

A Linguistic-stylistic Analysis of Post-appeal Court Victory Speech of Selected State Governors in Nigeria

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Abstract

This demonstrates the approach of Linguistic-Stylistics in the analysis of political speeches by examining post-appeal court victory speeches of selected Governors in Nigeria with the objectives of identifying and analysing prominent linguistic features; relating the identified linguistic features to the message of the speeches; and determining the way the linguistic features mark out the victory speeches as a unique stylistic genre. The data for the study were drawn from the victory speeches of the governors delivered between 2003 and 2009. These were the governors that challenged the outcome of the elections in their states and had their victory restored in the appellate courts without a re-run before 2010. The data were collected from the national dailies, such as Daily Independent, The Guardian and The Hope. The speeches were carefully studied, with close and cautious attention paid to the syntactic features. The identified predominant syntactic features are the pronominal references and structural parallelism, which the governors used to convey their messages and foreground the theme of their speeches. The study concluded that the identified features were basically used by the governors to convey their messages and intentions. The features were also used to achieve cohesion in their respective addresses. Again, with various sentential repetitions in the speeches, the governors reinforced their thematic focus as they sought to legitimize their administrations. These features thus marked out the speeches as a unique political genre.

Keywords: Political speech; Stylistics; Language; Discourse; References.

1. Introduction

Language is a basic instrument or tool of communication. Indeed, it is most significant medium of achieving diverse communication-related objectives among humans. In the society, language is crucial in the successful running of any democratic governance. It is in this regard that Taiwo (2009) rightly notes that language is the conveyer belt of power; it moves people to vote, debate or revolt. Therefore, language is the central point of political stability or polarisation. The importance of language was emphasised by Akinkurolere (2017) thus: Language is distinctively a human phenomenon. In fact, the society at large depends so much on the use of language for its continual existence; this is to say that people use language for different purposes in the society. These include communication, association, integration, education, etc. Once an individual acquires a language, it becomes the greatest tool in his hand as a social being. To this end, language is essential to every politician because most of the activities performed by the politicians are done through the means of language. Various types of political address are delivered through language which include but not limited to campaign, manifesto, inauguration, budget presentation, etc. There is no gainsaying that language and politics are closely related. This is due to the fact that language is a very important weapon; in fact, the major vehicle of politicking

as noted by various scholars. No wonder, Opeibi (2009) refers to the relationship that exists between language and politics as symbiotic.

Therefore, we can say that no political programmes or goals can survive, or be consolidated without language, since it is the very means through which the view and culture of every society is preserved and expressed. Because language itself is a science, it becomes the medium of political expressions through which the policies, programmes, ideologies, and affairs of any political group are propagated across the globe. Corroborating this assertion, it is cited in Ayeomoni (2001:119) that 'we can use language to rule or govern men', Thorne (1997:368) argues that political language often conceals the truth by using euphemism which makes harsh reality more palatable'. Thorne's submission could be attributed to the fact that politicians often use language for defensive purpose.

From the above, language can be seen as a strong weapon used by political leaders in their politicking and power acquisition processes. It is in view of this that Ayeomoni (2001) concludes that 'the strength of language in politicking is enormous'. This suggests that language and politics are closely connected and cannot be separated because language plays a significant role in the political behaviour of every society. Politicians, both in Nigeria and other parts of the world, use language to cover up and escape whenever the populace wants to make them accountable for their words; they also use it to solicit for support. This interrelatedness of language and politics is further demonstrated when language is used to mobilize, educate, incite and persuade the public for political reasons.

Political speech is a popular concept anywhere politics is being practised. It is seen as a means of establishing and maintaining relationships, expressing thoughts and feelings, and projecting an ideology in the society. So, it is a speaker-audience phenomenon since every speech given is meant to address a particular audience, as it serves the purposes of influencing, informing, persuading, inciting, or entertaining people. Thus, politicians employ political speeches to sell their images as well as party policies, using carefully worded statements involving euphemisms or paraphrases in order to avoid controversy or public loss of face (Wales 1989).

