

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU'S INAUGURAL SPEECH IN NIGERIA

¹ **Babatunde Mustafa AJADI, Ph.D.**

mustafaajadi@yahoo.com

&

¹ **Kazeem Sabi AHMED**

Ahmedsabikazeem@gmail.com

^{1a2}Department of English, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study conducts a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the inaugural speech delivered by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Nigeria's 17th President, to uncover the discursive strategies and ideological constructs embedded within the text. Drawing on postcolonial theory—particularly Frantz Fanon's critique of colonial power structures - and Fairclough's socio-cultural and socio-economic approaches to CDA, the research explores how language is employed to reproduce power relations and shape public perception. The analysis is guided by three core objectives: identifying the discursive strategies and structural processes within the speech, examining how the speech reflects and sustains existing power structures in Nigeria's postcolonial context, and investigating the lexical choices that signal reformist, optimistic, and economic ideologies. Through a multi-dimensional framework encompassing textual, interpretive, and social analysis, the study reveals how President Tinubu's rhetoric constructs national identity, legitimizes authority, and promotes specific ideological narratives. The findings demonstrate that political discourse, particularly inaugural speeches, serves as a strategic tool for reinforcing hegemonic practices and influencing democratic engagement. This research contributes to the broader understanding of language as a vehicle for power and ideology in postcolonial governance, offering insights into the implications of political rhetoric for social justice and democratic development in Nigeria. Critically examining the intersection of language, politics, and identity, the study underscores the importance of discourse analysis in evaluating the communicative practices of political elites.

Keywords: Discursive Strategies, Ideologies, Postcolonial Theory, Power Relations and Dynamics, Social Justice

Introduction

The critical analysis of political discourse within post-colonial contexts is imperative for understanding the intricate dynamics of power, identity and representation in societies struggling with the legacies of colonialism. Despite the growing body of literature on post-colonial theory and discourse analysis, there remains a notable gap in the scholarly exploration of political rhetoric in specific contexts, particularly within the Nigerian landscape (Folarin, 2018). Equally, inaugural speeches, as symbolic articulations of political vision and authority, offer valuable insights into the negotiation of power and the construction of national identity in post-colonial settings (Girard, 2016). However, existing studies often overlook the significance of individual speeches and their discursive strategies, thus, hindering a comprehensive understanding of the role of language in shaping political dynamics (Smith, 2014).

Discourse, Discourse Analysis, and Critical Discourse Analysis are three-in-one field that is frequently employed interchangeably, particularly by non-linguists. Discourse analysis is not the same as discourse. Discourse Analysis, on the other hand, is a method of analysing communication, whereas Discourse is communication. When a discourse's analysis is aimed at revealing the hidden ideology entrenched in that discourse, it is considered to be in the area of Critical Discourse Analysis. To put it simply, Discourse Analysis becomes Critical Discourse Analysis when the hearer or reader employs all linguistic elements accessible in the said to produce meaning for the unsaid in a way that reveals power and abuse of authority, domination, inequality, and embedded ideologies. In general, all discourse is shaped by domination, and dominant frameworks are legitimised by strong groups' ideas (Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

Nnamdi-Eruchalu (2017) investigates President Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural speeches through critical discourse analysis. The research argues that President Muhammadu Buhari used personal pronouns to present different identities and project different ideologies in both his maiden speech as a Military Head of State in 1984 and his inaugural speech as a President with executive powers in 2015, and that the backgrounds from which the President spoke influenced his pronominal choices. The research revealed how President Muhammadu Buhari's ideological beliefs influenced his language choices. President Buhari's inaugural speech was subjected to a Systemic Functional Linguistic and Critical Discourse Analysis adopted by Leonard Koussouhon (2015). The focus of the study was on mood, epistemic, and deontic modality choices, as well as, recoverable allusions through personal pronouns employed in the political speech.

