
Development Discourse Analysis of the 2016 State of the Nation's Address

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Abstract

This paper investigates the image of Ghana's development as revealed by the president in the 2016 state of the nation's address. Using the inter discourse theory of Fair Clough (1992), the study investigated the various discourses evoked in the development discourse and brought out their contextual significance. The analysis shows development of Ghana as an intentional act of giving equal attention to the diverse domains that are discoursed by the president. The blend of different discourse equally exemplifies and concretizes the achievements of the government and renders the speaker credible.

Keywords: Development, discourse, president, Interdiscursively

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Background to the Study

Development is desirable by every generation. It is the essence for leadership, (Bellu, 2011). For development to be effective, leaders must communicate to their followers specific goals set for each period. To this effect, the presidents of many African countries present the state of the nation's address to the citizens yearly. On the Thursday, the 25th of February, 2016, the president of Ghana delivered the State of the Nation's Address. Linguistically, the speech could be describes as a political discourse, however, there are sub discourses embedded in the discourse. One major sub-discourse is the development discourse, a communication that centers on development. The purpose of this research is to find out from the state of the nation's address, what the current development state of Ghana is.

Objective of the Study

The objective is to investigate the image of Ghana's development as revealed by the president in the 2016 state of the nation's address.

Literature Review

Concept of Discourse

This research explores three general dimensions of the term discourse. Firstly, discourse situates a given utterance in a communicative domain (Jorgensen& Philips, 2002; Dzivor, 2006). Secondly, discourse is encapsulated in the daily life of a given community, (Burr, 1995; Trapples-Lomax (2000). Thirdly, we could talk about written or oral discourse (Bakah, 2010; Klinogo, 2015). A written discourse in this context could be an oral production transcribed into text. Our data, the State of the nation's address by his Excellence John Dramani Mahama of the republic of Ghana was presented orally but a text form is published for reference purposes.

In the light of the above explanation of the term discourse, our data is aptly considered as one. Firstly, the speech is communicative, having an addresser (the president) and a target recipient(the public). Secondly, the speech could assume a multifaceted interpretation had it not been situated in the socio cultural and political context of the target audience (Maingueneau, 1998b). Thirdly, by its form as we use in the current study, is written.

Concept of Development

Literature for the current study reveals three major areas of the term "development". We can talk about modernization (the switch from the traditional system to a technology orientated system that characterized the western world (Turner & Hulme, 1997). Having more "needy" people having what they "want" and "need" (Chambers, 1985). Looking at other worlds in terms of what they lack and obstruct an indigenous alternative (Sachs, 1992). From the above discussion, the term development has a progressive connotation. It indicates a shift from a disadvantaged position to a more advantageous position. We can therefore consider the term "development discourse" then as a communicative situation with a central focus of bettering the lot of the audience.

Methodology

This section aims at describing the data source and data collection process. The analytical framework use to analyze the data will also be discussed.

Data Source and Analysis

The major source of data for this work will be the 64 pages (of 2.0 spacing, Times New Romans 12) speech delivered by His Excellency President John Dramani Mahama, the current president of Ghana. A hard copy which will accompany this work is gotten from the internet and an audio version recorded live on the same day the speech was presented. The combination of the two format will help us analyze both the linguistic and extra-linguistic features of the discourse. A detailed reading of the speech is done and attention is given to the discursive presentation of the concept of development.

Method of Analysis

The study uses mixed approach (qualitative and quantitative). By the qualitative approach, we will elicit text extracts from the data to support assertions. While the quantitative will enable us to present findings in form of tables and figures to aid understanding of the analysis. We find Fair clough (1992) inter discursive theory very useful as they serve as the main analytical tool for the work.

The concept of inter discursively is not new, it is traceable to the works of Kristeva (1980), Foucault (1981), Bakhtin (1986), and Fair clough (1992). However, as we have observed, it has not been fully explored to investigate the complex nature of development discourse which draws on other discourses already situated in the social domain of the consumers of the discourse.