2. Methodology

The approach to the research is linguistic-stylistic, a significant approach in Stylistics. In stylistic analysis, items are usually isolated and described using a framework chosen from whatever school of descriptive linguistics, the stylistician or analyst subscribes to, or considers as appropriate for a particular purpose. Supporting the above, Ayeomoni (2004) states that 'linguistic stylistics is an analytical approach which helps readers to objectively study both literary process and non literary materials'. It is along this reasoning that, it can be categorically stated that stylistic appraisal of language is Linguistic-stylistics. For this study, syntax is the level of linguistic analysis considered for this work because it is discovered that certain syntactic features are among the prominent linguistic features in the speeches. Therefore, syntax is regarded as the framework or linguistic tool of analysis.

From the foregoing, we can postulate that stylistic approach provides insights into the immense variation within language; as it provides and enhances the practical linguistic evidence used to explicate the nuances of any discourse and arrive at the general interpretation of such text. In line with the core objective of linguistic-stylistic analysis, which is to provide systematic and empirical analysis of texts, the speeches were carefully studied with close and cautious attention paid to syntactic features.

The data are examined for the various syntactic components of the speeches in order to aid an objective generalization on the syntactic features that characterize the victory speeches of selected Nigerian governors. The data for this study are inaugural/victory speeches of selected state governors in Nigeria from 2003 to 2009. These governors are Olusegun Mimiko from South-Western part of the country representing the Labour Party;

(LP); Adams Oshiomole from the South-South representing Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) now All Progressive Congress (APC), and Peter Obi from the South-East representing All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA). The rationale behind the selection of these governors was premised on the fact that, they were the only three governors that contested the outcome of the elections in their respective states in election-petition tribunals between 2003 and 2009, and had their mandates restored at the appellate courts without a re-run before 2010. The data were obtained from the Daily Independent, The Guardian, and The Hope newspapers

No doubt, the scope of Syntax is wide; hence, the analysis will be restricted to pronominal reference items as the main focus. For clear analysis, below is the tabular representation of the governors, the titles of the speeches, and the date in order of their presentation.

Table 1: Representation of the Governors and their Speeches

Label	Governors	Speech Title	Date Presented
Speech A	Mr. Peter Obi	Our God Is Faithful	March 17, 2006
Speech B	Mr. Adams Oshiomole	A New Dawn	November 12, 2008
Speech C	Dr. Olusegun Mimiko	I will Work for You	February 24, 2009

Analysis procedure

In order to arrive at a logical and objective conclusion, the data were subjected to careful study, and analysed using the framework of syntax. The sentences in the speeches were numbered for the purpose of easy references. To this end, pronominal references were noted to be significant in each of the speeches, therefore, the linguistic-stylistic approach and syntactic framework were discovered to be appropriate for the study, and found to provide the tools to objectively analyse the texts of the speeches. The data analysis procedure involved identification, sorting and classification of the various identified pronominal references and the data were discussed in relation to the relevance and significance of these features to the success of the speeches.

3.Results and Discussion

Pronominal References in the Speeches

In the text of the speech of Mr. Obi, various pronominal reference items are used by the governor. These include first person singular pronoun 'I' which appears twenty-three (23) times out of the total forty-seven (47) pronouns in the speech. The reason for this could be explained by Thorne's (1997) submission that 'the use of pronouns by politicians is significant in that pronominal choices often reflect the ideology of individual politicians by conveying their personal negative or positive attitudes'. She further opines that 'pronouns enable politicians to accept, deny or distance themselves from their responsibilities; to encourage their supporters; to distance the opposition; and to give a personal touch to their discourse'.

The governor uses the first person pronominal items 'I' to refer to himself twenty-three times, 'our' fifteen times, the possessive form 'ours' one time, and 'we', 'us', 'me', 'myself' and the determiner 'my' eight times in the text. This is done to show that the governor really identifies with the people, and to emphasise his commitment to championing the cause of the people of Anambra State. Consider these excerpts from the speech. 'I offered myself...' (s. 4). 'I contested the...' (s. 5). In sentence five, the speaker uses the pronoun 'I' to express humility and his determination to serve his people by way of offering himself, and so contested the election in 2003. It also portrays him as Christ, who offers himself to be sacrificed in order to save the world. In sentences 7 and 8, the speaker expresses his total trust in God as demonstrated in the title of the speech, and shows that he eschews violence and wants peace and calmness to continue to prevail in the state, so he decided to go to court. 'I looked for the face of God' (s. 7). 'I turned to the judiciary...' (s. 8).

