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Discourse Analysis of Inaugural Addresses of Nigerian Leaders

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Declaration on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

The undersigned Musefiu Olaniyi Bukola, student ID number 898628, enrolled at Ca'Foscari in the Master's Degree Programme in Language Sciences, author of the final degree thesis *Discourse Analysis of Inaugural Addresses of Nigerian Leaders*, thesis supervisor Professor Daniela Cesiri, aware of the penalties provided for in Article 76 of the Consolidated Act set out in Presidential Decree no.445 of 28 December 2000, and of the loss of benefits provided for in Article 75 of the same Consolidated Act in the event of false or misleading statements, under his own responsibility pursuant to Articles 46 and 47 of Presidential Decree no.445 of 28 December 2000.

DECLARES

that he has NOT used generative artificial intelligence technologies to support various aspects of the research and writing of the final degree thesis.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Almighty God, the giver of knowledge and to my late parents.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Declaration	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Contents	v
Abstract	viii
General Introduction	1
Purpose of the Study	2
Research Objectives	3
Significance of the Study	4
Synopsis of the Dissertation	4
CHAPTER ONE: SOCIO-CULTURAL HISTORY AND POLITICAL SITUATION OF NIGERIA	
1.0 Political and Cultural Background of Nigeria	5
1.1 Colonial Rule in Nigeria	6
1.2 Political Dispensations in Nigeria since 1960	9
1.3 Nigeria as a Multilingual and Multicultural Nation	10
1.4 The Socio-Economic and Political Situation in Nigeria	12
1.5 Military Intervention in Nigerian Politics	14
1.6 Political Crises in Nigeria	17
1.7 System of Government in Nigeria	19
1.8 An Overview of the Concept of Nigerian English	20
1.9 Features of Nigerian English	21
1.10 The Status of English in Nigeria	22
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.0 Introduction	24
2.1 Political Discourse	24
2.2 Inaugural Speech as a Genre of Political Discourse	33

2.3 Language of Politics	36
2.4 Existing Studies on Political Speech	40
CHAPTER THREE: DATA AND METHODOLOGY	
3.0 Introduction	47
3.1 Data Selection	47
3.2 Reasons for Selecting the Speeches	48
3.3 Method of Analysis	48
3.4 Theoretical Framework	49
3.5 An Ideal Discourse Analysis	56
3.6 Intertextuality	57
3.7 The Concept of Ellipsis	58
3.8 Pronouns in Political Discourse	58
3.9 Context in Discourse Analysis	60
3.10 Origin of Discourse Analysis	62
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	
4.0 Introduction	66
4.1 Outline of Babangida's Speech	66
4.2 Outline of Obasanjo's Speech	67
4.3 Outline of Tinubu's Speech	68
4.4 The Rhetorical Implications of Ellipsis	70
4.5 Instances of Ellipsis in Babangida's Coup Speech	70
4.6 Instances of Ellipsis in Obasanjo's Speech	71
4.7 Instances of Ellipsis in Tinubu's Speech	72
4.8 Intertextuality	73
4.9 Implications of Intertextuality in Babangida's Speech	74
4.10 Implications of Intertextuality in Obasanjo's Speech	75
4.11 Implications of Intertextuality in Tinubu's Speech	76
4.12 Use of Pronouns in Babangida's Coup Speech in 1985	77
4.13 Use of Pronouns in Obasanjo's Speech in 1999	79

4.14 Use of Pronouns in Tinubu’s Speech in 2023	80
4.15 Cohesive Features in the Selected Speeches	81
4.15.1 Antonym	81
4.15.2 Synonym	82
4.15.3 Conjunction	83
4.15.4 Lexical Repetition	84
4.15.5 Passive Verbs	85
4.16 Nigerian English in the Selected Inaugural Addresses	86
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND GENERAL REMARKS	
5.1 Research Findings	88
5.2 Implications of the Study	91
5.3 Recommendations	92
5.4 Contribution of the Study	93
5.5 General Remarks	94
CONCLUSIONS	95
REFERENCES	97

ABSTRACT

The study examines the selected inaugural speeches of both military and democratic leaders in Nigeria. It identifies and analyzes instances of ellipsis, intertextuality, and personal pronouns that occur in the inaugural addresses of General Babangida, presidents Obasanjo and Tinubu. The speeches are analyzed based on tools from Gee's (2011) approach to Discourse Analysis. The study reveals that political leaders deploy language in different persuasive ways to influence the people within the multicultural and plurilingual context of Nigeria.

The research findings have shown that Babangida, Obasanjo and Tinubu have understanding of the necessity of good followership in governance and have strategically employed intertextuality, ellipsis, and personal pronouns in their speeches to persuade and convince the people of Nigeria to support their administration. With the qualitative research approach used, the study has as well revealed that Nigerian military leaders have used language of threat and fear whereas the civilian leaders have utilized language of appeal and optimism to influence the Nigerian people. It has also been discovered through the various extracts analyzed that Babangida, Obasanjo and Tinubu have used synonyms and antonyms as a rhetorical tool to drive their political ideologies and resonate with the people.

INTRODUCTION

Political discourse involves the exchange of ideas and opinions about politics, government and public policy. It encompasses all forms of communication and argument which range from informal conversations and media coverage to formal speeches and debates. The aim is not only to shape public opinion and influence decision-making but also to negotiate power dynamics among politicians. The meaning and impact of political discourse are heavily influenced by the context in which it occurs as language is powerfully and stylistically used for persuasive and other purposes (Alo 2015: 88).

According to Chilton (2004: 4), the use of language can produce the effects of authority, legitimacy and consensus that are recognized as being intrinsic to politics. This means that political actors can legitimately constitute the positions of authority by winning elections after persuading and convincing the electorate through series of campaign and rally. Gardenfors (2002: 5) argues that an eloquent leader can depict enticing goals and convince the supporters to make radical sacrifices, even though the visionary goals are extremely uncertain. This no doubt juxtaposes the significant effects of political language in the world of politics.

Taylor (2019: 4) also believes that political speeches are made in order to persuade the audience for the endorsement of the viewpoints of the speakers. She breaks the means by which a speaker seeks to persuade the audience into three methods. First, there is deliberative rhetoric which has to do with the speaker expressing support or opposition to a particular course of action or policy, and attempts to persuade members of the audience to endorse their viewpoint. The second method is termed judicial rhetoric which is forensic in approach in which the addresser seeks to identify evidence or facts to support the position or policy under debate. There is also an epideictic rhetoric that focuses on the extent to which the orator's delivery is based on drama and theoretical performance. These and other persuasive techniques will be examined in the speeches delivered by Nigerian leaders at different periods of political dispensations.

Therefore, this study intends to focus on the investigation of selected inaugural speeches of Nigerian leaders. Specifically, the speeches of General Ibrahim Babangida in 1985, President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999 and President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in 2023

are examined in this study. I have limited the speeches to these three in order to be able to carry out a thorough analysis on them. In the views of Biria & Mohammadi (2012: 48), the principal aim of the presidential inaugural address is to ease the transition of power and unite the country after an election when the newly elected president proposes solutions to the country's problems and tries to express his goals by means of the rhetorical devices that can effectively contribute to his success in making people to believe in him and the ideology he represents. The tools of Discourse Analysis (DA) would be employed to investigate the selected speeches.

According to Brown & Yule (1983: 1), the analysis of discourse is necessarily the analysis of language in real use and it is on this premise that Gee's (2011) approach to Discourse Analysis is adopted in this study. In addition, it is a broader approach to meaning than is common in mainstream linguistics. In his approach, Gee (2011: 1) sees discourse analysis as tied closely to the details of language structure(grammar) and deals with meaning in social, cultural, and political terms. Gee (2011) also enumerates several tools that can be selected, identified, and contextualized in a text under analysis. Van Dijk (1997: 32) as well believes that Discourse Analysis approach to textual analysis ensures a mild identification of the discursive strategies employed by the speakers who intend to construct meaning in socio-political contexts.

This theoretical framework is appropriate for a study such as this because in the view of Jager (2001: 170), Discourse Analysis encompasses the respective spectrum of what can be said in its qualitative range and all utterances which in a certain society at a certain time are said or can be said. Additionally, according to Fairclough (2001: 19), the lives of people are represented through different discourses in the social practices of government, politics, social science and so on. These imply that Nigerian reality and its political landscape can be accessed through analysis of political discourse such as inaugural addresses of Nigerian leaders.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyse the various elements of cohesion such as ellipsis, intertextuality and use of pronouns in the selected military speech of General

Babangida and civilian speeches of Presidents Obasanjo and Tinubu of Nigeria. The selected speech of Babangida was delivered immediately he became the military Head of State after the coup de tat in 1985 while the selected speeches of Presidents Obasanjo and Tinubu were delivered during their inauguration as democratically elected presidents after the general elections in 1999 and 2023 respectively.

The study also aims at investigating the similarities and differences in the use of language by Nigerian military and civilian leaders. According to Basiru (2015: 6), there are similarities and differences between military and civilian directives which can be observed in the way language is used in their speeches. It should however be noted that this study is neither intended for comparison and contrast of achievements of military and civilian administrations nor reasons for military intervention and incursion in Nigeria. Rather, my interest is to dwell on how language is used in speeches delivered by both military and democratically elected leaders in Nigeria.

Research Objectives

According to Van Dijk (1997: 38), political discourse analysis has much to offer political science as well as the field of linguistics because it can address important political issues and increase public awareness of political processes or realities. This is true, especially when it focuses on features of discourse that are relevant to the purpose of the political process or event whose discursive dimension is being analyzed. So, the specific objectives of this study are:

1. To identify and analyze the instances of ellipsis and intertextuality that occurred in the selected speeches of General Babangida, Presidents Obasanjo and Tinubu.
2. To investigate the use of pronouns in the military and civilian speeches of Nigerian leaders.
3. To find out the similarities and differences in the political use of language by the military and civilian leaders within the multicultural context of Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

Political analysts have suggested that the study of political speeches and rhetoric as a form of and mode of political action in its own right offers a potentially fertile means of analyzing and explaining core themes of political enquiry in the study of political institutions, ideologies and strategies. So, this study will be significant to Nigerian leaders and politicians because it will guide them to understand how to use language to effectively communicate with their followers. It will also be of significance to Nigerians as they will be exposed to deeper understanding of ideas and policies of their leaders. The study will equally be beneficial to the students of Discourse Analysis because this gives them an insight on how political leaders communicate. It is expected that the outcome of this study will contribute to the existing literature on political discourse as well as to the field of rhetoric and discourse in general.

Synopsis of the Dissertation

The study is structured into five different chapters with various sections under each chapter. The first chapter generally focuses on the socio-political and cultural background of Nigeria. The second chapter dwells on the review of relevant literature and overview of the concept of inaugural speech as the genre of political discourse. The third chapter is on methodology and theoretical framework for the study without leaving out the data collection and reasons for selecting the inaugural addresses that are investigated. The second to the last chapter centers strictly on analysis and discussion while the last but not the least chapter highlights the findings, observations, and suggestions about the future directions of analysis of the Nigerian leaders' inaugural addresses.

CHAPTER ONE

Socio-Cultural History and Political Situation of Nigeria

1. Political and Cultural Background of Nigeria

Nigeria is a country of disparate people lumped together by colonial fiat and forced to stay together in an unwilling union. This has been a major problem that has bred various ills: including nepotism and oppression of minority ethnic groups (Ukpe 2014). According to Ukpe (2014:142), the major preoccupation of Nigerian political leaders since 1960 has been how to weld the various ethnic nationalities they have inherited from the colonial masters into a unified nation that is devoid of ethnic sentiments and cleavages. This implies that after gaining independence from Britain in 1960, Nigerian leaders have been in the process of nation-building.

Moreover, successive governments have been making concerted efforts to create and structure a national identity which aims at the unification of the people within the state so that it remains politically stable and viable. Ukpe submits that Nigeria has been plagued by tribalism and rivalry among ethnic groups which sometimes resulted in near disintegration such as the attempt by Biafra to secede from Nigeria in 1970. This and other factors have therefore led to various military and civilian governments. Meek (1960) cited in Akinola & Ehinomen (2017: 152) asserted that the name “Nigeria” was coined in 1897 by Flora Shaw, the wife of Lord Lugard, the British colonial administrator and it was initially called “Niger-area”, but after a long usage, it was shortened to Nigeria. The country became more prominent in 1914 when the British colonial administration under the leadership of Lord Lugard amalgamated the southern and northern protectorates. Nigeria is the most populous in Africa with an estimated population of over 170 million people Odumegwu (2013: 240). Being a religiously, culturally, linguistically and an ethnically heterogeneous nation and according to Gut (2004: 820), Nigeria is made up of more than 450 registered languages, out of which Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are considered the major ones.

Speakers of Hausa predominantly live in the North, Yoruba in the West while the Igbo reside in the East. However, because of socioeconomic reasons, many Nigerians live

in different parts of the country and speak the language of the host community. Nigeria gained independence from Britain on 1st October, 1960 and adopted English as her official language Whitely (1974: 93). Since then English has remained the language of communication in politics, education, judiciary, media and so on. Although, whether English as a foreign language is a blessing or curse in a plurilingual society like Nigeria is still an ongoing debate, English remains at the forefront in the Nigerian language repertoire.

From 1960, Nigeria has had different phases of civilian dispensations and military rules and this study investigates speeches delivered during both administrations by southern and northern leaders. According to Akinola & Ehinomen (2017: 156), Nigeria has faced difficult challenges as a country comprising various ethnic groups with different cultural, religious, and economic backgrounds and these challenges have shaped her leadership and led to unhealthy rivalry, exploitation, marginalization and oppression among certain ethnic groups. They maintained that early politicians failed to make good use of natural resources Nigeria is blessed with to improve the well-being of Nigerians.

Instead, the politicians were engaged in economic vandalism and political opportunism which precipitated a premature military takeover of government. It is lack of knowledge of governance, power intoxication, and greed by the military that invariably resulted in coups and counter coups in Nigeria at different periods of time. Thus, the speech delivered by General Ibrahim Babangida immediately after successfully toppling the government of General Mohammedu Buhari in 1985 is among the speeches for examination in this study.

1.1 Colonial Rule in Nigeria

Colonial rule was formally established in Nigeria in 1900 and it had two complementary tiers of government (Iweriebor 1982). At the central level, a single colonial authority was imposed on the entire country. It was made up of the Governor, the advisory council, a legislative council, the bureaucracy, the judiciary, the police and a military contingent. The second tier of government was the provincial or regional level which was made up of the Lieutenant-Governor, the regional bureaucracy, the regional judiciary and a native

police force as well as the provincial residents who supervised and controlled the administration of the provinces which were still under their traditional rulers.

According to Iweriebor, the system of governance at the regional level was referred to as the indirect rule system because the colonial authorities administered these areas indirectly through the preexisting political institutions and leaders. This implies that the colonial masters' system, structure and values were imposed on Nigeria. According to Ikime (1968), the indirect rule system was introduced by the first Governor-General, Lord Frederick Lugard who felt that Nigeria being very big and vast would be impossible to handle if the British ruled directly. Lugard did this when he was the High Commissioner of the Northern region of Nigeria.

The traditional rulers were made the intermediaries between the colonialists (British) and the people who were allowed to practice their cultures. Ikime opines that the British did this in order to ensure that the people did not see them as intruders but as partners with the traditional institutions already in place. Salamone (1980) believes that it is important to note that the system was more successful in the Northern Nigeria than the Western and Eastern regions. This was because the traditional system in the north was highly centralized as the Emir (king) was the absolute ruler. In the South, indirect rule was a little complicated because the Southern Nigeria was not as homogenous as the North. This made the British to appoint in the East warrant chiefs who were saddled with the responsibility of collecting taxes for the British rulers.

Salamone submits that the appointment was met with great resistance from the people and it later led to Aba Women's riot in 1929. As I have said earlier, the British adopted indirect rule due to the vastness of Nigeria. Other reasons include insufficient British personnel, language barrier, lack of finance, and the need to preserve traditional institutions so as to gain the people's favor. Linguistically, the colonialists resorted to indirect rule because they did not understand the local languages spoken in Nigeria, as they varied from place to place and there was a need to communicate to the people in order to rule successfully. They therefore used a few interpreters to communicate with the traditional rulers.

Atanda (1973) posits that since the colonizing power, Britain, was a parliamentary liberal bourgeois democracy, it sought to foist the structure and ideology of a capitalist democracy in Nigeria. This means that the introduction of bourgeois democratic institutions and practices within the ideological baggage of colonialism was considered as part of the civilizing mission. He argues that in theory, it was a liberal democratic state that colonialists established in Nigeria. However, in practice, a full-blown bourgeois democracy could not be allowed to operate without various qualifications because of racism and economically exploitative goals of colonialism.

Ake (1970) simply reveals that indirect rule was a deception as one could not be a colonizer and a democrat at the same time. If the colonizers allowed popular participation in the government, colonialism would end. Joseph (1986) outlines the demerits of colonialism to include the restriction of franchise to certain classes of people and to certain areas, the absence of universal adult suffrage, and the absence of the various formal rights which constitute the essential decorative bricks of a bourgeois democracy. Their absence in colonial political practice ensured that the colonial state in Nigeria was in essence an authoritarian administrative state. Then, the state structures, power, and policies were directed towards enhancing the undisturbed exploitation of the mineral and human resources of Nigeria. Joseph maintains that colonial state lacked political, social, and customary legitimacy. Therefore, its exercise of power was based on the possession and monopoly of instruments of violence, as well as on the fact of conquest.

The state apparatus of coercion was the police and military and state power was exercised without restraint since the colonial power was not accountable to the subject people. This suggests that colonial rule through its socio-economic policies and practices had set the processes which led to the emergence of social classes in Nigeria which existed in typical capitalist state. In the views of Falola (2018), many scholars have debated the contradictions and implications of British colonial rule in Nigeria and have reached a general consensus that the main purpose of British colonial rule in Nigeria was to establish a stable colonial society that served British interests first and foremost. Benefits accruing to Nigerian colonial subjects were of secondary importance until Nigerians threatened the stability of the colonial system to acquire them. This shows that Nigerians benefit from

colonial system amidst conflict and strong opposition. One of the vital merits of colonialism in Nigeria has to do with some bad practices in the traditions. Several traditional practices which were inhumane and wrong were criminalized and stopped.

1.2 Political Dispensations in Nigeria since 1960

After gaining independence from Britain in 1960, Nigeria began struggling to create a democratic nation. At the heart of the Nigerian problem is the complex ethnic configuration of the country. Consequently, there have been coup d'états, threats of secession, a civil war, and numerous outbreaks of ethnic, political and religious violence (Maier,2000). Nigeria adopted parliamentary system of government in 1960 under the leadership of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister, and Nnamdi Azikwe, the President. Ogbeidi (2012: 6) said that the government officials during the administration of Balewa and Azikwe looted public funds with impunity and this among other factors provided the pretext for a group of young army officers to sack the government through a coup on 15th January 1966. In July 1966, another coup under the leadership of General Yakubu Gowon took place and ousted the Ironsi government.

Okonkwo (2007:9) attributed the Gowon coup to the misappropriation of funds as well as disregarding laid down procedures in the award of contracts by ministries and parastatals under the former government. General Gowon ruled Nigeria for nine years and his government was toppled by General Murtala Muhammed in July 1975. The coup of 1975 among other things was an attempt to end corruption in the public service (Ogbeidi 2012). General Murtala was later assassinated after only six months in office and was succeeded by his Chief of Staff, General Olusegun Obasanjo.

However, General Obasanjo ensured that the rein of power was transferred to a democratically elected president, Alhaj Shehu Shagari in October 1979. President Shagari was in power for four years after which General Mohamodu Buhari led a popular coup that overthrew the civilian administration of Shagari in 1983. The coup according Ogbeidi (2012) was carried out with the aim of halting corruption and restoring discipline, integrity and dignity to public life. The new regime of General Buhari promised to bring corrupt officials and their agents to book but could only last for two years. On 27th August 1985,

General Ibrahim Babangida in a bloodless in-house coup removed General Buhari from office. General Babangida ruled for eight years. Gboyega (1996: 7) said that in the face of intense public opposition to his rule, General Babangida reluctantly handed the power to a non-elected man in person of Earnest Shonekan on 26th August 1993 but within a short time, General Sani Abacha overthrew Shonekan-led government. The dictator, General Sani Abacha was in government for five years and died suddenly from heart attack in June 1998 and was replaced by General Abdulsalam Abubakar who subsequently handed over power to a democratic government in May 1999 after having spent eleven months in power. The retired General Obasanjo then became a civilian leader on 29th May 1999. So, military rule continued until 1999 when Nigeria transitioned back to a presidential democracy which is still in place today.

