

Speech Act Theory and Political Speech: An Analysis of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Inaugural Address

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Abstract

This study presents a speech act analysis of the inaugural address of President Ahmed Tinubu with the aim of examining the communicative intentions and illocutionary force embedded within his discourse. The analysis focuses on identifying the various speech acts performed by Tinubu and exploring their rhetorical effects on the audience. It addresses the problem of understanding the persuasive power and communicative strategies used in political speeches, particularly in the context of presidential inaugurations. The study utilizes a qualitative research approach and the methodology involves several steps to systematically analyze the speech and identify the speech acts performed by the Nigerian President. The theoretical framework of Speech Act Theory is used for analyzing the performative aspects of language in political discourse. It uncovers the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts embedded in the speech and their rhetorical significance. The findings of the study reveal that President Tinubu utilized a range of speech acts in his address, including promises, assurances, pledges, acknowledgments, appeals to unity, and expressions of commitment and these speech acts served various purposes, such as establishing trust, inspiring hope, outlining policy priorities, and promoting national unity. The study reveals that the speech acts used address key issues such as governance, inclusivity, security, and economic development. Based on the findings, the study recommends that political leaders and speechwriters should be cognizant of the power of speech acts and their potential to shape public opinion and political discourse. The findings provide insights for political leaders, speechwriters, and researchers interested in the role of language and rhetoric in political discourse.

Keywords: Speech Act Theory, Inaugural address, Linguistic Strategies, Rhetorical Techniques, Audience Impact

Introduction

Sharndama (2015) asserts that political speech is associated with either struggle for power or maintenance/control of it. It is diverse because it encompasses the different forms of speeches that the politicians deliver at political forums. Chilton (1998) affirms that politics is “the art of governance and power” while language is “the universal capacity of humans in all societies to communicate”. Okoro C. N (2017) subscribes to this view when she asserts that politics is concerned with power to make decisions, control resources, and control other people’s behaviour and, at times to control their values. In the realm of political discourse, speeches hold immense power; they serve as a platform for leaders to convey their vision, rally support, and shape public opinion. Behind every word spoken lies a complex web of intentions, meanings, and persuasive strategies. Understanding the nuances of political speech is deemed necessary for comprehending the messages conveyed by leaders and the impact they have on society. The aim of this research paper is to employ Speech Act Theory as a framework to analyze the inaugural address of President Ahmed Tinubu. As the newly elected president, Tinubu's speech serves as a significant event that marks the beginning of his political leadership and sets the tone for his presidency. By examining this address through the lens of Speech Act Theory, we seek to unravel the various speech acts performed within the discourse, delve into their underlying intentions, and shed light on their rhetorical implications.

President Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural address as the newly elected President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria holds immense significance for the future direction of the nation and its political landscape. In order to comprehensively understand the implications of his speech, the researcher aims to conduct a thorough analysis of the speech acts employed by President Tinubu, examining the linguistic strategies, rhetorical devices, and communicative intentions embedded within his address. Speech act analysis, rooted in the field of pragmatics, explores how speakers use language not only to convey information

but also to perform actions and influence their audience. The researcher has decided in the study, to scrutinize President Tinubu's inaugural speech through the lens of speech act theory, we can gain a deeper understanding of the pragmatic functions and implications of his words.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of study in the analysis of President Tinubu's inaugural address lies in examining the effectiveness and implications of his speech acts in conveying his intended messages to the Nigerian public. Specifically, the study aims to investigate how President Tinubu utilizes speech acts to establish his authority, rally support, and address key issues facing the nation. It seeks to understand the persuasive strategies employed, the rhetorical devices utilized, and the overall communicative impact of the speech on the audience.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to conduct a speech act analysis of President Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural address, with a focus on exploring its linguistic and rhetorical features. The study identifies the speech acts performed by President Tinubu and analyzing their intended meaning, illocutionary force, and potential impact on the audience. Additionally, the study seeks to uncover the thematic elements, figures of speech, and underlying messages embedded within the speech. By undertaking this analysis, the study intends to provide insights into President Tinubu's communication strategies, his vision for Nigeria, and the rhetorical techniques employed to convey his ideas and aspirations. The findings of the study will contribute to a deeper understanding of political discourse and the persuasive power of speeches in shaping public opinion and mobilizing support.

