

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Dr Adesina's Speech at the Inauguration of Nigeria's President (2023)

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Abstract

This paper is a Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth, CDA) of Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina's (henceforth, the speaker) speech delivered on May 27th, 2023 at the inauguration lecture for the new President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Bola Ahmed Tinubu. Anchored on Fairclough's dialectical-relational approach to CDA (Fairclough, 2003; 2010) and the descriptive mixed-method research design, the study specifically investigates the linguistic features and discursive strategies the speaker employs in his speech to encode ideological effects. The findings reveal that the speaker, in a bid to propose a recovery plan for Nigeria's economy through debt, investment, and the African Development Bank, deploys such discursive strategies as specific lexical items and rhetorical devices (metaphor and personification). The study also shows that the speaker uses linguistic features like Transitivity, Modality, Passivisation, Nominalisation and Pronouns like *I*, *You*, *We*, etc. The paper concludes that the speaker uses the abovementioned linguistic features and discursive strategies to represent the current Nigerian economic status and propose adequate solutions on how to improve such key areas of the country's economy as human capital, energy supply, private sector and foreign investments.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, development, discursive strategies, ideological effects, Nigeria's economy.

Introduction

Governing a country entails pondering and making important decisions concerning key aspects of the country's life for the betterment of the citizens' living conditions. Some of such decisions include finding ways to improve the economy of the country by proposing tangible solutions to

the current economic crisis the country is undergoing. This process cannot be achieved without the use of language, which plays a pivotal role therein. Therefore, for a thorough analysis, interpretation, and explanation of the language used by the leaders to communicate solutions to pending issues in their respective countries, many language enthusiasts or scholars have propounded suitable theories. One of such approaches is Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth, CDA).

The purpose of CDA is to analyse “opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and control in language” (Wodak, 1995, p. 204). Wodak (1997, p.173) believes that CDA studies real, and often extended, instances of social interaction which take (partially) linguistic form. The distinctiveness of the critical approach, Wodak furthers, lies in two respects: the relationship between language and society and the relationship between analysis and the practices analysed.

In the same token, Fairclough (2010, p. 8) opines that CDA aims to produce interpretations and explanations of areas of social life which both identify the cause of social wrongs and produce knowledge which could (in the right conditions) contribute to righting or mitigating them. In other words, one of the primary focuses of CDA is to bring out the effect of relations and inequalities in producing social wrongs, and in particular in discursive aspects of power relations and inequalities. This is what Fairclough (2010) labels the dialectical relations between discourse and power, and their effects on other social relations within the social process and their elements. The social relations the critical discourse analyst is interested in include ideology in its diverse forms, the people who live and act in particular circumstances and their relations with those who seek to govern or regulate the ways in which they do so, including politicians and managers.

In the context of the current work, a speech delivered on May 27th, 2023, by the President of the African Development Bank Group, Dr Akinwumi A. Adesina (henceforth, the speaker), is analysed through the lens of Fairclough’s (2010) CDA approach. The speech was delivered at the inauguration lecture for the new President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Bola Ahmed Tinubu, to propose a recovery plan for Nigeria’s economy through debt, investment, and the African Development Bank. The aim here is to unveil the linguistic features and discursive strategies employed by the speaker to encode the message in

his speech. Specifically, this paper aims to answer the following questions:

- i. What linguistic features and discursive strategies does the speaker employ in his speech?
- ii. What ideological effects do these linguistic features and discursive strategies encode?

To achieve this goal, the researchers first of all review previous related studies in order to establish the gaps the study intends to fill. Then, the theoretical framework on which it is anchored is clarified. This is followed by the methodology used, and finally the analysis and discussion of the findings are given.

Literature Review

Studies employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to investigate political speeches and other forms of discourse have become increasingly prominent in discourse studies. These studies generally demonstrate how language functions as a medium for constructing ideology, legitimising power, and influencing public opinion. For instance, Abidi (2015) investigates the use of euphemism in Tony Blair's political discourse on the 2003 Iraq War. Drawing on van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach to CDA, the study examines how the former British Prime Minister employs euphemistic expressions to justify Britain's military intervention in Iraq. The findings reveal that the use of euphemism is shaped by Blair's context model and its epistemic knowledge device (K-device). The study further shows that euphemism functions not merely as a linguistic strategy but also as an ideological resource through which Blair legitimises his political actions and advances hegemonic interests.

Similarly, Allagbé (2024b) analyses the linguistic features and discursive strategies employed in Liberia's President George Manneh Weah's closing presidential campaign speech delivered on 8 October 2023 in Monrovia. Anchored in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach to CDA, the study adopts a descriptive mixed-method research design to investigate how linguistic choices encode ideological power relations. The findings indicate that all six process types are employed, with Material processes occurring most frequently. The analysis also reveals the predominance of Topical

Themes and Modalisation over other thematic and modal choices. In addition, the study identifies numerous discursive strategies, including actor description, comparison, illustration, number game, allusion, hyperbole, personification, repetition, parallelism, foregrounding, passivisation, personal pronouns, modal verbs and mood adjuncts, and neologisms. It concludes that these linguistic and discursive resources are strategically deployed to persuade the electorate to support President Weah's bid for a second term.

