

STANCE AND ENGAGEMENT MARKERS IN NAIRALAND DISCUSSIONS ON IBRAHIM BADAMASI BABANGIDA'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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Abstract

The publication of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBB), a former Nigerian military ruler (1985-1993), autobiography in 2025, an era where social media amplifies diverse viewpoints, has reignited debates about his legacy and political actions, prompting a reassessment of his contributions and shortcomings. These analyses and discussions on platforms like Nairaland provide valuable insights into how IBB's portrayal aligns with or diverges from public sentiment. Adopting Hyland's (2005) framework of stance and engagement markers to meticulously analyse twenty excerpts from vibrant discussions on Nairaland, a prominent online forum. The research delves into how users articulate their attitudes towards IBB and engage with one another, emphasising the linguistic strategies employed to express both support and criticism, particularly about the controversial annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election. The findings reveal a striking polarisation in user responses: while some participants wield positive stance markers to defend IBB's political legacy robustly, others deploy negative markers to vehemently challenge his credibility and decisions. Furthermore, engagement markers are pivotal in facilitating interaction, inviting users to share personal anecdotes and counterarguments, thereby enriching the dialogue. This analysis not only underscores the intricate dynamics of narrative construction in digital spaces but also highlights the transformative role of online platforms in shaping public perceptions of political figures. Ultimately, this research aspires to deepen the understanding of how linguistic choices in online discussions reflect and influence societal attitudes towards democracy and leadership in Nigeria, offering critical insights into the interplay between language, identity, and political discourse.

Keywords: Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, autobiography, Nairaland, stance markers, engagement markers.

Introduction

Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, commonly known as IBB, governed Nigeria during a time marked by significant political turmoil and a decline in democratic practices. His administration is particularly infamous for the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election, which is often regarded

as one of the most credible elections in Nigeria's history (Nwankwo, 2021). The release of his autobiography on February 25th, 2025, has reignited debates about his legacy and political actions, prompting a reassessment of his contributions and shortcomings. In an era where social media amplifies diverse viewpoints, analysing discussions on platforms like Nairaland provides valuable insights into how IBB's portrayal aligns with or deviates from public sentiment. Despite the profound impact of IBB's governance on Nigeria's political landscape, public opinion remains sharply divided. On Nairaland, users express contrasting views, ranging from strong support to intense criticism, often shaped by personal beliefs, ideological affiliations, and historical interpretations (Olaniyan, 2019). This paper aims to understand the dynamics of these conversations, focusing on the stance and engagement markers that characterise them. The primary aim of this research is to analyse the discussions surrounding IBB's autobiography on Nairaland, with particular emphasis on identifiable stance and engagement markers. The specific objectives are :

1. To identify the stance and engagement markers in the conversations about Babangida's autobiography.
2. To analyse the stance markers that reflect users' attitudes towards IBB and his narrative.
3. To explore the engagement markers that reveal how users interact with one another in discussions about IBB.

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do stance and engagement markers manifest in conversations about IBB's autobiography on Nairaland?
2. How do stance markers reflect users' attitudes towards IBB and his claims?
3. What engagement markers are present in the discussions, and how do they shape user interaction?

This study is significant as it provides a nuanced analysis of public opinion in Nigeria, particularly concerning historical and political figures. By examining how digital platforms facilitate discussions about controversial leaders, this research sheds light on the complexities of collective memory and identity in Nigeria (Jones, 2020). It offers essential insights into the role of social media in shaping political discourse and influencing perceptions of democracy in the country.

Theoretical Framework

Hyland's (2005) model of stance and engagement markers serves as the theoretical foundation for this research, providing a nuanced lens through which to analyse user interactions in Nairaland discussions of Babangida's autobiography. Stance markers comprise hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mention, which signal the writer's assessment of the truth of their claims and their emotional involvement with the subject matter. In the context of Babangida's autobiography, these markers illuminate how users express uncertainty, assert their opinions, or convey personal feelings regarding the political figure, thus shaping their identity within the discourse. Hedges are

linguistic tools, such as "might" or "perhaps," allow users to express caution or uncertainty, reflecting the contentious nature of Babangida's legacy. For example, a user might say, "He might have had good intentions," which conveys a sense of ambiguity about the former president's motives. Boosters like "definitely" or "undoubtedly" enhance the certainty of a statement, potentially revealing a user's strong allegiance or critical stance toward Babangida. An example could be, "He contributed to Nigeria's infrastructure," indicating a robust affirmation. Attitude Markers encapsulate the emotional responses users have towards Babangida's autobiography. Phrases such as "I admire" or "I am frustrated with" offer insights into the user's engagement with the text and the figure. Self-Mention refers to the use of first-person narratives that create a personal connection, as users reference their own experiences and perspectives, influencing how they relate to the subject matter and to each other in the discussion.

Engagement markers encompassing reader pronouns, directives, questions, shared knowledge, and personal asides further facilitate the interactive quality of online discourse. These markers invite readers into the conversation, generate community involvement, and establish a rapport between contributors. Reader Pronouns refers to the use of pronouns such as, "you" or "we" fosters inclusivity and encourages others to participate in the dialogue, which is vital in collective platforms like Nairaland. Directive involves using commands or requests, prompting responses, such as, "Think about his policies." This action engages other readers directly in the conversation, stimulating further discourse. Questions pose challenges or encourage reflection, often revealing the speaker's uncertainties and desire for connection, for example, "What do you think about his role in Nigeria's history?" Shared knowledge refers to references to common knowledge about Nigeria's political landscape that help ground discussions and build a collective framework for understanding Babangida's narrative. Personal Asides are linguistic tools such as informal remarks and side comments which personalise the conversation, adding depth and a human touch that can resonate with readers.

