

Analysis and Functions of Vague and Ambiguous Language in President Tinubu's 2023 Inaugural Address

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Abstract: *The paper sheds light on the types and functions of vague and ambiguous language in President Tinubu's 2023 inaugural address to the nation which forms the data for the study. The analysis was carried out using insight from the concepts of vagueness and ambiguity in semantics. Findings reveal that vague expressions in the speech are meant to: make Nigerians feel happy and hopeful; make Nigerians have pride in their country; achieve tact or save the face of some people; achieve mass mobilisation or support, etc. For ambiguous expressions in the speech, their functions include creating a sense of belonging or shared value and achieving tact.*

Keywords: vague language, ambiguous expressions, inaugural address, contextual ambiguity.

INTRODUCTION

Language is the most notable, advanced, universal and developed means of communication among human beings. Linguistic scholars have identified different characteristics of human language such as productivity/creativity, displacement, discreteness, rule governance, semanticity, etc. However, it appears as if there are other features of language such as vagueness and ambiguity which characterized every language but have not been formally added to the list of features of natural languages. Ismail, Bisharat and Amirbayeva (2021) write that vague language is as old as language itself. In the same vein, Caixia (2024) declares that vagueness is a linguistic feature that cuts across every natural language. With respect to ambiguity, Malikzadah (2022) writes that ambiguity is "a pervasive phenomenon in language" and that it is found "at all levels of linguistic analysis"(p. 297).

However, there is no evidence in the literature that both vagueness and ambiguity are always consciously deployed by every language user; in other words, it is not likely that all language users will intentionally decide to be vague or ambiguous in their linguistic interaction since many language users do not even know what constitutes vagueness and ambiguity in language use. However, the fact remains that politicians, because they rely on the instrumentality of

language to achieve their both covert and overt objectives, may deliberately be vague and ambiguous in their political speeches. It is precisely because of this reason that the current research investigates the occurrence, types and functions of vague and ambiguous expressions in President Tinubu's 2023 inaugural address.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concepts of vagueness and ambiguity in linguistic research serve as the theoretical framework for this study. Hence, these two concepts are reviewed in this section alongside empirical works on them. The concept of vagueness has been given attention by different scholars. From the literature, it appears as if Peirce (1902) popularised the concept of vagueness by writing that, "a proposition is vague when there are possible states of things concerning which it is intrinsically uncertain whether had they been contemplated by the speaker, he would have regarded them as excluded or allowed by the proposition (p. 748). In other words, it means that vagueness arises when a speaker considers whether something should be considered as part of a proposition or not. Zadeh (1965, p. 338) cited in Qin (2023) also contributes to our knowledge of vagueness by proposing the concept of "fuzzy set" which is explained as "a class of objects with a continuum of grades of membership." This means that the degree to which an element belongs to a fuzzy set is not fully deterministic; that is, it can vary along a continuum.

Lakoff (1972, p. 192) brings up the concept of hedges as a way of further explaining vagueness. Lakoff opines that, "for me, some of the most interesting questions are raised by the study of words whose meaning implicitly involves fuzziness – words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy. I will refer to such words as hedges." This simply means that hedges is a form of vagueness. Carter and McCarthy (2006) aver that vague language simply refers to words or phrases that intentionally refer to either people or things in a way that is not specific or precise. Ullman (1962) contributes significantly to the understanding of vagueness in language by identifying four factors which can make words or phrases to be vague: (a) the context dependent nature of words, that is, the meaning of words is never static, (b) lack of definite boundaries in the non-linguistic world, (c) lack of familiarity with what words really meant, and generic character of words. The above review of literature simply denotes that vagueness arises when words or phrases lack specific or clear referents. Scholars have investigated vague language from different perspectives. Zhu and Li's (2013) work apply the pragmatic theory of cooperative principle and conversational implicature to investigate the functions of vague language in commercial advertising with data sourced from English-speaking countries of the USA, the UK, Australia and Canada. The author identifies both positive and negative functions of vague language in commercial advertisements. Paris, et. al (2021) examine the vagueness of vagueness in norm phrases using noun phrases in a Wikipedia corpus as its source of data. The authors find out that ¼ of noun phrases exhibit one type of vagueness or the other.

