

LEADERSHIP IDEOLOGY AS A FORM OF REPRESENTATION IN THE INAUGURATION SPEECHES OF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO

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Abstract

Presidents of nations have variously used their political speeches to express ideological nuances. Consequently, scholars have examined the various dimensions of language use by political leaders and the ends such use are meant to meet. As many as these studies appear to be, literature is scanty on how former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo deploys linguistic categories in his inauguration speeches to express leadership ideology. This study examines the way power and leadership are expressed in Obasanjo's two inauguration speeches. It adopts Norman Fairclough's discourse socio-cultural model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explain Obasanjo's power consciousness which characterises his eight-year democratic government. From Obasanjo's language repertoire, his two inauguration speeches are purposively sampled as they supposedly provide a blueprint for how he deploys power expressions in a democracy. Linguistic features such as pronouns, assertions, allusions and idioms are subjected to descriptive linguistic analysis to bring out the leadership rhetoric in the inauguration speeches. The study reveals that Obasanjo deploys linguistic features for self-assertion and to portray himself as the messiah needed to heal Nigeria of its ailments.

Keywords: Speeches, Critical Discourse Analysis, leadership ideology, inauguration speeches, Olusegun Obasanjo

1. Introduction

The concept of ideology could be traced to Destutt de Tracy (1796) who conceived it to mean the science of ideas. The word became later popularised through the writings of the late philosopher, Karl Marx. Today, the definitions of ideology are expanded and modified so much that it enjoys prominence in social and political thoughts. Ideologies, according to van Dijk (2003) are belief systems that are socially shared by the members of a group of social actors. This group could be political, social or professional. By their nature, ideologies are fundamental. They capture, control and organise socially shared norms and beliefs. They are used to enact the domination of a particular group to the detriment of another. Leaders use ideology to control just as politics involves intrigues and power play. Historically, the concept of ideology is deeply rooted in political theory because ideology is a set of ideas about politics. It is almost impracticable to discuss political activities without mentioning the guiding ideologies because, as Omotola (2009) notes, ideology represents a typically crucial element of political parties and

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their activities.

Juxtaposing politics and ideology, Shively (1997) argues that ideology is a continually developing organised set of ideas about politics that assists in making sense of a number of political questions. Corroborating the above, Nnoli (2003, p. 13) posits that “ideology is a systematised and interconnected set of ideas about the socio-economic and political organization of society”. The inter-relatedness of politics and ideology is further expressed in Lezek’s (2007) definition. According to him, ideology is a set of political belief systems and an action-oriented set of political ideas that articulate or embody class or political interests. He opines that an ideology is not only an officially sanctioned set of ideas used to legitimise a political system or regime but also an all-encapsulating political doctrine that claims a monopoly of truth. Similarly, Minogue (2002) establishes a relationship between ideology and political systems by arguing that an ideology is a “coherent set of ideas that provides the basis for organised political action whether this is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power” (p. 105). Judging from its various definitions, it could be argued that ideologies are diverse and are supposed to serve various functions. Its diversity, notwithstanding, one of the most popular ideologies across the globe is political ideology.

Political ideology makes tacit reference to some social order either as an affirmation or a rejection of such social systems (Freeden, 2001; Knight, 2006). Political ideology explains how political change is achieved. According to Jost, Federico and Napier (2009), ideological orientation has influence on political attitudes and behaviours. As a brand of political ideology, leadership or messianic ideology in texts manifests when the text producer uses language to portray himself as the messiah who could restore lost hope as well as provide direction and guidance to his followers. The leadership of a country provides guidance and direction to the masses. If the leadership does not get things right, the nation would be disillusioned and vice versa. Messianic/leadership ideology manifests in the way leaders attempt to influence the thinking patterns and behaviors of their subordinates (Ranil, 2010). It manifests in different aspects of scholarship, and as Ranil (2010) argues further, leadership ideology involves modeling.

