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A Critical Analysis of Persuasive Strategies in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's August 4, 2024, Nationwide Broadcast

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Abstract

Persuasion, the strategic use of language, symbols and arguments to influence opinions, attitudes, and behaviours, can undermine democratic values when deployed manipulatively. This study examines the persuasive strategies and underlying ideologies in President Tinubu's national broadcast of August 4, 2024, delivered in response to the #EndBadGovernanceinNigeria protests. Using Connor and Lauer's (1985) model of persuasive appeals – rational, credibility and affective and van Dijk's (1998) socio-cognitive approach to critical discourse analysis, the study analyses how rhetorical devices function in constructing political discourse. The findings reveal that the speech employs a broad range of strategies, including emotional appeals, credibility-based references and logic-driven arguments. These are underpinned by ideologies such as pacifism, collectivism, Welfarism, anti-ethnicism and progressivism. The study contributes to understanding how language mediates political authority and public perception.

Keywords: Persuasion, Political Discourse, Ideology, Socio-Cognitive Approach, Critical Discourse Analysis

Introduction

The act of influencing someone's thoughts and behaviour is known as persuasion. That is, a conscious effort made by an individual or group to shape attitudes, beliefs, actions, and perceptions of others by spreading a message. A person uses the formal, intellectual process of persuasion to sway the people they are speaking to. According to Mortensen (2004:7), it is "a process that aims to change or reform attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or behaviours towards a predetermined outcome through voluntary compliance." van Dijk (1998) defines persuasion as the process through which listeners alter their opinions as a result of some conversation. The goal of persuasion is to alter someone's thoughts, motives, intentions, or behaviours regarding certain events. It is accomplished by utilising written, spoken, or visual aids to communicate specific emotions, facts, or logic.

One common and essential objective of language-based human communication is persuasion. It is possible to see the social component of persuasiveness in conversations involving two or more people. When crafting such a convincing discourse, the writer or

speaker uses language to pose a query, refute a particular assertion, or affirm another (Barnes & Hicks, 2021). Therefore, persuasion is essential to human contact and communication in a variety of social, professional, and cultural contexts. It is inherently audience-and context-dependent (Virtanen & Halmari, 2015).

Politics and language are closely linked since they both affect one another. In politics, language is an essential tool. Thus, according to Hogan (2012), language and politics have complementary distributions. They rely on the other for survival. Politicians strategically employ persuasive strategies to persuade people to match their behaviours with their objectives (Moses, 2012). The use of language is important in political discourse. Politicians employ this useful instrument to influence individuals, mould their perceptions, and accomplish specific objectives (Aalberg & de Vreese, 2016).

Additionally, language is widely used to create ideas, sway policies, and mould opinions. In fact, language is a crucial tool for carrying out effective political initiatives in any nation. To effect change in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres, political leaders have been able to increase their political influence using language. Van Dijk (1998) observes that political speech frameworks have the capacity to satisfy the needs of effectiveness and persuasiveness. In addition to following etiquette, lexical decisions are made to support, garner support, sway public opinion, shape political consensus, or defend political authority, among other goals. Politicians, according to Bayram (2010: 29), are skilled wordsmiths because they are aware that words can shape people's attitudes, perceptions, and thoughts. On the other hand, Bayram (2010: 24) contends that politics is a power struggle that aims to implement specific political, economic, and social ideas, make decisions, exert control over the behaviour of others, and generally control people's values.

In the opinion of Hirschberg (1996:1), a persuasive speaker must employ a variety of techniques in order to persuade and impact their audience. When someone is persuasive, they pique their interest in learning without resorting to force or violence. Specifically, the persuader uses language that stimulates the recipients in an attempt to generate a response, which could be a change in behaviour. Argumentation, or presenting evidence in favour of or against particular assertions and declarations, is the typical mode of persuasion. Despite their close relationship, argument and persuasion is not the same thing. In an argument, the persuader seeks to persuade the addressee that there are no other claims that are worth adopting than his or hers. At the same time, the speaker acknowledges the existence of opposing claims and tries to justify why their claims deserve to be adopted. Consequently, politicians employ diverse persuasive techniques to engage their audience, thereby impacting the art of leadership through their collective influence (Charteris-Black, 2011).

