Appraisal of Resources in Post-Election Defeat-Concession Speeches of Some Gubernatorial Candidates in Southwestern Nigeria, 2014-2015

by

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Abstract

This paper seeks to examine the language of evaluation in speeches delivered by some politicians upon electoral defeats in gubernatorial elections in southwestern Nigeria, with a view to revealing how language is used for the construction of attitudes and stances by such politicians. Four post-election defeat speeches were purposively selected because they were publicly presented and made available on various media platforms. The data in this study was analyzed using appraisal theory, and the paper reveals that the speakers strategically deployed appraisal resources such as affect, judgment, appreciation, graduation and engagement more positively than negatively in evaluating the circumstances of their electoral defeats. The paper therefore concludes that the language of evaluation of defeated political candidates in Nigeria reveals increased tolerance and maturity.

Keywords: Electoral defeat; concession speeches; gubernatorial elections; southwestern Nigeria; language of evaluation; appraisal resources.

Introduction

Elections are an important aspect of the political processes in the democratic system of any nation. According to Opeibi (2009), elections can be said to be the heart of any political system. Given the importance of elections in determining the person or people who have access to state power and the desire of most politicians to acquire state power, a lot of effort is invested into preparations for elections. Since language is central to all human actions and endeavors, including politics, it also becomes largely implicated in the electoral processes as politicians and the electoral umpires use language to achieve their desired results.

Therefore, language use in relation to electoral matters constitutes an important aspect of political discourse, which broadly refers to all talks and texts in the domain of politics (van Djik, 1997).

Political discourse has enjoyed generous attention from scholars in diverse disciplines including linguistics, which serves as the orientation of this study. Political discourse occupies a strategic space as it is not a mere linguistic exercise or adventure, but often has serious political implications. According to van Djik (1997), political discourse analysis has a lot to offer political science as it can answer serious political questions or raise awareness about political realities or processes, especially if "it focuses on features of discourse which are relevant to the purpose or function of the political process or event whose discursive dimension is being analysed" (van Djik 1997:38).

Linguistic studies on Nigerian political discourse have focused on sub-genres of the discourse such as political speeches, political advertisements, political rally campaigns, political interviews, legislative discourse, revealing the dynamics of political mobilization and practices by the country's successive political actors. However, of all the different aspects of political discourse studied in Nigeria, political speeches seem to have enjoyed the greatest attention. The popularity of political speeches in Nigerian political discourse can be attributed to the fact that political speeches such as Independence Day speeches, inauguration speeches and campaign speeches all serve as useful platforms for the ventilation of the views of politicians on important national issues. Therefore, scholars have consistently researched into the speeches with a view to analyzing the ideologies of the politicians and the implications for the people while also revealing the linguistic and persuasive features of the speeches.

Political speeches in Nigerian political discourse can however be classified into two categories: pre-election speeches and post-election speeches. Pre-election speeches are, among others, manifestos, political debates and political rally speeches. Post-election speeches, however, focus on reactions to, and reflections on conducted elections and the political activities of elected politicians. Such speeches are victory speeches of winners of elections, legislative speeches, Independence Day speeches, New Year day speeches, budget speeches, inauguration speeches of politicians and concession or post-election defeat speeches. A survey of the literature on political speeches in Nigeria however shows that while the full range of pre-election speeches has been remarkably subjected to linguistic analysis, same hardly applies to post-election speeches. Although some post-election speeches such as legislative speeches, victory speeches, Independence Day speeches have been studied, post-election defeat-concession speeches have not enjoyed much significant linguistic analysis.

As stated earlier, post-election defeat speeches refer to the speeches of political candidates upon electoral defeat. Such speeches can also be referred to as concession speeches. However, the reality of the Nigerian situation is that some politicians upon losing elections do not concede victory but rather use language to show their resolve to challenge the victory of their opponents at the tribunal or condemn their loss and its circumstances outright. Nonetheless, whether such speeches are defeat or concession or post-election defeat/concession speeches, they constitute an equally important sub-genre of political discourse. This is because they contain the views and attitudes of politicians who lost elections which can be harnessed for the strengthening of the democratic processes in any nation. In fact, the perspectives expressed in such speeches are important in a developing democracy such as Nigeria's, fraught with post-election violence among other negative realities. Consequently, the insights provided into the views and attitudes of Nigerian political actors upon electoral loss can help to plan subsequent elections more successfully and forestall post-election crisis.