Research Objectives

The research objectives of the study on President Tinubu's inaugural address are as follows:

- i. To identify and analyze the primary speech acts performed by President Tinubu in his inaugural speech.
- ii. To examine the intended meaning and illocutionary force of the speech acts performed.
- iii. To interpret the rhetorical strategies and persuasive techniques employed in the speech.
- iv. To assess the thematic elements and key messages conveyed in the speech.
- v. To ascertain the rhetorical strategies and persuasive techniques used in the text.

These objectives focus on assessing the reception and impact of President Tinubu's speech, examining how well the speech resonates with the audience, inspires trust and confidence, and mobilizes support for his administration's agenda. By addressing these research objectives, the study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of President Tinubu's inaugural speech, shedding light on the speech acts, intended meanings, rhetorical strategies, thematic elements, and overall effectiveness of the speech in conveying his vision and engaging the audience.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be answered in the analysis of President Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural speech:

- i. What are the primary speech acts performed by President Tinubu in his inaugural address?
- ii. What is the intended meaning and illocutionary force of the speech acts performed in President Tinubu's address?
- iii. How does President Tinubu employ rhetorical devices, such as figures of speech, to convey his message and engage the audience?
- iv. What are the thematic elements and underlying messages present in President Tinubu's speech?
- v. To what extent did the president use rhetorical strategies and persuasive techniques in his address?

Research Methodology

The study utilizes a qualitative research approach to conduct a speech act analysis of Ahmed Tinubu's speech. The methodology involves several steps to systematically analyze the speech and identify the

speech acts performed by the Nigerian President. The researcher thoroughly reads the speech multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of its content, context, and purpose. This step helps in identifying the key themes and issues addressed in the speech. The primary data source is the transcript of Tinubu's speech. Following Searle's speech act theory, the researcher identifies and categorizes the different types of speech acts present in the speech. These include assertions, directives, promises, declarations, expressions of gratitude, and other illocutionary acts.

Empirical Studies

Drawing from the existing literature, this study examines the specific speech acts employed in Tinubu's speech, this study intends to contribute to the understanding of persuasive strategies, rhetorical devices, and communicative intentions used in political discourse.

Abuya Eromosele (2012) examined linguistic acts that manifest in the Inaugural Speech of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan as the democratically elected president in May 2011 General Elections in Nigeria through the pragma-stylistic approach. Leonard Koussouhon, did a Systemic Functional Linguistic and Critical Discourse Analysis of President Buhari's Inaugural Speech using critical discourse analysis. The analysis was focused on mood, epistemic and deontic modality choices, as well as recoverable references through personal pronouns used throughout the political discourse under consideration. The study has demonstrated how political leaders' discourses unearth a sort of harmony with ideologies that tally and commensurate the domestic, sub-regional and international realities.

Rahim Vaezi et al (2014) did a comparative study of speech-acts in the textbooks by native and non-native speakers. They pragmatically analyzed new interchange series and locally-made EFL textbooks. The study attempted to investigate the types and the numbers of speech acts included in Right Path to English and the New Interchange series. For this purpose, 225 utterances from each textbook were selected and analyzed based on the Searle's (1979) speech act framework. The reliability of results was checked by two independent inter-raters. The results revealed that there is a meaningful difference between the speech acts used in the two textbooks. The research carried out by Rahim Vaezi et al is related to the present study as both of them are anchored on speech acts, however, the case study differs. Ononye, C. F. (2017). examined 'Language, Contexts and Power Relations in Nigerian Newspaper Headlines on President Muhammadu Buhari's Inaugural Address'. He examined the context elements constraining the linguistic structures used in newspaper headlines to reflect the power relations surrounding President Muhammadu Buhari's (PMB) inauguration discourse. Data collected were analyzed with insights from van Dijk's theory of Critical Discourse Analysis and context.

