Rhetoric Performativities of Pronouns: A Reading of Campaign Speeches

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Abstract

This study examined rhetorical performativities of pronouns; a reading of campaign speeches of Bola Ahmed Tinubu (Nigeria) and Joe Biden (United States of America). The paper organized in segments including introduction, statement of the problem, conceptual review, method, discussion and conclusion. The main focus of the study is on determining whom the two presidents refer to when they use the pronouns *I*, *you* and *we* and to compare the differences in pronominal usage by the two presidents. The results suggest that the pronominal choices of the presidents do not differ significantly. The results also indicate that the pronoun *I* is used when the speaker wants to speak as an individual rather than as a representative of a group. *You* is used both as generic pronoun as well as in a particular sense. The pronoun *we* is used to invoke a sense of collectivity and to share responsibility, referring to the campaigner and the audience/people. Overall, it is important to note that the choices of pronoun and whom the pronouns refer to vary greatly depending on the context of the speech.

Keywords: Rhetoric, Performativities, Pronoun, Campaign Speeches

Introduction

Pronouns are used in place of nouns. They are used first and foremost as a way for the speaker or writer to avoid being repetitive, by not having to repeat the same words again and again. A singular pronoun is used to refer to a singular noun and a plural pronoun is used to refer to a plural noun. The personal pronouns are used to refer to people or things that the speaker is talking to, or talking about and they can be used as a way for him to refer to himself. There are subject pronoun, object pronoun, possessive pronouns, possessive adjective, and reflexive pronoun. Subject pronouns are used as subjects of the sentences, such as I, You, She, He, It, We, They. Object pronouns are me, you, her, him, it, us, them. Possessive pronouns are mine, yours, hers, his, its, ours, yours, theirs. Possessive adjectives are my, your, her, his, its, our, their. Reflexive pronouns are myself, yourself, himself, herself, yourselves, ourselves, themselves.

In verbal communication, appropriate use of personal pronouns by a speaker in a specific context is able to produce a desirable impact on the audience (Wahyuningsih, 2018). The term 'personal' is used to label the pronoun class to which the grammatical category of a person applies (Bhattacharyya, 2015). Personal pronouns are one of the rhetorical devices (Alemi, Latifi & Nematzadeh, 2018) used to persuade audiences of political speeches. Political speeches are talks that border on social, economic or political issues and are delivered by government officials and their agents or by candidates contesting political posts in a given forum. The major purposes of political speeches include but not limited to informing, convincing, confusing of the opposition party, the general public or the electorates on matters of public concerns (Obiora et al., 2021). As such, political speeches are laden with persuasion, exhibition of power, ideology, emotion, and excitement with the intention to achieving a goal.

Making speeches is the way leading politicians convey information and opinions to the people, and computers and TV have undoubtedly made it easier for the citizens (and other people across the world) to access those speeches. These days, although the audience is a key part of political speeches, the real audience is the millions of people reading the speeches in the newspapers, listening to them on the radio or watching them on TV. The speeches are usually written in advance for the speakers by professional speechwriters. Not very many

political speeches are transmitted as wholes. Instead, only highlights of the speeches are broadcasted; the highlights are sometimes referred to as sound bites. Experts always consciously choose the sound bites in advance.

While listening to or reading speeches, we might not reflect on or even notice the use of personal pronouns. Personal pronouns make up a big part of political speeches, because they can give an idea of whom the speaker in question identifies with. The pronominal choices in political speeches are also interesting because they make an important influence to the overall effect (Beard in Hakansson, 2012). Politicians present themselves as being able to identify with the wants, interests and needs of the audience. They present themselves in that way to be perceived as good politicians i.e. suitable leaders of the nation. The way politicians present themselves in their speeches, by referring to themselves, their audience and also their opposition can successfully be used to persuade the audience to agree with them. When giving speeches, politicians have a tendency to present the positive aspects of themselves and the negative aspects of their opponents. And one way of achieving this is by intentionally using specific personal pronouns, which refer to themselves or others.