The study has shown how political leaders' discourses uncover a kind of coherence with ideologies that match and correspond to internal, sub-regional and worldwide reality. This present study is different from the two studies earlier reviewed as this study aims at exploring how President Bola Tinubu manipulates the cognition of his citizens through discourse, and how power are deployed through social resource in his inaugural speech. Furthermore, the current study aims to examine and uncover the inter-connection in the context, discourse structures and ideological construction through the inaugural speech of the leader of black most populous nation. Against this backdrop, the analysis of President Tinubu's inaugural speech becomes even more pertinent, as it allows for a nuanced understanding of the evolving dynamics of power and language within the Nigerian postcolonial context (Omolade, 2020). Through an examination of the discursive strategies employed by President Tinubu within the specific socio-political context of Nigeria, the research seeks to shed more light on the complexities of postcolonial governance and the enduring legacies of colonialism on political discursive practice (Girard, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

Generally, the study aims at carrying out a critical discourse analysis of President Tinubu's inaugural speech in an attempt to unveiling power dynamics within the Nigerian post colonial context. In specific terms, the study attempts to:

1. Examine the discursive strategies in the speech and the structural processes that signal them,
2. Examine how President Tinubu's inaugural speech reflects and perpetuates existing power structures within the Nigerian post-colonial context,
3. Investigate the lexical structures (reformist, optimist and economic ideological structures) in the speech, and its relationship to social-cultural domains;

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What are the discursive strategies in the speech and the structural processes that signal them?
2. How does President Tinubu's inaugural speech reflect and perpetuate existing power structures within the Nigerian post-colonial context?
3. What lexical structures does the speech employ to portray specific reformist, optimist, and economic ideologies and its relationship to the socio-cultural domain in Nigeria?

Literature Review

The critical analysis of political discourse within postcolonial contexts has emerged as a significant area of scholarly inquiry in recent decades. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of relevant scholarship on postcolonial discourse analysis and its application to the analysis of inaugural speeches, with a specific focus on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural speech. Bola Ahmed Tinubu, born on March 29, 1952, in Lagos, Nigeria, is a prominent Nigerian politician and one of the most influential political figures in the country. He served as the Governor of Lagos State from 1999 to 2007 and played a significant role in the growth and development of the state during his tenure. Tinubu is also known for his role as a key figure in the All Progressives Congress (APC), one of Nigeria's major political parties. His political influence extends beyond Lagos to the national level, making him a central figure in Nigerian politics.

However, his arrogant campaign and the cooperation of former President Buhari, who was imposed in 2015 (without former President Jonathan's legal challenge) due to Tinubu's kingmaker role - viewed the 2023 election as a payback deal - foreshadowed his unpredictable ascent to power. A major speech given by someone taking on a new role, or oath of office is referred to as an inaugural speech. It is usually given as an introduction, a statement of intent or a blueprint for the future. These speeches are frequently delivered during formal gathering where the speaker assumes a new position or duty, like presidential inaugurations. Inauguration speeches have a vital role for political leaders as they provide the foundation for their tenure and clarify their objectives, vision and policy trajectories. They might contain an assessment of the situation as it is, a list of the most important objectives and an appeal for cooperation or group efforts.

The president must address the nation after winning an election in a way that succinctly summarises their objectives, aspirations and ideals as well as their plans and programmes for the position after they take office (Velez, 2022). The fact that the inaugural speech is regarded as a preserved fragment of the historical record, it shows that every president is aware that the words they choose will resonate as a reflection of themselves for the duration of their tenure and beyond (Owolabi & Sikiru 2024). Politicians' inaugural speeches after elections serve as evidence for the principles of political discourse. Unlike campaign speeches, which aim to convince or coerce the audience into doing something they do not want to do, inaugural speeches attempt to encourage the audience to have faith in the new government. An inaugural speech's worth of empty promises in the shape of policy recommendations that stem solely from the major problems facing society is abundant (Badmus, O., Badmus, O., & Kilani Sakiru, 2024).

Political discourse involves the promotion of representations and pervasive features of representation. It is necessary for political speakers to imbue their utterances with evidence, authority and truth. This process is referred to in broad terms, in the context of political discourse, as "legitimisation". Human minds possess an innate "cheater detection" ability and the task of political speakers is that they have to guard against the operation of their audience's "cheater detectors" and provide guarantees for the truth of their sayings (Chilton, 2004). Nigeria's post-colonial trajectory has been marked by a complex interplay of political, social and economic forces, shaped in part by its colonial history under the British rule (Osaghae, 1998). Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has experienced periods of military rule, democratic transitions and ethno-political tensions, all of which have left enduring imprints on its political discourse (Momoh, 2005). Within this context, inaugural speeches serve as symbolic expressions of political authority and vision, encapsulating the aspirations, promises, and priorities of newly elected leaders (Ukaegbu, 2018).