By applying Hyland's framework, this study highlights the complex interplay of stance and engagement markers, enhancing our understanding of how users construct meaning and identity in the context of Babangida's autobiography discussions. Through qualitative analysis of excerpts from Nairaland, this research aims to map the linguistic landscape of these conversations and illuminate the socio-political implications of autobiographical narratives in Nigeria's digital public sphere.

Methodology

A qualitative research design focused on discourse analysis of user-generated comments on Nairaland about IBB's autobiography. This approach was chosen to explore stance and engagement markers in shaping the conversation regarding IBB's legacy and the reception of his narrative (Aluya, 2016). The data for this study consist of twenty comments extracted from threads in Nairaland that discuss IBB's autobiography. These comments were

selected based on their relevance to how stance and engagement markers contributed to shaping the conversation about IBB's legacy. Data were collected over a two-week period, with particular attention to threads that generated significant user engagement. Comments were evaluated for their relevance to the research questions, and attention was given to the diversity of perspectives represented, as discourse analysis focusing on stance and engagement markers provided insight into user attitudes and interactive styles.

Data Analysis

Excerpt 1

"Lame book, lame writer... No pun intended."

At the heart of this excerpt lies a marked disdain for both the written work in question and its author, articulated through the repeated use of the word "lame." This term is not merely an adjective but a potent expression indicative of the speaker's complete dismissal of the book's value, as well as a scathing critique of the writer's abilities. To label something as "lame" implies that it is not only inadequate or inferior but also lacking in substance, creativity, or skill—essentially rendered useless in the eyes of the speaker. The choice of words suggests a strong emotional reaction, perhaps rooted in disappointment or frustration, which serves to heighten the intensity of the criticism. The addition of "No pun intended" introduces a level of meta-commentary, indicating that the speaker is consciously aware of the playful potential of their choice of words. By clarifying that there is no intention of cleverness in their phrasing, the speaker underscores the straightforward nature of their critique (Edem & Aluya, 2023). This statement emphasises their direct engagement with the subject and sheds light on their awareness of literary devices, suggesting a degree of literary analysis in their thought process. In doing so, the speaker elevates their critical stance from mere opinion to a reasoned examination, although it firmly steers in derision. Overall, this excerpt is a microcosm of the speaker's broader attitude towards literature and authorship, suggesting an uncompromising standard for what constitutes quality writing. The intensity of their contempt, coupled with the thoughtful acknowledgement of their word choice, generates a tense dynamic that invites readers to ponder the weight and consequences of literary expression.

Excerpt 2

"Someone told me IBB used to frequent Ogbomosho; there is a family that looks like him there!"

In this statement, the speaker navigates the complex labyrinth of personal histories and ethnic identity through a seemingly innocuous piece of hearsay. The phrase "someone told me" effectively positions the speaker as a conduit for information rather than a direct source, which inherently raises questions about the reliability and authenticity of the claim being made. This distance from the source of information underscores a key theme in this excerpt: the precarious nature of memory and anecdote in the context of larger narratives about identity, heritage, and belonging. By mentioning "Ogbomosho," a specific geographic locale in South-West, Nigeria, the speaker anchors their commentary within a tangible setting that carries cultural and historical significance in Nigeria. This

reference offers a sense of authenticity, inviting the audience to align or juxtapose their understanding of IBB's life against what is presented. The notion that "there is a family that looks like him there" opens the floodgates of speculation regarding ethnic and familial connections, hinting at a larger narrative about lineage and identity politics (Ogunsiji & Aluya, 2022). This statement implies that resemblance equates to kinship, suggesting that physical characteristics might provide insights into broader social or historical dynamics. Furthermore, this excerpt awakens a latent curiosity in the audience, prompting them to question the nuances of personal and collective identity within the intricacies of Nigeria's diverse ethnic tapestry. In doing so, the speaker subtly invites readers to explore deeper how individual histories intersect with cultural narratives, navigating the delicate thresholds of rumor and fact. Thus, this claim, while seemingly trivial at first glance, encapsulates a rich confluence of cultural identity, personal connection, and the weight of collective memory.

Excerpt 3

*"Oh I see where the Yoruba propaganda ends, no evidence
no links just Yoruba propaganda."*

Here, the speaker adopts a combative tone, openly critiquing what they perceive to be an inherently biased narrative stemming from the Yoruba community. The phrase "Oh I see" acts as a dismissive acknowledgment, revealing a condescending attitude towards those whom the speaker perceives to be propagating this supposed bias. By reinforcing the term "propaganda" through its repetition, the author intensifies their attack, reinforcing the idea that the message conveyed by the Yoruba people is neither genuine nor credible (Aluya, 2016). This choice of language emphasises the speaker's belief that the information is crafted for manipulative purposes, aiming not to inform but rather to distract or mislead the audience.

The assertion "no evidence, no links" is a direct challenge to the validity of opposing viewpoints, underlining the speaker's conviction that the arguments made by the Yoruba proponents lack substantial backing. This critical stance signals a desire for accountability in discourse, implying that assertions of identity and truth should be fortified with concrete proof. The phrase works as a rallying cry for those who may share the speaker's scepticism about the Yoruba narrative, fostering an environment conducive to combative debate and staunch division. Upon analysis, this excerpt engages with broader themes of ethnic conflict and the contentious nature of historical narratives in Nigeria. The outright rejection of Yoruba voices suggests an unwillingness to engage with diverse perspectives, exemplifying the deep fissures that often characterise discourse surrounding ethnic identity and historical interpretation (Aluya & Iangba, 2024). Ultimately, the statement serves as an invitation—an overture to align with the speaker's viewpoint while disregarding what they deem as unfounded claims propagated by a specific ethnic group.

Excerpt 4

"Look well at the eyes of the youthful IBB in photos ...those are not northerner eyes."