Scholars have, over the years, concerned themselves with the way political leaders express their ideologies through the machinery of language. Rogers (2003) and Wodak (2007) stress the symbolic role of language in people’s construction of ideology and justify that language is used to explain different kinds of ideologies in various ways and at various levels. Studies such as Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) and Dirven, Hawkins and Sandicioglu (2001) also place ideology in some form of potential underlying language practice because, according to them, ideological nuances in language use are sometimes implicit. One aspect of such overlap between language and ideology in the social context is inherent in the notion that language is a tool deployed in the instantiation of ideology. The relationship of language and ideology is clearly established and basic that it is difficult to see them operate

in isolation from one another. This is because “ideology is understood in its roles as a promoter of language” (Zaidi, 2007, p. 71) and language is a preeminent form of ideology (Fairclough, 1991).

Similarly, there is a connection among language, ideology and power. Language often serves as the tool for expressing both ideology and power just as power is, oftentimes, expressed in ideology. Rudyk (2007) posits that language is a fundamental social institution and, thus, is inherently linked with power and domination even in the freest democracy. Language reflects and has an impact on power structures. Language manifests its dynamism in social and political situations. It is viewed as a driving force directed at changing people’s opinions, politics and society. It is an instrument for or against enlightenment, emancipation and human rights. The centrality of language is also so intense that it is intricately related to beliefs, opinions and ideologies (van Dijk, 2008). Bearing the above in mind, Zaidi (2007) posits that language and ideology as instruments in the hands of the powerful have an overwhelming hold on people; the ability to convince and be convinced, persuade and be persuaded and the possibility of establishing the distinction between the in-group and the out-group.

Thus, it is almost impossible to find a site of social practices where language and ideology do not play a major role. To illustrate the interrelatedness of language, ideology and power in political speeches, Oha (1994), Ajewole-Orimogunje (1996), Oni (2012) and Akinwotu (2016) consider the way Nigerian leaders, both during the military and democratic dispensations, assert themselves, instantiate domination and further suppress opposition groups through the use of language in their political discourses.

Additionally, speeches of Nigerian presidents in the Fourth Republic have been variously appraised. Adetunji (2006), Adeoye (2009), Adedun and Atolagbe (2011), Abuya (2012), Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere (2012), Oni (2012), Ademilokun (2015) and Adegbenro (2017) focus on the linguistic analyses of the speeches of Olusegun Obasanjo, Umar Musa Yar’Adua, Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari. Abuya (2012) considers a pragma-stylistic analysis of Goodluck Jonathan’s inaugural speech while Adetunji (2006), and Adedun and Atolagbe (2011) investigate the use of deixis in Obasanjo’s speeches and a discourse analysis of Obasanjo’s farewell speech to Nigerians. Adegbenro (2017) carries out a contrastive analysis of the rhetorical features inherent in the first inauguration speeches of both Olusegun Obasanjo and Barack Obama. A study of the inclusion/exclusion dichotomy forms the fulcrum of Adetunji’s (2006) study. He observes that the deixis ‘we’ is deployed by Obasanjo as a manipulative tool while ‘I’ serves as a form of assertion.

In her case, Oni (2012) compares the way Obasanjo deploys the language of power during his military rule and as a democratically elected president, focusing essentially on lexical relational items such as synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms and collocations. Her study emphasises the way these lexical relational items reflect the leadership ideology of Obasanjo as a Head of State

and as an Executive President. Much as it is plausible for any linguistic unit to suggest an ideological disposition, a major gap in Oni's (2012) study is that beyond the deployment of lexical relational elements, Obasanjo's speeches exhibit a number of other linguistic features and figurative colourations, all of which tilt towards self-assertion.

Emeka-Nwobia (2013) carries out a pragmatic analysis of selected speeches of former Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo. She examines the various meanings associated with the language used by the ex-president. She looks at the way contextual factors interact with linguistic resources in the interpretation of speeches and utterances. Deploying aspects of speech acts theory and CDA, she argues that language is an indispensable social phenomenon necessary in demystifying and carrying out political activities. She investigates the similarities and differences between the commissives deployed by Obasanjo both during the military and civilian administrations, and observes that more forceful commissives are deployed in Obasanjo's civilian speeches than in his speeches as Nigeria's military head. This, according to her, is a conscious effort to elicit patriotism from politicians.