Therefore, this study is motivated by the need to carry out a linguistic analysis of post-election defeat-concession speeches of Nigerian political actors by paying attention to the evaluative component of the language of the speeches and the implications for political sustainability and growth in the country. The study seeks to unveil the patterns of language of evaluation in the speeches and relate such patterns to the personalities of the speech givers, their political maturity, the political contexts of the speeches and the Nigerian political culture.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The relationship between language and politics or political activities such as elections has been extensively studied by linguists. Scholars such as Beard (2000), Schaffner (2004), Opeibi (2009) have strongly maintained that there is an intricate relationship between language and politics. The relationship between the two is such that one influences the other, as it is impossible to do politics successfully without language, just as it is unavoidable for politics to shape language. Therefore, according to Adetunji (2006:177), "politics is thus a discursive domain, not just because it situates language in action but also because the action is contextualized". After all, it is a fact that language is usually contextual. The realization of the fact that language is crucially implicated in politics has made scholars from linguistic, semiotic and communication backgrounds to study how language is used in different domains of politics such as political debates, electoral campaigns, political interviews, political meetings, legislation and political occasions such as inauguration and transition ceremonies.

In Nigeria, scholars have thus researched into different aspects of the country's political discourse such as political speeches, political interviews, political advertisements, political cartoons and political campaigns (see Ayeomoni & Akinkuolere 2012; Ayoola 2005; Opeibi 2009; Ademilokun & Taiwo 2013; Ademilokun 2015, etc.).

It is also important to mention that political discourse studies in Nigeria have been approached from pragmatic perspective (Ayeomoni 2012; Aremu 2015), discourse-analytic perspective (Taiwo 2008; Asiyanbola 2008; Adedun & Atolagbe 2011; Ademilokun 2015), critical discourse analytic perspective (Ayoola 2005; Ademilokun & Taiwo 2013) and stylistic perspective (Oha 1994; Ayeomoni 2004; Adegoju 2005; Abuya 2012).

Since political speeches constitute the focus of this study, we consider it pertinent to show the state of literature on political speeches as an aspect of Nigerian political discourse. Political speeches delivered and studied in Nigeria over the years can be classified into two: political speeches delivered by political leaders in the various Republics that Nigeria has had since independence and the speeches of the military rulers who interfered in the politics of the country. Some of the earliest works on civilian political speeches in Nigeria are Akindele (1989) and Oladeji (1989). Interestingly however, both studies focus on the language of Chief Obafemi Awolowo (First Premier of Southwestern Nigeria), analyzing it from rhetorical and discourse perspectives.

Scholars have also worked on political speeches delivered in the aborted Third Republic. Typically, such studies revolve around the 1993 June 12 election in Nigeria which is still held sacrosanct in view of its free and fair nature. Specifically, Opeibi (2009) works on the speeches of the two major contestants in the presidential elections (Chief Abiola and Alhaji Bashir Tofa), analyzing the various linguistic features, some visual signifiers and their semantic imports in the discourse. He reports that diverse linguistic features and visual codes were deployed for communicative and persuasive effects in the speeches. Similarly, Adegoju (2005) works on speeches of M.K.O. Abiola, Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha, three notable figures caught in the web of the June 12 1993 political conflict, highlighting the various stylistic features in the speeches.

Scholars have also investigated and analysed political speeches produced in the fourth republic in Nigeria. There have been studies on President Obasanjo's speeches (see Yusuf 2003; Ayoola 2005; Taiwo 2008; Adedun & Atolagbe 2011; Ezeifeka 2013), on Late President Umaru Yar'adua speeches (Olaniyi 2007; Ayeomoni and Akinkurolere 2012) and also on the speeches of Dr Goodluck Jonathan (see Kamalu and Agangan 2011; Abuya 2012; Waya and Ogechukwu 2013).

Studies on political speeches in Nigeria are however not limited to civilian speeches as there are also works on the military speeches of the erstwhile military leaders of the country. Oha (1994) examines the war speeches of General Gowon and Colonel Ojukwu during the Biafran war, showing how language was used by the two leaders to motivate their people for the prosecution of the war. Ayeomoni (2007) also studies the lexical choices of some military heads of states of Nigeria. Alo and Igwebuike (2009) also study the coup speech of Major Kaduna Nzeogwu's speech of 1966 from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics, identifying different lexico-semantic and grammatical features in the speech.

The review of literature above shows that, in awareness of the intricate relationship between language and politics by scholars, a lot has been done on the language of different political contexts. More importantly, scholars have analyzed different aspects of Nigerian political discourse, most especially political speeches from various linguistic perspectives. However, in spite of the rich literature on Nigerian political speeches, one realizes that there is no research that is known of that focuses on post-election defeat concession speeches of Nigerian politicians, hence the significance of the present study. Furthermore, even though most studies have analyzed political speeches from different theoretical perspectives, the language of evaluation in political speeches has been largely neglected, as the appraisal theory is yet to be applied to the analysis of political speeches.

Appraisal theory has its roots in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) but it only focuses on the interpersonal function of language which is one of the three meta-functions of language espoused in SFL. According to De Souza (2006:531), "Appraisal theory is a framework developed in SFL for systematizing and investigating the construal of interpersonal meanings in texts". Therefore, following the submission of Martin and White (2005:1), appraisal theory allows for the investigation of the subjective presence of text producers in texts, revealing their stances towards the material in the text and those that they communicate with. White (2003) observes that appraisal theory is interested in the linguistic tools used by text producers to express, negotiate and naturalize certain inter-subjective and ideological positions. The theory enables one to gauge the feelings and dispositions of discourse producers towards the propositions expressed in their discourse and the personalities involved in the discourse.

