

A LINGUISTIC-STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF ABDULRAHMAN ABDULRASAQ'S INAUGURAL SPEECH (2019)

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Abstract: Political speeches are frequently loaded with meanings; people tend to misconstrue as well as give false interpretation to what is said and how it is said. This research aims at examining the linguistic-stylistic elements used in Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq's inaugural speech with a view to identifying how these elements achieve communicative effects to the audience. Governor AbdulRahman's inaugural speech serves as the data for this study, and the speech was delivered at his swearing-in ceremony as the 20th governor of Kwara State on 29th May, 2019. Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) serves as the theoretical framework. The analysis of this text is carried out along the linguistic levels of analysis, which are syntactic, lexico-semantic and cohesive levels. The study reveals that the governor's speech is made up of 43 sentences; 21 sentences (48.8%) are simple sentences; 5 sentences (11.6%) are compound sentences; 9 sentences (20.9%) are complex sentences; while 8 (18.6%) are compound-complex sentences. The dominant use of simple sentences in the speech aligns with the simple and determining attitude of politicians in getting what they want. The analysis also reveals that the imposition of synonyms and antonyms in the speech helped in enhancing the cohesive quality of the text. Hence, it is concluded that the language of the governor exhibits some unique language features with the intent of exerting great influence on the masses, and grasping power and consolidating it.

Keywords: AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq; communication; political speech; stylistics; systemic functional grammar

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1. Introduction

One of the beautiful features of human language is the fact that it is used for social interaction. In social lives of humans, language is used to establish and maintain social relationships. Akinmusuyi (2022, p. 14) notes that humans communicate particularly through the distinctive use of language since communication is vital for facilitating growth and development in every society. Language is the main goal of linguists. Hence, linguistics is considered as a scientific study of language (Crystal, 2008; Agu, 2015). As a science, linguistics is concerned with developing theories that account for and explain the phenomena of language and language use. Stylistics is therefore seen as one of the relatively branches of linguistics with special bias for both a description and analysis of language. The practice of this stylistic approach (descriptive and analytical) on the linguistic features of a text is done in relation to their meaning.

Speech is the art and process of speaking or giving lectures to a group of people in a structured and deliberate manner and it is intended to inform, influence, or entertain a listening audience. Speech can be of two types: written and spoken. Speech is commonly used for the purpose of communication. It is closely allied to “presenting” either in writing or speaking. Speech is basically associated with the persuasion of the audience. A prevalent form of speech is political speech.

Political speeches are frequently loaded with meanings; they are expected to reveal the roadmap of actions of politicians and the likely effects of such future action on the masses (Ademilokun, 2015). People tend to misconstrue as well as give false interpretation to what is said and how it is said. The inaugural speech of Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq of Kwara State, Nigeria is pregnant with various linguistic-stylistic features, and the listeners’ inability to recognise these features will make them lose sight of the beauty and creativity employed in the speech. This study attempts to elucidate how these stylistic features give a better clarification and interpretation to political speeches.

However, Crystal (2008) argues that stylistics is a branch of linguistics which studies the features of situational distinctive use of language and tries to establish principles capable of accounting for the particular choices made by individual and social group in their use of language. Crystal posits that there must be a reason for the use of language but his primary concern is in the manner of usage, which is the style of usage. The situation of usage can be anything or anywhere but the concern here is on identification and explanation of techniques used either consciously or unconsciously by Governor AbdulRahman to convey meaning in his speech.

The aim of this study is to examine the stylistic elements such as syntax, lexico-semantics and cohesive devices used in the inaugural speech with a view to identifying how these elements achieve communicative effects to the audience. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. explore the syntactic structures of the sentences, that is, the sentence types, sentence structures, thematization process, voice, and parallelism;
- ii. identify the lexico-semantic features such as synonym, antonym, use of register, and the figurative language used in the text; and
- iii. examine the cohesive devices employed in the inaugural speech.

