RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE RHETORIC OF TENTATIVENESS AND SUBJECTIVITY IN SELECTED NIGERIAN INAUGURAL POLITICAL SPEECHES

CHINWE R. EZEIFEKA

Department of English Language and Literature, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, PMB 5025, Awka,
Nigeria
chiezeifeka@gmail.com

CHINWE R. EZEIFEKA

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on Nigerian political leadership as one of the indices of national transformation and appraises the rhetoric of tentativeness and subjectivity in selected inaugural political speeches of two Nigerian past leaders: Olusegun Obasanjo (1999) and Alhaji Shehu Shagari (1979). Specifically, it focuses on the system of Modality, the grammar of the clause that expresses the speaker's judgement and modal assessment. A total of 152 and 114 clauses were selected from the two speeches respectively on the grounds that they contain the targeted linguistic items. These were analyzed using Halliday's systemic functional grammar (SFG) model and insights from critical discourse analysis (CDA). Our findings showed persistent use of high and median value modals that are implicitly and explicitly subjective and a few implicitly and explicitly objective ones, thus construing meanings in the region of modalized probability (for propositions), modulated obligation and inclination (for proposals), the latter having the tendency to divest the speakers of sole responsibility and commitment in the offer of goods-&-services. These grammatical choices foreground unverifiable, tentative personal convictions as the basis for authenticating propositions and proposals that border on national transformation but beg questions of implementation. The paper argues that this is a political rhetoric aimed at expressing subjectivities as *fait accompli* to ensure continued hegemony. These indeterminate and non-committal linguistic choices in the system of Modality are called up for scrutiny in the light of CDA quest for critical language awareness on the part of the electorate as well as the power elite.

Keywords: rhetoric, Modality, systemic functional grammar, critical discourse analysis, political speeches, tentativeness, subjectivity

INTRODUCTION

The theme of national transformation is pertinent at this period when our country Nigeria seems to be bedeviled by multiple ills of poverty, underdevelopment, famine, pestilence, draught, civil strife, terrorism, bad governance, inter-ethnic and inter-religious violence. It is also interesting to note that language and literature scholars have taken a bold step to use the resources at their disposal – words – to address issues of national transformation. One of such areas of national transformation which this paper attempts to

address is the area of political leadership. Nigeria is one of the African nations that have experienced hydra-headed problems of political leadership.

Available literatures on the Nigerian political experience since her independence from the British in 1960 have not been favourable (Ndubisi 45ff, Adegbulu 96-120, Nwokike 124-131). A number of factors have been implicated in bringing about this bleak political history. Ndubisi attributed this situation to what he termed the 'zoo' leadership which is symbolized by corruption, embezzlement, irrationality, fraudulence, deceit, sectionalism, selfishness, recklessness, immorality, lack of sense of direction and devotion, indiscipline, greed, avarice, lust for power and fragrant abuse of office. He lamented the impunity with which successive leadership in Nigeria had turned the country from 'the Garden of Eden or Paradise' which her rich human and natural resources would have placed her, into a 'zoological garden' 'the animal kingdom instead of human kingdom', where 'beasts' reign (Ndubisi 4). He surmised that the catalogue of woes in the country was the product of 'corruption glut' or 'an oversupply of corruption'. It is not a plus for Nigerian governance that Transparency International in the year 2000 would declare the country the second most corrupt nation in the world (Nwankwere, 330).

The Shagari 1979 and Obasanjo 1999 inaugural speeches which constitute the textual data for this study, are important in the Nigerian political history. In the first instance, Nigerians identified with these politicians as fellow civilians. Secondly, they represented hope, succour, and a source of freedom from military dictatorship, corruption, human right abuses as well as an opportunity to fulfill the expectations of the teeming population and improve living conditions. In fact, according to Osuntokun, Aworawo and Masajuwa (228), Obasanjo's inaugural speech captioned "The New Dawn" was regarded by the international community as 'the second most important day in Africa's recent history, after Nelson Mandela's installation as president of South Africa'.

Political speeches especially inaugurals are usually awaited for by the elected and electorate with high expectations. For the electorate, an inaugural speech is a time to confirm that their decision to vote for a particular candidate is justified judging by the number of proposals and promises of positive affirmative action the candidate puts forward. For the elected office holder, it is, according to Charteris-Black (87), "an opportunity to indulge in political fantasy… because it usually occurs immediately after the election has been won", and so is "unlikely to be taken as a formal statement of policy". It is a period to establish hegemony and at the same time to propose intentions of commitment and sensitivity to the yearnings and expectations of the electorate.

The two inaugural speeches are hereby subjected to critical discourse analysis to find out how the interpersonal meaning conveyed in the speeches represents plans of, and commitment to positive action, how lexical choices reflect objective facts, or whether they encode tentative or subjective probabilities. Tentativeness means being uncertain, hesitant and cautious in making propositions or proposals such that the agent is unsure of its accomplishment or implementation (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary 1525). Similarly, subjectivity is based on personal opinion, conviction, thoughts and feelings. Subjectivism as a philosophical assumption presupposes that "all knowledge is subjective because there can never be an objective form of truth or perception" on a particular issue (Chambers 1405). This assertion seems to negate the presumed objectivity that speakers and writers should strive after.

This above view gives credence to the possibility of imposing personal ideologies by those with greater access to political and social power which the less privileged accept as the truth. This assertion of hinging human knowledge on subjectivism is equally implausible as objective facts lie at the root of much world knowledge. This argument locates the present work within the research paradigm of critical discourse analysis (CDA) which views all textual representations with skepticism. CDA support the view that textual representations should be viewed critically in order to properly appraise their implications to issues of power and interpersonal relations, and by so doing, achieve what has been called "critical language

awareness" (Fairclough *Critical Awareness* 75). Taking these insights to the Nigerian experience of political speeches, we pose these questions:

