



## A Pragma-Stylistic Analysis of Nigeria's President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Inaugural Speech

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### ABSTRACT

This paper sets out to look into some pragmatic and stylistic resources deployed in the Nigeria's newly elected president's, Bola Ahmed Tinubu's, inaugural speech. Drawing its theoretical underpinnings from pragma-stylistics propounded by Black (2006), it specifically seeks to examine such features as speech acts, tenses, deictic expressions, and tropes encoded in the speech. The findings arrived at reveal that the aforementioned politician employs four out of the five illocutionary acts (representatives, expressives, commissives, and directives) in varying proportions. They also disclose that the simple present, present perfect, simple past, simple future and imperative are the tenses deliberately deployed in the discourse. It is inferred from the foregoing that in his choice of discursive patterns, Tinubu plainly focuses on the socio-political, socio-economic and geo-political context to manipulate linguistic resources for ideological purposes in order to (i) restore Nigerians' trust and faith in his forthcoming governance, (ii) persuade the audience, and overall (iii) manage his message for effective communication.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Politics is variedly defined according to one's situation and purposes. However, it is admitted that two broad strands exist in attempting to delineate the concept. According to (P. Chilton 2004, p. 3), politics is viewed, on the one hand, as a struggle for power, between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it. On the other hand, politics is glossed as cooperation, as the practices and institutions that a society has for resolving clashes of interest over money, influence, liberty, and the like. Cross-cutting these two orientations leads to the distinction between 'micro' and 'macro' levels. (Jones *et al.* 1994, cited in P. Chilton, *ibid*) argue that "[a]t the micro level we use a variety of techniques to get our own way: persuasion, rational argument, irrational strategies, threats, entreaties, bribes, manipulation - anything we think will work."

The aforementioned micro-level behaviours, (P. Chilton, 2004) sustains, are actually kinds of linguistic action- that is, discourse. In line with that contention, (T. A. van Dijk 1997, p.18) sustains that most political actions (such as passing laws, decision-making, meeting, campaigning, etc.) are largely discursive. Of course, most studies about politics have focused on the discourse politicians deliver on specific occasions. Some recent studies have examined the pragmatic or stylistic features in/of the different investigated discourses. Others have attempted a combination of such linguistic resources (under the theory of pragmatic stylistics or pragma-stylistics) to "offe[r] more complete explanations for many hitherto unexplained phenomena than stylistics or pragmatics can do alone" (L. Hickey 1993, p. 579). In fact, those studies have mostly been theoretical in nature (L. Hickey 1993, Al-Hindawi & Al-Aadili 2018), or have applied pragma-stylistics to literary artefacts (IR. K. brahim & K. A. Khamail 2017, G. E. M. Abdelrahman 2018, F. W. Nosa 2018, etc.), political discourse (T. S. Shardaghly & N. M. Abdullah 2020, E. J. Abuya 2012; A. A. Allagbé & F. Amoussou, 2023), or media discourse (S. Mehreen, S. Rasul & Y. Akhtar 2021). Although a few research endeavours have scrutinized political discourse, they have been concerned either with a thematic aspect of the discourse (T. S. Shardaghly & N. M. Abdullah 2020), or just an aspect of pragma-stylistic approach (E. J. Abuya 2012). The current paper seeks to examine a set of pragma-stylistic features in a full political speech. In actual fact, it draws on (E. Black, 2006)'s analytical approach to explore the Nigeria's newly elected president's, Bola Ahmed Tinubu's, inaugural address. The theoretical foundation and the model of analysis adopted are provided first.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

As earlier stated, the study draws on pragma-stylistics. As evidenced in its wording, this concept, is a double-barreled term made of stylistics and pragmatics. Stylistics is simply defined as the study of style in language use. Put another way, stylistics is "the linguistic study of style" (G. Leech & M. Short (2007, p. 11). Style is the way of expressing oneself in writing or speaking. The term "stylistics", (L. Hickey, 1993) observes, suggests a scientific, orderly, objective study of style, as distinct from an intuitive or impressionistic reaction to a particular text. Assuming that style can be applied to both spoken and

written, both 'literary' and 'everyday' varieties of language (G. Leech & M. Short 2007, p. 10), stylistics can be split into two types: literary and non-literary stylistics. However, both categories resort to linguistic insights and terminology as methods. It is also worth highlighting that stylistics has been moving towards pragmatics in recent years, seeking explanations for aspects of language use that it alone cannot adequately provide (L. Hickey, *ibid*, p. 575).

Pragmatics, roughly speaking, is viewed as the study of contextual meaning (G. Yule 1996, cited in F. Amoussou, I. Djimet & A. A. Allagbé 2022, p. 430). This implies that a pragmatic study undertakes the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context and pinpoints the influence of context on what is said. In a more explicit sense, pragmatics is the study of the relations between speech and context as encoded in the language (S. C. Levinson, 1983, p. 9). Pragmatics approaches texts using a variety of technical devices, which could be very helpful in the multi-layered process of stylistic analysis of texts. The methods and devices include but are not limited to speech acts, deixis, implicature, presupposition, and conversational structure.

Considering the dialectical relationship between those two above-delineated concepts, the term pragma-stylistics (also called pragmatic stylistics) is coined to denote stylistics with the addition of a pragmatic component. It is a sub-branch of linguistics that emerged from (T. A. van Dijk, 1972)'s suggestion of reserving stylistics as a theoretical and linguistic branch of both linguistics and stylistics wherein there is its practical coincidence with the theory of performance and pragmatics, hence, resulting in a new sub-branch of pragma-stylistics. (S. Mehreen, S. Rasul & Y. Akhtar, 2021, p. 462) explain that the advent of pragma-stylistics as follows:

Recently stylistics is seen approaching pragmatics to understand, discuss and identify numerous features of literary and non-literary texts, especially, in the domain of interpretation. This juncture of stylistics and pragmatics resulted in a new sub-branch of linguistics called pragma-stylistics or pragmatic stylistics, a term coined by (L. Hickey, 1993), which has been used as a useful framework for text analysis.