Although the studies mentioned above and several others examine what Nigerian political leaders do with language, the focus of the present study is quite different. None of the studies, to the best of the present researcher's knowledge, has examined the way former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo expressed his powerfulness and leadership ideals as reflected in his inauguration speeches, through pronominalisation, assertion and figurative colouration. This is the gap that this study intends to fill.

2. Olusegun Obasanjo

Born on March 5, 1937 in Ogun State, Olusegun Aremu Obasanjo is a Yoruba and south-wester. He was educated both in Nigeria and the United Kingdom. He became the Nigerian Military Head of State in 1976. He has a history of being the longest serving Nigerian Head of State, having served as Military Head of State for a period of three years and democratically elected president for eight unbroken years. He contested and won the 1999 presidential election under the platform of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP). He was sworn in as a civilian president in May 1999. Obasanjo's first four-year tenure in office ended May 28, 2003. He contested for and won a second term in office in May 2003. In 2007, he handed over power to the late Umar Musa Yar'Adua.

3. Theoretical Framework

The focus of Norman Fairclough's socio-cultural model, which is the theoretical framework for this study, is on the relationship among language, society and power distribution across the various strata of the society. This approach attempts to investigate the distribution of roles amongst the various classes in the society, and seeks to probe the nature of social interactions among these various groups or societies (Fairclough, 1995). Within the socio-cultural approach, an all-encapsulating linguistic analysis is usually carried

out. Linguistic analysis is done in terms of vocabulary, grammar, semantics, the sound system, cohesion as well as organizational structures above the sentence level. Fairclough (1989, p. 93) suggests some questions that assist the analyst in understanding the nature of discourse and aid appropriate textual interpretation. These are as follows: What experiential values do words have? What relational values do words have? What expressive values do words have? What metaphors are used? What experiential values do grammatical features have? What relational values do grammatical features have? What expressive values do grammatical features have? How are (simple) sentences linked together? What interactional conventions are used? What larger-scale structures does the text have?

While the areas of focus in Fairclough's CDA remain text, discourse practices and socio-cultural practices, he identifies three stages of critical discourse analysis which he refers to as the description, interpretation and explanation stages. These stages show how text producers and interpreters draw upon the socially available resources to carry out a robust linguistic analysis. A major reason the socio-cultural method is preferred as theoretical model for this work is its provision for the analysis of linguistics as well as larger-scale elements. Typically, when a method of CDA is used, it is often with the accompaniment of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) which focuses on how speakers of a language generate utterances and texts to convey intended meanings. Linguistic analysis in SFL is systematic and the central theme of SFL is an examination of the functionality of language. SFL as a theory stipulates the possibility of systematically deriving unlimited meanings from a limited choice of words. It enhances the analysis of the various units of grammar in a systematic order. A major reason SFL is used as a supporting model for CDA is that, while it can explain the meaning behind utterances, its scope does not accommodate the explication of ideological biases which is taken care of under CDA.

4. Research Methodology

Data for this study were collected from the two inauguration speeches of former Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo, produced in 1999 and 2003. These speeches were selected because they present the blueprint for his administration. Extracts from the speeches were randomly sampled through a selection of only the features that foreground the ideological preoccupation of the subject. These features include pronouns, declarative expressions, allusion and idiomatic expressions. These linguistic and extralinguistic features are subjected to critical linguistic analysis with a view to showcasing the ideology that they portray. Norman Fairclough's socio-cultural approach to CDA was adopted as theoretical framework because it explains the way linguistic and larger-scale expressions are used to instantiate ideology.

5. Data Analysis

Having provided a background to this study in the previous sections, this section shall focus on the analysis of the selected data.