On the one hand, it has been noted that political persuasion can be used for morally acceptable and beneficial ends, involving the public, promoting educated discussions, and bringing about good changes. However, it can also be used dishonestly or manipulatively, preying on people's cognitive biases and misleading them. Therefore, for people to effectively traverse political discourse and make informed decisions, they must practise critical thinking and fact-checking.

Statement of the Problem

Research has indicated that presidents utilise particular discursive practices, such as persuasive strategies, to achieve deliberate political objectives in line with societal values and beliefs. Nevertheless, it has been observed that miscommunication and misinterpretation may arise when people fail to identify the persuasive discursive

strategies politicians employ or are unable to explain the hidden implications when exposed to this kind of discourse. This study, therefore, examines the effectiveness and structure of the persuasive linguistic message used in the national broadcast by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Persuasive strategies in political discourse have been examined from different approaches and genres such as psycholinguistic (Avetisyan, 2017, Glukhova & Sorokina, 2018), phonological (Abdul Kreem et al., 2022), stylistic (Sallomi, 2018; Chinyere & Ugoala, 2024; Amoussou et al., 2024), pragmatics (Zidane et al. 2017, Anyanwu, 2023) sociolinguistics (Harutyunyan & Yeghiazaryan, 2022, Hawamdeh & Qudah, 2024) and discourse analysis (Khajavi et al. 2020; Kashiha, 2022; Balla, 2023; Jazrawi et al., 2023; Ajayi & Kilani, 2024). However, not much attention has been paid to Connor and Lauer's (1985) model, which has been prominently used in religious and academic discourse, to explore the rational, credibility, and affective appeals in political discourse. Also, despite the depth of literature on presidential speeches, most especially with particular reference to campaign, inaugural, democracy, or independence speeches, there is a dearth of literature on other presidential addresses, such as the special broadcast by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on the nationwide protest (#EndBadGovernanceInNigeria#), hence, this study.

Research Objectives

- i. To describe how the persuasive strategies were discursively constructed in the nationwide broadcast.
- ii. To investigate the implicit ideologies in the speech.

Research Questions

More specifically, the current study seeks to answer the following question:

- i. How were the persuasive strategies discursively constructed in the nationwide broadcast?
- ii. What are the implicit ideologies in the speech?

Research Significance

Political speeches have significant effects on society. They shape political ideas, public attitudes, and policy decisions in the end. Consequently, it is imperative that scholars, decision-makers, and the general public understand the language, rhetoric, and discursive strategies employed in political speeches. It is anticipated that this study's findings will improve our understanding of how to interpret political speeches and their consequences for political communication. A more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of political discourse is ultimately achieved by dissecting the persuasive strategies and underlying ideologies in President Tinubu's broadcast. This allows researchers and practitioners to gain insight into the ways in which leaders mobilise support, shape public opinion, and reinforce their power. Overall, this study adds to our understanding of political communication, leadership rhetoric, and the role of ideology in shaping public discourse.

Scope of the Study

This study is restricted to the national broadcast by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Sunday, August 4, 2024, which was necessitated by the planned 10-day nationwide protest tagged "10 Days of Rage" (#EndBadGovernanceInNigeria), which started on August 1, 2024. The theoretical framework used in this study is the persuasive strategies by Connor and Lauer (1985) and the socio-cognitive approach of critical discourse analysis by van Dijk (1998).

2.1 Persuasive Strategies

The appeals model developed by Connor and Lauer (1985) was used in the study and is shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3. This model applies the Aristotelian idea of persuasion, which divides persuasive techniques into three categories: rational, credibility and affective appeals. These categories correlate to the logos, ethos, and pathos. This model classifies persuasive strategies into: 12 rational strategies, four credibility strategies and three affective strategies. These are further described in the tables (1, 2 and 3) below:

Table 1: Types and Explanation of Rational Strategies

Types of Strategy	Abbreviation	Explanation
Descriptive example	R1	Using a compelling descriptive example from one's own or someone else's experience.
Narrative example	R2	Employing narrative examples which have a story form, i.e., a beginning, middle and end.
Classification	R3	Placing in a class or unit and describing what that means.
Comparison	R4	Using comparison to support one's focus.
Contrast	R5	Using contrast to support one's focus.
Degree	R6	Arguing that two things are separated by a difference of degree rather than kind, or making an appeal for an incremental change.
Authority	R7	Using the authority of a person other than the writer.
Cause and effect-consequences	R8	Showing how one event is the cause of another.
Model	R9	Proposing a model for action that relies on existing programs.
Stage Process	R10	Reviewing previous steps and looking forward to What steps need to be taken.
Ideal or Principle	R11	Basing the argument on universal premises that

		are accepted by all members of the audience.
Information	R12	Using supporting facts and statistics.

