

A CRITICAL STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU'S SELECTED SPEECHES

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Abstract

This study identifies the thematic issues in the speeches of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu; it analyses the textual conceptual features employed in projecting the themes and relates these features to the underlying ideological stance and political values projected in the speeches. This is done to elucidate the critical conceptual features in the speeches. The data for the study is the inaugural and independence speeches of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu which were delivered online *through cable.ng* May 29th, 2023 and October 1st, 2023, respectively. The theoretical framework for the data analysis is Lesley Jeffries' (2010) *Critical Stylistics*. The findings reveal thematic issues such as patriotism and unity, the concept of the Nigerian ideal, the resilience of Nigerians, a promise of renewed hope, equal representation and progressive good governance, recognition of the sacrifices of Nigeria's heroes, expression of concern over hardship, the quality of election in Nigeria and a thorough cleaning of the den of malfeasance, in the speeches. The study concludes that a speaker's choice of linguistic items is a reflection of the speaker's worldview and realities which he consciously or unconsciously tries to impose on the listeners. The study is significant as it contributes to the interpretation/understanding of political discourse and the communication of ideology by Nigeria's President to Nigerians.

Key words: critical stylistics, ideology, political discourse, speeches,

Introduction

One of the genres of discourse where language plays a significant role is political discourse. Language and politics are intertwined because it is through language that people are governed and led. Chilton (2004) supports this view when he avers that the doings of politics are predominantly constituted in language. The use of language in the political sphere is a conscious and deliberate attempt to persuade, control, and influence people. Political actors always craft their language to suit their purposes: to appeal to the emotions of people, impose their ideologies, alter people's beliefs and opinions, convince and persuade, assert authority, and exercise and consolidate power. Thus, political language is provoking thought-provoking and action-compelling.

Throughout written history, the most successful political actors are known to be very skilled in the use of language, be it verbal or non-verbal, to achieve their political goals. They use language, the very tongue by which the target audience processes their thoughts to whip up ethnic, sub-ethnic, religious and other such parochial sentiments to achieve sometimes benign but most times malignant and selfish political goals. It is an established philosophy amongst the Yoruba people of western south western Nigeria, one of the most politically advanced ethnic nationalities in Africa, according to Atanda (1980) that the use and tone of language has the power to birth prosperity or kick-start a war. Effective rhetoric has proven repeatedly throughout history to be a master key to opening the door that leads to political dominance and also to shaping the political trajectory of various ethnic nationalities and Nigeria as a whole.

Nigeria has a complex political history marked by periods of colonial rule, military dictatorships, and transitions to democracy. After gaining independence from Britain in 1960, Nigeria experienced a series of military coups and civil conflicts, notably the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970). In 1999, Nigeria transitioned to democratic governance with the election of President Olusegun Obasanjo, marking the beginning of the Fourth Republic. Since 1999, Nigeria has held

multiple democratic elections, with power alternating between the two major political parties: the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). The 2015 election was particularly significant as it marked the first time an incumbent president, Goodluck Jonathan, was defeated by an opposition candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, who was re-elected in 2019. Despite these democratic advancements, elections in Nigeria are often marred by allegations of electoral fraud, violence, and voter intimidation (Okwelum, 2023).

The 2023 election process resulted in Bola Ahmed Tinubu becoming the 17th President of Nigeria. On May 29, 2023, immediately after assuming office as the Executive President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Tinubu delivered his inaugural address at Eagles Square, Abuja. Throughout its history, Nigeria has experienced both military and civilian governments. The 2023 presidential election, which elected Bola Ahmed Tinubu, was one of the most contentious since the beginning of the Fourth Republic in 1999. The nation faces significant challenges, including instability, corruption, and persistent fuel and electricity shortages. These pressing issues motivated researchers to analyse the speech President Tinubu delivered on May 29, 2023. His inaugural address, as well as his first Independence Day speech, is crucial for understanding the future direction of Nigeria and its political landscape (Okwelum, 2023).