- What lexicogrammatical choices encode the rhetoric of tentativeness and subjectivity in the selected speeches?
- What systemic patterns of choices in the grammar of the clause were deployed by the speakers to achieve this rhetoric?
- What meaning relations do these choices construe?
- How do these choices assign modal responsibility to the speakers in the propositions and proposals intended in the speeches?
- What are the implications of the findings to the theme of national transformation?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The work is hinged on two complementary theoretical models: critical discourse analysis and systemic functional grammar. These models see language use as social practice and as a meaning-making resource which speakers and writers use to reflect on their experiences of the world as well as enact their personal and group relationships. We shall discuss the two models in detail in the following sections to find out how they inform the arguments in the present study.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis relates language use to issues of power and ideology. In the first instance, interpersonal and group relations within social institutions are said to be based on power demonstrated through language. For instance, political power exists by means of language through speeches, laws, rules and regulations (Wareing 11). According to Charteris-Black (87), political speeches are distinct genres of elitist political discourse because they emanate from the powerful political elite and so engage the mind of the electorate. They are looked upon as dominant discourses that provide social direction and control by exploring the potential for a better world. It is argued that our political leaders have greater access to the medium of communication and so can control what gets said and how they are presented to the electorate without much opposition from their subjects who

are not so privileged and who are at the other end of the power continuum. CDA therefore takes political stance explicitly, (Weiss and Wodak 14) that is, the analyst takes the side of the less-privileged, and critically scrutinizes textual representations of the power elite in order to find out the power structures these texts enact and how discourse can be used in their deconstruction.

Ideology, on the other hand, has been defined as a complex body of ideas, beliefs, values and insights we hold as individuals and groups that influence and direct our behaviour and serve as a basis for our actions as individuals and as groups (Ogunmodede x). This definition sees ideology as simply a world-view and not as a negative concept. Another definition sees ideology in its pejorative sense as 'a system of ideas and beliefs about human conduct which has normally been simplified and manipulated in order to obtain popular support for certain actions and which is usually emotive in its reference to social action' (Watson and Hill 129).

The critical analyst has the sole objective of the elision of power and dominant ideological positions in theory and analysis of texts (Fairclough *CDA* 17). Its major aims are: creating awareness or raising consciousness, enlightenment, intervention and emancipation, demystifying discourse by locating features that are ideologically-loaded, providing empowerment to the less dominant group to debunk the repressive worldview through linguistic means, and ultimately change the prevailing status quo if possible to make for equitable representation of individuals and groups, what Mey (297) called 'emancipatory linguistics'. CDA has therefore been described as 'linguistics with a conscience and a cause' (Wardhaugh 10; Widdowson 77), aimed at making discourse free from hidden meanings that sustain dominance in order to create a social structure where every institutional subject is equitably and fairly represented in discourse. That is at the crux of this paper, to discover how linguistic choices in the speeches serve the speakers' rhetoric of tentativeness and subjectivity and how the interpersonal meanings conveyed by these choices sustain hegemonic regimes or manufacture of consent for the political power elite.

CHINWE R. EZEIFEKA

Systemic Functional Linguistics

The systemic functional linguistics theory, propounded by the London School linguist, Michael Halliday and his mentor J.R. Firth, has been recognized by many scholars working in the area of CDA as a powerful explanatory and evaluative framework for analyzing language use in context. Thus, most of the references in this section are credited to Halliday's works (Halliday, 1973, 1978 and 1985) and to the 2004 joint revision of *Introduction to Functional Grammar* by Halliday and Matthiessen. This framework sees discourse – language use in speech and writing –as a strategic meaning-making and text-forming resource which enables people to accomplish their purposes in life, convey their intentions, make sense of their experiences in the world and act out their personal and group relationships (Halliday and Matthiessen 29-30). The fundamental concept of the theory is that language is part of the social semiotic (Halliday 108-126) – a resource for the social man/woman to make meaning by choosing, and this meaning resides in specific contexts and in the systemic patterns of choice of linguistic items. The concept of 'meaning as choice' is essentially the basic component of systemic theory.

Furthermore, Halliday in his SFG asserts that the language system provides the language user with a rich inventory of alternative choices which are in paradigmatic relationship with one another. The choice the language user eventually makes from the totality of other choices open to them will depend on their position in the context of situation and on the function that particular choice will perform in their lives. The question this theory poses is basically why a language user chooses a particular linguistic item as against the myriad of other potential choices that could have been made. It is argued that actual linguistic choices are the product of the speakers' worldview, ideological positions and the angle of vision they want to project as the truth. Halliday has therefore distinguished between 'the potential' and 'the actual' choices, (Eggins 20, Halliday *Social Semiotic* 40), the former referring to the total meaning potentials from where a speaker chooses one linguistic item from among a range of options open to them (systemic), and the latter to the actual choices including the function of the choice in a given context of situation (functional). The concept, 'systemic-functional' therefore derives from these twin attributes of language, on the one hand as systemic, because it comprises a network of potential alternative choices. On the other hand, it is functional because the actual choices (instantiated as "texts") we eventually make out of the totality and the rich inventory of the options open to us in the linguistic system will have a function to perform in our lives. This view of language led Halliday (*Social Semiotic* 40) to refer to a text as 'actualized meaning potential' comprising actual choices of speakers/writers. We therefore regard the political texts under review as the actualized meaning potential of the speakers' worldviews and ideological positions.

Halliday (*Explorations* 29) identified three 'meaning potentials' which texts convey simultaneously in the grammar of the clause and referred to them as 'metafunctions'. He calls these metafunctions 'the formalized meaning potential of language' or 'the functional components of the grammar'. These include: **ideational, interpersonal** and **textual** metafunctions. The clause being the basic unit of analysis in systemic functional grammar, these three metafunctions are realized in the grammar of the clause by the lexicogrammatical systems of Transitivity, Mood and Theme respectively. Though we shall not be discussing Transitivity and Theme in detail, we shall appeal to the ideational/experiential and the textual metafunctions to enable us identify the macroproposdons that form the subject matter of each move structure of the speeches and how the speeches are generically or schematically structured to achieve textual coherence respectively. In the following section, we shall discuss in more detail the Mood system which is the main focus of this paper as it is the grammar of interpersonal meaning.

The Mood Structure

The Mood structure is the grammar of interpersonal meaning. The interpersonal metafunction is described as the 'participatory function', the grammar of personal participation which expresses the speaker's role in a speech event, his/her personal commitment, intentions,

beliefs, attitudes, judgements and interaction with others. It involves the use of language to enact and maintain personal and social relationships including persuading people to do things, to believe in things and the speaker's intrusion into the speech act (Haliiday *Explorations* 41). It represents the speaker's meaning potential as an intruder, a means of acting on things. (Halliday *Social Semiotic* 112). The interpersonal function relates to the grammar of the clause as an exchange of information and goods-&-services (Halliday and Matthiessen 106ff). The semantic function of the clause in the exchange of information is a proposition while in the exchange of goods-&-services, it is a proposal (Halliday and Matthiessen 110-111).

