

ANALYZING PRESIDENT TINUBU’S SPEECH ON ECONOMIC CHALLENGES: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PERSUASIVE TOOLS

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Abstract: Speeches are used in various circumstances during the reign of political leaders. Although speeches are more pronounced during campaigns, victories at polls, inauguration Independence Day, and New Year’s Day, etc., they can be driven by occasion. Hence, this study examines President Tinubu’s speech to address economic challenges using persuasive and rhetorical tools. The address was the 3rd speech or state of the nation by President Tinubu after 2 months in office. This study employed critical discourse analysis (CDA). The corpus of this study was the manuscript of President Tinubu’s third speech as president of Nigeria. The study revealed that President Tinubu's speech blamed individuals who divert subsidy money for personal gain for economic challenges, reinforcing power differentials in the country's political economy. The speech preached hope using affirmative and persuasive language to offer economic relief in the short- and long-term and projected solutions. The study concludes that the speech on economic challenges was used as a means of giving hope and persuading Nigerians to key into the president’s economic policies. Therefore, it provided much evidence to recommend that speech when deployed skillfully can offer legitimate or desirable delivery, potentially shaping public perceptions and influencing policy decisions.

Key words: Critical Discourse Analysis, Political Speech, Political Discourse, Persuasive Discourse and Economy.

Introduction

Speeches serve the purpose of conveying the speaker's objectives. Political leaders in Africa and other countries often deliver speeches during electoral campaigns as a means of conveying their manifestos to voters. Acceptance speeches are often delivered following presidential triumphs. Subsequently, inauguration addresses are delivered on the day of their appointment. In addition to the aforementioned events necessitating speeches, there are several additional conditions or occurrences that require speeches from political leaders during their

tenure (Chinyere & Bibian, 2023). Political speeches, according to Akinseye (2023), provide a forum for expressing policy goals, inspiring group action, and fostering a feeling of community among a population.

Presidential power is a major determinant of the policy agenda of a nation, since the president plays a crucial role in shaping and establishing the agenda. Presidents can affect the priorities of the government, media, and the public by setting agendas. They have a distinct advantage in influencing the national agenda, including topics that the country's legislative focuses on and problems that are deemed significant to the Nigerian public and media. The policy agenda refers to problems that political institutions pay substantial attention to and are typically affected by the president. Studies have demonstrated that presidential effectiveness and authority rise if the president can influence legislative, media, and public attention to problems through his/her communications or speeches (Chinyere & Bibian, 2023; Vaezi, 2021).

President Tinubu made a historically contentious comment in his inaugural speech on May 29, 2023, stating that "Subsidy is gone". However, some scholars argue that it was improvised and not part of Mr. president's speech as originally proposed. Others felt that this element had been made hastily without proper forethought. The assertion provoked prompt and substantial reaction from the economic domain, comparable to the swift propagation of a wildfire. The government had contended that it was an optimal policy for the nation, determined by considering aspects such as national security, resource depletion, reallocation of funds toward more advantageous goals, and economic sustainability. Nevertheless, there were contrasting viewpoints concerning the timing and consequences of the message, as critics contended that it was inadequately coordinated. Subsequently, the Tinubu administration clarified that the removal of subsidies was not a recent event but rather a restatement of the federal government's pledge to cease subsidies by June 2023. Following the inauguration speech, queues were observed at filling stations as individuals engaged in panic buying in response to the alleged increase in prices (Aro, 2023; Veegil, 2023).

As a result, Ogunyale (2023) observed that the third speech of the Tinubu administration—the subject of this study—was given to address the nation's economic difficulties after the president's policies were put into effect. It is noteworthy to mention that President Tinubu has spoken at numerous summits and international gatherings. To put things in perspective, the president addressed the Nigerians mostly in the first three addresses, which were the inaugural speech, the Democracy Day speech, and the speech on the country's economy. The president delivered his third speech on July 31, 2023, to address the nation's economic problems. The broadcast, which was live on national television and radio, with manuscripts sent to major media outlets, occurred just a few days following the labor union's scheduled protest.