The study of language in political communication has garnered significant scholarly attention. Researchers like Abuya (2012), Udoma (2012), and others have focused on analysing the speeches of past Nigerian presidents using critical discourse analysis and pragmatics. Scholars such as Massoud and Elahe (2015) and Tian (2021) have examined the speeches of U.S. presidents like Obama, Trump, and Biden through systemic functional grammar, critical discourse analysis, and pragmatics. However, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's speeches have not been extensively studied due to his recent ascension to office, presenting an opportunity for new research. This study aims to fill this gap by using critical stylistics, which offers specific tools for uncovering

ideologies in texts, in contrast to the broader approaches of critical discourse analysis and pragmatics. The specific objectives are to identify the thematic issues in the speeches; analyse the textual conceptual features employed in projecting the themes in the speeches; and relate the textual conceptual features to the underlying ideological stance and political values projected in the speeches.

Theoretical Framework

Critical stylistics is a synthesis of linguistic stylistics and critical discourse analysis. It was first used by (Jeffries, 2007) in her book *Textual Construction of the female body: A critical stylistics approach* and was formally established in 2010 with the publication of Jeffries' *Critical Stylistic: The Power of English*. Jeffries (2010) believes that no text is ideologically free, that is, texts carry ideologies which could be explicit (I hate my neighbour) or implicit (my annoying neighbour is around). It is with this belief that all texts are ideological that Jeffries proposes a theory, which is not entirely new, to uncover and unearth the hidden ideologies in texts using linguistic tools. Speakers rely on or use the resources of language to present a particular view of the world. Ideologies are a very important aspect of the world we live in, this is because people perceive reality differently and these different ideas are communicated, reproduced, constructed and negotiated through language. The text conveys particular ideologies that may influence or alter the viewpoint of the recipients. Critical stylistics therefore seeks to understand how a text can create specific types of meaning in of several different ways.

Despite embracing many of the political outlooks and ideological concepts of CDA, critical stylistics developed as a reaction to the inadequacies of Critical Discourse Analysis as an approach to ideology in language. She explains that "developing critical stylistics was the answer to feelings of frustration in the face of critical discourse analysis's deliberate lack of methodology or framework and its apparent abandonment of many of the achievements of linguistics in its scientific phase of development". Instead of the above, she proposed a theory giving to give the reader a clear set of analytical tools to follow in carrying out the critical analysis of texts,

uncover or discover the underlying ideologies of text (Jeffries 2014, p. 410).

Jeffries views textual meaning as being encoded by the stylistic choice of lexical items that are embedded in the text. As against the CDA perspective on the importance of context, Jeffries believes in the centrality of text in deriving meaning as she explains that the textual meaning being talked about is not that the text has a single and rigid meaning but that the textual meaning which is triggered by the text interacts with interpersonal and basic linguistic meaning, as well as the context of situation and other background features or knowledge (Jeffries, 2010). This study uses the framework and tools provided by critical stylistics to analyse and interpret the speeches. These tools are called the textual conceptual functions which had the aim of “bringing the rigour and textual focus of stylistics to the analysis of non-literary texts to identifying the ideological underpinnings of such text” (Jeffries 2014, p. 417). The ten tools are:

Naming and Describing: a broad term which is used to cover linguistic practices that are used to structure the noun or the noun phrase which is usually the grammatical subject or object of the sentence. People or things can be characterised or described through the nominal item and this can be used to produce different ideologies.

Representing Action/Event/State: In describing events, speakers or writers choose verbs that will perfectly communicate or convey the kind of meanings they have in mind. The choice of the main verb in a clause can alter or shape the meaning that the text recipient will decode from the text.

Equating and Contrasting: This tool has to do with how text producers construct their view of the world for the reader to what they see as equivalent or contrasting to the recipient’s ideology. It concerns the way texts use the textual construction of equivalence and opposition to represent the world. Jeffries (2010) opines that the construction of certain synonyms or antonyms in a text can produce an ideological effect.

Exemplifying and Enumerating: This has to do with the textual function of listing with the ideological implication of inviting the reader /hearer to

see the list as being comprehensive and to indicate that all possibilities have been covered.

