



## Time and Season Idioms in Nigerian Political Talk Show

Maria Mbursa Salihu<sup>1</sup>, Hajar Abdul Rahim<sup>2</sup>, Hicham Lahlo<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1-3</sup> English Language Studies, School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia

Corresponding author: [salihumaria@student.usm.my](mailto:salihumaria@student.usm.my)

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### Abstract

This study examines semantic features of time and season idioms in Nigerian talk show, Politics Today, to identify their types, conceptual processes, and communicative functions. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study analysed 57 time- and season-related idioms that appeared in the broadcasts between 2022 and 2024. Data were obtained through non-probability sampling, selecting and downloading five episodes from the Channel's TV website. The episodes were manually transcribed, and two dictionaries were consulted to classify idioms into Standard English and Nigerian English. The analysis was guided by cognitive theory of metaphor and Metaphor Identification Process (MIP) to identify linguistic metaphors and their corresponding conceptual mappings. Also, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the roles of idiom in political discourse. The findings reveal 14 Standard English idioms and 11 Nigerian English idioms, generating 24 conceptualisations. The analysis shows that conceptual metaphor frequently draws on universal schemas such as temporal and seasonal sequences, reflecting political transitions and strategic moments. These motivations are grounded in conventional and cultural understandings of time as a measurable, renewable, and cyclical entity. Idioms conceptualised under Politics is Time and Politics is Season demonstrate how politicians perceive politics as a temporal, periodic, and cyclical process. Interview responses further indicate that participants recognise idioms as central to political discourse, emphasising their conceptual and cultural richness within the talk show. Overall, the study underscores the importance of idiom in framing political thought and suggests that future research could extend this inquiry to different cultural contexts and media platforms

## 1. Introduction

Figurative language has long been central to political communication, where it conveys deeper meanings, evokes emotions, and persuades audiences. Idiom is a type of figurative language, which involves “the use of words that deviate from their conventional and literal meanings to convey vivid, imaginative, or symbolic interpretations” (Kövecses, 2010, p. 9). From the perspective of semantics, Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) consider idiom to involve surface realisations of deeper conceptual meaning that structure human cognition.

Language functions not only as a medium of communication but also as a cognitive and cultural process through which societies interpret political realities. In his 1961 inaugural address, John Kennedy used the idiomatic appeal “*Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country*” to promote civic duty and collective responsibility (Aghajanian et al., 2023). Abraham Lincoln personified government in his Gettysburg Address *government of the people, by the people and for the people*. These figures of speech are familiar, high-impact examples that illustrate how political language functions across cultures and how meaning-making relies on shared cognitive and cultural knowledge, which this study seeks to examine. In Nigeria, figurative language has also been central to political rhetoric. Nigerian politicians strategically employ figurative language to inspire, persuade, and influence public opinion by drawing on shared cultural knowledge. For instance, in 1965, Obafemi Awolowo urged peaceful coexistence through the metaphor “*it is safer and wiser to cure unhealthy rivalry than to suppress it*” (Ojo, 2012). Nnamdi Azikiwe cautioned against violent disintegration with “*it is better we disintegrate in peace and not in pieces*” (Obotetukud, 2010). Olusegun Obasanjo once remarked, “*even Jesus Christ cannot conduct a free and fair election in Nigeria*”, a hyperbolic critique of electoral corruption (Adedun & Atolagbe, 2011). In 2015, Muhammadu Buhari declared “*I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody*” to project impartiality and commitment to national service (Osisanwo, 2017).

In political talk, time and season idioms are not random figurative language; they are grounded in embodied experiences of natural cycles, i.e., day and night, planting and harvest, wet and dry seasons, that form part of Nigeria’s cultural knowledge. For example, conceptual metaphor ***Politics Is Season*** allows politicians to frame elections as decisive but temporary moments of change, while *Time is a Limited Resource* emphasises urgency and accountability in governance. By evoking such

conceptual frame, speakers strategically shape how audiences evaluate politicians, political events, and governance. One prominent arena where figurative language circulates is *Politics Today*, a flagship talk show on Channels Television in Nigeria. Within this context, time and season idioms are frequently used to frame political developments, project ideological positions, and link abstract policy debates to the life experiences of ordinary Nigerians. As these idioms are recycled through media reportage and social media, they shape wider public discourse.

A persistent challenge in political communication, however, lies in the gap between figurative language and its conception by the public (Oyeleye & Olaniyan, 2014). While some studies in Nigeria have explored the conceptualisation of figurative language (Shehu, 2020; Umar, 2019), few have focused specifically on idioms and their role in political discourse. African scholarship has studied metaphor and other forms of figurative language (Dube, 2023). Globally, research has examined metaphor in political communication (Musolff, 2020), political discourse in the UK (Imperiale & Phipps, 2022), figurative language in public communication (Ahmad Bilal et al., 2012), and figurative language comprehension (Van Ginkel & Dijkstra, 2020). In Iran, Sharifian (2009), and Sharifian and Jamarani (2013) have studied the cultural grounding of political metaphor.

Building on this scholarship, the present study examines the role of *time and season idioms* in shaping conception within Nigerian political discourse, focusing on *Politics Today*. Specifically, to (1) identify the types of idioms structuring political discourse, (2) uncover the conceptual metaphors underlying the use of time and season, and (3) analyse how participants interpret the roles of idioms in relation to political realities. By situating the analysis at the intersection of language, cognition, and culture, the study underscores the significance of idioms as semantic tools in Nigerian media and democratic talk show communication.

## 2. Conceptualisation of Idiom and Figurative Language

From a linguistic perspective, an idiom is defined as a fixed phrase whose overall meaning cannot be directly inferred from the literal meanings of its individual words (Fernando, 1996). In this sense, idioms are non-literal expressions with context-dependent meanings that cannot be substituted with their word-for-word equivalents.

From the cognitive semantic perspective, Kövecses (2010) argues that idioms are stored as holistic units in memory and evoke mental imagery, functioning as shortcuts that activate shared cultural knowledge. They are not constructed each time but are

retrieved from the mental lexicon as ready-made expressions. This supports the idea that idioms often function as “dead metaphors” (Fernando, 1996): their figurative origins may no longer be transparent, but their meanings persist as conventionalised cultural concepts. For example, the idiom “*to kick the bucket*” cannot be interpreted literally by analysing “kick” or “bucket”; its meaning, “to die”, is stored and retrieved as a whole.

