

Cross-Cultural Comparison of the Persuasive Function of Lexical Cohesion in Obama's and Buhari's Presidential Inaugural Speeches

Zubairu Malah

Department of English, Yobe State University, Damaturu, Nigeria.

zubayrmalah@yahoo.com

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Received: 17/08/2021	Abstract <i>Numerous studies have revealed how Lexical Cohesion supported the fulfilment of political leaders' persuasion intention in their rhetoric. The purpose of this study was to cross-culturally explore President Obama's and President Buhari's Inaugural Speeches to examine the impact of culture on the persuasive functions of Lexical Cohesion in their rhetoric. Therefore, while drawing on Pragmatics, the study adopted a qualitative discourse analysis approach, utilised an eclectic framework of Lexical Cohesion based on Hoey (1991), Martin (1992) and Eggins (2004) to analyse Obama's and Buhari's first inaugural speeches. The findings indicate, on one hand, that although Obama deployed more categories and more frequencies of Lexical Cohesion than Buhari did, 'Repetition' (50%) was the most dominant source of Lexical Cohesion in each of the two speeches. Moreover, the most reiterated item in the two speeches were personal pronouns, where Obama mostly repeated the pronoun 'we', which had inclusive function, and Buhari mostly repeated 'I' and the exclusive 'we'. On the other hand, the findings suggest that Obama utilised Lexical Cohesion mainly for 'emotional appeals', 'audience involvement', and 'credibility-building strategies'; while Buhari used Lexical Cohesion for 'emphasizing his (and his team's) personal commitment', 'building his credibility', and 'demonizing past administrations'. Finally, in the light of these findings, the study has drawn two major conclusions: (1) that on the preponderance of repetition of personal pronouns in both the two speeches, the findings suggest that the generic conventions of the use of personalised English in the inaugural address outweigh any culture-specific discourse practices of the two communities; (2) that Obama's strategies of emotional appeals and audience involvement that enabled him to 'speak along with his audience', which contrast with Buhari's strategies of emphasizing personal commitment and audience-exclusive tone that made him to 'speak alone', seem to have rendered Obama's speech more interactional and more audience-engaging than Buhari's speech.</i>
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1. INTRODUCTION

Presidential Inaugural Speeches belong to the genre of Political Discourse performed by new presidents to formally mark the commencement of their tenure of office. In such debut addresses, new presidents intentionally enact their discourse to target recipients, which are comprised of not only their supporters but also opponents and even the undecided. The goal of inaugural speech is not just to acknowledge and appreciate the electorate's mandate or to

publicise the visions and missions of the new administration, but more importantly to reinforce and win the unflinching support and goodwill of the audience (Campbell & Jamieson, 1990; Wilson, 1994; Alimole, 2004). Therefore, like most genres of Political Discourse, the pragmatic intention of persuasion is a critical feature of Presidential Inaugural Address (see, for example, Chilton, 2004; van Dijk, 2008; Fairclough & Fairclough, 2013). Consequently, the debut speech is conventionally not a lacklustre one; it is mostly convincing, inspiring and persuasive enough to imbue palpable emotions and break down barriers of beliefs, attitudes, views and prejudices among the audience and ultimately charge them with a proposed course of action for the good of the whole nation (Campbell & Jamieson, 1985; Wilson, 1994; Alimole, 2002).

Thus, the discourse resources deployed by different presidents in their performance of the inaugural genre continue to attract scholarly attention from different research fields (of discourse analysis). These fields include, for example, *Critical Discourse Analysis* (henceforth CDA) (see, for example, Wang, 2010; Koussouhoun & Dossoumou, 2015; Sharndama, 2015; Temidayo & Sotayo, 2016; Lodhi et al 2018; Oparinde et. al., 2021), where researchers mainly investigate the utilization of linguistic devices that reflect *ideology* and *power* in inaugural speeches; *Systemic Functional Linguistics* (SFL) (see, Nur, 2012; Kondowe, 2014; Enyi & Chitulu, 2015; Sameer, 2017; Chanturidze, 2018), where inquirers mostly focus on linguistic elements of *Interpersonal Metafunction* as employed by the speakers. Other categories of researchers taking inaugural speeches seriously operate within the frameworks of *Pragmatics* (see, for example, Abuya, 2012; Boakye, 2014; Teng, 2015), where studies mostly examine the categories of Speech Acts – illocutionary forces – performed in the speeches; *Cognitive Linguistics* (see, for example, Hu, 2010; Escudero, 2011; Xue et al, 2013; Pasaribu, 2016; Malah & Taiwo, 2020), where researchers analyse how *Conceptual Metaphors* are used by new presidents to make abstract political concepts concrete for the purposes of simplification and persuasion. Finally, drawing on the analytic tools of *Genre Studies*, other researchers explore genre-specific features such as *Move Structure* of the Presidential Inaugural Speeches (see, Liu, 2012; Naeem, 2013). Therefore, the assortment of rhetorical tools deployed in the performance of Presidential Inaugural Speech has been a major concern among discourse analysts.

Furthermore, Lexical Cohesion is the cohesive effect discourse producers create through the selection of lexical items that encode related propositional contents in discourse (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Halliday, 1994; Eggins, 2004; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Malah, 2020), has been a vital resource that communicators utilise to strategically support their pragmatic aims. Specifically, Lexical Cohesion has been found to facilitate the fulfillment of discourse producers' pragmatic intention of persuasion (see, for example, Orta & Gil, 1995; Klebanov et al. 2008; Prados & Penuelas, 2012; Malah, 2016; Malah et al., 2017, Malah, 2020). However, the significance of Lexical Cohesion in Presidential Inaugural Speeches seems to have been under-researched. Previous studies on Lexical Cohesion such as Hasan (1984), Morris and Hirst (1991), Taboada (2004), Tanskanen (2006), Gonzalez (2010) and Malah (2015) appear to have concentrated on the role of Lexical Cohesion in building the coherence of discourse. Thus, the current study was an attempt to bridge this gap in research by investigating the contribution of Lexical Cohesion in fulfilling persuasive intention of President Obama and President Buhari in their inaugural speeches.

In addition, the literature suggests that previous research on Presidential Inaugural Addresses has not taken much heed of the persuasive function of Lexical Cohesion across cultures, when all aspects of pragmatics are potential subjects for cross-cultural exploration (Fetzer, 2007; Paltridge, 2008; Trosborg, 2010). Moreover, because language and culture are so intertwined and inseparable (Paltridge, 2008; Schlee, 2009; Trosborg, 2010; Malah & Idris, 2016; Fetzer, 2017), it could be argued that whenever a new president gives the inaugural

address, he also makes cultural choices. Each president designs his discourse to a speech community with particular ways of producing and interpreting explicit and implicit meanings, with distinct norms, values, and discourse practices which are not necessarily the same with those of other communities. President Obama designed his speech to Americans who (largely) use English as First Language (L1), while President Buhari enacted his speech to Nigerians who use English as a Second Language (L2). The current study, therefore, was an endeavour to extend the current knowledge on the interaction between the persuasive function of Lexical Cohesion and culture by investigating American and Nigerian Presidential Inaugural Speeches. The investigation was guided by two major questions as follows:

- I. What are the major sources of Lexical Cohesion in President Obama's and President Buhari's Inaugural Speeches?
- II. What does a cross-cultural comparison reveal about the persuasive functions of Lexical Cohesion across President Obama's and President Buhari's Inaugural Speeches?

1.1 Theoretical Underpinning

This study was guided by the assumptions of Pragmatics. Pragmatics has been an approach to the study of language (in) use (or discourse). The approach of pragmatics contrasts with those of other approaches to the study of language such as Syntax and Semantics. While Syntax focuses on the grammar and analyses how words relate to one another, Semantics focuses on meaning and analyses meanings of words 'in isolation' (Cutting, 2002, p. A1.1), Pragmatics focuses on meanings based on the obvious linguistic forms, the context of usage and the speaker's intention. In this approach, the meaning of an utterance does not reside only in the surface linguistic form but also in the contextual factors influencing communication, as well as the discourse producer's communicative intention (Yule, 1996; Cutting, 2002; Jones, 2012). To interpret an utterance, therefore, pragmaticists take into cognizance not only the linguistic meaning, but also the context, and the speaker's purpose/goal in speaking

Pragmatics analyses investigate the relationship between linguistic forms and communicative functions. Here, attention is focused on how discourse producers utilise linguistic forms to achieve communicative purposes/goals (Yule, 1996; Cutting, 2002; Paltridge, 2008; Fetzer, 2011). The framework enables researchers to relate linguistic forms to the communicative functions they are used to accomplish, to talk about the communicators' intended meanings, assumptions, goals, and even the actions performed. In the current study, the data investigated were Presidential Inaugural Speeches where speakers designed their discourse with the intention of influencing the target recipients. The study specifically anchored its analysis on Lexical Cohesion devices to explore how the presidents utilised them to support their persuasive intentions. Thus, it was an endeavour to study this pragmatic function across cultures in order to examine the impact of culture on lexical cohesion in speeches of presidents from two distinct cultures.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES ON (LEXICAL) COHESION IN POLITICAL SPEECHES

Cohesion analysis has been a field of prolific inquiries on Political Discourse. Specifically, cohesion analysts interested in Political Discourse have often been concerned with categories of cohesive devices, Grammatical or Lexical (see Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Malah, 2020), and how they function in political speeches. These researchers have often focused on the interaction between cohesive devices and different properties of Political Discourse such as

coherence, ideology, power and persuasion. It has consequently been revealed that different patterns of cohesive resources facilitate the accomplishment of political leaders' speaking goals. For instance, Hidayat (2007) explored cohesive devices in President George W. Bush's second Inaugural Speech. The study found that President George W. Bush mostly deployed *Reference* and *Repetition* in his speech. Hidayat also observed that cohesive devices not only built coherence but also had the function of stressing ideas in the speech. From Hidayat's findings, it could be understood that the use of cohesive devices to 'stress' ideas in political speeches is a deliberate effort by speakers to communicate particular messages that have the potential to persuade their audience.

