A Critical Discourse Analysis of President Tinubu's 2025 New Year Speech

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Abstract: This study undertook a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 2025 New Year speech. The aim is to bring out the ideological meanings hidden in the speech. The research examined how language is used to express socio-political ideas, strengthen power relations and gain public support. Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA, which focuses on text analysis, discourse practice and social practice was adopted as an analytical framework. The analysis revealed three main findings. First, the speech uses metaphors and symbols to promote national unity and highlight economic reforms. Second, rhetorical strategies are employed to present Tinubu's administration as a stabilizing force during a period of uncertainty. Third, contrastive framing is used to justify government policies and build a sense of shared national purpose. The study holds that political speeches function as an influential tool designed to inspire hope, promote trust in the government and reinforce an administration's legitimacy. It concluded that language can be strategically used to influence public opinion, strengthen authority and shape political reality.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, President Tinubu, New Year Speech, Power Relations, Ideology.

1. Introduction

Language plays a crucial role in political communication. It is a powerful tool for expressing opinions, ideologies and social perspectives. In politics, language is often used to influence, persuade and shape public opinion. Political leaders carefully choose their words to communicate social, political and economic ideas in ways that can affect how people think and feel. Bayode (2010, 35) explains that "language offers many possibilities for speakers to express their views effectively," while Salami (2010, 47) notes that "language not only shapes thoughts and beliefs but can also control them." These views highlight the centrality of language to political discourse and show that linguistic choices can determine how political messages are interpreted by the public.

Political speeches are one of the most common ways through which politicians express their ideologies and represent societal interests. According to Van Dijk (2001, 78), "political discourse expresses group ideologies and beliefs and often reflects the collective aspirations of the society." At the same time, each political speech carries a personal imprint that reveals how individual leaders frame these shared beliefs. Van Dijk (1998b, 17) further observes that political communication involves not only politicians but also citizens, interest groups and the wider public, making it a complex arena where language shapes perception and power relations.

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Given these roles of language in political communication, it becomes important to investigate how such strategies manifest in contemporary political discourse, particularly in speeches that aim to set national agendas and influence public trust. Despite the abundance of studies on political rhetoric in Nigeria, there is limited scholarly attention on the ideological framing and persuasive strategies in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's public addresses. His 2025 New Year speech is particularly significant because it outlines the administration's "Renewed Hope" agenda at a critical moment of economic reforms, public skepticism and heightened national expectations. Examining the linguistic and rhetorical choices in this speech helps illuminate how the administration attempts to justify its policies, negotiate power relations and build legitimacy.

This study therefore, critically examines the ideological meanings embedded in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 2025 New Year speech. Using insights from Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA (text, discursive practice, social practice), it explores how language is deployed to shape public perception, construct authority and reinforce the administration's political vision. Specifically, the study identifies the rhetorical techniques used in the speech, analyzes how these techniques reflect underlying power relations and evaluates how the discourse attempts to influence public confidence in the government. Through this approach, the study provides a clearer understanding of how political communication functions as a strategic tool for persuasion and governance in contemporary Nigeria.

1.1. Background on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu

Bola Ahmed Tinubu was born on March 29, 1952. He began his political career in 1993 when he was elected Senator for Lagos West in Lagos State, Nigeria. As one of the founding members of the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), Tinubu played a major role in the fight for democracy and in seeking international support for the recognition of the June 12, 1993 election results. Because of his involvement in this movement, he went into exile in 1994 and returned to Nigeria in 1998 after the death of the military ruler, General Sani Abacha.

After his return, Tinubu was elected Governor of Lagos State in 1999 and served until 2007. During his tenure, he displayed strong political leadership and became known for his strategic political skills. He was a key figure in the formation of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), which later merged with other parties to form the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Tinubu is known for his ability to negotiate, share power and build political alliances. His focus on long-term goals rather than immediate rewards helped him unite different political groups under one platform. This strategy contributed to the rise of the APC, which has become one of Nigeria's most influential political parties.

In February 2023, Bola Ahmed Tinubu was elected President of Nigeria. He was sworn in on May 29, 2023, as the 16th President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. His political journey reflects his reputation as a skilled strategist who can bring diverse groups together to achieve common goals. Today, he remains one of the most prominent figures in Nigeria's political history.