Inaugural speeches have long been recognised as sites of ideological struggle and representation, where political leaders articulate their vision for governance and national development (Harris, 1995). Within the post-colonial context, these speeches often reflect broader debates about sovereignty, identity, and the legacy of colonialism (Girard, 2016). In the same vein, power dynamics play a central role in shaping political discourse, influencing the construction of meaning and the distribution of resources and opportunities within society (Foucault, 1980). More so, within postcolonial contexts, these power dynamics are often mediated through language, with dominant groups employing discursive strategies to maintain their hegemony and marginalise dissenting voices (Spivak, 1988).

Language plays a crucial role in the construction of national identity and belonging within postcolonial societies (Kachru, 1986). In Nigeria, where over 500 languages are spoken, language choice in political discourse can reflect and perpetuate existing power structures and social hierarchies (Bamgbose, 2000). President Tinubu's inaugural speech offers an opportunity to explore how language is used to construct and reinforce national identity within the Nigerian postcolonial context, shedding light on issues of unity, diversity and social cohesion (Ukaegbu, 2018). This study adopts Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its foundational theoretical framework. Beyond simply analysing communication, CDA delves deeper to unveil the hidden ideologies and power structures woven within discourse. It meticulously examines how language choices, structures and representations are strategically employed to construct and maintain power dynamics, often exposing underlying inequalities and dominant narratives (Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 2001).

The study specifically draws upon Postcolonial Frantz Fanon (1961), and Fairclough's socio-cultural and socio-economic discourse approaches to CDA (Fairclough, 2010; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). The theories offer valuable frameworks for examining the discursive strategies and ideological constructs that are present in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural speech. These models provide a framework for conducting a comprehensive analysis, encompassing three distinct yet interconnected levels: description (text), interpretation (processing), and explanation (social practice) (Fairclough, 2003). By applying these models, the study will meticulously examine how President Tinubu effectively utilises the English language to communicate his messages to the public during his inaugural speech to Nigerians. However, the study aims not only to understand the president's message but also unveil the deeper societal and ideological constructs embedded within his discourse.

Post-colonial theory, rooted in the critique of colonial power structures and Eurocentric narratives, provides a critical framework for analysing the ways in which language, culture and identity are shaped by colonial legacies (Ashcroft et al., 2000). Within this theoretical paradigm, discourse analysis serves as a methodological tool for interrogating the construction of meaning, power relations, and ideologies within texts (Fairclough, 1995). By examining language use, rhetorical strategies and discursive practices, scholars seek to uncover hidden power dynamics and contest dominant narratives in postcolonial societies (Spivak, 1988). Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis theory emphasises the examination of language as a social practice that reflects power relations, social structures and ideological formations. This theory is highly relevant to this present study of President Tinubu's speech, as it enables a comprehensive analysis of the linguistic choices and discourse strategies deployed to shape public perception.

Van Dijk argues that language is not neutral but carries ideological implications, and through CDA, researchers can uncover the hidden ideologies and power dynamics embedded within the speech (Van Dijk, 2009). By applying the principles of CDA, researchers can contribute to a deeper understanding of the broader socio-political landscape of Nigeria and the implications of President Tinubu's leadership agenda.

Methodology

This research employed a qualitative research methodology, specifically a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach to examine President Tinubu's inaugural speech, through the lens of Post-colonial Frantz Fanon, Teun van Dijk's, and **Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of Discourse theories**. CDA is particularly well-suited for this study as it allows for an in-depth exploration of language use, power relations, and discursive strategies within a specific socio-political context. Drawing on insights from Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, the analysis focused on the textual, discursive and social dimensions of the speech to uncover underlying power dynamics and ideological positioning (Fairclough, 2013). The primary data source for this study includes President Bola Ahmed Tinubu inaugural speech delivered on May 29th, 2023 which was subjected to detailed linguistic and rhetorical analysis.