A study by Peake and Eschbaugh-Soha (2008) cited in Vaezi (2021) analyzed George W. Bush's State of the Union addresses from 2002 to 2008 using grounded theory to determine the extent to which some policy issues took precedence over others. The findings revealed that presidential authority was a primary source of agenda setting in the United States, which refers to the ability to affect the attention given to policy matters by other institutions. Presidents are generally acknowledged for their capacity to shape the priorities of the government, the media, and the people by establishing agendas. Research (Akinseye, 2023; Chinyere & Bibian, 2023; Imahasees & Mahmoud, 2022; Vaezi, 2021; Altikriti, 2016) has focused on presidential speeches, especially acceptance and inauguration speeches. Others have made comparisons of speeches, while others have examined speeches by presidents addressing international summits and gatherings. However, few studies have established the nexus between persuasion and rhetoric as tools of critical discourse in political or government speeches and

communications. Hence, this study fills this gap by examining the text, interaction, and power identity of president Tinubu's third speech to Nigerians to address the economic challenges of the country.

Literature review

The use of persuasive discourse has considerable political importance. Politicians use various persuasive methods to exert influence, provide guidance, and exercise control over their audiences in alignment with their interests. Political social work relies heavily on effective communication, with a particular emphasis on customizing messages to audiences. In political discussions, speakers use reasoning and semantic frames as strategic tools to mold and modify the reactions of their audience, thus exerting influence over their level of support. Political speeches serve as potent instruments for advancing agendas and asserting leadership, often focusing on psychological themes. The use of language is of significant importance to politicians because it enables them to establish choices, shape attitudes, and exercise control over values, making political persuasion a crucial component of societal dynamics. In political speeches, persuasive speaking actions have a substantial influence on the opinions and conduct of the audience (Wilson, 2015).

The act of persuading an individual involves the use of communication, specifically language, to perform a certain action. Language plays a crucial role for politicians since Politics revolves on the ability to make choices, shape people's views, and even exert influence over their ideals. Political persuasion plays a significant role in societies, as communicators attempt to influence individuals to alter their opinions or behaviors about political matters via messages that convey a feeling of autonomy. In this regard, persuasion may be seen as a "speech act" that is executed via verbal communication. Prior research on speech acts has mostly focused on several categories of speech acts, including compliments, complaints, greetings, and requests. However, there has been a lack of significant emphasis on the speech act of persuasion (Altikriti, 2016).

The role of discourse is of utmost importance in the everyday manifestation and perpetuation of cognitive and social ideas. It signifies a deliberate attempt to manipulate and direct individuals' thoughts toward what they believe are the most desirable. Ideology is the fundamental framework that connects society, communication, and social understanding. The dominance of communication is determined by the circumstances and frameworks of a written work and can be regulated by linguistic techniques like paraphrasing and grammatical modifications. The influence of mental representations or perceptions is significantly shaped by the context and structure of conversation (Ajiboye, 2013).

Eze and Nwasogwa (2023) noted that the mass media had the ability to manipulate public conversation by employing discursive structures that either downplay or divert attention away from unfavorable information or highlight or concentrate on desirable information. The mass media engage in a mission of hegemony, instructing readers to adopt its beliefs and perspectives.

Research conducted in Nigeria has demonstrated that news headlines employ emotive terminology and rhetorical tactics to initiate, maintain conversation, and influence readers' perspectives on matters of national importance. The press uses lexical variants and labeling to portray the media and government as the positive "us" and ethnic militia groups as the negative "them". The ideological perspectives projected by the media are reflected in their choice of words and transitivity options (Chinyere & Bibian, 2023; Ajiboye, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

This study was grounded on the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The discipline of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) encompasses various academic domains, including linguistics, social

sciences, and literary studies. It is a comprehensive theoretical framework, methodology, and analytical instrument, specifically designed to understand power dynamics, inequality, and social constructs. CDA examines the function of language in the formation and perpetuation of power dynamics. This analysis examines the role of language in shaping and perpetuating norms and institutions in society. Qualitative and interpretive Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the analysis of texts to reveal latent power relations (Ehineni, 2014).

