

## A Generic Structure Analysis of Nigerian Presidential Inauguration Speeches from 1999 to 2015

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**ABSTRACT** – The article focuses on a generic structure analysis of Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015. The data for the study comprised five (5) Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches that have been delivered from May 29, 1999 to May 29, 2015. The selected Nigerian inauguration presidential speeches were subjected to Halliday and Hasan's Generic Structure Potential Theory and ten (10) discourse elements were identified. Out of the ten (10) discourse elements, eight (8) obligatory elements were identified: Title (T), Opening Acts (OA), Protocol (P), Recognition of Predecessors (RoP), Manifesto (M), Call for Support (CfS), Closing Acts (CA), and Customary Declaration (CD). Two (2) optional elements were identified: Theme (TH) and Acknowledgement of God (AoG). The GSP for Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015 yielded: [T.(TH)]<sup>o</sup>[(AoG)<sup>o</sup>OA]<sup>o</sup>{P<sup>o</sup>RoP<sup>o</sup>}<sup>o</sup>{M}<sup>o</sup>[CfS<sup>o</sup>CA<sup>o</sup>CD].

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### INTRODUCTION

Language is used in various contexts for different purposes (Damopolii et al., 2013). One of the contexts that actively adopt language use for specific purposes is the political context. Philosophers such as Socrates, Sophists, Aristotle, and Plato considered language use in the political context. Their findings revealed that language in politics is often used to gain, exercise, and keep power (Aduradola & Ojukwu, 2013). Accordingly, language use in politics is linked to three (3) generic purposes, which are to convince people to take action as the speaker desires; to radically change the attitudes of people, and to weaken the belief of people while the speaker reinforces his own opinion (Sukhanov, 2018). Thus, it can be affirmed that language use in politics aids in assigning power, governing how people speak, and how they are understood. Language use in politics comes in different forms, and key among these forms is "Inauguration Speech" (Akinkulore, 2013). In government and politics, inauguration deals with the process of swearing a person into office, making the person an incumbent (Biria & Mohammadi, 2012).

Specifically, this article emphasises the theme of "The Presidential Inauguration Speech", particularly in the Nigerian context. Thus, a presidential inauguration speech can be regarded as a type of political speech given on the inauguration day by the candidate who became victorious in the presidential election (Balogun, 2015). The presidential inauguration speech is usually delivered in an atmosphere of celebration and geared toward informing, educating, and assuring citizens about the new president's ideological priorities, objectives, and goals (Akinwotu, 2018). The inauguration speech further enables the winning candidate to appreciate their team and the whole public for their backing during the campaign and election period (Medubi & Amuda, 2016).

The presidential inauguration speech is widely recognised as a generic representation of political speaking (Biria & Mohammadi, 2012). A number of various analyses have been conducted in relation to the actual inauguration speeches that various presidents have delivered in Nigeria. These studies are deep-rooted in the idea that the inauguration speech exhibits the president's linguistic personality; such that, it is considered that the inauguration speech does not only voice the ambition for the future but also the leader's linguistic identity in the public and political space (Nnamdi-Eruchalu, 2017). Some of the analyses include pragmatic analysis, lexico-syntactic analysis, speech acts analysis, socio-pragmatic analysis, sentiment analysis, qualitative content analysis, and many others. These individual analyses have been able to shed more light on the underlying representations, structure, language use pattern, and linguistic identity adopted in inauguration speeches.

However, while Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches have enjoyed much scholarly attention in terms of other forms of discourse analysis techniques, these inauguration speeches have not been subjected to a generic structure analysis. Likewise, while different practical contexts have been submitted to the generic structure analysis, none has focused on Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches. Thus, it is on this basis that this article focuses on a generic structure potential of Nigerian inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015, with a view to demonstrating the pattern of inaugural speeches by Nigerian presidents. Thus, this study, apart from being a veritable addition to studies on the nexus between language and politics, especially in the Nigerian context, it serves as a detailed reference material for cataloguing and teaching the structural elements that constitute presidential inaugural speeches in Nigeria.

## REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Several studies have been conducted to assess Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches with diverse forms of discourse analysis techniques and analytical frameworks. Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere (2012) considered a pragmatic analysis of victory and inaugural speeches of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. They focused on the pragmatic functions of locution, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts of the presidential inauguration speech. Sharndama (2015) carried out a study on a critical discourse analysis of President Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural speech. In this study, Normans Furlough's three-dimensional Analytical Models was adopted to study the description, interpretation, and explanation of the presidential inauguration speech. Ibrahim (2020) conducted a pragmatic analysis of Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural speech. In this study, Austin's 1962 and Searle's 1999 Speech Acts Theory was adopted to analyse the speech acts, commissive acts, and intricate language relationships in the presidential inauguration speech. Fowobaje et al. (2022) considered a qualitative content analysis of Nigerian heads-of-state and presidents' inaugural addresses. They employed textual data to analyse presidential inauguration speeches.

