

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF GOODLUCK JONATHAN'S DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN THE PDP PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES

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Abstract

This paper examines the text of President Goodluck Jonathan's declaration of his candidacy for his party's presidential primaries. Previous studies on presidential speeches in Nigeria have focused on stylistic and pragmatic analysis with little emphasis on the ideological perspective of the texts. None of these studies examined the speeches of a president's declaration of presidential ambition or candidacy for election. The study employed a qualitative approach in the analysis of the text to tease out the meaning potential of the rhetorical strategies deployed in the speech and the ideology they encode. Methods of and insights from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Systemic Functional Linguistics were employed to unearth the underlying ideology and persuasive strategies used in the declaration speech. The study revealed a conscious deployment of diverse rhetorical strategies by the President to articulate an alternative ideology for the Nigerian nation. The study also showed that the President used a variety of persuasive strategies such as appeal to ethno-religious sentiments, alignment with the suffering majority of the country, and reconstruction of childhood experiences to entreat and manipulate the conscience of his party and other Nigerians. The study also showed the deployment of delegitimization strategies to threaten undesirable groups such as criminals, miscreants, and corrupt individuals.

Keywords: rhetorical strategies, ideology, language and power, political messiah, President Goodluck Jonathan.

1. Political Rhetoric and the Context of Nigerian politics

The deployment of political rhetoric as an instrument of persuasion in speeches is not a recent phenomenon in the Nigerian political climate. De Wet (2010:103) observes that “politicians rise to power mainly because they can talk persuasively to voters and political elites... politicians are endlessly geared to persuading voters to their own or party’s point of view.” The language of politics is essentially aimed at persuading the audience/addressee to accept the perspective of the speaker. Beard (2000:2) contends that it is important to study the language of politics because it enables us to “understand how language is used by those who wish to gain power, those who wish to exercise power and those who wish to keep power.” Van Dijk (1995, 2006) and de Wet (2010) perceive politically structured discourses as instruments of mind control by the dominant ideology.

Political discourses, like declaration of candidacy for a political office, political campaigns, presentation of party manifestoes and other forms of political speeches which fall within the purview of Aristotle’s deliberative rhetoric, aimed at marketing the ideology of the candidate and the party they represent. Beard (2000:35) observes that “making speeches is a vital part of the politician’s role in announcing policy and persuading people to agree with it.” In ideal political situations, language is the bullet employed by political opponents to bring down the other or diminish their relevance, and construct a positive face for themselves. This, to a large extent, is also the case with Nigerian politics. Analysing the rhetoric and propaganda of political campaigns in Nigeria, Ezejideaku and Ugwu (2007:10) posit that political campaigns are meant to acquaint the prospective voters with the candidates and party’s programmes, with the intention of persuading the voters to accept their party’s candidates. They do this by appealing to primordial and sectional sentiments.

2. Nigeria’s Socio-Political Context: The Place of President Jonathan

The political discourses in Nigeria such as campaigns and declarations are normally structured to appeal to sectional or ethno-religious interests. Historical facts show that tribe and religion have played crucial roles in Nigerian politics right since the beginning of the first

republic. This explains why the three dominant political parties in the first republic (1960-1966) represented the interest of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. The Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) in the north represented the interest of the mainly Hausa/Fulani group; The National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) in the east represented that of the dominant Igbo ethnic group; while the Action Group (AG) in the west catered to the interest of the Yoruba. Subsequent political experiments in Nigeria from 1979 to the present time have consciously or unconsciously followed the traditional pattern of North/South, that is to say, the Christian/Moslem or majority/minority dichotomy in the formation of parties and appointment of principal officers of the parties.. In the current dispensation, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the ruling party in Nigeria, also recognizes the role of religion and tribe in its agenda. It has a policy that allows power to rotate between the mainly Moslem North and the predominantly Christian South on a basis of two terms (8years) of four years per term.

The intention of the arrangement was to permit power to rotate among the three major ethnic groups: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. President Obasanjo, a Yoruba/Westerne/Christian, benefitted from the arrangement (1999-2003); President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, a Fulani/Northerner/Moslem, was the next beneficiary of this structure (2007-2010). Unfortunately, Yar'Adua died on May 5 2010 before he could complete his first term in office in 2011, thereby making way for his deputy, Vice-President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, from the Ijaw "minority" ethnic group in the South-South geo-political zone, to be sworn in as President on May 7 2010.