Anyanwu, Esther (2020), did a stylistic analysis of president Buhari's addresses of Nigerians in the face of Covid-19 pandemic. She investigated two speeches of President Muhammadu Buhari during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic to ascertain how he has employed language, the linguistic elements used and the stylistic and pragmatic imports. Using the theoretical framework of stylistics, the researcher found out that Buhari tactfully used words to address Nigerians on Covid-19 and stressed the measures to be taken to contain the spread of the virus. To achieve the pragmatic effect of his speeches, he used lexical devices such as transitional makers, repetition, alliteration, assonance, pronouns to project the theme/subject matter of the language discourse. It was found out that the speaker used coordination to denote relationship of grammatical units, show contrast and as a re-statement of what he said earlier. The speaker repeatedly used coordination in his speeches and this is commendable since in language, identical items may be conjoined in an indefinite number of times. The analysis revealed that president is committed in combating the coronavirus pandemic that is ravaging his nation. From the previous studies reviewed, the researcher discovered that no study has been carried out on speech act theory and political speech: an analysis of President Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural address and this forms the lacuna for the present research.

Theoretical Framework

Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory, developed primarily by J.L. Austin and further expanded by John Searle, provides a framework for understanding how language functions beyond its literal meaning and how utterances perform actions in social contexts. The theory focuses on the pragmatic aspects of language use, emphasizing the intentionality and effects of speech acts. This paper draws on key works by Austin and Searle, along with supporting scholarly literature. J.L. Austin, in his seminal work "How to Do Things with Words" (1962), introduces the concept of speech acts and highlights the performative nature of language. He argues that utterances not only describe or represent the world but also have the power to perform actions. Austin distinguishes between two types of utterances: constative and performative. Constative utterances describe the state of affairs, while performative utterances accomplish actions through their utterance, such as promising, apologizing, or naming. Austin introduces the notion of felicity conditions, which are the necessary conditions for the successful performance of a speech act. For example, for an apology to be felicitous, the speaker must sincerely express regret, accept responsibility, and acknowledge the wrongdoing. If any of these conditions are not met, the speech act may be deemed infelicitous or even insincere.

John Searle, in his work "Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language" (1969), builds upon Austin's ideas and provides a more comprehensive framework for speech act analysis. Searle distinguishes between three dimensions of speech acts: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. The locutionary act refers to the act of uttering words and producing meaningful sentences. For instance, saying "I promise to help you" constitutes a locutionary act. The illocutionary act refers to the intended force or function of the utterance. It represents the speaker's communicative intention and the illocutionary force performed by the speech act. Using the same example, the illocutionary act of promising implies the speaker's commitment to fulfill the stated promise. The perlocutionary act on the other hand, refers to the intended effect or impact of the speech act on the hearer or audience. It encompasses the consequences or reactions that the speaker intends to elicit. In the case of the promise, the perlocutionary act might aim to inspire trust, reassurance, or a sense of obligation in the hearer. Searle identifies various speech act types, including assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. Each type corresponds to different illocutionary forces and performs different actions. For instance, an assertive speech act aims to state a fact or make a claim, while a directive speech act seeks to influence or direct the behavior of the hearer.

Scholars have expanded and applied speech act theory to various domains, including politics, law, and pragmatics. Van Dijk (2011) explores the role of speech acts in political discourse, highlighting how politicians use speech acts to persuade, manipulate, or gain power. Wodak (2015) analyzes political speeches from a discourse-historical perspective, focusing on the illocutionary and perlocutionary effects of speech acts in shaping public opinion and political ideologies. Furthermore, Maillat and Oswald (2017) investigate the performative nature of hate speech, examining how hate speech acts contribute to social polarization and discrimination. Ogirisi and Uchendu (2016) apply speech act theory to analyze legal discourse, demonstrating how legal practitioners use speech acts to persuade judges, influence jury decisions, and construct legal arguments.

