

A Discourse Analysis of Persuasive Elements in President Tinubu's 1st October, 2024 Independence Day Speech

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Abstract:

This research analyzes the persuasive elements in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's first Independence Day speech delivered on October 1, 2024, using a qualitative approach grounded in critical discourse analysis (CDA) and stylistic frameworks. It explores how language functions as a tool for persuasion, social influence, and the reinforcement or challenge of power and ideology within a political context. The study identifies key rhetorical devices and examines their role in appealing to emotion, shared values, and unity among Nigerian citizens. Through Employing Fairclough's critical discourse analysis and Leech and Short's stylistic framework, the research contextualizes the speech within Nigeria's socio-political landscape, and reveals how President Tinubu uses inclusive and positive language to promote national pride, hope, and resilience. This work fills a gap in linguistic and political studies by providing an in-depth discourse analysis of a recent and significant political speech. It highlights strategies for persuasion and its implications for social cohesion and political ideology in Nigeria. The findings contribute to better understanding of discourse as a powerful medium in political communication and nation-building.

key words: Discourse Analysis; Persuasive Elements; Independence Day; Political Discourse

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1. Introduction:

This study is analysis of persuasive elements in president Tinubu's Independence Day speech. The idea behind linguistic analysis is the study and examination of language samples in order to unveil the underlying rules and structures, and to identify speaker's use of language to reflect social and cultural contexts. Effective communication plays a crucial role in leadership within a nation where the ability to inspire, persuade, and mobilize the citizens is key to national progress and development. Speeches delivered by leaders serve not only as tools for conveying messages but also as strategic instruments for shaping perceptions, reinforcing values, and rallying collective efforts. However, there is a limited scholarly study on the persuasive elements in president Tinubu's Independence Day speech due to the recency of the speech. This study focuses on filling this gap. The study therefore. Identifies, Examines, and analyzes the persuasive techniques employed by President Tinubu, during his 1st October, 2024, Independence Day speech with a focus on how he constructs meanings, evoke emotions, and appeals to the citizens logic and values, and ultimately persuades listeners towards cooperation and shared goals. Drawing on linguistic and rhetorical theories, this study examines how the president uses of numerous persuasive elements, rhetorical devices, and inclusive language to communicate his commitment, inspire confidence, and foster unity.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews literatures that are relevant to the study

2.1 Conceptual Review

This section reviews relevant literature and element surrounding the topic of the research. This review provides a deeper understanding of the work being studied by providing information about aspects that are encompassed in the topic of the research. This will help in gaining a more nuanced understanding of the work's context.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis has been widely defined as an investigation of language in use and which is fundamentally interested in the extra-sentential levels, is all in all regarded as a recent field of linguistics (Brown & Yule, 1983). More specifically, Van Dijk (2003) assumes that discourse analysis is best depicted in the so-called relationship between the text and context in which that text is introduced or generated. Detailing more in this prominent point of view, he adds that the word "discourse" is grasped as a text within context in which data are subjected to empirical investigation. Besides, Fairclough (1989) defines the discourse as a term referring to the whole process of the social interaction of which a text is just part or segment affected by other super-linguistic components

such as the speaker, audience, and occasion. Discourse, as such, is a broad term with many definitions.

Persuasion

Lucas (2015) defines persuasion “as the process of creating, reinforcing, or changing people’s beliefs or actions”. He sees persuasion as a continuum where audiences hold positions from strong opposition to strong agreement. Persuasion involves moving the audience toward greater acceptance or action. Perloff (2003) defines stylistics as "A symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behavior regarding an issue through the transmission of a message, in an atmosphere of free choice

Persuasion is a case of social influence pursued through communication where a speaker aims at influencing the listeners with the target of achieving some goals while leaving them free to adopt it or not, and presenting an argument on how the goals are in the speakers’ interest. Such a speaker usually employs certain strategies in terms of a rhetorical device so as to be able to convince their audience.

Political Discourse

Politicians utilize language as the most vital instrument through which they communicate their ideologies to people. So language has a crucial role to play in politics (Sarah & Oladayo, 2018). According to Fairclough (1989) the term refers to “the whole process of interaction of which a text is just a part” (Fairclough, 1989, p.24). Beard (2000) observes that political discourse, language use in politics, helps to know how political office holders use language. Politicians, especially presidents and governors, use language skilfully in their speeches to persuade the people.

Political discourse therefore, can be seen as any well talented or decorated use of language by politicians in any political settings or discussions to present their intents or ideologies in an impressive manner to persuade people.

