A Critical Stylistic Analysis of Major Kaduna Nzeogwu Coup Speech

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the ideological underpinnings of the coup speech delivered on January 15, 1966, by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu. Employing Jeffries' (2010) Critical Stylistics theory as a methodological framework, the study conducts a linguistic analysis to uncover the political viewpoints and intentions of the coup plotters. The analysis reveals how specific linguistic choices and patterns were employed to communicate the plotters' intentions to the public, suppress dissent, and advocate for the establishment of military rule instead of democratic governance. The speech underscores the plotters' portrayal of their actions as necessary for national salvation, while framing democratic processes as ineffective. Additionally, the use of emotive language and authoritative tones served to bolster legitimacy and rally public support for the coup. The analysis further elucidates how the adopted linguistic strategies functioned to justify the overthrow of the existing government and the suspension of democratic institutions in Nigeria's First Republic. This Critical Stylistic study highlights the intricate power dynamics that underpinned the military intervention and emphasizes the role of language as a tool for ideological persuasion. By revealing the linguistic resources employed by the coup plotters, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how language can shape political realities and influence public perception during times of upheaval.

KEYWORDS: Critical stylistic, Analysis, Major Kaduna Nzeogwu, Coup speech, Ideological

1. Introduction

Language plays a fundamental role in communication. It serves not only as a means of interaction but also as a powerful tool for achieving political objectives. The stylistic choices made by speakers, whether in speeches, poetry, or essays, profoundly shape the impact of their messages. Stylistics, as a field of study, explores the creativity inherent in language, focusing on the expressive capacities available to all speakers rather than the unique talents of individuals. In the context of politics, the intrinsic link between language and power lies in its function as a medium for expressing opinions, ideologies, and viewpoints, often reflecting broader social, political, and economic stances.

Language's versatility allows speakers to shape thoughts, beliefs, and public opinion through various rhetorical techniques, including the use of imperative, declarative, and interrogative sentence types, as well as active and passive voice constructions. Salami (2010) emphasizes that language not only influences but can also control thoughts and beliefs, making it a crucial instrument in constructing political discourse. Political speeches, in particular, encapsulate ideologies and reflect the positions of both individual speakers and the groups they represent. As Van Dijk (2001) notes, political discourse conveys group ideologies through collective texts like party programs and institutional policies, while also reflecting personal beliefs and experiences.

The coup speech delivered by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu on January 15, 1966, serves as a powerful example of political discourse. Crafted for oral delivery via broadcast media, the speech aimed to rally public support for the coup leaders while coercing the acceptance of significant changes to Nigeria's civil and constitutional structures. The speech's linguistic strategies and rhetorical techniques warrant close examination to understand how the coup plotters justified their actions and persuaded the populace to endorse the revolution.

2. Background of the January 15, 1966 coup speech

The January 15, 1966 coup d'état marked a pivotal moment in Nigeria's political history. Led by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu and a group of army officers, the coup sought to overthrow the government of Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, accusing his administration of corruption, despotism, and mismanagement. This military intervention was framed as a necessary response to the political instability and violence that followed the controversial 1965 regional elections in the Western Region, as well as the broader electoral conflicts of 1964.

In his speech, Nzeogwu outlined several reasons for the coup. He cited the growing chaos and violence in the country, stemming from political mismanagement and widespread public discontent. The speech criticized the incumbent government for its incompetence and authoritarian tendencies, highlighting a pattern of crisis mismanagement dating back to 1962. Nzeogwu also expressed concern over the misuse of the military to suppress dissent, which had fostered resentment among military officers towards the political class. Furthermore, the speech addressed the rampant corruption within the ruling elite and the politicization of the military. The coup plotters argued that political interference had undermined military standards, especially with attempts to diminish Southern influence in the army—a legacy of colonial favoritism towards Southern officers based on qualifications.

Although many decades have passed since the January 1966 coup, the significance of this event remains relevant today. This study delves into the historical context of Nigeria's first military intervention, while also highlighting the necessity of a Critical Stylistic Analysis of Nzeogwu's speech. Such an analysis reveals the power dynamics that led to the coup and it explains the subsequent suspension of democratic institutions and, uncovers the linguistic techniques used to persuade the populace and justify the actions of the coup plotters. The study is not only of linguistic and political importance but also contributes to a deeper historical understanding of Nigeria's turbulent political evolution.

