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FROM OPPOSITION FIREBRAND TO GOVERNMENT APOLOGIST: A PRAGMA-DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF DANIEL BWALA'S TELEVISED INTERVIEW AND THE POLITICS OF DISCURSIVE REVERSAL IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Political interviews function as key arenas where ideological narratives, institutional legitimacy, and public accountability are negotiated. This article examines the discursive strategies deployed by Nigerian presidential media adviser Daniel Bwala during a televised interview on Al Jazeera's Head to Head programme hosted by Mehdi Hasan. The interview gained international attention after the interviewer confronted Bwala with his previous public statements accusing President Bola Tinubu of corruption, electoral manipulation, and criminal conduct—statements Bwala denied or reframed after joining the administration. Using a combined framework of critical discourse analysis, speech-act pragmatics, and pragma-dialectical argumentation theory, this study investigates how political actors manage discursive contradictions when confronted with archival evidence of prior claims. Through micro-linguistic analysis of 15 excerpts from the interview, the study examines deixis, modality, presupposition, and rhetorical legitimization strategies. The findings reveal a pattern of strategic denial, contextual reframing, discursive amnesia, and moral repositioning, demonstrating how political elites reconstruct previous speech acts to align with shifting political loyalties. These strategies are interpreted within the broader culture of Nigerian political communication, where ideological consistency is often subordinated to pragmatic political survival. The article concludes that the interview illustrates a growing phenomenon of discursive opportunism in contemporary Nigerian politics, where rhetorical flexibility replaces principled political communication, contributing to the erosion of democratic accountability.

Keywords: Political discourse, critical discourse analysis, pragma-discourse analysis discursive reversal, political denial, elite defection, discursive opportunism, deixis, modality, political accountability

Introduction

Political interviews are institutional spaces where public officials must justify policies, defend reputations, and negotiate contested narratives. In media democracies, such interactions are central to democratic accountability because they subject political actors to public scrutiny. The interview analysed in this article features Nigerian presidential adviser Daniel Bwala, who appeared on the programme *Head to Head* hosted by Mehdi Hasan. The episode examined the performance of Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the governing All Progressives Congress. During the interview, Hasan confronted Bwala with archival clips from 2023 in which Bwala had accused Tinubu of corruption, links to criminal networks, and attempts to manipulate elections. However, Bwala repeatedly denied making these statements or reframed them as partisan rhetoric, arguing that “the job of opposition is to oppose.” This episode provides a compelling case for examining discursive contradiction and rhetorical repositioning in political communication.

The article addresses three research questions:

1. How does the interviewee manage contradictions between past and present political statements?
2. What micro-linguistic strategies are used to deny or reinterpret previous claims?
3. What do these discursive practices reveal about Nigerian political culture?

Political Context

Elite Defection and Discursive Reversal

Nigeria’s political system is characterized by frequent elite defections between parties. Political actors often move from opposition to government positions while maintaining public prominence. Before joining the Tinubu administration, Daniel Bwala served as a spokesperson for the presidential campaign of opposition candidate Atiku Abubakar. During that period, he publicly criticized Tinubu’s political record. After his defection to the ruling party, however, Bwala became a senior adviser tasked with defending the same administration he had previously condemned. This phenomenon is not unique to Bwala. Nigerian politics has historically witnessed similar rhetorical reversals among political spokespersons. The discursive tensions observed in the interview must be situated within the broader political culture of Nigeria, where elite defection between rival political formations has become a recurring feature of democratic practice. Since the transition to civilian rule in 1999, Nigerian political elites have frequently shifted allegiances between parties, often with minimal ideological justification. Such defections are typically accompanied by rhetorical repositioning in which previously articulated criticisms are either reframed, denied, or strategically forgotten. This phenomenon produces what may be described as discursive reversal—the reconfiguration of prior speech acts in order to align with new political loyalties.

In the Nigerian political environment, party affiliation is often less a reflection of ideological commitment than of strategic political calculation. Scholars of African political communication have noted that elite mobility across parties frequently generates significant discursive contradictions, particularly when political actors who previously served as critics of a government subsequently assume positions within that same administration. Under such circumstances, earlier statements—often delivered

with emphatic moral certainty—must be reconciled with new obligations of loyalty and defence. The result is a rhetorical environment in which political communication becomes characterised by discursive elasticity, enabling actors to reinterpret past utterances in ways that minimise reputational damage while legitimising their new roles.