According to Martin and White (2001), there are three components of appraisal theory: *attitude*, *engagement* and *graduation*. Martin and White (2006:35) describe the three domains of appraisal in the following words:

> Attitude is concerned with our feelings, including emotional reactions, judgments of behavior and evaluation of things. Engagement deals with sourcing attitudes and the play of voices around opinions in discourse. Graduation attends to grading phenomena whereby feelings are amplified and categories blurred.

Attitude is the first and major category in appraisal analysis. It is concerned with the way that text producers attach inter-subjective assessment to participants or processes in a speech event by reference to emotional reactions or cultural norms and etiquettes. Attitude itself is further divided into three: affect, judgement and appreciation. De Souza (2006:532) says "affect concerns linguistic resources speakers utilize for expressing their feelings in terms of their emotional states …." Martin and White (2005:42) also remark that "affect is concerned with registering positive or negative feelings". Therefore, affect simply deals with the expression of emotion.

Judgment is concerned with the proclamations or expression of attitudes towards behavior, which can be condemned, praised or criticized (Martin and White, 2005). De Souza (2006:532) states that judgment refers to "how speakers evaluate themselves and other people in terms of their character and social behavior in relation to culturally established sets of moral, legal and personal norms". Appreciation is however concerned with how linguistic resources are used by speakers to express positive or negative evaluations of entities or phenomena. According to Martin and White (2005:43), "appreciation involves the evaluations of semiotic and natural phenomena, according to the ways in which they are valued or not in a given field".

The second category of analysis in appraisal theory is engagement. According to Martin and White (2005:36), "engagement is concerned with the ways in which resources such as projection, modality, polarity, concession and various comment adverbials position the speaker/writer with respect to the value position being advanced and with respect to potential responses to that value position – by quoting or reporting, acknowledging a possibility, denying, countering, affirming and so on".

The third category of analysis in appraisal theory is graduation. According to Martin and White (2005:37), "graduation has to do with gradability… has to do with adjusting the degree of an evaluation – how strong or weak the feeling is." Some of the linguistic resources that were identified by Martin and White (2005) as capable of realizing graduation are intensification, comparative and superlative morphology, repetition and various graphological and phonological features.

Methodology

A qualitative method of data analysis is employed in this study. The data comprise post-election concession speeches of Senator Omisore, Dr. Fayemi and Mr. Agbaje, defeated candidates for gubernatorial elections in Osun, Ekiti and Lagos States in Southwestern Nigeria between 2014 and 2015. The data were purposively selected since the contestants specifically published the speeches as their post-election defeat speeches and were made available on the Internet. The speeches were accessed from the Internet and were closely read by the researcher. The speeches are labeled texts "A", "B" and "C" with Omisore's speech being "A", Fayemi's being "B" and Agbaje's speech being "C". Subsequently, the tools of appraisal theory were deployed in the analysis of the texts of the speeches. The analysis covers aspects of appraisal theory such as attitude, engagement and graduation.

Data Analysis

This section engages the appraisal resources in the speeches and the linguistic modes of activating them. The section begins with a consideration of the linguistic representation of "attitude" in the speeches.

As earlier indicated, *attitude* in appraisal analysis is concerned with utterances in a text or discourse which evaluate a person or an entity in a positive or negative light. Such assessment can be done through different linguistic resources and are also categorical into *affect*, *judgment* and *appreciation*. The speeches serving as the data for this study contain attitudinal evaluation in view of the fact that political aspirants who lost elections and produced the speeches used the opportunity provided by the speeches to express their feelings about the circumstances of their losses, assessing their fans, political opponents and the electoral umpire in their linguistic construction. In what follows, our analysis of the attitudinal meanings in the speeches is done in the ambits of the various layers of attitudinal meaning as enunciated in Appraisal Theory: *affect*, *judgment* and *appreciation*.

Affectual Meanings in the Post-Election Defeat-Concession Speeches

As indicated earlier, a*ffect* is the linguistic term in appraisal analysis that captures the expression of the feelings of a speaker/writer in relation to a particular subject matter or emotional trigger through the use of linguistic resources. *Affect* is a resource that is used by text producers to present themselves in certain emotional lights and create solidarity between themselves and their listeners. *Affect* is generally realized by adjectives, verbal elements infused with attitudinal meanings (dislike, appeal etc.), comment adjuncts (happily, eagerly etc) and nominalizations (love, liking, etc.). A close reading of the selected post-election defeat speeches indicates that the defeated political aspirants could not conceal their emotions in the speeches as the speeches were laden with affectual meanings. The affectual meanings in the speeches were conveyed through various linguistic features such as adjectives, verbal elements infused with attitudinal meanings and comment adjuncts. Some significant examples are provided below:

(1) …we *shared* the daily experiences of a people *traumatized* and
   fervently … (A)
(2) … we *congratulate* all the gladiators in this effort. (A)
(3) The best man does not always win (A)
(4) …I *thank* you for listening. (B)
(5) … We are *proud* that with the support of the people…(B)
(6) …God bless the *land of honour*. (B)
(7) …Our *great* state (C)
(8) …*may God continue to bless* the people of Lagos (C)
(9) …My wife, I *couldn't have done this without* you. (C)
(10)   …I *sincerely thank* you. (C)

A close look at the texts above shows that there are instances of linguistic construction of *affect* in all the speeches even though such instances may not be many. While the words "shared", "congratulate", "thank", "couldn't have done this" in the various texts are all verbal expressions infused with affectual meanings, "proud", "great" and "traumatized" are adjectives used to express *affect* in the speeches. It is discernible from the texts that some of the expressions are consolatory as the gubernatorial aspirants in the various states tried to motivate themselves and their supporters as can be seen in texts 1, 2, 3 and 5. The consolatory nature of the speeches clearly manifests in text 3 "the best man does not always win". The expression produced by Chief Omisore, aspirant for the 2014 gubernatorial elections in Osun State of Nigeria was used by the politician to present him-self in a good light, suggesting that he lost not because he was not competent enough.

Some of the affectual words or expressions in the speeches were also used to create some bonding with the electorate or the people generally. In consciousness of the fact that politics is a venture that requires the support of people, the defeated political aspirants in spite of their defeats consciously showed positive affect towards their supporter and, in many instances, the states that they aspired to govern. Texts 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 all exemplify the tactful and mature deployment of language by the defeated gubernatorial aspirants to sustain the interest of their political followers or sympathizers in their political goals or ambitions, as the examples portray the speakers as polite and decorous individuals who brought in the spirit of sportsmanship into their political pursuits. Such linguistic deployments are particularly significant in the Nigerian context with a long history of post-election violence, where defeated politicians resort to arson and other notorious activities. In fact, the delivery of concession speeches by the politicians can be considered a reflection of their growing maturity as many politicians in the past would never concede to defeat. Therefore, the affectual expressions can be said to mark out the speech givers as progressives and can even increase the public's sympathy for them.

Expression of Judgment in the Speeches

The data for this study reveals that there are meanings which evaluate human behavior positively and negatively in the speeches. This is what is referred to as *judgment* in appraisal analysis and it involves assessing human actions against certain institutional or ethical norms. In the context of the post-election speeches, the meanings pertaining to *judgment* relate to the defeated political aspirants' evaluation of the political actors involved in their electoral contest experience; for example, their party leaders, people involved in the conduct of the elections, their political opponents, the electorate, among others. In the speeches, there were instances of positive and negative *judgments* expressed through different linguistic features and structures such as adverbials, adjectives, nominal expressions and verbs. Below are some significant examples of expressions with the value of *judgment* in the speeches:

11. …we presented our 8 cardinal programmes with *clear indicators..* (A)
12. They bore *with courage and hope*, the scars of neglect. (A)
13. We were *bold* (A)
14. everyone was *awesome* (A)
15. I remain a *democratic* to the core (A)
16. .. a *clearly partisan REC* (A)
17. The citizens and stakeholders *have heeded our call for a non-violent electoral process* (A)
18. We have *raised the bar of excellence* in governance (B)
19. We *gave our best* (B)
20. We presented our scorecards to you; we *never at any time took you for granted* (B)
21. We have *fought* a good fight; we *have kept faith*. (B
22. I salute your courage and doggedness (B)
23. The *incidences of brazen harassment, intimidation and allied infractions on fundamental human rights*, which many of you suffered… (B)
24. *Your extraordinary work* gave us more than a fighting change (C)
25. You can *hold your heads high* (C)

A look at the above instances of *judgment* in the speeches shows that the speeches are replete with expressions with the value of *judgment.* However, it is interesting to note that even though there are instances of negative *judgment* in the speeches, positive *judgments* dominate the speeches. This shows a great improvement in the maturity of Nigerian politicians and also portrays the politicians who produced the speeches in a positive light. Just as we noted when discussing *affect*, it is apparent that the speakers consciously used *judgment* to deepen their bonding with their political supporters as can be seen in texts 12, 14, 17, 24 and 25 above. The texts are all positive *judgments* of the behaviors of the electorate and the political supporters of the gubernatorial aspirants. Such texts and others such as 19 and 20 were also used to make the political supporters of the defeated candidates not to be demoralized but consider themselves as gallant losers who should not be ashamed of their loss.

Many examples of the expressions laden with positive *judgment* were also used by the defeated politicians to praise themselves and show to the people that they deserved the support they received from them. Texts 13 and 15 by Chief Omisore are examples of self-praise just as texts 18, 19 and 20 were used by Dr. Kayode Fayemi, a defeated incumbent governor of Ekiti State of Nigeria, to score himself and his team highly.