Statement of the Problem

Generally speaking, written or spoken language incorporate messages that the speaker or writer intends to convey to his audience. As much as they can be explicit, these messages are also implicit. To this understanding, several scholars across varying studies have tried to analyze and interprete the linguistic formations in speeches and their socio-political perspectives from different critical visions. However, the problem remains that while many scholars have attempted to examine the linguistic features of campaign speeches while looking at hyperbole, repetition, metonymic and metaphorical processes from Paul Grice, Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson's concepts of implicature in Relevance theory, Speech Acts theories (especially John Langslaw Austin and John Searle), Levinson's concept of Presumptive Meanings, and Jurgen Habermas' Universal Pragmatics in Pragmatics, fewer or no studies have considered the rhetorical use of pronouns in political speeches.

The mastery of rhetorical skills demonstrates a politician’s ability to move the hearts of others or motivate attitude change. A favourable outcome of a

persuasive political speech might make a huge difference for the nation and even internationally. However, there are certain factors to consider when choosing the most appropriate persuasive technique to be used in a speech. Cultural differences are one important aspect to consider in persuasion. This brings up the question of how political leaders should go about persuading an audience from a specific culture or an audience of diverse cultures. Therefore, it is important to investigate the rhetorical use of personal pronouns in political speeches of leaders from collectivist and individualist cultures to ensure effective persuasion. When used effectively, political leaders will be able to appeal better to their people.

Conceptual Review

In this review, the paper examines the concepts of rhetoric, speeches in political discourse, and personal pronouns as rhetoric.

Rhetoric

Rhetoric can be defined as the art of effective speaking, or of persuasion through words. The word "rhetoric" can also refer to the study of the various techniques of such art, and that is why it can be described both as an art and a science. Duplicity has marked the history of rhetoric since its beginning. In fact, over the years two different connotations, running parallel to one another, have determined the glory and misery of this art. One is positive or neutral, as it focuses on the power of words to make an argument persuasive, or to strengthen substance through form. The other is negative, focusing on the power of words to hide the lack of (good) substance through form, considering rhetoric as a toolbox of manipulation, demagogy and empty talk. In short, rhetoric can be both the art of persuasion and of manipulation and deception, where the difference between the two is a matter of intentions or epistemic validity. The study and practice of rhetoric have been accompanied by debate on its ambiguity ever since.

Etymologically, rhetoric is one of the advanced products of Greek civilization (Bitonti & Trupia, 2021). Even if Homer's poems already talked of the beautiful speeches of several heroes, the origins of rhetoric are conventionally traced in the fifth century BCE in Magna Graecia, and specifically in

Sicily. After the fall of the tyrants, many citizens in Syracuse discovered they had to reclaim their lands because those had been confiscated and given to mercenary soldiers in lieu of pay. To

regain these stolen goods they had to resort to courts and to use the art of words in trials,

thus attesting for the first time the pragmatic nature of rhetoric, which soon became known as the art of persuasion. In fact, the word's etymology itself leads us to the Greek *rhêtorikḕ téchnê*, the art of rhetoric), referring to the figure of the *rhetor*, the "orator" or "speaker," a word deriving from the verb *eírō*, which means "to speak, say, tell."

The most famous speaker during the period of the tyrants was a man called Corax who, together with his pupil Tisias (according to some interpretations they could be the same person though), is considered one of the founders of rhetoric (Hinks, 1940). They developed the principle behind the art of persuasion: what seems true can be more important than what is true. This prompted a debate about the best way to make something seem true; strategies to either boost an orator's natural skills or train a speaker who lacks them. A few key concepts began to emerge, such as:

- *The doxa*: the opinion, something that can be transformed and manipulated.
- *The eikos*: the probable premise or plausible argument, which provides an opportunity to base a line of reasoning on one of the possible visions of reality, and not on its univocal interpretation
- *The kairos*: the opportune time, which focuses on modulating a speech depending on where and when it is delivered
- *The polytropos*: the ability to adapt a speech to whom it addresses

The ground for the diffusion of eloquence was already prepared in the previous century, especially by Solon, who governed Athens in the sixth century BCE. With his reforms of the tribunals system, every citizen was allowed to appeal to courts and to speak in favor of a victim during a trial. This led to the creation of the profession of the logographer, a job that today we would call "speechwriter." These individuals wrote legal speeches for those unable to compose them themselves; - a proof that ghost writers have existed for a long time.

