

Textual Analysis on Governor Godwin Obaseki's 61st Independence Day Speech

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Abstract

The study was embarked upon to critically analyse the 61st Independence Day Speech of Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo state using Van Dijk's triadic model to discuss the macrostructure, superstructure and microstructure of the speech. The study was anchored on the speech act theory while the full transcript of the Governor was the source of data. Findings from the study revealed that the macrostructure (thematic) of the Governor's speech centred on the Independence Day celebration and the 30th anniversary of the state and the steps his government is taking in delivering the dividend of democracy to all Edo people. Findings also showed that the superstructure (schematic) of the speech was in order with a good organised opening, content and closing while the microstructure (semantic) of the speech was simple and easy to comprehend by the audience. Therefore, the researchers concluded that the Governor's speech was coherent, logical and without ambiguity. The researchers recommended that Edo people who constitute the audience of the speech during the celebration of the country's Independence Day should always endeavour to pay adequate attention to the speech to grasp the information disseminated.

Keywords: Governor, Speech, Independence Day, Godwin Obaseki, Edo State

Introduction and Motivation for the Study

Every country is defined by its history. Events, both past and present taking place within a geo-political entity make-up its history. These, therefore, follows that there is no country that does not have its own unique history. The history of Nigeria, however, precedes her independence which she won from her British colonialists on 1st October, 1960. Countries come together to celebrate their history during certain days or periods of the year in forms of national celebrations. For countries that had experienced colonialism, the date they earn their independence from their colonial master(s) often

becomes the most remarkable of their national days. Indeed, Nigeria is not left-out in the practice of celebrating her independence day, which has now become a yearly event. On 1st October, 1960, Nigeria gained her independence from her colonial masters and so, October 1 of every year is the most remarkable of all national day celebrations of the country. On this day, usually, at the federal level, the incumbent president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and governors at the state level deliver speeches to all the citizens of their states and the country. In the speech, issues relating to or affecting the country are highlighted and homage is paid to its nationalist leaders, who fought tirelessly to free the country from the shackles of colonialism. This presents a veritable platform for the president and governors of Nigeria to make promises of good and responsible governance for all citizens. To achieve this, the enormous power of language is greatly used.

Consequently, several political speeches have been delivered across various places concerning events in Nigeria and studies have been carried out by several scholars and researchers on these speeches. Despite the studies carried out by these scholars and researchers over time, it is so unimaginable that there is no single study on Governor Godwin Obaseki's speeches to understand his schematic, rhetoric, stylistic, syntactic and semantics in his speeches, despite his numerous speeches he had made ever since he became the governor of Edo state. Based on this, the research work sought to adequately fill this gap which has been identified.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Examine the macrostructure (thematic) of Governor Godwin Obaseki's speech on Nigeria's 61st Independence Day celebration.
2. Ascertain the superstructure (schematic) of the governor's speech during Nigeria's 61st Independence Day celebration.
3. Identify the microstructure (sematic) of the governor's speech during Nigeria's 61st Independence Day celebration.

Conceptual Review and Review of Related Literature

In the field of political communication, speeches or addresses have strong communication channel through which great politicians gain power, prestige, interest and loyalty from their followers. According to Ekharefo & Ambrose (2015), politics is essentially the struggle for and the use of state power by individuals and socialite groups. Asemah (2010) and Nwammuo, Edegoh & Asemah (2013) note that political communication is a process that touches all aspects of society's life and, therefore, takes place in a communication system that produces messages at the boundary between politics and the media. Communication entails the interaction between and or among individuals through previously agreed symbols (Asemah, 2009; Asemah, 2011a; Asemah, 2011b). In view of this, Sharndama (2015); Anyanwu (2020) aver that there is a strong correlation between politics and communication. Arguing in this line, Davis & Gardner (2012) say that a political leader must be able to use speech or rhetoric

to his or her greatest advantage to anticipate, address or mediate crisis. On his part, Andrew (2011) stresses that while in office, presidents and governors often use the permanent campaign to keep the public focused on issues important to them and to maintain a positive image in the media; hence, there is always a nexus between politics and speeches and a leader who intends to remain in the helms of power must be skillful in the delivery of speeches.

Over the years, a handful of scholars home and abroad, have done a good number of studies to analyse presidents' and governors' speeches. In the first place, Kazemian (2014) had carried out a discourse analysis on Obama's 2012 speeches. The researcher builds his findings on Ideational Grammatical Metaphor (IGM) as captured within systematic functional linguistic as proposed by Halliday (1994). In addition, he considered Critical Discourse Analysis as well as rhetorical strategies. The major objectives of that study was to inquire into IGM, rhetorical tropes, passivation, modality and their respective frequencies and function in the corpus comprising five political addresses. The choice of the speeches was on the basis of their skillful political rhetoric and oratory with certain criteria for selecting these strategies.