Prioritising: It explores the syntactic possibilities of making some information salient in a text. When there is a re-ordering of the conventional information structure of the English clause, which makes it easy for the hearer/reader to identify new information, for backgrounding or foregrounding, the textual function of prioritising is being used.

Implying and Assuming: The textual function of implying and assuming is premised on pragmatics' presupposition and implicature. Implicature which is derived from the verb "to imply" is a component of a speaker's meaning that constitutes what is meant as against what is said.

Negating: It is a textual practice that text producers use to create a non-existent world or to portray something contrary to reality. Apart from the negative particle in English which is attached to the first item in a verb phrase, which is an auxiliary verb, negation can also be introduced through pronouns like none, no one, nobody and nothing.

Hypothesising: This textual function explores the contribution of Halliday's system of modality with useful insights from Simpson (1993) by considering the hypothetical situations that modality introduces. Since it has been established that texts reflect the writer's view of the world, it is worthy of notice that some texts reflect how the world should be or how the producers wish it was.

Presenting others' Speech and Thoughts: One of the textual tools that is used to manipulate people is how other's speech and thoughts are presented. At the center of this model is the disparity between direct and indirect speech presentation where direct speech presents the exact words of the speaker and the indirect speech presents a reported version of the original with a change of person and tense.

Representing Time, Space and Society: This is one of the mild tools of textual analysis and is attractive to text producers because it can bring the readers to their point viewpoint. At the centre of this model is the pragmatics' deixis which are expressions that point at people, locations and time. These are the ten tools proposed by Jefferies, the study will not utilise all the tools but has selected five tools that are relevant to the study.

Literature Review

Political discourse can loosely be defined as any form of text or talk produced by or for politicians (Hayward and O'Donnell, 2011). This definition implies that speeches by politicians, campaigns, manifestoes, interviews, party programs, political debates and party slogans among others fall within the purview of political discourse or communication. In his own words, Wilson (2015, p. 776) says "Political discourse refers to the study of political language where the focus is on aspect of language structure as it constitutes and displays specific political functions". The role of language in politics cannot be over-emphasized as language and politics are intimately connected and tied together in such a way that makes it almost impossible to do politics without language. Chilton (2004, p. 6) supports this opinion when he says that "political activity does not exist without the use of language". This means that language is a veritable tool that politicians use to struggle for power, retain it or resist it.

Language use in political communication has attracted the attention of many scholars and stimulated a lot of research. Balogun and Murana (2011) conducted a pragmatic study of the inaugural speeches of President Donald Trump and they submitted that there is a great bond between language and politics and that a political career is negotiated, secured and practised through language. They also noted that presupposition was employed by the speaker to characterise the citizen's knowledge about the affairs of the nation. Abuya (2012) carried out a pragma-stylistic analysis of President Ebele Jonathan's inaugural speech using the speech act theory of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) identifying the speech act type that was prominent in the speech. The study agreed with Balogun and Murana (2011) on the use of language in the political arena. The study revealed that commissive sentences were majorly used by the president to appreciate the votes and support of the audience and to further encourage them to be hopeful of a better administration which his tenure promises.

Udoma (2012) worked on the semantic and pragmatic meanings of modals in President Jonathan's speech during Nigeria's

50th independence celebration. The study agreed with Van Dijk (1995) that political discourse is an instrument that is used by the dominant ideology to control people. The study concluded that political discourse like independent speeches, political campaigns and manifestoes are used to sell the ideology of the candidates or parties represented.

From the theoretical perspective, scholars have applied critical stylistics to different data such as Oyebamiji (2018) conducted a critical stylistic study of advocacy campaigns in Nigeria. The study analysed advocacy campaigns on terrorism and human trafficking jingled on the Nigerian Television Authority using critical stylistic theory. The study revealed the use of naming and describing, representing action/state and event, prioritising and negation. The study concluded that Nigeria's advocacy on terrorism and human trafficking is a discourse site for elucidating the theory of critical stylistics.

