



About Us: <http://www.the-criterion.com/about/>

Archive: <http://www.the-criterion.com/archive/>

Contact Us: <http://www.the-criterion.com/contact/>

Editorial Board: <http://www.the-criterion.com/editorial-board/>

Submission: <http://www.the-criterion.com/submission/>

FAQ: <http://www.the-criterion.com/fa/>



ISSN 2278-9529
Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal
www.galaxyimrj.com

Persuasion and/or Manipulation in ‘We Must Remain United’: A 2014 Democracy Day Broadcast by President Goodluck Jonathan

Asiru Hameed Tunde

Department of English and Linguistics

Kenyatta University, Kenya

English and French Department

Umaru Musa Yar’adua University, Katsina, Nigeria

Abstract:

The paper examines the strategies of manipulation and/or persuasion in the 2014 Democracy Day Broadcast by President Goodluck Jonathan. The author situates the study within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis and operationalises the communicative mechanisms in Social Representation Theory to uncover the instances of manipulation and/or persuasion and how these strategies help to conscript his audience into his ideological fold and belief. The paper discovers group polarization along in-group and out-group divide and their positive self-representation and negative-other representation.

Keywords: Persuasion, Manipulation, Critical Discourse Analysis and Social Representations.

Introduction

Persuasion and/or manipulation involve power and domination. Manipulation involves the exercise of an illegitimate influence, in this context, through discourse. This is the negative side to the concept of manipulation; however, it could also be in form of legitimate influence which can be termed persuasion. In persuasion, the audience are free to accept the argument, act in accordance with the persuader or disregard the move, while in manipulation; the audience are passive because they are victims of the manipulator.

However, the boundary that demarcates manipulation and persuasion is fuzzy and content dependent (Van Dijk, 2006). This is because messages cannot be inherently manipulative; some recipients may be manipulated by a message that is unable to manipulate others. Manipulation/persuasion in the present study adopts the triangulated frame of discourse, cognition and society as put forward by Van Dijk (2001). Manipulation/persuasion is a discursive act because it is being exercised through text and talk, such as the present data which is the speech of the President of Nigeria. Similarly, the subjects of manipulation are the people. It happens through the manipulation of their minds which ultimately changes their beliefs, knowledge, opinions and ideologies. Manipulation is also a social phenomenon because it involves interaction and abuse of power between groups and social actors. In this case, the President of a nation is socially powerful, and the access and control he has to information and

other scarce resources, such as the media and public discourse, may encourage the exercise of legitimate and illegitimate influence on the people who do not share that position and access. This study therefore examines the 2014 Democracy Day Address by the President in order to uncover the strategies of persuasion /manipulation on the security issues in the country. The data is chosen because it was delivered on a very important occasion in Nigeria- the 15th Democracy Day Anniversary, where it was expected that many Nigerians would be listening and watching via many radio and television stations across the country.

Theoretical Framework

For this study, Social Representation Theory (SRT) is operationalised within the broader framework of Critical Discourse Analysis because it is a methodological framework that can cater for how citizens can construct political and societal issues in order to enhance a collective or common cognition. Situating it within the purview of CDA can also be helpful in uncovering covert meanings and underlying ideologies in discourse. This framework is assumed relevant because many scholars have adopted it, even bearing in mind the multidimensional nature of discourse analysis. Bell & Garrett (1998) opine that CDA is the standard framework for analyzing media texts. Many scholars have adopted this framework in different studies, for instance, Van Dijk, (1991) studies news discourse and he uses a Sociocognitive approach by focusing on the nature of the reproduction of racism by the press. It is therefore, my contention that the framework can be used in the present study to account for the discursive strategies in the data.

