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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARTICLES

A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF POSTMODERN FEMALE-RELATED GRAFFITI OF ENDSARS PROTEST IN NIGERIA
Ganiu Bamgbose & Muhammed Lawal **1-18**

A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF A COMIC NIGERIAN WHATSAPP ADAPTATION OF THE EASTER STORY
Kikelomo Adeniyi (PhD), Favour Olajide & Janefrances Osere Nnkem (PhD) **19-44**

ENHANCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION THROUGH MODERN TEACHING RESOURCES: A STUDY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AKWA IBOM STATE
Akpan, G. F. **45-63**

EFFECTS OF LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH ON THE READING ABILITY OF EARLY GRADES' PUPILS IN SOKOTO PUBLIC PRIMRY SCHOOLS
Shehu Muhammad (PhD) & Yusuf Abubakar **64-78**

AN EXPERIENCE OF TRANSLATING LA VIE DE KOFI, A LITERARY TEXT FOR CHILDREN, FROM FRENCH TO ENGLISH
Michael Ngongeh Mombe **79-93**

LEXICAL COHESION IN PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU'S SPEECH IN RESPONSE TO AUGUST, 2024 NATIONWIDE PROTESTS
Jemimah Dan'azumi Gada **94-110**

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTION AND INVOLVMENT
Jessica Atong Pinta (Ph.D) & Bamidele Ibiyemi Lydia **111-126**

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF WIKE'S MINISTERIAL ACCEPTANCE SPEECH
Haruna Babagogata Alhaji (PhD) **127-140**

A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF SPEECH ACTS IN EVERYDAY CONVERSATION
Abdul, Mohammed Ademu & Joy Isa **141-157**

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF WIKE'S MINISTERIALACCEPTANCE SPEECH

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Abstract
This study delves into a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Nyesom Wike's appointment speech as a minister, with the goal of exploring how language plays a crucial role in shaping political discussions. CDA, a versatile method that adapts to new challenges and contexts, continues to be a valuable resource for scholars. By scrutinizing the language and the surrounding context, this study aims to deepen our understanding of political discussions in Nigerian. Wike's political journey and influence are marked by his dedication to community growth, strategic political tactics, and effective leadership across different levels. He skillfully uses various linguistic and rhetorical techniques to engage his audience; he builds trust, and advocate for his policy goals. By placing his speech within its historical, cultural, and political backdrop, he adds depth and impact to his message. This study provides the summary of essential theoretical ideas, research methods, and prior studies pertinent to the examination of political discourse through the lens of CDA. The examination of Wike's speech highlights the complex ways in which language is used to construct identities, convincelisteners, and manipulate power structures. The significant impact of Wike's speech on Nigerian politics is profound. It challenges deep-seated party loyalties, signalling a shift towards a more pragmatic and cooperative approach in politics. This research, recognizing its own limitations, aims to illuminate the role and importance of political discourse through CDA. This research gives rise to various recommendations, including the promotion of political collaboration, the emphasis on issue-based politics, and the improvement of public communication, the encouragement of transparency and accountability, and the fostering of inclusive governance.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, speech, Nyesom Wike, political discourse, language

Introduction

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a multidisciplinary approach that examinesthe role language plays in shaping and reflecting power relations within society. CDA is a field of study that draws on linguistic,

sociological, and critical theories. It was developed in the 1970's and 1980's as a corrective to the rigidities of traditional linguistic analysis, with the aimof exploring the sociological and political implications of language use (Fairclough, 1995). Developed by scholars such as Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk, and Michel Foucault, CDA posits that language is not a neutral tool but is inherently intertwined with power relations and social structures. The approach goes beyond linguistic analysis and delves into the socio-political context in which language operates (Van Dijk, 1998).