The insights from the earlier study show that most of the works on political discourse and speeches were situated in the area of pragmatics and discourse analysis. These earlier works have concentrated on the speech act and contextual analysis of political discourse. Since critical discourse analysis deals with the issues of power relations, abuse and how language enacts authority, the framework has attracted a lot of researchers in the area of political discourse. However, this present study is undertaking a critical stylistic study of the inaugural and independence speeches of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu discovering the ideological position of the president.

Methodology

The primary data for this study is the inaugural and independence speeches of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu who is the 16th president of Nigeria and also the 5th president of the fourth republic. The president's speeches were purposively selected for the study because he is the present president of Nigeria. Two (2) of his speeches as president were selected: the first is the inaugural speech which is his first speech as the democratically elected president of the federation and was delivered on May 29th 2023 while the second speech was delivered to celebrate the 63rd

independence anniversary of the nation on October 1st, 2023. The data were downloaded from *the cable.ng* and transcribed for analysis. The analysis was done using the critical stylistic theory proposed by Jeffries (2010). The primary focus of the analysis was on the text itself with occasional reference, where necessary, to the social and situational context in which the text is produced and received. A rigorous and objective qualitative analysis was done to uncover the ideological stance and values projected through the linguistic structures and lexical choices of the president.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Thematic Issues in the Speeches

Political speeches serve as a medium of communication between the leaders and the governed. It is through these speeches that politicians communicate their intentions, plans, goals and other issues surrounding governance and polity. Beyond communications of plans, politicians also, in a subtle way, communicate their ideologies and those of their parties to the people. To satisfy the demands of the first objective of this study, the analysis in this section is drawn on some of the thematic concerns of the speeches. The identified themes are patriotism and unity, the concept of Nigeria's ideal, extolling Nigerian's resilience, a promise of renewed hope, the nature and quality of the election that made him president, equal representation and progressive good governance, recognition of the sacrifices of Nigeria's heroes, expression of concern over hardship and thorough cleaning of the den of malfeasance.

Patriotism and Unity

One of the most important and weighty messages the president conveys to Nigerians in his inaugural speech is the clarion call for patriotism and unity. According to the president, we must always encourage the labour of those who have gone before us to flourish and give rise to a better reality rather than letting it wither in vain. He opines that it is our responsibility to tread the path and continue the journey

that our heroes started and believed in. He advises that regardless of our beliefs, ethnicity or place of birth, we must recommit ourselves to seeing Nigeria as the “indispensable home” for every one of us. This message is targeted at awakening the consciousness of one Nigeria in the people.

The Concept of Nigeria's Ideal

At the very beginning of his inaugural speech, the president begins to explain what he later called “the new Nigeria ideal” which is to position the country as a strong, united and indivisible nation where citizens across the various political and religious divides will work together to build a powerful and prosperous nation. He describes the Nigeria ideal as a system which is “more than just an improvement in economic and other statistics”. He expresses the opinion that our story cannot be fully conveyed only based on economics and statistics, but through our ways of life which he feels should nurture humanity and encourage compassion towards one another so that we can jointly combat the social ills that threaten to tear the nation apart. The Nigeria ideal seeks to revive the spirit of nationalism and unity which is needed to put the country on the path of growth and development. The president’s rhetoric in the opening paragraph is crafted to stir the emotions of Nigerians so that this concept of the ideal Nigeria will be embraced by all.

Extolling Nigerians’ Resilience

The president extols and celebrates the resilient nature, determination and ability of Nigerians to cope with the myriad of challenges that threaten the stability, peace and progress of the country. He acknowledges the tireless efforts of the citizens of Nigeria to survive the various hardships, insecurity, religious crises, ethnic conflicts, extreme poverty, terrorism and unemployment that pervade the country. It is worthy of applause that Nigerians continue to thrive and excel despite the hunger and economic hardship that plague the country. For instance, in the 2023 global hunger index, Nigeria ranked

109th out of 125 countries considered in this survey. Despite these grim realities, Nigerians have refused to kowtow with neighbouring West African countries that have been thrown into irreparable internal crises through violent civil disobedience and military coup. Instead, they are channelling all their energies and anger towards productive ventures, sports and entertainment. President Tinubu admits that other countries have crumbled in the face of far lesser challenges while Nigerians, through their resilience, continue to stand firm as the strongest champions of the black race.