Beyond Nigeria, Tincheva (2012), Mcclay (2017) and Korhonen (2017), are prominent works that demonstrate the nexus between language and politics, particularly as it concerns the use of the former by political actors to achieve goals. Tincheva (2012) argues that the structure and texture of political speeches are manipulative in nature. In line with the position of Tincheva, Mcclay (2017), from the ambits of van Dijk's notion of ideology, explores how Donald Trump, a former US president, engaged the us-them ideological dichotomy in his pre-2016 campaign speeches in the US. In like manner, Korhonen (2017) analyses the use of rhetorics by Trump in his speeches, mainly to sell his candidacy to the American electorate.

Similarly, various studies have considered the generic structure analysis of different practical themes in the Nigerian context. Unuabonah (2012) conducted a study on the generic structure of presentations in quasi-judicial public hearings on the FCT Administration in Nigeria in 2008. The study examined forty (40) video recordings of the 2008 public hearings on the FCT Administration. Olaniyi (2014) considered an exploration of the generic structures of problem statements in research article abstracts. In carrying out this study, data was gathered from purposively selected three hundred (300) arts-based research article abstracts published in learned journals in the inner circle between 2001 and 2010. Sunday and Fagunleka (2017) considered the generic structure potential analysis of feature articles in Nigerian newspapers. The study investigated Nigerian newspapers such as, *The Punch*, *The Nation*, *Vanguard*, and *Nigerian Tribune*. Ajayi (2019) investigated the generic structure potential analysis of Christian street evangelism in Southwestern Nigeria. In this study, data were gathered using ethnographic techniques. The data entailed fifteen observed street evangelism activities randomly sampled in different cities in Southwestern Nigeria.

As mentioned earlier, while some of the reviewed studies have examined Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches in the purview of different discourse analysis techniques and the rest have examined generic structure potential analysis in relation to different practical themes in the Nigerian context, none of them has considered a generic structure analysis of Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015. This article, therefore, attempts a generic structure analysis of Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015, within the purview of Halliday and Hasan's (1985) Generic Structure Potential Theory. Specifically, the article will provide answers to these questions:

1. What are the obligatory elements in Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015?
2. What are the optional elements in Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015?
3. What is the sequencing of obligatory and optional elements in Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015?

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

While this article focuses on a generic structure analysis of Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches, Halliday and Hasan's (1985) Generic Structure Potential Theory will serve as its theoretical basis. The Generic Structure Potential (GSP) theory has the systemic functional grammar as its fundamental basis, and it has been adopted by systemic linguists to illustrate the functional structure of texts which are often "re-occurring" in society (Hyland, 2005). GSP was proposed by Halliday and Hassan in 1985. In their definition, they argue the theory describes the total range of textual structures that exist within a genre. Thus, GSP embodies all textual elements that are obtainable for the development or identification of a genre. According to Zheng (2014), GSP adds to the significance of a text that is being interpreted based on its current stage or its role in a particular context. Olagunju (2015) affirmed that generic structures have collective social meaning, thus, readers or listeners are often subjected to several instances of generic structure; thereby, learn to acknowledge diverse structures. GSP performs an analytical function as it aids in describing the potentials of specific function of a whole categorisation of any genre in a discourse.

Generic structure can be also regarded as genre staging, as it caters to sequencing and formalisation within a cultural experience. It serves as the medium through which elements of a text are arranged to match the text's purpose. According to Unuabonah (2012), GSP represents all textual elements available for the development of a genre. For every genre, there are potential elements. Therefore, when a set of specific elements are grouped in a particular order, determined by semantic categories (meanings), this permits the recognition, reproduction, and identification of texts that belong to the same genre. Basically, GSP represents the full potential of occurrences of elements that belong to a particular text. The significance of GSP relies in its ability to detect limits of a genre and its variable and invariable properties.

GSP operates based on the identification of organisation of a text and elements that are obligatory, optional, and recursive. According to Olaniyi (2014), GSP describes the obligatory and optional elements within a genre, alongside the arrangement and recursion of the elements. Thus, what decides the generic type of a particular text are the obligatory elements that it possesses. A text can be said to belong to a particular genre when its obligatory elements have been decided/identified. This enables all genres to have their own GSP. Conversely, texts with a similar genre may differ in their optional elements. The model of GSP is based on the notion of Contextual Configuration (CC). CC is a distinct set of values that are employed to denote the tenor, field, and mode of a discourse. Hence, CC allows statements regarding a text structure to be made. CC specifically aids GSP to predict the following about a text structure:

1. Obligatory elements – What elements must occur?
2. Optional elements – What elements may occur?
3. Sequencing of elements – What arrangements of elements
4. Recursiveness – How often may what elements occur?