The interview analysed in this study exemplifies this phenomenon. Prior to his alignment with the ruling administration, the interviewee had served as a prominent spokesperson for an opposition presidential campaign. During that period, his public commentary reportedly included severe criticisms of the political record and personal integrity of the incumbent president. However, following his transition into government service, his communicative role shifted dramatically: from adversarial critic to institutional defender. The interview thus becomes a discursive arena in which these conflicting rhetorical identities collide. The interviewer’s strategy of presenting archival footage of earlier statements introduces a powerful element of discursive accountability, forcing the interviewee to confront the gap between past accusations and present defence. Within this interactional context, the interviewee deploys a range of rhetorical manoeuvres designed to manage the tension between these competing discursive identities. One prominent strategy involves categorical denial; whereby previously documented statements are rejected outright. Another involves contextual reframing, in which earlier criticisms are reinterpreted as routine partisan rhetoric typical of opposition politics. By redefining earlier accusations as part of the performative obligations of opposition discourse, the speaker attempts to neutralise their evidential force. This move transforms what originally appeared as factual claims into mere expressions of political contestation.

Such rhetorical manoeuvres reveal a deeper structural characteristic of Nigerian political communication: the relative absence of sustained ideological commitment within elite political discourse. Political actors frequently justify defections by invoking narratives of national interest, political maturity, or institutional responsibility. However, these justifications rarely engage substantively with the contradictions between previous and current positions. Instead, the contradictions themselves are often managed through discursive techniques such as selective memory, strategic ambiguity, and appeals to political pragmatism. The concept of discursive amnesia is particularly relevant here. Discursive amnesia refers to the deliberate or unconscious suppression of earlier statements that conflict with present political alignments. In media interviews, this strategy often manifests through repeated denials or through the use of vague deictic expressions that obscure the precise content of earlier claims. By refusing to acknowledge the specific wording of previous accusations, speakers create interpretive uncertainty that weakens the interviewer’s attempt to establish inconsistency.

Closely related to discursive amnesia is the phenomenon of brazen contradiction, a communicative practice in which political actors openly contradict previously documented statements without offering a detailed explanation for the reversal. Rather than attempting to reconcile the two positions logically, the speaker relies on rhetorical confidence and institutional authority to assert the new position as the legitimate one. In contexts where political memory is fragmented and public discourse is highly polarised, such contradictions may not necessarily produce significant reputational consequences. The persistence of this communicative

pattern reflects broader institutional dynamics within Nigerian politics. Political parties are often characterised by weak ideological differentiation, while electoral competition frequently revolves around personalities, patronage networks, and regional alliances. In such an environment, political actors may perceive ideological consistency as less important than strategic adaptability. Consequently, discursive reversals become normalised as routine features of political survival.

The media environment further amplifies these dynamics. Televised interviews and digital media platforms now preserve political statements in easily retrievable formats, enabling journalists and audiences to compare past and present utterances with unprecedented precision. This archival visibility increases the likelihood that political actors will be confronted with their own previous statements. Yet rather than eliminating discursive contradictions, this environment often encourages more sophisticated rhetorical strategies for managing them. Denial, contextual reframing, and moral repositioning become tools for navigating the tension between the permanence of digital records and the fluidity of political allegiance. The interview analysed in this article therefore illustrates not merely the communicative behaviour of an individual political actor but a broader pattern within Nigerian political discourse. Elite defection generates situations in which political spokespersons must simultaneously defend their current institutional roles while neutralising the rhetorical implications of their past statements. The resulting discourse is characterised by strategic ambiguity, argumentative manoeuvring, and the redefinition of previous claims as partisan exaggeration.

From a discourse-analytical perspective, this pattern raises important questions about the relationship between language, political accountability, and democratic deliberation. When political actors can publicly deny or reinterpret previously recorded statements without engaging substantively with their content, the normative expectation of consistency within political communication becomes weakened. Public debate shifts from evaluating the truth or falsity of claims to negotiating the legitimacy of competing narratives about what was said and why it was said. Ultimately, the phenomenon of elite defection and discursive reversal reflects the complex interplay between political power and rhetorical practice in contemporary Nigeria. Political communication becomes less a site for stable ideological articulation and more a terrain for strategic narrative management. Within this environment, the credibility of political discourse depends not only on the factual accuracy of statements but also on the ability of speakers to rhetorically reconstruct their own political histories in ways that align with shifting alliances and institutional obligations.

