

**President Muhammadu Buhari Sixtieth Independence Anniversary Speech:  
A Discourse Analysis**

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**Abstract**

Independence Day celebration in Nigeria usually features an address of the President on socio-economic and socio-political issues. The choice of the appropriate language to address such sensitive issues needs careful considerations. The sixtieth independence anniversary speech of the President constitutes the data for the study. The objective of the study is to investigate how President Muhammadu Buhari manipulates language to convey his message to the citizens. The study employs both qualitative and quantitative method in the analysis of

data. In the qualitative analysis, the transitivity component of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic is employed as theoretical model while frequency and percentage distributions of data is used in the quantitative analysis. Findings show that President Muhammadu Buhari's address is an action-oriented speech as a cursory look at the transitivity system in the text clause by clause indicates how the President encapsulates his mission to re-build Nigeria and solicits for the co-operation of the people to achieve this laudable objective. The high-level number of material processes is an indication that the analyzed text is an action-oriented speech. A cursory look at the transitivity system in the text clause by clause shows how President Muhammadu Buhari encapsulates his mission to re-build Nigeria and soliciting for the co-operation of the people. The study concludes that resourcefulness of language is very significant in human society as language and discourse will continue to play central role in communication, interaction and the establishment of a sustainable democratic society.

**Keywords:**

Language, linguistics, discourse, independence anniversary speech, democratic society.

**Introduction**

Human communications basically rely on the use of language in an organized way. According to Stork and Widowson (2013:208), 'every language comprises sophisticated and highly developed systems which can meet up with the needs of the society where they function and that of the individual to express emotions and transmit information. Therefore, society and language are inseparable because an individual needs language to function and fit in properly into the society. As a potent tool in the hands of the one who has the oratorical skills, language can achieve the unexpected positive outcome. Osisanwo (2017:272) citing Edom (1965) believes that "language is the key to the heart of the people, if you lose it, you lose the people, if you keep it safe, it unlocks the people's heart". According to Yule (2017:190), to be able to interpret the messages we receive and for our messages to be meaningful is beyond structure and linguistic form because there are discourse rules which the users of the language are familiar with. When speeches are made in politics, political leaders are able to stay connected to the masses. They usually manipulate language to convince the masses logically and appeal to their emotions. Since English functions as the official language of communication in Nigeria, it has become the major tool of political discourse in the country. Political discourse is considered to be an important aspect of discourse practices that presents a scholarly approach to creative uses of language. Political discourse provides a fertile research platform for language creativity, demonstrating the great potentials of the English language in an L2 situation. What is even more interesting is the

significant communicative strategies employed in the use of English in the political speech during the period under study. First October of every year marks important landmark in Nigeria during which the President addresses the citizens. However, the sixtieth independence speech of Presidential Muhammadu Buhari is unique from the previous speeches because it marked a significant epoch in the history of Nigerian sovereignty as a nation when the President found it most advantageous to use the speech to Present the government policies to the people and elicit their support and cooperation. He also used the occasion to remind the citizens on the aspirations of our founding fathers and the need to work together in order not to let their struggle be in vain.

It is in view of the above, therefore, that the objective of this study is to describe and examine how President Buhari successfully used the English language in a second language situation to convey his message to re-build Nigeria to the people. The effective use of English as a medium of communication in a political discourse is a key factor in achieving socio-political and socio-economic development.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)**

The framework for describing and modeling language is suggested by the Systemic Functional Linguistics. This framework helps to determine choices and meaning. That is, it emphasizes on semiotics, the way utterances and texts show the meaning potentials and the code of language. Halliday (2004) states that the functions of language are expressed through three types of meaning or meta-functions which reflect in the structure of the clause. According to him, “the clause is considered as multifunctional construct in the grammar, one that realizes three different semantic units, one for each meta functions: ideational, interpersonal and textual (2004:588). For the structure of the clause to make meaning, the three kinds of meaning must be considered.

In the **Ideational Function** language is used to express our thought of the real world and the inner world of our consciousness through the clause. “From the ideational point of view, the different in meaning relates most directly to the question of what is constructed as a quantum of change in the flow of events” (Halliday, 2004: 597). Two subtypes of ideational meta-functions are the experiential which is clause as representation and the logical which has to do with how each clause experience may be connected to that of another. The major tool of ideational function is Transitivity. Transitivity is concerned with transmission of ideas representing ‘processes’ or ‘experiences’: actions, events, processes of consciousness and relations. The concept of transitivity is seen as a component of the ideational meta functions, and as a property of clauses used to specify the different types of processes and the attendant circumstances (Opeibi, 2004:58). In the transitivity structure,

Halliday identifies three major processes and three minor processes. The three major processes are Material processes, Mental and Relational, while the minor processes are Verbal, Existential and Behavioural. “The minor processes are subsidiary processes types, located at the boundaries of the major processes. For instance, behavioural shares the characteristics of material and mental; verbal shares that of mental and relational; while existential shares the characteristics of relational and material” (Opeibi, 2004:59). The term processes in SFT is used in two senses: First, to refer to what is going on in the whole clause, and second, to refer to that part of the proposition anchored in the Verbal Group (Bloor and Bloor, 2004).