This research scrutinizes the linguistic resources employed by the coup plotters in their speech through the lens of Jeffries' Critical Stylistics toolkit. By analyzing the speech within the realms of military and political discourse—marked by themes of force, coercion, and domination—the study reveals how power and ideology are embedded in the language used. Through this detailed examination, the study seeks to illuminate the complex interplay between language, ideology, and power in one of Nigeria's most critical historical moments. The data for this study were primarily derived from Nzeogwu's speech which was sourced online, notably from Wikipedia (Wikipedia contributors, 2024).

3. Literature Review

Critical Stylistics denotes the stylistic activity involved in verifying social meanings through systematic language analysis, drawing from critical linguistics and CDA (Norgaard et al., 2010). This concept is rooted in Jeffries' work, which illustrates the interconnections between language, power, and ideology. Jeffries first introduced the term in 2007 to highlight the strengths of stylistics and CDA in revealing how ideologies are embedded within texts.

In her 2010 publication, Jeffries emphasizes that CS aims to compile the primary functions of texts in representing realities, providing a comprehensive set of tools for critical analysis that exceeds existing CDA methodologies. She outlines various analytical tools known as textual conceptual functions, which are based on semantic-grammatical theories, enabling a nuanced exploration of representational practices within texts (Berlin, 2020).

Critical Stylistics (CS) is an emerging field within applied linguistics that aims to bridge stylistics which focuses on textual choices and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which centers on ideological manifestations (Newsome, 2002). According to Jeffries (2010), CS seeks to synthesize the functions of texts in representing realities, thereby providing a more rigorous theoretical framework and methodology for CDA. Jeffries emphasizes that CS introduces a comprehensive toolkit of analytical tools that, while not exhaustive, surpasses what is available in existing CDA literature.

Gee (2014) argues that CS maintains a neutral stance in terms of political alignment, positing that all texts are inherently ideologically motivated, whether consciously or unconsciously. The primary goal of CS is to systematically uncover and expose these hidden ideologies within texts and discourses. By integrating stylistics and CDA, CS combines analytical tools from both approaches to provide a holistic analysis of meaning in various texts.

A significant distinction between CS and CDA lies in the toolkit available for analysis. While CDA is critiqued for lacking a comprehensive set of analytical tools, CS offers a systematic analytical model that incorporates resources from stylistics and critical linguistics. This enables CS to elucidate the linguistic choices of text producers and their potential ideological implications (Newsome, 2002).

Jeffries contends that Critical Linguistics and CDA do not provide a robust framework for revealing hidden ideologies within texts. To address this gap, she introduces ten analytical tools that resemble the eclectic models developed by scholars such as Fowler (1991), Simpson (1993), and Fairclough (1989) to examine textual ideologies.

CS primarily focuses on uncovering underlying ideologies manifested through language in both literary and non-literary texts, regardless of external circumstances (Jeffries, 2014). In contrast, CDA prioritizes external contexts—including social, historical, and visual elements—in its analysis. Despite this distinction, Jeffries acknowledges the insightful utility of stylistic analysis in examining both fiction and non-fiction texts, thus enriching the overall discourse.

While CS has made significant contributions to the understanding of language, power, and ideology, some scholars have raised critical perspectives on its scope and application. Critics argue that CS, while comprehensive in its toolkit, may still fall short in addressing the broader socio-political contexts that shape language use. For instance, while CS focuses on the linguistic mechanisms of ideology, it may neglect the social practices and power relations that inform those mechanisms.

Moreover, some researchers contend that the emphasis on linguistic features may overshadow the qualitative aspects of discourse, such as the emotional and cultural dimensions that play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and political discourse. This critique suggests that while CS provides valuable insights into the structural elements of texts, it may benefit from integrating a more holistic approach that includes the social and cultural contexts of discourse.

In essence, Critical Stylistics represents a valuable intersection of stylistics and CDA, offering a robust analytical framework for exploring the ideologies embedded in texts. However, ongoing discussions about its limitations highlight the need for a more integrative approach that considers the complex interplay between language, ideology, and the socio-political environment. As the field continues to evolve, these critiques will be essential for refining the methodologies and expanding the theoretical underpinnings of Critical Stylistics.

