



# A Stylistic Analysis of the Acceptance Speech of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the presentation of certificate of return by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

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**Abstract:** This study examines the Acceptance speech of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the presentation of certificate of return to him by the Independent National Electoral Commission. INEC. The objectives of the study are to examine the rhetorical and linguistic strategies employed in Bola Ahmed's acceptance speech and its overall effectiveness in conveying the intended message, the study adopts the theoretical framework of (Halliday, 1985) which explains how written and verbal text produce meanings, how the assets of language are arranged in dynamic environments and how they are operationally tied to meanings rather than concentrating on grammar as usual and this encourages a more open definition of language as a resource for making meanings. It is noteworthy that the framework of SFL conceives of language as an intricate system inherently imbued with layers of significance and it designed to convey three different meanings concurrently and these interpretations known as metafunctions includes interpersonal, ideational and textual metafunction but this study pays attention to the interpersonal metafunction of language. The study found that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's acceptance speech effectively employed rhetorical devices and linguistic strategies to convey a message of unity, hope, and collective responsibility; he employed a formal, metaphorical syntactic structure and grammatical construction to develop his identity as a dignified, empathetic, inclusive leader and strategically employs language to convey and reinforce his ideological goals. The study concluded that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu sheds light on the intricate and purposeful use of language and rhetoric by political leaders to communicate their visions, mobilize public support, convey their ideological goals with their acceptance speech and demonstrated the manifestation of political power in the speech showcasing how language can be a potent tool in influencing and persuading the masses.

**Keywords:** *Bola Ahmed Tinubu, certificate of return, acceptance speech, political speech, independent national electoral commission (INEC)*

**Received:** 2 January 2023; **Accepted:** 6 March 2023; **Published:** 4 June 2023

## INTRODUCTION

Political speeches, whether inaugural or acceptance, play a pivotal role in conveying the thoughts of politicians to the public, serving as crucial moments for leaders to express gratitude, outline their visions, and inspire confidence among supporters. This significance is not confined to Nigeria but extends globally. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a notable Nigerian presidential candidate, has generated varied opinions regarding his education, paternity, and income

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sources. To scrutinize his acceptance speech during the certificate presentation by INEC, this study investigates the stylistic elements, employing Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. It aims to discern whether these elements convey persuasiveness, mockery, information, inspiration, or a blend, and explores potential correlations between Tinubu's background and language expression.

Political speeches, encompassing acceptance, inaugural, and campaign addresses, often incorporate phrases such as "national progress," "transformation agenda," and "renewed hope" to influence public opinion. Politicians are recognized for their adept use of language to acquire and wield power (Ahmed, 2017); (Bagimbola, 2017); (Beard, 2000); (Khabut, 2022); (Koutchade, 2015); (Kulo, 2009). This study delves into the prevalent stylistic strategies in Tinubu's acceptance speech, aiming to examine how rhetorical and linguistic techniques contribute to conveying the intended message and revealing the underlying ideologies. The study questions focus on understanding the effectiveness of these strategies and the ideologies inherent in the speech. This study is particularly relevant, as there are no prior investigations into the stylistic analysis of President Tinubu's acceptance speech. Its goal is to scrutinize the language's impact on influencing the populace, shedding light on the role of political language in emotion, self-projection, persuasiveness, and communication effectiveness within the context of Bola Ahmed Tinubu's acceptance speech in political communication.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on presidential speeches have been carried out by some researchers (Sharndama & Mgbemena, 2015); (Isa, 2020); (Anderson, 2021); (Ugoala, 2017); (Anyanwu, 2023); (Asadu, 2022) analyze the linguistic elements of two major political speeches that were given by both Nigerian presidential candidates: Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of the People Democratic Party (PDP) and General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd) of the All Progressive Congress (APC). The study adopted the Crystal (1999) linguistic descriptive and discursive approach to language analysis which stated that knowing a language involves more than just making sounds; it also involves being competent to recognize sounds and comprehend what people are saying. The study shows how users of a language can manipulate resources from the collection at their disposal in order to achieve tactical and communicative proficiency beyond reflecting how the individual speakers used language resources to communicate their views. The data analysis for this research led to a verdict that discourses on politics have unique vocabulary and sentence structure.