From a cognitive semantic standpoint, idioms are embedded in metaphorical thought and often motivated by conceptual metaphors (Kövecses, 2017, 2018). Idioms involve mappings between two domains: the **source domain** (concrete, physical experience) and the **target domain** (abstract concepts). According to Kövecses (2010, p. 235), “idioms are motivated by metaphor in most instances,” which implies that idiomatic meanings reflect underlying conceptual processes. Metonymy also plays a role in idiom conceptualisation, particularly in body-part idioms. For example, “mouth” may represent power (speech as control), while “head” can stand for the entire person, following the PART–FOR–WHOLE principle.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), provides a cognitive framework for understanding idiom as linguistic realisations of underlying conceptual mappings. CMT argues that metaphors are not merely stylistic devices but mental models that structure how individuals interpret complex ideas and cultural experiences. Conceptualisation involves transferring knowledge from one domain (the **source**) to another (the **target**), thereby generating new understandings and meanings.

In this study, CMT is employed to demonstrate how language and thought are closely intertwined, and how metaphor influences the ways Nigerians conceptualise time and season in discussing politics. By highlighting the culture- and context-dependent nature of meaning construction, CMT allows the examination of how idiom contribute to shaping political discourse. Specifically, it shows how abstract political concepts are grounded in concrete, embodied experiences such as time, season, or bodily imagery. Time is abstract whereas seasons are more concrete experiential categories. Seasons are conceptualised in bodily experience (such as heat, cold, rain, dryness), which is why they feel more concrete than time itself. Bodily imagery occupies an intermediate position, either abstract or concrete depending on the contextual use emphasised. (e.g., election rainy season is fast approaching) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010).

In Nigerian, idiom reflect both universal conceptual structures and culturally

specific metaphor. Consider the examples:

**INEQUALITY IS EXPLOITATION:** (Nigerian English) *Monkey dey work, baboon dey chop* (The workers toil, but the elite benefit).

This idiom used animal hierarchical imagery to metaphorically contrast labour and consumption, where the ‘monkey’ represents the marginalised working class, labourers or common people and the ‘baboon’ symbolizes the elite or those in power who benefit from others’ toil.

**LEADER IS THE HEAD:** *The fish rots from the head* (Corruption begins at the top).

Unlike the previous idiom, this idiom uses bodily imagery to show the conceptual metaphor *ORGANISATION IS A BODY*, attributing systemic corruption to leadership rather than to subordinate members. ‘Fish’ stands for organisation, ‘head’ symbolized leaders or ruling elite, ‘rot’ means corruption or mismanagement and ‘spread of decay from top to tail’ present systemic collapse.

Such idioms frame political issues like corruption, governance, and inequality. Within CMT, they are not seen as arbitrary expressions but as cognitive processes that encode deeply rooted cultural knowledge. Therefore, idioms in political discourse serve two key functions:

1. **Framing Effect:** Idioms embody metaphor that shapes how issues are interpreted. For example, framing corruption as a disease (*the fish rots*) suggests that the public should expect a “cure,” even if it requires painful reforms. Kamalu et al. (2023) similarly shows how metaphor of corruption is framed as a disease reflect public morality and collective attitudes toward governance, particularly societal expectations of accountability, fairness, and ethical leadership.
2. **Persuasive Role:** Politicians and media figures use idioms to align their messages with public sentiments. For example, *monkey dey work, baboon dey chop* reinforces awareness of inequality through a war-like cultural knowledge. Comparable research by Lahlou and Abdul Rahim (2022) demonstrates how COVID-19 discourse in North African francophone

media employed war metaphor to frame the pandemic and evoke strong emotional responses. Together, these perspectives show that idioms are not ornamental but integral to political communication, shaping how citizens conceptualise and interpret political realities. Unlike Framing Theory (Entman, 1993), which explains how media selectively highlight aspects of reality to promote certain interpretations, CMT goes deeper by revealing how metaphors structure thought and represent culture. This makes CMT especially relevant for uncovering the cognitive and cultural dimensions of time and season idioms in political talk. Findings in the results section will demonstrate how idioms serve as cultural and cognitive tool that shape perception, reinforce shared values, and influence political conceptualisation in Nigeria.

### 3. Figurative Language Review

Idioms are not random figurative language but manifestations of how people experience and conceptualise the world through an embodied metaphorical process. Expressions such as “*time is running out*” or “*seasons of change*” illustrate the conceptual metaphors of TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT and POLITICS IS A SEASON, which structure reasoning, expectations, and decision-making (Kövecses, 2010). Previous studies (Charteris-Black, 2011; Kövecses, 2010) demonstrate that time- and season-related idioms are effective in political discourse because they draw on universal human experiences of temporality, cycles, and change, while embedding culturally specific associations. CMT emphasises that metaphor conceptualisation is shaped by cultural contexts (Kövecses, 2010).

Research on political discourse has documented idiom use across different media, including news reports, political magazines, and newspapers (Riemer, 2019). Studies from Ethiopia (Mulugeta, 2019) and Ghana (Ansah, 2017) reveal how figurative language reflect cultural and ideological positions, underscoring that conceptualisation is influenced by speaker competence, discourse genre, and cultural context. Moon (1998), for instance, documented more than 4,000 idioms in everyday English, noting the continuous emergence of new forms. Similarly, studies by Pan (2020) and Shehu (2020) extend the role of idioms into educational and cultural domains, while Umar (2019) highlights the emergence of new idiomatic language in

Nigerian print media, contributing to the development of a Hausa idiom dictionary.

In the Nigerian context, CMT has been applied to reveal how metaphor shapes public understanding of governance. Malah and Suleiman (2020) show that President Buhari's rhetoric employs war, journey, and body-part metaphors to construct political ideology and leadership persona. Likewise, Oguegbu and Chukwu (2020) identify journey and building metaphors in inaugural speeches as recurrent conceptual strategies for framing governance and nationhood. Extending this line of research, Akintayo and Olatokunbo (2024) demonstrate how Nigerian newspapers frequently construct politics through metaphors of warfare and struggle, highlighting the persuasive force of figurative language. Beyond descriptive accounts, Agbo et al. (2018) adopts a Critical Metaphor Analysis approach to focus on the ideological role of metaphor in constructing power relations. Collectively, these studies emphasise that metaphors in Nigerian political discourse function not merely as stylistic enhancement but as a cognitive and ideological resource.

Despite this rich body of work, no study to date has centred on time and season idiom use in Nigerian political talk shows. Existing research (Adegoju, 2009; Muhammad, Yap, Chan, and Wong, 2016; Umar, 2019) treats idioms broadly without distinguishing the temporal or seasonal dimensions of their conceptualisation as a rhetorical framing process. Furthermore, limited research examines the roles of time- and season-related idioms in Nigerian political discourse, or how these idioms migrate from televised talk shows into wider media narratives and everyday political conversations. This gap highlights the need for focused research on time and season idioms as persuasive linguistic tools that frame political discourse and its role in the media. The present study addresses this semantic and discursive gap.