The first scientific treaty on rhetoric (that we know of) is by Aristotle (c. 384–322 BCE) with his Rhetoric, where rhetoric is considered a techné, art and body of techniques, specular to dialectics (where the former is the study of persuasive speaking and the latter is the study of ideas). Differently from Plato, who condemned rhetoric (judging dialectics the only admissible method of acquisition of

knowledge, see section below), Aristotle assigned dignity to rhetoric, as a method of reasoning based on plausibility, systematizing the juxtaposition between what is true and what seems or is likely true. He admits that an argument cannot always be based on premises that are true or can be demonstrated as true; in many disciplines one has to argue using elements "based on opinion accepted by everyone, or by the majority, or by the wise" (Aristotele, Organon, Topics). Aristotle thus "democratises" the possibilities to reason, assigning a value to opinions and thus to the art of rhetoric that deploys the strategies required to influence or shape them.

In addition to the syllogism, considered as a method of demonstration relying on the reasoning deriving from the premise of true elements, he acknowledges a function for the (enthymeme), also known as rhetorical syllogism, which refers to an argumentation where the reasoning originates from premises that are not necessarily true but instead only probable and based on opinion. Correspondingly, whereas the dialectic relies on induction, rhetoric relies on examples. Furthermore, Aristotle identifies the strategies of persuasion applicable to any subject: "Rhetoric is the faculty of discovering all of the available means of persuasion in any particular case" (Rhetoric, Book 1). It is a transversal toolbox because it can be applied to any discipline. However, the power of persuasion works according to some specific strategies. In particular, Aristotle highlights the importance of:

- *The ethos*: that is the speaker's character, the credibility that makes his words convincing or worth to be listened
- *The pathos*: that is the trigger of the emotions of the listeners
- *The logos*: that is the rational concatenation of the arguments linked to the "truth or what appears to be true" (Rhetoric, Book 1)

Interestingly enough, many of Aristotle's insights will resist in the centuries, and will be re-taken or confirmed by various studies of modern times, with a renewed interest and a "new scientific rhetoric" emerging in the 1950s thanks to the contribution of psychologists and neuroscientists (Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953).

The Canons of Rhetoric and the Parts of a Speech

The rules of rhetoric can be (and have actually been) applied to many different genres of speech. If Aristotle in his Rhetoric distinguished the three genres of judiciary

(to use in courts), epideictic (to praise or deprecate someone or something), and deliberative orations (to discuss political and legislative matters), many other specific types of speech have in history represented examples of uses of rhetoric. For instance, one can think of funeral speeches (such as Pericles' oration in Athens, as reported by Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War, or Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address), war speeches (used to declare a war or to encourage one's troops), inaugural speeches for Heads of State or Government beginning their office, electoral speeches for candidates during electoral campaigns, concession speeches by the losers of an electoral competition, as well as wedding speeches, farewell speeches, and many others.

Regardless of the specific context, a classical model of oration has been developed in time, with five canons (rules, activities) to respect in creating an oration, and with different parts composing an oration itself. These models have been developed in ancient times between Greece and Rome, in books such as the Rhetorica ad Herennium (the oldest Latin book on rhetoric, attributed to Cornificius, written around 86 BCE), Cicero's De Inventione (c. 84 BCE) and De Oratore (55–54 BCE), and Quintilian's Institutio Oratoria (90–96 CE). The five canons used to prepare an ideal speech are:

- The *inventio* (invention, discovery), that is the process of coming up with the best arguments to make the speaker's idea persuasive.
- The *dispositio* (arrangement), that is the process of ordering the material in a text so as to take the people in the audience by hand and accompany them on a journey.
- The *elocutio* (choice of style), which involves the choice of the words and of the rhetorical figures that bring the ideas to life. These figures are also called lights of the speech or thunders in the night, because they are moments of emotion or revelation for the audience.
- The *memoria* (memory) that involves committing a text to memory, in order to be able to "master" it in front of the audience.
- The *actio* (delivery), which involves the actual performance of speaking, including body language, intonation, breathing, rhythm, and management of space.