A Promise of Renewed Hope

President Tinubu adopted the “renewed hope” agenda as a catchy slogan during the campaigns with a promise of a new way and style of doing things particularly as the immediate past administration’s promise of “change” failed to effect the desired change that Nigerians longed for. The “renewed hope” slogan aims to revive and resuscitate the hope that Nigerians had in the previous administrations, especially the immediate past APC-Controlled-Administration because he belongs to the same APC fold. The president wastes no time in emphasizing this slogan in his inaugural speech, describing Nigeria as a country on the march from “the dimness of night into the open day of renewed national hope”. To sell the message of renewed hope to Nigerians, he highlights some of the policies he feels would change the fortune of the country which border on agriculture, security, foreign policy, job creation, revival of small-medium enterprises (SMEs), monetary policy, and subsidy removal among others. The renewed hope mantra is used as a subtle way of pleading with Nigerians to trust and have faith in his administration even as he commits himself to performing better than his predecessors.

Analysis of the Textual Conceptual Tools

Naming and Describing

This tool deals with the nominal options of the speaker by which people, places and things are identified and characterized. These

nominal choices do not only refer to something or someone but can also be used to show the speaker's opinion about the referent.

Nominal Choices that reflect the President's Religious Ideology

Excerpt 1.

The sacred mandate
 God Almighty
 Fate
 Destiny

A speaker's choice of words is highly sensitive in any multi-religious and multi-tribal nation like Nigeria. Thus, there is a deliberate usage of religion-neutral lexical items like 'fate', 'destiny', 'sacred mandate' and 'God almighty' in the speeches. In his opening remarks, Tinubu's description of his mandate as "sacred" and his faith in "God almighty" as absolute portrays his belief and conviction that his ascension to power was designated by God himself. Tinubu, a Muslim from the south-west, against the expectation of many and the unwritten code of balance of power between the two main religions in the country (Christianity and Islam) decided to choose Senator Kashim Shettima, a Muslim from the North East as his running mate, thus throwing up a highly controversial and divisive so-called 'Muslim-Muslim ticket'. While explaining his decision to the leadership of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), he admitted that choosing a Christian running mate would have been the easiest choice, but according to him, he chose Shettima based on the need for competent hands to address the urgent challenges facing the country.

Tinubu's decision was a display of crass insensitivity and neglect of Christians in the North where he was obliged to choose his running mate, they pointed out that same faith ticket did not respect the country's diversity and its federal character principle, especially at a time when Nigeria is deeply divided along ethnic and religious lines exacerbated by the activities of the Islamic extremists. Thus, the use of nouns associated with a particular religion will heighten the existing religious controversies in the country. In order to avoid being pigeon-

holed into a particular religious faith and to give the speech national acceptance, he avoids the use of words that could spark religious conflict such as the God's name in Islam "Allah" or the usual "Insha Allah" or any such words, instead, he sticks with religious neutral nouns like 'faith', 'Destiny', 'Sacred', and 'God almighty'.

Positive Image Making through Naming and Describing

Excerpt 2.

Here, permit me to say a few words to *my predecessor*, President Muhammadu Buhari. Mr. President, you have been an *honest, patriotic leader* who has done his best for the nation you love. On a more personal note, *you are a worthy partner and friend*.

Through his nominal choices, as evident in the example above, the president constructs a positive identity for the immediate past president by describing him as a leader who is 'honest' and 'patriotic'. He didn't use these adjectives to modify the headword 'leader' just to refer to president Buhari, but also to indicate his opinion of the referent. The noun phrase "a patriotic leader who has done his best for the nation you love" is an embedded nominal group with a relative clause as a post-modifier which is deliberately used to project his view about Buhari's administration. An administration that many Nigerians adjudged as a disappointment and failure because the so much anticipated and miraculous 'change' that he promised did not happen: he failed to deliver on all his promises, the economy was crumbling, security of lives and properties was non-existent, unemployment was on the rise and poverty rate increased drastically, yet, the adjectives worthy, honest and patriotic has been used by President Tinubu to engage in positive image making.

