

---

**ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE STRATEGIES AND IDEOLOGIES IN THE  
INAUGURAL SPEECHES OF BARRISTER IBRAHIM SHEHU SHEMA**

**Asiru Hameed Tunde, Ph.D**  
Department of English and French  
Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina.

and

**Peace Benson**  
Department of English & Literary Studies  
Federal University Wukari, Wukari.

### **Abstract**

Inaugural speeches are crucial to political processes because they are avenues to mobilize, seek for support, persuade the people and consolidate their loyalty throughout the administration. Political actors, therefore, use the medium to persuade, manipulate, or simply inform their audience about their administration's policies. Their speeches are carefully crafted to convey their messages which definitely have ideological intents because political speeches are not value-free or neutral in terms of ideological leanings. In this study, the authors investigate the discourse strategies in the inaugural speeches of Barrister Shehu Shema. This is done by operationalizing some tenets of Critical Discourse Analysis with the aim of uncovering covert ideologies enshrined in the inaugural speeches. Several linguistic facilities such as allusions, conversational tone, pronominal references, positive face-strategies, etc are used by the speaker to change the orientation of the people and sold his party agenda to them. All these linguistic tools, as wielded by Barrister Shema, help to underscore the fact that 'ideologies truly reside in texts' and cannot be read off. The findings revealed that the language used in the speeches are consciously and skillfully deployed to champion his party ideologies of inclusiveness, fairness and justice, continuity, acceptance of religious diversity, and unity.

**Keywords:** Political Discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis, Inaugural Speech.

### **Introduction**

Politics is never devoid of decisions to attain power for the purpose of enshrining certain political, economic and social ideas into action. To achieve these, language, therefore, performs crucial roles because political action is always prepared, accompanied, influenced and played by language. That makes language inevitable in the attainment of any political power. The way it is wielded, therefore, will determine how and to what extent political power can be achieved. Similarly, through language, the world can be created, recreated and organized. That is why the extent to which

language is perhaps one of the most powerful weapons that can be used for ideological purposes is not really known. Language is used to create and reflect the world, but it can be under the dominance of powerful institutions and political actors. Also, one of the qualities of a successful politician is the ability to lead others by articulating a clear and inspiring vision of a better future. The study therefore, assesses the effectiveness of the use of language through the discourse strategies that Barrister Ibrahim Shehu Shema employed in his inaugural speeches. This study is of interest to the researchers because of the acceptance and conviction of the people of Katsina state to have voted him for the second

term as Governor of Katsina State.

Considering the domestic importance and significance of the speeches, the two occasions were opportunities given to the Governor and his party to enumerate how he would deliver the dividends of democracy to the people. It must be stated that inaugural address states the policies of the governor for the term he/she would be in office (four years in Nigeria context) and these speeches, be they prepared, extempore, or memorized are geared towards motivating, mobilizing, educating, informing and in some cases, entertaining the target audience (Adebiyi, 2006).

Various scholarly works have been carried out on the analysis of political speeches. However, many of the works have adopted purely linguistic approach with little or no attention to the contexts that produced the speeches. For instance, Ayeomoni (2005) uses the framework of syntax to investigate the language of the military in politics. It is a purely grammatical analysis covering the nominal, verbal and adverbial group and their syntactic patterns. Ayoola (2005) also employs the approach of Critical Discourse Analysis in interpreting Nigerian political discourse. His major parameters of analysis include the socio-political background, the use of personal deixis, emotive lexis and structures. Ayodabo (2005) also carried a Pragma-Stylistic study of Abiola's historic speech of June 12. He worked within the framework of Pragmatics by operationalising Lawal's (1995) 'Aspect of a Pragmatic Theory' in the investigation of speech acts performed in the speech.

Babatunde and Odegbedan (2009) is another attempt. They examined the pragma-rhetorical strategies in selected speeches of President Olusegun Obasanjo. Another similar study was also carried out by Olaniyi (2010) on a pragmatic analysis of President Umar Musa Yar'adua's inaugural speech of 29th May, 2007. He examined the language use in a political inaugural speech using some pragmatic tools subsumed in a reordered version of Lawal's (2003)

'Aspects of a Pragmatic Model'. This present study is different as it examines the strategies used and ideology in political inaugural speeches of Barrister Shehu Ibrahim Shema, the former Governor, Katsina State. This avails us the premise to investigate the hidden meanings in his inaugural speeches and how the discourse strategies have been helpful in mobilizing the people of Katsina into supporting his administration and policies.

