Analysis of the Use of Personal Deixis in Concession Speeches
(Concession Speeches of John Mahama and Akuffo Addo)

Mwinwelle, Peter¹; Adukpo, John² & Mortey, Favour Mawutorwu Randy³

¹Mwinwelle, Peter; ²Adukpo, John & ³Mortey, Favour Mawutorwu Randy
1,3Department of Languages, E.P. College of Education, Amedzofe
2Department of Languages, Dambai College of Education
Ghana

Abstract: Interestingly, Akuffo Addo and John Mahama are Presidents of Ghana who conceded defeat to each other in the 2012 and 2016 General Elections respectively. The study investigates how these two politicians exploit personal deixis to position themselves in relation to their electoral defeat in their concession speeches underpinned by the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis. The study reveals a preponderant use of the first person singular and plural pronominals by the speakers to position themselves together with their parties in a positive light despite their defeats. Akuffo Addo personally distances himself and his party from the defeat by disagreeing with the court’s ruling yet exercises respect for it while John Mahama accepts the defeat but tries to recount his achievements in order to present himself and his party in a good image. The study concludes that politicians exploit the flexibility of pronominal use to position themselves favourably in their concession speeches.


1. Introduction
Life has got positive and negative phases. At every phase of life whether negative or positive, language is appropriated to express one’s thoughts or feelings. Politics just as life, also has negative and positive sides. In politics, one either wins or loses power. The inception of democratic systems has employed elections as the only medium of assuming political power. Elections therefore serve as a diagnostic instrument for determining who holds political power in democratic systems. Opeibi (2009) amplifies the importance of elections when he says elections can be said to be the heart of any political system. One of the most disappointing moments in the life of politicians occurs when they lose elections, considering the amount of time, money and strength they spend in their campaigns and rallies. Politicians react to their defeats differently depending on the circumstances surrounding such defeats. In situations of disappointment, language becomes one of the potent means through which the thoughts, feelings and reactions of politicians are exhibited. The relationship between language and politics 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, the relationship between
language and politics is symbiotic. Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere (2012, p. 462) deepen this relationship when they say that “language has been a powerful tool in the hands of political leaders; they manipulate the tool to suit their purposes”. In times of electoral defeat, politicians use language to position themselves in relation to their defeats. It is based on this backdrop that, the study carries out a linguistic analysis of post-election defeat- concession speeches of Ghanaian political actors by paying attention on the use of personal deixis and their implications on how these politicians react to their defeats.

1.1. Post-Election Defeat/Concession Speeches

One sub-genre of political speeches delivered under disappointing situations are the post-election defeat/concession speeches. Post-election defeat or concession speeches refer to the speeches delivered by political candidates upon electoral defeat. These speeches are generally referred to as concession speeches because in such speeches politicians formally concede defeat. Anurudu and Oduola (2017) say that “a concession speech is the act of a losing candidate publicly yielding to a winning candidate after an election when the outcome of the overall result of the vote has become clear” (p. 15). Although these speeches are not backed by legislative instruments, they still play an important role in the political sphere. The cardinal importance underlying concession speeches is that they present the views and attitudes of politicians who lose elections which can contribute to improving the electoral processes by helping to plan subsequent elections more successfully and forestall post-election crisis to boost democratic systems in general. Chesebro & Hamsher (1974, p. 40) observed that “The concession speech is the vehicle used to secure a new social relationship, it is intended to purify and redeem both sides involved in the conflict...which allows power realignments to occur in a socially acceptable way”. The delivery of these speeches also marks the maturity of the political actors in politics and shows positivity in their attitudes and stances to their electoral defeat. There might still be some level of political protestation from politicians who lose out in electoral contests after conceding defeat. Ademilokun (2016) says that “some politicians upon losing elections do not concede defeat 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” (p. 169). Some politicians consider it as a sign of weakness to concede defeat after losing while others tag their speeches congratulatory messages. Notwithstanding the motives behind or titles given to such speeches, the bottom line is that they indicate an approval of the opponent’s victory. Post-election concession speeches as a sub-genre of political discourse has got distinct characteristics. Ritter and Howell (2001) in the study of American post-election concession speeches identify six characteristics of concession speeches which include: a formal declaration of defeat, a call for national unity, a tribute to democracy, an affirmation of the candidate’s campaign, a recognition of the transformed roles for candidates, and an expression of appreciation for supporters. Nevertheless, it possible to find concession speeches that might lack some of these characteristics.