Bolarinwa (2016) examines the acceptance speech of President Goodluck Jonathan; it provides insight into the stylistic analysis of political language style specifically conducted within the context of a chosen acceptance speech of President Goodluck Jonathan. She believed that politicians experiment with style in a bid to garner acceptance from the electorates through language. The political language used by the speaker must enable the listeners to visualize his or her vision and mission, politics should be conducted through advocacy rather than attack and emotional language should be used in all recommendations made by the research.

Ugoala (2017) examined President Buhari's directive to the Service Chiefs regarding the urgency of combating Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria using the Language Expectancy theory employed by Burgoon and Stewart (1975). The objective of the study was to draw attention to the coherent communicative tactics and semantic connections that former President Muhammadu Buhari used to make his order to the Service Chiefs and focus on recognizing the lexical and semantic connection in the former President's directive to the Service Chiefs. She concluded that the order to the Service Chiefs contains terms with discernible semantic links that used semantic relations: synonymy, antonym, polysemy, hyponym, and metonym to effectively communicate his thoughts and ideas to the Service Chiefs, who were the speech's main audience.

(E. C. Anyanwu, 2020) investigated two speeches of President Muhammadu Buhari during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic to examine how he has employed language, the linguistic elements used and the stylistic and pragmatic imports. Using the theoretical framework of stylistics, the researcher found out that Buhari tactfully used words to address Nigerians on Covid-19 and stressed the measures to be taken to contain the spread of the virus. The study found that Buhari used coordination to denote relationship of grammatical units in his speeches. The analysis revealed that president is committed in combating the coronavirus pandemic that is ravaging his nation.

Isa (2020) emphasizes that the pursuit, formation, and exercise of authority are all characterized by the skilled use of language in the discourse analysis of selected campaign speeches of President Muhammadu Buhari and Goodluck Jonathan. The study employs the multifaceted approach to CDA, which includes the representational (Chilton, 2003) model, the ideological (Dijk, 1998) model, and the three-dimensional Fairclough (1992) model. The findings

demonstrated the two speakers employed a variety of rhetorical tools to influence and appeal to the audience in an effort to gain electoral votes; how the format of campaign addresses has become such that politicians build how they appear in the public eye prior to focusing on the country's challenges; and that the concept of interrelationships influenced the speeches because it served as a way to portray both political candidates background and advised that the use of language and philosophical politics should be taken into consideration in order to conduct any extensive evaluation of campaign speeches.

Ugoala (2020) investigates the numerous face-mitigation techniques in the autobiography *My Transition Hours* (MTH) of former Nigerian President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. The four verbal politeness tactics to redress face loss were used to analyze the excerpts comprising face-saving activities (FSA), which were selected using principles from (Brown & Levinson, 1987). She advised the avoidance of using linguistic expressions and justifications that might further endanger the face of the speaker or listener. The research finds that individuals employ various face-saving techniques, particularly when they believe their reputation has been tarnished and it highlights the significance of politeness techniques in public narratives in Nigeria in our pursuit of a national development trajectory.

It is evident that from the examinations of related research and reviews of stylistic analysis of all kinds of presidential speeches, no one had analyzed the acceptance speech of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the presentation of the certificate of return by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

### *Stylistics: A brief overview*

Stylistics is a systematic method of analyzing a literary work, particularly the language used. It aims to clarify how language affects meaning, style, and particular effects. One of the key methods for examining a literary work from a linguistic perspective is the study of stylistics. In relation to history, the analysis of style originates back to the fifth century BC literary scholars of the Greeks and Romans. Rhetoric dominated art at this period.

This discipline comprises of set of rules and strategies that help writers and speakers "speak well." In other words, they fully embellished the language with all the symbols and cliches necessary to alter the audience's perceptions and emotions.

The fact that stylistics in the early twentieth century was a development of literary criticism is a further significant aspect of the historical development of stylistics. Stylistics primarily concentrated on literary works and not on their writers. The author was the focal point of attention in the nineteenth century. Simpson (2004) two vital critics in Great Britain, changed the trajectory of literary criticism through their arrival on the scene. They provided greater focus to the literary texts. They reached an understanding that the text has an effect on the readers.