Textual analysis involved examining the linguistic features (lexical choices and metaphorical expressions), discursive devices, and narrative structures employed in the speech to construct and reinforce specific ideologies and power relations. Hence, discursive analysis delved into the broader discursive strategies and patterns evident in the speech, considering how language is used to shape meaning and influence perceptions of political authority and legitimacy. Finally, social analysis attempts to situate the speech within its socio-political context, considering factors such as historical background, audience reception, and broader power dynamics within Nigerian society (van Dijk, 1998). Overall, this research methodology provides a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the ways in which language, power, and politics intersect in President Tinubu's Inaugural speech and its implications for post-colonial governance in Nigeria.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data from President Ahmed Tinubu's Inaugural speech followed comprehensive approaches integrating qualitative method of analysis in the examination of the 3592 words in the speech. Post-colonial, Van Dijk's and Fairclough's three-dimensional model - comprising description, interpretation, and explanation, provided a structured framework for the analysis. The analysis method focuses both the structure and content of the speech. This framework facilitates a deeper understanding of the speech's context and implications within broader societal norms. By integrating these various theoretical frameworks and analytical tools,

the study aimed at providing insightful analysis of the speech, shedding light on both its linguistic aspects and socio-cultural implications.

Discursive Strategies and Structural Processes

Upon examining the First Inaugural speech by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, several specific words and phrases are identified as they shape meaning, social relation, and power dynamics. In analysing the language used, it is essential to identify loaded or biased language, euphemisms, and politically charged terms. Let's explore some items related to lexical choices and metaphorical expressions as used in the speech:

Excerpt 1: "I stand before you honoured to assume the sacred mandate you have given me."

Sacred mandate: conveys a sense of divine endorsement and elevates the President's election to a higher level of significance. By framing the mandate as "sacred", it not only emphasizes the President's legitimacy but also establishes a moral authority that can influence social relations and power dynamics within the country. It positions the President as a chosen leader, instilling a sense of trust and faith in his ability to govern the nation Nigeria.

Excerpt 2: "As a nation, we have long ago decided to march beyond the dimness of night into the open day of renewed national hope".

Dimness of night: The phrase "dimness of night" stands out as a metaphorical expression used to describe the challenges and difficulties faced by the nation. By employing this visual imagery, the President creates a sense of struggle and adversity, suggesting that the country has endured hardships and setbacks. This language serves to evoke empathy and solidarity among the citizens, positioning the President as a leader who can guide the nation towards a brighter future. It reinforces the power dynamics by presenting the President as a beacon of hope and progress, capable of leading the country out of the metaphorical darkness.

Excerpt 3: "For many years, Nigeria's critics have trafficked the rumour that our nation will break apart, even perish."

Trafficked the rumour: The phrase "trafficked the rumour" in the Address by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu refers to the intentional spread of false information or baseless claims by Nigeria's critics, believed to have conveyed negative connotations, suggesting that, these critics have engaged in manipulative tactics to undermine the nation Nigeria. The term "trafficked" implies a deliberate and harmful act, drawing a parallel with the illegal trade of goods associated with illicit activities. By using this term, the President portrays

the critics as engaging in deceptive practices and potentially having ulterior motives. The phrase implies that the rumours spread by these critics have gained significant infractions, leading to a climate of doubt or negative perception about Nigeria.

The expression positions the critics as adversaries who are actively working to tarnish the nation's reputation domestically and internationally. The use of the word "*rumour*" suggests that the information being spread lacks credibility or factual basis, indicating that, the critics have disseminated unfounded claims or exaggerated accounts about Nigeria. This language casts a doubt on the veracity of the information and underscores the need for critical evaluation and evidence-based analysis. Therefore, the President presents himself as someone who is aware of these rumours and is determined to counteract their effects, emphasising the importance of addressing and correcting false narratives.

Excerpt 4: "As citizens, we declare as one unified people devoted to one unified national cause, that as long as this world exists, NIGERIA SHALL EXIST."

The phrase "*NIGERIA SHALL EXIST*" carries significant linguistic and discursive implications, shaping meaning, social relations and power dynamics within the Nigerian context. This statement serves as a powerful assertion of national unity and resilience, reinforcing the collective identity of Nigerians and their shared commitment to the survival and progress of their nation. Linguistically, the use of Capital Letters in "*NIGERIA SHALL EXIST*" emphasises the importance and prominence of the nation. The phrase employs strong and assertive language, projecting a sense of determination and certainty. The verb "*shall*" conveys a sense of obligation and inevitability, suggesting that the existence of Nigeria is not merely a possibility but an imperative that cannot be questioned.

