

Rhetorical Functions of Lexical Collocations in the Inaugural Speech of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu

Opeyemi Emmanuel, OLAWÉ
Department of English, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria
Email: oolawe6392@stu.ui.edu.ng

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Abstract

In political communication, inaugural speeches are pivotal, signifying the start of a leader's term and a new chapter in a nation's history. These serve as a momentous occasion where the leader outlines their vision, pledging to guide the country to prosperity and unity. This study delves into the inaugural speech delivered by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu upon assuming the highest office in Nigeria in May 2023. Through a meticulous analysis of lexical collocations, the study uncovers the underlying linguistic intricacies, thematic emphasis, and rhetorical strategies employed by President Tinubu in his address, to gain insights into the rhetorical techniques used to connect with the audience and convey his vision as well as the impact of his address on political discourse and public perception. Downloading the speech from the Punch Newspaper website, the analytical approach followed the principles of lexical collocation theory and systemic functional linguistics. The analysis reveals eight strategic rhetorical purposes in President Tinubu's use of lexical collocations in his speech. These functions encompass appeals to religiosity, political sensibility, national pride, patriotism, unity, hope, calls to action, policy clarification, and exemplifying an inclusive government. His language choices resonate with the audience, eliciting emotions and nurturing a national sense of pride and identity. The analysis of President Tinubu's inaugural speech contributes to a better understanding of his linguistic legacy and communication strategies during his tenure in office. It becomes a part of the historical record, revealing the president's approach to governance and leadership.

Keywords: Rhetorical functions, lexical collocations, inaugural speech, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, political communication

1 Introduction

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is a prominent Nigerian politician and a key figure in the country's political landscape. Born on March 29, 1952, in Lagos, Nigeria, Tinubu served as the Governor of Lagos State from 1999 to 2007, making significant contributions to the state's development during his tenure. His political acumen and strategic leadership earned him recognition as one of the foremost political leaders in Nigeria. In the 2023 presidential election, President Tinubu emerged victorious and was sworn in as the President of Nigeria, marking a historic moment in the nation's democratic journey. As the newly elected President, he assumed a critical role in shaping the country's future, addressing its challenges, and advancing its aspirations on the national and international stage.

Political speeches, particularly inaugural addresses, hold immense significance in the realm of public communication and governance (Ayoola, 2019). They serve as platforms for leaders to articulate their vision, outline policy objectives, and inspire the nation with their rhetoric (Chilton, 2004). According to Akinkurolere (2015), inaugural speeches are precisely the first speeches presented by people occupying leadership positions. In Nigeria, such speeches serve as a major means of winning people's hearts after a major selection, election, or appointment is announced or confirmed. Especially, to people that were not initially in support of such candidates either by signifying express disapproval or by not casting their votes. Within these speeches, lexical collocations play a vital role in shaping the persuasiveness and effectiveness of the conveyed message

Lexical collocations are specific word combinations that frequently occur together in a language, and they can create a specific effect or meaning. They encompass words and phrases that have become linguistically connected due to their recurrent co-occurrence in various contexts, and they can be an important part of the way a speech is written and delivered. These combinations exhibit a high degree of co-occurrence in natural language usage, making them essential building blocks of fluent and coherent speech (Petrovic, 2017). The importance of lexical collocations in shaping speech coherence, rhetorical effectiveness, and subtle meaning lies in their ability to enhance communication efficiency and impact (Sutopo, Prabowo and Sukmaningrum, 2023). When presidents use collocations, they create cohesive and coherent utterances that are more readily understood by the audience. Collocations also carry connotations and nuances beyond the literal meanings of the individual words, allowing presidents to evoke emotions, emphasize key points, and convey subtle shades of meaning (Stubbs, 2010; Chibueze, 2020). By skillfully employing collocations, presidents can shape the tone and persuasiveness of their speech, making it more engaging, persuasive, and memorable.

The selection of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural speech as the focus of analysis is justified by its immense impact on political discourse and its significance in the public domain. As the 16th President of Nigeria, his inaugural address marked the commencement of his presidency and set the tone for his administration's policies and priorities. The speech garnered widespread attention from the media, political commentators, and the general public, making it a key subject for linguistic analysis. Furthermore, inaugural speeches are critical moments in a leader's tenure, where they outline their vision for the nation and present their agenda to the public. President Tinubu's inaugural speech was highly anticipated, given the polarizing nature of his candidacy and the expectations surrounding his presidency. As such, analyzing this speech offers an opportunity to gain insights into his

communication strategies and the rhetorical techniques he employed to connect with the audience and convey his vision.

The analysis of lexical collocations in President Tinubu's inaugural speech holds significance in enriching our understanding of political communication and rhetorical strategies. By examining the linguistic patterns and collocation choices in the speech, we can unravel its coherence, rhetorical effectiveness, and subtleties of meaning, offering valuable insights into the president's communication strategies and the impact of his address on political discourse and public perception. Hence, this study aims to analyze the rhetorical functions of lexical collocations in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural speech, investigating how these word combinations contribute to the overall persuasive and communicative effectiveness of the address. This article therefore attempts to provide answers to the following questions: (i) What are the rhetorical functions of lexical collocations in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural speech? (ii) How do these word combinations contribute to the persuasive and communicative effectiveness of the address?

2 Literature Review

Lexical collocations, as an essential aspect of language use, have been extensively studied in various linguistic disciplines. In the context of political discourse, researchers have explored their role in shaping public perception, fostering political identity, and effectively conveying political messages. Inaugural speeches by political leaders are prime examples of persuasive political communication. Researchers have examined lexical collocations in inaugural addresses to understand how leaders use language to inspire and mobilize their constituents. In Hamed's (2020), corpus-assisted analysis using AntConc was employed to examine keywords and collocations in US presidential discourses from Clinton to Trump. The analysis of US presidential discourses reveals distinctive traits in each leader's language. For example, Democrats Clinton and Obama consistently use positive words related to domestic improvements, with Clinton emphasizing social aspects and Obama excelling in foreign affairs. Conversely, Republican Bush focuses on external issues, particularly evident in keywords related to the war against terrorism. Trump's unique linguistic style is characterized by exaggerated positive descriptors and frequent references to his name and position, showcasing his distinctive personality in political communication. Similarly, Zubairu (2021) explores the impact of culture on the persuasive functions of Lexical Cohesion in President Obama's and President Buhari's inaugural speeches. Despite Obama's higher frequency of Lexical Cohesion, both speeches heavily rely on 'Repetition,' with personal pronouns prominently used. Obama employs Lexical Cohesion for emotional appeals, audience involvement, and credibility-building, fostering a more interactive and engaging speech. In contrast, Buhari emphasizes personal commitment, credibility, and criticizes past administrations, resulting in a less interactive and more solitary tone.

Previous research on rhetorical strategies in inaugural speeches has highlighted the significance of various linguistic devices, including lexical collocations in shaping the discourse. Scholars have explored how political leaders employ these rhetorical devices to communicate their vision, establish credibility, and create emotional connections with their audiences during these momentous occasions. Studies on inaugural speeches worldwide have identified common rhetorical devices such as metaphors, similes, alliteration, parallelism, and lexical collocations (Sharndama, 2016; Nurkhamidah, Fahira, & Ningtyas, 2021; Nurlatifasari, Nababan, Santosa, & Wiratno, 2022; Al-Khawaldeh, Rababah, Khawaldeh & Banikalef, 2023).

Nurkhamidah, et al (2022) demonstrated how metaphors in political speeches can frame issues and influence public perception. Similarly, Al-Khawaldeh et al (2023) emphasized the power of parallelism and repetition in creating memorable and impactful messages.

