



DISAMBIGUATION OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A STUDY OF *POLITICS TODAY* ON CHANNELS TELEVISION

Wulashik Lucius Dafaan¹
Wakkai Hosanna Husseini²

^{1&2} Department of English, Plateau State University, Bokkos
ORCID: 0009-0003-8296-6190²
E-mail: wulashik@gmail.com¹
Phone: +234 803 048 0730¹
ORCID: 0000-0002-1533-1043²
E-mail: hosannawakkai@yahoo.com²
Phone: +234 806 544 3508²

Abstract

This study examines ambiguity in Nigerian political interviews, focusing on Channels Television's "Politics Today" program. It uses a qualitative approach based on discourse analysis to examine how ambiguity is introduced, addressed, and disambiguated in televised political discourse. The theoretical framework is grounded in a socio-pragmatics approach, incorporating theories of disambiguation, audience interpretation, and rhetorical framing to examine how ambiguity operators operate in televised political discourse. The data include seven recorded episodes, broadcast between February 17 and 24, 2025, transcribed verbatim and anonymised for analysis. The research identifies functions and strategies through discourse analytical coding, which identifies the roles of both interviewer and interviewees. The study found clarifying questions, contextual references, emotional appeals, and rhetorical questions, which promote specificity and accountability as interviewer's strategies while interviewees, were found to use ambiguity to avoid concrete commitments, preserve party unity, and manage public perception, often through vague or emotionally charged statements. The study concluded that while disambiguation can increase clarity and commitment, it also has manipulative potential. This study contributes to theories of political communication and have implications for media literacy and governance in Nigeria.

Keyword: Ambiguity; Disambiguation Strategies; Ambiguator; Nigerian Political Communication

Introduction

According to (Saussure et al., 1966), language functions as a dynamic social institution that both arises from and shapes social interactions and structures. Its significance is particularly pronounced in political contexts: English has evolved from its roots in Britain and the United States into a dominant global language, serving as a crucial instrument for communication, persuasion, and the dissemination of complex ideas (Ilyosovna, 2024). In political interviews, such as those featured in "*Politics Today*" on Channels Television, English plays a vital role in shaping public opinion and influencing policy decisions, allowing politicians to convey their messages and construct narratives that resonate with constituents (Habiburahman & Abdul Rahman, 2024).

Although ambiguity is negatively perceived as nebulousness, it is a useful tool in political communications. Taubaldiyeu et al. (2024) argue that the choice and use of political terminology are not mere linguistic exercises, but strategic maneuvers to influence public perception. Political communications in English are mostly introduced by ambiguous English expressions, requiring the ambiguity to be disambiguated, by processing the disambiguation, a full political communication is established. Along this line, (political) communication is a process of disambiguation – suggesting that political communication is concluded when the established ambiguity is cleared (or rather disambiguated).

The phenomenon of "disambiguation" encompasses the various strategies and processes utilized to clarify ambiguity within the English language across contexts, particularly in political discourse. Recent research has revealed how politicians utilize ambiguity as a strategic tool in their political argumentations.

Ambiguity, defined as the coexistence of multiple meanings for a given expression, frequently emerges as a salient feature in political discourse (Carnap & Morris, 1938). In political contexts, the strategic use of English is often accompanied by ambiguity—the ability of words, phrases, or statements to allow for multiple interpretations (Carnap & Morris, 1938). The presence of such ambiguity necessitates a disambiguation process, wherein interlocutors clarify intended messages to ensure effective communication. Miller (1995) emphasizes that disambiguation is crucial for maintaining clarity and is often contingent upon contextual cues and shared background knowledge. Politicians use various linguistic elements, such as metaphors, allusions, etc., to make their expressions ambiguous. Metaphors are crucial in the language of political leadership, as they

mediate between consciously rational ideology and unconscious myth. Charteris-Black as cited in Arakelyan (2009). Consequently, in political interviews marked by intricate narratives and persuasive rhetoric, the need for disambiguation becomes even more crucial.

The terms "ambiguator" and "ambiguation" are integral to understanding ambiguity and the dynamics of communication, particularly in the political realm. An "ambiguator" refers to an agent or entity that intentionally introduces ambiguity into communication to achieve specific rhetorical or strategic outcomes. This is where the concept of pretext comes into play. The term 'pretext' generally refers to an ulterior motive: a pretending to do one thing but intending to do something else (Widdowson, 2004) as politicians deliberately formulate statements that allow for multiple interpretations. In political discourse, ambiguity can include politicians, political analysts, or media representatives who strategically use contexts in which ambiguity, deriving from underspecification, as a device to establish a certain degree of obscurity. In this way, speakers may create the impression of pursuing, for example, definite political aims while in fact not doing so. (Bauer & Zirker, 2022). For example, politicians may use ambiguity to present themselves favorably or deflect criticism by crafting statements that lack precise meaning (Charteris-Black, 2011).

The use of ambiguity is particularly significant in media environments where public figures are under scrutiny, as intentional vagueness can help maintain support from diverse audience segments while minimizing backlash (Leech, 1981). On the other hand, "ambiguation" refers to the process through which language is rendered ambiguous, resulting in statements or expressions that can be interpreted in multiple ways. In political communication, ambiguity serves strategic purposes by allowing politicians to frame their arguments flexibly and engage a broader audience (Carnap & Morris, 1938).

(Orwell, 1946) noted that ambiguity can obscure the truth, enabling politicians to navigate sensitive topics without committing to specific positions, thus avoiding potential dissent. This phenomenon has been widely studied within sociolinguistics and political communication, underscoring its prevalence in interviews, debates, and public statements. By examining how ambiguity operates and how ambiguity occurs, scholars can gain insights into the construction of political narratives and the shaping of public perceptions within contemporary governance contexts.

In Nigeria's unique political landscape, English disambiguation becomes particularly relevant as public figures must overcome a multifaceted terrain of expectations and interpretations. This study focuses on "*Politics Today*" to investigate how disambiguation operates within Nigerian political interviews. By doing so, it seeks to address the notable gap in existing literature regarding the application of disambiguation in Nigerian political settings as well as to investigate disambiguation in political communication. The use of English in executing diplomatic relations – which is a specialized form of political communication – offers interesting data for studying the process of disambiguation, which cannot be done without explicitly addressing the question of ambiguity.

The research objectives are therefore to:

1. determine the causes of disambiguation in political interviews on "*Politics Today*" on Channels Television.
2. analyze the disambiguation strategies employed to resolve ambiguity in political interviews on "*Politics Today*."
3. assess the effectiveness of the disambiguation strategies used in political interviews on "*Politics Today*."