Here, the governor uses the first pronoun 'I' to reiterate his efforts in alleviating the problems in the state through the recovery of his mandate. In what follows, the governor appreciates the judiciary for its commitment to justice, which restore his mandate. These expressions in sentences 10 and 11 corroborate this assertion. 'I pay tribute to...' (s. 10) 'I commend the ability...' (s. 11). The governor uses the forum to praise God, the judiciary and, perhaps, the people for hearkening to his cry. We find that Mr. Obi has employed the first pronominal item 'I' to refer to himself to great advantage. This is in line with the submission of Alo and Ebuka (2009) that 'pronouns are referring expressions'.

Having thanked God and the judiciary, Mr. Obi goes on to lament the woes that have bedevilled the state and reiterate his resolve to see that things change for the better in the state, as evident in the following sentences. 'I make a solemn...' (s. 26). 'I shall do everything...' (s. 26). 'I pledge to do...' (s. 34). The governor emphasises his determination to change the social, economic, and political situation of the state in the expressions above using the first person pronoun to refer to himself and not any other person. Also, Mr. Obi briefly mentions his predecessor and invites him to support his administration in building and revamping Anambra State. The governor states the fact that he acknowledges the contribution of the former governor to the development of the state. He, however, uses the objective third person pronoun 'him' to distance himself from the former governor and achieve cohesion in the text. Thus, in sentence 30, he states: 'I acknowledge... and offer him...'

He also praises the Anambra State legislature for what he describes as 'outstanding, courage, and independence'. And vows to do all he could to reciprocate such good virtues (s. 33 and 34) 'I have watched...' (s. 33). 'I pledge to do all...' (s. 34). He uses the same forum to solicit for support and cooperation from the civil servants in the state. This could be as a result of the fact that the governor recognizes the importance of public servants as stakeholders in the growth of the state. In sentences 35 and 36, he states: 'I appeal to all...' (s. 35). 'I intend to...' (s. 36). The first person pronouns are used here to refer to the governor himself, and this suggests that he cannot succeed without the people's support. Mr. Obi further expresses his intention to involve the private sector in the task of developing Anambra State through the use of first person pronominal reference 'I'. For instance, the following expressions are used to emphasise his determination to carry the public sector along: 'I understand...' (s. 38). 'I intend to...' (s. 36). 'I appeal for peace...' (s. 40).

As noted by various scholars that pronouns are rhetorical tools in the hands of politicians, Obi has shown his ability to employ this linguistic item to solicit for solidarity, patriotism, and create rapport and alignment with all the sectors and masses in the state (see Opanachi, 2009). The governor also salutes the unflinching support he enjoyed from his party (APGA) and its national chairman Dim Chukwuemeka Odumegu Ojukwu in sentences 41 – 46: 'I cannot end...' (s. 41). 'I salute...' (s. 42). 'I ran...' (s. 43). 'I bow to...' (s. 45). 'I felicitate with...' (s. 46). The first person pronominal reference items in the above expressions are used by the governor to show his gratitude to his party, its chairman and the good people of Anambra State for the opportunity given him to run for the office, and to Nigerians as a whole for his victory at the appellate court.

Other first person pronominal items used in this speech can be seen in s. 48 and 49. He uses them to reiterate his commitment to the growth of the state and to consolidate on his earlier promises to the masses and the people of Anambra State. The expressions have the self-referring 'I' to show that he and not another person will fulfill all his promises to his people, e.g., 'I pledge to run...' (s. 48), and 'I will officially...' (s. 49). We find that the governor on this occasion makes use of the first pronoun 'I' greatly to present himself and his programmes to the state. It is a rhetorical device used to solicit support, patriotism, and create rapport between the speaker and the audience.