2. Brief Biography of Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq

AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq, the incumbent Governor of Kwara State, was born on the 5th February, 1960 in Ilorin West Local Government, Nigeria. He attended Capital School,

Kaduna between 1966 and 1968; Bishop Smith Memorial School Ilorin between 1970 and 1971; and Government College Kaduna where he earned his West African School Certificate Examination. AbdulRasaq joined politics in 1999 when Nigeria returned to democracy. He contested for the governor of Kwara State in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 respectively under the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) political party but was successively defeated in those attempts. However in 2019, he contested again under the ruling political party in Nigeria – All Progressive Congress (APC) and emerged as the governor of Kwara State, after he successfully won the 2019 governorship election in the state. Alhaji AdulRahman AbdulRasaq was elected to the Office of the Governor of Kwara State at the 2019 governorship election held on March 9, 2019 and sworn in on May 29, 2019. (*Source: Wikipedia*)

3. Language and Politics

Language and politics have become intertwined to an extent that language is an indispensable tool in politics. Beard (2002) claims that “looking at the language of politics as an occupation is important because it helps us to understand how language is used by those who wish to gain power, those who wish to exercise power and those who wish to keep power”. This assertion affirms the claim of Opeibi (2009) and Ayeomoni (2011) that language is a vital process of setting the personality and the programme of the candidates to the public, with the primary aim of gaining their support and mobilising them to participate in the process of securing and controlling power. We therefore say that politics has become a linguistic issue while language has become a political issue.

According to Fairclough (1989), and Thomas and Wareing (1999), the acquisition of power in politics is primarily founded on the persuasion of citizens that the ideas of their political leaders coincide with their own views and interests. They reason that politicians make use of a wide range of linguistic resources and choices to build up their discourse and these usually have crucial effects on shaping an ideology that will lead the people to accept their argument more easily. The ability to accurately and creatively exploit the appropriate linguistic resources to suit specific communication situation is the most valuable asset a politician could have to achieve his personal or public objectives. Thomas and Wareing (1999, p. 34), commenting on the influential power of language in politics, says:

By a subtle manipulation of language skills, skillful orators have traditionally been able to exert great influence on the preconceptions, presuppositions, beliefs, aspirations and fear of the masses to the extent of causing people to accept false assertions as true postulates, or even to support policies contrary to their interests.

From the foregoing, it is clear that language is a key factor in political behaviour concerning controlling people’s ideas and mobilising them for support and followership. Whether a government is civil, democratic or military, it has to use language to communicate in order to inform, persuade, advertise, issue their rules and regulations, decrees, announcements, pronouncements, legislate and so forth (Enyi, 2016, p. 50). We can therefore say that language could be seen as the vehicular expression of politics.

4. Linguistic Stylistics as a Model of Stylistics

Different movements and theoretical approaches in the study of linguistics have inevitably determined the various profiles and practices of stylistics. Over time, different approaches or models of stylistic analysis have evolved. Some theories are scientifically motivated while others are socially and politically motivated. One of these many models is the linguistic approach to stylistics.

Linguistic stylistics explores the features of a text; it points out those choices which a writer or speaker has made as well as the effects of the choices. As linguistics studies language scientifically, it studies style as well in an impersonal and objective manner. Stylistics defines, studies and analyses style objectively and technically applying methodology of linguistics. According to Udeze et al. (2017, p. 116), this model of stylistics focuses on linguistic theory, conducting stylistic analysis to test or refine a linguistic model.

The concept of linguistic stylistics has to do with a stylistic study that relies heavily on the 'scientific rules' of language in its analysis. Such rules will embrace the lexical, grammatical, figures of speech, context and cohesion categories. Linguistic stylistics is primarily concerned with the use of language and its effects in a text. Texts, whether written or spoken, are organised through several distinct levels of language (Setiawan et al., 2017; Ogunrinde & Jayeoba, 2020). These levels of language form the basis of linguistic stylistic analysis. The linguistic stylistic features that an analyst must look out for are: phonology, grammar, semantics, lexis, cohesion and coherence.