Table 2: Types and Explanation of Credibility Strategies

Types of Strategy	Abbreviation	Explanation
Firsthand Experience	C13	Providing information taken from the speaker's experience.
Showing the speaker's respect for the audience's interests and point of view	C14	Avoiding clash with the receiver's own beliefs and convictions.
Showing the speaker's shared interests and point of view	C15	Highlighting any views or interests that are similar to those of the receiver.
Showing the writer's good character and judgment	C16	Being neutral and objective.

Table 3: Types and Explanation of Affective Strategies

Types of Strategy	Abbreviation	Explanation
Appealing to the audience's views	A17	Either emotional, attitudinal or moral.
Vivid pictures	A18	Creating a thought or a mind's eye vision.
Charged Language	A19	Using strong language to arouse emotion.

2.2 Socio-Cognitive Approach (SCA)

The mental images and cognitive processes involved in group members' understanding and production are the main emphasis of van Dijk's (1998) socio-cognitive approach to critical discourse analysis. He investigates the ways in which political language perpetuates prejudices, ideologies and social hierarchies. SCA demonstrates how language affects people's opinions about political issues and how they see social groups. His method emphasises the need to analyse the cognitive processes that underlie the understanding and significance of political discourse in addition to language structures (van Dijk, 1998).

He goes on to say that language is not neutral but has ideological undertones that can be used to reveal the power dynamics and hidden ideologies that are ingrained in speech (van Dijk, 2009). He bases this on the multidisciplinary perspective that views ideologies as centred around the interface of discourse, cognition, and society. This method describes how language users create, comprehend, and analyse discourse; how their individual and collective beliefs influence the discourse they produce and the discourse that influences them; and how we, as discursive agents, create mental images of our experiences in order to store and analyse them (van Dijk, 2021).

3. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in discourse analysis. The data comprises the full transcript of President Tinubu's August 4, 2024, national address. The speech was retrieved from YouTube and transcribed manually into Microsoft Word format. The choice of this particular speech stems from its timeless and rhetorical complexity, occurring during a politically volatile period in Nigeria. The analysis focused on identifying and interpreting the use of persuasive strategies based on Connor and Lauer's (1985) framework, and ideological underpinnings using van Dijk's socio-cognitive model. Coding and classification of appeals were conducted thematically. Researcher positionality and subjectivity were acknowledged, with attention paid to ensuring analytic neutrality and validity. No personal data was used and ethical considerations were adhered to throughout.

4. Results and Discussions

The nationwide address is analysed and classified into three persuasive strategies (rationality, credibility and affective). The persuasive strategies used in each appeal type are classified and then analysed.

4.1 Persuasive Strategies used in the Address

The three appeal types of persuasive strategies were evident in the nationwide address by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. Out of 19 appeal types, 17 were utilised in the address. These are further analysed below:

4.1.1 Rational Appeal and Its Strategies

Rational appeal utilises arguments to address the mind of the audience logically (Biber, Connor and Upton, 2007: 125). The analysis reveals the use of the following rational persuasive strategies:

- a. Descriptive Example: This strategy involves giving supportive descriptive examples from one's own experience or others'. The example below illustrates this:

R1: "For decades, our economy has remained anaemic and taken a dip because of many misalignments that have stunted our growth. Just over a year ago, our dear country, Nigeria, reached a point where we couldn't afford to continue the use of temporary solutions to solve long-term problems for the sake of now and our unborn generations."

In this example, President Tinubu attempted to describe the situation of things in Nigeria by describing how Nigeria has been in the past administrations, how past administrations have structured systems that have become detrimental to the current economic hardship in the country. President Tinubu knew that Nigerians are eager to know what he has achieved since he assumed office on 29 May 2023. By describing what he met on the ground, he attempted to establish historical context and justify reform initiatives. He frames current economic issues as inherited, justifying government actions. This helps absolve the current administration of blame and redirects public frustration. Thus, it engages the audience's reasoning, stimulates rational judgement

and builds credibility that what Tinubu and his administration have achieved so far may not be visible and concrete in the meantime.

