

Pragmatic Affordances of the Theme of National Integration in Political Memoirs of Olusegun Obasanjo, Nasir El-Rufai and Goodluck Jonathan

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Abstract

*Scholarly interventions have largely neglected how political actors' actions reveal contextual properties of the events related to national integration reported in the memoirs written by Nigerian political leaders. As a response to this lacuna, this paper explores the themes, contexts and pragmatic force of the question of national integration in three purposively selected political actors' memoirs in Nigeria – Olusegun Obasanjo's *My Watch*, Nasir El-Rufia's *The Accidental Public Servant* and Goodluck Jonathan's *My Transition Hours*. The paper identifies four themes (national and strategic representation, national unification and national interest, electoral fairness, and broad-mindedness) which are wrapped within three broad contexts (cognitive, social and political) and which assign illocutionary force to the writers' construction of national integration at different levels of interactivity and governance. The paper concludes that the selected political memoirs chronicle Nigerian leaders' dispositions to the country's fragile democratic texture and produce pragmatically-driven models of national integration and effective governance.*

Keywords: Contextual affordances, national integration, national interest, Nigeria, political memoirs, pragmatic affordances

1. Introduction

National integration, which captures the citizenry's consciousness of a unifying socio-geographic identity, and thus isomorphic to national cohesion, is a quest that lies at the heart of most societies that are multi-ethnic and, therefore, sometimes polarised along social and political lines. This situation holds true for Nigeria which is a multiculturally-diverse country confronted

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with the crisis of national integration since it gained Independence from the colonial grips in 1960. Interestingly, since the 1960s, some Nigerian leaders have documented their political and leadership experiences in memoirs which reflect the intricacies of ethnicity, culture and politics in and beyond their terms of governance and which have shown their different approaches and attitudes to governance. Among other themes, these texts display contents of integration, and disintegration combined with societal positives and negatives capable of defining and finding borders for national cohesion or non-cohesion.

Although the memoirs are well known among several circles of Nigerians because their publications are often heralded with heavy political publicity, they have been largely unpopular as texts deserving rigorous academic attention given the socially-influenced and pre-theoretical perception associated with them more as documentaries of mere, sometimes ‘doctored’ political events, than as true and painstaking accounts of statesmanship. It is important, however, to note, contrary to this view, that our survey of the memoirs, particularly those selected for this study, indicates that they possess sufficient ideational and stylistic contents, reflective of national (dis)integration, for research. Yet, the selected texts, namely, *My Watch* by Former President Olusegun Obasanjo (henceforth Obasanjo), *My Transition Hour (MTH)* by Former President Goodluck Jonathan (henceforth Jonathan) and *The Accidental Public Servant (APS)* by Former Governor Nasir El-Rufai (henceforth El-Rufai) have received scant attention from scholars in spite of their huge thematic resources. With the exception of Odebunmi (2019) which focuses on the “bush” conceptualisation (Caffi 2002; Mey 2017) in Obasanjo’s *My Watch*, and Ugoala (2020), which addresses face mitigation strategies in Jonathan’s *MTH*, most other interventions on the texts are book reviews, newspaper commentaries and blurbs which appear too intellectually limited to provide critical access to the writers’ engagements with the important question of national integration and leadership.

What is available in the literature in some quantity are studies such as Opanachi (2009) and Ubong and Effiong (2012) which deal with the political speeches of some of these leaders, some of which are incorporated into the selected texts by the writers. Besides the unavailability of studies on the selected memoirs, the question of national integration has not equally enjoyed attention from the pragmatic perspective. Studies on the discourse of national integration in Nigeria bifurcate into those that are non-language-based (Egwu 2018; Ogonnaya and Oshinfowokan 2015; Joshua 2019; Ubani 2014; Akinyetun 2020; Edosa 2014) and those that are language-based (Ralph,

Ongarora and Matu 2016; Baji 2019; Ajala 2017; Ezeobi, Mbachu, and Chukwuji 2019; Chattaraj 2021; Ojo and Taiye 2020; Ohia 2018). While the former cover history, politics, security and identity, the latter encompass other areas of language studies than pragmatics. Importantly, none of the dimensions considers a focus on memoirs. This means that the present research (and the larger project under which it is conducted as indicated in the introduction to the special issue) is more or less one of the most extensive studies on the texts, and naturally the first to establish a link between pragmatics and national integration. Consequently, this study bears the potential to provide material to occupy the vacuum in the scholarship on political memoirs in Nigeria and their ability not only to point to issues of national integration but also to explore some solution paths to dealing with the entrenched disintegration, and by fair implication, governance debacle, in large measure. To provide these interventions, the study addresses the following objectives:

- i. to account for thematic and social indications of national integration in the texts; and
- ii. to examine the contextual and pragmatic force affordances of the national integration resources in the texts.