4. The adopted models

This research utilizes Jeffries' (2010) Critical Stylistics theory as the analytical framework. Jeffries' (2010) Critical Stylistics theory identifies ideological positioning through Critical Stylistic strategies or identifies ten tools such as Representing (Actions/Events/States), Negating, Equating, and Contrasting, Presenting Other's Speech and Thoughts, etc., which have proved instrumental in interpreting the underlying ideologies in both non-fiction and literary data. The analytical framework becomes an appropriate tool to discern embedded ideologies within the January 15, 1966 coup speech by analyzing various linguistic choices and patterns employed to convey confidence to the populace, suppress public dissent, and establish military rule (militocracy) in place of democracy. The study adopts Jeffries' (2010) ten tools analytical model as a framework for analyzing linguistic choices and patterns within the coup speech aimed at uncovering embedded ideologies and communicative intentions.

5. Theoretical Framework

Lesley Jeffries' Critical Stylistics (CS) theory, introduced in 2010, offers a powerful analytical framework for exploring the intricate relationship between language, ideology, and power. It integrates stylistic analysis which focuses on the specific linguistic choices made in texts with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which examines how language both reflects and constructs social ideologies. Within this framework, Jeffries identifies ten key analytical tools and strategies which are designed to unveil different layers of meaning and intention within a text. Among these tools is *Vocabulary Choice*, which delves into the selection of words and their connotations, as well as the implications they carry. *Transitivity Analysis* examines how verbs and verb phrases represent actions, events, and relationships. *Modality* investigates the degrees of certainty, possibility, or obligation expressed through language, while *Metaphor and Metonymy* uncover the ideological implications of figurative language. Additionally, *Implicature* seeks to reveal meanings that are implied rather than explicitly stated, and *Speech and Thought Representation* analyzes how both are depicted in a text. The tools of *Evaluation and Appraisal* explore the evaluative and emotive functions of language, and *Naming and Labeling* investigate how individuals or groups are categorized and defined through language. *Representation and Referring* look at how entities are constructed and referred to, while *Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity* examine the relationships between different texts and discourses. Jeffries' Critical Stylistics thus provides a

comprehensive approach to interpreting the complex interplay between language, ideology, and social power, especially within the context of significant historical events. This makes it an ideal framework for analyzing the January 15, 1966, coup speech. By applying Critical Stylistics to the speech, the linguistic choices and patterns employed by the coup plotters are critically examined, revealing the underlying ideologies that shaped their communicative intentions. This approach enables a deeper understanding of how language was used not only to convey their perspective but also to manipulate and influence public opinion during this pivotal moment in Nigeria's history.

6. Text analysis and methodology

The methods of analysis of the text involved a close reading with data systematically categorized for examination at various levels. The methodology focused on identifying a dichotomy between linguistic forms and functions to uncover hidden ideologies embedded within the discourse. The analysis was organized into four thematic categories: *Naming and Describing* which focuses on how language is used to name entities and describe the world within the text. It explores the nuanced information conveyed through noun phrases and the packaging of worldviews and opinions. *Equating and Contrasting* examines how the text presents different entities or ideas as either equivalent or opposed to one another. This contrast shapes interpretations and reveals underlying ideological positions. *Representing Action/States/Events* delves into the choice of verbs and verbal elements within the text, influencing how readers interpret actions, events, or states presented in the discourse. *Presenting Others' Speech and Thoughts* focuses on how the text represents the speech and thoughts of other participants. This includes evaluating how the author mediates and presents the words and ideas of different individuals within the text. By employing these four critical stylistic tools and organizing the analysis into these thematic categories, the study systematically revealed the embedded ideologies and shed light on the communicative strategies employed in the text.

6.1. Representing actions

Jeffries (2010:41) identifies the following material actions: Material Action Intention [MAT], Material Action Supervention [MAS], and Material Action Event [MAE]. To analyze the verbal elements (predicators) and the actions and processes conveyed through lexical verbs in the text, we identify the material actions and processes that take place between the participants as identified by Jeffries (2010:41). This helps explore how the lexical choices manifest the ideological intent of the speaker. Here are some examples and analyses below:

6.1.1. Material action intention

Material Action Intention (MAT) involves verbs that indicate the speaker's intentions or purposes. The selection of these verbs serves to project authority and determination. By utilizing verbs such as *declare, ban, assure, promise,* and *establish,* the speaker not only communicates specific actions but also establishes a framework of control and legitimacy.