In a similar study but with a different focus, Klebanov et. al. (2008) analysed Margaret Thatcher's speech at Conservative Party Conference 1977 to examine the interaction between Lexical Cohesion and semantic domains in the speech. The researchers reported that Lexical Cohesion related to the major semantic domains on which the speech drew, and this ultimately supported Thatcher's rhetorical strategies. Therefore, Klebanov et. al.'s findings seemingly agree to Hidayat's (2007) findings, to some degree, because it is only when the coherence of a speech is perceived that semantic domains on which it draws could be discerned.

Like Klebanov et. al. (2008) on Lexical Cohesion and Thatcher's rhetorical strategies, another study on how cohesion supports rhetorical strategies is Prados and Penuelas (2012). Prados and Penuelas' study focused on cohesion in American political rhetoric. It investigated the persuasive function of cohesive devices (grammatical and lexical) in *The Gettysburg Address, I Have a Dream, and Obama's Inaugural Address*. The analytic framework applied was an adaptation of Halliday and Hasan (1976) and de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981). The research unraveled that American political speakers relied primarily on *lexical repetition*, which supported their persuasive goals of speaking. Thus, Prados and Penuelas' study has revealed how American politicians utilise cohesive devices not just for achieving coherence in their speeches, but also for the fulfillment of their persuasive intentions.

While Prados and Penuelas (2012) were interested in rhetoric of several American political leaders, Nurjannah (2013) was specifically concerned with President Obama's second Victory Speech. Nurjannah's study focused on the major sources of cohesion and how they were utilised in Obama's speech. The analysis revealed pervasive use of *Reference* (especially the pronoun 'we') and *Repetition*. The researcher further observed that Obama used cohesive devices to achieve coherence and persuasion in his speech. Nurjannah's study, therefore, revealed consistent findings with those of Hidayat (2007), who also found how President George W. Bush used cohesive devices to build coherence and stress ideas in his Inaugural Speech. Based on these findings, thus, it could be assumed that in spite of the generic variations between political speeches, cohesive devices have the potential to always support coherence and persuasion.

Contrary to Nurjannah's (2013) study which was concerned with Grammatical and Lexical Cohesion, Enyi and Chitulu's (2015) study was concerned specifically with Lexical Cohesion. The study investigated categories and functions of Lexical Cohesion in Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan's Inaugural Speech. Results from Enyi and Chitulu's analysis indicated that the president mostly used *Repetition* and *Synonymy* in his Inaugural Speech. Additionally, the study found that the president utilised Lexical Cohesion devices to support progression of ideas across his speech (coherence) and also to persuade his audience. These findings corroborate those of Prados and Penuelas (2012) and Klebanov et. al. (2008) also reported pervasive use of lexical repetitions to build coherence and fulfill persuasive goals in presidential speeches. However, Enyi and Chitulu's (2015) study was unique in reporting *Synonymy* as a dominant cohesion category in political speeches. This difference could have

resulted from the fact that while most studies analysed both Grammatical and Lexical Cohesion, Enyi and Chitulu focused specifically on Lexical Cohesion. It is recently more common among contemporary cohesion analysts to analyse one type of cohesion than the two at the same time.

Incidentally, the literature suggests that recent trend in cohesion analysis on political speeches focuses mostly on Lexical Cohesion than Grammatical Cohesion (see, for example, Desti, 2020; Nuzulia & Wulandari, 2020; Saefudin, 2020; Sinambela et. al. 2021). Desti (2020) investigated Lexical Cohesion in Seokarno's Trikora Speech; Nuzulia and Wulandari (2020) explored President Trump's speech at UN General Assembly in 2017; Saefudin (2020) analysed Lexical Cohesion in President Trump's and Clinton's presidential debates of 2016; and Sinambela et. al. (2021) were concerned with Lexical Cohesion in German Chancellor Angela Merkel's speech. With the exception of Sinambela et. al. (2021), all of these studies reported consistent findings that the most preponderant sources of Lexical Cohesion in their data were *Repetition* and *Synonymy*, and that these lexical devices built coherence and persuasion. On the other hand, Sinambela et. al. (2021) reported that Merkel mostly used *Antonymy* and *Repetition*. This difference could be attributed to language (and culture) difference in the use of lexical resources. In addition, it is well to understand that while all of these studies analysed speeches composed in English, Sinambela et. al.'s data were translated texts originally composed in German language. It could therefore be assumed, in the light of these consistent findings, that *Synonymy* and *Repetition* remain the most utilised categories of Lexical Cohesion in political speeches.

However, the literature additionally shows that cohesion studies still explore both Grammatical and Lexical Cohesion in political speeches (see, for example, Mandarani & Fakhrudin, 2020 and Maretanedhi, 2021). Mandarani & Fakhrudin (2020) analysed cohesion in President Trump's speech on Iranian Army General Qassim Soleimani's assassination by the US; Maretanedhi (2021) analysed cohesion in Theresa May's Conservative Party Conference speech of 2017. Both of these studies reported the preponderance of *Reference*, *Repetition* and *Synonymy* in the speeches. They have also shown how cohesive resources supported coherence and persuasion in the speeches. For instance, Mandarani and Fakhrudin have illustrated how President Trump strategically deployed cohesive devices such as the personal pronoun 'we' and the modal auxiliary 'will' in attempts to justify his action and to also express his personal commitment and firm determination to squarely deal with any enemy of America and her allies.

In conclusion, an attempt has been made in this brief review to capture the current state of knowledge on the strategic utilization of (lexical) cohesive devices by political leaders in their speeches. It could have been seen how the literature suggests tremendous progress in exploring how political leaders often deploy cohesive devices to facilitate the achievement of their speaking goals. It could also be seen how previous research on the persuasive function of (Lexical) Cohesion has mainly concentrated on analysing speeches of presidents (or political leaders) from the same culture (and native language). Apparently, previous research on cohesion has not given much heed to the persuasive function of Lexical Cohesion across different cultures to examine how culture could interact with this discourse resource. Consequently, little is known on the impact of culture on the persuasive function of Lexical Cohesion devices in political speeches. Thus, the purpose of the present study was to bridge this gap in research. It was an endeavour to extend the current knowledge by comparing cross-culturally the persuasive function of Lexical Cohesion in President Obama's and President Buhari's Inaugural Speeches. Moreover, the study was an attempt to yield new insights into the persuasive properties of

Lexical Cohesion in the speeches of presidents from different cultures. This was done through adapting a fresh approach by applying an eclectic framework of Lexical Cohesion.

3. METHOD

3.1 Research Approach

This study employed qualitative discourse analysis approach. This approach was deemed suitable for the study because the data analysed were texts and the researcher needed the liberty to explore in-depth the interactionability of surface discourse elements, namely, Lexical Cohesion devices, and the (abstract) elements of discourse producers' persuasive intentions and cultures, to be able to offer some valuable insights. This methodological decision was informed by Yule (1996), Dornyei (2007), Merriam (2009) and Creswell (2012), who have consistently contended the qualitative researcher's involvement in data analysis, interpretation, and the subsequent acceptance of his artful/creative answers to the research questions.

3.2 Sampling

The study applied purposeful sampling, where America's President Barack Obama's first inaugural speech and Nigeria's President Muhammad Buhari's first inaugural speech were intentionally selected. This methodological decision was made based on Matthews and Rose (2010), Merriam (2009), Creswell (2012) and Tavakoli (2012) who consistently assert that qualitative researches deliberately handpick purposive samples based on their conviction that the chosen samples are rich enough to enable the exploration of the research questions. Moreover, President Obama's and President Buhari's first inaugural speeches were chosen based on the criteria that: (1) while Obama was an American president, Buhari was a Nigerian president, (2) both President Obama and President Buhari won elections and took power from the incumbent presidents/political parties, (3) both President Obama and President Buhari came to power at a time when their countries were in the grips of tough challenges, but their speeches succeeded in inculcating courage and confidence in their audiences, and (4) both President Obama and President Buhari have displayed excellent oratory skills that have attracted academic attention from different disciplines.

3.3 Data Collection

President Barack Obama's first inaugural speech was culled from *America Online* (Aol) at <https://www.aol.com/article/news/2017/01/19/president-barack-obamas-first-inauguration-speech-full-text/21657532/>, while President Muhammad Buhari's first inaugural speech was obtained from Nigerian *Vanguard Newspapers* at <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/05/read-president-buhari-inaugural-speech>.