At this point, it suffices to say that the various military and civilian leaders that Nigeria has produced have periodically used persuasive language and rhetoric to convince Nigerian people of the necessity of the change in government. Hence, this study investigates two inaugural speeches of the civilian leaders and one of the military leaders. The choice of both military and civilian speeches in a single study is suitable because of the socio-political and cultural background of Nigeria that is illustrated above.

1.3 Nigeria as a Multilingual and Multicultural Nation

Nigeria is a multilingual and multicultural speech community whereby diverse languages and cultures compete. Language is connected to culture in different ways. That is, it is one of the objects and institutions of culture. It is an instrument of thought and helps to concretize thought. Language assists in exploring, extending, discovering and recording the experiences in culture. It expresses culture and it is the only way by which the social experiences and values of a group of people are perceived and understood. The issues of language and culture came out of an attempt to explain the relation between language and the interpretation of social reality, Akindele & Adegbite (1992).

Sapir (1929) explores this relationship in his discussion of the interrelations between language, culture and personality. According to him, language does not as a matter of fact stand apart from direct experience but completely interpenetrates it. He goes further to

argue that language is a guide to social reality. He observes that although language is not ordinarily thought of as being of essential interest to human being, it powerfully conditions all our thinking about social problems and processes. He opines that it is an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication. Sapir stresses that the fact of the matter is that the real world is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. One sees and hears and otherwise experiences very largely as one does because the language habits of one's community predispose certain choices of interpretation.

Moreover, Whorf (1956) claims that language conditions our world view and that different speakers view the world along the different lines laid down by their respective languages. The import of this is that language difference engenders cultural difference or rather linguistic relativism engenders cultural relativism. This represents the theory of linguistic relativism in its strongest sense. This simply means that human beings live in different worlds because of the different languages they have. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not the same worlds with different labels attached. What can be deduced here is that although the physical and social environment of the world are organized as a continuum, this organization is perceived as separate things in accordance with the thought patterns of a particular group. Although language is closely connected to thought, it is separated from thought.

The world we live is broadly similar and some aspects of it can be perceived similarly by individuals irrespective of linguistic differences. Otherwise, it may be impossible to translate between languages. Although the possibility of translation justifies linguistic universals which is a contrary theory to linguistic relativism, the impossibility of total translation shows that perception is relative to some extent. So, in essence, the linguistic relativist posits that language does not solely determine the way we structure our social reality.

According to Trudgill (1971), it has been observed that there are many instances of the physical environment in which a society's lives being reflected in its language, often in the structure of the lexicon: the way in which distinctions are made by means of single

words. For instance, many words will be used to express ‘cold’ in temperate region communities and ‘hot’ in tropical environments. A society’s system is as well generally reflected in its kinship vocabulary. For example, Trudgill (1971:27) submits that kin relationships in English-speaking societies are said to be signaled by single vocabulary items: son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter, brother, sister, father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, cousin but the distinction between maternal and paternal aunt is not important and is not reflected in the lexicon.

In Yoruba-speaking societies in Nigeria, kin relationship is signaled by father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, brother, sister and no distinction is made between aunt and uncle, nephew and niece, and cousin. They are not reflected in the Yoruba lexicon. This shows the difference between English and Yoruba. In Yoruba, the word ‘father’ is a single kinship relationship which has to be translated into English in different ways according to context. This reflects the situation in Nigeria as one of the multilingual and multicultural nations in Africa. Many scholars such as Bamgbose, Akindele, Adegbite, Odetola have attested to the fact that over four hundred indigenous languages exist in Nigeria.

Consequently, Nigeria has not been able to actualize its socio-political and economic development due to cultural and language conflicts. Some actions aimed at promoting the major languages have attracted adverse reactions from the minority languages. Bamgbose (1993:4) reports that in 1961 when parliament debated the national language question, fierce opposition was put up by speakers of minority languages against the adoption of one or all the major languages as national ones.

1.4 The Socio-Economic and Political Situation in Nigeria

Socio-political challenges connote impediments relating to or involving a combination of social and political factors which are capable of crippling investments and declining growth in the economy of a nation. Social challenges involve problems that people have while interacting with others in the society. On the other hand, political challenges relate to government or politics and may include issues of party politics or political system or other issues determined by the citizens Fapetu (2016: 62). Scholars like Nwana (1996:

45), Elugbe (1990: 117) claim that some criteria for assessing national development range from increase in the real income of the average citizen, high level of productivity, low level of unemployment, stable electricity to stable political polity.

Nigerians have not found life easy in the democratic dispensations and military regimes. There have been galloping inflation, high rate of unemployment, high level of insecurity involving banditry, terrorism, kidnapping, communal and ethnic clashes. The cost of living is quite high because the country depends a lot on importation without any corresponding high level of exportation. This has led to depreciation of the country's currency against hard currency. The political class that was virtually kept in the cooler by the military regimes appears not to be so much different from the corrupt military dictators after gaining power. Appointments and elections into public office are still very much influenced by ethnic origins. Even the so-called freedoms of association, speech and religion exist only as are stated in the constitution.

In practice, many Nigerians are treated as strangers in States other than their own, sometimes being forced to conform with a religion strange to them for the simple reason that they live in areas where such religions are held to tenaciously. All these are problems which cannot be wished away unless we want the country to disintegrate. This is why so many Nigerians are calling for a sovereign national conference or dialogue which of course can only be possible through effective medium of language Bamgbose (1993).

At independence in 1960, the Nigerian economy was an agrarian one. Agriculture was the major contributor to the gross domestic product (GDP) and foreign exchange earnings until 1970s, when oil displaced the position of agriculture as the mainstay of the economy Adeyemi (2014). As a result of this, the Nigerian economy became a mono-product economy because of over reliance on oil. However, the decline in the demand for crude oil from late 1980 led to economic crises in the country. Adeyemi submits that the glut in the market made Nigeria's crude oil production to reduce with government revenue declining drastically. The climax was reached in 1985 when the external sector became virtually unmanageable and the economic crisis in Nigeria reflected in serious inflationary pressures, undesirable erosion of the naira and undermined credit worthlessness of the country. According to Obamuyi (2002), the crisis pauperized many citizens and made them

miserable. The situation, therefore, encouraged illegitimate activities in the economy such as corruption and vandalization of government properties.

In trying to manage the situation, Nigerian government decided to strengthen the private sector in order to promote economic growth. Obamuyi claims that government then implemented financial liberalization policy in 1986 as part of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which was an economic reform package recommended to the developing countries by International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the world bank. However, as Ademiluyi & Solanke (2007) argue, the efforts could not yield maximum results because of inconsistency and frequent change of government among other factors.

In addition, Fapetu (2016) argues that ensuring economic growth and forward movement of the country politically, economically, government must be more accountable in managing the nation's resources in order to reduce poverty, unemployment, and wastage. Additionally, close attention should be given to those socio-political and economic challenges in the formulation of policies that aim at maintaining economic growth at a level that is commensurate with Nigeria's population growth rate. She submits that the government of Nigeria should stop treating the issue of insecurity with kid's gloves, it should be nipped in the bud completely. This means that there cannot be any meaningful development in a country being ravaged with all forms of insecurity.

Nigerian government can genuinely seek help from international community in combating the various terrorist groups such as Boko Haram, Iswap, Lakurawa whose activities may have hampered economic growth and development of Nigeria. There may be no doubt that it is necessary for the nation to develop. The benefits of national development socially, economically and politically are enormous that it is an obligation for government to explore and exploit all means to achieve it.

1.5 Military Intervention in Nigerian Politics

The history of the Nigerian Army can be traced to 1863 when the Governor-General of Lagos, Lt. Glover of the Royal Navy, organized 18 Northern Nigerians into the so called "Glover's Hausa" which later became known as the Hausa Constabulary in 1987 (Arnold-

Baker,2001). The basic functions of the Constabulary were to protect the lives and properties of the British residents, traders and trade routes in and around Lagos.

According to Ukpabi (1987), the Hausa Constabulary and the West African Field Force formed the first Battalion in August 1896 with the second Battalion in 1898 while the third Battalion was added in 1899. The West African Field Force and the Northern Nigeria Regiment were amalgamated in 1900 under the command of Lord Lugard. The Southern Nigeria Regiment and the Northern Nigeria Regiment were in 1914 amalgamated to form the Nigeria Regiment of the West African Frontier Force (NRWFF). Ukpabi submits that the remaining troops that were not part of NRWFF were renamed Queen's Own Nigeria Regiment (QONR) during the visit of Queen Elizabeth II to Nigeria in 1956. In the same year 1956, Britain granted military autonomy to her colonies and QONR was changed to Nigerian Military Force (NMF). In the views of Welch (1995), NMF changed its name again in 1960 when Nigeria gained independence to become the Royal Nigerian Army (RNA).

As soon as Nigeria became a Republic in 1963, the name changed again to the Nigerian Army and with the other two forces (Nigerian Navy and Nigerian Air Force), it was designated the Nigerian Armed Forces, the name which remains up till today. George et al. (2012) report that despite the country becoming a Republic, the Nigerian Armed Forces were structured according to the British military system and to implement British oriented doctrines and their training programmes both in content and methodology were done in Britain and in British fashion.

The intervention of the military in the political scene of Nigeria was not totally a surprise to most political observers and thinkers. This is because nearly all the pre-colonial ethnic groups in the country were ruled by traditional rulers who were more or less dictators (Yesufu 1982). The first intervention of the military in Nigerian politics in January, 1966, was celebrated by the people due to the perceived corruption among the public office holders, oppression and intimidation of Western Region government by the ruling Northern People's Congress (NPC). Yesufu maintains that many of the former British colonies in Africa such as Ghana, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zimbabwe etcetera had gone through what could be referred to as military rule immediately after the British left.

According to Osoba (1996), the first military coup in Nigeria was very bloody and it was led by Major Nzeogwu on 15th January, 1966 about five years after independence on October 1st 1960. The coup was expected to end the tribalism, corruption, ineptitude and political crisis in Western Region orchestrated by the ruling NPC. Heaton & Falola (2008) opine that the coup was unfortunately not consummated successfully and the military installed Brig-General Aguiyi Ironsi as the Head of State in January, 1966. On 29th July, 1966 the government of General Ironsi was overthrown in another violent coup and Lieutenant-Colonel Yakubu Gowon was installed as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

These coups resulted in the Nigerian civil war in 1967. In the views of George (2012), the civil war can be said to be what brought Nigerian military out of its shells as the army grew from merely infantry force of about 6000 to one of over 250,000, equipped with heavy weapons and supported by air and naval power. He believes it was the same war that eventually eroded the military's trust of civilian leadership. The war caused catastrophic loss of lives with high number of civilians due to starvation. It devastated Eastern Nigeria's infrastructure, triggered mass displacement, and entrenched deep-seated ethnic distrust. It politically centralized power, strengthened federal authority, and established a long-lasting military influence in governance, while its humanitarian crisis profoundly shaped the evolution of modern international aid and non-governmental organizations (Adebite 1992). During the war years, the Eastern region suffered severe destruction of infrastructure and starvation of many Biafran civilians largely caused by federal blockades.

The civil war ended in 1967 and the post-war era saw a significant shift toward a more centralized federal government and the creation of more states to weaken power bases. Adebite concedes that the war entrenched the military's role in Nigerian politics for decades, setting a precedent for leadership and governance structures. The war was one of the first conflicts to be televised worldwide, exposing the world to the plight of starving children and impacted Nigeria's foreign relations and contributed to long-standing issues regarding transparency.

The Nigerian Civil War was fought from 1967 to 1970 between the federal government and the secessionist state known as Biafra. It was Ojukwu that declared the secession of the three states of the Eastern region under the name of the Republic of Biafra. Nigeria's federal government interpreted the actions of Ojukwu as an act of rebellion. Ethnic conflict, economic inequality, and educational disparities were among the factors that contributed to the start of the war. Adegbite submits that the civil war intensified ethnic and regional grievances which leave a legacy of distrust that continues to influence national unity and political discourse.

1.6 Political Crises in Nigeria

Politics is a key aspect of human life. Everyone is affected by it and the effect it has on all inhabitants of the society informs the massive participation at different levels. The volume of participation always brings about complexities in coordinating and controlling political activities all over the world, though with differences in magnitude and approach (Morlino 2017). Therefore, it can be inferred from this that politics and conflict are inseparable. According to Albert (2011), Nigeria's first republic and independence commenced on a conflicting note with series of crises from the regional parties of the major tribes and compounded by that of the minorities. The crises include the Eastern regional crisis of 1953, National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) crisis over the motion for self-government in 1956, and Action Group (AC) crisis after Nigeria's independence in 1963.

The AC crisis was much more pronounced and it was caused by differences of opinion and clash of personality between the leader of the Action Group, Obafemi Awolowo and his deputy, Ladoke Akintola. Chief Obafemi Awolowo preferred alliance with the NCNC while Samuel Akintola sought to form alliance with Northern People's Congress (NPC). Awolowo also accused Akintola of not consulting him before taking some important decisions about the party. After series of attempt to reconcile the two leaders failed, Chief Akintola was expelled from the party at the party's convention in Jos in 1962. This later led to a serious fight in the Western Regional House of Assembly which warranted policemen to use tear gas in dismissing house members from the chamber. The action

against Akintola further worsened the unfriendly relationship between the AG and the NPC (Oyewole 2002).

Another round of political crisis took place as well after the general elections in 1979. Alhaji Shehu Shagari won the presidential election conducted on 11th August, 1979 under the platform of NPN. His government was characterized by crises, repression and victimization of opposition parties and was noted for corruption and mismanagement which made the opposition parties' voices audible (Delani 2014). In an attempt to curb opposition parties and cling to power, the ruling party resorted to viciousness, victimization and attack of oppositions.

The polity became over heated before and after the election of the second tenure of Shagari. According to Dare (2017), the 1983 election won by Alhaji Shagari was far more from being free and fair. The only political parties that could complain of election rigging were those parties that lacked the resources to rig. Dare maintains that there was ample evidence that rigging and thuggery were relative to the resources available to the parties. It was also during the administration of Shagari that Maitatsine riots occurred. Bello (2015) explains that the Maitatsine riots were a series of violent uprisings instigated by Islamic militants in Northern Nigeria between 1980 and 1985 and represented the Northern Nigeria's first major religious violence.

The riots prompted ethno-religious discord between Muslims and Christians. He says the movement was led by Muhammadu Marwa, a Cameroonian residing in Kano who opposed the Nigerian state. Maitatsine is a Hausa term for "He who damns". Isichei (1987) and Adesoji (2011) equally comment on Maitatsine by saying that its first riot broke out on December 18th 1980 and about 4000 deaths including the movement's leader were recorded. Numerous riots also took place between 1980 and 1985 where thousands of deaths and casualties were recorded (Adesoji 2011).

Another notable political crisis in Nigeria involved the late M.K.O Abiola. He was the presidential candidate of Social Democratic Party (SDP) in the popular June 12 1993 presidential election which was annulled by the Head of State then, General Ibrahim Babangida. The electoral commission was yet to officially announce the results before the election was cancelled. According to Bolaji (2023), Abiola was assumed to have won the

election. This may be because people overwhelmingly voted for him. The annulment was followed by series of riot and protest as well as argument to convince the military dictator to accept Abiola's victory.

However, General Babangida on 27th August 1993 decided to step aside and hand over power to an interim national government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan. After barely three months, precisely 17th November 1993, the then Minister of Defense, General Sani Abacha forced Shonekan to resign and took over power. Bolaji insists that the June 12 political crisis represents Nigeria's worst experience since the creation of the Nigerian nation. This might be based on number of lives lost, the rate of disruption of businesses and governmental activities, high level of destruction and destabilization of infrastructural facilities and social proceedings.

1.7 System of Government in Nigeria

Nigeria operates a federal government with a Presidential system that is heavily modeled on the United States of America (USA). The federalism was embraced in 1954 and it has been highly centralized in all its ramifications (Ojo 2009). The government is divided into three arms; executive, legislature, and judiciary with operation across federal, state and local government. The executive arm is headed by an elected President who is both head of state and government. He is elected for a maximum of two four-year terms and leads the Federal Executive Council (FEC).

The legislative branch is a bicameral National Assembly (Senate and House of Representatives) consisting of members from all the 36 states and federal capital territory (FCT) while the judicial arm is led by the Chief Justice of the federation with the Supreme Court as the highest court in the nation. This implies that Nigeria operates under the separation of powers. According to Anyebe (2016), there are basic elements that make the presidential system what it is without which it will be nothing but a personal rule of an individual who has usurped power or manipulated the electoral system to put himself in power. These basic elements include the unity of the political executive, checks and balances, and independence of judiciary. Knapp & Wright (2003) assert that there are full presidential systems, and semi-presidential systems or quasi-presidentialism.

The full presidential system exists where the president exercises his power as both executive head of state and the head of government just like in the USA and Nigeria while the semi-presidential system refers to a situation under which the president shares governing power with other person who may be a prime minister as being practiced in France. In Nigeria, the president is the Head of Government and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. Ojo (2009) further asserts that there are challenges associated with federalism in Nigeria and outlines them to include authoritarianism and executive recklessness, corruption and maladministration, tyranny of the majority, unfeasible processes of impeachment and recall, and over concentration of powers.

1.8 An Overview of the Concept of Nigerian English

English is one of the languages that have been implanted in many foreign countries either through colonialism or globalization, which has positioned it as a global language for use in domains such as business, diplomacy and education. A notable sociolinguistic implication of the spread of English across the world is the emergence of many English varieties. Nigeria is one of the countries where English was introduced first through trans-Atlantic trade relations and was consolidated through many decades of British colonization (Taiwo 2006).

The long-standing existence of English in Nigeria and its interaction with over 500 indigenous languages have resulted in a nativized variety known as Nigerian English, characterized by wide-ranging lexical items, grammatical rules and cultural concepts drawn from standardized British English and the many numerous Nigerian indigenous languages that English has been in contact with, Ugwuanyi (2025:154). Nigerian English can be defined from both broad and narrow perspectives. Broadly speaking, Nigerian English is commonly defined as the English spoken by Nigerians, encompassing a wide range of variations and styles.

This perspective acknowledges that English in Nigeria is used in diverse contexts, from formal settings to casual conversations, and may exhibit varying degrees of influence from local languages and cultures and spoken by speakers at varying levels of competence. From a narrow perspective, Nigerian English refers to the phonological, grammatical and

lexical properties that distinguish the English used in Nigeria from other varieties of English elsewhere Jowitt (2019:1).

This perspective focuses on the specific linguistic features that distinguish Nigerian English from other varieties of English. It highlights the unique phonological (pronunciation), grammatical (sentence structure) and lexical (vocabulary) characteristics that have emerged due to the interaction of English with Nigerian languages and cultural contexts. This perspective emphasizes the systemic nature of those differences, often showing the extent to which Nigerian English has developed its own distinct linguistic norms. In essence, the broad perspective emphasizes the sociolinguistic reality of English usage in Nigeria, while the narrow perspective focuses on the linguistic characteristics that set Nigerian English apart as a distinct variety.

Theophilus et al (2013) quotes Walsh (1967) as saying that: The varieties of English spoken by educated Nigerians, no matter what their language, have enough features in common to mark off a general type which may be called Nigerian English. In the view of Achebe (1975), the English in Nigeria has undergone domestication, localization and nativization. This means that English has come to stay in Nigeria and it has been bent to accommodate the thought processes and patterns of Nigerians instead of looking at it as the language of the colonial masters.

The theoretical phenomenon that produces Nigerian English is that of language contact and variation. Uriel Weinreich (1968) presents a systemic framework for the categorization of the mutual influence that takes place when languages come in contact. Nigerian English differs from other varieties of English because of its distinct linguistic and cultural identities which are due to historical, geographical, political socio-cultural factors. There are linguistic data which constitute the features that prove the existence of localized and acculturated form of English in Nigeria.