2. Literature Review

The interaction between language and politics has long been agreed by scholars on the ground that language serves as a critical tool in political communication. Political actors skillfully manipulate language to shape perceptions, consolidate power and ensure the loyalty of their audiences. The literature

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on discourse analysis highlights how political discourse is crafted and employed to achieve specific ideological and strategic goals. Through the use of rhetorical strategies, figurative language and other linguistic tools politicians convey their messages, exert influence and maintain control over the social and political spheres.

The inseparability of language and politics is situated in the realm where political actors rely on language not just for communication but for the acquisition and maintenance of power. Larswell (1965, 27) defines politics as "the science of power." This implies that political success is contingent on the ability to influence others. The comment above underscores the pivotal role that language plays in the political arena. It should be noted that politicians use language to assert dominance, challenge opponents and build alliances. The effectiveness of a politician, therefore, often hinges on their mastery of linguistic tools which they use to shape public discourse, create narratives and influence societal attitudes.

Ayeomoni (2004, 67) observes that "politicians frequently use figurative or metaphorical language to convey their intentions in a way that resonates with the public." Metaphors, similes and other rhetorical devices are seen in this context not as instruments of mere embellishment but as the useful tools employed with strategic intent. Hence, politicians leverage these figures of speech to evoke emotions, excite their audience and solidify their support base. According to Ayeomoni(ibid), "such language choices leave a lasting impact which ensures that the political message lingers in the minds of listeners." This strategy is particularly effective in evoking collective excitement and mobilising followers because it taps into shared values, historical references, and cultural symbols. In this way, language serves as a vehicle for both communication and persuasion in the political arena.

Language in politics serves diverse purposes depending on the speaker's objectives. Political discourse can be manipulative and persuasive. Emphasizing this, Benaiah (2024, 29), argues that "messages in political contexts are often infused with religious colouration and even outright lies." The intention behind such psychological and mental manipulation is to steer public opinion in favor of the speaker's agenda. In this sense, political language is not neutral; rather it is imbued with power relations and ideological intent. Politicians often craft their language to conceal or distort certain realities. They frame issues in a way that serves their political objectives. This manipulation of religious sensibility is a recurring issue in the literature on political discourse, where scholars have constantly navigated the realms where language and religion are used to reinforce power structures and legitimize authority.

Scholars have further explored the concept of political discourse by highlighting its reflexive nature. According to Van Dijk (1998, 23), "political discourse is shaped by political systems, ideologies, institutions, processes, actors and events." This means that political discourse is not only the product of political actors but also a deep reflection of the broader political environment in which it is produced. Political discourse, therefore, serves as a battleground for competing ideologies, where politicians advocate for their policies while also challenging existing power structures. This dual function of political discourse, as a tool for both advocacy and opposition, demonstrates the dynamic nature of language in a specific political landscape.

Ideology plays a central role in political discourse. It frames beliefs, values, and assumptions that underpin political actions and policies. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) views all forms of discourse as carriers of ideological values. The notion that discourse and ideology are intertwined is a recurring theme in CDA literature. Ideology, although difficult to define, generally refers to a system of beliefs that helps justify the actions of those in power. Crouteau and Hoynes (2003, 73) argue that "ideologies often serve to distort and misrepresent reality in ways that benefit the ruling class." Ideological perspectives

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create a mental framework that shapes how individuals perceive the world, thereby influencing their belief systems, behaviors, and political choices.

Flowerdew (2024, 29) elaborates on the function of ideology by noting that "it is expressed through language, concepts, categories and images of thought." Ideologies are embedded in language use, which guides how people interpret and understand complex social and political phenomena. In political discourse, ideologies are not only overtly stated but may also be implicit. They are embedded in the language choices and rhetorical strategies employed by political actors. Therefore, the use of implicit ideologies serves to maintain the *status quo*, which strengthens existing power structures while presenting them as natural or inevitable.

Wodak (2020, 147) accounts for the role of ideology in political discourse by pointing out that "political speeches often reflect the ideological identities of the speaker." On this note, politicians use discourse not only to communicate policy but also to project their ideological positions. This projection of ideological position can be explicit when a politician openly advocates for a particular policy or belief system. It can also be implicit when ideological assumptions are embedded in language choices like metaphors and rhetorical strategies. Jatau (2023, 79) accentuates the above by arguing further that political discourse is key to reproduction of ideology because it serves to legitimise the actions and policies of those in power.

