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Abstract

Inaugural speech is the first chance for a president to engage the public in new strategies for success. Every inaugural speech is an example of the aims and objectives of the future. As president of America, Joe Biden has faced many challenges, including foreign affairs, a poor economy due to COVID-19, and, most importantly, American unity. The focus of the present investigation is to lead a stylistic examination from the viewpoint of syntax and rhetoric on Joe Biden's inaugural speech in Washington, D.C., on January 21, 2021. The researchers discovered that the speech is full of rhetorical and syntactic devices. The analysis revealed that the speech emphasized on unity and solidarity to preserve and promote American Identity through the excessive use of First-person pronouns and planned use of similes, repetitions, modality and conjunction. In this way, Biden made his speech productive and readily revealed his plans and motives to his audience.

Keywords: Syntactic and Rhetorical Devices, Analysis, Inaugural Speech, Political Discourse, Joe Biden

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Syntactic and Rhetorical Analysis of Joe Biden's Inaugural Speech at Washington D.C.

Abstract

Inaugural speech is the first chance for a president to engage the public in new strategies for success. Every inaugural speech is an example of the aims and objectives of the future. As president of America, Joe Biden has faced many challenges, including foreign affairs, a poor economy due to COVID-19, and, most importantly, American unity. The focus of the present investigation is to lead a stylistic examination from the viewpoint of syntax and rhetoric on Joe Biden's inaugural speech in Washington, D.C., on January 21, 2021. The researchers discovered that the speech is full of rhetorical and syntactic devices. The analysis revealed that the speech emphasized on unity and solidarity to preserve and promote American Identity through the excessive use of First-person pronouns and planned use of similes, repetitions, modality and conjunction. In this way, Biden made his speech productive and readily revealed his plans and motives to his audience.

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Introduction

Without language, communication is not possible. Humans are using language as a tool of communication. There are four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The most crucial language skill is speaking. This skill is productive and has output. Speaking conveys a discourse to listeners, and the history of public speaking can be traced back to ancient Greece. Public speaking intentionally comprises three reasons: to notify, influence, and delight someone. The occasion of the inauguration is the start of the new administration of the public office holder. On

this occasion, the elected president of the country was anticipated to deliver a speech. This was called an inaugural speech and is also categorized as a political speech. According to Jegede (2018) and Abuya (2012), political leaders give people a feeling of belonging and security through their truthfulness in their speech. Public speaking is face-to-face formal interaction with many people. The researchers chose the inaugural speech of Joe Biden to conduct their study by utilizing stylistics and linguistics knowledge.

Stylistics is a part of Linguistics that uses the theory and methodology of present-day etymology



to investigate style. It contemplates the utilization of language in an explicit setting and endeavors to represent the qualities that mark the language utilization of people and social gatherings (Qian, 2006). Fundamentally, stylistics responds to how content is arranged and compares it to why it is thus organized (Murana, 2017). Carter (1989) and Widdowson (1975) have the same views that stylistics plays a role as a bridge between linguistics and literature.

Joe Biden started his political career early and was a member of the Senate at the age of 29. Now, he is the 46th president of the United States, and his inaugural speech was in Washington, D.C., on January 20, 2021. His speech showed his style. The style depends upon linguistic levels, essentially offering novelty to each author (Carter, 1989). The purpose of the present paper is to examine the stylistic analysis of the speech and how Biden conveyed his meaning with the help of linguistic features. This paper makes stylistics analysis at two levels: rhetorical level and syntactic level.

Literature Review

Style and Stylistics

Stylistics is a fundamental methodology that utilizes the results of a study of semantics in the investigation of literary discourse. British etymologists in the 1930s introduced an alternate kind of custom with comparative ideas called British Contextualism. As indicated by Roger Fowler, linguistics stylistics or new stylistics, in this way, accommodates a technological base for the investigation of style for the first time. Before the twentieth century, stylistics managed scholarly content. However, in the twentieth century, it began to manage non-artistic content. The absolute first point of Stylistics is to comprehend the writer's or essayist's aims. In the second half of the 20th century, Freeman (1970) explains it as a sub-discipline. As Widdowson (1975) indicated, stylistics is the investigation of artistic content that shows semantic direction. Turner (1975) portrays stylistics as a field of semantics that accentuates the adjustments in the complex employment of language.

Political Discourse

Language has a significant task in governmental issues since it impacts all political exercises in a

country (Balogun & Murana, 2018). Beard (2000) sees that political talk and language use in governmental issues assist with knowing how political officeholders use language. Presidents and lead representatives convince individuals through the skillful use of language in their discourses. As indicated by (Balogun & Murana, 2018), there are two interconnected things: language and power. Accordingly, everybody in power uses language as an essential instrument in completing their authority obligations. Government officials usually control their words together to accomplish their aims. Along these lines, we can say that language is the medium of politics.