Based on a particular CC, Halliday and Hassan (1985) asserted that it is probable to express the entire range of optional and obligatory elements and the sequence in which they occur, such that we can expend the possibility of a textual structure for all text that are in a discourse. Sunday and Fagunleka (2017) opined that GSP is often used for the analysis of the structure and elements of the interactions of a discourse. Over time, some symbols have been adopted in GSP to identify and code identified elements. These symbols include:

1. “[ ]” – This is used to include restriction of elements. The square bracket further signifies stability of occurrence, which implies that elements enclosed within it can only occur in a given position.
2. “( )” – This implies optionality of elements. Whenever an element is enclosed within plain brackets, it indicates that the element may or may not occur.
3. “^” – This shows sequence, which signifies how elements are to be positioned in their sequential order.
4. “.” – This indicates more than one alternative in a sequence.
5. “{ }” – This denotes recursiveness as a whole. It shows that the level of repetition for elements in the square brackets is equal.

To clearly illustrate this, Halliday and Hasan (1989) examined similar spoken texts in the Service Encounter of a Shop Transaction and thereafter identified obligatory and optional rhetorical elements, which has served as the basis of GSP. Thus, the following schema represents the obligatory and optional elements of a shop transaction:

$$[(G). (SI) ^] [(SE.) \{SR^SC^ \} ^S^ \} P^PC (F)]$$

The structural elements embedded within the schema translate to: Greeting (G), Sale Initiation (SI), Sale Enquiry (SE), Sale Request (SR), Sale Closure (SC), Sale (S), Purchase (P), Purchase Closure (PC), and Finis (F). The round bracket ( ) indicates optionality of the enclosed elements. Thus, G, SI, SE, and F are optional. While SR, SC, S, P, and PC are obligatory. The dot between elements represents more than one option in a sequence, which implies that the element before or after the dot can either come first or last. Thus, G can come before SI or SI can come before G. The square brackets [ ] show restraint on sequence. The braces with a curved arrow { } signifies that the level of iteration for elements in the square brackets is equal. This implies that, if SR appears twice, then SC must also appear twice. Lastly, the caret sign ^ shows sequence of elements.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a qualitative content analysis method. The data for the study, which were sourced from [www.dawodu.com](http://www.dawodu.com); [www.segundawodu.com](http://www.segundawodu.com); [www.nairametrics.com](http://www.nairametrics.com); [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com), and [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng) (some of the sites that document and archive events and developments in Nigeria), comprised five (5) Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches that have been delivered from May 29, 1999 to May 29, 2015. Although an election took place in 2019, and Gen. Muhammadu Buhari was re-elected as president, he did not deliver an inauguration speech at the inauguration ceremony on May 29, 2019. This can be buttressed with the report of Semeniorima (2019), where it was affirmed that President Muhammadu Buhari did not deliver an inauguration speech at the inauguration ceremony when he was re-elected as president on May 29, 2019. This explains why 2019 was not covered in our data scope.

The five (5) Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches that were considered are: Olusegun Obasanjo’s May 29, 1999; Olusegun Obasanjo’s May 29, 2003; Umaru Yar’adua’s May 29, 2007 ; Dr Goodluck Jonathan’s May 29, 2011; and Muhammadu Buhari’s May 29, 2015 inauguration speeches. The data were then subjected to discourse analysis, with particular reference to Halliday and Hasan’s (1985) generic structure potential theory.

**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

This section focuses on data presentation and analysis. Particularly, the obligatory and optional discourse elements will be identified alongside their sequencing in the five (5) Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches that have been selected.

**Discourse Elements and their Keys to Symbols**

This subsection will provide an overview of the discourse elements and their keys to symbols. From the analysis of the data, five (5) discourse elements have been identified. These discourse elements include: Title (T), Theme (TH), Acknowledgement of God (AoG), Opening Acts (OA), Protocol (P), Recognition of Predecessors (RoP), Manifesto (M), Call for Support (CfS), Closing Acts (CA), and Customary Declaration (CD).

**Distribution of Discourse Elements in the Selected Speeches**

Having carried out a top-down generic structure potential analysis of the five (5) Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches that have been selected, this section provides the distribution of discourse elements that were identified. Table 1 presents the distribution of the discourse elements in relation to the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches, and Table 2 provides the data source.