2. Literature Review

Political discourse has enjoyed generous attention from scholars in diverse disciplines including linguistics especially regarding the use of personal deixis. Some studies have been conducted on the use of personal deixis in political speeches which include Adetunji (2006) and Quinto (2011) who examine the use of personal, spatial and temporal deixis for anchorage in political discourse. Adetunji (2006) studies two political speeches of Olusegun Obasanjo which reveal that Obasanjo uses deixis to reflect politicians’ way of associating and dissociating from actions taken by them or their officers and conscripting their audience into accepting views and positions on controversial issues. Quinto (2011) on the other hand, analyses the English translation of President of the Philippines, Benigno Simeon Aquino III which indicates that the Filipino president creates adeictic field in which the Filipino people are situated at the deictic centre and the President and his critics in binary opposition where he judges himself and his government favourably and his opponents unfavourably. They conclude that personal deixis helps political actors to persuade audience in their favour and ultimately boost leverage in their political discourse and outside.
In addition, Bramley (2001) and Allen (2007) conduct a pragmatic study of the use of personal deixis in Australian political media interviews and political campaign speeches on pronominal choices and how politicians construct and convey their identities and those of their parties and opponents. Bramley’s (2001) study reveals that pronouns are used to show affiliation or create distance between people where it would not traditionally be expected. The study further establishes that politicians actively exploit the flexibility of pronominal reference to construct diverse identities of themselves and ‘other’ and use them to create different alignments to, and boundaries between, their multiple ‘selves’ and ‘others’. Allen’s (2007, p. 2) study confirms Bramley’s (2001) findings by establishing that “politicians present positive aspects of themselves and negative aspects of their opponents during election campaigns using personal pronouns to refer to themselves and to others, and to evoke multiple identities of themselves and others, presented from a range of perspectives.” Both studies conclude that pronouns are pivotal in the construction of reality that is created and understood in political discourse.

Moreover, Håkansson (2012) and Hasan (2013) investigate the pronominal choices made by American and Egyptian presidents. Håkansson (2012) studies Bush and Obama’s State of the Union speeches which shows that Obama uses more pronouns than Bush, but that Bush uses the pronoun “you” more frequently. The study concludes that pronominal choices in political speeches differ depending on whether the politician who makes the utterance wants to share the responsibility with other people or colleagues or not. Hasan (2013) analyses the use of in-group and out-group pronouns in Hosni Mubarak’s speech which reveals that Mubarak uses the out-group pronouns more frequently than the in-group ones especially the pronoun I predominantly to address the Egyptian people to persuade them that the beliefs, experiences, and involvement he is expressing are his personal ones.

Furthermore, Adegoju (2014) draws on the “June 12” political crisis in Nigeria, to analyse speeches of some military and civilian leaders in Nigeria’s political history between 1993 and 1998. He applies the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis to examine how the conflict rhetoric is positioned and how such positioning serves the speakers’ interests and undermines those of their hearers through the use of person deixis as a discursive strategy. The study reveals that by deploying personal deixis in the conflict rhetoric, the political figures seek to reproduce ‘dominance’ in a bid to control the cognition and actions of their audiences.

Last but not least, Juliasti (2015) and Bouk (2016) examine the use of person deixis in selected speeches of former president of Indonesia and the former Prime Minister of Timor Leste respectively. Juliasti’s (2015) study reveals that the speaker uses “I” when he wants to express his own feeling, his thought or opinion to show his actions as an Indonesian president to overcome Indonesia’s problems and uses the inclusive “we” to refer to the speaker, hearer and people of the world altogether. The results also establish that the exclusive “we” is dominantly used by the speaker to represent the Indonesian people alone and sometimes he and his government only respectively. Bouk (2016) on the other hand finds out that person deixis specifically the first person plural ‘we’, preponderates in the speech of former Prime Minister of Timor Leste which presents him as an “insertive” leader and introduces Timor Leste as a new country to the outside world.