1.9 Features of Nigerian English

According to Akindele et al (1992), the components of Nigerian English range from semantic extension, shift, narrowing, reduplication, loans, coinages to nigerianization of

idioms and proverbs. Typical features of Nigerian English can be found in the examples below:

Nigerian English	Standard English
The man hears English very well.	The man understands English very well.
I stayed in Lagos for two years.	I lived in Lagos for two years.
My globe shines better than yours.	My electric bulb shines better than yours.
You have to shine your eye when you get to that area.	You have to be vigilant when you get to that area.
The woman has taken in.	The woman is pregnant.
Nigeria has happened to the man in the hospital.	Something bad has happened to the man in the hospital due to trivial or needless factors.
The young girl has been disvirgined.	The young girl has been deflowered.
I came late because of go-slow along the road.	I came late because of traffic jam along the road.
The man used a long leg to secure a job for his son.	The man got the job for his son through undue influence.
I want to give you an advice.	I want to give you a piece of advice.

Table: Features of Nigerian English. Akindele & Adegbite, 1992, Eyisi, 2004.

1.10 The Status of English in Nigeria

The status of English as a symbol of Nigerian unity and as a tool for upward social mobility results in its de facto recognition as Nigeria's official language. Although the designation of English as Nigeria's official language is not explicit in the Constitution, the statement in Section 55 of the 1999 Constitution that “the business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English, and Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba when adequate arrangements have been made therefore” is interpreted by many to mean that these four languages are recognized as official languages (Jowitt 2019). Despite the absence of an explicit de jure recognition of English as Nigeria's official language, English wields more

power than any other language in the country. It is the dominant language in official, educational, media, religious, creative writing and inter-ethnic communication, as well as in the wider linguistic landscape of the country (Adegbite, 2015).

This shows that English performs the role of unification which is indispensable in a plurilingual society like Nigeria. In Afolayan (1984), it is unrealistic for anybody in Nigeria today to think that national unity can be forged without recourse to utilization of the English language which is now functioning as the language of Nigerian nationalism. However, some Nigerian linguists are of the opinion that English poses a threat to indigenous languages and this perhaps made the National policy on Education (NPE) in 1980 to stipulate that the mother tongue (MT) should be used as the medium of instruction in the first two of the six years of primary school and that where possible literacy should be attained in it, while English should become the medium of instruction in the third year of primary school. Although this rule has not been strictly adhered to especially by the private school owners who prefer to use only English as medium of instruction irrespective of the classes.

The Federal Ministry of Education under the leadership of Dr. Tunji Alausa in 2025 officially announced the abolition of the use of an indigenous language as the medium of instruction in the first and second year of primary school. The Minister cited research findings that ascribe poor performances of students in the early years of primary education in Nigeria to the use of indigenous languages as the medium of instructions. Therefore, English should be used as the only language of instruction at all levels of education in Nigeria. According to Bamgbose (1996), the linguistic repertoire of an average Nigerian involves bilingualism with mother tongue and English as the constituents. Hence, English is central to official activities in Nigeria. Jowitt (2013) submits that Nigerian English is a subject that has been under discussion in Nigeria over a long period and stresses that it has been a highly controversial subject with emphatic rejection and enthusiastic acceptance.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2. Introduction

This chapter takes a look at some of the relevant previous studies that have been carried out by scholars on speeches and political discourse in general. It as well focuses on terms and expressions that are central to politics (language of politics). Also, attempts are made here to give some rudimentary knowledge of inaugural speech with a view that it will serve as a way for further understanding of the subject. Political speeches have been widely explored by linguists from different points of view. Beard (2002:10) states that politics is understood as a struggle by politicians to gain and retain power. This struggle is done through the use of language, and that is why Taiwo (2009:19) asserts that language is a catalyst of power which initiates debate and incites support or revolt.

2.1 Political Discourse

The term ‘political discourse’ can refer to different types of talk or text. It relies primarily on language and can be described as a form of social action, always determined by values, social norms, conventions, and social practices, often delimited and influenced by power structures and historical process (Wodak: 1995). According to Van Dijk (1997) and Fairclough (2012) as cited in Wilson (2015: 775), it is a type of discourse which is a political production – a speech, debate, political interview, election campaign, editorial, policy document, and so on. It can also be any textual output that is either about a political subject or which is politically motivated. Howard & Donnell (2011) describe political discourse as the object of analysis which is a piece of extended talk or text produced by or for political actors. Also, Liebes & Ribak (1991) argue that family talk about political events could as well be political discourse since the topic of talk is about political issues.

Amaglobeli (2017) defines political discourse as a communicative act in which participants try to give specific meanings to facts and influence or persuade others. In other words, it is a manipulative linguistic strategy which serves concrete ideological

goals. This means that political discourse is an intentional act which in every individual case is meant to reach certain objectives and purposes which include articulating, protecting, challenging or deconstructing certain interests. It encompasses different areas of human life.

Political discourse, in the view of Cicero (1971) can be equated with the term “rhetoric” because it describes particular forms of persuasion within political assemblies and the focus is usually on language. Therefore, the essential nature of political discourse is the study of rhetorical procedures, their identification and persuasive effects. In a more restricted sense, political discourse refers to the study of political language where the focus is on aspects of language structure as it constitutes and displays specific political functions Wilson (2015). This shows how significant language is in political gatherings such as campaign, rally, meeting and other political engagements where politicians endeavor to woo people and win their support.

One of the central concerns of political discourse is the question of how the world is presented to the public through particular forms of linguistic representation. For instance, how is language used in attributing meaning to individuals and groups with reference to the performance of their social practices? How are actions and events perceived and described? Which modes of reference are used to signify places, objects, and institutions within particular positive and negative frames? These are rhetorical questions asked by the scholars like Fairclough (1995), Wodak (2000), Blommaert & Verschueren (1998) while illustrating the various interpretations that politicians ascribe to different political activities and institutions. This makes Sapir (2010) to submit that reality is not simply given to us through language, rather it is mediated through different forms of language representation. Consequently, Wodak (2011) holds that politics is a relationship between language and power and that political control is a form of language control while Chilton & Schaffner (2002) argue that politics is a struggle for power between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it.

Scholars such as Fairclough, Van Dijk and Amaglobeli have tried to identify the types of political discourse to include Parliamentary debates, government legislation, political speeches, media interviews, and campaign advertising among others. According

to Amaglobeli (2017), classifications of political discourse range from ideological, genre-based, media-mediated, deliberative to emancipatory and religious discourses. It is believed that ideological discourses represent different political beliefs such as liberalism, conservatism, nationalism, socialism, feminist or green discourse.

The genre-based discourse is categorized through the context in which it occurs. Hence, parliamentary debates, inaugural speeches, party programs can be said to belong to genre-based political discourses while media-mediated political discourse involves political talk-shows, televised interviews, and news commentary, where politicians communicate directly with the public. The emancipatory discourse can be a type of liberal democratic discourse that often focuses on people's rights and duties. Amaglobeli (2017: 12) concludes that political discourse can be classified according to the ideologies it tries to promote (socialist, liberal or democratic, conservative and totalitarian) or sub-genres (feminist, religious, nationalistic). It may be dominant or subordinated according to the presence or absence of the power or hierarchy.

Kenzhekanova (2015) identifies various features or characteristics of political discourse which can be broadly divided into linguistic and nonlinguistic features. The nonlinguistic features which he argues are the main features of political discourse are agonistic ability, aggressiveness, ideological character, and theatricality. Agonism or competitiveness as a feature of political discourse has to do with continuous dialogue duel between the party in power and opposition in which opponents attack each other from time to time. This can be likened to sports discourse which involves elements such as the presence of the enemy, fight of rivals, ethics of fight, rules and regulations, strategy and tactics of fight, victory and defeat. The competitiveness of political discourse with greatest evidence is shown in such forms, as parliamentary debates and pre-election campaigns.

Kenzhekanova notes that one of the most important components of a political speech is aggression which connotes hostile attitude. It is connected with the concept of hierarchy and domination which focuses on the relations of subordination and the chain of commands from the lowest to the highest. The reason for hierarchy is that the competition is connected to the struggle for power, a social status and recognition. The dominant aggression is directed at a concrete political figure that is not presented in the situation of

communication. That is, the critic of the political opponent in dealing with the third party or mass audience in public speeches, interviews or political discussions. Verbal aggressions are presented by specific speech acts in political speeches and are demonstration of political force aimed at downgrading the status of the addressee.

The ideological character represents the system of social representations, group knowledge, beliefs, and opinions based on group values, norms and interests. This feature brings the political discourse with the military. War is a continuation of policy by other means and the scope of political interaction covers genres such as military doctrine, political agreement, an ultimatum and peace negotiations. That is, genres, providing the ideology and course of the war from the perspective of the warring parties (Kenzhekanova 2015: 198). The category of theatricality pulls together a political discourse with advertising and scenic discourses. Theatricality of a political discourse is connected with the fact that one of the parties of communication – the people – carries out not the role of the direct addressee, but the observer addressee who perceives the current political events as the certain performance played for them with a fascinating plot and the unpredictable end.

Politicians, communicating with each other and with journalists, constantly remember about a spectator audience and intentionally or unintentionally act or work for public, trying to make impression and to break an applause. This submission of Kenzhekanova suggests that political events can be dramatic, featuring elements such as scripts, pre-written texts, distribution of roles, rehearsals and the like. Horbenko (2023: 190) also argues that theatricality of political discourse consists in the fact that the people act as spectators, and not just as direct addressees, and perceive political events as a show intended for them. He holds that the presence of the spectators-addressees consciously or unconsciously affects the communicative behavior of politicians, their strategy, and language choices as they often remember their audience and seek to evoke an emotional reaction from viewers and gain recognition.

Rakhmonova (2025) itemizes different linguistic features of political discourse which range from lexical units, morphological tools, syntactic devices, deixis, presupposition to implicature. He posits that it is through word choice that political ideas,

ideological positions and power relations are expressed at language level. It is observed that the lexical units used in political speech are characterized by evaluative and emotional connotations. Fairclough (1995) cited by Rakhmonova notes that the lexical analysis of political discourse helps in uncovering its hidden layers of meaning. He maintains that ideologically loaded words and terms are of particular importance in political discourse and they serve to strengthen certain political views and ideological concepts.

According to Rakhmonova (2025: 168), words like democracy, freedom, reform, security are interpreted differently in different political contexts in order to evoke positive associations in the audience. Also, evaluative adjectives such as dangerous, successful, unfair are used by political actors to influence the feelings of the listener or reader and form a positive or negative attitude towards a particular political phenomenon or person. This type of vocabulary reinforces the persuasive nature of political discourse and indirectly influences the decision-making process Chilton (2004). Van Dijk (2006) corroborates this by saying that ideological lexicons shape political identity by creating a “we” versus “they” opposition.

Additionally, euphemism, metonymy and metaphor are used widely in political discourse to express complex political processes through simple and understandable images. I agree with Lakoff & Johnson (1980) that metaphors constitute a stylistic device and an important mechanism of human cognition which plays a crucial role in the perception of political realism. Otieno et al. (2016) argue in line with Wei (2001) that metaphors are used in political discourse to help the voting public to make sense of different political issues and therefore to express their general attitudes toward politics. They enable citizens identify with and understand their beliefs and goals for their country as speakers' ideological positions are revealed.

Modality is as well part of the linguistic features of political discourse. In the views of Kenzhekanova (2015: 196), the category of modality is understood as the attitude towards reality in the representation of the speaker. Speaker's evaluations of the content of expressions in terms of reality, possibility, necessity or desirability, the degree of certainty of the reported thing, qualitative estimation of the content of statements are characteristics that are applicable not only to the participants of the discourse, but also to

the discourse as a whole. He submits that expressions of the need and desirability are implemented in the component of modality, which can be described as prescriptive. In other words, modality implies in political speeches a degree of confidence of the speaker that will demonstrate the level of knowledge, from which the seriousness of the impression produced by political performance of the addressee will be depended on.

The impact of political discourse is not limited to lexical choice, but also emerges through the conscious and strategic application of morphological and syntactic devices. Grammatical units play an important role in how to present information in political speech, to whom responsibility is assigned or to hide it, as well as in the information of a sense of trust and commitment in the audience Ulfatovna (2025). Gasparyan & Harutyunyan (2022: 27) hold that syntax and morphology reveal cases of manipulation in media-political discourse. They maintain that grammatical patterns can largely condition the conceptual and contextual message.

In their submission, different morphological and syntactic properties of the language which include the active and passive voices, hypothetical conditional sentences, degrees of comparison of adjectives, tense forms among others can be used in political speeches with the intention of manipulating people and situations in order to achieve specific purposes. In this regard, analyzing political discourse at the morphological and syntactic levels allows for a deeper understanding of its pragmatic nature Fairclough (2003). So, complex syntactic constructions are common in political discourse as long sentences serve to demonstrate the complexity of political issues for the purpose of creating the image of formality and competence.

Wodak (2011) observes that complex syntactic structures in political discourse sometimes allow information to be conveyed indirectly, obscuring the underlying content with higher details. On account of this, audience tends to accept the text on a ready-made basis, rather than critically analyzing it. Therefore, morphological and syntactic features of political discourse suggest that grammatical forms are not a simple structural tool, but a powerful pragmatic and ideological mechanism. It is noted here that political discourse influences social consciousness and shapes specific political perceptions in the audience through modals, pronouns, syntax and passive constructions.

Furthermore, Ulfatovna (2025) cited Jonhson (1996) observes that pragmatics reveals the connection of political speech with hidden meanings, mechanisms of influence and social context. The speaker in political discourse does not merely provide information, but assures, commands, justifies, or shifts responsibility on others. According to Austin (1962), in political speech, the oratory intentions of the speaker such as to warn, to call, to promise and their effects like fear, support, confidence on the audience are of particular importance. This is significant, for example in Nigerian political context, the simple sentence “I assure you” is a statement that is commonly made by political leaders. It almost became the nickname of the late President Mohammadu Buhari during his administration. This statement may be a promise in appearance but it is intended to create a sense of confidence and hope in the audience.

Presupposition and implicature are additional important linguistic features of political discourse. Some information may be presented as facts through presupposition. For instance, president Tinubu of Nigeria claims that the economy has improved as a result of reforms his administration embarked upon from 2023 when he became the new Nigerian leader. This presupposes the fact that reforms exist and they are yielding positive results. Levinson (1983) notes that implicature forms meanings that are not said directly but are understood through context. This and other pragmatic mechanisms function effectively in political discourse to limit critical thinking and to guide the audience toward a predetermined conclusion.

Another important characteristic of political discourse relating to linguistics is deixis. It ensures that political discourse relates to context and it is found in the areas of person, space and time. As noted by Van Dijk (2006), deictic expressions connect political speech with a concrete social situation and evokes a sense of closeness and relevance in the audience. He notes that the frequent use of the pronoun “we” creates a symbolic solidarity between the political leader and the people while “they” allows responsibility to be imposed on external forces. Therefore, deixis of time, space and person (now, today, we, here) are rhetorical strategies employed by politicians for persuasive effects. This is in agreement with Chilton (2004) that rhetorical strategies manifest political discourse not only as a means of information, but also as a weapon of persuasion and manipulation.

At this juncture, there is need to specifically highlight the functions of political discourses even though they have been alluded to in the previous pages. Horbenko (2023) observes that political discourse has its own characteristics, including the use of specific vocabulary, structure, and discourse realization and its main goal is to persuade people of the correctness of certain actions or evaluations, rather than simply describing events. The implication here is that persuasive function is the most pronounced in political speeches, party programs, parliamentary debates, propaganda materials and so on. Johnson & Johnson (2000) in their article titled “Civil Political Discourse in a Democracy: The Contribution of Psychology” states four basic purposes of political discourse. According to them, the purposes of political discourse include clarifying citizens’ understanding of the issue, helping citizens reach their best reasoned judgement as to which course of action will solve a problem, increasing citizens’ participation in the political process, and socializing the next generation into the procedures and attitudes they need to be active citizens. These in the long run are to ensure peace, development, and stability within a democratic society.

In democratic political discourse, it is important to adhere to informativeness, rationality, clarity, logical argumentation, and dialogicity Horbenko (2023). To this end, Horbenko identifies four main functions of political discourse: instrumental, informational, persuasive, and prognostic functions. The instrumental function of political discourse has to do with its use as a tool of political power. Some elements are attached to the instrumental functions of political discourse and they include legitimization of power, reproduction of power, social control, social orientation, social solidarity and differentiation, agonistic and actional elements. The influence of these sub-functions of instrumental function includes control over public opinion which involves justification of decisions regarding the distribution of power and resources. This creates support for those in power and shapes perception of political reality in society. It promotes integration or separation of different social groups which brings about activation and coordination of social conflicts, expressing disagreement and protest against the actions of those in power.

The study indicates that informational function of political discourse is necessary to fulfill the instrumental function. It is ensured through the interaction between the media

and political gladiators. Many citizens form their perceptions of the political situation based on information they receive from the media, rather than their own direct experience in politics, since most of them do not engage directly in politics. The dissemination of information about politics helps citizens to be informed about political reality. The informational function basically comprises dissemination of information, setting the agenda, and projection into the future and past and these form the information field of political discourse.

Another function of political discourse is persuasive and it involves influencing the addressee which shapes the thoughts and beliefs of the people about the speaker. The persuasive function of political speeches is important not only in providing information but also in convincing listeners by evoking certain intentions and trust in oneself. It as well exerts emotional and intellectual influence on society's thoughts about certain phenomena or events. It calls for actions and shapes the necessary thoughts and values for convincing the public. Martin (2013) notes that it is difficult to imagine politics without persuasion because it requires choices to be formulated, options to be weighed and decisions to be made. He maintains that persuasion is integral to politics because it involves making judgements in contexts of uncertainty about what to do. So, speeches are made in order to ensure mutual understanding, shared perceptions and interpretations. Martin submits that knowing how to speak in voiced words and written text and in order to persuade successfully is a fundamental political knowledge or skill.

The last but not the least function of political discourse as stated by Horbenko (2023) is prognostic in nature. It is based on the analysis of past experience and events, which can predict the trends in the future development of political processes. This function ensures that power relations are reproduced and preserved in forms that may correspond to a specific type of power. In political discourse, a connection between the past, present, and future is provided and this shapes relationships in the society, and determines the dynamics of political processes. As a result, political discourse becomes a complex communicative phenomenon mediated by certain sociocultural customs and values which aim to achieve political goals. Therefore, inferably, political discourse depends on who is

speaking, who is listening, communicative intentions of the speaker, and the results of the influence on the addressee.

2.2 Inaugural Speech as a Genre of Political Discourse

An inaugural speech is a formal speech a new leader gives when starting a new position, such as a president's address during his/her inauguration. It is used to formally address the public and outline the vision and goals of the new leader which sets the tone for their term in office. Osisanwo (2017: 127) sees an inaugural speech as a speech delivered at a ceremonial induction of an individual into a new office. According to Eze (2024), inaugural speeches delivered by political leaders carry significant weight in shaping public opinion, establishing policy agendas, and conveying ideological frameworks. This shows that such addresses serve as a platform for leaders to articulate their visions, aspirations, and values to their nations. Eze sees an inaugural address as the presidential speech given to inform the people of the president's intentions as a leader. It is observed that political inaugurations often feature lavish ceremonies in which the politicians publicly take their oath of the office in front of a large crowd of spectators.

Cambell & Jamieson (1990) state that an inaugural speech is actually designed to set the tone for new beginnings when a new office holder assumes responsibilities. It is a specific kind of discourse targeted at unifying the audience by reconstituting them as the people who can witness and ratify the ceremony, practice shared values drawn from the past and determine the political principles that will govern the new administration. Cambell & Jamieson maintain that these objectives must naturally be attained through discursive tools that suitably actualize the speaker's aims. This makes Graber (1981) to argue that political language is a complex kind of discourse which must meet a variety of functions and requirements which include information dissemination, agenda setting, interpretation and linkage, projection for the future and the past as well as action stimulations. He believes that the principal aim of the presidential inaugural address in the democratic societies is to ease the transition of power and to unite the country after an election. So, the newly elected president proposes solutions for the country's problems

and tries to express his goals by means of the rhetorical devices that can effectively contribute to his success in making people believe in him and the ideology he represents.

Mason (1990) argues that the complex ways by which language elements are interconnected in discourse create a precondition for the speakers' representation of their communicative intent. That is, speakers delivering public speech like an inaugural address can actualize their ultimate goal which is to make the audience believe that what they are asserting is worthy of whole hearted and unconditional support by meticulously manipulating linguistic resources. Inaugural speeches are characteristically unique in that the speakers tend to make an appeal on both personal and emotional levels. They must appear sincere and fully committed to their cause and sound plausible and fair in order to be convincing.