The assertion made in this statement hinges on the insinuation that physical appearance is indicative of one's ethnic identity, extending the conversation into the realm of ethnic stereotypes and assumptions. By commanding the audience to "look well at the eyes," the speaker is not merely encouraging a casual observation; rather, they are imploring a meticulous examination intended to reveal deeper truths about heritage and belonging (Aluya & Obande, 2024). This directive invites the audience to engage in a form of ocular scrutiny that elevates the physical traits of an individual to a point of ethnic contention, thus reinforcing the idea that appearance can serve as a gauge for legitimacy within a given community. The phrase "those are not northerner eyes" serves as a stark categorical assertion, delineating clear boundaries within the classifications of identity. The use of "not" implies a definitive exclusion from the northern ethnic group, suggesting an insider knowledge of what constitutes "northerner" features. In this way, the speaker navigates the complex interplay of appearance and identity, reducing an individual's ethnic authenticity to a visual characteristic. Such a declaration also relays an implicit criticism of those who may wish to claim a wholly integrated Nigerian identity, hinting at the speaker's belief that adherence to ethnic distinctions remains paramount. Moreover, this excerpt exposes underlying biases and broader societal tensions regarding representation and identity within Nigeria. It reflects a fraught conversation about how ethnicity is perceived and defined, revealing a deep-seated need for clarity in categorical distinctions. This lens of scrutiny, focused squarely on the individual, underscores the speaker's desire to challenge accepted narratives and provoke discourse surrounding ethnic affiliation, thereby reinforcing the complexities embedded within Nigeria's socio-political landscape.

Excerpt 5

"We have given you the evidence Go and find it in the Archives Babangida took power on the 27th August 1985. Now go and get the Daily Times and Daily Sketch of that day."

The urgency embedded in this statement pulses with a sense of defiance, presenting a call to action that demands the audience engage with historical evidence as validation for the speaker's assertions. The phrase, "We have given you the evidence," articulates a strong sense of confidence or perhaps exasperation, indicating that the speaker has already made their case, which they believe should be acknowledged by others. This insistence reflects an underlying frustration with skepticism and a desire to reinforce their standpoint in light of tangible documentation. By referencing specific historical outputs like the "Daily Times" and "Daily Sketch," the speaker posits that credible journalism serves as reliable evidence to support their claims about Babangida's assumption of power on the significant date of August 27, 1985. This reference works rhetorically and substantively; it lends an aura of authenticity to their argument while simultaneously challenging the audience to engage in diligent

inquiry. The instruction, "Go and find it," conveys a challenging imperative, encouraging the listeners not only to question their knowledge but also to seek verification beyond mere opinion actively. In this excerpt, the speaker positions themselves as an authoritative voice—presumably someone who has researched and uncovered the truth—while simultaneously urging others to rise to the occasion by validating the discourse through independent verification. This tactic serves as an evocative gesture, allowing the speaker to assert their credibility while inviting; however, it also suggests an underlying narrative of disenfranchisement, framing the task of uncovering truth as a shared burden fraught with the potential for partisan interpretations and propagandist narratives. Overall, this excerpt serves as a pivotal moment in the larger narrative, engaging with themes of historical legitimacy, accountability, and the role of media in shaping collective memory. The insistence on archival evidence shifts the dialogue from subjective opinions to objective truths, rendering a call to history as not only a quest for understanding but also a challenge to prevailing myths and attitudes surrounding leadership and governance in Nigeria.

Excerpt 6

"I also have the evidence that what you said it's a lie, if you doubt, look into his archive both when he entered the military and when he became Head of state."

In this excerpt, the speaker asserts a strong position against an opposing claim, emphasising their confidence in the evidence they possess. The phrase "I also have the evidence" serves as a powerful declaration, suggesting that the speaker is not merely participating in a debate but is armed with concrete proof that can substantiate their argument. This assertion of evidence is crucial in political discourse, where the validity of claims often hinges on the ability to provide verifiable information. By stating that the opposing viewpoint is a "lie," the speaker not only dismisses the other party's argument but also positions themselves as a guardian of truth, suggesting that they are committed to revealing what they perceive as the reality of the situation. The directive "if you doubt, look into his archive" is particularly significant. It invites the audience to engage in their own investigation, thereby empowering them to seek out the truth independently. This call to action reflects a belief in the importance of historical documentation and the role it plays in shaping public understanding. By referencing "his archive," the speaker implies that there is a wealth of information available that can clarify the historical context surrounding Ibrahim Babangida (IBB), particularly during pivotal moments in his career, such as his entry into the military and his ascension to the role of Head of State. This specificity not only enhances the credibility of the speaker's argument but also encourages the audience to consider the complexities of IBB's political journey. Moreover, the phrase "when he entered the military and when he became Head of state" adds layers of context that are essential for understanding the nuances of IBB's leadership. It suggests that the speaker is not merely interested in a singular event but is instead advocating for a comprehensive examination of IBB's career. This approach invites the audience to reflect on the broader

implications of IBB's actions and decisions, encouraging a more nuanced discussion about his legacy. Overall, this excerpt encapsulates a broader theme of historical interpretation and the struggle for narrative control. The speaker's insistence on the existence of evidence reflects a desire for truth in a landscape often marred by misinformation and bias. By framing the opposing viewpoint as a "lie," the speaker not only seeks to discredit it but also to assert their own version of events as the more legitimate narrative. These dynamics highlight the contentious nature of political discourse, where historical facts can be weaponised in the battle for public opinion.

Excerpt 7

"Zombies are really angry with IBB."