In conclusion, speech act theory, pioneered by Austin and developed further by Searle, offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the pragmatic aspects of language use. It provides insights into how utterances perform actions, emphasizing the intentionality, felicity conditions, and the three dimensions of speech acts: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. The theory has been applied to various domains, including politics, law, and pragmatics, demonstrating its relevance in understanding the complexities of human communication and the social effects of speech acts.

Data Analysis and Discussion

In analyzing Ahmed Tinubu's speech, we can identify various speech acts performed within the text. Speech acts refer to utterances that not only convey information but also have illocutionary force and intention behind them. Let's examine some of the key speech acts in the speech:

What Are the Primary Speech Acts Performed by President Tinubu in His Inaugural Speech?

The primary speech acts performed by President Tinubu in his inaugural speech include:

- (a) **Assertion:** President Tinubu makes several assertions throughout his speech, expressing his confidence in the Nigerian people, his faith in God Almighty, and his commitment to governing on behalf of the citizens. Excerpts from the speech that typify assertion include:

My confidence in its people, unwavering.

And my faith in God Almighty, absolute.

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.

I stand before you honored to assume the sacred mandate you have given me.

Our burdens may make us bend at times, but they shall never break us.

Nigeria shall exist.

These assertions express Tinubu's beliefs and positions, presenting them as factual statements.

- (b) **Thanking/Appreciation:** President Tinubu expresses gratitude and appreciation to his supporters, as well as extends a hand of unity and cooperation to those who voted for his opponents.

My supporters, I thank you.

To those who voted otherwise, I extend my hand across the political divide.

Mr. President (ex-president, Buhari), you have been an honest, patriotic leader who has done his best for the nation you love. On a more personal note, you are a worthy partner and friend. May History be kind to you.

Tinubu expresses gratitude towards President Muhammadu Buhari, acknowledging his contributions and showing respect.

- (c) **Promising:** The President makes promises to the Nigerian people, such as impartial governance, defense against insecurity, economic growth, job creation, and addressing social issues. Some of these are encapsulated in the statements below:

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

We shall reach out to all but never put down a single person for holding views contrary to our own.

These promises reflect a commitment to democratic principles and the idea of government as a service to the people. By stating that the administration will govern on behalf of the citizens, President Tinubu emphasizes the notion of public service and implies that the government's actions will be guided by the interests and welfare of the people. The promise not to rule over the citizens suggests a rejection of authoritarianism and a commitment to inclusive governance, where power is exercised in collaboration with and for the benefit of the people. The above also signals a commitment to inclusivity, tolerance, and respect for diverse opinions and perspectives. By pledging to reach out to all, President Tinubu expresses a desire to engage with different segments of society and promote dialogue and understanding. The promise not to put down individuals for holding contrary views underscores a commitment to freedom of expression and the recognition that a healthy democracy thrives on open and respectful discourse. It signals an intention to foster an inclusive political environment where dissenting opinions are valued and taken into consideration.

We shall defend the nation from terror and all forms of criminality that threaten the peace and stability of our country and our sub region.

We shall remodel our economy to bring about growth and development.

Security shall be the top priority of our administration.

My administration must create meaningful opportunities for our youth.

President Tinubu's promise above addresses the critical issue of security and demonstrates a commitment to protecting the nation and its citizens from threats such as terrorism and criminal activities. By emphasizing the defense of the nation, President Tinubu underscores the importance of maintaining peace and stability for the well-being and progress of both Nigeria and the wider sub-region. This promise implies a dedication to strengthening security forces, implementing effective strategies, and cooperating with regional partners to combat threats and ensure the safety of the country's

citizens and its neighbors. The above promises indicate Tinubu's commitment to specific actions or policies that he intends to implement during his presidency.

(d) Affirming: President Tinubu affirms the enduring existence of Nigeria as a nation and declares his dedication to its progress, unity, and prosperity.