- b. Classification: This strategy mentions classes and labels units. Connor and Lauer (1985: 323) indicate that 'classification' can be indicated throughout, moving from general to specific information. This is seen in the example below:

R3: "I am equally pained by the loss of lives in Borno, Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna and other states, the destruction of public facilities in some states and the wanton looting of supermarkets and shops, contrary to the promise organisers made that the protest would be peaceful across the country."

In this example, President Tinubu categorises protest consequences into discrete harms to frame urgency. These consequences are categorised into three: the loss of lives, especially young Nigerians who may have died as a result of police brutality or intervention in their bid to beef up security during protests. The vandalism of properties or facilities in certain states, such as the burning of Government House, Police Stations, Local Government offices, among others, has raised questions about the real motive of the protesters. Lastly, the massive looting of business outlets by armed hoodlums to frustrate the peaceful nature of the demonstrations and instigate violence. This enables the speaker to delegitimize the protests while maintaining sympathy for genuine grievances.

- c. Contrast: This strategy shows the differences between things to add more focus to the suggested point. This is illustrated in the example below:

R5: "Fellow Nigerians, we are a country blessed with both oil and gas resources, but we met a country that has been dependent solely on oil-based petrol, neglecting its gas resources to power the economy."

The President highlights poor past decisions to position current reforms as progressive and necessary. He used contrast to enhance the rationality of his argument that the past administrations were responsible for the current situation of the country and not his administration. He stressed that past administrations have only focused on the oil sector, thereby neglecting the gas resources which could have been used to power the economy or our transportation, which by so doing could have reduced hikes in the cost of food items and fuel. As a result, his administration had launched Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) to power the transportation economy and reduce costs. This reinforces logic of improvement through contrast.

- d. Degree: This strategy is used to argue that two things are separated by a difference of degree rather than kind. The example below illustrates this:

R6: "Under the circumstances, I hereby enjoin protesters and the organisers to suspend any further protest and create room for dialogue, which I have always acceded to at the slightest opportunity."

In the above example, President Tinubu validated the justification for a dialogue instead of a protest since the motive of recent protests has been questionable. With this strategy, the President softens the call to end the protest by presenting it as a reasonable, less harmful alternative. This strategy therefore highlights the great value of entering into a dialogue with the federal government as opposed to protesting since protests in recent times have led to the loss of lives, violence, vandalism and massive

looting in certain states in Nigeria. It encourages gradual resolution rather than confrontation.

- e. Authority: This strategy involves utilising the authority of others rather than the speaker himself. Authority appeal is used to put more emphasis on the content of the message and it involves referring to religious sources or mentioning a distinguished name that has a strong influence on the listener (Biber, Connor and Upton, 2007: 127). The example below illustrates this:

R7: "FORWARD EVER, BACKWARD NEVER!"

In the example above, the President draws on the ethos of Pan-Africanism (via Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first prime minister and president) as a driving force to echo a united Nigeria and to mobilise Nigerians not to bemoan its past misdeeds all the time, instead, to forge ahead even when it seems impossible and never look back! This strategy was used to symbolically link the president's leadership with African liberation ideals, evoking patriotic sentiments.

- f. Cause and Effect-Consequences: This strategy is employed to illustrate the outcome of an event or how one thing leads to the existence of another. A typical example is seen below:

R8: "These actions blocked the greed and the profits that smugglers and rent-seekers made. They also blocked the undue subsidies we had extended to our neighbouring countries to the detriment of our people, rendering our economy prostrate."

In the antecedent before the example above, the President attempted to explain the cause of the economic hardship in the country; he blamed the previous administrations for many misalignments, leading him to take the necessary decision to remove fuel subsidies and abolish multiple foreign exchange systems. Thus, this strategy positions government actions as producing positive outcomes, e.g., curbing corruption and protecting national interest, which in turn appeal to logic and policy rationale.

- g. Model: This strategy involves agreeing on a suggested model or an example to follow in all aspects. This is illustrated in the example below:

R9: "Let us work together to build a brighter future for ourselves and for our generations to come. Let us choose hope over fear, unity over division and progress over stagnation, the economy is recovering; Please, don't shut out its oxygen."

