

STANCE ACTS AND ENTITLEMENT IDEOLOGY IN POLITICAL DECLARATIONS IN NIGERIA: THE “ÈMI LÓ KÀN” EXAMPLE

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Abstract

Stance acts are linguistic phenomena through which political actors express contextually motivated entitlement ideologies to demonstrate their sense of deservedness and right to positions or offices. While various works on political speeches, addresses and manifestoes in Nigeria and other parts of the world deemphasise these acts and their underlying entitlement beliefs, others from the fields of philosophy, political science, discourse analysis and sociolinguistics have shown detailed interest in how political power, identity and ideology are constructed through language. This study, however, is aimed at identifying the typologies of stance acts and the entitlement ideologies that empower these acts in Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu’s popular “Èmilókàn” declaration” made on 2 June, 2022. The speech was transcribed, using both Jefferson’s and Yoruba notations to

capture its sociocultural voices. Aspects of Du Bois (2007) Stance Triangle, complemented by Ifantidou's (2001) model of stance and relevance, van Dijk CDA (2015) and Odeunmi's (2016) contextual model were adopted as the framework. The study revealed two main stance acts: the evaluative stance act which evinces co-acts of self-positioning (which is speaker-generated); and alignment-seeking (which is audience co-opted). The evidential stance act is also grounded on the co-acts of direct and indirect evidential stance acts. These stance acts are linked principally to three entitlement ideologies: politico-religionist, ethnicist, and altruist entitlement ideologies. Political actors, by their tactfully expressed stance acts, are bolstered by a heavy sense of rights and deservedness to construct power, dominance, and acceptance in a bid to clinch their desired positions.

Keywords: Stance Acts, Entitlement Ideology, Political Declaration, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu's popular "Èmiló kàn"

Introduction

In political discourse, stance acts and entitlement (the demonstration of the right and sense of deservedness), are strong forces on which political actors rely to foreground their ambitions and make them incontestable among other opposing forces. Sadly, these are understudied in the literature on entitlement and political declaration. According to Verstegen (2001), entitlement is a matter of both rights and power, and it is concerned with the actual process of how people gain access to resources. It is imperative to understand that this concept, if not well managed, is capable of motivating narcissistic tendencies, especially when one becomes over-entitled (Piff, 2014). Political actors often project this sense of deservedness to political offices in their declaration of intention. Hence, to enforce this entitlement ideology, they resort to stance acts that invoke evidentials to bolster their entitlement sense. This study, therefore, investigates the different stance acts and their motivating entitlement ideologies in the political declaration of Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the incumbent President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Bola Ahmed Tinubu, born on 29 March, 1952, was the Governor of Lagos State between 1999 and 2007. Prior to that period, he had been a Senator representing Lagos-West Senatorial

District in 1992, during the Third Republic, under the aegis of Social Democratic Party (SDP). The All Progressives Congress' (APC) chieftain is an accountant and a politician who is renowned for his influential role in the formation APC. His political declaration popularly tagged *Emilokan*, meaning 'it is my turn', attracted much attention and subsequently became a mantra used by individuals when asserting their sense of entitlement or declaring that they are the most qualified in a contest or a collective patrimony. This informed our engagement of the declaration to assess the stance acts performed, and unravel the ideological orientation underlying this declaration of deservedness to Nigerian presidency. Investigating the stance act and ideology will help identify and determine the extent to which personal desires are constructed in the speeches of politicians in their declarations. To realise this goal, the study sets to pursue the following specific objectives:

1. to examine the types of stance acts in Tinubu's Political Declaration (hereafter TPD) and the underlying contexts, and;
2. to identify and determine the entitlement ideologies upon which the stance acts are anchored.

Literature Review

Studies abound in the sphere of political discourse within the differing frameworks of discourse analysis, stylistics, rhetoric and pragmatics. Scholars have equally explored distinct political discourse forms: press addresses, interviews of individual candidates, media competitive encounters and campaign speeches. With emphasis on campaign Speeches, Olorunsogo and Ige (2022) examine the rhetoric of 'Ó tó gé' in the 2015 Kwara State's electioneering campaign of the All Progressives Congress. The study submits that the language of political campaigns is ideological and goal driven, hence, negative labels are used by the politicians (APC) during rallies, against opposition parties and aspirants. The study, therefore, identifies lexical items such as 'reckless', 'ambitious person', 'dirt', 'looters', 'cheat' and 'glutton' as negative representations of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP). The study

is relevant to the analysis of TDS, particularly in the context of electioneering campaign slogans, though it does not focus on negative identity representations. Adeagbo (2023) focuses on the negotiation strategies employed by Bola Tinubu in his ‘Èmi ló kàn Campaign Speech’. Anchoring the analysis on van Dijk’s model of Critical Discourse Analysis, the study reveals that Bola Tinubu relied on the following discursive resources: historical references and allusions, principles of exclusion and inclusion, techniques of sympathy, superiority and arrogance power-seeking tactics, and self-glorification, among others, to convey his political views and seek political support. Also, Ige (2023) explores the underlying ideologies in Bola Tinubu’s ‘Emi lo kan speech’ using van Dijk’s (2015) socio-cognitive model. The study of Ige (2023) is relevant to the current study as it shows how campaign speeches of political actors are imbued with different ideological beliefs. The entitlement dimension to ideology and stance acts in TDS is a significant difference between the current study and the ones reviewed above. Agbeloba, Fafiyebi, Bamigboye and Feyisara (2023) considered the nexus between ideology and power relations in Bola Tinubu’s ‘Emi lo kan’ concept in Nigerian politics. The researchers revealed that campaign speeches are used to persuade, plead, project self positively and negotiate power. As it is evident from the foregoing, Bola Tinubu’s ‘*Emi Lo Kan*’ speech has not enjoyed significant research attention from the stance acts and entitlement perspective. Therefore, this paper examines TDS, with particular attention on the stance acts and entitlement ideologies that propel it.