Mood comprises the Subject (a nominal element) and the Finite (a verbal element) which also includes the possibility of Polarity. The Subject is regarded as the "anchor" of the proposition or proposal. It supplies what it takes for the proposition or the proposal to be affirmed or denied or to be desirable or undesirable respectively. The success or failure of the proposition or proposal is vested on the Subject. It is the element of the clause that carries "modal responsibility". The Subject is also the unmarked Theme in a declarative clause ((Halliday and Matthiessen 163). Modal responsibility implies that the validity or otherwise of the interactive event is vested on the Subject. We had discussed the function of the Subject as the responsible agent and how the role of the subject conflates with that of the Actor in determining modal responsibility and in effecting concrete quanta of change in the context of the utterances. (Ezeifeka *Experiential Meaning* 179-182, Ezeifeka *Interpersonal meaning* 55-58)

The Finite element is the first element in the verbal group, that is, the finite temporal operator which expresses tense and the finite modal operator which expresses modality as in for instance, *is* in *He is sleeping in that room* and *must* in *He must be in that room*. The Finite element usually precedes the predicator or may be fused with it. In the latter case, the finite element is usually retrieved by the dummy operator "do". As has been mentioned earlier, the Finite relates the proposition or the proposal to the 'here and now'

and to its context in the speech event in two ways, (Halliday and Matthiessen 116)

- By reference to the time of speaking. This is called "the primary tense" – present, past, future using temporal operators such as the verb "be" (is, are, was, were, be) "have" (have, has, had) and "do" (do, did, done) "shall", "will", "would", "should" and these could be marked or unmarked for polarity.

- By reference to the judgement of the speaker as to how likely or unlikely something is based on the speaker's opinion and personal convictions. This is called "Modality" (Halliday and Matthiessen 116) also marked for polarity. A proposition, for instance, may become arguable through being assessed in terms of the degree of probability or obligation that is associated with it. It provides the clause with a kind of modal assessment (Halliday and Matthiessen 126, 605).

Our focus would be on the second function of the Finite element of the Mood structure – the system of Modality – as it construes the speakers' personal judgement and convictions. However the system of Polarity and temporal operators are used to provide illustrations of alternative usages and to establish the fact that Modality operates in the region of probability between the positive and negative poles, with its manifestations ranging from implicitly/explicitly subjective/objective to implicitly/explicitly subjective/objective.

Modality

The one-time governor of Anambra State, Dr Chinweoke Mbadinuju, came up with a slogan on his assumption of office: 'It **shall** be well with Anambra State'. According to Quirk and Greenbaum (47, 54), 'shall' has both temporal function expressing a neutral future as well as a modal function expressing personal volition and insistence. This slogan did not last long in use simply because people may have noticed its illusive, tentative, and subjective prediction, thus locating it within the region of probability and uncertainty. With time, the modal operator was replaced with a temporal operator which situates the proposition in time and space, in the "here and now" and within the factual

CHINWE R. EZEIFEKA

region as realizable goal. The expression was thus transformed to 'It **is** well with Anambra State'. It is not surprising why this seemingly innocuous expression could cause such reaction. It simply further illustrates the thesis of this paper. It shows the indeterminacy of such tentative and subjective usages and their undesirability in propositions and proposals of national consequence.

Modality presupposes that there are intermediate degrees between the two extremes of Polarity: the positive pole ("it is" for propositions, and "do it" for proposals) and negative pole (it is not, don't do it) with reference to the opinion and judgements of the speaker (Halliday and Matthiessen 146-147). Thus, in expressing modal assessment or speaker opinion, the grammar recognizes in addition to the two poles of "yes" (positive polarity) and "no" (negative polarity), other intermediate degrees of indeterminacy or uncertainty. They are realized in the grammar of the clause in three ways:

- by finite modal operators such as *may, must, will, can, won't, needn't, should* (Halliday and Matthiessen 148, 622)
- comment/modal adjuncts functioning as interpersonal adjuncts, expressed by adverbial group or prepositional phrases like *surely, perhaps, certainly, probably, possibly, in my opinion.*(for the difference between comment and modal adjuncts see Halliday and Matthiessen 126-132)
- by whole clauses such as *I think… I am aware…, I know... I am sure..., It is possible…, it is certain…, it is very likely…* They are used to express the speaker's opinion when they occur as statements but as questions, they are used to request for the listener's opinion. These choices therefore construe areas of doubt, probability, tentativeness and subjectivity in discourse.

The finite modal operators can be graded on a scale of values "low", "median" or "high" probability or usuality as in Table 1:

Table 1: Values of Modality on the Positive-Negative Pole

Positive		Negative
Low	can, may, could, might, dare	needn't, doesn't/didn't + need to/have to
Median	will, would, should, is/was to	won't, wouldn't, shouldn't, isn't/wasn't to
High	must, ought to, need, has/had to	mustn't, oughtn't to, can't, couldn't, mayn't, mightn't, hasn't/hadn't (to)

Source: **Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 116**

It should be noted that the modal "shall" is not listed as a modal operator in the above diagram. It was listed together with "will" as finite temporal operator indicating futurity (Halliday & Matthiessen 116, Quirk and Greenbaum 47). However, "shall" and "will" can serve both temporal and modal functions. According to Quirk and Greenbaum 1973:54 "'shall' shows "willingness on the part of the speaker in the 2nd and 3rd person… intention on the part of the speaker, only in the 1st person… (and) insistence in restricted use" and so indicates the speaker's volition in reference to personal convictions and judgements (as in the above slogan). Thus some of the clauses containing these items in their volitional and discretionary functions and not as indicators of futurity are counted among those indicating tentative and subjective proposals in our textual data.

Halliday and Matthiessen (619) gave a diagrammatic representation of the system network of modality and its relationship to Polarity and Mood.