There had been speculations since the emergence of President Jonathan about whether he would step down at the end of the first term of his joint ticket with President Yar'Adua in 2011 and allow a Moslem/ Northerner to complete the second term of the late President after which power will once again return to the South in 2015. His emergence as president and subsequent declaration of his candidacy has upset several hierarchies in the political structures of Nigeria. He is the first minority presidential candidate whose ideology implicitly challenges the assumption that it is the prerogative of the three major ethnic groups to determine the political direction of the nation. This position and many more have pitched him against so many interest groups from within the PDP, from the North, from the East, from opposition parties, and so many others who perceive his presidential ambition as a threat to

their group interests. This paper investigates how President Goodluck Jonathan's speech constructs an alternative discourse and epistemology that de-emphasizes religious and ethnic affiliations as prerequisites for the office of president in Nigeria.

3. Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework

Previous studies of presidential speeches in Nigeria have focused on the stylistic, discourse analysis and rhetorical strategies in the speeches of Nigerian presidents/ heads of state. Ayeomoni (2005) did a linguistic-stylistic investigation of the language of the Nigerian political elite. He analysed the speeches of past presidents, heads of state, governors, ambassadors and political advisers from the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. Yusuf (2002) focused on the dysphemisms in the language of President Olusegun Obasanjo; Ayoola (2005) conducted a discursive study of President Olusegun Obasanjo's July 26, 2005 address to the National Assembly; Adetunji (2009) discussed the inaugural addresses of Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo and America's President George Bush; Babatunde and Odegbedan (2009) examined the pragma-rhetorical strategies in selected speeches of President Olusegun Obasanjo; while Opanachi (2009) engaged in a discourse analysis of President Obasanjo's national address on the Nigeria Labour Congress of 8th October, 2003. None of these studies explicitly examined the role of ideology as a dominant force of mind control in political speeches. The analysts did not link political discourse with the attempt by speakers to manipulate and control the mind of the audience. Thus, political speeches as a tool in the hands of dominant groups to legitimize their control of the "Other" were largely ignored in the analyses.

Language plays an important role in manifesting political wills and accompanying political actions. Schäffner (1996) contends that "in political discourse linguistics have always been interested in the linguistic structures used to get politically relevant messages across to the addressees in order to fulfill a specific function." Schäffner (1996), Sauer (1996), and Fairclough (1996) claim that the analysis of political speeches in political discourse should relate linguistic structures to larger contexts of communicative settings and political functions. Thus, they favour the use of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the integrated approach.

CDA, as Fairclough (1996:287) claims, is “a perspective which is concerned with showing up often opaque connections between language and other aspects of society and culture”. In addition, van Dijk (1993) suggests examining the style, rhetoric or meaning of texts for strategies that aim at the concealment of social power relations and the exercise of power.

The theoretical framework for this study is Fairclough’s (1995) model of Critical Discourse Analysis - a three dimensional framework that seeks to map three separate forms of analysis onto one another. That is, it analyses language texts (spoken or written), discourse practices (processes of text production, distribution and consumption), and discursive events as instances of socio-political practice. Fairclough (1989:20) defines CDA as an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that does not only see “language as a form of social practice,” but also focuses on the idea that social and political dominion is reproduced by “text and talk.” Thus, Fowler (1991:67) describes critical discourse analysis as a theory that sets out to respond to the problems of “fixed, invisible ideology permeating language”.

CDA focuses on the hidden relationship between the discourse practice, events and text on the one hand and the wider socio-cultural context on the other hand. Meaning exists in that hidden relationship because it is all about the “unsaid said” concealed in a text. The “hidden agenda” of any text must be seen from the socio-cultural background that informed the construction of that text. In order to encode these hidden ideologies and power involved in discourse, Fairclough (1989:15) notes that “language connects with the social through being the primary domain of ideology, and through being a site of, and a stake in the struggle for power.” Supporting this view, Luke (1997) posits that CDA reveals the ways discourses are used every day for power relation, and by extension, for signification and the construction of new knowledge. That is why Thompson (2002) asserts that CDA helps to make clear the connections between the use of language and the exercise of power. CDA helps to legitimize the voice of the marginalized and by extension, take the voice of those in power into question. Thus by so doing, it reveals the agenda and motives that serve sectional or self interests which help to maintain and subjugate the other.