It stands to infer from the foregoing that in associating stylistics with pragmatic features, pragma-stylistic analysts forcibly refer to textual structures and non-linguistic or contextual factors to interpret language use or a text. Submitting to that inference, Hickey contends that "pragma-stylistics [...] involves the study of all the conditions, linguistic and extralinguistic, which allow the rules and potential of a language to combine with the specific elements of the context to produce a text capable of causing specific internal changes in the hearer's state of mind or knowledge" (L. Hickey, 1993, p. 578). This scholar further points out that:

In studying the stylistic potential of a language or of a particular construction, or in analysing a specific text, pragmastylistics pays

special attention to those features which a speaker may choose, or has chosen, from a range of acceptable forms in the same language that would be semantically, or truth conditionally, equivalent, but might perform or achieve different objectives or do so in different ways. In other words, the choices are seen as determined by the desired effects (expressive, affective, attitudinal, etc.), by the communicative qualities aimed at (clarity, effectiveness, etc.) and by the context or situation itself (what is already known and what is new, relationships between speaker and hearer, the physical distances etc.) (L. Hickey, 1993, p. 578).

Based on that contention, it is reasonable to postulate that pragma-linguistics proffers more insights into the linguistic resources used by a writer or a speaker in his/her text. As such, pragma-stylistics appears to provide comprehensive explanations to many unexplained phenomena than stylistics or pragmatics can do alone. (S. Mehreen., S. Rasul & Y. Akhtar, 2021, p.463) make a more or less thorough list of linguistic clues that can be tackled in a pragma-stylistic exploration. It is displayed in the figure below.

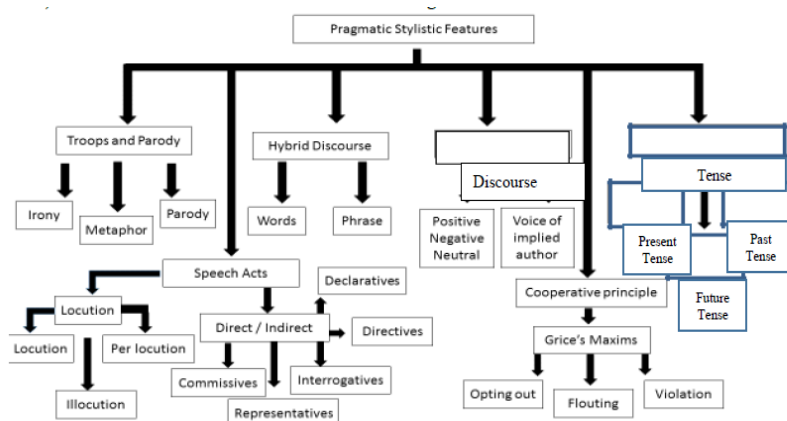


Figure 1: Pragma-Stylistic Features ((S. Mehreen., S. Rasul & Y. Akhtar, 2021, p.463)

In the current study, we choose to apply the pragmatic-stylistic approach propounded by (E. Black, 2006) to the newly elected Nigeria's president's, Bola Ahmed Tinubu's, inaugural address delivered on May 29, 2023. In practical terms and given space limitations, the endeavour is restricted to such dimensions as speech acts, tenses, deictic expressions, and pragma-rhetorical tropes. For the moment, it is deemed important to have a glance at the methodological approach the study anchors on.

## METHODOLOGY

The speech under study here was retrieved from the website of channels television on June 15, 2023. As it unfolds, the speech outlines the key aspects of the new ruling teams program into eight important domains: Security, the Economy, jobs, Agriculture, Infrastructure, Fuel Subsidy, Monetary Policy, and

Foreign Policy. The speech naturally ends with a Conclusion section. In the process of analysis of the speech, we adopt the mix-method analytical approach. We also apply (E. Black, 2006)'s Pragmatic Stylistics framework to the discourse at hand in four phases. First, the illocutionary acts encoded in the speech are identified, labelled, counted and tabulated. While the quantitative method is referred to for their frequencies and percentages, we use the qualitative method to interpret the epitomized statistical data.

Second, the tenses the speaker deploys to locate actions and events in relation to the moment of speaking are typified and discussed. Here again, the concerned patterns are numerically counted before being analyzed and discussed. Third, the deictic expressions registered in the speech are investigated into just qualitatively. Finally, the core rhetorical devices (or pragma-rhetorical tropes) are examined to reveal their artistic and persuasive effects on the audience. It should be emphasized that sentences are considered in the identification of speech acts, while for the study of the other pragma-stylistic resources, clauses/clause complexes are rather considered. Furthermore, at each level, the discourse fragments selected for illustration and analysis are italicized, and the specific recorded linguistic expression bolded (if need be). Note, however, that due to space limitations, the full analyzed speech is not showcased in the paper. We only evince the outstandingly relevant pragma-stylistic features likely to help unveil the deeper meaning of the speaker's utterances.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As stated earlier on, the current study encompasses the exploration of the following pragma-stylistic features from/in the speech at stake: speech acts, tenses, deictic expressions, and pragma-rhetorical tropes. The analysis focuses on how these linguistic features create effects in the speech under study.

### 1. Analysis and Discussion of Speech Acts

A central concept of pragmatics is the illocutionary act, commonly called speech act: "what the speaker actually does in uttering a sentence" (W. Croft, 1994, p. 460). This part is devoted to the application of (J. L. Austin, 1962)'s and (J. R. Searle, 1976)'s Speech Act Theory. The illocutionary acts encoded in the speech under study are counted, labelled and tabularized as follows.

Table 1: Speech acts in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural address

Speech acts	Utterances	Frequen cy/ Percenta ge
Representativ es (Re)	(1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), (9), (11), (12), (13), (14), (15), (16), (18), (19), (21), (22), (23), (24), (25), (26), (27), (29), (30), (37), (38), (39), (40), (41), (42), (45), (46), (47), (48), (49), (54), (56), (57), (59), (60), (61), (62), (67), (69), (71), (82), (87), (93), (102), (103), (105), (107), (109),	62 (49.6%)

	(113), (117), (118), (119), (120), (122), (124)	
Directives (Dir)	(10), (17), (36), (50), (51), (52), (55), (58), (63), (64), (65), (66), (70), (108), (112), (123)	16 (12.8%)
Commissives (Com)	(28), (32), (33), (34), (35), (43), (44), (68), (72), (73), (74), (75), (76), (77), (78), (79), (80), (81), (83), (84), (85), (86), (88), (89), (90), (91), (92), (94), (95), (96), (97), (98), (99), (100), (101), (103), (104), (106), (111), (114), (115), (116)	42 (33.6%)
Expressives (Exp)	(20), (31), (53), (121), (125)	5 (4%)
Declaratives (Dec)	-	0
Total		125 (100%)

It is obvious from the table below that four out of the five speech acts put forth by the abovementioned scholars are identified in the speech. These are: representatives, directives, commissives and expressives. While nearly half of the utterances are representatives (63/125, i.e., 49.6%), 33.6% (i.e., 42/125) are recorded as commissives. 12.8% (i.e., 16/125) and 4% (i.e., 5/125) are, respectively, directives and expressives.