In a similar fashion, Wang (2010) adopted the theory of systemic functional linguistic to analyse two of Barack Obama's presidential speeches from the point of modality and transitivity. In effort to find the frequencies and percentage of the processes, the researcher presented the result that the use of the material processes; the most frequent processes used in Obama's speeches demonstrate his attempts to government achievement to the audience, as well as their future plan. In the same vein, Bellova (2010) wrote on the evolution of means of persuasion; discourse analysis of sample inaugural speeches of U.S Presidents 1833-1997. Based on the findings from the analysis, the means of persuasion were located and evaluated. It was then determined whether or not the language of persuasion had evolved over time. In the theoretical part, the discourse analysis and its levels and methods were described in detail under the headings of graphology, phonetics, lexis, stylistics, discourse and pragmatics as well as the history of rhetoric and inaugural speeches.

On his part, Loudenslager (2012) examined three ceremonial speeches that propelled Lincoln to presidency to find out the persuasive techniques used by Lincoln. Using Aristotelian approach of rhetorical analysis, Loudenslager found that the persuasive devices Lincoln used include figures of speech such as repetition to unite the listeners to end expansion of slavery, alliteration, metaphor and allusion to elucidate and further his arguments against slavery. Loudenslager also concluded that Lincoln establishes themes that develop his arguments on slavery and intensifies that by means of contrasting slavery with the principles set out in the Declaration of independence. And affirmative dealing with adverse argument, hyperbolic/exaggeration, rhetorical questions and using plain and descriptive language to stir emotion of the listeners and describe his feelings were found by the researcher to be among other persuasive techniques used by Lincoln.

In his contribution, Madkur (2018) analysed the speech made by President Joko Widodo at the CEO Summit in Beijing, China on 10th November, 2014 using the Van Dijk's triadic model. Madkura analysed the thematic, schematic and semantic features of the speech and concluded that the president was successful in stating the theme,

creating scheme and expressing semantics in the speech. Similarly, Munawar (2018) analysed Donald Trump's first presidential speech using Norma Fairclough's three levels of discourse and found that the president did well with regards to the ideal expressed in the speech. In the same vein, Sharndama (2015) did a Critical Discourse Analysis on President Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural speech, using Norman Fairclough's three-point model and found that the speech essentially comprised appreciations, expression of the government plans and a subtle criticism of the previous administration. Likewise, Anyawu (2020) embarked on a stylistic analysis of two of President Muhammadu Buhari's addresses during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that the president utilised language properly to convey his messages.

On their parts, Peter & Ojukwu (2020) engaged in a process type analysis of president Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural speech using MAK Halliday's Systematic Functional Grammar and found that mental and material process were mostly used by the president in accepting the mandate given to him by Nigerians. Temitope (2019) did a critical discourse analysis on President Muhammadu Buhari 2019 Independence Day Speech using Van Dijk's (2004) model of critical discourse analysis. Findings revealed that the speech is characterised by two ideological strategies: positive self-representation and negative other-representation. While the former is deployed to project his administration as people-oriented, the latter is deployed to blame, berate and condemn the past governments in the country.

Relatedly, Lagu (2021) did persuasive strategies of 2015 inaugural speeches of Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State using Halliday's systemic functional linguistics and the practice of Critical Discourse Analysis. The study revealed that Wike's speeches open with words of appreciation to God and humanity. In the second step, intentions are declared by the governor who assures the people of Rivers State that their suffering has already gone into history. The study demonstrates how ideas and thoughts are represented in the select speeches of the governor of Rivers State. Therefore, based on the fact that there has not been any research done by any scholar on Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo state speeches, this study was embarked upon by the researchers to critically analysed the Independence Day Speech of Governor Obaseki by beaming searchlight on his thematic, schematic and semantic nature of his speech with a view to critically x-raying the whole structure of the speech.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the speech act theory. Speech act theory accounts for an utterance that has performative function in language and communication. According to Bach (1987), "almost any speech act is really the performance of several acts at once, distinguished by different aspects of the speaker's intention: there is the act of saying something, what one does in saying it, such as requesting or promising and how one is trying to affect one's audience. Acts such as promising, ordering, greeting, warning, inviting and congratulating are commonly incorporated within 'Speech Acts' as they are regarded or described as actions performed by speakers and in most cases, they equally compel responses on the part of the addressee which can be in the form of verbal or attitudinal response, where movement involving the performance of an action

is compelled. According to BachHarnish, speech act theory was developed from the philosophical theories of Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein believes that meaning derives from pragmatic tradition, demonstrating the importance of how language is used to accomplish objectives within specific situations. Littlejohn (2009) asserts that by following rules to accomplish a goal, communication becomes a set of language games. Thus, utterances do more than reflect a meaning, they are words designed to get things done.