Duranti (2006) posits that speakers in the political inauguration should move beyond plain exposition into the realm of argumentation whose primary purpose is merely building a case for persuading a given audience. The speaker's main objective is to substantiate the validity of the propositions he is making by utilizing believable, unassailable, and defensible reasoning. As a consequence, by marshalling evidence and exerting vigorous evidential support, the speaker can turn his speech into a mode of oration wherein he tries to prove that he is right and well-meaning, and in so doing, he tries to win the audience to his side. It follows, therefore, that linguistic elements should not merely be considered as acts of referral but as a system of units by which different speakers formulate their perceptions of the world, their beliefs and ideologies (Fairclough 1989).

Nigeria is not an exception when it comes to talking about inaugural speech as every 29th of May within the period of four years marks the inauguration of a new President. This has been the tradition for the past 26 years of uninterrupted democratic dispensation with seven inaugural addresses delivered. President Tinubu in 2023 used his inaugural address to shape public opinion and garner support for his political agenda. The various rhetorical strategies or persuasive techniques he uses in the speech would be examined in this study. However, the socio-political background of Nigeria is deeply rooted in its history as a multi-ethnic and diverse nation with a complex socio-cultural system (Eze

2024). Since Nigeria gained independence from British colonial rule in 1960, it has experienced a turbulent political landscape, marked by periods of military rule and civilian governance. The country's political system has evolved from a federal parliamentary system to a federal presidential system, with significant challenges such as ethnoreligious tensions, economic disparities and governance issues. Despite these challenges, Nigeria remains one of the most influential countries in Africa, with a vibrant democracy and a striving civil society. It is against this past historical background that this study includes the coup speech of General Ibrahim Babangida.

Military language in the opinion of Ayeomoni (2005) has to do with the language used by the military in enforcing authority. The military uses a language of power which is a commanding language. The study of military language becomes peculiar to coup speeches because the coupists themselves are the military and as such use a militaristic language politically to control the audience. A coup speech can then be likened to an inaugural speech in Nigerian context because it is the first speech delivered by a military leader after successfully executing a coup.

Umar (2019) asserts that coup speeches are the initial statements made at the hour of takeover of power and they capture the anxieties and views of the coup plotters and are regarded as aspects of political discourse. Enyi (2016) too sees a coup speech as the first opportunity the incoming military leader has to display the power of language, which becomes the greatest tool used in realizing their goal of power takeover. He concludes that a military coup speech can be seen as a sub-type of political speeches because its aim is targeted toward a political ambition. A coup speech or address has the features of all the public communication meant for the public consumption and that it reveals the ideological inclination of the military that see themselves as heroes and saviors because they claim to have come to save the nation from savages through their interventions. Therefore, this study deploys the tools of Gee's (2011) model of Discourse Analysis to analyze the selected military and civilian Nigerian leaders' speeches.

2.3 Language of Politics

The word 'politics' according to Miller (1984) is a form of collective rhetorical and social action driven by language to solve recurring community problems and it has come from the Greek word 'polis' which means state or city. That is, politics is about the affairs of the state. Politics varies according to situations and purposes and it has been defined in various ways. Chilton (2004: 18) on the one hand describes politics as a struggle for power, between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it. On the other hand, politics is viewed as cooperation, as the practices and institutions that a society has for resolving clashes of interest over money, influence, liberty, and so on. According to Heywood (1997), politics is defined in such different ways: as the exercise of power, exercise of authority, the making of collective decisions, the allocation of scarce resources, the practice of deception and manipulation, and the like. Roberts (1995) views politics as the study of conflict resolution while Burke (1975) sees it as a conflict of forces and application of moral principles.

The various descriptions of politics show that it has been understood differently by different thinkers within different traditions. Therefore, politics is difficult to define because of the contradiction between its broad and narrow conceptions and there is a lack of consensus on its meaning Modebadze (2010). No matter how politics is defined, there will always be influence on how societies are directed and the way public affairs are managed and people will be involved either as the government or the governed.

Language of politics concerns with how words and expressions are used in the world of politics. That is, the ways politicians use language to gain power. According to Beard (2000), looking at the language of politics as an occupation is important because it helps us to understand how language is used by those who wish to gain power, those who wish to exercise power and those who wish to keep power. He proceeds by saying that politics has its own code (a language variety particular to a specific group). This means political terms and register which politicians and political commentators make use of in their formal and informal talk.

Wodak (2009) notes that politics involves linguistic and discursive strategies or tactics which relate to the devices to be used in which function and in which way, where

and when and possibly why. According to her, it is obviously an issue of grading and scales, not a decision to either employ strategies or not to employ them. She submits that political meanings are always created in contexts and text analysis necessarily includes context analysis and that all dimensions of language can be used in persuasive and manipulative ways, depending on the respective context, language, culture, ideologies, topic, functions, speakers, audience and occasion. This seems to be in line with the argument of Orwell (1974: 111) who simply claims that political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable.

Another essential term that shares certain degree of relationship with politics is rhetoric which Martin (2013) describes as art of speech and persuasion, the study of argument and an essential component in the education of citizens. He believes that speech mobilizes the power of persuasion and rhetorical tools can help us understand it. Political speech aimed at persuasion – whether in private or in public – is a powerful channel of energies, one directed as much at fashioning human subjects and the conditions under which they make choices as it is at molding their judgements Martin (2013: 2). He notes that analyzing rhetoric invites the people to grasp the deeper political dimension that shapes how individuals relate to each other, what they can say and how. He submits that rhetoric draws people towards the power relations, the contests over the parameters of space and time and the controversies that underlie and occasionally disrupt routine politics. This shows that politics and rhetoric are linked, with rhetoric serving as an important tool for communicating political power. Burke (1982) argues in line with this when he holds that a rhetorical conception of politics is part of a rhetorical philosophy. So, rhetoric acts as the substance of political reality through persuasion and emotional appeal.

Bagea et al. (2026: 94) comment that strategic use of language in the context of political and media discourse is particularly significant as it serves to inform, persuade and control public opinion with the aims of reinforcing political ideologies and sustaining power structures. They note that political speech can take many forms in the modern world. There are party platforms, manifestos, campaign speeches at political rallies and conventions, addresses to political bodies like Congress or Parliament, speeches on public

holidays, editorials in newspapers, books outlining political programs, and advertisements on television for political candidates and causes. They link all these and others with media language and techniques of persuasion which range from the brief slogan or sound bite to lengthy reports with documents and statistics. This reveals how media contributes to language of politics in an attempt to win or capture the general trust of the public for a particular candidate or political party.

Martin (2013) while commenting on the relationship between politics and rhetoric observes that politicians use ideas, theories and arguments in a situated way to define the present circumstances, to forge coalitions, judge policies, contest government actions or advocate alternative ways of thinking and doing politics. They inventively navigate the constraints and opportunities of politics to re-fashion ideas as legitimation for action. Therefore, a rhetorical perspective on politics explores how political actors put theories and ideas to work Wodak (2011). It is revealed that rhetoric is used to examine what politicians do because it performs an understanding of persuasive speech as a situated practice of argumentation.

According to Brubaker (2013), the language of politics within religious houses is often characterized by a blending of sacred terminology with secular political goals, used to influence, mobilize or unify congregants. He explains that this discourse can range from overt advocacy to subtle, symbolic messaging, designed to align spiritual beliefs with specific socio-political positions. The language is rarely passive and it is designed to impact the behavior of voters and to frame the political participation of religious members. Brubaker sketches various ways in which language and religion are both similar to and similarly intertwined with ethnicity and nationhood and identifies a series of key differences between language and religion and draws out their implications for the political accommodation of cultural heterogeneity.

In Nigeria, religion and politics are deeply intertwined. Religious identity often acts as a primary driver for political mobilization and voting behavior. Although Nigeria operates a secular constitution, power-sharing and other political activities are always based on religion and ethnicity Ogunsiji (2005). As I have alluded to in the previous chapter, the land scape of Nigeria is characterized by a Christian-dominated South and a

Muslim-dominated North, with political alliances and candidate selection often based on balancing these faiths. According to Osisanwo (2012), Nigeria utilizes different informal and critical power-sharing arrangements in order to avoid conflict. These include federal character, zoning, separate religions of the president and vice-president and so forth. He posits that during electioneering campaigns, religion is used to mobilize support which often overshadows ideologies and party manifestos and even competence. That is, people support candidates with whom they share same religion even if they are not qualified in terms of academic qualifications and efficiency in the previous offices held.

Olateju (2008) notes that the exploitation of religious differences by politicians in Nigeria is a contributing factor to weakened governance and insecurity. She believes that religious leaders command significant loyalty and frequently influence the voting preferences of their followers through endorsements and sermons. So, religion is a defining factor in the democratic process in Nigeria and religious leaders are heavily involved in political activities.

The language of politics in Nigerian religious houses is a specialized form of rhetoric that blends sacred doctrines with secular power struggles. This language has evolved from passive guidance into active political mobilization which involves the use of spiritual authority to validate or disqualify political actors. Ojo (2010) classifies the language of politics in relation to religion in Nigeria into three: the Lord says, the chosen one concept, and the spiritual warfare. 'The Lord says' is associated with clerics who often present political endorsements as divine revelations or prophecies rather than personal opinions. 'The chosen one' concept has to do with candidates framed as being anointed by God to lead. These candidates are presented to the religious members by the religious leaders as God-ordained or preferred candidates for particular political positions. This according to Ojo which I agree with can effectively shut down debate over actual competencies or policies. The 'Spiritual Warfare' is a term for a situation whereby political contests are described in sermons as battles between light and darkness or the righteous and the ungodly. All these indirectly shape the opinions of the followers in making their choices in any election in Nigeria.

Joshua & Orungbami (2025) in their study on the role of religion and ethnicity in Nigeria's elections discover that because Nigerians have a strong attachment to their religion and ethnic backgrounds, politicians often capitalize on this as basis to mobilize for votes so as to pave the way for their victory without taking into cognizance the divisive tendencies these may pose on the fragile unity of the country. They maintain that some organizations like Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) always try to use language to foster peace and tolerance which significantly ensures national cohesion. Some politicians as well in Nigeria sometimes adopt the language of the religious house as a tool of legitimacy and to build rapport. They regularly use religious titles and cite scriptures especially during campaigns.

2.4 Existing Studies on Political Speech

Scholars all over the world have carried out research on political speeches, particularly inaugural addresses of various leaders in different countries using different linguistic approaches. Santulli (2020) investigates persuasive strategies and specifically examines the selection of the audience, strategies of pronominal choices, and the exploitation of metaphors and myths. She works on two institutionalized genres of political communication in the US: The Presidential Announcement and the Victory Speech, choosing former president Barak Obama as a case study. She explores how the arguer (Obama) constructs his ethical identity and that of his audience in the different generic contexts. The study reveals that Obama in his presidential announcement employs personal and American history as a significant rhetoric device to influence the audience. He emphasizes his commonality with the audience through the identification of strong shared values rooted into the fundamental events of American history. Mohammadi & Biria (2012) highlight the socio-pragmatic functions of inaugural speech using a critical discourse analysis approach to analyze George Bush's second term and Barack Obama's first term inaugural speeches.

According to them, an inaugural speech is the first formal presentation of a new president and it plays highly persuasive and ideological functions in the political scene of a country. They investigate the discursive strategies and rhetorical devices employed by

presidents Bush and Obama to express their political views. The results of the study show that both presidents possess a rich repertoire of discursive mechanisms such as the positive self and negative other-presentation strategies, biased and manipulative language, and strong bonding between lexical choice and ideological tendencies to rationalize policies and influence the audience.

Alafnan (2021), critically analyzes the inaugural speeches of President Donald Trump and President Joe Biden using the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional Linguistics. He focuses on transitivity, modality, and texture to identify the political purposes of the two speeches and how language serves power and ideology. The findings reveal that Trump uses linguistic devices in his speech to portray himself as a strong leader while Biden employs fatherly-like approach to uplift morale and generate trust. The thematic development and lexical cohesion investigated in the study show that Biden in his speech concentrates on abstract concepts and American values such as unity and racial justice while Trump focuses on concrete concepts such as jobs, wealth and borders. This difference may be as result of the contents of their political manifestos and the general programs of their respective political parties.

Furthermore, Chanturidze (2018) does a comparative and contrastive analysis of the victory and inaugural speeches of President Donald Trump. She identifies the similarities and differences in the speeches from the functional and linguistic points of view. The results of the research indicate that in the Trump's victory speech, the focus is on the greatness of everything and everyone whereas in the inaugural speech words connected with patriotism are dominant and they are expressed mostly by means of personal pronouns. Moreover, Pierini (2023) delves into the politics of United Kingdom and investigates the inaugural speeches by Conservative Prime Ministers. He tries to analyze the differences and similarities in the inaugural speeches delivered by the various Conservative leaders in the UK. He explains how each of these leaders has informed the country and communicated with the people in his inaugural speech. According to Pierini, the Prime ministers' sense of leadership and decisiveness emerge from the words, syntactic structures and rhetorical figures they use in their speeches to communicate their ideas to the country.

Strukowska & Buczowski (2022) examine the selected inaugural speeches of British Prime Ministers and analyze them from the perspective of anthropological pragmatics. They employ speech act theory in conjunction with a qualitatively centered Critical Discourse Analysis to unveil messages within the illocutionary communicative acts in the contexts of public political speeches. They reveal that the selected speeches are inherently embedded within threat-based rhetoric whose persuasive effect follows from a predominant use of the pathos and ethos appeals. These scholars also argue that generating fear in public discourse is essentially a strategic and goal-oriented practice. In their submission, it is revealed that the investigated British leaders rely heavily on strategies of using promises and statements to reflect patterns of legitimization through building a credibility schema and proximising the frame of fear mongering as well as developing narrative patterns that draw upon promises which help enact collective leadership in the times of threat and socio-economic crises.

Moreover, Ortu (2014) investigates tension and conflict in the labor discourse community by employing the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze the various speeches delivered by the British Prime Ministers who were elected under the platform of Labor Party to the Trade Union Congress (TUC). The study reveals the frictions inside the labor community in the United Kingdom (UK). She discovers that the relationship between the trade unions and the labor party has evolved through time and changes have transformed into open conflict. She argues that the conflict has affected the support given to the labor government by the members of the public.

Murodova (2024) generally works on socio-political and military patriotic speeches. The study shows that military speech is unique and independent due to its fighting spirit, political tension, and patriotism as well as the spirit of loyalty to the people. It is revealed that military speeches may be patriotic and inspiring for people to live to new goals and ideas. She argues that the art of oratory has a special place in peacetime, wartime, state administration and in commanding the army and urging soldiers to protect the country. This often requires effective strategy and language tactics from the commanding officers in the military. This is in line with Fafiyebi and Dada (2024) who investigate the features

of military speeches in Nigeria. The findings of the study point out that military speeches showcase clarity, exactness, objectivity, correctness, and austerity.

Basiru (2015), from a pragmatic point of view, investigates Nigerian President Obasanjo's selected military and civilian speeches and focuses on directives and commissives that occur in those speeches. In his speeches, according to Basiru, Obasanjo uses modal auxiliaries to express willingness and futurity in order to strengthen his commitment to improving the economy of Nigeria. Olaniyan (1987) analyses the tenor of discourse in General Babangida's speech and observes the relationship between the military leader and citizens to be largely formal. This accounts for the choice of the formalized linguistic structures used by General Babangida in his speech, which can be ascribed to the social class he occupied in the society in relation to his audience.

Ekoro and Asuquo (2024) work on lexico-semantic analysis of coup speeches of two Nigerian military leaders and state that diplomacy, vagueness, persuasiveness, and euphemism are part of the political language that characterize the coup speeches of military leaders in Nigeria. Military speeches have some elements of political orientations which gear towards persuading, appealing, and convincing the audience through the use of language.

Falode (2019), in his paper titled *The Military and Nation-Building in Nigeria*, posits that the military era in Nigeria was confronted with various nation-building challenges which were tackled through the use of constitutional and institutional mechanisms as well as the language of order and force. This brought about an absolute control of the economy, which would have made the people embrace the administration if the military dictators had got power through legitimate means. The administration of General Babangida, whose coup speech is being examined in this study, was significant in the history of military regime in Nigeria. Akinrinola (2016) carries out a rhetorical analysis of the inaugural speech of President Buhari of Nigeria. The speech is subjected to discourse and rhetorical analysis and shows that Buhari uses an array of lexical choices that reveal the prevailing socio-political context of the Nigerian nation.

Moreover, the study indicates that the speaker's verbal choices conform with his obligation, commitment, and promise to be proactive about the welfare of the people. The

results additionally reveal the president makes use of some pronouns to demonstrate the politics of inclusion, unity, and social cohesion. The president uses a major paradoxical statement in the speech to express political neutrality. He as well chooses historical allusions in his speech to express his preparedness to alleviate poverty and other social plights in Nigeria. According to the researcher, instances of growth and war metaphors are employed in the text to create a vivid image of the social development in Nigeria.

Ogunsiji (2025) comparatively investigates the inaugural addresses of Nigerian presidents elected under the platform of All Progressive Congress (APC), the political party that has been in power since 2015 till date. The study seeks to offer insightful information on the APC presidents' leadership priorities and discourse patterns through an analysis of linguistic elements, discourse structures, rhetorical devices, themes, and power dynamics. The results showcase the APC leaders' shared emphasis on national unity, good governance, and development across numerous areas while also emphasizing disparities in their approaches. The presidents whose speeches are examined in the study declare their dedication to global participation and inter-regional collaboration. The investigation reveals the socio-cultural elements that influence language use in the speeches.

Based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, Ayeomoni (2012) investigates the language and political ideology in the Nigerian military coup speeches. He extracts the content lexical items in the speeches and classifies them into the sense relations of collocation, hyponymy, antonymy, synonymy, and repetition. He discovers from the study that Nigerian military political leaders employ in their speeches all the lexical relations of synonym, hyponym, repetition, and collocation to enhance directness, military authority and orientation. The study generally shows interconnecting relationships of lexemes and political ideology in military coup political discourse. Still on the existing studies on the inaugural addresses of various political leaders in Nigeria and beyond, Unegbu (2023) does an analysis of power relations and affiliations in selected inaugural speeches of Nigerian leaders and applies the tools of Corpus Linguistics and Systemic Functional Linguistics to do a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data. He does a micro and

macro analyses of the speeches which allow a perspective on the development of discourses over time.

Key findings from the study show that the speakers in the selected inaugural speeches make use of civil-oriented words and expressions to reproduce unequal power relations with all Nigerians. The coup speakers also employ mainly militaristic words and expressions to reproduce binary power in order to create in-group and out-group affiliation with Nigerians.

It was revealed by Alo (2012) when he conducts a rhetorical analysis of selected political speeches of prominent African leaders that there are socio-economic and political inequalities between the developed countries of the west and the rest of the world including Africa. This assertion is partly supported by trade and commercial activities in the global world. In the study, Alo tries to uncover the ideological preoccupations inherent in the speeches of selected African leaders including President Obasanjo of Nigeria within the framework of Fairclough's socio-semiotic model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). He shows how African leaders employed persuasive strategies in their speeches to influence the African people on the expediency of various political and economic policies and plans that are capable of enhancing African economic recovery and development.

Moreover, Ogundipe (2023) works on the structure and meaning of metaphors in the president Tinubu's 2023 inaugural speech. He explores the application of metaphor within the political discourse domain and reveals that President Tinubu used in his inaugural speech in 2023 metaphors for socio-political interaction which depicts the idiosyncrasies of the Nigerian politics. This revelation has further exposed Nigerians to the programs and activities of Tinubu's government. Ahmed's (2012) study also investigates the use of negation in selected presidential speeches from the United States of America (USA) and Nigeria. The study aims to determine whether negation serves any other functions apart from contradicting the truth-value of affirmative statements. The speeches of former Presidents Obama of U.S. and Jonathan are analyzed by Ahmed using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework and the findings reveal that negation performs other functions beyond mere contradiction. He concludes that other functions of negation

as observed in the speeches investigated include constructing false dilemmas, creating ambiguity, and fostering common ground.

Furthermore, Omisakin et al. (2023) employ cohesion as a rhetorical instrument with close insight from M. A. K. Halliday's (2004) Systemic Functional Grammar in analyzing the inaugural speech of President Obasanjo. According to the analysis, Obasanjo deploys heavy cohesive devices to create textual unity and as a strong rhetorical mechanism in his 1999 inaugural speech. It can be inferred from their submissions that in politicking, either when seeking election or to sustain political positions, persuasive instruments are very crucial. Therefore, politicians purposively structure some linguistic choices to reconstruct the minds of the readers in order to gain their support.

