

Contextualising “Change” Slogan in Nigerian Political Discourse

OGUNJOBI, Olumide Samuel

Department of Mass Communication
Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

LIMAN, Alhaji Musa, PhD

Department of Mass Communication
University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

ADEYEMO, Julius Abioye, PhD

Department of Public Relations and Advertising
School of Communication, Lagos State University, Lagos, Nigeria

Abstract

The meaning of “change” in different discourses presents different meanings hinged on the context in which the word “change” is being used. In this study “change” as a slogan was crucially analysed concerning President Muhammadu Buhari and its deployment in select presidential and religious addresses. Thus, the researchers analysed four (4) presidential speeches of President Muhammadu Buhari, employed a contextual method of analysis and theoretically hinged on critical discourse analysis. The findings showed that the use of the change slogan in Nigerian political discourse is very common; yet, change does not exist in itself. It is always tied to key economic issues, which, in the Nigerian case, encompasses insecurity, insurgency and petroleum scarcity. Also, from the speeches analysed, it was seen that while Muhammadu Buhari presented himself as an agent of “change” in his 2014 Declaration Speech, employing linguistic forms of positive nomination and predication to describe himself and his party as “transparent” and “credible, he criticised his opponent with negative formations of the same strategies: “unthinking government” and “oppressive.” The findings also showed that while the incumbent government was perceived to have accrued a high rate of corruption and misappropriation of funds, the media were used to prime President Buhari using his policy of War Against Indiscipline (WAI). The researchers concluded that political slogans are not confined to the domain of politics and the analysis is the determination of the new government to strengthen foreign relations and policies, strengthen democracy, fight corruption and insecurity and improve the power sector and economic sector of the country which some are yet to be affected.

Keywords: Slogan, Political Discourse, Critical Discourse. Muhammadu Buhari, Contextualisation