3.4 Analysis Framework

The study applied an eclectic framework of **Lexical Cohesion** based on Hoey (1991), Martin (1992) and Eggins (2004). This was in attempt to: (1) develop a framework that would best suit the 'single-source monologic' data (Kaplan and Grabe, 2002:191) being investigated, (2) cover a wide range of lexical relations, (3) use simpler terminologies and (4) avoid the criticisms labelled against Halliday and Hasan's (1976) *collocation* (see, for example, Martin, 2001; Tanskanen, 2006). This framework has a total of eight (8) categories of lexical relations as follows:

Category	Description
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1	<i>Hyponymy</i>	Following Martin (1992), <i>Hyponymy</i> is the relation between a <i>superordinate</i> term and its <i>subordinate</i> member(s), where lexical items relate as X is a type of Y. e.g. jaguar/car, greyhound/dog and table/furniture.
2	<i>Co-hyponymy</i>	From Eggins (2004), this is where lexical items are both/all <i>subordinate</i> members of a given <i>superordinate</i> term e.g. mango/banana./orange (<i>fruits</i>), table/chair (<i>furniture</i>)
3	<i>Contrast</i>	From Eggins (2004), This is the relation of opposition between lexical items that encode contrast relationship e.g. new/old, strong/weak. Some cohesion analysts term this relation variously as <i>Antonymy</i> , <i>opposition</i> , or <i>complex paraphrase</i> (see Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; McCarthy, 1988; Hoey, 1991; respectively).
4	<i>Synonymy</i>	From Eggins (2004), this is when lexical items encode similar meanings in texts e.g. correct/right, happy/glad. Other models refer to synonymy relation differently as <i>simple paraphrase</i> (Hoey, 1991) and <i>equivalence</i> (Taboada, 2004).
5	<i>Repetition</i>	From Eggins (2004), this is a relation between items in which the same form, irrespective of identity of reference, is subsequently repeated in texts e.g. life/life, reports/reported. Moreover, following Hoey (1991), the relation between a pronoun (the presupposed) and another pronoun (the presupposing) is considered <i>repetition</i> in the current study.
6	<i>Meronymy</i>	From Eggins (2004), this is the part-to-whole relation (or vice versa) between lexical items e.g. body/hand/neck/arms and tree/trunk/branches/leaves
7	<i>Co-meronymy</i>	From Eggins (2004), this is where lexical items relate by being parts of a common whole e.g. hand/eye/neck/arms and trunk/branches/leaves/
8	<i>Expectancy relations</i>	From Eggins (2004), this category is close to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) collocation, but lexical relations are more systematically defined here. Expectancy relations are based on <i>expectancy</i> of <i>co-occurrence</i> or <i>going together</i> of lexical items. These relations may operate: <ol style="list-style-type: none">i. between an action and the characteristic (or expected) doer of the action e.g. tailors/sew, researcher/discoverers, doctors/diagnoseii. between an action/process and the characteristic sufferer affected by the action e.g. play/guitar, paint/house, write/letteriii. in accordance with the predictability tendency between an event/process and its typical location of occurrence e.g. learn/school, read/libraryiv. between compound nouns and individual lexical items forming their parts e.g. heart/disease, child/birth

3.5 Analysis Procedure

On the analysis procedure, because the data were written texts, the study followed Halliday and Hasan (1976) by analyzing cohesive relations across sentence boundaries only. The analysis also adopted Eggins' (2004) idea that lexical units could be simple (single-itemed) or complex (multi-itemed). The analysis was also based on McCarthy's (1988) discourse-specific approach, adopting the view that lexical relations in texts are context-sensitive.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Sources of Lexical Cohesion in President Obama's and President Buhari's First Inaugural Speeches

Analysis of the two data set discovered a total of 461 cohesive links across 112 sentences and 2,408 words in American President Obama's Inaugural Speech, and a total of 301 cohesive links across 99 sentences and 1,911 words in Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari's Inaugural Speech. Thus, President Obama's speech was quite longer and had more cohesive ties than President Buhari's speech. The Analysis also revealed that while the preponderant sources of Lexical Cohesion in President Obama's Inaugural Speech include: *Repetition* (50%), *expectancy Relations* (16%), *Synonymy* (11%) and *Contrast* (9%); President Buhari mostly used *Repetition* (50%), *Contrast* (19%) and *Synonymy* (17%). In addition, the analysis revealed that, in both the two speeches, there were long lexical chains woven across extended segments of the speeches, short lexical chains that run across short spans, and simple ties across sentences. However, President Obama used more amount of long lexical chains than President Buhari used. *Figure 4.1* and *Figure 4.2* below represent the frequencies of Lexical Cohesion in the two speeches:

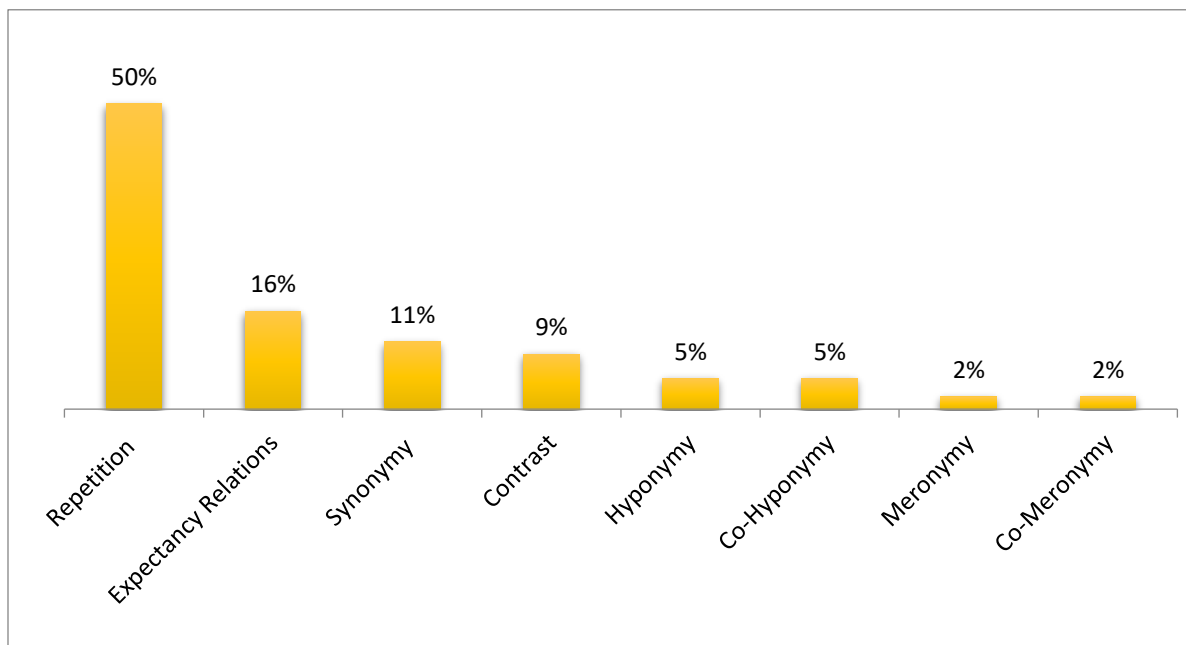


Figure 4.1: Sources of Lexical Cohesion in President Obama's First Inaugural Speech

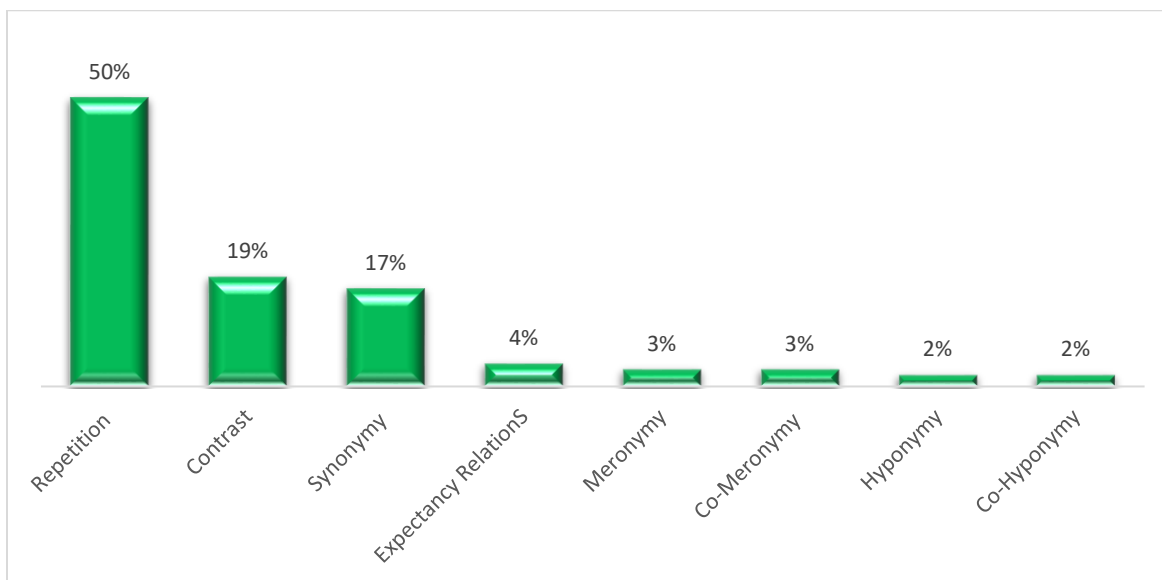


Figure 4.2: Sources of Lexical Cohesion in President Buhari's First Inaugural Speech

As shown in *Figure 4.1* and *Figure 4.2* above, results from the analysis indicate that President Obama deployed more types and frequencies of Lexical Cohesion than Buhari did in his inaugural speech. Obama used four major sources of Lexical Cohesion – *Repetition*; *expectancy Relations*, *Synonymy* and *Contrast*; while Buhari used only three – *Repetition*, *Contrast* and *Synonymy*. In the light of this finding, the study argues that although the amount of cohesive links in texts is also attributable to texts' length or word counts (see, for example, Taboada's, 2004; Haswell's, 1988), culture difference between Obama and Buhari impacted significantly on the types and frequencies of Lexical Cohesion the two presidents used. However, culture-specific differences do not seem to have much impact on the high use of *repetition* by both the presidents. This is based on the finding that the presidents mostly used *repetition* (50%) to achieve cohesion in their inaugural speeches. The results indicate that each of the two presidents mostly reiterated certain words in order to establish relation between the surface elements of his speech. These findings suggest that each of the two speech communities in which the presidents spoke favours repeating key lexical items in texts to establish cohesive relations, support comprehensibility of discourse and fulfill pragmatic intentions.