As an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse, CDA views “language as a form of social practice” (Fairclough 1989:20) and focuses on the idea that social and political domination is reproduced by “text and talk.” According to van Dijk (1988), CDA is

concerned with studying and analyzing written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias, and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced and transformed within specific social, economic, political and historical contexts. By so doing, it illuminates ways in which the dominant forces construct texts that favour their interest.

According to Sheyholislami (2001), one key principle of CDA is that the way we write, what we say, is not arbitrary – it is purposeful whether or not the choices are conscious or unconscious. Thus, Batstone (1995:198-199) contends that critical discourse analysts seek to reveal how texts are constructed so that particular perspectives can be expressed delicately and covertly.

Fairclough (1987, 1993), van Dijk (1988), Wodak (2001), Thompson (2002), and McGregor (2004) contend that CDA takes an interest in the ways in which linguistic forms are used in various expressions and manipulations of power. The form and structure of sentences can suppress information that exists in a text because of the attitude of the dominant group in the discursive construction. CDA therefore aims at demystifying the text.

Fairclough (2000) observes that there are three central tenets of CDA. To him, discourse is shaped and constrained by: (a) Social Structure, (b) Culture, and (c) Discourse. Social Structure includes age, class, status, ethnic identity, and gender. Culture could be considered as the generally accepted norms of behaviour in the society. Discourse refers to the words we use. Thus, the goal of CDA is to determine the relationship between these three central tenets. Our discourses reflect the societal norms and beliefs, that is, we say things in conformity with the way they should normally be said in our society, and there are certain things we do not say because the society has constrained us not to say them. Likewise, our identity in the social structure is shown in the way we think, act and speak. Thus, text is produced by socially-situated speakers.

There are a number of crucial concepts in CDA which require special attention because they imply discursive power abuse. Van Dijk (2006) examines some of the properties of manipulation, within the “triangulation” framework that explicitly links discourse, cognition and society. A discourse analytical approach is necessary because most manipulation, according to van Dijk, takes place by text and talk. However, insight from van Dijk’s approach shows that the subjects being manipulated are human beings, and this usually occurs

through the manipulation of their “minds”. Since manipulation “implies power and power abuse”, van Dijk recommends a social approach to the study to because a cognitive dimension is important as well, since manipulation always involves a form of mental manipulation”

Manipulation, according to van Dijk (2006) does not only involve power, but precisely, *abuse* of power, that is, *domination*. Manipulation can imply the exercise of a form of *illegitimate* influence by means of discourse where manipulators make others believe or do things that are in the interest of the manipulator and against the best interests of the manipulated (see Wodak, 1987; Chouliaraki, 2005; Martín Rojo and Van Dijk, 1997). Manipulation can equally be a form of (legitimate) persuasion (see Dillard and Pfau, 2002; O’Keefe, 2002). Insight from van Dijk’s notion of manipulation will be incisive to our understanding and analysis of political speech.

4. Data

The data for this study consist of a corpus of 1,855 words on a six page written text, being the text of President Goodluck Jonathan’s declaration of interest in the 2010 PDP presidential primaries. The data were written and delivered orally in English on 18th September, 2010 and transmitted through the print and electronic media, including the internet. The data were collected from President Goodluck Jonathan’s facebook notes on 20th September, 2010. We did a critical discourse analysis of the speech to identify its ideological orientation and persuasive strategies and how they reflect the power relationship between the speaker and his audience. The details of the speech are as follows: “Speech by President Goodluck Jonathan Declaring his Candidacy for the PDP Presidential Primaries” Saturday, September 18 2010. <http://www.facebook.com/notes/goodluck-jonathan>