Micro-Linguistic Analysis of the Interview:

Deixis, Modality and Presupposition in Political Denial

Micro-linguistic analysis provides a powerful methodological lens for examining how political actors manage reputational threats during media interviews. In high-stakes political communication, denial rarely occurs as a simple rejection of an accusation; rather, it is embedded within a complex network of linguistic strategies that shape how audiences interpret responsibility, credibility, and institutional legitimacy. In the interview analysed here, the discursive interaction between Daniel Bwala and Mehdi Hasan reveals a range of micro-linguistic manoeuvres through which political denial is constructed and negotiated. This section focuses

on three core linguistic dimensions: deixis, modality, and presupposition. These features are particularly relevant in political discourse because they allow speakers to position themselves relative to events, manage degrees of certainty or obligation, and embed assumptions within apparently neutral statements. When combined, these elements produce subtle yet powerful mechanisms through which political actors attempt to control narrative interpretation.

Deixis and the Strategic Construction of Discursive Distance

Deixis refers to linguistic expressions whose interpretation depends on contextual reference points such as the speaker, the listener, or the temporal setting of an utterance. Pronouns, temporal markers, and demonstrative expressions frequently serve as deictic devices that position actors within discourse. In the interview, one of the most striking patterns involves the repeated use of generic or distancing pronouns when addressing accusations derived from earlier statements. For example, when discussing opposition rhetoric, the interviewee frames his earlier criticism within a generalized formulation:

“The job of opposition is to oppose.”

The sentence employs a generic deictic structure, replacing the first-person pronoun “I” with the abstract noun “opposition.” This linguistic shift performs an important rhetorical function. By substituting a collective category for the individual speaker, the statement reduces personal accountability for earlier accusations. Responsibility is redistributed from a specific political actor to an institutional role. This form of deictic displacement serves two key purposes. First, it normalizes the earlier statements by presenting them as standard features of adversarial political communication. Second, it dissolves the personal ownership of the claims, thereby weakening the interviewer’s attempt to frame the contradiction as an issue of individual credibility.

A similar distancing strategy appears in the repeated use of vague demonstratives such as “that.” When confronted with specific allegations, the response often takes the form of a simple denial:

“I never said that.”

The demonstrative “that” functions as an indeterminate deictic reference, leaving the exact content of the disputed statement unspecified. Such vagueness creates interpretive ambiguity. While the interviewer may be referring to a precise accusation shown in archival footage, the speaker’s response reframes the issue as a general claim whose boundaries remain unclear. This ambiguity allows the denial to operate without directly engaging with the specific wording of the earlier statement.

Deictic strategies of this kind are common in political interviews because they allow speakers to re-contextualize accusations without explicitly acknowledging them. By manipulating reference points within discourse, political actors can shift the focus from concrete statements to broader institutional narratives.

Modality and the Performance of Certainty

While deixis structures the relationship between speaker and context, modality governs the expression of certainty, obligation, or possibility within discourse. Modal constructions play a critical role in political denial because they signal the speaker’s level of commitment to a claim.

In the interview, denial is frequently expressed through categorical modality, as illustrated in the statement:

“I never said that.”

The adverb “never” functions as a strong negative modal marker indicating absolute certainty. From a pragmatic perspective, such categorical denial serves as a performative act intended to close argumentative space. By presenting the denial as unequivocal, the speaker attempts to discourage further scrutiny of the claim. However, categorical modality can also generate discursive tension when external evidence contradicts the claim. When the interviewer introduces video recordings of earlier statements, the absolute certainty expressed in the denial becomes rhetorically vulnerable. In such contexts, speakers often shift toward more flexible modal formulations that allow reinterpretation.

Another important modal pattern emerges in statements describing the speaker’s current institutional role:

“Promoting and defending the President is what I do.”

Here, the declarative structure conveys a sense of professional obligation. Although no explicit modal verb appears in the sentence, the statement implies a normative duty associated with the speaker’s position. This implicit modality serves to legitimize the speaker’s current rhetorical stance by framing it as an institutional responsibility rather than a personal ideological shift. Such modal framing is particularly effective in situations involving political defection or discursive reversal. By presenting present-day defence of the administration as an obligatory aspect of professional duty, the speaker implicitly downplays the significance of earlier criticisms. The contradiction between past and present statements is reinterpreted not as inconsistency but as the natural consequence of changing roles within the political system.