Methodology

Data for this study were constituted by the political declaration speech of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, made on 2nd June, 2022. The declaration was transcribed using aspects of Jefferson’s notation and Yoruba tonal diacritics to map out sociocultural communicative intents and voice. The transcribed text was then translated into English for non-Yoruba speakers’ relatability. Theoretically, resources from Du Bois’ Stance Triangle (2007), complemented by

Ifantidou's (2001) model of stance and relevance, van Dijk CDA (2015) and Odeunmi's contextual model (2016) were used for the appraisal of TPD. Du Bois stance triangle conceptualises stance as an act equivalent to the concept of speech act where utterances are used to tease out individuals' intention. In a similar vein, stance functionally possesses the power to assign value to objects of interest, position social actors with respect to those objects, calibrate aligning between stance takers, and invoke presupposed systems of sociocultural values (Du Bois, 2007, 141). This outlook to self-expression espoused in Du Bois' stance recognises stance acts as acts of registering personal opinions of interlocutors, their level of affection towards the subject of discourse, whether or not they agree, and ultimately the informing ideals that prompt the actions taken. Hence, stance is overly described as a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to salient dimension of the sociocultural field (Du Bois, 2007: 163). The stance act triangle thus represents this proposition:

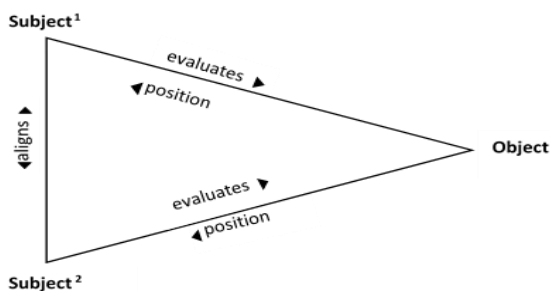


Figure 1: A stance act triangle

The triangle marked by subject 1, subject 2 and the shared object sums up the stance acts that define the crux of the stance-taking. This triangulation represents the acts of evaluating, positioning and aligning which are undertaken by the two subjects with respect to the object of discourse or interest. It is demonstrated in the triangle

that the two subjects represent two social actors involved in stance taking, who are capable of agreeing to each other's position (alignment) and both assess (evaluate) the object (issue raised or theme) of discourse. While this model is apposite for our data analysis, it lacks the tool for identifying the evidential backing that informs the stances taken. This gap basically informs the complementary choice of Ifantidou's (2001) quota of stance in order to have an in-depth explanation of TPD. Evidentials, which are missing tools in Du Bois model, according to Chafe (1986) as cited in Ifantidou (2001, p.3), "are devices used by speakers to mark the source and the reliability of their knowledge. In other words, they are the stance acts performed during the declaration. The indices of lexical evidential markers include "I guess", 'I suppose', 'they say', and 'must have been' among others. Hence, evidentials "show the kind of justification for a factual claim which is available to the person making the claim directly or inferentially" (Ifantidou, 2001, 3).

Underlying most stances are ideologies which drive them. According to van Dijk (2015), in his ideological discourse analysis, speakers' stances are characterised by ingroup and outgroup divides where the individuals tend to amplify their positive actions through emphasis of self-positive acts, assertions, hyperbole, topicalisation, narrative illustration, argumentative support, impression management and so on, while others are given negative labels. Odebunmi's (2016) model of context harmonises the co(n)textual part of Jacob Mey's (2001) pragmatic acts which deals with the outside-in context enables us to account for the properties of voice (VCE), inference (INF), metaphor, relevance (REL), shared socio-cultural knowledge (SSK) and metapragmatic (M) joker. These are deployed in the analysis of TPD.

Analysis

Findings in TPD foreground two significant stance acts defined by the political, historical and cultural contexts. These pragmatically inspire the stances taken in Tinubu's desire to become the party's

flag bearer after the primary election of the All Progressive Congress (APC, *henceforth*). At the pivot of the declaration, the speaker finds strength in the deployment of the evaluative and evidential stance acts, respectively. The evaluative stance act evinces co-acts: self-positioning evaluative stance act (which is speaker-generated) and alignment-seeking evaluative stance act (which is audience coopted); making the first phase of the analysis. In the second phase, the evidential stance act is grounded on the co-acts of direct (evidential stance) acts and indirect (evidential stance) acts. These stance acts are linked principally to three entitlement ideologies: politico-religionist entitlement ideology, ethnicist entitlement ideology and altruist entitlement ideology. The construction of these stance acts and their trailing entitlement ideologies forged out the renowned *Èmilókàn* mantra of the APC chieftain. This is explored from the prisms of pragmatics and discourse analysis in the following sections.

Stance Acts in Tinubu’s Political Declaration (TPD)

As earlier identified, TPD comprises the evaluative and evidential stance acts. First, this section brings to fore, the evaluative stance acts in TPD, while the second part explicates the evidential stance acts of the declaration.