Moreover, the most repeated lexical items in President Obama's speech, on one hand, are the *personal pronouns*: *we*, *us*, *our(selves)*, *they* and also the word *America*. On the other hand, Nigeria's President Buhari also mostly repeated the *personal pronouns*: *I*, *we*, *us* and *our*. Buhari too repeated the word *Nigeria* several times. Observed carefully, this similarity in the high use of personal pronouns suggests that the generic conventions of the use of *personalised English* in the inaugural address outweighs any culture-specific discourse practices of the two communities. Personalised English is the variety of English that enables speech presenters to constantly refer to themselves and their (imagined) discourse recipients in their discourse. This form of English is used in speech making, and it warrants much use of personal pronouns. Accordingly, the two presidents analysed in this study utilised personal pronouns in their speeches to allow them achieve the desired persona. Hence, these pronouns were used by these presidents not only to achieve cohesion but also as metadiscourse devices. As such, these pronouns have enabled each president to not only constantly project himself into the discourse but also involve his audience,

smoothen ideas in his speech and establish his desired interpersonal relations with the audience. *Examples 1* and *2* below illustrate this:

Example 1

- (1) ... I stand here today humbled by the task before **us**, grateful for the trust you've bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by **our** ancestors. (2) I thank President Bush for his service to **our** nation ... (6) ... America has carried on ... because **we** ... have remained faithful to the ideals of **our** forebears and true to **our** founding documents. (15) Today I say to you that the challenges **we** face are real ... (President Obama's First Inaugural Speech, 20th January, 2009)

Example 2

- (1) ... I am immensely grateful to God Who has preserved **us** to witness this day ... (4) **Our** journey has not been easy but thanks to the determination of **our** people ... **we** have today a truly democratically elected government ... (5) ... I would like to thank President Goodluck Jonathan for his display of statesmanship ... that has now made **our** people proud to be Nigerians ... (6) ... he has made it possible for **us** to show the world that ... **we** can be a united people capable of doing what is right for **our** nation. (8) I hope this act of graciously accepting defeat by the outgoing President will become the standard of political conduct in the country. (President Buhari's First Inaugural Speech, 29th May, 2015)

From *examples 1* and *2* above, it could be seen how the two presidents from the two different cultures employed similar patterns of Lexical Cohesion by utilizing the repetition of the personal pronouns *I*, *our* and *we* to establish connection among the sentences in their inaugural speeches. The presidents utilised these items not only to achieve cohesion but also to express their personal involvement, feelings and gratitude to their audience, especially their predecessors, and also to appeal to the sense of patriotism and unity among their audience.

It could be argued, then, that although patterns of cohesive relations in texts vary in accordance with texts' genre (Hoey, 2005) and register (Tanskanen, 2006), the findings of the current study support Hoey's (1991) claim that repetition has the most significant text-forming property for enabling text producers to 'say something again' in their discourse. In the inaugural speeches analysed, President Obama and President Buhari deployed pronouns to enable them constantly refer to themselves and their audience.

It can also be seen from Figure 4.1 above that the next highest sources of Lexical Cohesion in President Obama's inaugural speech is *expectancy relations* followed by *synonymy* and *Contrast*. As shown below (see 4.2), the president utilised expectancy relations to construct metaphors for persuasive aims. One of such metaphors depicts America(ns) as *characteristic doers/sufferers* of *journey, path, traveled, long rugged path, [moving] forward* and *[never turning] back*. He also used synonymy by, for example, relexicalizing the same content *America's difficulties* differently as *gathering clouds, raging storms, crisis, challenges, new threats, common danger, winter of hardship* and *icy currents*.

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 also show that while President Obama used expectancy relations and synonymy most frequently, President Buhari mostly employed *contrast* and *synonymy* in his inaugural speech. For instance, Buhari utilised *Contrast* lexical devices such as *deep trouble/triumph for Nigeria, tension in the land/peace, gross corruption/responsible and*

accountable governance, kidnappings/rescue, disorder/rebuild and reform, darkness/light, hopeless/increased prosperity, and abuse of office/responsible and accountable governance to establish cohesive relations between the sentences in his speech. The president also used contextually synonymous lexical items such as *challenges, insecurity, pervasive corruption, Boko Haram* and *Unemployment* to weave sentences in his speech.

Therefore, the two presidents were more similar and only slightly different in their use of Lexical Cohesion in the inaugural speeches. It has been shown how both of them made much use of *repetition, contrast* and *synonymy*. The only slight difference is that Obama preferred *expectancy relations* while Buhari preferred *contrast*. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that, despite their cultures differences, President Obama and President Buhari employed similar Lexical Cohesion patterns in their presidential inaugural speeches. As highlighted earlier, this similarity could be attributed to the genre conventions and constraints, which supersede culture-specific practices, in performing the presidential inaugural address. In addition, the similarity in high frequency of personal pronouns in the speeches of the two presidents has also been attributed to the personalised English variety characteristically employed in the inaugural address.

In conclusion, the findings of the current study corroborate those of Hidayat (2007), Prados and Penuelas (2012), Olajoke (2015), Enyi and Chitulu (2015), Temidayo and Sotayo (2016), Jamil (2018), Saefudin (2020), Jasim and Mustafa (2020) and Oparinde et al (2021), who have consistently reported preponderance of *lexical repetition* and *synonymy* in political speeches. Specifically, studies exploring cohesion (and other linguistic features) in different presidential inaugural speeches such as Hidayat (2007) on America's President George W. Bush's inaugural speech, Nur (2012) on Mandela's presidential inaugural speech, Enyi and Chitulu (2015) on Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan's inaugural speech and Wahyuningsih (2018) on President Trump's Inaugural Speech, and Lodhi et. al. (2018) on the linguistic features of Inaugural Speeches of American presidents, have reported similar findings that inaugural speeches of presidents (from different cultures) exhibited high repetition of *personal pronouns*. It could, therefore, be concluded that repetition of personal pronouns is a critical cohesive feature that cuts across presidential inaugural speeches irrespective of culture boundaries.

4.2 Cross-cultural comparison of the persuasive functions of Lexical Cohesion across President Obama's and President Buhari's Inaugural Speeches

As understood earlier (see 1 & 1.2 above), the current study was based on the premise that in performing the inaugural speech, each president makes cultural choices and designs his discourse to a speech community with distinct ways of producing and interpreting meanings, with distinct norms, values, and discourse practices, which are not necessarily the same with those of other communities. In other words, each president enacts his discourse for a specific culturally homogeneous recipients. The study, therefore, was an endeavour to explore and compare how presidents of American and Nigerian speech communities deploy Lexical Cohesion resources to accomplish persuasive goals. Fulfilling the speaker's persuasive intentions is a key goal of the inaugural address. Therefore, a further analysis was anchored on the Lexical Cohesion devices found from the first-phased analysis (as reported in 4.1 above).

The second-phased analysis revealed that both America's President Obama and Nigeria's President Buhari utilised Lexical Cohesion not only to enhance the comprehensibility of their speeches but also as a tool to support their pragmatic intentions of persuasion. Thus, while the debut speech could be celebratory in nature (Campbell and Jamieson, 1990; Boakye, 2014),

President Obama and President Buhari used it mainly for the rhetorical purpose of persuasion. This happened because, on the one hand, at the time of President Obama's coming into power – January, 2009 – the powerful America was in her darkest days in history. The country was being gripped by huge crises, including serious economic challenges, war, and a dark future (Hu, 2010; Escudero, 2011; Naeem, 2013; Lodhi et. al. 2018). Therefore, at the time of presenting the speech, the intended audience (Americans) was badly troubled by the precarious situation in the country, and they would like the president's inaugural rhetoric to address it. There was need to bolster their hopes. There was need to motivate their confidence. They needed to be emboldened. There was need to have a leader who could get them out of the 'dark tunnel'. Their spirits of unity and pride needed to be rekindled.