Some work has been carried out on political speeches delivered by heads of state of Ghana. However, the focus of earlier works has not been on concession speeches. Some of these studies focused on speeches such as Inaugural Speeches (Boakye, 2014; Adjei-Fobi, 2011), Independence Day Speeches (Mensah, 2008; Mensah, 2014), Campaign Speeches (Obeng, 2000; Agyekum, 2004; Djabatey, 2013), State of the Nation’s Addresses (Adjei, Ewusi-Mensah and Okoh, 2015; Dadugblor, 2016), Political Advertisements (Anim-Ayeko, 2012), Farewell Speeches (Adjei and Ewusi-Mensah, 2016), Speeches at International Meetings (Adjei-Fobi, 2011; Mensah, 2014) and New Year Messages (Anderson, 2014). Again, regarding the analysis of concession speeches, studies such as (Lakoff, 2001; Mills, 2010; Koussouhoun and Dadjo, 2016; Ademilokun, 2016 and Anurudu and Oduola, 2017) have analysed presidential concession speeches in and outside Africa from various linguistic perspectives but with none of them centering on any Ghanaian presidential concession speech.

However, in spite of the replete literature on Ghanaian presidential speeches, one realises that there is no research known of that focuses on post-election defeat concession speeches of Ghanaian politicians, hence the significance of the present study. Mills (2010) confirms this lacuna in
literature when he establishes that presidential concession genre appears to be a relatively untouched, but growing area of academic inquiry. Furthermore, though most studies have analysed political speeches from different linguistic perspectives, the analysis of personal deixis in Ghanaian presidential speeches has also been largely under-researched, as the extant literature reveals that no known work has been analysed on the use of personal deixis in Ghanaian presidential speeches. As a result, people are not able to identify how Ghanaian politicians utilize deixis, especially to concede defeat in concession speeches. This study therefore analyses the use of personal deixis in concession speeches of Mahama and Akuffo Addo to indicate how they position themselves in relation to their defeat. This will also enable future researchers to better understand the reactions of politicians towards their defeat in post-election concession speeches.

3. Theoretical Framework

The study is framed by the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis. It is a language oriented framework that highlights the use of language conventions and practices to transform power relations between people involved in a specific discourse. Hoepfner (2006, p. 5) says that “the aim of Critical Discourse Analysis is to unmask ideologically permeated and often obscured structures of power, political control, and dominance, as well as strategies of discriminatory inclusion and exclusion in language in use”. Discourse analysis unearths ideologically influenced structures which show bias inclusion and exclusion in relation to power through the use of language. van Dijk (2001, p. 353) establishes that critical research on discourse needs to meet some requirements, which include: (i) CDA should not just describe discourse structures but relate to properties of social interaction and especially social structure; and (ii) It must focus on the way linguistic items affect relations of power and dominance in society. The access to public discourse and communication delivery therefore allows powerful politicians to enact or exhibit power verbally.

3.1 Deixis

The study of deixis is one of the main aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis that mediates between speakers and how they position their audience in relation to power differentials. Deictic expressions are sometimes also called indexicals. Zupnik (1994, p.340) explains that "the term 'deixis' refers to the ways in which language encodes features of the context of utterance.". The speaker's perspective or point of view serves as the yardstick that helps understand the referents of the personal indexicals. Deixis have been traditionally grouped into three recognizable categories based on three axes, namely spatial, social and temporal axes (Trask,1999). Spatial deixis is based on place (e.g. this, that, here and there), social deixis is based on persons (e.g. You and I) and temporal deixis is based on time (e.g. now, today, and yesterday).

Person deixis is related to personal pronouns, provided its reference is used appropriately within a context. Levinson (1983, p. 62) states that “person deixis concerns the encoding of the role of participants in a speech event in which the utterance in question is delivered. Analysis of pronoun deictic elements are best understood in terms of how they are being used interactionally, rather than having fixed basic referential and deictic properties. Personal pronouns are not just a way of indicating person, number and gender as is proposed by traditional grammarians nor do they only do referential and deictic work but rather, they must be thought of in the context of interaction and in terms of the identity work that they accomplish (Bramley, 2001). There are three types of personal deixis. These are the first, second and third person personal deixis. The category of first person is the grammaticalization of the speaker’s reference to himself, second person refers to the encoding of the speaker’s reference to one or more addressees, and third person denotes the encoding of neither reference of persons and entities which are neither speakers nor addressees of the utterance.