5.1. Deployment of Pronouns

Pronouns are used in the place of nouns. There are different types of pronouns. These pronouns are very important in the analysis of political speeches. Beard (2000) argues that pronoun analysis influences people's overall perception of the delivered message in political speeches. Similarly, Fairclough (1989) posits that the way people use pronouns particularly in addressing recipients has implications for their interpersonal relationships and the way the receivers are positioned. Furthermore, Brown and Gilman (1960) note that some singular pronouns are used as a form of address to a person of superior power. They also posit that pronouns are used to show solidarity in which case such pronouns help to differentiate among power equals. According to them, the deployment of pronouns to show power and solidarity are different things. For example, superiors are to be respected. Hence, the pronouns that are used to describe them must indicate power.

However, among the superiors, pronouns are used to show solidarity to a specific person or group while such an attitude may not be displayed towards the other. Furthermore, pronouns are used by individuals to express their powerfulness or the lack of it. Pronouns are also used to foreground class stratification. Of the various types, the personal pronouns, which are also described as deixis, are essentially used to substantiate ideology (Aboh, 2008). For example, the pronoun 'we' is used to give a special status to oneself (royal 'we') while it is also used to demarcate between the in-group and the out-group. On the other hand, the personal pronoun 'I' is used for assertion, power and domination. Through the use of 'I', the speakers make themselves visible and portray themselves as the characters at the centre around which all issues revolve. In the selected texts for the research, the various manifestations of pronouns are explored. The focus of this segment is on the personal pronouns, 'I' and 'we' which are predominantly used in the selected speeches. The following are examples:

5.1.1 Leadership as responsibility

The pronoun 'I' is used to establish Obasanjo's projection of leadership as responsibility in the following data:

- a. *I accept this destiny in all humility (OBJ, 1999)*
- b. *I am determined, with your full cooperation, to make significant changes (OBJ, 1999)*
- c. *I pledge to provide leadership that will consolidate this new democratic foundation (OBJ, 2003)*
- d. *I am a firm believer in the good nature of the Nigerian (OBJ, 2003)*

Obasanjo portrays himself as a modest leader who is willing to give responsible leadership to the people. He uses the pronoun 'I' to present himself as the focal person in government. Hence, in (a) above, he sees leadership for himself as destiny; something that is divine and has to be fulfilled. Rather than attribute some yeoman qualities to himself, Obasanjo speaks of accepting the responsibility in humility. Determination is crucial to

success. Thus, in (b), Obasanjo expresses his determination, suggesting that his personal effort is crucial to good governance. His personal effort is what would be spiced up with the electorate's cooperation to achieve the required result. In data (c), Obasanjo pledges to provide good leadership. It should be stressed that the focus in these data is Obasanjo. Hence, he keeps reiterating the pronoun 'I'. The declaration 'I am' in (d) above also underscores the centrality of Obasanjo to Nigerian leadership.

5.1.2 Running a government of inclusion

One of the attributes of a good leader is his/her ability to carry followers along in the decision-making process. Obasanjo portrays himself as one who believes in the axiom that one tree does not make a forest. He expresses his readiness to run a government of inclusion. This is a way of endearing himself to the hearts of Nigerians:

- e. *I am determined to stretch my hand of fellowship to all Nigerians regardless of their political affiliations (OBJ, 1999).*
- f. *I intend to reconcile all those who feel alienated by past political events and will restore the harmony we used to know in this country (OBJ, 1999).*
- g. *I am also determined to build a broad consensus amongst all parties (OBJ, 1999).*

It is noteworthy that even though Obasanjo would not be the only one to run his government (there are usually ministers and other government stakeholders), he prefers to adopt the pronoun 'I' to instantiate his centrality or importance to government. In excerpt (e) above, Obasanjo emphasises his leadership ideology when he expresses the determination and will to 'stretch' the 'hands of fellowship' to all Nigerians. Stretch has the connotation of elasticity and the ability to accommodate. The hands of fellowship also imply friendship, brotherhood and companionship. This means that leadership ideology is the ability of the leader to be accommodating and flexible enough to adapt to changes especially those that would be of positive influence on the people. Any leader who does not possess these qualities may not grow. In (f), He speaks of reconciliation knowing fully well that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve any meaningful result where there are dissensions. By putting the responsibility of reconciliation on himself, Obasanjo presents himself as one who is duly prepared for leadership and one who can conveniently bring people together regardless of their differences. Rigidity and self-centeredness in leadership do not only affect the leader, they have grave implications for the country. Hence, in (g), Obasanjo asserts his determination to build a consensus that would enhance 'national unity'. He repeats the assertion 'I am determined' to express his resolve to be a leader to all and a rallying point for all factions. He also portrays the role of good leadership towards earning a good image for the country all over.