The concept of inter discursively originated from Fair clough (1992). However, there were earlier works in which the concept was seen a kind of intersexuality. Even in Fair clough's earlier works, the term was rather referred to as constitutive intersexuality which expressed the configuration of conventions such as genre, activity types, and style associated with a different type of discourse. The term inter discursively was later introduced by Fair clough (1992) to emphasis that focus is on discourse conventions and not on text as constitutive. Inter discursively has to do with a discourse drawing upon other discourses. Distinguishing the intersexuality and inter discursively, Fair clough (1992) observed that "intersexuality refers to the use of prior text transforming the past into the present often in relatively conventionalized and standardized way, while inter discursively on the other hand refers to a more innovative attempt to create hybrid or relatively novel construct by appropriating or exploiting established conventions or resources associated with other genres or practices". In a clearer term, we could say that the difference between the two concepts is that in intersexuality, the text overtly draws upon explicitly surface features such as quotations and citations of another text (intertext) while in inter discursively, the new text draws upon the language convention such as genre, style, and discourse) of other text (inter discourse). It is on this note that WU (2011, p.2) observed that "inter discursively is a more complex concept because it deals with the implicit relations of discursive formation rather than the explicit relations between texts".

Having studied the development as a discourse presented in the state of the nation's address closely, features of other discourses such as academic discourse, infrastructural discourse, professional discourse, health discourse are noteworthy. Also there is an obvious democratization of the discourse as proposed by (Fair clough, 1992) as the president seems to adopt a more informal style in the discourse.

In what follows, I will present a brief summary of the entire speech then followed by the analysis. Considering the fact that we are limited to specific number of pages in this work we have tried to reduce 20,513 words into 166 words. For ease of citation, we form an acronym of the state of the nation's address (SONA). This will be used with the page cited in the analysis at the end of each citation made from the address.

Summary of the State of the Nation's Address

The presentation aims at distinguishing between policy and people. Education, the key tool for transformation is being developed in all angles. The development cuts across basic to tertiary levels. There is also an infrastructure and material supply to the health sector. Provision is made for the aged, the disabled, the kayaye (head porters) under the government's policy. A policy is made for the decongestion of Nsawam prison. Under youth development, training programmes, financial support and employment for the youth are ongoing. In the area of sports, infrastructural progress is recorded. There are shortfalls in the economy but steps are being taken to enhance SME and other sectors. Energy crises is also being addressed. To facilitate rural-urban transport, roads are being constructed in many areas of the country. Peaceful atmosphere in the country is also created by avoiding political discriminations. Technological advancement in communication is also going on. To achieve effective development, the government is addressing corruption issues by enhancing the judicial and legislative system. (*Summary mine*)

Discussion

At the onset, some observations were made regarding the form and the contents of the speech. Firstly, the speech is more development oriented as in all facet, it speaks to specific domains and the achievements the government has wrought therein. Secondly, the speech is situated into three time zones, the past (what was already done), the present, (what is being done), the future (what is hopeful to be done). This helps the audience to measure the progress of the nation from one stage to another and to possibly forecast what is possible to achieve if the speaker is given a second chance. It is also observed that the various contents discoursed received varying textual spaces. Table1 below shows the contents of the speech and the textual spaces allocated to them. The textual space is measured by the number of pages allocated to the specific component as per the 2.0 (Time New Romans font size in order to simplify the analysis. Along the same line we will adopt the abbreviation SONA for State of the Nation's Address in quotations and citations from the speech to support our arguments.

Table1: Distribution of Speech Components and their Textual Space

Items	Textual space (in pages)	Percentage (100)
Introduction	2.5	3.9
Education	4.5	7
Health	5.5	8.5
Social protection	3.5	5.5
Youth and sports	1.5	2.3
General economy	5.5	8.5
Dumsor/energy crises	4.5	7
Agricultural products	5.5	8.5
Infrastructure	18.5	28.7
Good governance	7.5	11.6
Decentralization	1	1.5
Security agencies	1	1.5
Foreign relations	2.5	3.9
Conclusion	1	1.5
Total	64.5	100

Source: Generated by Researcher, 2016

Table1 shows the distribution of discourse contents presented in the state of the nation's address delivered by the president of the republic of Ghana. From the table, 28.7% constituting the highest textual space is devoted to infrastructural development. This is followed by good governance which occupy 11.6% textual space. Health, Argicand the general economy took the third position with 8.5%. Education and power crisis "Dumsor" took the forth position with 7% textual space. We have social protection which has to do with taking care of the aged, the marginalized and the vulnerable (STONA, p.13)has 5.5% while foreign relations has 3.9%. Youth and sport got 2.3% while security agencies and decentralization had 1.5%.