The theory becomes relevant to this research because the governor's Independence Day speech was performative in nature. This is because the governor as an Act performer employed some rhetoric devices with a view to compelling responses on the part of the audience which can be in the form of verbal or attitudinal responses. The governor also tried to affect the audience minds through an oratory act performance as well as makes his intentions known in other for the addressee to have same empathy with him. Similarly, the act of making promises to the audience was also employed in the speech to produce attitudinal responses in the direction of the governor. Therefore, the speech act theory has a very strong bearing for analysing the governor's speech with a view to bringing to fore the thematic, schematic and semantic elements.

Methodology

The researchers adopted the textual analysis method to critically analyse Governor Godwin Obaseki's 61st Independence Day Speech. Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafu & Okpanachi (2012) described textual analysis as the description of content, structure and functions of the messages contained in texts. Thus, the analysis was anchored on Van Dijk's (1997) triadic model which includes the macrostructure (thematic), superstructure (schematic) and microstructure (semantic). Van Dijk's model was found appropriate to this study because as noted by Madkur (2018), the model is primarily a socio-cognitive one and is characterised by the interaction between cognition, discourse and society. The primary data for the study is the full transcript of the governor on Nigeria's 61st Independence Day which was retrieved online. Also, research papers and scholarly articles from online journals also formed the data for this research.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Macrostructure of the Governor's Speech: Thematic

The macrostructure also known as thematic structure has to do with the general picture or ideal or message of a text/speech/address. Dijk (2001), cited in Madkur (2018) describes it as "global coherence," that is, the elements of the text are sequenced and are referred to one general idea. Wang & Guo (2014) cited in Ahmad (2019), define coherence as a dynamic process and can be achieved by the cooperation made by the discourse producer and receiver based on their mutual understanding. The governor's

speech has politics (Nigeria's Independence) as the central theme which was also tied to the 30th anniversary of Edo state. Although, in paragraphs (4 & 5), the governor made reference to the global pandemic and economic challenges facing the country, but Paragraphs (1, 2 & 3) vividly capture the major theme of the speech which is political. Although, the speech is very simple and free from ambiguity, yet the speech has a very powerful political undertone. In paragraph (1) which is the opening of the speech, the governor lucidly revealed the theme of the speech; he said:

“I heartily salute, congratulate and celebrate our great country Nigeria and its citizens, as we celebrate the 61st anniversary of the nation's independence this year which coincidentally also marks the 30th anniversary of the creation of Edo State.”

The above opening paragraph shows how the governor was able to tie the two historic political events together. He saluted and congratulated the country and its citizens for witnessing another Independence Day. Paragraph (2) also talks about politics. The governor said:

“As we celebrate these historic events, it is important that we deeply reflect on the vision of our founding fathers who laboured to secure our right to self-determination and establish a country based on equity, fairness and justice on October 1st 1960.”

From the above second paragraph, the governor made reference to the political vision of our past political leaders who struggled to attain independence in October 1st 1960. The governor called on Nigerians to reflect on the vision of our founding fathers who did everything within their power to build a single political entity called Nigeria which should be governed by equity, fairness and social justice. Similarly, paragraph (3) is also tied to politics. The governor said:

“Today, I join all patriots to once again affirm that “though our tribes and tongues may differ, in brotherhood we stand” and that the “labour of our heroes past shall never be in vain.”

In this paragraph, the governor acknowledged our tribal differences, but believed that together we can promote peace and oneness and achieve political stability despite our tribal, religious and cultural differences. He, however, reminded us to work together in other not to let the efforts of our heroes past be in vain. From the above paragraphs, it is crystal clear that the governor's speech reflects the theme of the speech.

b. Superstructure of the Governor's Speech: Schematic

Superstructure has to do with the frame of a text, such as opening, content and closing. The superstructure of the governor's speech is presented under the following headings below:

Opening

The entire speech opens with words of greetings by the governor. In Paragraph (1) the governor said:

I heartily salute, congratulate and celebrate our great country Nigeria and its citizens, as we celebrate the 61st anniversary of the nation's independence this year which coincidentally also marks the 30th anniversary of the creation of Edo State.