Although the choice of 'his best' and not 'the best' in the rank-shifted relative clause has a kind of subtle pejorative connotation because 'Buhari's best' does not mean 'the best' for the nation. President Tinubu has described his predecessor as someone who loves his nation and who has done everything, he could to lead the nation

towards the path of progress. The reasons behind such lofty descriptions are purely ideological. Through the use of noun phrases, whose structure permits information to be packaged up; Tinubu tries to re-present Buhari to Nigerian citizens as being upright. Using the words partner and friend to describe Buhari also suggests that there exists some sort of intimacy and cordiality between the speaker and the referent.

Also, President Tinubu's use of appositives to describe the immediate past president is ideologically significant. Though the apposition has similar structures that perform the same syntactic function in the sentence, but they have different semantic implication. The use of predecessor implies that Buhari has been stripped of all his power as a president because the mantle of leadership has been passed to President Tinubu. However, the addition of the title 'president' to Buhari's name in the second structure is a mark of respect, deference and honor.

Nominal Choices that promote Solidarity and Patriotism

Excerpt 3.

Our home our nation
 Our country fellow compatriot
 Dear compatriotour precious nation
 Dear Nigerians our destiny
 One unified nation one unified national cause

One of the biggest issues in Nigeria is ethnic and religious divide which threatens to tear the country apart. The president however believes that if harnessed properly and channelled correctly, our diversity can be strength, a ladder to Nigeria's prosperity rather than a stumbling block to progress which it had been since independence. Hence, the president usage of noun phrases that promote unity and joint ownership of the country. The addition of the possessive adjective 'our' to modify home, nation, country, destiny and precious nation in the noun phrases above is aimed at awakening the spirit of patriotism

and solidarity in Nigerians. The choice of the noun ‘compatriot’ is also ideologically important. In the speeches, the president deliberately switches from referring to Nigerians as ‘dear Nigerians’ to ‘dear compatriot’ and ‘fellow compatriot’ and the ideological implication of this choice is that ‘compatriot’ confers a kind of responsibility and obligation on Nigerians. The reference to the citizens as Nigerians doesn’t translate to being a patriotic Nigerian, but being addressed as a compatriot automatically makes one feel the compelling sense of responsibility and loyalty to one’s nation. The noun phrases ‘one unified people’ and ‘one national cause’ in the examples above connotes unity, togetherness and peace co-existence. Nigerians are admonished to see themselves as one people with the same cause which is to work towards the progress and development of the country in a bid to having a better society which Tinubu calls ‘the new Nigeria ideal’.

Representing Action/Event or State

This tool deals with how the choice of verb alters or shapes the meaning that the text recipient will decode from the text. Below are the examples of representing actions, events or states in the speeches.

Excerpt 4.

We **have endured** hardships that would have made other societies crumble

We **have shouldered** the heavy burden to arrive.....

The people of this nation **shoulder** burden that would have been shed

We **have stumbled** at times, but our resilience.....

Our burdens **may make us bend** at times.....

We **have** long ago **decided** to **march** beyond the dimness.....

We **have more firmly established** this land as a democracy.....

Material Action Process Intention/ Event to depict the Tenacity of Nigerians

President Bola Tinubu’s speeches are characterized with the usage of strong verbs that appeal to the emotions of Nigerians. These

verbs, as evident in the examples above, are used to depict the resilience and tenacity of Nigerians. In the examples above, the sentence has a voluntary action 'endured' which means they deliberately persist and continue to suffer unpleasant situations which other societies could not endure. Tinubu, through this verb, admires the determination of the people to continue to pull through the plethora of challenges and difficulties that the country faces. He acknowledges that it is the enduring nature of the people that differentiate them from other societies who have crumbled because they were not tenacious as Nigerians. Nigerians have chosen and continued to exhibit strength and perseverance despite the prevalent state of poverty, deprivation and economic insecurity which is compounded by terrorism and corruption.