### Political Discourse

The easiest, and not altogether misguided, conception of a political discourse is to identify it through its actors or authors, i.e., politicians Van Dijk (1997). This is because; the bulk of studies on political discourse are about text and talk of professional politicians or political institutions, political parties etc. However, obviously, it is not only official or professional politicians that are involved in the polity. The process also involves voters and citizens, pressure groups, demonstrators and dissidents etc. Wilson (1990) is of the opinion that the term is reflexive and potentially ambiguous in nature. It is suggestive of at least two possibilities;

- a) A discourse which is itself political.
- b) Political discourse as simply an example of discourse type.

Our attention here is on the latter view because one of the major goals of political discourse analysis is to seek out the ways in which language choice is manipulated for specific political effect. Different studies on concepts such as loaded words, technical words and euphemisms, all at the level of lexical choice have been carried out by Grabber (1981), Geis (1987), Bolinger (1982) etc. In grammar, studies of selected functional systems and their organization within different ideological frames by Fowler and Marshall (1985) have been done. Van Dijk (1989), Wilson (1990), Holy (1989), Chilton and Ilyin (1993) have adopted more pragmatically oriented objectives such as implicatures, metaphors and speech acts.

However, the analysis of political discourse in general and political speech in particular should relate linguistic structures to larger contexts of communicative settings and political functions (Shaffner, 1996). This approach is an integrated one being advocated by Norman Fairclough. This study tends towards the new growing trend in political discourse by combining social theory with linguistic theory as exemplified by Fairclough (1992a), Wodak (1995). This means that political discourse analysis is both about political discourse and a critical and committed exercise.

### Theoretical Underpinning

Human beings frequently mean more than their words actually say. Some language philosophers such as Austin (1962); Searle (1969); and Grice (1975) had explored the fact that we mean more than what we say, less than it or even something completely different from it (Schiffrin, 1994). The utterances of political leaders have the rhetoric force to persuade or manipulate the public to a specific ideological or counter – ideological line of action. There is, therefore, the need to combine the analytical tools of linguistics with the knowledge and experience of the world to arrive at the interpretation of a text.

Similarly, Fairclough (1996) is of the opinion that analysis of political speeches in political discourse should relate linguistic structures to larger contexts of communicative settings and political functions. Critical Discourse Analysis is therefore adopted in this study but not as a homogenous model or paradigm but at most a shared perspective on doing discourse analysis that takes into consideration the social milieu that gives birth to the texts. This is because language users do not function in isolation but in a set of cultural, social and psychological frameworks. CDA accepts the social contexts that necessitate the production of a text and therefore studies the connections between textual structures and their function in interaction within the society.

CDA is also different from other forms of discourse analysis because of its attribute of “critical” which implies showing connections and causes which are hidden to the readers or listeners. Scholars of CDA, therefore, try to expose the covert meaning and ideology in text or speech as the case may be. This idea is summarized by Bastone (1995: 198-199)

*Critical discourse analysts seek to reveal how texts are constructed so that particular (and potentially indoctrinating) perspectives can be expressed delicately and covertly; because they are covert, they are elusive of direct challenge, facilitating what Kress calls the 'retreat into mystification and impersonality'*

This opinion is also buttressed by Sheyholislami (2001) that, one key principle of CDA is that the way we write, what we say, is not arbitrary- it is purposeful whether or not the choices are conscious or unconscious. This paper, therefore, adopts some tenets from CDA in order to unveil covert ideologies in the speech.

### Data Analysis

In this section, the aim of the analysis is to link the inaugural speeches to the social processes that necessitated the production of the speech in order to decipher and interpret covert ideologies embedded therein. The analysis projects from ideology of inclusiveness, continuity, and fairness to linguistic tools that help shape or give form to the ideologies.

#### *Excerpt 1*

*The time has come when all hands should be on deck and must be on deck to support our elected officials to transform Nigeria. I hereby extend my hand of friendship to all those who*

*competed with us.*

*We believe in good life for all...*

*We also did **our** best to have **our** public finances under control.*

*We built houses, secondary schools and special girls' schools in all the 34 Local Governments of the State.*

All the extracts above can be perceived as attempts to display an inclusive style of governance. The governor tries to extend his hands of friendship to those on the other side of political divide who competed against him. Shema did not only condemn leaving the business of governance solely to the elected officials but also pleaded for support from the masses as against the “business as usual syndrome” where the business of governance is left only for the elected officials. He equally used in-group pronouns to identify with the populace and the laudable programmes and policies that he designed for them in order to gain their support and loyalty. The plural in-group pronoun forms ‘we’ and ‘our’ are used to appeal to the collective sense of the audience, their togetherness and unity among the people. Similarly, the last extract is used to underscore his concept of fairness and justice to all strata of the society where the poor, the rich, men and women, young and old and rural dwellers will benefit from his governance.