Figure 1 represents the range of meanings that lie between yes and no, that is, the intermediate degrees between positive and negative polarity. Depending on the speech function of the clause, propositions (information-type clause, congruently realized as indicative) which can be affirmed or denied are referred to as modalization-type. They construe the region of "probability" (maybe) and "usuality" (sometimes). Proposals (goods-&-services-type clause, realized as imperative) cannot be affirmed or denied as they

CHINWE R. EZEIFEKA

have no truth value, but can either be desirable or undesirable, just as is the case with constative and performative utterances in speech acts. They are referred as modulation-type, because when an imperative is modulated, it is realized as an indicative as in *come here,* modulated to the indicative *you must come here* (Halliday and Matthiessen 618). Modulation-type modality

construes meanings of the type "obligation" (deontic modals – giving directives) and "inclination" (making offers). In the speeches, these choices would be analyzed to find out how they commit the speakers to the propositions and proposals

Figure 1: The System Network of Modality
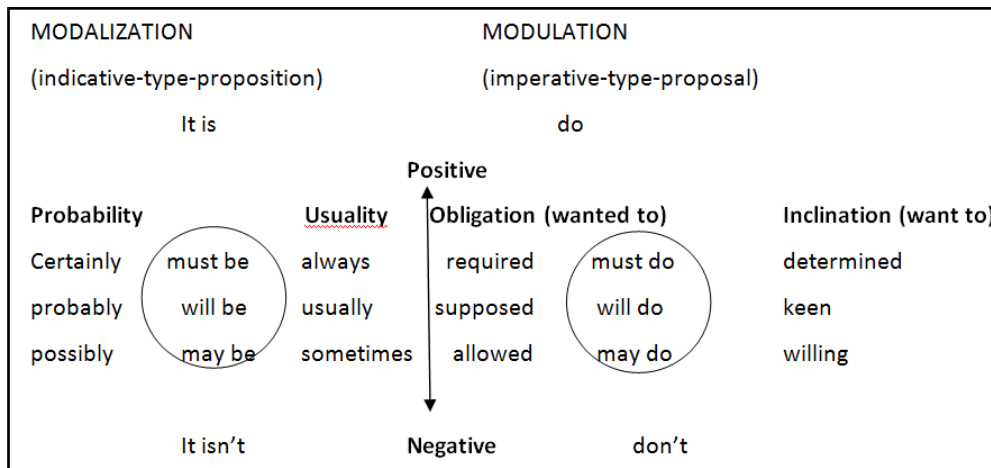
Source: Halliday and Matthiessen (2004:619)

Congruent and Metaphorical Realizations of Modality

In discussing the above topic, Halliday and Matthiessen (149-150, 626) considered these concepts as essential to the system of Modality or modal assessment. Whereas the word "congruent" refers to the straightforward mode of expressing modality using modal operators and mood/comment adjuncts, "incongruent" or "metaphorical" mode is more oblique, involving a whole clause serving interpersonal function as a modal adjunct. These modes of expressing Modality function in two dimensions: These include:

- the system of ORIENTATION of modality on the **"subjective-objective"** dimension of the speaker's judgement. By 'orientation' is meant the extent of the speaker's conviction or authority over a particular opinion or judgement and;
- a systemic contrast in MANIFESTATION between the **"explicit-implicit"** modality. (for detailed illustration of subjective/objective, explicit/implicit

modality, see Halliday and Maatthiessen 620)

Since Modality represents the speaker's angle either on the validity of the assertion (proposition) or on the rights and wrongs of the proposal, orientation determines how each type of modality will be realized in the grammar of the clause – whether subjectively or objectively. For instance:

Subjective – he couldn't have meant that, could he? (modal operator – could)

Objective – Surely, he didn't mean that, did he? (comment adjunct – surely)

In the subjective example, the validity of the proposition is made to rest on the speaker's own judgement. The speaker is convinced of his/her opinion and judgements and only wants the listener to confirm his/her estimate of the probabilities (I know it is unlikely; do you share my opinion?). However, in the objective illustration, the validity of the proposition is shared between the speaker and the addressee and the speaker wants the listener to acknowledge this shared conviction (We know it is unlikely, isn't it?).

The above examples represent the congruent realization of modality where the speaker's opinion regarding the probability the validity of his/her observation is coded as modal element within the clause – that is, as either an adverbial group or prepositional phrase saving as modal/comment Adjunct such as: *surely, certainly, probably, possibly, in my opinion, as usual*; or a finite modal operator such as *may, must, will, can, won't, needn't, should*. (Halliday and Matthiessen 148, 622; Quirk and Greenbaum 52-57). The manifestation of these congruent forms of the subjective - objective dimension is usually implicit with respect to the source of the conviction (Halliday and Matthiessen 149).

Modal assessment can also be realized in the system of modality by a whole clause using the systemic resources of grammatical metaphor and projection (Halliday and Matthiessen 613-616). Grammatical metaphor manifests in two ways – ideational metaphor and interpersonal metaphor. We are concerned here with interpersonal metaphor as it relates to the system of Modality. Whereas in its congruent form, Modality is realized as an adjunct to a proposition, in its metaphorical form it is upgraded to becoming a proposition in its own right. The metaphoric strategy in the system of modality is to "upgrade" the interpersonal assessment from group rank to clause rank – from adverbial group or prepositional phrase or a modal operator serving within a simple clause to a clause serving within a clause nexus of "projection" (*I think that …., I believe that* ……) or "embedding" (*it is believed, it is probable*…..). The interpersonal projection embodied in the speech function as a Mood Adjunct (*I think*) is realized as if it were an ideational projection – that is, ideational resources are co-opted to serve interpersonal purposes.

Interpersonal metaphor is thus a systemic resource that tends to expand the meaning potential of the interpersonal system of the clause by creating new layers or patterns of structural realizations and by opening up new systemic domains of meaning (Halliday and Matthiessen 626). This expansion in meaning potential is more evident in the addition of the implicit and explicit variants to the subjective and objective orientation of modality

using the resources of projection. In its congruent form, the manifestation of the assessment interpersonally is implicit because it does not represent the Sayer or Senser rather it enacts the speaker's opinion, an enactment of his or her degree of commitment to the proposition is assessed as being projected by somebody other than the speaker. They can be in any of these two dimensions
subjective – implicit – realized by finite modal operator – *may, could, will, must*.
objective – implicit – realized by Mood and Comment Adjuncts: *evidently, regrettably, supposedly, reportedly, allegedly, arguably, presumably.*
In its metaphorical mode, the interpersonal element assumes ideational meaning – as a clause nexus of the hypotactic projection type and the manifestation of the assessment becomes explicit: it is also realized in these two ways:
Subjective-explicit- The modal assessment is logically realized, as a projecting mental clause plus an idea clause where the "Senser" is explicitly represented as the speaker "I"
I guess we should call him. *I think* we can handle it. *I suppose* that settles it. *I don't know* what he meant by that.
Objective – explicit – Here the assessment is realized experientially as Attribute of an intensive attributive relational clause with a factual Carrier E.g.
It is regrettable that… It is certain… It is obvious… It is not possible…
The reason for the choice between the explicitly-subjective (*I think)* and the explicitly-objective (*it is thought*) lies at the root of the analysis of modality, why speakers would like to give prominence to their subjective point of view in the one instance, and in the other, make it appear as if they are tentative or they want to shift the responsibility to others. This apparent paradox, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (624-625), is the inevitable feature of the whole system of modality which makes it possible for us to say we are certain when in fact we are not.
For instance, when we say;
Emeka has left – a statement of fact: (We are sure)