**The Interpersonal Function** sees clause as exchange and the relationship connecting speakers who are engaged in any discourse. This meta-function, at the level of clause, comprises two parts: the Mood and the Residue. Mood has to do with the subject which a nominal group and the finite operator which is an element of the verbal group. The functional elements within the residue are Predicator, Complement and Adjunct.

**Textual Function** treats clause as a message. Text according to Daramola (2001:161) is “a continuous piece of writing or an extract from any part of written or printed materials. In discourse analysis, text is studied with context. The idea of context, in the view of Osoba and Sobayo (2014:210) is credited to Brosislaw Malinowski, whose ‘Context of Situation’ refers to the ‘environment’ in which users of any language or participants in discourse find themselves. For Daramola (2005:67), “context of situation is indispensable in the interpretation and understanding of discourse”. Text is concerned with how information is organized in different clauses and with the entire text. The thematic structures in the clause perform this meaning function. In this instance, the clause is classified into ‘Theme and Rheme’. According to Halliday (2004:134), the theme is the part of the clause which functions as the point of departure of the message; it finds and positions the clause inside its context. The remaining part of the message where the theme is elaborated is called the Rheme. Therefore, the clause as message is thus structured into Theme + Rheme.

### **Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis is considered as a relevant approach in the application of SFT in a political discourse. The term discourse means different things on different occasions and serves different purposes but they are all related to language use. Discourse analysis in the view of Johnstone (2002:172) is ‘actual instances of communication in the medium of language’ while Pustejovsky (2006:170) describes it as a continuous stretch of spoken or written language which is longer than a sentence. Discourse in the view of Osoba and Eniayofor (2014:200) can be regarded as a language in use. They opined that as long as language is used by people in various social fields, there are various types of discourse to be

investigated. Thus, discourse analysis has a wider spectrum of areas to cover to account for how language is used in through linguistic and theoretical tools. is a language can be regarded as a form of language use such as the various ways of speaking, public speeches and spoken language. The conversation of a group of people who share similar ideas and give same meaning to such conversation can also be called discourse. On the uniqueness of discourse from the linguistic perspective, Onadeko (2008:23) comments that, “It is the scientific study of naturally occurring (i.e spontaneous) conversation (or what is meant to be rendered in written mode) which exists between at least two participants in a social context”. From his view, discourse analysis encompasses all verbal and non-actions that take place in a conversation in a social setting.

Discourse analysis focus not only on complex utterances of a particular speaker but also on the interaction between speakers and the language rules which apply and govern the exchange. Therefore, discourse analysis aims to answer the question ‘how do language users form and interpret meaning in utterances?’

Discourse study can also be regarded as interdisciplinary approach. This means that researchers incorporate appropriate conceptual tools, techniques and insights from different theoretical fields in order to provide solutions to research problems. Weiss and Wolak (2003:172) summarized advantage of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse as “Interdisciplinary research ideally integrates theoretical approaches and thereby creates new holistic approaches”.

### **Methodology**

President Muhammadu Buhari’s Sixtieth Independent Anniversary Speech constitutes the primary source of data for this study. The speech was first transcribed from the oral form to a written text and grouped into tables and organized into clauses for the purpose of presenting a systematically explicit description of the text. In the analysis of data, Halliday’s grammatical model of transitivity was adopted to explore the President’s choice of words and expressions and their functions. To present a systematically explicit description in this analysis, the text under investigation is organized into clause structure.

The method adopted for analysis of data also includes quantitative data technique. The method accounts for frequency of occurrence of linguistic features especially material, mental, relational and verbal processes in the transitivity structure which are presented in tables and pie chart. This method of analysis brings about detailed fact finding and precise description.

**Presentation and Analysis of Data**  
**Clausal Analysis of Processes in the Text**  
**Table 1**

1.