Similarly, Ajayi et al. (2024) corroborate the views of Omisakin et al. (2023) by arguing that President Tinubu, in his inaugural speech in 2023, deployed some tools of cohesion to communicate his ideology of optimism to the Nigerian people. Ajayi and his colleagues adopted Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis in their study in a corpus-based manner. Yusuff (2025) investigates politeness principles and persuasive strategies in president Tinubu's inaugural speech in 2023 using the tools of Locher and Watt's Politeness Theory complemented by M.A.K Halliday's Functional Linguistics. The study reveals that four basic persuasive strategies: appealing, asserting, assuring, and engaging are employed by Tinubu in the speech. These rhetorical tools are deployed to motivate and instill confidence in the audience and by extension foster a sense of unity in the country.

All the studies that are on Nigerian leaders which have so far been reviewed have focused either solely on Nigerian military speech or civilian speech. There is little or no work that has combined the analysis of both Nigerian military and civilian leaders in a single study. Therefore, this current study intends to fill this gap by drawing upon the framework of Discourse Analysis to uncover the linguistic and rhetorical devices used by both Nigerian military and civilian leaders in their speeches.

CHAPTER THREE

Data and Methodology

3. Introduction

This Chapter is devoted to describing the methodology and theoretical framework of the study. Method of analysis and the rationality behind the choice of selected inaugural addresses as well as the analytical approach for the study are expounded here. In this Chapter, the various rhetorical devices and strategies employed to examine the selected political speeches are also illustrated and elaborated with the aim of situating their relevance in this type of linguistic analysis. The Chapter contains discussion of the specific tools of inquiry as well: intertextuality, ellipsis, and pronouns. Finally, this Chapter focuses on what an ideal discourse analysis is as exemplified by James Paul Gee. The concept of context and origin of discourse analysis are discussed in this chapter.

3.1 Data Selection

The data in this study are three inaugural speeches of eminent Nigerian military and civilian leaders. As already pointed out in Chapter One, the Nigerian leaders whose speeches are captured in this research are from both northern and southern parts of Nigeria and they represent different political, ethnic and religious affiliations. General Ibrahim Babangida is a prominent military dictator who hails from north-central geo-political zone dominated by People of Islamic faith. He became the Head of State in Nigeria in 1985 through military coup.

President Olusegun Obasanjo became Nigerian president in 1999 after he was officially declared winner of presidential election by the electoral body. He served as the military leader from 1976 to 1979 and returned as a democratically elected president from 1999 to 2007. According to Ogundipe (2023) Obasanjo is a Christian from the south-western geo-political zone of Nigeria while the current president Bola Ahmed Tinubu from the same zone as Obasanjo is a Muslim.

President Tinubu is a core politician without any form of military background and had his Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Chicago University, U.S.A. The essence of

this brief profile of these leaders is to demonstrate the balancing of the data for this study as their first inaugural addresses form a turning point in Nigerian political discourse.

3.2 Reasons for Selecting the Speeches

It is pertinent to state that the texts for this study are selected purposely because their contents are preoccupied with major political ideologies which are expressed through different rhetorical strategies with various cohesive ties. The speeches are also selected for the study due to their relevance to the target audience and rich embedded persuasive features. They as well discuss issues related to socio-political realities of Nigeria.

The sentences and expressions that suit the objectives and the focus of the study are carefully selected, grouped, and analyzed respectively under relevant headings. The inaugural speeches were sourced from Nigerian Punch newspaper website. The choice of punch newspaper website is based on the fact that it is a reputable Nigerian news outlet known for accurate and comprehensive reporting. Therefore, accessing the speeches from this source ensures the complete and unaltered texts which reflect the official addresses delivered by President Obasanjo, President Tinubu, and General Babangida.

Furthermore, President Obasanjo's speech marks off his disengagement from being a military ruler to a democratic leader. My concern is to investigate the language and a virtue of being a democrat and the attitudes of being a retired military dictator in the same person. It is equally important to state that the selected speeches are characterized with a lot of foregrounded cohesive features which are carefully analyzed and explained. More importantly, the coup speech of Babangida is selected in order to examine both the choice of military language and tools he employs to justify the change in government. Lastly, president Tinubu's inaugural speech is selected to see how he tries to connect himself with his co-contestants in a keenly contested election and how he intends to unite the good people of Nigeria who have been widely divided along religious, ethnic and political lines before the presidential election in 2023.

3.3 Method of Analysis

The study employs a qualitative approach using Gee's (2011) model of Discourse Analysis (DA) with specific tools of intertextuality, ellipsis, and use of pronouns to dissect

the selected inaugural addresses of three Nigerian leaders. The choice of DA as the theoretical framework is owing to the fact that it is a broad linguistic approach and very suitable for analyzing speeches whether spoken or written. That is why Johnstone (2008) describes DA as a methodology that can be used to answer many kinds of questions. Wodak & Mayer (2016) also observe that discourse analysis is a framework for understanding how language in political discourse reflects and actively shapes social reality.

3.4 Theoretical Framework

First and foremost, I like to discuss discourse. Many scholars have described discourse in different ways. According to Van Dijk (1997), the term ‘discourse’ usually refers to a form of language use, public speeches or more generally to spoken language or ways of speaking. Fasold (1990: 65) simply defines the study of discourse as the study of language use. Crystal (2006) sees discourse as continuous stretch of spoken language that is larger than a sentence and can also be a set of utterances which constitute any recognizable speech event.

Discourse is a socially determined entity and specific principles of a speech system according to which the reality is being classified and represented during certain periods of time (Shama 2011). This means that discourse depicts formal way of thinking expressed through language. That is, language is germane and significant when discourse occurs in any community. It can be deduced from these various definitions given by different scholars and analysts that discourse often revolves around a speech form more than the written aspect of language. This is supported by Akebayeva (2014) when he comments that discourse considers verbal and non-verbal linguistic means, mental issues, intention of communicants and communication tools. The field of discourse has witnessed a lot of research in different disciplines and communities.

In the shared views of Brown & Yule (1983), Fairclough (1995,2003), Gee (2011), discourse can be described as the organization and expression of knowledge, ideas and experience that is rooted in language and specific socio-cultural contexts. They note that the notion of discourse includes the use of spoken, written, sign language, and multimodal

forms of communication. Discourses involve any kind of communicative utterance such as full conversations and texts which include gesture, visual and verbal materials, fictional and non-fictional prose and verse.

Another important term in the field of discourse analysis is discourse community. Jordens et al. (2022) describe discourse communities as groups of people who share common ideologies and common ways of speaking about things. That is, the group members share common goals and make use of specialized language and communication methods to achieve their aims. This agrees with Brown & Yule (1983: 1) who state that the analysis of discourse is necessarily the analysis of language in real use and that it involves social networks of participants such as speakers, individuals, communities, domains and so forth. They reveal that a discourse community is composed of members who share an agreed set of common goals and examples include political parties, organizations and so on.

According to Porter (1992), a discourse community is a local and temporary constraining system, defined by a body of texts or practices that are unified by a common focus. It is observed that discourse can colonize the members of discourse communities, taking over the domains of thought by means of ideology. They believe that discourse communities can serve positive ends and can create risks as well. Examples of discourse communities include professional and workplace communities, academic and educational communities, civic and social communities, political parties, and so forth. These groups maintain certain level of expertise and new members learn the communicative norms for them to be deemed experts.

Brown & Yule (1983) highlight the various features of discourse communities which include mechanisms of intercommunication (meetings, newsletters etc.), genres of communicating their purposes (minutes of meetings, corporate website), specific lexicon (business language, medical language), threshold level of relevant content and discursial expertise. Similarly, Swales (2011) states several key ideas about discourse communities, arguing that a set of descriptive characteristics are needed for discourse communities. He comments that all communities cannot be regarded as discourse communities. Hence, he specifically itemizes six defining characteristics of a discourse community. According to

him, a discourse community has a broadly agreed set of common public goals. It has mechanisms of intercommunication among its members. It uses its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback.

A discourse community possesses and utilizes one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims. In addition to these owning genres, a discourse community has acquired a specific lexis. Lastly, a discourse community has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discursual expertise.

Having said these about discourse and discourse community, what then is discourse analysis? Poythress (1982) defines Discourse Analysis broadly as the analysis that encompasses everything or everything deemed relevant going on with the speaker and the audience. He believes that the impact of discourse analysis should involve what the speaker indicates about his own attitudes and the responses the discourse is trying to produce in the audience as well as what the discourse conveys by its own inherent force and structure. While discussing the relationship between meaning and discourse, Poythress (1982) further describes meaning as residing in the structural whole that a discourse is, (unital meaning) and the contribution that all prominent smaller parts together make to the larger whole (hierarchical meaning). He concludes with contextual meaning as meaning that resides in the relations that the discourse bears to its immediate context or contexts.

In Gee's view (2005), discourse analysis centers around communicative events where the focus is on a linguistic mode and social events that involve a coordinated pattern of words, actions and interactions, values, beliefs, tools, objects, times and places. Johnstone (2008: 2) describes Discourse Analysis as being typically focused on the analytical process in a relatively explicit way and as a methodology that can be used in answering many kinds of questions. She highlights the various uses of Discourse Analysis to include shedding light on how meaning can be created via the arrangement of chunks of information across a series of sentences or via the details of how a conversationalist takes up and responds to what has just been said.

Additionally, Discourse Analysis sheds light on how speakers indicate their semantic intentions and how hearers interpret what they hear. It equally helps to describe the

culturally-shaped interpretive principles on which understanding is based and how people are thought to perform actions by means of utterances. Discourse analysis as well embraces work on cohesion and examines the meanings of utterances in their linguistic contexts.

According to Farinde (2010), the traditional concern of linguistic analysis has been the construction of sentences, but recently there has been an increasing interest in analyzing the way sentences work in sequence to produce coherent stretches of language. This has brought about discourse analysis and textual analysis. Farinde (2010) is of the view that discourse analysis focuses on the structure of naturally occurring spoken language as found in such discourses as conversation, interviews, commentary and spoken words while textual analysis is based on the structure of written language with examples such as essays, notices, road signs and so forth.

McCarthy (1991) submits that discourse analysis is concerned with the study of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used. This shows that all forms of written text and speech are interpreted based on different internal and external factors and it necessitates the belief of Firth (1957) that it is in the study of conversation that the key to a better understanding of what language is and how it works can be found. He sees language as a human sociological dimension and the best way to get to its root is to set it in use. There seems to be a lack of one-to-one correspondence between grammatical form and communicative function and it may be important to note that communicative function cannot be the sole domain of grammar. Though discourse analysis might not be entirely separated from the study of grammar and phonology, analysts are interested in a lot more than linguistic forms.

Ogunsiji (2009) states that discourse analysts' goals are how two speakers are coherent in dialogue, how they interpret each other's grammar approximately and what their roles are during conversation based on the stipulated rules and conventions. Gee (2011: 1) asserts that people use language to communicate and to help others and that discourse analysis is interested in the relationship between discourse forms such as grammatical, lexical, phonological and discourse functions. He submits that forms are the raw materials which enable people to use language functionally.

Gill (2000) opines that “discourse analysis is the name given to variety of different approaches to the study of texts, which have developed from different theoretical traditions and diverse disciplinary locations”. It involves many different styles of analysis of texts and speeches. He maintains that discourse analysts are interested in texts in their own right, rather than seeing them as a means of getting at some reality which is deemed to lie behind the discourse that can be social, psychological or material. So, discourse analysis involves content and organization of texts. He differentiates discourse analysts from other social analysts by noting that social scientists’ concern with language is generally limited to finding out what an individual’s attitude to something really is. Gill (2000) observes that discourse analysis has four main themes: a concern with discourse itself, a view of language as constructive and constructed, an emphasis upon discourse as a form of action, and a conviction in the rhetorical organization of discourse.

Moreover, discourse analysis is viewed by Johnson (2003) as a qualitative research method which examines how language creates meaning, shapes social realities, and enforces power dynamics within specific contexts. Its tools are deployed to analyzing language beyond individual sentences and focusing on cultural, social, and historical settings of communication. Johnson opines that the purpose of discourse analysis is not just to understand what is said but why and how it is said and effects of the language in the audience. He maintains that discourse analysis also is extended to discursive practices which center on how conversations are produced and consumed. The emergence of discourse analysis according to Albertin (2016) can be traced back to the work of Michel Foucault, a French theorist, who considers discourses as statements that are recognized as meaningful within the society. It is valuable as it seeks to establish how and why certain social systems are attributed significance and therefore helps us understand better the world around us. Albertin reveals that discourse analysis provides a tool to analyze the role of language in reinforcing and producing such social value systems and material realities.

Turner (2020) cites Hodges et al. (2008) and Tannen et al. (2015) identifies three main types of discourse analysis which are formal linguistic discourse analysis, empirical discourse analysis, and critical discourse analysis. The first type looks at words, phrases,

grammar or semantics while the second one goes beyond the sentence and considers how language can function as a social practice. The third type of discourse analysis looks more broadly at the social context and goes farther than the linguistic scope of the language. It explores how language is situated in cultural and contextual power dynamics as well as the ways language constructs and limits people's thought. Turner holds that critical discourse analysis is the most often cited form of discourse analysis. This is perhaps because it looks at discourse critically and takes a critical analytical stance which may influence thought processes in the society.

Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis are similar but different in some ways in their examination of language. Alam (2024), observes that both examine language beyond the sentence level. This implies that both analyze language use that extends further than single sentences, such as conversations and texts. They analyze text within its context and aim to uncover hidden meanings in communication. Both also are approaches that are used across various disciplines such as linguistics, social sciences, media studies and so forth.

However, Alam (2024: 389) states the differences between Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis. Discourse Analysis is said to be a broad, descriptive, and interpretive method which focuses on how language constructs meaning while Critical Discourse Analysis is a specialized and normative approach that focuses on how language challenges power imbalance, ideology, and social inequality. While Discourse Analysis aims to describe, understand, and interpret how language is used, Critical Discourse Analysis aims to critique, expose, and change ideological practices. Discourse Analysis may focus generally on neutral interactions and conversations whereas Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on power dynamics, inequality and dominance. Discourse Analysis can be more descriptive and rooted in linguistics and pragmatics while Critical Discourse Analysis may be evaluative and heavily influenced by critical theory.

Discourse Analysis essentially provides a lens through which language functions can be viewed and this is why Ogunsiji et al. (2010) argue that functions of Discourse Analysis may be likened to the functions performed by language in the society. They believe that since discourse is an aspect of language use, whatever function language is used to

perform, discourse cannot be excluded as the locus of language is around discourse. They cite Halliday (1973) and classify functions of language into three categories: ideational, interpersonal, and textual.

The ideational meta-function deals with the speaker's experience of the world which includes internal and personal world. That is, the writer or speaker expresses his experiences of the real world in language. It relates to the knowledge of language rules that has been internalized by the speaker. The interpersonal function has to do with social relations and also known as an interactional function. Language use helps to sustain relationship and influence people's opinion. The textual function helps the writer to construct text and organize the message. It ensures cohesion and coherence in the relation of sentences that constitute a text whether spoken or written.

Another aspect of discourse analysis is cohesion which Halliday & Hassan (1976) see as a matter of contextual appropriacy of linguistic form. It is the study of the way in which discourse hangs together as a meaningful unit Farinde (2009). It concerns grammatical and lexical linking within a text and how sentences and ideas are held together. Cohesion manifests itself through ellipsis, substitution, pronoun, repetition, punctuation and the like. Farinde notes that grammatical items like pronoun, preposition, conjunction can be used to achieve cohesion in the same way other vocabulary choices could be used to bring about cohesive tie in discourse. Cohesion is vital for effective communication and helps the readers to track references and relationship between ideas.

Cook (2003) identifies some important levels of discourse analysis which range from grammatical structure, semantic structure, word usage, phonological features to context. Semantic level deals with the type of meaning the text relies on which could be literal or connotative while grammatical structure concerns the sentence and phrase structures of the text as well as word order, active and passive constructions. Word usage or lexis of the text involves the vocabularies and expressions used by the writer or speaker and how they are used.

The vocabulary of the text could be simple, complex, dynamic or static, formal, descriptive or evaluative. It could as well be general or specialized while context focuses on the relationship between the writer and the reader or speaker and the addressee. The

contextual consideration of the analysis may reveal whether the speaker addresses the audience directly or otherwise. It may also include the external factors referenced by the speaker for certain purposes (Ogunsiji & Farinde,2010).

3.5 An Ideal Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis, though often seen as located within the discipline of linguistics, is in fact an interdisciplinary field of inquiry but an ideal discourse analysis according to Gee (2011) has to do with what discourse analysis actually entails. That is, the various factors that a discourse analyst should put into consideration. He notes that actual discourse analyses usually develop in detail only a small part of the full picture with some consideration given to the whole picture. Essentially a discourse analysis involves asking questions about how language, at a given time and place, is used to construct the aspects of the situation network as realized at that time and place and how the aspects of the situation network simultaneously give meaning to that language Gee (2011). This means that discourse analysis ideally combines a deep look at a text with its social and historical context.

An ideal discourse analysis tries to uncover how language builds power, shapes identity and creates shared meanings and Gee (2011) proposes different activities before a discourse analyst when analyzing a text which he technically refers to as ‘Building Tasks’. The tasks involve understanding the status of the speaker and culture of the participants as well as the setting of the discourse. In addition to this, lexical and grammatical choices, themes and hidden assumptions in a text have to be put into consideration by an ideal discourse analyst. The analyst also takes into account the sorts of connections between the previous and future conversations that are made within and across utterances and large stretches of the interaction in a text. All these have to be linked with the people, ideas, and institutions in the current situation.

3.6 Intertextuality

Intertextuality has to do with external features of a text. According to Fairclough (2003: 17), intertextuality can be interpreted as how texts draw upon, incorporate, recontextualize, and dialogue with other texts and it is an instance of discourse practice as well as social practice. This implies that speakers and writers make references to other texts that are relevant to the issues being discussed. Bakhtin (1981) argues that texts do not occur in a vacuum but are situated within history and society and speakers or writers insert themselves within them by rewriting the texts. So, intertextuality deals with insertion of past events into a text.

Alfaro (1996: 268) equally argues that the theory of intertextuality insists that a text cannot exist as a self-sufficient whole which means that insights are drawn externally by speakers and writers to shed light on a particular topic of discussion. Johansen & Larsen (2002) believe that intertextuality means the texts refer to each other, quote each other and that there are allusions in the text to other texts. They maintain that such an influence can take the form of adopting the conventions, materials, actions or themes of other texts. It is revealed that the intention of intertextuality is to cause remembrance of a person, place or thing in relation to what one is currently discussing, and by so doing, motivate speakers into action. It can be inferred from this that the essence of intertextuality is to boost the interest of the speaker and to reinforce or emphasize the point being made. Alabi (2024: 170) notes that political actors and language users generally adopt intertextuality to foreground their position on certain issues.

Intertextuality is important because it enhances understanding and interpretation of a text. Haberer (2007) in his article *Intertextuality in Theory and Practice* argues that referencing another text serves as a guide for readers to make sense of a text by bridging it with familiar historical contexts and narratives which transforms a simple reading into a richer experience. This can mean that writers and speakers use intertextuality for the purpose of adding layers of meaning to their discourse. He posits that intertextuality brings about deep textual complexity. Another significance of intertextuality according to Haberer is that it connects audience to the broader cultural heritage and enables critical thinking by showing how texts exist within a larger dialogue. Therefore, in adherence to

this work, political actors reference past information in order to validate their points and invalidate the claims of their opponents.

3.7 The Concept of Ellipsis

Ellipsis is a syntactic term and it can be used in texts especially in political speeches as rhetorical device to achieve certain purpose. Winkler & Gruyter (2011) describe ellipsis as the omission of linguistic material, structure, and sound. It is an interface phenomenon which can only be explained on the basis of the complex interaction between syntax, semantics and information structure. It is observed that ellipsis occurs in different grammatical units of language depending on the focus of information.