Likewise, Isa (2020) conducts a CDA of selected campaign speeches delivered by Presidents Muhammadu Buhari and Goodluck Jonathan during Nigeria's 2011 general elections. Employing an eclectic analytical framework comprising Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model, van Dijk's (1998) ideological model, and Chilton's (2004) representational model, the study demonstrates that both candidates employ diverse rhetorical and ideological strategies to persuade voters and secure political power. The study concludes that campaign speeches are inherently ideological and are designed to persuade, influence, dominate, and shape the perceptions of the electorate.

Extending CDA beyond political discourse, Amoussou and Djimet (2020) apply Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*. Their study examines how language reflects and challenges patriarchal power relations within Nigerian society. The findings reveal that both authors deconstruct dominant gender ideologies by portraying female characters who resist patriarchal oppression. The study argues that such literary representations contribute to transforming existing social and cultural power relations between men and women.

A review of these studies reveals several commonalities. First, they demonstrate the usefulness of CDA in uncovering hidden ideologies, power relations, and persuasive strategies embedded in discourse. Second, although they differ in their theoretical orientations, they all regard language as a social practice through which speakers or writers negotiate power and influence audiences. Third, most of the studies focus either on election campaign speeches or literary texts, while relying predominantly on van Dijk's socio-cognitive model, eclectic CDA frameworks, or Feminist CDA.

Despite these valuable contributions, significant gaps remain in the literature. Contextually, previous studies have concentrated largely on

campaign speeches, wartime political discourse, or literary narratives, with little attention paid to inauguration lectures delivered to newly elected political leaders. Methodologically, relatively few studies have employed Fairclough's (2003, 2010) three-dimensional model as the sole analytical framework for examining contemporary Nigerian policy-oriented speeches. Empirically, no known study has undertaken a CDA of Dr. Akinwumi Adesina's inauguration lecture delivered to Nigeria's President-elect, His Excellency Bola Ahmed Tinubu. This speech represents a distinctive genre of political-development discourse that combines economic policy advocacy, governance recommendations, and persuasive rhetorical strategies. Consequently, this study addresses these contextual, methodological, and empirical gaps by applying Fairclough's (2003, 2010) three-dimensional model to analyse Dr. Adesina's inauguration lecture, with the aim of revealing how language is deployed to construct ideology, negotiate power, and articulate a vision for national development.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is hinged on Fairclough's (2003, 2010) three-dimensional model, which is a foundational approach consisting of a set of philosophical premises, theoretical methods, methodological guidelines, and specific techniques for linguistic analysis (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). According to Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000, p. 548), Fairclough's three-dimensional framework helps in conceiving and analysing discourse. The first dimension or discourse-as-text handles the linguistic features and organisation of concrete instances of discourse. Simply put, this dimension deals with linguistic features inherent in a text such choices and patterns in vocabulary (e.g. wording, metaphor), grammar (e.g. transitivity, modality), cohesion (conjunction, schemata), and text structure (episoding, turn-taking system) (Ibid, p. 548). Fairclough (2010, p. 94) postulates that it is this attention to concrete textual features that distinguishes CDA from germane approaches such as Michel Foucault's.

The second dimension or discourse-as-discursive-practice considers discourse as something that is produced, circulated, distributed, consumed in society. Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000, p. 548-9) opine that approaching discourse as discursive practice means that in analysing vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure, attention should be given to speech acts, coherence, and intertextuality, i.e., linking the text

to its context. As for the third and final dimension, which is discourse-as-social-practice, it has to do with the ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which discourse is a feature (Ibid, p. 549). Hegemony concerns power that is achieved through constructing alliances and integrating classes and groups through consent, so that the “articulation and re-articulation of orders of discourse is correspondingly one stake in hegemonic struggle” (Fairclough, 2010, p.95). This is the approach this paper is anchored upon. The next section deals with methodology.

Methodology

This paper adopts a descriptive mixed-method research design to analyse a speech delivered by Dr Adesina at the inauguration lecture for the new President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on the 27th May, 2023. The speech downloaded on the 12th July, 2025 from African Development Bank Group’s website, (<https://www.afdb.org>) has been purposively selected by the researchers because of its specific concerns about the economic situation of Nigeria and how to improve it. The paper analyses the speech through the lens of CDA as proposed by Fairclough (2003, 2010). Due to space constraints, the full speech is not provided here, but excerpts thereof are used to back up the claims made in the analysis.

Analysis and Discussion of the Findings

As stated above, Fairclough’s dialectical-relational approach to CDA is structured in three stages: the description (text analysis), interpretation (discourse practice), and explanation (sociocultural practice). In the first stage, the text analysis and the discourse practice are combined. In other words, this stage describes and interprets the speaker’s use of such linguistic features as Transitivity, Modality, Mood Adjuncts, and Minor Clauses, Passivisation, Nominalisation, and Pronouns, as well as some discursive features such as specific lexical items and figures of speech to encode his message.

5.1 Text Analysis (Description) and Discourse Practice (Interpretation)

Transitivity

In Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), Transitivity belongs to the experiential aspect of the ideational metafunction (Eggins, 2004; Fontaine, 2013; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Thompson, 2014). It

has to do with unveiling how speakers/writers represent their worldview through processes, participants, and circumstances. Therefore, these three systems are analysed in the speech, and they are summarised and discussed below:

Table 1: Process-types in Dr Adesina's Speech

Process-type	Material	Mental	Relational	Verbal	Existential	Behavioural
Frequency	158	28	62	19	6	2
Percentage (%)	57.45	10.18	22.554	6.91	2.18	0.73

Table 1 shows that Material process ranks first in proportion with a total of 158 instances (i.e., 57.45 %). It is followed by Relational process, deployed 62 times (i.e., 22.554 %), and divided into 42 Attributives (i.e., 15.32 %), 14 Identifying (i.e., 5.10 %), and 6 Possessives (i.e., 2.18 %). The next highest deployed process-type is Mental process, with a total of 28 occurrences (i.e., 10.18 %). Verbal process is the fourth most deployed process type, with a frequency rate of 19 appearances (i.e., 6.91 %). Existential and Behavioural processes are the least deployed types, with a frequency rate of 6 (i.e., 2.18 %), 2 (i.e., 0.73 %), times, respectively.