A further advancement in stylistics known as Russian Formalism is credited to academics from Eastern Europe and Russia. This group included psychologists, literary critics, and linguists. The textual analysis, also referred to as foregrounding theory, was made possible by them. According to this perspective, certain textual elements had a greater impact on readers' ability to interpret the text than others.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The qualitative method of data analysis is adopted in this study. The data for this study is the acceptance speech that was made on Wednesday, 1st March 2023 during the presentation of the certificate of return to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. The speech data was retrieved from YouTube: <https://youtu.be/C-GgWi6JTcY> and transcribed into a written text by the researcher. The goal of the study is to identify the stylistic elements that are inherent in the selected acceptance speech: a thorough perusal of the accessible speech to get acquainted with its contents. The context in which the speech was delivered and the events leading up to their delivery were subsequently looked upon. In this particular situation, consideration was given to the purpose of the speech, the precise time it was delivered, and the context of the event. The speech was broken into excerpts to analyze the rhetorical strategies employed in the speech and the kind of ideologies underlying the speech.

The speech was categorized and codified stylistically important elements such as imagery, repetition, self-projection, rhetoric, and persuasive methods in the acceptance speech to ascertain the impact and effectiveness of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's message to the populace since this study focuses on the interpersonal metafunction of the (Halliday, 2004) Systemic Functional Linguistics theory.

## **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

*Excerpts that show how the rhetorical and linguistic strategies employed in President Bola Tinubu's acceptance speech aid him in conveying the intended message*

**Positive self-projection** :President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is attempting to project a positive perception of his identity via this speech. As a result, he creates a self-conception and portrays himself before the audience. His perspective on life and disposition are inherent in this paradigm. Through this process, a certain picture is created in the audience's political consciousness. This phenomenon is prevalent in this acceptance speech and it is regarded as an important stylistic element.

### *Excerpt 1*

**...I am no different than any of you...** : President Tinubu uses the above excerpt to let the audience know that even if he is the president, he still has equal status with them and that he is privileged to be the president. By doing so, he establishes a social relationship with the audience and this buttresses the interpersonal metafunction of language. He creates a selfconception and emphasizes his role in humility and service-oriented. This projection of humility and equality serves to inspire and empower the audience. Positive self-projection in this sentence is achieved by projecting an image of relatability, emphasizing shared experiences, and inspiring the audience to believe in their own potential for success. The speaker positions himself as a source of motivation and encouragement suggesting that his achievements are not unique and that others can surpass him with effort and determination. Through this process, a certain picture is created in the audience's political consciousness.

### *Excerpt 2*

**...I extend the embrace and comfort...** : The interpersonal metafunction of language as described by Halliday is evident in the above statement of President Tinubu through his use of a declarative mood to express his action of offering support and reassurance by directly addressing the audience and conveying a sense of personal connection and demonstrating his politeness and empathy in extending emotional comfort, all of which collectively serve to establish and strengthen social bonds and convey a positive interpersonal message. Positive self-projection in the above excerpt involves the speaker acknowledging and empathizing with those who did not support them while projecting an image of understanding, unity, and empathy. President Tinubu uses embrace and comfort to emphasize the importance of unity and collaboration stating that the victory should not be limited to one person or party. He reaches out to those who did not support him acknowledging their disappointment and calling for a collective effort to progress as a nation. This highlights his dedication to promoting a sense of belonging amongst all Nigerians projecting a positive image of himself as a unifying and compassionate leader.

**Promise** :President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's acceptance speech focuses on commitments and actions as he takes office. He pledges to extend outreach to all sectors of society, expressing his aspiration to interact with diverse populations and facilitate meaningful dialogue. His commitment to avoiding belittling individuals with opposing viewpoints underscores his dedication to upholding freedom of expression, emphasizing that a robust democracy thrives through transparent and courteous exchanges of ideas. This declaration signifies his intent to cultivate an inclusive political atmosphere valuing dissenting perspectives and giving them due regard.