Regarding lexical collocations, previous research has shown their use in reinforcing key themes, evoking emotions, and fostering a sense of unity and continuity. The work of Jameel(2023) on the function of lexical cohesion in political speeches demonstrated their emotive and persuasive functions. Other studies on inaugural speeches have analyzed collocations to uncover the underlying ideological stances of political leaders. According to a recent study by Sutopo et al (2023) on the types and functions of lexical cohesion underlying President Joe Biden's inaugural speech, lexical cohesion fascinates the audience, instills strong belief in the people's minds that Joe Biden is the right person to lead the United States, and provides proof about the country's problems and the solutions that they have devised. Furthermore, Rachmi, Yassi, and Sukmawaty (2023) proved that collocations were imbued with various meanings in King Charles' inaugural speech to Britain as the new ruler.

In the Nigerian context, researchers have investigated the rhetorical features of political speeches and their impact on public discourse. These studies have examined speeches by prominent Nigerian leaders, including presidential speeches, to gain insights into the linguistic strategies employed to engage the public and convey political messages. Research on Nigerian political speeches has explored rhetorical devices like repetition, parallelism, and lexical collocations. For instance, Fakunle and Adegbite (2019) analyzed the inaugural speeches of Nigerian presidents to understand how they employ rhetorical devices to communicate their policy priorities and visions for the nation.

Moreover, studies have also examined the cultural and sociopolitical contexts in which Nigerian political speeches are delivered, emphasizing how these factors influence the choice of rhetorical strategies. Adegbite et al. (2016) explored the impact of culture on rhetorical devices in Nigerian presidential speeches, shedding light on the significance of linguistic and cultural factors in shaping political communication. Also, Ayoola (2019) examined the attitudinal choices and meanings in Dr. John KayodeFayemi's inaugural address as governor of Ekiti State, Nigeria in October 2018. Martin and White's (2005) appraisal theory, which is an extension and elaboration of Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics' interpersonal Metafunction, was used as the theoretical basis for the study's analysis. The analysis concludes that the address is rich in both evoked and inscribed attitudinal connotations that represent the president's viewpoint on and reaction to the state's economic and sociopolitical predicament, as well as residents' experiences over the last four years.

Furthermore, in the aspect of lexical analysis of inaugural speeches, Akinkurolere (2015) investigated the pattern and purpose of lexical devices in the President's Inaugural Speech to the State House of Assembly. The data were extracted from the President's speech to the Benue State House of Assembly (2011-2013) and analyzed using Halliday and Hassan's Lexical Cohesion theory (1976). Legislators use lexical cohesive devices like repetition, synonymy, antonym, collocation, and superordination to achieve specific goals like interconnectivity, directness, emphasis, appreciation, and appeal when negotiating meaning in their language use. In addition, Akinkurolere (2020) conducts an in-depth analysis of Nigerian Speaker of the House of Representatives Rt Hon. AminuWaziriTambuwal's inaugural speech in 2011, using lexical cohesion theory to demonstrate the inherent lexical choices as devices used to perform accentuation, which is primarily and traditionally a pragmatic function. The

speaker's linguistic choices reflect his role as a politician who prioritizes pragmatic and social goals.

Similarly, Soji-Oni (2021) investigated the language elements (as defined in lexical cohesion) of former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo's first inaugural speech. The president employs discourse analysis to emphasize her point. The data show that President Olusegun Obasanjo made extensive use of repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and collocation. Furthermore, guided by Halliday's tripartite metafunctions of language, Enyi and Chitulu (2015) investigated the lexical cohesive devices used by President Goodluck Jonathan in his May 2011 Inaugural Address to bring his message and intentions to the attention of listeners and readers. The fundamental finding was that the President made predominant use of lexical repetitions, synonyms and close synonyms, superordinate/hyponyms, and the many shades of oppositeness in language use, in fleshing out the details of his text and making the text say what it intends to say.

The existing literature extensively explores the role of lexical collocations in political speeches, particularly inaugural addresses, with a focus on various leaders such as Obama, Buhari, and others. However, there is a conspicuous absence of research on the rhetorical functions of lexical collocations in the inaugural speeches of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. The current body of knowledge lacks an in-depth analysis of how specific lexical collocations contribute to the persuasive strategies and communication style of President Tinubu. This study aims to bridge this gap by providing a focused examination of the rhetorical functions of lexical collocations in President Tinubu's inaugural speech, offering valuable insights into his unique linguistic strategies and contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of political discourse in Nigeria. By synthesizing and building upon these existing studies, the analysis of President Tinubu's inaugural speech can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the rhetorical strategies employed by Nigerian political leaders.

3 Methods and Materials

In this study, the descriptive qualitative method was used because the data to be collected is conveyed in the form of a word description rather than figures or tables containing statistical measurements. The corpus for this analysis consisted of the inaugural speech delivered by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu upon assuming office as the newly elected President of Nigeria on the 29th of May 2023. The speech was presented live on national television and was covered in reputable newspapers that covered the inauguration ceremony. However, the speech was downloaded on the Punch Newspaper website. The selection was based on the availability, authenticity, and representativeness of the President's discourse. The analytical approach followed the principles of Lexical Collocation Theory and Systemic Functional Linguistics. Lexical collocations in the inaugural speech were identified through a systematic and iterative process. Initially, a close reading of the text was conducted to identify recurring word patterns and collocation relationships within the text. Next, the identified collocations were categorized based on their function and position within the speech. The context in which each collocation is used was carefully examined to understand its persuasive implications. The context surrounding the use of the collocations was examined to gain a deeper understanding of how specific collocations contribute to the overall persuasive effect of the speech.

4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used to analyze lexical collocations in President Tinubu's inaugural speech is based on Lexical Collocation Theory and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

4.1 Lexical Collocation Theory

This theory is rooted in corpus linguistics, a methodology that involves the systematic analysis of large collections of texts (corpora) to identify patterns and regularities in language usage. Corpus linguistics allows researchers to examine language as it is used in authentic contexts, providing insights into the natural patterns of word combinations and collocations. Collocation analysis, within the Lexical Collocation Theory, focuses on the co-occurrence patterns of words in texts. Collocations are recurrent and non-random word combinations that tend to appear together more frequently than would be expected by chance. These collocational patterns are not solely determined by grammar but are influenced by the conventions and preferences of language users. By analyzing collocations in a specific text or speech, researchers can identify the recurring word associations and explore how these combinations contribute to the overall meaning and rhetorical impact of the discourse.

In the context of President Tinubu's inaugural speech, Lexical Collocation Theory enables a systematic examination of the collocational patterns used by the President to convey his message, express his political vision, and connect with the audience. The analysis will involve identifying key collocations and investigating their semantic significance and persuasive functions in shaping public perception of the President's leadership and policy agenda.

4.2 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

In addition to the Lexical Collocation Theory, this study will incorporate Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as a complementary approach. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a theory that focuses on the function of language in a given context. It looks at how language is used to create meaning, and how it is influenced by the context in which it is used. In this case, SFL could be used to analyze the language used in the text, and how the president uses language to convey their vision for the administration (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2015). Halliday's SFL is hinged on the fact that language affords its users many options to choose from while using it for communication, and the choice made is used to perform a particular communicative function. SFL will help identify how specific collocations are contextually employed by the President to create emphasis, evoke emotions, and establish a sense of connection with the audience.