**Table 1.** Distribution of discourse elements in the speeches.

Elements	Olusegun Obasanjo May 29, 1999	Olusegun Obasanjo May 29, 2003	Umaru Yar’adua May 29, 2007	Dr. Goodluck Jonathan May 29, 2011	Muhammadu Buhari May 29, 2015
Title	+	+	+	+	+
Theme	+	+	+	-	-
Acknowledgement of God	+	+	-	-	+
Opening Acts	+	+	+	+	+
Protocol	+	+	+	+	+
Recognition of Predecessors	+	+	+	+	+
Manifesto	+	+	+	+	+
Call for Support	+	+	+	+	+
Closing Acts	+	+	+	+	+
Customary Declaration	+	+	+	+	+

Note: (+; indicates the presence of a feature, -, indicates the absence of a feature)

**Table 2.** Data Source

Speeches	Source
Olusegun Obasanjo May 29, 1999	<a href="https://www.dawodu.com/obas1.htm">https://www.dawodu.com/obas1.htm</a>
Olusegun Obasanjo May 29, 2003	<a href="http://www.segundawodu.com/obas13.htm">http://www.segundawodu.com/obas13.htm</a>
Umaru Yar’adua May 29, 2007	<a href="https://nairametrics.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Inaugural-Address-of-Umaru-Musa-Yar.pdf">https://nairametrics.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Inaugural-Address-of-Umaru-Musa-Yar.pdf</a>
Dr. Goodluck Jonathan May 29, 2011	<a href="https://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/05/over-40-heads-of-state-witness-jonathans-inauguration-amid-tight-security/amp/">https://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/05/over-40-heads-of-state-witness-jonathans-inauguration-amid-tight-security/amp/</a>
Muhammadu Buhari May 29, 2015	<a href="https://guardian.ng/features/president-muhammadu-buharis-inaugural-speech/">https://guardian.ng/features/president-muhammadu-buharis-inaugural-speech/</a>

Based on the distribution of discourse elements presented in Table 1, it can be observed that virtually all analysed Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches possess a structural coherence, as they follow a specific sequential and structural pattern. From the analysis, eight (8) obligatory elements were identified: Title (T), Opening Acts (OA), Protocol (P), Recognition of Predecessors (RoP), Manifesto (M), Call for Support (CfS), Closing Acts (CA), and Customary Declaration (CD). Accordingly, two optional elements were also identified: Theme (TH) and Acknowledgement of God

(AoG). It was further identified that an obligatory element such as Title (T) and an optional element such as Theme (TH) have the ability to precede or follow each other in the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches. More so, obligatory elements such as Protocol (P), Recognition of Predecessors (RoP), and Manifesto (M) were found to be recursive in the five (5) Nigerian presidential elections that were analysed. Thus, based on the distribution of elements, the GSP of Nigerian presidential inauguration speech yielded:

$$[T.(TH)]^{[ (AoG)^{OA} ]} \{ P^{RoP} \} \{ M \} [ Cfs^{CA}^{CD} ]$$

Concerning the GSP schema illustrated above, “[ ]” indicates restraint on sequence. There is a restraint on the sequence of Title (T) and Theme (TH), before the next elements emerge. “.” between Title (T) and Theme (TH) indicates more than one option in a sequence. This implies that elements that occur before or after the dot can either come first or last. In two of the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches that were analysed (such as Olusegun Obasanjo’s May 29, 1999 and Umaru Yar’adua’s May 29, 2007 speeches), Title (T) occurred before Theme (TH), while in another instance (such as Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo May 29, 2003), Theme (TH) occurred before Title (T).

“( )” indicates optionality of elements. This implies that some elements are not present in all of the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches that were analysed. Thus, elements such as Theme (TH) and Acknowledgment of God (AoG) are optional, while the remaining elements that are not enclosed in “( )” are considered as obligatory as they occurred in all Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches that were analysed. “^” indicates sequencing, which can also be termed as the arrangement of elements in a specific order. The analysis of the five (5) Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches concluded that they all follow the same sequencing of elements. Lastly, “{ }” indicates recursiveness. This implies that elements enclosed within “{ }” occurred frequently in the inauguration speech. Thus, elements such as Protocol (P), Recognition of Predecessors (RoP), and Manifesto (M) occurred frequently in the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches that were analysed.

### The Obligatory Elements in Nigerian Presidential Inauguration Speeches from 1999 to 2015

This section focuses on the obligatory elements that were identified. Based on this, these identified obligatory elements will be selected and discussed alongside their practical instances in the body of the five (5) Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches selected.

#### *Title (T)*

The Title (T) is an obligatory element in Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches and it contains information about the inauguration speeches. The title provides information such as the name of the person delivering the speech and the date the speech is being delivered. In most cases, the title is not usually read out by the president when delivering the inauguration speech. Instances of Title (T) are provided below:

#### **Excerpt 1: (Olusegun Obasanjo’s May 29, 1999 Inauguration Speech)**

"President Obasanjo's Inaugural Address to the Nation - May 29, 1999."