CHINWE R. EZEIFEKA

But when we add a high value probability of whatever orientation, our conviction becomes shaky and doubtful as in the following examples:

Emeka has *certainly* left – objective – implicit

I am certain Emeka left – subjective – explicit

Mary *must* have left – subjective – implicit

(We are not sure)

It is certain that Mary left – objective – explicit

(We are not sure)

According to Halliday and Matthiessen,

> This means that we are admitting an element of doubt – which we may try to conceal by objectifying the expression of certainty. Hence whereas the subjective metaphors which state clearly – "this is how I see it" take on all values: (I think, I am sure, I don't believe, I doubt, etc), most of the objectifying metaphors express a "high" value probability or obligation – that is, they are different ways of claiming objective certainty or necessity for something that is in fact a matter of opinion. Most of the games people play in the daily round of skirmishing involve metaphors of the objectifying kind. (625)

METHODOLOGY AND TEXTUAL DATA

As mentioned earlier, our textual data were drawn from the two inaugural speeches of General Olusegun Obasanjo and Alhaji Shehu Shagari. The two speeches are henceforth referred to as Speech 1 and Speech 2 respectively. These speeches are selected because they belong to Nigerian past leaders and could be used as yardstick to assess Nigeria's journey on the road to national transformation as well as provide the current leaders with areas that need to be redressed for a better political future. A purposive sampling of 152 and 114 clauses were drawn from Speech 1 and Speech 2 respectively which constitute two-thirds of the total number of clauses in each speech. Whereas Speech 1 has a total of 227 clauses, Speech 2 has 170 clauses in all. This means that out of every three clauses, two were selected for the analysis.

Our approach to data analysis is qualitative as well as quantitative. We proceeded to reduce the speeches to macropropositions or generic structure to get a kind of an overview of the moves that make up the speech. We then went on to count the type of modal elements used to express the speakers' judgement in the form of modal operators, comment /modal adjuncts and the incongruent realization of modality using whole clauses in the form of interpersonal metaphor. Then we noted the use in each of the move structures and their implications on the propositions and proposals in the speeches, that is, how these choices express certainty – uncertainty and the degrees of probability and inclination between the two opposing poles. In addition to quantitative data, we also provided sample texts to buttress our findings with concrete textual data. The numerical values and sample texts were then used to make inferences.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data for this study are categorized into three, first, presentation of the generic or move structure of the speeches which will help determine the move with high prevalence of modal elements. Second, a quantitative analysis of modality counts in the speeches in relation to the move structures will help determine this prevalence earlier mentioned; and third, presentation of sample texts to illustrate the different orientations and manifestations of modality.

Table 2: Summary of the Generic/Schematic Structure of the Speeches

Moves	Speech 1	Speech 2
M_1	Announcing election to presidency as destiny preordained by God/Establishing common ground	Announcing the birth of second Republic. Election as President. Establishing common ground
M_2	Accepting office "in all humility"	Assumption of office "as a result of a free, democratic and peaceful election"
M_3	Appreciating God and the electorate	Appreciating God and the electorate
M_4	Ills of past administration	Ills of past administration
M5	Goodness of present administration, promises of	Goodness of present administration, promises

CHINWE R. EZEIFEKA

	good times ahead	of good times ahead
M6	Challenges of present administration	Challenges of present administration
M7	Call for collective responsibility	Call for collective responsibility
M8	Coda	Tributes/Coda

The two speeches appear to have identical move structure in the flow of ideas. Table 2 analyzed the speeches according to the macropropositions or move structures that constitute the subject matter or the experiential/ideational component of the speeches. The two speeches were found to have identical move structures ranging from Moves 1 to 8.

Table 3: Choices in the Modality System of the Speeches by Move Structure

Moves (1)	Sampled Clauses (2)		Temporal Operators (3)		Modal Operators (4)		Modal Adjuncts (5)		Interpers. Metaphor (6)		Predicator (7)	
Speech	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2
M1	6	3	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	1
M2	2	3	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
M3	3	15	0	3	0	2	0	0	3	1	3	9
M4	41	5	24	3	3	0	0	1	0	1	13	2
M5	4	6	1	4	3	1	1	1	2	3	0	0
M6	85	72	20	27	53	35	0	0	6	2	9	10
M7	10	9	6	4	0	4	0	0	0	1	4	1
M8	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	152	114	53	45	62	43	2	2	11	8	33	24

Table 3 provides a run-down of choices of Modality in the speeches according the move structure of the speeches specified in Table 1. Column 1 indicates the moves while Column 2, captioned "Sampled Clauses", specifies the number of clauses sampled from each speech per move. Columns 3 and 7 contain choices of temporal operators and predicator only without the finite element respectively. However, Columns 4, 5 and 6 present modality choices in the form of finite modal operators, modal/comment adjuncts and interpersonal metaphor functioning as modal adjuncts respectively. S1 and S2 stands for Speeches 1 and 2 respectively. This table shows high prevalence of modality choices as against temporality choices. Most of these modal choices tend to cluster around Move 6: "Challenges of the Present Administration" whereas temporal operator choices cluster around Move 4: "Ills of past administration". Table 4 below provides a concise general summary of temporal and modal choices in the speeches.

Table 4: Summary of Choices in the Finite and Modality Systems

Temporal and Modal Choices	Occurrence in the Speeches		
	Speech 1 No=152	Speech 2 No=114	Total Clauses=266
Finite Temporal operators	53	45	98
Finite Modal Operators	62	43	105
Clauses as Modal adjuncts, interpersonal metaphor	11	8	19
Modal/Comment Adjuncts	2	2	4
Total	128	98	226

There is also a clear indication of more choices made in the modality system in the speeches showing tendency to locate the propositions and proposals in the speeches in the region of uncertainty. The

CHINWE R. EZEIFEKA

sample texts that follow illustrate some modality choices in the speeches that exemplify tentativeness and subjectivity of explicit/implicit orientation.