Given that the speech centres around presenting past economic achievements and proposing solution to the new President of Nigeria on how to improve the country's economy, the highest deployment of material processes by the speaker is justified. This is because material processes are used to describe tangible, concrete actions (Eggins, 2004). The participants involved in this process; i.e., the Actor, the Goal, and the Beneficiary are all animate and inanimate entities. For example, a scrutiny of the speech shows that entities such as: "the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha, Chairman, and members of the Presidential Transition Council" and "me", "Mr President", "the African Development Bank", and many others play the role of Actor, Goal and Beneficiary in the speech. These participants are diligently selected by the speaker to adequately convey his message. The excerpt below illustrates the above claims:

- 12v. **who (A) sent (Pm) him or her (G).**” 13i. **Mr. President, you (A) sent (Pm) me (G)** on an errand (Cl)...
- 14iii. that **the African Development Bank (G) was ranked (Pm)** this year (Cl) by **Publish What You Fund (A)** as the “Most Transparent Institution in the World. (Co)...
- 16i. **Dear Mr. President, as you (A) leave (Pm),** 16ii. **you (A) can (Fms) take (Pm) pride (G)**...

Again, the fact that Relational and Mental processes rank respectively second and third reveals that the speaker not only defines and describes the participants involved in the events, but also connects and identifies emotionally with them. Noteworthy is that the participants of the Relational processes, namely: the Carrier, the Token, the Attribute, the Value, the Possessor, and the Possessed, contribute to the overall meaning of the speech in that they are used to provide the audience with the necessary information on key aspects of the economic moves of the country. The following passage from the speech buttresses this claim:

- 7i. It (Cr) **is (Pi)** such a great honor (At), [7ii. **to share (Pv)** my views and perspectives (Vb), 7iii. as the nation (Cr) **gets (Pi)** ready (At) [7iv. **to have (Pp)** a passing of the baton between H.E. President Muhammadu Buhari, and the incoming-President, H.E. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu (Pd)] (Cc)] (Cc).
8. ***It (Cr) is (Pi) your turn (At)!***
- 14i. I (Cr) **am (Pi)** pleased (At) [14ii. **to let (Pc)** you (S) **know (Pme)** [14iii. that the African Development Bank (G) **was ranked (Pm)** this year (Cl) by Publish What You Fund (A) as the “Most Transparent Institution in the World. (Co)”] (Ph)] (Cc).
- 18i. I (Cr) **am (Pi)** delighted (At) ... 19. He (Cr) **was (Pi)** a great leader (At) for Kenya (Cc).
- 20i. I (Cr) **am (Pi)** sure (At) 20ii. he (S) **must (Fms) be wondering (Pme)** 20iii. why there **are (Pe)** two Kenyans (X) on the same panel (Cl).
- 42ii. that the debt to GDP ratio at 34% (Cr) **is (Pi)** still **(Am)** low compared to other countries in Africa (At)] (Vb), 42iii.

which (Cr) **is (Pi)** correct (At); 42iv. but no one (A) **pays (Pm)** their debt (G) [42v. **using (Pm)** GDP (G)] (Cc).

The Relational processes in the passage above make important claims and revelations on the speaker and why his views on how to make Nigerian economy better are important for the new President. As for Mental processes, they are deployed by the speaker to identify and connect emotionally with the audience who in this context are majorly the former presidents of Nigeria and Kenya, the new president of Nigeria, and Nigeria as a whole. This entails that the aforementioned entities constitute the Sensor and Phenomenon of the Mental processes employed in the speech. This can be seen in the excerpt below:

- I (S) **wish (Pme)** [3ii. **to thank (Pv)** President Muhammadu Buhari (Rv) for his personal invitation to me (Cc) 3iii. **to attend (Pm)** the ceremonies (R) for the swearing-in of the incoming President-elect (Cc), H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu] (Ph).
- 9i. I (S) **wish (Pme)** [9ii. **to congratulate (Pv)** you Mr. President (Rv) for your stewardship of Nigeria (Cc) for the past eight years (Cx)] (Ph).
- 17i. I (S) **wish (Pme)** [17ii. **to congratulate (Pv)** the incoming President, H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, (Rv) 17iii. who (A) **will (Fms)** **take over (Pm)** the mantle of stewardship of Nigeria (G) tomorrow (Cl)] (Ph).
- 27. Nigeria (S) **will (Fms)** **be looking to (Pme)** you (Ph)...
- 62i. Nigeria (S) **must (Fml)** **rely (Pme)** more on the private sector (Ph)
- 70i. Governments (S) **need to assure (Pme)** effective social contracts (Ph)

The Mental processes deployed in the above clauses confirm the claims made earlier; that the speaker uses Mental processes to connect emotionally and identify with the audience. This is important for him as they help the speaker capture their attention and prove how he has high esteem for them. In this case, it is easy for them to embrace the speaker's views. The Sensor role in the speech is performed by "I" "you", "he", "Nigeria", among others.