5. Analysis of Rhetorical Strategies

Political discourses are generally aimed at mind control or manipulation (van Dijk, 1995, 2006). Politicians usually employ persuasive language to make the audience accept their

ideology. They often employ emotional arguments and language to arouse the interest of the audience. De Wet (2010:104) observes that “the language of political persuasion is geared to guiding recipients’ attitudes and orientation/or behaviour, that is, to forming, sustaining or changing their attitudes on a political issue or impelling them to act.” Our analysis will centre on identifying some of the rhetorical strategies employed by the speaker to market his identity (and ideology) and that of his party. We shall examine these strategies under two broad dimensions: positive-face strategies and negative-face strategies. The two are synonymous with Chilton’s (2004:46-47) legitimisation and delegitimisation strategies. Legitimation is expressed in techniques such as arguments about voters’ wants, general ideological principles, charismatic leadership projection, boasting about performance, and positive self-presentation; on the other hand, delegitimation manifests in acts of negative other-presentation, acts of blaming, scapegoating, marginalising, excluding, attacking the moral character of some individual or group, attacking the communicative cooperation of the other, attacking the rationality and sanity of the other. Chilton (2004:47) contends that “The strategies of delegitimation (of the other) and legitimisation (of self) may perhaps coincide with positive face (being an insider and legitimate) and negative face (being not only an outsider and thus not legitimate but also under attack).”

5.1 Positive-face Strategies

We use the term “positive-face strategies” to mean those rhetorical patterns that are intended to positively orient the speaker to his audience. The overall aim of the speaker is to present his political agenda and ideology in the most favourable manner to his audience, who are mainly members of his political party, his political admirers, and potential voters. Some of the positive face strategies employed by President Goodluck Jonathan are analysed below.

5.1.1 Recollection of landmark accomplishments as President

The President started his speech with a list of his accomplishments in “the past four months that I have served as President of Nigeria”. His accomplishments centred around the major problem areas of the economy such as oil and gas, power generation and distribution, peace in the Niger Delta, infrastructural developments, education, electoral system, transparent banking, etc. The items were structured in order of importance and clearly indicate

the President's priority agenda. The placement of the items also reflects the President's assessment of "Self" and his highlighting the areas of great success and ongoing development initiatives.

The President scores "Self" high in the oil and gas sector and rationalizes that with the fact that "today, all our refineries are working, saving us huge amounts of funds spent on importation of petroleum products." On electricity generation and distribution, the President calls on "you" as a witness to his success in the sector - "as **you** can see from the lower quantities of diesel that **you** are buying today, power generation has significantly improved." The deixis "you" is however vague because the identity of the referent cannot be easily determined from the context. It is not certain whether the "you" refers to the president's immediate audience or those who will later read the text of the message, or an imaginary audience. To prove that peace has been restored in the volatile Niger Delta region, the President uses the inclusive first person pronoun "we" – "**we** saw to it that normalcy began to return to the Niger Delta by ensuring government's fidelity to its promises, and this has helped to stabilize our national revenue." It is also not certain why the speaker suddenly shifts from the use of singular "I" to plural "we" in the same discourse context. He perhaps chose to use the plural form to share the success or otherwise the amnesty deal with other stakeholders. It shows collective involvement and responsibility, and an attempt to distance or separate the individual "Self" from a collective action. This explains why de Wet (2010:110) posits that ambiguity is especially conspicuous in political language because politics invariably concerns conflicts of interest. In all, the President is excited to recall with pride "all the development initiatives we have accomplished so far."

Our analysis shows that the President decided to precede his political declaration with a presentation of his accomplishments so as to convince the audience that he has a record of achievement and good governance and can do better if given the mandate to participate in the 2011 general elections as his party's presidential candidate.

5.1.2 Alignment with the suffering majority of the country

President Jonathan in his rhetoric tried to establish common ground with the poor of the country, express an understanding and respect for their socioeconomic position, reassure them of his goodwill to them, and highlight the similarity of their present situation with his past.

The President informed the audience that his concern is the “immediate needs and priorities of our people” and “to solve the everyday problems that confront the average Nigerian.” The reconstruction of his childhood experiences as a metaphor of hope and regeneration is to motivate or manipulate the minds of people within his target audience that he is one of them and that hence, “my story symbolizes my dream for Nigeria.” The President carefully chose words and phrases that connect him psychologically with the audience. He informed them that “I was not born rich”; never “imagined that I would be where I am today”; was raised by “my mother and father with just enough money to meet our daily needs”; “had no shoes, no school bags”; had to carry “my books in my hands”; and could only afford “one meal” some days, etc.