On the other hand, President Buhari gave his inaugural speech when Nigerians were engulfed in huge predicaments and despair. They needed to be inspired. Their spirits needed to be raised. Their confidence in Nigeria's further existence, governance, and patriotic emotions needed to be resuscitated. The country, which was under the leadership of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) for over a decade, was being faced by enormous crises such as insecurity, Boko Haram insurgency, unemployment, bad economy, poverty, corruption, indiscipline, frequent power outage and uncertain future. Nigeria's plights were attributed to PDP's poor governance and incoherent ideological principles (Olowojolu, 2015; Katsina, 2016; Oparinde et. al, 2021). President Buhari, a retired Major General and former Nigeria's Head of State, contested under All Progressives' Congress (APC), a merger of different opposition parties, in order to bring CHANGE to the country's situation. As a result of his tremendous achievements in office and fierce war against indiscipline and corruption, Buhari has been a charismatic and highly respected figure in (Nigeria and) Africa. He has made his mark globally for honesty and fierce fight against corrupt practices and indiscipline in the Nigerian society. His popularity largely derives from his renowned credibility, honesty, patriotism and solemn anti-graft stance. This was a major factor that made Buhari succeeded in defeating the then incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan, who ran under the Peoples' Democratic Party, and became the newly elected president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on 29th May, 2015 (Malah & Idris, 2016; Temidayo & Sotayo, 2016; Malah & Dinyo, 2021; Oparinde, 2021 et. al.). The new president, therefore, deployed Lexical Cohesion devices to persuade his audience and motivate their confidence and good will in his new administration.

In sum, both President Obama and President Buhari sought to achieve persuasive goals in their inaugural speeches. The results suggest that President Obama deployed Lexical Cohesion resources mainly for *audience involvement* and *emotional appeals*. He used Lexical Cohesion resources to appeal to different emotions of the audience. This consequently enhanced his credibility among them. Through the patterns of Lexical Cohesion used in the speech, *audience involvement* enabled Obama to not only identify with the Americans in terms of their common woes, but also encourage them, reawaken their pride and motivate them to a life of service and sacrifice for a desirable future. On the other hand, the results also suggest that President Buhari utilised Lexical Cohesion mainly for the *expression of his personal commitment, determination*, and the *involvement of his team* in ameliorating Nigeria's predicaments. Moreover, Buhari similarly used Lexical Cohesion devices for emotional appeals, but not as much as Obama did. He used lexical devices to appeal to different emotions, establish common bond by identifying with their concerns, enhance his credibility, motivate their confidence in the new administration, appeal for patriotism and unity, and appealed for patience, hard work and sacrifice among the audience. This is discussed and illustrated in the following sections:

4.2.1 Repetition

As seen from Figure 4.1 and 4.2 above, *repetition* (50%) is the most dominant source of Lexical Cohesion in both President Obama's and President Buhari's inaugural speeches. The results further show that President Obama has woven long lexical chains of repetition of the pronouns *we*, *our(s)* and *us* across the stretch of his inaugural address. Specifically, Obama's *we's* were mostly *inclusive* (87%), referring to himself and the audience. The president, therefore, strategically utilised the long chains of these pronouns for *audience involvement* in the speech. This persuasive strategy enabled the president to emotionally connect his audience to his messages, thus succeeded in engaging their minds, captivating and sustaining their attention and interest throughout the speech.

Moreover, because this involvement strategy afforded the audience the opportunity to 'speak along with the president' through the repetition of these devices, the president was able to better identify with the audience's needs and major concerns. This strategy created strong *bond* between the president and the Americans, and it ultimately enhanced his credibility. It also gave him the opportunity to bridge the gap between himself and the audience. *Example 3* below illustrates these points:

Example 3

... America has carried on not simply because of the skill or vision of those in high office, but because **we**, the people, have remained faithful to the ideals of **our** forebears and true to **our** founding documents...

(8)... **we** are in the midst of crisis ... (9) **Our** nation is at war ... (10) **Our** economy is badly weakened, a consequence of ... **our** collective failure to ... prepare the nation for a new age... (12) **Our** health care is too costly, **our** schools fail too many -- and each day brings further evidence that the ways **we** use energy strengthen **our** adversaries and threaten **our** planet... (15) ... the challenges **we** face are real...

(19) On this day, **we** gather because **we** have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord ... (24) In reaffirming the greatness of **our** nation **we** understand that greatness is never a given... (26) **Our** journey has never been one of short-cuts ...

(34) This is the journey **we** continue today. (35) **We** remain the most prosperous, powerful nation on Earth... (40) Starting today, **we** must pick **ourselves** up, dust **ourselves** off, and begin again the work of remaking America... (87) **Our** challenges may be new. (88) The instruments with which **we** meet them may be new. (89) But those values upon which **our** success depends -- honesty and hard work, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism -- these things are old... (96) So let **us** mark this day with remembrance of who **we** are and how far **we** have traveled... (105) Let it be said by **our** children's children that when **we** were tested **we** refused to let this journey end, that **we** did not turn back nor did **we** falter ... **we** carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations... (President Obama's First Inaugural Speech, 20th January, 2009)

From example 3 above, it could be understood how repetition of the pronouns *we*, *our(s)* and *us* supports President Obama's persuasive strategy of *audience involvement*, which consequently enabled him to psychologically engage the audience in his speech, arouse and sustain their attention, create bond and build credibility. The president succeeded in identifying with the audience in terms of major concerns such as the crises being faced by America –war, economy, uncertain future; the need for Americans to work hard in order to ameliorate the situation, and the shared pride in America's age-long prosperity and power.

In addition, it was also found that repetition interacted with other lexical cohesion types in the data to construct conceptual metaphors of high pragmatic value. These metaphors were employed by the president in attempts to fulfill persuasive aims. In other words, the results revealed that President Obama used conceptual metaphors as persuasive techniques in this speech, and he employed repetition to blend with other types of Lexical Cohesion in the construction of different metaphors (see Example 6 and 7 below).

On the other hand, President Buhari also used *repetition* of the personal pronouns: *I*, *we*, *our* and *us* to support his persuasive intentions. However, while President Obama utilised these pronouns for *audience involvement* and *emotional appeals*, Buhari used them mainly to emphasize his *personal commitment* and the *involvement of his team* in handling Nigeria's woes. Consequently, Buhari used more number of I's (22 occurrences) than Obama did (3 occurrences). In addition, while Obama used only 13% of *exclusive we's*, Buhari used 75% of *exclusive we's*, referring mostly to himself and the members of his team than the whole citizens (or at least the audience). It could be argued that although Buhari has succeeded in verbalizing his firm commitment and ideology of fair play in handling Nigeria's affairs seriously and fairly through this repetition of personal pronouns, the resultant audience-exclusive nature of his speech, to some degree, seems to have rendered it less interactional and less audience-engaging than Obama's speech. Buhari seems to be giving more precedence to his roles and those of his team members than involving the audience (or all Nigerians) in attacking Nigeria's challenges and putting her back on the right track. *Examples 4 and 5* below illustrate this:

Example 4

... (9) **I** would like to thank the millions of our supporters who believed in **us** ... (10) **I** salute their resolve in waiting long hours ... to ... cast their votes ... (11) **I** thank those who tirelessly carried the campaign on the social media. (12) ... **I** thank our other countrymen and women who did not vote for **us** but contributed to make our democratic culture truly competitive ... (13) **I** thank all of you. (14) ... **I** intend to keep **my** oath and serve as President to all Nigerians. (15) **I** belong to everybody and **I** belong to nobody. (16) ... on coming back to office, **I** shall [not] go after [anyone] ... (51) ... **I** will try to ensure that there is responsible and accountable governance ... in the country. (52) ... **I** will not have kept **my** own trust ... if **I** allow others abuse theirs under **my** watch... (54) **I** appeal to employers and workers alike to unite in raising productivity ... (79) **I** call on the leadership and people ... [of Niger Delta] ... to cooperate with the State and Federal Government in the rehabilitation programmes ... (80) ... **I** am ready to listen to grievances of my fellow Nigerians. (81) **I** extend **my** hand of fellowship to them so that we can bring peace and build prosperity ... (91) ... **I** cannot recall when Nigeria enjoyed so much goodwill abroad as now. (92) The messages **I** received ... are indicative of international expectations on us... (President Buhari's First Inaugural Speech, 29th May, 2015)

From Examples 4 above, it could be seen how, through the repetition of the pronoun *I*, President Buhari 'speaks alone', not along with his audience as President Obama did. But this enables the president to establish rapport with the audience through the expression of gratitude, his authority, personal feelings and emphasizing his personal commitment to meeting the expectations of the audience as their new president. He pledges to keep his trust and oath just sworn by ensuring 'responsible and accountable governance'. He also promises to disallow other political leaders to act contrary to the audience's expectations in ways that would abuse the trust and oath taken. This is a persuasive strategy that would not only boost his credibility but also motivate the audience's confidence in his leadership. The audience would like to see the new president and all other (elected) leaders keeping the trust they have invested in them.