Social Representation Theory

The term Social Representation was first introduced by Serge Moscovici in the field of Social Psychology when he studied the psychoanalytic thinking by the media in the French society and the transformation into commonsensical social representations (Hoijer, 2011). Social Representations are concepts, statements and explanations originating in daily life, in the course of inter-individual communications (Moscovici (1981). Potter and Litton (1985) observe that social representation tries to explain the social processes involved in the daily active construction of the world by participants, and to show how attitudes, beliefs and attributions are formed in terms of these socially derived frameworks.

Similarly, Parker (1987) sees social representations as the shared images and concepts through which we organise our world. That is, people inhabit a wide variety of different social worlds and as a result, employ different explanations and draw on different vocabularies to warrant their actions. People identify themselves with different groups by drawing upon different social representations in different situations. All the above definitions point to the same focus that has been aptly summarized by Mosscovi, (1981) that is, social representations transform the 'unfamiliar into familiar' through the communicative mechanisms of anchoring and objectification. Anchoring draws new information into an existing system of categories. It

involves the naming and classifying of novel encounters, ideas, things or persons. It is based on an existing order of names (Bauer and Gaskell 1999). Objectification turns an abstract concept into something almost tangible. It solidifies and makes tangible the abstract new ideas, that is, materialization of abstract ideas (Hoijer, 2011).

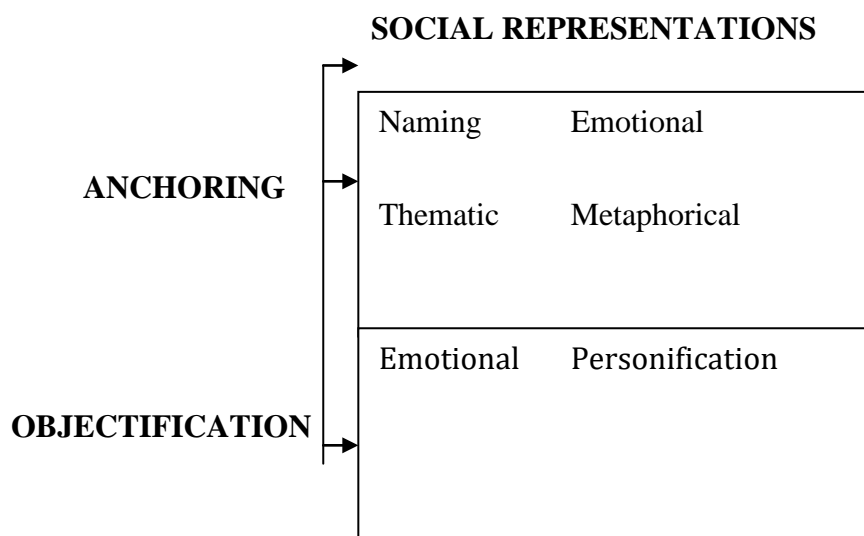


Fig 1: A diagrammatic illustration of SRT

Source: Author

Critical Discourse Analysis

Strauss and Feiz (2014), opine that CDA is a broad, interdisciplinary methodological approach to language and society that centers on discourse as social practice. That is, discursive practices are social in nature and social practices are inherently built on and around discourse. Social practices suggest that our ways of using language and discourse, either as producers or consumers of discourse, are shaped by society. In the same vein, our discursive practices shape and re-shape our ways of seeing, understanding and even our ways of being (Strauss and Feiz, (2014). That is, 'discourse is the process of putting the world into words' (Strauss and Feiz, 2014, p.314). CDA, is a discourse methodological approach that pays attention to uncovering the hidden meanings in text and talk. Among the scholars who have done many researches in CDA include Norman Fairclough, (1995); Van Dijk, (2001) and Wodak and Meyer, (2001). Their researches have taken various dimensions but with a similar focus which is the study of linguistic features of text and talk.