In Section 2 below, we highlight the key features of a memoir in connection with the three texts being studied; in Section 3, we present the theoretical resources on which our analysis is built; in Section 4, we provide the methodology; in Section 5, we present the analysis and findings of the study; and in Section 6, we conclude the research.

2. The Memoir Genre and the Texts in Focus

Memoirs are texts focused on the writer's personal experiences through a given period of time or a lifetime. They "create a unique self in discourse, exemplifying the human desire to connect, construct and share life experiences as data to support a claim" (Osisanwo and Adegbenro, 2021, p. 1072). They are always personal or private stories told from the point of view of the writer, and provide the writer's subjective accounts of their experiences and interactions with people. However, while it is often the case that memoir writers heighten certain favourable events and dim unfavourable ones, blatant mendacity is rare in most of the narratives, thus giving a level of credibility to the quintessentially subjective account. In addition, given that memoirs are products of amassed experiences garnered in active service or retirement, they are often stuffed with a hindsight, reflecting the writers' key activities and interventions while in responsible roles. They are, thus, sometimes used as repair, advisory and panacea mechanisms.

The above features of memoirs are captured fully or partially in all the texts studied for this research. Obasanjo's *My Watch* is a three-volume memoir on the writer's leadership experiences as the president of Nigeria. The first volume, *My Watch: Early Life and Military* focuses on his birth, childhood, early life, cultural roots, job as a soldier, and leadership experience as Head of State; the second, *My Watch: Political and Public Affairs* (henceforth *My Watch*) which has been selected for this research, places attention on his two terms as a civilian president in Nigeria; and the third, *My Watch: Now and then*, concentrates on aspects of his life reflective of a mixture of his pre-presidency, presidency and post-presidency times. The *Accidental Civil Servant* narrates Nasir El-Rufai's experiences as a public servant in his role as an adviser for the military government of Abdulsalam Abubakar in 1998, the Director General of the Bureau for Public Enterprises and later as the minister of the Federal Capital Territory under President Olusegun Obasanjo between 1999-2007, and a member of the elite corps of economic reformers between 2003 and 2007. It equally devotes attention to the writer's childhood and early schooling, including his tenacity and resilience in the face of adversities especially after the demise of his father prior to his enrolment in school. *My Transition Hours* focuses predominantly on the point of his leadership when he had to hand over power to General Muhammadu Buhari as his successor and return to Otueke, his hometown. However, a few flashes of events prior to or post-dating the moment are found inserted into the narrative to scaffold the main accounts.

3. Theoretical Resources

The study benefits from aspects of three theories: socio-integration theory, contextual models, aspects of the socio-cognitive theory and Sbisa's model of speech acts. Each of the theoretical categories is briefly developed below.

The concept of "social integration", which was theorised by Durkheims in 1892, and which captures the principles that define the relationships between people and groups in larger societies and how they relate with one another, is popular in the fields of sociology, psychology, and cultural/ethnic studies, among others. According to Jeannotte (2008), social integration relates to policy development in contemporary society which is interested in achieving stability, equity, tolerance, equality and inclusivity. This range of coverage makes the conceptualisation of social integration suitable to explain the foci of the selected memoirs which document events centred on unification or disintegration of Nigeria among other concerns. Blau's (1960) further intervention which premises social integration on mutual attraction is

instructive for the understanding of the theory. This attraction was connected to the need for people to possess something of value to give to the larger people. In his conception, the dominant people must be impressed in order for the minority group to gain respect and membership. Blau (1960) identifies a combination of attractiveness and approachability as key concepts to achieving successful social integration. Complementarily, Jeannotte (2008) notes three principles that are necessarily invoked in the realisation of social integration: “social inclusion”, “social cohesion” and “social capital.