According to Shopen (1973), there is ellipsis when propositions are not fully realized in the grammatical form of utterances. This means that there is more to the message than what has been said. In other words, Kempson et al. (2015) assert that ellipsis is a phenomenon in which what is conveyed does not need to be fully verbally articulated. That is, the message is not expressed in detail but may be understood to a certain extent by the interlocutors. This is supported by Kudryashova et al. (2025) when they hold that ellipsis is a term for a number of linguistic phenomena when a sentence lacks a unit that would normally be obligatory, and it is nevertheless semantically reconstructed from the local syntactic or semantic context. They argue that the meaning of an elliptic utterance is still achieved despite the absence of an explicitly expressed unit.

Ellipsis is used to achieve different goals, one of the most important ones is brevity and economy of linguistic means, which are manifested in all functional styles Kudryashova et al (2025). It enables an expression to be understood from the context which makes language more natural and concise.

3.8 Pronouns in Political Discourse

Pronouns in political discourse are strategic tools used in constructing identity and defining in-groups and out-groups. They are used to exert power and solidarity. Political actors manipulate choices of personal pronouns to share responsibility, create personal connection, or distance themselves from opposition Beard (2000). According to Santulli

(2020: 5), the use of personal pronouns characterizes the domain of discourse “where the utterance is linked to the context of enunciation, and sender and receiver propagate their presence through all the language forms subject to grammatical agreement”. She opines that the occurrence of ‘you’ is a sign of the presence of ‘I’, even when it is not explicitly codified. She as well observes that the pronoun ‘we’ is extremely flexible in its use because it can be differently interpreted in the pragmatic context which leaves room for ambiguities. It is however noted that ‘we’ often builds unity while ‘they’ frames opponents.

Generally, the use of pronouns in political discourse is not uniform and can change based on the situation, cultural background and political orientation Beard (2001). Beard (2001: 261) states the common ways of using some pronouns in politics. The first-person singular pronoun ‘I’ is said to be used to highlight personal conviction or responsibility when speaking as an individual while ‘you’ is often used to directly engage the audience, challenge opponents and to imply a universal experience. The third person ‘they’ is often used to create distance, and alienate the speaker and his team from the opponent. Beard also points out the inclusive ‘we’, exclusive ‘we’ and the national ‘we’. The inclusive ‘we’ is used to create a sense of community, shared responsibility, and connection with the audience which bridges the gap between the politicians and citizens. The exclusive ‘we’ is used to often refer to only a specific group such as the speaker and his team, excluding the audience whereas the national ‘we’ is used to align the speaker with the nation to project authority.

Alavidze (2017) states that the use of personal pronouns is very important to identify the intention of politicians and to construct their image. The study reveals that during political speeches, the choice of pronouns goes beyond their grammatical person, number, and gender and they can be chosen for different reasons. They can be used to show the communicants’ attitude, social status, gender, motivation and so on. This submission suggests that political speeches whether spoken or written involve the strategic use of pronouns.

3.9 Context in Discourse Analysis

Language communication is not conducted in a vacuum but in a specific language environment. Context therefore plays a vital role in discourse analysis. It is regarded by Yang & Hu (2022) as the environment that forms discourse and one of the key factors that influence discourse comprehension. They reveal that analyzing features of reading materials strengthens comprehension and appreciation of the language and the cultural contexts within which it is used.

As noted by Song (2010), context in discourse analysis concerns the physical, social, and cultural environment surrounding a text or interaction which dictates how language is produced, interpreted, and understood. It goes beyond literal words to include participants, setting, and purpose, ensuring that meaning is properly constructed and analyzed. According to Van Dijk (2006), discourse depends on the context, and it is a part of the context and the context-free approach to the study of discourse is constrained and superficial. This implies that discourse analysis without considering context is incomplete and not thorough. Understanding both intra-textual and extra-textual contexts is essential for grasping meaning, communicative intentions, and implicitness Van Dijk (2006).

Cook (2003) asserts that context is relevant to whether a particular action or utterance is appropriate or not. In accordance with him, analysis of language in use should involve taking into account many relevant factors other than words themselves. He believes that “instances of language are never abstracted, they always happen in specific situations, they belong to particular people and are used to realize those people’s purposes”. Cook (2003: 49) identifies the different examples of contextual factors that might be involved in interpreting a real language encounter to include tone of voice and facial expression, the relationship between speakers, their age, sex, and social status. Other ones are the time and place and the degree to which speakers do or do not share the same cultural background.

Cook (2003: 50) notes that there are three areas of study which contribute to the field of discourse analysis and they are paralanguage, pragmatics and genre studies. Paralanguage is described as communicative behavior such as tone of voice, hand waving, eye contact etcetera used alongside language during communication. It is not limited to

oral production alone, it is applicable to writing too. Written words can be scribbled or painted and their meaning can be altered by layout, accompanying pictures and diagram. He submits that whether written, spoken or mixture of the two, language cannot be used for communication without paralanguage.

Pragmatics is the discipline which studies the knowledge and procedures which enable people to understand each other's words. Its main concern is not the literal meaning, but what speakers intend to do with their words and what it is which makes this intention clear Cook (2003). So, it can be deduced from this description of pragmatics by Cook that meaning can be subject to circumstances and situations. That is, an utterance may have more than one interpretation based on the context.

The third study area of discourse analysis stated by Cook is genre studies. The term 'genre' according to Swales (1990) refers to a class of communicative events which share some set of communicative purposes. Meaning changes with the kind of communicative event to which words belong. For instance, the same person can be described differently when writing a job reference or giving a funeral oration after their death. So, any instance of communication belongs to one category of genre or the other.

Context classifications in the views of Song (2010) vary from one to another. Some linguists divide context into two groups while some look at it from three, four, or even more perspectives. However, the common context types are linguistic context, situational context and cultural context. Linguistic context refers to the context within the discourse. That is, the relationship between the words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs. Linguistic context can be explored from three aspects, namely, deictic, co-text, and collocation. Participants in a language event know where they are in space and time and these features relate to deictic context. This involves deictic expressions such as time words like now, then etc, the spatial words like here, there etc and the person expressions like I, you etc. Deictic expressions help to establish deictic roles which derive from the fact that in normal language behavior the speaker addresses his utterance to another person and may refer to himself, a certain place, or to a time.

Co-text in line with Halliday & Hassan (1976) deals with verbal environment or the surrounding words, phrases, and sentences that accompany a specific word or passage

within a text. It is an internal linguistic context focusing on what comes before and after a specific element that helps determine its meaning. Based on the observation of Halliday & Hassan, collocation is a type of lexical cohesion where words that occur typically together appear in a text. It is a predictable combination of words or lexical sets that contribute to a text cohesion within the broader context of textual cohesion and structure.

Situational context or context of situation has to do with the immediate physical and social environment (time, place, participants etc) where communication takes place. It shapes how language is interpreted and acts as a non-linguistic filter that defines meaning beyond lexical items. In line with Halliday (1994), the components of situational context in discourse are field, tenor, and mode. Field of discourse of discourse is about the ongoing activity or social action while tenor refers to the kind of social relationship enacted in the discourse. Mode of discourse focuses on the linguistic reflection of the relationship the language user has to the medium of transmission.

Another important type of context is cultural. According to Adjei (2013) cultural context in discourse refers to the culture, traditions, history, shared values, beliefs, norms, background and social customs that influence how language is produced and understood within a community. Since language is a social phenomenon and closely tied up with the social structure and value system of society, it cannot avoid being influenced by factors like social status, age, sex and so forth Adjei (2013). Cultural context shapes communication and may give room for correct interpretation of meaning.

3.10 Origin of Discourse Analysis

The origin of Discourse analysis can be traced to early 1950s when language was analyzed beyond sentence boundaries and sentences were examined in relation to context Jacobs (2021). It evolved significantly in the 1970s, drawing from sociolinguistics, philosophy, anthropology, and sociology. Jacobs (2021) posits that among the pioneers and key contributors to the development of discourse analysis are Zellig Harris, Michel Foucault, Michel Pecheux, Teun Van Dijk, Norman Fairclough and so forth. He submits that Zellig Harris' work in the 1950s on structuralist linguistics is generally considered the beginning of discourse analysis.

Harris (1952) attempts to find structural patterns in texts. In line with this, Qadri (2017) argues that discourse analysis stemmed from early 20th century structuralism and solidified as a distinct discipline in the early 1970s, driven by researchers like Michel Pecheux who focused on the study of conversation and how language creates social reality rather than just conveying information. Qadri identifies some sub-fields of discourse analysis which include Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) developed in the 1980s/90s from earlier 1970s Critical Linguistics by scholars such as Norman Fairclough who aimed to expose how power inequalities are maintained and reinforced through language.

Another sub-field is Conversation Analysis which Qadri believes emerged from ethnomethodology in the late 1960s to study the structure of interaction. Foucaudian Discourse Analysis is an additional one and it focuses on how broad social discourses shape knowledge and power dynamics, based on the work of Michel Foucault.

Gill (2000) observes that Discourse Analysis is a new area of study in linguistics. It is said to have grown out of studies in different disciplines in the 1960s and early 1970s including linguistics, semantics, psychology, anthropology and sociology. He maintains that two main approaches have developed: Discourse Analysis which focuses on the structure of spoken language and the one that focuses on the structure of written language. He further sheds light on the origins of Discourse analysis. He notes that its origins can be traced back to the study of language, public speech, and literature more than 2000 years ago. One major historical source is undoubtedly classical rhetoric, the art of good speaking and performance of public speech in political and legal settings.

However, rhetoric lost much of its importance in the curricula of schools after some revivals in the eighteenth century. The emergence of historical and comparative linguistics at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the birth of structural analysis of language at the beginning of the twentieth century replaced rhetoric as the primary discipline in the humanities. Fragments of rhetoric survived only in school textbooks of speech and communication. Parallel to this decline of rhetoric as an independent academic discipline, new developments in several fields of the humanities and the handbook social sciences took place that eventually led to the emergence of discourse analysis Taylor (2013).

Moreover, Hook (2001) argues that 1960s brought various attempts to applying semiotic or linguistic methods to the study of texts and communicative events. According to him, the early 1970s saw the publication of the first monographs and collections that explicitly deal with systematic discourse as an independent orientation of research within and across several disciplines. Apart from variations in phonology, morphology, and syntax, and the dependence of stylistic variation on social factors, this reorientation also soon began to pay specific attention to discourse analysis.

Another important development in linguistics in the 1970s was the discovery of the philosophical work by Grice, Austin and Searle about speech acts. Whereas sociolinguistics stressed the role of language variation and the social context, this approach considered verbal utterances not only as sentences but also as specific forms of social action Hook (2001). That is, sentences when used in some specific contexts could be assigned some additional meaning.

Glynos et al. (2009) highlight the various contributions to discourse analysis which include the writings of Michael Pecheux and Michel Foucault. Pecheux was a French social psychologist, psycholinguist, and philosopher. He was one of the main representatives of a critical and productive episode in French discourse analysis from the late 1960s to the early 1980s. He shared with more famous contemporaries such as Michel Foucault a background in epistemology and post-structuralism and an interest in theories of discourse, but his most important contribution to discourse analysis consisted in the development of tools for conducting empirical studies of discourse.

Glynos and his colleagues observe that in an attempt to break away from the spontaneous ideology of content analysis, Pecheux developed a formal, potentially automatic instrument, which he called *Automatic Discourse Analysis*. This instrument could generate a theoretical description of a discourse by identifying and describing relations of selection and substitution of syntactic elements in a corpus of texts representing that discourse. When dealing with criticisms of this approach and attempting to overcome its limitations, Pencheux moved away from structuralism and developed a more reflective theory of 'inter-discourse' in which he tried to account for the ideological struggle and dynamic inequality between discourses.

The works of Michel Foucault are as well major contributions to discourse analysis. Foucault developed the concept of the 'discursive field' as part of his attempt to understand the relationship between language, social institutions, subjectivity and power. Discursive fields, such as the law, the family etc. contain a number of competing and contradictory discourses with varying degrees of power to give meaning to and organize social institutions and processes Glynos et al. (2009). They also offer a range of modes of subjectivity.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analysis and Discussion

4. Introduction

This Chapter focuses on the analysis and discussion of the selected speeches based on the rhetorical devices employed by the speakers. It begins with the outlines of the speeches. Qualitatively, the data are analyzed, described, interpreted and explained on the basis of the vocabulary, grammar and structures using Gee's (2011) discourse analysis approach to discover a subjective understanding of the inaugural addresses delivered by three prominent Nigerian leaders. The specific grammatical cohesive devices for investigation are: ellipsis, intertextuality and use of pronouns. The other features of cohesion observed in the selected speeches and discussed in this chapter are lexical repetition, conjunction, synonym, antonym, and passive voice. This Chapter also contains some of the elements of Nigerian English that are found in the selected inaugural addresses.

4.1 Outline of Babangida's Speech

The coup speech of General Ibrahim Babangida on August 27, 1985 can be internally divided into the following parts:

- 1) Criticism and failure of the past military leadership (paragraphs 1-3). General Babangida criticizes and proves that former military leader, General Buhari fails and dashes the hope of Nigerians.
- 2) Justification of the coup and pointing out lapses of the past government (paragraphs 4-8). Babangida is direct in justifying toppling Buhari's administration. He uses the following expressions to describe the weakness of Buhari and his deputy (Tunde Idiagbon): "Regrettably, ... Major-general Muhammad Buhari was too rigid and uncompromising in his attitudes to issues of national significance." "Major-General Tunde Idiagbon was similarly inclined in that respect. He arrogated to himself absolute knowledge of problems and solutions."

- 3) Enumeration of the nation's challenges and inability to find solutions to them alone (paragraphs 9-16). The military dictator identifies core economic problems of the nation and states his resolve to pursue good external relations with other countries under what he calls Nigeria's foreign policy.
- 4) Recognizing the diverse nature of the country and his intention to unite the people (paragraphs 17-19). Babangida recognizes the importance of the people's consent to the government and therefore rules out ruling by force. He welcomes constructive criticism. However, he warns people against needless demands.
- 5) Seeking support of every Nigerian and conclusion (paragraphs 20 and 21). The New military leader calls for genuine patriotism and expresses his gratitude to his fellow soldiers and other security personnel for their efforts during the period of the coup. Examples of Babangida's gratitude and support seeking calls include: "There is a lot of work to be done by every single Nigerian. Let us all dedicate ourselves to the cause of building a strong, united and viable nation for the sake of our own lives..." "I wish to commend the members of the Armed Forces and the Nigeria Police for their mature conduct during the change."

4.2 Outline of Obasanjo's Speech

The inaugural address of president Olusegun Obasanjo on May 29, 1999 can be broken into the following parts:

- 1) Expressing gratitude to God and Nigerians home and abroad as well as the military under the headship of General Abdulsalam Abubakar for handing over power to a democratically elected president (paragraphs 1-4). President Obasanjo does not only thank God for his victory at the election but also for being alive. This is because he was arrested and detained by General Sani Abacha for allegedly plotting a coup against his (Abacha) administration. He was later pardoned by General Abdulsalam after Abacha's demise and he subsequently became the candidate of the political party that won the presidential election. In his words: "... you the good people of Nigeria elected me, a man who had walked through the valley of the shadow of

death, as your president... I believe that this is what God Almighty has ordained for me and for my beloved country...’’

- 2) Bribery and corruption impede national progress (Paragraphs 5-8). The new president states that the nation is endowed with human and natural resources but are not utilized judiciously because of corrupt activities of government officials.
- 3) The need for people’s cooperation with the government and the promise to govern the country effectively (Paragraphs 9 & 10). President Obasanjo expresses his determination to provide good leadership to the people of Nigeria and charges Nigerians too for forthright followership. He says thus: “Alone, I can do little”.
- 4) Highlight of key issues and challenges (paragraphs 11-19). President Obasanjo in his inaugural speech lists the various programs he intends to pursue in transforming the country. He also clearly states the different problems Nigeria as a country faces which include corruption, Niger Delta crisis, military incursion into government and so on.
- 5) Ending the address with repetition of the need for change and hope (Paragraph 20). The president concludes the speech by emphasizing the need to avoid corruption and vowing to improve the living condition of the people.

4.3 Outline of Tinubu’s Speech

The inaugural address of president Bola Ahmed Tinubu on May 29, 2023 is internally divided as follows:

- 1) Praying and expressing love for the country and its people (paragraphs 1-6). President Tinubu in his inaugural address begins by showing his joyful feelings as the new president of Nigeria. He appreciates God and prays for his direction in piloting the affairs of the country as well as for peacefully concluding the election process.
- 2) Commending the former president and recognizing the diverse nature of the country (paragraphs 7-11).

The newly sworn in president thanks the immediate former president Muhammadu Buhari for his efforts in the conduct of the elections. He calls for unity and nationalism and

states that Nigeria remains indivisible forever. In his words: "... we declare as one unified people devoted to one unified national cause ... as long as this world exists, Nigeria shall exist".

3) Promising to be a listening leader and enjoining the vanquished in the contest to support his government (paragraphs 12-15). President Tinubu promises to be democratic in governance and calls on the candidates who lost the election to work with him for the sake of the country's development. He acknowledges that the election was keenly contested and fairly won.

4) Calling for people's commitment and patriotism toward the nation (paragraphs 13-14). The new president asks the people to be patriotic like the fore fathers who fought for the country's independence irrespective of their differences in ethnicity, religion and so on. According to him. "We must never allow the labor of those who came before us to wither in vain..." let us recommit our very selves to placing Nigeria in our hearts... regardless of creed, ethnicity, or place of birth."

5) Expressing gratitude to the electorate and pledging to be just to all the regional parts of the country (Paragraphs 15-19).

6) Outlining the guiding principles and expected programs and policies of the government. (paragraphs 20-29). President Tinubu highlights the various principles that will guide his administration which include being impartial in governing the country as he strictly intends to follow the constitution and rule of law. He also outlines different programs and plans of priority to his administration to include security, economy, agriculture, jobs, infrastructure, fuel subsidy, and the like.

7) Concluding the inaugural address by calling on the people to support his government and its policies (paragraphs 30-31). The new Nigerian leader, president Tinubu ends his speech with prayers for the people and the country and asks them to have confidence in his ability to deliver dividends of democracy to Nigerians.

In his words: "... I ask you to join me in making Nigeria a more perfect nation and democracy..."

4.4 The Rhetorical Implications of Ellipsis

Toner (2015: 62) describes ellipsis as intentional omission from speech or writing of a word or words that are superfluous or are understandable to both interlocutors from the contextual clues. It often occurs with a linguistic antecedent and it is indicated by three omission dots.

4.5 Instances of Ellipsis in the Coup Speech of General Babangida

Extract (1)

Sentence (a): When in December 1983, the former military leadership, (...) headed by major General Muhammad Buhari assumed the reins of government, its accession was heralded in the history of this country.

Sentence (b): Major issues falling into this category have been identified and decisions (...) taken.

Sentence (c): The initial objectives were betrayed (...) and fundamental changes do not appear on the horizon.

Sentence (d): Our dedication to the cause of ensuring that our nation remains a united entity (...) worthy of respect and capable of functioning as a viable and credible part of the international community dictated the need to arrest the situation.

There are noticeable connective ties of ellipsis in sentences a, b, c and d which are identified as relative clause ‘which was’, verb phrase ‘have been’, prepositional phrase, ‘by the former military leadership’, and relative clause ‘which is’ as indicated with ellipsis mark above. The omitted structure in the sentences is understood to have been connected to the referent nominal phrase, the former military leadership which is the administration of Major-General Buhari. Therefore, the sentences can be interpreted without ellipsis as follows:

Sentence (a): When in December 1983, the former military leadership, which was headed by major General Muhammad Buhari assumed the reins of government, its accession was heralded in the history of this country.

Sentence (b): Major issues falling into this category have been identified and decisions have been taken.

Sentence (c): The initial objectives were betrayed by the former military leadership and fundamental changes do not appear on the horizon.

Sentence (d): Our dedication to the cause of ensuring that our nation remains a united entity which is worthy of respect and capable of functioning as a viable and credible part of the international community dictated the need to arrest the situation.

The speaker deploys the cohesive device ‘ellipsis’ in order to save space and economies time but still creates textual forms in a bid to drive at his target objective which is to justify the takeover of power from the former military leader, Major-General Buhari. This is to theoretically enthuse his audience to see him as a man who is passionate about the progress of the country. For instance, sentence b in the above extract indicates firmness, strictness, and directness in the use of language by the military leader, General Babangida. This is because problems were identified and firm and final decisions were already taken on them without any form of prior dialogue or consultation with the people of Nigeria. This may be considered as a persuasive force to drive support for his new government.

4.6 Instances of Ellipsis in Olusegun Obasanjo’s Speech

Extract (2)

Sentence (e): I wish, at this point, to thank all you good Nigerians for the confidence (...) reposed in me.