Literature Review

Many scholarly attempts have been recorded in political discourse analysis. Many of the studies have adopted several theories and foci to delineate the speaker's intents and strategies of delivery in discourses, such as the inaugural speeches, campaign speeches, news reports of important political events and other too numerous dimensions. Abdullahi-Idiagbon (2010) for instance, examines the language use in selected Nigerian Presidential election campaign speeches using

the framework of CDA. The study reveals the strategies used in manipulating linguistic elements in order to win the mandate of the electorates. Many concepts from CDA, such as topicalisation, mood system, passivisation, presupposition, connotation, tone and style, among others, were used in the study.

Among the studies on political discourse analysis conducted beyond Nigeria is (Orwenjo, 2010). The study examines the use of metaphorical language in political discourse by Kenyan politicians during the 2005 constitutional referendum campaigns and the 2007 general elections campaigns. He situated the study within the framework of CDA by operationalising Charteris-Black (2004) Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) in order to identify and analyse the intentions and ideologies in language use. He also uses De Landtsheer (1994) Metaphor Power Model and De Landtsheer & De Virji (2004) Crisis Combination Communication Theory (CCCT) in calculating the metaphor power indices. The study discovered that the metaphorical language used during the campaign periods contributed to a greater extent, to the chaos and ethnic violence that arose after the announcement of the winner of the presidential elections.

Makamani (2010) examines hate language in political discourse in Zimbabwe. The study is premised on the claim that language can be used for manipulative purposes, for image building and forging identities. Within the theoretical framework of CDA, the study analyses the linguistic resources in the political campaign of President Mugabe and his officials. The study demonstrated how inclusion and exclusionary linguistic strategies associated with hate registers divided the Zimbabwean nation. It is largely a rhetorical analysis that showcases Mugabe and his officials' committed use of different rhetorical instances aimed at face managing their positive images while attributing a negative image of their opponents.

Similar analysis was also carried out by Kangira (2010). His study was a rhetorical analysis of President Mugabe's speeches at the National Heroes' Acre, on the burial occasions of four national heroes in Zimbabwe between May and November, 2001. The study discovers the use of unequal proportions of deliberative, judicial and epideictic rhetoric in all the sampled speeches for the purpose of inspiring the audience about the good deeds of the heroes and to win the audience loyalty for his party. Though the study is a descriptive analysis, it is not hinged on any linguistic theory or framework.

Similarly, Pu (2007) examines the rhetorical strategies used in the political speech of President Bush at Tsinghua University, China. Within a pragmatic dimension, the study tries to unravel the implicit meanings of the Bush's speech and the power relations between the two countries. The study identifies the construction of Americanism and the indirect critique of China's social situation at the time as the central themes. The study uses for its textual analysis of the speech, the rhetorical tropes, (parallelism, metaphor, antithesis, passive voice, etc.) rhetorical strategies, (constructive, transformation and perpetuation strategies) and linguistic strategies (tense and pronouns).

However, the present study is different as it takes a triangulated approach by situating manipulation and/persuasion into discourse, cognition and society mangle, following the idea of Van Dijk (2006). This would help understand the nature of manipulation and/or persuasion as a social, discursive and cognitive phenomenon.

Analysis of Data

It is observed in the speech, a group polarization along in-group and out-group divide. The patriotic citizens can be referred to as the in-group, i.e., those that share the President's vision while the unpatriotic/misguided citizens are classified as the out-group. The strategies of their representations are explored in the following analysis.

Positive-self presentation

The President, though, acknowledged the beginning of a democratically elected government as the outset of 'true beginning of a government of the people, by the people, for the people', he attributed to his administration, success and high level accomplishments in all sectors of governance. This can be further attested through the use of some phrases, such as *under my watch, under this administration and within this period*, to highlight his achievements.

1. **high** national economic growth rates; **advances** in education, sports; **significant increase** in mobile telephone; developed **strong financial market**; made **consistent progress**; the **largest economy** in Africa; the **most preferred** investment destination in the continent; **fourth** in the world in terms of returns on investment, etc.