I	speak	to you	today	as your President and fellow citizen	on this epochal occasion of our country's 60 <sup>th</sup> independence anniversary
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstantial Adjunct</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>	<b>Goal: Circumstantial</b>

As President	I	wish	to renew	my appreciation	to Nigerians
<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Senser</b>	<b>Mental</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Identifier</b>	<b>Goal</b>

for entrusting	Me	with your hopes and aspirations for a better and greater Nigeria			
<b>Material</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Goal: Circumstantial</b>			

2

Today	It	is	my	unique privilege	to re-commit	Myself
<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Senser</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Identifier</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>

to the service of this great country of great people with profound diversities and opportunities
<b>Circumstantial</b>

We	are	bound	by destiny	to be	the largest and greatest black nation on earth
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Goal: Circumstantial</b>

3.

At this stage in our nationhood	it	is	important that	We	Reflect
<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Senser</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Circumstance1</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>

How	we	got	here	to enable	us	work	Together
<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

to get	to where	we	aspire	to be	as a strong indivisible nation
<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Relationa</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>
united	in hope and equal in opportunity				
<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>				

4.

On October first 1960	when	Prime Minister Alhaji Abubakar	received	the constitutiona l instruments	Symbolizing	Nigeria's independence,
<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

He	expressed	his	wish	that	having	our rightful
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					acquired	status as an independent sovereign nation
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Identified</b>	<b>Mental</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Mental</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>

History	would record	that the building of our nation	proceeded	at the wisest pace
<b>Identifier</b>	<b>Verbal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

5.

This optimism	was	anchored	on the peaceful planning, full and open consultation and harmonious cooperation with the different groups which
<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal: Circumstantial</b>

culminated in	Nigeria	emerging	as a country without bitterness and bloodshed
<b>Material process</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal: Circumstantial</b>

6.

Our founding fathers	understood	the imperative of structuring a national identity	using	the power of the state
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal: Circumstantial</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

and	worked	towards the unification of Nigerians in a politically stable and viable entity
<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>



7.

That philosophy	guided	the foundation	that	was	laid	for our young nation of 45 million people	with an urban population of approximately 7 million
<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Relation</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>

Occupying	an area	of 910,768 square kilometers
<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

These demographics	led	to developmental challenges for which major efforts	were made	to overcome
<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

8.

Today	we	grapple	with multiple challenges with	a population	exceeding	200 million
<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Senser</b>	<b>Mental</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>

Occupying	the same landmass	but	52%	residing	in urban areas
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<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Sayer</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>
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9.

Sixty years of nationhood	provides	an opportunity	to ask	Ourselves	questions on the extent to which
<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Identifier</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

We	have sustained	The aspirations of our founding fathers.
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

Where	did	we	Do	the right things?
<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

are	we	on course?
<b>Relational</b>	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Attribute</b>

If not	where	did	we	stray	and	how	can
<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Identifier</b>	<b>Relational</b>

we	remedy	and	retrace	our steps
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal: Circumstantial</b>

10.

Upon attaining	Nigeria's growth	was	anchored	on policies and	impacted
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independence	trajectory			programmes that positively	
<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Material</b>

on all sectors of the economy
<b>Goal</b>

However,	this journey	was cut short	by the 30-months of civil war
<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Verbal</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>

11.

We	came out	of the civil war	with a focus on reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation that	enabled	the country	to put	in place
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstantial adjunct</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>circumstance</b>

world-class development structures	and	a strengthened public service	that well	Served	the government
<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

This positive trajectory	continued	with a	return	to the democratic government which	was truncated	by another round of military rule
<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>

12.

For a cumulative 29 of our 60yrs existence as a nation	we	have been	under military rule
<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Senser</b>	<b>Mental process</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>

13.

My summary of our journey so far as a nation	is	necessary to appropriately	chart	where
<b>Identifier</b>	<b>Relational process</b>	<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>

We	need to go	and	how	to get	there together
<b>Senser</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Identified</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>

14.

Today	I	am	aware that		
<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Senser</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>		
our economy	along with every single economy in the world			Is	in crisis
<b>Identifier</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>			<b>Relational</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>

We	still face	security challenges in parts of the country	while	our society	suffers	from a high loss of moral rectitude
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>adjunct</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

which	is	driven	by unbridled	craving for	political control
<b>adjunct</b>	<b>Relational process</b>	<b>Mental process</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

15.

An underlying cause of most of the problems	we	have faced	as a nation	is	our	consistent
<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

harping on	artificially	contrived	fault-lines that	we	have	harboured and allowed	unnecessarily	to fester
<b>Verbal</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Senser</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Material</b>

16.

In addition,	institutions such as civil service, police, the judiciary, the military all	Suffered	from a general decline
<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

17.