5. Review of Related Works

There have been many scholarly works which employed linguistic stylistics as a theoretical framework. One of those works is Nnadi (2010) who uses linguistic stylistics to analyse Chukwuemeka Ike's novels. He examines how, through a network of lexical selection (diction), the various tones in the texts are revealed; how the stylistically significant phrasal and clausal typology, sentence structures and punctuation patterns have combined to produce the aesthetics of the selected novels. Also, Namwandi (2019) utilises linguistic stylistics to explore and discuss the most common stylistic devices used in advertisements by SMEs, and to analyse the stylistic features used in advertisements by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). The study also proposes suitable linguistic styles that can be used by SMEs in advertising.

One researcher who employed linguistic stylistics to analyse political speeches is Balogun (2015), who undertakes a linguistic study of parallelism as a significant stylistic device used in the selected Presidential speeches of Barrack Obama and Goodluck Jonathan. However, to the knowledge of this researcher, there has been no research which attempts to employ linguistic stylistics, or any other form of linguistic study, to analyse AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq's inaugural speech, which was delivered at the swearing-in of the governor as the Executive Governor of Kwara State which took place at the Government House, Ilorin, Kwara State on 29th May, 2019. This current study is of a considerable advantage to language users because it specifically analysed the language use in political speeches, and also serves as a supplement to the existing literature regarding stylistic analysis of political speeches in English language. This study hopes to enrich the knowledge of the reader and it will justify the need to appreciate the exclusive human phenomenon, such as language.

6. Theoretical Framework: Systemic Functional Grammar

Halliday is the founder of the Systemic Functional Grammar (henceforth, SFG) theory which emerged from earlier studies. SFG was originally built on the linguistic notions of Malinowski and J.R. Firth. The emphasis of SFG on sociological aspect of language makes it a potent theoretical framework for this research. SFG is an approach which can be said to be an influential model for the study of texts. SFG identifies how language can be used in social contexts to achieve particular purposes (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Adetomokun (2012, p. 44) says that "this theory (SFG) looks at language from the outside as well as the inside, because it analyses language as used naturally in any social setting". SFG can be used to analyse texts in order to have a better understanding of the descriptions of grammatical resources and the general functions of language within discourse.

According to Halliday (1994), language can only be understood by examining the ways in which it is used in certain contexts, both cultural and situational. Context is indisputably a key factor in language choices. Therefore, context is integral to the overall process of making meaning. SFG studies language in context in terms of three aspects - Field, Tenor and Mode. **Field** refers to the subject matter of discussion at any situation. It answers questions such as “what is going on in the text,” and “what are people doing”. **Tenor** refers to relationships of main characters and roles of people in social status. As Halliday and Hassan (1989, p. 13) point out, tenor “refers to who is taking part, to the nature of the participants, their statuses and roles”. **Mode** deals with the medium or channel of communication. Mode of discourse can be written or oral.

Osisanwo (1999, p. 10) further submits that “systemic grammar postulates four theoretical categories of unit, structure, class and system which are used to account for the fundamental grammatical patterns of any human language”. In essence, the unit and the class categories operate at both surface and deep planes of grammar. The structure category applies to only the surface plane of grammar while the system category operates only in deep grammatical plane. This study therefore investigates the linguistic-stylistic features of language use in the inaugural speech of Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq with the intent of identifying how these elements achieve communicative effects. These linguistic-stylistic elements will help in identifying the features of the governor’s distinctive language use.

7. Methodology

This study undertakes a linguistic stylistic analysis of the inaugural speech delivered by the newly elected governor of Kwara State, His Excellency, Alhaji AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq. The speech was delivered at the governor’s swearing-in ceremony as the 20th governor of Kwara State on 29th May, 2019. The speech was downloaded from the web address: <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/2019-inaugural-address-of-kwara-governor-alhaji-abdulrahman-abdulrasaq.html>. Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2014) Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) serves as the theoretical framework for this study. The analysis of this text is carried out along the linguistic levels of analysis, which are syntactic, cohesive and lexicosemantic levels of analysis. The language used and its effects on the speech is assessed and an attempt is made to reveal why the governor uses the type of language and what he has achieved.

8. Results

This study undertakes a stylistic analysis, at the levels of syntax, lexicosemantics, and cohesion, of Governor AbdulRahman’s inaugural speech. This section presents the results of the data analysed and its discussion.