Lexical collocation theory and SFL are both theories of language that can be used together to analyze how words are used in context. Lexical collocation theory analyzes how individual words are used and how these words are grouped to create meaning, while SFL provides a way to analyze how language is used in context. The relationship between lexical collocation theory and SFL can be described as complementary. Through this integrated theoretical framework, the analysis aims to offer a nuanced understanding of the persuasive functions of lexical collocations in President Tinubu's inaugural speech and their role in influencing public opinion and discourse surrounding his presidency.

5 Results

There were 123 lexical collocations discovered in President Tinubu's inaugural speech. These words and phrases are categorized into different ideas presented in the speech in line

with their rhetorical effects. In total, the analysis identified eight rhetorical purposes that President Tinubu used Lexical collocations to execute in his speech; these functions are discussed below. However, only a subset of the data corpus is used in the study.

5.1 Lexical Collocations to Appeal to Religiosity

Nigeria is a secular country. However, Nigerians are a deeply religious people. The Pew Research Center (2015) ranks Nigeria 9th among the 40 most religious countries in the world. Hence, the newly elected president, in his speech employed lexical collocations that appealed to the religious values and beliefs of the people. These are seen in the extracts below

- (1) I stand before you honoured to assume the **sacred mandate** you have given me..... And my **faith in God Almighty**, absolute. I know that **His hand** shall provide the needed **moral strength** and **clarity of purpose** in those instances when we seem to have reached the limits of our **human capacity**.

In extract (1), the words "sacred" and "mandate" form a collocation representing the solemn and significant responsibility entrusted to the president. The president considered his office as a position that is holy and important. Words like "absolute faith", "moral strength", "clarity of purpose", and "human capacity" are used to express complete and unwavering trust in God Almighty and represent the inner fortitude to uphold ethical principles. The use of religious language and references to God and faith certainly suggest that the president's beliefs are rooted in his religious faith. The implication here seems to be that the president is relying on a higher power to guide his actions and decisions. This suggests that President Tinubu sees his role as one that is ultimately guided by a higher purpose, rather than simply a secular or political agenda.

- (2) This nation's journey has been shaped by the **prayers of millions**, and the **collective sacrifices** of us all.... We have endured hardships Yet, we have shouldered the **heavy burden** to arrive at this **SUBLIME** moment

The collocation "prayers of millions" is used to appeal to the religious values of the citizens. This phrase explicitly references prayer and God, which are central to many religious traditions. This collocation suggests that the nation's progress is due in part to the prayers of the people, which may resonate with those who are religious or spiritual. There are also references to "collective sacrifice" and "heavy burden," which may appeal to those with a religious background as these words are often associated with religious concepts like self-sacrifice and carrying one's cross. This phrase "this sublime moment." suggests that the present moment is a pivotal point in the nation's history, where the past and future come together. These collocations work together to create a sense of continuity and hope for the future

- (3) This handover symbolizes our **trust in God**, our **enduring faith** in representative governance and our belief in our ability to reshape this nation into the society it was always meant to be.

The phrase "trust in God" is a collocation that appeals to the religious beliefs of the people of Nigeria. This phrase suggests that the nation's future is in God's hands and that the people should put their faith in a higher power. The phrase "enduring faith" is also a collocation that appeals to the religious beliefs of the people. This phrase suggests that the people have a strong and unshakable faith, which has helped them through difficult times. This collocation calls for a commitment to the values of democracy and a belief that these values will continue to guide the nation into the future. Together, these collocations are meant to appeal to the religious values of the people and provide them with a sense of comfort and strength.

- (4) Today, **Fate and Destiny join together** to place the torch of **human progress** in our very hands.

The collocation, "Fate and Destiny join together" suggests that there is a higher power or force guiding the actions of the people and the country. The president has drawn on the concept of fate and destiny to frame the purpose of the new administration. The imagery, with the description of the torch shining and the light never extinguishing, creates a vivid mental picture for the audience, making the message more powerful and emotional. This collocation is also paired with the idea of "human progress," which suggests that the future of the country is dependent on the efforts and cooperation of its citizens. This collocation suggests that the government is interested in not just economic or material progress, but also progress in terms of the quality of life for the people of Nigeria. The president draws on people's religious beliefs to persuade the citizens to see the new administration as a divine ordinance and give it their utmost support

5.2 Lexical Collocations to Stimulate Political Sensibility

The president employed lexical collocations in his speech to stimulate the political sensibility of the citizens by legitimizing his winning in the election, articulating the power of democracy and promising to uphold the rule of law. These are demonstrated in the extracts below

- (5) In this vein, may I offer a few comments regarding the election that brought us to this juncture. It was a **hard fought** contest. And it was also **fairly won**. Since the advent of the **Fourth Republic**, Nigeria has not held an election of **better quality**.... The outcome reflected the **will of the people**.
- (6) The **peaceful transition** from one government to another is now our **political tradition**. This handover symbolizes our trust in God, our enduring faith in **representative governance** and our belief in our ability to reshape this nation into the society it was always meant to be.

In extract (5), the collocation "hard-fought contest" creates a scene of the political context of the election that brought President Tinubu to office. The collocation, 'fairly won', modifying the word "election." suggests that the election was of a high standard and was conducted fairly and properly and of 'better quality'. The collocations "Fourth Republic" and "will of the people" suggest that the government is based on a set of democratic principles that allow for the expression of the people's desires. With "will" modifying the phrase "of the people.", this collocation suggests that the election outcome was a true reflection of the wishes and desires of the citizens. These collocations draw on the people's understanding of the nation's political system and values and appeal to their desire for a government that is fair and just.

The collocations of "political tradition" and "representative governance" in extract (6) appeal to the political sensibilities of the people of Nigeria. The phrase "political tradition" refers to the values and beliefs that are deeply ingrained in the nation's political system. The collocation is used to refer to the process of a new government taking power without violence or conflict. This collocation calls for respect for the democratic process and a commitment to maintaining peace during times of change. The phrase "representative governance" refers to the idea that the government is responsible for representing and serving the people. Together, these collocations refer to the election process that resulted in the current president's victory. It

suggests that the people have chosen the current president through a fair and democratic process, and have faith in the system of government. This collocation reinforces the idea that the nation is built on the values of democracy and fairness

- (7) However, **my victory** does not render me any more Nigerian than **my opponents**. Nor does it render them any less patriotic.... They represent important **constituencies and concerns** that wisdom dare not ignore. They have taken their concerns to court. **Seeking legal redress** is their right and I fully defend their exercise of this right. This is the essence of the **rule of law**.

In the extract above, the collocation of "constituencies and concerns" emphasizes the importance of considering the needs and opinions of all groups and individuals. Likewise the collocation "seeking legal redress" emphasizes the government's commitment to fairness and justice. The collocations "seek legal redress" and "rule of law" are both informative and evocative. They provide specific information about the legal process, but they also evoke a sense of justice and fairness. There's also a contrast between "my victory" and "my opponents" in the first sentence of the extract above, which emphasizes the idea that everyone should be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of the outcome of the election.

- (8) Over six decades ago, our founding fathers gave bravely of themselves to place Nigeria on the map as an **independent nation**... We must never allow the labour of those who came before us to **wither in vain** but to blossom and bring forth a better reality.... I ask you to grasp it in **national affinity and brotherhood**. For me, political colouration has faded away. All I see are Nigerians. May we uphold these fitting and excellent notions as the **new Nigerian ideal**.