In this succinct yet provocative statement, the speaker employs the term "zombies" as a derogatory label for individuals who are critical of Ibrahim Babangida (IBB). The choice of the word "zombies" is particularly revealing; it implies that those who express dissatisfaction with IBB are not only lacking in independent thought but are also mindlessly following a trend or narrative. This characterisation serves to diminish the legitimacy of their grievances, suggesting that their anger is not rooted in rational discourse but rather in a collective emotional response that lacks depth or understanding. The phrase "really angry" intensifies the sentiment expressed, indicating that the speaker perceives a significant emotional reaction from this group. The use of "really" serves to amplify the speaker's disdain, suggesting that the anger is not only misplaced but also excessive. This choice of language reflects a broader tendency in political discourse to dismiss dissenting opinions as irrational or overly emotional, thereby undermining the complexity of the issues at hand. By framing the critics in such a negative light, the speaker seeks to rally support for IBB, positioning him as a misunderstood figure rather than a controversial one. Furthermore, this excerpt highlights the polarisation that often characterises political discussions. By labelling critics as "zombies," the speaker creates an "us versus them" dynamic, which can alienate those who may have legitimate concerns about IBB's legacy. This tactic serves to solidify the speaker's own position while simultaneously marginalising opposing viewpoints. It reflects a broader trend in political rhetoric where opponents are dehumanised or caricatured, making it easier to dismiss their arguments without engaging with the substance of their claims. In essence, this excerpt encapsulates the emotional undercurrents of political discourse, where language is wielded as a tool for both persuasion and division. The speaker's choice to label critics as "zombies" not only reveals their disdain for dissent but also underscores the challenges of fostering constructive dialogue in an environment rife with animosity and partisanship. This raises important questions about the nature of political engagement and the ways in which language can shape perceptions and influence public opinion.

Excerpt 8

*"I see Yoruba people need someone to whine them anyhow
Walahi Abiola no win any election. God punish Buhari for
recognising that stupid mofu! June 12 na big scam for fools."*

This excerpt is a vivid expression of the speaker's strong emotions and opinions regarding the Yoruba people, the late Moshood Abiola, and the political landscape surrounding the June 12 elections in Nigeria. The phrase "I see Yoruba people need someone to whine them anyhow" suggests a belief that the Yoruba community is overly sensitive or easily manipulated, implying that they require constant reassurance or validation. This characterisation not only reflects a dismissive attitude towards the Yoruba but also serves to position the speaker as someone who perceives themselves as more discerning or enlightened. The use of "Walahi," an Arabic term often used in Nigerian Pidgin to emphasise sincerity, adds a cultural dimension to the statement, grounding it in a specific linguistic and social context. This choice of language may resonate with certain audiences, reinforcing the speaker's connection to their cultural identity while simultaneously alienating others who may not share the same sentiments. The phrase "God punish Buhari for recognising that stupid mofo!" is particularly incendiary, revealing deep-seated frustration and anger towards President Buhari for his acknowledgment of Abiola. The use of "stupid mofo" is a crude insult that underscores the speaker's contempt, indicating that they view Abiola's legacy as fundamentally flawed and unworthy of celebration. The assertion that "June 12 na big scam for fools" is a powerful dismissal of the significance attributed to Abiola's electoral victory. By labeling it a "big scam," the speaker not only undermines the legitimacy of the election but also casts doubt on the collective memory and sentiments of those who view June 12 as a pivotal moment in Nigeria's democratic history. This statement reflects a broader trend in political discourse where historical events are reinterpreted or dismissed based on current political alignments and sentiments. Overall, this excerpt is emblematic of the intense emotions that often accompany discussions of political figures and events in Nigeria. The speaker's use of strong language and cultural references serves to engage their audience while simultaneously alienating those who may hold differing views. This highlights the challenges of navigating political discourse in a context where emotions run high and historical narratives are deeply contested.

Excerpt 9

"Abiola won. Better accept it. Yeah, I'm not fond of the idea of an Abiola presidency, but not allowing him to take over helped fuel a near civil war scenario."

In this excerpt, the speaker acknowledges the opposing viewpoint while firmly asserting that Abiola's victory is an undeniable fact. The phrase "Abiola won" serves as a definitive statement that seeks to establish a consensus on a historical event that remains contentious in Nigerian political discourse. By following this assertion with "Better accept it," the speaker challenges dissenters to confront the reality of the situation, positioning themselves as a voice of reason in a landscape often clouded by emotional rhetoric and partisan bias. The admission of discomfort with the idea of an Abiola presidency adds complexity to the speaker's stance. This nuance indicates that while the speaker recognises the legitimacy of Abiola's electoral victory, they also grapple with the implications of that victory. The phrase "not allowing him to take over helped fuel a near

civil war scenario" introduces a critical perspective on the political decisions made in the aftermath of the election. It suggests that the refusal to accept Abiola's presidency had far-reaching consequences, potentially leading to instability and conflict within the nation.

This acknowledgment of the potential consequences of political decisions engages the audience in a broader discussion about governance and stability. It invites reflection on the importance of democratic processes and the need for political leaders to respect the will of the electorate. By framing the discussion in terms of national unity and the dangers of political exclusion, the speaker elevates the conversation beyond mere partisan bickering, urging a more thoughtful consideration of the implications of political actions. Overall, this excerpt serves as a reminder of the complexities inherent in political discourse, where historical facts are often intertwined with personal beliefs and emotional responses. The speaker's willingness to confront uncomfortable truths while also acknowledging their own biases reflects a more nuanced understanding of the political landscape, encouraging a dialogue that transcends simplistic narratives.

Excerpt 10

"You mean ibos like Joel Obianuju Odumakin, Chidi Odinkalu & co, are zombies? Ipob are getting sense las las."

In this excerpt, the speaker employs the term "zombies" derogatorily to describe individuals from the Igbo ethnic group, specifically targeting prominent figures such as Joel Obianuju Odumakin and Chidi Odinkalu. This choice of language implies that these individuals lack independent thought or agency, framing them as mindless followers rather than critical thinkers. The rhetorical question embedded in the statement suggests disbelief or mockery towards the idea that these individuals could be considered anything other than mindless adherents to a particular narrative. This tactic serves to undermine the credibility of the individuals mentioned, positioning the speaker as someone who perceives themselves as more enlightened or aware.

