

**A MORPHO- SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU'S
SPEECH AT PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN RALLY IN JOS**

by

Ahmadu Mohammed Dauda Ph.D

Department of English and Literary Studies

University of Maiduguri

ahmadumdauda@unimaid.edu.ng

08067018673/09032777080

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Ajiduku Beavens Ahmadu Ph.D

Department of English and Literary Studies,

Taraba State University, Jalingo

ajidukubeavens@gmail.com

08035264056

Abstract

This study conducts a morpho-semantic analysis of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's speech delivered during his Presidential Campaign Rally in Jos, with the aim to uncover the linguistic strategies employed by the speaker to shape certain political rhetoric and to influence public perception towards his election. The research utilizes Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its theoretical framework to examine how some morphological structures and semantic choices work together to construct meaning and support political agendas. Data were collected from the official transcript of Tinubu's campaign speech and supplemented with contextual information from media reports and relevant literature. The analysis focuses on key themes, including unity, development, and security, employing qualitative methods to present and interpret the morpho-semantic elements within the speech. Findings reveal that Tinubu strategically employed affixation, compounding, and specific lexical choices to evoke emotional responses, convey urgency, and create a sense of solidarity among his audience. The interplay between morphology and semantics not only enhances the persuasive power of his rhetoric but also reinforces his vision for Nigeria's future, demonstrating the critical role of language in political discourse. This study contributes to the understanding of how linguistic elements shape political messages, thereby, filling some possible gap in existing research on morpho-semantics in political contexts.

Keywords: morpho-semantics, critical discourse analysis, political rhetoric, Nigerian politics, linguistic strategies, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu

1. Introduction

The political landscape in Nigeria has long been shaped and reshaped by the oratory skills of its leaders, where their speeches serve as crucial tools for rallying support, articulating visions, and influencing public opinion towards them. Within this context, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's speech delivered during his presidential campaign rally in Jos stands as a significant moment in his political career and in Nigeria's electoral history. As a key figure in Nigerian politics, Tinubu's speeches are often laden with carefully chosen words, phrases, and certain linguistic structures that reflect not only his political agenda but also the socio-cultural and political milieu in which they are delivered. This study aims to delve into the intricate layers of Tinubu's speech through a morpho-semantic analysis, which examines both the structure of the words used and the meanings they convey within their context of use.

Morpho-semantics is a linguistic framework that integrates the study of morphology, which focuses on how words are formed and structured, with semantics, which examines meaning (Aronoff, 1994). This combined approach is particularly useful for analyzing political speeches, where each word is chosen intentionally and each phrase can have significant implications (Cruse, 2011; Beard, 2000). In Tinubu's speech, examining the morphology of his word choices can illuminate the strategies he uses to engage various segments of the electorate. For example, his employment of affixes, compounds, and various word formations may be intended to foster feelings of solidarity, urgency, or optimism among listeners. Conversely, semantic analysis aids in understanding the meanings behind these terms, highlighting their contributions to the overall message and emotional resonance of the speech.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the morpho-semantic elements of Tinubu's speech, focusing on how the structure and meaning of his words contribute to the effectiveness of his political messaging. This analysis will explore key themes in the speech, such as unity, development, and security, and how these themes are reinforced through his linguistic choices. By examining the interplay between morphology and semantics, this study aims to uncover the

rhetorical strategies Tinubu employs to persuade his audience and to assert his vision for Nigeria's future.

2. Morpho-Semantic as a Concept

Morpho-semantics as a concept represents the intersection between morphology and semantics, exploring how the structural elements of words influence each other to shape their meanings. Anderson's (1992) contribution to the field of morphology, particularly towards the understanding of the relationship between word structure and meaning is worthy of note here. He describes morpho-semantics as "the examination of the relationship between morphological structures and the meanings of the words they create. This definition reflects his broader focus on the intricate connection between the form and function of words in language. Anderson's approach to morpho-semantics underscores the idea that the morphological processes involved in word formation, such as affixation, compounding, and inflection, are not merely mechanical operations but are deeply intertwined with the meanings that these words convey.

Anderson's emphasis on the relationship between morphological structures and meanings suggests that every morphological element within a word, whether a prefix, suffix, or root, plays a crucial role in shaping the word's semantic content. For example, in English, the addition of the suffix "-ness" to an adjective like "happy" forms the noun "happiness," altering the word's grammatical category while also shifting its meaning from a descriptive state to an abstract concept. Anderson would argue that understanding this transformation requires more than just a recognition of the morphological change; it necessitates an exploration of how this change affects the word's meaning and its use in different contexts.