Presupposition and the Reframing of Political Accountability

Presupposition refers to the background assumptions embedded within an utterance that are taken for granted rather than explicitly stated. In political discourse, presuppositions often function as subtle mechanisms for shaping audience interpretation without direct argumentative confrontation. The statement “the job of opposition is to oppose” contains several important presuppositions. First, it presupposes that opposition politics inherently involves exaggerated or confrontational rhetoric. Second, it implies that statements made during opposition campaigns should not necessarily be interpreted as literal claims about factual reality. By embedding these assumptions within a seemingly neutral observation about political practice, the speaker reframes earlier accusations as routine features of adversarial politics.

This presuppositional strategy shifts the debate from the truth value of specific accusations to the broader norms of political communication. If opposition rhetoric is presumed to involve exaggeration, then earlier criticisms become less significant as evidence of factual claims. The presupposition effectively redefines the meaning of the earlier statements. Another presuppositional structure appears in statements emphasising the speaker’s current role within the administration. When the interviewee asserts that defending the president is part of his professional responsibility, the utterance presupposes that such defense is legitimate and expected within democratic governance. This background assumption reduces the perceived contradiction between earlier criticism and present advocacy.

Presuppositions are particularly powerful because they operate below the surface level of explicit argumentation. Rather than directly refuting the interviewer’s claims, the speaker reshapes the interpretive framework within which those claims are evaluated.

The Interaction of Deixis, Modality and Presupposition

Although deixis, modality, and presupposition can be analysed individually, their rhetorical impact emerges most clearly when they operate together. In the interview, these linguistic mechanisms combine to produce a multi-layered strategy of political denial. Deictic distancing reduces personal accountability for earlier accusations by attributing them to the generalized role of opposition politics. Categorical modality reinforces the credibility of denials by expressing absolute certainty. Presuppositional framing redefines the meaning of earlier statements by situating them within broader assumptions about political behaviour.

Together, these strategies create a discursive environment in which contradictions between past and present statements can be managed without direct acknowledgment. The speaker’s linguistic choices enable the reconstruction of political identity while maintaining the appearance of rhetorical coherence.

Micro-Linguistic Strategies and the Performance of Political Credibility

From a broader discourse-analytical perspective, the linguistic patterns observed in the interview illustrate how political credibility is constructed through interactional performance rather than purely through factual consistency. Political actors often rely on rhetorical confidence, institutional authority, and narrative framing to maintain credibility even when confronted with contradictory evidence. Micro-linguistic strategies such as deictic displacement, modal certainty, and presuppositional framing play a crucial role in this process. These devices allow speakers to navigate reputational threats while preserving the legitimacy of their current political roles.

The interview therefore demonstrates how the management of political contradiction operates not only at the level of large-scale narrative but also through the fine-grained linguistic structures of everyday speech. By analysing these micro-linguistic features, discourse scholars can gain deeper insight into the mechanisms through which political actors negotiate accountability in contemporary media environments.

Theoretical Framework

Speech Act Theory

According to J. L. Austin, utterances perform actions rather than merely convey information. Political interviews contain performative speech acts such as:

- accusations
- denials
- justifications
- legitimations

These speech acts play a central role in managing political credibility.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) examines how language constructs ideological power relations. Scholars such as Norman

Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk argue that discourse shapes political legitimacy.

In televised debates, linguistic choices reveal attempts to control narratives and maintain institutional authority.

Pragma-Dialectical Argumentation

Pragma-dialectics conceptualizes argumentation as a structured process involving four stages:

1. confrontation
2. opening
3. argumentation
4. conclusion

Political interviews frequently involve strategic manoeuvring where participants attempt to win argumentative advantage while appearing reasonable.

Methodology

The study employs qualitative discourse analysis focusing on:

- 5 key excerpts from the interview
- micro-linguistic features
- argumentative structures

Each excerpt is analysed for:

- deixis
- modality
- presupposition
- speech acts
- legitimation strategies

Micro-Linguistic Analysis of the Interview

Excerpt 1

“Tinubu didn’t create a militia, and I never said that.”

Analysis

Speech	Act:	Denial
Modality:	categorical	certainty

Presupposition: interviewer’s claim is inaccurate

This utterance functions as a defensive speech act designed to dissociate the speaker from earlier accusations.