5.1.3 Collectivism

As observed in the deployment of the pronoun 'I' in the examples above, the

personal pronoun 'we' is also used by Obasanjo to establish collectivism as we have in the following data:

- h. *We shall take steps to halt the decline in human development (OBJ, 1999).*
- i. *We shall be firm with them (OBJ, 1999).*
- j. *We shall pursue a dynamic foreign policy to promote friendly international relations (OBJ, 1999).*
- k. *We shall restore military cooperation (OBJ, 1999).*
- l. *We are pleased to note that there are more Nigerians who are openly acknowledging that they have gained democracy dividends (OBJ, 2003).*
- m. *We all have a stake in Enterprise Nigeria (OBJ, 2003).*

The personal pronoun 'we' is plural by convention. This means that it is used to refer to more than one person. The personal pronoun 'we' is used to perform two functions in the data above; to express unity as well as to create a sense of inclusion. In examples h, i, j, k, and l, Obasanjo deploys the plural pronoun to couch a sense of unity between himself and members of his cabinet. He seeks to score a political goal by portraying himself as a leader who is willing to work with members of his team to achieve the desired success. As the president, he speaks on behalf of his cabinet members to show that they have like minds and are willing to deliver on their promises.

In (h), he stresses the need to bring the decline in human development to a halt. He projects himself as one who understands the importance of humans in development and growth. He understands that where there is no human development, there would be decay. He also demonstrates the understanding that government has roles to play and the failure of government to perform its expected role would mean that the governed would not be empowered to perform optimally. In (i), Obasanjo says his government would be firm, stressing that no nonsense would be tolerated from people who might want to bring his administration down. Furthermore, in this same data, the personal pronoun 'we' is used to express inclusion versus exclusion, a demarcation between 'we' as lovers of good and the haters of government. In example (j), Obasanjo claims that the impact of good governance would not only be felt in Nigeria but also in the international community. In (k), he expresses the readiness of his administration to restore military cooperation. This is expected to bring about national integration and security within the borders of the nation. In (l), he adjudges his administration as one that is on track and claims that government's efforts are eliciting positive reactions among the public. In (m), Obasanjo instantiates the need for inclusion in government. He identifies both the rulers and the governed as all important in the governance process. He projects that both parties have roles to play in the actualization of a better society. He stresses the import of role distribution which is very crucial to good and effective governance. This is because where all the burdens of government are rested in one hand, breakdown is imminent but when each stakeholder identifies and plays his role as expected, governance

would be easier.

5.2 Deployment of Assertions

Many of the assertions deployed by Obasanjo in his inauguration speeches tilt towards self-aggrandisement and praise singing of the achievements recorded by his administration. The following data would suffice:

- a. Our campaign slogan is: The leadership you can trust (OBJ, 2003).
- b. The improvement in the last four years dwarfs the total activities in the previous 30 years (OBJ, 2003).
- c. We have markedly improved the conditions of service of public sector employees (OBJ, 2003).
- d. The private sector is reporting significant increase in business activities and legitimate profit (OBJ, 2003).
- e. No Nigerian asylum seekers (OBJ, 2003).
- f. Our image as a pariah nation is erased for good (OBJ, 2003).
- g. In four years, our status as a respected nation has grown (OBJ, 2003).
- h. Corruption, the greatest single bane of our society today, will be tackled head-on at all levels (OBJ, 1999).
- i. It is our firm resolve to restore Nigeria fully to her previous prestigious position (OBJ, 1999).