#### **4. Materials and Methods**

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, which is appropriate for examining issues of culture, language, and communicative experience (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The descriptive component involve identification and classification of time- and season-related idioms, as well as their conceptualise, in a Nigerian talk show titled *Politics Today*. The study applies a cognitive linguistic analysis based on the principles of conceptualisation (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) to explore how these idioms are conceptualised in Nigerian political discourse and how they achieve relevance in shaping meaning. The Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) is used to identify figurative language and conceptual/linguistic metaphors, and CMT was used to

categorise source and target domains.

Unstructured interviews with viewers of *Politics Today* were also conducted to enable an in-depth interpretive and descriptive analysis of audience perspectives on the role of time and season idioms in political talk. Several studies highlight the importance of integrating conceptualisation with Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of idiomatic language. Hammas (2021) examines fear-related metaphors and metonymies in Arabic translation, demonstrating that metonymic structures operate within domains and complement metaphor's cross-domain mappings. Similarly, Veinberga (2024) investigates English and Latvian phraseology, showing that metonymic relations frequently underpin idioms and reinforce cultural and semantic associations that may not be fully captured by CMT alone. Roengpitya (2023) further confirms these findings in literary analysis, where idioms draw on metaphor and metonymy to convey complex cognitive and cultural meanings. Collectively, these studies justify the inclusion of metonymy alongside CMT, as this combined approach provides a fuller account of idiom conceptualisation and reveals semantic structures that remain invisible in metaphor-metonymy analyses.

The approach combines linguistic, cultural, and conceptual analysis to examine time and season idiom use within Nigerian political communication. Qualitative research is therefore most suitable for this study because it allows exploration of language, culture, and conceptualisation within the context of *Politics Today*. Following Yin's (2017) recommendations, triangulation involves multiple methods, data sources or theoretical perspectives to strengthen validity of the finding. This study adopted methodological triangulation achieved through data collection from two sources: (1) audio-visual documentation from *Politics Today*, and (2) viewers' interviews. Participant interviews were conducted to investigate how idiomatic language is interpreted and evaluated, a process that aligns with CMT's assumption that conceptual metaphor reflect underlying cognitive structures. These interviews provide insight into the conventional and culturally knowledge that frames language use in political talk shows, thereby complementing conceptual analysis with viewers' experiential perspectives.

## 4.1 Data Collection

### Step 1: Audio-visual Text Collection and Transcription

This phase involved selecting audio-visual talk shows from the nationally broadcast

programme *Politics Today* on Channels Television (Channels TV). The study focuses on political talk shows aired during ‘pre and post’ 2023 Nigerian general elections, a period characterised by heightened political activities and intensified persuasive discourse. Data were collected from Channels TV, a nationally broadcast news channel with a wide audience reach of over 319 K viewers and a reputation for sustained political programming. It is a popular news station known for its credibility in political reporting. Established in 1995, the station is widely regarded for its professional journalism standards, continuous news coverage, and sustained focus on political affairs. Channels TV was selected because it offers regular and issue-focused political talk shows, which has provide accessible archives. Each programme is moderated by a professional broadcast journalist called Seun Okinbaloye, whose role involves guiding discussions, managing turn-taking, and framing issues for public interpretation. While other channels also host political programmes, Channels TV was chosen because it is non-governmental station that promote freedom of speech that ensure data consistency, analytical depth, and manageability, rather than representativeness of all Nigerian media. Channels TV consistently features elite guest(s) such as politicians, political analysts, journalists, and civil society commentators, whose roles position them as influential opinion that shapes public discourse. Although data were collected during election periods, the focus of the analysis extends beyond electoral campaigning to political issues addressed in the talk shows, such as governance, national unity, accountability, corruption, and civic responsibility, making it suitable for cognitive-semantic analysis.

Five full-length episodes covering a range of political issues were chosen for analysis. The episodes were downloaded from YouTube based on relevant political and election content. Each episode lasted 30–45 minutes. The total transcribed episodes comprised of 27,000 words. After selection, only verbal content words (7306) remain because no discourse markers, repetitions, and interactive elements between hosts and guests was included. This provided qualitative data for analysing idiom, enabling the study to examine linguistic structures and cultural meanings embedded in political talk show. Although *Politics Today* has aired over 2,000 episodes and it is acknowledged that five episodes cannot statistically represent the entire corpus. But in qualitative design, such a small selection is justified because the focus is on in-depth understanding of language use, idiom, conceptual metaphor, and metonymy, rather than statistical representativeness. The selected episodes were chosen to reflect political topics, viewers' knowledge of idiom, and cultural contexts, providing data for the application of CMT analyses. The sample was narrowed to a **pre-election and post-election period between January–December 2022 and**

**2024.** The year 2023 was excluded from the study because Channels TV did not upload election-related episodes during that period. This study includes two episodes of pre-election discourse and three episodes of post-election reflection.

The selected episodes were manually transcribed to facilitate MIP analysis. At this stage, the focus was the identification of different idioms (Muhammad, Yap, Chan, & Wong, 2016). Each idiom was cross-verified using two dictionaries. Idioms absent from both dictionaries were categorised as Nigerian English idioms, based on their localised or translated forms. Two academic professionals further validated these idioms, confirming their figurative meanings and classification as localised Nigerian usage (see Table 1).

## **Step 2: Participant Interviews and Observations**

This phase employed purposive sampling to select viewers. Ten individuals (ages 45–65) from Maiduguri, Borno State, were enlisted, each assigned a Research Identification Number (RIN 1–10). This age range was chosen to reflect mature citizens with likely extensive exposure to media discourse and local idiomatic usage. Maiduguri was chosen as the study site because of its significance in Nigeria's political and security context. Although *Politics Today* is a national broadcast, the study focuses on how viewers in Maiduguri as some guests are from Borno State (Ali Ndume, Daniel Bwala and other). This regional focus allows for culturally and contextually insights into public knowledge of political talks.

Data were collected through face-to-face interviews and naturalistic observations, allowing researchers to observe how participants point out and interpret the roles of idiomatic language in authentic contexts. This approach avoided artificial laboratory settings and fostered genuine interaction. In line with Creswell & Creswell's (2017) suggestion, direct interaction with participants through interviews, communicative observation, and discourse analysis provided context-sensitive insights. Instead of relying on pre-existing instruments, the study adopted a flexible, context-driven strategy. The interview commenced with an introduction of the topic to provide the participants context on the significance of idioms, what they are and how they are culturally rich expressions that are used for various purposes, including persuasion, manipulation, making political points and convey complex ideas in relatable ways. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes, depending on the depth of the participant's responses. Interviews were conducted individually, in person, and were audio-recorded with consent for transcription and analysis. The data presented in

section 6.4 reflects the aggregated responses from these interviews. The interview questions (see Appendix 2) elicited viewers' responses on how idiom function in authentic media contexts. Interviews were conducted to complement CMT analysis, providing a triangulation of data. Although CMT allows for the identification of metaphorical structures in texts, it does not automatically reveal how such structures are understood or cognitively reflect audiences' knowledge. Interviews allow the study to capture participants' perspectives, clarifying context-dependent meanings, and culturally embedded interpretations of idiom. This approach strengthens the study's application of CMT by linking observed linguistic patterns with underlying conceptual structures, ensuring that the analysis reflects language use and viewers cognition.