Examples:

I declare martial law over the Northern Provinces of Nigeria

Here, *declare* functions as a powerful assertion of control. It signifies a unilateral decision-making process, reinforcing the speaker's authority and the gravity of the situation.

All political, cultural, tribal and trade union activities... are banned until further notice.

The verb *ban* indicates a prohibition that conveys decisiveness and the establishment of new social norms, illustrating the regime's intent to suppress dissent and maintain order.

I am to assure all foreigners... that their rights will continue to be respected.

The verb *assure* reflects a deliberate attempt to manage perception and instill a sense of security, even while imposing martial law. This indicates a dual strategy of control and reassurance.

But what we do promise every law-abiding citizen is freedom from fear and all forms of oppression.

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6.1.3. Material Action Event (MAE):

Material Action Event (MAE) refers to actions that are enacted as events, often associated with enforcement and consequences. Verbs like *imprison, punish, penalize, and rectify* create a vivid picture of the regime's capacity for enforcement, illustrating the consequences of disobedience and the overarching theme of control.

Examples:

Refusal or neglect to perform normal duties... will be punishable by a sentence imposed by the local military commander.

The verb *punishable* conveys a direct threat, establishing a clear link between behavior and consequence. This choice of verb emphasizes the regime's power to enforce compliance.

Spying, harmful or injurious publications... will be punished by any suitable sentence deemed fit by the local military commander.

Punished here reinforces the concept of surveillance and control over information. It portrays dissent as a criminal act, thereby legitimizing severe repercussions.

Tearing down an order of the day... will be penalized by death.

The bluntness of *penalized by death* creates a chilling effect, emphasizing the ultimate consequence of disobedience. This extreme measure reflects the regime's oppressive nature and serves as a deterrent against dissent.

The selection of verbs in the coup speech is a deliberate choice that reflects the ideological stance of the speaker. Each category of material action; MAT, MAS, and MAE highlights different facets of power: intention, intervention, and enforcement. The overall lexical choices convey an authoritative, interventionist, and punitive regime, aiming to control the narrative, suppress dissent, and reshape societal norms. This linguistic strategy not only informs the audience of the actions being taken but also seeks to instill fear, compliance, and a sense of inevitability regarding the regime's authority and governance. Thus, the speech serves as both a declaration of intent and a means of asserting control over the populace during a time of upheaval.

6.2. Prioritizing

Prioritizing is a conceptual tool. The English clause generally utilises an information structure which positions new and important information at the clause final (Jeffries, 2010:77). Analyzing the tool of Prioritizing which is also known as a conceptual tool in Jeffries' Critical Stylistics, focuses on how the text structures information to emphasize what is considered new and important, typically positioning such information towards the end of clauses. Prioritizing is achieved through the strategic placement of key information to highlight its significance.

6.2.1.Immediate Declaration of Authority

Example:

I declare martial law over the Northern Provinces of Nigeria.

In this clause, the act of declaring martial law is front-loaded, which serves to assert the speaker's authority from the outset. The immediate announcement of such a drastic measure sets a tone of urgency and control, suggesting that the situation is critical and that decisive action is required. By placing this declaration upfront, the speaker not only communicates the action but also instills a sense of inevitability regarding the enforcement of martial law, reinforcing the ideological stance of an authoritarian regime poised to take drastic measures for stability.

6.2.2.Clear prohibition of activities

Example:

All political, cultural, tribal and trade union activities, together with all demonstrations and unauthorised gatherings, excluding religious worship, are banned until further notice.

The structure of this sentence places the wide-ranging prohibitions near the beginning, establishing the gravity of the measures being implemented. By highlighting the ban on various activities, the speaker underscores the regime's intent to control public life comprehensively. This prioritization reflects an ideological stance focused on suppressing dissent and ensuring conformity, as it explicitly communicates the limitations imposed on civil liberties. The strategic placement of *banned until further notice* at the end underscores the indefinite nature of these restrictions, suggesting that the control will be sustained indefinitely, further instilling a sense of powerlessness among the populace.