Sentence (f): Nigerians (...) living in foreign lands deserve special tribute for not forgetting their fatherland and for making their voice (...) heard persistently in defense of freedom.

Sentence (g): The difference will be that in the past, sacrifices were made and patience (...) exercised with little or no results.

In the extract (2), cohesive tool of ellipsis is noticed in sentences, (e, f, and g) which can be identified as relative phrase (that you), relative clause (who are), verb phrase (to be), and auxiliary past verb (was) respectively. So, each of the sentences can be interpreted without using ellipsis as follows.

Sentence (e): I wish, at this point, to thank all you good Nigerians for the confidence that you reposed in me.

Sentence (f): Nigerians who are living in foreign lands deserve special tribute for not forgetting their fatherland and for making their voice to be heard persistently in defense of freedom.

Sentence (g): the difference will be that in the past, sacrifices were made and patience was exercised with little or no results.

The speaker, president Obasanjo deploys the elliptic technique as shown above in order to make his germane point of appreciating all Nigerians home and abroad for finding him worthy of being their leader. He appreciates the people of voting age for coming out on election day to carry out their civic responsibility which leads to his victory. This serves as a way of drawing support for his government.

4.7 Instances of Ellipsis in Bola Tinubu's Speech

Extract (3)

Sentence (hi): My love for this nation is abiding.

Sentence (hii): My confidence in its people (...) unwavering.

Sentence (hiii): And my faith in God Almighty (...) absolute.

Sentence (i): For many years Nigeria's critics have trafficked the rumor that our nation will break apart, (...) even perish.

Sentence(j): Power generation should nearly double and transmission and distribution networks (...) improved.

In the extract (3), sentences hi, hii and hiii are connected through omitted verb 'is'. This verb is elliptically present in sentences hii and hiii but we have it non-elliptical in sentence hi. The ellipsis in sentence (i) is identified as modal verb (will) and that of sentence (j) as (should be). Therefore, the sentences in the extract 3 can be interpreted below.

Sentence (hi): My love for this nation is abiding.

Sentence (hii) : My confidence in its people is unwavering.

Sentence (hiii) : And my faith in God Almighty is absolute.

Sentence (i): For many years, Nigeria's critics have trafficked the rumor that our nation will break and will even perish.

Sentence (j): Power generation should nearly double and transmission and distribution networks should be improved.

President Tinubu deploys the cohesive tool of ellipsis in his inaugural speech as illustrated above in order to create a sense of shared understanding between him and the audience and by extension demonstrates his leadership capability in tackling the various challenges confronting the country which require the cooperation of the good people of Nigeria. It is inferable from the extract (3) that president Tinubu uses the occasion of his inauguration as the new president of Nigeria to reassure the people of his undiluted loyalty, love, and patriotism to Nigeria as a country. He shows that he believes in oneness and unity of the country and that he will do everything to ensure stable electricity in the country. He deliberately makes use of ellipsis as a rhetorical tool to connect his government with the Nigerian people.

4.8 Intertextuality

According to Gee (2011: 171), the word 'text' means what someone has said or written, a stretch of speech or writing while intertextuality is when one text quotes, refers or alludes to another text. That is, what someone else has said or written or other styles of language. It involves direct and indirect quotations and some characteristics of texts that are external to the events which are brought in by the speakers. Fairclough (2003: 17) as well corroborates this by referring to intertextuality as how texts draw upon, incorporate, recontextualize and dialogue with other texts. So, references that speakers and writers make to relevant events and periods purposively to woo the audience in order align to their viewpoints connote intertextuality. Nigerian leaders in their inaugural addresses reference other familiar texts to create sense of shared experience and values between them and the Nigerian people.

4.9 Implications of Intertextuality in General Babangida's Speech

Extract (4)

When in December 1983, the former military leadership... assumed the reins of government... a new sense of hope was created in the minds of every Nigerian. Since January 1984, however, we have witnessed a systematic denigration of that hope. It was stated then that mismanagement of political leadership and a general deterioration in the standard of living... were the reasons for the intervention.

Extract (5)

... the Public Officers Protection Against False Accusation, Decree 4 of 1983 is hereby repealed... those who have been in detention under this decree are hereby unconditionally released.

The underlined part of the extract (4) is an indication of intertextual reference between General Babangida's coup speech and General Buhari's coup speech. General Buhari in his speech in 1983 after overthrowing the government of president Shehu Shagari claims that president Shagari mismanages the economy and standard of living of many Nigerians remains poor and unimproved. Babangida as well in 1985 gives same reasons for taking over power from Buhari.

In extract (5), Babangida references one of the prominent policies of Buhari administration known as decree 4 of 1983. He has to abolish and invalidate the decree in order to pave way for the lawful release of political detainees. The essence of those actions of the new military leader is to persuade and convince Nigerians for a change in government. He tries to justify the country's leadership change through the use of political and military language by condemning almost everything about the administration of the former military leader, General Buhari. The speaker believes he has come to save the nation from savages through military intervention.

Babangida describes the regime of General Buhari as wasteful government. He expresses his disappointment at the fact that expectations of the people are not met and their hopes are dashed. He points out that the main objective of the military takeover has been betrayed and therefore there is need for a change. Babangida condemns Buhari and accuses him of being too rigid and uncompromising to issues of national importance. He later in his speech addresses the major issues confronting the country. He reaffirms that he and his cabinet members have come to restore the lost hope. Babangida vows to change the course of history and solicits the assistance of all Nigerians in order to make Nigeria a better country. He ends his speech with a blessing to all Nigerians.

4.10 Implications of Intertextuality in Obasanjo's Speech

Extract (6)

I commend General Abdulsalam Abubakar and members of the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) ... for keeping meticulously to their announced timetable of handing over to a democratically elected government today.

Extract (7)

You have been asked many times in the past to make sacrifices and to be patient. I am also going to ask you to make sacrifices, and to exercise patience. The difference will be that in the past, sacrifices were made and patience exercised with little or no results. This time however, the results of your sacrifice and patience will be clear and manifest for all to see.

In extract (6), president Obasanjo intertextually references the handing over timetable previously announced by the military leader, General Abdulsalam. The slated date is not changed nor cancelled as witnessed during the regime of General Babangida. This action of General Abdulsalam is highly commendable as he willingly and peacefully relinquishes power to the newly elected president. The speaker (Obasanjo) makes this intertextual reference to the past action of the former leader as a rhetoric strategy about readiness to fulfill his campaign promises and to create a sense of textual unity.

This statement is alluded to by the speaker in the seventh extract above. From the extract (7) above, it is deducible that the analogical reference to the sacrifices and patience preached by the past leaders is deliberate. The speaker deploys this cohesive style

persuasively to project integrity and to mark a sharp difference between the present and the past leadership in the country. To him, the sacrifice and patience of Nigerians would yield positive results. This is obviously an attempt to persuade and convince Nigerian people to support his administration. It can also be inferred from the extract (7) that president Obasanjo is an ideal leader who acknowledges the sacrifices and patience of the people and the need for those efforts not to be in vain.

4.11 Implications of Intertextuality in president Tinubu's Speech

Extract (8)

Nigeria will be impartially governed according to the constitution and the rule of law.

Extract (9)

I have a message for our investors, local and foreign: our government shall review all their complaints about multiple taxation and various anti-investment inhibitions.

In the extract (8) above, president Tinubu references a written document, the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria. Constitution is a legal document containing the principles and laws that regulate a government. Considering the fact that Nigeria is a country with immense potentials, abundant resources, and a vibrant population but grapples with issues such as corruption, unemployment, nepotism, favoritism and social inequality, governing constitutionally is very appealing and strategic.

In the Nigerian context, for a president to lead the country impartially and according to what the constitution stipulates holds significant relevance. The statement in extract (8) is a logical appeal which underscores the importance of justice and fairness on the part of the new president. It implies that Nigerians can harness their collective potential, drive positive change and shape a brighter future for themselves irrespective of their religious, ethnic and language differences. It also shows that the past leaders have engaged in one thing or the other that was against the constitution. For instance, the predecessor of president Tinubu, former president Buhari was tacitly accused of favoring the northern part of the country where he hails from in his appointments and economic policies. So,

the speaker, president Tinubu tactfully makes reference to the constitution to convince the people so that they can give his government the necessary support.

The extract (9) is an intertextuality between the speaker's speech and that of the Nigerian businessmen as well as the foreigners who have investments in Nigeria. According to the speaker, both the local and foreign investors in Nigeria have complained either verbally or in writing about multiple taxation and the president is willing and ready to review and address their complaints. This suggests that the new president is conversant with the government policies about taxation and investments in the country. It also attests to the fact that president Tinubu, being an accountant and a former governor of Lagos state, a business hub, understands the significance of different scales of business in driving the economic development of the country. This intertextual reference is a cohesive and rhetorical device deployed by president Tinubu to woo the various groups of the elites in business sector in Nigeria and beyond to endear his government to them.

4.12 Use of Pronouns in Babangida's Coup Speech in 1985

The use of pronominal reference is common in political speeches. These pronouns are used to realize specific meaning and cohesive feature in the speech. According to Bello (2013), political actors often make a deliberate use of subject pronouns like (I, we, our, my) in such a way that can be seen as ideologically motivated. This may be interpreted as intentional manipulation by the speaker to claim or disclaim responsibility depending on the issue at stake. He maintains that it seems 'we' is used when the speaker is in doubt of the verifiability or acceptability of the proposal. If the proposition fails, the speaker would not be held modally responsible for the claim. On the other hand, 'I' is used when the speaker is on safer grounds and wants to claim responsibility for positive achievement or to disguise responsibility.

Another explanation to the shift in the use of singular and plural pronouns 'I' and 'we' is that 'we' is used when speakers want to adopt a "face-preserving act" (Yule 1996: 61). When they need the solidarity of their audience, to identify with them as in-group and thus win their consent and perpetuate their hegemonies, in that case, the inclusive 'we' is

used. However, when the speakers want to assert authority as one in control, they change to face-threatening acts by using singular 'I' meaning 'I am the leader here'.

Bloor & Bloor (2004: 228) claim that the grammatical use of possessive pronouns 'my/our' in conjunction with nominals representing things that cannot be owned in any real sense of the world is ideological. They can color people's attitudes to the world and encourage loyalty, care and other natural emotions. They can also be used to distort the ugly side of issues making them more acceptable and thus divert the attention of the audience from any hidden agenda.

General Babangida in his coup speech uses different personal pronouns for various persuasive purposes. Examples are:

- 1) Let me ... make you understand... I thank you all for your cooperation...
- 2) Our role as Africa's spokesman has diminished because we have been unable to maintain the respect of African countries
- 3) Efforts to make him understand...
- 4) He failed to exhibit the appropriate disposition demanded by his position...
- 5) My colleagues and I are determined to change the course of history.
- 6) We do not pretend to have all the answers to the questions which our present problems have put before our nation.
- 7) We shall not allow anything to obstruct us.
- 8) we have come with the strongest determination.

In the extract above, General Babangida employs the pronoun 'you' and its variant 'your' to refer to the citizens of Nigeria whom he believes share the collective will to keep Nigeria free from corruption and instability while the use of the personal pronouns 'I' and its object variant 'me' as well as its possessive variant 'my' depicts General Babangida as a man of authority who is ready to rescue the country and its people.

Another significant pronoun in Babangida's speech is 'we' together with its variants 'our' and 'us'. They are used for cohesive, rhetorical and persuasive effect of inclusion. The inclusive pronoun 'we' is deployed by Babangida in utterances 6,7 & 8 of the extract to refer to himself and his executive body excluding other Nigerians. It also suggests that

he is part and parcel of the coup that ousted General Buhari. However, the plural pronoun ‘we’ and its variant ‘our’ in the second utterance simply depicts Nigeria as a country and its people in general.

Moreover, Babangida makes use of the pronoun ‘he’ and its variants ‘him’ and ‘his’ to refer to his predecessor, General Buhari or his Chief of Staff, General Idiagbon whose names are categorically mentioned by the speaker in the speech and they constitute what Brown & Yule (1983: 221) regard as “topic entities in the discourse”.

4.13 Use of Pronouns in President Obasanjo’s Speech in 1999

President Obasanjo in his inaugural speech in 1999 employs personal pronouns extensively for various strategic purposes. He uses the speaker-listener related pronouns such as (I, you, me, us, we, our, your) to establish a direct connection and personal agency while third-person related pronouns such as they, them, he, she to talk about people who have been in the leadership positions before and have mismanaged the country. Examples are:

- 9) I know what great things you expect of me...
- 10) With God as our guide,...we shall not fail.
- 11) We are assuming office as a result of a free, democratic and peaceful election, we must be proud of this.
- 12) Our infrastructure- roads, NEPA... were allowed to decay and collapse.
- 13) We shall be firm with them.

President Obasanjo in the first sentence of the extract (sentence 9) above uses the second-person plural pronoun ‘you’ to represent Nigerian people especially those who are physically present at the event. The plural pronouns ‘we’ and ‘our’ in the sentence 10 and first part of the eleventh sentence refer only to Mr. President and his vice, Atiku Abubakar who had been duly elected to pilot the affairs of the country for four years. However, the pronoun ‘we’ in the second part of the eleventh sentence and ‘our’ in the sentence 12 point to all Nigerians including the speaker. In the last sentence of the extract, the subject pronoun ‘we’ and its variant ‘them’ denote president Obasanjo (speaker) together with his

team while ‘them’ refers to the various beneficiaries of corruption in the country. It means the new president is ready and determined to deal decisively with those who might be found guilty of corruption in the country.

4.14 Use of Pronouns in President Tinubu’s Inaugural Speech in 2023

President Tinubu uses personal pronouns strategically in his inaugural address in 2023. He employs the pronouns to build rapport between him and the people of Nigeria as a way of drawing support for his new government. The president as well tries to establish authority and create a sense of national unity through the use of some personal pronouns. Inclusive plural pronouns dominate the speech and this essentially is to foster collective responsibility and a shared national unity. He also makes use of ‘I’ and its variants to assert commitment. Examples are:

- 14) For many years, Nigeria’s critics have trafficked the rumor that our nation will break...
- 15) Yet here we are.
- 16)... we declare as one unified people devoted to one unified national cause...
- 17) My victory does not render me any more Nigerian than my opponents...
- 18) They shall forever be my fellow compatriots.
- 19) I have a message for our investors...
- 20) My administration must create meaningful opportunities for our youth.
- 21) We shall honor our campaign commitment of ... new jobs...

In the above extract except one, president Tinubu uses the plural pronoun ‘we’ and its variant ‘our’ to refer to himself and all Nigerian people who were at the Eagle Square (the physical context or setting of the event) and others wherever they may be within and outside the country. It is to emphasize collective action and purpose as well as genuine belief in the country’s bright future. He however tactically uses the pronouns ‘we’ and ‘our’ in the last utterance to refer to himself and the vice president (Kashim Shetima) as well as their political party’s officials and by extension registered members. He uses the

occasion to reiterate his promise of increasing the employment rate in Nigeria by creating several employment opportunities for Nigerians.

President Tinubu uses the plural pronoun ‘they’ in the utterance 18 to refer to the other candidates who contested the presidential election with him. He endeavors to persuade them to support his government. He makes use of the singular pronoun ‘I’ and its variant ‘me’ in the extract to establish authority while the possessive pronoun ‘my’ in expressions like ‘my victory’, ‘my administration’ are used to justify the fact that he lawfully won the election and was legally declared winner by the electoral body constitutionally saddled with the responsibility of conducting elections in Nigeria. This is implied because he was widely alleged to have rigged the election.

4.15 Cohesive Features in the Selected Speeches

Cohesion as described by Halliday & Hasan (1976) has to do with the relationships within and between the sentences that constitute a text. It gives texture to the text and brings about a set up where the interpretation of some elements in the discourse depends on. The various cohesive ties that bind together the sentences and paragraphs in each of the selected texts include conjunctions, lexical repetition, synonyms, antonyms, and passive expressions.

4.15.1 Antonym

According to Omisakin et al. (2023), antonym is a cohesive device that refers to opposite concept of another unit in a text. It involves contradiction which brings about unity of ideas in a text. Antonyms help to achieve textual cohesion by revealing the oppositeness and producing a sense of comparison. In Nigerian context, antonyms are employed by Nigerian leaders in their inaugural addresses to reveal their philosophical contradictions of the political ideals and realities in Nigeria. For instance:

Extract A

Instead of progress and development,... we experienced in the last decade... deterioration in the quality of governance. (Obasanjo 1999).

We are here to further mend and heal this nation, not tear and injure it. (Tinubu 2023).

...the same government which received the tumultuous welcome now became alienated from the people (Babangida 1985).

It can be inferred from the above extract that Obasanjo makes the statement in an antonymous sense. He believes that the past leaders of Nigeria did not administer the country effectively and it led to backwardness rather than growth. Tinubu's utterance presupposes that things have been very bad but he would not make them worse, rather, he would provide solutions to the various challenges confronting the nation while Babangida is antonymous in the way he describes the relationship between the people of Nigeria when Buhari got to office and when power was wrested from him. It is implied that people were happy when Buhari became the head of state but within a short time, he isolated himself from the people through bad governance which saddens the Nigerian people. These antonyms are used by Babangida, Obasanjo and Tinubu to strategically promote their new administrations and endear themselves with the good people of Nigeria.

4.15.2 Synonym

Synonyms act as linguistic variants with similar meanings that construct discourse coherence. They support cohesion in text and help speakers manage tone, highlight specific features and emphasize emotions. General Babangida in his August 27 1985 coup speech employed synonyms to emphasize the failure of Buhari's regime and to justify the takeover of power. In a similar manner, Obasanjo in his inaugural address on May 29 1999 utilized various synonyms to emphasize his commitment to transparency and national reforms after many years of military rule. Tinubu as well in 2023 in his inaugural speech used specific synonyms to emphasize unity and create hope for the people of Nigeria. Instances can be seen in the extract below:

Extract B

... Major-General Muhammadu Buhari was too rigid and uncompromising in his attitudes to issues of national significance (Babangida 1985).

I wish to pay tribute to the great and gallant Nigerians who lost their lives in the cause of the struggle for liberty, democracy and good governance (Obasanjo 1999).

To those who voted otherwise, I extend my hand across the political divide. I ask you to grasp it in national affinity and brotherhood (Tinubu 2023).

The underlined synonyms in the above extract are meant to stress the point and information being given by the speakers. Babangida is trying to make solid the narrative that the previous leader was authoritarian and inefficient which justifies his overthrow as a necessary change. Similarly, Obasanjo uses the synonyms to deeply appreciate the efforts of few people who have died and whose death is remotely or immediately caused by the election while Tinubu endeavors to seek support for his administration from the generality of people particularly those who opposed him during the election.

4.15.3 Conjunction

Conjunctions in discourse are important cohesive tools that link ideas, phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs together in order to create logical flow of communication. They establish semantic relationships and act as signposts that guide the reader or listener through the narrative structure. According to Halliday & Hasan (1976) cited by Brown & Yule (1983: 191), an explicitly marked cohesive relationship in texts is indicated by conjunctions which are formal markers that relate what is about to be said to what has been said before. They classify the markers into additive, adversative, causal and temporal. Instances of conjunctions in Babangida's, Obasanjo's and Tinubu's inaugural addresses are illustrated through the following extract:

Extract C

When in 1983, ... a new sense of hope was created in the minds of every Nigerian. Since January 1984, however, we have witnessed a systematic denigration of that hope (Babangida 1985).

I call on all Nigerians but particularly on our religious leaders to pray for moral and spiritual revival and regeneration in our nation (Obasanjo 1999).

We have stumbled at times, but our resilience and diversity have kept us going (Tinubu 2023).

In the extract, Babangida employs the adversative conjunction ‘however’ to indicate the sharp difference between Buhari of 1983 and Buhari of 1984 upward. It is suggested that people were optimistic that Buhari would transform the country positively only for him to dash the hope. This means that Buhari led a disappointing government and should not be allowed to continue. The additive conjunction ‘and’ and adversative ‘but’ used by both Obasanjo and Tinubu in the above extract are strategic. They are not only binding the clauses in the sentences together, but also carrying extra information about Nigeria and its people.

President Obasanjo tries to enjoin the clergy to preach morality which can make people especially public office holders to shun all forms of corrupt practices. President Tinubu persuades people to unite and he acknowledges the fact that Nigeria has faced different challenges such as political crises and civil war which ought to have led to disintegration but the country remains one united nation despite the tribal, religious and linguistic differences.