Many researchers have demonstrated their interest in political discourses in recent years. Jegede (2019) noticed that the language of political discourse is extraordinary in contrast with our everyday language use since it undoes political goals. According to Jegede (2018, 2019), political languages empower politicians to investigate the aspects of language. These aspects of language control convince, appreciate, impact, and spread the word about their aim for individuals. According to Schaffner (2004), political speech has been utilized to address the language used in the political setting or accomplish a politically spurred objective. Jegede (2018) sees language as a political instrument. In such a manner, language is a powerful instrument in conveying our political obligations.

Joseph (2006) contends that language is political in light of how it is utilized. Hence, our considerations and perspectives are dictated by the alternatives made accessible by our language (Jegede, 2015). According to Jegede (2019), crowds ordinarily help legislators because they utilize linguistic devices to turn their messages political and precise. In this manner, the accomplishment of a government official relies upon how well they can utilize language to control the minds of individuals. Chen (2018) sees that political talk or discourse is a standard practice that plays a significant part in actualizing the speaker's objectives.

Inaugural Speech

Speeches are regularly composed to make politicians more trustful and give the residents a sense of security. Ayeomoni (2001) said that during the inaugural event, the president gave a speech to tell his/her aims as a pioneer. Politicians handle

language during public discourses in a very skillful and logical manner. An inaugural speech is an opening speech by a political officeholder during his inauguration (Ademilokun, 2016). In Nigeria, Politicians utilize the discourse as a chance to win the public's hearts and try to focus on their words during their missions. Political talk as discourse or talk is a vital instrument in governmental issues. Jegede (2018) notes that due to inaugural speeches, people have a positive image of politicians; they use words to control the personalities and considerations of individuals. Accordingly, language in the possession of government officials is an instrument for control to suit their aims (Ayeomoni, 2001). Garifullina et al. (2021) stated that the inaugural speech aims to present the state leader as 'a strong linguistic personality', an emblem of national ideology, and the symbol of national values.

Political discourses are also inescapable, considering that politics is well-known and significant in numerous parts of the world, as are political discourses. Politically involves vital perspectives on human issues; various individuals convey political addresses at various political gatherings. Nonetheless, official discourses are more important because a country's president conveys official talks in various political settings like Independence Day, New Year's Day, and, more critically, the initiation of a political career. According to Irimiea (2010), political discourses are categorized based on what a political leader talks about and where he talks. The fame of political addresses has no uncertainty added to the entrenchment of the field of information known as political talk and the development of exploration in the areas.

Many researchers have examined Joe Biden's inaugural speech from various perspectives. Abdulla (2024), through a stylistic analysis of the speech focusing on linguistic features like graphological and grammatical deviations, transitivity, and modality, concludes that Biden's speech achieves power and persuasion through lexical and grammatical items like abstract nouns and modal auxiliaries and repetition of certain lexical items. Alkhawaldeh et al. (2023) carried out a critical discourse analysis of the speech, using Fairclough's CDA framework, and concluded that the president stated implicitly and explicitly his significant ideologies encompassing unity, equality, and freedom for US citizens. The

present study is significantly different from these previous studies on Biden's inaugural speech in that it exclusively focuses on the syntactic and rhetorical strategies and devices used by the president in his speech to reflect his power and engage his audience. Through the close stylistic analysis of the speech, the study presents the key features of an impressive inaugural speech at a national level.

Syntax

(Carnie, 2006) characterizes linguistic structure in a given language as a bunch of rules, standards, and procedures that oversee the design of sentences, mainly including word order. Researchers in this field aim to bring out the principles of the grammar of a specific language, in this case, the English language (Robert & Howard, 2006). Grammaticality and acceptability are the central areas of syntax. Syntax is the investigation of word blends to shape phrases, from phrases to clauses and clauses to sentences. The syntactic design in a book can be analyzed by dissecting the arrangements of the sentences in the content. Vassileva (2021) analyzed the speech in the context of uncertainty caused by the coronavirus circumstances and concluded that despite the troubles, the speech achieved unprecedented levels of audience involvement due to its effective communication model of an inauguration speech.

Methodology

This study used a mixed-method approach for analysis. The quantitative approach was used to determine the frequencies of syntactic devices in the political discourse. This made the investigation adaptable and guaranteed an authentic data examination. The examination likewise centered on how the syntactic and rhetorical devices helped decipher belief systems communicated in the discourse. Joe Biden's inaugural discourse served as the subject and data for this study. The discourse was fundamentally read, and the syntactic and rhetorical devices, conjunctions, adverbials and pronouns, first and second person, use of will and must in developing the discourse were distinguished, arranged, deciphered, and talked about corresponding thoughts transferred in the discourse.