2.2 Empirical Review

This section analyzes and evaluates the empirical evidence presented in some particular works of literature.

Inpon (2019) wrote a thesis titled “An Analysis of Syntactical Parallel Structure and the Flouting of the Parallel Structure in the U.S Presidents’ Inaugural Speeches”. He discussed in details the syntactic parallelism in the speeches as well as the flouting parallelism. He also touched lexical parallelism, phonological parallelism. The study discussed political inaugural speeches as well as studies of language analyses of presidential speeches. The research reveals that the use of marked parallel structure is common in real communication. This implies that the instruction of the English language could benefit from making the learners aware of such usage. The researcher also suggested that teachers should guide learners to be aware of the use of parallel structures and unparallel structures in their communication. However, the researcher did not explore rhetorical devices and persuasive elements employed in the speeches.

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Wang's work "A Critical Discourse Analysis of Barack Obama's Speeches" (2010) analyzes Barack Obama's presidential speeches mainly from the point of transitivity and modality, in which one can learn how language is used to serve ideology and power, thus having a better understanding of the purposes of political speeches. The paper discussed briefly the metafunctions, tenses and modality, but the paper was not able to give detailed discussions on persuasive elements, rhetorical devices as used in the speech

Uchegbu-Ekwueme (2016) wrote a paper titled: "A Syntactic Analysis of President Umar Musa Yar'adua's Inaugural address". The paper deliberated well on syntactic structures and analyses with illustrations on how different meanings are formed from two similar sentence structures by simply changing the arrangements of words in one sentence to come up with similar sentences but which has a different meaning. The paper then discussed in details the syntactic features in President Umar Musa Yar'adua's inaugural speech by pointing out the sentence types found in the speech and analyzing them with clear illustrations using diagrams. The paper also discussed coordination, subordination and apposition as linguistic processes of linking ideas within a unit of a given written text and illustrated how each of these linking devices is used in the speech to make meaning or elaborate on meaning of other clauses. These devices "provide the writer with the linguistic tool of saying exactly what he (President Yar'adua) intends to say. The paper concluded that the writer of the speech made a good choice and use of linguistic and syntactic features which helped the writer to gain emphasis and syntactic beauty that served as tools for making meaning in the speech. However, the paper was not able to discuss other elements for making meanings such as rhetorical and persuasive elements used in the speech.

Munir (2014) in his work titled: "A Stylistic Analysis of Barack Obama's Second Independence Day Speech" deliberated much on the analysis of figurative language used in the speech, lexical items that were used to make such figurative terms and how the speech achieved effectiveness through the use of figurative language. The research explored literary devices as tools for distinguishing style and making meanings in the speech. The researcher suggests that students who are majoring in linguistics have to learn stylistics seriously since every text, discourse or speech has its own style; it also suggests that readers should acknowledge the language phenomena, especially the phenomenon of figurative language in an Independence Day Speech so that readers can recognize that figurative language is not only employed in literary works, but also in a speech. However, the research was limited only to figurative language. It did not discuss language used as an instrument to persuade audiences or rhetorical elements used in the speech.

3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on Fairclough's (1989) and Leech and Short (2007) framework for stylistics and discourse analysis. He

aimed to bring together social and political thought with linguistically-oriented discourse analysis. According to Fairclough's (1995) there are three elements in the critical discourse analysis. The elements are textual analysis, discourse practice analysis and social practice analysis. His goal was to raise awareness of exploitative social relations through language. He believed that discourse has the potential to impact, ensure the continuity of, or change social structure.

Leech and Short (2007) framework on the other hand, provides a systematic approach to analyzing texts, revealing how language choices shape meaning and interpretation. The framework is used to analyze literary devices by examining how they are utilized to convey meaning, understand speaker's intent and explore how readers interpret texts based on linguistic features. Leech and Short framework provides a heuristic checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories. According to the checklist, there are four levels for analyzing the linguistic data in any given text. These levels include lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech, context, and cohesion. The lexical scheme searched in the form of parallelism, anaphora, and lexical repetitions.

3.1 Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach, which is a research method that uses descriptive data to gather information. To specifically employ descriptive analysis of President Tinubu's Independence Day speech, the speech was studied as the main source of data in the research where the researcher analyzed the speech, identify persuasive elements, rhetorical devices, and how language is used to maintain social inequalities from the speech.