#### 4.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis employed a **qualitative design** to provide a understanding of time and season idiom use in Nigerian political talk show and its interpretation by participants. Metaphor Identification Process (MIP) was used to identify recurring idioms across the selected episodes. English and Nigerian English idioms were then analysed using **Conceptual** metaphor and metonymy to determine their underlying conceptual structures. Time and season idioms were mapped onto source and target domains to reveal their metaphorical organisation.

Semi-structured interviews with participants provided complementary insights into how participants interpret the role of idioms that provide insights or indicative use of idioms in political talks. Ethical standards were strictly maintained. These include the authentication and validation of Nigerian English idioms, particularly those absent from standard dictionaries. The chosen site (Channels TV) is publicly accessible, and all politicians appearing on the programme did so voluntarily. Participants were fully informed of their rights, including the option to withdraw from the interview process at any stage (Silverman & Patterson, 2021). The methods used were consistent with the research objectives and ensured that the findings addressed the objectives.

#### 5. Results

This section presents results of data analysis. A total of 57 time and season idioms were collected and analysed. Using the *Oxford* and *Cambridge English Idiom Dictionaries* for reference, time and season idioms were categorised into two types: Standard English idioms and Nigerian English idioms. The types of English and Nigerian English idioms were indentified. English idiom from standard English

dictionary and Nigerian English idiom emerges from the interaction of standard English with local languages, cultures, in Channels TV political talk show contexts (Adeyanju, 2009; Osoba, 2014). The demographic distribution of participants and guests across the sampled episodes illustrates the types of time and season idioms. The conceptualisation of time and season idioms (based on Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and roles of idiom based on participant views in *Politics Today*,

### 5.1 Demographic Information in *Politics Today*

Table 1 shows information on viewers, guest(s), number of words and number of time and season idioms.

**Table 1 Demography of Viewers, Guest(s), Words and Idioms in Channels TV**

Episodes	Years of Talk Show	No. of Content Words in Episode (s)	No. of Idioms	Viewers RIN 1 & 2	No. of Guest(s)
1	2022	876	09	1	1
2	2022	2104	05	2	2
3	2024	1266	09	3	1
4	2024	1565	19	2	2
5	2024	1495	15	2	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>7306</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

RIN represents Research Identification Number

Table 1 presents the demographic information of participants, guests, number of words and idioms. Out of the 10 participants initially selected for the study, two interviews were successfully completed, while two participants were unable to complete the interview, two provided invalid responses, and four opted out entirely. Some responses were considered invalid and excluded from analysis when participants misinterpreted idioms, provided off-topic or overly vague answers, or failed to reflect meaningful engagement with the figurative language under study. Such invalid responses are common in qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Patton, 2015), particularly when analysing culturally specific or context-dependent language, and their exclusion ensures that only reliable interpretations contribute to the understanding of idiomatic meaning. This approach strengthens the credibility of the analysis by linking observed discourse patterns to audience cognition and cultural knowledge. Despite the low response rate, data analysis proceeded with the two valid interviews. The participants demonstrated advanced

language competence. Both were educated to the master's degree level and were regular viewers of *Politics Today* for over a year. They also work as political analysts within various government institutions, further indicating their familiarity with political discourse and media language. Using two participants in an interview is a common practice, especially in professional or academic research (Malterud, et al., 2016). Here are reasons why this is done: first, to improve reliability and validity by having two interview reduces individual bias and enhances the credibility of the data. One interviewer may miss details that the other catches (Patton, 2015). Secondly, two perspectives during interview allow for data triangulation, which strengthens the analysis and reduces subjectivity (Denzin, 1978; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

*Politics Today* episodes range from 30 to 45 minutes, during which invited guests discuss current and trending political issues. Analysis of guest appearances reveals that the most represented age group is between 49 and 69 years. This suggests that the majority of guests featured on *Politics Today* fall within the middle-aged demographic, which is often associated with active persons who can comment on Nigerian politics. Furthermore, the variety of words and frequency of time or season idioms presented in Table 1 reflect how guests are exposed with culturally shared knowledge. Over two years (2022–2024), five episodes were analysed, producing 7,306 words and 57 time and season idioms. This further supports the study's objective of investigating the language, cognitive semantic and cultural dimensions of time and season idiom use in political talk show.

## 5.2 Types of Time and Season Idiom in *Politics Today*

This section examines the types of idiom that occur most frequently in Nigerian political talk shows, with emphasis on the dominant categories recurrently used by politicians. The most prevalent time and season idiom presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Types of time and season Idiom in *Politics Today***

Serial No	English Idioms	Nigerian English Idioms
1.	A matter of time	At the end of the day_
2.	At that time	Back at the time
3.	At all times	Fullness of time

4.	Full-time	In those days_
5.	High time	Length in time
6.	It is time	On time
7.	Long-time	Period of time
8.	Long ago	Period in time
9.	Right time	Short time
10.	Stand the time of tests	To finish the day
11.	Take time_	Take time
12.	Too early in the day	
13.	Time to go ahead	
14.	Time heals all wound	
<b>Frequency</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>

Table 2 shows types of time and season idiom found after dictionary check. The first research question is addressed with recourse to 2 types of idioms with English idioms (25.6%) occurring more frequently than Nigerian English idioms (19.3%).

### 5.3 Conceptual Process in *Politics Today*

CMT was employed to identify the conceptual process of time and season idioms. The findings are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Conceptualisation of Time and Season Idioms in**

#### *Politics Today*

<b>Conceptual Metaphor</b>	<b>Metonymy</b>	<b>Metaphor</b>	<b>English Idioms</b>	<b>Nigerian English Idioms</b>
POLITICS IS SEASON	3	8	4	4
POLITICS IS TIME	6	16	9	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>

As illustrated in Table 3, the range of time and season idiom conceptualisations reveals 24 underlying motivations embodied in conceptual metaphors and 9 metonymies. *Politics is Time* and *Politics is Season* allow politicians and media to anchor abstract political change to familiar physical cycles (such as, morning/evening, past/present. Frame leadership decisions as inevitable, renewable, or overdue to present them as unavoidable and timely responses to changing realities,

thereby normalising power shifts and discouraging public contestation. These conceptualisations emphasise timing and urgency in political talks. These idioms (English and Nigerian English) reflect culturally shared understandings of time and season, by drawing on familiar cyclical and linear temporal schemas through which societies make sense of change. In many cultures, time is conceptualised as a cycle (renewal, continuity, return) and as a progression (inevitability, maturity, and overdue action). Framing leadership decisions as inevitable associated with linear notions of historical progression, suggesting that events unfold according to an unstoppable trajectory. Describing politics as renewable process that evokes seasonal cycles of regeneration, growth, and continuity, while bodily imagery activates shared beliefs about proper timing, ripeness, overdue and seasonal urgency. Together, these frames connects with collective cultural experiences of seasons, ageing, and timing, making political change appear natural, timely, and culturally proper rather than arbitrary or imposed. making political language more accessible, culturally motivated, and cognitively structured for the Nigerian public.