Moreover, inside a single oration one can enucleate different parts or sections. They typically include:

- The *exhordium*, the beginning of the speech that aims to introduce oneself and to catch the attention of the audience, stimulating its good disposition.
- The *narratio*, where the object of the speech is introduced or explained.
- The *partitio*, that aims to illustrate the points that are going to be touched.
- The *confirmatio*, aiming at demonstrating one's point.
- The *refutatio*, aiming at disproving the opponent's point.
- The *exhortatio/conclusio*, the end of the speech, typically with a call to action

Personal Pronouns as a Rhetorical Device

Crystal (2008) defines rhetoric as the study of effective or persuasive speaking and writing. Along the same line, Setiarini, Winarni and Junining (2019) claim that rhetoric is a useful way to control the audience, persuade and attract the public's attention. It can be concluded that rhetoric is a style of persuasive speaking and a technique to attract the attention of the audience.

As a rhetorical device in political discourse, personal pronouns do not only refer to politicians and others, but also suggest multiple identities of themselves and others, presented from a range of perspectives (Allen, 2007). Allen (2007) claims that personal pronouns are used by politicians to present positive aspects of themselves and negative aspects of their opponents. Hakansson (2012) concurs by adding that politicians tend to present themselves to be perceived as suitable leaders of the nation by their people. This is due to the inclusive and exclusive nature of personal pronouns. Alemi, Latifi and Nematzadeh (2018) assert that personal pronouns are a powerful device in political speeches when it is necessary to include or exclude a part of the society or institutions.

Allen (2007) highlights a point on the traditional polarization in politics specifically on the pronouns *we* versus *they*, or *us* versus *them*. *We* and *us* are associated with inclusiveness and positive elements, while *they* and *them* are associated with exclusiveness and negative elements (Allen, 2007). Similarly, Jong (2018) simply describes *we* and *us* as togetherness and *they* and *them* as separateness. *He, him, she, her* and both forms of *it* are irrelevant to the inclusiveness and exclusiveness aspects of a

political speech, as they simply refer to a singular and specific third person which are used in everyday personal conversations. This is supported by Gocheco (2012) who agrees that the personal pronoun *we* and *us* is generally used to express solidarity and therefore indicates inclusiveness (Gocheco, 2012). Meanwhile, the personal pronouns *I*, *me*, *you*, *they* and *them* indicate exclusiveness (Gocheco, 2012; Jong, 2018). Other studies on the use of pronouns in political speeches (Bataineh, 2019; Setiarini, Winarni and Junining, 2019; Alemi, Latifi and Nematzadeh, 2018; Wahyuningsih, 2018; Kulsum-Binder, 2017; Hakansson, 2012; Nakaggwe, 2012) include some or all the aforementioned inclusive and exclusive personal pronouns but did not include *he*, *him*, *she*, *her* and *it*. Hence, it can be concluded that different personal pronouns can significantly affect the perception of the audience differently.

Speeches in Political Discourse

Political discourse analysis is a discipline that takes place within the political environment, which are manifested by political performers, and can be referred to the written text, spoken language or non-verbal communication used by politicians to reach their goals (Bataineh, 2019). The objectives are to observe the utilisation of linguistic and rhetorical strategies, as well as the language choices made to achieve a particular political effect (Bataineh, 2019). Additionally, political leaders are responsible to present their or the party's ideas in an influential way (Nakaggwe, 2012). Their goals are to persuade the audience to concur with them or to motivate a change in perception or attitude towards a particular matter (Orji, 2016). In the current technological era, a politician's speech is easily spread worldwide. Due to this, their audience is not only those sitting in the hall, but also those sitting behind the screen. Hence, it is crucial for a political speech to be easily understood and appealing to the audience, in order to garner political support (Nakaggwe, 2012).