It appears from the analysis above that more attention is given to infrastructural development than other items in the discourse. This is not surprising since the development of infrastructure indirectly is beneficial to the other sectors. For example, in schools, there must be classrooms to occupy students, bungalows to house teacher and good roads to transport the students. The importance of infrastructure to the security agencies is noted in the extract below:

Extract 1:

Over the past few years we have embarked upon a progressive retooling of our security agencies. We have provided them with vehicles, accommodation, logistics and resources that enable them to fulfill their constitutional mandate. (STONA,p. 59)

Extract 1 is from the security column of the state of the nation's address. In the extract, it is clear that the fulfilling of the security mandate depends on adequate supply of infrastructure. So it is a balanced discourse placing the right details at the right position. The health sector equally depends on infrastructure as supported by the following extract:

Extract 2:

It is for this core reason that over the past few years we have invested over US\$2 billion in health infrastructure, equipment and human resource. We project to add 6,000 more beds to Ghana's existing stock by the end of 2018 when the programme is completed. Presently, there are two Teaching Hospitals, three Institutional Hospitals, four Regional Hospitals, fourteen District Hospitals, dozens of Polyclinics and Health Centres, as well as hundreds of CHPS compound projects all at various stages of completion. (SONA, p.10)

Extract 2 is from the health column of the address. It indicates clearly that the health sector, which is very dear and important to the nation will not survive without the necessary infrastructure.

Looking at the textual positioning and development of each component of table 1 above, we can effectively conclude that each of them constitutes a discourse. Firstly, each component has been fairly communicated within the framework of national development (Maingueneau, 1998b). Again, they are individually bodies of communicative events that can make sense on their own domain (Maingueneau, 1998b). Finally, each of them possess explicit or implicit features of specific domains (Maingueneau, 1998b, Dzivor, 2006). The point here is that by their sub discursal integration into a larger developmental discourse, they constitute an inter discourse. The following shows the analysis of the integrated discourses. For the sake of space, we will limit the work to two (Health and education).

Education Discourse in Development Discourse

In education discourse, there are traces of its educational context of production and consumption (Maingueneau, 1998b). Characteristics of educational discourse in the address is the mention of education related constructions such as “schools, learning, students, teachers etc. (SONA, p. 4-6). The educational discourse introduced here is to inform the audience about the current state of education and the way forward. It also furnishes those directly or indirectly related to the education field with salient information. Take the following extract for example.

Extract 3:

Education can break cycles of poverty and abuse. Education is the key that can unlock, for children, worlds into which their parents could not enter; worlds they never even knew existed. (SONA, p.3)

Extract 3 is from the state of the nation's address. The extract constitutes a philosophical reflection of the speaker on education as the main theme of the discourse. This is a clear education discourse in that it has reflected the education context of its production. It is also communicative, expressing the explicit presence of a speaker and a presence of a target audience (Dzivor, 2006; Klinogo, 2015). In presenting the discourse, speaker adopted a holistic approach to education, tackling issues on admission, enrollment, teaching learning etc. (SONA, p.4-6) The speaker equally, review the existing structures

in the educational system ranging from basic to tertiary levels, bringing to light their challenges and projected solutions that are underway to address these problems, (SONA, p 3-6). The discourse, however is embedded in a larger development discourse. By the integration of the two discourses, one discourse (the sub-discourse) which is the education discourse, loses its original purpose (to give educational information) and put on the larger purpose of the main discourse (to inform the audience of advancement of education). In this case, educational discourse seems to promote the development agenda of the speaker. Again, per his position as a president, the speaker blended the two discourses effectively to achieve a rhetorical effect.