Bauer (2003) provides a significant perspective on morpho-semantics by emphasizing the compositional nature of word meaning, where the meaning of complex words is derived from the meanings of their constituent morphemes. He defines morpho-semantics as the intersection of morphology and semantics, highlighting how individual morphemes the smallest units of meaning combine to form complex words. For instance, in "unhappiness," the prefix "un-" negates the meaning of "happiness," resulting in the interpretation of "the state of not being

happy." This approach underscores the importance of understanding how morphemes contribute to meaning construction in language.

2.1 Morphological Analysis

According to Aronoff (2007), morphological analysis focuses on breaking down word structures to explore how they contribute to meaning. In President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's campaign speech in Jos, various key morphological processes are evident. Affixation, which is the process of adding prefixes, suffixes, or infixes to words can shape meaning and stir up emotions. For instance in the campaign speech, the use of the prefix "un-" in "unify" conveys the idea of bringing people together, while the suffix "-ness" in "greatness" can foster a sense of National pride in the electorates. Tinubu's use of compounding, which is a morphological that merges two or more words, can be seen in his use of terms like "nation-building" and "self-reliance," offering concise representations of broader political concepts. He also used other morphological processes like reduplication and blending to emphasize points or create memorable expressions, such as "steady-steady" for reinforcing consistency or "infortainment" to describe a mix of information and entertainment. By analyzing these morphological strategies, we can gain insight into how Tinubu uses language to engage his audience and underscore the themes of unity, progress, and resilience.

2.2 Semantic Analysis

Saeed (2016) explains that semantic analysis focuses on the meanings of words and phrases in a speech, revealing how they contribute to the overall message and influence audience interpretation. In President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's speech, several key semantic elements stand out. Semantic fields clusters of related words underscore themes like "unity," "progress," and "security." For instance, terms such as "together," "peace," and "future" belong to the lexical field of unity, emphasizing Tinubu's focus on bringing people together. Word choice is crucial in shaping emotional responses; for example, using "resilience" evokes strength and recovery, a more positive sentiment than merely surviving hardship. Moreover, metaphors and symbolisms are powerful rhetorical strategies that help Tinubu to communicate complex ideas through imagery. He compared Nigeria's journey to that of building a house, thereby symbolizing

stability and care. Analyzing these semantic strategies reveals how Tinubu effectively uses language to engage with his audience and reinforce his campaign's core messages.

2.3 Interplay between Morphology and Semantics

The interplay between morphology and semantics is crucial in understanding how the structure of words influences their meaning and overall impact in a speech.

2.3.1 Morpho-Semantic structures: Morpho-semantic structures involve the ways in which morphological processes (like affixation or compounding) contribute to the meanings of words and phrases. In Tinubu's speech, analyzing these structures might reveal how certain morphological choices are designed to enhance the clarity, persuasiveness, or emotional impact of his message. For example, the use of the prefix "re-" in words like "rebuild" or "revive" not only indicates a process of doing something again but also carries connotations of restoration and hope. By examining these structures, we can gain insights into how Tinubu's linguistic choices support his rhetorical goals.

2.3.2 Rhetorical impact: The rhetorical impact of morpho-semantic choices refers to how these choices influence the effectiveness of the speech in persuading, motivating, or inspiring the audience. For instance, the strategic use of a compound word like "nation-building" might evoke a sense of collective responsibility and progress, thereby strengthening the audience's connection to Tinubu's vision. Analyzing the rhetorical impact of Tinubu's morpho-semantic strategies will help us understand how his speech not only conveys information but also seeks to move and mobilize his listeners.

3. Methodology

This research adopts a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to analyze President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's speech delivered during his presidential campaign in Jos. CDA, developed by notable scholars such as Norman Fairclough (1989), Teun A. van Dijk (1993), and Ruth Wodak (2001), offers a robust methodology for exploring how language constructs and sustains power, ideologies, and social identities. The analysis specifically focuses on the

morpho-semantic aspects of the speech to uncover how linguistic choices underpin political strategies and shape public perception.

3.1 Data Collection

The primary dataset for this study is President Tinubu's campaign speech delivered in Jos, Plateau State of Nigeria. Which was downloaded from the internet. The data obtained are presented and analyzed morpho-semantically. The presentation and analysis of the data was done simultaneously. This research used a qualitative method of analysis. The speech is chosen because of its significance in the political landscape and its potential to provide insights into the strategic use of language in a political context. The text of the speech is obtained from official campaign documents, transcripts, or audio recordings. To enrich the analysis, additional contextual information were gathered from media reports, campaign-related literature, and background data on the political and social climate during the campaign period.