8.1. Syntactic Features

Syntax, at the simplest level of analysis, refers to the grammatical arrangement of the various elements of a sentence (Pam, 2012). It has been observed that political speeches are usually written in clauses, sentences or fragmented syntactic structures. The noticeable syntactic features in our data are discussed below.

Sentence Structure. The sentence is the vehicle the writer uses to convey the intensity of his message. Maximum effectiveness in communication is achieved by the way a writer uses sentences. The analysis of sentence structure in stylistics can be determined by looking at the composition of the sentences such as the use of simple, compound, complex or compound-complex sentences.

A simple sentence contains only one independent clause; compound sentence contains two or more independent clauses joined by a coordinator; a complex sentence is a sentence that contains an independent clause and at least one dependent clause joined by a subordinator; while a compound-complex sentence contains two or more independent clauses and at least one dependent clause. AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq’s speech is made up of 43 sentences; 21 sentences (48.8%) are simple sentences; 5 sentences (11.6%) are compound sentences; 9 sentences (20.9%) are complex sentences; while 8 (18.6%) are compound-complex sentences.

Samples of Simple Sentences

S P C

“You all / fought against / all odds and at great cost.” (Paragraph 5; sentence 8)

S P C

“It / belongs to / the people of Kwara” (Paragraph 6; sentence 12)

This dominant use of simple sentences in the speech aligns with the simple and determining attitude of politicians in getting what they want. Hence, they often make their messages clear, simple and unambiguous.

Samples of Compound Sentences

“Allow me to thank Allah for keeping us alive and in good health to see this historic day and thank you Kwarans for the confidence you have reposed in us in the course of our struggle to redefine, refocus and reposition our State.” (Paragraph 3; sentence 4)

“We shall engage them and find solutions.” (Paragraph 7; sentence 18)

In this speech, simple sentences have been joined properly through the use of coordinating conjunctions, such as “but” and “and” to form compound sentences. The compound sentences employed in the speech give the speaker opportunity to express his thoughts logically and coherently.

Samples of Complex Sentences

“Kwarans reached that decision-making point when they collectively decided to vote us into office on March 9, 2019.” (Paragraph 2; sentence 3)

“The spirit of that movement shall always remain with us as we work to achieve our dreams.” (Paragraph 6; sentence 13)

Samples of Compound-Complex Sentences

“In the history of a people, a time comes when they individually and collectively decide to take their destiny in their own hands and fashion an alternative narrative and quest for peace, progress, growth and development for themselves and future generations.” (Paragraph 2; sentence 2)

“Many of you were blackmailed, abused, humiliated and harassed in several ways because you simply said enough is enough.” (Paragraph 5; sentence 9)

By means of compound-complex sentences, the governor conveys multiple ideas and information in a logical and grammatical way. The subordinate clauses in this kind of sentence modify the main clauses which reveal the information the speakers seek to convey to the audience. Since compound-complex sentences are often considered as complicated, the speaker’s accurate combination of clauses to construct this kind of sentences reflects his mastery of the grammar of English.

Voice. Voice refers to the form of a verb that shows when a grammatical subject is the doer of an action or is the receiver of an action in a sentence. In the *active voice*, the subject always “does” the action of the sentence. In other words, the subject of the sentence is doing or performing the action, while the object is receiving the action. A verb is said to be in the *passive voice* when the subject of the sentence is acted upon by the verb.

All the sentences that constitute the speech except sentence 9 are in the active voice. Active voice has been predominantly employed to ensure clarity of thoughts and ideas. However, sentence 9 – “*Many of you were blackmailed, abused, humiliated and harassed in several ways because you simply said enough is enough*” – is in the passive voice. Passive voice is used when the focus is on the action and on whom the action is performed, rather than the performer of the action. The receiver of the action is now placed in the subject position. The speaker adopts this voice to give prominence to the fact that his supporters were brutally dealt with prior to his declaration as the winner of the gubernatorial election. The speaker however avoids accusing anyone of perpetrating the attacks inflicted on his supporters.