3.2 Personal Deixis

The first personal deixis has got its plural and singular forms. Its singular personal pronouns forms include “I, me, my, mine”. The first person singular pronoun “I” usually preponderates in speeches. “I” and its variants basically express the identity of an individual speaker. Politicians use ‘I’ (and its variants) to represent themselves as individual politicians who speak from their personal
perspective in order to construct a favourable image of themselves. A plethora of studies have indicated the varied uses of the pronoun “I” and its variants. One of such studies by Bramley (2001) positions that “I” is used by speakers to express their authoritative opinions. When a politician takes a stand that is criticised by his/her own party members, the politician must defend him/herself. One way of accomplishing this defense is by constructing a picture of him/herself as a person of principles. “We” (and other related first person plural forms) is central in the construction of identities of politicians as members of groups and can be used to invoke a collective identity or group membership. It is used inclusively to cover everyone who is part of the audience including the speaker to invoke collective identities while it’s exclusive use only covers the speaker together with a special group among the audience which also invokes a politician’s “institutional identity”. Politicians may also invoke collective or institutional identities by the use of ‘we’, to deflect individual attention or simply to present issues as collective rather than individual ones.

The pronoun “you” traditionally refers to the person(s) spoken to by the speaker. Although, “you” has varied functions, one of these function is its role 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 (Håkansson, 2012). The use of the indefinite “you” does not always discuss actual experience; instead it discusses ‘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. 13). This enables the speaker to present ‘self’ as someone who has views that appear to be widely held and also help add more weight to arguments and thus, is a means for the speaker to defend his/her views.

‘They’ (and other related third person plural pronouns) is used to identify an ‘other’; in particular, to distinguish the speaker, either as an individual or a member of a group, from an ‘other’. ‘They’ occurs in a continuum of linguistic contexts ranging from oppositional, through neutral to affiliative relationship with the ‘other’ (Bramley, 2001). ‘They’ is also used to obscure identity by the use of its categorical property or to create unspecific groups of people. In such uses, what is salient is that an ‘other’ is constructed, rather than the specification of the referent. The forms of the third person singular pronoun “he, him, her, it, she” are used in reference to individuals talked about in discourse. Pronominal forms cannot just be analysed in abstract unless they are used in context to establish their actual referents.

4. Methodology

This study is qualitative descriptive in nature. Concession speeches by Nana Akuffo Addo and John Dramani Mahama sourced from the internet websites are used as data for the study. One interesting link between the two speeches is that both candidates conceded defeat to each other after the 2012 and 2016 general elections respectively. In the study, John Mahama’s concession speech is labelled JM while Akuffo Addo’s is labelled AA. Akuffo Addo’s speech contains thirty-three (33) sentences while John Mahama’s contains forty-one (41) sentences. To analyse the data, the study applied the following stages in textual analysis as proposed by Cohen (2007:470), namely: (1). “Generating natural unit of meaning”, (2). “Classifying, categorizing and ordering these units of meaning”, (3). “Structuring narratives to describe the contents of the text or speech”, and (4). “Interpreting the data”. In line with these proposed stages, each of the speeches was coded into sentences, the sentences were further ordered from first to last, the ordered sentences were used as illustrations to back the analysis and based on that, the data was interpreted.
5. Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of the Use of Personal Deixis by John Mahama and Akuffo Addo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>President John Mahama</th>
<th></th>
<th>President Akuffo Addo</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person Deixis</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Person Deixis</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>Me</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>My</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We (Inclusive)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>We (Incl.)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We (Exclusive)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>We (Excl.)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Us (Inclusive)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Us (Incl.)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Us (Exclusive)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>Us (Excl.)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our(s) Incl.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>Our(s) Incl.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our(s) Excl.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>Our(s) Excl.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>Your</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Him</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>Him</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>His</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>They</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>Their</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 above, indicates a predominance of the use of the first person singular pronoun “I” in the data. In all, “I” constitutes twenty-seven (27) occurrences representing 28.7% in Mahama’s concession speech and a frequency of twenty-three (23) representing 37.1% in Akuffo Addo’s speech. The predominant use of the “I” therefore suggests that speakers present much of their personal thoughts in the speeches. This discussion below therefore touches on the use of personal deixis by the speakers selected.