4. Theoretical Framework

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a methodological approach primarily developed by scholars such as Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk, and Ruth Wodak. It became a prominent field of study during the 1980s and 1990s, with key foundational texts emerging in that era. CDA provides an in-depth framework for analyzing how language shapes and sustains power structures, ideologies, and social identities. When applied to the morpho-semantic analysis of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's speech at his presidential campaign in Jos, CDA reveals how specific linguistic choices bolster political strategies and influence public perception. This approach offers valuable insights into the broader social and political ramifications of Tinubu's discourse, illustrating how his language functions within the overall context of his campaign.

By utilizing CDA for the morpho-semantic analysis of Tinubu's speech, we gain a detailed understanding of how language constructs and maintains political authority, supports ideologies, and shapes social identities. The framework enables us to uncover how linguistic elements contribute to political agendas and affect public views, providing a clearer picture of how his speech operates within the larger context of his campaign and strategic communication efforts.

5. Literature Review

A couple of researches have been done in the area of morpho-semantics in recent times. For instance, the work of Fatmalyn & Guadalupe (2022) aimed to identify and document the morpho-semantic features of Tausug inflection. Discourse analysis was employed to examine the structure, meaning, and usage of Tausug inflections. Additionally, a phenomenological approach was used to explore how Tausug natives preserve their language and their perspectives on its significance to their cultural identity. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with 14 Tausug participants seven participated in in-depth interviews, while the other seven took part in focus group discussions. The findings identified five commonly used Tausug inflections: *-um*, *-im*, *-nag*, *-mag*, and *-ma*. The study also revealed five major themes related to language preservation: usage at home, in written and online communication, during occasions, sharing with other cultures, and promoting proper usage in the Masjid. Finally, four key themes emerged regarding the importance of the language in cultural identity: its deep cultural roots, sense of cultural pride, language conflict during conversations, and the need for research to support preservation.

Ariwardani & Mulyana (2019) carried out a research on a morpho-semantic analysis of the kamue personal names. This study explores market names in Bantul Regency from a morpho-semantic perspective to illuminate their linguistic characteristics and underlying significance. Using a descriptive qualitative research approach, data were collected through observation, documentation, and interviews. The analysis revealed that market names can be categorized into monomorphemic and polymorphemic types. The study identifies several factors influencing the names, including the origin of the location, distinguishing characteristics, the initiator of the market, and naming conventions such as shortening (of longer descriptive names or phrases into more concise forms, such as acronyms or abbreviated terms). Additionally, it was found that market names often reflect the hamlets or village names where the markets are situated, the names of individuals who initiated the market, and the surrounding context or situation of the market.

All the three studies employed morpho-semantic analysis to examine how morphology (word structure) and semantics (meaning) interact to make meaning. In Fatmalyn and

Guadalupe’s study, the morpho-semantics of Tausug inflections are explored, while Ariwardani and Mulyana analyze the morpho-semantics of market names. Similarly, the current study on Tinubu’s speech focuses on some morphological processes like affixation, compounding, and word formation. It also shares similarities and differences with the studies by Fatmalyn & Guadalupe (2022) and Ariwardani & Mulyana (2019), while also addressing distinct research gaps. The gap filled by this study is the lack of morpho-semantic analysis within the context of political speeches, specifically in how morphological features contribute to the construction of persuasive political discourse. Unlike the previous works that focus on language preservation and naming conventions, this study offers insight into the strategic use of language in shaping political messages and influencing public perception.

6. Data analysis

To perform a morpho-semantic analysis of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu’s speech at the APC Presidential Campaign Rally in Jos, we would focus on the interaction between morpho-syntactic structures (how words and sentences are formed) and their semantic (meaning) implications. The analysis of the campaign speech is presented below:

6.1 Morpho-semantic analysis

This section examines how the morphological (word formation) and syntactic (sentence structure) elements contribute to the overall meaning of a text. In Tinubu’s speech, this involves looking at how specific word choices, syntactic structures, and word forms contribute to the speech’s persuasive and motivational impact, such as

S/N	Word Choices from the Speech and Their Examples	MORPHOLOGICAL ASPECT	SEMANTIC ASPECT
1.	Honor and Potential “It is indeed a great honor to flag off our presidential campaign in Jos, the Home of Peace and Tourism.”	The use of “flag off” is a metaphorical expression that has a literal meaning of starting an event, which in this	The phrase “Home of Peace and Tourism” personifies Jos as a nurturing and peaceful place, setting a positive