Contexts and/or contextual models have been conceptualised as macro (broad) or micro (narrow) pragmatic resources (Firth 1957; Hymes 1964, Lewis 1977; Ochis 1979; Halliday 1978; Auer 1995 Mey 2001; Fetzer 2002; Odebunmi 2016). The broad perspective is considered more relevant to the present study with its focus on the general communicative and narrative orientation the writers devote to the thematic concerns of the texts. It trifurcates into cognitive, social and linguistic types which respectively embody shared mental representations among interactants, the “constraints imposed on meaning and understanding of events by communicative encounters” (Odebunmi 2016, p. 9) and the influence exerted on lexical co-occurrences. Importantly, it is characterised by the participants, their physical and verbal acts, and the structural and lexical environments providing interpretative anchorages for discourses. Closely connected to the concept of context are some aspects of the Kecskesian socio-cognitive model which found equally instructive for the analysis of the memoirs. In the main, the concepts of apriori and emergent common grounds are considered useful in respectively orienting to the knowledge shared by interactive/communicating parties prior to actual encounters created and shared while the encounter is in progress.

Sbisa’s (2006) model of speech acts, which rests on and advances the foundation laid in Austin (1962) and Searle’s (1969) versions of speech act theory, makes up the third theoretical orientation of this research. The thrust of Sbisa’s argument is that the earlier models defined speech acts by the presence of a performative force marked by explicit verbs which constitute the illocutionary act, leaving unaccounted the force underlying illocutionary acts performed without explicit performative verbs. Three questions were, therefore, raised by her: “How do performative utterances really work? How is the illocutionary force of speech acts indicated, when no explicit performative formula is used? How are explicit and inexplicit ways of performing the same

illocutionary act related to each other?" (Sbisa, 2006, p.9). These questions led to her focus on illocutionary force-indicating devices (IFIDs) and non-illocutionary force-indicating devices (Non-IFIDs). IFIDs, connected to direct acts, are largely ascribed the constructional components of mood and modal verbs, intonation, adverbs, connectives, extra-linguistic gestures and contextual features while Non-IFIDs, considered co-terminus with indirect acts, are attributed the resource of inferences aided by the socio-cultural contexts (Sbisa, 2006).

4. Methodology

The three political memoirs selected for this research have purposive motivations. First off, they are eminently illustrative of the question of national integration and governance styles in Nigeria. Secondly, while only one text each has been published by both El-Rufai and Goodluck Jonathan, and each has been sampled, at least two have been published by Olusegun Obasanjo, namely, *My Command* and *My Watch*. Our choice of the second volume of *My Watch* is due to its huge information on Obasanjo's presidential experience and is, thus, the only one of the three books in the volume that provides comparable data to El-Rufai's *The Accident Public Servant (APS)* and Jonathan's *My Transition Hours (MTH)*. *My Command* documents Obasanjo's military career and military leadership experiences, and was, on the basis of this thematic scope, considered incomparable to *APS* and *MTH* and irrelevant when placed within the parameters of democratic governance focus taken as our selection preference. Thematic coding, which was instrumental to the top-down method used to analyse the excerpts taken purposively from all the texts, was employed to categorise the features of the data connected to the objectives. While the socio-integration theory is used to analyse the thematic aspects of the objectives, the models of context, Kecskes' soci-cognitive approach and Sbisa's model of speech acts are engaged in an interpenetrating manner, sometimes in complex concert with the socio-integration theory, to account for the objectives related to contextual and pragmatic force features. A few supplemental insights (explained at the point of use) are taken from Leech's (1983) politeness principles to support a section of the analysis.

5. Analysis and Findings

The analysis of the texts is conducted at three levels as per the objectives of the research. At each of these levels, analytical features are aggregated and disaggregated to show the convergences and divergences of the writer's

orientations to national integration and leadership. The objectives are topicalised in the sections below as compasses for the analysis.

5.1 National integration Themes and Contextual Affordances in *My Watch*, *APS* and *MTH*

Four themes related to national integration are found in the three texts:

- a. National and strategic representation
- b. Unification and national interest
- c. Electoral fairness
- d. Broad-mindedness

These themes, together with the contexts in which they occur, are developed in turns below.

5.1.1 National and Strategic Representation

The concept of national representation, which refers to the consideration of the coverage of the entirety of the national spread of Nigeria in political decisions, action and practice, is captured in OBJ's *My Watch* and El-Rufai's *APS*. It is not found in GEJ's *MTH* logically because it is largely an account of his final days in the presidential office.

National representation is operationally conceptualised in two ways in this paper:

- i. National leadership endorsement that cuts across key ethnic and geographical boundaries in Nigeria
- ii. Equitable distribution of political positions, including sometimes, national resources, sensitive to the ethnic and geographical diversity of Nigeria.