The phrase "Ipob are getting sense las las" introduces a contrasting perspective, indicating a shift in perception among members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). The use of "getting sense" suggests that the speaker believes there is a growing awareness or understanding among IPOB members, implying that they are beginning to recognise certain truths that may have previously eluded them. This acknowledgment of a potential awakening among IPOB members adds a layer of complexity to the speaker's argument, suggesting that while they may dismiss certain critics as "zombies," they also recognise the capacity for change and growth within the community.

This excerpt reflects a dismissive stance towards the Igbo community while simultaneously acknowledging a potential awakening among them. The juxtaposition of derogatory language with a hint of recognition creates a tension that underscores the complexities of ethnic and political identities in Nigeria. It highlights the challenges of navigating discussions about ethnicity and political allegiance, where language can serve as both a tool for division and a means of fostering understanding.

Overall, this excerpt encapsulates the contentious nature of political discourse in Nigeria, where ethnic identities are often weaponised in debates over legitimacy and authority. The speaker's use of derogatory language serves to reinforce their own position while simultaneously alienating those who may hold differing views. This raises important questions about the role of language in shaping perceptions and influencing public opinion, particularly in a context where historical grievances and contemporary political realities intersect.

Excerpt 11

"You hoarded the truth till now? To what end?"

This excerpt is a powerful expression of frustration and accusation, suggesting that an individual or group has deliberately withheld crucial information from the public. The phrase "hoarded the truth" is particularly evocative, as it implies not just a passive withholding of information but an active and intentional act of keeping knowledge away from others. This choice of words evokes a sense of betrayal, as it suggests that the individual in question has prioritised their own interests or agenda over the collective need for transparency and honesty. The term "hoarded" also carries connotations of greed and selfishness, as if the truth is a valuable commodity that the speaker believes should be shared freely rather than kept in reserve.

The rhetorical question "To what end?" serves as a critical challenge to the person being addressed, compelling them to justify their actions. This question is loaded with implications; it suggests that the speaker believes there is no valid reason for the withholding of information, thereby framing the act as not only unethical but also counterproductive. By asking this question, the speaker invites the audience to engage in a moral or ethical debate about the importance of transparency and accountability in public discourse. It raises fundamental questions about the responsibilities of individuals, particularly those in positions of power or influence, to share information that could impact the lives of others.

This excerpt also reflects a broader theme of distrust in political and social institutions. The speaker's accusation implies a belief that there are systemic issues at play, where information is manipulated or concealed for ulterior motives. This sentiment resonates with many individuals who feel disenfranchised or misled by those in authority. By framing the discussion in terms of "truth" and "hoarding," the speaker taps into a collective yearning for honesty and integrity in public life, suggesting that the failure to provide this can have far-reaching consequences. Moreover, the emotional weight of the statement suggests a deep-seated frustration with the status quo. The speaker's tone conveys a sense of urgency, as if they believe that the truth is not just important but essential for the well-being of society. This urgency is further amplified by the implication that the truth has been withheld for a significant period, raising concerns about the potential damage caused by this lack of transparency. The speaker's challenge to the listener to consider the implications of their actions serves as a call to action, urging individuals to reflect on their own roles in the dissemination of information and the ethical responsibilities that come with it.

Overall, this excerpt serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of transparency in governance and public discourse. It challenges the audience to consider the implications of withholding information and the ethical responsibilities that come with knowledge. The speaker's frustration is palpable and their call for accountability resonates with a broader societal desire for truth and openness in an era often characterised by misinformation and manipulation.

Excerpt 12

"This rufai na edddiot. Since when did IBB become a saint and an impeccable source of knowledge, fact and evidence?"

In this excerpt, the speaker employs a derogatory term, "edddiot," to insult Rufai, indicating a strong disapproval of his views. The use of such a term immediately sets a confrontational tone, suggesting that the speaker is not merely engaging in a debate but is instead dismissing Rufai's opinions as foolish or misguided. This choice of language reflects a broader trend in political discourse where personal attacks are often used to undermine the credibility of opponents rather than addressing the substance of their arguments. By labeling Rufai in this manner, the speaker seeks to delegitimise his perspective and position themselves as more knowledgeable or rational.

The phrase "Since when did IBB become a saint" serves as a critical inquiry into the perceived elevation of Ibrahim Babangida (IBB) to a status of moral superiority. This rhetorical question implies skepticism about the narratives surrounding IBB, suggesting that the speaker believes there is a disconnect between IBB's past actions and the reverence he is purportedly receiving. By questioning IBB's status as a "saint," the speaker challenges the notion that he can be viewed as an impeccable source of knowledge, fact, and evidence. This skepticism is rooted in a belief that IBB's historical actions disqualify him from being seen as a trustworthy figure, thereby inviting the audience to reconsider the narratives that have been constructed around him. The phrase "impeccable source of knowledge, fact and evidence" further emphasises the speaker's disdain for the idea that IBB could be viewed as a reliable authority. This assertion reflects a broader critique of how historical figures are often romanticised or vilified based on contemporary political alignments and sentiments. The speaker's insistence on questioning IBB's credibility serves to highlight the complexities of political legacies, where individuals may be celebrated or condemned based on selective interpretations of their actions. Moreover, this excerpt underscores the tension between historical memory and contemporary political discourse. The speaker's challenge to Rufai's views reflects a broader struggle over how history is remembered and interpreted, particularly in a context where political allegiances can shape perceptions of past events. By framing IBB's legacy in such a critical light, the speaker invites the audience to engage in a deeper examination of the narratives that inform their understanding of political figures and events.

Overall, this excerpt encapsulates the contentious nature of political discourse, where personal attacks and skepticism about historical narratives intersect. The speaker's use of derogatory language and rhetorical questioning

serves to challenge prevailing narratives while also reflecting a broader frustration with the political landscape. This raises important questions about the nature of authority and the ways in which historical figures are remembered and interpreted in contemporary discussions.