The high proportion of representatives, as disclosed by the quantitative study, suggests that the speech is mainly designed to describe some state of affairs or to state some facts (F. Amoussou & A. A. Allagbé, 2023). As a matter of fact, President Tinubu resorts to representatives to announce [(68), (81), (119)], acknowledge [(17), (18), and state [(1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (11), (28), (29) (39), (58), (59), (60), (93), (113), (117), etc.], (66)]. For instance, the president starts his speech by assuring his countrymen of his ability and his determination to do the job: 2. *My love for this nation is abiding (Rep)*. 3. *My confidence in its people unwavering (Rep)*. 4. *And my faith in God Almighty absolute (Rep)*. In expressing his utmost love for the nation, his undeniable trust in its people, and his unshaking faith in God, President Tinubu intends to suggest that he is ready to perform the task he is assigned. He then proceeds to remind the sacrifices Nigerian people together have made: 7. *As a nation, we have long ago decided to march beyond the dimness of night into the open day of renewed national hope (Rep)*. 11. *We have endured hardships that would have made other societies crumble (Rep)*. Through those illocutionary acts, the Nigeria's president revisits history to lay emphasis on the unity that has, for long, characterized Nigerian people. He eventually avers in overt terms: 25. *As citizens, we declare as one unified people devoted to one unified national cause that as long as this world exists, NIGERIA SHALL EXIST (Rep)*.

Aware of the fact that his predecessor has played a vital role in consolidating the cohesive ties of the populace, the speaker commends him in the following terms: 17. *Mr President, you have been an honest, patriotic leader who has done his best for the nation you love (Rep)*. 18. *On a more personal note, you are a worthy partner and friend (Rep)*. The foregoing utterances unflinchingly unveil the speaker's acknowledgement of the patriotism and leadership mark of President

Muhammadu Buhari. Following the latter's footsteps, he promises to work hand-in-hand with everybody, no matter their political coloration: 53. *To those who voted otherwise, I extend my hand across the political divide (Rep)*. 55. *For me, political coloration has faded away (Rep)*. 56. *All I see are Nigerians (Rep)*. Within such a unification perspective, the speaker clearly states the mission the new regime is assigned: 60. *Our mission is to improve our way of life in a manner that nurtures our humanity, encourages compassion toward one another, and duly rewards our collective effort to resolve the social ills that seek to divide us (Rep)*.

It follows from the foregoing that the new president aims to focus his governance on social justice. To reach that goal, he commits himself to taking some concrete measures and actions: 31. *Our administration shall govern on your behalf but never rule over you (Com)*. 32. *We shall consult and dialogue but never dictate (Com)*. 33. *We shall reach out to all but never put down a single person for holding views contrary to our own (Com)*. Through those illocutionary acts, it appears that President Tinubu expresses his attachment to democratic values. As a matter of fact, while authoritarianism is stated to be banned from his governance, he rather opts for a participatory management whereby dialogue will prevail over any (dictatorial) considerations whatsoever. Based on that inclusive governance, the president skillfully enunciates five principles that will guide his administration: 71. *1. Nigeria will be impartially governed according to the constitution and the rule of law (Com)*. 72. *2. We shall defend the nation from terror and all forms of criminality that threaten the peace and stability of our country and our subregion (Com)*. 73. *3. We shall remodel our economy to bring about growth and development through job creation, food security and an end to extreme poverty (Com)*. 74. *4. In our administration, Women and youth will feature prominently (Com)*. 75. *5. Our government will continue to take proactive steps, such as championing a credit culture to discourage corruption while strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the various anti-corruption agencies (Com)*.

It can be drawn from those principles that the cardinal rules the new administration will get stuck to are (i) a staunch respect of the fundamental law -i.e., the constitution- (ii) security, (iii) boosting the country's economy, (iv) gender promotion, and (v) a merciless fight against corruption. Those guiding principles give rise to eight priority sectors that will constitute the cornerstone of the new governance. These are: security, the economy, jobs, agriculture, infrastructure, fuel subsidy, monetary policy, and foreign policy. Coming to security, the speaker says that: 78. *We shall invest more in our security personnel, and this means more than an increase in number (Com)*. 79. *We shall provide better training, equipment, pay and firepower (Com)*. It follows from the foregoing to argue that a huge investment will be devoted to security personnel to hope to get tolerance zero against insecurity. Among other actions in the economic domain, he states that: 82. *First, budgetary reform stimulating the economy without engendering inflation will be instituted (Com)*. 83. *Second, industrial policy will utilize the full range of fiscal measures to promote domestic manufacturing and lessen import dependency (Com)*. 84. *Third, electricity will become more accessible and affordable to businesses and homes alike (Com)*.

Here, reforms are envisaged in the fields of budget (to avoid inflation), industry (to promote domestic manufacturing), and electricity (for accessibility and affordability). Regarding job creation, the speaker says that: 91. *We shall honour our campaign commitment of one million new jobs in the digital economy (Com)*. 92. *Our government also shall work with the National Assembly to fashion an omnibus Jobs and Prosperity bill (Com)*. Youth employment will mainly be focused on digital economy and transport. In terms of infrastructure, efforts made by Buhari's administration will be continued and 101. *Progress toward national networks of roads, rail and ports shall get priority attention (Com)*. Turning to fuel subsidy, the speaker adds that: 104. *We shall instead re-channel the funds into better investment in public infrastructure, education, health care and jobs that will materially improve the lives of millions (Com)*. This means that petrol subsidy will subsequently be injected into social sectors to make it more profitable to the poor than to the rich. As for foreign policy, the speaker avers that a close relationship will be set with sub-regional, continental and international institutions: 114. *As such, my primary foreign policy objective must be the peace and stability of the West African sub-region and the African continent (Com)*. 115. *We shall work with ECOWAS, the AU and willing partners in the international community to end extant conflicts and to resolve new ones (Com)*.

It is obvious from the overall commissive speech acts exploration that the speaker projects himself more as a leader of action. In point of fact, he cautiously sets concrete actions he is willing -not to say eager- to undertake in each sector. His pragmatism is not surprising to Nigerians as he previously proved this when he governed Lagos State for eight years. In October 2022, calling upon his fellow citizens to cast their votes to him, the presidential candidate of All Progressives Congress (henceforth, APC) gives them assurance about his capacity and his determination to operate change here and now. He thus alleges:

When I was governor of Lagos, my team and I developed institutions and policies that changed the face of the state. It became a safe place for its residents and an engine of prosperity for all those willing to work in pursuit of their economic dreams. What my team and I achieved in Lagos, together we all can achieve for Nigeria. Our objective is to foster a new society based on shared prosperity, tolerance, compassion, and the unwavering commitment to treat each citizen with equal respect and due regard" (*Punch Newspapers*, 2023, March<sup>1</sup>).