By examining these elements, this research aims to enhance the understanding of how disambiguation facilitates the communication of complex ideas within Nigerian political discourse. Furthermore, this research will shed light on the broader implications of English usage in the Nigerian political landscape, highlighting the role of language in shaping political communication, governance, public perceptions, and political narratives.

Literature Review

English disambiguation is a key concept in the study of political communication, addressing the ways in which ambiguous language can be clarified and effectively interpreted in discourse. This phenomenon, defined as the process of resolving ambiguity to achieve a clear interpretation, holds noteworthy importance in political interviews where precise messaging is crucial. Horn and Ward (2008) explore the dynamics of disambiguation and its relevance across different levels of discourse, emphasizing how this process can be strategically employed to shape audience perceptions. Yang (2014) posits that through the phenomenon of ambiguity, the categories and causes of ambiguity can be understood well, the efficient method of the disambiguation and application of the English ambiguity can be found, and then we can better

understand and apply correctly the language. In political contexts, disambiguation allows interviewees to navigate complex narratives, thereby facilitating their engagement with varied audience segments while managing public scrutiny.

Political discourse often leverages various rhetorical tools and techniques to foster clarity amidst ambiguity. Charteris-Black (2011) underscores this point noting that lexical disambiguation is instrumental in allowing politicians to appeal to diverse voter bases. Similarly, Leech (1983) highlights the role of pragmatic disambiguation by discussing how contextual factors can influence the clarity of a speaker's intentions. This interplay of context and language serves to reinforce the significance of disambiguation in political rhetoric, framing it as a means for politicians to maneuver through the delicate waters of public opinion without alienating constituents.

While Orwell (1946) criticizes the widespread use of ambiguous language, warning that it often obscures true meanings and misleads the public. Widmaier et al. (2023) take a contrary position: the absence of ambiguity and uncertainty can generate false certainties and excessive risk-taking, thus increasing the likelihood of conflict. This dichotomy highlights the complexity of ambiguity in political discourse, where its interpretation can vary considerably depending on the context.

Moreover, the discourse surrounding ambiguity and disambiguation is not without its critiques. Orwell (1946) cautions against the confusion that can arise from the misuse of ambiguous language, warning that it often misleads the public and undermines democratic discourse. Widmaier et al. (2023) take a contrary position: the absence of ambiguity and uncertainty can generate false certainties and excessive risk-taking, thus increasing the likelihood of conflict. This dichotomy emphasizes the complex nature of disambiguation, where its effects can shift between promoting clarity and fostering confusion, depending on the intent of the speaker and the context of the discussion.

Expanding on this complexity, Hall et al. (1980) elucidates how audience interpretations of messages are shaped by their individual contexts and biases. This perspective underscores the necessity of examining the contextual factors influencing political discourse and the way disambiguation functions within it. Furthermore, in the realm of media studies, Ozyumenko and Larina (2018) argue that the linguistic means of construing or disambiguating ambiguity/uncertainty, is viewed as a strategy of persuasion. They go further to add that we mostly

focus on the semantics of certain groups of words and other textual features and some other tools used in media texts to construe ambiguity, uncertainty and vagueness. The works of (Abdulkadir, 2023) further highlight the implications of disambiguation as a form of manipulative communication, where ambiguity can marginalize opposing viewpoints and create distorted public perceptions.

The impact of visual and contextual factors in shaping disambiguation has been highlighted by Machin and Mayr (2023), who advocate for a multimodal approach that encompasses both verbal and nonverbal elements in political messaging. Furthermore, Friedman (2017) explores cognitive biases in processing ambiguous information, suggesting that politicians often exploit these biases to achieve desired outcomes in communication. This multifaceted understanding of ambiguity and disambiguation extends to framing social movements and political identities, as noted by Benford and Snow (2000), allowing various groups to interpret shared but vague concepts while fostering collective efforts.

Despite the exploration of disambiguation in political communication, a notable gap in the research specifically examining its application within Nigerian political interviews remains. While scholars such as Horn, Charteris-Black, Leech, and others have investigated ambiguity and disambiguation in diverse political contexts, the unique characteristics and implications of disambiguation in Nigerian discourse, particularly in platforms such as "*Politics Today*" on Channels Television, have yet to be addressed. Most existing studies predominantly focus on Western contexts, leaving a significant gap in understanding how disambiguation functions within the socio-political intricacies of Nigeria—a nation rich in linguistic diversity and complexity.

This research aims to fill this gap by investigating the contextual usage and effectiveness of English disambiguation in Nigerian political interviews, specifically on "*Politics Today*." By focusing on this unique context, the study aspires to contribute valuable insights into how disambiguation shapes political narratives, influences public discourse, and manage the complexities of governance in Nigeria.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design with a specific focus on discourse analysis. This approach is particularly suitable for investigating the intricate dynamics of language—specifically disambiguation—within the realm of political interviews, with particular

emphasis on the context of Nigerian political discourse. The intent is to scrutinize how politicians utilize disambiguated English expressions to influence public perceptions and behavior regarding critical societal issues.

Research Population and Sample

The target population for this study comprises Nigerian interviewers and interviewees engaged in political interviews broadcast on television. The data source for this analysis is the program "*Politics Today*" on Channels Television, which serves as the representative sample for this research. The interviewers and interviewees were selected based on their participation in the political dialogue within this prominent television framework, which consistently provides timely coverage of Nigeria's political landscape.

Channels Television stands out among major Nigerian news outlets, especially for its commitment to delivering up-to-date political reporting. "*Politics Today*" is aired daily from 7:00 to 8:00 PM, with an additional slot on Sundays from 8:00 to 9:00 PM, ensuring that both Nigerian and international viewers are kept informed about political developments. The program features a variety of guests from diverse backgrounds, allowing discussions that elucidate both Nigerian and global political contexts.

Data Instrument and Collection

Given that "*Politics Today*" serves as the primary source for this research, recorded broadcasts were utilized to collect data. This methodology was particularly crucial since the interviews were conducted by a third party, not the researcher directly. By leveraging televised interviews, which naturally lend themselves to authentic conversational dynamics, the researcher was able to minimize concerns associated with conducting live interviews. Such recordings provide a rich source of data, capturing the complexities of political discourse as it unfolds.

Data was collected through seven recorded episodes of "*Politics Today*," spanning duration of eight days, from February 17 to February 24, 2025. The research carefully selected only seven episodes for analysing for deeper insights and more meaningful interpretations which will enhance the quality of the findings. For the purpose of this study, verbatim extracts were taken from the full interview transcripts and subjected to thematic analysis. the sample of interviews from which these extracts were drawn is presented and clearly labeled to indicate their source.