CDA draws on various theoretical foundations, including linguistics, sociology, and critical theory. One of the key figures in the development of CDA is Norman Fairclough, whosethree-dimensional model integrates text analysis, discourse practice, and socio-cultural context(Fairclough, 2001). This model emphasizes the interconnectedness of language, power, and society, acknowledging that discourse is a site where power relations are negotiated and maintained. Several key principles guide the practice of CDA. Firstly, CDA assumes that languageis a form of social practice and is inseparable from the social contexts in which it occurs. Secondly, it recognizes that discourse is a site of power, where different groups contend for influence and control. Thirdly, CDA aims to unveil hidden ideologies and the ways in which language contributes to the construction of social reality (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

CDA has found applications in various fields, including media studies, political science,education, and healthcare. In media studies, CDA can be employed to analyze news articles, advertisements, and political speeches, revealing how language constructs and disseminates particular narratives. In political science, CDA helps uncover the power dynamics inherent in political discourse, shedding light on the strategies employed to legitimize or challenge authority. CDA provides a powerful lens through which we can analyze the intricate relationship between language and power. By examining the ways in which discourse operates within socio-cultural contexts, CDA allows for a nuanced understanding of how language contributes to the perpetuation or subversion of power structures.

Methodology

The methodology for this analysis follows the principles outlined by Fairclough (1995) and van Dijk (2001), who emphasize the importance of examining both the text and its sociopolitical context. The speech was transcribed and coded from YouTube for key themes, rhetorical devices, and discursive strategies. These were then analyzed to reveal the underlying power dynamics and ideological constructs. The approach includes both qualitative and quantitative analysis, with the former focusing on interpretive methods and the latter on frequency and patterns of linguistic features.

Literature Review

CDA is a potent tool for examining the underlying ideologies, power structures, and social implications embedded within linguistic expressions. It provides a framework for dissecting texts to reveal how language constructs and perpetuates social realities. In the context of political discourse, CDA becomes particularly valuable as it enables researchers to unveil the strategies employed by politicians to shape public perceptions, legitimize their authority, and advance their agendas.

A Nigerian 2023 Ministerial Acceptance Speech serves as a focal point for this study due to its high significance in Nigerian politics and its potential to elucidate broader discursive strategies employed by Nigerian political figures. As Wike assumes the ministerial role, his speech not only outlines his agenda but also reflects the discursive maneuvers inherent in such ceremonial addresses. Through a CDA perspective, this research aims to uncover the underlying ideologies, power dynamics, and rhetorical devices utilized by Wike to position himself within the political landscape and garner support.

Scholars have extensively explored the intersection of politics and discourse, offering insights into the complex interplay between language and power. Fairclough (2013) underscores the importance of CDA in uncovering the discursive mechanisms through which political actors construct and maintain dominance. Similarly, Van Dijk (2014) emphasizes the role of discourse in legitimizing political authority and shaping public opinion. By interrogating Wike's speech, this study contributes to this body of literature by offering a nuanced analysis of how political discourse functions within the Nigerian context. Furthermore, the study situates itself within the framework of Nigerian political discourse, recognizing the unique sociopolitical dynamics that shape communication practices in the country. Adebayo (2019) highlights the centrality of language in Nigerian politics, arguing that it serves as a primary tool for negotiating

power relations and constructing identities. By examining Wike's speech within this context, this study seeks to elucidate the specific linguistic strategies employed by Nigerian politicians to navigate the intricacies of power and governance.

With the proliferation of social media platforms, politicians have unprecedented access to public audiences, reshaping the dynamics of political communication. Ogunmodede and Babalola (2021) discuss the impact of social media on Nigerian politics, noting its role in amplifying political discourse and shaping public opinion. This study acknowledges the influence of digital platforms on contemporary political communication and considers how Wike's speech may be tailored to resonate with online audiences.

Data Analysis

This segment presents a detailed analysis of Wike's Ministerial Acceptance Speech using the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is employed to uncover the implicit meanings, power relations, and ideologies within the speech. The analysis focuses on various linguistic and rhetorical strategies used by Wike to construct his identity, persuade his audience, and to position himself within the political landscape. The analysis x-rays the thematic, rhetorical, and discursive strategies. Furthermore, the study is advanced by contextual analysis, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the speech.