The next most employed process-type is Verbal process. This means that the speaker encodes acts of saying in his speech. The Sayer role is played by the speaker, President Jonathan, President Kenyatta, some, many, and God. The experiential meaning of the use of these participants is that the speaker aims to capture his audience's mind by mentioning what these important persons say or have said. This gives credit to his speech and makes the audience listen attentively. Below are examples drawn from the speech:

- 3i. I (S) **wish (Pme)** [3ii. **to thank (Pv)** President Muhammadu Buhari (Rv)]...
- 6i. I (S) **wish (Pme)** [6ii. **to thank (Pv)** the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha, Chairman, and members of the Presidential Transition Council (Rv)]...
- 18i ... President Uhuru Kenyatta, former President of Kenya (G) **was invited (Pm)**
- 18iii. **to deliver (Pv)** the inauguration lecture (Vb)...
- 22vii. to which President Kenyatta (Sy) **responded (Pv)**...
- 42i. Some (Sy) **will (Fms) argue (Pv)**...
- 66iii. as many (Sy) **question (Pv)** [the value 66iv. of paying (Pm) taxes] (Vb)...
- 144i. **May (Fms)** God (Sy) **bless (Pv)**
- 145. And **may (Fms)** God (Sy) **bless (Pv)** the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Vb).

Finally, the least used process-types in the speech are existential (6 times) and the behavioural (2 times) processes. For instance, the speaker uses the existential processes to talk about the need to revisit the cost of governance, the need to resolve Nigeria's electricity issues, the potential of the youth among other things. Lastly, the behavioural processes are deployed to encode physiological meaning. The following excerpt illustrates this point:

- 23. We all (Be) **laughed (Pb)**!
- 54i. There **is (Pe)** an urgent need (X) [54ii. **to look at (Pb)** the cost of governance (Ph)] (Cc).
- 87i. There **is no (Pe)** justification (X) [87ii. for Nigeria (Pr) **not having (Pp)** enough power (Pd)] (Cc).

- 119i. There **is (Pe)** an urgent need (X) [119ii. **to unleash (Pm)** the potential of the youth (G)] (Cc)

Moreover, the transitivity analysis of the speech reveals that the speaker uses circumstances. These are summarized in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Circumstances in Adesina's Speech

Circumstances	Location	Cause	Manner	Accompaniment	Role	Extent
Total	53	50	24	4	8	10
Percentage	35.57	33.55	16.10	2.68	5.36	6.71

The table shows that the speaker deploys the 6 types of Circumstance: 53 (i.e., 35.57 %) Circumstances of Location, 50 (i.e., 33.55 %) Circumstances of Cause, 24 (i.e., 16.10 %) Circumstances of Manner, 4 (i.e., 2.68 %) Circumstances of Accompaniment, 8 (i.e., 5.36 %) Circumstances of Role, and 10 (i.e., 6.71 %) Circumstances of Extent. Considering the frequency in which Circumstances of Location are employed by the speaker and the subject matter of the speech, it could be said that he focuses on exact places and times or where and when events (in this context, investments) (must) happen. Moreover, the narrow gap between Circumstances of Cause and Location shows a link between the “where” and “when” of the events happen, the reason of those events, and the beneficiaries thereof.

The Circumstances of Manner explain the way or manner in which such propositions are to occur. Again, the high number of Circumstance of Extent gives the time frame in which such events will be materialised. Finally, Circumstances of Role and Accompaniment denote the roles of specific individuals in the materialisation of some events. Specifically, Circumstances of Accompaniment inform about the people who would accompany the new president, the speaker or the country as a whole in this journey to economic boosting. The text below illustrates the above claims:

I (S) wish (Pme) [6ii. to thank ... Boss Mustapha, ..., [6iii. for inviting (Pm) me (G) [6iv. to speak (Pv) at this inauguration lecture (Cl) for the incoming President of Nigeria (Cc)] (Cc)] (Ph).

- 11i. **Without your strong support (Ca) for me (Cc) in 2015 (Cl), and then in 2020 (Cl),** I (Cr) would not (Fms) have been (Pi) President of the African Development Bank (At).
27. Nigeria (S) will (Fms) be looking to (Pme) you (Ph), **as President Tinubu (Co), on your first day in office (Cl), with hope (Cm).**
- 31i. Hope (Pme) [31ii. that you (A) will (Fms) **drastically (Cm)** improve (Pm) the economy (G)] (Ph).
- 70i. Governments (S) need to assure (Pme) effective social contracts (Ph) **[70ii. by delivering (Pm) quality public services (G)] (Cm).** 71i. It (Cr) is not (Pi) [71ii. the amount (G) collected (Pm)] (At), 71iii. it (Cr) is (Pi) [71iv. **how (Cm)** it (G) is spent (Pm), 71v. and what (G) is delivered (Pm)] (At). 72i. [72ii. Nations that (A) grow (Pm) **better (Cm)**] (A) run (Pm) effective governments (G) 72iii. that (S) assure (Pme) social contracts (Ph) **with their citizens (Ca).**
- 93i. **With the support of the African Development Bank (Ca), Kenya (Cr), under President Kenyatta (Cl),** was (Pi) able (At) **[93ii. to expand (Pm) electricity access (G) from 32% in 2013 to 75% in 2022 (Cx)] (Cc)**

This passage illustrates how the circumstances (in bold) are employed in the speech.