The recordings were made using a DSTV Explorer Decoder, equipped with PersonalVideo Recorder (PVR) capabilities for subsequent playback and analysis. Utilizing a DSTV Explorer

Decoder equipped with PVR capabilities ensures high-quality recordings. This technology supports clear audio and visual capture, which is crucial for accurate analysis. The PVR feature allows the researcher to pause, rewind, and replay the recordings. This flexibility is essential for catching subtle details or repeated segments that may be pertinent to the discourse analysis.

The transcriptions of these recordings were completed meticulously within three days, ensuring a verbatim representation of the spoken dialogue, including critical elements such as intonation, pauses, and nuances that contribute to disambiguation efforts.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the transcription data focused on identifying recurring themes and linguistic strategies that exemplify the use, causes, and effects of disambiguation in political discourse. This examination encompassed both the structural elements of language used and the broader contextual factors influencing these interactions. Efforts were made to present findings respectfully and cautiously to protect the reputations of individuals involved while still acknowledging their public roles. Consequently, the identities of interviewers and interviewees have been thoroughly anonymized to ensure confidentiality.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study is constrained by the availability of transcripts and relies on publicly accessible materials, suggesting that the findings may not be easily generalisable outside of the context of Nigerian political interviews. The research focuses exclusively on political interviews featured on "*Politics Today*," thus deliberately excluding other forms of political discourse such as debates, social media interactions, or informal interviews, thereby honing in on a specific aspect of political communication.

Sample Transcript of an Interview

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV 'POLITICS TODAY' ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR MOHAMMED GOSHI (RETIRED ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL DSS)

INTERVIEWER: The DSS is a creation of the Nigerian constitution, and their duties and the roles are spelt out, and it's part of the effort of securing the of ensuring internal securities are right?

INTERVIEWEE 1: sure.

INTERVIEWER: both for VIP operations or both for covert operation, but majorly covert operation, Isn't it?

INTERVIEWEE 1: It is a secret service.

INTERVIEWER: Is it a Secret Service?

INTERVIEWEE 1: it is. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So their jobs are not supposed to be visible. Is that right?

INTERVIEWEE 1: Actually, they are not supposed to be visible.

INTERVIEWER: But give us an understanding, these days, we see the DSS more often. Why, if they are supposed to be secret and covert, why do we see more of them?

INTERVIEWEE 1: Yeah, the overt aspect of the of SSS operations are also there when you have an, a subject before it comes to be covert or overt, you do a lot of things. By the time you go into the covert activities, you have to remain anonymous. You have to be secret. That is why it is covert. But getting to certain levels in covert operation, you cannot help but you must do certain things open, for example, you are following a case, going forward in the case, you discover that if you don't take certain actions, it is going to produce results that are not desirable, and that action that you must take will have to be physical. People have to see you do it. You have to take certain actions to stop it from happening or from getting worse. If it is something that is already going on in that situation, you have to come out open. But by responsibilities, we have the responsibility of protective security. Protective security. You cannot do it under cover. You must be visible. You have to be seen. Of course. If you are covering, for example, the head of state, you give him close body cover six-man formation, four-man formation, two-man formation depending on the occasion and the level of threat, the people covering him are always visible. You see them. The same thing with physical security activities. When you go to a place, access control is conducted by the State Security Service, you have to see them physical there, and those ones are people that you cannot deny.

INTERVIEWER: So the DSS operatives are the ones. When we see the president, the guys who are always in suit and tie, and we see a part of their tummy bulging, and we imagine it's weapon, that is there isn't it?, they are the ones, isn't it?

INTERVIEWEE 1: They are the ones, and they are the ones that takes the bullet for the President, if for any reason, there is any emergency

Results

The Results of Research Objective 1

From the data collected, the following results for Disambiguation in political interviews have been extracted:

Political Pressures and Accountability: Politicians are always under pressure from the electorate and acutely aware of the public scrutiny on them, leading to the use of ambiguous statements to avoid potential backlash. For example, in Interview 1, the *Interviewer* asked: “What is your view and take on what you saw happen today, especially when you can see on National television this evening?” In his response to this question, the *Interviewee* remarked, "It was a major low for politics in Lagos state...." This is a general assertion that avoids specifics regarding politicization.

EXTRACT 1: Interview 1

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR GBADEBO RHODES-VIVOUR (FORMER LP GOVERNORSHIP CANDIDATE LAGOS STATE)

INTERVIEWER: “What is your view...?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “It was a major low for politics...an assault on this assembly...a big shame...taking Lagos politics to a low...”

Similarly, in Interview 2, the *Interviewer* asked: “... what can you say about the turn of events today?” In response, the *Interviewee* stated, "... today is a sad day for me, and indeed, it should be for all democracy loving Nigerians," these remarks simply convey the *Interviewee's* sentiment without addressing the specifics of the event that he is being asked about.

EXTRACT 2: Interview 2

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR FAUD OKI (APC CHIEFTAIN LAGOS STATE)

INTERVIEWER: “...what can you say about the turn of events today?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “Today is a sad day... should be for all democracy loving Nigerians...”

Complex Context of Nigerian Politics: The intricate Nigerian socio-political landscape necessitates the use of disambiguation to avoid committing to specific narratives. In Interview 3, In responding to the *Interviewers* question: “... you have said that members of your party were

killed today. What more can you tell us?” the *Interviewee* mentioned, "... It is quite unfortunate today, we lost six good citizens of this state..." without clarifying the political affiliations of those involved. This can also be seen in Interview 4, the *Interviewer* asked: "... how dangerous is it to want to secure, to put your life on the line, to to work, to secure this country working in the DSS?” The *Interviewee* commented: "... It is a thankless job. It is a difficult job... you put your line in your life on the line to protect this this country..." These responses indicate a reluctance to disclose specific details due to the complexities therein.

EXTRACT 3: Interview 3

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: HON. KOLAPO ALEMI (PDP CHIEFTAIN OSUN STATE)

INTERVIEWEE 2: SEN. AJIBOLA BASHIRU (APC CHIEFTAIN OSUN STATE)

INTERVIEWER: "What more can you tell us?"

INTERVIEWEE 1: "...we lost six good citizens..."

EXTRACT 4: Interview 4

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR MOHAMMED GOSHI (RETIRED ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL DSS)

INTERVIEWER: "How dangerous is it...?"

INTERVIEWEE 1: "It is a thankless job...you put your life on the line to protect..."