According to Richardson et al. (2014), CDA emerged in the mid-1980s as a new direction in Fairclough, van Dijk, Wodak, Kress, and van Leeuwen. It began in 1992 in Amsterdam and has since grown into an interdisciplinary movement that meets annually. Critical discourse analysis has evolved beyond linguistics to adopt a more interdisciplinary approach, studying texts and their contexts through historical or ethnographic methods. This approach involves collaboration between discourse analysts and historians, political scientists, anthropologists, and sociologists. It also acknowledges that discourses are often multimodal and uses visual analysis methods inspired by systemic-functional linguistics. For example, visual racism can be realized through subtler methods, such as grouping members in similar poses or taking long shots. This shift toward a more explicit dialog between social theory and practice emphasizes interdisciplinary and multimodality. According to Dwi (2018), a principle review by Van Dijk (2009) and Wodak and Meyer (2009) highlighted five propositions:

1. CDA focuses on a problem, not a theory or discipline.
2. It is interdisciplinary and involves various theories, methods, and applications.
3. This social study focuses on human rights abuses of power in domains like racism, classism, and sexism.
4. CDA investigates unethical issues, focusing on groups that are experiencing injustice discursively.
5. CDA emphasizes spontaneous assessment to explain phenomena and to justify effective interpretations.

According to Fairclough and Fairclough (2013), Fairclough (1992) suggested that a critical analysis of a text should involve three stages: description, interpretation of the text-interaction relationship, and explanation of the interaction-social context relationship. The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) theory can be used to analyze President Tinubu's economic statements. It focuses on how language shape perceptions, influence policies, and maintains power dynamics. By examining Tinubu's speech, researchers can identify his position in relation to economic challenges, how he may challenge existing power structures, and how his ideologies are communicated and reinforced through language. The theory also highlights the potential for discourse to influence social practices and structures and the importance of analyzing discourse in its broader social, political, and historical contexts. This approach can help researchers understand the complexities of President Tinubu's use of language and its implications.

Empirical Review

The research conducted by Lmahasees and Mahmoud (2022) analyzed the persuasive tactics employed by King Abdullah II of Jordan in seven speeches from 2007 to 2021. The speeches were analyzed using Fairclough's discourse analysis. The use of intertextuality, creativity, analogies, references and circumlocution by the King in his speeches was observed as a means to effectively communicate his vision and emphasize the importance of reality.

The inaugural speech delivered by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu was examined by Akinseye (2023), specifically focusing on the analysis of discursive techniques and interpersonal resources employed. The

investigation uncovers significant themes, polarization, and lexicalization approaches by applying van Dijk's ideological position and Halliday's systemic functional linguistics. Modal verbs highlight binding obligations and active involvement, whereas epistemic modality highlights ambiguities. Tinubu's perspective and attitude toward the listener are reflected through the use of personal pronouns. This approach offers valuable insights into the realm of political communication and its consequences on leadership dynamics and public participation. Vaezi (2021) asserted that practitioners of critical discourse analysis (CDA) direct their attention toward the examination of politicians' discourses, recognizing their proficiency in employing political persuasive methods to sway communities. Their distinctive language plays a crucial role in altering individuals' perspectives and actions, which is frequently demonstrated in political campaigns where presidential candidates articulate their ideological stances, socioeconomic strategies, and cultural aspirations to secure votes.

Methods

For this study, the CDA methodological approach, which is situated within the qualitative paradigm of research inquiry, was used. CDA as a method is an interdisciplinary field of research that offers a systematic and detailed analysis of corporate narrative documents from a linguistic perspective. It allows for a de-contextualized structural perspective but primarily focuses on the social context in which a text is written, allowing researchers to examine a text from a more detailed and logical standpoint (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2013; Merkl-Davies & Koller, 2012).