However, aware of the fact that his dream will be unrealistic without his populace's contribution, the speaker honestly lets his compatriots know they have their own role to play. For him, *We are too great a nation and too grounded as a people to rob ourselves of our finest destiny (Dir)*. This perspective suggests we should not rob ourselves of our finest destiny. In other words, we should come together as one people to build our society. In concrete terms: 62. *We must work*

harder at bringing these noble documents to life by strengthening the bonds of economic collaboration, social cohesion, and cultural understanding (**Dir**). 63. Let us develop a shared sense of fairness and equity (**Dir**). Through those directive speech acts, Tinubu is inviting Nigerians to a sense of social cohesion based on such values as fairness, and equity, to foster the country's economy. In that regard, he adds that: 64. The South must not only seek good for itself but must understand that its interests are served when good comes to the North (**Dir**). 65. The North must see the South likewise (**Dir**). In short, brotherhood and love are the preconditions to progress and development. Therefore, the speaker recalls: 123. In this spirit, I ask you to join me in making Nigeria a more perfect nation and democracy such that the Nigerian ideal becomes and forever remains the Nigerian reality (**Dir**).

The implication from that clarion call is to paraphrase the speaker, 'despite my ability and my goodwill, no change is possible if you do not prove ready for action'. It is of note to stress that in the course of his address, the president has, at times, expressed his psychological state as regards the issues raised. Some occurrences are displayed as follows: 19. May History be kind to you (**Exp**); 52. My supporters, I thank you (**Exp**); 125. May God bless you, and May He bless our beloved land (**Exp**). The first and last expressives connote, in that order, blessing wishes on President Buhari, Nigerians and the nation. As for the second one, it is deployed as an epitome of gratitude to the then-candidate's supporters. The last utterance is a wish to bless everybody, without distinction, and the nation. Those speech acts show that President Tinubu is recognizant of everyone's merit and believes that people should be commended or congratulated for their strenuous efforts. After the identification of speech acts, let us turn to the types of tense the speaker deploys in the speech.

## 2. Tenses

The cautious selection of tenses plays a crucial role in the understanding and assessment of a given text, be it written or spoken. As regards the speech delivered by President Tinubu, five focal tenses are identified: the simple present, the present perfect, the simple past, the simple future and the imperative. The table beneath is provided to better appreciate their occurrence from a quantitative perspective.

Tense	Simple present	Present perfect	Simple past	Simple future	Imperative	Total
Encoding utterance	(1i), (2), (3), (4), (5iii), (6i), (6ii), (8), (9), (12ii), (14), (15), (17iii), (17), (21), (23i), (24), (25i), (25ii), (26), (27), (28i), (28ii), (28iii), (29i), (29ii), (30), (34i), (40), (41), (44i), (44ii),	(1ii), (7), (10), (11), (12i), (13), (17i), (17ii), (20i), (22i), (22ii),	(35ii), (36), (37), (39), (48), (49ii), (50i), (50ii), (53i), (109i), (109ii),	(5ii), (20ii), (23ii), (25iii), (31i), (31ii), (32i), (32ii), (32iii), (33i), (33ii),	(16), (19), (35i), (50i), (51), (57), (63), (64ii), (69i), (112),	

	(46i), (46ii), (47), (49i), (52), (53ii), (54), (56), (58), (59i), (59ii), (60i), (60ii), (60iii), (60iv), (61), (62), (64i), (64iii), (64iv), (65), (66), (69ii), (70), (76ii), (78ii), (81), (87), (89ii), (90), (102), (103), (105), (106), (108), (113), (114), (116i), (117), (118), (119), (120), (123i), (123ii), (123iii), (124i), (124ii) (124iii), (124iv)	(38), (45), (55), (122),		(42), (43), (67), (68), (71), (72), (73), (74), (75), (76i), (77), (78i), (79), (80), (82), (83i), (83ii), (84i), (84ii), (85i), (85ii), (86), (88), (89i), (91), (92), (93i), (93ii), (93iii), (94), (95), (96i), (96ii), (97i), (97ii), (98), (99), (100), (101), (104), (107), (110), (111), (115), (116ii), (121),		
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				(125i), (125ii)		
Frequency	81	15	11	59	10	176
Percentage	46.02%	8.52%	6.25%	33.52%	5.68%	100%

It is clear from the above table that the simple present (46.02%) and the simple future (33.52%) are the two outstandingly employed tenses. They are respectively followed by the present perfect (8.52%), the simple past (6.25%), and the imperative (5.62%). The high proportion of the simple present indicates that the speech is designed as an address focused on current life facts or phenomena. At the beginning of the speech for instance, President Tinubu merely states: 1i. *I stand before you honoured to assume the sacred mandate...* Later, after a series of events, he successively reminds his audience the following: 2i. *Yet here we are.* 34. *We are here to further mend and heal this nation, not tear and injure it.* 40. *However, my victory does not render me any more Nigerian than my opponents.* 41. *Nor does it render them any less patriotic.* 103. *Subsidy can no longer justify its ever-increasing costs in the wake of drying resources.*

The speaker also refers to the simple present to describe actions or facts. For example, in his opening remarks he vividly describes the day of the speech delivery: 6i. *This day is bold and majestic yet bright and full of spirit,* 6ii. *as is our precious nation.* As a genuine rhetorician, he skillfully likens the fate and destiny of Nigeria to a torch that might provide light everywhere in the nation: 26. *Today, Fate and Destiny join together to place the torch of human progress in our very hands.* 27. *We dare not let it slip.* 28i. *We lift high this torch* 28ii. *So that it might shine on every household and in every heart* 28iii, *that calls itself Nigerian.* Moreover, the simple present is resorted to in view to addressing straightly specific people from the audience. In actual fact, while commending the former president Buhari, the speaker overtly says: 18. *On a more personal note, you are a worthy partner and friend.* While this statement is a direct speech. To his predecessor, it is also expressive of a moral description. Very often, the rationale behind that direct-address strategy is to get his addressees involved/committed or to get their acquiescence about the content of his message. In that perspective, he preferably refers to vocatives as in: 52. *My supporters, I thank you.* 58. *My fellow compatriots, the Nigerian ideal [[which I speak of]] is more than just an improvement in economic and other statistics.* The likely effect of the gratefulness in the direction of his supporters is to create a sense of pride in them. Likewise, he is seeking his fellow compatriots' approval that the Nigeria's ideal goes beyond bettering economic and other statistics. Predicating on the foregoing, it could be claimed, following Black (2006), that the present simple "seems designed to increase interest and involvement by the audience" (p. 7). However, the use of that tense alternates with that of other tenses, especially the present perfect and the simple future.