Several collocations appeal to political sensibilities in extract (8) above. For example, the collocation of "independent nation" suggests a sense of political autonomy and self-determination. It also evokes the idea of a new beginning, with a country that is free and self-governing. The collocation "wither in vain" suggests a sense of disappointment or loss if the country's political progress were to stagnate or decline. The collocation "grasp it in national affinity and brotherhood" suggests a sense of unity and belonging that transcends political differences. The collocation "new Nigerian ideal" suggests a new vision for the country that is different from the past. These lexical collocations express the president's determination to promote unity among Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups

- (9) **Our constitution and laws** give us a nation on paper ... On this day, Nigeria affirms its **rightful place** among the world's **great democracies**. There, Nigeria shall reside forever.... In this spirit, I ask you to join me in **making Nigeria** a more **perfect nation and democracy** such that the **Nigerian ideal** becomes and **forever remains** the Nigerian reality

In the above extract, the president also emphasizes the importance of democracy, both as a principle and as a practice. This is reflected in the phrases "Nigeria affirms its rightful place among the world's great democracies" and "make Nigeria a more perfect nation and democracy." The president is suggesting that democracy is a process, not a destination and that the country will always be working towards a more perfect version of itself. The president's use of terms like "constitution" and "laws" is likely to evoke political sentiments and sensitivities. These terms are often associated with the government and the political system in Nigeria. The collocations "great democracies," "forever remains," "making Nigeria," and "ability" all evoke political sensibilities. These collocations suggest that the president has a clear political vision

for the country and that they are committed to making it a reality. They also suggest that the president believes in the power of democracy to bring about positive change. The president's call for action and unity is also likely to inspire political sentiments and ideas about how to improve the country.

5.3 Lexical Collocations to Evoke National Pride and Patriotism

In the speech, the president uses collocations that convey a sense of national pride and appeal to patriotic values. Below are extracts that show how the president combines words to create a sense of strength and perseverance in the country that inspires hope and admiration.

- (10) This day is bold and majestic yet bright and full of spirit, as is our **precious nation**. As a nation, we have long ago decided to march beyond the dimness of night into the open day of renewed **national hope**...

In extract (10), the collocation "precious nation" is used to describe the nation as something valuable and worth preserving. This may resonate with those who are proud of their national identity and heritage. The collocation "national hope" is also used, which may appeal to the patriotic ideals of the citizens.

- (11) We are **too great a nation** and **too grounded as a people** to rob ourselves of our finest destiny... We have **endured hardships** that would have made **other societies crumble**.... Yet, we have **shouldered the heavy burden** to arrive at this **SUBLIME** moment...

Instead, we stand forth as Africa's **most populous nation** and as the **best hope** and **strongest champion** of the Black Race.

The collocations "too great a nation" and "too grounded as a people" are used to emphasize the nation's greatness. "Endured hardships" suggests that the nation has faced difficult times and challenges, but has persevered through them. The collocation "would have made other societies crumble" suggests that the nation's ability to overcome these hardships is exceptional. And the collocation "shouldered the heavy burden" is used to describe the nation's ability to endure hardships with strength and resilience. The words "most populous," "best hope," and "strongest champion" all suggest that Nigeria is a nation that is strong and worthy of pride. The speech praises the people for their strength and determination in the face of hardship. These collocations all work together to convey a sense of pride and admiration in the country's strength and inspire the people to continue working towards a better future. Together, these collocations create a sense of pride in the nation's history, strength, and resilience.

- (12) Our burdens may make us **bend** at times, but they shall **never break us**

This collocation in extract (12) is a great example of how the language of the speech is designed to unify and inspire the people. The phrase "bend but never break us" suggests that the nation is strong and resilient and that the people can endure and overcome difficult circumstances.

- (13) Whether from the winding creeks of the Niger Delta, the vastness of the northern savannah, the boardrooms of Lagos, the bustling capital of Abuja, or the busy markets of Onitsha, you are all my people

The president's use of words like "winding creeks," "vastness," "bustling," and "busy" helps to create a vivid image of the country and its people. The president's language is precise and evocative, and it helps to create a sense of community and identity. The collocations demonstrate the pride of the president in the vastness of the country in both human and natural resources

(14) This is the **proudest day** of my life.... On this day, Nigeria affirms its **rightful place** among the world's **great democracies**.... The course of our past and the promise of the future have brought us to this **exceptional moment**.... May God bless you and May He bless our **beloved land**.

In extract (14), the collocations "proudest day," "rightful place," "great democracies," "exceptional moment" and "beloved land" all evoke a sense of national pride. These collocations suggest that the president is proud of Nigeria and its people and that the country has a special and unique place in the world. For example, the collocation "rightful place" suggests that Nigeria is taking its place among other great nations, while the collocation "great democracies" suggests that democracy is a value that is shared by many countries around the world. These words evoke feelings of pride, hope, and gratitude, and they help to create a sense of connection between the president and the citizens

5.4 Lexical Collocations to Arouse National Unity and Collective Effort

Understanding the country's polarization in terms of language, culture, belief, and religion, among other things, the president employed lexical collocations to build a sense of togetherness among citizens regardless of tribe or beliefs. The president emphasized the need to put aside personal interests and work collectively to effect constructive change. The extracts below prove this

(15) I ask you to **grasp it** in **national affinity and brotherhood**. For me, **political coloration** has faded away. All I see are Nigerians.

A collocation that stands out in extract (15) is "grasp it in national affinity and brotherhood." This collocation combines the physical action of grasping with the concepts of affinity and brotherhood, which gives the sentence a strong emotional resonance. It's not just about taking hold of an idea, it's about embracing a feeling of connection and fellowship. There's also the collocation "political coloration has faded away." This is such a powerful statement because it suggests that political differences don't need to divide people. The president is implying that there's something more important than politics – the unity of the country and its people. It makes listeners think about the role of politics in society, and whether it's always necessary to see things through a political lens. The president is suggesting that there's a bigger picture and that we shouldn't let politics obscure our vision of what's truly important.

(16) This **nation's** journey has been shaped by the prayers of millions, and the **collective sacrifices of us all**.... Yet here we are. We have stumbled at times, but **our resilience and diversity** have kept us going.

In extract (16), the collocation "collective sacrifices of us all" is used to describe the nation's potential to unite and cooperate for the common good. It is used to describe the nation's ability to change its future through collective effort. It highlights the importance of each individual's contribution and the need for everyone to work together. It also suggests that the nation's success is dependent on the efforts of all its members. The collocation "our diversity" expresses inclusivity and unity. This collocation suggests that the nation is made up of people from different backgrounds and experiences, but that they are united in their shared goal of building a better society. This collocation is also closely linked to the idea of "our resilience," which suggests that the nation's diversity makes it stronger and more capable of overcoming challenges. These collocations are used to create a sense of collective power and possibility.

Throughout the whole speech, the president used several collocations that helped to convey a sense of unity and shared purpose. For example, the phrase “fellow compatriots” creates a sense of togetherness and shared identity, while “Nigerian ideal” evokes a sense of national pride and common goals. The president also uses phrases like “collective effort,” “social cohesion,” and “shared sense of fairness and equity” to emphasize the importance of working together to achieve a better future for all Nigerians. They are used to emphasize the nation’s ability to achieve great things when working together. The collocations “people of Nigeria,” “great democracies,” “we,” “join me,” “making Nigeria,” and “our ability” all evoke a sense of national unity. These collocations suggest that the president sees the people of Nigeria as a single community, working together to build a better future for the country. There is a lot of thought and intention behind these words. The president is not just trying to say that Nigeria should be economically prosperous or socially cohesive. Instead, the president is emphasizing that these goals can only be achieved through a collective effort and a shared sense of identity and purpose. Overall, the president’s use of collocations in the speech helps to create a sense of inclusiveness and shared purpose and position the President as a unifying figure.