### *Excerpt 3*

**...I will work day and night...** : The interpersonal metafunction of language is demonstrated in above statement of President Tinubu's statement as it conveys his strong personal commitment indicating a positive attitude and dedication to the audience, which helps establish a sense of trust and rapport, thereby managing the social relationship and negotiating the shared understanding that the speaker is fully committed to their responsibilities. The promise of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu revolves around the commitment to work tirelessly for the betterment of Nigeria and it is intended to inspire confidence and trust in the speaker's leadership and dedication to the welfare of the nation. He promises to extend his outreach to all sectors of society, President Tinubu conveys his aspiration to interact with diverse segments of the population and facilitate meaningful dialogue and mutual comprehension. His commitment to refraining from belittling individuals with opposing viewpoints emphasizes his dedication to upholding the principles of freedom of expression. It also underscores the acknowledgment that a robust democracy flourishes through transparent and courteous exchanges of ideas.

**Repetition** :Repetition emerges as a significant stylistic feature in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's acceptance speech, strategically employed to underscore specific points and ideas. According to Inogo-Mora (2004), the repetition of structure and concept serves as a persuasive rule, adding consistency and rhythm while simplifying the message for the listener. This rhetorical device is utilized to draw attention to key elements, foster a sense of unity, and clarify the speaker's role and intentions. Through repetition, the speech aims to reinforce the message, making it more impactful and memorable to the audience.

#### *Excerpt 4*

##### **Repetition of I**

**...I realize that I am...** : President Tinubu with the above statement reflects on his self-awareness and introspection conveying a sense of humility and recognition of his audience's position or feelings. This helps to establish a genuine and relatable social relationship by acknowledging shared human experiences and emotions with the audience about the speaker's personal perspective.

Moreso, the researcher found out that the repetition of "I" at the beginning of the sentence emphasizes the personal acknowledgment and understanding of the speaker while the second "I" reinforces the speaker's humility and recognition of his role as a servant to a greater purpose.

#### *Excerpt 5*

**...You even can do better. You must do better...** : President Tinubu encourages and challenges the audience, using "you" repeatedly to directly address them conveying a positive attitude of potential improvement with a motivational tone that aims to establish a sense of responsibility and urging them to strive for higher achievement, thus facilitating an interactive and aspirational social relationship.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu uses the first "you" to reinforce the idea that the populace can do even better, setting a higher standard. The second "you" is used to convey a sense of obligation or responsibility emphasizing that they must strive for improvement. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's use of repetition adds impact and resonance to the statements making them more memorable and persuasive. The repetition in this excerpt adds consistency and rhythm, making it simple for the listener to grasp, and helps them concentrate on the message.

**Metaphor** :The acceptance speech of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu contains metaphors that are used to make the speech more engaging and convey complex ideas and emotions in a more vivid and relatable way.

#### *Excerpt 6*

**The road has been long. Yet, we walked it...** : President Bola Ahmed Tinubu employs a declarative mood that sets the tone for conveying information while the use of "we" directly addresses and includes the audience creating a sense of collective engagement. This demonstrates the interpersonal function of connecting the speaker with the audience and fostering a social relationship.

Moreover, the contrasting conjunction "yet" suggests that despite the challenges and the length of the journey, the collective effort "we walked it" signifies determination, perseverance, and achievement. This communicates an attitude of positivity and resilience while emphasizing the group's ability to overcome obstacles together.

The speaker employs the metaphor of a "long road" to symbolize a challenging journey or experience. "The road has been long" signifies that the journey has been arduous and time-consuming, filled with obstacles. The phrase "Yet, we walked it" conveys resilience and determination, suggesting that despite difficulties, the individuals persevered and made progress. The metaphor emphasizes the strength to move forward in the face of adversity and challenges, creating vivid mental images for the audience. It illustrates the arduous path to the presidency, symbolizing the struggles and efforts faced during the election process, and helps the audience envision a strenuous contest where significant effort and determination led to victory.

#### *Excerpt 7*

**The battle has been hard fought. Yet, we won it...** : The election and its antecedents are metaphorically compared to a battle. President Tinubu uses the concept of a battle as a metaphor for a challenging and strenuous endeavor or

conflict. The battle has been hard fought portrays that the election has been extremely challenging, requiring great effort, determination, and persistence. It may involve facing strong opposition, obstacles, or difficulties. They effectively foster interpersonal communication and relationship-building by connecting the speaker with the audience and conveying a sense of accomplishment.