We	need to begin	a sincere process of national healing	And
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>

this anniversary	presents	a genuine opportunity	to eliminate	old and outworn perceptions that
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

Are	Always	put to test	in the lie	They	Always	Are
<b>Relational</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Relational</b>

18.

The stereotype of thinking of ourselves as	coming	from one part of the country	before	Seeing	ourselves as Nigerians	is
<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Mental</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>	<b>Relational</b>

a key starting point	to project	us	on the road	to our deserved nation's evolution and integration
<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>

19.

To start	this healing process	we	are	already blessed	with a most important asset	any nation	requires
<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Material</b>

For such- our people	and	this	has manifested	globally	in the exploits of Nigerians in many fields
<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Goal: Circumstantial</b>

20.

It	has been demonstrated	time and time again that	Nigerians	in the diasporas frequently	excel
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstance adjunct</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Material</b>

in science, technology, medicine, sports, arts and many other fields
<b>Goal: Circumstantial</b>

21.

Similarly, the creativity, ingenuity and resourcefulness of Nigerians at home	have resulted in	Globally	recognized	endeavours
<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Circumst ance</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>

22.

I	am	convinced	that if	we	pursue	our aspirations together
<b>Senser</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

We	would be able to achieve	whatever	we	desire.
<b>Senser</b>	<b>Verbal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Senser</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>

That	informed	our	adopting	the theme TOGETHER	to mark	this epochal event.
<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

23.

Together	we	can change	our condition	for the better
<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstantial adjunct</b>

And	more importantly together	we	can do	much more for ourselves and our country
<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal: Circumstantial</b>

24.

I	chose	the path of reflecti on	becaus e	this	is	what	I	do	dail y
<b>Acto r</b>	<b>Materi al</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Adjun ct</b>	<b>Carri er</b>	<b>Relatio nal</b>	<b>Circumstan ce</b>	<b>Acto r</b>	<b>Materia l</b>	

and	I	must confess	that at most times	I	always felt the need
<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material process</b>



for a collective reflection	As	I	know	that the foundation for a solid future which	this administration	is	laying
<b>Phenomenon</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Senser</b>	<b>Mental</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>	<b>Identified</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Material</b>

can only be	sustainable if there	is	a collective commitment by Nigerians
<b>Verbal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>

25.

Nigeria	is	not a country for Mr. President, any ruling or opposition party	but	a country for all of us	And	We	must play	our part
<b>Identified</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

irrespective of the challenges	we	face	to make	this country	what	we	desire
<b>identifier</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>		<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>

26.

To achieve	this	we	must focus	our TOGETHER people	minds as a	on ways of	resolving
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<b>Material</b>	<b>identified</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal: Circumstantial</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Material</b>
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the identified critical challenges	that	underlie	our present state.
<b>Identifier</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>

these	include:
<b>identified</b>	<b>Mental</b>

a.

evolving and sustaining	a democratic culture that	leaves	power	in the hands of the people
<b>Material process</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>

b.

Supporting	the enthronement of the rule of law	demanding	accountability of elected representatives	and	contributing to	good governance
<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

c

increasing	our commitment to peaceful co-existence	in a peaceful, secure and united Nigeria
<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstantial adjunct</b>

d.

harnessing and optimizing	our tremendous human and natural resources	to attain
<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Material</b>

our goal of	being	the top twenty economies of the world	and	in the process;
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Material</b>

e.

lifting	100 million Nigerians	out of poverty in 10 years;
<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>

f.

strengthening	institutions	to make	them	stronger in	protecting	national interests;	and
<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>

g.

imbibing	tolerance in diversity
<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

27.

I	am	a firm believer	in transparent, free, fair and credible elections	as has been demonstrated	during my period	as a democratically elected President.
<b>Senser</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>

28.

The recent build-up and eventual outcome of the Edo state elections	should encourage	Nigerians	that	it	is	my	commitment
<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>		<b>Senser</b>	<b>Relationa l</b>	<b>Identifie r</b>	<b>Circumstanc e</b>

to bequeath	to this country processes and procedures that	would guarantee	that the people's votes count
<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal: Circumstantial</b>	<b>Verbal process</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>

29

The problems with our electoral processes	Are	mainly human	induced	as desperate	desire for power
<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Goal</b>

leads to	desperate attempts	to gain power and office
<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

30.

Democracy, the world over and as	I	am	pursuing	in Nigeria	recognizes	the power of the people
<b>Circumstantial adjunct</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Phenomeno n</b>

However, if	some constituencies	choose to bargain off	their power	they	should be prepared	for denial of their rights
<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

31.