Modality, Mood Adjuncts, and Minor Clauses

The next linguistic strategies investigated in this study are Modality, Mood Adjuncts, and Minor Clauses. Table 3 summarises how Modality features are deployed in the speech while Table 4 gives the summary of Mood Adjuncts and Minor Clauses as used therein:

Table 3: Modality features in Adesina's Speech

Modality	Modalisation	Modulation
Total	37	19
Percentage	66.07	33.93

Table 4: Mood Adjuncts and Minor Clauses in Adesina's Speech

Type	Mood Adjunct	Minor Clause
Total	8	22
Percentage	26.67	73.33

Table 3 displays that the speaker employs 37 (i.e., 66.07 %) modalisations and 19 (i.e., 33.93 %) modulations, while Table 4 displays a usage of 8 (26.67 %) Mood Adjuncts and 22 (i.e., 72.33 %) Minor clauses. The high frequency of modalisations demonstrates that the speaker proposes ways to enhance Nigerian economy in a soft/polite manner. Specifically, his suggestions are encoded in modalisations to avoid sounding like giving orders to the new President of Nigeria. However, the few modulations show areas where his propositions are the only way out for the betterment of Nigerian economy. These claims are illustrated by the excerpt below:

- 11i. Without your strong support (Ca) ... I (Cr)
would not (Fms) have been (Pi) President of
the African Development Bank (At).
- 27. Nigeria (S) **will (Fms) be looking to (Pme)** you
(Ph), as President Tinubu (Co), on your first day
in office (Cl), with hope (Cm).
- 28i. **Hope (Pme)** [28ii. that you (S) **will (Fms) assure**
(Pme) security, peace, and stability (Ph)] (Ph).
- 29i. **Hope (Pme)** [29ii. that you (A) **will (Fms) heal**
(Pm) 29iii. and [**will (Fms)**] **unite (Pm)** a
fractious nation (G)] (Ph).
- 31i. **Hope (Pme)** [31ii. that you (A) **will (Fms)**
drastically (Cm) **improve (Pm)** the economy (G)]
(Ph).
- 33i. And hope (G) **must (Fml) be brought (Pm)** to
the present (Cl), 33ii.
- 61. We (A) **must (Fml) change (Pm)** this (G). 62i.

Nigeria (S) **must (Fml) rely (Pme)** more on the private sector (Ph) ...

Furthermore, the Mood adjuncts in the speech are used by the speaker to strengthen the degrees of certainty and probability of the events. The mood adjuncts deployed in the speech are: “always”, “still”, “just”, “simply”, and “completely”. Also, many minor clauses deployed confer a dialogic tone to the speech. Most are used either to congratulate, acknowledge or draw the attention of his addressees. Additionally, the minor clauses reduce the distance between the speaker and his audience. Below are some examples from the speech:

- 2. Your Excellencies (Mn),
- 4. Congratulations Mr. President on Nigeria’s 7th consecutive democratic transition (Mn).
- 34. Your Excellencies (Mn),
- 52. Congratulations to Aliko Dangote for his amazing \$19 billion investment! (Mn)
- 64i. Much (G) **can (Fms) be done (Pm)** [64ii. **to raise(Pm)** tax revenue (G)] (Cc), 64iii. as the tax-to-GDP ratio (Cr) **is (Pi)** still **(Am)** low (At).
- 66i. [66ii. However, simply **(Am)raising (Pm)** taxes (G)] (Cr) **is not (Pi)** enough (At)...
- 66v. hence the high level of tax avoidance (Mn).

Passivisation

Again, the analysis of the speech shows that the speaker employs some passivisation techniques in encoding the message in his speech. They are used to foreground some participants or actions. Interestingly, the speaker’s sole intention as he uses this construction is to propose solutions to how to improve the economy of Nigeria. The excerpt below derived from the speech illustrates this claim:

- 33i. And hope (G) **must (Fml) be brought (Pm)** to the present (Cl), ...
- 35. The starting point (T) **must (Fms) be (Pi)** macroeconomic and fiscal stability (V). 36i. Unless

- the economy (G) **is revived (Pm)** 36ii. and fiscal challenges (G) **addressed (Pm)** boldly (Cm), 36iii. [36iv. resources (A) to develop (Pm)] (Cr) will (Fms) not be (Pi) there (Cl).
- 50i. Rather, support (G) **should (Fms) be given (Pm)** to private sector refineries and modular refineries (B)
- 55i. The cost of governance in Nigeria (Cr) is (Pi) way too high (At) 55ii. and **should (Fml) be** drastically (Cm) **reduced (Pm)** [55iii. to free up (Pm) more resources (G) for development (Cc)] (Cc).

Nominalisation

Moreover, another important linguistic feature inherent in the speech is nominalisation. This consists of turning verbs or adjectives into nouns. Some instances are as follows:

- i. Nominalisation: “3ii. to thank (Pv) President Muhammadu Buhari (Rv) for his personal **invitation** to me (Cc)” in this clause, the word “invitation” a noun derived from the verb “invite”.

De-nominalisation of this clause may result in: “President Muhammadu Buhari **invited** me”

- ii. Nominalisation: 16ii. you (A) can (Fms) take (Pm) **pride** (G) 16iii. that the mission for Africa (Cr) is being (Pi) well executed (At).

De-nominalisation: “Dear Mr President... you can be **proud** of me.