The use of possessive determiner 'our' in the speech appears in sixteen instances. It is observed that politicians usually employ this to indicate that the politicians and the masses both own the state. It is in this

regard that Ayoola (2005) describes this usage as 'inclusive our'. From the title of the speech 'Our God Is Faithful', we found that Mr. Obi employs the inclusive possessive determiner 'our' to tell the people of the state that our God is faithful and not only his God. This, perhaps, is predicated upon the fact that there is a universal God, the God of everybody on the one hand, and the fact that the governor is a Christian, who so much trusted in God during the period of the litigation. This expression is used in the title of the speech, while its variant possessive pronoun 'ours' occurs once in the speech. The phrases 'our people harkened' (s. 6), 'our long ordeal', 'our state' (s. 12), 'Ours is a state' (s. 13), 'Our children' (s.15), our problems (s.26), 'future of our children' (s.29), 'our collective', 'lot of our people' (s.30), 'restoring our state to' (s. 35), 'our jointly' (s.39), 'our stolen mandate' (s. 41), 'our national chairman' (s. 42), 'of our state' (s.49), 'of our great country' (s.56) reveal that Governor Peter Obi on this occasion makes use of an inclusive possessive determiner in different ways to prove that the state, children, ordeal, problems, and stolen mandate belong to them all in the state.

For instance, 'our people' presupposes that he refers to himself, the political party that produced him and the entire people of Anambra State. In the same vein, he repeatedly uses this device to bring himself closer to the people. He identifies with the people and their problems and states that whatever affects them affects him as well. This device is used to persuade the people. The governor only uses the first person plural pronominal item 'we' six times in subjective form while its variant 'us' appears one time in the objective position, e.g.: 'we have a state' (s. 14), 'we previously attained' (s. 17), 'we begin' (s. 35), 'we shall collectively' (s. 39), 'we laboured to' (s.41), 'we will employ' (s. 53), 'to use us to bring' (s. 12).

The governor employs the inclusive pronoun 'we' to demonstrate his humility in presenting himself at the same level and condition with the masses of the state. He notes that they both own the state that has fallen from its place of pride. Mr. Obi goes ahead to use this style to call on all of them; the public and the civil servants to join him and his party in the task of restoring the state to its former glory. Thus, the first person pronoun 'we' is used in this context to refer to the governor and his political party (APGA). The use of pronoun 'we' inclusively in s. 39 refers to the governor and the stakeholders in the private sector. The same usage in s. 41 also refers to APGA and the governor, perhaps, and his friends who stood by him during the litigation.

While in s. 53, the governor uses the first person plural pronoun 'we' to refer to himself and his cabinet, he states that 'we will employ the service of any one capable and willing to contribute towards the achievement of our common goals' that is, the administration and the party will welcome whoever is capable of contributing to the goals of the governor, his cabinet and his party. The first person plural objective pronoun *us* occurs in the speech only once. In s. 12, the governor states 'God has a design to use us to bring about some positive changes in our state', which implies the governor and his party. Mr. Obi uses the distance second and third person plural/singular pronouns 'your' and 'him' respectively in the speech.

First, the plural pronoun, 'your' refers to the entire Anambra people. The governor here calls for the support of the people in his determination to take Anambra State back to its place of pride. Like every other politician, he employs this pronoun to seek for solidarity and acceptance from the people. Secondly, he employs the third person singular pronominal item 'him' to refer to his predecessor as he distances himself from him. He states that '... I offer him my hand...' in s. 30 thus inviting him to work with the new administration in the state. This is the usual way politicians invite their opponents to accept defeat and cooperate with whoever wins at the end of elections.

In s. 6, the governor also uses the first person singular objective pronoun 'me' to refer to himself '...vote massively for me...' This presupposes that the Governor is loved by all as demonstrated by their votes. The possessive determiner 'their' is also used by the governor to great advantage. For instance, we have the following expressions: 'their mandate' (s. 6), 'give their best' (s. 35), 'their vast experience' (s. 36), and 'their union' (s. 40). The governor talks about 'their mandate', which refers to the confidence and vote that the people gave him during the election. It thus presupposes that since it belongs to the people, it cannot be taken away

except by the people, because they freely give it to whoever they wish. Mr. Obi acknowledges the fact that the mandate was given to him and not that he owns it. That means, the power resides in the people and not an individual. In the same vein, he talks about giving their best in s. 35. The governor is soliciting for the cooperation of the public servants in the state. And in s. 36, he mentions 'their vast experience'; the governor is here appealing for solidarity, cooperation and patriotism from the civil servants through the use of their experiences.