This call	is made	more urgent if	we	realize	that even after	a transparent, free, fair and credible election, desperation
<b>Identifier</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstance ( Goal)</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>

leads to	compromising	the judiciary	to upturn	legitimate decisions of the people
<b>Material</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

32.

It	is	necessary to therefore	support	the enthronement of the rule of law
<b>Senser</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

by	Avoiding	actions that compromise the judiciary
<b>adjunct</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

33.

Fellow Nigerians,	our history	has shown	that	We	Are
<b>Senser</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Mental</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Senser</b>	<b>Relational</b>

a people that have the capacity	to live	peacefully with one another
<b>Phenomenon</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Circumstance(Goal)</b>

34.

As a government,	we	remain committed to	our constitutional oath of	securing	the lives and properties of the citizenry.
<b>Identified</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal: Circumstantial</b>

I,	however,	call	on the citizenry	to also	Support	government
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>adjunct</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

by	providing	the necessary community-level intelligence in	addressing	these challenges
<b>adjunct</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Goal: Circumstantial</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

35.

In moving forward together	it	is	important	to strengthen	our economy	
<b>Material</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Senser</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

to provide	sustainable means of livelihood	for as many Nigerians as possible so as to	Eradicate	absolute poverty	from our midst
<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstantial</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Goal: Circumstantial</b>

**Summary of Processes in the Text**

**Table 2**

Processes	No of Occurrence	Percentage %
Material	134	77 %
Relational	27	15 %
Mental	9	5 %
Verbal	3	2 %

**Frequency Distribution of Processes in the Text**

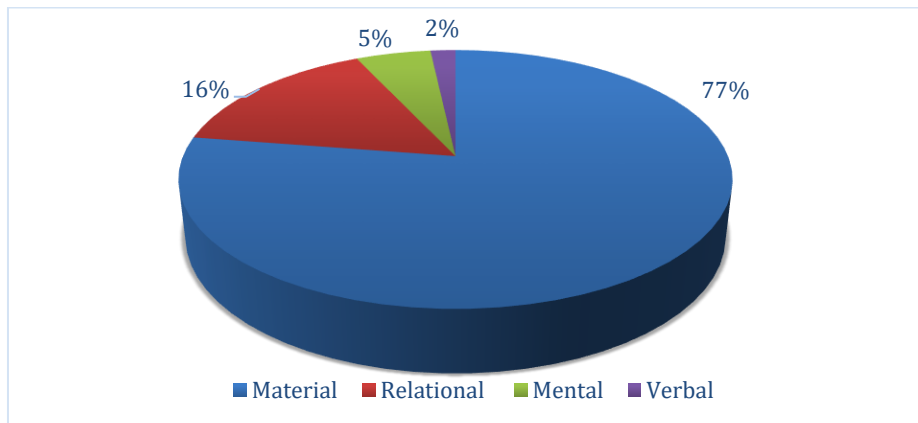


Fig 1

### Discussion of Processes in the Text

In the analysis carried out as shown in the tables and figure above, a preponderance of material process in the text is observed. A total of 134 verbs in the material process occur in the address, while only 27 relational, 9 mental and 3 verbal processes are present in the text. The high-level number of material processes is an indication that the analyzed text is an action-oriented speech. A cursory look at the transitivity system in the text clause by clause shows how President Muhammadu Buhari encapsulates his mission to re-build Nigeria and soliciting for the co-operation of the people.

The speaker begins the speech in clause 1 with the personal pronoun, **I** to identify and introduce himself as the President who is addressing the citizens of his country on the special occasion of the nation's independence anniversary. *The material process - speak* expresses the action of the speaker. The attendant circumstance identifies the existence of an entity - **our country** and an event - **60<sup>th</sup> independence anniversary**. Another *material process- to renew* indicates the significance of the event within the socio-political context of the text as the medium for the President to appreciate the citizens for the confidence repose in him and his commitment to reposition the country as contained in the attendant circumstance - **with your hopes and aspirations for a better and greater Nigeria**.

Clause 2 is a continuation of the President's commitment as contained in the attendant circumstance - **to the service of this great country of great people with profound diversities and opportunities**). Using the *material processes-re-commit, bound* and the relational process **to be**, the President reveals the great potentials of the country as (a) **great country of great people with profound diversities and opportunities** and (b) **the largest and greatest black nation on earth** (circumstantial). These potentials are indeed great weapons for the nation's economic and political development.

In the third clause, the fronting of the attendant circumstance-**At this stage in our nationhood** reveals the event that necessitated the speech and the celebration. This expression appeals to the sense of reason of the people that as the country clocked sixty, there is need for everyone to **reflect** (*material process*) on the present situation of the country and work collectively to get to where the people aspire to be - **a strong indivisible nation** (*Circumstantial*). The speaker chooses the *material process - united* to indicate the key factor that will facilitate the people's aspiration - **hope and equal in opportunity**.