Excerpt 13

"Bet you..Some GenZs aren't even aware or seen that book.. 'Why we struck.'"

This statement implies a generational divide in knowledge or awareness regarding historical events, specifically referencing a book that may hold significance in political discourse. The phrase "Bet you" serves as a challenge to the audience, indicating that the speaker is confident in their assertion about the ignorance of younger generations. This choice of language not only engages the audience but also positions the speaker as someone who possesses knowledge that the younger demographic may lack. By framing the statement in this way, the speaker seeks to provoke curiosity or defensiveness among younger listeners, potentially igniting a desire to learn more about the historical context being referenced.

The mention of "Some GenZs" specifically targets a demographic that is often characterised by its digital nativity and perceived detachment from historical events. This characterisation suggests that the speaker believes younger individuals may be more focused on contemporary issues and less aware of the historical narratives that have shaped their current political landscape. By invoking the title of the book, "Why We Struck," the speaker emphasises the importance of understanding historical events and the motivations behind them, suggesting that such knowledge is crucial for informed political engagement. Furthermore, the reference to the book itself serves as a gateway for deeper exploration into the political history of Nigeria, particularly the events surrounding the military coups and the subsequent implications for governance and democracy. The speaker's assertion that younger generations may not be familiar with this text highlights a perceived gap in historical awareness, which can have significant implications for how future generations engage with political discourse. This gap in knowledge can lead to a cycle of misunderstanding and misinterpretation of past events, ultimately affecting the political landscape.

The tone of the statement carries an undertone of urgency, as if the speaker is imploring younger audiences to bridge this knowledge gap. By framing the discussion around a specific text, the speaker not only highlights the importance of historical literacy but also positions themselves as a custodian of knowledge, urging the younger generation to take an active interest in their political heritage. This call to action reflects a broader concern about the implications of historical ignorance in shaping future political dynamics. Overall, this excerpt serves as a reminder of the importance of historical awareness in political discourse. It challenges younger generations to engage with their past and understand the narratives that have shaped their present. The speaker's confidence in their assertion underscores the need for

intergenerational dialogue and the sharing of knowledge to foster a more informed and engaged citizenry.

Excerpt 14

"Not ethnic bigots But Yorubas especially E-BOLA Tinubus urchins."

In this excerpt, the speaker distinguishes between general ethnic bigotry and a specific focus on the Yoruba community, particularly targeting supporters of Bola Tinubu. The phrase "Not ethnic bigots" serves as a preemptive defense against accusations of prejudice, suggesting that the speaker is aware of the potential backlash that could arise from their statements. This defensive posture indicates a desire to clarify their position while simultaneously launching an attack on a specific group. The use of "Yorubas" as a target for criticism reflects a broader trend in political discourse where ethnic identities are often invoked to frame political disagreements.

The term "E-BOLA" is a play on words that combines Tinubu's name with a derogatory connotation, suggesting that his supporters are not only misguided but also harmful. This linguistic choice serves to dehumanise Tinubu's supporters, framing them as a collective that is not only politically misguided but also socially detrimental. The use of such derogatory language reflects a strong anti-Yoruba sentiment, engaging in ethnic labeling to criticise a specific political faction. This tactic can be seen as an attempt to rally support among those who share the speaker's views while simultaneously alienating those who may identify with Tinubu or the Yoruba community. The phrase "Tinubus urchins" further emphasises the speaker's disdain, suggesting that the supporters are akin to pests or nuisances rather than legitimate political actors. This choice of language serves to diminish the credibility of Tinubu's supporters, framing them as unworthy of serious consideration in political discourse. By employing such derogatory terms, the speaker seeks to reinforce their own position while undermining the legitimacy of opposing viewpoints. Moreover, this excerpt highlights the complexities of ethnic identity in Nigerian politics, where allegiances are often shaped by historical grievances and contemporary power dynamics. The speaker's focus on the Yoruba community and Tinubu's supporters reflects a broader struggle over representation and power within the political landscape. By framing the discussion in such stark terms, the speaker invites the audience to engage in a more polarised debate, where ethnic identities become battlegrounds for political conflict.

Overall, this excerpt serves as a reminder of the challenges inherent in navigating political discourse in a context marked by ethnic diversity and historical tensions. The speaker's use of derogatory language and ethnic labeling reflects a broader trend in political rhetoric, where identities are weaponised to advance specific agendas. This dynamic raises important questions about the role of language in shaping perceptions and influencing public opinion, particularly in a context where historical grievances and contemporary political realities intersect.

Excerpt 15

*"Ethnic Bigots Are Upset That IBB Debunked The Igbo Coup
Narrative - Rufai Oseni."*

This statement asserts that there is a backlash from ethnic bigots in response to Ibrahim Babangida's (IBB) actions, specifically his efforts to challenge the narrative surrounding the Igbo coup. The phrase "ethnic bigots" positions the critics as prejudiced, suggesting that their opposition to IBB is rooted in bias rather than legitimate concerns. This labeling serves to delegitimise the critics' arguments, framing them as motivated by narrow-mindedness rather than a genuine engagement with the issues at hand. By using such charged language, the speaker seeks to rally support for IBB while simultaneously marginalising dissenting voices. The term "upset" indicates that the emotional response from these critics is significant, suggesting that their anger stems from a perceived threat to their established narratives or beliefs. This emotional framing serves to heighten the stakes of the discussion, implying that the truth revealed by IBB is not just a matter of historical accuracy but a challenge to the identity and legitimacy of those who oppose him. The speaker's choice to highlight the emotional reactions of critics underscores the contentious nature of the discourse surrounding IBB and the Igbo coup narrative.