Research Instruments

Since it is a qualitative research, the primary instrument is the researcher himself. In qualitative research, a researcher is a planner, data collector, analyst, data interpreter, and reporter of the research result. It can be inferred from the above statement that the researcher in qualitative research is the human instrument. Secondary instrument used in this study to help the researcher in collecting and analyzing data President Tinubu's Independence Day Speech.

Technique for data collection

The data for this study was collected from the internet after which the researcher did a close analysis of language as used in president Tinubu's Independence Day Speech with focus on identifying ideas and ideologies it promotes, and the context in which it was delivered. The researcher also analyzed rhetorical devices and how they are used to make meanings to persuade the audience.

Method of Data Analysis

The research is a textual analysis. This is because the study examined and analyzed a text, which is president Tinubu's Independence Day Speech. The researcher performed quantitative analysis on the identified patterns. This involves calculating frequencies of certain structures, examining correlations between linguistic structures and specific communicative purposes or rhetorical

strategies employed in the speech. Afterwards, the researcher conducted a qualitative analysis to explore the intended meanings, rhetorical devices or persuasive techniques employed by president Tinubu in his Independence Day Speech.

Source of data:

This study adopt a qualitative approach. The data for this study is specifically the structures which form the manuscript of president Tinubu’s Independence Day Speech. This manuscript was obtained from Punch Newspaper, published online (internet, punchng.com) on 6th October, 2024.

3.2 Second subtitle

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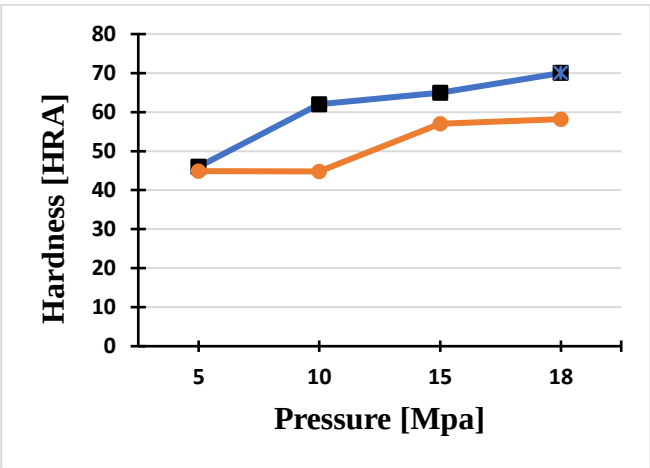
- Table model (if it exists): (included in the article)

Table 1 :Table title

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- Figure model (if it exists): (included in the article in image form, dressing in front of the text, regrouping the composite schemas)

Figure 1: Figure title



4. Results and discussion

Analysis of Persuasive Elements in President Tinubu's Speech

Persuasion is a case of social influence pursued through communication where a speaker aims at influencing the listeners with the target of achieving some goals while leaving them free to adopt it or not, and presenting an argument on how the goals are in the speakers' interest. Such a speaker usually employs certain strategies in terms of a rhetorical device so as to be able to convince their audience. The persuasive elements used in the speech include:

1. Appeal to emotion:

- i. The text appeals to the audience's emotions by referring to the "solemn yet hopeful day" line 2 of Nigeria's independence and by praising the "activism, dedication and leadership"² of the country's founding fathers and mothers. The president is suggesting to the citizens that the Independence Day is a time for both reflection and optimism. It is a day to remind citizens of the uncountable sacrifices and struggles made to achieve such an independence, a time to honor those whose lives were lost and who made the independence possible, and at the same time the Independence Day represents freedom and an aspiration for progress, unity and national development.
- ii. The text appeals to the audience's emotions by referring to the "triumphs" and "travails"³ that Nigeria has endured, which suggests a sense of pride and resilience, and reminding the citizens about the success of fighting and overcoming colonialism. On the other hand, such phrases also acknowledge the nation's struggles in areas of economy, politics, terrorism, poverty among others.
- iii. The text appeals to the audience's emotions by when the president promises to secure "lives, liberty and property of the people," in line 7 when he says "At my inauguration, I made important promises about how I would govern this great nation. Among those promises, were pledges to reshape and modernize our economy and to secure the lives, liberty and property of the people." which suggests a sense of responsibility and concern for the well-being of the citizens.