6.2.3.Enumerating Offenses with Severe Consequences

Example:

You are hereby warned that looting, arson, homosexuality, rape, embezzlement, bribery or corruption, obstruction of the revolution, sabotage, subversion, false alarms and assistance to foreign invaders, are all offenses punishable by death sentence.

Analysis:

This complex sentence utilizes a list format that builds in intensity, leading to the climactic declaration of the punishment. By prioritizing the various offenses and culminating with the ultimate penalty '***death***' the speaker emphasizes the severity of the regime's stance on law enforcement. This structure serves to instill fear, reinforcing the ideological message that dissent and criminal behavior will not be tolerated. The inclusion of *'**homosexuality**'* alongside more traditionally criminal offenses suggests a broader ideological agenda targeting not just crime, but also societal norms and identities, positioning the regime as a moral arbiter.

6.2.4.Defining the "Enemies of the States"

Example:

Our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand 10 percent; those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers or VIPs at least, the tribalists, the nepotists, those that make the country look big for nothing before international circles, those that have corrupted our society and put the Nigerian political calendar back by their words and deeds.

The enumeration of enemies is progressively structured, leading the audience through a series of increasingly grave accusations. By prioritizing the most egregious categories of enemies towards the end, the speaker emphasizes a multifaceted threat to national unity and progress. This strategic arrangement not only portrays the regime as a necessary force against corruption and division but also fosters a collective sense of identity among the populace. The rhetorical choice to position these enemies prominently serves to unify the audience against a common foe, reinforcing the speaker's ideological narrative of righteousness and urgency.

The tool of Prioritizing effectively shapes the ideological framework of the coup speech by structuring information in a way that emphasizes key actions, prohibitions and societal threats. By placing significant information towards the end of clauses, the speaker enhances the urgency and importance of their messages and aligns the audience's focus with the regime's authoritarian intent. The linguistic choices made throughout the speech reflect a deliberate strategy to instill fear, promote compliance and consolidate power thereby highlighting the ideological underpinnings of control and suppression in the face of

perceived threats to the state. Through this analysis, we see how prioritization serves as a powerful mechanism for not only conveying information but also shaping public perception and reinforcing the regime's authority.

6.3. Equating and contrasting

Jeffries (2010:52) recognizes that the English language has a lexical system with the possibility for words to be semantically similar or semantically opposed. To conduct a comprehensive analysis of how the text exploits linguistic devices to project-specific worldviews regarding the similarities and oppositions of the participants, we examine how the text establishes synonymies (similarities) and antonyms (contrasts) between different elements. The linguistic strategies of equating (establishing synonymies) and contrasting (establishing oppositions) play a crucial role in shaping the ideological intent of the coup speech. By leveraging semantic relationships, the speaker crafts a narrative that delineates between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, aligning them with the broader goals of the regime. This analysis explores how these strategies manifest in the text, revealing underlying worldviews and reinforcing the speaker's authority.

Here are some examples for analysis:

6.3.1.Establishing synonymies (similarities)

6.3.1.1. Political measures and stability

The actions of *declaring martial law, suspending the constitution, and dissolving elected assemblies* are linked with the vision of a *strong united, and prosperous nation, free from corruption and internal strife*.

This lexical connection frames military interventions as necessary steps toward achieving national stability. By synonymizing authoritative measures with the goal of a prosperous nation, the speaker constructs a narrative that justifies drastic actions as essential for collective wellbeing. This reflects an ideological intent to normalize authoritarianism as a means to achieve societal progress, positioning the regime's actions as not merely reactionary but fundamentally constructive.

6.3.1.2. Proclamations and enforcement

The relationship between actions such as *looting, arson, and bribery* and their corresponding severe punishments such as *death sentence, incarceration, etc.,* underscores strict enforcement of the order. By aligning specific behaviors with harsh penalties, the speaker communicates a clear message: compliance is non-negotiable. The use of synonymies here emphasizes the regime's commitment to order and stability, framing punitive measures as protective actions against threats to the revolutionary cause. This reflects an ideological stance that equates strict enforcement with societal health, reinforcing the idea that order must be maintained at all costs.

6.3.1.3. Civic duties and allegiance:

The expectation of maximum cooperation is equated with *civic duties, cooperation,* and *allegiance*. By linking civic duties to allegiance, the speaker establishes a framework of mutual responsibility between the state and its citizens. This synonymy serves to reinforce the idea that active participation and compliance are synonymous with loyalty to the regime. The ideological intent is clear: to cultivate a sense of collective responsibility and to frame any dissent as a betrayal, thereby fostering a culture of obedience.