The present perfect is used to express a past action, the result of which is in the present. Building on this, Murphy (1985/1994) submits that when we use the present perfect, there is always a connection with now. In the coming clause: 5iii. *when we seem to have reached the limits of our human capacity,* the fact

of reaching the limits of our capacity is still observable now. In the same way, the president intends to state that the effects of the numerous sacrifices of everybody are here and then visible and undoubtedly tangible, as he claims: 10. *This nation's journey **has been shaped** by the prayers of millions, and the collective sacrifices of us all.* In fact, the present perfect serves to recall the hardships/privations endured to come to the current level of democracy. The following instances are more telling: 12i. *Yet, we **have shouldered** the heavy burden to arrive at this sublime moment...;* 13. *To the surprise of many but not to ourselves, we **have more firmly established** this land as a democracy in both word and deed;* 38. *Since the advent of the Fourth Republic, Nigeria **has not held** an election of better quality.*

As well as talking about past actions, President Tinubu regularly projects his intentions via the simple future. Indeed, the prevalence of the simple future tense indicates that the speech is basically replete with future or forthcoming actions. More specifically, the newly elected president informs his countrymen about how he envisions to lead them: 31i. *Our administration **shall govern** on your behalf* 31ii. *but **[shall]** never **rule** over you.* 32i. *We **shall consult*** 32ii. *and **[shall]** **dialogue*** 32iii. *but **[shall]** never **dictate**.* 33i. *We **shall reach out** to all* 33ii. *but **[shall]** never **put down** a single person for holding views contrary to our own.* The speaker seeks to assure his opponents after reassuring them about the type of relationship. He also announces his management system of Nigerian people as a whole: 42. *They [My opponents] **shall** forever **be** my fellow compatriots.* 43. *And I **will treat** them as such.* 67. *As your president, I **shall serve** with prejudice toward none but compassion and amity towards all.* At last, the remainder of the speech is devoted to outlining the key aspects of his program, sector by sector: 76i. *Security **shall be** the top priority of our administration.* 77. *To effectively tackle this menace, we **shall reform** both our security doctrine and its architecture.* 80. *On the economy, we **will target** a higher GDP growth and to significantly reduce unemployment.* 88. *our government **shall review** all their complaints about multiple taxation and various anti-investment inhibitions.*

Concerning job creation, the speaker states that: 93i. *Th[e][prosperity] bill **will give** our administration the policy space to embark on labour-intensive infrastructural improvements,* 93ii. ***[will]** **encourage** light industry* 93iii. *and **[will]** **provide** improved social services for the poor, elderly and vulnerable.* As for agriculture, he avers that: 94. *Rural incomes shall be secured by commodity exchange boards guaranteeing minimal prices for certain crops and animal products.* He further adds that: 96i. *Agricultural hubs **will be created** throughout the nation to increase production* 96ii. *and **[will]** **engage** in value-added processing.* 97i. *The livestock sector **will be** introduced to best modern practices* 97ii. *and steps **[will be]** **taken** to minimize the perennial conflict over land and water resources in this sector.* As already underscored in the previous subsection, in the field of infrastructure, he says that: 100. *We **shall continue** the efforts of the Buhari administration on infrastructure.* Coming to monetary policy, he states that: 110. *[it] **shall be reviewed**.* 111. *In the meantime, my administration **will treat** both currencies as legal tender.*

From the overall analysis, we can take the view that futurity is encoded in President Tinubu's speech to "provide information about upcoming events that

are planned” (Chovanec 2014, p. 146). It is worth stressing that, in light of their frequency (6.25%), actions in the simple past also play a crucial role in the speech meaning-making. Viewed as “the normal narrative tense” (Black, 2006, p. 6), the simple past is employed in the discourse to talk about events related to the presidential elections. In President Tinubu’s opinion, 36. *It was a hard-fought contest.* 37 *And it was also fairly won.* It follows from the foregoing that though his opponents did not approve of the results of the elections, he is publicly proud of his victory as Nigeria has witnessed such transparent elections. Before asking his compatriots to give priority to national affinity and brotherhood, he first of all reminds them of the (political) history of Nigeria: 48. *Over six decades ago, our founding fathers gave bravely of themselves to place Nigeria on the map as an independent nation.* 49i. *We must never allow the labor of those* 49ii. *who came before us to wither in vain but to blossom and bring forth a better reality.*

Sometimes the speaker makes recourse to past events to justify projected future actions. That is the case when the president starts evoking the envisaged action as regards monetary policy. For him, 109i. *Whatever merits it had in concept,* 109ii. *the currency swap was too harshly applied by the CBN given the number of unbanked Nigerians.* That’s why, 110. *The policy shall be reviewed.* Notice that while using present and past tenses, the orator also resorts to the imperative. President Tinubu strategically inserts, at times, imperative sentences to draw his audience’s attention to the discourse situation. More precisely, given what he intends to say, the speaker humbly asks his addressees’ permission as shown thus: 16. *Here, permit me to say a few words to my predecessor, President Muhammadu Buhari.* While this may seem, to the audience’s eyes, an allowance sought for to revert to a particular concern, it is a skillful means to insert an idea of utmost importance. As Fowler (1981, cited in Black 2006) observes, “this [strategy] creates empathetic involvement” (p. 13). Hence, the listeners feel valued as they are pragmatically addressed via face-saving acts. Sometimes, the speaker authoritatively decides to give the audience orders to show that, as their president, he has to exert the power constitutionally given to him. Consider the following directives: 50i. *Let us take the next great step in the journey* 50ii. *they began,, and* 50iii. *believed in.* 51. *Today, let us recommit our very selves to placing Nigeria in our hearts as the indispensable home for each and every one of us, regardless of creed, ethnicity, or place of birth.* Through those illocutionary acts every Nigerian, irrespective of skin color, geographical origin, is requested to consent to the new type of management. Given the functions assigned to each of the five recorded tenses to encode meaning to/in the speech, we can endorse Black’s contention that “tense is so commonly used to signal changes in the focalisation or perspective” (Black, 2006, p. 7). Besides, deictic expressions- as the scholar argues- play a crucial role in understanding and interpreting the discourse.