5.1 Analysis of John Mahama’s Concession Speech (JM)

Mahama makes a predominant use of the first person singular pronoun "I" with a frequency of twenty-seven (27) representing 28.7% of the total number of personal deixis used. He uses the pronoun “I” and “me” to first of all express his personal appreciation to the president elect. Bramley (2001, p. 11) avers that “positioning the ‘other’ in a way reflects the type of relationship that a speaker has with the ‘other’. Mahama’s positioning of the “other” ie Akuffo Addo reflects the cordial relationship between them as he picks a phone and calls to congratulate him as a friend. He therefore presents himself in that light as a man of peace who considers the leader of opposition party not as an opponent but a friend. He congratulates Akuffo Addo thrice to emphasise his surrender to the defeat since the margin difference in the votes between them was wide (58.6% against 46.5%). Here are some examples taken from the speech.

- My fellow Ghanaians, My Brothers and Sisters, a while ago, I phoned Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and offered him my congratulations ... JM 1
- ..., I have decided at this stage to congratulate the President-elect. JM 8
- Again, allow me to offer my sincere congratulations to the President-elect, Nana Akufo-Addo. JM 37

The speaker again uses the pronoun “I” to express his personal appreciation to individuals and groups within his party, various worker groups, his family, all Ghanaians in general and to God for at least the chance to serve in one term of office. Akoto (2016) says that politicians give thanks to God in their speeches to acknowledge that there is an almighty being more powerful than themselves and
acknowledge his guidance and protection over their lives. Mahama thanks God in order to position himself as one who believes in the supremacy of God. Since the speaker had no reservations concerning the results, he dedicates a greater portion of his speech to thanking people with the hope of harnessing their support again in the next elections making his speech appear like a “Thank You Speech”. He also uses "I", "me" and "my" to undoubtedly position himself in two capacities, as an individual and leader of his party. As an individual, he expresses his thanks to his family and as a leader, he appreciates his administration and other individuals and groups within his party. He hides behind the showing of appreciation to his party members to campaign subtly by recounting some of the achievements chalked by his government such as “infrastructural projects”, “social, political, and economic development”. This is illustrated below

- **I am profoundly grateful to the almighty God and the people of Ghana for the opportunity to serve in the high office of President.** JM 11
- **As President, I have done my bit and made a contribution to the political, social and economic development of our country.** JM 12
- **I wish to thank the leadership of the NDC, all of our members, foot soldiers and sympathizers for their belief in the principles of social democracy...** JM 16
- **Likewise, I would like to thank the members of my administration for their diligent service and for bringing to fruition many of the plans we set out to accomplish the numerous programs that have been implemented and the infrastructural projects that have been completed and ongoing.** JM 17
- **I wish to thank my able Vice President Kwesi Amissah Arthur for his unflinching support and loyalty during our period in office.** JM 18
- **To the service commanders and men and women in uniform, I wish to extend my profound gratitude to you ....** JM 19
- **I wish to thank my family: my children, my brothers, and sisters, and especially my wife, Lordina, for standing as firmly with me ...** JM 23
- **Most importantly, I am grateful to the almighty God who has sustained us through the implementation of the Agenda for Transformation.** JM 22

The speaker also uses the pronoun “I” to indicate his personal responsibility to what he says as his own opinions. He declares his resolute support for the democratic principles in Ghana. He also assures the people of Ghana for his unflinching believe in democracy notwithstanding who wins or who loses. With these declarations, he positions himself positively before the people of Ghana knowing very well that he will contest in the next elections where he would need the support of the people which confirms Bramley’s (2001, p. 11) assertion that “politicians seek to represent their different ‘selves’ and ‘others’ in such a way as to construct a reality that positions themselves and the groups to which they belong in a positive light”. This is evidenced below

- **With this understanding, I would like to assure the people of Ghana of my commitment to the sustenance of our country’s democracy and would work to ensure a smooth and peaceful transition to the incoming administration.** JM 9
- **I remain committed to the unity and stability of our great nation.** JM 10
- **I would have cherished an opportunity to do even more, but I respect the will of the Ghanaian people.** JM 13

