

**DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF MUHAMMADU BUHARI'S DEMOCRACY DAY SPEECH,
2019**

By

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Abstract

Language and context play vital roles in discourse especially in political discourse. The language of politics is not the language of ordinary everyday conversations. Politicians make use of unique discourse analysis that set their speeches apart from other discourses. The data for this work was got from the Democracy Day Speech of President Muhammadu Buhari (2019). The theoretical framework for this research is Austin's Speech Act theory (1962), also speech vocatives, personal pronouns and flashback/allusions were used in the analysis. From the findings it was discovered that President Muhammadu Buhari in his 2019 Democracy Day Speech, used illocutionary acts, perlocutionary acts, speech vocatives, personal pronouns and flashback/allusions in his speech which qualifies it as a political speech. Conclusively we can say that speech act theory plays an important role in the analysis of any speech and this has been evidenced in the research carried out in this work.

Keywords: Language, Speech, Discourse Analysis, Political Discourse, Speech Act

Introduction

Language is generally seen as a means of human communication. It can be spoken, written or signed. Language serves many functions such as communication, persuasion, command, and social interaction among others. Language is uniquely a human phenomenon. The functions of language

Include: communication, the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression, and emotional release.

Ofoegbu and Usar (2018) defines Language as the human system of communication. It is a means by which humans alone communicate. Language is man and man is language. Man uses language for his everyday interaction. Language has been a powerful tool in the hands of politicians which they manipulate to suit their purpose since politics is basically a struggle to control and maintain power. Thus, language serves as a powerful political weapon. The language of politics is mostly persuasive, manipulative and in some cases deceptive, hence politicians are expected to be skilled in the art of persuasion and rhetoric in order to convince and influence their audience or public. Language is the most ancient persuasive device.

Discourse is verbal or written communication between people that goes beyond a single sentence. Importantly, discourse is more than just language. The term “language” can include all forms of linguistic and symbolic units (even things such as road signs), and language studies can focus on the individual meanings of words. Discourse goes beyond this and looks at the overall meanings conveyed by language in context. “Context” here refers to the social, cultural, political, and historical background of the discourse, and it is important to take this into account to understand underlying meanings expressed through language.

According to Lawan (2006), cited Ofoegbu and Usar (2018) people have to engage themselves in communication for any meaningful development or change to take place in the environment. At a formal level of interaction, there are several forms of public discourse such as motivational speech, debates, sermons, and so on. In all these, language plays an important/vital role. Schaffner (1996) posits that any political action is prepared, accompanied, controlled and influenced by language. Language is vital to meaningful, political discourse.

Various researchers have carried out studies on discourse analysis and on political speeches but not much have been done on the study of discourse analysis in the Democracy Day speech of president Muhammadu Buhari, 2019. This research work, however, will fill the gap which other research works have failed to cover.

This study looks at the discourse analysis of Democracy Day speech of President Muhammadu Buhari, 2019. The purposes of this Study are to identify and analyze the discourses that are used in Muhammadu Buhari's Democracy Day speech, 2019, to explain the use of the discourse analysis in the speech and to explain why these discourse features were used.

What is Discourse Analysis?

Discourse as a linguistic term literally refers to a formal talk, a piece of writing or discussion. In other words, a discourse could be in the spoken or written form. Ofoegbu and Umeh (2015) asserts that discourse analysis is the branch of linguistics which deals with the analysis of written, spoken or sign language. It is also sometimes considered as language put to use, which is synonymous with text. Cook (1992) describes discourse as language use in communication and the search for what gives discourse coherence is discourse analysis. Cook further explains that discourse analysis examines how stretches of language, considered in their full textual, social, and psychological contexts becomes meaningful and unified for their users. Also, Rymes (2008) cited in Mirzaee & Hamidi (2012) believes that, discourse is defined generally as "language-in-use." And discourse analysis, is the study of how language-in-use is influenced by the context of its use.

Discourse is everywhere around us from the scholarly reports to political speeches, personal letters, debates, advertisements, dialogue and spoken or written discourses. All these are dependent on the context in which the discourse is carried out. A political speech greatly differs from a family

discussion, sermons, and a classroom lecture is different from that of advertising. This is in line with the definition of discourse by Rhyme (2008) cited in Mirzae and Hamidi (2012) as “language-in-use”, and discourse analysis is seen as the study of how language-in-use is influenced by its context of use. This implies that in the study of discourse, context (environment) comes into play. Woods (2006) defined discourse as language plus context. She says discourse determines our language in the context of usage. She further states that carefully examining a particular discourse brings about its analysis, hence, the term ‘discourse Analysis’, she lays emphasis on the context of usage.