In the example above, the President recommended certain measures to be taken to ensure a united Nigeria, since a prolonged shutdown of Nigeria can only damage the economy and hurt all parties concerned. Therefore, he enjoined all Nigerians to work together and be united in reshaping the destiny of Nigeria, regardless of age, tribe, party, religion and shun ethnic bigotry which tears a nation apart. This strategy offers an ideal scenario or moral pathway forward. It serves to unify audience around a vision of collective responsibility and optimism. To that effect, he encouraged all Nigerians to have hope in his administration and put away fear, division and aim for the progress of all Nigerians.

- h. Stage Process: This strategy is employed to review previous steps and look forward to what steps need to be taken. This is illustrated in the example below:

R10: "In the past 14 months, our government has made significant strides in rebuilding the foundation of our economy to carry us into a future of plenty and abundance."

Throughout the address, the President outlined his administration's significant strides in terms of programmes, economic reforms, and achievements in the last one year. These included fiscal improvements, infrastructure development, oil and gas sector revival, compressed natural gas initiative, youth empowerment programmes, housing projects, and food security measures, among others. This strategy is employed to review accomplishments to present the administration as stable, productive and forward-looking. However, it is alleged that the overall speech lacked focus and context since it did not address the protester's demands nor did it serve as a measurable panacea to the dashed hopes of protesting Nigerians; it was meant to douse the tension in Nigeria, yet the speech focused primarily on listing government achievements without directly addressing protester's core demands. This omission occurred amidst widespread economic hardship, rising inflation, and public discontent with perceived government extravagance and policy disconnect. Thus, this strategy was also used to build credibility for promised reforms.

- i. Ideal or Principle: This strategy involves basing the argument on universal premises that are accepted by all members of the audience. Below is an indicative example of a principle:

R11: "The safety and security of all Nigerians are paramount."

The President mentioned a principle that invokes a universally accepted value to justify law enforcement presence and crackdowns. This came right after he requested the security operatives to continue to maintain peace, law and order in the country since the wellbeing of all Nigerians is significant. This legitimises state authority and calls for civic obedience. The President used this premise to highlight the need for cooperation in the country. The persuader set up a basis upon which the reasoning was built to encourage people to cooperate. Thus, after accepting the premise, the president moved to appeal to the receivers' common sense in order to encourage them to cooperate with the security operatives and shun violence.

- j. Information: This strategy involves using supporting facts and statistics. A number of facts and statistics are mentioned, below is an indicative example of information:

R12: "My dear brothers and sisters, we have come this far. Coming from a place where our country spent 97% of all our revenue on debt service, we have been able to reduce that to 68% in the last 13 months."

The President adds empirical backing to leadership claims via several facts that are supported by some statistics to strengthen his claim that his administration is revolved around good governance and they have been committed towards the actualisation of his vision for Nigeria, which, among other things, is the provision of meaningful livelihood that only democratic good governance can provide. These numerical data lend credibility and create a factual tone amid emotive content, reflecting his knowledge and confidence.

4.1.2 Credibility Appeal and its Strategies

According to Aristotle, the persuader should not depend only on presenting arguments to convince people, but he should reflect a trustworthy image of himself. The term "credibility" is used to replace the Aristotelian's ethos. Both of them indicate goodwill, wisdom and

moral virtue, but the new term comes to include more persuasive strategies (Biber, Connor and Upton, 2007: 129). The analysis reveals the use of the following credibility persuasive strategies:

- a. **Firsthand Experience:** This strategy involves providing information taken from the speaker's experience. This includes mentioning personal incidents and stories, which helps to establish the speaker's experience and knowledge in his domain. The image of the speaker's character in the eyes of the receiver is very important in increasing the credibility of his/her claims. Below is an indicative example of firsthand experience:

C13: "I have been meeting with our Governors and key Ministers to accelerate food production. We have distributed fertilisers."

In the above example, this strategy was used to increase the credibility of his claim when he assumed office by revealing plans to boost food production, including the removal of tariffs on certain food items and the distribution of farming equipment. This strategy creates the impression that the President is knowledgeable about the topic that he is discussing with his audience and that he is a person who walks the talk. Thus, personal involvement in solving national issues portrays the president as proactive, connected and accountable. It also builds leadership ethos.