#### **5.4 Participant's Responses**

The findings in this section are based on CMT-driven semantic analytical procedure (see Table 2 and 3), in which selected idioms were first identified using the *Metaphor Identification Procedure* (MIP) applied to the first and second participant's responses. The identified idioms were then systematically analysed in terms of their underlying conceptual metaphors or metonymies, mapping between source and target domains, and cultural or conventional knowledge structures that motivate their use in *Politics Today*

##### **5.4.1 Participant RIN 1 Responses**

According to the first participant (RIN 1), an idiom as a figurative language is rooted in traditional wisdom that carries cultural weight and semantic meaning in Nigerian political discourse, they perform several roles like simplifying complex issues, reinforcing cultural wisdom, framing narratives or biases, mobilising emotional responses such as creating a memorable instance, building alliances or painting opponents as enemies and stirring public sentiment.

###### **a. Simplifying complex issues**

Idiom translates abstract political language into physical relevant, everyday expression. For example, similar universal metaphor of TIME IS A RESOURCE considers time as a tangible asset (money, commodity, etc.) or time could be used or wasted as it has expiring date. Instances from Tables 2 and 3 are used in the

following.

*On time* reflects universal conceptualisation of TIME IS A POSITION

Source domain	spatial time of location (“on” means aligned)
Target domain	politically opportune timing
Idiom from episode 2	<i>When you say on time in your trust, it beats me</i>
Cultural knowledge	the idiom suggests punctuality or responsiveness, that reflects on end of leadership or systemic failure.

b. Reinforcing cultural wisdom

Idiom evokes shared value, history, and communal knowledge. When used by hosts or guests, idioms increase credibility and accountability. For example, RIN 1 stated that, ‘*chop I chop*’ (eat I eat) is a political critique that signals corruption and equality. The idiom is motivated by seasonal metaphor of harvest and consumption, where political office is conceptualised as a limited season for personal gain. Political power (target) is conceptualised as a consumable resource (source) available for a limited time. The repetition (*chop I chop*) represents immediacy and cyclicity, suggesting that corruption is not exceptional but routinely renewed with each political cycle. This connect with culturally shared understandings of time in Nigerian discourse, where access to power is framed as “one’s turn” or “one’s time to eat,” normalising corruption as temporally bounded yet recurrent. Another instance is the following:

*A matter of time* involves conceptual metaphor of *Time is Matter*

Source domain	Unresolved matter that needs time
Target domain	Inevitable political event
Instance from episode 4	<i>It was just a matter of time and it will be their season to chop</i>
Cultural implication	Motivated by the understanding that political outcomes are delayed but inevitable

In another CMT extract from episode 5

*At that time* reflects conceptual metaphor of *Time is a Position*

Source domain	chronological point in time (at)
Target domain	historical and political events (or time)

Example from episode 5	<i>At that time, Saraki had 80% of members pass a vote of confidence</i>
Cultural experience	emphasis on political events anchored to specific moments

### c. Framing narratives and biases

Idiom can subtly guide public opinion toward a particular interpretation of events. For example, the statement *In APC, we give everybody a fair hearing*, suggests punishment is necessary for wrongdoing, reinforcing a law-and-order stance. This can be interpreted as invoking a temporal logic of process and sequence, rather than immediacy. The source domain of institutional time, characterised by stages, cycles, and due process, and the target domain of political justice and punishment “Fair hearing” presupposes waiting, deliberation, and procedural timing. “*Time to go ahead*” used to signal widespread unrest or tension. From the CMT perspective, the idiom invokes time as a natural regulator of action, suggesting that events must occur when conditions are ripe. Also, this idiom constructs political action as seasonally appropriate and temporally inevitable, drawing on shared cultural schemas that link legitimacy to acting at the right time. By framing action as occurring in its due season. The source domain includes time, seasons, ripeness, transition, cycles and target domain include political decision-making, leadership action or policy execution. When an idiom is used frequently, it can shape how the public view leadership, political failures, or opposition parties. *Time to go ahead* includes conceptual metaphor of TIME IS MOTION and Metonymy: *Time for Opportunity/Conditions* (ahead)

Source domain	Forward movement (time goes ahead, season to go ahead)
Target domain	Political progression (go ahead with policy execution)
Idiom from episode 3	<i>We may not have time to go ahead, because the dry season of suffering persisted</i>
Cultural experience	Urges forward action within limited time undermining the hardship
Conventional knowledge	time is location/motion that is either spatial position or temporal point (time can be arrived at or left behind due to suffering)

Also, in Episode 1 another time conception was identified

*Stand the test of time* motivated by universal conceptualisation of TIME IS A TEST and

Metonymy: SEASON FOR STANDING THE TEST OF TIME

Source domain	Durability (time and season for standing the test)
Target domain	Long-term credibility (standing the test)
Instance from episode 1	<i>To stand the test of time, they need to restructure the party</i>
Cultural implication	season of validation through endurance
Conventional knowledge	time is test, trial or evaluation which needs temporal endurance. Time measures the worth of actions, people, or ideas

d. Mobilising emotional responses

Because idioms are culturally embedded, they evoke strong emotional reactions, ranging from humour to outrage. Politicians and media host often use them to:

i. create memorable instance, as in

*Too early in the day* involves SEASON IS TOO EARLY

Source domain	time of the day (morning)
Target domain	political action taken before the appropriate moment (too early)
Idiom from episode 3	<i>A matter that is too early in the day to be discussed</i>
Cultural knowledge	This idiom uses the cultural schema of premature action

ii. build alliances or paint opponents as enemies to the people as in

*Right time* reflects conceptual metaphor of TIME IS CORRECTNESS, also time can also be a resource, equally motivated by QUALITY IS CORRECTNESS

Source domain	accuracy or appropriateness (rightness in timing)
Target domain	strategic opportunity
Example from episode 5	<i>This is the right time, and the right way to go</i>
Cultural Implication	This idiom reflects timely action with optimal political judgment
Conventional knowledge	Time can be used wisely or unwisely

iii. to stir public sentiment as in

*Rainy season for the masses* motivated by conceptual metaphor of SEASON FOR MASSES and conceptual metonymy of BENEFIT FOR RAIN

Source domain	Agricultural time (rainy)
Target domain	Ultimate season for political outcome
Instance from episode 3	<i>Rainy season for the masses, as Nigerians will be happy with the decisions</i>
Cultural knowledge	Merging agricultural period with long-term consequence

CMT findings show time and season conceptualisations based on 11 conceptual metaphors and 3 metonymies found after data analysis of the first participant responses.