Appreciation in the Speeches

As indicated above, 'appreciations are interpersonal resources utilized by speakers for expressing positive and negative evaluations of entities, processes and natural phenomena' (de Souza 2006:532). Appreciation as a technical term in appraisal analysis refers to the way by which human feelings toward products, processes and entities are evaluated.

There are few instances of appreciation in the speeches which the producers of the speeches used to react to different matters and processes regarding their political pursuits. Below are instances of appreciation in the speeches:

> 26. I am deeply *appreciative of the protection* achieved in both lives and properties (A)
> 27. Our campaign strategies have been *unique* … engaging everyone in each nook and cranny (A)
> 28. It has been *a hard-fought election* (B)

It is apparent from the data presented above that there are only few instances of *appreciation* as an appraisal resource in the post-election defeat-concession speeches. It shows that the speakers do not have much to say regarding the processes leading to their electoral loss as they did regarding the persons carrying out the processes which they evaluated using *judgment*. Therefore, one can surmise that since politics is a human activity, the speakers reacted to the human agency of it more than the non-human. However, even the few instances of appreciation in the speeches show the maturity of the speakers as most of the expressions are positive appreciations. Text 26 is a plain positive evaluation of the security provided during the election which forestalled any breakdown of law and order. In a developing democracy such as Nigeria where people often resort to violence during elections and after losing elections, it is commendable for lives and properties to remain intact owing to the adequate security arrangement. More interesting is the fact that it was noted by a strong defeated aspirant such as Chief Omisore, thus sending a signal to the touts who often hijack such situations that such barbaric practice would not be tolerated. Texts 27 and 28 were both used to give a positive evaluation of the campaign mechanisms and electoral participation of the respective speakers, confirming legitimacy on the electoral outcomes by asserting that the campaigns and the elections manifested the features of a keenly contested election.

Engagement Strategies in the Speeches

Since the speeches focus on various issues, certain linguistic resources were used by the speakers to relate their propositions to the views of their putative addressees or existing views generally. Below, we examine the various linguistic/discursive modes of activation of engagement in the speeches.

The Use of Bare or Categorical Assertions

The data reveals that there is a prevalent use of mono-glossic resources by the speakers, as categorical assertions were generally made by the speakers in order to construe their stances. Many of the expressions in the speeches are bare assertions that present the authorial voice without reference to any external voice, thus presenting the propositions in the expressions as unilateral without any "dialogistic alternative which need to be recognized or engaged with" (Martin & White, 2005:99). Below are examples of bare assertions in the speeches:

> 29. Our campaign strategies have been unique (A)
> 30. We presented our 8 cardinal programmes with clear indicators to allow everyone to hold us to account on what we said we shall achieve in four years (A)
> 31. The best man does not always win, but a winner emerges (A).
> 32. Our abiding guide is that Osun State must not be governed in the old days anymore, and August 9 has given the demography of the change-seeking people (A)
> 33. Yesterday, Ekiti State decided. (B)
> 34. It has been a hard-fought election (B)
> 35. Elections tend to be highly divisive affairs that often see brother rising against brother (B)
> 36. Our performance and achievements will remain the backdrop against which the next government and indeed future governments will be assessed (B).
> I believe in Lagos (C)

All the instances of mono-glossic resources given above are strong declarative statements that present only the voice of the text producer without reference to any external voice. The speakers present the propositions in the expressions as facts and personal opinions without thinking that the reader may hold a different opinion. Therefore, it is evident from the examples above that the defeated gubernatorial aspirants were strongly aligned with the propositions in the declaratives and intended that the putative addressees should view the propositions the way he viewed them.

The Use of Dialogic Contraction

According to Martin & White (2005:117), dialogic contraction involves the limiting of the dialogic space in a discourse by its producer rather than opening it up. This occurs in heteroglossic selections in speeches where the speakers establish dialogistical positioning in relation to the content of their expressions.

Within this category of engagement consisting of *disclaim* and *proclaim*, *proclaim* is the most dominant in the speeches for this study. According to Martin & White (2005:98), *proclaim* represents a proposition "as highly warrantable (compelling, valid, plausible, well-founded, generally agreed, reliable, etc.), the textual voice sets itself against, suppresses or rules out alternative positions". In this regard, the speakers used factual expressions. Consider the following instances of *proclaim* in the data:

37. *It did not escape our notice* that many of the everyday people in our towns and villages….. valued our presence. (A)

38. We collectively with the citizens and people of Osun State will sustain the rescue mission from a campaign to *what I note* it has become, a socio-political movement for positive change in Osun State. (A)

39. *I stand tall to assure them* that their efforts will not be in vain. (A)

40. *Let it be known* that our people will no longer be taken for granted. (A)

41. *I restate* my undaunted support for the people of Osun State… (A)