Discursively, "*NIGERIA SHALL EXIST*" creates a sense of national solidarity and cohesion. It asserts that regardless of the challenges, Nigeria will endure and thrive. By invoking the prayers, sacrifices and resilience of the Nigerian people, the phrase bolsters a collective narrative of overcoming adversity and offers a unifying vision for the future. It fosters a shared sense of belonging and national pride, transcending differences in creed, ethnicity or place of birth. Moreover, the phrase "*NIGERIA SHALL EXIST*" has implications for power dynamics within the Nigerian society. It positions the speaker, President Tinubu, as a custodian and guardian of the nation's destiny. By invoking the torch of human progress and pledging to govern on behalf of the people, the statement implies a commitment to serve and lead with humility, compassion and inclusivity. It establishes a social contract between the government and the citizens, emphasising the accountability of those in power.

Excerpt 5: "Reach out to all but never put down a single person for holding views contrary to our own."

This statement emphasises the importance of tolerance, inclusivity and open dialogue in a democratic society. The phrase "*holding views contrary to our own*" highlights the existence of diverse opinions and perspectives within the Nigerian population. The use of the word "*contrary*" suggests a divergence or opposition of ideas, indicating that not every Nigerian shares the same views or beliefs. This recognition of divergent viewpoints is crucial for fostering a pluralistic society where individuals are encouraged to express their opinions freely. Discursively, "*holding views contrary to our own*" contributes to creating a culture of tolerance and respect for differing opinions.

Acknowledging the legitimacy of opposing views, the statement promotes open dialogue and exchange of ideas. It implies that the government, under President Tinubu's leadership, will not suppress or dismiss dissenting voices, but instead engage with them constructively. This approach fosters a more inclusive and democratic system, where it implicates power dynamics within Nigerian society. It therefore suggests willingness on the part of government to listen and engage with its citizens, even when their views challenge the prevailing ideology. This commitment to open dialogue can help to bridge divides and build trust between the government and the people. It also signals a shift towards a more participatory and inclusive governance model, where decision-making is informed by a range of perspectives.

Excerpt 6: "The question we now ask ourselves is whether to remain faithful to the work inherent in building a better society or retreat into the shadows of our unmet potential."

The phrase "retreat into the shadows of our unmet potential" is a metaphorical representation of a choice faced by the nation, suggesting that, there is a risk of stagnation and missed opportunities if the country does not continue its journey towards progress and development. The metaphor of "shadows" conveys a sense of obscurity, uncertainty and underachievement. By using this metaphor, President Tinubu evokes a powerful image of the nation's potential being obscured and unfulfilled, emphasizing the need to avoid complacency and strive for growth. It suggests that the nation has the capacity to achieve greatness but must actively pursue it, rather than remain stagnant or complacent.

In terms of social relations and power dynamics, the metaphor highlights the role of collective responsibility and agency. It also stresses that the decision to embrace the nation's potential or retreat from it lays in the hands of the citizens as a collective entity, thereby calls for unity and shared commitment in actualizing the nation's aspirations, notwithstanding the forces or factors that hinder the nation's progress. These are represented by shadows and could include social, economic or political challenges. By acknowledging these obstacles, President Tinubu conveys a sense of determination and resilience in overcoming them, suggesting that the nation can transcend its limitations and achieve its finest destiny.

Ideologies and Discourse Properties

Ideologies are systems of belief and ideas of a group. They form the foundation of the social analysis on the representations, identities and practices of group members. They are signaled through discourse properties which relate to group ideals, value and relations; all of which are extremely connected to group's sets of opinions and practices. The focus is on the specific identification and categorisation of expressions or the discourses that signal or suggest the perspectives, opinions, interests, positions or other markers of groups in the sampled speech. Therefore, these categorisations are in segments. Three ideologies are observed in the study namely: *Reformist, optimist and economist ideologies*. They are signaled by discursive strategies that are in turn connected by lexical processes.

Reformist Ideology

In the excerpt below, the African leader imbued by Reformist ideology post-colonial and Faircloughian perspectives, encourage his hearers to the course of positive development in the coming years. The signaled ideology relating to the possibility of improvement in human conditions through concerted efforts is inherent in the discourse, specifically in the expressions:

Reclaiming National Identity:

Excerpt 7: "Our burdens may make us bend at times, but they shall never break us. Instead, we stand forth as Africa's most populous nation and as the best hope and strongest champion of the Black Race."