The President used these rhetorical strategies to construct affinity and commonality with the masses and to reassure them that he understands the meaning of poverty and suffering. He gives the impression that he identifies with the plight of the “ordinary Nigerian” and assures them of his friendship and understanding: “You are all my friends and we share a common destiny...I am one of you and I will never let you down.” His mission then seems to be the redemption of the “millions of Nigerians whose potentials for greatness are constrained by the lack of basic infrastructure,” and to raise from this group who are “disadvantaged by the lack of opportunities” an army “who can make a difference in the service of their country”.

5.1.3 Presentation of “Self” in the frame of political messiah

Positive self-presentation is one of the rhetorical strategies employed by politicians to persuade or manipulate their audience. In our analysis, President Jonathan presents himself in the frame of a political messiah with the magic wand to fix all of Nigeria’s socioeconomic problems. He metaphorized himself as the “new era” that “beckons for a new kind of leadership.” He presented a long list of seemingly intractable socioeconomic and political problems facing Nigeria in key sectors such as energy, education, agriculture, the economy, health, transparency and accountability and declared, “I have come to say to all of you, that Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan is the man you need to put Nigeria right.” Using contrastive pairs such as “campaign of ideas not of calumny,” “love, not hate,” and “friends” not “enemies,” he distanced himself from the “divisive tendencies of the past, which have slowed our drive to true nationhood.” He asserted that the “new Jonathan administration” will

“herald a new era of transformation of our country.” The underlying ideology behind the phrase, “new Jonathan administration” is quite tricky. It is an attempt to discriminate between the “new” (future) administration which will be under his firm leadership from the current one that is an appendage of the late Yar’Adua regime. The Yar’Adua administration came with a 7 point agenda in which none of the items listed as top priority was accomplished as at the time of his death “four months” ago. President Jonathan seems to be tactfully distancing himself from the ideology of failure associated with the regime. He is therefore asking for the opportunity to correct the failures of past administrations, including that of late President Yar’Adua, in which he served for three years as Vice-President. This explains why he “humbly offer (my)self” to participate in the 2011 Presidential elections. The above thus affirms Beard’s (2000:41) position that “politicians often claim humility and service to the people as their motive for wanting power.”

5.1.4 Appeal to ethno-religious sentiment

The President recognized early enough the odds against him in the contest, being a candidate from “Otuoke, a small village in the Niger Delta”. He acknowledged that tribe/religion and number (population) are crucial elements of Nigerian politics. He therefore tried in his speech to deconstruct the relevance of ethnicity and religion in the vision of the “new era” he was trying to market to the audience. He asked his audience to break away from the “divisive tendencies of the past” and realize their “God-given potentials, unhindered by tribe or religion” so as to be able to “herald a new era of transformation of our country.” He however makes an indirect appeal to ethno-religious sentiment when he acknowledged that he came to power by the “power of God” and the “support and prayers” of “all ethnic groups, North, South, East and West.” He used the metaphor of inclusion and solidarity by asserting oneness with all ethno-religious groups in Nigeria: “I am one of you and will never let you down!” The reference to God and ethnic groups shows that he completely understands the role of religion and tribe in Nigerian politics, since he is from the Ijaw “minority” tribe in the Niger Delta. He therefore needs the support of all ethno-religious groups in the country to win the party primaries and the 2011 Presidential elections.

5.1.5 Name as Metaphor

It is a common belief in traditional Africa that one's name affects one's fortune in life. Parents therefore give their children "positive" names so that their lives will be positive too. This has even received more recognition and pronouncement within the fold of contemporary Pentecostalism which oppose any "negative" confessions because of their belief that one is what one professes. Izevbaye (1981:164) argues that "names in reality exist in a context that gives them form and meaning. Taken out of this context of social reality, names remain in atomistic state." President Jonathan realized the importance attached to names in traditional Africa and in Christendom, and decided to play politics with his names: Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan.