Hussein (2016) states that political discourse is not a genre by itself, but a class of genres defined by a social domain, namely politics. Parliamentary debates, programmes in a political party and speeches given by political leaders are among the genres that belong in the political domain. A speech is an example of spoken political discourse and refers to an activity of public speaking, commonly used in a formal setting to deliver an opinion (Wahyuningsih, 2018).

Political speeches are usually given by political leaders representing a political

group rather than as an individual. The objectives are to increase the population's political participation and to persuade them to have the same opinion as the politician (Hakansson, 2012). This is supported by Allen (2007) who further explains that all meanings intended by the speaker aim to fulfill a politically strategic function by carefully scripted words. Despite this, Hussein (2016) believes that the spoken discourse is spontaneous in comparison to the written discourse. Due to the persuasive nature of political speeches, political leaders rely significantly on the manipulation of language to meet the objectives. Chilton (2004), as cited in Bataineh (2019), asserts that both language and politics are intertwined, and politics is all about the appropriate use of language.

When communicating, people use discoursal elements to construct, maintain and direct their interactions to their receptive audience (Farahani and Kazemian, 2021). This interaction is established via the communication between the conveyor of the message and its receiver. According to Hyland (2017), as cited in Farahani and Kazemian (2021), the discoursal elements, also known as metadiscourse features, are responsible in establishing the speaker-audience interaction during the communication process. Wang and Zhang (2016) further add that the speaker uses metadiscourse features to assist the audience to understand the intention better. Markus (2006) supports this claim by stating that metadiscourse represents a speaker's attempts to guide the audience's perception of a message being conveyed. On top of that, Wang and Zhang (2016) and Markus (2006) agree that metadiscourse allows the speaker to make the audience understand their personalities and attitudes towards a message.

Interactional resources (Farahani and Kazemian, 2021; Markus, 2006; Wang and Zhang, 2016) are one of the defining characteristics of communication in metadiscourse, which functions to involve the audience in the interaction. It includes hedges, boosters, attitude markers, engagement markers and self-mentions (Farahani and Kazemian, 2021; Markus, 2006; Wang and Zhang, 2016).

Markus (2006) found that the use of personal pronouns is especially prominent in the interactional resource of self-mentions. According to Markus (2006), by using *we* and *us*, the speaker creates an atmosphere where the audience is welcomed into the interaction. Markus (2006) claims that the audience is not only drawn to the speech

being delivered, but are also connected to the speaker through these inclusive personal pronouns. All in all, building a relationship between the speaker and audience is essential in a speaker-audience interaction to attract the attention of the audience and eventually, persuade them of the speaker's ideas.

Theoretical Framework

The paper adopts the Critical Discourse Analysis as the theoretical framework for the study. Over the last two decades Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has emerged as an interdisciplinary approach to the description and analysis of texts in terms of their wider social and political significance. Generally, proponents of CDA argue that the complex interrelationship between language use and social systems is characterized by mutual influence or constitutive action (Fairclough 1995). This is evidence in the current paper, which is an investigation of the discursive use of pronouns by Joe Biden and Ahmed Bola Tinubu in persuasion and asserting power control through campaign speeches.

Simply put, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a method of analysis in relation to ideology and power (Fairclough, 2013). It is a theoretical approach that examines aspects of language use in all socio-cultural domains. According to Jorgesen and Philips (2011), CDA has supplied methods for the empirical study of the relations between discourse, social and cultural developments in various social domains. Through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the salient features of a text can be identified to decode the ideologies conveyed within the representations and grammatical patterning of the discourse. CDA is a multidisciplinary approach to language that strives to highlight the nature of social power and dominance by substantiating the intricate relationships between "text, talk, social cognition, power, society and culture" (Van Dijk, 1995, p.253).