#### 5.4.2 Participant RIN 2 Responses

According to the second participant (RIN 2), politicians make sense of their language needs and express their daily experiences through: imageries that are easy to understand, comparing and explaining complex ideas, eliciting emotional response, engaging viewers, establishing and creating personal bond.

##### 1. Make imageries easier to understand

Idioms make political speeches appealing and remarkable “*idioms make political talk sweet and easy to remember.*”. It enables politicians to create vivid mental images, making it easier for the audience to conceptualise and remember the political talk.

The idiom *to finish the day* is motivated by cultural conceptualisation of TIME IS VARNISHED or RESOURCE CONTAINER. The idiom encourages ending the day with motivation, reflecting the cultural view of time as a valuable resource that must be wisely used, it is precious or limited; it should not be wasted. “TIME IS RESOURCE CONTAINER” frames time as something to be filled productively, like a container holding valuable contents.

Source domain	Full cycle of a day (time is finished)
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Target domain	Culmination of political effort or spending (finish the day)
Instance from episode 1	<i>If you finished the day, that is what you have</i>
Cultural knowledge	Time as a container that can be completed or emptied

## 2. Compare and explain complex ideas

Idioms simplify and clarify complex concepts or policies. By using idioms, Nigerian politicians have explained ideas in more relevant and logical ways. Time is presented as measurement in Episodes 2, 4 and 5 (see appendix), linking this interpretation to specific linguistic metaphors in the following

Time is short (*short time*)

Time is long (*long time*)

Long time ago (*long ago*) In episode 4 time is presented as measurement  
*Short time* involves universal conceptualisation of TIMING IS SHORT

Source domain	Size (shortened measurement of time)
Target domain	Brief duration (short)
Idiom from episode 4	<i>For a short time, they will see</i>
Cultural implication	Emphasis is on urgency or temporary state
Conventional knowledge	Time is presented as either physical substance or measurable quantity.

Also, time as measurement conception found in episode 2 and 5 respectively  
*Long time / Long ago* reflects universal conceptualisation of TIME IS LONG (AGO)

Source domain	Distance (lengthened measurement of time)
Target domain	Historical reference (...ago)
From episodes 2/5	<i>For a long time, corruption was embedded.” Or “Not long ago, the party faced challenge</i>
Cultural implication	Time has length or volume that is historically rooted or persistent

Conventional knowledge	Time is element with either physical substance or measurable quantity
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Idioms such as “*time is short*,” “*time is long*,” and “*long ago*” simplify and clarify the abstract concept of time by mapping it onto concrete, embodied experiences of physical length and distance. Time, which is intangible and difficult to measure experientially, is cognitively structured in terms of spatial dimensions that speakers understand. By describing time as short or long, speakers compress complex temporal judgments, urgency, duration, or historical distance into accessible expressions. This simplification is comparable to the conceptual metaphor TIME IS SPACE, which motives abstract temporal reasoning to familiar spatial schemas (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

### 3. Elicit emotional response

Idiom evokes emotions bond with viewers. By using imageries, symbolisms, or non-literal languages, politicians can stir optimism, inspire action, or request for dedication and national unity.

From episode 2 time is conceptualised as container,

*Full-time* is motivated by universal conceptualisation of TIME IS A CONTAINER

Source domain	Completeness or maturity (fullness of time)
Target domain	Appropriate moment for action (full)
Example from episode 2	<i>The clock is ticking for the producer of the vaccines in full-time</i>
Cultural experience	This idiom conceptualises readiness and timeliness
Conventional knowledge	Time is a container reflected as an object that holds things or a period with bounded content (full)

### 4. Engage Viewers

According to RIN 2 viewer “*Politicians use sayings to make people work together*” and “*Dem talk so we go understand each other*”. Politicians unite the nation and encourage a sense of common goal using idiom in political talks most times to give emphasis, to shared cultural knowledge, principles, or agenda that will foster a sense of unity and collective responsibility in the country.

For instance, episode 4 show time as justice system

*Fullness of time* involves universal conceptualisation of *Time Is Overflowing*

Source domain	overflowing or saturation (full time)
Target domain	arrival of an appropriate or destined political moment (fullness)
Idiom in episode 4	<i>At the fullness of time, as every day is for the thief, but one day for the owner</i>
Cultural experience	This idiom elaborates the idea of completion and justice
Conventional knowledge	This conception includes time as a container or object that holds things or a period with bounded content (fullness of time bring judgement)

Similarly, in episode 5 time is seen as vertical conceptualisation  
*High time* is motivated by conceptual metaphor of SEASON IS HIGH TIME.

Source domain	elevated position (“height of time” signifies urgency)
Target domain	pressing political action (high)
Example from episode 5	<i>This is high time to nip it in the bud</i>
Cultural experience	This idiom combines vertical schema and timing
Conventional knowledge	Season is opportunity reflected in ripeness, harvest or strategic agricultural timing ( <i>nip it in the bud</i> )

#### 5. Establish and create deeper personal bond

The use of idiom can establish a personal bond between audience and speaker, allowing politicians to connect with people intimately. By using idioms, or other figurative forms, they can create a sense of connection and relatability as in:

*In those days* is motivated by universal conceptualisation of TIME IS PAST CONTAINER and SEASON FOR DAYS (metonymy)

Source domain	previous time (those days)
Target domain	historical and political references to seasons ago
Idiom from episode 4	<i>He appointed them in those days</i>

Similar to episode 4 and episode 3 conception of time as an object that can be

taken as a possession

*Take time* involves conceptual metaphor of TIME IS VALUABLE COMMODITY.

Source domain	possession of time (take time)
Target domain	effort or patience in political decisions
Instance from episode 3	<i>He took time to address the country</i>
Cultural experience	This implies the duration used to talk to his citizens or careful deliberation

CMT findings show time and season conceptualisations based on 9 conceptual metaphors and 1 metonymy found after data analysis of the second participant responses. Idioms in Nigerian talk show are not rhetorical features. The results reveal that idioms compare or explain complex ideas, describe ideas that are sometimes difficult to explain, create deeper personal connection, engage viewers, improve relationship with electorate, make imageries easier to understand and elicit emotional responses. The list goes on, but the roles of idiom in political talks cannot be overemphasised. They are tools of persuasion, cultural identity, and political strategy (Chetaikina, 2024). Figurative language shapes how issues are discussed and conceptualised, either toward commitment or manipulation (Ijaz, 2023; Malah & Suleiman, 2020). These findings are supported by CMT-driven studies that identify recurrent idiom–metaphor patterns and their collocational role in political discourse (Kamalu et al., 2023; Romano, 2024). And Nigerian studies that informed interpretations of idiom function in framing cultural knowledge (Shehu, 2020; Umar, 2019).