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

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

The first statement conveys a strong sense of national pride and unity. It emphasizes the collective commitment of the citizens of Nigeria to their nation and asserts the unwavering existence of Nigeria as long as the world persists. The use of "one unified people" and "one unified national cause" highlights the importance of solidarity and common goals among the citizens. This statement portrays a resilient and determined attitude, reflecting a strong belief in the endurance and continuity of Nigeria. In the second statement, the speaker utilizes metaphorical language to convey the significance and positive impact of a particular "beam." This beam symbolizes something that brings illumination and guidance to the people. The qualities associated with it, such as compassion, brotherhood, and peace, suggest that it represents values and principles that are cherished and essential for the well-being of the community. The act of "holding it aloft" implies a sense of reverence and protection for these ideals. This statement emphasizes the importance of fostering positive virtues and creating a harmonious society.

In fact, both statements express a sense of unity, commitment, and aspiration for a better future. They convey the idea of collective strength and the importance of upholding certain values to ensure the progress and continuity of the nation.

(d) Commending: President Tinubu commends his predecessor, President Muhammadu Buhari, for his leadership and patriotism, acknowledging his contributions to the nation.

Mr. President, you have been an honest, patriotic leader who has done his best for the nation you love.

May History be kind to you.

(e) Invoking: The spirit of unity, compassion, and collective effort among Nigerians are invoked and emphasis is laid on the need to work together for a better future:

Today, Fate and Destiny join together to place the torch of human progress in our very hands. We dare not let it slip.

Today, let us recommit our very selves to placing Nigeria in our hearts as the indispensable home for each and every one of us.

(f) Outlining: Here, key aspects of his administration's program such as highlighting principles and initiatives related to governance, security, the economy, jobs, agriculture, infrastructure, and foreign policy are outlined as can be exemplified below:

The principles that will guide our administration are simple...

Security shall be the top priority of our administration...

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

Given the world in which we reside, please permit a few comments regarding foreign policy.

These primary speech acts reflect President Tinubu's intentions to inspire, assure, express gratitude, make promises, affirm beliefs, commend others, invoke unity and rally support from the Nigerian people, as well as set forth his vision and agenda for his presidency.

(g) Declaration: This is exemplified below:

We are too great a nation and too grounded as a people to rob ourselves of our finest destiny.

We lift high this torch so that it might shine on every household and in every heart that calls itself Nigerian."

We shall defend the nation from terror and all forms of criminality that threaten the peace and stability of our country and our subregion.

These declarations serve to assert Tinubu's vision and goals for Nigeria, expressing his determination and resolve.

- (h) **Directive:** These directives urge the audience to take specific actions or follow a particular course of action:

Let us take the next great step in the journey they began and believed in.

Today, permit me to outline in broad terms a few initiatives that define our concept of progressive good governance.

Throughout the speech, Tinubu aims to inspire and rally support by employing persuasive techniques and appeals to emotion. He emphasizes unity, national identity, and the importance of collective effort in achieving Nigeria's progress. Tinubu also acknowledges the challenges and the need for collaboration and dialogue with different stakeholders.

Research Question 2: What is the Intended Meaning and Illocutionary Force of the Speech Acts Performed in President Tinubu's Speech?

The president uses assertions to express strong belief and confidence in the Nigerian people, in God, and in the potential for national progress. The illocutionary force is to make definitive statements and convey the speaker's unwavering convictions. Gratitude and appreciation were expressed as is evident above and the illocutionary force is to acknowledge the support received and extend goodwill towards both supporters and those who voted differently, emphasizing a desire for unity and collaboration. By making promises, he makes commitments and assurances about the actions and principles that will guide the administration. The illocutionary force therefore, is to establish trust and convey a sense of responsibility and accountability to the people.