The relationship between ideology and discourse is particularly significant in political contexts, where language is used to shape public perceptions and maintain power relations. Fairclough (2001,102) emphasises the importance of language as a tool in political behavior. He notes that the connection between language and politics is a critical area of inquiry for discourse analysts. Accordingly, political discourse is often structured in such a way that favor certain ideologies over others, thereby subtly reinforcing the dominance of the ruling class while marginalising alternative perspectives. Fairclough's work highlights how language is used to naturalise power relations and make them appear normal or unquestionable.

While much of the literature emphasises how political actors use language to assert power, shape ideology, and manage public perception, fewer studies focus on New Year speeches or the temporal framing used by political leaders at the start of a new administrative cycle. These speeches are analytically significant because they function as agenda-setting moments in which presidents outline policy directions, reaffirm their legitimacy, and attempt to stabilise public confidence. They also serve as symbolic recalibration points where leaders try to frame national challenges, justify ongoing reforms, and project the ideological identity of their administration. Despite their importance, New Year speeches in Nigeria remain under-examined, particularly in relation to how they construct hope, solidarity, and political legitimacy during periods of economic uncertainty and public skepticism. This gap makes it necessary to analyse how President Bola Ahmed Tinubu uses language to negotiate authority and shape collective expectations under the "Renewed Hope" agenda.

This study therefore draws together the theoretical strands of power, ideology, discourse and rhetorical strategy to analyse the ideological work performed in the speech. It applies Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis by operationalising these concepts at each stage of the framework. At the textual level, the study identifies specific linguistic choices, rhetorical devices and ideological markers embedded in the speech. At the level of discursive practice, it examines how the speech is produced and circulated, and how it draws on existing narratives and intertextual resources within Nigerian political communication. At the level of social practice, it interprets how these discursive patterns relate to broader structures of power, governance and public trust under the Tinubu

administration. Through this synthesis, the study responds to the need for context-sensitive, discourse-driven analysis of how political leaders use language to shape national realities and legitimise their authority.

3. Theoretical Framework

One of the most influential models in CDA is Norman Fairclough's (1995) Three-Dimensional Model. This model offers a clear and systematic approach to understanding how discourse operates across different levels of meaning. It consists of three main components: text, discourse practice, and social practice. Each of these dimensions contributes to a deeper understanding of how language functions within political communication. The first dimension focuses on the analysis of the text itself. This includes examining linguistic features such as vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and the use of metaphors or symbols. These elements do more than organize the message—they reveal the speaker's attitudes, intentions, and ideological leanings. Through textual analysis, the researcher can identify how specific language choices are used to influence perception, emphasize certain values, and conceal or highlight particular meanings. The second dimension, known as discourse practice, examines how texts are produced, distributed, and consumed. It focuses on the processes that shape how discourse is created and understood by different audiences. In political contexts, this means analyzing how political speeches are written, how they are delivered, and how the public interprets them. This component recognizes that discourse is not created in isolation; it is shaped by the relationship between the speaker, the audience and the media through which the message is conveyed. The third dimension, social practice, situates discourse within its wider social, cultural and political context. It examines the power structures, ideologies and institutional influences that affect both the production and interpretation of discourse. This dimension highlights how political speeches are connected to broader social realities such as governance, inequality and public trust. It also shows how language can reinforce or challenge existing power relations within society. Fairclough's three-dimensional model is particularly suitable for this research because it provides a comprehensive way to study both the linguistic features of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 2025 New Year speech and the social context in which it was delivered. By applying this model, the study investigates how language is strategically used to project ideology, shape public opinion, and reinforce political power.

4. Research Methodology

This study adopts Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its analytical framework. Fairclough's framework examines discourse at three interconnected levels: the textual level focuses on linguistic features; the level of discursive practice explores the production, distribution and consumption of the text; and the level of social practice connects the discourse to broader ideological and socio-political structures. Using this model ensures a systematic approach to identifying how linguistic choices within the speech reproduce power relations, shape public perception and reflect wider political realities. The study undertook a detailed analysis of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 2025 New Year speech, which contains 836 words and was divided into 24 extracts for ease of analysis. The speech was delivered orally in English and broadcast nationwide on January 1, 2025.