		context implies initiating the campaign.	tone for the campaign.
2.	Unity and Hope “One can look out on the horizon of renewed hope the great things we are capable of achieving with unity of purpose and a collective spirit.”	The noun phrase “horizon of renewed hope” uses “horizon” metaphorically, suggesting future possibilities.	The phrase emphasizes future prospects and collective effort, suggesting that unity will lead to significant achievements.
3.	Prosperity and Jobs “One can see greater prosperity and jobs in an economy humming with activity.”	“Humming with activity” uses a gerund form to convey continuous action and vitality in the economy.	The phrase paints a picture of a thriving economy, implying that the envisioned prosperity will result from dynamic economic activity.
4.	Building a Decent Life “One can see a Nigeria where all who want to will be able to build a decent life from the fruits of their individual and collective endeavor.”	“Fruits of their individual and collective endeavor” uses the metaphor of “fruits” to represent results or outcomes.	This highlights the reward of hard work and collective effort, reinforcing the idea of a reward-based system for contributions.
5.	Symbolic Step and Foundation “With this flag off, we take a most important and symbolic step in the	“Symbolic step” emphasizes the significance of the act of moral and practical	The use of “best and proper direction” connotes

best and proper direction.”

starting the campaign as more than just a practical move.

correctness, setting a tone of righteousness and leadership.

Acknowledgments and Contributions

6. “I am deeply honored for the presence of His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari.”

The title “His Excellency” is a formal honorific that denotes respect and high status.

Semantic Aspect:
Acknowledging Buhari’s contributions in this formal manner elevates the importance of his support and aligns the campaign with his achievements.

. Vision for the Future

7. “We shall build on progress in the agricultural sector by establishing commodity boards guaranteeing minimal prices for strategic crops.”

“Guaranteeing” is a verb that indicates a promise or assurance.

A semantic aspect: This shows commitment to agricultural development and economic stability through structured support.

Security and Development:

8. “Most importantly, I will give utmost priority to extinguishing terrorists and violent criminals.”

“Extinguishing” is a strong verb that implies a decisive action against threats.

This stresses the priority of security and safety, aligning with a message of protection and stability.

In the above the overall impact are Persuasive Effectiveness and Emotional Appeal:
Persuasive Effectiveness: Tinubu uses a combination of formal and metaphorical language to

build a vision of a hopeful and prosperous Nigeria. The use of inclusive language like “one can” and “we” fosters a sense of collective effort and shared goals.

Emotional Appeal: The morpho-semantic choices in the speech such as metaphors related to vision and prosperity, and honorific titles appeal to emotions and build credibility. They create a narrative of progress, unity, and security that aligns with the campaign’s objectives. By analyzing these elements, we see how Tinubu’s speech strategically uses morpho-semantic features to convey his vision, build trust, and mobilize support for his campaign.

6.2 Discussion of Results

In President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's speech at the APC presidential campaign in Jos, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) highlights how his language choices shape power dynamics, ideologies, and social identities. By aligning with influential figures such as President Muhammadu Buhari and emphasizing past successes, Tinubu bolsters his political authority and credibility. His authoritative tone and endorsement of key party leaders create a sense of continuity between his potential leadership and previous administrations, reinforcing his role as a trustworthy and competent candidate. Through ideological framing, Tinubu outlines his vision for a prosperous and united Nigeria, contrasting it with the outdated or unrealistic proposals of his opponents, thereby engaging voters by presenting a path toward economic development and national progress.

Additionally, Tinubu's speech carefully constructs social identities, fostering a sense of national unity and shared purpose. By referencing themes of solidarity and highlighting past achievements, he positions his campaign as forward-looking and inclusive. Tinubu’s strategic communication, which emphasizes both his past accomplishments and future plans, underscores his readiness to lead while rallying voter support. The speech ends with a call to action, encouraging the audience to join his vision for a better Nigeria, further strengthening the connection between his goals and the aspirations of the electorate. Through these rhetorical strategies, Tinubu’s discourse effectively consolidates power, shapes public opinion, and galvanizes electoral backing.

7. Conclusion

The morpho-semantic analysis of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's speech during his presidential campaign in Jos reveals how language is strategically utilized to achieve political goals. Through a detailed examination of morphological processes like affixation and compounding, the analysis shows that Tinubu's speech is a carefully crafted rhetorical artifact aimed at resonating with various voter groups while addressing key national issues. His use of emotive language and memorable phrases, along with strategic word choices and metaphors, helps frame his vision of progress, unity, and security in alignment with the electorate's aspirations. Additionally, the application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) highlights how Tinubu constructs political authority by associating himself with respected figures and contrasting his proactive agenda with his opponents' perceived shortcomings. Overall, the speech exemplifies how linguistic strategies shape political discourse, influence public perception, and mobilize electoral support, ultimately enhancing Tinubu's campaign credibility and differentiating his leadership from that of his competitors.

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