This kind of greeting is in conformity with the occasion which is expected that the governor begins by greeting the audience. His greeting is suitable for the occasion. Immediately after the formalities, the governor swiftly calls on the good people of Edo state and Nigerians to deeply reflect on the efforts of our founding fathers that did everything to achieve independence in October 1st, 1960.

Content

The content of the speech begins in paragraph (2) and runs through to paragraph 8. In the content, the governor majorly addressed the essence of the speech which is for Nigerians to always remember and reflect on the efforts of our founding fathers who fought gallantly to establish a one political entity called Nigeria in October 1, 1960 based on equity, fairness and justices.

In paragraph (3), the governor affirms that though our tribes and tongues may differ, in brotherhood we stand and that the "labour of our heroes past shall never be in vain." In paragraph (4), he however made reference to the current global and local challenges facing the country which he says may be discouraging, but expressed optimism that with resilient, the country will prevail and triumph over these challenges while in paragraph (5), he acknowledged the negative effects occasioned by the global pandemic, the downturn of the country's economy coupled with the high level of insecurity facing the country, but he expressed optimism that with unity, Nigeria will overcome.

In paragraph (6 & 7), the governor listed the things his administration is doing in the state in promoting good governance such as transforming the existing institutions, curbing corruption, reducing the leakages in public resources and building the capacity of workers to ensure efficiency in production and service delivery. According to him, the steps his administration has taken would help strengthen the political and economic fabric of the state and also enhance social justice, security, economic development and delivery of good services to the citizens.

Closing

The closing of the speech is in paragraph (8) and in it, the governor urges the good people of Edo state to be hopeful, prayerful and continue to work towards sustained peace, unity and progress of the state and the country in general.

c. **Microstructure of the Governor's Speech: Semantic**

Microstructure entails the local meaning of a text and this can be understood from the angle of word choice, sentence type and structure, and language style. As Madkur (2018), Anini & Widodo (2018) note, the semantic aspect of a text can further be broken down to include the semantic, syntactic, stylistic and rhetorical aspects. Therefore, the researcher presents the analysis of the microstructure under the following headings.

Semantic

As observed by Ajayi & Filani (2014) & Ajayi (2017), pronouns and pronominals can be pragmatically deployed in discourse as markers of in-group identities. Following the position of these scholars, there is the identification of the preponderant use of the inclusive 'we' by the governor inclusive to create an executive identity for himself and members of his administration as well as the other arms of the government. In doing this, he hopes to assure the good people of Edo state that he is not running a one-man show without due recourse to other arms of government and essentially members of his administration. The governor also used the pronoun 'we' to express his belief in collective governance (following the principles of democracy). This came to light in paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 & 7 and this depicts the fact that the governor believes in unity of purpose and collective responsibility. The governor however made use of 'I' in the opening paragraph to make his greetings and also in paragraph 3 to join other patriots to reaffirm that though our tribes and tongues may differ, but in brotherhood we stand and that the labour of our heroes past shall never be in vain. This vividly shows the passion by the governor in personalising the speech.

Syntax

The governor used more of the coordinating conjunction "and" to join his words, phrases and clauses together. Example of such usage can be found in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 of the speech. In paragraph 4, the governor used a contrasting marker "however" and "but" to transit from one ideal to another in his speech.

Stylistic

A major feature of the speech is the use of simple diction (word) or language by the governor. The language or words of the speech is straight to the point without ambiguity and high sounding words which make the speech easier to understand by the audience. In terms of sentence structure, the governor used more of compound and compound complex sentences as against complex sentences. An example of compound sentence is found in paragraph (3) and it reads:

Today, I join all patriots to once again affirm that "though our tribes and tongues may differ, in brotherhood we stand" and that the "labour of our heroes past shall never be in vain."

Rhetoric

Rhetoric is one of the ways to dig the writer's ideology in expressing his thoughts into a text. Therefore, the governor in a stylistic move to appeal to the conscience of Edo

people and Nigerians to continue to uphold the legacies of our founding fathers uses more of logos and ethos as there was no trace of pathos in the speech.

From paragraph (1) all through to (8) is full of logos as the governor went ahead to highlight the number of things his administration is doing to enhance efficiency and transparency in governance as well as cushion the harsh economic effects occasioned by the pandemic on Edo people which include transforming the existing institutions, curbing corruption, reducing the leakages in public resources and building the capacity of workers to ensure efficiency in production and service delivery. The governor also used ethos which can be found in paragraph (2) to reminiscence as well as remind Edo people of the efforts and labour of our heroes past to secure our right to self-determination and establish a country based on equity, fairness and justice on October 1st 1960. However, the speech lacked pathos as there was no paragraph or sentence in the speech that made mention of tragedies or losses.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study revealed that the macrostructure (thematic) of the governor's speech centred on politics which was Nigeria's 61st Independence Day celebration and the 30th anniversary of Edo state and the step the governor is taking to deepen democracy in the state. It was also found that the superstructure (schematic) of the speech is very much in order as the organisation ranging from the opening, content and closing of the speech. The governor started with a good and empathic opening after which he moved through the content from paragraph (2) through to paragraph (8) and ended the speech by calling on the good people of Edo state to be hopeful, prayerful and continue to work towards sustained peace, unity and progress of the state and the country.