While both of these conceptualisations are found in both texts, they have differential representations; for example, there is more prominence of the former in *My Watch* than in *APS* and vice versa. Therefore, to save space, each is connected only to its thematic prominence below.

5.1.2 Leadership Endorsement across Ethnic and Geographical Boundaries

In *My Watch*, OBJ captures national representation as endorsement from key geographical and ethnic constituencies of Nigeria. This, for him, represents the quintessential protocol for a nationally acceptable president. We cite two instances from the text to illustrate this.

First, OBJ reports his reception of large contingents of visitors from key regions of Nigeria shortly after his release from prison by the Abdulsalami interim military government. These visitors are reported to share a common goal: while celebrating his release as victory for both him and the nation, they also appeal to him to contest the presidency in the democratic government (See pp. 8 and 9). These situations point to three contexts: cognitive, socio-cultural and political. The emotional support staged with the visits, demonstrating a combination of cognitive and socio-cultural contexts, indicates the visitors' connection with OBJ's escape from potential danger of death as experienced by political detainees such as MKO Abiola detained at the same time as him (See p. 4). The action equally qualifies as a cultural gesture demanded by the African collectivist socio-cultural dynamics which is, however, meshed with the expression of political intents shown in the visitors' venting of their proposals to OBJ to contest the national presidency.

In addition, in a strictly political context, OBJ visits and consults with key political personalities widely en route to securing their consent for the proposal received to contest the election. These actions are situated in the understanding of the socio-political dynamics and complexity of the Nigerian society which, of necessity, demands strategically locating and tracking down support from groups and individuals. The list in the account of Obasanjo includes traditional rulers (p. 21), religious leaders (p. 22), "leaders of thought" (p. 22), strategically-positioned politicians (pp. 23, 25, 26, etc) and ethnic and political leaders (p. 33).

5.1.3 Equitable Distribution of Political Positions, Including National Resources

In *APS*, one of the ways through which El-Rufai presents the idea of national representation is by evoking power sharing through the zoning of political and bureaucratic posts. According to the writer,

As a legal requirement for a multi-ethnic base for political parties in Nigeria, zoning is a special programme designed to bring people together, and consequently raise national consciousness. (p.138).

While identifying with the adoption of zoning in the Nigerian political system as well as the federal character commission in the civil service, El Rufai expresses some reservations about its implementation which, over the years, has tended to negate the essence of fairness, equity and justice (p.138). His

illocutionary force here is a claim designed to repair a previous concept of zoning.

5.1.4 National Unification/Interest

National unification conceptualised in this research as the careful, deliberate and strategic stringing and maintenance of ethnic and cultural diversities of the country to ensure continuous bonding and co-existence, constitutes the hub of the question of national integration copiously captured by all the writers. It is, however, more prominent in *MTH*, which was designed strictly for that intervention, than in *My Watch* and *APS*, both of which are concerned with much broader national questions.

Four conceptualisations of national unification are manifest in the three texts:

- i. Cohesion as an orientation to objectivity and concessionary output
- ii. Positive and negative behavioural traits as national trans-ethnic qualities
- iii. Membership status and political service strictly as loyalty to national organicity
- iv. Defeat as a tool of national cohesion

Attention is given to each of these below.

5.1.4.1 Conceptualisation of Cohesion as an Orientation to Objectivity and Concessionary Output

This conceptualisation, found only in *My Watch*, considers national integration as the tendency to demonstrate objectivity or fairness and grant appropriate concessions in sensitivity to the national diversity and delicacy of the country. One interesting instance of objectivity or fairness is OBJ's vindication, and logical exoneration, of the Abdulsalami administration (the military government that was instituted following the death of General Sanni Abacha and the one that released OBJ from the imprisonment term he got from the Abacha government) in the death of MKO Abiola contrary to the insinuations among the Nigerian populace (p. 5). This action is contextualised in ethical judgment aligned to emotional balance contra the nature of politics in Nigeria with its jaundiced dimensions evident in the motivation for OBJ's vindication of Abdulsalami.

In terms of granting concessions, the reported readiness of the North to shift power to the South en route to preventing national disintegration (p. 8) is quite instructive. However, thematised in the text as well are OBJ's outright

disregard for certain (ethnic) groups (e.g. the Yoruba leaders), humongous de-profiling of his vice-president and other government functionaries such as El-Rufai, which might be indicative of dis-unification and thus contradictory to his claims to national integration in several aspects of the text.