5.5 Lexical Collocations to Inspire Hope

In the speech, the president created a powerful message of optimism and hope for the future of Nigeria. With lexical collocations, the president paints a hopeful image of the country. The extracts below show this

- (17) This day is **bold and majestic** yet **bright and full of spirit**, as is our precious nation

In the extract above, the lexical collocations, "bold and majestic" and "bright and full of spirit" are used to describe the nature of the day, as well as the nature of the nation. These collocations are used to describe the nation's future as one of hope and vitality. The collocation evokes positive emotions like happiness, excitement, and joy

- (18) Instead, we stand forth as Africa’s **most populous nation** and as the **best hope** and **strongest champion** of the Black Race.

- (19) We lift high this torch so that it might shine on every household and in every heart that calls itself Nigerian. We hold this beam aloft because it **lights our path** with **compassion, brotherhood, and peace**. May this great light **never EXTINGUISH**.

Collocations that inspire hope, such as "best hope," "strongest champion," and "lights our path" are evidenced in the extracts above. These collocations suggest that even though there may be challenges and difficulties ahead, there is still hope for the future. They give the impression that the president believes in the possibility of a brighter future and that his administration is committed to working towards that goal. In extract (19), "lights our path." is a really powerful metaphor that suggests that the country is on a journey and that the torch is providing guidance and direction. Thus, the future is uncertain, but there is still hope for a better tomorrow. It's also paired with "compassion, brotherhood, and peace," which are all positive and uplifting concepts. This collocation creates a sense of hope and possibility, and it emphasizes the importance of working together towards a common goal. The phrase "never extinguish" also adds to this sense of hope, as it suggests that the light of hope will always be present, even in difficult times. The use of the word "extinguish" suggests the idea of darkness or destruction, and the president is suggesting that the light of unity and purpose must never be

allowed to be extinguished. This combination of collocations creates a sense of hope that is rooted in positive emotions which gives hope for the future

- (20) As a nation, we have long ago decided to march beyond the **dimness of night** into the open day of **renewed national hope**..... Yet, we have shouldered the heavy burden to arrive at **this SUBLIME moment** where the prospect of a better future merges with **our improved capacity** to create that future.

In extract (20), the collocation "the dimness of night" is used to describe the negative state of the nation in the past, while "the open day of renewed national hope" is used to describe the positive state of the nation in the present. The collocation "renewed national hope" is used to convey a sense of optimism for the nation's future. This phrase refers to the renewal of hope and optimism for the nation's future. The word "renewed" emphasizes the idea that hope is something that must be continually cultivated and nurtured. This collocation appeals to the idea that the nation's future is not predetermined, but can be shaped by the collective efforts of its people. It suggests that the nation is beginning to feel hopeful again. In the second sentence of extract (20), the collocation "merges with" is used to describe the relationship between the nation's prospects and its capacity. The collocation "capacity to create" is used to describe the nation's potential to make positive change. The collocation "prospect of a better future" evokes a sense of anticipation and optimism, while the collocation "improved capacity" suggests that the nation can bring about this better future. The collocation "sublime moment" is used to describe the pivotal nature of the current moment. These collocations convey a sense of empowerment and the ability to improve its future. They suggest that the nation is becoming stronger and more competent to achieve its goals. These collocations are used to create a sense of connection between the nation's current state and its future possibilities.

- (21) We must never allow the labour of those who came before us to wither in vain but to **blossom and bring forth a better reality**...

My supporters, I thank you. To those who voted otherwise, I extend my hand across the political divide. I ask you to **grasp it in national affinity and brotherhood**..... May we uphold these fitting and excellent notions as the **new Nigerian ideal**.

The extract (21) uses several collocations to inspire hope and optimism for the future. For example, the collocation "blossom and bring forth a better reality" suggests a positive and hopeful future. It suggests a future that is full of promise and potential. The collocation "grasp it in national affinity and brotherhood" suggests that working together as a nation is a source of hope and strength while the collocation "new Nigerian ideal" combines the idea of something new with the idea of an ideal. This is such a powerful collocation because it gives the impression that the country is starting fresh, but with a clear and inspiring vision for the future. The president really used collocations to build a strong and compelling case for a better Nigeria. All these collocations work together to create a sense of hope and possibility for the future of Nigeria. They create a sense of movement from the past to the future, with a focus on the positive changes that are possible

- (22) This is the proudest day of my life. But this day does not belong to me. It belongs to you, the people of Nigeria...

On this day, Nigeria affirms its **rightful place** among the world's **great democracies**. There, Nigeria shall **reside forever**...

With full confidence in our ability, I declare that these things are within our **proximate reach...**

The collocations "proudest," "rightful place," "reside forever," "great democracies," and "proximate reach" all evoke a sense of hope. The use of these collocations suggests that there is a bright future ahead for Nigeria, and that its people can make it a better place. These collocations not only inspire hope, but also create a sense of empowerment and possibility. By using these collocations together, the president can convey a message that is both emotionally resonant and intellectually compelling.

5.6 Lexical Collocations to Call to Action and Responsibility

The president in his speech has not only inspired hope of a better tomorrow, he also used lexical collocations to evoke a sense of responsibility and call to action. A few examples are given below to demonstrate this

- (23) We **hold this beam aloft** because it lights our path with compassion, brotherhood, and peace... We are here to further **mend and heal this nation**, not tear and injure it.

There are two collocations in extract (23) that really emphasize the importance of action and responsibility: "hold this beam aloft" and "mend and heal this nation." These collocations suggest that the people have a responsibility to actively work towards making their country a better place. The "hold this beam aloft" collocation evokes an image of a physical act of lifting and carrying something, which suggests that action is required. The "mend and heal this nation" collocation also suggests that there is work to be done in order to improve the country.

- (24) Let us take the **next great step** in the journey they began and believed in. We must never allow the **labor of those who came before us** to wither in vain... Today, let us recommit our very selves to **placing Nigeria in our hearts** as the **indispensable home** for each and every one of us regardless of creed, ethnicity, or place of birth... I ask you to grasp it in national affinity and brotherhood.

- (25) We are too great a nation and too grounded as a people to **rob ourselves of our finest destiny**.... We have **endured hardships** that would have made other societies crumble. Yet, we have shouldered the **heavy burden** to arrive at this **SUBLIME** moment...

In the extract above, there are several collocations that call for action and responsibility in the speech. The collocation "great step" suggests a need for significant action to be taken. "labour of those who came before us," which collocates the idea of past generations' work with the metaphor of labour gives a sense of both the physical and emotional effort that went into building the country, and how the new generation must honor that legacy. There's also the collocation "indispensable home," which uses the metaphor of home to describe the importance of the country. The collocation "place Nigeria in our hearts" suggests a need to take ownership of the country and its future. And the collocation "grasp it in national affinity and brotherhood" suggests a need to take concrete action in order to build a stronger sense of unity.

Also, in extract (25), the collocation "rob ourselves of our finest destiny" is used to describe the negative consequences of inaction. The collocations "endured hardships" and "heavy burden" are used to describe the trials and challenges the nation has faced. These collocations suggest that the president believes that positive change is possible if people are willing to take action. The speech seems to place the responsibility for improving the nation

primarily on the citizens themselves, rather than on outside forces. Through these collocations, the president frames the challenges facing the nation as ones that must be addressed through self-reflection and individual action, rather than through outside intervention. The collocations are used by the president to emphasize the importance of hope and belief in the possibility of change, even in the face of difficult circumstances.

(26) To the surprise of many but not to ourselves, we have more firmly established this land as a democracy in both **word and deed**.