Evaluative Stance Acts in TPD

Evaluative stance acts are performed by stance-takers (speakers) in the process of assessing the stance object to which the assessment is made. The act necessarily passes comment and judgment on the features, qualities and activities of the stance object or addressee. The crux of this act is tied to the concept of perspectivisation where speakers express their points of view (Du Bois, 2007; Takanashi, 2018). In concretising their views, speakers do not only portray the addressees’ actions and qualities but also subtly publicise their personal qualities and feats. Typically, in TPD, the speaker conjures up the oratory and pragmatic dexterity in substantiating the fitness of his candidacy. By this prowess, Tinubu’s declaration was

anchored on two principal co-acts, namely, self-positioning evaluative stance act and alignment-seeking evaluative stance act.

Self-positioning evaluative stance act

Slightly attuned with the natural understanding of positioning within the purview of stance-taking as captured in Du Bois (2007) approach which naturally evokes the act of subjectivity, in TPD, the speaker while evaluating the stance objects implicitly positions himself as the instrument of quality bestowal by emphasising the events that characterise the party's survival. As espoused in Takanashi (2018), positioning is enacted as stance-takers take their position as well as the stance object, thereby committing themselves to the social action of stance-taking. Excerpt 1 establishes this strand of evaluative stance act, that is basically intra-partisan.

Excerpt 1:

Tinubu: Wí pé kí o má dàrú, kó má bàjé, kí orílẹ̀-èdè Yorùbá, ká ti è lè dé bẹ, kí á gun òkè díẹ. Ijọ tí a tí n' bá a bọ. Toríbẹ ni se se di isín, a se ọ́tá ara wa. Mo kàn ní ó tó àsikò (All of these, just so for non-disintegration and party group cohesion, such that the Yoruba nation can get there, there isn't enmity between us till date, I just feel it is about time). Orò ojò orí kó. Tó bá jẹ ti iwé ni, mo kàwé o. (This isn't even about age, come to think about it, I am also not a pushover from formal education).

Audience: Cheers! (@). Jagaban!

Tinubu: Tó bá dẹ jẹ ọ̀rò àgbà ni, èmi l'ègbón (And then if you are about playing age, I am the eldest).

Audience: @

Tinubu: Wọn ò dẹ bí mi níbejì, ti wọn má ní ìkan saájú gbègbón (And the beauty is that I didn't arrive with the ambiguity of the more senior in a twin-couple of who is the senior)

Audience: Gbajúmọ wọn ò tó è (They can't even match your fame.)

Tinubu: Àpèmọ̀ra-ẹni dẹni {LÀÁ PE TÈMÍ DIRE}. ([As] an individual always wishes self the best). Mo ti n' sinyinbò, ojò tipé (It has been a while that I have been serving you)

Audience: Bẹẹ ni (Yes!)

Tinubu: È gbékiníyíwá, èmilókàn! (Bring this thing over, it is my turn!).

Audience: Bèè ni (Yes!) Cheers. @

Tinubu: ÈMI LÓ KAN, ÈMI, ÈMI LÓ KAN! (It is my turn! It is my turn!)

Excerpt 2:

Tinubu: Ìgbà tí wọ̀n yọ̀ ẹ̀gba tí Atiku, nínú ẹ̀gbé ẹ̀, tí Obasanjo fẹ̀ nà á pa, ọ̀dọ̀ mí ló sá wá, èmi ló kàn, mo fí í lẹ̀ fun. (When Obasanjo nearly flogged the life out of Atiku in the party, he ran to me for help... It is my turn. I left it for him). Ó yọ̀ àáké tí Nuhu Ribadu, Ah! ọ̀rọ̀ àáké kọ̀, ọ̀rọ̀ ọ̀gbón orí ní kiní yí. Nuhu nísó, mo gbé Nuhu Ribadu síta (He [Obasanjo] did the same to Nuhu Ribadu, and I counselled wisdom saying it was not all about violence).

Audience: Bèè ni! Ìwọ̀ ló kàn. (Yes! it is your turn!)

Both excerpts 1 and 2 are practical instances culled from TPD that evince and substantiate the self-positioning evaluative stance acts. The context instantiated in excerpt 1 shows historical reference to the previous plans of the speaker in contesting the Presidential seat under the auspices of the APC. He further narrated how he had often shifted grounds in order to strengthen the party's unity and prepare a governing space for his people. The self-positioning evaluative stance act is premised on the proposition “Wí pé kí ẹ̀gbé má dàrú, kó má bàjẹ̀, kí orílẹ̀-èdè Yorùbá, ká ti ẹ̀ lẹ̀ débẹ̀, kí á gun òkè díẹ̀, ijó tì a ti n b́a a bọ̀, tori bèèni se se, di isín a se ọ̀tá ara wa, mo kàn ní ó tó à̀sìkò (All of these, just so for non-disintegration and party group cohesion, such that the Yoruba nation can get there, there isn't enmity between us till date, I just feel it is about time).” The speaker here traced the factors that had delayed his presidential ambition. In it, there are strong implicatural elements, especially as captured in the expression, “Wí pé kí ẹ̀gbé má dàrú-All of these, which he did for non-disintegration and party group cohesion which implies that a lot of sacrifices had been made for the party which had invariably stalled his ambition. In essence, TPD carefully selects the stance subject, Tinubu (the speaker),, “ẹ̀gbé” (party) and “orílẹ̀-èdè