Syntactic Parallelism. Parallelism is a linguistic phenomenon, which explains the relationship that may be understood between units of linguistic structures, which are constructed parallel to each other or related in some other ways. According to Balogun (2015, p, 77), there are three ways to identify syntactic parallelism, which are: each section of the text contains the same classes of phrases and words; corresponding phrases bear similar grammatical and thematic relations to the predicator; and corresponding phrases and words are in the same order in both sections of the text.

Parallelism has been employed by the Governor to beautify his speech. Moreover, it intensifies the audience’s excitement and suspense. Most importantly, syntactic parallelism has helped the Governor to convey the meaning of the discourse more comprehensively to the audience.

Two forms of syntactic parallelism are observed in the speech. These forms are **Isocolon** and **Tricolon**. Isocolon is a device in which parallelism is reinforced by members that are of the same length, while tricolon is a form of isocolon and it is a sentence with three clearly defined parts of equal length, usually independent clauses. Examples of isocolon in the speech are:

- a) “the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful” (paragraph 1)
- b) “All praises and adoration” (paragraph 1)
- c) “they individually and collectively” (paragraph 2)
- d) “its officials and field workers at all levels” (paragraph 3)
- e) “for their support and hard work” (paragraph 3)
- f) “Allah will never forget you and will give you the strength” (paragraph 6)
- g) “task of reformation and reconstruction” (paragraph 7)
- h) “our goal is to build confidence...; create an enabling environment” (paragraph 9)
- i) “human and material resources” (paragraph 10)
- j) “enough wealth and opportunities” (paragraph 10)

Instances of tricolon in the speech are:

- k) “for peace, progress, growth and development” (paragraph 2)
- l) “to redefine, refocus and reposition our State” (paragraph 3)

- m) “the collective will, courage and determination of our people” (paragraph 5)
- n) “initiated, nurtured and propelled the Otoge movement” (paragraph 5)
- o) “the foundation, soul and spirit of our victory” (paragraph 5)
- p) “Many of you were blackmailed, abused, humiliated and harassed” (paragraph 5)
- q) “legendary infrastructure deficits, decay and deprivations” (paragraph 8)
- r) “the wheel of peace, progress and sustainable development” (paragraph 8)
- s) “What we stand for is to empower our people. Make society and life better. Strengthen family values. Improve efficiency and service delivery in our public services” (paragraph 12)
- t) “Fellow Kwarans, distinguished ladies and gentlemen” (paragraph 14)
- u) “our policies, programmes and actions” (paragraph 16)
- v) “love it, hold it, pray for it and work with it” (paragraph 18)
- w) “we have no other State than Kwara; we have no other dream than Kwara, and we have no other priority than Kwara.” (paragraph 12)

This syntactic feature has helped the governor to reinforce the messages he wants his audience to go home with and to imprint these messages on their minds. The feature helps to emphasise the speaker’s points and draw attention to the significance of what he is trying to communicate.

The Process of Thematization. The process of thematization is related to the idea of Theme and Rheme. Thematization is the process by which some parts of the clause, such as the complement, object or adjunct are placed in the Theme position as in the following examples used by the Governor:

- a) “In the history of a people, a time comes when they individually and collectively decide to take their destiny in their own hands” (paragraph 2)
- b) “Many of you were blackmailed, abused, humiliated and harassed in several ways” (paragraph 5)
- c) “Rather, our goal is to build confidence that a better future is possible” (paragraph 9)
- d) “Based on data from the research we have been conducting on the resource base of our State, there is no doubt that we are abundantly blessed in human and material resources” (paragraph 10)
- e) “Fellow Kwarans, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we are confident that we shall, together, make Kwara great again” (paragraph 14)
- f) “In all our policies, programmes and actions, the people of Kwara shall always come first.” (paragraph 16)
- g) “Today, I invite you all to join hands with us in Government to repair and rebuild Kwara.” (paragraph 17)
- h) “As for me and those I will be working with, we have no other State than Kwara” (paragraph 18)
- i) “May Allah continue to bless our State.” (paragraph 19)

The underlined expressions are the themes of the passive surface structure. They function as the starting point or signpost, that is, the frame which the speaker has chosen to communicate his message to the audience. Example e is referred to as interpersonal themes. The speaker begins the clause with interpersonal meanings (such as the use of vocatives: *Fellow Kwarans, distinguished ladies and gentlemen*) which indicate the kind of interaction between the speaker and the audience. The speaker adopts this style to get acquainted with his audience by establishing an interpersonal relationship between them.