In the next clause (4), the speaker uses the *material process- received* and **symbolizing** to inform his audience on when Nigeria gained freedom from colonial rule - (*circumstantial*). The speaker chooses *actor- Prime Minister Alhaji Abubakar* to identify the receiver of the symbol of authority from the colonial masters. In the last part of the clause, the speaker uses *the material process - expressed* and **proceeds** to assert the fact that the building of the nation began at - **a wisest pace** (*Goal*).



In clause 5, the *relational process-was* and the material process- **anchored** assert the fact that the optimism of the speaker on having a prosperous nation was based on peaceful planning and co-operation with different groups in the country. This **culminated** (*Material process*) in **Nigeria** (*Actor*) **emerging** (*Material process*) - **as a country without bitterness and bloodshed** (*Goal: Circumstantial*).

In clauses 6 and 7, the speaker further asserts the quests of the nation's founding fathers and present political leaders for a peaceful and united country. The speaker expresses this assertion by choosing appropriate processes and participants with the attendant circumstance. These include the *actor- our founding fathers, understood* (*material process*) **the imperative of structuring a National identity** (*Goal: Circumstantial*) all in Clause 6. Others include *circumstance- That philosophy, that* (*Adjunct*) **guided** (*Material process*) **the foundation** (*Goal*) **was** (*Relational process*) **laid** (*Material process*) **for our young nation of 45 million people** (*Goal*) (clause 7).

In the eight clauses, the actor-**we** and *the material process- grapple* expresses the fact that Nigeria is facing multiple challenges of population explosion. This is captured in the *senser* (a population) and the *material process-exceeding* as well as the *phenomenon- 200 million*. The choice of the *material process- occupying, goal-landmass, adjunct-but, 52%, material process-residing, circumstance-in urban area* are significant in the last expression of the clause.

In clause 9, we found the occurrence of another *material processes-provides, have sustained, stray* having **we** as *actor*. The use of these processes and participants are emphasizing the sustainability of the **aspirations of our founding fathers**(*goal*). However, the fronting of the *adjunct-where* and the speaker's choice of the material processes-**did, stray, remedy, retrace** with the *circumstantial goal-our steps* express his call for self-assessment to know where we are making progress and improve on the areas where there are shortcomings.

Clause 10 brings back to memory lane efforts of the past governments to improve the economy. The President employs the *material process-anchored* to refer to the situation at that time in which government activities were based **on policies and programmes** that were beneficial to the people. This assertion is demonstrated in the material process-**impacted**. Unfortunately, the smooth process of these policies and programmes were cut off by the **30-months of civil war** (*Circumstantial*).

Clause 11 begins with the use of **we-** as *actor* taking on the performance of an action-**came out** which is directed at-**civil war** (*goal*) with *circumstantial adjunct-with a focus on reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation* indicating the result of the action. Another *material process* in the clause-**enabled** directed at *the goal- the country* is introduced by another *material process-to put* and a *circumstance-in place* to indicate action

to be performed to re-build the country-**world-class development structures**.

This achievement **continued** (*material process*) which was again **truncated** (*material process*) **by another round of military rule-circumstantial**.

The speaker begins clause 12 with *attendant circumstance*-**for a cumulative 29 of our 60yrs existence as a nation** indicating that the country has been under military rule more than civilian rule.

In clause 13, the material processes- **chart, to go, to get** are directed at the circumstantial- **there together** expressing the speaker's appeal for the co-operation of the citizens to work together to get to the desired destination.

Clause 14 begins with an adjunct-**today** follow by a personal pronoun-I as *senser* and a *relational process*- **is** to identify the information the speaker wants to present-**crisis**. The *actor*-**we** and the *material process*-**still face** directed at the *goal* identify the crisis the country is experiencing. The *material process*- **craving** reveals the extent to which the society was psychologically affected by warped values of inordinate political ambitions of some politicians. In clause 15, the *actor*-**we** and the *material process*-**have faced** give a sense of psychological feeling of the country. Another *material process*-**harboured and allowed** reveals this psychological feeling.

In clause 16, he expressed the belief that only the people of Nigeria themselves can solve their problem as indicated in the *phenomenon*-**a general decline**, that is, collapse of the system.