Yorùbá” (the Yoruba nation) to effectuate the self-positioning stance act wherein the speaker presents himself as a statesman of the party who prioritises its interest above his personal ambition and also takes decision that would, in the long run, put his people, the Yoruba, at the helm of governance. After this evaluation, he went ahead to stamp his declaration by emphatically stating that “*mo kàn ní ó tó àsikò*” (I just feel it is about time). Several inferences are imbued in the proposition “it’s about time”. It revs up the possibility of an abandoned aspiration (for the candidacy of Tinubu) and also ignites hope for the Yoruba nation for which a lot of sacrifices had been made, including delaying his declaration. Through this staunch declaration, the speaker forges ahead to clearly and timely position himself through the subject of stance “*mo (I)*” by justifying and obviating likely counter opinions on the “rightfulness” of his candidacy through the evaluative stance act “*Ọrọ ojó orí kó, tó bá jé ti ìwé ni, mo kàwé o* (It is not about age, if it is based on formal education, I am educated)”. These are stance acts that position him as the rightful candidate that the party can bank on for the general elections due to the qualities he possesses, thereby enacting the self-positioning evaluative acts to solidify the veracity of his candidacy. More projections of the positioning acts were constructed between the speaker and the audience as he continued the positioning by self-evaluation:

Tinubu: *Tóbádè jé ọrọ àgbàni, èmilègbón* (And if it is based on age seniority, I am the eldest).

Audience: @.

Tinubu: *Wọ̀n ò dè bí mi níbejì, ti wọ̀n wá ní ikan saájú èkejì gbègbón* (And I wasn’t born as twins, wherein it would be asserted that one became the elder because he was born before the other)

Audience: *Gbajúmò wọ̀n ò tó è .* (They can’t even match your fame.).

Tinubu: *Àpèmóra-ẹ̀ni dẹ̀ni.* ([As] an individual always wishes self the best). *Mo ti ń sìn yín bọ, {ojó tipé},* (It has been a while that I have been serving you)

Audience: *Bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni!* (Yes!)

Tinubu: È gbékiníyíwá, èmilókàn! (Bring this thing over, it is my turn!).

Audience: Bèèni! (Yes!), cheers, laughter

Tinubu: ÈMI LÓ KAN, ÈMI, ÈMI LÓ KAN! (It is my turn! It is my turn!)

At this juncture, the speaker was gradually gliding to the final declaration of his ambition; hence, he circumspectly anchored it on the qualities that qualify him as the party flag bearer, among which are “àgbà”, (age) to which the audience complemented by adding “Gbajúmò” (fame). Ultimately, the speaker, relying on shared sociocultural knowledge (SCK) (Odeunmi, 2016) in the proverbial construction “Àpèmòra-èni dèni {làá pe tèmí dire} ([As] an individual always wishes the best to the self)” to again validate his self-positioning stance act. Hence, the self-positioning stance act was co-constructed through audience affirmative response “Bèè ni” (YES). The audience endorsing act was immediately capitalised on by the speaker as he declared his right using the collective pronominal “È” calling on the people to give him what is his repeatedly “È gbékiníyíwá, èmilókàn! (bring this thing over, it is my turn!).

Excerpt 2 stretches this stance act through propositions that evaluate the stance objects and at the same time place the speaker at the position of a “saviour”. It presents an evaluative stance act that is directed at political actors who are outside the current circle of the APC. It is quite remarkable and instructive because Tinubu in the narrative context situated the stance subject in the second clause of the complex construction “he ran to me” where the “he” anaphorically references “Atiku” whose life was nearly flogged out of him by his former boss and President of Nigeria, Obasanjo, while the “me” exophorically references Tinubu who came to salvage Atiku from Obasanjo’s political victimisation. While recounting this, he still injected the catchy phrase “èmilókàn” (it is my turn), to bolster the fact that he has done enough to deserve his present aspiration and that it is now his turn to be President of the nation through the party which he had served and demonstrated impeccable

leadership acumen therein. He further corroborated this saviour and peace-keeper identity through the self-evaluative stance act by referencing Nuhu Ribadu and the latter's ordeal in the hands of Obasanjo.

The pragmatic import of Tinubu's allusion to his past feats was to strategically position himself, not only as an elder statesman, but also a man whom other politicians run to when in danger, thereby strengthening his viability and suitability to the office he craved.

Alignment-seeking evaluative stance act: partisan/ethnic/altruist

Alignment within the purview of stancetaking is construed as an act of calibrating the relationship between two stances and by implication between two stancetakers (Du Bois, 2007). While this is indicated with stance predicates like "agree", in TPD, alignment is sought and constructed without such overt lexical indicators. However, the alignment to propositions is realised through the validation of the speaker's evaluative stance act, either implicitly or explicitly through interrogatives and cultural epistemic expressions. Tinubu tactically employed this act in engaging the audience in order to elicit responses that constrain alignment to his candidacy, and alignment to deservedness, as instantiated in excerpts 3 & 4.

Excerpt 3:

Tinubu: Èmi ọmọ Tèmídìrè. ('I, the child of Temidire). Àpèmọraeni dèni.... èyin tí ẹ dẹ ñ wọ *aeroplane*, tí ẹ bá wà nínú *aeroplane*, wón ní tí oxygen bá *fail*, tí *face mask* bá, bá yọ, bó ti ẹ gbómọ ẹ dání sí esè, wa má fi kini yẹn sí ẹnu ẹ náà , wa kòkò fi sí ojú ara ẹ, tí o bá kòkò fi sí ẹnu, tó bá *change ti e*, to bá *protect* ara ẹ ni kóo tó *protect* ọmọ to gbé lówó (Drawing from the experience of people who travel regularly by flight, in emergencies, where the oxygen gets scarced, and passengers are advised to secure their own oxygen, you will have to secure your own mask first and stay safe and conscious before you can even assist another person). Abi beeko? (Isn't it?).

Audience: Bẹ̀ni (Yes!)

Excerpt 4:

Tinubu: ...Àpèmóra-ẹni de ni, {làá pe tèmí dire}. ([As] an individual always wishes the best to the self).