Opara (2015) sees discourse analysis as ‘analysis of Language beyond the sentence’. She further states that an analyst should go beyond the level of linguistic analysis such as phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, study chunks of language. In her view, discourse should be analyzed based on the context in which it occurs and not just on the linguistic items present in the given discourse. Johnstone (2008) defines discourse analysis as the actual instance of communicative action in the medium of language. She believes in the separation of ‘discourse’ from ‘analysis’ for a better understanding of the term ‘discourse analysis’. She further explains discourse analysis as conventional ways of talking that both create and are created by conventional ways of thinking. This examines that discourse analysis studies how discourse is shaped by its context and how discourse shape its context. While some linguistic may concentrate on determining the formal properties of Language, the discourse analysis is committed to an investigation of what that language is used for. This assertion implies that discourse analysis focus at the pattern and structure of language as well as the communicative functions attached to them.

What is Political Discourse?

Schaffner (1996) sees political discourse as a subcategory of discourse in general, which can be based on two criteria: functional and thematic. Political discourse is functional because it performs different functions due to different political activities. It is thematic because its topics are primarily related to politics such as political activities, political ideas and political relations. Bayley (2010) says that political discourse is a wide and diverse set of discourse, genre and register such as policy papers, ministerial speeches, government press releases, party manifesto, and electoral speeches.

Woods (2006) stated some of the functions of political discourse are to protest, legitimize, intimidate, persuade or lead people to a particular view of political ideas and realities and to influence their political thinking and act accordingly by supporting and voting for the particular party. Woods (2006) further compared the discourse of politics to that of the discourse of advertising because both aims at influencing and leading its audience to some particular thoughts, beliefs and actions. According to her, political discourse borrows heavily from the discourse of advertising at the level of sounds, words, and syntax which are important for arranging political messages for a desired effect. These elements are interwoven and layered to manipulate the meaning of political messages.

The discussion on political discourse would not be complete without mentioning the roles language play in political discourse. Language is generally seen as a means of communication, a way of expressing our views, ideas, wishes, and emotions. It is widely conceived that language and politics are interconnected. Ayeomoni (2005) says that language is “the vehicular expression of politics.” Political discourse and ideas are disseminated through language. The relationship between language and politics is summed up in the following words of Chilton and Schaffner

(2002): What is clear is that political activities do not exist without the use of language. It is true that other behaviors are involved, for instance, physical coercion. But the doing of political discourse is predominantly constituted in language. Not much work has been done on a Discourse Analysis on Democracy Day Speeches only a few has been done on discourse analysis of democracy day speeches one of the few includes:

Jegede (2019) did a Lexical Relations in Muhammadu Buhari's 2018 Democracy Day Speech, even if it not a Discourse Analysis but on lexical Relations but there is an indirect connection. Jegede (2019) uses some lexical makers in his analysis such as, synonym, antonyms, collocation, compounding, borrowing, coinage/ neologism, compound and compounding. In his conclusion, the study shows that the lexical sets are in four folds. The antonym and synonyms used in the speech shows the contracts and relationships among the different incidents, projects and the agenda of the president for his country.

What is Speech?

A speech is a mass communication using spoken language, as a speaker to a large number of people as audience. The language used may be different from the language used in daily conversation. Speech is human vocal communication using language. Basically, there are about 15 types of speeches but for the purpose of this research we shall be looking at only 6 because they are related to the topic under discussion. They include:

i. Informative Speech

Informative speeches aim to educate an audience on a particular topic or message. Unlike demonstrative speeches, they don't use visual aids. They do, however, use facts, data and statistics

to help audiences grasp a concept. These facts and statistics help back any claims or assertions you make. For example, a zoo guide gives an informative speech to a group of people, educating them on a zoo animal using various statistical facts or historical information. Informative speeches can also cover social or economic topics. Although they're not designed to get the audience to believe a certain viewpoint or opinion, they inform the audience with all the relevant details surrounding a particular topic.

ii. Demonstrative Speech

Demonstrative speeches serve to educate an audience about a topic or idea they don't have knowledge of. They often include visual aids to help better demonstrate or describe something in greater detail. While you can easily confuse a demonstrative speech with an informative speech, a demonstrative speech actually demonstrates how to do something. For example, a tech company can give a speech demonstrating their new devices. While they're informing the public about their new products, they're demonstrating how they work, thus, making it a demonstrative speech.