## 6. Discussion

The study analysed semantic conception of time and season idioms in Nigerian Channels TV's *Politics Today* talk show, using the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Each idiom was examined in terms of semantic features of conceptual metaphor or metonymy, English and Nigerian English idioms, cultural knowledge, conventional experience, conceptualisation of source and target domains, and participant views. Although idioms make up only a small proportion of the total lexical items, their frequency, 11 idioms per 1,000 words, highlights their strategic importance. Two key patterns emerged. First, idiom use is intensified in the more recent episodes (2024), with episode 4 recording 19 idioms and episode 5 recording 15. This suggests a growing reliance on figurative language in political debates, possibly to simplify complex issues, persuade viewers, or appeal

to culturally shared knowledge strategies. Second, guests contributed more idioms than participants. For example, in episode 4, two guests talk figuratively thereby producing 19 idioms, far outnumbering the single guest in other episodes. This implies that hosts and discussants may deliberately use idioms as framing strategies, while participants rely more on straightforward or technical language, reflecting their roles as experts rather than rhetorical framers.

These findings align with CMT's view that idiom in political discourse serve as frame of reference. Idioms linked to time and season conceptualisation not only capture the complexity of governance and reform but also localise abstract ideas in culturally resonant imagery. In this way, idioms reduce political distance between speakers and audiences, making political processes feel accessible, familiar, and even inevitable. Table 1 underscores that idioms are not merely linguistic features but also strategic tools of persuasion. By embedding arguments in figurative frames, politicians and guests guide audiences toward particular interpretations, thereby influencing political discourse on governance, elections, and post-election issues. These findings support Entman's (1993) framing theory, Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) CMT, and align with Umar's (2019) observations on indigenous Hausa idioms in Nigerian newspapers. Other studies (Adegoju, 2009; Akintayo and Olatokunbo, 2024; Kamalu et al., 2023) also show how English in Nigerian broadcasting has evolved into Nigerian English, incorporating locally coined idioms and translations from indigenous languages.

Findings from section 6.2 further reveal that time-related idioms are the most frequent category in *Politics Today*. As shown in Table 2, English idioms (25.6%) and Nigerian English idioms (19.3%) rely heavily on temporal expressions such as "a matter of time," "high time," "long ago," "too early in the day," and "at the end of the day." These idioms conceptualise politics through time as a resource and determinant of action. The dominance of time idioms is not coincidental: politicians often frame arguments around urgency, patience, and inevitability. For example, "it is high time" reveals the need for reform, while "time heals all wounds" conveys reconciliation after political conflict. Similarly, "too early in the day" dismisses premature criticisms.

Notably, about 70% of the Nigerian English idioms emerged from *Politics Today*. Figurative language, such as "back at the time," "fullness of time," or "to finish the day" coexist with Standard English idioms, reflecting a hybrid of local creativity and global English usage. This similarity balance between English idioms (13) and Nigerian English idioms (11) highlighting the mixed nature of Nigerian political

talks: English idioms provide a global communicative frame, while Nigerian English idioms embed the local cultural knowledge. This blend reflects the localisation of idiom, where universal schemas such as TIME and SEASON are mapped onto Nigerian political realities. These findings reinforce CMT (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010).

The findings in Table 3 show that *political talk* is structured around the conceptual metaphors *Politics is Time* and *Politics is Season*. Of the 57 idioms identified, 24 were motivated by conceptual metaphor and 9 by conceptual metonymy, confirming that metaphor remains the dominant conceptual process in Nigerian politics. Time-based idioms (16 conceptual metaphors and 6 conceptual metonymies) outnumber season-based idioms (8 conceptual metaphors and 3 conceptual metonymies), suggesting that politicians and commentators frame political events and decision-making in terms of temporal schemas such as waiting, deadlines, ripeness, and inevitability. Idioms like “*it is right time*,” “*it is high time*,” and “*on time*” illustrate how political action is conceptualised as dependent on the “right” or “wrong” timing. This supports the predominant conceptualisation of *Politics is Matter of Time*, which frames governance as a process unfolding in stages. Temporal idioms function as rhetorical tools to justify delays, promise future change, or emphasise the inevitability of events.

Section 6.3 further shows that temporal idioms dominate *Politics Today* because they enable politicians to frame action as urgent or deferred, manage public expectations, and align discourse with cultural knowledge of time as healer, judge, or determinant of outcomes. By contrast, seasonal conceptualisation that are represented as cyclic, recurrent, and transitional politics. Idioms such as “*in the fullness of time*” makes reference to political “seasons” that portray governance as a natural cycle of growth and decline. These conceptualisations reinforce the cultural belief that “*no condition is permanent*.”

Conceptualisation revealed structured sub-patterns: season is back/high/end and moving ahead appeared less frequently than time is position/location, right/short/long and activity, which align with universal schemas such as *Time Is Size*, *Time Is Motion*, or *Time Is Container*. These mappings are conventional and widespread but also culturally motivated. The idioms motivation of spatial and temporal prepositions (*on, in, of, end, short, long, ago, once, full, right, finish, back, at*), reflects the cultural understandings of time as something to be waited for, wasted, used wisely, or experienced as “right” or “wrong.” Recurring cultural schemas such as measurement,

size, location, position, and active time were identified, with the schema of time occurring most prominently (eight instances), across five English idioms and eleven Nigerian English idioms. This highlights the performative and interactive role of idiomatic language in Nigerian political communication.

Culturally, time and season idioms encode shared knowledge of cyclical agriculture, social justice, and political change. Nigerian English and Pidgin idioms such as “*dry season of suffering*,” “*rainy season for the masses*,” “*season to chop I chop*,” or “*time dey go*” convey hardship and hope in terms familiar to audiences. As Oguegbu and Chukwu (2020) and Oyeleye and Olaniyan (2014) show, such conceptualisations are familiar to Nigerian political discourse, used to comment on governance, corruption, insecurity, and elections. By linking political events to natural or seasonal cycles, these idioms evoke affective responses, strengthen speaker credibility, and align audiences with shared cultural knowledge.