The all-inclusive "we" is used by the speaker to bring on to his side, the people of Ghana, in his ideological and power positioning. "We", and its variants, "our" and "ours" therefore represent, what Adegaju (2005:140) defines as, "the Coalescence of the voice of the person with the voice of the people". Mahama uses inclusive “we” and its variant "our" ten (10) and eleven (11) times which represents 10.6% and 11.7% respectively in his speech to refer to himself, his party together with the people of Ghana thus encouraging solidarity where he positions himself among the people. The inclusive “we” and "our" are used mostly to convince the audience that their collective team work has
helped and continue to help the country progress in the future thereby making the people feel that the
government appreciates their contributions. For instance, the use of “We have been a leader on so
many fronts” “...as we move forward, even as we voice our differences” and others as presented in
the illustrations below.

- Ghana, this land that we all call home, is a powerful nation ... JM 24
- We have been a leader on so many fronts, ... JM 25
- And we have been able to do all of these things because we have always
functioned as one nation, one people. JM 26
- ...we have always recognized that we are all, ultimately, on the same side... JM 27
- We see all throughout the world in countries that are much older than ours the
devastation that division and intolerance bring. JM 28
- ...., I would like to assure the people of Ghana of my commitment to the
sustenance of our country’s democracy ... JM 9
- I remain committed to the unity and stability of our great nation. JM 10
- As President, I have done my bit and made a contribution to the political, social
and economic development of our country. JM 12
- ... I am immensely appreciative of your contributions to the development of our
country in the last four years. JM 22
- ... may God continue to bless our homeland Ghana. JM 40
- So I pray that as we move forward, even as we voice our differences and possibly
even disagree on agendas and decisions and other details of governance, we
always keep in mind the fact of our shared destiny ... JM 29

The speaker uses the exclusive “we” and its variants “our” and “us” to refer to himself and his
government (the members of his party). The exclusive “we” and its variants “our” and “us” are used
to show a marker of category membership and “institutional identity” (Sacks, 1992). It is used in
speaking on behalf of the team that lost the elections and creating an image of a united team which
will surely bounce back in the next elections. Since the speaker lost the elections as the incumbent
government, he uses the exclusive “we” also called the "royal we"(Wilson, 1990; Miller 2004), to
refer to the executive arm of government (the Mahama-led Ghanaian government).

This helps him position his party in a positive light as one that lost power but has conceded
defeat because of it’s understanding of democratic principles as shown below in the extracts.

- For those of us who choose to be contenders and go into electoral contests, we go
about it as a win-lose proposition. JM 3
- I wish to thank the leadership of the NDC, all of our members, foot soldiers and
sympathizers ... JM 16
- ...., I would like to thank the members of my administration for their diligent
service and for bringing to fruition many of the plans we set out to accomplish ... JM 17
- I wish to thank my able Vice President Kwest Amissah Arthur for his unflinching
support and loyalty during our period in office. JM 18

The second person deixis forms part of the least used type of deixis in political speeches
(Adetunji, 2006). This observation is confirmed in the study by the minimal occurrence of the second
person pronoun “you” and its variant “your” representing 6.4% and 2.1% respectively in the speech.
Allen (2007) establishes that politicians use the pronoun “you” as a rhetorical device to position
themselves as superiors speaking to their subordinates in a manner the subordinates are swayed to
reason with them. Mahama uses the pronouns “you” and its variant “your” to refer to the apolitical
institutions such as the security forces thereby disassociating them from political connections and to
Ghanaians in general who happen to be his immediate audience since the speech was telecasted nation-
wide. The speaker appreciates and acknowledges directly the role played by the security services and
Ghanaians in general who came out to queue and to vote as exemplified below.

- To the service commanders and men and women in uniform, I wish to extend my profound gratitude to you for your selfless service to Ghana. JM 19
- I thoroughly enjoyed working with you to ensure the internal and external security of our country. JM 20
- I am very proud of you. JM 21
- ..., I know that this is not the outcome that we wanted and hoped for, but I say to you that this day should not mark the defeat of your role in this nation’s political process. JM 32
- I thank you for your kind attention. JM 38
- May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our homeland Ghana. JM 40

He uses the pronouns “him” and “his” to refer to the Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the president-elect and Kwesi Amissah Arthur, his running mate respectively. The speaker relates to both his running mate and the president elect in a context of affiliation by offering his thanks and congratulations to them respectively which portrays him as an affable fellow. The speaker also uses the third person plural pronouns “they” and “their” to refer to his family, party members, stakeholders and Ghanaians who attended his rallies. Bramley (2001) postulates that the politicians’ world in which they live is made up of three types of linguistic contexts which are oppositional, affiliative, and neutral relationship in relation to the ‘other self’ realised through the use of third person deixis. Mahama uses the pronoun “they” to represent affiliative and neutral relationships. Regarding the affiliative relationship, he uses “their” to relate to his campaign team while the neutral relationship is established when he uses “their” to refer to the media who are supposedly apolitical as illustrated in the sentences below.