The full text was retrieved from Vanguard News.[5] This speech serves as the primary data for the research. A descriptive and interpretive research approach was employed to examine both the linguistic and contextual features of the discourse. Purposive sampling was used to select the speech because of its relevance, richness and agenda-setting significance. This sampling technique allows the researcher to focus on a text that is ideologically dense and strategically crafted, making it suitable for discourse analysis. At the textual level of analysis, the study identified and described linguistic features such as lexical choices, sentence structures, figurative expressions and rhetorical techniques. This descriptive phase provided the foundation for understanding how the text is constructed and how meaning is encoded linguistically. At the level of discursive practice, the study examined how the speech was produced and disseminated, as well as how it draws on intertextual references and established patterns within Nigerian political communication. This interpretive stage enabled a deeper understanding of how the speech positions itself within existing narratives of governance, reform and national unity. At the level of social practice, the analysis connected the linguistic and discursive patterns to broader ideological structures, including the political climate under the "Renewed Hope" agenda, economic reforms and issues of public trust. This stage revealed how President Tinubu's language choices function to legitimise authority, manage public perception and shape national identity. By integrating description with interpretation through Fairclough's model, the study provides a rigorous and coherent account of how language operates as a tool of power in political discourse.

5. Analysis

Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) frames language as a form of social practice and emphasizes the interconnections of three dimensions or three interrelated components: textual analysis (description) which focuses on the specific language used in the speech, discourse practice (interpretation) examines the production, dissemination and consumption of the speech while social practice (explanation) analyses understanding of the broader social and ideological context in which the discourse is situated. The speech was carefully divided into extracts 1–24 to enable an in-depth analysis.

5.1. Textual Dimension

This analysis focuses specifically on the textual dimension, which examines the *lexical choices*, *grammatical features, rhetorical and discursive Strategies* of President Tinubu's 2025 New Year Speech. Analysis explores how these features reflect power, ideology and social relations.

5.1.1. Lexical Choices looks at the use of specific vocabularies by the speaker to build desired realities in the minds of the listeners. The analysis of lexical choices in the speech is done in relation to the under-listed considerations:

a. Constructing Hope and Positive Reality.
   Use of adjectives and noun phrases such as *happy, prosperous, great promise, brighter days, positive and encouraging outlook* (Extracts 1–5) are crafted to create an optimistic tone. This

use of lexis of positive reality is a deliberate attempt to establish government credibility and public trust after a challenging period.

Also, the use of metaphor in *dawn of a new year* (Extract 2) symbolically frames year 2025 as a fresh opportunity which corresponds with nation-building ideologies.

b. Use of Technical and Economic Terminology.

Employment of economic terms such as *foreign trade surpluses, foreign reserves, stock market growth, inflation, 34.6%* to *15%* (Extracts 4, 5, 6,8, 13) is to establish policy driven authority which presents the administration as data-driven with adequate knowledge of the quantitative approach and competence capable of driving virile economy.

Therefore, the noun phrase; *recorded foreign trade surpluses in three consecutive quarters* (Extract4) is crafted to construct economic competence.

c. Collective Identity Construction.

The use of repetition in intoning inclusive pronouns such as *we, our, us* (Extracts 1–24) helps to build a sense of collective responsibility and national unity. For example:

"We will fulfill our collective desires" (Extract 2)

"Let us stay focused and united" (Extract 13)

The use of this strategy implants the *ideology of shared sacrifice* that orientates citizens with governmental goals.

5.1.2. Grammar and Structures consider the use of imprints of grammar like m*odality*, a*ctive constructions* and use of *complex sentences* by the speaker to establish his political will, assert his intentions and demonstrate his administrative policy to the listeners. The analysis of grammar and structures in the speech is to assess the following functions:

a. Expression of Certainty.

The intentional selection and use of modals like *will, must, shall* are meant to establish strong political will and assertiveness:

We will continue to embark on necessary reforms… (Extract 12)

We must become better citizens… (Extract 15)

The use of modality in the construction above illuminates assertion of institutional power and future-oriented control.

b. Expression of proactive political commitment.

The use of non-passive voice allows the speaker to maintain active agency and establish autoritative willingness in constructions like *I will unveil…, the government will establish…*(Extracts 8,17) It is noted that the use of active voice in the italicised constructions portrays the speaker as intentional and proactive.

c. Expression of concern and empathy.

The use of compound and complex sentences indicates a combination of formal and authoritative tone suited for political rhetoric. Its use allows significant framing such as balancing praise with concern:

Nevertheless, the cost of food and essential drugs remained a significant concern… (Extract 5)

5.1.3. Rhetorical and Discursive Strategies looks at the use of appeal tone, contrastive framing, face-saving strategies and use of metaphorical and symbolic language to cultivate cultural expectations,

add moral legitimacy, strengthen the ethos of leadership and reinforce positive ideology and public expectations. The analysis of Rhetorical and Discursive Strategies in the speech is done through the under-listed considerations:

a. Appeal to Religion and Patriotism.