These examples are emphasising his administration's score card and ultimately implying their good act. At the macro speech act level, we can deduce that the president is defending his administration and the progress recorded. In all these examples, he de-emphasizes the fact that poverty, unemployment, and corrupt practices are still issues that his administration is still being accused of. He used seven paragraphs to enunciate the positive side of his government.

Negative-other presentation

The out-groups are represented in negative terms by emphasizing their bad deeds through the use of negative terms and labels explicitly and implicitly. From the 13th paragraph, the President turned his attention to the cases of insecurity in the nation. He labelled the out-group as **international terrorists, misguided citizens, agents of evil and extremist foreign elements** that are **brainwashing and inciting** ignorant young men and women to attack the innocent. To further concretise the negative representation, the President acclaimed that '*a war has been unleashed on us*' by the supposed international terrorists. The mention of 'war' connotes a state of total insecurity of lives and property and that will emotionally touch his listeners.

Similarly, to further persuade or manipulate his audience into believing that the attack is internationally coordinated, he makes an allusion to the incident of New York Twin Towers, Mali, Somalia, Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan where terrorists attacks have brought war and pain to the people. Moreso, as part of the negative presentation of the out-group, he adopts negative lexicalizations to capture their activities.

2. *despicable abduction of schoolgirls, the heartless brutality of these terrorists, who want to instigate a descent into anarchy and balkanize the nation, several compatriots injured, maimed, villages and communities destroyed, brainwash and incite, attack the innocent, warped and ferocious, threaten, etc.*

These examples are carefully mapped persuasive strategy which is capable of appealing to the emotions of the audience to view the activities of the out-group as deadly, uncivilised and unpatriotic. Similarly, the President tries to arouse the emotions of Nigerians by consciously referring to the attempt by terrorists to bring down the ‘country, democracy and freedom’ which the nation relentlessly fought for in the past.

Ideologically, the President showcases his government as ‘the government of the people, by the people, for the people’ which he mentioned at the outset of his speech. He does this through the use of adjectival pronominal ‘our’ and the first person plural pronoun ‘we’ to appeal to the Nigerians togetherness.

3. *‘Our dear nation, our country, our collective efforts, our people, our current political and socio-economic challenges, our expectations, on our shores, our forces, reinforce our defence, free our girls, protect our democracy, our national unity, our political stability, our beloved country, etc’*
4. *‘I have instructed **our** security forces to launch a full-scale operation to put an end to the impunity of terrorists on **our** soil’.*
*‘I am determined to protect **our** democracy, **our** national unity and **our** political stability’.*

All these instances are used as ‘inclusive deixis’ which place both the speaker and the audience in a collective situation. The audience will feel a sense of communal affair and interpret the message of the President as common problems that require united efforts. That the challenges are in Nigeria, the abducted girls are Nigerians and the solutions should also be concerted efforts by Nigerians is what the President is persuasively driving at. Ultimately, what the speaker stands to achieve, is to appeal to Nigerians to remain united in spite of the challenges of insecurity that is tearing the nation apart.

Similarly, the first person plural ‘we’ is also judiciously used in his speech. It is divided into two, the ‘Royal we’, (Miller, 2004), which relates to the inner-in-group, i.e., the members of his cabinet and political party, while the other category of ‘we’ situates the speaker and the audience in a collaborative communication (Adetunji, 2006).

5. *We have also developed strong financial markets*
 - *We have made consistent progress*

- *The National Conference we initiated*
- *We will reinforce our defence*
- *We will spare no efforts*
- *We will continue to partner with the civilised world*

All the above instances of ‘Royal we’ are referring to the members of his administration and political party, and these examples are part of the positive-self representation aimed at portraying and defending his administration in positive light. The second category of ‘we’ includes Nigerians who are the primary target audience. These instances are carefully adopted to drive home the message of unity which the President aims at achieving.