- iii. Nominalisation: “26. The **election** of a new President (A) always (Am) elicits (Pm) **hope** (G).”

De-nominalisation: “people are **hopeful** when they **elect** a new president”

- iv. Nominalisation: “30iv. to move (Pm) the nation (G) forward (Cl), with **inclusiveness, fairness, equity, and justice** (Cm)] (Cc)”

De-nominalisation: “the nation expects your leadership to be **inclusive, fair, equitable, and just**”

Pronouns

This is the last linguistic feature to be highlighted in this study. Dr Adesina employs extensively the following pronouns: “you” (17 times) to address the presidents of Nigeria, “I” (13 times) to refer to himself, “we” to refer to himself and his fellow Nigerians. After highlighting, discussing, and interpreting the linguistic features inherent in the speech, it is now time to address the discursive features couched in the speech.

Discursive Features

The analysis of Dr Adesina’s speech reveals that he uses specific lexical items as well as some rhetorical devices to depict the economic state of Nigeria and propose a way out to the new president. Some of these features are discussed here.

Lexical Items

The speaker deploys the term “economy” 18 times. In most cases, this lexicon is used to show the need and the ways to revolutionise and improve the country’s economy. The subsequent excerpt illustrates these claims:

- 31i. Hope (Pme) [31ii. that you (A) will (Fms)
drastically (Cm) improve (Pm) the **economy** (G)]
(Ph).
- 36i. Unless the **economy** (G) is revived (Pm)...
- 48i. Fuel subsidies (A) are killing (Pm) the Nigerian
economy (G),
- 51. The newly commissioned Dangote Refinery ...
will (Fms) revolutionize (Pm) Nigeria’s **economy**
(G).
- 74. We (A) must (Fml) rebalance (Pm) the structure
and performance of the **economy** (G).
- 77i. The **economy** of Nigeria (T) is (Pi) one of the
most diversified (V) in Africa (Cl)...
- 81i. The solution (Cr), therefore, is (Pi) [81ii. to unlock
(Pm) the bottlenecks (G) 81iii. that (A) are

- hampering (Pm) 85% of the **economy** (G)] (At).
 105i. Nigeria's rural areas (Ph) are forgotten (Pme)
 104ii and have become (Pi) zones of **economic** misery
 (V).

Another key lexicon in the speech is "development". This is normal as the speech's subject-matter revolves around how to use the country's resources to develop it. Moreover, the speaker was a two-time president of the African Development Bank Group. Hence, "development" is found 28 times in the speech. Below are some instances wherein the word is used:

- 36i. Unless the economy (G) is revived (Pm) 36ii. and
 fiscal challenges (G) addressed (Pm) boldly
 (Cm), 36iii. [36iv. **resources (A) to develop**
 (Pm)] (Cr) will (Fms) not be (Pi) there (Cl).
 ...49v. and uses (Pm) the resources (G) well (Cm) for
its national development (Cc).
 (Cc). 56. Nigeria (A) is spending (Pm) very little (G)
 on **development** (Cl).
 04. **For inclusive development** (Cc), Nigeria (A)
 must (Fml) completely (Am) revive (Pm) its rural
 areas (G).
 109i. **The development** of Special Agro-industrial
 Processing Zones (A) will (Fms) transform
 (Pm) agriculture (G).

Again, given the importance of the role of the youth in developing a country, the speaker deploys that term at least ten times in the speech. This is to call the new president's attention to the need to empower the Nigerian youth without whom it will be very difficult to talk about economic improvement as they represent at least 70% of the entire Nigerian population. Here is an excerpt that illustrates this claim:

- 119i. There is (Pe) an urgent need (X) [119ii. to
 unleash (Pm) the potential of the **youth**
 (G)](Cc). 120. Today (Cl), over 75% of the
 population in Nigeria (Cr) is (Pi) under the age
 of 35 (At).

123. Nigeria (A) must (Fml) create (Pm) **youth**-based wealth (G).
 (Cl). 125. **Youths** (S) do not need (Pme) handouts (Ph)...127i. The current banking systems (A) do not (Pm) 127ii. and will not (Fms) lend (Pm) to the **youth** (Cl).

There are many other key terms used by the speaker. These include “investment” (7), “Nigeria” (52 times), “president” (29 times), “support” (7 times), among others. The second aspect of the discursive strategies is the use of rhetorical devices.

Rhetorical Devices

It has been established above that Dr Adesina uses rhetorical devices to reach the communicative goals of his speech. Some of these devices are highlighted and discussed below:

Personification

Personification is a figure of speech where human qualities or actions are attributed to inanimate objects or abstract ideas. The speaker personifies a lot of entities to achieve his communicative needs. Below are some examples:

- 28i. **Hope (Pme)** [28ii. that you (S) **will (Fms) assure (Pme)** security, peace, and stability (Ph)] (Ph).
 29i. **Hope (Pme)** [29ii. that you (A) **will (Fms) heal (Pm)** 29iii. and [**will(Fms)**] **unite (Pm)** a fractious nation (G)] (Ph).
 33i. And hope (G) **must (Fms) be brought (Pm)** to the present (Cl), 33ii. [as hope deferred] (Ag) **makes (Pc)** the heart (Cr) **grow (Pi)** weary (At).
 84i. Nations (A) **do not thrive (Pm)** through import substitution (Cl); 84ii. they (A) **thrive (Pm)** from export-bound industrialization (Cl).