2. Appeal to shared values:

- i. The speech appeals to the audience's shared values when the president talks about the importance of independence, sovereignty, and democracy in line 2 when he says: *On this solemn yet hopeful day, let us commend our founding fathers and mothers. Without them, there would be no modern Nigeria. From the fading embers of colonialism, their activism, dedication and leadership gave life to the belief in Nigeria as a sovereign and independent nation,* which are values that are likely to have much impact or influence on the citizens of Nigerian.
- ii. President Tinubu's statement ...*We are joined by a common thirst for peace and progress, by the common dream of prosperity and*

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harmony and by the unifying ideals of tolerance and justice. In line 4 is an appeal to the shared values. He talks on the importance of individual rights, national pride, and the pursuit of peace, prosperity, and justice. These are values every citizens of a country believes in, respects and accept, and wishes to have or gain. By this statement the president wants to build trust, promote understanding and create a sense of togetherness and belonging among the citizens.

- iii. The president's statement. *"To ensure better grassroots development, we set up an Infrastructure Support Fund for states to invest in critical areas. States have already received funds to provide relief packages against the impact of rising food and other prices."* In line 15, highlights a desire for a shared commitment to improve the lives of people in such phrases as "better grassroots development," "lowering transport costs," and "more efficient" transportation. He also emphasizes on fairness and solidarity that "providing the relief package" will help all citizens cope with cost of living. This also shows care across the nation. His statement also appeals to the values of progress. He presents in his statement that the funds are to be invested in "critical areas" so that everyone will benefit through jobs creation, strengthening local economies, improving services etc.

3. Use of inclusive language:

- i. The text uses inclusive language, such as "we" and "our," to create a sense of unity and shared purpose among the audience.

4. Use of positive language:

Positive language refers to a communication style in which a speaker uses optimistic, constructive, and uplifting words or phrases in order to foster unity and cooperation, improve relationship, reduce conflicts and misunderstandings, and encourage team work. President Tinubu uses positive language in various places in his speech to clear to motivate citizens' belief on his administration.

- i. In line 1 when he uses terms such as "it is my unique honour...", "...my dear country", and "...simply, as a fellow Nigerian", he expresses with respect his privileged position as the president, shows his affection and positive sentiment toward, and creates a sense of unity and humility. The use of the terms such as "solemn yet hopeful day" in line 2 by the president is a positive language which indicates a bright and positive future. He also says ..."let us commend our founding fathers and mothers. Without them, there would be no modern Nigeria". In this, the president shows respect and appreciation to the efforts made by the past leaders, the efforts which gave birth to our independence.

- ii. In line 10 when president Tinubu says “ *Reform may be painful, but it is what greatness and the future require. We now carry the costs of reaching a future Nigeria where the abundance and fruits of the nation are fairly shared among all, not hoarded by a select and greedy few. A Nigeria where hunger, poverty and hardship are pushed into the shadows of an ever fading past.*” He uses terms that convey fairness, progress, improvement, and hope. He recommends a positive goals by his saying “Reform may be painful, but it is what greatness and the future require.” Or ideal to strive for, and the mention of “future Nigeria” implies that the future of the country is wide and bright, putting hope into the mind of the citizens. He also uses positive language when moves his words and talks about the decline of negative conditions and makes emphasis on improvement “A Nigeria where hunger, poverty and hardship are pushed into the shadows of an ever fading past.” His talks on equity and justice, and positive societal values indicates the use of positive “...the abundance and fruits of the nation are fairly shared among all, not hoarded by a select and greedy few.” Again, when he says to the citizens that “reform many painful, but it is what greatness and future require”. The president motivates the citizens to accept a temporary pain or hardship and that a long-term gain is coming. He acknowledges challenges but portrays them as inevitable and necessary steps to achieving a bright future.
- iii. The use of terms as “there is no joy in seeing the people of this nation shoulder the burdens that should have been shed years ago” in line 11 which indicates the president’s acknowledgment of of hardship with empathy. This statement evokes compassion and recognition of people’s difficulties which can build trust and rapport between him and the citizens. He also frames endurance as a must step to achieving a positive outcome, emphasizes future advancement and hope for the country “ but we must endure if we are to reach the good side of the future”. His words in line 12 “ my government is doing all that it can to ease the load” demonstrates the use of positive language. He conveys his commitment and efforts to improve the situation in order to build and gain trust from the citizens. Then he now talks about transparency, plans and approaches to solve problems “I will now outline the path we are taking to relieve the stress on our families and households”.