Globally, similar patterns exist. For example, idioms like “*the time is ripe*” or “*a new dawn*” in Western political rhetoric frame political change through temporal progression, while season-based metaphors such as “*winter of restlessness*” draw on recurrent agricultural cycles to convey hardship or renewal (Semino, 2008). In Nigeria, idioms such as “*it is their season to chop*” or “*rainy season for the masses*” (linked to politics is agricultural season) frame corruption and redistribution as predictable cycles. Likewise, idioms like “*the clock is ticking*,” “*test of time*,” or “*time will tell*” highlight inevitability and accountability (conception of time will deliver justice). These idioms act as culturally grounded framing strategies that shape how audiences conceptualise governance, reform, and social justice.

In terms of domain conception, the findings show how target ideas connect to source concepts through cross-domain mappings. Time and season idioms serve as interpretive tools that frame events, critique governance, and reflect public responses. Among the various idioms identified (English and Nigerian English), those linked to the domains of time and season are particularly significant. Expressions such as “*every day is for the thief*,” “*one day for the owner*,” “*in those days*,” “*if you finished the day*,” and “*too early in the day*” encode abstract knowledge of temporality (e.g., day, morning or finished day) or cyclical change, while associating them with concrete entities like thief, owner, Saraki, or masses. These time and season idioms provide accessible linguistic links that allow politicians and commentators to frame political issues in terms of urgency, inevitability, patience, or transformation, thereby shaping audience conceptualisation of Nigerian politics.

Supporting scholarship reinforces the connection between idiom and cognition. Kövecses (2010) argues that idiom conceptualisation in second-language discourse consists of differences between conception and the mental processing of cross-domain mappings. Similarly, Shao (2024) shows that metaphorical conceptualisation within physical domains can shape cultural and conventional knowledge of second-language learners. Ansah's (2017) study in Ghana demonstrates that abstract cognition can be anchored in related physical domains, while Kraska-Szlenk (2020) highlights how mental domains function as knowledge structures that guide expectations and shape discourse culturally.

According to Kövecses (2018), conception is shaped by conventional and cultural knowledge. Media communication, including newspapers, advertisements, cartoons, and televised interviews, often motivates systematic metaphors grounded in recurring cultural contexts. Face-to-face communication also reflects systematic metaphor, particularly in domains of public interest such as politics, which rely on familiar conceptual structures like relationships and time. This study supports that view, showing how Nigerian English idioms in *Politics Today* emerge conventionally from both cultural and communicative contexts. These findings align with Framing Theory (Entman, 1993; Chong and Druckman, 2007), which emphasises how language influences political discourse by highlighting certain aspects of reality. Idioms function as ready-made frames that compress complex political debates into culturally familiar images (Charteris-Black, 2011). Hutchby (2006) similarly shows that figurative language in political discourse enhances memorability and quotability, increasing its circulation beyond broadcasts into headlines, memes, and everyday conversations. African studies (Adegoju, 2009; Ndalama-Mtawali and Kamanga, 2023) confirm that idioms reflect arguments and naturalise ideology by aligning speakers with the public. In this study, time- and season-based idioms allow speakers to present political change as inevitable, urgent, or natural seasons, thereby influencing how audiences align with or resist political discourse.

Interview data from participants RIN 1 and RIN 2 highlight the use of idioms may presents limitations such as manipulation can distort facts or promote divisive rhetoric (e.g., regional bias). Overreliance on idioms may oversimplify complex realities, reducing persuasive discourse to provocation. Furthermore, cultural exclusivity can lead to exclusion or misinterpretation when unfamiliar idioms are used with linguistically diverse audiences. The participants' perspectives can be productively interpreted through CMT. RIN 1 emphasised that time and season

idioms draw from shared cultural knowledge as source domains for political discourse. For example, time and season idioms that frame politics as a rainy or dry season draw on deeply embedded Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo cultural understanding where time and natural cycles motivate moral and social lessons. In CMT terms, such idioms map culturally specific domains (farming seasons, communal struggles, legendary wisdom) onto the target domain of politics. This not only simplifies complex issues but also enhances persuasion by evoking cultural solidarity and positioning opponents as outsiders to shared values. RIN 2, by contrast, focused on embodiment and experiential mappings, stressing how time and season idioms simplify abstract ideas by grounding them in everyday temporal or bodily experiences. Idioms like “*time to move ahead*” “*at the end of the day*” or “*too early in the day*” are not only culturally intelligible but also reflect embodied routines of beginning, continuing, and ending actions. According to RIN 2, idioms help politicians compare abstract concepts to daily life, making discourse more relatable and impactful.

Together, these responses illustrate the dual nature of semantic conception in Nigerian politics: (i) cultural-schematic conception (RIN 1), where time and season idioms evoke collective knowledge, communal wisdom, and historical memory; and (ii) embodied-experiential conception (RIN 2), where time and season idioms rely on universal human experiences (time, movement, life cycles starting or completing) to make politics comprehensible and emotionally conceptualised. These two dimensions reinforce CMT’s view that conceptualisation embody cultural specificity and universal cognitive patterns, making them effective in shaping discussions in political talks. For instance, “*at the end of the day*” reflects experiential mapping, while “*in the fullness of time*” draws on cultural knowledge.

Methodologically, this study used CMT, MIP, and dictionary references to distinguish literal from figurative meanings. These research methods and materials proved effective in collecting, identifying, and analysing time and season idioms. While data collection did not reach full saturation (i.e., not all possible time and season idioms were included), the study offers a purposive and representative account of idioms related to time and season in Channels TV. The analysis focused on 24 of the 52 English and Nigerian English idioms identified in *Politics Today*. Despite its limitations, this study contributes to understanding the semantic and cultural roles of time and season idiom in Nigerian political communication.

## 7. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that season- and time-based idioms, particularly those categorised under *Politics is Time* and *Politics is Season*, are motivated by conceptual metaphors grounded in universal and cultural schemas such as measurement, motion, and location. Drawing on cultural and conventional knowledge, these time and season idioms conceptualise politics as a sequential, measurable, and cyclical process. In doing so, they play a role and motivate perception of political events, reinforce cultural values, and facilitate discourse in Nigerian political communication. The findings reaffirm that time and season idioms are not merely stylistic embellishments but serve cognitive, semantic and communicative functions in framing discourse in *Politics Today*.

The results further show that conceptual metaphor, rather than conceptual metonymy, is the dominant conceptual process in Channels TV, with conceptual metonymy playing a supportive but less prominent role. The prominence of time-based idioms highlights the urgency, delays, and inevitability emphasised in political communication, while season-based idioms reinforce cyclicity and transitional phases of governance. These conceptualisations enable politicians to frame arguments persuasively, guiding conceptualisation by situating politics within shared cultural and temporal experiences. This study contributes to existing knowledge on the conceptual and cultural significance of idioms in Nigerian political talk shows. Future research may extend these insights by investigating the use, functions, and conception of idiomatic language across different cultural settings and media platforms.

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