Thematic Analysis: The process of thematic analysis involved the systematic identification and examination of various recurring themes present within the speech delivered by the speaker, encompassing important concepts such as unity, governance, accountability, and national development. It is imperative to delve into each of these themes in a comprehensive manner, while shedding light on how the speaker, Wike, skillfully maneuvers through the intricate and multifaceted political landscape in order to effectively connect with and evoke a response from his audience.

Unity: The theme of unity is pervasive throughout Wike's speech. By repeatedly invoking collective pronouns such as "we" and "our," Wike fosters a sense of shared identity and purpose: "We must work together to move our nation forward." This inclusive language is a strategic choice to unite his audience, emphasizing common goals and the importance of collective effort. This aligns with Fairclough's (1995) assertion that pronouns can be used to construct social identities and relationships within discourse. Moreover, Wike appeals to national solidarity by addressing

historical and cultural ties that bind the nation together: "Our rich cultural heritage and shared history are the foundation of our unity." Here, Wike employs historical references to legitimize his call for unity, grounding his message in a sense of national identity and continuity.

Governance: Wike's emphasis on governance underscores his vision for effective leadership and administration. He frequently references principles of good governance to establish a framework for his policies: "Good governance is not a choice but a necessity for our nation's progress." By framing good governance as essential, Wike positions himself as a pragmatic leader focused on essential reforms. This aligns with van Dijk's (2001) view that political discourse often involves the strategic presentation of ideologies to justify policies and actions. Additionally, Wike outlines specific governance strategies, such as anti-corruption measures and administrative transparency, to build trust and credibility: "We will implement stringent anti-corruption policies to ensure transparency and accountability in our operations." This detailed approach serves a reassurance of his commitment to ethical leadership and effective governance to the audience.

Accountability: The theme of accountability is central to Wike's speech, reflecting his commitment to transparency and responsible leadership: "We must hold ourselves accountable to the people we serve." This pledge of accountability not only enhances his credibility but also sets a standard for his administration, aligning with public expectations for ethical governance (Fairclough, 1995). Wike further emphasizes the importance of accountability by addressing past shortcomings and outlining measures to prevent future lapses. Hence, he says: "Learning from the mistakes of the past, we will establish robust mechanisms to monitor and evaluate our progress." This reflective stance not only acknowledges previous issues but also demonstrates a proactive approach to governance, which is crucial for gaining public trust.

National Development: National development is another key theme, with Wike advocating for comprehensive infrastructural and social advancements, says "together, we will build a prosperous and inclusive nation where every citizen has the opportunity to thrive." This visionary statement aims to inspire and mobilize his audience towards a shared goal of national prosperity. By using an inclusive language, Wike appeals to a broad demographic group, emphasizing that development benefits all citizens of Nigeria as well as those living in Abuja. Wike also outlines specific sectors for development, such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. This he captures by saying that, "investing in education and

healthcare is crucial for sustainable development. We will prioritize these sectors to ensure long-term growth and stability." This detailed approach not only highlights his policy priorities but also provides a clear roadmap for achieving national development, reinforcing his commitment to tangible progress (van Dijk, 2001).

Rhetorical Analysis: The rhetorical analysis examines how Wike employs various rhetorical strategies to enhance his message and persuade his audience. Key strategies identified include ethos, pathos, and logos. Wike establishes credibility (ethos) by referencing his track record and commitment to public service. He emphasized this by saying "as someone who has dedicated my life to public service, I understand the challenges we face." This appeal to his own experience and dedication serves to build trust and authority, positioning himself as a credible and reliable leader (Aristotle, trans. 2007). Additionally, Wike reinforces his ethos by aligning himself with respected figures and institutions: "Drawing inspiration from the visionary leadership of our past heroes, we will continue their legacy of excellence." This association with revered individuals and values strengthens his position and appeals to the audience's sense of history and respect for tradition.