Clauses 17, 18 and 19 present the message of national healing, peace and unity in diversity. This further confirms the president's commitment and sincerity to the project Nigeria. It was his view that every Nigerian should see themselves as one. Clause 17 begins with the *actor*- **we** followed by the *material process*-**need to begin** which is directed at the *goal*-**a sincere process of national healing**. The appeal for national unit by the President features in clause 18 as contained in the *mental process*- **seeing** and the *phenomenon*-**ourselves as Nigerians**. The fronting of the *material process* -**to start** is directed at the *goal*-**this healing process**. The word healing mentioned in clause 17 is repeated here for emphasis. Another *material process*-**blessed** is directed at the *goal*-**with a most important asset**, indicating the fact that Nigeria has the potentials for socio-economic and socio-political development.

Clauses 20 and 21 are confirmation of Nigeria great potentials for development which was expressed in the previous clause. The *actor*-**Nigerians** in clause 20 points to this fact in the *material process*- **excel** and the *goal*-**in science, technology, medicine, sports, arts and many other fields**. Clause 21 begins with a fronted *attendant circumstance*-**Similarly, the creativity, ingenuity and resourcefulness of Nigerians at home**, the *material process* -**recognized** and the *phenomenon*- **endeavours** attest to the recognition of

Nigeria **globally** (*circumstance*).

Clauses 22 and 23 express the need for the citizens to come together to achieve a common goal. In clause 22, the *material process* - **pursue** with the *actor-we* directed at the *goal-our aspirations* which can only be achieved with cooperation. In clause 23, the speaker uses the *material process-can change* with the *actor-we* directed at the *goal- our condition* to express his optimism that the citizens can make life better for themselves and bring development to the country if they work together as a people.

In clause 24, the speaker uses the *material process-chose* with the *actor-I* to mention one very important action he performs regularly to bring Nigeria to greatness-**reflection**. The fronting of the *phenomenon-for a collective reflection* in the second part of the clause expresses the speaker's appeal for other Nigerians to cultivate the same attitude. The *relational process-is* pointing to the *material process-laying* is further emphasizing the fact that **a collective commitment by Nigerians** (*Phenomenon*) is a key factor in sustaining the solid foundation his administration has laid.

Clause 25 is a relational clause where the speakers establish the fact that Nigeria **is** (*relational process*) not a country for Mr. President, any ruling or opposition party (*Circumstantial*). **The adjunct-but** identified a contrary opinion in the **phenomenon** a country for all of us. The *material process-must play* with the *actor-we* directed at the *goal-our part* expresses the appeal of the speaker to the people- **to make** (*material process*) **this country(goal)** what **we** (actor) **desire**.

In clause 26, the speaker chooses the *material process-to achieve* with the *goal-this* and the *actor-we*, and another *material process-must focus* with the *goal-our minds together as a people* to call for action **in resolving** (*Material process*) **the critical challenges** (*identifier*) facing the country. The *identifier-these* and the *mental process-include* identifies these critical challenges and the solutions to them in the remaining part of the clause. The speaker uses some key *material* and *relational processes*, *actors* and *attendant circumstance* to list these critical challenges and solution to them. These include:

- i. **Material process**: evolving, leaves, supporting, demanding, contributing, interesting, harnessing, to attain, lifting, strengthening, imbibing and protecting.
- ii. **Relational process**: is
- iii. **Goal**: power, accountability of elected representatives, good governance, commitment to peaceful co-existence, our tremendous natural and human resources, our goals, 100 hundred million Nigerians, institutions, them, national interest, tolerance.

Clause 27 is fronted with a *senser-I* and a *relational process-is*. *The phenomenon-a firm believer* with the *attendant circumstance-in transparent fair and credible election* identifies what the speaker stands for. **The material process- has been demonstrated** directed at the *goal-during my period* with the *attendant circumstance* testify to the claim of the speaker. Clause 28 is a continuation of the previous clause. Here, the speaker further confirms his commitment to democratic value as indicated in the *attendant circumstance-The recent build-up and eventual outcome of the Edo state elections*, the *material process-should encourage* and the *goal- Nigerians*. Further confirmation is contained in the *material process-to bequeath*, *goal-to this country processes and procedures that*, *material process-would guarantee*, *circumstantial-that the people vote count*.

Clause 29 begins with *attendant circumstance-the problem with our democracy* and a *relational process-are*, an *attribute-mainly human*, a *material process-induced*, an *antecedent circumstance-as desperate* and a *phenomenon-desire for power*.

Clauses 30 and 31 provide the picture of what democracy should be and the consequences of violating its processes and rules. Clause 30 is a material clause that contains four *material processes-pursuing, recognizes, choose to bargain off and should be prepared. I* as *actor* is introduced functioning as the performer of the actions indicated in the clause while the *phenomenon-power of the people* identifies the value of democracy. The *material process-choose to bargain off* with the *goal-their power* and another *material process-should be prepared* directed at the *goal-for denial of their rights* express the consequence of the citizens not defending their democracy.