Text 1: Choice of Implicitly Subjective Modal Operators

Speech 1:

1. Politicians **must** carefully examine the budget// to ensure that funds are judiciously spent
2. They **must** avoid damage to their own credibility
3. They **must** not vote for themselves special privileges
4. They **must** join the campaign against corruption
5. There **will** be no sacred cows
6. …to implement measures that **would** restore confidence in governance.
7. …and they **must** help to reestablish integrity in the conduct of public affairs
8. …this administration **must** deal with the following issues even in these difficult times of near economy collapse.
9. …we **must** change our ways of governance and of doing business on this eve of the coming millennium
10. This we **must** do to ensure progress, justice, harmony and unity.

Speech 2:

1. However, we **must** all be determined to see// that higher wages and better conditions of service are matched by higher productivity in the interest of national development
2. //… the slogan "one nation one destiny shall be translated into reality
3. Nigeria **can** and **must** become a great and modern nation.
4. As we develop our economy, we **shall** be in a better position to provide the needed services and amenities for all our citizens

In the above text, the prevalence of high value modals of the obligation type construe modulated commands realized as indicative clauses. In these clauses, the speakers are not the potential Subjects and modal responsibility is made to rest on others including the speakers. Here the speakers and the

addressee and other non-interactant subjects share the obligation expressed by the modulated imperatives in the form of proposal. This reduces the load of modal responsibility assigned to the speakers. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (633), "the indicative realization of proposals has the effect of blurring the line between proposals directed at the addressee and propositions about how the world ought to be". By presenting proposals as modulated propositions, the speaker attenuates the effects of obligation, and by using high and median value implicitly subjective modal operators, the clauses construe the proposals in the region of indeterminacy and uncertainty as subjective and tentative proposals.

Text 2: Choice of Explicitly Subjective Modals using Interpersonal Metaphor

Speech 1

1. I **believe**// that this is what God Almighty has ordained for me and for my beloved country Nigeria and its people//
2. I **believe**// that this administration must deal with the following issues even in these difficult times of near economic collapse…
3. I **appreciate//** that the quality and caliber of the members of my cabinet and top appointments will send a positive or negative signal to Nigerians…
4. I **assure** you all// that it is the policy of this government to ensure fair remuneration in service and in retirement to public servants…
5. **I trust** they will keep it up
6. **I intend** to reconcile all those who feel alienated by past political events…
7. **I am** also **determined** to build a broad consensus amongst all parties…

Speech 2:

1. **We are determined** to transform Nigerian agriculture to a point //where Nigeria will be self-sufficient in food production//
2. For my part, **I assure you all**// that the federal government will give equal treatment to each state…
3. **We strongly believe**// that home ownership will lead to family pride and healthy surroundings in every Nigeria…

CHINWE R. EZEIFEKA

4. **I am aware//** of the constraints under which Nigerian workers have had to live in the immediate past….

5. **This administration is determined** that the slogan of "one nation one destiny" shall be translated into reality.

6. I **am convinced//** that these goals are attainable…

The expressions in bold in Texts 1 and 2 highlight the use of implicitly and explicitly subjective modals realized by modal operators and interpersonal metaphor respectively, showing the speakers' personal opinions, beliefs and judgements of the issues at stake. These convictions tend to border on the indeterminacy and are obvious evidences of tentativeness and subjectivity in the speeches. They do not represent any quantum of change in the socio-physical context but only as they exist in the speakers' imaginations as subjective opinions and tentative proposals.

Text 3: Choice of implicitly objective modals using comment/modal adjuncts
Speech 1:

1. Fellow Nigerians, we give praise to God for this day **specially** appointed by God Himself.

2. **On my part**, I will give the forthright, purposeful, committed, honest, transparent leadership that the situation demands.

Speech 2

1. **Surely**, we have learnt great lessons from the past

2. **For my part**, I assure you all that the Federal government will give equal treatment to each state of the Federation regardless of the party in power in that state.

Text 4: Choice of explicitly objective modals realized as interpersonal metaphor
Speech 1:

It is my resolve to work harmoniously with the legislature and the judiciary….

Speech 2:

It is our determination to do our utmost to contribute to their solution.

Text 5: Samples of suggested alternative usages
Speech 1:

1. The issue of crime **requires** much attention and seriousness as the issue of corruption

2. All Nigerian citizens and residents in our midst **are** entitled to the protection of life and property

3. To be appointed a minister or to any public office **is** not a license to loot public funds

4. It **is** a call to national service

Speech 2:

1. This government **accepts** the responsibility for free education

2. We **need** more schools, more teachers, more laboratories, more books, more desks, more playing fields and more numerous other supplies and equipment

3. This administration **stands committed** to ameliorate the conditions of Nigerian workers…

4. To achieve this objective **requires** the energy of all of us

These sample texts in Text 5, drawn from the speeches are more actionable, more located in time and space as realizable goals because of the use of temporal operators and predicators that assign responsibility for the actions to the Subject.

DISCUSSION

This study sets out to interrogate the rhetoric used by the past leadership in Nigeria in political speeches especially inaugurals where the electorate are highly expectant of propositions and proposals that would fulfill their expectations, solve their problems and improve their living conditions. The work looks at this rhetoric against the background of the myriad of failed promises and non-implementation culture that has characterized Nigerian leadership in the past. The work assumes that bringing up for scrutiny the verbalizations of the power elite in these speeches, in line with the tenets of CDA, would help to provide a kind of awareness and consciousness raising both to the power elite and the electorate on the semantic load of these discourses so that more care would be taken in the choices made in the linguistic system that would assure the subjects of commitment and responsibility to the proposals as against illusive and

CHINWE R. EZEIFEKA

indeterminate choices that beg the question of implementation.

In dealing with the questions posed by this study, we appealed to the Hallidayan stratification of the functional components of the grammar of the clause – ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions – in order to decipher which of the components construe the rhetoric of tentativeness and subjectivity in the speeches. Our findings show that this rhetoric is located in the grammar of interpersonal meaning, realized by the system of Mood, particularly in the patterns of Modality. As we have already stated in the review of our theoretical framework, Modality construes meaning as a range of indeterminate degrees of probability between the positive and negative Polarity.