42. *I must not end this without* thanking the President … for the unalloyed support given to us. (A)

43. *As expected*, in the course of the campaigns, there were unsavory episodes … (B)

44. We *must* remember that we are all sons and daughters of Ekiti State. (B)

45. We *must* all heed your voice. (B)

46. *It would be unfair* not to stop by here to thank all of you… (C)

47. *We have an obligation* to ensure that Lagos continues to be inclusive … (C)

A close look at the underlined expressions in the texts above shows that they are used by the various speakers to construe perspectives about the propositions in the texts. For example, "it did not escape our notice" and "let it be known" both contract the dialogic space for alternative perspectives in the various sentences because they confirm the importance of the contents of the propositions in the sentences. While the former establishes the view that the defeated gubernatorial contestant, Iyiola Omisore, recognized the appreciation and love of the electorate for him and his party, which he presents as uncontestable, in the latter, he used the type of *proclaim* known as *pronounce* to present his proposition that the electorate would be highly valued and respected. Being a politician who recognizes the importance of people in electoral pursuits, he convinces them through the expression that the alternative to his proposition stands little or no chance of actualization through the contractive expression.

While most of the instances of *proclaim* listed above are *pronounce*, the one in text 43 is clearly a case of *concur,* which is used to contract the dialogic manifestations of the proposition in the text. It is remarkable that most of the instances of *pronounce* in the texts are positive except for text 43. The instances of *pronounce* are positive in the sense that they appeal positively to the putative audience, imbuing them with confidence in spite of the electoral losses of their leaders and convincing them that the speakers meant the propositions in their texts. The instances of *pronounce* in the speeches were also strategically used by the speakers to present themselves as strongly committed to the value positions in the propositions.

The Use of Dialogic Expansion

According to Martin & White (2005:102), dialogic expansion is concerned with a locution or an expression making allowances "for dialogically alternative positions and voices". The appraisal resources of dialogic expansion are *entertain* and *attribute*. There are few instances of *entertain* in the data. *Entertain* is an appraisal resource which according to Martin & White (2005:98) presents "the proposition as grounded in its own contingent, individual subjectivity, the authorial voice represents the proposition as but one of a range of possible solutions". Consider the texts below:

48. *If indeed this is the will of the Ekiti People*, I stand in deference to your will. (B)
49. Indeed a new sociology of the Ekiti people *may* have evolved. (B)

In text 48, there is the presentation of a value position in respect of the outcome of the gubernatorial elections in Ekiti State in 2014 which saw the loss of the speaker. The speaker states that he respects the will of the people in voting his opponent into power, but gives room to another possibility that the election might have been rigged against him and even many other possibilities through the expression "If indeed this is the will of the Ekiti people". The conditional word, "if", and "indeed" vividly emphasize the ambivalence of the speaker regarding his perspective on his electoral loss and how he wishes his listeners to view the outcome of the election. Text 49 presents a situation in which a modal verb is used to entertain alternative viewpoints. The authorial voice through the modal verb "may" opens up diverse semantic possibilities about the outcome of the elections in the State which did not favor the speaker. While one may view it against the general noise about "stomach infrastructure" (voting induced by vote-seekers through financial and material means), and some may view it as a statement of the people about their expectations of their political leaders. Therefore, multiple meanings about the proposition are generated by the modal in the expression.

It is also remarkable that *attribute* also features in the data as an engagement strategy even though it does not have a dominant presence. *Attribute* is a resource used to expand a dialogic space by representing a proposition as one of a range of possible solutions through the representation of the proposition as based on the subjectivity of an external voice (Martin & White 2005:98). Below are examples of *attribute* in the data:

50. *As aptly put by Sam Omatseye in the Nation of Monday August 11, 2014*:It is an APC victory but it is not time to gloat. The PDP was not crushed…
51. As we trudge on in the task ahead of building our state, *I take solace in the words of Theodore Roosevelt*: It is not the critic who counts;… the credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena….

Texts 50 and 51 above contain *engagement* resources produced by Chief Omisore, contestant for the position of Governor in Osun State of Nigeria. The speaker through the texts was trying to encourage himself and his supporters about their participation in the elections despite his loss. However, rather than state that by himself alone, he cited authorities who had spoken on that in the past. Since both Sam Omatseye and Theodore Roosevelt are important figures whose opinions would influence many people, Chief Omisore intentionally referred to them to open up dialogues about the participation of his party and himself in the elections and whether he could be said to have been successful or not despite his electoral loss. In Nigeria, Omatseye is a popular preacher and motivational speaker who has carved a niche for himself in the public sphere just as Theodore Roosevelt was a world leader whose opinions are evergreen. Therefore, the putative addressees are expected to engage with the views of the two cited personalities. Both examples of attribute fall under acknowledge as given by Martins and White because they are mainly acknowledgements of the views of such individuals in relation to the electoral experiences of the defeated gubernatorial contestants.