‘As we commemorate, as we mark, the gains we have made from democracy, freedom that we cherish and celebrate, the challenges we face, we must commend our security forces, we must show confidence, we must remain united, we have challenges but we will surely overcome’

6. *Freedom that we cherish and celebrate...*

- *Nigeria is the country that we have...*
- *We must all work to preserve it...*

The president wants to further arouse the emotions and anxiety in the audience by making reference to ‘freedom’ which he believes that everybody cherishes and would not want to go back to their experience in the days of military rule when freedom was a dream. He introduces this to seek the people’s collective efforts in stamping out insecurity because the country belongs to all Nigerians.

In a similar vein, the President also uses the singular personal pronoun ‘I’ in many instances to show his personal commitment to the security challenges facing the country and also to emphasize that he is the head of the government.

‘I greet and felicitate with you all, I address you today, I have no doubt, I assure them, I am determined to protect, I have also authorized the security forces, I assure you that Nigeria will be safe again’

7. *I have ordered a low-key commemoration...*

- *I have instructed our security forces...*
- *I share the deep pain and anxiety of their parents...*
- *I welcome the statements of solidarity from patriotic citizen...*

In all these examples, the speaker tries to emphasise his powerful position and moral superiority as the President of the country. He also employs the use of this personal deixis to show his commitment to ensuring that peace is restored in the zones where there are security challenges and assures the parents of the victims of the abduction that the girls will be freed. It is equally a way of convincing the audience of what he wants them to believe and accept as fact and proof.

Other forms of persuasion and/or manipulation can be achieved through two communicative mechanisms of anchoring and objectification. They both can be used to generate social representation of issues, events and objects. Anchoring makes the unknown to be known by relating it to earlier known social representation for easy comparison and interpretation. Similarly, objectification makes the unknown to be known by transforming it into something

concrete. In the speech under analysis, several instances abide in the form of these communicative mechanisms and are capable of persuading and/or manipulating the audience.

Naming/labelling is one of the subsets of anchoring. When a phenomenon is named, 'we extricate it from a disturbing anonymity to endow it with a genealogy and to include it in a complex of specific words, to locate it, in fact, in the *identity matrix* of our culture' (Moscovici 2000: 46). That is, it can be identified and it is no longer obscure or incomprehensible.

8. All the gains of the past 15 years of democratic governance in our country are threatened by the presence of **international terrorism**
 - The menace of **Boko Haram** will surely come to an end
 - The heartless brutality of these **terrorists**
 - **Al Qaeda** and international terrorists

The act of naming prepares or forges a reference point for the out-group and locates them in the identity matrix of terrorists. It indicates that the activities of the outer-group have been associated with terrorism thereby legitimating them as unpatriotic, deadly, evil and heartless. Naming may sometimes be strongly connected to processes of stereotyping and such naming may be 'loaded with preferences, suffused with affection or dislike (Lippman, 1998/1922: 119).

Emotional anchoring

Emotions also motivate the formation of social representations and this is evident in the present study as the speaker brings to fore, various emotions that link the out-group to the label he gave them in his speech. In his representation of this group, the President brings in emotions of war, threat, evil, fear, murder, etc while for the representation of the in-group, he uses emotions, such as compatriots, innocent, etc. The phenomenon of **Boko Haram/out-group** has thus been fastened to a well-known emotion of danger.

Thematic anchoring

Anchoring may also take place at the basic thematic level through the use meaning, antonyms and metaphors. In the present study for instance, the speaker refers to the in-group as patriotic citizens and it means that others/out-group that do not share or support his efforts are unpatriotic. Similarly, there is polarity of us-the patriots and them-the infidels. We offer freedom, they foment trouble and oppression, we want peace and unity and they want war and disunity. All these examples can be situated within thematic anchoring which the President employs to persuade and/or manipulate his audience.

Objectification

Emotional objectification involves a situation when there is a strong emotional component involved in the representation of an object, issue or an event. Moscovici (1984:38) opines that 'objectifying is to discover the iconic quality of an imprecise idea or being'. That, '*a war has been unleashed us*' objectifies the activities of the out-group emotionally.