The study also appealed to the other two metafunctions; the experiential component of the ideational metafunction and textual metafunction. Although the work is located in the interpersonal metafunction, we need the experiential metafunction to enable us assign content to the speeches by determining the macro-propositions or topics of each move as the ideas flow, and the textual metafunction to determine the generic/schematic structure of the speeches according to their cognitive move structure which characterize the speeches as political genres. This is in line with Halliday's (*Social Semiotic*) claim that the three metafunctions are realized simultaneously in the grammar of the clause.

In Table 1, we presented the move structure of the speeches and assigned macro-propositions according to the subject they address. We found that the two speeches have basically similar move structure in the logical coherence and flow of ideas and the macro-propositions show the unique textual patterning of political speeches. In Table 2, we itemized the modality choices according the moves. Our findings in Table 2 show that the majority of modal choices in their congruent and metaphorical forms seem to cluster around Move 6 that specify plans for action on the challenges facing the administration while temporal operators were used more in other moves. We have noted earlier that temporality and modality are located in the Finite element of the Mood system – the former,

realized by primary auxiliaries (*be, have, do)*, locates the proposition or proposal to the time of speaking, "the here and now" as realizable goal; and the latter, realized by modal auxiliaries, locates the proposition and proposals to the personal opinions, judgements and convictions of the speakers and within the region of indeterminacy, probability, uncertainty, usuality, inclination and obligation.

In answer to our first research question, we found that the lexicogrammatical choices that construe the rhetoric of tentativeness and subjectivity are realized congruently by modal operators and modal/comment adjuncts; and incongruently by grammatical metaphor of the interpersonal type. These are either subjective or objective in orientation and implicit or explicit in their manifestation. The sample texts provide illustrations of these systemic contrasts. We found in our analysis more choices of high and median value modals which are implicitly subjective (must, will, shall), representing the speakers' implicitly subjective volition, discretionary options and tentative possibilities which they want the addressee to acknowledge. For instance, 'must' is a high value modal that expresses high degree of obligation. In the first place, the modals used in Text 1 divest the speakers of modal responsibility as the Subjects are not the potential carrier of these obligations. The load of responsibility is strategically shifted to others that include the addressee thereby extricating themselves from direct commitment to these propositions and proposals. Secondly, though high value modals may simulate certainty, it encodes high probability, doubt and uncertainty (Halliday and Matthiessen 624-625), making the proposition and proposal tentative and subjective. The speakers are unsure and are implicitly calling on the addressee to acknowledge and accept the validity of the proposition, based on their own subjective convictions, which when picked up by the mood tag creates this illusion of tentativeness and subjectivity, as in:

> This administration must deal with the following issues… (Mustn't they? Don't you think so?).

This type of modal assessment is said to admit an element of doubt in the speaker's conviction of the

CHINWE R. EZEIFEKA

validity of the assertion and the degrees of probability and obligation expressed. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (634), the lexicogrammatical resource of Mood and the associated pattern of Modality… "carry a very considerable semantic load as the expression of interpersonal rhetoric". These subjective modals reduce the degrees of certainty or obligation or the speech functional value of these proposals because the use of these modals admit an element of doubt because speakers claim they are certain when in actual fact they are doubtful of their own convictions.

Text 2 shows a high prevalence of interpersonal metaphor serving as explicitly subjective modals realized logically as a projecting hypotactic mental clause where the Senser is explicitly represented as the speaker "I/we" Examples abound in the two speeches as *I believe…I know…we are determined… I am very aware…I assure you all…I am convinced…* These interpersonal projections embody the speech function of a Mood Adjunct though it is realized as an ideational projection, as a whole clause. One illustration will suffice here as exemplified in Speech 1, Text 2 (number 2) above:

> **I believe//** **t**hat this administration **must** deal with the following issues even in this difficult times of near economic collapse.

In the first instance, "I believe" is a mental clause projecting an idea clause that take effect in the speakers' inner consciousness and so do not impact any concrete change in the physical world of experience. Secondly, since "I believe" is an incongruent realization of modal assessment, presented as interpersonal grammatical metaphor, it is construed in the region of probability, tentativeness and subjectivity. Two modal assessments were used in this clause. The first is 'I believe', a projecting mental clause serving incongruently as an upgraded modal adjunct. Here it is used as an explicitly subjective modal assessment realized as a projecting mental clause where the Senser, represented as the speaker (I), claim uncertainty of the possibility of achieving the goals listed. But there is still a lingering element of doubt on the implementation of the "issues" listed, which

in the speech (Speech 1) are eighteen in number. The implication is that about eighteen propositions listed to be addressed are construed in the region of probability, uncertainty and on the speaker's judgement as tentative plans of action. The second is an implicitly subjective modulated command of the obligation type, directed not at the speaker but at "this administration", strategically divesting the load of sole responsibility from the speaker and assigning it as shared responsibility to other members of "this administration" which includes the speaker.

Instances of implicitly-objective modal/comment Adjuncts are illustrated in Text 3 with examples as *surely, on my part, for my part* and others. Since modal adjuncts express the speaker's judgement, these modals are based on the speaker's personal convictions of the outcome of the proposals being offered. From our analysis, tentative and subjective modality seem to be located more in the probability-type (epistemic modals expressing judgement about the truth of a proposition), inclination-type (volitionary) and obligation-type (deontic modals expessing directives), than in usuality-type, as the former relate more to the speaker's judgement, opinions, personal convictions and directives to the electorate in the exchange of information or goods-& services.

The proposals construed in this and similar sample texts are lofty ideals which represent the yearnings of the average Nigerian. They are proposals which, if judiciously implemented, would put the country on the road to national transformation. One wonders why this is not the case. It is also seen from the analysis that the choices made in the system of Modality by these political leaders, while seemingly expressing the hopes, expectations and values of the electorate construe these meanings in the region of probability, uncertainty, tentativeness and subjectivity. They facilitate the exploration of possibilities, inclinations, probabilities and obligations which seem achievable but do not commit the speakers to their realizations. Modality is therefore seen in this paper as a tool for political rhetoric used by the power elite to hide certain meanings.

CHINWE R. EZEIFEKA

In Text 5, we give a few examples of alternative choices which would render the propositions and proposals more actionable and attainable. Since SFG is a grammar of potential alternative choices, more options could be scouted for in the predicators and temporal operators that locate the proposition and proposal to the here and now and not hide in the mask provided by the system of Modality to shirk responsibility for positive affirmative action and convey meanings and actions that only come to life in the speakers' innermost consciousness or judgement as subjective and tentative .