6.3.2.Establishing oppositions (contrast):

6.3.2.1. Political enemies and desired unity

The speech delineates *enemies of the revolution; political profiteers, swindlers and corrupt officials* from the envisioned unity of the nation. This contrast highlights a dual worldview: those who obstruct progress versus those who embody the ideals of unity and integrity. By portraying political enemies as external threats to national stability, the speaker reinforces a sense of urgency and righteousness in the regime's actions. This ideological stance frames the revolutionary government as a necessary blockade against corruption, thereby justifying its authoritarian measures.

6.3.2.2. Forbidden activities and desired conduct

A clear opposition is drawn between banned activities such as *political gatherings, demonstrations* and acceptable behaviors in the realm of religious *worship.* This linguistic contrast not only delineates permissible from prohibited actions but also positions the regime as a guardian of societal order. By allowing religious worship while banning political expressions, the speaker creates a moral hierarchy that elevates certain forms of expression while demonizing others. The ideological intent here is to control the narrative surrounding civic engagement, portraying the regime as both protective and punitive in maintaining social harmony.

6.3.2.3. Legal obedience and disloyalty

The distinction between *law-abiding citizens* and those labeled as *disloyal* underscores a profound ideological divide. By contrasting *compliance with established norms* against *disloyalty,* the speaker cultivates an atmosphere of suspicion towards dissenters. This opposition not only stigmatizes non-compliance but also elevates the status of those who adhere to the regime's expectations. The ideological intent is to foster a culture of surveillance and self-policing among the populace, where loyalty is rewarded and dissent is vilified.

The linguistic strategies of equating and contrasting in the coup speech effectively project a specific worldview that reinforces the regime's authority and ideological framework. Through synonymies, the speaker constructs a narrative that normalizes authoritarian measures as pathways to stability and prosperity, while oppositions delineate clear boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. This manipulation of language not only conveys the regime's intentions but also shapes public perception, fostering an environment of compliance and control. Eventually, these strategies serve to legitimize the regime's actions while creating a collective identity rooted in loyalty and obedience which effectively aligns the populace with the revolutionary objectives set forth by the speech.

6.4. Naming and describing

Naming and describing is one of the potent weapons employed by the producers of texts to convey ideologies. The use of naming and describing in the coup speech is a powerful rhetorical strategy that conveys ideological motives and shapes the audience's perception. By carefully selecting nouns and noun phrases, the speaker constructs a narrative that legitimizes the revolutionary actions and positions the regime as a necessary authority.

Let us examine the following

6.4.1.Authority and identity

Supreme Council of the Revolution of the Nigerian Armed Forces

The title *Supreme Council* inherently suggests ultimate authority and decision-making power which position this body as the pinnacle of governance. This naming conveys an ideological stance that frames the council as the rightful leader of the nation, asserting its dominance over all other entities. By coupling this with the *Revolution of the Nigerian Armed Forces,* the speaker not only provides an identity to the military but also reinforces the idea that the coup is a necessary uprising against previous governance. This nomenclature effectively legitimizes military rule as a unifying force aimed at restoring order and progress, shaping the public's perception of the coup as a patriotic duty.

6.4.2.Control and urgency

Martial Law

The term *martial law* evokes immediate connotations of strict enforcement and military oversight. This naming serves to communicate a shift from civilian governance to military control, signaling to the populace that extraordinary measures are required to restore order. By invoking this term, the speaker emphasizes urgency and necessity, framing the imposition of martial law as a protective measure rather than a punitive one. This ideological intent is aimed at garnering public support for the drastic measures, reinforcing the narrative that such actions are vital for the nation's survival.

6.4.3.Disregarding democratic norms

Constitution Suspended

The phrase *Constitution Suspended* serves as a stark indicator of the regime's departure from established democratic principles. This naming reflects an ideological position that prioritizes the revolutionary agenda over legal frameworks. By describing the constitution as suspended, the speaker implies a temporary but necessary abrogation of civil rights in favor of centralized authority. This framing cultivates a perception that traditional governance structures are inadequate in addressing the nation's crises, thus legitimizing the regime's actions as essential for national rejuvenation.