As a cross-disciplinary approach within Applied Linguistics that is a relatively new branch of Discourse Analysis, dscourse Analysis grew out of the research within different disciplines in the 1960' s and early 1970' s that included the fields of linguistics, semiotics, psychology, anthropology and sociology. From these multi-disciplinary approaches of Discourse Analysis, CDA emerged with additional influences from the social theories of Foucault, Bordieu, and Habermas as well as the linguistic theories of Halliday (Burns, 2001; McCarthy, 2006). In recent times,

following inputs from Van Dijk and Wodak, its critical tentacles have spread. Therefore, although critical discourse analysis concerns itself with the study of relationships between language and the contexts in which language is used, CDA is also concerned with issues of language, power and ideology within the discourse of texts (McCarthy, 2006; Coffin, 2001). Accordingly, Fowler (cited in Jaworski and Coupland, 2006, p.27) states that:

> to be critical within CDA means to produce a careful analytic interrogation of the ideological categories, and the roles and institutions and so on, through which a society constitutes and maintains itself and the consciousness of its members. All knowledge, all objects, are constructs: criticism analyses the processes of construction and, acknowledges the artificial quality of the categories concerned, offers the possibility that we might profitably conceive the world in some alternative way.

As its main aim, CDA highlights how language is utilized within texts to construct specific ideological positions that entail unequal relations of power. Within CDA language is not neutral and all texts are critical sites for the negotiation of power and ideology (Burns, 2001). In this way, CDA not only focuses on the linguistic dimensions of language, but also maintains a strong political agenda in reference to how the language is used (Coffin, 2001). As Fairclough (cited in Coffin, 2001, p.100) sees it:

> the relationship between social action and text is mediated by interaction: that is the nature of the interaction, how texts are produced and interpreted, depends upon the social action in which they are embedded; and the nature of the text, its formal and stylistic properties on the one hand depends upon and constitutes " traces" of its process of production, and on the other hand constitutes " cues" for its interpretation.

CDA thus, can provide effective insights into the relationships within language because it offers a Hallyidayan view of language in which language is itself inseparable from its socio-linguistic context, its mediation of ideology and its relation to power structures within society (Orphin, 2005, p. 37-38). By identifying the linguistic

mechanisms or semantic categories through which ideology is constructed, CDA is able to make apparent the hidden methodology an author may employ within discourse to package representations of the world, whether consciously or unconsciously. In this way, the main purpose of CDA is to find how the text is organized and it investigates the hidden ideological features by analyzing the characteristics of language and structures in the text (Meyer, 2001).

Within the aims mentioned above, there are many proponents of CDA, and these may be theoretically and analytically quite diverse. Critical analysis of conversation is very different from an analysis of campaign speeches and news reports in the press or of lessons and teaching at school. Yet, given the common perspective and the general aims of CDA, we find overall conceptual and theoretical frameworks that are closely related. Therefore, as noted, most kinds of CDA will ask questions about the way specific discourse structures are deployed in the reproduction of social dominance, whether they are part of a conversation or a news report or other genres and contexts. Thus, given the typical vocabulary of many scholars in CDA, our comparative study on Joe Biden and Bola Tinubu's campaign speeches will feature such notions as "power," "dominance," "hegemony," "ideology," "class," "gender," "race," "discrimination," "interests," "reproduction," "institutions," "social structure," and "social order," besides the more familiar discourse analytical notions.

Method

The paper adopts the qualitative design. The population of the study is made up of Bola Tinubu's campaign speech made at the APC stakeholder town hall meeting in Abeokuta (Emi lokan, Yoruba lokan Speech - Town Hall meeting at Abeokuta, 2nd June, 2022) and Biden's campaign speeches between the Democratic primaries and the general election against Donald Trump (Super Tuesday Speech - 3rd March, 2020). These political speeches were deliberately chosen because they contain instances of rhetorical devices. And also strikes a balance between language use in both African and American political landscape. The paper makes use of documented speeches of American president Joe Biden and Nigerian's Bola Tinubu, particularly those that concerns politics. These speeches are harnessed from internet; particularly TV channels like NBC, TVC and Channel news. It was downloaded from the YouTube platform and transcribed into an MS Word. The choice of YouTube as

source of data collection was informed by the fact that the platform serves as repository for campaign speeches. The paper exploited this medium for accuracy. Accordingly, the paper employs textual analysis in line with its theoretical framework. Analysis of data is carried out using the analytical framework associated with the Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis and political discourse analysis.