Yet, we won it indicates that despite the difficulty and adversity encountered, he ultimately emerged victorious. "Won it" is a metaphorical way of saying he achieved his goal, succeeded, or overcame the challenges he faced. The researcher found out that this metaphor is used by the speaker to emphasize the idea that even in the face of significant adversity and obstacles, people or groups can achieve success through determination, effort, and resilience. It underscores the notion of triumphing over difficulties.

#### ***Excerpt 8***

**...Holding this great symbol of democracy...** : The metaphor in this statement uses the physical object as a symbol to represent the abstract concepts of democracy and national leadership. It adds depth and significance to the idea that a young person is about to assume a leadership role in the nation, emphasizing their role as a living embodiment of these important ideals and responsibilities creating vivid mental imagery, making it more powerful and memorable.

The statement above implies the ceremonial context where President Tinubu is addressing an audience. By using this language, he establishes a hierarchical relationship, positioning himself as the holder of the symbol of democracy which carries a position of authority and leadership. This sets the tone for the social relationship between him and his audience. The adjective "great" conveys a positive attitude and feeling towards the symbol suggesting that the speaker views the certificate as highly significant and valuable. This choice of language reflects a sense of pride, reverence, and perhaps even excitement in the speaker's tone. President Tinubu negotiates meaning with the audience by conveying that the certificate in question represents the core principles of democracy, such as freedom, participation, and accountability. In doing so, the speaker invites the audience to share in his interpretation and understanding of the symbol's significance.

#### ***Excerpt 9***

**This great project called Nigeria...** : In President Tinubu's acceptance speech, Nigeria is metaphorically compared to a project that calls upon all citizens. It also symbolizes the collective endeavor of nation-building and governance in Nigeria. It emphasizes the importance of unity and common purpose in addressing the nation's challenges and suggests that the nation's well-being should transcend partisan differences. This statement of President Tinubu, emphasizes the shared responsibility and the collaborative nature of nation-building implying that President Tinubu and his audience are participants in this project, it also conveys a positive attitude towards the country and negotiates meaning by framing Nigeria as a dynamic and collaborative project, thus encouraging engagement and commitment to the nation's growth and development.

**Personification** : The personification in Bola Ahmed Tinubu's acceptance speech involves giving human qualities or attributes to abstract concepts or entities. In this case, personification is used to imbue abstract concepts like poverty, hunger, scarcity, brutality, violence, and peace with human characteristics and actions.

#### ***Excerpt 10***

**...Let us create prosperity and jobs...** : The statement above conveys a proactive and optimistic attitude from President Tinubu by defining the action required to create prosperity and jobs, motivating individuals to work together toward economic growth and employment opportunities.

President Tinubu in his acceptance speech personified poverty as if it were a condition that can be engaged in a conversation or negotiation. It is as if poverty has agency and the speaker is proposing a plan to change its status to prosperity.

#### ***Excerpt 11***

**...Chasing the hunger from our midst...** : Hunger is personified by suggesting that it can be chased away as if it were a physical presence or entity. The act of feeding the people is portrayed as a means of combating this personified hunger. Through the use of inclusive language like our midst President Tinubu fosters unity among the audience conveying a proactive and determined attitude to combat hunger and emphasizing the importance of collective effort in achieving

the goal of food security and well-being.

#### **Excerpt 12**

**Where there is now scarcity, let us rediscover abundance...**: Scarcity is personified as something that can be transformed or reversed. It's given the human-like quality of being discoverable and changeable. In this statement, President Tinubu utilizes language to cultivate a sense of collective partnership within the audience, employing the inclusive phrase let us to imply cooperation in addressing scarcity and attaining abundance thereby establishing a social bond rooted in joint action and a shared dedication to a common objective. Additionally, his language conveys a dual perspective characterized by both concern and optimism as it acknowledges existing challenges with scarcity while simultaneously expressing a hopeful and determined attitude towards rediscovering abundance highlighting the importance of actively pursuing abundance despite any obstacles. Furthermore, the statement engages in meaning negotiation by explicitly stating the shared aim of transitioning from scarcity to abundance, inviting the audience to align their comprehension with the speaker's objective of addressing shortages and emphasizing the significance of collaborative efforts in achieving this goal. In essence, this language effectively motivates individuals to collaboratively pursue economic prosperity and resource sufficiency, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and a positive, resolute outlook.