As equally seen above, the president strongly confirms and upholds certain beliefs and values, particularly the unity and resilience of the Nigerian nation. The aim is to inspire and instill confidence in the audience, reinforcing national identity and pride. Through commendation, he expresses his admiration, recognition, and respect for the outgoing President and his leadership. The illocutionary force attached is to honor the achievements of the predecessor and extend goodwill towards him. By way of invocation, the president emphasizes the significance and urgency of the moment, calling upon shared destiny and collective responsibility. The illocutionary force is to motivate and rally the audience to embrace their roles in shaping the future of Nigeria. Finally, by the use of the speech act outlining, there is provision for a broad overview of the administration's plans and priorities and this is to inform the audience about the direction and focus of governance, setting expectations and signaling the administration's commitment to specific areas of concern.

In conclusion, the illocutionary force of President Tinubu's speech acts is to inspire, unite, and convey a sense of purpose, while the intended meaning is to articulate the speaker's beliefs, commitments, and vision for Nigeria's future.

Research question 3. How does President Tinubu employ rhetorical devices, such as figures of speech, to convey his message and engage the audience?

Here are some notable figures of speech used in Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural speech:

(i) Metaphor

I stand before you honored to assume the sacred mandate

Here, the presidency is metaphorically portrayed as a sacred mandate, emphasizing the significance and responsibility of the position.

This day is bold and majestic yet bright and full of spirit.

The day is metaphorically described as having characteristics of boldness, majesty, brightness, and spirit, evoking a sense of optimism and enthusiasm.

(ii) Personification

His hand shall provide the needed moral strength.

The hand of God is personified as having the ability to provide moral strength, imbuing it with human-like qualities.

(iii) Repetition

We are too great a nation.

The repetition of "we are too great" emphasizes the nation's greatness and serves as a rhetorical device to strengthen the argument against robbing themselves of their destiny.

Today, Fate and Destiny join together.

The repetition of "Fate and Destiny" emphasizes their significance and portrays them as active agents in determining the future.

(iv) Parallelism

We shall govern on your behalf but never rule over you. We shall consult and dialogue but never dictate.

The parallel structure in these sentences emphasizes the contrast between governing and ruling, highlighting the President's commitment to inclusive and participatory governance.

(v) Hyperbole

Nigeria shall exist.

This president employs hyperbole to emphasize the enduring existence of Nigeria, presenting it as an unshakable reality.

(vi) Anaphora

We shall defend the nation from terror and all forms of criminality that threaten the peace and stability of our country and our sub region.

We shall remodel our economy to bring about growth and development through job creation....

We shall invest more in our security personnel, and this means more than an increase in number.

We shall provide, better training, equipment, pay and firepower.

The repetition of the phrase 'we shall' at the beginning of multiple sentences creates an anaphoric pattern, adding rhythm and emphasis to the enumerated principles and initiatives of the administration. It must be stressed that the figures of speech used by President Tinubu enhance the speech's rhetorical impact by adding vividness, emphasis, and memorable expressions. They help to convey President's vision and ideals with greater rhetorical effect and engage the audience's emotions and attention.

Research Question 4: What are the thematic elements and underlying messages present in President Tinubu's speech?

President Tinubu's speech encompasses several themes that reflect his vision and aspirations for Nigeria. Some of the prominent themes found in his speech include:

National Unity and Identity: President Tinubu emphasizes the importance of unity and a shared sense of national identity. He highlights the diversity of Nigeria and calls for Nigerians to see themselves as one unified people, transcending creed, ethnicity, or place of birth. The theme of unity underscores his commitment to fostering a sense of togetherness and inclusivity among all Nigerians.

Democracy and Good Governance: The theme of democracy and good governance runs throughout the speech. President Tinubu acknowledges Nigeria's progress as a democracy, highlighting the peaceful transition of power and the importance of representative governance. He pledges to govern on behalf of the people, consult and dialogue with them, and uphold the rule of law. The theme reflects his commitment to democratic principles and accountable governance.

National Development and Progress: President Tinubu emphasizes the need for national development and progress. He discusses economic growth, job creation, poverty alleviation, and infrastructure development as key priorities. The theme underscores his focus on improving the standard of living, fostering economic prosperity, and ensuring equitable development across the country.