Mo ti ń sinyínbò, {ojó tipé} (It has been a while that I have been serving you: it is time!)

Audience: {làá pe tèmí dire}

Audience: Bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni (Yes).

Tinubu: Ẹ gbé kiní yìí wá, ẹmi ló kàn! (Bring this thing over, it is my turn!).

Audience: Bẹ̀ẹ̀ni (Yes!). Cheers. @@@

Tinubu(.) ÈMILÓ KAN, ÈMI, ÈMILÓ KAN! (It is my turn! It is my turn!)

Audience: Ìwọ̀lókàn, Ìwọ̀ ló kàn, bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni! (Surely, it's your turn, it's your turn) (Yes!)

Alignment-seeking evaluative stance act is exuded in excerpts 3 & 4. Its representation is however realised explicitly and implicitly; both geared towards getting the audience's agreement to his proposition. Excerpt 4 typifies the covert type of alignment-seeking evaluative stance act which built-up is entrenched in the speaker's justification of his decision couched in proverbial constructions that lean on the shared sociocultural knowledge between the candidate and the audience. Specifically, the first proverbial construction “Àpèmóra ẹni dẹ re là á pe ohun tí ẹ te ni (I make a self-claim of what is mine)” evokes the essentiality of self-endorsement for which the speaker tries to seek alignment in the proposition that followed, using the “aeroplane” scenario” which implicates that “ẹyin tí ẹ dẹ ń wọ *aeroplane*, tí ẹ bá wà nínú *aeroplane*, wọ̀n ní tí oxygen bá *fail*, tí *face mask* bá yọ, bo tí ẹ gbọmọ ẹ dání sí eṣẹ, wa ma á fi kiní yẹn sí ẹnu ẹ naa , wa kọkọ fi si ojú ara ẹ, ti óbá kọkọ fi sí ẹnu, tó bá *change*, tó bá *protect* ara ẹ ni kó tó *protect* omọ tó gbé lówó.” This illustration depicts and conjures up the mental frames that offer the prioritisation of an individual's ambition in certain contexts over anything or anybody, including close ties. To ascertain the correctness and felicity of this stance, the speaker resorted to the

interrogative “Àbí bẹ̀ẹ̀ kó?” (Isn’t it?) to strike epistemic alignment which constrains the response “Bẹ̀ẹ̀ni (Yes!)” from the listeners. In other words, the cultural and political affordances allow individuals to project and protect their interest in matters of critical concern, just as advanced in Tinubu’s analogical proposition.

Excerpt 4 is premised on the implicit alignment-seeking evaluative stance act. The implicitness is anchored on the speaker’s stewardship to the stance object, in that, he maintained “Mo ti ñ sìn yín bọ, ojọ̀ ti pé” (It has been a while that I have been serving you). By implication, the speaker is demanding reciprocity of service wherein he reminds the people of his past services to the party and the people and thus he consequently seeks a replication of similar gesture from them. In plain terms, he has served and therefore it is time for him to be served. It is this time construct that he further trailed in the requisition “È gbékiníyíwá, èmilókàn!” This naturally triggered the alignment he seeks from the audience who again affirm his stance act through the alignment stance marker “Bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni (Yes!), cheers, @@@”. The speaker assertively amplified his alignment-seeking evaluative stance act by emphasizing “ÈMILÓ KÀN, ÈMI, ÈMILO KÀN! (Itismyturn! It is my turn!)” This alignment is reechoed with reiteration of the “: Ìwọ̀ ló kàn, Ìwọ̀ ló kàn, bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni! (Surely, it’s your turn, it’s your turn) (Yes!)” The reechoing of the speaker’s proclamation serves as an alignment act of candidacy re-affirmation that truly it is the time and turn of the speaker, Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Evidential Stance Acts in TPD

One of the noticeable characteristics of the TPD was the reliance on the evidential stance act to bolster felicity. Evidentiality manifests in the demonstration of some sort of commitment to the speaker’s propositional information (Mushin, 2001). It could be marked by directness and reportiveness depending on the contextual standpoint that produces the speaker’s commitment to a proposition. It is direct when the speaker shows clear involvement in a narrative while reportiveness measures speaker’s commitment through reference to

other agents' narrated acts. In TPD, evidentiality is sourced from directness and indirectness in the construction of the political claim to his viability among potential contestants.

i. Direct evidential stance acts: partisan/ ideology of religion/altruist/

This direct evidential stance act is characterised by the stances that demonstrate the speaker's overt commitment to their proposition. It is also effectuated by personal pronominals and historical references in which the speaker not only exudes higher epistemic involvement but practical influencer of events. In TPD, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu deployed this evidential stance act through factual epistemic propositional contents that relate his clear knowledge of his party's historical trajectories, and candidacy roles and impacts. Excerpts 5 and 6 construct this act practically.

Excerpt 5:

Tinubu: Láti ìgbà tá a ti bèrè lórí AD, AC, ACN, a gbe dé orí APC, òògùn èfòrí. (Since we started with AD, AC, ACN and now to APC, medication for headaches [cracks joke]).