This study relied on Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model, which enabled the analysis of the complex relationship between language, power, and identity in President Tinubu's speech on economic challenges. Fairclough posits that the examination of speech can be undertaken through three separate phases: description, interpretation, and explanation. In every phase, the conversation considers three key elements: textual/contextual (e.g., written or spoken), interactive/intersubjective (e.g., participant engagement and impact), and power/identity (e.g., how the conversation is employed to reinforce or challenge power dynamics and identities) (Vaezi, 2021). Hence, this study presents its findings based on the three parameters proposed by Fairclough. By employing Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis methodology, this study examines how President Tinubu's speech on economic issues uses language to establish power dynamics and express ideological positions. Data will be utilized to analyze the manner in which President Tinubu uses language and rhetorical tactics and how he articulates economic difficulties, with the aim of either reinforcing or contesting the existing state of affairs and prevailing beliefs.

The corpus of this study is the text of the national broadcast by president Tinubu to Nigerians on the current economic challenges titled "after darkness comes the glorious dawn". The original text comprises 41 paragraphs, 96 sentences, and a total word count of 1,757. The speech was accessed from the official website of the Nigerian presidency's speeches and remarks: <https://statehouse.gov.ng/news/text-of-the-national-broadcast-by-presidents-tinubu-to-nigerians-on-current-economic-challenges/>

Results

Fairclough posits that the examination of speech can be undertaken through three separate phases: description, interpretation, and explanation. These three elements must be discussed in the light of three elements: textual/contextual (e.g., written or spoken), Interactive/intersubjective (e.g., participant engagement and impact), and power/identity (e.g., how the conversation is employed to reinforce or challenge power dynamics

and identities) (Vaezi, 2021). The results are thus presented in two major subheadings of 1. Persuasive tools (textual and interactive tools) and 2. Power dynamics.

1. Persuasive techniques

The speech employs persuasive strategies with the intention of influencing the audience's views, attitudes, or behaviors to convince them to accept the speaker's perspective or engage in a certain course of action. Through the skillful use of persuasive strategies, speakers can captivate their audience, establish credibility, and motivate people to contemplate novel concepts, alter their viewpoints, or endorse a certain cause. The objective of using persuasive strategies in a speech is to effectively convey a message in a captivating and persuasive manner that inspires the audience to react favorably to the speaker's argument or appeal for action.

According to Derin et al., (2020 p.15) persuasive techniques used for effective communication include: emotional appeal, clarity and transparency, social identity, metaphors, repetition, and inclusive language.

a) Emotional appeal

The speech of president Tinubu employed a series of appeals. The emotional and moral appeals. The speaker employs expressive language to create an emotional connection with the audience, evoking patriotism, empathy, and hope. This approach is known as "pathos" and is used to persuade audiences by evoking their emotions.

For instance, the title or theme of the speech from its main script is carried According to The State House, (2023) "after darkness comes the glorious dawn"- The phrase creates a vivid image of a brighter future, evoking feelings of hope and optimism.

Also, the speaker in the sixth sentence of paragraph 11 of the president's speech captured empathy and compassion, by nothing thus "I understand the hardship you face" (The State House, 2023 para.11). This phrase creates a sense of connection with the audience. The paragraph recognizes the challenges that the listener is encountering, demonstrating that the speaker is aware of their hardships and concerned about their welfare. This compassionate demeanor helped establish confidence and connection with the audience. Therefore, it implies a strong use of emotive appeal.

Also, the phrase "our beloved country" (The State House, 2023 para.2) elicits a feeling of patriotism and collective responsibility, underscoring the speaker's dedication to the welfare of the nation.

The speaker also used moral appeal by using words and phrases like "fairness" and "sovereignty of the people" (The State House, 2023 para.5), which also raise a sense of emotion and morality for the listeners. These expressions also highlight the speaker's dedication to democratic values and the significance of prioritizing the interests of the public rather than the privileged few.