Personification

Objectification through personification involves linking an idea or phenomenon to specific persons, for instance, linking freedom in South Africa to the Late Mandela. In this study, **Boko Haram** is being linked to **Al Qaeda** and other international terrorist groups.

Conclusion

The study has been able to explore the strategies employed by the President of Nigeria in persuading and manipulating his audience to believe his line of argument about the need for unity in the country concerning the issue of insecurity plaguing the country. The research identifies group polarization in the data; the President presents the in-group using positive self-presentation, and uses negative other-presentation for the out-group. The study also identifies instances of labelling and pronominals to either associate with a group or dissociate from a group.

Works Cited:

- Abdullahi-idiagbon, M.S. (2010). Language use in selected Nigerian Presidential election campaign speeches: A critical discourse analysis perspective. *Journal of the Nigeria English Studies Association (JNESA)*, 13(2), 30-44.
- Adetunji, A. (2006). Inclusion and Exclusion in Political Discourse: Deixis in Olusegun Obasanjo's Speeches. *Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 5(2), 177-191.
- Bauer, M.W. and Gaskell, G. (1999). Towards a paradigm for research in Social Representations. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 29(2), 163-186.
- Bell, A. and Garrett, P. (eds.) (1998) *Approaches to Media Discourse*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Longman.
- Højjer, B. (2011). Social representations theory: A new theory for media research. *Nordicom Review*, 32(2), 3-16.
- Kangira, J. (2010). Mugabe's Graveside Orations: Collective memory and nostalgia. In D.O Orwenjo and J.O. Ogone (Eds.), *Language and politics in Africa: Contemporary issues and critical perspectives*. (pp. 26-51). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Lippman, W. (1998). *Public Opinion*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers (first published in 1922).
- Makamani, R. (2010). Brown is saying nonsensical things, much more idiotic than Blair: An analysis of hate language in political discourse used in Zimbabwe. In D.O. Orwenjo & J.O. Ogone (Eds.), *Language and politics in Africa: Contemporary issues and critical perspectives*. (pp. 2-25). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Miller, D. (2004): ". . . to meet our common challenge': Engagement strategies of alignment and alienation in current US international discourse" In M. Gotti, and C. Christopher, (Eds.), *Textus XVIII* [http://www.grammatics.com/appraisal/miller D](http://www.grammatics.com/appraisal/miller%20D).
- Moscovici, S. (1981). On Social Representations. In J.P. Forgas. (Ed.), *Social Cognition: Perspectives on everyday understanding*. (pp.181-209). London: Academic Press.
- Moscovici, S. (1984). The Phenomenon of Social Representations. In R.M. Farr and S. Moscovici (Eds.), *Social Representations*. (pp. 3-69). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Moscovici, S. (2000). *Social Representations. Explorations in Social Psychology*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Orwenjo, (2010). Off shifting goal-posts and scoring own goals: Patterns of metaphorical language use in Kenya's political discourse. In D.O. Orwenjo and J.O. Ogone (Eds.), *Language and politics in Africa: Contemporary issues and critical perspectives*. (pp. 52-81). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Parker, I. (1987). 'Social Representations' Social Psychology's mis(use)of Sociology. *Journal for the theory of Social Behaviour*, 17(4), 447-469.
- Potter, J. and Litton, I. (1985). Some problems underlying the theory of social representations. *British journal of Social Psychology*, 24, 81-90.

- Pu, C. (2007). Discourse analysis of President Bush's speech at Tsinghua University. *China Intercultural Communication Studies*, 16(1), pp. 205-216.
- Strauss, S. and Feiz, P. (2014). *Discourse Analysis: Putting our worlds into words*. New York: Routledge.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1991). The interdisciplinary study of news as discourse. In: K. Bruhn-Jensen & N. Jankowski (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Methods in Mass Communication Research*. (pp. 108-120). London: Routledge.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (2001). Critical Discourse Analysis. In D. Tannen, D. Schiffrin & H. Hamilton (Eds.), *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. (pp. 352-371). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (2006b). Discourse and Manipulation. *Discourse and Society*, 17(2), 359-383.
- Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. (Eds.), (2001). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis: Introducing Qualitative Methods*. London: Sage.

