

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE INAUGURAL OF DR LATEEF OLATUNJI, RECTOR, THE FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC OFFA, 16TH JANUARY, 2017

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ABSTRACT

Inaugural speeches are many and diverse just as occasions and contexts are. An inaugural speech is the basic way of assessing a newly appointed or elected leader. This paper critically analyses the inaugural speech of Dr. Lateef Olatunji which was delivered shortly after his appointment as the Rector of The Federal Polytechnic, Offa on 16th January, 2017. In analysing the speech, Norman Fairclough's three dimensional analytical model was adopted. Thus, the speech was subjected to description (text analysis), interpretation (processing analysis); and explanation (social practice and analysis). The results showed that an inaugural speech is a revelation of plans, hope and aspirations of a new administration. The analyzed speech specifically revealed the policies and plans on which the new administration headed by Dr. Lateef Olatunji intends to pursue. The most salient ones include instilling discipline, entrenching unity, promoting academic standard, provision of infrastructure and open administration.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, Inaugural address, Speech*

INTRODUCTION

Language is an essential ingredient of an effective leader at any level of governance, either in politics or administration. The basic function of language for a man is for the purpose of communication. The ability of man to use language to communicate distinguishes him from animals. Therefore, language is essential in the implementation of policies of any corporate organizations. It is in this connection that Taiwo (2009) observes that language is the conveyor belt of power which could be used to mobilize, persuade or coerce. It is a stabilizing factor in any organized human organization – political or administration. Language is important to administration because all activities are performed or carried out through the use, influence, manipulation or windows created by language. These activities are manifested in workshops, seminars, board meetings, AGMs, etc.

Inaugural speech has become a prominent concept in all political and corporate activities; and it has attracted the interest of linguistic researchers. The concept of (inaugural) speech especially political speech could be traced to rhetorical works of Greek philosophers such as Sophist, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, etc. Inaugural speech is defined by Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary as a speech meant to introduce a new public official or leader at a special ceremony. Inaugural speech or address enables the speaker to introduce

himself, enumerate policy, mobilize people, call for support, etc.

Inaugural speech in corporate organizations or agencies is usually delivered after an appointment into an office. In such a speech the speaker tries to build hope in the minds of the listeners and ultimately solicits for their support in the running of the organization. He may also inform them of the policy direction of his administration. .

The office of the Rector is the highest in the Polytechnic system. The Rector is the Chief Executive Officer to whom every other principal officer is responsible for daily administration of the polytechnic. However, the office needs to be in touch with the people by engaging in constant communication with them. One important channel of communication in this context is speech making. The appointment of Dr. Lateef Olatunji as the Rector of the Federal Polytechnic, Offa was seen as a relief to the entire polytechnic community. The speech marked a turning point of the tensions and anxieties that had enveloped the institution for almost one year. The speech was regarded as a means of establishing social relationships between the Rector and the members of staff of the institution. This paper, therefore, attempts a critical discourse analysis of Dr. Lateef Olatunji's inaugural address as the Rector of The Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State of Nigeria on 16th January, 2017.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) had its foundation from critical linguistics and theories. The discipline according to Rahimi and Riasati (2010) became invigorated and attracted scholars with the works of Fairclough in the 1980s. As a research method/theory that stems from critical linguistics, CDA sees the use of language as a form of social practice. Fairclough (1995) cited in Sharndama (2015) refers to CDA as:

a discourse analysis aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts; arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggle over power and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony.

In an earlier analysis Fairclough (1989) model of CDA consists of three intercepted processes of analysis. The three dimensions are:

1. The object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts)
2. The process by which the object is produced and received.
3. The social historical conditions that govern these processes.

Furthermore, each of these dimensions needs a different kind of analysis as follows:

1. text analysis (description);
2. processing analysis (interpretation);
3. social analysis (explanation).

In his own view Van Dijk (1988) sees CDA as a field with a deep concern for the study and analysis of written and spoken texts in order to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominances, inequality and bias. It is in this connection that Sharndama (2015) opines that the discursive sources are maintained and reproduced with specific social, political and historical contexts. The major difference between CDA and other discourse analysis is its critical appellation. Critical goes beyond mere analysis of discourse features. It shows, in

addition to other things connections and causes underlying a discourse. That is why CDA broadly concerns itself with the social, contextual, contentual, historical, sociological and cultural properties of a text.