Similarly, Example 5 below illustrates the use of exclusive *we*'s in Buhari's speech to refer to himself and his team members in handling Nigeria's problems:

Example 5

... (23) ... [Nigeria] face enormous challenges ... Insecurity, pervasive corruption ... (25) **We** are going to tackle them head on. (26) Nigerians will not regret that they have entrusted national responsibility to **us**... (41) **We** shall rebuild and reform the public service ... (42) **We** shall charge them to apply themselves with integrity ... (47) ... relations between Abuja and the States have to be clarified if **we** are to serve the country better... (59) ... **we** have to improve the standards of our education. (60) **We** have to look at the whole field of medicare. (61) **We** have to upgrade our dilapidated physical infrastructure... (73) **We** shall overhaul the rules of engagement to avoid human rights violations in operations. (74) **We** shall improve operational and legal mechanisms ... [to handle proven] ... human right violations by the Armed Forces... (77) **We** are going to erect and maintain an efficient, disciplined people ... [within] ... all security architecture... (81) ... **we** can bring peace and build prosperity for our people... (86) **We** will not allow this [situation] to go on ... (89) **We** intend to attack the problem frontally ... (90) **We** shall quickly examine the best way to revive major industries and accelerate the revival and development of our railways, roads and general infrastructure... (President Buhari's First Inaugural Speech, 29th May, 2015)

As highlighted earlier, example 5 above shows how President Buhari utilised repetition of the exclusive *we* to refer to himself and his team. By constantly repeating this pronoun, Buhari emphasized only his role and that of his team, not of all the audience, in ameliorating Nigeria's plights. He does not 'speak along with the audience' to mean that each citizen can actually participate in healing the country as Obama did. Rather, Buhari prioritized the role of his team than involving the whole citizens in the task of 'rebuilding' Nigeria. However, it can be seen how Buhari's use of this pronoun in the future tense construction 'we shall', and the expression of obligation and determination by using 'we will' enabled the president to not only verbalize authority but also strengthen their commitment and obligation in saving the nation. It has also enabled him to use a series of sentences in the *commissive speech acts* to encode the impression of their resolve in the task of rescuing the country. This would ultimately convince the audience that their most pressing needs would be met under the new administration. Therefore, this is the major difference between Obama's persuasive strategy and Buhari's. Obama in his speech 'speaks along with the audience' by employing numerous inclusive *we*'s, which generally conveyed the impression that each and every audience member (or citizen) has a role in saving

America's situation. This technique bridges the gap between the inaugurated president and his citizens, hence enhances his legitimacy.

These findings, therefore, suggest that culture differences between America's President Obama and Nigeria's President Buhari impact significantly on the use of the personal pronoun 'I' as a cohesive device deployed for persuasion in their inaugural speeches. We have seen how Obama used only 3 I's but Buhari used 22 in his inaugural speech. Moreover, the findings also suggest significant impact of culture on the persuasive functions of the personal pronoun *we* as utilised by the two presidents of the two cultures, where Obama deployed *inclusive we's* for *emotional appeals* and Buhari used *exclusive we's* to convey the positive impression of his (and his team's) personal commitment, obligation and resolve to save Nigeria's situation.

Finally, it is well to point out here that the findings of the current study corroborate those of Enyi and Chitulu (2015), who reported high repetition of the pronoun *I* in Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan's inaugural speech; Oparinde et. al. (2021), who also observed high use of I's from the analysis of Nigeria's political speeches, and Lodhi et. al. (2018), who discovered very low deployment of I's in American Presidential inaugural speeches. Furthermore, on the inclusive and exclusive use of the pronoun *we* for persuasion, some studies have reported consistent findings to those of the current study. For instance, from the analysis of Malawi's Bingu wa Mutharika's presidential inaugural speech, Kondowe (2014) discovered that the president largely deployed *exclusive we's* (76%) than *inclusive we's*, and this, according to Kondowe, created distance between Mutharika and his audience. Koussouhou and Doussoumou (2015), who analysed ideologies in Buhari's inaugural address, reported pervasive use of *exclusive we's*, which, observed the researchers, implied that he and his team alone could handle Nigeria's problems. Wang (2010), on Obama's political speeches, Chanturidze (2018), on America's President Donald Trump's (Victory and) inaugural speech(es), Wahyuningsih (2018), on President Trump's Inaugural Speech; and Lodhi et. al. (2018), on the linguistic features of American presidents' inaugural speeches, consistently reported that the presidents pervasively deployed *inclusive we's*, which enabled them to 'shorten the distance', involve and engage their audience in their speeches for persuasive effectiveness. However, other studies such as Sharndama (2015) and Temidayo and Sotayo (2016) have reported dissimilar findings that President Buhari made high use of *we's* in his inaugural speech for inclusiveness and solidarity with his audience. This difference could have resulted from certain methodological approaches, such as the fact that the two studies did not clearly distinguish between inclusive and exclusive usages of *we's* in their analysis.

4.2.2 Expectancy Relations

As seen from Figure 4.1 above, *expectancy relations* (16%) is the second most dominant source of Lexical Cohesion discovered in President Obama's inaugural Speech. Further analysis revealed that Obama deployed this cohesive device mainly for the construction of conceptual metaphors of high pragmatic value to enable him appeal to audience's emotions and fulfill his persuasive intentions. Specifically, the metaphors constructed through the use of expectancy relations in Obama's speech include: JOURNEY and HUMAN metaphors. These metaphors have not only simplified the conveyance of the president's political messages in the speech, they have also imbued the speech with key emotions – those of inspiration to service, hard work, encouragement, unity and freedom. Example 6 below illustrates how President Obama used expectancy relations cohesion to achieve JOURNEY metaphor:

Example 6

... (3) Forty-four **Americans** have now taken the presidential oath... (26) Our **journey** has never been one of **short-cuts** or settling for less. (27) It has not been the **path** for the faint-hearted, for those that prefer leisure over **work**, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. (28) Rather, it has been the **risk-takers**, the doers, the makers of things... who have carried us up **the long rugged path** towards prosperity and freedom. (29) For us, they packed up their few worldly possessions and **traveled** across oceans in search of a new life... (34) This is the **journey** we continue today...

(53) The question we ask today is ... whether our government ... works ... (54) Where the answer is yes, we intend to **move forward** ... (102) So let us mark this day with remembrance of who we are and how far we have **traveled**... (111) Let it be said by our children's children that when we were **tested** we refused to let **this journey** end, that we did not **turn back** nor did we **falter**; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations... (President Obama's First Inaugural Speech, 20th January, 2009)

In Example 4.2.1 above, the journey metaphor used portrays America or the American people as travelers who have been on a tough but successful journey. The common destination of these travelers is desirable social developments or goals. This is achieved through expectancy relation cohesion, which interacts with repetition of the words *journey* and *travel*. In this cohesive relation, *journey* is the event or process being done by *Americans*, and (*the long rugged*) *path* is the typical location the process takes place. These travelers also typically avoid *short-cuts*, and always *move forward* without *turn(ing) back* or *falter(ing)*, despite the daunting *work*, *risk-taking* and being *tested* that accompany the task. Therefore, in this metaphor, *journey* is the source domain through which the target domain – America's struggle for desirable social goals – is understood. It has depicted that to achieve these goals, Americans, like travelers, must together brace themselves for all kinds of inevitable challenges, unforeseen tribulations and difficulties on their way to success.

Functionally examined, this metaphor is used by the president to make his audience come to terms with the current situation. The president additionally aims to use the metaphor to motivate, inspire and ginger the audience's zeal for endurance and hard work for ameliorating the situation. The audience would ultimately see the current woes as expected phenomena and also the need for them to act together like travelers and be brave enough to face their challenges. He utilised this metaphor to motivate all Americans sacrifice in order to overcome the difficulties being faced.

Another conceptual metaphor interactionally constructed through *expectancy relations* and *repetition* in Obama's speech is the HUMAN metaphor. In this metaphor, the inanimate concepts *nation* and the *world* have been personified and some human attributes and experiences have been mapped onto them. Specifically, this metaphor portrays America as a young person who needs to be nurtured well to grow well. Example 7 below illustrates this metaphor:

Example 7

... (21) We remain a **young** nation ... (43) ... we will act, not only to create new jobs, but to lay a new foundation for **growth** ... (69) ... our power **grows** through its prudent use ... (78) ... as the world **grows** smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself; and that **America** must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace ... (103) In the year of **America's birth**,... a small band of patriots huddled by dying campfires on the shores of an icy river (President Obama's First Inaugural Speech, 20th January, 2009)

Example 7 above shows how president Obama employed expectancy relations (and repetition) cohesion to construct conceptual metaphor of high pragmatic quality in his speech. In these cohesive relations, *America* is the characteristic sufferer of *being born* or given birth to (*America's birth*). The country is also described as *young*, therefore characteristic doer of the action *grows/growth*. It could also be seen how repetition of the word *grow* (in different forms) has supported the achievement of this metaphor.

Functionally observed, this metaphor could facilitate the audience's understanding of the abstract political concept *nation* or *country* in terms of the concrete concept *person*, with which they are most familiar. Using the metaphor would make them have vivid conception of different abstract properties of the country as just like humans who need to be taken care of to thrive well. Therefore, this metaphor would ultimately have a powerful persuasive function. It has the potential to encourage the American people to not only support the new president's policies and principles but also to fully take part in all activities and programmes meant to resuscitate the country's power and prosperity. The president blames the country's current economic weakness on Americans who have become *greed*, *irresponsible*, and *failed to make hard choices*, *sacrifices* in order to prepare the nation for a new age. He laments that all this happens when America's age-long greatness was never *given* but *earned*.

Therefore, the use of expectancy relations is a key difference between President Obama and President Buhari in their inaugural speeches. As seen from Figure 1 and 2 above, while Obama used 16% of expectancy cohesive devices, Buhari used only 4%. This finding appears to have suggested that the American culture tends to favour more expectancy relations cohesion than Nigerian culture does. The finding agrees with that of Saefudin (2020), who reported that *collocation* (a closely related category to *expectancy relations* (see Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Eggins, 2004)) was the second most frequent Lexical Cohesion in American Presidential Debate between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. However, the finding disagrees with that of Hidayat (2007), who observed that *metonymy* (and not *collocation*) was the second most dominant Lexical Cohesion in George w. bush's inaugural speech. This difference could be due to the fact that Hidayat analysed both grammatical and Lexical Cohesion in the speech.