As part of the build up to his formal declaration, there were huge media hypes about the "miraculous" names of the President. Some of the jingles implored Nigerians to embrace Goodluck Jonathan if they want "goodluck" for themselves, their families, and the nation. This is also contained in the President's equivocation that "**Goodluck** has come to transform Nigeria..." Here, the underlying metaphor and ideology suggest that the President's name "Goodluck" which has worked for him will also work for the nation. The word "goodluck" presupposes an act of providence. The text indirectly urges the nation to key into the divine plan for President Goodluck Jonathan for it to rise above its present state of amnesia. To prove that he is "lucky", the President asserted:

1:

"I never imagined that I would be where I am today...not once did I imagine that a child from Otuoke, a small village in the Niger Delta, will one day rise to the position of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria."

Thus, the noun "goodluck" is metonymically used for the person of President Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan and the aura of "goodluck" around him.

The President also plays politics with his first middle name, "Ebele". Ebele is an Igbo word for mercy or grace. Besides using the name to appeal to Igbo sentiment and give the impression of solidarity and commonality with the Igbo ethnic group, it is also synonymously related to "goodluck" as an act of providence. His second middle name, "Azikiwe," seems to be a new addition. "Azikiwe" is the name of Nigeria's foremost nationalist and first President

of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. President Jonathan's adoption of the name or his popularizing it now as one of his middle names is politically motivated. Four reasons can be adduced for this. First, he wants to appeal to the sentiment of the Igbo people who see his presidential ambition as a threat to their chance of producing a President in 2015. He wants to reassure them that he is one of them. Second, he wants to garner the support of all lovers of Zik (as Nnamdi Azikiwe was popularly known) and his one-Nigeria philosophy. Third, he wants to reinvent and appropriate the myths associated with Zik. Fourth, he wants to be viewed as a great nationalist "in the order" of the Great Zik of Africa.

His surname, "Jonathan" is biblical. Jonathan was the son of Saul, the king of Israel. Jonathan became a popular biblical figure because of his friendship with David, whom he protected from the sword of Saul, his father. The metaphor around the name evokes the image of love, sincerity, and trust. When all the meanings around the President's names are fully deconstructed, the ideological underpinnings that emerge are that the President has a great nationalistic interest in the Nigerian project like Zik; can be trusted like the biblical Jonathan; has the mercy and grace of God upon him to bring about the desired social change; and has the divine mandate (metaphorically called Goodluck) to transform the nation.

5.1.6 Lexical and pattern repetition

Lexical and pattern repetition is a dominant feature of political style/rhetoric. The text of President Jonathan's speech is replete with repeated words and patterns – as rhetorical strategies. Our data reveal that the President has a predilection for repeating certain words he considers fundamental to his political agenda. Such words include "new", "era" and "leadership" which are synonymously related in the discourse context:

2:

The country is at the "threshold of **a new era, an era** that beckons for **a new kind of leadership; a leadership** that is uncontaminated...**a leadership** committed to change; **a leadership** that reinvents...I will herald **a new era** of transformation; **an era** that will end the agony of... **a new** Jonathan administration..."

Structural patterns are also reiterated for rhetorical purposes in the President's speech as can be seen in the two texts below:

3:

“I have come to say to all of you, that Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan is the man you need...I have come to launch a campaign of ideas, not of calumny. I have come to preach love, not hate. I have come to break you away from divisive tendencies...I have no enemies to fight. You are all my friends...”

It is important to note the shift from the use of war metaphor: “launch a campaign” to a religious metaphor: “preach”. It suggests that the President recognizes politics as war but chose to mitigate its effect on his audience by contrasting it with the Christian ideology of love and friendship for one’s enemies. However, the deployment of words like “calumny,” “hate,” “break away,” “divisive tendencies,” “enemies,” and “fight,” which are obtained from war and conflict image schema, validates the argument that politics in Nigeria is war.

4:

“Let the word go out from this Eagle Square that Jonathan as President in 2011 will herald a new era of transformation...Let the word go out that my plans for a Sovereign Wealth Fund...will begin the journey...Let all the kidnapers, criminal elements, and miscreants that give us a bad name be ready....Let the ordinary Nigerian be assured that President Jonathan will have ... Let the international community hear that...”

The structural repetitions contain the direction that his government will take if elected President in 2011. The repeated words and structures are means of controlling the collective mind of the audience and impressing upon this mind that the speaker has the audience’s interest at heart. Our analysis shows how the elite uses words to sustain its domination of the lower classes.