To corroborate the above views, Wodak and Meyer (2001) point out that CDA is concerned with power as a central condition in social life, and its efforts to develop a theory of language which incorporates this as a major premise. In the same way, Fairclough (1992) sees CDA as an approach to discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between discursive practice, events and texts, and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes. It thus means that as a linguistic approach, it is not limited to the texts. Its analysis, according to Sharndama (2015) may be “to investigate how practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor of securing power and hegemony”.

Language is key in CDA. In fact it is central to CDA's processes. All scholars agree and maintain that CDA is interested in the ways in which linguistic forms (styles) are used in various expressions and manipulations of powers and other variables. Wodak (1996), Fairclough (1995), Van Dijk (1991) see language as a crucial factor that determines, shapes and deepens analyses, explanations and descriptions in CDA. Critical Discourse Analysis is therefore a methodology that allows an intensive assessment of what is meant when language is used to describe and explain something. Wodak and Meyer (2001) say that language use in speech and writing (within texts) as a form of social practice including texts and communication must always be considered in their social contexts.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims at carrying out Critical Discourse Analysis of the inaugural address of the Rector Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Dr. Lateef Olatunji presented to the Polytechnic community on 16th January, 2017. Because the approaches and methods of CDA are broad and diverse, the study adopts Fairclough's three-dimensional model which shows the relationship between language, power and ideology. The study

specifically attempts to realize the following objectives:

- (i) To identify and discuss the prevalent or crucial micro structures (linguistic features) of the speech, and
- (ii) To identify the macro structures, that is the ideological structures in the speech with a view to explaining how they relate to social structures.

Theoretical Framework

Fairclough's Model and Analytical Framework has been adopted for this study. Sharndama (2015) opines that Fairclough's analytical framework has three levels of analysis: the text, the discursive practice, and the socio-cultural practice. Each of these discursive events has three proportions: (i) It is a spoken or written text, (ii) It is an instance of discourse practice which include production and interpretation of texts, and (iii) it is a part of social practice. The analysis of text according to Fairclough (1995) consists of the study of the language structures produced in a discursive event – an analysis of the discursive reproduction of the texts. Also, analysis of socio-cultural practice consists of an investigation of what is happening in a particular socio-cultural framework (Sharndama 2015s).

Fairclough's second dimension, based on Rodgers et al discursive practice has to do with the analysis of the process of production, interpretation and consumption. How people perceive, interpret, reproduce or transform texts is the basic concern of this dimension. The third dimension which is socio-cultural practice has to do with the issue of power. Here, the analysis includes exploration of the ways in which discourse operates within the different domains of the society. For Fairclough, CDA is concerned with the investigation of the relations between two assumptions about language use – that language use is socially shaped and socially shaping. This idea is based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The Halliday's Systemic Linguistics is a major grammatical method of analysis of discourse. The SFL also provides a platform for the writing and interpreting various categories of speeches including inaugural speeches.

Data Analysis

The data for this study was obtained from the inaugural address of the Rector of The Federal Polytechnic Offa, Dr. Lateef

Olatunji presented to the Polytechnic community on the 16th January 2017. The 16 paragraph speech was subjected to analysis using qualitative approach. The analysis was guided by Fairclough's three-dimensional model – description, interpretation and explanation of texts. The analysis for this study was done according to the structure and content of the speech.

Appreciations

The first four paragraphs of the speech are mainly devoted for appreciations. This act shows a marked deviation from the norm of speech delivery in an occasion of this nature where protocol greetings should come first. The Rector thanked God for making his appointment possible. As part of the inaugural address, the Rector appreciates the entire Polytechnic community for maintaining peace and orderliness during the period that the institution did not have a substantive Rector. Every segment of the Polytechnic community and indeed the entire Offa Community was appreciated.

Let me also seize this opportunity to appreciate all members of the Polytechnic... I commend the efforts of the Management led by the Ag. Rector, Dr. (Mrs.) Olaosebikan... I also appreciate all the union leaders, for their unwavering supports... I will also like to specially appreciate the distinguished support of our Royal Father, His Royal Majesty, Oba Mufutau Gbadamosi Oloyede Esuwoye II, the Olofa of Offa...

The Rector also recognizes and appreciates his employer that appointed him into the exalted position: "I am most delighted for the opportunity granted me to contribute my quota to the development of the polytechnic".