Use of Rhetorical Devices in the Speech

The rhetorical devices employed by president Tinubu in his Independence Day speech include:

Metaphor

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Metaphor is a figure of speech that compares an abstract thing to a concrete thing, which makes the sentence easy to be understood. Metaphors Identified in the Speech are seen in the following phrases:

i. "Fading embers of colonialism" where he said: "From the fading embers of colonialism, their activism, dedication and leadership gave life to the belief in Nigeria as a sovereign and independent nation." Here president Tinubu compared colonialism to dying embers. He suggested that colonialism fell, implying its decline.

ii. "Our bonds are intangible yet strong, invisible yet universal" where he said: "*Yet, our bonds are intangible yet strong, invisible yet universal.*" He described and compared the citizens' bonds to as an unseen but yet powerful force.

iii. "The rule of law remains our guiding light" where he said: *By democratically electing a 7th consecutive civilian government, Nigeria has proven that commitment to democracy and the rule of law remains our guiding light.* In this expression president Tinubu compared law directly to light. He symbolized that rule of law is sole guide in running the government, and it is what will make the county stable.

Personification

Personification is a figure of speech that gives human qualities or attributes to nonhuman or inanimate objects. Places where personification is used in the speech include the following:

i. Where he said: "From the fading embers of colonialism, their activism, dedication, and leadership gave life to the belief in Nigeria as a sovereign and independent nation." In this statement president Tinubu described colonialism to have "fading embers," as if it were a fire. Also the word "Belief" is personified, he fact that belief was given life, as if it were a living being.

ii. "The triumphs that Nigeria has achieved shall define us. The travails we have endured shall strengthen us. "Triumphs" are given the ability to "define" people. Travails (difficulties) are given the power to "strengthen" people. These two terms are abstract entities, and defining and strengthening people is done usually by another human. so the two terms are personified.

Parallelism

Parallelism is the repetition of similar grammatical structures in a sentence or multiple sentences to create rhythm and emphasis. It is also called parallel structure. Parallelism can be made up of adjectives, propositional phrases, paralleling phrases and short sentences, together with their one or more equivalents as the paralleling opponents in the phrases

i. "The triumphs that Nigeria has achieved shall define us. The travails we have endured shall strengthen us." Repetition of the expressions *shall define us* and *shall strengthen us* is used to maintain a balanced structure emphasizing on the idea endurance to achieve success.

- ii. "Our bonds are intangible yet strong, invisible yet universal."

This expression creates parallel structure using the adjectives intangible...strong, invisible...universal, then makes contrast in both clauses. However, such parallel structures are used by the president to create some meanings in his speech, he is highlighting and motivating on the unity of Nigerian citizens despite their differences in culture, background and region.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is an exaggerated statement used for emphasis and not meant to be taken literally. Here are hyperbolic structures used by the president in the speech:

i. "Those who sought to perpetuate the fuel subsidy and broken foreign exchange policies are people who would build their family mansion in the middle of a swamp." This statement is hyperbolic because of the fact that president Tinubu exaggerates the consequences of bad policies (...the fuel subsidy and broken foreign exchange policies...) by comparing such policies to a totally absurd action of (...building a mansion in a swamp). Hyperbole is used in this statement to bring more to light to the citizens the negative effects of such a bad policy of perpetuating the fuel subsidy.

ii. "We now carry the costs of reaching a future Nigeria where the abundance and fruits of the nation are fairly shared among all, not hoarded by a select and greedy few." Using the phrase "abundance and fruits of the nation" by the president is a hyperbolic way, an exaggerated method of saying that economic prosperity should be shared among all citizens.

This research provides a comprehensive analysis of the persuasive elements in President Tinubu's first Independence Day speech delivered on October 1, 2024. Using a qualitative critical discourse analysis framework; Fairclough's and Leech and Short's theoretical perspectives, the study explores how language serves as a strategic tool for political persuasion, social influence, and ideological construction. Through careful examination of rhetorical devices, the research reveals how the speech has various appeals on the audience. The research also uses inclusive and positive language as key features designed to instill and motivate national cohesion, inspire resilience, and promote a vision of progress and justice. The analysis also positions the speech within Nigeria's socio-political context. It portrays the role of political discourse in sustaining and challenging power relations and social inequalities

5. Conclusion

President Tinubu's Independence Day speech effectively utilizes language as a powerful tool for persuasion and political communication. It balances the recognition of hardships with a vision of unity and progress. The speech cherishes trust and motivates collective action through its strategic use of rhetoric and appeals to common values. This study contributes to the underexplored area of

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critical discourse analysis on Nigerian political speeches and demonstrates the significance of discourse in shaping political realities and social cohesion.

Conflict of Interest (must be written) (size 11)

I, Bello Tukur, declare that I have no conflict of interest.

- List of annexes (if it exists): keep the same format as the tables and figures above.

- References (size 11)

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