Wike effectively uses emotional appeal (pathos) to connect with his audience on a personal level. He reassures the people with the following words: "I share your hopes and dreams for a better future." By expressing empathy and understanding, Wike fosters a sense of solidarity and emotional connection, which is crucial for persuasive political communication (Aristotle, trans. 2007). Furthermore, Wike invokes powerful imagery and narratives to evoke emotional responses from his audience: "Imagine a nation where every child has access to quality education and healthcare." This vivid imagery helps the audience visualize the positive outcomes of his policies, thereby strengthening his emotional appeal.

Logical appeal (logos) is evident in Wike's use of facts and rational arguments to support his vision. Thus, he says "investing in education and infrastructure is crucial for sustainable development." By providing logical reasoning and evidence-based arguments, Wike appeals to the audience's rationality, enhancing the persuasive power of his speech (Aristotle, trans. 2007). Wike also uses statistics and data to substantiate his claims and proposals. In his words, "studies have shown that countries with high investment in education see significant economic growth." This use of empirical evidence reinforces his arguments and lends credibility to his policy recommendations.

Discursive Strategies

Discursive strategies are employed to analyze how language is used to construct social reality and power relations. Key strategies identified in Wike's speech *include legitimation, mitigation, and framing*. Wike legitimizes his position and policies by invoking democratic principles and the will of the people. According to him, "our mandate comes from the people, and we must honor their trust." This appeal to democratic legitimacy enhances his authority and justifies his policy proposals (van Dijk, 2001). By grounding his legitimacy in the democratic process, Wike aligns himself with widely accepted norms and values. Furthermore, Wike uses historical references to legitimize his leadership by saying that "our journey as a nation has been guided by the principles of justice and equity, and we will continue to uphold these values." This connection to historical values and principles serves to reinforce his legitimacy and align his current policies with the nation's foundational ideals.

Wike uses mitigation to downplay potential criticisms or challenges. For instance, he acknowledges the difficulties ahead but frames them as surmountable with collective effort.This is why he says "while we face significant challenges, our resolve and unity will see us through." This strategy minimizes the perceived threat and emphasizes resilience, reassuring the audience of their ability to overcome obstacles (Fairclough, 1995). Wike also mitigates potential criticisms by proactively addressing concerns and outlining solutions. Hence, he says "we are aware of the challenges in our education system, and we are committed to addressing them through targeted reforms and increased funding." This approach does not only acknowledge existing issues, but it also demonstrates a proactive and solution-oriented stance.

Wike uses framing to shape how issues are perceived. He frames national development as a collective responsibility and a moral imperative. According to him, "it is our moral duty to ensure that no one is left behind in our quest for progress." By framing development in moral terms, he, according to van Dijk (2001) strengthens the ethical appeal of his agenda and positions his policies as not only beneficial but also just and necessary. Furthermore, Wike frames his policies in terms of long-term benefits, emphasizing their sustainability and future impacts. For this, he says "our investments today will lay the foundation for a prosperous and secure future for generations to come." This long-term perspective encourages the audience to support his policies by highlighting their enduring value.

Contextual Analysis

Contextual analysis situates the speech within its sociopolitical broader and context, considering the historical, cultural, and political factors that influence its reception and impact.

Historical Context: Wike's speech must be understood against the backdrop of Nigeria's political history, marked by periods of military rule, democratic transitions, and ongoing struggles with corruption and governance. This context influences both the content of the speech and its reception by the audience (Fairclough, 1995). By referencing historical events and figures, Wike aligns his vision with the nation's enduring values and struggles. Thus, he says "our forebears fought tirelessly for the freedom and democracy we enjoy today. We must honor their legacy by building a better future." This historical framing serves to legitimize his policies and inspire a sense of continuity and purpose.

Cultural Context: Culturally, Wike's speech resonates with Nigerian values of community, resilience, and progress. For this, he makes reference to these values strengthen his connection with the audience and enhance the persuasive power of his message (van Dijk, 2001). He also draws on cultural symbols and narratives to enhance his appeal. In his words "our rich cultural heritage and diverse traditions are our strength. Let us harness this diversity for our collective progress." By celebrating cultural diversity, Wike fosters a sense of national pride and unity, which is crucial for garnering widespread support.