Excerpt 2

“I never said that.”

The repeated phrase illustrates discursive repetition as a rhetorical shield.

Linguistic features

- Deixis: “that” refers vaguely to prior allegations
- Modality: absolute denial
- Strategic ambiguity: avoids specifying what was allegedly said.

Excerpt 3

“The job of opposition is to oppose.”

Analysis

This statement reframes earlier accusations as routine political rhetoric.

Presupposition: opposition discourse is inherently exaggerated.

Excerpt 4

“Promoting and defending the President... is what I do with ease and joy.”

Analysis

This functions as institutional legitimation.

The speaker redefines his role as professional duty rather than ideological commitment.

Excerpt 5

“Selling ice cream, looking fine, and seeking praises... were never part of my job.”

This metaphor frames criticism as superficial. It is a metaphorical and rhetorical construction used to frame criticism as trivial or superficial while redefining the speaker’s professional role. It operates on several discursive levels.

Discursive Opportunism in Nigerian Politics

The interview illustrates a broader pattern where political actors reconstruct prior speech acts after changing political alignment. This phenomenon can be described as discursive opportunism, where rhetorical flexibility becomes a survival strategy in elite politics. The phenomenon of discursive opportunism refers to the strategic manipulation of language by political actors to reconcile contradictions between past and present positions while maintaining legitimacy and public credibility. In the Nigerian political context, discursive opportunism is particularly salient due to the high frequency of elite defection, party realignment, and shifting political allegiances. Political actors often navigate a landscape where ideological commitment is subordinated to pragmatic calculations of power, influence, and institutional survival.

The interview with Daniel Bwala exemplifies this phenomenon. Prior to joining the ruling administration, Bwala publicly criticised President Bola Tinubu, describing alleged corruption, electoral manipulation, and links to violent networks. Following his defection to the government, however, he adopted a radically different rhetorical posture, denying or reframing his earlier claims. This rapid discursive realignment highlights the fluidity of elite political identity in Nigeria and underscores how political actors employ language as a tool of strategic repositioning.

Discursive opportunism in this context manifests through several interrelated strategies:

1. Strategic Denial – Previous statements are categorically denied or presented as misinterpretations, often using vague deictic references (e.g., “I never said that”) to avoid engaging with specific accusations.
2. Discursive Amnesia and Brazen Contradiction – Earlier statements are selectively ignored or directly contradicted without explicit acknowledgment. This allows the speaker to maintain rhetorical confidence in

the face of archival evidence that could otherwise undermine credibility.

3. Contextual Reframing – Statements made in opposition are reframed as standard partisan rhetoric, suggesting that criticism from opposition figures is inherently exaggerated or performative. For example, Bwala’s assertion that “the job of opposition is to oppose” neutralizes the evidential force of his earlier criticisms by embedding them within normative assumptions about opposition behaviour.
4. Moral and Professional Legitimation – Current defense of the administration is framed as a professional obligation rather than opportunistic behaviour. Utterances such as “Promoting and defending the President is what I do with ease and joy” shift focus from past inconsistencies to present institutional duties, reinforcing the speaker’s credibility despite prior contradictions.

The strategic use of these linguistic and rhetorical devices reflects the broader normative environment of Nigerian political communication, where public accountability is often mediated through narrative performance rather than empirical consistency. Political actors operate within a system in which audiences may be more receptive to displays of loyalty, confidence, and rhetorical skill than to adherence to previous positions. Consequently, discursive opportunism emerges as a rational strategy for navigating the complex interplay between media visibility, elite competition, and institutional expectation.

Comparative analyses with other Nigerian spokespersons further illustrate the prevalence of discursive opportunism. For instance, spokespersons such as Lai Mohammed, Garba Shehu, and Femi Adesina similarly deploy denial, reframing, and institutional legitimation when addressing media challenges. Across these cases, discursive opportunism enables elite actors to maintain political influence while minimizing reputational risk, even when confronted with prior contradictory statements or public scrutiny.

From a theoretical perspective, discursive opportunism aligns with post-structuralist understandings of political language, in which meaning is contextually negotiated and subject to reinterpretation. It also resonates with Habermas’ notion of distorted communication, in which power asymmetries allow certain actors to dominate the framing of public discourse. By systematically analysing micro-linguistic features such as deixis, modality, and presupposition, scholars can trace how discursive opportunism is enacted at the level of language, revealing the interplay between linguistic strategy, political power, and audience perception.