Fear of Violent Backlash: The potential for violence in political discourse compels politicians to use ambiguous language to prevent aggravating tensions and inflaming passions. For example, in Interview 5, the *Interviewer* asked the question: "Your party has already said that it will not participate in the election of tomorrow, but earlier the High Court in Ilesha said OSIEC should go ahead and conduct election. Let me get your view on the the order of court? In reply to this question, the *Interviewee* remarked: "This is a judicial rascality. There's a clear court judgment affirming the elected local government officials. There's no vacancy, so you cannot have election" to avoid discussing the sensitive topic of violent confrontations attached to Nigerian local government elections for fear of violent repercussions.

EXTRACT 5: Interview 5

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR REMI OMOWAIYE (FORMER COMMISSIONER OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT OSUN STATE)

INTERVIEWER: “Your party has said it will not participate in the election...what’s your view?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “This is a judicial rascality...there’s no vacancy, so you cannot have election...”

Similarly, In Interview 3, the *Interviewer* asked the question: “Just a moment, members of PDP and APC are up in arms against each other and were falling each other. They’re killing each other, Is that what happened? So, there are casualties on both sides. Is that what happened?” The *Interviewee* responded: “It’s not about casualties on both sides... i learnt of one member and five members of our sons across the state. When several persons were injured, they were the ones who are being harmed.” Here the *Interviewee* is clearly been deliberately ambiguous in his attempt to minimize his party’s culpability in the killing of members of the other party in fear of a violent backlash or retribution.

EXTRACT 6: Interview 3

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: HON. KOLAPO ALEMI (PDP CHIEFTAIN OSUN STATE)

INTERVIEWEE 2: SEN. AJIBOLA BASHIRU (APC CHIEFTAIN OSUN STATE)

INTERVIEWER: “Is that what happened?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “It’s not about casualties on both sides...I learnt of one member and five members...”

Desire to Maintain Party Unity: Politicians often employ ambiguous language to keep their party members aligned, avoiding divisive statements that could lead to further dissent and acrimony among its members. For example, in Interview 3, the *Interviewer* asked: “... i mean, there are allegations that you, members of your party in Osun state are killing PDP members. Why So?” The *Interviewee* commented: “... is it just about power, or is it that people are just mindless? Leave politics out of this?” suggesting a cautious approach to discussing conflicts without implicating party members directly.

EXTRACT 7: Interview 3

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: HON. KOLAPO ALEMI (PDP CHIEFTAIN OSUN STATE)

INTERVIEWEE 2: SEN. AJIBOLA BASHIRU (APC CHIEFTAIN OSUN STATE)

INTERVIEWER: “*There are allegations that you...are killing PDP members. Why So?*”

INTERVIEWEE 2: “*...this is not politics. What happened is carnage...mowed down in cold blood...*”

In Interview 1, the *Interviewer* asked: “... what is your view and take on what you saw happen today, especially when you can see on National television this evening?” The *Interviewee* commented: “... and imagine what they're thinking, seeing all this harassment of her right and armed men coming into the state assembly is a big disgrace, the big disgrace and the new low for our police, for our politics in Lagos state, there isn't any excuse?” the reference to "armed men" in the assembly subtly indicates the internal strife within the APC without naming specific factions.

EXTRACT 8: Interview 1

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR GBADEBO RHODES-VIVOUR (FORMER LP GOVERNORSHIP CANDIDATE LAGOS STATE)

INTERVIEWER: “*What is your view...especially when you can see on National television this evening?*”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “*It was a major low for politics in Lagos state...an assault on this very assembly...a big shame...an attempt...to take the politics of Lagos state to a new low...allegations...of 17 billion...still in the air...big disgrace...setting a dangerous precedent...*”

Message Control and Audience Engagement: Politicians might introduce ambiguity to control messages and engage audiences without revealing vulnerabilities. For example, in Interview 7, the strategic language employed by the interviewee avoids concrete commitments, inviting generalized interpretations while fostering engagement as seen below when the *Interviewer* asked: “... 7 billion naira allegedly spent on consultancy. And this is alleged to have, and it does look like nothing is happening?” The *Interviewee* in his remarks stated: “... I'm trying to, you know, I'm trying to avoid some things tonight. I don't want to, you know, ruffle feather so

much, but I'm struggling here, Nigeria today is, is dining with poverty, with over 40% in multi-dimensional poverty....”

EXTRACT 9: Interview 7

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR KOLAWOLE JOHNSON (DATA POLICY AND POLITICAL ANALYST)

INTERVIEWER: “...allegations of about 7 billion naira spent on consultancy...?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “...I'm trying to avoid some things...Nigeria today is...dining with poverty...this kind of allegation will be...for an agency of government...we have a pandemic of corruption...”

Another incident of message control and audience engagement is seen in Interview 2 where in response to the *Interviewer's* question: “... what can you say about the turn of events today?” the *Interviewees* emotionally charged statement, “... I did say that in the event we refuse to learn from history, that we may be consumed by it. And I think today, it's exactly the beginning of us possibly being consumed by the oligarch....” aims to evoke reflection without specifying a particular historical context.

EXTRACT 10: Interview 2

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR FAUD OKI (APC CHIEFTAIN LAGOS STATE)

INTERVIEWER: “What can you say about the turn of events today?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “Today is a sad day...we refuse to learn from history...may be consumed by the oligarch...”

The Results of Research Objective 2

The data gathered for this research provides the following results as disambiguation strategies employed to resolve ambiguity in political interviews:

Use of Clarifying Follow-Up Questions: Interviewers often employ follow-up questions to solicit clarity from ambiguous statements made by politicians during political interviews. In Interview 1, the *Interviewee* asked: “... what is your view and take on what you saw happen today....?” After the *Interviewee's* vague response, the *interviewer* used a clarifying follow-up

question and further asked: “Do you have your worry about how this will impact on governance in the state?” prompting a clearer and disambiguated response from the *Interviewee*.

EXTRACT 11: Interview 1

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR GBADEBO RHODES-VIVOUR (FORMER LP GOVERNORSHIP CANDIDATE LAGOS STATE)

INTERVIEWER: “Do you have your worry about how this will impact on governance...?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “It was a major low for politics...an assault on the assembly...disgraceful...setting a dangerous precedent...Lagos state has gone past that...”

Similarly in Interview 5, the *Interviewer* inquired if the *Interviewee*’s party would participate in the election to which he repeatedly commented in his response that there was “No vacancy”. The *Interviewer* used a follow-up question: “... but your party says it will not participate in that election. Is there any justification for that?” this follow-up question by the *Interviewer* into the court’s ruling helped the *Interviewee* clarify the ambiguity concerning the “no vacancy” statement he made.