**Excerpt 2**

*You don't have to be a member of the People's Democratic Party(PDP) for your child to enjoy free education in Katsina State. You don't have to lobby anybody for your child to be sent abroad to read Medicine, Pharmacy, Nursing or Environmental Engineering or indeed get free Medicare for yourself and family in Government hospitals. For development to be meaningful, it has to be even.*

The reiteration of 'you don't have to' is carefully wielded to further accentuate the principle of inclusive system of government

and his philosophical standpoint on the distribution of State's wealth which he believed has to be evenly distributed. This necessitates his policies of free education, free healthcare facilities and manpower training. He reiterates these policies to signal their availability to all the people and not just those that belong to his political divide. Through these statements, he also condemns exclusive system of governance.

**Excerpt 3**

*As his successor, I inherited several ongoing projects. For me, the completion of the projects I inherited became my priority without even a second thought for two reasons.*

The above speech is intended to convince the people and win their support by indicating that he (Governor Shema) operates on principle of continuity in governance where the uncompleted projects of a previous regime are not abandoned as the usual practice by some politicians. Another justification for this is because both Barrister Shema and Malam Umar Musa Yar'adu belong to the same political divide; Peoples Democratic Party. (PDP) and he wanted the people to support his administration just as they supported his predecessor. The predecessor has been acclaimed the father of modern Katsina State because of his laudable projects aimed at transforming the lives of the people. All these beliefs and ideas are what define the speaker's disposition and attitudes to governance. This also means that these values are relevant to him and his political party. On the other hand, these beliefs presuppose that there are other political parties or governors whose ideas are not in support of continuity in governance, inclusiveness and fairness and justice.

Similarly, the above ideological stances are couched in different linguistic tools. Just as van Dijk(2006, p. 124) opines that 'if ideologies are acquired, expressed, enacted and reproduced by discourse, this must happen through a number of discursive structures and strategies'. In the above analysis, such ideological structures include the use of

pronouns, repetitions, and evidentiality for positive self-emphasis.

### Analysis of Discourse Strategies

Discourse strategies are strategies for communication. It is also referred to as communicative strategies embedded in different discourses. Inaugural speech, as a genre of political discourse, also has strategies that are used by the speaker in carrying his audience along. In the analysis below are different communicative strategies found in the inaugural speeches of Barrister Shehu Shema.

### Allusions

This is a character reference to something outside the immediate scope of what is being discussed or presented. Allusions could be made to places, characters, historical events, mythology etc. It is a strategy that enables speakers to adopt short cuts or shortened ways of explaining things that ordinarily would have taken much time. However, meanings are implied and persuasion is achieved when references are made to persons, places and events. This strategy also portrays the speaker as an authority who is versed and conversant with the issue or area of discussion.

#### Excerpt 4

- a. *Fortunately, education makes people easy to govern, provided the leadership is focused and purposeful. This, I believe, is responsible for the success of Alh. Umaru Musa Yar'adua as the Governor of Katsina State.*
- b. *Our leader, Mallam Umaru Musa Yar'adua (Matawallin Katsina) of blessed memory, laid the foundation for creation of a new society in Katsina State.*
- c. *This is why Mrs. Hillary Clinton, the strongest opponent of President Barack Obama in the last presidential primary election of the Democratic*

*Party in America is now the Secretary of State in Obama's administration.*

In the first extract, the governor alludes to the fact that education makes people governable provided the leadership is focused and purposeful. He believes this claim is responsible for his predecessor's success and his own readiness to follow the line of focused and purposeful leadership. The second extract lays credence to the fact that Umaru Musa Yar'adua is regarded as his political leader and predecessor and that he laid the foundation of a new society in Katsina, hence, his readiness to continue with his policies. He consciously echoes the achievements of his predecessor without stating a clear strategy of how he intends to govern the state.

Similarly, the Governor makes reference to Hillary Clinton as the strongest opponent to president Obama during the primaries yet, she is serving as the State's Secretary. This is done in order to debunk the generally held attitudes of political opponents who only back off after losing a political contest instead of serving their nation with their wealth of experience.