**Parallelism** : [Ayuningsih, Ali, and Malabar \(2020\)](#) and [Tariq and Mukheef \(2019\)](#) posit that parallelism is a device that represents a number of concepts through a succession of related structures. This may be used to highlight how equally important the concepts are and can also provide symmetry and rhythm, which improve the speech's memorability. The acceptance speech by Bola Ahmed Tinubu exhibits parallelism through the repetition of similar grammatical structures and ideas often in a balanced or parallel manner. Parallelism is a rhetorical device that enhances the rhythm and impact of a speech or text.

#### **Excerpt 13**

**... A victory at all, it cannot simply be a victory for one man... a victory for all Nigerians...** : The speaker effectively defines unity among Nigerians portraying a humble and inclusive attitude by describing the victory as a collective achievement motivating individuals to work together towards the objective of national progress and success.

Parallelism is used in this statement by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to convey a message of inclusivity and the idea that the victory should benefit not just one individual or party but the entire nation. The introductory part of the sentence establishes the idea that the concept of victory being discussed is incomplete or insufficient in some way. The second part of the sentence introduces a contrast by shifting from what the victory cannot be to what it must be. The use of "It must become" signals a call to action, indicating that the victory should transform into something broader and more inclusive. The final parallel element specifies that the victory should be shared by all Nigerians who share a commitment to improving society as a whole and the idea of inclusivity and collective responsibility.

In summary, this parallelism is used to contrast the limitations of a victory restricted to one person or one party with the broader and more desirable outcome of a victory that encompasses all Nigerians dedicated to the betterment of society. The repetition of parallel structures ("it cannot," "even" "it must become," and "who are committed to") serves to emphasize the point and make the message more impactful. It underscores the importance of unity and collective effort for the betterment of the nation.

#### **Excerpt 14**

**...Day by day brick by brick... poverty, prosperity, and jobs...** : The use of parallel structure in the phrases above creates a rhythmic and persuasive cadence that makes President Tinubu's promises sound more achievable and appealing. This parallelism highlights a contrast between different conditions or states. It presents a vision where poverty is replaced by prosperity and where jobs play a role in achieving this transformation. The repetition of nouns in this way reinforces the speaker's commitment to addressing these important issues in a systematic and balanced manner. It also adds a sense of completeness to the list of challenges and solutions, making the message more persuasive.

**Allusion** : [Bibbee \(2003\)](#) states that an allusion is a rhetorical tactic that draws the reader's or listener's attention to previously written or spoken material. It refreshes information and experience in the mind.

### **Excerpt 15**

**...Make Nigeria stand, shining forth at the beloved and brave republic that God created for all...** : In the above statement, President Tinubu uses language to effectively promote a sense of national pride, and unity among the audience by invoking phrases like "beloved and brave republic" and "that God created it for all". These words establish a social connection based on a collective love for Nigeria and portray a positive and patriotic attitude by emphasizing the nation's inclusivity of a harmonious society where all citizens are valued.

President Tinubu alludes to the concept of Nigeria as a "beloved and brave republic" that God created for its people. This allusion draws upon patriotic and nationalistic sentiments by portraying Nigeria as a nation with a special destiny, similar to how the term "beloved and brave republic" might evoke the ideals and aspirations associated with a nation like the United States. The allusion serves several purposes such as patriotism, and historical and ideological connection by referring to Nigeria as a "beloved and brave republic," the speaker aims to evoke a sense of love and pride for the country. This kind of allusion taps into the collective national identity, encourages unity among the citizens, and alludes to historical and ideological concepts associated with nations that have overcome challenges and adversity to achieve greatness suggesting that Nigeria has the potential to be a great and resilient nation.

Overall, the allusion is a powerful and effective way to communicate the speaker's message. It is a reminder of Nigeria's history, its potential, and its shared values by drawing upon patriotic and nationalistic sentiments associated with the concept of a "beloved and brave republic."