iii. Oratorical Speech

While oratorical refers to the act of speech giving, an oratorical speech refers to a specific type of speech. They're typically more formal than other types of speeches. While some oratorical speeches can be long such as those found at funerals or graduations, others may be short and more informal such as a toast at a special event. Though oratorical speech givers don't necessarily want to persuade the audience on a particular topic, they can still cover certain issues and express their opinion.

iv. Special Occasion Speech

Special occasion speeches don't fall into a particular category and don't follow a set format. Instead, they aim to fit the special occasion, whether it's a wedding, an award show or a birthday party. Special occasion speeches aim to fit the context of the environment to effectively communicate the message and gain the audience's attention. While they're often short and upbeat, they're still interesting and direct. Unlike a lot of other speeches, special occasion speeches don't require the use of statistics or data.

v. Motivational Speech

Motivational speeches aim to inspire an audience and give attendees the confidence to do something better or improve themselves. They essentially serve to lift the audience's spirits and improve their self-esteem. Motivational speeches help move a person or audience toward achieving a particular goal. While employers or managers give this type of speech to motivate their employees to perform better in the workplace, coaches give this type of speech to inspire their team to perform better on the field or court.

vi. Persuasive Speech

Persuasive speeches help convince an audience that the speaker has the right opinion on a particular topic. Persuasive speeches can cover any topic from entertainment to something more serious like politics. Typically, speakers use concrete evidence to better persuade their listeners and gain their support. When you include evidence, it helps make your stance more believable and may even be enough to change a listener's mind about the particular topic you're speaking on. With

enough facts to back up your opinion, you have a greater chance of receiving the audience's support.

Discourse Analysis of Muhammadu Buhari's Democracy Day Speech (2019)

This section examines the discourse Analysis present in the democracy day speech of President Muhammadu Buhari's delivered on 12th June 2019. The discourse Analysis used in the speech are Speech Act theory by Austin (1962) (Illocutionary acts and Perlocutionary acts), speech vocatives, personal pronouns and flashback/allusions

Methodology

The theoretical framework for this study is the Speech Act Theory of Austin (1962) which is historically attributed to the Austrian philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, but was given prominence by the British philosopher, John Langshaw Austin, in his William James' Lectures at Harvard in 1955. His ideas, however, were refined and systematized by his pupil, John R. Searle, the American philosopher. Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962; Searle 1969) originated from philosopher John Austin (1962). It attempts to solve some of the deviance in language and it depicts that to speak is to do something. Austin, starting from utterances called constatives (true or false statements like declarative in mood structure) and performatives (utterances used to do something or strong action taking sentences that go out to do what they say), ended up with the claim that we perform three kinds of major actions when we speak: locutionary act, Illocutionary act and Perlocutionary act.

The locutionary act is the act of saying something, illocutionary act is the act performed in saying something, while the perlocutionary act is the act performed by saying something and the effect

the utterance has on the psychological state of the hearer. Austin (1962) is of the opinion that the locutionary act is composed of three important components or acts which are the phonetic act, the phatic act and the rhotic act. The illocutionary forces of utterances have been classified by notable scholars like Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Allan (1986). Austin classified illocutionary forces of speech acts into five: verdictives, behavities, expositives, commissives and exercitives. Searle, refining on Austin's model, developed five: commissives, expressives, directives, assertives and declaratives. However, for the analysis of this work, Austin's verdictive feature and Searle's expressive, commissive, directive, assertive and declarative features will be adopted.

A Perlocutionary act (or perlocutionary effect) is a speech act, as viewed at the level of its consequences, such as persuading, convincing, scaring, enlightening, inspiring, or otherwise affecting the listener. This is contrasted with locutionary and illocutionary acts (which are levels of description, rather than classifications of speech acts). Unlike, the notion of illocutionary act, which describes the linguistic function of an utterance, a perlocutionary effect is in some sense external to the performance. It may be thought of, in a sense, as the effect of the illocutionary act via the locutionary act. Therefore, when examining perlocutionary acts, the effect on the hearer or reader is emphasized. Perlocutionary act is the effect of the utterance on the hearer, depending on specific circumstances. This is the effect on the hearer of what the speaker says. Perlocutionary act is the consequent effect of the utterance on the hearer, or the overall aim of the utterance

Data Presentation and Analysis

The following are examples of the discourse analysis in the speech

a. Illocutionary Act

Illocutionary acts are linguistic acts in which one can be said to do something - like stating, denying or asking. Austin classified illocutionary forces of speech acts into five: verdictives, behavities, expositives, commissives and exercitives. However, for the analysis of this work, Austin's verdictive feature and Searle's expressive, commissive, directive, assertive and declarative features will be adopted.