In the speech, the speaker personifies “hope” and “nations”. The analysis shows that the abstract concept of *hope* is given the human ability to:

- provide assurance,
- heal and unify,
- transcend political party,
- bring about economic improvement and prosperity,
- make a heart go weary, that is, tired.

As for the concept of “nations”, the speaker confers to it the human ability of thriving.

Metaphor

A metaphor is a trope that compares two unlike things without using the terms “like” or “as”. Some instances in the speech include the following:

[7iv. to have (Pp) a **passing of the baton** between H.E. President Muhammadu Buhari, and the incoming-President, H.E. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu (Pd)].

105i. Nigeria’s rural areas (Ph) are forgotten (Pme)

105ii. and have become (Pi) **zones of economic misery (V)**.

32ii. that you (A) will (Fms) **spark (Pm) a new wave of prosperity (G)...**

91. And it (Cr) is not (Pi) **brain surgery (At)**.

115ii. **Nigeria’s best asset (T) is (Pi) its human capital (V)**.

119i. There is (Pe) an urgent need (X) [119ii. to **unleash (Pm) the potential of the youth (G)**] (Cc).

In 7iv above, the speaker uses “passing of the baton” to compare the transfer of power from the former to the new President to the exchange of a baton in a relay race. In the same token, “zones of economic misery” is deployed by the speaker in 105ii to liken rural areas experiencing economic hardship to a desolate zone. Moreover, “economic misery” is a metaphor that describes the state of a failing economy as a form of suffering or misery. In 115ii, “Nigeria’s best asset (T) is (Pi) its human capital (V)” is a metaphor that equates a country’s population and workforce to a valuable resource. Again, “spark a new wave of

prosperity” in 32ii, is used to compare the start of a new, flourishing economy to the creation of spark that ignites a wave. Finally, in 119i, the speaker employs “unleash (Pm) the potential of the youth (G)” as a metaphor that likens releasing the youth’s abilities and creativity to unleashing a powerful force.

5.2.Sociocultural Practice (Explanation)

This aspect of the analysis majorly focuses on the ideological stances of the data. According to Fairclough (2003), one of the causal effects of texts which has been of major concern for CDA is ideological effects. Therefore, CDA investigates the effects of texts in inculcating and sustaining or changing ideologies. Ideologies are nothing but the representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination, and exploitation (Ibid, 2003). And each text carries ideological points. This is because texts have social, political, cognitive, moral and material consequences and effects, and that it is vital to understand these consequences and effects if we are to raise moral and political questions about contemporary societies, and about the transformations of “new capitalism” in particular. In the text under scrutiny, the following ideological stances can be highlighted:

Neoliberal or New Capitalist Ideology

According to Fairclough (2010, p. 11), the neoliberal ideology is aimed at actions like attempts to reducing the state’s responsibility for providing social welfare, freeing the markets from state intervention and regulation, among other things. Therefore, neoliberalism is a political project and ideology that aims at facilitating the restructuring and re-scaling of social relations in accord with the demands of an unrestrained global capitalism (Bourdieu, 1998, cited in Fairclough, 2010, p. 12). This is exactly what Dr Adesina advocates in his speech. He calls for an economic liberalisation. He also believes that the legitimate solution for boosting Nigerian economy is through the private sector and a market reform. Below are some instances of such claims:

- 50i. Rather, support (G) **should (Fms) be given (Pm)** to private sector refineries and modular refineries
(B) [50ii. **to allow for (Pm)** efficiency and

competitiveness (G) 50iii. **to drive down (Pm)** fuel pump prices (G)] (Cc). 51. The newly commissioned Dangote **will (Fms) revolutionize (Pm)** Nigeria's economy (G).

61. We (A) **must (Fml) change (Pm)** this (G). 62i. Nigeria (S) **must (Fml) rely (Pme)** more on the private sector (Ph) for infrastructure development (Cc), 62ii. **to reduce (Pm)** fiscal burdens (G) on the government (Cl).

81i. The solution (Cr), therefore, **is (Pi)** [81ii. **to unlock (Pm)** the bottlenecks (G) 81iii. that (A) **are hampering (Pm)** 85% of the economy (G)] (At).

In this excerpt, the speaker is urging the new President to strengthen the private sector if he wants to revolutionise Nigeria's economy. Dr Adesina is also advocating a restructuring of the relation between the economic, political and social domains by including and associating the rural economies in order to revive and transform them. This is buttressed by this excerpt:

105i. Nigeria's rural areas (Ph) **are forgotten (Pme)** 105ii. and **have become (Pi)** zones of economic misery (V). 106i. **To revive (Pm)** 106ii. and **transform (Pm)** these rural economies (G), 106iii. we (A) **must (Fml) make (Pm)** agriculture their main source of income, a business and a wealth creating sector (G).

Therefore, one of the major ideological stances of Dr Adesina's speech is the neoliberal one. Another ideology inherent in the speech under scrutiny is the human capital ideology.