Health Discourse in Development Discourse

Health discourse is a communication that centers on the wellbeing of a person or people. In presenting the discourse the speaker presents health under sub topic like health education, health infrastructure and health financing (SONA, p.8-12). The quantitative dimension of the discourse provides figures to support his argument while qualitative aspect draws on textual explanations to health phenomenon. Since discourse is oriented towards the targeted goal of the speaker (Maingueneau, (1998b), the speaker employs his personal strategies to put forth his argument (Bakah, 2010). In communicating health issues, the president contextualize the discourse in the social framework of the audience by evoking core features of the health discourse that are common to both the speaker and his audience. Features of health discourse used here are disease names like high blood pressure, HIV and AIDS, Diabetes etc. and health related names like National Health Insurance, Ghana Demographic and Health Survey, etc. which show the context of producing the text. While the constant reference to “Mr. Chairman” provides a communicative cue (audience involvement) to effectuate a discourse out of the speech. An extract from the health part is as follows:

Extract 4

Through this, we hope to achieve an uninterrupted supply of anti-retroviral drugs for HIV and AIDS patients. There are also innumerable other associated benefits to this strategy, not least of which is the creation of more jobs in Ghanaian companies. (SONA, p.

The extract is from the health part of the discourse. Notable health discourse elements are “anti-retroviral drugs” “HIV and AIDS” etc. The speaker wove in another discourse into the inter discourse (job creation discourse). Altogether, we have a complex discourse structure (job creation discourse in health discourse in development discourse). Having discussed the inter discursive contents in the speech so far, we will also look at some language forms used to present these contents. Specifically, we will give attention to transitivity and modality.

Transitivity and Modality in the State of the Nation's Address

Transitivity focuses on how events and processes in a text are connected or not with the subject or the object (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002). In a discourse, events and or processes can be loosely or strongly connected to the subject or the object. In some cases the agents can

be completely detached from events or processes. This results in the passive structures. Transitivity is narrowly used in this study to show the speaker identifies himself with the events in his speech. A study of the speech reveals that the speaker used a lot of passive construction when talking about developmental projects. Examples are as follows:

Extract 5:

These children are now being targeted under the Compulsory Basic Education (CBE) programme of the Ministry of Education. (SONA, p.4)

Extract 6:

In the last year, a total of 54,800 out of school children in four regions have been enrolled into schools. (SONA, p. 4)

The extracts 5 and 6 are taken from the education portion of the address. In the extracts, the agents are omitted, leaving the “targeting of enrolment of children” and the “enrollment of the children” respectively, to an unidentified agent (such as the government, the president etc.). Here, the speaker takes no responsibility and credit for the children's enrollment in school. Suggestively, the president sees the above actions as a credit to neither himself nor his government but to all. Another issue signaled by the use of passive form such as the above is that it could be a political way of escaping responsibility for the contents of the speaker's speech. Modality focuses on the speaker's degree of affinity to his statement. Truth modality, the speaker's absolute commitment to his statement, is extensively used in the state of the nation's address. The following are some examples:

Extract 7

These are 54,800 children who would not have received an education. These are 54,800 children whose lives will now have much different outcomes as a result of this programme (SONA, p 4).

Extract: 8

A number of students would have struggled without the basic necessities with which to attend school - students like... who received free uniform, free exercise books and textbooks (SONA, p.4)

Extracts 7 and 8 are cited to support the government education support programme. In the extracts, the speaker shows a higher degree of affiliation to his statement. He was sure that the children would have suffered educationally without the support. It is not surprising these structures highly characterize the address since the speaker, the president must speak with conviction to persuade the public. In the oral form, hedges which are modal forms indicating low affinity are avoided. The speech maintains a commanding tone throughout, the speaker only broke the speech to calm down the hooting opposition.