Findings also showed that the microstructure (semantic) of the speech is good and simple to comprehend by the audience. There was no high sounding word or ambiguity in the speech which makes it easy to understand. Also the governor use of "we" shows the democratic and inclusive nature of his government. Synthetically, it was found that he used more of conjunction "and" and seldom use "but" and "however" to link and contrast sentences. Stylistically, it was found that the governor used a simple diction and a combination of compound and compound complex sentences.

On the aspect of the rhetoric devices, it was found that the governor used more of logos to drive home his point. He also employed ethos to remind Edo people of the gallant effort made by our founding fathers in attaining independence 61 years ago.

Over and above, the findings of this study is related to previous study done by Madkur (2018) who analysed the speech made by President Joko Widodo at the CEO Summit in Beijing, China on 10th November, 2014 using the Van Dijk's triadic model. Madkura analysed the thematic, schematic and semantic features of the speech and concluded that the president was successful in stating the theme, creating scheme and expressing semantics in the speech. Also the study is related to the study done by Munawar (2018) who analysed Donald Trump's first presidential speech using Norma

Fairclough's three levels of discourse and found that the president did well with regards to the ideal expressed in the speech.

In the same vein, the findings of the study is also related to the study done by Anyawu (2020) who embarked on a stylistic analysis of two of President Muhammadu Buhari's addresses during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that the president utilised language properly to convey his messages. Relatedly, the study can also find support with the study done by Ajewole (2013) who did a research on a Stylo-Rhetorical analysis of Obafemi Awolowo "Its not Life that Matter" and anchored it on the framework of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar and News Rhetoric approach. Findings from the study showed that Awolowo employed the use of the English Language as a strategy of persuasion to gain the support of the audience.

The findings of the study also align with that of Lagu (2021) who did a study on persuasive strategies of 2015 inaugural speeches of Governor Nyeson Wike of Rivers State, Nigeria and the study was anchored on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. The study demonstrates how ideals and thoughts are represented in the governor speeches to capture the attention of the audience.

Equally, the findings of the study align with the theoretical framework which is the speech act theory which the study was anchored on. The theory becomes relevant to this research because the governor's Independence Day speech was performative in nature. This is because the governor as an Act performer employed some rhetoric devices with a view to compelling responses on the part of the audience which can be in the form of verbal or attitudinal responses. The governor also tried to affect the audience minds through an oratory act performance as well as makes his intentions known in other for the addressee to have same empathy with him. This can be vividly seen at the opening (paragraph1) of the speech when the governor greeted, congratulated, celebrated the country and the citizens. Similarly, the act of making promises to the audience was also employed in the speech to produce attitudinal responses in the direction of the governor. This can also be seen in paragraph (6) of the speech where the governor promised and expresses his continual commitment to strengthen the foundations of our society by transforming our institutions, curbing corruption, reducing the leakages in public resources and building the capacity of our workers to ensure efficiency in production and service delivery.

According to Harnish (1979), speech act theory was developed from the philosophical theories of Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein believes that meaning derives from pragmatic tradition, demonstrating the importance of how language is used to accomplish objectives within specific situations. Littlejohn (2009) asserts that by following rules to accomplish a goal, communication becomes a set of language games. Thus, utterances do more than reflect a meaning, they are words designed to get things done. The above assertions have a solid relationship with the study when the governor under the microstructure (semantic) use simple and well-tailored words and language to drive home his speech to the audience.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study has revealed the macrostructure (thematic), superstructure (schematic) and microstructure (sematic) of the speech delivered by Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo state during the 61st Independence Day celebration in Nigeria. While the speech majorly focused on the Independence Day, the governor highlighted the steps his government is taking to deliver the dividend of democracy to all Edo people. Therefore, the speech has a good macrostructure, superstructure and microstructure. The use of “we” in the speech shows the democratic processed of the governor’s administration. Above all, the speech can be said to be good. Based on the conclusion, the researchers recommend that Edo people who constitute the audience of the speech during the celebration of the country’s Independence Day should always endeavour to pay adequate attention to the speech to comprehend the information disseminated.

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