He, in s. 14, uses the demonstrative and reflexive pronouns 'those' and 'themselves' to distance himself and perhaps his party from the people he considers enemies of progress in the state. He sees this group as a clog in the wheel of progress of the state. This may not be unconnected with the political tension that covered the state in the past; the kidnapping of the former governor and godfatherism in the state. Having possessed the official platform, he renounces and condemns this group in totality as he addresses the state. The governor laments that 'our children are today plagued by the wrong values as a lot of those who put themselves forward as role models represent the worst that can be found in any decent society'. These pronouns are what scholars refer to as distance strategy usually employed by politicians. In all, the pronominal reference items are used by the governor to enhance the unity of the text, and to avoid unnecessary repetition of certain nominal items in the speech.

As noted above, Governor Oshiomole also uses various pronominal references like the singular and plural first person pronouns, (I, we, me, us), second person pronoun and its possessive variants 'you' and 'your'; third person pronouns 'they' and 'them'; and reflexive pronouns 'myself', and 'themselves' over 200 times across the text. He uses these items in different ways to achieve cohesion and avoid redundancy in the text. Oshiomole begins by using the personal pronoun 'I' and the possessive determiner 'my' across the speech to refer to himself, his quality and the new office. This style draws attention to the person of the governor, his aims and plans for the state. It also portrays the governor as somebody who is grateful, and sympathetic to the plight of the people of the state.

The governor's use of this style predominantly in the speech shows his acceptance of responsibility for the wellbeing and social welfare of the people. The first person plural pronouns, 'we', 'us', and the possessive determiner, 'our' are used to refer to the ACN and LP as a whole. This is because he is just a part of the whole system, and the fact that the governor is interested in unveiling the programmes and the agenda of the party for the state. This style also creates a sense of unity and stresses the importance of the party and its policies above any individual on the victory at the appeal court. This use of plural pronouns 'we' and 'us' is what Thorne (1997) calls inclusive pronoun; that is, the governor refers to the party, the state as a whole, and himself in some instances. This style also widens the field of reference as he includes all the Edo people and Nigerians as a whole. This act enables the governor to move beyond the ACN to the electorate, appealing to them for cooperation and patience. This permeates the whole speech.

In the victory speech of Governor Mimiko, we identified about 40 first person pronominal reference items 'I' and 'me'. These pronominal items are employed by the governor to make reference to himself as he promises to work for the people since he has offered himself to do so. It is found that in the speech, Dr. Mimiko tries to show the people of Ondo State his personal commitment to the service of the state. By this strategy, he can also be said to have accepted responsibility for providing an enabling environment for all the citizens of the state. To this end, the first person pronominal reference items are judiciously used by the governor as a cohesive device.

The use of first person plural pronominal reference items 'we/us/our' occurs in about 149 instances. These uses are in different perspectives; first as plural pronouns referring to the governor and the Labour Party. There is an inclusive use of this set of pronouns which occur severally in the speech. Consider the pronouns in the following expressions: '... what we offer is a completely new paradigm of governance under which we shall use existing communal structures and our legendary my-brother's-keeper spirit to drive development...' , 'our

conviction is situated ahead of us to deliver Ondo State' and 'our duty is to begin to work very hard to ensure that the sun continues to produce a sustaining beam (s.50, 23, and 46).'