i. Expressive: This class of illocutionary act expresses a psychological state, which includes, but not limited to thanking, apologizing, congratulating, welcoming and greeting. Examples:

All Praise is due to GOD Almighty Who spared our lives to be present at this great occasion. We give thanks also that the democratic process has been further entrenched and strengthened.
(Paragraph 1)

I thank all the peoples who worked for our party, who campaigned and who voted for us. I thank you my fellow Nigerians, who since 2003 have consistently voted for me. (Paragraph 6)

I and Nigerians collectively must give adequate thanks to our Armed Forces, Police and other law enforcing agencies for working round the clock to protect us by putting themselves in harm's way and defending our values and protecting our future. (Paragraph 8)

At this point, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the entrepreneurs, investors and venture capitalists who have built or are building agro-processing projects; petrochemical plants; crude oil and solid mineral refineries; energy exploration; software development projects; telecom infrastructure; health, education and manufacturing projects; and the like, across our country.
(Paragraph 58)

ii. Commissive: These groups of illocutions tend to commit the speaker to some future course of action. Paradigm cases include promising, threatening, offering and swearing to do something.

Examples:

The principal thrust of this new Administration is to consolidate on the achievements of the last four years, correct the lapses inevitable in all human endeavors and tackle the new challenges the country is faced with and chart a bold plan for transforming Nigeria. (Paragraph 10)

I have worked and served in Kaduna, Lagos, Abeokuta, Makurdi, Port Harcourt, Maiduguri, Ibadan, Jos and finally here in Abuja. Throughout my adult life, I have been a public servant. I have no other career but public service. I know no service but public service. (Paragraph 13)

I was involved at close quarters in the struggle to keep Nigeria one. I can therefore do no more than dedicate the rest of my life to work for the unity of Nigeria and upliftment of Nigerians. (Paragraph 14)

A huge responsibility therefore rests on this and succeeding Administrations to develop, harness and fulfill our enormous potential into a force to be reckoned with globally. (Paragraph 22)

iii. Directives: These acts are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something; they tend to bring an effect through the action of the hearer. They include ordering, requesting, begging and questioning. Examples:

What we require is the will to get our acts together. And our strength is in our people – our youth, our culture, our resilience, our ability to succeed despite the odds. (Paragraph 21)

Elsewhere, Nigeria is the Big Brother to our neighbours. We are the shock-absorber of the West African sub-region, the bulwark of ECOWAS and Lake Chad Basin Commission. We can therefore

be proud to be Nigerians. We must continue to be Good Neighbours and Good Global Citizens.
(Paragraph 25)

This task is by no means unattainable. China has done it. India has done it. Indonesia has done it. Nigeria can do it. These are all countries characterized by huge burdens of population. (Paragraph 32)

China and Indonesia succeeded under authoritarian regimes. India succeeded in a democratic setting. We can do it. (Paragraph 33)

iv. Assertive: This class of illocutionary act is also called representatives and it commits a speaker to the truth of the same propositions. They are statements that describe a state of affairs in the world, which could be true or false (Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere 2012). They include stating, claiming, reporting and announcing. Examples:

Twenty years ago, a democratically elected government took over from the military in a historic transfer of political power for our country. (Paragraph 2)

Today, we are privileged to mark the longest period of unbroken democratic leadership and 5th peaceful transfer of power from one democratically elected government to another in Nigeria.
(Paragraph 3)

Throughout the last four years, I respected the independence of INEC. I ensured that INEC got all the resources it needed for independent and impartial management of elections in the country.
(Paragraph 4)

All interested parties are agreed that the recent elections, which except for pockets of unrest, were free, fair and peaceful. (Paragraph 5)

v. Declarative: This class effects immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs and tends to rely on elaborate extra-linguistic institutions such as excommunicating, marrying, firing from employment, declaring a war and so on. Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere (2012) posit that they are used to say something and make it so. Other examples of declarative acts include resigning, sentencing, dismissing and christening. Examples:

Victory is your greatest reward; peace, unity and greater prosperity will be our collective legacy.
(Paragraph 7)

Today, I propose the re-naming of the Abuja National Stadium. Henceforth it will be called MOSHOOD ABIOLA NATIONAL STADIUM. (Paragraph 70)

In my first term, we put Nigeria back on its feet. We are working again despite a difficult environment in oil on which we depend too much for our exports. We encountered huge resistance from vested interests who do not want CHANGE, But CHANGE has come, we now must move to the NEXT LEVEL. (Paragraph 71)

God bless us all, and God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria. (Paragraph 74)

b. Perlocutionary Act

Perlocutionary act is the effect of the utterance on the hearer, depending on specific circumstances. This is the effect on the hearer of what the speaker says. perlocutionary act is the consequent effect of the utterance on the hearer, some examples in the speech are seen below:

“God bless us all, and God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.” The effect on the hearer is to celebrate and praise the president that had just finished his speech. In (Paragraph 74)

Also in the same speech in Paragraph 7: “Victory is your greatest reward; peace, unity and greater prosperity will be our collective legacy.” The effect it will have on the listener is that they praise the president and maybe shout the slogan of the political party in happiness.