**Symbolism** :In parallel with the concept of imagery, symbolism entails the utilization of a particular item or element to allude to another in a philosophical context. President Tinubu's acceptance speech during the certificate of return presentation is replete with symbolism, which serves to signify not solely the importance of the occasion but also the overarching aspirations and principles of democracy in Nigeria.

### **Excerpt 16**

**...This certificate...** :The certificate itself symbolizes the official recognition of President Tinubu's victory in the election. It represents the formal transition of power from one leader to another in a democratic society.

### **Excerpt 17**

**...Road has been long... battles have been hard fought...** :The reference to the long road and hard-fought battle symbolizes the challenges and obstacles faced during the campaign and election process. It signifies the determination and perseverance required to achieve political success.

### **Excerpt 18**

**...Servant of a larger purpose...** :President Tinubu's acknowledgment that he is a servant of a larger purpose symbolizes the idea of servant leadership. It emphasizes that leaders are there to serve the interests of the people and the nation rather than pursuing personal gain.

**Anaphora** : In Bola Ahmed Tinubu's acceptance speech, there is a prominent use of anaphora, which is a rhetorical device that involves the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences. This repetition serves to emphasize a particular idea or theme.

### **Excerpt 19**

**I stand before you as the president-elect... I am no different than any one of you...**

**If I can do this. You even can do better. You must do better...** : The repetition of "I" and "You" creates a direct and personal anaphoric connection between the speaker and the audience. It emphasizes that President Tinubu, despite his elevated position as president considers himself equal to the people he serves. It encourages the audience by suggesting that if Tinubu, as an ordinary person can achieve the presidency; they too have the potential to excel. This empowers and motivates the audience to aspire to greater heights.

The rhetorical strategies and persuasive techniques synergize to craft an engaging and impactful speech with the aim of inspiring the audience, cultivating trust, and rallying support for his vision and agenda. President Tinubu's speech serves as a starting point and a statement of intent but its transformative potential will be realized through sustained efforts and effective execution of policies and initiatives. His speech primarily focuses on conveying messages, expressing gratitude, outlining policy objectives, and inspiring the audience through rhetorical strategies



such as repetition, parallelism, metaphor, personification, and appeals to shared values. President Tinubu effectively employs linguistic and rhetorical strategies to connect with the audience emotionally, appeal to shared values, and present an optimistic vision for Nigeria's future. The use of emotive language, inclusive language, historical and cultural references, and personal connections enhances the speech's persuasive power. The speech showcases President Tinubu's ability to inspire hope and instill a sense of pride in the audience's national identity. It sets forth his agenda for governance, emphasizing key areas such as security, the economy, job creation, and infrastructure development. Consequently, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's acceptance speech employed a variety of rhetorical techniques, such as repetition, parallelism, metaphor, and personification, to achieve this objective.

**Excerpts that show the kind of ideologies underlying the speech :** President Tinubu's acceptance speech is marked by several key ideological themes and messages. He strategically employs language to convey and reinforce his ideological goals of:

**Inclusivity and Unity :** In President Tinubu's acceptance speech, language is used to build social bonds by employing inclusive terminology like *we and our* that portrays unity to the audience. The speech conveys a positive attitude of inclusivity and celebrates diversity, emphasizing the importance of overcoming divisions. It negotiates meaning by outlining challenges as collective obstacles that can be surmounted together, motivating action on shared responsibilities such as addressing poverty. Additionally, the language manages potential conflicts by acknowledging differences empathetically, promoting social harmony, and encouraging open dialogue. These linguistic strategies aim to create a cohesive, harmonious society founded on the principles of inclusivity and unity.

#### *Excerpt 20*

**... Gladness for us, we live fully, you can achieve... :**

**Empowerment and Hope :** President Tinubu uses positive words like "gladness" and "fully" to convey positive attitudes and emotions, associating these sentiments with his policies and vision for the future. The phrase "you can achieve" serves as a motivational tool encouraging the audience to believe in their capabilities and aligning their beliefs with the leader's agenda. This is a persuasive technique. He utilizes language to rally support, establish the leader's authority, build a shared vision, and persuade the audience, all of which are essential functions in political communication. It effectively manages social relationships, conveys emotions, and negotiates meaning in the context of governance and leadership. Tinubu employs language that empowers and instills hope in the audience. He repeatedly emphasizes the potential for individual and collective improvement, encouraging citizens to aspire to greatness. This embodies his ideology of empowerment and the belief in the people's capacity for positive change.