GEJ perspectivises objectivity and concessions as a demonstration of empathy and sacrifice en route to achieving national cohesion. Two interconnected excerpts from *MTH* explain these points:

A:

I often wonder why my political philosophy which insists that ‘my political ambition is not worth the blood of any Nigerian’ was not attractive to many amongst our politicians. Threats of violence to ‘soak’ people in ‘blood’ were seen as warnings to scare voters away from the polling booth. It was one potent threat everyone knew would be carried out if it caught their fancy (p. 18)

B:

As I have always affirmed, nobody's ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian. The unity, stability and progress of our dear country are more important than anything else. (p. 72)

In the first excerpt, GEJ orients to peace and objective judgment contrary to the position of many Nigerian politicians. In communicating this perspective, he licenses three speech act-inclined inferences:

- a. peace preference pitched against popular violence preference, constructed with the blood-scare entextualisation;
- b. a design of destructive and disruptive elections by GEJ's opponents, constructed with blood metaphors;
- c. an account of foreshadowed violence, constructed with genericised conditionality.

In the second excerpt, GEJ, further perspectivising concessions, expresses his preference of peace and national integration by genericising political selflessness placed against achievement of ambition via bloody violence, and by prioritising national cohesion through preservation of oneness. By choosing the way of peace and averting disintegration, GEJ sacrifices his ambition for the organicity of the nation, thus granting concessions at his own expense. Metaphorical choices demonstrative of bloodlessness and emotive choices illustrative of endearment, combined with social integration lexemes such as

“unity”, “stability” and “progress” produce pragmatic emblems of empathetic leadership.

5.1.4.2 Conceptualisation of Positive and Negative Behavioural Traits as National Trans-ethnic Qualities

Only El-Rufai presents the conceptualisation that embodies a balanced outlook on behavioural traits of ethnic groups, a view that does not stereotype a group or locate the best qualities in any but rather sees positivity and negativity as a pan-human trait, beyond religion, characteristic of all Nigerian ethnic groups. This is aptly illustrated below:

By the time I came to the BPE, my thoughts and life experience had already aligned in one particular direction, which can be summarized in four points. The first was that although Nigeria had a population then of some 120 million people (now more than 160 million), over 500 languages and more than 300 ethnic groups, I had come to the conclusion through my experiences up to that point that there are simply two kinds of people in Nigeria. There were good people and there were bad people, period! Each can be found speaking every language, in every religion, every ethnic group, every village, every town, and every city. In my private sector career, I had been helped more by people from the south of Nigeria despite the fact that they knew me as a ‘northerner’, and I had more often than not been let down by fellow ‘northerners’ perhaps because I grew up knowing more of them. I therefore do not perceive my country and its population through tribal or ethnic lenses. (p. 95)

In this excerpt, the writer, in constructing evaluative speech acts in social contexts, presents himself as a de-tribalised Nigerian who recognises the existence of both good and bad people in every society. The expression, ... “There were good people and there were bad people, period!” presents an absolute tone deeply rooted in El-Rufai’s claimed robust interactions with people from the South and the North whose social qualities have been measured with three instruments: religion, ethnicity and geography. His

conclusion, fed by his experience of more support from the South than from the North where he belongs, by ethnic affiliation, although seems to slightly modify the social proportionality scale he earlier built, still somehow succeeds in conveying a universalist intention relating to de-ethnicisation, a quality he recommends for national integration in Nigeria.

5.1.4.3 Conceptualisation of Membership Status and Political Service as Loyalty to National Organicity

This conceptualisation, largely found only in *APS*, considers national integration as an achievement situated in the individual's affinity with the group and thus perceived as a collective attainment demanding positive inputs from all parties. In other words, national integration is considered achievable only when the national or Nigerian interest is placed above the individual interest. This is established only in the political context and manifest in El-Rufai's reported or claimed position in support of or against the action of some of his associates and bosses. His prime example is his stand against the touted third term agenda of Former President Olusegun Obasanjo which, to him, goes against his concept of national organicity. The extract below demonstrates the basis of his position:

Personally, I took an oath of office which required my loyalty to the federal republic of Nigeria, the Law and the Constitution. I think my loyalty ends where any assault on the national interest, our constitution and our laws begins. I can't out of loyalty to a friend or even to a mentor break the law or violate the Constitution or do something that in my assessment could be wrong, illegal and against Nigeria's overall interest. The third term project fell within that class of situations. (LVII)

Deploying non-IFIDs in large measure, El-Rufai in this excerpt, constructs the following speech acts which establish his membership of the Nigerian State and his political service to the oneness of Nigeria:

- a. Affirming loyalty based on legality: This means that his political actions are geared only towards all activities that can be found within the law of the nation: "I took an oath

of office which required my loyalty to the federal republic of Nigeria, the Law and the Constitution”

- b. Vowing to serve the national interest strictly: This speech act, framed agency-evasively given the non-specificity of anti-national interest actors with the use of a partitive pronominal phrase, “any assault on the national interest...”, indicates El-Rufai’s pledge to pursue interests which are nationalistic, constitutional and legal: “my loyalty ends where any assault on the national interest, our constitution and our laws begins”
- c. De-sentimentalising political relationship in the service of national organicity: Placing his preference of legality over social relationships, camaraderie and emotional ties, El-Rufai constructs objectivising political decisions only within the ambits of the law, thus gate-keeping whatever goes into political action, an example of which is his opposition to OBJ’s third term agenda: “The third term project fell within that class of situations”.

5.1.4.4 Conceptualisation of Defeat as a Tool of National Cohesion

This conceptualisation, shown only in *MTH*, describes the ability to concede defeat in the multi-ethnic setting as a key way to achieve national cohesion. It captures a rare commitment to relinquishing power in the African political context where removing a sitting president through fair or fraudulent elections is a herculean task. One illustration of the conceptualisation is provided below:

I reached for the telephone and placed a call. A peace I had not seen or felt since my political sojourn started, now descended upon me. It told me where I had been in the past six years and where I was then. I had been in a large golden cage. It was large, yes. It was golden, yes. But it was a cage all the same. A glorified prison of power. I thought the process could be made to make inmates feel better doing their time. I smiled at the thought. I waited calmly for the person at the end of my call to pick. “Hello...General Buhari here" "I'm calling to congratulate you" The line was seized by silence

for several seconds. Then we had a brief discussion. I could feel his concern too, which traveled on the line to me with some tenseness in his voice (p.69)

In this text, several speech acts demonstrative of five-phase concessionary considerations in the service of national cohesion are performed in the social, cognitive and political contexts:

Phase 1: Defeat concession completed with the intention to communicate felicitations

Phase 2: Reconciliation of defeat concession with the bliss of shed encumbrances

Phase 3: Expectation of an audience enroute to expression of defeat concession

Phase 4: Expression of defeat concession

Phase 5: Mutually satisfactory acceptance of defeat concession

While this excerpt is dominated by several non-IFID-based and one IFID-based speech acts of conceding defeat, each phase shows specific acts that further elucidate the overall speech act. For example, Phase 1 comes with the speech act of concluding which occurs in two specific intertwining contexts: psychological and physical. Reaching for the phone and placing a call to General Buhari is traceable to Jonathan's psychological settlement of the defeat question, implicating his conviction of the acceptance of his loss of the election. This speech act is endophorically and exophorically co-textualised. In Phase 2, Jonathan's narrative is predominantly contextualised in the cognitive frame which reveals his thoughts and their orientation to his decision and conclusion to accept defeat.

The controlling speech act, which is 'comparing', reflects an interface between the peace that attends his new decision which is accompanied by psycho-social extrication and the burdensomeness of the presidential office he has held for several years. In Phase 3, the speech act of longing is constructed as a cue for expected positive reciprocation of defeat-concession gestures from General Buhari. The intended perlocutionary effect could not guarantee positive perlocution, given the political context in which the whole scenario plays out; hence, Jonathan "waited calmly for the person at the other end of [his] call to pick". This phase foregrounds the obligation of defeat concession co-construction for the happiness of the speech act. Phase 4, with the IFID-based speech act of congratulating, verbalises Jonathan's actual concessionary intent, presupposed in the very cue of congratulation: "I'm

calling to congratulate you". This phase and the fifth phase orient to the realisation of Jonathan's intended perlocutionary effect. In Phase 4, he achieves his expectation of an audience from General Buhari and is able to express his defeat concession. In Phase 5, the utterance, "Hello... General Buhari here", performs the actual perlocution which brings aboard the audience sought by Jonathan and the engagement platform for the expression of defeat concession, overtly contextualised camaraderie and, implicatively, expression of goodwill.

5.1.5 Electoral Fairness

The theme of political fairness, found only in *My Watch* and *MTH*, demonstrates the observer's or writer's perception of equitable conduct of election. This means that electoral fairness as conceived here may or may not necessarily glide along with the perspectives of Nigerians in general or the actual national concept of fairness.