Security and Stability: Another prominent theme is security and stability. President Tinubu acknowledges the importance of security in fostering prosperity and justice. He emphasizes the need to tackle insecurity, reform security doctrine and architecture, and provide better training, equipment, and support for security personnel. The theme highlights his commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of Nigerians.

Diplomacy and Regional Leadership: President Tinubu touches upon foreign policy and regional leadership. He expresses his commitment to working with regional organizations like ECOWAS and the AU to promote peace, resolve conflicts, and pursue collective prosperity. The theme reflects his intention to strengthen Nigeria's role in regional and continental affairs.

Hope, Faith, and Optimism: Throughout the speech, President Tinubu exudes a tone of hope, faith, and optimism. He acknowledges the challenges faced by Nigeria but expresses confidence in the resilience and potential of the nation and its people. The theme of hope and optimism reflects his belief in a brighter future for Nigeria.

Worthy of mention is the fact that these themes collectively shape President Tinubu's vision for Nigeria, highlighting his priorities in governance, national development, unity, and progress. They convey his commitment to inclusive leadership, democratic principles, and the pursuit of a prosperous and united nation.

Research Question 5: To what extent did the president use rhetorical strategies and persuasive techniques in his speech?

Some of these strategies and techniques used in the inaugural address include:

Emotional Appeals: The speech utilizes emotional language and appeals to evoke a sense of pride, unity, and hope among the audience. Phrases such as "My love for this nation is abiding" and "This day is bold and majestic yet bright and full of spirit" create an emotional connection and inspire a positive emotional response.

Inclusive Language: President Tinubu employs inclusive language throughout the speech, using pronouns like "we" and "our" to create a sense of shared identity and collective responsibility. By emphasizing the idea of a united nation, he aims to foster a sense of togetherness and encourage the audience to participate in nation-building.

Repetition: The speech incorporates repetitive elements to emphasize key messages and create a memorable impact. For instance, the repetition of phrases like "Nigeria shall exist" and "May this great light never extinguish" reinforces the ideas of national unity, resilience, and a shared vision for the future.

Imagery: President Tinubu employs vivid imagery to paint a picture of a prosperous and harmonious nation. For example, phrases such as "torch of human progress," "path with compassion, brotherhood, and peace," and "bright and full of spirit" create visual and sensory imagery, appealing to the audience's imagination and aspirations.

Appeals to Authority: The speech includes references to Nigeria's founding fathers, previous leaders, and the nation's history to establish credibility and invoke a sense of tradition and continuity. By acknowledging their contributions, President Tinubu aims to gain the trust and support of the audience.

Future-oriented Language: Throughout the speech, President Tinubu uses forward-looking language to emphasize his administration's commitment to progress and improvement. Expressions like "a better future," "a better reality," and "the Nigerian ideal" convey a sense of optimism and a vision for positive change.

Call to Action: The speech concludes with a call to action, urging the audience to join him in making Nigeria a better nation. By inviting the audience to actively participate and contribute to the country's development, President Tinubu seeks to mobilize support and engagement.

These rhetorical strategies and persuasive techniques work together to create an engaging and compelling speech, aiming to inspire the audience, build trust, and rally support for President Tinubu's vision and agenda.

It is quite significant to consider the overall implications of President Tinubu's speech for the future direction of Nigeria as can be inferred from the content and the goals outlined in the speech. It is important to note that the actual outcomes and impact will depend on various factors including policy implementation, political dynamics, and societal factors. President Tinubu emphasizes unity and inclusivity in his speech, aiming to bridge divides based on ethnicity, religion, and political affiliations. The emphasis on national unity and the call for Nigerians to see themselves as one people regardless of their backgrounds can contribute to fostering a more cohesive and inclusive political landscape. Consider the excerpts:

Whether from the winding creeks of the Niger Delta, the vastness of the northern savannah, the boardrooms of Lagos, the bustling capital of Abuja, or the busy markets of Onitsha, you are all my people. As your president, I shall serve with prejudice toward none but compassion and amity towards all.