Audience: @@@

Excerpt 6:

Tinubu: Afé ẹ́ é nígbàyeń. (We were intent on it, then.) This is me telling you between my life and God *Almighty*, Buhari ní kí n wá ẹ́ igbákeji òun. (Almighty {swears in the name of God} Buhari invited me to be his running mate). Ó ní nítorí àkókó tí òun jáde, òun gbe fun Okadigbo, *flamboyant*, *faajiloving*, *catholic*, pe, wọn ò dibò fún òun (He said because on his first outing [to contest], he picked Okadigbo, flamboyant, faaji loving catholic as his Vice but Nigerians didn't vote for him). Èẹ̀keji, òun gbé e fún *another* Igbo, Ume-Ezeoke, *tóje Speaker*, wọn gbà á lówó òun, wọn ò dibò fún òun. (And the second time, he nominated another Igbo, Ume-Ezeoke, the Speaker but Nigerians didn't vote for him). Ó nì, òunriipétíòunbólómúPopewá ((@@@@@-audience laughs)) láti *Rome*, wọn ò ní dibò fún òun...

Direct evidential stance act is instantiated in Excerpts 5 & 6 as forms that establish Tinubu's political credentials through his knowledge demonstration and actional partisanship. In excerpt 5, Tinubu deployed his experiential knowledge and crested it on the bands of history to narrate the evolutionary stages the APC had undergone before its present state. This is strategic to great orators who resort to historical profiles in order to adumbrate the crux of their messages and intents. For Tinubu, he was a practical key player in the journey from AD to APC, as he further solidified this with the pronominal marker of collectivity "Láti ìgbà tá a ti bèrè (since we started) to reveal his involvement. Similarly, excerpt 6 also typifies the direct evidential stance act through self-accentuative evidential marker, "This is me telling you between my life and God almighty". This is deployed to emphasise the felicity of his proposition and concretise his claim by resorting to the prepositional religious avowal "between my life and God Almighty." Here, these evidential markers lead the audience into the socio-political and religious contexts that define his narrative. This evidential narrativity was constructed through "other's political failures" and an inferential clue validating his candidacy as the preferential choice, by dint of his positive political antecedents. It was built on Buhari's presidential ambition in relation to his choice of running mate; Buhari recognised the political weight of Tinubu, and therefore considered him as a running mate who could make his ambition become a reality. One noticeable part of the narrative was the regional bias and the religious identity of the previous running mates of Buhari who were mainly Igbos and Catholics as evident in the proposition "È̀è̀kejì, òun gbé e fún *another* Igbo, Ume-Ezeoke, tójé *Speaker*, wọn gbà á lówọ̀ òun, wọn ò dibòfúnòun. (And the second time, he nominated another Igbo, Ume- Ezeoke, the Speaker but Nigerians didn't vote for him). Ó nì òun rí I pé tí òun bá lọ mú Pope wá ((@@@-audience laugh)) láti Rome, wọn ò ní dibò fún òun," These evidential references are designed to construct the candidacy of Tinubu as a sought- after" politician and also as the right person from the right region to bear the flag of the party.

ii. Indirect evidential stance acts

The indirect evidential stance acts encode a pragmatic mechanism of inferentiality in which the speaker leaves suggestive answers with the audience without stating them. It is a form of distancing from the centrality of propositions. It is entrenched in co-opting the audience into thinking along the speaker's line of thought.

Excerpt 7:

Tinubu: Orò ojó orí kó. Tó bá jé ti ìwé ni, mokàwé o. (This is not about age. If it is based on formal education. I am educated)

Audience: Cheers, laughter. Jagaban!

Tinubu: Tó bá dè jé òrò àgbà ni, èmi lègbón (And then if it is about age, I am the eldest).

Audience: @ @ @

Tinubu: Wọ̀n ò dè bí mi níbejì, ti wọ̀n wá ní ìkan saájú gb'egbon (And I was not born as a twin, that they would assert that one of the twins is the elder because he arrived first)

Audience: Gbajúmò wọ̀n ò tó è. (They can't even match your fame.)

Implicitness is used by Tinubu to largely leave out his portrayal of staunch age and academic superiority, as he shrouded them in the indirect evidential stance act. Excerpt 7 presents how Tinubu responded to purported challenge on his age, academic qualification and accumulated experience in the presentation of candidates. His response, “Orò ojó orí kó, tó bá jé ti ìwé ni, mo kàwé o. (This isn't even about age, come to think about it, I am also not a pushover from formal education) implicates that beyond the age experience he is also educated. In an extra-linguistic context, it is a common practice for the candidates' academic credentials to be validated, as a similar certificate saga engulfed the incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari. Hence, Tinubu's stressing of “mo kàwé o” (I am well educated) is a reflection of the shared knowledge he has with the audience about issues of education and certificates which are often points of controversies. He further touched on seniority among the contestants and maintained that he is still older in that wise.

Entitlement-constructing ideologies underlying the stance acts in TPD

Politico-religionist entitlement ideology

The politico-religionist entitlement ideology entails demonstrations of rights to political deservedness by reason of one's religious belief or belonging to a particular. In a narrower sense, it is the demonstration of the right to position of authority politicised on the grounds of one's religion. It is the intermingling of religion and politics naturally established through the evaluative stance act and the context of religion. In TPD, the speaker reveals the manifestation of this ideology as the driver of partisan politics in terms of representation.

Excerpt 8:

Tinubu: ...Ìgbàtí a tò ó tán, tí a mú àwọn PDP wọlé. Saraki ríi pé àwọn PDP ò ní rí ǹkankan, te mi ba, tí Buhari bá jé *Gov, President*, èmi nàà *Muslim*, tí n bá jé *Vice President*, wọn ò lè rí *Senate President*. *Senate President* ò tún lè jé *Muslim* (And when we finished restructuring the party, Sarakirealises that those from PDP will not get anything if Buhari a Muslim becomes the President, I, a Muslim become the Vice, he won't get a Senate President since that can't also be Muslim). Bí wọn se bèrè sí *campaign màdàrú niyèn*. (That was how they started campaign ofcalumny). Mo bà ní ẹ wá, mo lè yan ẹni tó jé *Christian*, mà á mú u lè. Egbé yìí ò dè gbọdò fọ, a ò dè gbọdò *fail*, bí mo se mú ẹni tó jé ọmọ yín silè niyèn (Then I said, hold on, I equally have a Christian candidate, so I am nominating him and the party must not disintegrate and we must not fail, that was how I nominated your son.