Analysis and discussion

Rhetorical analysis

Parallelism

Biden used parallel structures frequently in his speech. "With unity, we can do great things, important things. We can right wrongs. We can put people to work in good jobs." Biden used this sentence structure again and again. He used 'can' 16 times in his discourse. He used 'can' eight times in this paragraph. In his discourse, he mentioned that union is strength and, with the help of unity, they could make America a superpower. Through discourse, he wanted to make clear that he, as president, would prove good for the middle class and provide them with basic needs like school, hospital, security, and work.

Another example of parallel structure is: "Let's begin to listen to one another again. Hear one another, see one another, show respect to one another." He made it clear that without society, humans are nothing. Therefore, it is time to hear one another again; unity is the theme of his speech. Biden stressed on joining hands and understanding each other.

Simile

Most writers use their mental processes and apply one or two figures of speech. This creates variety in the style of works of art. The job of a simile is to restore something fake to anything real, given that it depends on deception and not on the truth; it is intended to be a case that is not genuine (Shemisa,

2006). In light of this definition, a simile is a connection between things that are not obvious in reality. They are just in the producer's brain and extraordinarily enlighten the producer's point of view regarding the event (Shemisa, 2006). Biden used similes six times in his speech; he used them repeatedly to compare different things to make the difference between different plans. The extracts from the text are as follows:

- "It's taken as many lives in one year as America lost in all of World War II."
- "I know speaking of unity can sound to some like a foolish fantasy these days."
- "We can see each other not as adversaries, but as neighbors."

With the help of 'like' and 'as', Biden made clear that the number of deaths in World War II was 75-80 million, and in the days of COVID-19, America lost more people than in World War II. Since we are all isolated due to the world's current situation and there are no formal or informal gatherings, talking about unity is like daydreaming. We are friends and treat everyone like your friend, not your foe.

Repetition

The repeated use of a word in a text is called repetition. It helps get the public's attention. Frequently using certain words in speech would make the public energetic. Repetition in speech is used to gain power in one's tone, and reinforcement is important for explaining aims and plans for the future. The repeated words are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 1

Repeated words

Repeated words	Frequency
America	20
Americans	
Day	11
Democracy	12
Nation	10
I	39
We	75
People	14
United States of America	2

The most frequently used word is 'We'. Biden used it to show his solidarity with the American nation. "We" are no longer separate from each other. The

betterment of America is with Biden, and he is with America. He stressed that due to COVID-19, the country was shut down, and the following winter,

they should focus on restoring, repairing, and healing the country. "We" must create a soft corner in our hearts for others. "We" should follow morals and help each other in times of difficulty so that someone else can help us. After using 'We', the most frequently used word is 'I', 39 times in full speech. He used 'I' to show his future services to the public. He promised to stand with citizens through thick and thin, never violate the rules and regulations of the constitution, and try hard to provide every facility for the public. He used the word democracy repeatedly as a gesture of willfulness that the people selected him, and he was there just because of them,

and in the coming time, Biden would also follow their will.

Syntactic Analysis

Modality

Modal verbs aid action words, which show the 'mode' or 'way' of the fundamental action words demonstrated by different actions. They show capacity, plausibility, likelihood, consent, and commitment. There are different roles of modals for getting permission, for request purposes, for expressing possibility, and for giving suggestions; we can also use them to show the importance of something.

Table 2

Use of Modality

USE OF MODAL VERBS	FREQUENCY
Will	29
Would	1
May	5
Might	1
Can	16
Could	0
Shall	2
Should	1
Must	7

From the above table, it is obvious that the most used modal verb is 'will'. Biden used 'will' to make clear his plans to the public. Through his speech and usage of 'will,' the president spreads the word about his arrangements and wants Americans to go along with him to accomplish the plans. As a recently chosen president, he attempts to spread the word about his aims to the Americans and the world. Likewise, he utilizes 'will' to transfer what lies ahead. Examples are as follows:

- "It will never happen."
- "I will defend the Constitution."
- "I'll defend our democracy."
- "I'll defend America, and I will give all, all of you."

Biden uses 'can' 16 times in his speech to show that we can achieve our goals by following specific ways

and by achieving goals like good jobs, education, and the best health facilities, the public would be happy, and the utilization of 'must' to show his responsibility in his arrangements as found in the following extracts:

- "And we can do that now."
- "We can see each other not as adversaries, but as neighbors."
- "We can treat each other with dignity and respect."
- "Disagreement must not lead to disunion."