EXTRACT 12: Interview 5

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR REMI OMOWAIYE (FORMER COMMISSIONER OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT OSUN STATE)

INTERVIEWER: “...earlier the High Court in Ilesha said OSIEC should go ahead and conduct election...let me get your view on the order of court?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “...this is a judicial rascality...there's no vacancy...clear judgment...valid court judgment...no need for election...”

Contextual References: Politicians use contextual references to enhance their political arguments in their efforts to clarify any ambiguity. For example, in Interview 6, when queried on whether he was under pressure: “... that in fact, more pressure will be on your head. Do you feel that pressure?” The *Interviewee* notes, “... In 2021 I was sworn in as deputy governor, and today

as governor, they are two different experiences... I have learned to share the burden....” suggesting he has learnt from a past experience and will seek collaboration and fostering public trust.

EXTRACT 13: Interview 6

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: GOVERNOR LUCKY AYEDATIWA (EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR ONDO STATE)

INTERVIEWER: “Do you feel that pressure?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “...this is not the first time I'll be taking...the whole burden is upon my shoulder...I have learned to share the burden...many expect much...”

In Interview 7, the *Interviewer* asked: “... Census. How state of Africa, can we afford a census?” the interviewee in his response discusses contextual factors impacting census data, articulating his points while leaving room for interpretation:

Affordability? It's, you know, one thing do we need Census data? It's another so, you weigh, you weigh, you weigh your options. If you look, of course, you know that you need data in planning, and without adequate data, you can't even churn out sound policy instrument that will drive development, you know, in the country. So, for me, if we're looking at the cost, we may not do the needful. last year, some of us said no, that the country was not ripe. I mean, was not good enough in terms of our standing financially for the Census.

EXTRACT: 14: Interview 7

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR KOLAWOLE JOHNSON (DATA POLICY AND POLITICAL ANALYST)

INTERVIEWER: “Can we afford a census?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “...weigh your options...need data in planning...if we're looking at the cost...states do not need census...corruption process in procurement...we need value for money...”

Emotional Appeals: Emotional language is used to establish an emotional connection with the audience and clarify positions and ultimately gain the sympathy and support of the audience. In Interview 3, the *Interviewer* asked: "... I mean, there are allegations that you, members of your party in Osun state are killing PDP members. Why So?" The *Interviewee* lamented: "... I feel seriously emotional. I am in serious mourning and I don't know how those who coordinate are coordinated that attempt how they will be feeling now, it's just enough to say you are dropping, six people were killed. These are live people...." This statement elicits sympathy while addressing violence against APC members without detailing accountability.

EXTRACT 15: Interview 3

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV 'POLITICS TODAY' ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: HON. KOLAPO ALEMI (PDP CHIEFTAIN OSUN STATE)

INTERVIEWEE 2: SEN. AJIBOLA BASHIRU (APC CHIEFTAIN OSUN STATE)

INTERVIEWER: "... there are allegations that you...are killing PDP members. Why?"

INTERVIEWEE 2: "What happened in Osun today is carnage...our chairman...was cut down...killed in cold blood...by thugs of the People's Democratic Party...I have video evidence...one of our members was mauled...these are facts...is it just about power...how will a governor feel comfortable unleashing thugs...this has gone beyond..."

Similarly In Interview 2, when the *Interviewer* asked: "... what can you say about the turn of events today?" The *Interviewee* commented:

I work at the dark days of Nigeria under the military junta. I looked at what a few of us did, putting our lives on the line for us to win back democracy, unfortunately, today is a sad day... in the event we refuse to learn from history, that we may be consumed by it. And I think today, it's exactly the beginning of us possibly being consumed by the oligarch. And I recall what Adolf Hitler said in 1944 precisely, end of November. And he said, this is the beginning of the end, and there won't be any end until the end of the beginning. The *Interviewee* referenced the past, leveraging historical sentiment to draw parallels with current events to evoke emotional appeal.

EXTRACT 16: Interview 2

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV 'POLITICS TODAY' ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR FAOUD OKI (APC CHIEFTAIN LAGOS STATE)

INTERVIEWER: “...what can you say about the turn of events today?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “...today is a sad day...I worked during the dark days of Nigeria...unfortunately, today is a sad day...if we refuse to learn from history...today is the beginning of us possibly being consumed by the oligarch...there won't be any end until the end of the beginning...”

Use of Rhetorical Questions: Rhetorical questions are employed to provoke thought while subtly steering the conversation towards the direction of the issues that need disambiguation. This instance can be seen in Interview 1, the *Interviewer* asked: “... Do you have your worry about how this will impact on governance in the state?” to this question, the *Interviewee* commented:

And yes, it's an in-house party situation, but whoever is behind this should solve this problem in a civilized fashion, right? Because the State Assembly must owe its loyalty to the constituents, to their respective constituents, not to a Godfather, not to any particular one person's political interest, right?”

This response prompted the *Interviewer* to seek further clarification and asked the rhetorical question: “Do you imagine that this is a political godfatherism being played to the gallery or what exactly do you think is playing out here? The *Interviewer's* inquiry regarding political godfatherism invites the *Interviewee* to address underlying tensions and clarifying his earlier statement.

EXTRACT 17: Interview 1

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR GBADEBO RHODES-VIVOUR (FORMER LP GOVERNORSHIP CANDIDATE LAGOS STATE)

INTERVIEWER: “What is your view...?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “It was a major low for politics in Lagos...today was an assault on this assembly...it should be condemned...setting a dangerous precedent...it's a big disgrace...the EFCC has not investigated...we must find people behind this...Lagos state has gone past that...hundreds of years ago...”

INTERVIEWER: “Do you have your worry about how this will impact governance?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “Certainly...distracted by armed men...the State Assembly must owe

its loyalty to the constituents...not to a Godfather...there are ways to solve this problem...storming the state assembly with armed men is disgraceful..."

INTERVIEWEE 1: *"I think the APC has normalized using intimidation and force...what we saw today was unacceptable...an attempt to intimidate the speaker..."*

In Interview 4, the question of the nature and job role of the DSS was asked by the *Interviewer*: "Is it a Secret Service?" The *Interviewee* responded: "it is. Yeah." Seeking further clarification to this answer, the *Interviewer* asked a rhetorical question: "So their jobs are not supposed to be visible. Is that right?"