- b. **Showing the Speaker's Respect for the Audience's Interests and Point of View:** This strategy involves avoiding clash with the receiver's own beliefs and convictions. Below is an illustrative example that shows the speaker's respect for the audience's interests and point of view:

C14: "I therefore took the painful yet necessary decision to remove fuel subsidies and abolish multiple foreign exchange systems which had constituted a noose around the economic jugular of our nation and impeded our economic development and progress."

In the above example, the President attempted to defend his decision to remove fuel subsidy, which, according to him, had increasingly favoured the rich more than the poor. He attempted to avoid a clash with the receiver's own beliefs when he used "painful yet necessary decision". It is painful because the President is quite aware that the removal of fuel subsidy will affect Nigerians by dislocating the economic livelihood of the ordinary Nigerian, but it is necessary in order to reverse the decades of economic mismanagement that did not serve us well and serve for the permanent good in the long run. However, this claim might be rejected by the audience because the removal of the fuel subsidy led to a significant increase in the cost of fuel. Thus, he used "painful yet necessary" to avoid such a clash. Using this strategy, the president balances empathy with justification for hardship. He anticipates public anger and shows sensitivity to their struggles without retreating from policy.

- c. **Showing the Speaker's Shared Interests and Point of View:** This strategy involves highlighting any views or interests that are similar to those of the receiver. Below is an illustrative example of showing the speaker's shared interests and point of view:

C15: "We must work together to build a brighter future, where every Nigerian can live with dignity and prosperity."

In the above example, the President tried to pledge his allegiance to the desires of every Nigerian who wish to have a Nigeria where the lives and properties of citizens are protected; devoid of ethnic bigotry, constitutional rights of every Nigerian are respected and protected, a prosperous nation where each person may enjoy the peace, freedom

and meaningful livelihood that good governance can provide among other things. This strategy creates a positive attitude towards the president, who highlighted the shared points between him and his addresses. Thus, this increases the credibility of his claims that building a better Nigeria will require a collective effort, including him and his administration. Thus, this strategy enabled him to construct a shared national identity and portray him as part of 'us' rather than 'them.' It also creates solidarity with his audience, thus reducing resistance.

- d. Showing the Writer's Good Character and Judgment: This strategy shows how the speaker is neutral and objective and he is not taking sides. Below is an illustrative example of showing the writer's good character and judgment:

C16: "To those who have taken undue advantage of this situation to threaten any section of this country, be warned: The law will catch up with you. There is no place for ethnic bigotry or such threats in the Nigeria we seek to build."

This strategy was used by the President to reinforce his moral high ground. It aligns him with law, fairness and unity, especially in response to threats of ethnic division. This he portrayed when he mentioned that he is not in support of anyone going contrary to the vision he has about Nigeria. The objectivity and neutrality of his judgment are demonstrated by stating that the law will catch up with the offenders and reiterating that his administration is not an enabler of any divides that can tear the nation apart. This strategy gives him the authoritative evidence and highlights the credibility of his argument. It also builds a positive image of him as one with good intentions, who frowns against ethnic rivalry and who preaches unity in diversity.

4.1.3 Affective Appeal and Its Strategies

Persuasion "may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotion. Our judgments when we are pleased and friendly are not the same as when we are pained and hostile" (Aristotle, 1954: 9). Rational and credibility appeals are not sufficient to change the receiver's attitude. Thus, affective messages serve to catch attention and are likely to let the receiver accept a certain claim easily. The analysis below reveals the use of affective persuasive strategies:

- a. Appealing to the Audience's Views: This strategy involves emotional, attitudinal or moral appeals to the audience's views. Below is an illustrative example that shows appealing to the audience's views:

A17: My dear Nigerians, especially our youth, I have heard you loud and clear. I understand the pain and frustration that drive these protests and I want to assure you that our government is committed to listening and addressing the concerns of our citizens."

The President in the above example showed his understanding of the pain and frustration behind every protest. This justification comes in the form of supportive statements that appeal to the receiver's emotions. These supportive statements, such as "I understand the pain and frustration that drive these protests," highlight the president's experience as one who was among those who actively protested the annulment of the June 12 election. Therefore, this strategy was used by the president to share his understanding of protests. When protests are not exercised pacifically, they can be hijacked or abused, which does not lend greater depth to the relationship between the government and the governed, nor does it transcend any form of government. As a result its motive to generate meaningful reforms will be lost. Thus, the statement "I want to assure you that our government is committed to

listening and addressing the concerns of our citizens” prepares the receiver to accept the argument that President Tinubu and his administration are empathetic, compassionate, and committed to their democratic ideals.