### 3. Deictic Expressions

Deixis concerns the ways in which the interpretation of utterances depends on the analysis of the context of utterance or speech event (Levinson 1983, p. 54). Person deixis concerns the encoding of the **role** of participants in

the speech event in which the utterance in question is delivered (ibid., p. 62). In exploring the discourse at stake, it is discovered that the three types of person deixis –first person, second person and third person- are registered. The first-person deixis, preponderantly employed in the discourse, is expressed through two personal pronouns, namely ‘I’ and ‘we’. The speaker profusely uses the first-person singular and its variants (my, me) to emphasize his personality and his individuality as regards what he is talking about. Consider, for instance, the following assertives: 67. *As your president, I shall serve with prejudice toward none but compassion and amity towards all*; 2. *My love for this nation is abiding*; 9. *For me, there is but one answer*.

It is clear from the first statement that the speaker, in his quality of the president of the nation, is swearing to his compatriots to serve all of them with compassion and amity. Likewise, he is particularizing his love for Nigeria through the use of the demonstrative adjective ‘my’. Finally, the adjunct ‘for me’ is intentionally selected to state his own/personal position vis-à-vis a question he previously asked: 8. *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*. In short, it could be provisionally concluded that first person deixis serves to express “the grammaticalization of the speaker’s reference to himself” (Levinson 1983, p. 62) in the speech event. Turning to the first-person plural pronoun, it should be noted that the speech encompasses two types: the ‘we-inclusive-of-addressee’ (Levinson 1983, p. 96) and the ‘we- exclusive-of-addressee’ (Huang 2014, p. 177). The following snippets are illustrative: 13. *To the surprise of many but not to ourselves, we have more firmly established this land as a democracy in both word and deed*; 22i. *We have stumbled at times, 22ii. but our resilience and diversity have kept us going.*; 72. 2. *We shall defend the nation from terror and all forms of criminality [[that threaten the peace and stability of our country and our subregion]]*.; 81. *We intend to accomplish this by taking the following steps*.

A cursory look reveals that the first two utterances are inclusive of the audience, whereas the last two ones are exclusive of them. In the first example, the reflexive pronoun ‘ourselves’ and its related personal pronoun ‘we’ indicate that all the Nigerians –the speaker himself included- have contributed to set the nation as a plain democracy. In the same way, the pronouns ‘we’, ‘us’, and the possessive adjective ‘our’ are used to remind the audience that the people of Nigeria, without exception whatsoever, have gone through hard times; yet their resilience and diversity have revealed redeemable factors for them. Those deictic patterns are called ‘**in-group...pronoun[s and adjectives]**’ (van Dijk 2001, p. 31). On the other hand, in employing ‘we’ in the third example, President Tinubu is taking the responsibility (in his name and in that of his administration), to clear the nation of terrorists and criminals. So, the audience is not identified with such a ‘pointing’ term. Likewise, the ‘we’ uttered in the last utterance includes nobody but the president alone who is disclosing his intention. In fact, that deictic expression simply denotes higher status and is known as ‘**honorific**’ (Yule 1996, p. 10).

Like the first-person deixis, second-person deictic expressions can be grouped into different types. Below are some examples: 123i. *In this spirit, I ask you to join me in making Nigeria a more perfect nation and democracy...*; 17i. *Mr*

President, **you** have been an honest, patriotic leader.; 52. My supporters, I thank **you**. It is easily inferable that 'you', in clause 123i, stands for the audience to whom the president is giving a clarion call to get involved in the construction and transformation of their democratic nation. Interpersonally, this way of addressing the listeners more directly creates a rapport between the speaker and his addressees and is likely to prompt them into action. In other words, the second person produces solidarity between the speaker and his listeners. As for the last two incidences, 'you' is purposefully deployed to designate specific people from the audience: Buhari (his predecessor) and his supporters. In actuality, the president's use of the second person here functions as a '**membership categorization device (MCD)**' (Wodak 2007, cited in Amoussou & Aguessy 2020, p. 19) for discursive construction of social group. Indeed, the aforementioned people are all President Tinubu's partisans who belong to the ruling party, viz., the APC.

Temporal or time deixis concerns the encoding of temporal points and spans *relative* to the time at which an utterance was spoken (Levinson 1983, p.62). Some selected occurrences are displayed underneath: 6i. **This day** is bold and majestic yet bright and full of spirit; 26. **Today**, Fate and Destiny join together to place the torch of human progress in our very hands; 48. **Over six decades ago**, our founding fathers gave bravely of themselves to place Nigeria on the map as an independent nation; 68. **In the coming days and weeks**, my team will publicly detail key aspects of our programme. Given that the time at which the utterances are uttered- or the coding time (CT)- is assumed to be 'today' as deictically signalled in clause (26), it is initially emphasized in clause (6i) through the time adverbial 'this day' (May 29, 2023). The reference to that deictic expression is symptomatic of the symbolic or particular nature of the inaugural address day: bold, majestic, bright and full of spirit. Considering that the CT is here conflated with the receiving time (RT), the complex time adverbial 'over six decades ago' is employed to refer the CT/RT back to a time span encoding a past action. The objective pursued by the president at this stage is to draw the audience's attention to the history of the nation in view to triggering action. On the other hand, the deictic expression 'in the coming days and weeks' denotes a point in time which foretells a future action regarding the RT, viz., the release of the new government programme.