Human Capital Ideology

Dr Adesina puts much prominence on human capital as one of Nigeria's best assets. He believes that the development of the country heavily lies on the shoulders of its youth. By investing in the youth through education and skill development, in key disciplines such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics, among other things, Nigeria will be globally competitive. In fact, the lexical analysis

corroborates this claim, as the speaker deploys it ten times throughout the speech, while urging the new President to empower them. The excerpt below also proves the foregoing:

- 115ii. Nigeria's best asset (T) **is (Pi)** its human capital (V).
- 116i. We (A) **must (Fml) invest (Pm)** heavily (Cm) in human capital (Cl) [116ii. **to build up (Pm)** the skills (G)]
- 119i. There **is (Pe)** an urgent need (X) [119ii. **to unleash (Pm)** the potential of the youth (G)] (Cc).
- 123. Nigeria (A) **must (Fml) create (Pm)** youth-based wealth (G).
- 129i. [What (Cr)'s **(Pi)** needed (At) [**to unleash (Pm)** the entrepreneurship of the youth (G) in Nigeria (Cl)] (Cc)] (Cr) **are (Pi)** brand new financial ecosystems (At) ...

In the above passage, the speaker highlights all the benefits of investing and empowering Nigerian youth, thereby insisting on his belief on human capital as a major factor that favours development in their beloved country. Moreover, he also believes in the ideology of economic and Pan-African development.

Ideology of Economic and Pan-African Development

One of the major ideological stances of the speech is the developmental aspect. As the incumbent President of the African Development Bank, the speaker understands well the role of a country's economic development in national transformation. He also advocates a cooperation between the institutions of the African continent. The developmental ideology is so keen to the speaker that he deploys the term twenty-eight times in the discourse. For him, Pan-African cooperation is the best route to promote inclusion among African youths. He also suggests the establishment of a Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Bank in Nigeria. The excerpt below confirms such claims:

133i. The African Development Bank (A) **is currently (Cl) working (Pm)** with Central Banks and countries (Ca)

[133ii. **to design (Pm)**

133iii. and **support (Pm)** the establishment (G) of *Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Banks* (G)] (Cc).

134i. These (T) **will (Fms) be (Pi)** new financial institutions (V), 134ii. (that (G) **will(Fms)] run (Pm)** by young, ... [134iii. **to develop (Pm)** 134iv. and **deploy (Pm)** new financial products and services (G) for businesses and ventures of young people (Cc)] (Cc).

136. Nigeria (A) **should (Fml) establish (Pm)** the Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Bank (G).

138i. Nigeria's economy (S) **needs (Pme)**

[138ii. **to soar (Pm)] (Ph)!**

Here, the speaker proposes some ideas to favour Pan-African economic development. He urges the President-elect to valorise continental cooperation for a better productivity and national transformation. Moreover, the speaker mentions a critical aspect that is hindering the national economic development of Nigeria: fiscal fraud, debt management, and fuel subsidies. He states that:

38i. Nigeria (A) currently (Cl) **faces (Pm)** huge fiscal deficits (G),

40i. According to Nigeria's Debt Management Office (Cm), Nigeria (A) now (Cl) **spends (Pm)** 96% of its revenue (G) [41ii. **servicing (Pm)** debt (G).

43i. Debt (G) **is paid (Pm)** [43ii. **using (Pm)** revenue (G)] (Cc), 43iii. and Nigeria's revenues (A) **have been declining (Pm)**.

45i. [The place to start] (T) **is (Pi)** [45ii. **to remove (Pm)** the inefficient fuel subsidies (G)] (V).

48i. Fuel subsidies (A) **are killing (Pm)** the Nigerian economy (G), 49iv. if it (A) simply (Am) **eliminates (Pm)** the subsidies (G) 49v. and

uses (Pm) the resources (G) well (Cm) for its national development (Cc).

This excerpt corroborates the fact that the speaker believes in economic developmental ideology. He advocates key actions that once applied will definitely help boost Nigerian and African economic state. To sum up, Dr Adesina's speech is embedded with strong ideological stances, especially in the economic and developmental domains.

Conclusion

This study has examined Dr Akinwumi A. Adesina's inauguration lecture delivered on 27 May 2023 through the lens of Fairclough's (2003, 2010) dialectical-relational approach to CDA. By analysing the linguistic features and discursive strategies deployed in the speech, the paper has demonstrated how language functions as a powerful ideological resource for constructing and legitimising a particular vision of Nigeria's economic future. The analysis of Transitivity, Modality, Mood Adjuncts, and Minor Clauses, Passivisation, Nominalisation, Pronouns, lexical choices and rhetorical devices reveals that these linguistic resources are carefully put together to diagnose Nigeria's economic challenges, persuade the audience of the urgency of reform, and project a coherent agenda for national development.

Beyond their textual and persuasive functions, these linguistic choices encode broader ideological assumptions. The speech primarily reflects a neoliberal ideology where the speaker advocates an economic liberalisation through the private sector's participation as well as a market reform. The speaker also calls for a reform of the agricultural sector by making agriculture a business and valorising rural economies. Moreover, Dr Adesina believes that Nigeria's biggest asset is in its human capital, especially the youth. Hence, he urges the President-elect to invest more in that aspect through education and skill development. The speaker also advocates economic and Pan-African development through inclusion and establishment of Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Banks in Nigeria and across Africa.

The study therefore concludes that Dr Adesina's speech exemplifies how political-economic discourse can be strategically employed to shape public perception, legitimise policy directions and mobilise support for socio-economic transformation. By integrating Fairclough's three-

dimensional model with a detailed linguistic analysis, this study demonstrates that discourse is not merely a vehicle for communicating economic ideas but also a means of producing, sustaining and disseminating ideological meanings. It is hoped that this research will contribute to the growing body of scholarship on CDA, political discourse and development communication in Africa, while providing a useful framework for future studies examining the intersection of language, ideology and economic policy in contemporary political speeches.

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