   The use of religious expressions like b*y the grace of God, God bless you all* (Extracts 2 and 24) justify embedded cultural and religious expectations in a country where religion and politics have become intertwined to the extent of their being used as a mark of moral legitimacy.

   Also, the use of patriotic expression in l*et us stay the course of nation-building* (Extract 22) elicit affective action and sense of national unity.

b. Contrastive Framing

   Use of Contrasts such as *though 2024 posed numerous challenges… the new year will bring brighter days* (Extract 3) focuses the citizen expectations on the reform narrative by juxtaposing past hardship with future relief.

   Similarly,the use of expressions such as a*s far-reaching as our reforms are… only through shared values* (Extract 18) appeals to the citizens to go into a moral contract with the government.

c. Strategic Gratitude and Humility

   The use of phrases like *your trust humbles me* and *thank you for placing your confidence in me* (Extract 11) are examples of face-saving strategies that fills the gap of social distance and strengthen the dimension of leadership.

d. Metaphorical and Symbolic Language

   The use of expressions like of *dawn, bright future, stay the course* as the symbols of the journey metaphor help to convey the desired progressive movement despite challenges.(Extracts 2, 22)

5.1.4. Ideological Implications looks at ideologies embedded in the use of language by the speaker to achieve specific ideological and strategic objectives. It assesses how it circulates within public discourse and how it interacts with existing power structures. The analysis of ideological implications in the speech reflects the under-listed sensibilities:

a. Neo-liberal economic ideology that is channeled towards promoting credit access, financial institutions and private sector engagement (Extracts 8).

b. A shared sense of National integration and depoliticisation that can be used to fight against division based on *politics, ethnicity, region and religion* (Extract 14).

c. An ideology of Moral rearmament and civic responsibility which serves as the pivot for *ethical principles, shared values and better citizens* (Extracts 22–24).

The speech maintains a pragmatic approach to achieving these ideologies which significantly help in aligning with the *Renewed Hope Agenda.*

5.2. Discourse Practice

Analysis of Discourse practice in texts considers three key components: Production – how the text is constructed; Dissemination – how the text circulates across different media and Consumption – how audiences interpret and interact with the text. This model is applied to enable an in-depth assessment of the imprints of discourse practice in the President's New Year message

5.2.1. Production of the Speech

The production of the speech involves a highly institutionalized and collaborative process:
a. *Authorship and Institutional Influence (Extracts 4, 5, 13):*
The speech is put together by professional speechwriters, economic advisers and public communication experts in the presidency. Language choices like *economic indicators point to a positive and encouraging outlook, record growth... trillions of naira in wealth* suggest collaborative technocrats' influence in shaping a favorable national narrative.
b.*Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity (Extracts 6, 8):*
The speech takes from areas such as government policy discourse, economic reports and religious appeals and thereby blends them to resonate with a broad audience. The references to the *National Credit Guarantee Company* and *inflation reduction from 34.6% to 15%* reflect deliberate economic reform discourse.

> b. *Ideological Framing (Extracts 11, 13,14):*
> The use of language in phrases like y*our trust humbles me... I promise to serve diligently* frames the President as a servant-leader and also, the use of phrases like *we are on the right path* and *let us stay united….* calls for a shared national identity. This pattern of use positions the speaker as both authoritative and empathetic.
> c. *Linguistic Strategies:(Extracts 1, 6, 8)*
> Vocabulary choices reflect hope-laden political world views like *brighter days, fulfill our collective desires, great promise* and also, the use of assertive policy language in w*e will establish, we are committed to, we will reduce inflation,etc,* help to assert credibility and legitimacy.

5.2.2. Dissemination of the Speech

The dissemination was done through multi-channel circulation consistent with modern presidential communication:
a. *Media Channels (Extracts 1–24)*
The speech was broadcast live on national television, radio, and social media e.g., NTA, Radio Nigeria, Twitter/X, Facebook, YouTube and private media stations in the country. This wide dissemination ensures access across socioeconomic class and literacy lines which beef up presidential visibility.
b.*Textual Forms*:
The message exists in *spoken form* (oral broadcast) and *written form* (text publications in newspapers and online platforms). These dual forms increase the speech's durability and allow for further reproduction in news reports, commentary and public discussion.
c.*Re-contextualisation:*
News agencies, commentators and opposition voices may reframe parts of the speech e.g., *inflation at 34.6%* or *trust in me as your president* either to validate or critique the administration. These re-contextualisations influence the public's perception and ideological alignment with the message.