The second type is of collective plural 'we/us/our' referring to the entire Ondo State people, both the ruled and the rulers. This is what Ayoola (2005) refers to as the inclusive 'we'. This is employed by the politicians to make the masses believe that both the ruler and the ruled belong to the same class, e.g.: '...our greatest asset in this state today is not 'our' oil wells. It is not 'our' luxuriant bushes and extensive forests... 'our' greatest and most important asset as 'we' stand today on this threshold of history is 'your' trust, people of Ondo State... (s. 53-58). 'I' plead therefore for that change in attitude in all 'our' ways; from the way 'we' dispose our pure water sachets to how 'we' dress, from how 'we' celebrate to how 'we' handled government money, from how much attention 'we' pay to 'our' children to how committed 'we' are to the good of 'our' neighbourhoods...' (s. 68).

Other pronominal items he employs for various purposes include the third person plural pronoun 'they/them' and its possessive variant, 'their', and the third person singular pronoun 'he', and its possessive variant 'his'. The third person plural pronouns occur in the speech about six times. The use is of two perspectives: the first is to acknowledge those who lend him a helping hand and support during the litigation period. He uses these reference items 'those', 'they', 'them' and their possessive variant, 'their', to refer to them while thanking and pledging not to disappoint them in any way; e.g. ...and for which many of 'our' loved ones lost 'their' freedom, properties and limbs..., 'we' stand committed to the ideals of a better society for which 'they' struggled and died (s.18), ...these great patriots of 'our' state who stand tall even in 'their' death...(s.19), ...for 'their' dedication and total commitment to the common goal (s.20). ...and 'those' men and women of God who toiled for 'us' in prayer, for 'their' multidimensional and unwavering support these past months..., for 'their' total commitment to my cause, for 'their' patience, for 'their' perseverance and for 'their' unqualified understanding...' (s, 14, 31 and 35).

'Ours' is a people-oriented government in which 'we' shall help the masses to take decisions that will empower and ennoble 'them'...., that the weakest in the society is given the opportunity to develop and actualize 'their' potentials, (s. 51)... 'we' want all of 'us', especially 'our' children, pregnant women and the vulnerable, to have unfettered access to quality health care when and where they need it. 'We' want 'our' educational institutions to look good and functional and 'our' children to be equipped with the type of instruction that will give 'them' competitive edge in the national and global market place. 'We' surely want employment for all those who are unemployed. 'We' also want all citizens and residents of 'our' dear state to be able to go about 'their' businesses in a secured space...' (s. 100-4).

The second use of these pronouns is for the governor to distance himself from his political foes, e.g.: '...It therefore behoves 'us' in utmost deference to the Almighty to forgive 'those' who either or out of misguided conviction or deliberate mischief stood against 'us'. For 'our' leaders to be accountable, 'they' must know that they owe 'their' positions to the people...' (s.75, and 122). In a related manner, the reflexive pronouns 'myself', 'ourselves', and 'themselves' are used by the governor to refer to himself, e.g.: '...I offered 'myself' for service before the people of Ondo State at different periods of our chequered history as a state (s. 4). 'It was an auspicious moment for me to present 'myself' to Ondo State as a candidate for the office of Governor...' (s. 6). 'By the swearing-in of the Deputy Governor, Alhaji Ali Olanusi and 'myself', which we just had, deliverance has come for Ondo State...' (s. 36). The governor uses this reflexive to refer to himself as the messiah who has brought succour to the people of Ondo State.

The reflexive pronoun 'ourselves' is a reference to the governor and the Labour Party in Ondo State. It is thus used inclusively, e.g.: '...To these ends and many others, we have committed 'ourselves' (s. 111)...'. The third person reflexive pronoun 'themselves' is used by the governor to refer to his political opponents in his bid to distance himself from such people, e.g. '....It is in this same spirit that I once again appeal to all of our compatriots, politicians and leaders who found 'themselves' on the other side of the political divide these past

21 months that the time for collective action is now... (s. 77)'. This pronoun is also used by the governor to solicit for support and cooperation from his political opponents. The third person plural pronoun 'you' and its possessive variant 'your' occur across the speech about sixty-one times, while the subject/object pronoun 'you' occurs about forty-six times and the possessive form 'your' occurs about fifteen times. The governor adopts this pronoun and its possessive variant 'exclusively' to refer to the people of Ondo State and his political opponents. This presupposes that the governor uses the pronouns to distance himself from his opponents on the one hand and to attribute the victory celebrated to the electorate in the state, on the other.