### Conversational Tone

#### Excerpt 5

*I call on you to continue praying for him*

*I also call on you to continue to pray for Nigeria*

*I hereby extend my hand of friendship to all those who competed with us.*

This device positions the speaker to be carrying his audience along as if they were engaging in a collective business. It is a rhetorical device that is used to achieve his desired goal of persuasion. The emotional and rhythmical use of the first person personal pronoun 'I' in the excerpts is also not value-free. It could instill in the minds of the listeners some form of importance for being called upon by the governor. The speaker sounded as someone who was indeed in need of help from the people he was addressing.

**Pronominal References**

There are instances of pronominal items and they appear mainly in the form of first and second person pronominal *I, we, our and second person-you*. The use of pronouns in political discourse goes beyond substitution of a noun in traditional grammar to self-emphasis, self-responsibility, inclusiveness, solidarity and unity of purpose among others (Sharndama, 2015). In the excerpts below, the pronominals are used to show in-group and out-group polarizations and the utmost rhetorical intent of the speaker. In other cases, such as the use of the personal pronouns, assertion of responsibility and authority also lurk underneath their usage.

**Excerpt 6**

*I am here also for another swearing in...*

*I did my best to be fair to all in the transformation of our great state.*

*I want to believe that they are interested in the development of the State.*

*Our basic challenge is...*

*You don't have to be a member of the people's Democratic Party...*

*You don't have to lobby anybody...*

*We believe in good life for all...*

*We also did our best to have our public finances under control...*

*We built houses, secondary schools and special girls' schools...*

*We believe that the people must be consulted in deciding the priorities of the Government.*

*We can build on the labour of our heroes past.*

*Together we can transform our dear State to a model amongst states in Nigeria.*

The speaker, Barrister Ibrahim Shehu Shema employs the use of the first person pronoun *'I'* and its plural equivalence *"we"*. He uses the pronominals to identify with the populace and showcase the laudable programmes and policies that he designed for them in order to gain their support and loyalty. The first person plural form *'we'* and possessive pronoun *'our'* are used to appeal to the collective sense of the audience, their togetherness and unity among the people. He successfully uses the pronominal items to identify with the people's yearnings. It is also to persuade the people into believing that he is one of them. The plurals of the pronominal items are used to give the impression that his government is a democratic one where everybody is invited to participate in. In a similar vein, the first person plural *'we'* also signals a form of in-group identity referring to top echelon in his administration during his first term in office thereby showcasing their efforts on infrastructural developments in the state. This form of *'we'* is referred to as *'royal we'* (Miller, 2004). Also, the second person plural *'you'* was used to indicate out-group members who are not in the same political divide with the governor. It also shows that those being referred to are distal as against being proximal in the use of *'we'* in pronominal scales for political referencing (Rees, 1983, p.16). This was carefully used to score a political point by noting that those out-group members *'do not need to lobby'* to enjoy the dividends of democracy under his administration. The last two instances of *'we'* are what is termed all *'inclusive we'*. This is not limited to the top echelon of his administration; it involves all and sundry. He uses this to seek for more support for his administration.

**Structural Parallelism for Cohesion and Emphasis**

**Excerpt 7**

*Your children attend the schools he built or rehabilitated...*

*Your wives attend the hospitals modernized by him...*

*I call on you to continue to pray for him*

*I call on you to continue to pray for Nigeria*

*You don't have to be a member of ...*

*You don't have to lobby anybody...*

Structural patterns are reiterated for rhetorical purposes and they are geared towards controlling the collective minds of the audience to make them believe that he has their interest at heart. Similarly, he uses the examples to enhance cohesion in his speeches and to emphasise some important ideals. Similarly, these structures are identical and they are used to allow listeners to quickly process the encoded information therein. This stylistic feature makes the speech also rhetorical.

**Frequency Table of the Use of Pronouns in the Selected Speeches**

Pronouns	Frequency	Percentage
I	23	28.71
Me	10	12.5
We	16	20.0
You	14	17.5
Our	17	21.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

The table reveals the preponderance of the personal pronoun 'I' with 28.71% of all the pronouns identified in the data. The objective first pronoun 'me' is used 12.5% times, first person plural 'we' is 20%, the pronoun 'you' is uttered 17.5% times, possessive pronoun 'our' is 21.25%. It can be inferred from the choice of the pronouns mostly favoured that the speaker is confident and has personal interest in developing the state while the use of plural and possessive pronouns 'we' and 'our' means that together with the people they will effectively participate in the affairs of the state. The frequent use of the first person plural pronoun "we" and possessive pronouns such as, 'ours', 'yours' by the governor is also a deliberate attempt to give the impression that his administration is all inclusive.