President Tinubu's statement on national identity "*we stand forth as Africa's most populous nation*" employs powerful language to construct a specific image of Nigeria's greatness and the need to fulfill its destiny as a unified and prosperous nation. President Tinubu challenges the notion of Nigeria's potential demise propagated by critics, positioning Nigeria as a resilient and influential "*strongest champion of the Black Race*" African nation. His statement utilises metaphors of strength and resilience "*bend at times, but never break*" to counter negative narratives about Nigeria's future. It emphasises size "*Africa's most populous nation*" and leadership "*best hope*" and "*strongest champion*" to position Nigeria as a dominant force. However, this framing risks overlooking internal challenges and potentially reinforces an "us vs. them" mentality.

President Tinubu's statement reveals an ideology centered on national pride and a sense of pan-Africanism. The emphasis on overcoming burdens and emerging as Africa's leading nation suggests a strong belief in Nigerian exceptionalism. This ideology positions Nigeria as a powerful force with a responsibility to uplift the continent. It aligns with ideas of national rejuvenation, often associated with nationalist movements. The focus on the *Black Race* hints at a Pan-Africanist ideology. It seeks to unite Nigerians under a shared racial identity, potentially fostering solidarity with other African nations. However, this framing risks overlooking Nigeria's internal ethnic diversity and potentially fueling tensions within the country.

Decolonizing Political Traditions:

Excerpt 8: "The peaceful transition from one government to another is now our political tradition. This handover symbolizes our trust in God, our enduring faith in representative governance and our belief in our ability to reshape this nation into the society it was always meant to be."

President Tinubu highlights the peaceful transition "*The peaceful transition from one government to another is now our political tradition*" of power as a political tradition, symbolising Nigeria's trust in God (transcends a mere event and becomes a symbolic act), faith in representative governance and the nation's ability to reshape itself. This emphasis on democratic principles challenges the colonial legacy of authoritarian rule on colonized territories. "*This peaceful transition*" emphasises self-determination and empowers Nigerians to shape their own political destiny. And, the focus on "*God and faith*" in representative governance highlights a potential bridge between tradition and modernity. The expression acknowledges the importance of pre-colonial values, while embracing democratic principles. The belief in "*reshaping the*

nation” suggests a rejection of the colonial mold. It implies a vision for a future built on Nigerian aspirations, not imposed structures.

Socioeconomic Development:

Excerpt 9: “We shall remodel our economy to bring about growth and development through job creation, food security, and an end of extreme poverty.”

President Tinubu's vision for socioeconomic development encapsulates a comprehensive strategy aimed at uplifting the nation through targeted initiatives that prioritise economic growth, job creation, poverty alleviation, and enhanced social services. By articulating a clear agenda that encompasses key areas of concern “*through job creation, food security, and an end of extreme poverty*”, Tinubu demonstrates a commitment to foster a more equitable, prosperous, and inclusive nation. Central to Tinubu's economic agenda is the objective of remodelling the economy to catalyse growth and development. This ambition underscores a transformative approach that seeks to overhaul existing systems and structures to create a more dynamic and resilient economic environment. By focusing on key drivers of economic progress such as job creation, food security, and poverty reduction, Tinubu aims to address fundamental challenges while laying the groundwork for sustainable prosperity.

Optimist Ideology

Analysing President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural speech through a Post-colonial and Faircloughian lens reveals the presence of an optimist ideology. The speech emphasises the potential and resilience of Nigeria as a nation, while also addressing the challenges and aspirations of its diverse population. Here are some relevant lexical examples from the speech:

Excerpt 10: “We have endured hardships that would have made other societies crumble.”

Nigerians have passed through “*endured hardships*” some unjustifiable tests of hardship ranging from inflation, insecurity, economic devastation, political upheaval, religious turmoil, corruption, unmerited policies, poverty and joblessness among others along Nigeria's democratic years of governance which spans several administrations. The highlighted expression above suggests that, the speaker present himself as a member of the same group as his hearers. The expression above equally acknowledges the challenges Nigeria has faced in the past, but emphasises the nation's ability to overcome them *would have made other societies crumble*, reflecting an optimistic outlook.

Excerpt 11: "We shall remodel our economy to bring about growth and development."

This phrase above highlights the intention to transform and improve "*bring about growth and development*" the Nigerian economy, demonstrating an optimistic belief in the country's capacity for economic progress. Having kept these problems at the back of his mind, the incoming president uses his diction to convince his audience of what plans he has for Nigerians

Economist Ideology

The following provides insights into the economist ideology reflected in President Tinubu's speech:

Economic Policies: *GDP Growth and Unemployment Reduction:*

Excerpt 12: "On the economy, we target a higher GDP growth and to significantly reduce unemployment."