#### **Excerpt 2: (Olusegun Obasanjo’s May 29, 2003 Inauguration Speech)**

"Being President Olusegun Obasanjo's inaugural speech at Eagle Square, Abuja, May 29, 2003."

#### **Excerpt 3: (Umaru Yar’adua’s May 29, 2007 Inauguration Speech)**

"Inaugural Address of Umaru Musa Yar'adua, May 29, 2007."

#### **Excerpt 4: (Dr Goodluck Jonathan’s May 29, 2011 Inauguration Speech)**

"President Goodluck Jonathan’s inauguration address on the occasion of his swearing-in as President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria on May 29, 2011."

#### **Excerpt 5: (Muhammadu Buhari’s May 29, 2015 Inauguration Speech)**

"Inaugural speech by His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari following his swearing-in as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on 29th May, 2015."

#### *Opening Acts (OA)*

The Opening Acts (OA) is also an obligatory element in Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches and it consists of the introductory remarks that set the scene for the speech. Opening acts are carefully crafted to introduce the audience to the purpose of the speech and prepare the audience for the contents of the speech. Instances of Opening Acts (OA) in the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches are further presented:

#### **Excerpt 6: (Olusegun Obasanjo’s May 29, 1999 Inauguration Speech)**

"Twelve months ago, no one could have predicted the series of stunning events that made it possible for democratic elections to be held at the Local Government level, the State level, and culminating in the National Assembly Elections."



**Excerpt 7: (Olusegun Obasanjo's May 29, 2003 Inauguration Speech)**

"Exactly four years ago to this day, I humbly accepted the mantle of leadership of this country as determined by the mandate offered to me by the results of the preceding elections."

**Excerpt 8: (Umaru Yar'adua's May 29, 2007 Inauguration Speech)**

"This is a historic day for our nation, for it marks an important milestone in our march towards a maturing democracy. For the first time since we cast off the shackles of colonialism almost a half-century ago, we have at last managed an orderly transition from one elected government to another."

**Excerpt 9: (Dr Goodluck Jonathan's May 29, 2011 Inauguration Speech)**

"My Dear Compatriots, I stand in humble gratitude to you, this day, having just sworn to the oath of office as President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of our great nation."

**Excerpt 10: (Muhammadu Buhari's May 29, 2015 Inauguration Speech)**

"Today marks a triumph for Nigeria and an occasion to celebrate her freedom and cherish her democracy. Nigerians have shown their commitment to democracy and are determined to entrench its culture."

**Protocol (P)**

The Protocol (P) is an obligatory element in Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches and it is a form of socio-cultural realisation of values embedded within the speech. Nigerian presidents characteristically adopt the use of protocol to properly acknowledge and appreciate the citizens, high profile officials, dignitaries, and other people present or viewing the inauguration ceremony. Instances of Protocol (P) in the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches are further presented:

**Excerpt 11: (Olusegun Obasanjo's May 29, 1999 Inauguration Speech)**

"I wish, at this point, to thank all you good Nigerians for the confidence reposed in me. I wish to pay tribute to the great and gallant Nigerians who lost their lives in the cause of the struggle for liberty, democracy and good governance."

**Excerpt 12: (Olusegun Obasanjo's May 29, 2003 Inauguration Speech)**

"I would like to offer this day, which is also the fourth National Democracy, Human Rights and Thanksgiving Day, as a prize for every Nigerian man, woman and child who in their various ways, directly and indirectly, have contributed to the march of democracy and good governance over the last four years."

**Excerpt 13: (Umaru Yar'adua's May 29, 2007 Inauguration Speech)**

"My fellow citizens, I am humbled and honoured that you have elected me and Vice President Jonathan to represent that generation in the task of building a just and humane nation, where its people have a fair chance to attain their fullest potential."

**Excerpt 14: (Dr Goodluck Jonathan's May 29, 2011 Inauguration Speech)**

"I thank you all, fellow citizens, for the trust and confidence, which you have demonstrated through the power of your vote. I want to assure you, that I will do my utmost at all times, to continue to deserve your trust."

**Excerpt 15: (Muhammadu Buhari's May 29, 2015 Inauguration Speech)**

"Our journey has not been easy but thanks to the determination of our people and strong support from friends abroad we have today a truly democratically elected government in place."