He employs this to tell the people that the government and, perhaps, decision making in the state belong to the electorate, e.g.; '...I will work for you' (title) '... I stand before you...' (s. 1) '...I cannot thank you enough for your attention...' (s. 8), which you demonstrated by your tumultuous welcome...' (s. 8), 'you have confounded me by your resolute commitment...' (s. 9), ...the same way you stood by us for us ... so will I always stand by you'...,that government which you laboured for, for which you were traumatized... remains your government...' (s. 13 and 14).

He also uses the pronoun 'you' and its possessive variant to refer to the judiciary for standing on the path of truth and honour, e.g., My lord, I and indeed the entire people of Ondo State and democrats across this great nation cannot thank 'you' enough (s. 24). By 'your' determination and insistence... 'you' have renewed our faith in Nigeria (s. 25). 'You' all had a choice to do otherwise (s. 26). But 'you' chose to stand firm till the end..., we shall continually be challenged by 'your' action to do only those things that are enobling... (s. 27 and 28). Dr. Mimiko also uses this to refer to President Umaru Yar'Adua as he thanks him and salutes his courage to stand for truth and justice even when it affects him and the party under whose platform he emerged as president, e.g. '... Mr. President, Ondo State looks ahead to working closely with 'you' as 'you' strive to lift Nigeria out of years of unfulfilled expectations' (s. 30).

While thanking his friends, he also uses this pronoun, e.g.; 'You' stood by us during a time of truly suffocating difficulty. 'Your' support made so much of a difference. I can assure 'you' all that as a people, we in Ondo State do not forget our friends. (s. 33-35). '... After all, this is what 'you' voted for. And in the intervening period, when 'your' mandate was stolen, this is what 'you' fought for, this is what 'you' stood for, this is what 'you' suffered for, and this is what 'you' will surely get now that 'your' mandate has been restored' (s. 62 and 63).

'...I want to know 'you' all by name... what 'you' do... to talk to 'you'... I hereby solicit 'your' support and full participation in making the exercise a success...' (sd. 85-92). '... I pledge before 'you' again today that I will provide appropriate leadership (s. 116). 'Your' struggle will be my struggle, 'your' joy will be my joy, and 'your' aspiration will be my aspiration... (s. 117). I will work for 'you'...' (s. 119).

Here, we find that Dr. Mimiko employs these pronominal references to achieve cohesion and avoid redundancy as he seeks to legitimize his government and familiarize himself and his government with the people who elected him.

4. Conclusion

From all the observed realizations in the analysis above, it can be concluded that Nigerian governors' victory speeches certainly possess distinct linguistic features, which marked them out as a unique political discourse. In the course of the study, we found that the victory speeches of Nigerian governors, especially after legal battles, have the prevalence of pronominal references. It can thus be deduced that the frequent use of pronominal reference items by the governors is in concomitance with the submissions of Asiyanbola, (2009), Ayoola (2005), and Thorne (1997),

that politicians employ the use of these items to express various purposes; to distance themselves from certain groups or for inclusion, and to cover up. Also, in line with Abdullahi-Idiagbon's (2010) submission, the

governors employ the devices to foreground the themes of their speeches and as beautiful echoes to appeal to the sense of judgement of their audience.

It is evident that pronominal references characterised the victory speeches. This use is in line with the spirit of the times, since it was the period when the manifestoes or programmes of the parties were unveiled, on the one hand, and the electioneering campaign promises were reinforced, on the other. Though, it is quite difficult to examine all the stylistic features in the data, but the paper's focus specifically on pronominal references in order to be thorough and detailed.

Furthermore, this research establishes the fact that politicians deploy stylistic features when it becomes imperative to use language to express their feelings, convince their audience and seek for continual support. This ability is premised on the choice and use of words. thus, the study has provided an insight into the stylistic analysis of victory speeches of selected governors in Nigeria. It, thus, complements the existing literature on political discourse of civilian governors in Nigeria after legal battles over their elections. The study also established the post-appeal court victory speeches as a unique stylistic and political genre in Nigeria.

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