The speech highlights the importance of economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction. President Tinubu outlines initiatives such as budgetary reforms, industrial policies, and agricultural development. If effectively implemented, these strategies can have positive implications for Nigeria's economy, potentially leading to increased employment, improved infrastructure, and enhanced social services:

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

Second, industrial policy will utilize the full range of fiscal measures to promote domestic manufacturing and lessen import dependency.

Agricultural hubs will be created throughout the nation to increase production and engage in value-added processing.

President Tinubu prioritizes security as a crucial aspect of governance, emphasizing the need to combat terrorism and criminality. The commitment to reforming security doctrine and architecture, investing in security personnel, and addressing root causes of conflicts can contribute to enhancing security and stability within Nigeria. This, in turn, can create a more favorable environment for economic growth and development.

Security shall be the top priority of our administration because neither prosperity nor justice can prevail amidst insecurity and violence.

We shall invest more in our security personnel, and this means more than an increase in number. We shall provide better training, equipment, pay, and firepower.

To effectively tackle this menace, we shall reform both our security doctrine and its architecture.

President Tinubu mentions the importance of regional and continental cooperation, particularly through partnerships with ECOWAS, the African Union, and the international community. President Tinubu's focus on peace, stability, and collective prosperity suggests a desire to play an active role in regional and continental affairs. This can have implications for Nigeria's foreign policy and its positioning as a leader within Africa. He stresses the importance of regional and continental cooperation, particularly through partnerships with ECOWAS, the African Union, and the international community. President Tinubu's focus on peace, stability, and collective prosperity suggests a desire to play an active role in regional and continental affairs.

For the president to achieve most of his promises will depend to a large extent his commitment to consult and dialogue with different stakeholders and respect diverse viewpoints and uphold democratic values, the rule of law, and inclusive governance. If all these are translated into concrete actions, they would contribute to strengthening democratic institutions and promoting good governance practices in Nigeria. Nigerians can draw succour from the excerpts below:

Our administration shall govern on your behalf but never rule over you. We shall consult and dialogue but never dictate.

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

We shall ensure that investors and foreign businesses repatriate their hard-earned dividends and profits home.

President Tinubu's speech serves as a starting point and a statement of intent, but its transformative potential will be realized through sustained efforts and effective execution of policies and initiatives. His speech primarily focuses on conveying messages, expressing gratitude, outlining policy objectives, and inspiring the audience through rhetorical strategies such as repetition, parallelism, and appeals to shared values. These rhetorical techniques, along with the speech's thematic content, are the primary drivers of its impact and persuasive effect on the audience.

In conclusion, the analysis of President Tinubu's speech reveals several key findings. The speech exhibits a range of rhetorical devices, including alliteration, metaphor, and repetition, which contribute to its persuasive impact. The perlocutionary acts performed in the speech aim to inspire unity, mobilize support, and establish credibility. President Tinubu effectively employs linguistic and rhetorical strategies to connect with the audience emotionally, appeal to shared values, and present an optimistic vision for Nigeria's future. The use of emotive language, inclusive language, historical and cultural references, and personal connections enhances the speech's persuasive power. The speech showcases President Tinubu's ability to inspire hope and instill a sense of pride in the audience's national identity. It sets forth his agenda for governance, emphasizing key areas such as security, the economy, job creation, infrastructure development, and foreign policy. The research highlights the importance of studying political speeches to understand the strategies and techniques used by leaders to communicate

their vision and mobilize public support. President Tinubu's speech demonstrates the power of language and rhetoric in shaping public perception, fostering unity, and inspiring collective action. The analysis therefore, reveals that President Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural address encapsulates key speech acts that define his vision and policy priorities as the President of Nigeria. The promises of democratic governance, inclusivity, and tolerance, coupled with a focus on national security and economic development, provide insights into his leadership style and the direction he envisions for the country.

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