Linguistic Realization of Graduation in the Speeches

Graduation, which is a major sub-system of appraisal meanings, is also realized in the speeches analyzed in this study. According to Martin & White (2005), *graduation* is mainly concerned with the upscaling and downscaling of propositions, intended to show the extent of the investment of a communicator in the locutions he makes. The various lexico-grammatical resources used to activate graduation in human communication such as adjectives, adverbs (pre and post-modifiers), repetitions, and metaphors are generally used to sharpen the focus or amplify the force of a value in such communication. Below, we consider the nature of *graduation* in the speeches.

The Use of Pre-Modifiers

Pre-modifiers were used to intensify the values being communicated in different portions of the data. Pre-modifiers as intensifiers are mainly used to "graduate" the force of an utterance (Martin & White, 2005:94). Therefore, they are used by speakers and writers to portray themselves as strongly aligned or otherwise to the value position they put forward. Below are instances of pre-modifiers in the data:

> 52.…*immense* sacrifice (C)
> 53…*deeply* appreciative (A)
> 54…*clear* indicators (A)
> 55…*extreme* poverty (A)
> 56…*excruciating* suffering (A)
> 57…*clearly* partisan (A)
> 58…*huge* potentials (A)
> 59…*exemplary* courage (A)
> 60…*brazen* harassment (A)

The use of the pre-modifiers in the expressions above was intended to reflect the perspectives of the speakers in relation to the matters being talked about. Depending on the proposition being modified, the modifiers present positive or negative evaluation. Since the speeches were delivered by persons who lost elections, the modifiers were clearly used to indicate positive and negative evaluations. The positive evaluations mainly dwell on the participation of the electorate captured by pre-modifiers such as "immense", "deeply", "clear", "huge" and "exemplary" and their various linguistic contexts, and are a mark of maturity of the politicians who in spite of their electoral defeats still saw positive things to cheer, most especially about their supporters.

The remaining pre-modifiers ("extreme", "excruciating", "clearly", "brazen") alongside their linguistic contexts were used by the speakers to chastise their political opponents and criticize the electoral process that culminated into their loss. This is not unexpected of participants in a growing democracy such as Nigeria where some negative realities still exist. The pre-modifiers were thus strategically used for intensification of the ugly realities with the rhetorical effect of conditioning the people to reflect on their conditions and exercise restraints in accepting the new government and the election results in a subtle manner. Ultimately, through the deployment of the pre-modifiers, the speakers were trying to make the audience to sympathize with their own views.

The Use of Superlative Adjectives and Intensifiers

Superlative adjectives and intensifiers were also used in the speeches to heighten the force of the propositions being expressed by the speakers. Below are instances of such usage:

> 61…*greatest* honour (C)
> 62…The outcomes of the polls assert this *firmly* (A)
> 63…The positive change we fought for has *indeed* started (A)
> 64…Our supporters still fought *gallantly* (A)
> 65…I remain a democrat *to the core* (A)

The underlined items were used to convey the intensity of the commitment of the speakers to the propositions in the various expressions. It is remarkable that the intensifiers and superlative adjective were used to portray the speakers in a positive light to the electorate by heightening the positive evaluations of the efforts of the speakers and his supporters in the pursuit of the lost elections. The superlative adjective, "greatest", as used in text 61 was meant to portray the speaker as a very humble and mature person who accepts the result of the election in good fate despite his loss just as "gallantly" was used to intensify the appreciation of the other speaker for the people over their support for him. "Firmly" and "indeed" were strategically used by the speaker to convince the people that despite the loss, his efforts and those of his supporters were really worth it, thus strongly making the people to jettison any feelings of regret about the outcome of the result. The adverbial "to the core" conveys a strong meaning about the commitment of the defeated politician to democratic ideals, thus establishing that anti-democratic practices would not be adopted in challenging the outcome of the election.

Repetition as a Linguistic Resource for Graduation

There are also few but significant instances of realization of graduation through repetition in the data. Repetition generally serves the purpose of emphasis in human communication used to heighten the force of any locution being made. Consider the following instances of repetition for the purpose of up-scaling in the speeches:

> 66… It has been a hard-fought election; *we campaigned, we canvassed and we tranversed* (A)
> 67…The incidences of *brazen harassment, intimidation and allied infractions on fundamental human rights* will be documented and reported… (B)

The two examples above show that the speakers were conscious of the resourcefulness of repetition in amplifying the meanings they intended to communicate. Through the repetition in text 66, the speaker was able to emphasize that he and his team did everything humanly possible to achieve success in the election. This was a way by which he sought to convince the people that he never took them for granted and that he did not lose the election due to negligence. Therefore, the repetition was strategically deployed to achieve positive self-evaluation by the speaker. The other example is no doubt a case of negative evaluation by the speaker, Kayode Fayemi, defeated former Governor of Ekiti State. Just as in the first instance of repetition, the words are not similar but an idea is repeated in the various words/expressions. "Brazen harassment", "intimidation" and "allied infractions on fundamental human rights" are all similar in meaning, but the repetition is used to heighted the force of the meaning being communicated by the speaker about the ill-treatment he and his supporters received from the ruling political party at that time, the People's Democratic Party, on the eve of the election. Through such linguistic deployment, he tries to cause the people to subtly rebel against the incoming government while lobbying the people for sympathy for himself.