#### *Excerpt 21*

**...Determination and unyielding belief in a noble endeavor...**

**...Democratic attainment...**

**...The transfer of sacred duty...**

**Democratic Values :** President Tinubu establishes social bonds by aligning himself with his ideology of democratic values, promoting unity among his supporters who share these principles. His positive attitude toward democracy, emphasizing freedom and fairness resonates with those who cherish such ideas, strengthening alignment with the leader. Through the above ideology, he persuades the audience to interpret his policies as consistent with democratic principles and to align their beliefs with his agenda.

#### *Excerpt 22*

**...I understand your hurt, your anger, and disappointment...**

**...I extend the embrace and comfort... :**

**Reconciliation and Healing :** President Tinubu's ideology signifies a commitment to unity and harmony by promoting the idea of coming together after division or conflict. His language conveys a positive attitude toward conflict resolution and inspires hope and empathy for positive change, appealing to those seeking reconciliation. Furthermore, the ideology negotiates meaning by framing his actions as dedicated to healing divisions and fostering unity encouraging individuals to interpret his policies in this context and potentially align their beliefs with this approach. In summary, language serves as a potent tool for President Tinubu to build social connections, convey positive sentiments, and negotiate meaning in support of a reconciliation and healing-focused agenda.

## FINDINGS

The first finding of this study showed that the deployment of rhetorical and linguistic strategies in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's acceptance speech effectively conveyed a message of unity, hope, and collective responsibility. These rhetorical expressions facilitate the conveyance of intricate concepts and sentiments in a manner that is both relatable and enduring. The speech aimed to inspire and engage a diverse audience while outlining a vision for a better Nigeria. Its success lies in its ability to connect with people on both an emotional and practical level fostering a sense of shared purpose and commitment to the nation's progress. The rhetorical devices are meticulously crafted to engage the audience, appeal to emotions, commit to unity, and highlight the President's openness to dialogue. It was also crafted to project him as a unifying and visionary leader who is committed to addressing the country's challenges.

The second finding revealed that President Tinubu's acceptance speech is marked by several key ideologies strategically employed by the use of his language: Some of the ideologies include:

**Inclusivity, Unity, and National cohesion:** The speech underscores the idea that the victory is not just for one individual or one political party but for all Nigerians committed to a greater society. President Tinubu reached out to those who did not support him emphasizing the need for unity and collaboration across partisan lines to work towards the progress of the nation.

**Empowerment and Hope:** Throughout the speech, President Tinubu employs language that empowers and instills hope in the audience. He repeatedly emphasizes the potential for individual and collective improvement, encouraging citizens to aspire to greatness. This embodies his ideology of empowerment and the belief in the people's capacity for positive change.

**Democratic Values:** President Tinubu uses language that underscores his commitment to democratic principles and values. He acknowledges the significance of the certificate of election as a symbol of collective democratic attainment and aspirations highlighting the peaceful transfer of power as a crucial aspect of democracy. This linguistic choice aligns with his ideological goal of upholding and strengthening Nigeria's democratic institutions.

**National Progress and Development:** The repeated calls for action and collaboration emphasizing moving the nation forward and asking for the support of both his supporters and those who didn't vote for him aligns with his ideology of advancing the nation and renewed hope for Nigerians.

## CONCLUSION

The stylistic analysis of the acceptance speech of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu reveals that the speech exhibits a range of rhetorical devices that aided him in conveying his message of servant leadership, hope, rebuilding, and inclusivity. The speech showcases President Tinubu's ideologies of Unity and National Cohesion, empowerment and hope, National progress and development, democratic values, etc. The stylistic analysis of President Tinubu's acceptance speech not only enhances our comprehension of the dynamics of political communication but also provides a model for future research in the intersection of language, politics, and rhetoric. It underscores the enduring significance of language in the political arena and its role in shaping public perception and opinion.

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