Politico-religionist entitlement ideology is evident in excerpt 8 in Tinubu's revelation of how he conceded his vice-presidential seat in the party on the grounds of the politics of religion. In his propositional construct, Tinubu averred that the absorption of defectors from the PDP into their party came with quest to equitable representation which bolstered the religious card played by the like of Saraki, a Muslim who had the intention of becoming the senate

president in a party where the presidential and vice-presidential candidates were both Muslims. What Tinubu framed as politics of calumny came into play as he espoused “*Bí wón se bèrè sí campaign màdàrú niyèn*”. Constructing the politico-religionist ideology, Tinubu strategically deployed the deictic centered structure “*Mo bà ní ẹ wá, mo lè yan ẹni tó jẹ Christian*” in establishing his position to advance the candidacy of a Christian in his own camp in order to have a representation “*Mo bà ní ẹ wá, mo lè yan ẹni tó jẹ Christian, màá mú u lẹ. Egbé yìi ò dẹ gbòdò fò, a ò dẹ gbòdò fail, bí mo ẹ mú ẹni tó jẹ ọmọ yín sílẹ niyèn.* (Then I said, hold on, I equally have a Christian candidate, so I am nominating him and the party must not disintegrate and we must not fail, that was how I nominated your son (referencing Osibajo as a native of Ogun State and the son of the soil).” To Tinubu, his nomination of a candidate who is a Christian from his political camp, as inferred from his proposition, is a measure to retain the unity of the party. In other words, religion is a sensitive pad in the politics of Nigeria. In essence, Tinubu’s nomination of Osibajo in the 2015 Presidential election was constrained by the politico-religious entitlement ideology which leans on representation empowered by religious divide.

Ethnicist entitlement ideology

Ethnicist entitlement ideology represents the ideals that are underlined or built on a group’s perceived deservedness and right to position by dint of their ethnic or regional backgrounds. This is orchestrated by the cultural and social contexts. In TPD, this ideology was heavily reflected in his construction of his “rightness” as the candidate of the Yoruba ethnic and cultural background. Perhaps built on the immediate context of the declaration being at a venue largely populated by the Yoruba, Tinubu reiterated this ideal as contained in Excerpt 9.

Excerpt 9:

Tinubu: ...*kí orílẹ̀ èdè Yorùbá, ká ti ẹ̀ lẹ̀ dé bè, kí á gun òkè diẹ̀. Ijọ̀ ti a ti n bá a bọ̀, tori be, ni se se. Di isín, a se ọ̀tá ara*

wa. Mo kàn ní ó tó àsìkò. (All of these, just so for non-disintegration and party group cohesion, such that the Yoruba nation can get there).

Excerpt 10:

Tinubu: Láti ijó tó de ti dé bẹ̀, mi ò gba *minister*, mi ò gba *contract*. Mi ò tọ̀ọ̀ ọ̀bẹ̀, mi n tóró gàrri, mi n tọ̀ọ̀ fura, mi n dẹ̀ yáwó níbẹ̀. (Since he emerged as the President, I never requested for Ministerial slot contracts neither did I ever begged for anything) and I (didn't even take a loan from them). Mo wá ní lóṭẹ̀ yìí o, Yorùbá lókàn. (I say this time, it is the turn of the Yoruba nation)

Audience: Yorùbá lo kàn. Cheers!(It is the turn of the Yoruba nation)

Tinubu: Ta bá dẹ̀ sa Yorùbá náà, èmi ló kàn. (And within the Yoruba nation, it is my turn).

Audience: Cheers

In excerpts 9 & 10, Tinubu apparently showed his unapologetic ethnic loyalty in his lexicalisation of the ethnicist ideology as he unearths his desire to put Yoruba first in his bid to become the president of Nigeria. In the declaration, inferences can be circumspectly drawn from the proposition “*kíorílẹ̀ èdèYorùbá, káti è lèdébẹ̀*” to tease out the fact that other ethnic divides have had their own share of the representation at the presidency, hence, his ambition to contest as president is to ensure that the Yoruba also have their turn. This is entitlement. Unaffiliated to any pivotal developmental objective: only to have the banner of the Yoruba at the helm. Quite ironically, in excerpt 10, even though it is in the collective interest of Yoruba, the speaker was invariably pursuing his personal ambition in the political space of the party at the national level. This is entrenched by his recourse to many opportunities and positions he had sacrificed “*n ò gba Minister, mi ò gba contract. Mi ò tọ̀ọ̀ ọ̀bẹ̀, mi n tóró gàrri, mi n tọ̀ọ̀ fura* (two staple meals popular in Nigeria), *mi n dẹ̀ yáwó níbẹ̀* (I never requested for Ministerial slot or contracts neither did I never begged for anything). This propositional information is an evidential act

designed to solidify his ambition and stamp why it is “time” for him to be “compensated” for his sacrifices for the party. In response, the audience showed shared knowledge by echoing the mantra “Yorùbá ló kàn” meaning, it is the Yoruba’s time to assume the presidential seat of Nigeria. However, Tinubu who had a clear personal ambition wasted no time in advancing the fact that beyond the Yoruba’s turn, it is his turn to be elected as president “Ta bá dè sa Yorùbá nàà, èmi ló kàn. (I say this time around, it is the turn of the Yoruba and within the Yoruba nation, it is my turn). This pragmatic assertion that within the Yoruba circles in the party, it is his turn can further be sustained on the extra-linguistic reality of him having a main contender for the same position, Vice President Osibajo who he nominated for the position in 2015. Despite this personal ambition, the crux of the declaration is orchestrated by the ethnicist entitlement ideals.