Discussion

The Use of Personal Pronoun I and Its Inflections

The pronoun I is actually not a substitution of the speaker's name. It is the way for him to refer to himself. In political speeches, I can be used by the speaker to convey his opinion, in order to make the speech more subjective. It shows the authority of the speaker and it can be used to show compassion with the audience and to narrate a story (Bramley 2001, p.27). The issue of subjectivity is what might make some politicians avoid using *I (*Pennycook 1993, p.3). Another function of the first person singular pronoun of *I* in political speeches includes giving a sense of *here and now*, suggesting that *I* captures the moment. *I* can also be used to create a 'relationship' with the audience, because using *I* makes the speech seem as if it is on a more personal level. *I* might also be used to show commitment to the audience and personal involvement in issues; *I* gives the speaker a personal voice that distances him from others. This means that it cannot always be expected that the other members of his party agree with the speaker's opinions when the pronoun *I* is used (Bramley 2001, p.27).

The advantage of using *I* is that it shows personal involvement, which is especially useful when positive news is delivered. The disadvantage is that it is obvious whom to put the blame on when something goes wrong. It can also be seen as an attempt of the individual speaker to place himself above or outside the shared responsibility of his colleagues (Beard 2000, p.45). The most motivating reasons for a politician to use the pronoun *I* in his speech is to come across as good and responsible, to describe himself in a positive way and highlight personal qualities. Examples of personal qualities that politicians want to express include being someone with principles, moral, power and who is not afraid to take action when necessary (Bramley 2001, p.28). The following examples show how *I* is used in the two presidents' speeches, and the effect it has. Excerpt I captures the use of I pronoun by

president Tinubu during his famous Emiloka campaign speech in Ogun state in 2022.

Excerpt I

> …..If not for my support for Buhari that said "Okay Buhari, **I** am behind you," he would never have become the president. He attempted becoming the president the first time, he failed; he tried the second time, he failed, and he also the time. He even wept on national TV and vowed never to contest again. But **I** met with him in Kaduna and told him that it wasn't about crying but to try again, that with my support, you would win.

In the excerpt I, we can see Tnubu acknowledging and highlighting his political strength and astuteness over his contemporaries and challengers. This is evidently targeted at thrilling the audience and convincing them that he (Tinubu) is the only person most suitable for the seat of president at the time, and that he is already tested and trusted.

Excerpt II

> …I am going to start by rejoining an outfit I helped put together, the Paris Climate Accord, and we're to move it a long way.

In the excerpt II, Biden was seen identifying his personal effort in the formation of Paris Climate Accord, a global accord towards the preservation of world climate from global warming. The intention was to show himself as being principally committed to the accord, unlike his challenges whom does not share similar commitment.

The Use of You and its Inflections

The pronoun *you* usually refers to the person(s) the speaker is talking to. Although, *you* has multiple functions, one of which is to serve as an indefinite (generic) pronoun. The indefinite *you* can be a replacement for *I* and refer to the speaker, and also be used by the speaker to include himself as a member of a category. It has also been suggested that indefinite *you* is not used to discuss actual experience; instead it is used to discuss 'conventional wisdom'. In this sense, *you* is used to convey common sense or generally admitted truth, with the hope of receiving the agreement of the audience (Allen 2006, p.13f). When using the indefinite version of the pronoun *you*, it can be unclear whom the speaker is referring to. It can be used to refer to anyone and/or everyone. The indefinite version of *you* includes the speaker among the referents, even if this is not always the case. If the speaker uses the pronoun *you,* it

is up to the audience to decide if they view themselves as part of that group or not. The generic *you* can be used by politicians to criticize the opposition by including or excluding them from generalizations (Allen 2006, p.13f). The following examples of the pronoun *you* show how it can be used to speak to different groups of people as well as a generic pronoun. Excerpt II captures the use of **You** pronoun by President Tinubu below:

Excerpt III

> ….Buhari asked me to be his vice (president). He said because the first time he contested, he picked Okadigbo, flamboyant, faaji-loving Catholic, but Nigerians didn't vote for him. The second time, he picked another Igbo, Ume-Ezeoke; Nigerians didn't vote for him. He then said if he should bring the Pope from Rome to run as his running mate, Nigerians would still not vote for him. **But YOU, with six governors, never lost an election before, come and be my vice (president)**.

In this excerpt II, through the discursive strategy of evidentiality and self-glorification, Tinubu still demonstrated his supremacist ideology as indexed with reference how the then presidential aspirant Muhammadu Buhari having failed several times in his attempt to become the president acknowledged the fact that **he** (Tinubu) had never lost any election and so he should be his running mate.

Excerpt IV

> …**Sign up, volunteer, contribute if YOU can. We need YOU. We want YOU, and there's a place for YOU in this campaign**. People are talking about a revolution. We started a movement. We even increased turnout. When the turnouts turn out for us that can deliver us to a moment where we can do extraordinary, extraordinary things.

Biden in excerpt IV is creating the impression of important and significance the support of the people are in his campaign and eventual success in securing victory in the election. It was evidently intended to make the audience feel part of the process, and also make those on the outside to feel the hunger to join the campaign train.

The Use of Personal Pronoun We and Its Inflections

We is an important pronoun in political speeches in the sense that it expresses

'institutional identity', i.e. when one person speaks as a representative of or on behalf of an institution. *We* is also used to separate *us* from *them*, for example between two political groups, such as political parties. By establishing an *us* and *them* separation the speaker can create an image of the group he belongs to in a positive way and the other group in a negative way. The intention of the *us* and *them* separation is to set one group apart from the other group and their actions, and to include or exclude hearers from group membership (Bramley 2001, p.76ff). *We* is sometimes used to convey the image of one political party as a team, and therefore a shared responsibility. The use of the pronoun *we* can be divided into two categories: the inclusive *we*, which can be used to refer to the speaker and the listener/viewer.

Excerpt V

> ….So, I told them and said, "Look, someone who is a Christian that I can nominate, so that this party is not destroyed, and **we must not fail**."

Here, Tinubu shows his commitment and loyalty to the good and interest of the party above his own personal ambition, which then made him to give up his vice presidential slot to a Christian. The reference to this by him is strategic, as this act of sportmanship will ultimately appeal to the sense of reasoning of the audience, which will make them vote for him. This is achieved through the discursive means evidentiality and positive-self representation, where his good deed is emphasised and silent about their own good deeds.

Excerpt VI

> **WE**'re going to go. Look, the middle class is getting clobbered. The middle class is getting clobbered. Too many people in the neighborhoods that Jill and Val and I grew up in, are getting hurt. They're badly hurt, and guess what? They're the place where **WE** come from. Many of you come from. It's where **WE**'re raised. The people. They're the reason why I'm running. There's a reason why I'm a Democrat in the first place.

In this excerpt vi, Biden tried to create an image of himself as sharing same experience with the people, someone who has had similar experience like them, and who will most likely initiate policies that will favour them or save them from bad policies of the then present government.

Conclusion

So far, this paper examined the use of pronoun I, YOU, WE in the campaign speeches of president Bola Ahmed Tinubu of Nigeria and President Joe Biden of United States of America. It has further expounded the interface between language and politics, as well as the triangular relationship of politics, language and ideology. Specifically, language use in discourse situation, particularly by political actors, are not ideologically neutral. As it has been established, ideologies are acquired, spread, produced, reproduced and enacted through text and talk. These ideologies are in turn enacted exhibited through discursive strategies.

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