**Positive –face Strategies**

These are rhetorical patterns that are intended to positively orient the speaker to his audience (Kamalu & Agangan, 2011). The former governor was able to achieve this by recollecting the achievements of his predecessor in his first term inaugural address and his own achievements in the second term address so as to score himself high before the audience. He boasts about his performance and calls his audience to witness. Some of the examples that demonstrate these are as follows:

**Excerpt 8**

*We built houses, secondary schools and special girls' schools...*

*You are also my witnesses that I did my best to be fair to all...*

**Conclusion**

The study examined the discourse strategies and covert ideologies embedded in the first and second term inaugural addresses of Governor Ibrahim Shehu Shema of Katsina State. The study revealed a conscious manipulation of linguistic tools to persuade the people into supporting his administration. The speaker deployed the usage of pronominals, conversational tone, structural parallelism, positive face management etc to persuade his audience. The study also unveils his ideological stance such as inclusiveness, fairness and justice, continuity, and unity which are concealed in seemingly ordinary or innocent speeches without the conscious awareness of the people.

## References

- Abdullahi-Idiagbon, M.S. (2010). Language Use in Selected Nigerian Presidential Election Campaign Speeches: A Critical Discourse Analysis Perspective. *Journal of the Nigeria English Studies Association (JNESA)* 13(2)30-44
- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do Things with Words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Ayeomoni, M.O (2005). "A Linguistic-Stylistic Investigation of the Language of the Nigerian Political Elite." *Nebula* Vol. 2(2)
- Ayoola, K.A. (2005). Interpreting Nigeria political discourse: a study of President Olusegun Obasanjo's July 26 address to the National Assembly. *Papers in English and Linguistics*. PEL 1.6, 1-13.
- Batstone, R. (1995). *Grammar in Discourse: Attitude and Deniability*. In G. Cook and Seidhofer, (eds.) *Principle and Practice in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 197-213.
- Chilton, P. (2004). *Analysing political discourse: Theory and practice*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Fairclough, N (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The critical study of language*. New York: Longman Group.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. London: Longman.
- Horvath, J. (2009). "Critical Discourse Analysis of Obama's Political Discourse". Retrieved on August 31st, 2012 from [http://www.pulib.sk/elpub2/FF/ferencik2/pdf\\_doc/6.pdf](http://www.pulib.sk/elpub2/FF/ferencik2/pdf_doc/6.pdf)
- Ikenna, K. and Richard, A. (2011). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Goodluck Jonathan's Declaration of Interest in the PDP Presidential Primaries. *Language, Discourse and Society*, Vol. 1(1)32-54
- Miller, D (2004). ". . . to meet our common challenge" : ENGAGEMENT strategies of alignment and alienation in current US international discourse" In M.Gotti and C. Christopher (eds) *Textus XVIII*. [www.grammatics.com/appraisal/millerD](http://www.grammatics.com/appraisal/millerD).
- Olaniyi, K. (2010). A Pragmatic Analysis of President Yar'adua's Inaugural Speech of 29th May, 2007. *Journal of the Nigeria English Studies Association (JNESA)* 13(2)45-59
- Pu, C. (2007). Discourse analysis of President Bush's speech at Tsinghua University. *China Intercultural Communication Studies*, 16(1), pp. 205-216.
- Rees, A. (1983). Pronouns of person and power: a study of personal pronouns in public discourse. M. A. dissertation, University of Sheffield.
- Schaffner, C. (1996). Political Speeches and Discourse analysis. *Current Issues in Language and Society*. 3:201-4
- Sharndama, E.C. (2015). Political discourse: A critical discourse analysis of President Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural speech. *European Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research* 3(3), pp.12 -24.
- Sheyholislami, J. (2001). "Critical Discourse Analysis". Retrieved October 10, 2008, from <http://www.carleton.ca/sheyhol/cda.htm>
- Van Dijk, T. (2006). Discourse and manipulation. *Discourse and Society*, 17, 359-383.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1997). What is political discourse analysis. In J. Blommaert & C. Bulcaen (Eds.), *Political linguistics*. (pp. 11"-52). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Wilson, J. (1990). *Political speaking*. Cambridge: Blackwell.