In communication the use emotions like fear, love, anger, and empathy are used to connect with the audience. The speaker uses emotive language with the intention of inspiring and motivating the audience to endorse their vision for the future of the nation.

b) Clarity and transparency

The speaker begins with a note of clarity about what he wants to tell the public and pledges to use unambiguous words or expressions. I want to talk to you about our economy. It is important that you understand the reasons for the policy measures I have taken to combat the serious economic challenges this nation has faced (The State

House, 2023 para. 1). From his later statement, the speaker demonstrates how important it is for citizens to understand the policies and measures implemented by his administration.

Another excerpt shows that the speaker acknowledges the variety of listeners he has and wants to connect with them. Thus: I am not going to talk in difficult terms by dwelling on economic jargon and concepts. I will speak in a plain, clear language so that you will know where I stand. (The State House, 2023 para. 2). Here, he emphatically tells his listeners that he will talk to them in plain language for their understanding.

For transparency the speaker noted in paragraph 35:

In a little over two months, we have saved over a trillion Naira that would have been squandered on the unproductive fuel subsidy which only benefitted smugglers and fraudsters. That money will now be used more directly and more beneficially for you and your families (The State House, 2023 para. 35).

From the above excerpt, the speaker was telling the audience how the government had saved over a trillion Naira in just two months from an unproductive fuel subsidy, allowing more direct and beneficial use for citizens and families.

The implication is that the speech should be lucid, succinct, and unambiguous, facilitating the audience's comprehension of the speaker's vision and strategies for the nation's economic future.

c) Repetition and metaphors:

In the speech, various metaphors were used:

After Darkness comes the glorious dawn” (The State House, 2023 para.1)

Millstone around the country’s neck (The State House, 2023 para.4)

Filthy rich (The State House, 2023 para.7)

Elite of the elite (The State House, 2023 para.10)

These metaphors were used by the speaker to draw comparisons to help explain or give weight to the given speech. These metaphors evoke engagement and memory. The filthy metaphor creates a picture of a comparison between the few privileges and the rest of society. Metaphors are used to generate vivid and evocative language, enhancing the engagement and memorability of discourse. They facilitate the communication of complex concepts and sentiments in a more approachable and influential manner.

d) Social identity

The study also found instances of social identity in the speech of Mr. President. “our nation” (The State House, 2023 para.1), our economy” (The State House, 2023 para. 2), “our beloved country” (The State House, 2023 para. 2), “our people” (The State House, 2023 para.5), “Nigeria” (throughout the speech)

These expressions highlight the speaker’s strong connection to the country and its citizens, fostering a sense of shared identity and shared responsibility. The speaker uses the pronouns (inclusive language) "our" and "we" to include both themselves and the listener within a collective entity, thus establishing a feeling of cohesion and mutual accountability. In addition, the speaker used expressions such as "our democratic system" and "our national wealth" to underscore the notion that these entities are the collective possession of all Nigerians and that every individual has a vested interest in the future of the country.

The implication of using inclusive language in speech is that it fosters a feeling of inclusivity, reverence, and parity among all members of the audience. Through the use of inclusive language, speakers strive to engage and include all individuals in the discourse, regardless of origin, identity, or perspective. Utilizing inclusive

language fosters an atmosphere that is inviting and accommodating, ensuring that all individuals feel esteemed and adequately represented. Additionally, president Tinubu may have intended to foster trust and establish a positive relationship with the audience by demonstrating understanding and respect for other viewpoints and life experiences. Inclusive language ultimately promotes a feeling of cohesion and camaraderie among the audience, fostering cooperation and comprehension across diverse groups.

2. Economic discourse and power play

President Tinubu's speech exudes power-play dynamics and economic discourse between the government and other political and economic actors. The president presented the need for implementing policy and economic changes that will help tackle the economic difficulties faces by the people such as stopping fuel subsidies and making education affordable for all. This implies a power shift from a small group of economically advantaged individuals to a government that, in turn help distribute the wealth to all Nigerians.

This speech underscores the need for equality and justice in the economic distribution of a nation's wealth. This signifies a strategy to shrink the power in the hands of non-state actors who are influential and economically important. This is to safeguard the sovereignty of the government while protecting the economic freedom of citizens. Thus, in paragraph 37, the speech noted: "Our commitment is to promote the greatest good for the greatest number of our people. On this principle, we shall never falter" (The State House, 2023 para. 37).