Coming to spatial or place deixis, it is noticed that the speaker makes use of proximal and distal terms to convey his message. In the following three representatives, for instance, the demonstrative adjective 'this' designates a noun (concrete or abstract) that is near the speaker's deictic centre: 13. *To the surprise of many but not to ourselves, we have more firmly established **this** land as a democracy in both word and deed;* 28i. *We lift high **this** torch* 28ii. *So that it might shine on every household and in every heart;* 77. *To effectively tackle **this** menace, we shall reform both our security doctrine and its architecture.* In actuality, while 'this' is a pointing device to denote Nigeria as the current territory (or land) in clause (13), it indicates [in clauses (28i) and (77), respectively] the torch of human progress and insecurity and violence just talked about in the preceding utterances. In the same token, the plural proximal demonstrative 'these' in the

coming statement stands for a series of actions just announced in the agriculture sector: 98. *Through these actions, food shall be made more abundant yet less costly.* When we consider the upcoming imperative sentence, though, 'here' is an adverb of place which means 'where I reach presently': 16. *Here, permit me to say a few words to my predecessor, President Muhammadu Buhari.*

On the other hand, the distal deictic 'there' in the utterance beneath refers back to a phrase in the preceding utterance: Nigeria's place among the world's great democracies: 121. *There, Nigeria shall reside forever.* Another category of deictic expression recorded in the speech is discourse deixis. Discourse deixis is identified in the speech to exude "the use of a linguistic expression within some utterance to point to [...] preceding [...] utterances in the same spoken discourse" (Huang 2014, p.216). Two illustrative examples are given as follows: 47. *This is the essence of the rule of law;* 59i. *These things are important.* To retrieve the meaning of the proximal demonstrative pronoun 'this' in (74), we have to go back to the previous stretch of the speech, viz., 46i. *Seeking legal redress is their right* 46ii. *and I fully defend their exercise of this right.* In the same way, making out the meaning conveyed by the proximal demonstrative adjective 'these' requires a movement back to the things previously talked about. They are actually economic and other statistics. It can hence be provisionally concluded that discourse deictic devices, like spatial deictic ones, function as cohesive markers used not only to get the speech to hang but also to avoid the audience's diversion in the course of the speech delivery. The last deictic type (social deixis) is looked at below.

Social deixis, as can be discovered in the instances below, has to do with "the codification of the social status of the [...] addressee [...] referred to as well as the social relationships holding between them" (Huang 2007, p.163): 58. *My fellow compatriots, the Nigerian ideal [[which I speak of]] is more than just an improvement in economic and other statistics;* 52. *My supporters, I thank you;* 16. *Here, permit me to say a few words to my predecessor, President Muhammadu Buhari;* 17i. *Mr President, you have been an honest, patriotic leader* 17ii. *who has done his best for the nation* 17iii. *you love.* In the first two instances, Buhari relies on the terms/forms of address 'my fellow compatriots' and 'my supporters' to convey relational social information to his countrymen on the one hand and his party members on the other. Those relational deictic expressions, as formerly disclosed by/through person deixis, seek to create solidarity. As for the third move, two concomitant social deictic resources are clustered to play different roles. 'My predecessor' is an address term used to draw the outgoing president's attention to an upcoming message destined for him. It is followed by the predecessor's title + first name + his surname. That social deictic device is known as the '**addressee honorific**' (Yule, 1996). It is aimed at marking the higher social status of the addressee. The deictic expression of the last illocutionary act, endearment term + title, is also a higher social status marker designed to denote formality in the discourse. The next and last subsection looks at the rhetorical figures deployed in the speech.

#### 4. *Pragma-Rhetorical Tropes*

Trope is a word, phrase, or image used in a new and different way to create an artistic effect (Britannica, n.d.)<sup>2</sup>. It is thus a figure of speech that says one thing while artistically and imaginatively implying another. It may, however, be used in a non-literal sense to create a specific effect. The prominent rhetorical figures of speech typified in the political discourse under study are parallelism, hyperbole, metaphor, personification, alliteration, assonance, gradation, synonymy and antonymy. Parallelism structures are exhibited beneath:

2. *My love for this nation is abiding.*
3. *My confidence in its people, unwavering.*
4. *And my faith in God Almighty, absolute.*

As is obvious from the above, there is a grammatical clause parallelism in the three aforementioned clauses. It is of the type: First Person Possessive Adjective + Noun + [is] + Present Participle/Adjective. Notice that the three nouns are all abstract nouns denoting qualities sought from a valuable person: 'love', 'confidence', 'faith'. Notice also that the present participle and adjective at the end of the structure are assigned the same functional role, that of attribute. Notice at last that to create a special stylistic effect, the speaker willingly chooses to ellipsis the stative verb 'is' in clauses (3) and (4). It ensues then to claim that the speaker relies on parallelism here to project himself as someone endowed with the elementary qualities to efficiently perform the republican task assigned to him. This projection is what is termed, in van Dijk's Ideological Square, '**positive self-presentation**' (van Dijk, 2001). Sometimes, the speaker exaggerates the meaning. The hyperboles exuded in the following utterances illustrate that contention:

5i. *I know 5ii. that His hand shall provide the needed moral strength and clarity of purpose in those instances 5iii. when we seem to have reached **the limits of our human capacity.***

23i. *Our burdens may make us bend at times, 23ii. but they shall never **break us***  
*We are **too great a nation and too grounded as a people** to rob ourselves of our finest destiny.*

In his view, such adversities should not be considered as a source of resignation. So, claiming that 'they shall never break us' amounts to saying 'we shall not give up before difficulties'. The rationale behind that energy-giving directive is, 'We are too great a nation and too grounded as a people'. Consistent with the speaker's mindset then, Nigeria is so giant a nation and Nigerians so mature a people that the destiny of its infants should not be betrayed. In conceding such prominence to his country and its citizens, the president aims to get them to have confidence in themselves. In so doing, he subsequently intends to subtly instil hope, faith, and trust in them in a bid to ideologically manipulate their mental models. Metaphors and symbolism are also deployed in the speech.

Through the use of metaphor, President Tinubu resourcefully “creates an image of reality by connecting apparently quite disparate objects” (Waugh 1984, cited in Black 2006, p.103). Below are some incidences:

26. Today, **Fate and Destiny** join together to place the **torch** of human progress in our very hands.

4. And my faith in God Almighty, absolute. 5i. I know 5ii. that **His hand** shall provide the needed moral strength and clarity of purpose in those instances

The noun phrase ‘the torch’ is an imaginative object crafted by the speaker to metaphorically represent the power or the strength likely to change or improve the human condition. Besides, he creatively personifies Fate and Destiny-purposefully foregrounded through capitalization- to make them the Actor of the material process ‘join to place’ whose goal is the metaphorical phrase ‘the torch’. The skilful mingling or association of those two figures of speech validates Alm-Arvius’s postulation that “Prototypical examples of personification are metaphorical” (Alm-Arvius, 2003, p. 129). In clause (4), personification is achieved by collocating ‘God Almighty’ with ‘Hands’ as if, like human beings, He actually possesses limbs and can act with them. Through this figurative use, the speaker demonstrates his cogent conviction that an unnatural power exists and makes everything possible. Besides, he resorts to phonological schematic figures through alliteration and assonance.