Ismail, Bisharat and Amirbayeva (2002) equate vague language with ambiguity. They discuss the use of vague language generally and come up with the fact that: there are disparities in the way male and female gender use ambiguous words; people from varied cultures use ambiguous

language more often than not; vague language is commonly used in press releases and speeches to prevent the speech encoders committing themselves to a single idea; learners of English as a second language often employ vague language in that it assists them to speak easily because of availability of vague words to pass on their ideas. Qin (2003) investigates the pragmatic functions of vague language in Donald Trump's 2017 inaugural address. The author asserts that vague language performs four functions in the selected speech which are: establishing unity and inclusivity; alluding to past grievances and promising change; eliciting emotional response and calling attention to threats. Caixia (2024) carries out a pragmatic analysis of vague language in *China Daily News* using insight from H.P Grice's Cooperative Principle and Adaptation Theory. The author discusses the importance and appropriateness of the vague language used in the selected *China Daily News*. Ajibiye and Salako (2025) investigated vagueness in two inaugural speeches of selected Nigerian presidents (President Muhammadu Buhari's 2015 and President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 2023 inaugural speeches) using Linguistic Adaptation Theory by Jef Verschueren (1999). Though the work mentioned above and the current study both make use of President Tinubu's 2023 inaugural speech, their focus and coverage are not exactly the same. For example, while the focus of the work under review is on how intentional vagueness instantiates four different leadership stances, the major aim of our work is to identify the type of vagueness found in the speech, explain why they are vague and document their functions in the context of their use. Also, while the current work investigates ambiguity and its functions in the speech, the work under review does not.

Ewata (2021) investigated vague language in the speeches delivered by selected four Nigerian presidents using relevance theory to underpin the study. However, the focus of the work is on vague qualifiers and linguistic approximators as types of vague language. The work, though, is on political speeches delivered by selected Nigerian Presidents, the speech of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu used for the current study is not among. Furthermore, our work is not based on quantifying expressions alone, it also covers subjective vagueness and ambiguity in the speech of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu with their functions clearly documented. The above, no, doubt indicates that scholars have carried out a lot of research on vague language but none covers the scope of the current study.

This agrees with the position of Ismail, Bsharat and Amivbayeva (2022) that vague language is not a pejorative word when applied as a technical term and that most of the time, vague terms are apt; "and excessive specificity is time-consuming."

The Concept of Ambiguity

Ambiguity is a feature of language in which a word or a linguistic expression conveys more than one meaning. The concept has been variously explained by different scholars. Kairytè and Bikeliènè (2016) declare that "linguistically ambiguous expressions have multiple meanings." Kennedy (2009) asserts that ambiguity... is characterized by the association of a single orthographic or phonological string with more than one meaning." In the view of Gillion (1990, p. 394), ambiguity arises when an expression "has more than one meaning." few scholars have carried out research on ambiguity; and are reviewed in this study.

Kairyte and Bikelienė's (2016) work is on linguistic ambiguity versus vagueness in British proverbs. The data for the work was got through random sampling from the internet page titled "Learn English Today." The authors conclude that only marginal differences exist in the quantitative use of both vagueness and ambiguity in English proverbs. Agwu (2025) investigates ambiguity in titles of children's literary texts by African authors using Wittgenstein's use theory. The author finds different types of ambiguity in the data such as lexical/semantic ambiguity, structural syntactic ambiguity, metaphorical ambiguity, etc. although in varying degrees of frequency with lexical/semantic ambiguity having the highest frequency and referential ambiguity having the least frequency. Drawing data from literature, Siahaan and Damanik (2025) investigate the role of semantic ambiguity in communication and misunderstanding. The authors conclude by asserting that while it is true that ambiguity enriches discourses "through flexibility, symbolism, and expressiveness," "it can also become "a barrier to effective communication when left unresolved."

Malikzadeh's (2022) paper identifies some functions of ambiguity after which the scholar declares that ambiguity seems to be advantageous to users of language if one considers "the limits in human memory capacity and inborn ability of people to understand what is said and what is meant." Though several works exist on vagueness and ambiguity in the literature, but none currently exists on the current research.