In (a), Obasanjo attempts to impress it on his followers to have confidence in his administration. He wants them to view his government as one that they could repose confidence in. Like a saviour-figure in (b, c and d), Obasanjo projects that the different sectors of the nation witnessed improvement in just four years. In (e, f, and g), he mentions that the impact of good governance brought about by his administration is being felt within the country and in the international community. He creates the impression that his government has made Nigeria so peaceful and conducive so much that people no longer seek asylum elsewhere. He uses the pronoun 'our' to represent collective effort geared at gaining international recognition and to give the masses a sense of belonging. This is because of the perception that leadership of inclusion is usually more successful and acceptable than leadership that excludes the people. Obasanjo portrays his good leadership attribute by claiming that he has run a government of inclusion.

It is noteworthy that the seriousness of the leader of a nation goes a long way in determining whether other world leaders would be willing to trade with him or otherwise. The purported national stability experienced during Obasanjo's administration brought her respect in the comity of nations. He summarises his achievement in office in the assertion: 'in four years, our status as a respected nation has grown'. This shows accountability and responsibility in leadership. Obasanjo seems to realise the need for him to do a periodic assessment of his administration. He knows that people are looking forward to how he utilises the mandate unanimously given to him. Hence, as a mark of transparent leadership, Obasanjo pinpoints the structures he has been able to put in place in four years. In (h), he promises

to fight corruption ‘head-on’ and at ‘all levels’ meaning that the fight against corruption would be total and comprehensive. In (i), he speaks of his ‘firm resolve’ to restore the glory of Nigeria. This depicts Obasanjo’s determination, giving it all it takes to achieve the goal of making Nigeria better. As it is with his deployment of pronouns, Obasanjo uses assertions to enunciate individual as well as collective roles in nation building. It must, however, be noted that in both cases, there is more emphasis on Obasanjo’s abilities than on collective efforts.

5.3. Exophoric Features of Leadership Ideology

Fairclough (1989) observes that certain extralinguistic elements are used as analytical tools in critical discourse analysis. These extra-linguistic structures which are also referred to as larger-scale structures manifest in the data for this study. These devices, according to Fairclough (1989), are necessary tools for instantiating power and ideology in texts and talks. Plus, extralinguistic analysis of language refers to that level of analysis which is beyond linguistic interpretation and explanation. This level of analysis is considered exophoric because special grammatical markings, in this case, allusions and idiomatic expressions/clichés are used to make reference to issues in the context of the speaker. Examples of these features are presented subsequently:

5.3.1. Allusion

Even though Bloor and Bloor (2007) identify linguistic categories such as quotation and allusion as features required to achieve intertextuality in a text, Fairclough (1989) group this as figurative colouration or large-scale structures. Allusion refers to an indirect reference to something that is supposed to be known but not explicitly mentioned. It also refers to a covert indication of something. Allusion is used by Obasanjo to attribute the healer, restorer and savior character to himself. These are evident in the following example:

a. We will heal Nigeria (OBJ, 2003).

In several portions of the Holy Bible, God promised to heal the nations, which he actually did. One of such nations that experienced the healing powers of God is Israel. It is, therefore, plausible to argue that God, the Creator, possesses the most potent healing powers. This argument is supported by the maxim: ‘doctors treat but God heals’ which is widely used among medical professionals. This is to show that even trained medical doctors accept their fallibility as mortals, especially when it has to do with handling human health. They also largely attribute the ability to heal to God. So, if God is the healer, what Obasanjo subtly does is to attribute the power of the almighty (to heal) indirectly to himself. Moreover, it is only a sick person or thing that usually goes through the process of healing. This suggests that Obasanjo perceives Nigeria to be a sick entity which could only be healed by him, the special and anointed one. Furthermore, the medical profession is a very honorable and prestigious one. People have often said that medical doctors are the most powerful after God because their profession has to do with human

lives. Hence, by attributing an attribute in the medical profession to himself, Obasanjo portrays that he possesses some curative powers. Importantly, he attributes the healing power of God to himself; he presents himself in the frame of a messiah who has the powers to heal a sick nation/entity. Another example will suffice:

- b. I humbly accepted the mantle of leadership of this country as determined by the mandate offered to me by the results of the preceding elections (OBJ, 2003).