Appendix

WE MUST REMAIN UNITED'

Being the Democracy Day broadcast by President Goodluck Jonathan, to commemorate 15 years of Nigeria's return to democracy.

Fellow Nigerians,

1. I greet and felicitate with you all, today, as we mark 15 years of uninterrupted democratic governance in our beloved country.
2. Our dear nation, Nigeria, has certainly come a long way and made notable progress since our first Democracy Day on May 29, 1999 when the military finally relinquished power and handed over to a democratically-elected government, **marking the true beginning of a government of the people, by the people, for the people.**"
3. Although I have ordered a low-key commemoration of this year's Democracy Day in deference to the current mood of the nation, there can be no doubt that the past 15 years, the longest period of sustained democratic governance in **our country**, have been a blessing to us, as a people.
4. As we commemorate 15 years of our Fourth Republic today therefore, I believe that it is fitting that we pay tribute once again to all those who played a part in restoring our nation to the true path of democratic governance, built on the foundations of rule of law and freedom of expression.
5. **As a result of our collective efforts** since 1999, democratic governance is now entrenched in our nation and institutions. I wholeheartedly believe that our people are the better for it. The scope of fundamental rights and liberties enjoyed by our people over the past 15 years has been expanded beyond measure.
6. **On my watch**, we have witnessed **high national economic growth rates**, steady improvements and expansion of national infrastructure including airports and roads, the restoration of rail transportation, **the efficient implementation of a roadmap for improved power supply, a revolutionary approach** to agricultural production, as well as **advances** in education, sports, youth development, healthcare delivery, housing, water supply and other social services.
7. In the oil and gas sector, our promotion of a sustainable local content policy, continues to guarantee equity and better opportunities for Nigerian entrepreneurs and skilled personnel.
8. **Significant increase in mobile telephone** and national broadband penetration, making Information and Communications Technology (ICT) one of the fastest growing sectors of the

Nigerian economy. **We have also developed strong financial markets** and regulatory institutions. Our banks now have regional and global footprints.

9. Nigeria has also gained recognition as the largest economy in Africa, the most preferred investment destination in the continent and in terms of returns on investment, the fourth in the world. We are pleased that the world has noticed, as global leaders converged in Abuja early this month for the World Economic Forum in Africa.

10. The event not only witnessed a record attendance, it brought the prospect of an additional flow of investment into the Nigerian economy estimated at over \$68 billion over the next few years.

11. In foreign relations, our country has equally **done well within this period**, by establishing and strengthening strong partnerships with all ECOWAS countries and the rest of the world. This has helped to deepen Nigeria's leadership role in multilateral institutions including the United Nations.

12. Furthermore, **under this administration, we have made consistent progress** in improving the standard of elections in our country to ensure that they are ever more credible and truly representative of the people's free choice. The National Conference **we initiated to deliberate and make recommendations on the best ways of resolving our current political and socio-economic challenges is ongoing**. It is our expectation that its outcomes will help to further **consolidate** the gains we have made from democracy in the past 15 years, and place our dear nation even more firmly on the path to greatness.

Dear Compatriots,

13. It is a sad fact that as I address you today, all the gains of the past 15 years of democratic governance in our country are **threatened by the presence of international terrorism** on our shores. Our dear country, Nigeria is facing a new challenge. **A war has been unleashed on us. Extremist foreign elements**, collaborating with some of our **misguided citizens**, are focused on an attempt to bring down our country and the democracy and freedom we cherish and celebrate today.