Classification of Vagueness and Ambiguity

Vagueness and ambiguity have been variously classified in the literature; however, for the purpose of this paper, the classification of vague expression in our data is based on insight from Paris, EL Aoud and Suchanek (2021). The authors propose the following categorizations: scalar vagueness, quantitative vagueness and subjective vagueness. According to the authors, scalar vagueness can be found in expressions "that can be interpreted as a scalar that ranges over a numerical scale and for which an unspecified threshold gives a truth value." Quantitative vagueness talks about expressions: "that refer to an unspecified portion of an entity or to a set of entities whose number is not identified." Expressions that contain something like "a part of..." and "many" followed by a plural noun will normally be vague. Subjective vagueness "appears in expressions that can apply to a certain degree and where there is no consensus on how to measure this degree." In essence, expressions that contain subjective vagueness may not be interpreted exactly the same way by readers or listeners because of different orientations and world view that people will bring into it.

For ambiguity, the classifications of Kairyte and Bikelienė are used. Using insight from different sources, the authors identified five main types of ambiguity which are: phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic and contextual. However, only two types are manifested in other data which are: syntactic and contextual. Syntactic ambiguity can be as a result of "ambiguous sentence structure" (Kairyte and Bikelienė 2016. P. 102) as related to modifiers and prepositional phrases. The authors equally believe that ellipsis can lead to syntactic ambiguity. For contextual ambiguity, the authors opine that it embraces the use of irony, metaphor, intentional double readings and other uses of 'polysemy.' We adopt the

classifications above because they are simple, straight forward, encompassing and easy to apply to our data.

Aim

The main aim of this paper is to analyse and document the occurrence and frequency of vague and ambiguous expressions in the inaugural speech of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu delivered on May 27, 2023. Apart from this, the work equally aims to explain the functions of the vague and ambiguous expression in the selected speech.

METHODOLOGY

The speech, being an important political speech was documented by all the major national dailies in the country such as *The Punch*, *The Nation*, *The Guardian*, etc. It is equally available on the internet from where the researcher got the speech. The author carefully read the speech and digested the content. By relying on the definitions and explanations from the literature, the author identified excerpts from the speech that contain vague and ambiguous expressions which are then classified into their types and explanations offered on why they are vague or ambiguous. The model of classification has been explained under the appropriate sub-heading above. The last stage has to do with explaining the functions of the vague and ambiguous expressions identified in the data.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section analyses the data presented in the form of excerpts. There are two sections. Section A analyses the functions of subjective and quantitative vagueness in the speech while section B analyses ambiguity and their functions in the selected speech.

Section A

Functions of Subjective Vagueness in the Speech

To make Nigerians feel happy and hopeful

This is where the speech encoder uses some words and expressions that convince the listeners that the nation is finally on the track of greatness and that the future of the country is very promising. Consider the excerpts below:

1. The question we now ask ourselves is whether to remain faithful to the work inherent in building a better society or retreat into the shadows of our unmet potentials.
2. Yet, we have shouldered the heavy burden to arrive at this SUBLIME moment where the prospect of a better future merges with our improved capacity to create that future.

The underlined expressions advise and urge Nigerians to work towards making Nigeria a better place and give it a glorious future which is not unattainable. The expressions, on the surface, are very reassuring and convincing, but they are vague. In the first excerpt, nobody knows the exact meanings of the underlined three noun phrases in “the work inherent in building a better society or retreat into the shadows of our unmet potentials.” In essence, the exact meaning and

nature of “the work” being referred to is not clear. In the second underlined noun phrase made up of Art+Adj+N, the lexical item “better” which is an adjective is the source of the subjective vagueness. The expression is vague because there are no generally laid down criteria or exact point to measure when a society becomes better than before. The third noun phrase is a complex one made up of Art+N+Adj phrase where the meanings of “the shadows” and “unmet potentials” are not clearly defined. Just as in the first excerpt, the meaning of the complex noun phrase “the prospect of a better future” is also vague. The NP has the internal structure Art+N+Adj phrase where the meaning of “a better future” (Art+Adj+N) is clearly vague. In the same vein, “our improved capacity” has no clear meaning.

To make Nigerians have pride in their country on the surface

The vague language in this context is to make Nigerians feel happy, excited and proud because of the positive ways in which the nation is portrayed. It is to awaken the primordial emotional attachment which every Nigerian should have about the country. Consider the following excerpts.

3. We are too great a nation and too grounded as a people to rob ourselves of our finest destiny.
4. On this day, Nigeria affirms its rightful place among the world’s great democracies.