**Recognition of Predecessors (RoP)**

The Recognition of Predecessors (RoP) is an obligatory element in Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches and it is when the president appreciates and acknowledges the contributions of the previous administrations and leaders for the development of the nation till present-day. Instances of Recognition of Predecessors (RoP) in the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches are further presented:

**Excerpt 16: (Olusegun Obasanjo's May 29, 1999 Inauguration Speech)**

"I commend General Abdulsalami Abubakar and members of the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) for the leadership they gave the country in the last eleven months and for keeping meticulously to their announced timetable of handing over to a democratically elected government today."

**Excerpt 17: (Olusegun Obasanjo May 29, 2003 Inauguration Speech)**

"My special appreciation goes to the Vice President and the members of the Federal Executive Council. The collective dedication and hard work of these men and women, have been the driving force for moving Nigeria forward to the point that today, we can be confident in our ability to move Nigeria forward."

**Excerpt 18: (Umaru Yar’adua’s May 29, 2007 Inauguration Speech)**

"Luckily, we are not starting from scratch. We are fortunate to have been led the past eight years by one of our nation's greatest patriots, President Obasanjo. On behalf of all our people, I salute you, Mr. President, for your vision, your courage and your boundless energy in creating the roadmap toward that united and economically thriving Nigeria that we seek."

**Excerpt 19: (Dr Goodluck Jonathan’s May 29, 2011 Inauguration Speech)**

"I cannot but pay tribute to our late President, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar’Adua, with whom we won the Presidential election four years ago, when I contested as his running mate. May God bless his soul."

**Excerpt 20: (Muhammadu Buhari’s May 29, 2015 Inauguration Speech)**

"I would like to thank President Goodluck Jonathan for his display of statesmanship in setting a precedent for us that has now made our people proud to be Nigerians wherever they are."

**Manifesto (M)**

The Manifesto (M) is another obligatory element in Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches and it is filled with the goals, objectives, promises, and plans of the president for the nation. The Manifesto (M) is usually considered as the most important and lengthiest element of the presidential inauguration speech. Instances of Manifesto (M) in the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches are further presented:

**Excerpt 21: ( Olusegun Obasanjo’s May 29, 1999 Inauguration Speech)**

"I am determined with your full cooperation, to make significant changes within a year of my administration. Together we shall take steps to halt the decline in the human development indices as they apply to Nigeria. All the impacts of bad governance on our people that are immediately removable will be removed, while working for medium- and long-term solutions."

**Excerpt 22: (Olusegun Obasanjo’s May 29, 2003 Inauguration Speech)**

"I intend to use my mandate to provide quality leadership for all of Nigeria and for all Nigerians regardless of their political persuasions. Anything less would be unconstitutional, morally inadequate, and contrary to the will of God whose wishes are my command. Above all, in adherence to my leadership vision of a greater Nigeria, the only way to advance this country that belongs to all of us, is through solidarity and hard work."

**Excerpt 23: (Umaru Yar’adua’s May 29, 2007 Inauguration Speech)**

"Our goal now is to build on the greatest accomplishments of the past few years. Relying on the 7-point agenda that formed the basis of our compact with voters during the recent campaigns, we will concentrate on rebuilding our physical infrastructure and human capital in order to take our country forward. We will focus on accelerating economic and other reforms in a way that makes a concrete and visible difference to ordinary people."

**Excerpt 24: (Dr Goodluck Jonathan’s May 29, 2011 Inauguration Speech)**

"I am mindful that I represent the shared aspiration of all our people to forge a united Nigeria: a land of justice, opportunity and plenty. Confident that a people that are truly committed to a noble ideal, cannot be denied the realization of their vision, I assure you that this dream of Nigeria, that is so deeply felt by millions, will indeed come to reality."

**Excerpt 25: (Muhammadu Buhari’s May 29, 2015 Inauguration Speech)**

"Having just a few minutes ago sworn on the Holy Book, I intend to keep my oath and serve as President to all Nigerians. I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody."

**Call for Support (CfS)**

The Call for Support (CfS) is an obligatory element in Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches and it deals with when the president obliges the citizens to provide support, morally, ethically, and honorably, to ensure that the promises embedded within the manifesto are brought to fulfilment. The president expresses that the development of the nation is a collective obligation; thereby, calling for the support of the entire citizens of the nation. Instances of Call for Support (CfS) in the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches are further presented:

**Excerpt 26: (Olusegun Obasanjo’s May 29, 1999 Inauguration Speech)**

"I call on all Nigerians but particularly on our religious leaders to pray for moral and spiritual revival and regeneration in our nation."

**Excerpt 27: (Olusegun Obasanjo's May 29, 2003 Inauguration Speech)**

"Today, I ask all Nigerians to come along with me in the Nigeria-craft: let us pilot and move it in the next four years, let us keep it at a cruising level that is beyond turbulence, and let us sustain an optimum cruising speed in the direction of our dreams."