5.2.3. Consumption of the Speech

Consumption refers to how different listeners interpret and engage with the speech from diverse socioeconomic and political backgrounds:
Reflection of One Nation, Diverse Audience and Different Interpretation (Extracts1–24):

The speech addresses *"fellow Nigerians"* broadly, but the reception varies among different socio-economic classes, ethnic groups, political affiliations and age brackets: *The political elite* may view it through the lens of performance assessment and power alignment. *The urban middle class* might focus on economic indicators and policy promises. *Rural populations* may connect more with references to food prices and agricultural output and also, the president's appeals to unity and morality. *Youth groups* may pay attention to the *Youth Confab* and issues of employment and inclusion. For example:
Negotiation of meaning which points to the invocation of *shared value patriotism* and *national identity* may be accepted by some as a call for unity while others may read it critically as rhetorical masking of hardship. Similarly, the clause, *your sacrifices have not been in vain* might evoke either trust or skepticism which depends on individual experiences of 2023 and 2024.

Media commentary and citizen response rests on online platforms (e.g., Twitter/X) which allow citizens to respond in real-time. Some of these responses come with support while others come with memes, lampoon or protest hash-tags. This transforms a top-down message into a communication exchange space where meaning is constantly reshaped.
Therefore, the *discourse practice* of President Tinubu's 2025 New Year message utilizes the means of multimodal dissemination of information across media platforms to enhance accessibility and influence. It is a top-down and state-sponsored discourse which was planned to promote national unity, gain confidence in governance and support policy direction. Also, the speech projects a carefully crafted interdiscursive production which draws from economics, nationalism, religion and reform rhetoric to enhance diverse consumption by different social groups and thereby revealing ideological fault lines that prompts negotiated meanings based on perceived realities.

5.3. Social Practice

Analysis of *social practice* of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 2025 *New Year Message* was done in relation to understanding how the text both reflects and helps reproduce or challenge existing social conditions and ideologies. The analysis is done under the following considerations:

5.3.1. Political Context and Power Relations

President Tinubu's speech is shaped and informed by the political context of Nigeria in 2025 which was a period marked by economic hardship, citizens' discontent, security challenges and calls for accountability.
The speech makes effort to reaffirm state authority and legitimise the ruling government's power; a reflection of a hegemonic discourse where the state presents itself as the guardian of progress, unity and reform.

*On a personal note, thank you for placing your confidence in me as your president. Your trust humbles me…(*Extract 11)
This line echoes an *ideology of paternalistic leadership* which reinforces the President's role as a central figure of trust and direction in an attempt to naturalise authority and obedience.

5.3.2. Neoliberal Economic Ideology

A careful look at the dominant ideological imprint in the speech reveals a neo-liberal approach to economic reform. This is made evident in:
*We will establish the National Credit Guarantee Company… a partnership of government institutions... private sector, and multilateral institutions.(*Extract 8)
The use and emphasis on the phrases like *market growth, foreign direct investment, private-sector partnerships, credit expansion* sheds light on the *marketisation of governance,* where public services and social reforms are framed in economic terms. It becomes evident here that the role of the state is to facilitate capital but not to redistribute wealth equitably. This is a pointer to the reproduction of a neo-liberal logic that may marginalise the poor or the informal sectors.

5.3.3. Nationalism and Moral Renewal

President Tinubu's call for *moral rectitude, patriotism, and shared values* is a reflection of an ideology of revival of national, cultural and moral patriotism:
*"Let us not get distracted by a tiny segment… that still sees things through politics, ethnicity, region, and religion." (*Extract 14)
The tone in the line above and the use of the following clauses; p*romotes unity over diversity, delegitimises dissent, reinforces a monolithic national identity* in the speech marginalises diversity of opinions and clinical democratic criticism. This orientation frames the state as the moral arbiter which discredits alternative voices as divisive or backward thereby enabling reproduction of hegemonic control over national narratives.

5.3.4. Youth and women Inclusivity Discourses

The use of the phrase *Youth Confab* and the mention of the inclusion of women and youth in governance and government financial plans signal a yield to the growing youth activism and calls for representation.
*The Youth Confab… a testament to our commitment to youth inclusiveness…(*Extract 19)
The speech displays progressive ideology on the surface. However, it fails to reflect deep structural reform in youth empowerment thereby leaving the room for the interpretation that it operates within a symbolic inclusion frame which serves as an agent used in co-opting dissenting groups into state-sponsored programs where prospective oppositions are neutralised.