Below, an example from *My Watch* is cited:

Those who had depended solely on their tribal bases in the past could not make it and with my victory and some significant section of the Yorubas not voting for me, a new phenomenon emerged that while the support of your tribe may be desirable, it is impossible for you to make it to the top once you can muster the majority of the constituency which is Nigeria. For me, it also vindicated my steadfast position of Nigeria first. (pp. 45-46)

Here, Obasanjo deploys two non-IFID-based speech acts to commentate on the fairness of elections ultimately hinged on national rather than regional acceptability:

- a. He condemns tribal sentiments as a basis for achieving electoral victory. This presupposes that given the bias that comes with tribal bandwagon support, it is flawed as a way of ensuring electoral fairness: "Those who had depended solely on their tribal bases in the past could not make it"
- b. He extols extra-ethnic, i.e. national, support as the best and most objective determinant of electoral success. This at once points to the national acceptability of the political candidate and indexicates his/her unbiased popularity, and thus by implication, the higher possibility of gaining national cooperation in governance which is ultimately capable of fetching national cohesion.

One example is cited from *MTH* below:

This depicts the months and weeks leading to my unprecedented phone call to General Muhammadu Buhari on the 31 of March, 2015 to concede that he won the presidential election. It is also an effort to capture a certain return trip to my private life in the days which followed that very deliberate and well thought out concession call (p.xix)

Electoral fairness in this excerpt is resident in Jonathan's concession of defeat which gets materialised in his call made to General Buhari as the winner of the election in which he participated as a sitting president. Two speech-act-based inferences are important here. The first is the apriori decision to accept the outcome of the elections as representative of national and popular democratic decision. The second inference is the actual belief in the outcome of the elections and his acceptance of the electoral process and product as fair. Hence, he is prepared to vacate the presidential position without, by inference, not challenging the results of the elections. The mega narratorial speech act in which these inferences are licensed embodies convinced concluded strides in harmony which are intrinsically motivated by the urge for national cohesion.

5.1.6 Broad-mindedness

Broad-mindedness is thematised only in *MTH* as the moral quality and willpower to place individual gains above the interest either of the majority or the individual. While a few discourses exemplify this theme in all the selected texts, more prominent instances are found in *MTH*, a text differentiated by the writer's historically distinguished feat of not only conceding defeat but also the unprecedented willingness to hand-over power without further legal or arms battle and set a new record of power perspective in Africa.

The concept of broadmindedness in the text has three manifestations:

- i. Citizens' trauma conceptualised as a nightmare
- ii. De-personalised considerations
- iii. Saver decisions

We take them in quick turns below:

5.1.6.1 Citizens' Trauma Conceptualised as a Nightmare

This captures passion and compassion deepened in the scare of the horrible effects of violence on the citizenry. The excerpt below illustrates the conceptualisation:

One of the most traumatising moments of my presidency was the cold-blooded murders of youth corpsers [sic] in the north following our victory in 2011. I thought long and hard over the waste. It just did not make any sense. How does a parent lose everything like this? (p. 11)

In this excerpt, Jonathan constructs two non-IFID-based speech acts within the larger narrating discourse function:

- a. Recounting political horror: By saying, "One of the most traumatizing moments of my presidency was the cold-blooded murders of youth corpsers [sic] in the north following our victory in 2011", Jonathan recalls a massacre of the youths connected to his political benefit. The word, "traumatizing" cognicises it as a personally-dispreferred turn of events to him and implicates an avoidance of a repeat of the same event. This cognitive context underlies the entire excerpt.
- b. Emotionalisation of political horror: As a build up to 'a', Jonathan inserts his emotions into the horror question and both implicitly and explicitly condemns it. First, he conceives of the horrible killing as a waste, itself a trauma dominating his psychic domain, licensing implicit condemnation. Second, he overtly condemns the massacre endophorically and exophorically by the referring act of picking out the horror object of the preceding bit of the text as a condemnable scenery with the choice of 'it', and by rationalising the massacre as a preventable hindsight-based occurrence: "It just did not make any sense". Finally, he sympathises with the parents of the massacred youths as a cognitive connection to their trauma ("How does a parent lose everything like this") and further proof of the worthlessness of contesting the outcome of a presidential election loss which, inferentially, could result in the same outcome and further weaken the country's grip on national integration.

5.1.6.2 De-personalised Considerations

The conceptualisation here embodies stripping political decisions of political actors' personal gains particularly in the border between murderous violence and pursuit of political ambition.