4.15.4 Lexical Repetition

In political discourse, repetition is an important rhetorical strategy. It is used to emphasize key points and ensure messages are memorable as well as to build cohesion. It can as well be used to make certain clarification. In other words, repetition is the act of reproducing elements that have been previously mentioned. The relationship between items of repetition and their antecedents is textual rather than structural. It is observed that in political speech, repeated lexical items are content words which are semantically deemed to carry the core sense of the text. They are therefore foregrounded so as to stress some cogent information conveyed by the words.

In the inaugural addresses of Babangida, Obasanjo, and Tinubu, some essential words are repeated in order to drive their persuasive efforts of getting the support of Nigerian people. For instance, the word ‘corruption’ is the most mentioned word in the inaugural speech of Obasanjo in 1999. This is strategic as it is meant to project himself as

an incorrupt leader. It is also meant to pass a message that his government would be ruthless in dealing with corrupt politicians.

President Tinubu too in 2023 used the words ‘nation’ and ‘economy’ severally in his inaugural address. The choice of these lexical items is essentially to promote national unity and prioritize economic reforms. General Babangida in his coup speech in 1985 made use of words like “government, military, people” frequently while trying to justify the removal of the previous administration and outline a new direction. The words respectively are used to contrast his new leadership with the previous regime of Buhari and highlight the collective action of the army in the coup and align his government with the Nigerian populace.

4.15.5 Passive Verbs

Passive verbs are used strategically by political actors to obscure agency, evade responsibility, and shape public perception by shifting focus from the actor to the action. It is a rhetorical tool intentionally employed to reduce blame especially regarding controversial policies and failures and to make them sound objective and inevitable. For example, the extract below contains the instances of passive constructions in the coup speech of General Babangida as well as the inaugural addresses of both Presidents Obasanjo and Tinubu.

Extract D

The initial objectives were betrayed and fundamental changes do not appear on the horizon. (Babangida 1985).

Good men were shunned and kept away from government while those who should be kept away were drawn near. (Obasanjo 1999).

...may I offer a few comments regarding the election... It was a hard-fought contest. And it was also fairly won. (Tinubu 2023).

The first main clause in General Babangida’s statement in the extract D above is in a passive form. It shows that the former military leader before Babangida does not fulfill the promise of good governance he made when he became the head of state in 1983. The

speaker uses this to defend the necessity of the coup that ends Buhari's regime. Babangida did not render the utterance in an active form like 'Major-General Buhari betrayed the initial objectives' possibly to avoid repeating the name again after mentioning it twice. More importantly, it is a strategy to discredit Buhari's government and influence Nigerians to support the new government under the leadership of General Babangida.

The ironical statement of Obasanjo above is a passive expression. Contextually, it is perhaps directed at the former military leaders particularly General Sani Abacha for their acts of corruption and maladministration. General Abacha's regime was alleged to have engaged in massive corruption and looting of public treasury and those who opposed him were arrested and detained. General Abacha died in office in 1998 and thereafter succeeded by General Abdulsalam who within a short time authorized the conduct of the election that produced president Obasanjo in 1999. It should be however noted that Obasanjo uses the statement tactfully to establish his stand on corruption and to prepare the minds of Nigerians for the various policies of his administration to curb the menace.

Furthermore, president Tinubu in the extract makes a passive construction about the presidential election. He said "It was fairly won" rather than 'I fairly won it' in order to indirectly appeal to the candidates that lost out to accept his victory in good faith. That is, the focus should not be on who wins but on how it is won. This is because the election was keenly contested and it was won with a narrow margin. The lost candidates complained of irregularities in the process and went to court to seek redress.

4.16 Nigerian English in the Selected Inaugural Addresses

General Babangida's coup speech featured notable examples of Nigerian English which is a variety of English shaped by Nigerian cultural, linguistic, and social contexts. They are characterized by unique phrasing and specific semantic usage that are common in Nigerian public discourse. He uses phrases such as "our given mandate" and "the strongest determination". These expressions have some semantic implications. In Nigerian context, it is a civilian or a democratically elected leader that should talk about 'given mandate' but General Babangida gets to power through a bloody coup. Hence, no any form of mandate granted to him by the ordinary Nigerian people.

Therefore, the phrase means that Babangida and his military colleagues had to forcefully remove the previous government as part of their role of safeguarding the country against internal aggression. The other phrase that has the superlative adjective is used by Babangida to emotionally appeal to Nigerians that he would be an efficient leader. President Obasanjo too employs some Nigerian English expressions to make important points in his inaugural speech. The expressions include “bribe their way through”, “ministries and parastatals”, “the struggle” and so on. In Nigerian context, “to bribe your way through” means to pay bribes in order to bypass bureaucratic hurdles, “ministries and parastatals” refers to government institutions with various departments and offices while “the struggle” implies the fight against military dictatorship.

Moreover, president Tinubu on the occasion of his inauguration uses the phrase “renewed hope” to signify or promise betterment or improvement in the country’s affairs. Another common phrase in Nigerian political rhetoric used by Tinubu is “collective sacrifices” which connotes shared actions, efforts, endurance and patience. Two out of the three inaugural speeches of Nigerian leaders examined in this study begin with the phrase “Fellow Nigerians” while one starts with “My fellow citizens”. This form of greeting is yet another Nigerian English phrase strategically employed by Nigerian political leaders to amplify inclusivity and brotherhood.

CHAPTER FIVE

Findings and General Remarks

This Chapter presents the key results from the study and draws some general remarks based on the analysis of the selected inaugural speeches.

5.1 Research Findings

The study has shown a number of outcomes. It has revealed that ellipsis, intertextuality, and pronouns are strategically deployed by Nigerian political leaders in their inaugural addresses not only for the purposes of textual cohesion and persuading the people to support their government but also to expose people to their leadership capability to face the various challenges confronting the country. The analysis has also illustrated that the speakers of the speeches considered in this study make use of elliptic tool in the areas of word classes and grammatical units but the most prominent ones are related to relative or adjectival expressions.

This implies that relative phrases and clauses are mostly omitted in the examined extracts from the inaugural addresses of General Babangida, presidents Obasanjo and Tinubu. This discovery differs from what Basiru (2015) found when he examined the military and civilian speeches of president Obasanjo where he revealed that Obasanjo used modal verbs prominently to express willingness and futurity and to strengthen his commitment to national unity and nation-building.

Another key finding of this study is that Nigerian leaders do convince their people by referencing past events and actions. This reference often has both positive and negative impact on the Nigerian people. For instance, General Babangida in his speech tries to reference the good beginning of General Buhari's administration. According to Babangida himself, people were happy and optimistic when Buhari became the head of state but reverse was the case after a year in office. He says "In December 1983...a new sense of hope was created in the minds of every Nigerian...Since January 1984, however, we have witnessed a systematic denigration of that hope". Babangida in his speech also alludes to

Decree 4 of 1984 and repeals it which leads to unconditional release of the various people in detention under the decree. In his exact words: “The innocent cannot suffer the crimes of the guilty...the Public Officers Protection Against False Accusation Decree 4 of 1984 is hereby repealed...And finally, those who have been in detention under this decree are hereby unconditionally released”. This is part of the strategy employed by Babangida to influence the people of Nigeria for them to accept and support the new change of leadership in the country.

Furthermore, it is observed that president Obasanjo in his inaugural address references the former head of state, General Abdulsalam. He refers to him as a sincere and patriotic leader because of his choice to allow democratic rule in the country. Obasanjo also references promises made and unkept by the past leaders and vows that the situation like that will not be business as usual. President Tinubu too in his speech makes reference to the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria and vows to rule according to it. He as well promises to look into the multiple taxation challenge being faced by local and foreign investors in Nigeria. All these references indicate a strategic point. Therefore, the study shows that Nigerian leaders deploy historical intertextuality much more than future allusion in their inaugural speeches to shape the minds of the people. This aligns with Omisakin et al. (2023) when they discovered that Obasanjo deployed heavy cohesive devices including intertextuality in his inaugural speech as a strong rhetorical mechanism to communicate political senses and mobilize people’s support.

The study also reveals that both Nigerian military and civilian leaders make use of pronouns as rhetorical tools in their inaugural addresses to build solidarity and manage public perception. They prominently use the singular subject pronoun ‘I’ and subject plural pronoun ‘We’ to present themselves as capable leaders and to unite them with Nigerian people respectively. They use language in similar ways as the inaugurals examined in this study begin with either the phrase “Fellow Nigerians” or “My fellow citizens” and end with prayer in the form of expressions such as “God bless Nigeria”, “May the Almighty help us”, “May God bless you and may He bless our beloved land”. I observe that religious words like ‘Allah’ in Islamic faith and ‘Jesus’ in Christian faith are avoided in the selected addresses probably owing to the obvious religious plurality of the

country. It is also discovered that greetings such as ‘Fellow Nigerians’ and ‘My fellow citizens’ serve as a strategy showing bond and connection between the leaders and the Nigerian people. This finding is in line with that of Alo (2012) when he observes that greetings in the inaugural speeches of African leaders function as a persuasive strategy to show solidarity, oneness, and a sense of national belonging.

However, Nigerian military and civilian leaders use language to a certain extent differently in their inaugural speeches. Part of the findings in this study is that Nigerian military administration is associated with language of command, confrontation, and threat whereas civilian government is associated with language of appeal, encouragement and hope to establish authority. For instance, General Babangida in his coup speech says “We do not intend to rule by force. At the same time, we should not be expected to submit to unreasonable demands. Fundamental rights and civil liberties will be respected, but their exercise must not degenerate into irrational expression nor border on subversion”.

The speaker here instills fear in the people as he threatens and warns them to be watchful of their actions and utterances against the government. This finding does not differ from what Ayeomoni (2015) found when he revealed that coercion is a part of the elements of linguistic identity of the military. He observed that the strategy is used to compel people to submission and to secure their obedience and compliance to laws and orders of the land. This is in sharp contrast with presidents Obasanjo and Tinubu who say and I quote “It does no credit either to us or the entire black race if we fail in managing our resources for quick improvement in the quality of life of our people” and “I ask you to join me in making Nigeria a more perfect nation”. The speakers are trying to appeal, encourage and advise Nigerian people to support the government and shun corruption. Obasanjo tries to enjoin the government officials to judiciously manage the resources appropriated to various parastatals and departments for better living standard of the people. This is in agreement with Balarabe (2018) when he found out that Nigerian civilian presidents expressed ideological beliefs in their inaugural speeches through basic positive and emotive words and expressions.

Another important aspect of the study’s results involved application of the notion of presupposition to the analysis of significant lexical items constituting synonyms and

antonyms in the investigated speeches. Cesiri (2021: 114) notes that presupposition entails the implicit meaning of a word, rather than its explicit semantic connotation. Hence, it is discovered that Babangida, Obasanjo, and Tinubu deployed synonymous and antonymous words as a communicative strategy in their inaugural speeches to emphasize their ideological stance and separate past struggles from future hope.

5.2 Implications of the Study

This study, based on the findings highlighted above, implies that Nigerian leaders generally use language as a strategic tool to assert power and manage complex religious and ethnic identities. It exposes the tension between campaign promises and structural realities as well as the link between the past governance failure and optimism for future achievement. This means that in Nigerian politics, one of the factors of ensuring legitimacy is persuasion.

Political leaders have to create emotional arousing language in their speeches in order to legitimize their administrations. General Babangida demonstrates this by going memory lane to vividly and negatively describe almost every event and action of his predecessor's administration. President Obasanjo too is inclined to emotional strategy through the ways he illustrates his experience while in detention and how the past leaders have been unable to keep to their promises. President Tinubu as well deploys emotional strategy by expressing gratitude to God and the populace using words that denote sympathy.

The study further implies that personal pronouns are a big deal in the inaugural speeches of both military and civilian leaders in Nigeria. The new leaders are connected to the people through the use of pronouns. As indicated in the findings, personal pronouns 'I' and 'We' are dominant in the speeches investigated in this study. This means that the pronoun 'I' signals authority and responsibility on the part of Nigerian leaders. That is, they believe in personal commitment and accountability. They use the occasion of their inauguration to keep people informed about their programs and plans to build the nation and manage the resources efficiently. The pronoun 'We' is used in the speeches to create shared identity and collective purpose and efforts towards national development after the

1999 and 2023 presidential elections. The bottom line is that pronouns are rhetorical tools deployed by Nigerian political leaders to sway the public opinion about the policies of the government.

5.3 Recommendations

This work has been carried out using Discourse Analysis as the framework to examine the coup speech of Nigerian military leader, Ibrahim Babangida and the inaugural addresses of presidents Obasanjo and Tinubu. As regards the inaugural addresses of Nigerian political leaders generally, there are still gaps to be filled. Therefore, I want to recommend more research on political speeches of Nigerian leaders especially those who have governed the country both as military and civilian leaders such as Olusegun Obasanjo and Mohammedu Buhari.

This might reveal ideological differences if there are any in the ways they have ruled Nigeria at different periods of time. More studies involving combined data from military and democratic Nigerian leaders should as well be carried out to show how political speeches have been capturing the various challenges facing the country since gaining independence in 1960. I also like to suggest more research on inaugural addresses of Nigerian leaders who have no military background such as President Shehu Shagari, Musa Yaradua, Goodluck Jonathan, and Bola Tinubu with the aim of unravelling their persuasive strategies and political ideologies with their impact on the growth and development of Nigeria.

The future researchers might consider applying Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) as framework. This deepens analysis of transitivity and modality while exploring power dynamics in Nigerian political discourse. Critical Discourse Analysis is another theoretical framework I suggest here to be employed to the investigation of inaugural addresses of Nigerian political leaders to critically look into the roles of religion and ethnicity in the Nigerian politics. I want to further recommend comparative research on the inaugural speeches of new Nigerian leaders against those of their immediate predecessors particularly from different political parties to highlight contrasting political

ideologies and economic policies. Another suggestion is a Sociolinguistic Analysis of speech variations in the inaugural speeches of Nigerian leaders.

5.4 Contribution of the Study

Findings from this research contribute to both discourse studies and political studies by demonstrating how inaugural speeches function as communicative tools that both inform and persuade. The study also contributes to knowledge by revealing how political actors use language to shape collective memory and influence the people. It has explored the application of intertextuality and ellipsis in political discourse and inserted Nigerian history into the investigation of inaugural addresses of military and civilian leaders. It shows how Nigerian politicians establish political dominance and normalize their worldview. The study also shows how rhetorical strategies are employed to manage public reaction to policy reforms and change of government.

Moreover, this analysis of inaugural speeches delivered by various Nigerian leaders at different periods of time has added to how language, politics, leadership, and governance in Nigeria are understood. It has revealed the ways Nigerian leaders define the collective problems facing the country and what the future should look like through their choice of words. For instance, president Obasanjo in his inaugural speech in 1999 describes corruption as “the greatest single bane” and “the full-blown cancer”. These metaphorical expressions show the new president understands the fact that the issue of corruption has to be tackled before any meaningful development can take place in the country.

This research contributes to political discourse analysis by showing how linguistic tools are deployed to the investigation of inaugural speeches to construct national identity in Nigerian political context. It extends the approach of Gee (2011) to discourse analysis by applying it to post-election and coup discourse in Nigeria. Prior research has focused mostly on inaugural speeches delivered by democratically elected presidents leaving out the gaps of analysis of post-coup speeches in Nigeria. The study’s approach offers a replicable model for analyzing political discourse in multilingual contexts like Nigeria. That is, this research provides empirical evidence on how power and national unity are

linguistically constructed in a post-military democracy in Nigeria. In a broader sense, the analysis contributes to scholarship by showing how politicians increasingly adopt persuasive communicative mechanisms to foster unity in their community.

5.5 General Remarks

This study has investigated various rhetorical and persuasive strategies embedded in the inaugural speeches of three prominent Nigerian leaders: Ibrahim Babangida, Olusegun Obasanjo, and Bola Tinubu. It involved the examination of linguistic components, perception of the audience, and contextual factors of the speeches. Politicians purposively structure some linguistic choices to reconstruct the minds of readers so as to persuade them to their sides accordingly. The study has exposed the fact that close investigation of cohesive features as instrument of textual unity in political speeches can make electorate read into the psyche of a politician to discover their sincerity or otherwise to campaign promises.

Some textual and linguistic features are functional to the persuasive aim of political discourse. In the examined speeches, rhetorical and cohesive devices such as ellipsis, intertextuality, pronouns, conjunctions, and passive constructions have proved to be relevant. These elements are fundamental components of political discourse and their power extends beyond the selected and analyzed speeches. They are adapted to the linguistic and political context which inaugural speeches belong to.

Gee's (2011) Discourse Analysis approach was deployed to analyze the speeches to understand the ideologies, strategies, and vision of Nigerian leaders. The leaders covered in this study through their speeches, convey the message of optimism, unity, dedication, and bright future to Nigerians. They declared their agendas of New Dawn and Renewed Hope with their mastery of diction and consideration of the audience. As mentioned in Section 5.1, the leaders established authority and inclusion through the use of the personal pronouns 'I' and 'we' with their variants. The study's findings have illuminated the linkage between the Nigerian leaders with their plans for the country and the followers with their perception.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has examined three inaugural addresses of three eminent Nigerian leaders who are retired General Ibrahim Babangida, former president Olusegun Obasanjo, and president Bola Tinubu. The research on both military and civilian Nigerian leaders was motivated because most existing studies on their inaugural speeches have been either solely on military leaders or civilian leaders. Therefore, specifically, the data have comprised the speech delivered by Babangida immediately after overthrowing General Buhari on 27th August, 1985 and the official speech of Obasanjo on his inauguration day of 29th May, 1999 after winning the presidential election as well as the inaugural speech of Tinubu on 29th May 2023. The study has identified and deployed linguistic tools of Discourse Analysis as suitable and relevant framework in analyzing the selected speeches.

The research findings have shown that Babangida, Obasanjo, and Tinubu have understanding of the necessity of good followership in governance and have strategically employed intertextuality, ellipsis, and personal pronouns in their speeches to persuade and convince the people of Nigeria to support their administration. With the qualitative research approach used, the study has as well revealed that Nigerian military leaders have used language of threat and fear whereas the civilian leaders have utilized language of appeal and optimism to influence the Nigerian people. It has also been discovered through the various extracts analyzed that Babangida, Obasanjo, and Tinubu have used synonyms and antonyms as a rhetorical and persuasive tool to drive their political ideologies and resonate with the people.

The study focuses on three Nigerian political leaders out of many that Nigeria has produced and only one speech of each despite the fact that they delivered several official speeches during their tenures. For instance, General Obasanjo had an inaugural speech on 14th February, 1976 after becoming the head of state following the assassination of General Murtala Muhammed and another one as a democratically elected president in 1999 and the final one in 2003 after winning the second term. This implies that findings from a single inaugural speech of Obasanjo may not suffice to generalize his total political

career and ideology likewise the other two leaders captured in this study. Another constraint of this research concerns interpretation. It is a little restricted because the data are written texts which exclude body language of the speakers and other physical factors that could enhance the derivation of meanings from the data. Data were limited to three inaugural speeches because of time factor and in order to carry out a comprehensive analysis on them.

Furthermore, Nigerian political leaders do engage the services of speechwriters. Hence, the analysis may not reflect the personal linguistic style of each of the leaders whose speeches are investigated in this study. The research is limited to discourse analysis approach of Gee (2011) as theoretical framework because it is relevant to multicultural and plurilingual context of Nigeria. On account of these limitations, it is hereby suggested that future research considers speeches, inaugural addresses especially, of Nigerian political leaders. Such studies could explore speeches delivered by Buhari and Obasanjo because they have ruled Nigeria as both military and civilian administrators. On the other hand, speeches of Nigerian leaders who have no military background such as Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, Musa Yaradua, and Shehu Shagari could be investigated using different linguistic theories ranging from Critical Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Speech Acts, Conversation Analysis to Genre Analysis.

The study is relevant to political discourse as it exposes readers to information and knowledge about the past and present political activities in Nigeria. It sheds light on how linguistic devices can be so applicable when it comes to analysis of written and oral texts particularly in politics. The relevance of the study to my personal and career growth is not insignificant. It widened my critical thinking and increases my self-esteem as well as opens my mind to the views shared by others regarding discourse in any human endeavors such as politics. The study actually shaped my habits and enabled me to learn more about academic writing and research which support progress and development of the society.

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