“Today, I propose the re-naming of the Abuja National Stadium. Henceforth it will be called MOSHOOD ABIOLA NATIONAL STADIUM.” The effect of this declaration is surprising to the listener. (Paragraph 70)

“In my first term, we put Nigeria back on its feet. We are working again despite a difficult environment in oil on which we depend too much for our exports. We encountered huge resistance from vested interests who do not want CHANGE, But CHANGE has come, we now must move to the NEXT LEVEL.” The effect on the heater/ listener is joy for hope of betterment in the country. (Paragraph 71)

c. Speech Vocatives

The speaker directly addresses a person or a group as a way of acknowledging and appreciating their presence and also to strengthen the ties with his audience. Some speech vocatives are presented below:

“Fellow Nigerians, Your Highnesses” (Paragraph 64, line 1)

“Fellow Nigerians, I have had the privilege of free education” (Paragraph 11, line 1)

“Thank all the peoples who worked for our party, who campaigned and who voted for us. I thank you my fellow Nigerians, who since 2003 have consistently voted for me.” (Paragraph 6)

“Fellow Nigerians, Your Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen” (Paragraph 43, line 1)

In this example above, some linguistic elements are used to play specific pragmatic roles of unity and communality in the expressions. While “good” and “distinguished” are used for recognition and to praise the addressees, “compatriot” and “fellow” are used to create rapport and to portray the speaker as a humble person.

d. Use of Personal Pronouns

The President made abundant use of personal pronouns “I”, “we”, “us”, “our”, almost throughout the speech. Some of the pronouns used in the speech are:

“Throughout the last four years, I respected the independence of INEC. I ensured that INEC got all the resources it needed for independent and impartial management of elections in the country.”
(Paragraph 4)

“I thank all the peoples who worked for our party, who campaigned and who voted for us. I thank you my fellow Nigerians, who since 2003 have consistently voted for me.” (Paragraph 4)

“We have water, arable land, forests, oil and gas and vast quantities of solid minerals. We are blessed with an equable climate. However, the bulk of our real wealth lies in Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry and Mining. We possess all the ingredients of a major economic power on the world stage.” (Paragraph 20)

“At home, we have been successful in forging a nation from different ethnicities and language groups: our evolution and integration into one nation continues apace.” (Paragraph 26)

e. Flashbacks/Allusions

The President made use of allusion/flashbacks. Some of the allusions used in the speech. They include:

“I have worked and served in Kaduna, Lagos, Abeokuta, Makurdi, Port Harcourt, Maiduguri, Ibadan, Jos and finally here in Abuja. Throughout my adult life, I have been a public servant. I have no other career but public service. I know no service but public service.” (Paragraph 13) . Here, the President through the use of allusions drew the attention of the audience informing them his only service is to work for the public.

“I was involved at close quarters in the struggle to keep Nigeria one. I can therefore do no more than dedicate the rest of my life to work for the unity of Nigeria and upliftment of Nigerians.” (Paragraph 14)

“In 2002-2003 campaigns and elections, I travelled by road to 34 of the 36 states of the Federation. This year I travelled by air to all 36 states of the Federation.” (Paragraph 15)

“When I took the oath of office on 29 May 2015, insecurity reigned. Apart from occupying 18 local governments in the North East, Boko Haram could at will attack any city including the Federal Capital, could threaten any institution including bombing the United Nations building and Police Headquarters in Abuja.” (Paragraph 29)

Conclusion

Discourse Analysis is the key concept in this research. It refers to the various language features employed by a speaker or writer in order to drive home a point. Every speaker or writer has his/her own language habit and that makes his/ her speech unique. Using discourse analysis, politicians emphasize their key points, persuade and manipulate their audience to sympathize with their views,

and make their speech memorable. It is on this premise that the researcher undertakes to study how this discourse analysis has helped in shaping the presidential democracy day speech of President Muhammadu Buhari 2019. Conclusively, discourse analysis is indispensable in political discourse. It is seen from the analysis that the skillful use of these devices helps to emphasize the importance points the political speakers wants the audience to take home.

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