EXTRACT 18: Interview 4

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV 'POLITICS TODAY' ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR MOHAMMED GOSHI (RETIRED ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL DSS)

INTERVIEWER: *"Is it a Secret Service?"*

INTERVIEWEE 1: *"It is. Yeah."*

INTERVIEWER: *"So their jobs are not supposed to be visible, right?"*

INTERVIEWEE 1: *"Actually, they are not supposed to be visible...the overt aspect...comes into play...protective security...you have to be seen..."*

The Results of Research Objective 3

The results extracted from the data collected for this study are presented below:

Effectiveness of the Use of Clarifying Follow-Up Questions: Encourages Specificity: Follow-up questions prompt interviewees to clarify their ambiguous statements, which helps to elicit more precise information. This can lead to clearer communication and assists the audience in understanding the politician's true stance.

Enhances Accountability: By asking for clarification, interviewers hold politicians accountable for their vague responses. This process can pressure interviewees to articulate their positions more accurately, encouraging responsible communication.

Facilitates Deeper Dialogue: This approach fosters a more in-depth conversation by allowing interviewers to examine layers of meaning, thereby enriching the discourse and enabling a subtler examination of political issues.

Example from Interview 1: After the Interviewee's vague response, the *Interviewer* asked, “Do you have your worry about how this will impact on governance in the state?” This follow-up question prompted the *Interviewee* to focus on the implications of his earlier statement, leading to a clearer understanding of his concerns regarding governance.

EXTRACT 19: Interview 1

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR GBADEBO RHODES-VIVOUR (FORMER LP GOVERNORSHIP CANDIDATE LAGOS STATE)

INTERVIEWER: “Do you have your worry about how this will impact on governance in the state?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “Oh! certainly...distracted by armed men storming the state assembly...it must be to the constituents...not to a Godfather...should solve this problem in a civilized fashion...”

Example from Interview 5: The *Interviewer* asked, “... but your party says it will not participate in that election. Is there any justification for that?” This clarifying question encouraged the *Interviewee* to clarify the “no vacancy” statement, offering the audience a clearer context for the party’s position.

EXTRACT 20: Interview 5

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR REMI OMOWAIYE (FORMER COMMISSIONER OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT OSUN STATE)

INTERVIEWER: “... but your party says it will not participate in that election. Is there any justification for that?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “Yes, because there's no vacancy...valid court of appeal judgment...no need for election...”

Effectiveness of the Use of Contextual References Strengthens Credibility: When politicians refer to relevant past experiences or contextual factors, it lends credibility to their

statements and positions. This strategy helps audiences understand why a politician thinks or feels a certain way based on historical context.

Promotes Relatability: By situating their answers within a broader context, politicians can connect emotionally with the audience. This relatability enhances public engagement and empathy, making their argument more persuasive.

Offers Multi-Dimensional Perspective: Contextual references allow interviewees to present their arguments from various angles, which can help clarify complex issues and reveal the factors influencing their political decisions.

Example from Interview 6: The *Interviewee* noted, “... In 2021 I was sworn in as deputy governor, and today as governor, they are two different experiences...” Here, the contextual reference helped clarify the *Interviewee*’s understanding of pressure and the importance of experience in governance, thus providing more depth to his argument.

EXTRACT 21: Interview 6

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: GOVERNOR LUCKY AYEDATIWA (EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR ONDO STATE)

INTERVIEWER: Your Excellency...more pressure will be on your head. Do you feel that pressure?

INTERVIEWEE 1: “... In 2021 I was sworn in as deputy governor, and today as governor, they are two different experiences...”

Example from Interview 7: The *Interviewee*’s response, “Affordability? It's, you know, one thing do we need Census data? It's another...” indicates the complexity of the question regarding the census. By discussing the need for data in planning, the *Interviewee* clarified the broader implications of the census beyond just financial constraints.

EXTRACT 22: Interview 7

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR KOLAWOLE JOHNSON (DATA POLICY AND POLITICAL ANALYST)

INTERVIEWER: Census. How state of Africa, can we afford a census

INTERVIEWEE 1: “affordability? It's...one thing do we need Census data?...to plan effectively...”

Effectiveness of the Use of Emotional Appeals: Elicits Sympathy and Support: Emotional language can effectively resonate with audiences, fostering a sense of compassion and understanding. Politicians can use this tactic to gain public support for their positions or policies. Humanizes Political Discourse: By expressing emotions, interviewees emphasize their humanity, making them relatable to constituents. This can soften criticism and create a more favorable public image.

Shifts Focus: Emotional appeals can redirect attention from contentious political issues to the emotional stakes involved, helping politicians frame issues in a way that resonates with people's values and feelings, rather than raw facts.

Example from Interview 3: The *Interviewee* stated, “... I feel seriously emotional. I am in serious mourning...” This emotional appeal framed the violence against his party members in a deeply personal context, eliciting sympathy from the audience and drawing attention to the human cost of political conflict.

EXTRACT 23: Interview 3

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: HON. KOLAPO ALEMI (PDP CHIEFTAIN OSUN STATE)

INTERVIEWEE 2: SEN. AJIBOLA BASHIRU (APC CHIEFTAIN OSUN STATE)

INTERVIEWER: “...there are allegations that you, members of your party in Osun state are killing PDP members. Why So?”

INTERVIEWEE 2: “...I feel seriously emotional...I am in serious mourning...our chairman...was cut down in his prime...what happened in Osun today is carnage...”

Example from Interview 2: When the *Interviewee* referenced his experiences during the military junta, saying, “... unfortunately, today is a sad day...” and leveraged historical sentiment, he connected past struggles with current political tensions, evoking a strong emotional response from the audience and emphasizing the stakes involved.

EXTRACT 24: Interview 2

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR FAOUD OKI (APC CHIEFTAIN LAGOS STATE)

INTERVIEWER: *Mister Oki, what can you say about the turn of events today?*

INTERVIEWEE 1: *Good evening Seun today is a sad day for me, and indeed, it should be for all democracy loving Nigerians. I work at the dark days of Nigeria under the military junta... unfortunately...that in the event we refuse to learn from history, that we may be consumed by it. And I think today, it's exactly the beginning of us possibly being consumed by the oligarch”.*

Effectiveness of the Use of Rhetorical Questions: Stimulates Engagement: Rhetorical questions provoke thought and invite the audience to engage more deeply with the subject matter. They can challenge assumptions or prompt further reflection on complex political issues.

Guides Direction of Discussion: By steering the conversation through rhetorical questioning, interviewers can focus attention on key themes or issues that require clarification, nudging interviewees toward addressing important points without explicitly forcing them to do so.

Creates Space for Disambiguation: Rhetorical questions can create the opportunity for nuanced discussion, allowing interviewees to elaborate on important topics that may require disambiguation without directly assigning blame or making accusations.