The underlined expressions have positive meanings and are, therefore, expected to make Nigerians feel happy and excited. Nigeria, as a geographical entity, is positively described using the adjective “great” while Nigerians are equally described with another adjective “grounded” meaning “having a sensible and realistic approach to life” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, 9th Edition). In excerpt 4, the underlined expression passes on a piece of information that is gratifying to Nigerians – that Nigeria has fully asserted itself globally as a democratic nation. Having established the function of the expressions, it is significant to note that all the underlined expressions are subjectively vague because there can be no consensus on how to measure or determine if Nigeria is really a great nation or conclude that all Nigerians are grounded, that is, sensible and realistic. The expression “the world’s great democracies” in excerpt 4 is subjectively vague because no particular country is mentioned and there may not be any generally accepted definition of “world’s great democracies.”

To glorify President Buhari and one Government’s Project

This function of vague language makes it possible to praise or eulogise President Buhari and make something appear as the best of its kind, hence earning admiration and respect from readers or listeners. This function of vague language presents somebody or something as the ultimate in respect of something. The following excerpts clarify the point.

5. Here, permit me to say a few words to my predecessor, President Muhammadu Buhari. Mr. President, you have been an honest, patriotic leader who has done his best for the nation you love.
6. The livestock section will be introduced to best modern practices.

The underlined expressions are used to glorify President Muhammadu Buhari as well as the steps to be taken by the Federal Government in respect of livestock sector. However, a critical analysis revealed that the underlined expressions are vague. In excerpt 5, the underlined subjectively vague expression is used to glorify Muhammadu Buhari. In other words, the meaning of the adjectives “honest”, and “patriotic” used to describe Muhammadu Buhari are relative in meaning to different segments of the Nigerian society. Also, the relative clause “who has done his best for the nation you love” is equally subjectively vague in that there is no way to measure objectively that he has done his best and to equally show that he loves the country. In excerpt 6, the meaning of “best modern practices” is also fuzzy.

Analysis of Functions of Qualitatively Vague Expressions in the speech

This section sheds light on the functions of quantitatively vague expressions in the speech while also revealing why the expressions are vague.

To pass on message of unity, inclusivity and oneness.

One of the major functions of vague language in the speech is to pass across the message of unity and inclusivity. This is a way of indicating that he does not direct the message to a particular group or a set of the people with the listeners having the belief that they are parts of those being referred to. The excerpts below illustrate the point.

7. This nation’s journey has been shaped by the prayer’s of millions, and the collective sacrifices of all.
8. This handover symbolise our trust in God, our enduring faith in representative governance and our belief in our ability to reshape the nation...

In excerpt 7, the expressions “prayers of millions” and “collective sacrifices” are quantitatively vague in that the specific number of millions praying for the nation and the exact types of sacrifices are not revealed. Yet, the majority of Nigerian will have the conviction that the president is addressing and thanking them for their prayers for the country. In excerpt 8, the use of “our” occurs 4 times without any specific referents, the reason why it is vague and the reason also why it functions as a language of unity and inclusivity in the speech.

To achieve tact

President Tinubu uses vague language in the speech to achieve tact, that is, avoid offending some unknown listeners. Inaugural speech, by its nature and significance, is always of interest to many people who may not necessarily be Nigerians. This fact is not lost on President Tinubu, hence the reason he has to be tactful in passing on some messages. In other words, there are some messages that may not be overtly given in order to avoid backlash from those whose face may have been threatened by such information. This means that vagueness is a way of dodging or evading giving information that may threaten the face of listeners or a third party. The excerpt below clarifies the point.

9. We have endured hardships that would have made other societies crumble.

In the above, the expression “other societies” is vague because it is not referring to specific societies. In other words, it is just a plural common noun without reference to particular societies. The vague language is intentionally used to achieve tact. If the speech encoder has mentioned specific countries, it would have been a source of diplomatic row between Nigerian and the countries mentioned.

To avoid being specific with reference to the exact time that something happened or will happen.

Occasionally, there may be the need for politicians to make reference to past events or talk about some things that they wish to do in future. In order not to be accused of not being conversant with the issue referred to in the past or being accused of insincerity or not serious concerning what they wish to do in future, they may use vague language in expressing it. Let us take a look at the excerpts below

10. Over six decades ago, our founding fathers gave bravely of themselves to place Nigeria on the map as an independent nation.
11. In the coming days and weeks, my team will publicly detail key aspects of our programme.