4.2.3 Synonymy

Synonymy is the use of lexical items encoding similar propositional contents in discourse. As shown in *Figure 4.1* above, synonymy represents the third major source of Lexical Cohesion in President Obama's inaugural address. The analysis revealed that, through the use of synonymous lexical items in his speech, Obama was persuasive enough to appeal to the audience's emotions of patriotism, selfless service and sacrifice to the nation. The excerpt in example 8 below illustrates how the inaugurated president uses contextually synonymous items to arouse the feelings of pride and patriotism among the audience:

Example 8

... (2) I thank President Bush for his service to **our nation** ... (6) ... **America** has carried on ... because we, the people, have remained faithful to the ideals of our forebears and true to our founding documents ... (10) Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of ... our collective failure to ... prepare **the nation** for a new age ... (14) [one of the indicators of crisis] ... is a sapping of confidence across **our land** ...

... (21) We remain **a young nation** ... (51) [But cynics should not] have forgotten what **this country** has already done, what free men and women can achieve when imagination is joined to common purpose, and necessity to courage ... (81) To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, ... **we** will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist ... (89) ... as much as government can do, and must do, it is ultimately the faith and determination of the American people upon which **this nation** relies ... (114) And God bless the **United States of America**. (President Obama's First Inaugural Speech, 20th January, 2009)

As the excerpt in example 8 above illustrates, President Obama consciously relexicalized the same content 'America' differently as *our country, our nation, the nation, our land, a young nation, this country, the United States of America* and even the pronoun *we*. These items occur in different sentences in order to drum the president's message of pride and endear further the country to the audience. This has the potential to revive the patriotic pride among the audience and consequently prepare them for any call-to-action by the new president in attempts to curtail the current crisis.

Furthermore, president Obama also utilised synonymy to create disturbing mental images in order to portray the scale of the current challenges confronting America. Americans are demanded to unite themselves and work hard to address their common problems. Example 9 below illustrates this:

Example 9

(1) ... I stand here today humbled by the **task** before us, ... mindful of the **sacrifices** borne by our ancestors. ... (8) That we are in the midst of **crisis** is now well understood. (9) Our nation is at **war** against a far-reaching network of **violence** and hatred ... (10) Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of ... our collective failure to make **hard choices** and prepare the nation for a new age ... (15) Today I say to you that the **challenges** we face are real ... (27) [America's journey to greatness] ... has not been the path for the faint-hearted, for those that prefer leisure over **work**, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame ... (39) ... our time of standing pat, of protecting narrow interests and putting off **unpleasant decisions** -- that time has surely passed ... (87) We honor [brave Americans] ... not only because they are the guardians of our liberty, but because they embody the **spirit of service**. (88) And yet at this moment, a moment that will define a generation, it is precisely **this spirit** that must inhabit us all ... (98) What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility -- a recognition on the part of every American that we have **duties** to ourselves, our nation and the

world; **duties** that we do not grudgingly accept, but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character than giving our all to a **difficult task** ..._(President Obama's First Inaugural Speech, 20th January, 2009)

In the excerpt above, President Obama utilised synonymous lexical items to convey vivid impression of America's crises and the need for the audience to get united and work together in saving the country's situation. The chain of synonymous lexical items shown in the excerpt comprises: *task, sacrifices, hard choices, unpleasant decisions, spirit of service, this spirit, duties* and *difficult task*. This chain of emotive lexical items was intentionally used by the president in order to depict the level of America's predicaments and galvanize the Americans to get united and contribute towards ameliorating the nation's future.

Similar to Figure 4.1 on Obama's speech, Figure 4.2 shows that synonymy represents the third most dominant source of Lexical Cohesion in President Buhari's inaugural speech. The analysis revealed that, similar to Obama's strategy, President Buhari also deployed synonymous lexical items for emotional appeals, to appeal to the audience's emotions of patriotism, unity and service. The president relexicalized the same content *Nigeria* differently as *we, a united people, our nation, our country, our land, the country, our people* and *home* in order to infect his audience's minds with a strong feeling of pride and strengthen their love for the country. Example 10 below shows this from Buhari's speech:

Example 10

... (2)Today marks a triumph for **Nigeria** ... (4) ... **we** have today a truly democratically elected government in place... (6) ... despite the perceived tension in the land we can be **a united people** capable of doing what is right for **our nation**... (8) I hope this act of graciously accepting defeat by the outgoing President will become the standard of political conduct in **the country**... (46) [I will ensure] ... the three arms ... [of Nigerian government] ... act constitutionally ... to serve **the country** optimally ... (75) Boko Haram is not only the security issue bedeviling **our country**... (76) The spate of kidnappings, armed robberies, herdsmen/farmers clashes ... add to the general air of insecurity in **our land**... (81) I extend my hand of fellowship to ... [all] ... so that we can bring peace and build prosperity for **our people**... (93) **At home**, the newly elected government is basking in a reservoir of goodwill ... (President Buhari's First Inaugural Speech, 29th May, 2015)

It could be seen from the examples 8 to 10 above that both President Obama and President Buhari deployed synonymy for emotional appeals. Both the two presidents, for instance, used the contextually synonymous lexical items *our nation, our land, our country, this country* and even the pronoun *we* to refer to their respective countries in their speeches. This strategy allowed them to appeal to their audience's emotions of patriotism, unity, pride and service to the nation. Both the presidents employed synonymy to preach desirable virtues among their audience members – patriotism, unity, and hard work – necessary for the growth and development of their countries. Therefore, this finding suggests insignificant impact of culture on the use of synonymous lexis for emotional appeals, which implies that culture difference did not impact on the use of synonymy for persuasion in the inaugural speech of the two presidents.

Finally, this finding is supported by those of Hidayat (2007) on President George W. Bush's inaugural speech, Prados and Penuelas (2012) on American political speeches, and Enyi

and Chitulu (2015) on the inaugural address of Nigeria's President Jonathan. Each of these studies reported consistent finding that inaugurated presidents (from American and Nigerian culture) employed synonymy for persuasion, to influence his audience. Furthermore, the finding that inaugurated presidents appeal to the audience's emotions of patriotism, unity and handwork is also supported by Liu (2012) on genre moves of American Presidential inaugural speeches, Maru (2013) on President Reagan's inaugural speech, Pasaribu (2016) on President Widodo's inaugural speech, Chanturidze (2018) on President Trump's inaugural speech, Lodhi et. al. (2018) on American presidents' inaugural speeches, and Malah and Dinyo (2020) on President Buhari's political speeches. In a study on parliamentary speeches in Jordan, Bader and Badarneh (2018) also reported consistent findings that speakers mostly utilised synonymy to appeal to different emotions. Therefore, similar to previous research studies exploring rhetorical devices utilised to accomplish persuasion by different presidents, the current study has also revealed how synonymy (Lexical Cohesion) is used to fulfill persuasive intentions.

4.2.4 Contrast

As the name suggests, contrast is the relationship of opposition between lexical items in discourse. It has been variously referred to by different cohesion analysts as *Antonymy* (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014), *Opposition* (McCarthy, 1988), or *Complex Paraphrase* (Hoey, 1991). Analysis of the current study, on one hand, revealed that President Obama, in his debut speech, deployed lexical items of contrasting propositions in the lives of American citizens to enable him inspire, ginger up, and motivate his audience to a life of *hard work* and *service to the nation*, for the attainment of desirable social goals. Example 11 below shows this:

Example 11

... (24) ... we understand that **greatness** is never a **given**. (25) It must be **earned**. (26) Our journey has never been one of **short-cuts** ... (27) It has not been the path for the **faint-hearted**, for those that prefer **leisure** over **work**... (28) Rather, it has been the **risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things** ... who have carried us up **the long rugged path** towards **prosperity** and **freedom**... (31) For us, **they** fought and **died** ... (32) Time and again these men and women struggled and sacrificed and **worked** ... so that we might **live** ... (34) This is the journey we continue today... (38) Our capacity remains **undiminished**. (39) But our time of **standing pat**, of ... putting off **unpleasant decisions** -- that time has surely **passed**. (40) Starting **today**, we must **pick** ourselves **up**, **dust** ourselves **off**, and begin again **the work of remaking America**. (41) For everywhere we look, there is **work** to be **done**. (42) The state of our economy calls for **action, bold** and **swift**... (87) **Our challenges** may be **new**. ... (89) But those values upon which **our success** depends -- honesty and **hard work, courage** and fair play, **tolerance** and curiosity, loyalty and **patriotism** -- these things are **old**... (91) They have been the quiet **force of progress** throughout our history. (92) What is demanded ... is a **return** to these truths. (93) What is required of us **now** is a **new era of responsibility** -- a recognition on the part of every American that we have **duties to ourselves, our nation and the world; duties** that **we** do not **grudgingly** accept, but rather seize **gladly**, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so **satisfying** to the spirit, so defining of **our character** than giving our all to a **difficult task** ... (President Obama's First Inaugural Speech, 20th January, 2009)

From example 11 above, it can be seen how President Obama strategically employed contrasting lexical items such as *given/earned*, *short-cuts/long rugged path*, *faint-hearted/risk-takers*, *they/we*, *died/live*, *leisure/hard work*, *our challenges/our success*, *new/old*, *standing pat/action* and so on. The use of these contrasting items enabled Obama to rhetorically apply the American Puritan Jeremiad formula in order to persuade his audience to act in ameliorating America's current situation. The American Puritan Jeremiad formula is a persuasive technique which laments the present, evokes the glorious past, and calls for renewal. Using this frame, Obama acted as a president-preacher by not only lamenting America's current *challenges* and evoking America's past generations' virtues of *hard work*, *courage* and *tolerance*. The President also called for *return to these truths* by demanding Americans to turn a new leaf and usher in a *new era of responsibility* by recognizing *duties to ourselves*, *our nation*, and *the world* as responsibilities for every Americans. This persuasive strategy used by the president has the potential to re-awaken his audience and motivate them to renew their patriotism/commitment and return to original American values, which would impact positively on the current circumstance.