Furthermore, this excerpt engages the audience by framing the discussion as one of truth versus prejudice. By positioning IBB's revelations as a challenge to the biases held by ethnic bigots, the speaker invites the audience to consider the implications of these narratives on broader societal dynamics. This framing suggests that the acceptance of IBB's perspective could lead to a more nuanced understanding of history, while the rejection of it perpetuates division and misunderstanding. The reference to the "Igbo coup narrative" itself is significant, as it points to a historical event that has been subject to various interpretations and political manipulations. By asserting that IBB has debunked this narrative, the speaker implies that there is a need for a re-evaluation of historical events and the motivations behind them. This call for reevaluation resonates with broader themes of historical memory and the ways in which narratives are constructed and contested in political discourse.

Overall, this excerpt serves as a critical commentary on the intersection of ethnicity, history, and politics in Nigeria. The speaker's use of charged language and emotional framing reflects the complexities of navigating these issues, highlighting the challenges of fostering constructive dialogue in a context marked by deep-seated biases and historical grievances. This dynamic raise important questions about the role of historical narratives in shaping contemporary political identities and the potential for reconciliation through a more honest engagement with the past.

Excerpt 16

"Tribal bigots have gone bunkers since IBB launched his book. Nigerians from all over the country are eventually speaking out after years of seeing through the agenda of these bigots who are only driven by envy and hate"

In this excerpt, the commenter employs a vehement tone to address the reactions of what they term "tribal bigots" in the wake of IBB's book launch. The phrase "gone bunkers" is particularly evocative, suggesting a state of chaos or irrationality among those who oppose IBB. This choice of words not only conveys the author's disdain for these critics but also implies that their reactions are extreme and unwarranted. The term "tribal bigots" serves as a powerful label, categorising a group of individuals based on their perceived prejudices and biases. This categorisation is significant as it frames the discussion in terms of identity politics, suggesting that the critics are not merely individuals with differing opinions but rather members of a larger, problematic group that embodies tribalism and bigotry. The assertion that "Nigerians from all over the country are eventually speaking out" introduces a sense of collective awakening among the populace. This phrase implies that there has been a long-standing silence or complicity in the face of tribal bigotry, which is now being challenged. The author positions themselves as part of a broader movement, suggesting that the release of IBB's book has catalysed a national conversation about prejudice and the motivations behind it. The use of "eventually" indicates a delayed response, hinting at a historical context where such discussions were perhaps stifled or ignored. This framing invites readers to consider the implications of this awakening, suggesting that it is not only timely but necessary for the progress of Nigerian society.

Furthermore, the phrase "driven by envy and hate" serves as an engagement marker that invites readers to align with the author's perspective. By attributing negative motivations to the critics, the author seeks to delegitimise their arguments and reinforce their own stance. This rhetorical strategy is effective in polarising the discourse, as it positions the author and their supporters as champions of truth against a backdrop of envy and hatred. The emotional weight of these words is significant; they evoke a sense of moral superiority and righteousness, compelling readers to reflect on their own positions regarding IBB and the criticisms he faces. Overall, this excerpt is a call to action, urging readers to recognise the broader implications of tribalism and to stand against it. The author's assertive language and framing of the issue as a collective struggle against prejudice resonate with those who may feel similarly marginalised or silenced. By invoking a sense of unity among "Nigerians from all over the country," the author not only seeks to galvanise support for IBB but also to challenge the status quo of tribalism in Nigerian society.

Excerpt 17

Facts!

They've been wailing over my threads for some days now.

Truth must be told, no matter how bitter it tastes".

In this excerpt, the commenter asserts confidence in the validity of claims with the emphatic declaration of "Facts!" This exclamation serves as a powerful stance marker, immediately establishing the author's position as one grounded in truth and evidence. The use of an exclamatory statement conveys a sense of urgency and conviction, suggesting that the author is not merely presenting an

opinion but rather a well-founded assertion that demands recognition. This approach is particularly effective in engaging readers who may be skeptical or critical of the author's views, as it positions them as a reliable source of information. The term "wailing" is a derogatory engagement marker that diminishes the opposing viewpoint, framing critics as overly emotional and irrational. This choice of language serves to delegitimise their arguments, suggesting that their responses are not based on reasoned discourse but rather on emotional outbursts. By characterising dissenters in this way, the author seeks to create a dichotomy between themselves—representing rationality and truth—and their critics, who are portrayed as lacking composure and reason. This rhetorical strategy is effective in reinforcing the author's position while simultaneously discrediting opposing views.

The phrase "truth must be told, no matter how bitter it tastes" encapsulates the author's commitment to honesty, even in the face of discomfort. This statement acknowledges the potential for truth to be unpalatable, suggesting that the author is aware of the contentious nature of their claims. By framing the discussion in terms of truth-telling, the author elevates their argument to a moral imperative, compelling readers to consider the ethical dimensions of the discourse. This approach not only reinforces the author's credibility but also invites readers to engage with the complexities of the issues at hand. Overall, this excerpt reflects a combative tone, as the author positions themselves as a defender of truth against what they perceive as irrational criticism. The assertive language and emotional weight of the statements serve to galvanise support for IBB while challenging the legitimacy of dissenting opinions. By framing the discussion as one of truth versus emotional reaction, the author seeks to engage readers in a broader conversation about the nature of discourse in Nigerian society.

Excerpt 18

"There was an igbo coup planned and masterminded by people of igbo extraction. QED ipob is a disease".

In this excerpt, the commenter makes a bold and definitive claim regarding an alleged coup, stating that it was "planned and masterminded by people of igbo extraction." This assertion is laden with implications, as it not only attributes responsibility for the coup to a specific ethnic group but also suggests a level of organisation and intent that carries significant weight in the discourse surrounding ethnic identity and political power in Nigeria. The phrase "planned and masterminded" conveys a sense of conspiracy, implying that there was a deliberate effort to destabilise the political landscape, which serves to heighten the stakes of the discussion. The use of "QED" (quod erat demonstrandum) as a stance marker is particularly noteworthy, as it indicates that the author believes they have conclusively proven their point. This abbreviation, often used in mathematical or logical arguments, lends an air of authority to the author's claims, suggesting that they are not merely opinions but rather conclusions drawn from evidence. By employing this term, the author seeks to elevate their argument to a level of intellectual rigor, inviting readers to accept their conclusions as valid and well-founded.