In excerpt 10 above, the adverbial phrase introduced by “over” is the source of vagueness because it does not specify the exact date relative to the time of rendering the speech which was 2025. In other words, over six decades ago may 60, 61 62, 63 or 64 years ago. In excerpt 11, the underlined prepositional headed adverbial phrase is vague in that it does not refer to any specific day and week. Having established the fact that the expressions are vague, the fact remains that to the save the speech encoder from committing himself to giving specific time with reference to the ideas expressed in the two excerpts.

To achieve mass mobilisation or support

This is where vague language is used to address some groups in such a way that they feel happy that the administration has noticed them and it is ready to assist them in one way or the other. This belief may make them drum up support for the administration. Consider the excerpts below.

12. In our administration, women and youth will feature prominently.
13. Farmers shall earn more while the average Nigerian pays less.

In the above, “women”, “youth”, “farmers” and “average Nigerian” may readily support the administration because they are singled out for mentioning. But the fact remains that the expressions are vague. Excerpt 12 is vague because it does not specify the number of women or youth that will “feature prominently”. Equally, the verb phrase “will feature” is vague because it has no clear meaning. In other words, does “will feature” refer to “being given political appointments or employments or being singled out for skills acquisition?” The underlined word “farmers” and phrase “average Nigerian” are also vague. This is because there are different categories of farmers in Nigeria with the implication that some have barely little

to sell. How then will such farmers earn more from their farming? Also, there are some farmers who are subsistent farmers. Apart from this, the meaning of “average Nigerian” is not really clear.

Functions of Ambiguity in the Speech

Two types of ambiguity are found in the speech which are syntactic ambiguity and contextual ambiguity. Ambiguity performs two functions in the speech; ambiguity creates a sense of belonging, a sense of shared value and shared knowledge about the country’s political system. Consider the following excerpt.

14. To the surprise of many but not to ourselves we have more formerly established this land as a democracy in both word and deed.

This is a case of syntactic ambiguity where pronouns lack definite reference.

In the excerpt above, the reflexive pronoun “ourselves” and the third person pronoun “we” have no clear referents thereby leaving Nigerians to interpret the two pronouns as referring to President Tinubu and all Nigerians thereby creating a sense of belonging, and a sense of shared value and shared knowledge about the workings of the country’s political system. Meanwhile, to the speech encoder, the two pronouns may be referring to himself and few others. This is an example of what Kadlus (2017) calls ambiguous reference – a situation in which a pronoun may have two referents.

Contextual ambiguity is the second type found in our data and its function is that of achieving tact. This type of contextual ambiguity falls under what Kairytè and Bikeliènè (2016) will classify as intentional double reading. A typical example of this in our data is the following excerpt.

15. As citizens, we declare as one unified people devoted to one unified national cause, that as long as this world exists, NIGERIA SHALL EXIST (Emphasis not mine).

In one context, it simply means that Nigeria will continue to exist as long as other countries exist or as long as the planet Earth exists, Nigeria will also exist like other countries on the world map. This is the surface meaning. However, the deeper meaning, which can be interpreted in line with the agitations of separatist groups in Nigeria is that Nigeria, as a country, will not break up; Nigeria will not disintegrate; Nigeria will always remain as one indivisible entity. In other words, the expression NIGERIA SHALL EXIST may be a direct response to the agitations of some Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria and the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria clamouring for Oodua Republic and Biafra Republic respectively. Hence, the expression is to pass on the message that those who are nurturing the idea of splitting the country should forget it.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The study sets out to analyse the vague and ambiguous expressions in President Tinubu's 2023 inaugural speech and equally document the functions they perform. In essence, the paper discusses why the expressions selected for analysis are vague or ambiguous and the likely functions they perform in the speech.