8.2. Lexico-Semantic Features

This is the combination of both lexical and semantic qualities of elements of a text. The focus is on lexical relations between words and their meanings according to their context of usage. In this section, we examine how the choice of words and phrases used by the speakers of these speeches has contributed in constructing their respective styles and revealing their intentions.

Use of Register. Register is a style of a language used in a particular context. It could also refer to a technical term for words, phrases or sentence structures which are associated with a particular group of writers or professionals. Since the text analysed is a political speech, registers associated with politics and government are used in the speech. Expressions of politics and government which are dominant in the speech are:

“political development”, “decision-making”, “vote”, “state”, “official”, “movement”, “polls”, “victory”, “infrastructural development”, “social welfare”, “policy and programmes”, “sustainable development”, “office”, “transparency”, “accountability”, “government”, “administration”, “public service”, “resources”, and “policy making”.

These various political expressions employed in the speech belong to the formal category of language register; they serve as an indicator of the formality or official nature of the occasion, which is the swearing-in ceremony of the new Executive Governor of Kwara State, His Excellency AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq. These political expressions, which comment on government actions, plans and decisions, also give a hint to the kind of speech being delivered – a political speech.

Synonymy. Synonymy is a cohesive device that means similarity of meaning. It is a situation where two or more words express similar meanings. Synonymous words found in the speech are:

“praises and adoration” (sentence 1); “progress, growth and development” (sentence 2); “redefine, refocus and reposition” (sentence 4); “will, courage and determination” (sentence 7); “blackmailed and abused” (sentence 9); “dependable and sustainable” (sentence 25); “make better, strengthen, improve, revamp and promote” (sentences 24-33); “policies, programmes and actions” (sentence 36).

The use of synonymous words in this speech enhances the text by giving it a clear and vivid picture. The imposition of synonyms in the speech serves to strengthen and reinforce the various ideas expressed in the text. Also, it gives cohesive effects to the text by averting repetition of same expressions and consequently, preventing the audience from getting bored.

Antonymy. Antonymy is the opposite of synonymy. That is, the word that means the opposite of another word. In other words, it expresses semantic contrasts. Instances of antonyms in the speech are: “individually and collectively” (sentence 2); “struggle and victory” (sentence 14); “progress and stagnation” (sentence 20); “ladies and gentlemen” (sentence 34).

Like synonyms, antonyms also enhance the cohesive quality of the text and bring out the idea of meaning contrast in the text clearly. By contrasting different ideas in the speech, the audience tends to find the texts more interesting and also, have an acute understanding of them.

Metaphor. This is a figure of speech where one thing is described in terms of something else. In other words, it is direct transfer of a quality of one thing to another. AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq employs this device to add aesthetic value and clarity to the speech. As seen in the inaugural speech, instances of metaphorical expressions are:

...decide to take their destiny in their own hands... (sentence 2)

... that was the foundation, soul and spirit of our victory at the polls. (sentence 7)

You all fought against all odds... (sentence 8)

The spirit of that movement shall always remain with us... (sentence 13)

...we have put our hands on the wheel of peace... (sentence 20)

What we stand for is to empower our people (sentence 28)

It is our home (sentence 41)

Metaphors are used by the Governor to convey vivid imageries that transcend literal meaning; create images that are easier to understand and respond to than literal language. Hence, the governor employ this device to make his ideas clearer, vivid and add aesthetic value to what he says.

Cohesion. Cohesion is the linguistic means by which a text functions as a single unit. The essence of cohesion is to achieve unity, continuity and fluency of the text. The various devices to achieve cohesion in a text are Reference, Ellipsis, Substitution, Conjunction and Lexical Organisation. These devices are called Cohesive Devices.