The phrase "word and deed" refers to the idea that actions speak louder than words. The speech calls for the people to not only speak about their values but to act on them as well. This collocation reinforces the message of perseverance and strength by emphasizing the importance of taking action.

(27) **In this spirit, I ask you to join me** in making Nigeria a more perfect nation and democracy such that the Nigerian ideal becomes and **forever remains** the Nigerian reality... **With full confidence in our ability**, I declare that these things are within our proximate reach

The collocations "I ask you to join me," "make Nigeria a more perfect nation," "forever remains the Nigerian reality," and "with full confidence in our ability" all evoke a sense of responsibility and call to action. These collocations suggest that the president is asking the people of Nigeria to take an active role in shaping the country's future. "In this spirit" is a collocation that suggests a sense of optimism and determination. It's as if the president is saying, "Let's work together to make this happen, because we're all on the same team." "Making Nigeria" is a collocation that emphasizes the idea of action and change. It's like the president is saying, "We're not just talking about this, we're actually going to do something about it." And "forever remains" is a collocation that suggests permanence and stability. It's as if the president is saying, "This is something that will last for generations to come". The president seems to be suggesting that collective action and belief are what's needed to bring about positive change in the nation.

5.7 Lexical Collocations to Clarify Policies

Being an inaugural address where President Tinubu set out his vision for the future of the country, the collocations in the speech help to establish the themes and values that will guide the president's work and policies during his term in office. The collocations help to make the ideas concrete and easy to understand, while also adding emotional resonance and power.

(28) Our constitution and laws give us a nation on paper. We must work harder at bringing these noble documents to life by strengthening the bonds of **economic collaboration, social cohesion, and cultural understanding**. Let us develop a shared sense of fairness and equity.

In the extracts above, the president uses several collocations to help clarify their vision for Nigeria's future policy. For example, the president uses collocations like "economic collaboration," "social cohesion," and "cultural understanding" to convey the idea that there are multiple aspects of society that must be addressed to create a truly prosperous and united Nigeria. The phrase "economic collaboration" is used to emphasize the importance of economic policies that foster cooperation and partnership between different regions of Nigeria. The phrase "social cohesion" is used to highlight the need for policies that bring people together and strengthen community bonds. The phrase "cultural understanding" is used to emphasize the importance of policies that respect and value the diverse cultures of Nigeria. These collocations

emphasize the interconnectedness of different aspects of society and the importance of addressing them all to create lasting change. It's a very holistic approach

(29) The principles that will guide our administration are simple:

1. Nigeria will be **impartially governed** according to the constitution and the rule of law.
2. We shall remodel our economy to bring about growth and development through **job creation, food security and an end of extreme poverty**.
3. Our government will continue to take proactive steps such as **championing a credit culture** to discourage corruption while **strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency** of the various anti-corruption agencies.

Several lexical collocations stand out in this list of principles. The phrases "impartially governed," "job creation," "food security" and "end of extreme poverty" all emphasize the president's commitment to improving the quality of life for all Nigerians. The phrase "championing a credit culture" highlights the president's focus on creating a society that values honesty and integrity. The phrase "strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency" emphasizes the president's focus on improving the operations of government agencies. Each of these collocations reinforces the president's overall vision for the administration. President Tinubu's use of collocations creates a clear and compelling vision for Nigeria's future. The president understands that social and cultural policies are also essential for a thriving nation. This holistic approach is what makes the vision so powerful. All of these collocations help to clarify the president's vision for a more united and prosperous Nigeria.

5.8 Lexical Collocations to Demonstrate Inclusive Government

Inclusive government refers to a government that represents and includes all people, regardless of their background or beliefs. The president, in his speech, used shared knowledge of what it means to have an inclusive government and how it is important for the nation to demonstrate a sense of inclusivity and shared responsibility of the government and the people. The opening of the speech "Fellow citizens" is a classic collocation in an inaugural speech. This phrase is used to address the audience as a group, emphasizing the shared identity and common purpose of all those listening to the speech. The use of "fellow" also creates a sense of equality and inclusivity. Further illustrations are given below

(30) Our administration shall **govern on your behalf** but **never rule over you**.

This is a great example of a collocation that emphasizes the relationship between the government and its citizens. These phrases, "govern on your behalf" and "never rule over you." are lexical collocations because they contain two words that are frequently used together to convey a specific meaning. The word "govern" suggests a level of authority and power, but the phrase "on your behalf" suggests that this authority is being exercised on behalf of the people, rather than for the benefit of the government itself. In this case, the collocation "govern on your behalf" means that the government will act in the interest of the people, rather than acting in a dictatorial manner. The collocation "never rule over you" reinforces this message by emphasizing that the government will not try to control or dominate the people. The contrast between "govern" and "rule over" is also interesting, as it implies that the government will not use its authority to control or dominate its citizens. Instead, it's committed to working for the benefit of the people. The word "never" is also repeated throughout the passage, emphasizing the government's commitment to certain principles and values

(31) We shall **consult and dialogue** but **never dictate**. We shall **reach out to all** but **never put down a single person** for **holding views contrary to our own**.

The phrase "consult and dialogue." is a lexical collocation because the words "consult" and "dialogue" are often used together to describe a process of communication and decision-making. The collocation emphasizes that the government will seek input from the people and engage in meaningful dialogue before making decisions. It shows the new government is committed to listening to and engaging with the people it serves. This contrasts with the idea of "dictate," which suggests an authoritarian approach to decision-making. The collocation "reach out to all" is another example of a lexical collocation that reinforces the message of inclusion and unity. This collocation "never put down a single person" emphasizes the importance of respect and inclusion for all people, regardless of their background or beliefs. The collocation "hold views contrary to our own" is also significant, as it acknowledges that people will have different opinions and beliefs, but emphasizes the importance of respecting these differences. On one hand, it suggests that the government won't physically harm or repress its citizens. But on another level, it also suggests that the government won't criticize or dismiss the ideas or beliefs of its citizens. This shows respect for the diversity of opinions and perspectives within the country. So the collocations in this passage create a message of unity, respect, and healing.

(32) We are here to further **mend and heal** this nation, not **tear and injure** it.

Another collocation in the speech is "mend and heal this nation." "Mend" and "heal" are often used together, because they share the same general meaning of "fixing" or "making better." In this context, they suggest that the country needs repair and that the new government is ready to take on this task. They're also both verbs that suggest an ongoing process, rather than a one-time action, which reinforces the idea that this work will take time and effort. The use of these two words together suggests that the government is not only willing to make physical or tangible improvements to the country but also to improve the lives and well-being of its citizens. It conveys a message about the responsibility of the government to its people.

The collocation "tear and injure" is the opposite of "mend and heal," and it emphasizes the importance of avoiding further damage. This collocation suggests that the new administration is focused on healing and rebuilding, rather than causing further damage. The word "tear" is especially strong, because it evokes an image of destruction and pain. But by pairing it with "injure," the president is suggesting that even emotional and psychological pain is something that the new government wants to avoid. So the two collocations work together to create a message of hope and healing while avoiding further division and conflict.

(33) As citizens, we declare as **one unified people** devoted to **one unified national cause**.... We lift high this torch so that it might shine on **every household** and in **every heart** that calls itself Nigerian.

In the above extracts, some collocations demonstrate the importance of inclusivity. The phrase "one unified people" suggests that all people, regardless of their background or identity, are part of the same nation. The phrase "every household and every heart" emphasizes the importance of considering the needs and experiences of all individuals, regardless of their circumstances. These collocations demonstrate that a strong and successful nation includes and values all of its members.