Pronouns

A word used in place of a noun is called a pronoun. There are different types of pronouns. Their frequent usage is shown in the table below:

Table 3

Types of Pronouns

Type of pronoun	Frequency
Numeral	7

Type of pronoun	Frequency
Demonstrative	34
Reflexive	2
Interrogative	3
Personal	197
Possessive	25
Indefinite	31
Relative	37

The frequency of pronoun usage is mentioned in the above table. The main focus is on identifying personal pronouns. The pronoun "I" alludes to the first-person pronoun, a specific person, as the speaker delivers a statement. The pronoun "you" alludes to another person to whom the speaker coordinates the expression. This is an all-around acknowledged thought that a personal pronoun, in any case, does not add to the explanation of their

capacities in talk; however, first-second pronouns allude to discourse examples (Benveniste, 1966). The addresser of an illocutionary act is the first-person pronoun "I", which alludes to the speaker, and the recipient of the illocutionary act is the second-person pronoun "you", which alludes to the listener. They demonstrate that the members of the illocutionary act acted in the talk.

Table 4

Use of Personal Pronouns

Use of Personal Pronouns	Frequency	
First-person	I	39
	We	75
Second person	You	19
	He	2
	She	0
Third-person	It	17
	They	4

In his speech, Biden utilized pronoun words such as 'we', 'I', 'you', and 'they'. The main component in a rhetorical device is 'we' and it is known as anaphora, where the redundancy of a word implies logical force on "we". "We" is generally utilized to set up shared personality in comparison with 'they', and recommends co-activity and shared objectives. His speech revolves around the work that will be done and the advantages of cooperating. He additionally utilizes "me", "myself", and "I" in his speech frequently. "I" has been connected to genuineness, melancholy, status, and mental proportion. The use of personal pronouns leads us towards personality and mental traits.

Biden utilizes "you", "we", "I", and "they". His objectives for using "you and I" were to demonstrate sharing relationships dialogically, whereas "we and they" is another relationship used between himself and crowds. "I" alludes to him/herself; "They" is an approach to recommend human individuals by and

large, yet different from the others; "I", "you", and "we" are utilized uniquely to put forward certain suggestions to humans. In the inaugural speech, pronouns like "we and I" signify the president himself. Utilization, recurrence, and placing impressions are changing. 'We' can 'stimulate a feeling of solidarity by gathering people and tie in general.'

- "My fellow Americans, in the work ahead of us, we're going to need each other."
- "We need all our strength to persevere through this dark winter."
- "We're entering what may be the toughest and deadliest period of the virus."
- "We must set aside politics and finally face this pandemic as one nation, One nation."
- "My fellow Americans, I close the day where I began with a sacred oath before God and all of you."

- “ I give you my word, I will always level with you.”
- “I will defend the Constitution.”
- “I’ll defend our democracy.”
- “ I’ll defend America, and I will give all, all of you.”

Conjunctions

With the help of conjunctions, different words, clauses, and phrases are connected. There are three types of conjunctions, but this paper only works on coordinating conjunctions. The frequency of usage of different conjunctions is mentioned in the table below. The most frequently used conjunction is 'And'. It is used 15 times in the speech, and 'But' is used four times. Biden used 'And' because he wanted

to simultaneously show action and instances of more than two occasions. With the help of 'And', Biden showed contrastive features and, by the usage of 'But', showed contrastive things. The examples are as follows:

- “America has been tested anew, and America has risen to the challenge.”
- “We can deliver racial justice, and we can make America once again the leading force for good in the world.”
- “As does President Carter, who I spoke with last night, who cannot be with us today but whom we salute for his lifetime of service.”
- “We can deliver racial justice, and we can make America once again the leading force for good in the world.”

Table 4

Use of Conjunctions

Use of Conjunctions	Frequency
For	2
And	15
Nor	0
But	4
Or	2
Yet	1
So	0

Conclusion

The study reveals the frequently used words in the inaugural speech of Joe Biden. His speech is full of stylistic devices. This study just discussed two stylistic levels: syntactic and rhetorical. The rhetorical devices played an important role in discourse. After the speech, the aims and plans are published immediately in the media. He repeatedly used the effect of parallelism in his speech to make it forceful. Americans are greatly involved in speech, and rhetorical devices are the most crucial strategy for making a speech attractive and powerful. He repeated some words of importance to certain things that, according to him, are 'nation' and 'Americans'. He emphasized democracy and was elected due to

the public's will. The most frequently used pronoun is 'we' to show that the public and the newly elected president are together, and he uses 'I' to describe his future aims and objectives. The main focus of this speech is on good governance and democracy, and he wants all citizens to understand their responsibilities towards one another. He also offered his services to those who did not support him in the election; everyone was the same for him. He aimed to raise America and take it to its previous place. He begged again and again for unity in his speech. He wanted all Americans to clear their hearts for each other. He used these devices to make his speech broad and lively. He discussed the country's internal issues instead of foreign affairs. The audience must have developed a great love for their president.

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