Reference. Reference refers to the grammatical resources that allow the writer or speaker to indicate whether something is repeated from somewhere earlier in the text or whether it has not yet been exposed in the text. In the speech, the pronoun “us” used in sentence 1 refers to the speaker, Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq, and his audience, who are essentially the people of Kwara State. The speaker uses the plural pronoun to create and strengthen the bond between him and his addressees. In sentence 2, the pronoun “they” refers cataphorically to the people of Kwara state; this is further made evident in the succeeding sentence where the speakers uses the term “Kwarans” to describe the referent. This is exemplified below:

...a time comes when **they** individually and collectively decide to take their destiny in their own hands... **Kwarans** reached that decision-making point...

Governor AbdulRahman also uses the first person pronouns “me” and “I” to make reference to himself, while “we” in sentences 28 and 35 are used to refer to AbdulRahman’s administration. The pronoun “them”, as used in sentence 18, refers to the various challenges the new administration led by Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq are determined to tackle such as institutional reforms and reconstruction, infrastructural development, human capacity building, social welfare and policy reforms to other socio-economic, cultural, scientific and administrative repositioning.

The use of this device by the speaker enables the audience to keep pace with the unfolding of the plots of the speeches. With the intention of achieving coherence, the device has also helped in unifying the various parts of the speeches.

Ellipsis. This has to do with the deletion of a syntactic element to make room for grammatical cohesion in discourse. It involves omitting from speech or writing a word or words that are superfluous or able to be understood from contextual clues. Instances of ellipsis in the speech are illustrated below:

It is my prayers that Allah will never forget you and (**Allah**) will give you the strength to enjoy our victory.

In the sentence above, the word “Allah” is omitted so as to avoid repetition. This omission however does not distort the meaning of the sentence. Other instances of ellipsis are:

Sentence 9: Many of you were blackmailed, (**many of you were**) abused, (**many of you were**) humiliated and (**many of you were**) harassed in several ways...

Sentence 22: ...our goal in office is not to lament over the sad past. Rather, our goal (**in office**) is to build confidence...

Sentence 29: What we stand for is to empower our people. (**What we stand for is to**) Make society and life better. (**What we stand for is to**) Strengthen family values. (**What we stand for is to**) Improve efficiency and service delivery in our public services.

This device has helped in improving the syntactic quality of the speech by omitting the grammatical elements which are considered superfluous in the text. Hence, it has helped the speaker to smoothly read the text to his audience without getting bogged down in unnecessary details.

Substitution. This is the replacement of one lexical item by another item. The use of substitution as a cohesive device can help to avoid redundancy and repetition in a text. Instances of substitution in AbdulRahman’s speech are evident in sentences 19 and 42. In sentence 19, the speaker uses the noun phrase “our people” to replace “Kwarans”, or the people of Kwara State. This act is carried out in order to show a sense of solidarity and commonality with the people of the state. In sentence 42, the speaker uses the slogan of the state, “State of Harmony” to replace the state itself.

Conjunction. Conjunctive element is another device distinctive in the speeches to achieve cohesion. Conjunctive elements are cohesive not in themselves but indirectly, they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse. Instances of conjunctions in the speech are:

Co-ordinating Conjuncts. Some examples of co-ordinating conjuncts in the speech are: “All praises **and** adoration to Allah...” (sentence 1); “...when they individually **and** collectively decide...” (sentence 2); “...its officials **and** field workers at all levels...” (sentence 5); “...the collective will, courage **and** determination of our people, irrespective of class **or** religion...” (sentence 7); “You all fought against all odds **and** at great cost” (sentence 8); “credible policies **and** policy discipline, accountability **and** transparency...” (sentence 25); “...distinguished ladies **and** gentlemen...” (sentence 34).

Subordinating Conjuncts. Examples of subordinating conjuncts in the speech are: “...a time comes **when** they individually and collectively decide to take their destiny...” (sentence 2); “**As** you know, our victory, is only the beginning of our collective vision...” (sentence 6); “Many of you were blackmailed... **because** you simply said enough is enough” (sentence 9); “...work with it **so that** our dreams will come true” (sentence 39).

As it has been reflected in these examples, conjunction is a very important tool in unifying different parts of a text. The governor has adopted this tool in order to make his speech smooth, continuous and non-disjoint for the benefits and consumption of his audience.