5.1.7 The deployment of pronouns

Beard (2000) observes that pronoun reference is always important in putting over a piece of political persuasion. He therefore contends that “the pronouns politicians use in their speeches are worth looking at because they make a significant contribution to the overall

effect” (46). The text of President Jonathan’s speech is replete with pronoun references that signify different meanings to different people. Our concern here is the way personal pronouns (singular and plural) are utilized in the text and the ideology they encode. Our analysis reveals that the President uses first person singular I/me/myself/mine when he wants to highlight some of his individual achievements or take personal responsibility for some of the actions of his government.

5:

“In the last few months, I embarked on monumental projects in our road infrastructure to end the carnage on our highways. I began several projects to make water resources available...I targeted our educational system to return quality and competitiveness...I re-addressed our drive for self sufficiency in food production. I have taken bold steps to confront our security situation.”

The first person singular is persuasively used to give the impression of personal interest in the affairs of the nation and to instantiate or legitimize his claim of excellent performance in the “past four months.” There are also instances of shift from first person singular to first person plural we/us/ourselves/ours in the same discourse situation.

6:

“**I** have put in place new gas policies and very soon, **we** will be saying goodbye to gas flaring in **our** oil fields. Working with the National Assembly, **we** rolled out a law that requires companies operating in the oil and gas sectors of **our** economy to utilize an appreciable percentage of their goods and services from local sources. **We** saw to it that normalcy began to return to the Niger Delta...”

Our analysis shows the President shift from first person singular “I”, in which he takes credit for having put in place a new gas policy, to the plural “we”. When he realized that such an important law cannot be effective without an input from the National Assembly, he quickly decided to “share the glory”, as it were, with the legislature, hence the noticeable modification in the second sentence. He also gives the impression of a joint or group decision in the Niger

Delta matter. The ideology of the text indicates that the President wants to share the blame of those initiatives with the National Assembly should anything go wrong with them. Again, he wants to give the impression of cordiality between the Executive and the Legislature on serious national matters. However, the first person plural forms “we” and “our” in the first sentence refers to the President and the audience. The speaker wants the audience to believe that he is together with them in certain policies of the government. It is a clever way of manipulating the audience and making it believe he is acting in its best interest. Beard (2000:24) notes that “politicians often wish to suggest that even though they are trying to persuade us to a point of view, we already agree with them... ‘we’ gives a sense of collectivity, of us all being in this together.” There are also some instances in which the first person plural refers to the President and his running mate, Namadi Sambo, as in the text below.

7:

We will fight for JUSTICE!

We will fight for all Nigerians to have access to POWER!

We will fight for qualitative EDUCATION!

We will fight for HEALTH CARE REFORMS!

We will fight to create jobs, for all Nigerians!

The reader can only infer this from the preceding sentence in which he appeals to his party to support “...me. Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan...with Architect Namadi Sambo as my running mate.” Thus the “we” anaphorically refers to the President and his running mate. Here too, the speaker wants the audience to know that together with his running mate they can effectively “fight” all the eight items listed in his speech. A quantitative analysis of the use of pronouns in the president’s text is presented below

Figure 1: *statistical distribution of pronouns in President Jonathan’s speech*

Lexical choice	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage
Pronoun (I)	71	60.68
Pronoun (me)	8	6.84
Pronoun (you)	16	13.68
Pronoun (we)	17	14.53
Pronoun(us)	5	4.27
Total	117	100

The table reveals that the pronoun “I” has the highest frequency, with 60.68% of the entire pronouns identified in the sample analysis. The objective first person pronoun, “me” is uttered 6.84% of the time, and the pronoun “you” 13.68%. The first person plural pronoun “we” represents 14.53% of the words used in his speech, while the first person objective pronoun “us” represents 4.27%. The predominant use of the first pronoun “I”/ “me” highlights individual identity and achievement over group achievement and accomplishment.

5.1.8 Graphological Appeal

The President also used graphological devices to sustain the coherence of his rhetoric. The two major graphological devices employed by the speaker are capital letters and exclamation marks. The two devices were used in the text to emphasize certain development initiatives that the President would accord priority attention if given the mandate.