Altruist Entitlement Ideology

Altruist entitlement ideology encodes the amplification of personal feats towards salvaging others in moments of difficulty. Within the political context, this ideology enables politicians to publicise their roles in the political landscape, especially in their various philanthropic outfits, and as a result, they see themselves as entitled to a position. More often, these acts are invoked to bear on campaigns for the validation of personal candidacy. This finds its strength in social and political contexts to create the savior identity. Excerpts 11&12 are practical indices of this ideological construct. This is vividly illustrated in Excerpts 11&12.

Excerpt 11:

Tinubu: Ìgbà tí wọ̀n yọ̀ egba ti Atiku, nínú egbé è, tí Obasanjo fẹ̀ nà á pa, ọ̀dọ̀ mi ló sá wá. Emi ló kàn, (When Obasanjo nearly flogged the life out of Atiku in the party, he ran to me for help. It is my turn.) Mo fi lẹ̀ fun. (I left it for him) Ó yọ̀ àáké ti Nuhu Ribadu. Ah! ọ̀rọ̀ àáké kọ̀, ọ̀rọ̀ oḡbón orí ni kiní yí(). Nuhu nìsọ̀, mo gbé Nuhu Ribadu síta (He [Obasanjo] did the same to Nuhu Ribadu, and I counselled wisdom saying it was not all about violence).

Audience: Beeni! Iwo lo kan (Yes, it is your turn!)

Tinubu: Odun, Ó ti lẹ tó ọdún mèdèdògbòn nísìn-ín tí mo tí n sìn wọn bò. (I have been serving them by selfless grooming for over 25 years now).

Excerpt 12:

Tinubu: ...Eléyí tó jókòò lẹyìn mi yi, Dapo, sé ó wá lẹ sọ pé òun lẹ dá di Governor ni tî báá se èmi (And for this one sitting right behind me, Dapo, could he have thought of becoming the governor without me).

Audience: Heckles. Noise.

Tinubu: Àbí, a a dì jọ wà ní stadium kó ni? (demonstrating). Gbogbo poster è, wọn ya á tán, òun n iyí. Asíá egbé gan, wọn ò fẹ gbe fun. E lọ wo video è, èmi tí mo gbe le re (Weren't we all together at the stadium, with all his posters torn, he is right here, even the party flag, they weren't going to hand it over to him, go and watch the video, I personally handed the party flag over).

Audience: Clapping

Altruism is captured in the declaration of Tinubu in excerpts 11 & 12. Through this ideology, the speaker outlines and projects his philanthropic and altruist acts directed towards fellow politicians. This recourse to antecedent is a strategic means of gaining support from the audience and also sealing his indispensable acts in the annals of the party. In TPD, the speaker recounted how he saved former Vice President of Nigeria, Atiku Abubakar when his principal then, Olusegun Obasanjo had issues with him; Tinubu also reiterated a similar act of altruism in the case of Nuhu Ribadu as well as being instrumental to the realisation of the governorship ambition of the Governor of Ogun State, Dapo Abiodun. He went further to unveil why he resorted to these political and historical contexts, relying on the shared sociocultural belief with the audience and the party to advance his course as he emphasised “Èmi ló kàn, mo fi sílẹ fún un (It was my turn, I left it for him). Ó ti lẹ tó ọdún mèdèdògbòn ní sìn-ín tí mo tí n sìn wọn bò. (I have been serving them by selfless grooming for over 25 years now)”. This proposition

captures the intent of the propositional act which projects that Tinubu wants to be president of Nigeria because he has served in the past. Hence, the underlying altruist entitlement ideology is an implicit strengthener of his ambition which rests on the maxim or “whoever serves should be compensated with a position of service.”

Conclusion

Tinubu’s political declaration (TPD) was predominated by two overarching entitlement stance acts; evaluative and evidential stance acts, respectively. The evaluative stance act evinced self-positioning and alignment-seeking stance acts which were prompted by politico-religionist, ethnicist and altruist entitlement ideologies. Both the stance acts and their underlying ideologies were dependent on the political, historical and cultural contexts of the APC’s sociopolitical situation which apparently, was determined by Tinubu. By this declaration, Tinubu appreciated his deeds and projected his sacrifices for the party and further strengthened why it should be his turn to occupy the presidential seat under the mandate of the APC. Justifiably, the political actor substantiated his stance by reference to history in order to secure the endorsement of his next political inclination. One significant implication of this study is the potential of political communication to amplify political actors’ identity and ideological orientation through variegated entitlement acts. What Senator Ahmed Tinubu did was pure tact, uncommon in many routine manifestoes in most political declaration contexts. The study provides a model marked by one’s expression of right and deservedness to govern or lead. Unlike the typical ideological US-THEM ideological polarity which is evinced in most political discourse, TPD offers unique ideological orientation that advances internal political operation and power sharing formula. The mantra, *Èmi ló kàn’* is more of a circumspective self-positioning strategy meant not only to exude the speaker’s political intent but also to enlighten, enlighten and validate his entitled stance. The paper recommends the deployment of positive, facts-inundated entitlement

stance acts as a veritable communication resource for political declaration speeches.

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