**Excerpt 28: (Umaru Yar'adua's May 29, 2007 Inauguration Speech)**

"Let us join together to ease the pains of today while working for the gains of tomorrow. Let us set aside cynicism and strive for the good society that we know is within our reach. Let us discard the habit of low expectations of ourselves as well as of our leaders."

**Excerpt 29: (Dr Goodluck Jonathan's May 29, 2011 Inauguration Speech)**

"Nigerians, I want you to start dreaming again. What you see in your dreams, we can achieve together. I call upon all the Presidential candidates who contested with me to join hands with us as we begin the transformation of our country."

**Excerpt 30: (Muhammadu Buhari's May 29, 2015 Inauguration Speech)**

"At home the newly elected government is basking in a reservoir of goodwill and high expectations. Nigeria, therefore, has a window of opportunity to fulfill our long – standing potential of pulling ourselves together and realizing our mission as a great nation."

**Closing Acts (CA)**

The Closing Acts (OA) is an obligatory element in Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches and it contains the conclusion of the speech, where the president encourages the citizens and provides closing remarks. Instances of the Closing Acts (CA) in the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches are further presented:

**Excerpt 31: (Olusegun Obasanjo's May 29, 1999 Inauguration Speech)**

"I shall end this address by stressing again that we must change our ways of governance and of doing business on this eve of the coming millennium. This we must do to ensure progress, justice, harmony and unity and above all, to rekindle confidence amongst our people. Confidence that their conditions will rapidly improve and that Nigeria will be great and will become a major world player in the near future."

**Excerpt 32: (Olusegun Obasanjo's May 29, 2003 Inauguration Speech)**

"Let this be our hope. And let this be the challenge for all of us."

**Excerpt 33: (Umaru Yar'adua's May 29, 2007 Inauguration Speech)**

"Let us stop justifying every shortcoming with that unacceptable phrase 'the Nigerian Factor' as if to be a Nigerian is to settle for less. Let us recapture the mood of optimism that defined us at the dawn of independence, that legendary can-do spirit that marked our Nigerianess. Let us join together, now, to build a society worthy of our children. We have the talent. We have the intelligence. We have the ability."

**Excerpt 34: (Dr Goodluck Jonathan's May 29, 2011 Inauguration Speech)**

"Let us work together; let us build together; let us bequeath a greater Nigeria to the generations to come."

**Excerpt 35: ( Muhammadu Buhari's May 29, 2015 Inauguration Speech)**

"Our situation somehow reminds one of a passage in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; Omitted, all the voyage of their life, is bound in shallows and miseries."

**Customary Declaration (CD)**

The Customary Declaration (CD) is an obligatory element in Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches and it entails a statutory prayer or a catchphrase that serves as a means of providing more encouragement and solidarity to the citizens. Instances of the Customary Declaration (CD) in the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches are further presented:

**Excerpt 36: ( Olusegun Obasanjo's May 29, 1999 Inauguration Speech)**

"May the Almighty help us."

**Excerpt 37: ( Olusegun Obasanjo's May 29, 2003 Inauguration Speech)**

"May God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria."

**Excerpt 38: (Umaru Yar'adua's May 29, 2007 Inauguration Speech)**

"The challenge is great. The goal is clear. The time is now."



**Excerpt 39: (Dr Goodluck Jonathan's May 29, 2011 Inauguration Speech)**

"I thank you! God bless you all! And God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria."

**Excerpt 40: ( Muhammadu Buhari's May 29, 2015 Inauguration Speech)**

"We have an opportunity. Let us take it."

The eight (8) elements that have been discussed and illustrated in this section are all obligatory elements, as they all occurred in the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015. The generic structural analysis can be thus be affirmed to have effectively assisted in identifying the obligatory elements of the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches that were considered.

**The Optional Elements in Nigerian Presidential Inauguration Speeches from 1999 to 2015**

This section focuses on the identified optional elements in Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015. Based on this, the optional elements identified are selected and discussed alongside their practical instances in the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches where they occur. From the generic structure potential analysis, two optional elements were identified: Theme (TH) and Acknowledgement of God (AoG).