Example from Interview 1: The *Interviewer* asked, “Do you imagine that this is a political godfatherism being played to the gallery or what exactly do you think is playing out here?” This rhetorical question invited the *Interviewee* to elaborate on the issues of political influence without directly accusing anyone, effectively prompting a deeper exploration of the topic.

EXTRACT 25: Interview 1

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR GBADEBO RHODES-VIVOUR (FORMER LP GOVERNORSHIP CANDIDATE LAGOS STATE)

INTERVIEWER: *Do you imagine that this is a political godfatherism being played to the gallery or what exactly do you think is playing out here?*

INTERVIEWEE 1: *I think that the APC has sort of normalized this idea of using intimidation and force to get their way, and that is what we saw today, an attempt to intimidate this, the speaker to resign and step aside by using armed men and using threats of violence. That's what we saw today, and that's unacceptable.*

Example from Interview 4: The *Interviewer* asked, “So their jobs are not supposed to be visible. Is that right?” This rhetorical question encouraged the *Interviewee* to clarify the role of the DSS without requiring a direct admission or confrontation, allowing for a more detailed discussion.

EXTRACT 26: Interview 4

INTERVIEWER: SEUN OKINBALOYE (CHANNELS TV ‘POLITICS TODAY’ ANCHOR)

INTERVIEWEE 1: MR MOHAMMED GOSHI (RETIRED ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL DSS)

INTERVIEWER: “So their jobs are not supposed to be visible. Is that right?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “Actually, they are not supposed to be visible...”

INTERVIEWER: “...Why do we see more of them?”

INTERVIEWEE 1: “...certain actions...must do certain things open...”

Discussion

The findings of this research on English disambiguation in Nigerian political interviews reveal significant insights into how ambiguity is addressed and clarified in political discourse. The results affirm the importance of disambiguation as a critical mechanism through which politicians engage with complex narratives, enabling them to tailor their messages for diverse audience segments. This aligns with Horn Ward' (2008) notion that disambiguation plays a pivotal role in shaping audience perceptions. The interviews analyzed demonstrate how political figures strategically employ disambiguation techniques to manage the information they convey, thus facilitating clearer communication amid the inherent ambiguities of political language.

Throughout the interviews, the use of clarifying follow-up questions emerged as a vital strategy in the disambiguation process. Interviewers often pressed for clarification on vague statements, prompting politicians to articulate their positions with more precision. For example, in Interview 5, a follow-up query regarding the party's stance helped clarify the ambiguous notion of “no vacancy,” showcasing how such engagements can bridge the gap created by vague language. This supports Charteris-Black's (2011) assertion that lexical disambiguation is essential for appealing to diverse voter bases, as candid responses to specific inquiries enhance public understanding and trust.

Contextual references also played a crucial role in disambiguating complex political messages. In Interviews 6 and 7, politicians effectively contextualized their responses, illustrating how past experiences and situational factors impact their current viewpoints. This element of

pragmatics, as discussed by Leech (1983), served to anchor theoretical claims in more relatable narratives, thereby reinforcing the legitimacy of their statements. The findings underscore the idea that disambiguation is not merely about defining terms or phrases; it is inherently linked to the broader context in which political communication occurs, as emphasized by Hall et al. (1980).

The emotional dimensions of political discourse were particularly salient in this research. Interviewees frequently tapped into emotional appeals to establish connections with their audience, fostering empathetic understanding while addressing controversial topics. For instance, Interview 3 provided insight into the emotional toll of political violence, using poignant language that invited sympathy and support. This strategy reflects the dual potential of ambiguity in political communication; while it can promote clarity, it can also foster emotional resonance that can obscure critical facts. This duality is echoed in Widmaier et al's. (2023) analysis of the rhetoric of ambiguity, illustrating how emotional framing can either clarify or complicate political messaging.

Rhetorical questions were also a notable tool in the interviews, often employed to nudge interviewees toward greater clarity without directly confronting them. The use of rhetorical inquiries enabled the conversation to flow toward potential interpretations and deeper insights, serving as an effective mechanism for framing political narratives. The strategic positioning of such questions aligns with the argument put forth by Ozyumenko Larina (2018) regarding the importance of media literacy in interpreting complex political messages, underscoring the need for audiences to critically engage with the content presented to them.

However, despite these advancements in understanding English disambiguation within the context of Nigerian political interviews, the findings also suggest that the use of ambiguous language can have manipulative implications. As noted by Abdulkadir (2023), ambiguity can be wielded as a tool for marginalizing opposing views, allowing politicians to control the narrative in a manner that skews public perceptions. This manipulation further complicates the disambiguation process, as it invites speculation and can lead to misunderstandings that may affect public trust and engagement.

Moreover, the interplay of visual and contextual factors highlighted in the research by Machin Mayr (2012) is critical in this discussion. The analysis revealed that the multimodal nature of political communication enriches the disambiguation process by allowing political figures to leverage both verbal and nonverbal cues to clarify their messages. As the audience engages with

these elements, the potential for enhanced understanding grows, emphasizing that disambiguation in political language is as much about visuals as it is about words.

In conclusion, this research on English disambiguation in Nigerian political interviews outlines the intricacies of how ambiguous language can be navigated and clarified. The strategies employed by politicians, such as follow-up questioning, contextualization, emotional appeals, and rhetorical questioning, illustrate the multifaceted nature of political discourse. These findings not only reinforce existing literature on disambiguation but also contribute a unique perspective on the specific challenges and opportunities present in the Nigerian context. By highlighting the vital role of disambiguation in shaping political narratives and influencing public discourse, this study lays the groundwork for further exploration of communication dynamics within Nigeria's rich linguistic and political landscape. Future research could expand upon these insights by examining the nuances of disambiguation across various platforms, thereby enhancing our understanding of its implications in contemporary political communication.

Conclusion

The study of English disambiguation in political interviews, particularly within the context of *"Politics Today"* on Channels Television, contributes significantly to understanding the dynamics of communication in Nigerian political discourse. Through the meticulous analysis of how ambiguity is managed, clarified, and strategically employed by politicians, this research has highlighted the critical role that effective communication plays in shaping public opinion and influencing political narratives.

The findings reveal that disambiguation is not merely an academic concern but a practical necessity in the realm of political communication. Politicians, acutely aware of the diverse and often contentious audiences they must engage, rely on various strategies—such as clarifying follow-up questions, contextual references, emotional appeals, and rhetorical questioning—to enhance the clarity and relatability of their messages. These strategies serve as vital tools in ensuring that complex ideas are accessible while simultaneously managing the potential pitfalls of ambiguity that could compromise their public image or party unity.