On the other hand, President Buhari utilised contrasting lexical items of positive and negative connotations in the context of governance in order to motivate the support and confidence of his audience in his administration. By using this strategy, Buhari succeeded in attributing all negative impressions to the past administrations (the opposition), and all positive impressions to his new administration. This persuasive strategy enabled the inaugurated president to not only demonize the past administrations but also claim legitimacy and strengthened the confidence of his audience in the new administration. Example 12 below illustrates this:

Example 12

... (2) Today marks a **triumph for Nigeria** ... (6) ... despite the perceived **tension in the land** ... (7) ... the world ... had come to expect only **the worst from Nigeria** ... (9) ... our supporters ... believed in us even when the cause seemed **hopeless**... (23) ... we face enormous **challenges**... (32) Some of ... [Nigeria's past administrations] ... behaved like spoilt children breaking everything and bringing **disorder** to the house... (41) We shall **rebuild and reform** the public service ... (45) The country now expects the judiciary to act with dispatch on all cases especially on **corruption, serious financial crimes or abuse of office**... (50) ... [The Federal Government] ... will ensure that the **gross corruption** ... is checked. (51) ... I will try to ensure that there is **responsible and accountable governance** ... (54) ... everybody will have the opportunity to share in **increased prosperity**... (58) ... the Nigerian economy is in **deep trouble** and will require **careful management** to bring it round ... (66) This government will do all it can to **rescue** [the Chibok girls] ... alive... (76) The spate of **kidnappings**... add[s] to the general air of **insecurity** in our land... (82) No single cause can be identified to explain **Nigerian's poor economic performance** ... than the power situation. (83) It is a **national shame** ... (85) Continuous tinkering with the structures of power supply ... [has] ... only brought **darkness, frustration, misery, and resignation** among Nigerians... (87) Careful studies are under way ... to identify the quickest, safest ... way to bring **light** ... to Nigerians...

From the excerpt above, it can be seen how President Buhari intentionally deployed contrasting items such as *deep trouble/triumph for Nigeria*, *tension in the land/peace*, *gross*

corruption/responsible and accountable governance, kidnappings/rescue, disorder/rebuild and reform, darkness/light, hopeless/increased prosperity, and abuse of office/responsible and accountable governance in his speech. As highlighted earlier (see 4.2 above), Buhari came to power when Nigeria was being faced by enormous crises under the decade-long leadership of the PDP, which was blamed for poor governance and incoherent ideological principles (Olowojolu, 2015; Katsina, 2016; Oparinde et. al, 2021). So, he spoke as a new president and also a savior, who was believed to be well knowledgeable about the causes of the country's deep troubles and the most effective measures for remedying the situation; he was well determined to arrest the situation. In the above example, Buhari attributed lexical items with negative connotations such as *abuse of office, gross corruption, deep trouble, Nigeria's poor economic performance and darkness* to the past administrations. He also attributed items with positive connotations such as *responsible and accountable governance, a triumph for Nigeria, careful management, increased prosperity and light* to his new administration. By creating this emotive contrast between the previous administrations and his administration, Buhari vividly conveyed the message that while past administrations mainly contributed in messing the country up, his new administration had now come to heal those wounds and take Nigeria back to the right track. In sum, the use of this strategy enabled the inaugurated president to fulfilled his persuasive intentions of delegitimizing the past administration, self-legitimization and ultimately motivating his audience's confidence in his administration.

Therefore, these findings indicate that although both President Obama and President Buhari deployed contrast for persuasion, the two presidents differ in their persuasive styles that while Obama utilised contrasting items to preach for renewal, service and hard work for the betterment of the country, Buhari utilised contrasting items for (de)legitimization and motivating his audience's support and confidence in his administration. Obama employed contrast to apply the American Jeremiad formula by lamenting the America's present, evoking the America's past, and calling for renewal and hard work among the American people; while Buhari deployed contrasting lexis of positive and negative connotations in the context of governance to encourage Nigerians' support and confidence in his administration. Thus, observed carefully, these findings, like the findings on Obama's use of the inclusive *we's* and Buhari's high use of *I's* and the exclusive *we's* (see 4.2.1 above), suggest significant culture-specific differences that while Obama emphasized unity of purpose and collective responsibility in healing America, Buhari prioritized his (and his team's) personal commitment and resolve in tackling Nigeria's challenges.

The findings of the current study on the use of *contrast* for persuasion in presidential inaugural speeches corroborate those of Prados and Penuelas (2012), who analysed cohesion in American political speeches. The researchers observed that American political speakers used *antonym* (*contrast* equivalent in Halliday and Hasan (1976); Halliday and Matthiessen (2014)) for the purpose of emphasizing key ideas such as *inequality* and *change*, in their speeches. Furthermore, on the finding that Obama emphasized unity of purpose and collective responsibility among the American people in saving America's situation, Chanturidze (2018) on Trump's inaugurals and Lodhi et. al. (2018) on President George W. Bush's inaugurals reported consistent findings that the presidents called on Americans to get united in facing the country's difficulties.

Similarly, the current study has reported consistent findings with those of Maru (2013) and Sameer (2017) on the use of Puritan Jeremiad Frame in presidential inaugural speeches to influence the audience. Maru, who conducted a frame analysis of America's President Reagan's

inaugural speech, discovered that the president used the American Puritan Jeremiad frame by lamenting the present, evoking the past and calling for renewal. Sameer, from his rhetorical analysis of President Bush's inaugural speech, reported that the president strategically used three tenses to persuade his audience in his speech by reflecting the present situation, evoking the past and trying to convince the audience about the future. This finding, thus, suggests that applying the puritan Jeremiad frames is part of the American rhetorical culture, and Obama has spoken accordingly. However, regarding Buhari's use of contrast for (de)legitimization, the finding supports political discourse scholars' claim that self-legitimization and opponents' de-legitimization is characteristic of political discourse (see, for example, Chilton, 2004; Charteris-Black, 2005; Wodak, 2009).

5. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the pragmatic function of Lexical Cohesion across President Obama's and President Buhari's inaugural speeches. It specifically attempted to examine the impact of culture on the persuasive function of Lexical Cohesion, how lexical devices are strategically utilised to construct persuasion in the inaugural speeches of the two presidents from two distinct cultures. The findings show, on one hand, that the major sources of Lexical Cohesion in President Obama's speech include: *Repetition, Expectancy Relations, Synonymy and Contrast*; while President Buhari mostly used *Repetition, Contrast and Synonymy*. Moreover, the findings suggest that although Obama used slightly more categories and frequencies of Lexical Cohesion, Repetition (of personal pronouns) is the most preferred Lexical Cohesion by the two presidents. This finding suggests that culture-specific discourse practices of the two speech communities (America and Nigeria), in which the presidents spoke, did not impact significantly on the pattern of Lexical Cohesion exhibited in the speeches.

On the other hand, the findings revealed that President Obama and President Buhari utilised Lexical Cohesion resources to achieve contrasting persuasive strategies. Obama emotionally 'spoke along with his audience' through the use of the inclusive pronoun *we*. In addition, through the use of Metaphors and Puritan Jeremiad formula constructed using Lexical Cohesion devices, Obama also designed his discourse to give more precedence to unity of purpose and collective responsibility (involving all the American people), realizing the need for renewal and service to the nation in tackling America's difficulties. In contrast, Buhari's pervasive use of *I's* (22 instances) and exclusive *we's* (75%) made him to 'speak alone' and prioritized his own commitment/roles and those of his team members in tackling Nigeria's daunting challenges. In sum, Obama utilised Lexical Cohesion devices for emotional appeals, audience involvement, and building credibility; while Buhari used these devices for emphasizing his (and his team's) personal commitment in handling Nigeria's current challenges, building credibility and demonizing past administrations.

Finally, two major conclusions could be drawn from the findings of this study. First, the pervasive repetition of personal pronouns by both the two presidents in their inaugural speeches could be attributed to the genre conventions of adapting personalisHed English to set the most appropriate persona characteristic of speech delivery. Therefore, this generic convention has seemingly outweighed any culture-specific variation between the two presidents. Secondly, Obama's persuasive strategies of emotional appeal and audience involvement, which enabled him to rhetorically 'speak along with his audience', appeared to have rendered his speech more interactional, more audience-friendly and more audience-engaging than Buhari's speech, whose strategies of emphasizing personal commitment and resultant audience-exclusive tone made him to 'speak alone'.

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AUTHOR'S BIO

Zubairu Malah has been a lecturer at the Department of English, Yobe State University, Damaturu, Nigeria. He holds M. A. English Language (by research) from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), B.A English Language from University of Maiduguri, Nigeria and NCE (Nigeria Certificate in Education) in English/Hausa. Mr. Malah was the best graduating student for both his B.A and NCE. His areas of research interest include Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics, Political Discourse, Academic Discourse, and Phonetics and Phonology.