The phrase "Ipob is a disease" is a striking engagement marker that dehumanises the group in question, framing them as a societal ill that must be addressed. This choice of language is provocative and polarising, as it not only vilifies the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) but also positions them as a threat to the social fabric of Nigeria. By using such strong language, the author seeks to elicit a visceral reaction from readers, compelling them to consider the implications of IPOB's actions and the potential consequences for national unity. Overall, this excerpt reflects a strong bias and a willingness to provoke strong reactions from readers. The author's language choices serve to polarise the discussion, framing it as a battle between those who uphold national integrity and those who threaten it. By presenting their claims as definitive and supported by evidence, the author seeks to engage readers in a critical examination of the narratives surrounding ethnic identity and political power in Nigeria.

Excerpt 19

"We should all be disgusted at the elite gathering and fawning over a man who should be a pariah to society".

In this excerpt, the commenter employs the collective pronoun "we" to create a sense of shared moral outrage, inviting readers to join in their condemnation of the elite's actions. This rhetorical strategy is effective in fostering a sense of community among those who may feel similarly disillusioned by the political landscape. The phrase "disgusted at the elite gathering" serves as a stance marker that critiques the actions of a specific group, suggesting that the elite are out of touch with societal values and priorities. By framing the elite as a distinct and problematic group, the author seeks to galvanise support for their perspective and encourage readers to reflect on the implications of such gatherings.

The term "fawning" implies a lack of integrity or authenticity in the elite's admiration for IBB, suggesting that their actions are motivated by self-interest rather than genuine respect. This characterisation serves to undermine the legitimacy of the elite's support for IBB, framing it as a superficial display rather than a meaningful endorsement. The phrase "a man who should be a pariah to society" further emphasises the author's moral judgment, positioning IBB as someone who has committed transgressions that warrant social ostracism. This strong language serves to provoke readers, compelling them to consider the ethical implications of supporting a figure like IBB.

Overall, this excerpt reflects a strong moral judgment and a call for accountability. The author's use of collective language and emotive phrasing invites readers to engage in a broader conversation about the role of the elite in society and the responsibilities that come with power. By framing the discussion in terms of moral outrage, the author seeks to challenge the status quo and encourage readers to reflect on their own values and beliefs regarding political leadership and accountability.

Excerpt 20

"IBB is one greatest enemy of Nigeria nobody is talking about."

This statement serves as a strong stance marker, positioning IBB as a significant threat to the nation. The phrase "one greatest enemy" is particularly striking, as it elevates IBB's perceived threat to a level that suggests he is among the most dangerous figures in Nigeria's political landscape. This characterisation is designed to provoke thought and discussion, challenging readers to reconsider their views on IBB and his impact on the country. The phrase "nobody is talking about" introduces a sense of urgency and frustration, implying that the author believes an important conversation is being overlooked. This rhetorical strategy serves to draw attention to what the author perceives as a critical issue that requires public discourse. By framing the discussion in this way, the author seeks to engage readers in a dialogue about the implications of IBB's actions and the need for greater scrutiny of his role in Nigerian politics. Overall, this excerpt serves as a provocative challenge to the status quo, urging readers to confront uncomfortable truths about IBB and his legacy. The accusatory tone and strong language compel readers to reflect on their own beliefs and assumptions, fostering a sense of critical engagement with the issues at hand. By positioning IBB as a significant enemy of Nigeria, the author seeks to galvanise support for a broader conversation about accountability and the responsibilities of political leaders in shaping the nation's future.

Conclusion

The lively and often fervent discussions that have arisen around Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida's autobiography on the well-known online platform, 'Nairaland' exemplify the complex interplay of stance and engagement markers that significantly influence public discourse concerning contentious political figures in Nigeria. This examination reveals a notable polarisation among users, underscoring the deeply divided opinions shaped by various factors, including personal narratives, differing historical interpretations and the intricate ethnic affiliations that characterise Nigeria's sociopolitical environment. Supportive comments frequently utilise positive stance markers to reinforce and celebrate IBB's legacy, highlighting his contributions to the nation and portraying his tenure in a favourable light. In contrast, critical responses employ negative markers that question IBB's credibility and scrutinise his political decisions, thereby illuminating the emotional and evaluative stances users adopt towards him. This linguistic dichotomy not only reflects individual sentiments but also offers a deeper understanding of the broader societal attitudes towards democracy, governance, and leadership in Nigeria.

Moreover, the engagement markers present in these discussions play a vital role in enhancing user interaction, fostering a sense of community, and encouraging the sharing of diverse perspectives. By inviting participants to recount personal experiences, pose thought-provoking questions, and engage in lively debates, the dialogue surrounding IBB's controversial legacy becomes richer and more multifaceted. This dynamic exchange reveals the complexities and contradictions of his political journey, showcasing the transformative

potential of digital platforms like Nairaland in shaping collective memory and identity in contemporary Nigeria. Ultimately, the analyses highlights the crucial role of social media as a democratic space where citizens can engage in meaningful conversations about historical narratives and political accountability. By facilitating such discussions, platforms like Nairaland not only contribute to the discourse surrounding IBB but also influence broader conversations about governance and leadership, empowering individuals to reflect on their experiences and fostering a culture of engagement essential for a thriving democracy. Thus, the discussions surrounding IBB's autobiography transcend the narrative of a single individual, embodying the larger societal struggles and aspirations that define Nigeria's political landscape today.

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