14. The **despicable abduction** of school girls from Chibok in Borno State has brought to the awareness of the entire world, **the heartless brutality of these terrorists** who want to **instigate a descent into anarchy and balkanize our nation**.

15. In recent years, **terrorist attacks have claimed the lives of several of our compatriots**, many have been injured or maimed, whole villages and communities have been destroyed and the economy of some of our states is in jeopardy.

16. There can be no doubt that what we are witnessing in Nigeria today is a manifestation of the same **warped and ferocious world view that brought down the Twin Towers in New York, killed innocent persons in Boston and led to the murder of defenceless people in the Southern Russian city of Volgograd**. Terrorist activities have brought **war and pains to Mali, Somalia, Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan**. These **agents of evil continue to brainwash and incite ignorant young men and women to attack the innocent**. We cannot allow this to continue.

17. I welcome the statements of solidarity from patriotic citizens and the global community in support of our efforts to stamp out terrorism. I applaud the understanding that in a democracy, such as we are building, people can have differences while sharing worthy values and standing together in opposition to the scourge of terrorism. Nigeria is the only country we have and we must all work to preserve it for present and future generations.

18. Despite the challenges we face, **we must commend our security forces**. We must not forget their gallantry and successes in liberating nations and in peacekeeping, from Liberia to Sierra Leone, Congo, Sudan, Mali, Guinea-Bissau and many places in Africa and beyond. Our forces

have paid the supreme price in several places at several times. 19. Today, they face **a different challenge, an unconventional war by terrorists**. They are adjusting and are being equipped to tackle the new menace of terrorism. We must show confidence in their ability. I have no doubt that, with the support of Nigerians, our neighbours and the international community, we will reinforce our defence, free our girls and rid Nigeria of terrorists.

20. It is now 45 days since the horrifying abduction of the college girls of Chibok. **I share the deep pain and anxiety** of their parents and guardians and **I assure them** once again that government will continue to do everything possible to bring our daughters home.

21. **I am determined to protect our democracy**, our national unity and our political stability, **by waging a total war against terrorism**. The unity and stability of our country, and the protection of lives and property are non-negotiable. **I have instructed our security forces** to launch a full-scale operation to put an end to the **impunity of terrorists on our soil**.

22. **I have also authorized** the security forces to use any means necessary under the law to ensure that this is done. **I assure you that Nigeria will be safe again**, and that these **thugs will be driven away** – it will not happen overnight, but we will spare no effort to achieve this goal.

23. For our citizens who have **joined hands with Al Qaeda and international terrorists in the misguided belief** that violence can **possibly solve their problems**, our doors remain open to them for dialogue and reconciliation, if they renounce terrorism and embrace peace.

24. **My government**, while pursuing security measures, will explore all options, including readiness to accept unconditional renunciation of violence by insurgents, and to ensure their **de-radicalization, rehabilitation and re-integration** into the broader society.

Dear Compatriots,

25. We must remain united to win the war against terrorism. Christians, Moslems, farmers, fishermen, herdsman, teachers, lawyers, clergy or clerics, the rich, the poor and Nigerians from all sections of the country must work together with our security agencies and armed forces to overcome the terrorists who now threaten all that we hold dear.

26. The war against terror may be difficult, but the days of peace will come again. **Terror is evil**; nowhere in history has evil endured forever. The menace of Boko Haram will surely come to an end. I believe that because of your prayers, your courage, hardwork, faith and sacrifice, we will ultimately prevail over the terrorists and all other evil forces.

27. We are a strong, resilient and courageous people. We will continue to partner with the civilized world, to confront **international terrorism** and every other challenge that comes our way with patriotic zeal and determination.

Fellow Nigerians,

28. Yes, we have challenges but we will surely overcome. Nigeria is our country. Nigeria is blessed. We will all collectively protect, defend and develop this country for ourselves, and our children.

29. Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

30. Thank you and God bless Nigeria