- b. **Vivid Pictures:** This Strategy involves creating a thought or a mind's eye vision. Below is an illustrative example of a vivid picture:

A18: “My vision for our country is one of a just and prosperous nation where each person may enjoy the peace, freedom and meaningful livelihood that only democratic good governance can provide – one that is open, transparent and accountable to the Nigerian people.”

In the above example, the president created a picture that depicts the Nigeria that we all wish to have and live in. This vision which is aptly named “Renewed Hope” is based on the vision to build a nation transformed into greatness, a vibrant, thriving and prosperous nation and a nation where its people enjoy all the basic needs, including safe and secure environment, abundant food, affordable shelter, health care and a robust economy. The president used this depiction of a country to arouse desired emotions in the audience.

- c. **Charged Language:** This strategy involves the use of strong language to arouse emotion. The purpose of this appeal is to let the receiver experience a feeling of negative connotation. Below is an illustrative example of charged language:

A19: “I speak to you today with a heavy heart and a sense of responsibility, aware of the turmoil and violent protests unleashed in some of our states.”

In the above example, the president used a strong language of melancholy to evoke feelings of loss, which aims at urging Nigerians, especially the protesters, to suspend further protest. The president wanted his audience to experience guilt and feel a sense of loss towards the disadvantages of protest in order to let them take immediate action. Consequently, he was empathetic in his language by using words that were charged with negative emotions such as “heavy heart”, “turmoil” and “violent”. The president showed that the only way to end these loss of lives, destruction of properties, and wanton lootings that have ravaged the nation as a result of the demonstrations is by ending further protests. Raising this issue stirs up the feeling of guilt and responsibility. Thus, this drives the receivers to accept the solution suggested by the president, which is suspending the protest and creating room for a dialogue with the federal government.

4.2 The Embedded Ideological Constructs

i. Pacifists Ideology

The term Pacifism is derived from the word Pacific that translates into Peacemaking in Latin. It is based on Paci- Peace and -ficus meaning making. The basic aim of Pacifism is to resolve disputes in a peaceful manner and in most amicable way. Pacifism vehemently opposes war or military action or the use of force. The basic belief is that the political, economic and social ends are not to be met using violence.

Excerpt 1: Under the circumstances, I hereby enjoin protesters and the organisers to suspend any further protest and create room for dialogue, which I have always acceded to at the slightest opportunity.

Excerpt 2: We must stop further bloodshed, violence and destruction.

As seen in extract 1, the President showed his pacifist ideology through the use of 'dialogue', which, when used effectively, can manage conflicts and resolve disputes. This is seen when he urged protesters to suspend further demonstrations and engage in dialogue to address grievances and ensure peace and security in the country. Since the protest had degenerated into looting, deadly violence and police brutality, among other issues, the president in excerpt 2 charges Nigerians to stop further bloodshed from police intervention/brutality, violence and destruction of properties which does not solve any problem but instead sets back a nation. This strategic movement was employed to ease the tension in the country and pave the way for peace.

ii. Collectivist /Inclusivism Ideology

Collectivism or inclusivism seeks to create a society where everyone has a sense of belonging and equal opportunities to thrive. It recognises that diversity is a strength and that inclusion is essential for building a just and equitable society.

Excerpt 3: Nigeria requires all hands on deck and needs us all – regardless of age, party, tribe, religion or other divides to work together in reshaping our destiny as a nation.

Excerpt 4: We must work together to build a brighter future, where every Nigerian can live with dignity and prosperity.

In extract 3, collectivist ideology is seen through the president's portrayal of his commitment to the nation's best interests. The reference to "Nigeria requires all hands on deck and needs us all" is a strategic movement that means everyone, regardless of your age, party, tribe, religion, and others, is included in the rebuilding of the country. With that, he implies that no one is exempted and this will ultimately appeal to the sense of reasoning of every Nigerian to put aside all differences and divides and work towards the good of the country. In excerpt 4, inclusivity is shown in the use of "We" and "every Nigerian" to highlight that the reforms we desire to see cannot be done by one person but requires a collective effort. This affirms his claims to deliver an all-inclusive democracy to Nigerians where everyone can find a place of belonging in the country.

iii. Welfarist Ideology

Welfarism is a belief or an idea that prioritises the good, welfare and well-being of individuals, which ultimately translates to the good of the society as a whole (Ige, 2023). It emphasises the role of the state in ensuring the social and economic security of individuals.