This speech deliberately concedes economic difficulties while admitting the commitment of the government to rectify them. This shows the government's awareness of the need to disrupt the status quo in terms of power relations within the economy. This is because the existing state of affairs portends dire straits. Hence, the priority is the welfare of the majority of Nigerians.

The president was emphatic about how the futuristic plan would help create a better economy for every citizen. The speaker emphasized the long-term benefits of economic reforms and the fight against economic flaws to improve the future of the nation. The speech is noted as follows:

Fellow Nigerians, this period may be hard on us and there is no doubt about it that it is tough on us. But I urge you all to look beyond the present temporary pains and aim at the larger picture. All of our good and helpful plans are in the works. More importantly, I know that they will work (The State House, 2023 para. 32).

From the above the speaker emphasizes the importance of a strategic outlook and considering long-term consequences when making difficult choices for a better future, even if it involves immediate hardships. This leadership is ready to use its authority to bring about economic transformation, aiming to establish control, reduce the impact of special interest groups, and improve the welfare of the entire population.

Conclusions

An in-depth dissection of President Tinubu's orations reveals an articulate use of rhetorical devices alongside authority maneuvers to transmit his pronouncements and fulfill objectives. The discourse exploits emotive persuasion, lucidity and openness to establish rapport with listeners and construct legitimacy. Devices such as metaphors, recurrence and collective diction are harnessed to craft robust imagery, stimulate sentiments and nurture communal identity and culpability.

The purpose of emotive language in speech is to elicit intense sensations and emotions from the listener. Speakers use emotionally charged words to establish a profound connection with their audience, evoke empathy, and motivate them to take action or change. Utilizing emotive language may enhance the message's

level of engagement, memorability, and impact by appealing to the emotions and values of the audience. According to Chinyere and Bibian (2023), it has the ability to strongly evoke passion, empathy, or a feeling of urgency in listeners, prompting them to respond emotionally and perhaps take action based on those emotions. Moreover, the oration illustrates paradigms of dominance manipulation, where the head of state endeavors to reallocate influence from a select elite to the governing bodies and, eventually, the populace. The dialog underscores the need for economic adjustments, parity, and fairness, intending to unsettle existing conditions and advance communal welfare. The leader's role is portrayed as a vector for revolutionary change, prepared to implement arduous resolutions along a progressive horizon. The discoveries resonate with Fairclough's triadic stages of speech scrutiny: explication (recognizing rhetorical mechanisms and dominion structures), interpretation (comprehending the orator's purposes and techniques), and elucidation (contextualizing the rhetoric within wider socio-political frameworks). The address signifies an intentional endeavor to engage, convince, and energize the audience, concurrently reinforcing the president's dominion and foresight regarding the nation's economic trajectory.

Conclusions and recommendations

President Tinubu's speeches effectively use persuasive tools and power dynamics to communicate his message and achieve his goals. It uses emotional appeal, clarity, and transparency to connect with the audience and establish credibility. The speaker uses metaphors, repetition, and inclusive language to create vivid imagery and foster shared identity. The speech also demonstrates power play dynamics, shifting power from a few people to the government and the people.

Therefore, this study is recommended:

1. Individuals occupying roles in political leadership along with those tasked with the composition of speeches should contemplate the use of persuasive apparatuses encompassing emotive appeal, maintaining clarity and embracing transparency as a means to forge connections with the audience while simultaneously establishing an aura of credibility.
2. The use of strategic mechanisms such as metaphors, repetition and inclusive terminology has the potential to augment the potency of speeches and foster a sentiment of collective identity and an augmented sense of responsibility.
3. Speeches should be tailored to the audience and context, considering people's needs and concerns.
4. Political communication should prioritize clarity, transparency, and inclusivity.
5. Leaders should inspire and motivate citizens by promoting a shared vision for the nation's future.

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