5.3.5. Religion and Divine Legitimacy

Appeal to the acute religious sensibilities of Nigerians is procured in the speech by making references to God through the use of familiar religious phrases like:

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By the grace of God, With God's help… (Extract 2)
The use above reinforce a religious discourse that imbues governance with divine authorisation. This appeals to a religiously-inclined population contributes to the naturalisation of the leader's role which presents governance as part of a divinely ordained process. The implication of this is that political office holders use their rhetoric as a means of compressing the thinking pattern of the populace and reducing the room for rational critique.

5.3.6. Social Practices of Blame-Deflection and Sacrifice

The speech showcases the ideology of collective sacrifice by painting a vivid picture of positive future expectations and a better tomorrow
> *Your sacrifices have not been in vain…*
> *Together, let us stay the course…(*Extract 22)
The line above trivializes hardship by infusing it in a moral framework of national renascence and a future devoid of lack and suffering. It shifts responsibility from government inaction and inability to live up to expectations by constructing suffering as noble, shared and necessary for national development.

5.3.7. Technocratic and Reform-Oriented Discourse

The speech utilizes a technocratic style in some parts of the speech by making references to :
statistics -34.6% inflation, (Extract 6)
reforms and policy tools - CNG and *credit companies*. (Extract 21)
The use of technocratic terms above creates a discursive distance between the ruling elite and the everyday citizen, thereby promoting a top-down approach to problem-solving. Use of technocratic style may sometimes be employed to dazzle the citizens as well as to project competence. On the other hand, technocratic discourse may be interpreted as an attempt to conceal lack of democratic consultation and grassroots participation which may lead to exclusion of alternative knowledge or local agency systems.
Analysis through the lens of Fairclough's social practice model reveals that President Tinubu's 2025 New Year speech reproduces dominant ideologies of neo-liberalism, nationalism and moral authority. The use of language works to legitimise the current power structure. It frames hardship as shared sacrifice and uses religious and patriotic appeals to reduce dissent. While the speech offers hope and promises reform, it does not fully address deep structural causes of inequality and hardship. Thus, the discourse helps sustain the status quo even as it projects a reformist image.

6. Conclusion

The application of Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 2025 New Year speech has provided a clearer understanding of how language is used to encode ideology, exercise power and shape public perception. The analysis addresses the study's objectives by identifying the speech's key rhetorical techniques, demonstrating how these techniques reflect power relations and evaluating how they work to influence public confidence in the government.

The findings show that the speech articulates three dominant ideological positions. First, it advances a neoliberal economic ideology that promotes credit expansion, financial institutions and private-sector partnerships as central drivers of national development. Linguistic choices present governance as data-driven and market-oriented, reinforcing the administration's commitment to economic reform. Second, the speech projects an ideology of national integration by calling for unity across political, ethnic and religious divides. This framing positions the government as a unifying force while subtly discouraging dissent. Third, it reflects an ideology of moral rearmament and civic responsibility through appeals to ethical conduct and disciplined citizenship aligned with the "Renewed Hope" agenda.

The analysis also confirms that the speech's multimodal dissemination through television, radio and online platforms enhances its reach and reinforces its agenda-setting function. As a state-sponsored, top-down discourse, it aims to inspire unity, legitimise ongoing reforms and strengthen public trust in leadership. Overall, the findings show that the speech reproduces dominant ideologies of neoliberalism, nationalism and moral authority. It frames present hardships as patriotic sacrifice and promotes a technocratic narrative that portrays leadership as efficient and reform-focused, even as it downplays deeper structural inequalities.

The research shows how rhetorical strategies, ideological framing and discursive practices combine to shape citizens' interpretation of political leadership. The study demonstrates the value of CDA in exposing how meaning, ideology and power are negotiated in political communication.

The study, however, focuses on a single speech, which restricts the scope of generalisation. A wider corpus of presidential or governmental speeches would allow for a more comprehensive analysis of evolving ideological patterns. Additionally, the analysis relies on publicly disseminated text, which cannot fully capture audience reception or alternative interpretations across different social groups.

Despite these limitations, the study makes an important scholarly contribution. It advances understanding of how political discourse operates within the contemporary Nigerian context by showing how language is used to justify state action, shape public expectations and reinforce authority. It also illustrates the usefulness of Fairclough's CDA model for examining the interplay between text, discourse processes and socio-political structures in Nigerian political communication.