The first function of vague language identified in the data is to make Nigerians feel excited, happy and optimistic of a glorious future for Nigeria. This is expressed with the use of "a better society," "a better future," "improved capacity to create that future," etc. All the above expressions are very reassuring to the hearers but their meanings are unclear, hence they are vague. The second function of vague expressions in our data is to make Nigerians have pride in their country as an entity and have pride in themselves as a people. The speech encoder achieves this by using expressions with adjectives that have positive meanings such as: "we are too great a nation," and "too grounded as a people...". To illustrate this point further, the aim of excerpt 4 is to portray Nigeria as a custodian and guardian of democracy. In essence, this function of vague expression is to evoke the spirit of patriotism in Nigerians and make them feel proud of the nation. The third function of vague language in our data is to eulogise or glorify somebody, in this case, former president Muhammadu Buhari who handed over power to President Tinubu. This is achieved through the abstract and subjective adjectives "honest and patriotic" used to qualify him. Later in the expression, President Tinubu uses the subjective superlative form of adjective "good" which is "best" to qualify President Buhari's stewardship to the nation " ... honest, patriotic leader who has done his best for the nation...". Another function of vague language (quantitative vagueness) in the speech is to pass on the message of solidarity, inclusivity and oneness to Nigerians. He uses quantitatively vague noun phrase to talk about the pillars that have been sustaining the country: "prayers of millions," and "collective sacrifices,". These expressions have no ethnic, or gender colouration, hence they are suitable to pass on message of solidarity to Nigerians, but linguistically, they are vague because the specific number of millions is not stated and the types of sacrifices are not given. The next function of vague language in the speech is that of face-saving act for the purpose of preventing diplomatic row between Nigeria and "other societies" intentionally not mentioned in excerpt "9". In other words, vague language is used to avoid specificity which may have unfavourable consequences.

Similar to the above is the use of vague expression to avoid mentioning specific dates that something happened or that the speech encoder will do something. This may be for strategic reasons. For example, in the speech, President Tinubu says "in the coming days and weeks, my team will..." He intentionally does not mention any specific date; probably this is to avoid being pressurized into fulfilling what he has said on or before that day even though he may not be ready yet to present to the public "key details" of his programme.

The last function of vague language identified in our data is for the purpose of achieving support or mass mobilization. This is where selected common nouns are mentioned to represent

some groups of people as beneficiaries of government policies; however, nothing specific is said about the numbers that will benefit or the nature of the benefits apart from saying that "... will feature prominently". In other words, the meaning of "feature prominently" is not clear, hence vague. However, this fact may not be known to the listener, hence they will continue to support the administration because everyone among the categories of people mentioned will be hopeful that he/she would be among the those that will "feature prominently" in the administration.

Ambiguous expressions perform two major functions in the speech. The first one is that of giving an illusion of solidarity or oneness between the speaker and listeners. This is mainly achieved through the clever use of personal pronouns "we" and "ourselves" which do not have clear referents in the speech. The second function of ambiguous expression in the speech is that of face-saving act. That is, the intentional double reading in the expression "... NIGERIA SHALL EXIST" is to save the face of separatist groups in the country. In other words, NIGERIA SHALL EXIST is a more polite way of saying "To the separatist groups, your plan to break up this country will not succeed."

Implication to Research and Practice

When political leaders deliver speeches, many people applaud them based on the perceived refreshing and heart-warming messages and meaning in the texts. However, when such speeches are subjected to linguistic analysis using insight from the appropriate concepts or theories, it may be discovered that some of the expressions used by the speech encoders are actually vague and ambiguous as revealed in the analysis. This calls for more research efforts from linguistic scholars to analyse specific instances of how political leaders use vague and ambiguous expressions to probably hoodwink their listeners or to achieve other strategic aims. Enlightened citizens will be able to arm themselves with the necessary knowledge from such linguistic inquiry to interrogate the different shades of meaning in political texts they come across.

CONCLUSION

A political inaugural address, to all intents and purposes, should make its listeners feel valued, happy, optimistic and hopeful as the case may be; this is exactly what the speech under analysis has done. This is partly achieved through the use of vague and ambiguous expression. This logically follows that vagueness and ambiguity should not always be seen as negative features of natural language, but rather as one of the features that make natural languages effective in passing on varied, unpredictable and surprising meanings in discourse

Future Research

The current research investigated types and functions of vague and ambiguous expressions in President Tinubu's 2023 inaugural address to the nation. Future research may compare President Tinubu's inaugural speech with those delivered by any of his predecessors if actually vague and ambiguous expressions feature in them and the functions they perform.

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