(34) Whether from the winding creeks of the Niger Delta, the vastness of the northern savannah, the boardrooms of Lagos, the bustling capital of Abuja, or the busy markets of Onitsha, you are all my people. As your president, I shall serve with prejudice toward none but compassion and amity towards all.

The president uses several lexical collocations to emphasize their commitment to an inclusive government. For example, the phrase "you are all my people" indicates that the president views the entire nation as part of one community, regardless of region or background. It highlights the president's sense of connection and responsibility towards the people. The president is not only conveying information but also evoking emotions and building a sense of connection. The phrase "compassion and amity towards all" also suggests that the president wants to govern with kindness and understanding for all people. These lexical collocations help to create a clear image of the president's vision for an inclusive government.

The use of the inclusive pronouns "we" and "us" throughout the speech suggests that the new government sees itself as part of the larger community, rather than separate from it. The president is not only speaking to the people as a whole but also including himself in the collective effort to improve the nation. These collocations suggest that the president sees the government as something that belongs to the people and that everyone has a role to play in making the country better. These are all very important collocations that contribute to the message of inclusion and shared responsibility. These collocations suggest that all people in Nigeria should feel like they are part of a larger whole. They should feel a sense of belonging and togetherness, and they should be able to participate in the democratic process.

6 Discussion

President Tinubu's inaugural speech, a precise interplay of language, strategy, and intent reveals a complex tapestry of rhetorical devices, prominently featuring lexical collocations. The research identifies eight strategic rhetorical goals for President Tinubu's usage of lexical collocations in his speech. In examining the lexical collocations employed to appeal to religiosity, President Tinubu navigated the delicate terrain with phrases like "sacred mandate" and "absolute faith." These collocations extend beyond linguistic expressions; they reveal a profound connection between the president's religious convictions and his sense of duty. The deliberate use of religious language implies a reliance on a higher power to guide governance, aligning with the findings of Hamed (2020). The political landscape is vividly portrayed through collocations that narrate the election context. This political sensibility appeals to the democratic principles underpinning the electoral process, echoing Hamed's (2020) emphasis on democratic values in political discourse. These collocations serve as linguistic markers, painting a vivid picture of the democratic journey that brought President Tinubu to office.

The strategic use of collocations in the speech aims to evoke a strong sense of national pride and patriotism. Such choices resonate with literature on positive national identity (Nurkhamidah et al., 2022), positioning the nation as both valuable and hopeful. Through these collocations, President Tinubu crafts a narrative that instils a sense of pride in the audience about their nation and a hopeful vision for the future. Furthermore, in a diverse Nigerian landscape characterized by divisions, President Tinubu employed collocations like "national affinity and brotherhood" to emphasize the need for collective effort and national unity. The president's use of "political coloration has faded away" is a potent statement suggesting a vision

of unity transcending political differences. This sentiment aligns with studies emphasizing lexical cohesion's impact on national unity (Sutopo et al., 2023). These collocations serve as linguistic bridges, connecting disparate elements of society into a cohesive whole.

Hope emerges as a recurrent theme in the speech. President Tinubu, much like his predecessors (Jameel, 2023), uses collocations to paint an optimistic image. These collocations suggest that, despite challenges, there is hope for the future. They convey the president's belief in the possibility of a brighter future and the commitment of his administration to working towards that goal. In addition, the transformative power of words is harnessed to evoke a sense of responsibility and a call to action. Phrases like "hold this beam aloft" and "mend and heal this nation" transcend rhetoric, urging citizens to actively participate in nation-building. This aligns with Akinkulere's (2015) exploration of lexical devices emphasizing citizens' role in shaping the nation. Through these collocations, President Tinubu places the responsibility for positive change squarely on the shoulders of the citizens.

Concrete policy directions are elucidated through collocations. These choices, akin to the findings of Sutopo et al. (2023), highlight the multifaceted nature of policy-making, emphasizing economic, social, and cultural dimensions. President Tinubu employs these collocations to make policy ideas concrete, easy to understand, and emotionally resonant, adopting a holistic approach to governance. Also, the vision of an inclusive government is communicated through collocations. These choices echo the commitment to governance for the people—a theme resonant with studies emphasizing the significance of inclusive language in political discourse (Adegbite et al., 2016). The inclusive pronouns "we" and "us" further suggest that the new government sees itself as part of the larger community, rather than separate from it.

These findings demonstrated that President Tinubu's inaugural speech emerges as a linguistic masterpiece, where every phrase is a deliberate brushstroke shaping the canvas of political communication. The identified rhetorical purposes collectively contribute to a richer comprehension of the speech's communicative goals. The study not only adds a new layer to the discourse on lexical collocations but also lays the foundation for future research on the linguistic strategies employed by political leaders in Nigeria and beyond.

7 Conclusion

This study embarked on a comprehensive analysis of the rhetorical functions of lexical collocations in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural speech. By exploring the prevalent word combinations and their underlying meanings, this research has shed light on the president's vision, policy priorities, and aspirations as he assumed the highest office in Nigeria. Throughout the analysis, lexical collocations emerged as fundamental linguistic units that significantly influenced the coherence, flow, and rhetorical effectiveness of President Tinubu's inaugural speech. The strategic placement of collocations demonstrated the speaker's ability to craft a persuasive and impactful message for the nation.

The analysis revealed that President Tinubu employed collocations strategically to convey his vision for the nation. Key themes and policy priorities were intertwined with collocations, painting a picture of a prosperous and united Nigeria under his leadership. The use of impactful collocations in the speech heightened its rhetorical impact. The president's language choices resonated with the audience, invoking emotions, and fostering a sense of national pride and identity. By emphasizing shared values and aspirations, President Tinubu's speech fostered a sense of collective purpose, transcending regional and cultural divides. The

findings underscore the significance of lexical collocations in political communication. A skillful application of collocations enables leaders to effectively communicate their agenda, inspire the nation, and shape public perception. The analysis of President Tinubu's inaugural speech contributes to a better understanding of his linguistic legacy and communication strategies during his tenure in office. It becomes a part of the historical record, revealing the president's approach to governance and leadership.

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Appendices

Appendix A

President Bola Tinubu's inaugural speech as the president was delivered on Monday, May 29 at Eagle Square, Abuja.

My Fellow Citizens,

I stand before you honoured to assume the sacred mandate you have given me. My love for this nation is abiding. My confidence in its people, unwavering. And my faith in God Almighty, absolute. I know that His hand shall provide the needed moral strength and clarity of purpose in those instances when we seem to have reached the limits of our human capacity.

This day is bold and majestic yet bright and full of spirit, as is our precious nation.

As a nation, we have long ago decided to march beyond the dimness of night into the open day of renewed national hope.

The question we now ask ourselves is whether to remain faithful to the work inherent in building a better society or retreat into the shadows of our unmet potential.

For me, there is but one answer. We are too great a nation and too grounded as a people to rob ourselves of our finest destiny.

This nation's journey has been shaped by the prayers of millions, and the collective sacrifices of us all.

We have endured hardships that would have made other societies crumble.

Yet, we have shouldered the heavy burden to arrive at this SUBLIME moment where the prospect of a better future merges with our improved capacity to create that future.

To the surprise of many but not to ourselves, we have more firmly established this land as a democracy in both word and deed.

The peaceful transition from one government to another is now our political tradition. This handover symbolizes our trust in God, our enduring faith in representative governance and our belief in our ability to reshape this nation into the society it was always meant to be.

Here, permit me to say a few words to my predecessor, President Muhammadu Buhari. Mr President, you have been an honest, patriotic leader who has done his best for the nation you love. On a more personal note, you are a worthy partner and friend. May History be kind to you.