Furthermore, this research underscores the tension inherent in the use of ambiguous language. While it can facilitate engagement and empathy, particularly through emotional framing, it also harbors the potential for manipulation and misunderstanding. As the study shows, political figures may deliberately utilize ambiguity to obscure accountability or to side-step sensitive

topics, which can amplify public mistrust and hinder democratic discourse. This duality highlights the urgent need for media literacy among audiences, emphasizing the importance of critical engagement with political messaging.

Importantly, this research responds to a significant gap in the existing literature on disambiguation, particularly within the Nigerian context. Given the country's rich linguistic diversity and complex socio-political landscape, understanding the unique factors that influence political communication is essential. As the analyses demonstrate, the interactions between language, context, and audience perception are subtle and multifaceted, requiring further exploration.

These findings suggest that future research to be conducted to examine the broader implications of disambiguation strategies on political engagement and accountability in Nigeria. Comparative studies across different media platforms and political contexts could enhance our understanding of how disambiguation operates globally, offering insights into the universal complexities of political communication. Ultimately, this study reaffirms that clarity in language is not only a vehicle for effective governance but a cornerstone of democratic integrity, underscoring the profound impact of disambiguation on the political landscape.

References

- Abdulkadir, A. U. (2023). A critical discourse analysis of selected political interviews in Nigerian news media. *Journal of Languages, Linguistics and Literary Studies*, 3(2), 47–61. <https://doi.org/10.57040/jllls.v3i2.432>
- Arakelyan, A. (2009). Metaphor in Political Discourse. *Armenian Folia Anglistika*, 5(1-2 (6)), 72–77. <https://doi.org/10.46991/afa/2009.5.1-2.072>
- Bauer, M., & Zirker, A. (2022). *Political Obfuscation and Literary Ambiguity: Levelling (up) from Boris Johnson to William Shakespeare*. 613–630. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41244-022-00271-1>
- Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (2000). Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26(August 2000), 611–639. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.26.1.611>
- Carnap, R., & Morris, C. W. (1938). *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science Editor-in-chief Otto Neurath. I–II*.
- Charteris-Black, J. (2011). *The Language of Political Communication: Politics and Advocacy*. Routledge.
- Friedman, H. H. (2017). Cognitive Biases that Interfere with Critical Thinking and Scientific Reasoning: A Course Module. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, July. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2958800>
- Habiburahman, R., & Abdul Rahman, S. (2024). The Power of Language: Exploring the Role of Lanugage in Politics. *International Journal of Research and Innovation In Social Science (IJRISS)*, VIII(VIII), 11. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS>
- Hall, S., Hobson, D., Lowe, A., & Willis, P. (1980). *Culture, Media, Language* (S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe, & P. Willis (Eds.)). Routledge.
- Horn, L., & Ward, G. (Eds.). (2008). *The Handbook of Pragmatics*. Wiley.
- Ilyosovna, N. A. (2024). Importance of the English Language in Today's World. *International Journal of English Learning & Teaching Skills*, 6(2), 22–24. <https://doi.org/10.15864/ijelts.6205>
- Leech, G. (1981). *Semantics: The Study of Meaning* (Second). Penguin Books.
- Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of Pragmatics*. Longman.
- Machin, D., & Mayr, A. (2012). How To Do Critical Discourse Analysis A Multimodal

- Introduction Presenting Speech and Speakers: Quoting Verbs. *SAGE Publications Ltd.*
- Machin, D., & Mayr, A. (2023). *How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Introduction* (2nd, Illustr ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Miller, G. A. (1995). WordNet: A Lexical Database for English. *Communications of the ACM*, 38(11), 39–41. <https://doi.org/10.1145/219717.219748>
- Orwell, G. (1946). Politics and the English Language. *Propaganda*, 423–437. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-23769-2_19
- Ozyumenko, V., & Larina, T. (2018). Persuasion Strategies in Media Discourse about Russia: Linguistic Ambiguity and Uncertainty. *EDULEARN18 Proceedings*, 1(May), 1626–1633. <https://doi.org/10.21125/edulearn.2018.0487>
- Saussure, F. De, Sechehaye, A., & Riedlinger, A. (1966). *Course In General Linguistics* (W. Baskin (Ed.)). McGraw-Hill.
- Taubaldiyev, M., Kulmanov, S., Amirbekova, A., Azimkhan, Y., Zhonkeshov, B., Utemissova, G., & Ospanov, Y. (2024). Terminology In Political Discourse as A Means of Language Representation of The Image of The Country. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 10(1), 186–198. <https://doi.org/10.32601/ejal.10117>
- Widdowson, H. G. (2004). *Text , Context , Pretext*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Widmaier, W., Elliot, L., Davies, M., & Hamilton-Hart, N. (2023). Diplomacy and Ambiguity: Constructing Interests in Cooperation. *Asia Policy*, 18(4), 1–70.
- Yang, L. (2014). The Disambiguation and Application of the English Syntactic Ambiguity. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Education, Language, Art and Intercultural Communication*, 3(Icelandic), 329–333. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icelaic-14.2014.83>
- Politics Today*. (2025, February 17-25). Channels Television.

Appendix: Key to Linguistic Elements

1. **Ellipsis (...):** Indicates omitted text to enhance brevity while retaining essential meaning. Used to condense lengthy responses into key points.
2. **Quotation Marks (""):** Used to denote the direct speech of interviewees, maintaining the authenticity of their statements and perspectives.
3. **Bold Text:** Highlights key phrases or terms for emphasis, drawing attention to important concepts within the extracts.
4. **Colon (:):** Introduces a statement or elaboration following an identifier (e.g., speaker's name), clarifying who is speaking.
5. **Acronyms (e.g., PDP, APC):** Abbreviations for political parties mentioned in the interviews, allowing for concise references to commonly known entities.
6. **Parentheses (():** Provides additional context or clarification for statements, such as the role of the speaker or specific details relevant to their remarks.
7. **Dashes (—):** Used to denote abrupt shifts in thought or interruptions in dialogue, reflecting the natural flow of spoken language.
8. **Capitals for Emphasis:** Certain words or phrases may be capitalized to emphasize urgency or significance within the context of the dialogue (e.g., "CARNAGE").
9. **Inconsistent Verb Tense:** Indicates the interviewees' emotional state or urgency; conversational speech may shift to present tense for immediacy.
10. **Contextual References:** Understood references to ongoing political situations, events, or previous statements that provide background without needing explicit details.