Reference is made to Elijah's mantle in the Holy Bible (2 Kings, chapter 2). It is reported in this Bible passage that Elisha caught Elijah's mantle while the latter was being translated to heaven. Elijah's mantle consequently helped Elisha to find his path in the Christian Ministry. This mantle also triggered Elisha's superior performance. In essence, a mantle is considered a spiritual tool which aids better performance. Obasanjo's allusion to the mantle portrays him as one who has been equipped with the paraphernalia of leadership, and the anointing to perform better/outshine his predecessors. The allusion also portrays him as a political prophet to the nation. He creates the impression that he has a kind of responsibility as a political leader to redirect and reposition the country. The message Obasanjo expresses through the allusion of the mantle is that: The nation is sick and needs a healer and prophet with the powers of Elijah (whom he replicates) to transform it.

5.3.2. Idioms and clichés

There are a number of idioms and clichés in the speeches of Obasanjo selected for this study. The following are examples:

- a. There will be no sacred cows (OBJ, 1999).
- b. We will leave no stone unturned to ensure the sustenance of democracy (OBJ, 1999).
- c. It is imperative that we nip this in the bud because religion mixed with politics portends destruction (OBJ, 2003).
- d. We identified and warned against the attitude of business as usual as a potential enemy of our vision (OBJ, 2003).

Idioms and cliché are used by Obasanjo to assert power in his speeches. In (a), the assertion that there would be 'no sacred cow' is a threat or exertion of power. Obasanjo seems to say that he would deal with any erring individual and that disciplinary measures would not be one-sided. It takes a man who has power to issue such a threat. It is also a call on all concerned to sit up or face sanctions. By stating that he would leave no stone unturned in data (b), Obasanjo expresses confidence, determination and power. It buttresses Obasanjo's earlier claim that there would be no sacred cow. The reforms would be total, it would cut cross every sector. To nip something in the bud (c) is to checkmate and possibly control something from going out of hand. It takes an empowered person to control another person or situation.

As in (c), it takes an empowered person or one who is perceived to be in charge/on top of a situation or in control to stem the tide or checkmate

something as we have in (d). Anyone cannot just singlehandedly and decisively stem the tide of violence. Such a person must be a security agent or a leader who is empowered to do so. By stressing the need to stem the tide of violence, Obasanjo portrays himself as, probably, a Chief Security Officer. This is also a show of powerfulness. In (d), he says governance would not be business as usual. Obasanjo thus projects an end to the laissez faire attitude exhibited by people. He assures that government under him would be stricter and firmer. This is an expression of power.

6. Conclusion

This study focused on the analysis of the linguistic indices of leadership ideology in the inauguration speeches of former Nigeria's president, Olusegun Obasanjo. Obasanjo's inaugural speeches are inspiring. One of the possible reasons for this is the circumstances surrounding his emergence as president or probably because, at that time, Nigerians had become unfamiliar with the ideals of proper democratic governance after the long period of military interregnum. Expectedly, Obasanjo used his first inauguration speech to present himself as ready to rebuild a seemingly dying nation. The speech is full of a number of promises and assertions. The tone in Obasanjo's second inaugural speech is less emotional. It is more affirmative and direct. This is probably because having spent four years in office already, Obasanjo thought he had a deeper sense of responsibility because he was expected to have fully grasped the nature of his task.

The data revealed further that Obasanjo largely has a strong disposition to power. Various linguistic feature such as pronouns, assertions, allusion and idioms are used to underscore this assertion. These features also inherently reveal Obasanjo's leadership ideology as assertive, forceful, power conscious and accommodating. Also, leadership tenets such as self-aggrandisement, messianic tendencies, inclusive governance and role sharing manifest in the speeches. Of these, those that focus on Obasanjo's individual strengths reverberate more. His deployment of pronouns is apologetically forceful just as the assertions. There is emphasis on individual strength in the allusion deployed and the idioms deployed are also quite forceful. Nonetheless, the data reveal Obasanjo's belief in collectivism. He sees leadership as important as followership such that the failure of one could lead to the collapse of the system. His ability to be assertive when necessary and still promise to pursue a government of inclusion all sum up to make good leadership.

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