Clause 31 is also a material clause that contains four *material processes-is made, realize, lead to, compromising and to upturn*. The clause identifies the consequences of violating electoral processes and laws as contain in the processes-**is made, realize, lead to, compromising to upturn**, *the participant-we*, *the goal-the judiciary, legitimate decision of the people*, *the attendant circumstance-more urgent, than even before* and *the phenomenon-a transparent, free, fair and credible election, desperation*.

In clause 32, the fronting of *the actor- I* with the *relational process-is* and the *material process-support* directed at the *goal-the enthronement of the rule of law* as well as the *material process-avoiding* also directed at the *goal-actions that compromise the judiciary* all express the speaker appeal for the need to allow democracy work.

Clause 33 contains the expression of the President confidence in the citizens to live together in peace and harmony and use their strength to collectively build a united, strong and reliable country. This expression is contained in the key statement-**a people that have the capacity (phenomenon) to live (Material process)** peacefully with one another (*Goal: Circumstantial*) In clause 34, Buhari wants the people to share in his belief in a crime free and peaceful nation when he declared that-**as a government (Identified) we (actor) remain**

**committed to** (*Material process*) **our constitutional oath** (*Goal*) of **securing** (*material process*) **the lives and properties of the citizenry** (*Goal: Circumstantial*). He however believed that **these challenges** (*phenomenon*) of insecurity can only be solved by the people themselves **by providing** (*material process*) **community- level intelligence** (*Phenomenon*).

The trend of discussion in the last clause is carried into clause 35 which contains four material processes indicating more actions that are to be taken to make lives comfortable for the people. These actions are expressed in the material processes- **moving, strengthen, provide and eradicate**. The result of these actions is contained in the *goals* and *attendant circumstance*- **eradicates poverty from our mists and provide sustainable means of livelihood**.

### **Discussion of Findings**

This study, has to some extent demonstrated that discourse has structure, meaning and action. The speaker employs linguistic facilities by choosing from the various semantic options available to him to convey his information. It is found that the major context of the speech is revealed through the analysis of the transitivity system. The predominance of the verbs in the material process as indicated in the table and the pie chart shows that the President chose action-oriented processes as the veritable vehicle to demonstrate his seriousness and sincerity to serve the nation. He deliberately chose appropriate words to change the orientation of the people to work together for the unity of the country. The application of analytical tools of SFT made it possible to describe the President's speech as a resource organized according to the functions it has evolved to accomplish as several communicative and persuasive strategies employed by the President have been identified. As demonstrated in the study, it is found that President Buhari in an attempt to woo the people to accept his government policies, used highly persuasive language to present these policies and programmes to them. He demonstrated this by beginning his speech with an expression of appreciation to the people for given him their mandate to return as their President to serve a second time tenure. He also deliberately chose appropriate words to change the orientation of the people towards having positive attitude to the unity, development and progress of the country.

It is also observed that the theoretical approach applied was a relevant and effective grammatical model to accounting for socio-cultural and socio-political factors involved in the speech as it is found that the President was greatly influenced by his socio-political background. This is demonstrated in the President reference to the efforts of the country's founding fathers who struggled for independence and the need for the citizens to work towards achieving their aspirations. The study has also shown that contextual features contribute greatly to the meaning of discourse. It is found from the speech that knowledge of the physical and social environment where a discourse is produced can have great impact on

the nature and meaning of the discourse accomplished through the use of language. The study has demonstrated how the President deployed contextual variable to communicate meaning.

### **Conclusion**

From the analysis carried out in this study, it can be inferred that Buhari has successfully manipulated language to bring the people into agreeing with him that being together as a nation will attract more benefits to Nigerians than living as separate ethnic nationalities. It is also evident in the speech that as a united country, the nation would be strong but when separated into smaller entities, it gets weaker and prone to various security threats. It is when the people work together as a country that overcoming challenges usually get faster and easier. Hopefully, these ideas are expected to have a lasting impression on the people.

The language used in the speech functions as motivation to gear the people into actions of making decisive resolutions to support the government to move the country forward from where selfish individual and ethnic motives have restricted the growth of the country. One can therefore conclude that the resourcefulness of language is very significant in human society as language and discourse will continue to play central role in communication, interaction and the establishment of a sustainable democratic society.

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### **Semantic Analysis of President Muhammadu Buhari's 2022 Independence Day Speech**

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