For many years, Nigeria's critics have trafficked the rumour that our nation will break apart, even perish.

Yet here we are. We have stumbled at times, but our resilience and diversity have kept us going.

Our burdens may make us bend at times, but they shall never break us.

Instead, we stand forth as Africa's most populous nation and as the best hope and strongest champion of the Black Race.

As citizens, we declare as one unified people devoted to one unified national cause, that as long as this world exists, NIGERIA SHALL EXIST.

Today, Fate and Destiny join together to place the torch of human progress in our very hands. We dare not let it slip.

We lift high this torch so that it might shine on every household and in every heart that calls itself Nigerian. We hold this beam aloft because it lights our path with compassion, brotherhood, and peace. May this great light never EXTINGUISH.

Our administration shall govern on your behalf but never rule over you. We shall consult and dialogue but never dictate. We shall reach out to all but never put down a single person for holding views contrary to our own.

We are here to further mend and heal this nation, not tear and injure it.

In this vein, may I offer a few comments regarding the election that brought us to this juncture. It was a hard fought contest. And it was also fairly won. Since the advent of the Fourth Republic, Nigeria has not held an election of better quality.

The outcome reflected the will of the people. However, my victory does not render me any more Nigerian than my opponents. Nor does it render them any less patriotic.

They shall forever be my fellow compatriots. And I will treat them as such. They represent important constituencies and concerns that wisdom dare not ignore.

They have taken their concerns to court. Seeking legal redress is their right and I fully defend their exercise of this right. This is the essence of the rule of law.

Over six decades ago, our founding fathers gave bravely of themselves to place Nigeria on the map as an independent nation.

We must never allow the labor of those who came before us to wither in vain but to blossom and bring forth a better reality.

Let us take the next great step in the journey they began and believed in.

Today, let us recommit our very selves to placing Nigeria in our hearts as the indispensable home for each and every one of us regardless of creed, ethnicity, or place of birth.

My supporters, I thank you. To those who voted otherwise, I extend my hand across the political divide. I ask you to grasp it in national affinity and brotherhood. For me, political coloration has faded away. All I see are Nigerians.

May we uphold these fitting and excellent notions as the new Nigerian ideal.

My fellow compatriots,

The Nigerian ideal which I speak of is more than just an improvement in economic and other statistics. These things are important; but they can never convey the fullness of our story.

Our mission is to improve our way of life in a manner that nurtures our humanity, encourages compassion toward one another, and duly rewards our collective effort to resolve the social ills that seek to divide us.

Our constitution and laws give us a nation on paper. We must work harder at bringing these noble documents to life by strengthening the bonds of economic collaboration, social cohesion, and cultural understanding. Let us develop a shared sense of fairness and equity.

The South must not only seek good for itself but must understand that its interests are served when good comes to the North. The North must see the South likewise.

Whether from the winding creeks of the Niger Delta, the vastness of the northern savannah, the boardrooms of Lagos, the bustling capital of Abuja, or the busy markets of Onitsha, you are all my people. As your president, I shall serve with prejudice toward none but compassion and amity towards all.

In the coming days and weeks, my team will publicly detail key aspects of our programme. Today, permit me to outline in broad terms a few initiatives that define our concept of progressive good governance in furtherance of the Nigerian ideal:

The principles that will guide our administration are simple:

1. Nigeria will be impartially governed according to the constitution and the rule of law.
2. We shall defend the nation from terror and all forms of criminality that threaten the peace and stability of our country and our subregion.
3. We shall remodel our economy to bring about growth and development through job creation, food security and an end of extreme poverty.
4. In our administration, Women and youth will feature prominently.
5. Our government will continue to take proactive steps such as championing a credit culture to discourage corruption while strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the various anti-corruption agencies.

SECURITY

Security shall be the top priority of our administration because neither prosperity nor justice can prevail amidst insecurity and violence.

To effectively tackle this menace, we shall reform both our security DOCTRINE and its ARCHITECTURE.

We shall invest more in our security personnel, and this means more than an increase in number. We shall provide, better training, equipment, pay and firepower.

THE ECONOMY

On the economy, we target a higher GDP growth and to significantly reduce unemployment.

We intend to accomplish this by taking the following steps:

First, budgetary reform stimulating the economy without engendering inflation will be instituted.

Second, industrial policy will utilize the full range of fiscal measures to promote domestic manufacturing and lessen import dependency.

Third, electricity will become more accessible and affordable to businesses and homes alike. Power generation should nearly double and transmission and distribution networks improved. We will encourage states to develop local sources as well.

I have a message for our investors, local and foreign: our government shall review all their complaints about multiple taxation and various anti-investment inhibitions.

We shall ensure that investors and foreign businesses repatriate their hard earned dividends and profits home.

JOBS

My administration must create meaningful opportunities for our youth. We shall honour our campaign commitment of one million new jobs in the digital economy.

Our government also shall work with the National Assembly to fashion an omnibus Jobs and Prosperity bill. This bill will give our administration the policy space to embark on labour-intensive infrastructural improvements, encourage light industry and provide improved social services for the poor, elderly and vulnerable.

Agriculture

Rural incomes shall be secured by commodity exchange boards guaranteeing minimal prices for certain crops and animal products. A nationwide programme for storage and other facilities to reduce spoilage and waste will be undertaken.

Agricultural hubs will be created throughout the nation to increase production and engage in value-added processing. The livestock sector will be introduced to best modern practices and steps taken to minimize the perennial conflict over land and water resources in this sector.

Through these actions, food shall be made more abundant yet less costly. Farmers shall earn more while the average Nigerian pays less.

INFRASTRUCTURE

We shall continue the efforts of the Buhari administration on infrastructure. Progress toward national networks of roads, rail and ports shall get priority attention.

FUEL SUBSIDY

We commend the decision of the outgoing administration in phasing out the petrol subsidy regime which has increasingly favoured the rich more than the poor. Subsidy can no longer justify its ever-increasing costs in the wake of drying resources. We shall instead re-channel the funds into better investment in public infrastructure, education, health care and jobs that will materially improve the lives of millions.

MONETARY POLICY

Monetary policy needs thorough housecleaning. The Central Bank must work towards a unified exchange rate. This will direct funds away from arbitrage into meaningful investment in the plant, equipment and jobs that power the real economy.

Interest rates need to be reduced to increase investment and consumer purchasing in ways that sustain the economy at a higher level.

Whatever merits it had in concept, the currency swap was too harshly applied by the CBN given the number of unbanked Nigerians. The policy shall be reviewed. In the meantime, my administration will treat both currencies as legal tender.

FOREIGN POLICY

Given the world in which we reside, please permit a few comments regarding foreign policy.

The crisis in Sudan and the turn from democracy by several nations in our immediate neighbourhood are of pressing concern.

As such, my primary foreign policy objective must be the peace and stability of the West African subregion and the African continent. We shall work with ECOWAS, the AU and willing partners in the international community to end extant conflicts and to resolve new ones.

As we contain threats to peace, we shall also retool our foreign policy to more actively lead the regional and continental quest for collective prosperity.

Conclusion

This is the proudest day of my life. But this day does not belong to me. It belongs to you, the people of Nigeria.

On this day, Nigeria affirms its rightful place among the world's great democracies. There, Nigeria shall reside forever.

The course of our past and the promise of the future have brought us to this exceptional moment.

In this spirit, I ask you to join me in making Nigeria a more perfect nation and democracy such that the Nigerian ideal becomes and forever remains the Nigerian reality.

With full confidence in our ability, I declare that these things are within our proximate reach because my name is Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and I am the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

May God bless you and May He bless our beloved land.