- ...I phoned Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and offered him my congratulations for emerging the winner of the 2016 Presidential Elections. JM 1
- I wish to thank all of the people who worked on my campaign for their dedication and tireless efforts. JM 15
- I wish to thank the leadership of the NDC, all of our members, foot soldiers and sympathizers for their belief in the principles of social democracy and their commitment to the vision. JM 16
- Likewise, I would like to thank the members of my administration for their diligent service and for bringing to fruition many of the plans ... JM 17
- I wish to thank my able Vice President Kwesi Amissah Arthur for his unflinching support and loyalty during our period in office. JM 18
- My thanks also goes to the media and all stakeholders for their role in the election. JM 36

5.2 Analysis of Nana Akuffo Addo’s Concession Speech (AA)

The dominant personal deixis used by Akuffo Addo is the first person singular pronoun “I” with a frequency twenty-three (23) instances representing 38% of the total number of personal deixis used. The predominant use of the first person singular “I” generally suggests individuality. Bramley (2001, p. 260) confirms this observation when he says “Politicians use ‘I’ (and other related first person singular pronouns) to represent themselves as individual politicians”. The speaker’s dominant use of “I” indicates the extent to which he personally disagrees with the verdict of the court ruling on the election petition and notwithstanding, he accepts the results base on his respect for the highest court of the land which is the Supreme Court. In so doing, he considers the defeat as a personal one therefore speaks on his personal behalf and not on the party’s regarding his disdain towards the court ruling. This is illustrated below:
• As I said earlier, whilst I disagree with the Court’s decision, I accept it. AA 3
• I accept that what the Court says brings finality to the election dispute. AA 4
• Everything in my bones, in my upbringing and in what I have done with my life thus far makes it imperative that I accept a decision made by the highest court of the land, however much I dislike or disagree with it. AA 6
• I am saddened by the verdict and I know that many of our supporters are saddened too. AA 7
• I appeal to all members and supporters of our party, the NPP in particular to accept the verdict of the court. AA 9

The speaker also uses the first person pronoun “I” authoritatively as the flag bearer of his party to personally render his appreciation to individuals and groups who supported him in the elections and subsequently in the court petition such as his co-petitioners, his family and the officials and supporters of the party. He personally congratulates his opponent, John Mahama through the use of the pronoun “I” to construct a favourable image of himself and present himself as a good politician. He uses the pronouns “my” and “me” to further deepen his personalization of things around him such as his life, his family, his political future, and even the party. This is seen in the lines below

• I have called President John Dramani Mahama and I have now congratulated him on being elected the fourth president ... AA 11
• I am grateful to my co-petitioners, Jake Obetsebi Lamptey and Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia for their hard work, dedication and their commitment ... AA 13
• My gratitude goes also to the Lawyers and the technical team for their unbelievable hard work and sacrifices. AA 14
• I must also thank my party the NPP, the officials, the foot-soldiers and supporters for their unflinching support and belief in me. AA 17
• I also want to thank my daughters and my wife, Rebecca, for their love and extraordinary support and belief in me. AA 19
• I am sure there are many people wondering what I envisage for my political future. AA 22

The speaker uses the exclusive “we” and its variants “our” and “us” to refer to himself and his party, the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Politicians use of the first person plural pronouns to “create the impression of a symmetrical relation that holds among a people fighting the same (political) cause, which is presented in such a way that the interest of the country matters most” Adegoju (2005, p. 51). This is realised in Akuffo Addo’s use of “our disappointment” in AA 11 to indicate the party’s collective disappointment at the court ruling yet for the love of the country and their understanding of democratic principles, they accept the results although with reservations. This shows the political maturity of the speaker and his party and positivity in their attitudes and stances to their electoral defeat. The use of “our disappointment” in AA 11 also helps the speaker to share the load of the defeat with the party to relieve himself a little by associating the defeat to the whole party as explicated below.