Alliteration, assonance and rhymes are evidenced in the speech via different consonant and vowel sounds. Some examples are given beneath:

23i. Our **burdens may make us bend** at times, 23ii. **but they shall never break us**

25i. As **citizens, we declare as one unified people devoted to one unified national cause**

2. My love for this nation is **abiding**. 3. My confidence in its people, **unwavering**.

Four times in (23), the speaker has recourse to the plosive obstruent /b/ (**burdens, bend, but, break**), and three times in the same clause to the closing diphthong /ei/ (**may, make, break**) to persuade his audience about his certainty as regards their victory against adversities. As far as clause (25i) is concerned, the speaker refers to three different speech sounds to convey his message. These are the front short vowel /ɪ/ (in **citizens, declare, unified, devoted**), the front long vowel /i:/ (in **we, people**), and the constrictive sonorant /w/ (in **we, one**). Through those stylistic resources, the orator advocates for his fellow citizens’ union or unity for the nation's construction. It is noteworthy to pinpoint the rhythmic effect produced by the sound /meɪ/ in the two consecutive words **may** and **make**. A similar effect is obvious in clauses (2) and (3), with the end rhythm in **abiding** and **unwavering**.

Another important rhetorical figure deployed in the speech is gradation (or climax). In the two selected examples below, there is no doubt that the speaker presents a series of ideas in such a way that what follows always says a little more:

20i. For many years, Nigeria’s critics have trafficked the rumour 20ii. that our nation will **break apart, even perish**. 23i. Our burdens may make us **bend** at times, 23ii. **but they shall never break us**.

Clause 20ii unveils the progressive destruction effect of the rumour of Nigeria’s critics to harm the nation, breaking apart and then perishing forever. As for 23i and 23ii, they express the impossibility to succumb to the danger. As a point of

fact, we can be bent, but never broken, meaning we can vacillate but never die, never perish (as they wish). In sum, while the purpose of the first gradation may be to have the audience perceive the seriousness of the danger awaiting the country, the orator is rather giving them the assurance that such a menace is not a fatality: they could overcome it. In both cases, the climax at issue is ascending gradation.

At last, it is itemized the presence of lexical relations encoded through such figures as synonymy and antonymy. Some incidences are listed as follows: 14. *The peaceful **transition** from one government to another is now our political tradition..* 15. *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]].*

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

7. *As a nation, we have long ago decided to march beyond **the dimness of night** into **the open day** of renewed national hope.*

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

31i. *Our administration shall **govern on** your behalf* 31ii. *but never **rule over** you.*

Both (14) and (15) are two (relational) identified clauses, the tokens of which have a similar meaning. As a matter of fact, 'transition' and 'handover' can be interchangeably utilized to connote the change in regime subsequent to an election in a democratic context. Likewise, 'peace' and 'stability' mean tranquillity of spirit. In deploying those synonymic lexemes, the speaker tries to show how resourceful he is in designating the same thing differently. By contrast, the three remaining utterances encompass contrastive items. For instance, the two phrases, *the dimness of night* and *the open day* [clause (7)], encode opposite ideas as they encode, in that order, meanings of the darkness of night and light of day. Similarly, *tear or injure* projects a sense of destruction or damage whereas *mend* encodes a sense of repairing. Last but not least, the material process *govern on* employed in (31i)- which requires consultation, dialogue, and a participatory approach- is systematically in opposition to *rule over* (which implies an autocratic or dictatorial perspective) in (31ii).

## CONCLUSIONS

This paper has undertaken to account for the pragmatic and stylistic resources deployed in Nigeria's newly elected president's, Bola Ahmed Tinubu's, inaugural speech. Anchored on pragma-stylistics set forth by Black (2006) and the mix-method analytical approach, the study has mainly inquired about such linguistic patterns as speech acts, tenses, deictic expressions, and pragma-rhetorical tropes in speech. The analysis discloses very significant results. First, it shows that four illocutionary acts (representatives, expressives, commissives, and directives) are utilized in varying proportions in the speech. Second, it indicates that the speaker relies on the simple present, present perfect, simple past, simple future and imperative to express change in focalization. Third, it proves that the political leader resorts to all the deictic categories (person, temporal, spatial, discourse, and social deixis) to relate his

discourse to context. Lastly, it exudes that the orator utilizes a set of pragma-rhetorical tropes- viz., parallelism, hyperbole, metaphor, personification, alliteration, assonance, gradation, synonymy and antonymy- to convey intended meanings and achieve persuasive effects.

We have studied throughout this research endeavour how the speaker draws on “the rules and potential of [...] language to combine with the specific elements of the context to produce a text capable of causing specific internal changes in the hearer's state of mind or knowledge” (Davies 2007, p. 106). As a matter of fact, it has been demonstrated, by and large, how President Tinubu attempted, through persuasion, to convey his personal and political party’s ideologies to his audience in view of cognitive manipulation. We have also proven, through a range of textual discursive snippets, how the speaker builds on the history of Nigeria to attempt to convince his compatriots of the necessity to build together the nation on the basis of such principles as dialogue, unity, cohesion, solidarity, fairness, and equity. We have again unveiled how the newly elected president resourcefully uses the English language to announce the subsequent actions of his administration on the one hand, and create rhetorical effects and trigger the audience’s consent to the message delivered on the other hand. It can be inferred from the overall study that the speaker is an actual alert politician likely to bring sustainable, tangible changes in the governance of his fatherland. Bamigbose (2022) seems to concur with our assumption when portraying the political leader, he writes:

Tinubu has the political and economic credentials that qualify him to be among the wider political elite in Nigeria through the historical evidence as revealed in this paper. This is in respect of his ideology of investing in people, funding of political party, philanthropy and humanitarian services, being surrounded by brilliant and intelligent individuals, political networking and his understanding of the political variables making up Nigeria.

Regarding the implications for English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching and learning, this study provides valuable insights into the use of pragmatic and stylistic elements in political speeches. Educators can utilize the findings to design relevant and engaging language lessons that focus on speech acts, deictic expressions, rhetorical tropes, and tenses. Analyzing and discussing authentic political speeches can help EFL learners enhance their understanding of language use in real-life contexts and develop their communication skills. By delving into the linguistic strategies employed by skilled orators like President Tinubu, students can improve their persuasive abilities and become more proficient in conveying their ideas effectively in English. Moreover, the study's emphasis on context and cognition highlights the importance of teaching language in meaningful and contextually rich settings, enabling learners to grasp the nuanced meanings and persuasive intentions behind different linguistic choices. Overall, this research contributes to the advancement of EFL

pedagogy, facilitating learners' proficiency in using language strategically and persuasively in various communicative situations.

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