Nothing I wanted was worth the blood of a human being, least of all the people I had the direct charge to protect. (p. 43)

In the excerpt above, Jonathan depersonalizes the issues of elections and politics strung around his necessary action of, say, refusing to relinquish power or challenging the results of the 2015 elections in a violence-attractive manner, by performing two illocutionary acts: humanising his political interest (“Nothing I wanted was worth the blood of a human being”) and prioritising the security of the citizenry over his political ambition. Ultimately, both acts fall on the receptacle of broadmindedness to demonstrate Jonathan’s desire of a united nation unravaged by his unbridled keenness to have a hold on presidential power.

5.1.6.3 Saver Decision

Jonathan’s saver decision naturally connects to the two previously discussed conceptualisations of broad mindedness, namely, citizens’ trauma conceptualised as a nightmare and de-personalised consideration. It, thus, represents the cue and action to prevent large scale post-election violence.

I hung up the phone, confident that my decision was right for Nigeria and would have a great impact (probably) on Africa. Could this be the beginning of a fresh perspective on power? One which places personal preference at the base of the basket and raises up the wellbeing of women and children in their millions, who were always the ones who suffer most, when we make the wrong call. (p. 70)

Here, Jonathan narrates his saver action and evaluates it positively in the political, cognitive and social contexts. First, his “I hung the phone” entextualising his earlier defeat concession communication to General Buhari, precedes his self-commendation of his decision as contextually appropriate in the national and continental (African) political framework. Second, in a rhetorical question combined with a long assertive nominal phrase strategically inserted as a response to the rhetorical question, he implicitly recommends his action as a roadmap to political transitions in Africa which orients two Leechian politeness maxims: generosity (“Minimize the expression of beliefs that express or imply benefit to self; maximise the expression of beliefs that express or imply cost to self.”) and sympathy (“minimize antipathy between self and other; maximize sympathy between the

self and other.") (Leech 1983, p. 64). For instance, Jonathan's narrative maximises the cost to himself and recommends the same to African leaders ("One which places personal preference at the base of the basket") by requesting the de-prioritisation of the quest for power. Still orienting to the generosity maxim, combined with the sympathy maxim, he minimises the cost to the other party and maximizes sympathy between him and the party by advocating the protection of the mass victims of wrong political decisions and actions.

6. Conclusions

This paper has identified four themes related to national integration in Olusegun Obasanjo's *My Watch*, Nasir El-Rufai's *Accidental Public Servant* and Goodluck Jonathan's *My Transition Hour*, namely, national and strategic representation, unification and national interest, electoral fairness and broad-mindedness. These themes have been differently connected to four conceptualisations in the three texts in cognitive, social and political contexts: cohesion as an orientation to objectivity and concessionary output, positive and negative behavioural traits as national trans-ethnic qualities, membership status and political service strictly as loyalty to the national organicity, and defeat as a tool of national cohesion. Several speech acts, constructed with and without IFIDs, have been identified in connection with national integration (or sometimes disintegration) tendencies. They have also been shown to be determined by the writers' historical, sociological, cultural, interactive, anthropological, ideological, philosophical, religious and political apriori knowledge, shared or unshared with other characters in the texts, the readership and members of the Nigerian public.

The main and supplemental theoretical principles from socio-integration, contextual, socio-cognitive and politeness paradigms deployed in analysing the memoirs have not only revealed the integration-based themes that govern most of the scope of the texts but have also teased out the pragmatic mechanisms engaged in the discourses to demonstrate writer goals and deductive paths to achieving national integration and effective governance system in Nigeria. Models emanating from our pragmatic reading of the texts such as national organicity achievable through critical political loyalty, electoral fairness hinged on getting national support and on ethnic-neutral sentiments, veritable trust in national leadership irrespective of context-based threats, ethnicity and religion-fluid concept of positive political dispositions and empathetic political judgment transcending tribe and geocentricism are instructive for the achievement of national political cohesion and stable polity.

These are the key discoveries of the current study which extant linguistic studies have not addressed strictly. Thus, differently from and beyond Odeunmi (2019), which is interested in conceptual metaphorisation of leadership styles in Obasanjo's *My Watch* and Ugoala (2020) which analyses facework devices in Jonathan's *MTH*, this study has taken a more functional and pragmatic look at the selected memoirs and shown the potentiality of pragmatics research in extracting practical interventions into the question of national integration and leadership from political memoirs.

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