Figurative Realization of Intensification in the Speeches

According to Martin & White (2005:147), figurative meanings are also employed in the intensification of the propositions being expressed by speakers. Such figurative meanings as identified by the scholars are simile and metaphor but based on our interaction with the data; we suggest the addition of hyperbole into such category of figurative signifiers. Below are the few instances of figurative expressions used the amplification of meaning in the speeches:

> 68. In the course of our *house to house outreach* … (A)
> 69. Our campaign strategy and approach have been unique, taking
> us to *every corner* of this state… (A)
> 70. … engaging everyone in *each nook and cranny* (A)
> 71. I must not end without thanking …Dr Jonathan and the
> leadership of the party for the *unalloyed support* given to us… (A)
> 72. Your intellect, passion and motivation *kept the engines
> running* (C).

All the highlighted portions of the texts fall under the graduation component of appraisal theory. However, unlike the previous instances of appraisal, the amplification in them is presented in a figurative manner, as the speakers used hyperbole and metaphor to give intensity to the ideas they were expressing. The expression "house to house outreach" is no doubt hyperbolic as Chief Omisore did not visit all houses in Osun State during his campaigns even though he tried to reach different places.

However, the hyperbolic expression was intended to intensify the message that the speaker was conveying that he left no stone unturned in his bid to emerge as Governor of Osun State. The expressions "every corner" and "each nook and cranny" in texts 69 and 70 are metaphorical expressions used to convey the idea of everywhere in a place or an environment. Therefore, through the expressions, the speaker was still amplifying the meaning that he did all he could do during the campaigns in order to be successful at the election. "Unalloyed support" and "kept the engines running" in texts 71 and 72 are metaphorical expressions used to heighten the force of the values being expressed in the texts. By using unalloyed support" instead of "support" the speaker was positively presenting the people he acknowledged as having contributed to the success he achieved despite the electoral defeat suffered. Similarly, by saying "kept the engine running" instead of using a plain language, the speaker was intentionally drawing attention to the positive effects of the public's support for him.

Conclusion

This paper has dwelled on the analysis of the evaluative component of the language of defeated gubernatorial aspirants in Southwestern Nigeria in their concession speeches paying attention to the layers of appraisal analysis manifest in the speeches. Under the attitude component of appraisal, there were meanings relating to *affect*, *judgment* and *appreciation* in the speeches. The affectual meanings were mainly used by the speakers to create or deepen their bonding with the electorate who voted for them and possibly others who did not, as the lexical resources mainly infused with affectual meanings showed the positive feelings of the speakers toward the electorate regarding their electoral contests. Similarly, many affectual expressions in the data were used for the purpose of self-consolation and the consolation of supporters by the speakers, showing maturity on the part of the speakers.

The paper further reveals that *judgment* featured prominently as an appraisal resource in the speeches. Generally, there were more instances of positive *judgment,* especially of supporters and the electorate and of the political contestants themselves, consoling the political actors in spite of the defeats and engendering peaceful reactions to the election results. It is interesting that *appreciation* did not feature as much as *judgment* in the speeches, showing that the speakers focused more on the actors and participants in the electoral processes than the processes themselves.

The paper also shows that mono-glossic expressions were predominantly used in the discourse to present facts as gospel to the audience, while even though different hetero-glossic elements were used, *proclaim* was the most dominant, through which the speakers still attempted to limit contestations of the information they provided in their utterances. The few instances of *entertain* were used to stir the thought of the people about the outcome of the election in which the speaker lost, with a view to making them think on whether the result of the election was actually correct.

Therefore, *entertain* was technically used to elicit the sympathy of the public by the defeated gubernatorial aspirant who deployed it. Attribution was used in the speeches for the purpose of self-consolation and obtaining public sympathy as the speaker quoted certain authorities to affirm that despite the electoral defeat, the efforts of the contestants should be highly commended.

The paper reveals further that linguistic resources such as pre-modifiers, superlative adjectives and intensifiers, repetition and figurative expressions were used by the speakers for the purpose of up-scaling the force of the values in their propositions. Also, most of the instances of graduation in the speeches were positive.

The paper concludes that much as the culture of electoral defeat-concession speeches is recent in Nigeria and can be attributed to increasing maturity of the political actors in the political space in Nigeria, the evaluative language of the subjects of this study show maturity and positivity in their attitudes and stances to their electoral defeats. The different appraisal resources used by the speakers bear political maturity even though there is still some level of political protestation expected of politicians who lost out in electoral contests.

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