6.4.4.Centralized governance

Regional Government and Elected Assemblies Dissolved

The combination of *Regional Government* and *Elected Assemblies* conveys a clear message about the dismantling of existing governance structures. This use of noun groups indicates a transition to a more centralized and authoritarian form of rule. The phrase implies a rejection of democratic representation, reinforcing the ideology that the previous systems were ineffective or corrupt. By framing the dissolution of these bodies as a means to achieve stability, the speaker constructs a narrative that legitimizes the concentration of power within the Revolutionary Council.

6.4.5. Identifying enemies

Enemies of the Revolution

The phrase *Enemies of the Revolution* identifies and categorizes various groups as adversaries to the regime's goals. This naming creates a clear dichotomy between those who support the revolutionary cause and those who obstruct it. By labeling *political profiteers, swindlers,* and *other dissenters* as enemies, the speaker not only delegitimizes their actions but also unifies the populace against a common foe. This ideological framing positions the revolution as a moral struggle against corruption, fostering a sense of collective identity and purpose among the supporters of the regime.

6.4.6. Promoting Compliance

Law-Abiding Citizens

The term *Law-Abiding Citizens* frames the desired behavior of the populace in compliance with the new order. This naming reinforces the notion that obedience to revolutionary decrees is synonymous with patriotism and loyalty. By positioning *law-abiding individuals* as ideal citizens, the speaker aims to instill a sense of moral duty and responsibility among the populace, encouraging adherence to the regime's demands. This linguistic choice emphasizes the ideological intent of creating a compliant society that views adherence to the new order as a civic virtue.

The techniques of naming and describing in the coup speech are instrumental in shaping the ideological framework of the text. By carefully selecting nouns and noun phrases, the speaker conveys authority, urgency, and a clear moral dichotomy between supporters and detractors of the regime. This strategic use of language not only legitimizes the actions of the Revolutionary Council but also fosters a sense of collective identity and compliance among the populace. The ideological underpinnings embedded in these linguistic choices serve to reinforce the narrative of a necessary and justified revolution, ultimately shaping the audience's understanding of the regime's objectives and actions. Through this analysis, we see how naming and describing are not just stylistic devices but potent tools for ideological persuasion, framing the revolutionary narrative in a way that seeks to unify and control public perception.

Adopting the toolkit of Jeffries' Critical Stylistics (2010) has enabled us to determine that the devices such as naming, representing events and processes, equating and contrasting, and presenting others' speech among others, were exploited in the January 15, 1966 military coup speech in Nigeria. The apparatuses help to imprint the textual opinions, beliefs, and worldviews about the intentions behind the staged military coup in the reader's mind.

7. Conclusion

The application of Jeffries' Critical Stylistics toolkit in this study revealed that the military coup speech in question portrayed politicians in highly negative terms, depicting them as marauders, looters, saboteurs, and nepotists. It also cast them as subversive elements and enemies of the state. Furthermore, the speech framed the revolution as a necessary response to pressing national issues such as arson, corruption, and tribalism, which plagued Nigeria during the First Republic. Through the lens of Critical Stylistics, this analysis has enhanced our understanding of the linguistic strategies used to communicate sensitive and critical socio-political issues to the populace. The coup plotters, in this case, employed rhetorical tools to present a specific perspective on the state of the nation, particularly in relation to political profiteers, swindlers, and those who sought to perpetuate divisions for personal gain.

This research holds significant implications for the academic field, as it underscores the power of discourse in shaping public perception and political narratives. By dissecting the linguistic structures within the speech, we gain insights into how political discourse, particularly in military settings, differs in its use of coercion and intimidation from more subtle forms of democratic political speech aimed at garnering support and public trust. The patterns of discussion identified in this study not only provide clarity on the rhetorical methods used during the Nigerian military coup of January 15, 1966, but also contribute to the broader understanding of how language functions as a tool for persuasion and manipulation in political contexts.

For other researchers, this study opens avenues for further investigation into the use of language in political discourse, particularly in non-democratic settings. It emphasizes the need for continued exploration of how linguistic choices reflect and perpetuate power dynamics, influence public opinion, and shape historical narratives. The findings underscore the importance

of critical discourse analysis as a means to decode political intentions and the far-reaching impact of language in both historical and contemporary political contexts.

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