**Theme (TH)**

The Theme (TH) was identified as an optional element in Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches and it serves as an anchor of the presidential inauguration speech. The Theme (TH) serves as the centre that is projected through the body of the speech, and it is not to be read out by the president. In some cases, the Theme (TH) may precede or come after the Title (T). Instances of the Theme (TH) in the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches are further presented:

**Excerpt 41: ( Olusegun Obasanjo's May 29, 1999 Inauguration Speech)**

"THE NEW DAWN"

**Excerpt 42: ( Olusegun Obasanjo's May 29, 2003 Inauguration Speech)**

"WE WILL HEAL NIGERIA"

**Excerpt 43: ( Umaru Yar'adua's May 29, 2007 Inauguration Speech)**

"THE SERVANT LEADER"

**Acknowledgement of God (AoG)**

The Acknowledgment of God (AoG) was also identified as an optional element in Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches and it entails the recognition and appreciation of God for the success of the election and for making the presidential candidate victorious during the election. Instances of the Acknowledgment of God (AoG) in the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches are further presented:

**Excerpt 44: (Olusegun Obasanjo's May 29, 1999 Inauguration Speech)**

"Fellow Nigerians, we give praise and honour to God Almighty for this day specially appointed by God Himself. Everything created by God has its destiny and it is the destiny of all of us to see this day."

**Excerpt 45: (Olusegun Obasanjo's May 29, 2003 Inauguration Speech)**

"Fellow Nigerians, let us thank God for this great day in the history of our nation. Let us praise the Almighty for guiding us through many weeks of a difficult but successful electoral process, culminating in today's milestone event of civilian-to-civilian transition, as we continue on our political journey towards sustainable democracy in a truly united nation."

**Excerpt 46: (Muhammadu Buhari's May 29, 2015 Inauguration Speech)**

"I am immensely grateful to God Who Has preserved us to witness this day and this occasion."

The two (2) elements discussed and illustrated are the only optional elements that were identified in the generic structural analysis of the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015. The elements were considered to be optional because they did not occur in all the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches that were analysed. For instance, as an optional element, Theme (TH) only occurred in Olusegun Obasanjo's May 29, 1999; Olusegun Obasanjo May's 29, 2003; and Umaru Yar'adua May's 29, 2007 inauguration speeches. Accordingly, Acknowledgment of God (AoG) only occurred in Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo's May 29, 1999; Olusegun Obasanjo's May 29, 2003; and Muhammadu Buhari's May 29, 2015 inauguration speeches. Based on this, both elements were identified as optional elements in the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015.

## The Sequencing of Obligatory And Optional Elements In Nigerian Presidential Inauguration Speeches From 1999 To 2015

The generic structural analysis of Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches revealed that the entire inauguration speeches that were analysed followed the same sequence, inclusive of obligatory and optional elements. This reveals that there is a structural coherence in the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches that were analysed. Based on the structural coherence of the five (5) Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches that were analysed, it can be asserted that they all belong to a particular genre. More so, while some of the inauguration speeches differed in some optional elements, it is still valid to affirm that based on their structural coherence, the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015 possess the same GSP.

Recounting the work of Unuabonah (2012), it was averred that GSP represents all textual elements available for the development of a genre. Accordingly, for every genre, there are potential elements. Thus, the already identified obligatory and optional elements of the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches and their sequencing can be affirmed to permit their recognition as texts that belong to the same genre. Thus, this genre can therefore be labelled as the “genre of the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015”. Accordingly, this is further buttressed by the GSP schema that yielded:

$$[T.(TH)]^A[(AoG)^A(OA)]^B\{P^A(RoP)^A\}^C[M]^D[CfS^A(CA^A)CD]$$

Thus, all GSP of Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015 can be affirmed to follow a sequencing where Title (T) occurs before or after Theme (TH) followed by Acknowledgement of God (AoG) and Opening Acts (OA), which is also followed by Protocol (P) and Recognition of Predecessors (RoP), which is followed by Manifesto (M), and finally followed by Call for Support (CfS), Closing Acts (CA), and Customary Declaration (CD).

## CONCLUSION

This article has focused on a generic structure potential analysis of Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015. Findings of the study revealed that while Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches have enjoyed much scholarly attention in terms of other forms of discourse analysis techniques, these inauguration speeches have not been subjected to a generic structure potential analysis. Likewise, while different practical contexts have been submitted to the generic structure potential analysis, none has focused on Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches. Thereby, this served as the fundamental basis of carrying out a study on the generic structure potential analysis of Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches.

Based on the data analysis and findings of the study, it was revealed that the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015 followed the same sequence, inclusive of obligatory and optional elements. By so doing, it was affirmed that the five (5) analysed inauguration speeches possess structural coherence; thereby, establishing that they all belong to a particular genre. Although some of the inauguration speeches differed in some optional elements, it is still valid to affirm that based on their structural coherence, the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015 possess the same structure. As there are potential elements for every genre, the already identified obligatory and optional elements alongside their sequencing serve as the potential elements of the Nigerian presidential inauguration speeches from 1999 to 2015. Thus, this can be labelled as the “Genre of the Nigerian Presidential Inauguration Speeches from 1999 to 2015”.

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