• Even in our disappointment we can take pride in the way we have conducted ourselves. AA 10
• Even in our disappointment we can take pride that the NPP has again led the way in deepening Ghana’s democracy. AA 11
• In other words, we might not have been given the ruling we sought, but thanks to our efforts, we can hopefully look forward to an improved electoral process .... AA 13
• I am grateful to my co-petitioners, Jake Obetsebi Lamptey and Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia for their hard work, dedication and their commitment as we pursued the legal options available to us. AA 14
To my party, the NPP, I say we have a lot to be proud of; there are more than three years left in this political cycle to be a worthy opposition, and also position ourselves for the battle of 2016. AA 31

The speaker uses the inclusive forms of the first person plural pronouns such as “we”, “our” and “us” to inclusively refer to all Ghanaians as the recipients of his advice to marshal their collective efforts to deal with the challenges facing the nation. The use of the inclusive “us” repairs the separation between the NPP and the other political parties who took part in the elections. Bramley (2001) says that “the use of “all of us” and “us all” invokes an inclusivity of every one. ‘All’ is a mass universal pronoun enabling the ambiguity of who is included in ‘us’ to be dissolved” (p. 115). The speaker also uses ‘all of us’ and “us all” to reiterate that the challenges faced by the country are not only affecting one political party but rather the whole country which needs the collective collaboration of all and sundry to help solve. The speaker presents himself in a good light as a good politician who does not care about his party alone but also about progress and welfare of the people in general as presented in the lines below

- The whole world has watched us in wonder and admiration. AA 26
- It is now up to all of us Ghanaians to put the dispute behind us and come together to iron out our differences, ease the tensions among us, and come together to build our country. AA 28
- There are myriad problems facing us as a people. AA 29
- This is the time for us all to come together and work to find solutions to the challenges that confront our people. AA 30

‘Their’ and “all of them” can be used in contexts where the speaker constructs a group of people with whom s/he is affiliated but that is still ‘other’. Akuffo Addo takes up a positive position towards the ‘other’ invoked by the use of ‘their’ by making a positive evaluation of the groups referred to by ‘their’. The groups which are invoked by the use of ‘their’ in this context includes the speaker’s co-petitioners, Jake Obetsebi Lamptey (party chairman) and Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, (running mate) used in AA 14, his lawyers and the technical team in AA 15, his well-wishers in AA 18 and his daughters and wife, Rebecca in AA 20. All the “their” referents above are people who have positive political, marital and blood relationships with the speaker which therefore creates an image of a good relationship in an affiliative context. In order to put all his “their” referent groups into one group, he uses the deitic phrase “all of them” which according to Bramley (2001), evokes inclusivity of every one in order to put all the different groups under one umbrella as presented below.

- I am grateful to my co-petitioners, Jake Obetsebi Lamptey and Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia for their hard work, dedication and their commitment ...AA 14
- My gratitude goes also to the Lawyers and the technical team for their unbelievable hard work and sacrifices. AA 15
- I am grateful to all the well-wishers for their prayers. AA 17
- I must also thank my party the NPP, the officials, the foot-soldiers and supporters for their unflinching support and belief in me. AA 18
- I also want to thank my daughters and my wife, Rebecca, for their love and extraordinary support. AA 20
- I am grateful to all of them. AA 22

6. Conclusion

This study has attempted an analysis of the use of personal deixis in concession speeches of John Mahama and Akuffo Addo. Applying a Critical Discourse Analytical Theory, it tries to unmask varied ways in which the speakers react to their electoral defeat through the use of personal deixis. An insight is provided in this study into how the speakers position themselves in relation to their defeat and how such positioning serves the speakers’ interests. The study reveals that Akuffo Addo personally
distances himself and party from the defeat by disagreeing with the court’s ruling yet exercises respect for the court’s decision while John Mahama accepts the defeat and tries to recount his achievements in order to present himself a good politician. The study lends credence to Taiwo’s view that language is a heavily loaded vehicle which aids speakers to consciously or unconsciously achieve various effects (Taiwo, 2007).

7. References


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