Future studies can extend this work by analysing other presidential addresses, legislative speeches or campaign rhetoric to further explore how language shapes political realities in democratic societies.

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Appendix

https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/01/full-speech-president-tinubus-new-year-message-to-nigeri-ans/

The text of the speech was broken into 24 extracts as presented below for ease of analysis.

1. As we enter 2025, I wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year. May you be rich in joy, success, and good health.

2. As the new year dawns, it brings many hopes, aspirations, and prospects for better days. By the grace of God, 2025 will be a year of great promise in which we will fulfill our collective desires.

3.Though 2024 posed numerous challenges to our citizens and households, I am confident that the New Year will bring brighter days.

4. Economic indicators point to a positive and encouraging outlook for our nation. Fuel prices have gradually decreased, and we recorded foreign trade surpluses in three consecutive quarters. Foreign reserves have risen, and the Naira has strengthened against the US dollar, bringing greater stability.

5. The stock market's record growth has generated trillions of naira in wealth, and the surge in foreign investment reflects renewed confidence in our economy. Nevertheless, the cost of food and essential drugs remained a significant concern for many Nigerian households in 2024.

6. In 2025, our government is committed to intensifying efforts to lower these costs by boosting food production and promoting local manufacturing of essential drugs and other medical supplies. We are resolute in our ambition to reduce inflation from its current high of 34.6% to 15%. With diligent work and God's help, we will achieve this goal and provide relief to all our people.

7. In this new year, my administration will further consolidate and increase access to credit for individuals and critical sectors of the economy to boost national economic output.

8. To achieve this, the federal government will establish the National Credit Guarantee Company to expand risk-sharing instruments for financial institutions and enterprises.

9. The Company—expected to start operations before the end of the second quarter—is a partnership of government institutions, such as the Bank of Industry, Nigerian Consumer Credit Corporation, the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Agency, and Ministry of Finance Incorporated, the private sector, and multilateral institutions.

10. This initiative will strengthen the confidence of the financial system, expand credit access, and support under-served groups such as women and youth. It will drive growth, re-industrialisation, and better living standards for our people.

11. On a personal note, thank you for placing your confidence in me as your president. Your trust humbles me, and I promise to continue serving you diligently and wholeheartedly.

12. We will continue to embark on necessary reforms to foster sustainable growth and prosperity for our nation.

13. I seek your cooperation and collaboration at all times as we pursue our goal of a one trillion-dollar economy. Let us stay focused and united.

14. We are on the right path to building a great Nigeria that will work for everyone. Let us not get distracted by a tiny segment of our population that still sees things through the prisms of politics, ethnicity, region, and religion.

15. To achieve our national goals and objectives, we must become better citizens and uncompromising in our devotion and allegiance to Nigeria.

16. Citizens' moral rectitude and faith in our country are fundamental to the success of the Renewed Hope Agenda. In 2025, we will commit to promoting adherence to ethical principles, shared values, and beliefs under the National Identity Project.

17. I will unveil the National Values Charter, already approved by the Federal Executive Council, in the first quarter of 2025. I will launch an ambitious national orientation campaign that fosters patriotism and love for our country and inspires citizens to rally together. The Charter will promote mutual commitments between the government and citizens and foster trust and cooperation among our diverse population and between the government and the citizens.

18. As far-reaching and foundational as our reforms are, they can produce the desired outcomes only through shared common values and identities and unconditional love for our country.

19. The Youth Confab will begin in the first quarter of 2025, a testament to our commitment to youth inclusiveness and investment as nation-builders. The Ministry of Youth will soon announce the modalities for selecting the conference's representatives from our diverse, youthful population.

20. Dear Compatriots, I urge you to continue believing in yourselves and keeping faith in our blessed country.

21. Let me use this New Year's message to urge our governors and local council chairpersons to work closely with the central government to seize emerging opportunities in agriculture, livestock, and tax reforms and move our nation forward. I commend governors who have embraced our Compressed Natural Gas initiative by launching CNG-propelled public transport. I also congratulate those who have adopted electric vehicles as part of our national energy mix and transition. The Federal Government will always offer necessary assistance to the states.

22. To all citizens, your sacrifices have not been in vain over the past 19 months. I assure you they will not be in vain even in the months ahead. Together, let us stay the course of nation-building.

23. The New Year will bring us closer to the bright future we all desire and the Nigeria of our dreams.

24. God bless you all, and may God bless our beloved country, Nigeria.

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