In the same vein, the use of material action 'shoulder' to suggest that Nigerians bear burdens which is very heavy and cause them to stumble and bend a lot of times but their tenacity keeps them going. The choice of 'stumble' and 'bend' which are material action events is appropriate as it emphasises the size of the load they bear. The words suggest the impacts of the weight of the burden they bear. Regardless of the adverse effect of these burdens, Nigerians have decided to continue to make considerable progress, to march beyond their challenges so as to establish the ideal nation that the president is proposing.

Exemplifying and Enumerating

Exemplifying and enumerating concerns the rhetorical style of a speaker that demonstrates the speaker's ability to trigger the emotions of the recipient through listing. The following are the examples of exemplifying and enumerating in the speeches.

Excerpt 5.

This handover symbolizes our trust in God, our enduring faith in representative governance and our belief in our ability to reshape this nation into the society it was always meant to be.

We hold this beam aloft because it lights our path with compassion, brotherhood and peace.

In this excerpt, the president uses three abstract nouns: trust, faith and belief to reveal his religious and political ideology. Although these words are synonymous and sometimes used interchangeably, they are slightly different in this context. 'Trust in God' implies the reliance and confidence that the president has in God especially as he believes that he could not have won the election without the intervention of God. The president also acknowledges that he would not have achieved this great feat without the democratic system through which he was elected into office. 'Faith in representative government' indicates his political belief and conviction particularly in the fact that the election that brought him into office was free, fair and credible.

The president uses the textual tool of exemplifying and enumerating to list the ingredients that can be used to achieve unity and national cohesion in Nigeria. These ingredients are compassion, brotherhood and peace which are arranged chronologically. It is compassion that breeds brotherhood while the interaction of both leads to peaceful co-existence. Compassion and brotherhood are necessary in abating both ethnic and religious hostility that characterise Nigeria. Brotherhood is promoted by compassion which entails showing sympathy and willingness to help and support others. The president through this tool emphasizes the power of compassion and brotherhood in achieving a society devoid of conflict.

Negating

This concerns the addition of a negative particle to the verb to engage the imagination of the readers. The following are the examples of negation in the speeches:

Excerpt 6.

We are here to further mend and heal this nation, **not** to tear and injure it.

Our administration shall govern on your behalf but **never** rule on you.

We shall consult and dialogue but **never** dictate

The negative triggers in these sentences are not and never. By using these triggers, the president makes us imagine the other realities that stand behind the negative actions. Through the use of mend and heal in the excerpt above, the president has successfully painted a picture of a sick nation that needs quick interventions and he also painted the image of an imaginary nation with circumstances that are worse than what we are already facing. By doing this, he engages our imagination to create a hypothetical situation in which the sick nation is further injured and torn and allows us to embrace the first option of mending and healing the nation. In examples (b & c), the readers or listeners, through the use of negation, are forced to imagine a nation where the presidency dictate and jail or kill people that hold contrary views to theirs. He tries to paint the picture of a military regime where there is no freedom of expression and where the president consults neither the constitution nor the people.

The importance of the textual practice of negation in this speech is that it makes the reader or listener to build a virtual version of reality though it is imaginary and this makes the reader or listener conscious of situation that occurs if the opposite happens. The ideology behind this is that the president, through the use of negation, has created fear and belief in the mind of the readers or listeners by presenting two worlds: real and imaginary and by so doing, persuading us to embrace the plans that his administration has for us.

Conclusion

This study has been able to elucidate the critical conceptual features in the inaugural and independence speeches of president Bola Ahmed Tinubu. Based on the findings, the study reveals that political speeches are not only used by political actors to communicate information about their plans, goals, administration, and government policies but also to control the minds of the listener or reader and to provoke them, through their linguistic choices, to see the world from the lens of the speakers. The study also shows that the ideologies that are deeply rooted inside these speeches can be uncovered through

textual conceptual tools such as naming and describing, representing actions, events and states, negating, exemplifying and enumerating, and presenting time, space and society. The study furthers that the president used language resources to tailor his speeches such that it resonated with different audience and to promote unity, patriotism and national cohesion regardless of their ethnicity, religion, and beliefs. The study concludes that a speaker's choice of linguistic items is a reflection of the speaker's worldview and realities which he consciously or unconsciously tries to impose on the listeners.

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