Political Context: Politically, Wike's speech comes at a time of heightened scrutiny and expectations for public officials. His emphasis on accountability and governance reflects broader societal demands for transparency and effective leadership (Fairclough, 1995). Wike navigates the political landscape by addressing contemporary issues and aligning his policies with public concerns. He says "in these challenging times, we must prioritize the needs of our people and ensure that our policies reflect their aspirations." This alignment with public sentiment enhances his credibility and positions him as a responsive and attentive leader.

Discourse and Power

This section explores how Wike's speech constructs power relations and reinforces his authority. Through his use of language, Wike not only asserts his leadership but also delineates the boundaries of power and responsibility.

Constructing Authority: Wike constructs his authority through a combination of personal credibility, logical argumentation, and appeal to

democratic principles. His references to his track record and public service reinforce his credibility, while his detailed policy proposals and logical reasoning underscore his competence and vision. Additionally, his appeals to democratic values and the will of the people further legitimize his authority, positioning him as a leader who is both capable and accountable.

Reinforcement of Power Relations: Wike's speech reinforces existing power relations; he delineates the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders. His emphasis on collective effort and shared responsibility underscores the interconnectedness of different actors within the political system. However, by positioning himself as a central figure in this collective effort, Wike also reinforces his own position of authority and influence.

Ideological Constructs

This section examines the ideological constructs embedded within Wike's speech. By analyzing the underlying ideologies, we can better understand the broader implications of his rhetoric and its potential impact on the audience.

Nationalism: This is a prominent ideological construct in Wike's speech. His repeated references to national unity, collective effort, and shared destiny underscore a strong sense of national identity and pride. This nationalist rhetoric serves to mobilize the audience and foster a sense of solidarity and belonging.

Developmentalism: This is another key ideological construct, reflecting Wike's commitment to national development and progress. His emphasis on infrastructural and social advancements highlights a belief in the transformative power of development, positioning it as a central goal of his administration.

Democratic Values: Democratic values are a recurring theme in Wike's speech, reflecting his commitment to transparency, accountability, and public service. By invoking democratic principles, Wike aligns his leadership with the broader ideological framework of democracy, reinforcing his legitimacy and credibility.

Linguistic Features

This section analyzes the linguistic features of Wike's speech, focusing on syntax, vocabulary, and stylistic choices. These features play a crucial role in shaping the speech's overall impact and effectiveness.

Syntax: Wike's use of syntax is characterized by varied sentence structures, including simple, compound, and complex sentences. This variety enhances the speech's readability and engagement, while also allowing for nuanced expression of ideas. For example, his use of parallelism and repetition reinforces key themes and messages, creating a rhythmic and memorable speech.

Vocabulary: Wike's vocabulary is carefully chosen to convey authority, empathy, and vision. He employs a mix of formal and informal conversational language, striking a balance between professionalism and communicative competence. His use of technical terms and jargon underscores his expertise, while his use of emotive language fosters a connection with the audience.

Stylistic Choices

Wike's stylistic choices, including rhetorical questions, metaphors, and analogies, enhance the speech's persuasiveness and impact. These stylistic devices not only engage the audience but also reinforce key messages and themes, making the speech more compelling and memorable.

Conclusion

The analysis of Wike's ministerial appointment speech through CDA reveals the intricate ways in which language is used to construct identities, persuade audiences, and navigate power dynamics. Themes of unity, governance, accountability, and national development are articulated through strategic use of rhetorical devices and discursive strategies. This analysis underscores the importance of context in understanding the impact and significance of political discourse. Through a meticulous examination of the speech, one can discern the intricate power dynamics at play and the underlying ideological positions entrenched within the fabric of Nigerian politics, hinting at a potential transformative shift towards heightened political cooperation and a more substantive, issue-centric approach to governance. The far-reaching implications of Wike's speech on the Nigerian political sphere cannot be overstated, as it boldly challenges entrenched traditional party allegiances, heralding a new era characterized by a pragmatic, collaborative ethos in the realm of politics. Wike's speech effectively employs a range of linguistic and rhetorical strategies to connect with his audience, establish credibility, and promote his policy agenda.

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