Lexical Repetition. A particular element or lexical item could be repeated many times in a text for certain purposes, such as to achieve emphasis, memorability, or captivate the interest of the readers. In the inaugural speech, there are instances of repeated words for the purpose of achieving emphasis, and captivating the interest of the readers. The word “otoge” is repeated three times in the speech; the Yoruba word which translates as “enough is enough” serves as the slogan for AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq and his cohorts while seeking gubernatorial election in 2019. This slogan reflects the political ideology of AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq which is to end decades of political hegemony and bad governance in Kwara State. The word “Allah” is repeated five times in the speech, and this conveys the religious belief of the speaker, who is a Muslim. AbdulRahman largely repeats the word “Kwara” ten times in an attempt to captivate the interest of the audience and to assure them that the wellbeing of the state is paramount to him. The phrase “our state” is repeated thrice by the speaker to portray a sense of solidarity and unity with the audience. The words “people” and “government” are also repeated nine and four times respectively.

Collocation. Collocation is the pattern of co-occurrence of words. Some words appear to move very closely together in discourse. The mention of one brings to mind the other one or members of their groups; such words are called “collocates”. There are cases of collocates in the speech, such as:

“praise and adoration” (sentence 1); “individually and collectively” (sentence 2); “soul and spirit” (sentence 7); “progress and stagnation” (sentence 20); “human and material resources” (sentence 23); “accountability and transparency” (sentence 25); ‘ladies and gentlemen’ (sentence 34); “constructive criticism” (sentence 38).

These various collocations employed in the speech aid the speaker in making his language sound natural and relatable to his audience.

9. Discussion

This research has investigated the linguistic stylistic features employed in Abdulrahman Abdulrasaq’s inaugural speech. The analysis of this text was carried out along the linguistic levels of analysis, which are: syntactic, lexico-semantic and cohesive levels of analysis. Based on the analysis done and presented in the preceding section, the salient findings discovered are discussed in this section for the purpose of assessing the extent to which the research aim and objectives have been accomplished. The analysis of syntactic structures of the sentences revealed the dominant use of simple sentences in the Governor’s speech; this aligns with the simple and determining attitude of politicians in getting what they want. Hence, they often make their messages clear, simple and unambiguous. The study also revealed cases of syntactic parallelism in the speech which helped the Governor to beautify his speech and intensify the audience’s excitement and suspense. The consistent use of syntactic parallelism by the speaker helps in foregrounding the sentences; and reinforcing the ideas in the minds of the audience by making those lines unforgettable in their minds.

At the level of lexico-semantic level of language analysis, it was discovered that various expressions associated with politics and government, which belong to the formal category of language register, are employed in the speech. These expressions serve as an indicator of the formality or official nature of the occasion, which is the swearing-in ceremony of the new Executive Governor of Kwara State, His Excellency AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq. The political expressions are used to comment on the past and new governments’ actions, plans and decisions towards the development of Kwara state. Various devices were also discovered to have been employed in the speech to achieve cohesion. Such cohesive devices are reference, ellipsis, substitution, conjunction, lexical repetition, and collocation. These devices have enabled the audience to keep pace with the unfolding of the plots of the speech, and also

helped in unifying the various parts of the speech. As discovered in the study, ellipsis, for instance, helped in improving the syntactic quality of the speech by omitting the grammatical elements which are considered superfluous in the text. Hence, it helped the governor to smoothly read his speech to his audience without getting bogged down in unnecessary details.

10. Conclusion

It can therefore be concluded that the language of the governor exhibits some unique language features. This research has earlier established that there is a nexus between language and politics; hence, this feature is usually explored to an advantage by the political class to exert great influence on the masses, and to grasp power and consolidate it. In consideration of the above findings, the researchers recommend that more researches should be conducted on political speeches in order to further unravel how political elites employ the tool of language to influence the masses; impose their political ideologies on them (the masses); and mobilise them for support and followership. Such researches can be carried out using a different linguistic approach, such as semantics, discourse analysis, syntax or pragmatics.

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