The Impact of Inter Discursively on the Development Discourse

This conscious genre hybridization is a tool for creating artistic language image (Bakhtin (1981). Since the address in along one (4 hours), the artistic interjection like this hybridization serves the purpose of tension relief and keeps the audience waiting for more. This is equally an emotive tool for persuasion where flow of emotions is enhanced through an orderly flow of concrete evidence from one domain to another (pathos) (Aristotle (1926). This is evidenced by cheers of applause that emanated from the majority members of the house while hooting and negative comments from the opposition arouse to dissuade the unflinching speaker who was poised to accomplish his target of persuading the audience. The use of inter discursively also show credence to the speaker as the inter discourse serves as examples to enforce the president's governmental achievements. In all development is projected through other integrated discourses which reveal the actual substance of the progress in the nation.

Interdiscursivity: Implication for the National Development

Fairclough (1992, 2003) argues that interdiscursivity is more than a stylistic phenomenon rather it has implications for social practice. Thus, interdiscursivity in texts signals a process of social change. In the light of the above, we take keen note of the diverse domains of discourse combined in the development discourse analyzed in this research. The colonization of sub discourses like that of education, health, infrastructure, agriculture, social protection etc. into development discourse as noted in table 1 signals that Ghana's development structure is not haphazard but rather measurable. It also indicates that Ghanaian economic development means giving attention to all sectors. Another observation made from the data is that the very word "development" was used 29 times in the 20,513 words. Sixteen (16) times out of the 29, it was used in proper nouns denoting growth and improvement. Examples are as follows:

Extract 3:

Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (SONA, p. 3
Teacher Professional Development Initiative (TPDI) (SONA, p. 4)
University of Environment and Sustainable Development (UESD) (SONA, p.6)

This indicates more people are getting concerned about development issues. The effect of this awakening is that the nation will develop rapidly as the burden for development is shared by these numerous organizations. The term was again used 7 times in relation to infrastructural improvement as in the following extracts:

Extract 4:

This Government is implementing the biggest infrastructure development programme in our country's recent history (SONA, p.32.)

Extract 5:

Preparatory works for the redevelopment of the Accra-Tema Motorway into a six-lane road with 4 interchanges at Adjei Kojo, Abattoir, Teshie Link, and Tema Roundabout will commence soon. (SONA, p.37

Extract 4 and 5 present specific infrastructural improvements taking place in some major cities of Ghana. Seven (7) times the term “development” was used in contexts like this showing the huge dependent of development on infrastructure.

Four (4) times the term development was used in the discourse in the corruption, where corruption disrupts development. Exemplary extracts are as follows:

Extract: 6

it (corruption) exacerbates poverty and hinder development. (SONA, p. 50)

Extract: 7

It is an enemy of progress and development and a threat to peace and security. It is therefore an obligation on all of us to mobilize our efforts in the fight to eradicate corruption. (SONA, p. 51)

This indicates that the nation is not heaven, there are mortals with unhealthy interests. Those must be checked. The presence of those corrupt ones shows development not only as infrastructural but as a holistic process that cuts across even the moral uprightness of the nationals.

Finally, we found the term used 2 time with commodity improvement in Page (18) of the discourse. This is not necessarily an indication that commodities are given low attention because much is already said about this area under general economic development. In the above analysis, we see development as a whole entity enclosing all sectors. Since discourse shape society and vice-versa (Fair clough, 2003; Jorgensen& Phillips, 2002), it stands to reason from the development discourse proclaimed by the president that Ghana's development is infrastructure oriented.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In this part, the study will provide a brief overview of the key facts discussed in the paper. Right from the onset, the study set out to analyze development discourse as presented through the 2016 state of the nation's address. The researcher adopted the interdiscursivity theory of Fairclough (2000) in the analysis. The analysis showed development discourse as an amalgamation of other discourse genres such as educational discourse, health discourse, and etc. This implies that Ghana economic development plan is realizable if the government gives necessary attention to all the sectors. It is also observed that the different discourses integrated concretize and exemplify the achievements of the government. It is recommended that the leaders of the nation should give equal attention to the all sectors of the economy. They should also have a national development plan to follow.

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