We argue in this work that predicating a nation's destiny on subjectivity and tentativeness is inimical to national transformation and calls for critical scrutiny. National development presupposes that political leaders should be committed to their proposals in the way they express them as actionable, and not in non-committal and tentative propositions and proposals. Yet, these hidden meanings may escape undetected by the uncritical reader and thus aid in legitimizing hegemonies of the power elite. These non-committal linguistic choices may also have been responsible for the catalogue of failed promises by our political leaders which have been the bane of Nigerian development and national transformation.

CONCLUSION

Political speeches are supposed to assure the electorate of achievable goals and palpable propositions aimed at improving human conditions. The electorate looks up to the political leaders to provide this assurance by matching their words with concrete actions. Our political leaders should be able to separate political diplomacy from illusive and imagined utopia aimed at the manufacture of consent from the electorate. More use should therefore be made of action verbs and temporal operators which locate the propositions in time and space and less of modal operators that locate them within the personal judgement of the speaker as tentative opinions. It is the conviction of this writer that Nigeria has enough resources to make it a "transformed" nation. Only a goal-driven leadership can take it to that level, a leadership that matches words with actions, that places objective facts and

authentic proposals over and above subjective and tentative ones. Since most post independent Nigerian leadership seem to have failed to provide this model, going by the theme of this conference, present and future Nigerian leaders should take up this challenge and redress areas that would bring her out of the present moribund state. Only a selfless and sincere political leadership, committed to its proposals, can put Nigeria on that road to success.

WORKS CITED

Adegbulu, Femi. "Politics of the First Republic". *Issues in Nigerian Government and Politics*. Eds. Akinjide Osuntokun et al. Ibadan: Rex Charles Publications, (2003), 96-123. Print

Agbedo, Chris Uchenna. "Verbal Carpentry as Language of Political Corruption in Nigeria Implications for Good Governance in 21st Century Africa" *Governance in Africa in the 21st Century*. Ed. E.J. Otagburuagu. Nsukka: Global Publishers, (2008), 169-194. Print

Chambers 21st Century Dictionary. Revised ed. Robinson, Mairi. Ed. New Delhi: Allied Chambers Ltd, 2007. Print

Charteris-Black, Jonathan. *Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis.* New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2004. Print

Dawodu.com. "Shagari's Inaugural Address to Nigerians" October, 1, 1979. http://www.dawodu.com/shag/htm. accessed 11/05/09.

Eggins, Suzanne. *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. 2nd ed. New York: Continuum, 2004. Print

Ezeifeka, Chinwe RoseAnn. Analysis of Experiential Meaning in Selected Inaugural Political Speeches in Nigeria. *An International Journal of Language, Literature and Gender*

CHINWE R. EZEIFEKA

Studies (AFREV LALIGENS) Vol. 2(1), Bahir Dar Ethiopia, 2013. 170-190. Print

Ezeifeka, Chinwe RoseAnn. "Critical Discourse Analysis of Interpersonal Meaning and Power Relations in Selected Nigerian Inaugural Political Speeches in Nigeria". *UNIZIK Journal of Arts and Humanities (UJAH)* 14(2), 2013. 46-65. Print

Fairclough, Norman. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Essex: Longman: Group Ltd, 1995. Print

_____., "Global Capitalism and Critical Awareness of Language". *Language Awareness.*Vol. 8 No 2 1999 http://www.multilingual-matters.net/1a/008/0071/la008007/1pdf. Accessed 30/7/08.

Halliday, Michael A.K. *Explorations in the Functions of Language*. London: Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd, 1973. Print.

_____.,*Language as Social Semiotic. The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning.* London: Edward Arnold, 1978. Print.

Halliday, Michael A.K and Ruqaiya Hasan. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman, 1976. Print.

Halliday, Michael A. K. and Christian M. M. Matthiessen. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar.* 3rd ed. London: Hodder Arnold, 2004. Print.

Mey, Jacob L. *Pragmatics: An Introduction.* Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001.Print

Ndubuisi, Felix Acha. *Nigeria, What Hope?* Enugu: CECTA Nig. Ltd, 1991. Print.

Nigeria World Publication. "Inaugural Speech by His Excellency, President Olusegun Obasanjo following his Swearing-in as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on May 29, 1999" http://nigeriaworld.com/feature/speech inaugural. Accessed 11/05/09 .

Nwankwere, Angela Uloaku. "A Speech Act Analysis of Ex-President Obasanjo's Speeches on War Against Corruption". *The Humanities and Nigeria's Democratic Experience*. Eds. A.B.C. Chiegboka et al. Nimo: Rex Charles and Patrick Ltd, (2009). 330-343. Print.

Nwokike, Kenneth "The Politics of the Second Republic" *Issues in Nigerian Government*

and Politics. Eds. Akinjide Osuntokun et al. Ibadan: Rex Charles Publishers, (2003), 124-132. Print

Ogunmodede, Francis I. *Marxist Ideological Influence in Africa: The End of an Era?* Benin-City: Ava Publishers, 2005, Print.

Osuntokun, Akinjide and David Aworowo "A New Dawn? Nigerian Politics since 1999" *Issues in Nigerian Government and Politics.* Eds. Akinjide Osuntokun et al. Ibadan: Rex Charles Publications, (2003), 250-260. Print.

Quirk, Randolph. And Sidney Greenbaum. *A University Grammar of English.* Edinburgh: Pearson Education Ltd, 2000. Print.

Thomas, Linda and Shan Wareing. Eds. *Language, Society and Power*: *An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Van Dijk, Teun A. "Multidisciplinary CDA: A Plea for Diversity*". Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis.* Eds, Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer. London: Sage, (2005), 95-120. Print.

Wardhaugh, Ronald. *Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. 5th ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. Print.

Wareing, Shan. "What is Language and What Does it Do?" *Language, Society and Power. An Introduction.* Eds. Linda Thomas and Shan Wareing. London: Routledge, (2000). 1-15. Print.

Watson, James and Ann Hill. *Dictionary of Media and Communication Studies*. 7th ed. London: Hodder Arnold, 2006. Print.

Weiss, Gilbert and Ruth Wodak. *Critical Discourse Analysis.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. Print.

Widdowson H.G. *Linguistics.* Oxford University Press, 2002. Print.