Declaration of Intentions

Following appreciations in the opening paragraphs, the Rector made known his intention to serve the Polytechnic to the best of his ability. He acknowledges the efforts and works of his predecessors in office in which they made the institution as the fastest growing polytechnic in Nigeria; "...since the inception of the Polytechnic in 1992, the institution has been growing from grace to grace through the efforts of all our past leaders". He thus promises to maintain the structures already built by his predecessors and also vows to continue to

build on what they had put in place. Finally, he expressed the intention to bring new innovations into the Polytechnic: “I assure you that the good works of these past leaders would be built upon and many other new innovations and ideas will be injected”.

The synchronic connotations could be associated with lack of maintenance syndrome in Nigeria. In the Nigerian system, it is a known fact that we lack proper maintenance culture. For instance when a new administration or regime comes on board, it always abandons on-going projects and policies of the previous administration. In his address the Rector assures the Polytechnic community to deviate from the norms; he promises to continue with any project that is on-going.

In addition to the itemized intentions of the Rector, he also promises to create and promote conducive academic and working environments for members of staff of the Polytechnic. He must have come to a realization on the need to motivate and make the staff and students happy. This is reflected in his declaration where he says:

I promise to create a more conducive teaching and learning environment for both staff and students' welfare, among others... I promise to keep the communication line open and listen to everyone's ideas and suggestions.

The Rector promises to throw open communication windows. This, according to him, will provide opportunities for mutual interactions between the Management and the entire Polytechnic community. Essentially, this will promote information dissemination of course this is one way of creating conducive and attractive environment for academic activities.

Appeal for Unity

The Rector, after itemizing the plans he has for the Polytechnic, requests in his speech unity among all the stakeholders so that the institution could continue to discharge properly its functions as an educational institution.

The Rector as a stakeholder knows the importance of peace and unity in an educational institution. His appeal for unity is because the institution has always been a peaceful environment. Even during the tension-soaked period that the school did not have a substantive Rector there was peace. In calling for peace, he was mindful of his

language by not sounding autocratic.

He devotes a whole paragraph to sensitize his audience on the need to maintain unity among the people that cuts across different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Let me also implore all stakeholders, staff members and the general Polytechnic community to join hands with me because together(sic) we stand, divided we fall. Let us put our differences behind us and together build a better FEDPOFFA... I will need all of you to co-operate, rub minds together and work diligently to take the Polytechnic to the zenith of academic excellence.

The Rector emphasises that there cannot be development in an environment where there is no unity because it is unity that brings about peaceful coexistence. “...development of any organization lies strongly on peaceful coexistence, mutual understanding, tolerance and love among members”. Consequent upon this stance, he encourages every member of the Polytechnic community to be enlightened in the task of promoting unity, thereby contributing to the development of the institution; “I wish to admonish everyone not to be a mere passenger... we must all be ready to contribute our quotas to make the institution greater”. He situates the Federal Polytechnic Offa within the broad context of Nigerian society where there is stagnation for lack of unity among the people. He, therefore, charges institutions (using Federal Polytechnic Offa as a model) to come to the rescue and save the nation from further decline.

Call for Discipline

The speech finally talks on the need for discipline among the staff of the institution. He appeals strongly to every category of workers of the institution to imbibe the spirit of discipline as well as positive work attitude. The Rector was of the opinion that their attitude to work will ultimately affect the institution positively or negatively. To show the importance he attaches to the issue of discipline he uses a very strong phrase “... will not be tolerated” to drive home his points, and to state that he would not condone indiscipline:

Those who are in academics must

teach well and must not skip lectures nor change their lecture time. Non-teaching staff must be at their desk by 8am and deliver quality service. Absenteeism, lateness to work, loitering, idleness and nonchalant attitude will not be tolerated.

Ending

The Rector ends his speech with a message of hope. He metaphorically assures his audience by preaching hope: "I once again welcome you all into a new era". It is common in a speech of this nature to hear the speaker echoing "change" mantra. A new administrator would want to make pledges for a new beginning. The speech terminates in a prayerful manner. Here the Rector offers prayers in a protocol-like process:

God bless you all
 God bless The Federal
 Polytechnic Offa
 God bless Offa Community
 God bless Kwara State
 God bless Nigeria

The prayer is a symbolic religious requirement of the beginning of a new regime or administration seeking God's guidance.

Ideological Analysis

Two distinct ideologies manifest in the speech. The first is historical allusion used to remind the members of staff to good administration of the founding fathers of the institution. The second is the use of personal pronouns to make reference to personal or collective responsibilities in the running of the new administration.