President Tinubu underscores the goal "*we target a higher GDP growth*" of achieving higher GDP growth and significantly reducing unemployment rates in Nigeria. This reflects an economist ideology that prioritises economic development and job creation. In terms of the use of plural personal pronouns, the statement "On the economy, we target a higher GDP growth and to significantly reduce unemployment" effectively utilizes the pronoun "we." The plural personal pronoun "we" signifies a collective or group effort, indicating that the speaker, along with others, is involved in the endeavor to achieve a higher GDP growth and reduce unemployment. This pronoun creates a sense of inclusivity and shared responsibility, suggesting a collaborative approach towards addressing economic challenges. By using "we," the statement implies that multiple individuals or entities are working together towards the common goal of economic improvement. The use of the plural pronoun also enhances the persuasive power of the statement, as it implies a broader consensus and support for the proposed targets. Moreover, the inclusion of "we" fosters a sense of unity and collective accountability, encouraging a shared commitment to the economic objectives outlined. Overall, the use of the plural personal pronoun "we" effectively conveys a collaborative and cooperative stance, emphasizing the joint efforts of the speaker and others in targeting higher GDP growth and reducing unemployment.

Budgetary Reform and Industrial Policy:

Excerpt 13: "First, budgetary reform stimulating the economy without engendering inflation will be instituted. Second, industrial policy will utilize the full range of fiscal measures to promote domestic manufacturing and lessen import dependency."

The speech highlights the implementation of "*budgetary reforms*" to stimulate economic growth without causing inflation. Additionally, *an industrial policy* will be adopted to promote domestic manufacturing and reduce import dependency. This reflects an economist ideology that emphasises fiscal measures and self-sufficiency.

Reviewing Monetary Policy:

Excerpt 14: "Monetary policy needs thorough housecleaning. The Central Bank must work towards a unified exchange rate" and "Interest rates need to be reduced to increase investment and consumer purchasing."

President Tinubu stresses the need for thorough "*Monetary policy needs thorough housecleaning*" housecleaning of monetary policy, including working towards "*The Central Bank must work towards a unified exchange rate*" a unified exchange rate, reducing interest rates, and reviewing currency swap policies. This reflects an economist ideology that prioritizes monetary stability, investment, and economic growth.

Conclusion

The critical discourse analysis of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Inaugural speech provides valuable insights into the power dynamics, language, and democratic processes within the Nigerian post-colonial context. The study employed post-colonial, socio-cultural and socio-economic discourse approaches to uncover hidden ideologies, hegemonic practices, and the reproduction of power relations within the discourse. Through the analysis of discursive strategies, structural processes, and lexical structures, the research reveals how President Tinubu's speech reflects and perpetuates existing power structures in Nigeria. The findings shed light on the role of language in shaping public opinion, maintaining dominance, and highlighting the potential implications for democratic processes and social justice.

Equally, the study highlights the importance of analysing political discourse within post-colonial contexts to understand the intricate dynamics of power, identity, and representation. It emphasises the significance of the speech and its discursive strategies in comprehending the role of language in shaping political dynamics. By focusing on President Tinubu's Inaugural speech, the research fills a notable gap in the scholarly exploration of political rhetoric in specific Nigerian contexts as it contributes to the broader understanding of post-colonial governance and the enduring legacies of colonialism on political discursive practice.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. There is a need for further research on the discursive strategies employed by political leaders in Nigeria, particularly during significant events such as Inaugural speeches. This will no doubt provide a more comprehensive understanding of how language is used to shape public opinion and perpetuate power structures.
2. Future studies should explore the impact of these discursive strategies on democratic processes and social justice within the Nigerian post-colonial context.
3. Policymakers and political leaders should be aware of the power of language and discourse in shaping public perception and maintaining dominance. They should strive for transparency, inclusivity, and accountability in their communication with the public. It is crucial to foster a culture of open dialogue and critical engagement with political speeches to ensure a more informed and participatory democratic process.
4. Media organizations and civil society should play an active role in examining and scrutinising political discourse, providing a platform for diverse perspectives and promoting transparency and accountability.
5. Lastly, the study highlights the importance of incorporating critical discourse analysis into educational curricula, particularly in the fields of political science, communication, and linguistics. By equipping students with the tools to analyse and deconstruct political rhetoric, so they can develop a critical understanding of power dynamics and contribute to the promotion of democratic ideals and social justice.

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