While the eight equivalent structures (five are presented in 7 above) produce a certain rhythm that enhances textual cohesion, the speaker uses capitalization to foreground areas of priority attention. Thus, while all of the eight sentences end with marks of emphasis (exclamation marks), the speaker graphologically highlights “justice,” “power,” “education,” and “health care reforms” in capital letters in order to create the impression that the foregrounded items will receive more priority attention than the other four in his administration. The rhythm of the structural pattern of the text with its graphological design was intended to strengthen the manipulative purposes of the text. It was aimed at persuading the audience to buy into the ideology of the speaker. This explains why de Wet (2010: 113)

argues that the role of ideology in structuring and directing political language cannot be denied. Next, we examine the speaker's use of negative-face strategies in the text.

5.2 Negative Face Strategies

We coin the term “negative-face strategies” to refer to those rhetorical patterns that are intended to indirectly endear the speaker (self) to his audience and delegitimize the other (his opponents). This is exemplified in President Jonathan's strategies of persuasion, where he employed words that are coercive in nature:

8:

“I re-addressed our **drive** for self sufficiency in food production” and “I have taken bold steps to **confront** our security situation”; “we are pursuing the revision of our laws to be more **responsive...** and more **punitive** to criminals” and “I **charged** our anti corruption agencies to speed up the **war against** corruption, and **respect no sacred cows** in the process.”

President Jonathan adopts words that are tough and authoritative to indicate his readiness to deal with out-group and undesirable elements working against his government/interest. This is intended to make the people empathize with his sudden political dexterity in the face of strong opposition against his candidacy from certain quarters of the country. On the list of those working against his political interest are the “kidnappers, criminal elements and miscreants that give us a bad name” whom he challenged to be “ready for a fight that I shall give them.” Chilton (2004: 47) regards the group as “outsiders” and thus “not legitimate but also under attack” from the speaker who asserts himself as the legitimate source of power. The rhetoric shows the speaker blaming members of the out-group for certain ills in the society.

Jonathan wants his audience to believe that his firm policies or ideologies have created a safe haven for them in a nation that has recently been characterized by kidnapping, corruption, and other social vices. His strategy aims to influence them to believe that he is capable of ridding the nation of those destructive evils that had hampered national advancement and that had given the nation a negative image globally. Thus he tries to

minimize the distance between him and his audience by expressing friendliness and solid interest in the hearer's need of a habitable environment devoid of crime and insecurity.

5.2.1 Orientation with peace and justice of the country

President Jonathan in his rhetoric tried to establish his sincere commitment to the restoration of peace in the country and also tried to sell himself to his audience as a man of peace and justice. Considering the crisis usually associated with political campaigns and such other political activities, the president reassures them of his goodwill and ideological departure from the negative past characterized by image muddling and character assassination of one's opponent.

9:

“I have come to **launch** a campaign of ideas, not one of calumny... to **preach** love, not hate.”

Thus, he has offered himself as a preacher of love and not hatred; and a symbol of change, “new era”. Hence he has “come to break” the people away from “the divisive tendencies of the past which have slowed our drive to true nationhood.” This is a subtle appeal to his listeners to jettison any sentiment of bias they may hold against his political ambition.

In the same vein, he tries to persuade his political antagonists to forgo their political differences. He declares “I have **no enemies to fight. You are all my friends** and we share a common destiny”.

The above presupposes that he recognizes the fact that politics in Nigeria is warfare, but he does not want his opponents to consider it as such; hence, he appeals to their conscience to see him as a friend who “shares a common destiny” with them. This is a strategy employed by the President to subtly coerce his audience and opponents.

6. Conclusion and Findings

The study reveals a conscious deployment of diverse rhetorical strategies by the President to articulate an alternative ideology for the Nigerian nation. The President articulates a new

ideological direction that challenges previous approaches to governance in post-colonial Nigeria and gives the impression of a new dawn in the polity. He wants his audience, and his political antagonists, in fact all Nigerians, to see and accept him as the metaphor of change they all long for. The persuasive strategies were adopted to positively orient the President to his audience and to threaten the autonomous face wants of the opposition. Specifically, the President uses the positive-face strategies to project his identity and self-image and the negative-face strategies to coerce and threaten the opposition, and to make them jettison any sentiment of bias they may hold against his political ambition.

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