Historical Allusion

The Rector, through the use of historical allusion draws the attention of the Polytechnic community to standard of administration established and maintained by the past Rectors of the institution. He reminds his audience of the good name and brand that the institution has created for itself through the efforts of the former administrators. Allusion in this context is a reminder to the stakeholders of the institution that the founding fathers of the institution were resolute in building a standard institution. The historical allusion could also be to let the staff and students know the legacies left by these past leaders to emulate. He says:

Since inception of the Polytechnic in 1992, the institution had been growing

from grace to grace through the efforts of all our past indefatigable leaders... I wish at this point to doff my cap and give kudos to all the past rectors of this great institution, Dr. Engr. (Lady) Taiwo Adeife, Dr. Rasaq Bello and Dr. Mufutau Olatunde Olatinwo. I thank them for maintaining this institution as the fastest growing polytechnic in Nigeria.

Use of Pronouns

Chimbarange et al (2013) cited in Sharndama (2015) sees a pronoun as a substitution of a noun (or its equivalents). This means that ordinarily, pronouns are used as replacements of nouns. Pronouns are, therefore, used to refer back to something thereby avoiding boredom. It also promotes free flow of expressions in our writings. In inaugural speeches pronouns especially personal pronouns are used to refer to either the audience or the speaker (Sharndama 2015). In this connection the use of pronoun goes beyond the content of the speech, it is often used for emphasis, self responsibility, inclusiveness, as well solidarity and unity of purpose. Thus, pronoun can be used to explain power as an element of critical discourse analysis to foreground or obscure it.

There are some ideological uses of personal pronoun in the text. An analysis of the inaugural speech shows ideological uses of personal pronouns. The pronouns *I*, *you*, *us* and *we* are used pervasively in the speech. *I* is used to express the idiosyncrasy of the speaker – personal feelings, personal responsibility, personal functions and self reference; *you*, *us* and *we* create shared and collective sense of responsibility and oneness. The use of these pronouns portrays the speaker and the audience as members of the same team that are on the same page, with the same mission and vision in a show of solidarity.

I am happy and feel highly honoured for the privilege of addressing this gathering... *I* am most delighted for the opportunity granted me to contribute my quota to the development of this polytechnic. Let me seize the opportunity to appreciate all members of the polytechnic. *I* also appreciate all the union leaders... *I* will also like to specially appreciate the distinguished support of our Royal Father. *I* wish at this point to doff my

cap and give kudos to all past Rectors of this great institution. **I** thank them for maintaining this institution as the fastest growing Polytechnic in Nigeria.

In the excerpt above, the Rector uses personal pronoun **I** to express his personal feelings, happiness, appreciation and gratitude to God, past leaders and the entire Polytechnic community. The pronoun **I** also symbolizes power, authority, and control. It portrays the speaker (the Rector) as the Chief Executive Officer of the institution.

You will agree with me that **our** dear Polytechnic has been able to weather several storms... I assure **you** that the good works of the past leaders would be built upon. Let **us** put our differences behind and build a better FEDPOFFA. Finally dear colleagues, I wish to strongly appeal to all of **us** to constitute a positive work attitude. Let **us** imbibe the virtue of early to work... All of **us** must contribute **our** quotas to and do things rightly. Whatever **we** do will surely influence the entire nation. With **our** joint efforts, **we** will make Nigeria a heaven. Once again I welcome **you** all into a new era and I also wish **you** a most wonderful time working together.

Pronouns **you**, **us**, **our** and **we** from the excerpt above are used symbolically to demonstrate and express collectivism, team work, togetherness, and unity of purpose.

Their use is meant to cement a good relationship between the Rector and members of the institution's stakeholders. **You** and **we** particularly have little or no referential meaning; their usage in this context is a way of extending an olive branch to the Polytechnic community in an effort to jointly move the institution forward.

Conclusion

The study has shown that the content of an inaugural speech normally consists of appreciations, declaration of intention in the form of sketch itemization of policy plans of the new administration, as well as reference (a subtle acknowledgement) of past administrations. The speech has been informative and largely expository. This, of course is a feature of an inaugural speech. The opening segment of the speech contains appreciations of God who has made the appointment possible, the various categories of people which include the Olofa of Offa, the union leaders for their roles in making the appointment possible. After this the speaker makes a commitment to continue with the good works started by the founding fathers of the institution. The speaker, thereafter appeals for unity among members of staff of the institution; he admonishes them to be discipline and cultivate a good work ethics. Finally, the analysis of the paper reveals some ideological manifestations in the form of historical allusion and the pervasive use of personal pronouns.

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