Ultimately, discursive opportunism in Nigerian politics illustrates the tension between rhetorical performance and normative expectations of accountability. While such strategies may be effective in preserving elite influence and institutional authority, they also contribute to public cynicism, erosion of trust, and the normalization of political inconsistency. The case of Daniel Bwala demonstrates that in contemporary Nigerian political communication, the careful orchestration of language enables elite actors to navigate contradictions, realign allegiances, and maintain legitimacy, often with little regard for the factual coherence of their prior statements.

Implications for Democratic Accountability

When political actors deny or reinterpret documented statements without acknowledgment, several consequences emerge:

- erosion of public trust
- normalization of political inconsistency
- weakening of democratic deliberation.

The discursive patterns revealed in the interview with Daniel Bwala have profound implications for democratic accountability in Nigeria. At its core, democratic governance relies not only on the formal institutions of elections and rule-making but also on the transparent and consistent communication of political actors. When public officials engage in denial, discursive reversal, and rhetorical repositioning—particularly in the face of documented prior statements—they weaken the mechanisms through which citizens can evaluate political performance and hold leaders accountable.

One primary consequence is the erosion of epistemic trust. The public relies on the consistency of political statements to assess credibility and inform civic decisions. When elite actors strategically deny previous positions, shift blame, or reframe criticism as partisan rhetoric, they introduce uncertainty regarding the reliability of political discourse. This uncertainty complicates the public’s ability to distinguish between factual reporting and politically motivated narratives, creating a fertile ground for cynicism and disengagement.

Moreover, the phenomenon of discursive opportunism undermines the normative expectation of accountability embedded within democratic deliberation. In the Nigerian context, where televised interviews and digital media provide permanent records of political statements, the deliberate reframing or denial of prior claims represents a form of institutionalized rhetorical manipulation. It signals to both citizens and political actors that adherence to principle is secondary to strategic alignment, incentivizing further opportunism across the political system.

The use of micro-linguistic devices—such as deixis to diffuse responsibility, modality to assert certainty, and presupposition to reframe the interpretive context—exacerbates this challenge. These linguistic mechanisms allow political actors to maintain the appearance of legitimacy while effectively avoiding substantive engagement with prior positions. As a result, public deliberation becomes focused less on factual consistency and more on the performative skill of political communicators. Furthermore, discursive opportunism interacts with media dynamics to shape public perception. In an environment where archival footage and social media records are increasingly accessible, journalists can expose contradictions. However, sophisticated rhetorical strategies, such as those observed in Bwala’s interview, allow politicians to navigate these exposures without fully acknowledging inconsistencies, thereby maintaining institutional authority while sidestepping accountability pressures.

The implications extend beyond individual credibility to the broader health of democratic culture. When citizens perceive that political actors can freely deny or reinterpret documented positions, the incentive for informed participation diminishes. Democratic accountability is compromised because public scrutiny becomes performative: the electorate observes rhetorical contests but lacks effective means to enforce consistency or sanction opportunistic behaviour. Finally, these practices highlight a structural tension in Nigerian democracy: the interplay between

elite mobility, party fluidity, and rhetorical control. While such flexibility may enable pragmatic governance and coalition-building, it also entrenches a political environment in which discursive opportunism is normalized, and the boundary between principled opposition and opportunistic alignment is blurred. Consequently, democratic accountability is not only weakened institutionally but also culturally, as repeated exposure to discursive contradictions may recalibrate public expectations regarding political honesty and integrity.

In sum, the interview exemplifies how strategic language use by political elites can simultaneously protect personal and institutional legitimacy while eroding the mechanisms of democratic accountability. By reframing contradictions as professional obligations or partisan norms, political actors reduce the efficacy of public scrutiny, thereby challenging the foundational principle that democratic governance requires consistency, transparency, and responsibility in political communication.

Conclusion

The interview analysed in this article demonstrates how political actors use discourse strategically to reconcile contradictions between past and present positions. Through denial, contextual reframing, and institutional legitimation, the speaker attempts to transform earlier accusations into routine political rhetoric. Such discursive manoeuvres reflect broader tendencies within Nigerian political communication where ideological coherence is often secondary to political expediency.

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