Excerpt 5: A lot of work has gone into stabilising our economy and I must stay focused on ensuring that the benefits reach every single Nigerian as promised.

Excerpt 6: Security operatives should continue to maintain peace, law and order in our country following the necessary conventions on human rights, to which Nigeria is a signatory. The safety and security of all Nigerians are paramount.

Welfarist ideology is evident in excerpt 5 where the president, throughout his speech, outlined several programmes, reforms and achievements his administration had deployed and gained in the last one year for the welfare of the country. This was used strategically to assure Nigerians that his administration is working around the clock to improve their living conditions. In excerpt 6, the Welfarist ideology was used by the president to emphasise the importance of protecting human rights, most especially, social and economic security. He knew that some people, despite his appeal to suspend the protest, may continue the demonstrations, so to prevent the vandalism and violence that follow peaceful demonstrations, he urged the security operatives to ensure the safety and security of every Nigerian.

iv. Anti-Racism/Anti-Ethnicism Ideology

This is a social movement engaged in the resistance of social domination and inequality, such as discrimination, exclusion and oppression, among many other violations of human rights (van Dijk, 2021).

Excerpt 7: To those who have taken undue advantage of this situation to threaten any section of this country, be warned: The law will catch up with you. There is no place for ethnic bigotry or such threats in the Nigeria we seek to build.

Excerpt 8: Our government will not stand idly by and allow a few with a clear political agenda to tear this nation apart.

Anti-Ethnicism ideology was evidently used in the above excerpts by the president to reduce ethnic conflicts and divisions. Before the emergence of the August 1- 10 protests, a tweet on X reads that "Lagosians and every Southwest stakeholder should prepare for the massive protest of #IgboMustGoCampaign on the 20th -30th of August." The post advocates that the Igbos should vacate Lagos and relocate their businesses outside Lagos and the Southwest states within a month. This singular act by an irredentist group or ethnic chauvinists brought a lot of unnecessary ethnic tensions and as a result, the Igbos was advised to refrain from protesting. In the light of this, the president made a veiled reference to the campaign by condemning the act and stating emphatically that there is no place for ethnic bigotry or threats to any particular ethnic group in Nigeria and that his government will not allow such.

v. Progressivism Ideology

Progressivism is a political ideology that emphasises social and economic reform, government intervention to address social and economic issues, protection of individual rights and freedom, protection of social justice and equality among others.

Extract 9: Our administration has shown its commitment to the youth by setting up the student loan scheme. I encourage more of our vibrant youth population to take advantage of this opportunity.

Extract 10: For decades, our economy has remained anaemic our dear country, Nigeria, reached a point where we couldn't afford to continue the use of temporary solutions to solve long-term problems for the sake of now and our unborn generations. I therefore took the painful yet necessary decision to remove fuel subsidies and abolish multiple foreign exchange systems which had constituted a noose around the economic jugular of our Nation and impeded our economic development and progress.

In excerpt 9, progressive ideology was exhibited by the president by encouraging civic engagement and participation, most especially by the youth. This was strategically used as it will foster a culture of transparency, accountability and citizen involvement. In excerpt 10, the president showcases his progressive ideology by addressing systemic and structural issues. This he did through various actions and reforms, such as the economic reforms, like the removal of fuel subsidy and the reform of the foreign exchange system. In addition, these reforms serve as a strategic move to highlight his claim of providing democratic good governance to Nigerians and creating a more just, equitable and prosperous society.

Conclusion

The study concludes that President Tinubu's August 4, 2024 speech showcases the strategic orchestration of persuasive rhetoric tailored to pacify national unrest. The deliberate interplay of rational, affective and credibility appeals reinforce his leadership image while

anchoring discourse in ideological constructs such as pacifism, inclusivity, and progressivism. However, the speech's failure to address protesters' explicit grievances limits its persuasive efficacy. Overall, the study underscores how political discourse leverages rhetorical and ideological structures to shape public perception and legitimise authority.

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