

## **Pragma-Semantic Affordances of Pronouns as Tools for National Integration in Goodluck Jonathan's *My Transition Hours***

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### **Abstract**

*Extant literature on memoir writing reveals that scholars have examined how some past Nigerian leaders have used their memoirs to negotiate memory and identity in recounting their personal experiences in rising to the challenges of leadership in a politically divisive entity like Nigeria. However, existing studies using the tools of linguistics have not explored how former President Goodluck Jonathan deployed pronominal elements as communicative strategies to re/tell the Nigerian story at critical moments of the country's national history, particularly from his vantage position as president of the country. Working within an eclectic paradigm to analyse select extracts from the memoir, this study examines the pragma-semantic affordances of pronominal elements as tools for consolidating peace and national integration. The study reveals that that Goodluck Jonathan tactically uses the pronouns to indicate inclusiveness and exclusiveness in achieving the coveted national integration dream amidst attaining some other socio-political goals in the Nigerian project.*

**Keywords:** Goodluck Jonathan, memoirs, national integration, patriotism, pragma-semantic affordances, pronouns

### **1. Introduction**

Memoirs are typically written accounts of recollected personal experiences through a given period of the memoirist's life. They could be accounts of events that occurred at specific periods or the totality of one's life experiences. *My Transition Hours* was written by the former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan and published in 2018. Goodluck Jonathan stresses that *My Transition Hours* is a personal and very honest account of his stewardship in the days in which brinksmanship was the order of the day. He saw himself together with his team as those with the responsibility to check the excesses and profiteering tendencies of the political class. *My Transition Hours* is, therefore, a brief account of Jonathan's early experiences in politics, his

ascension to the presidential seat and the final handing over to his successor, President Muhammadu Buhari.

Jonathan was Nigeria's President from 2010 to 2015 after having served as Deputy Governor to Diepreye Alamiесеighа, Governor of Bayelsа State from 2005-2007; as Governor of Bayelsа State following the former governor's impeachment, and as the Vice President of Nigeria from May 29, 2007 to May 5, 2010. The death of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua on May 5th, 2010 paved the way for him to become the President of Nigeria on May 6, 2010. His tenure as the president came to an end through after having lost the 2015 presidential election to Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressives Congress (APC). *My Transition Hours* is, therefore, a subtle way to intimate to the readers his journey before, during and after his presidency (transition). A perusal of the book reveals that he deliberately and strategically deploys certain pronouns to get his readers' attention, express his disgust for certain actions and justify his actions on decisions taken before, during and after his defeat. These strategically selected pronouns in a way serve as rhetorical devices to appeal the sensibilities of the readers on his stance and interventions on some very critical national issues.

There is scant linguistic research and publications on memoirs, especially on *My Transition Hours*. The few available ones focus on Jonathan's communicative strategies on his Facebook page during his administration, while others focus on the politeness strategies deployed in his first inaugural address as Nigeria's president (Ubong & Effiong, 2012). The closest and most recent is Ugoala (2020) which focuses on face mitigation strategies in *My Transition Hours*. There are hardly any studies on *My Transition Hours* that examine the pragma-semantic content of the pronouns and their significance for understanding social and national integration, hence the significance of the present study.

Among other uses, pronouns basically replace nouns and thus function like nouns. They can either occur before their referents (cataphors) or after their referents (anaphors). On the other hand, a possessive determiner distinct from possessive pronouns refers to possessions and typically occur before nouns, i.e., they modify nouns. Pronouns and determiners with their co-occurring constituents often provide readers with background information about their anaphoric and cataphoric referents. Linguistic studies on pronouns abound. On the role that age plays on choice of pronouns in communication, Osifo-Adjei

et al. (2022) observe that age has significant impact on choice of pronouns during communication. Opeibi (2009), while examining M.K.O Abiola's political speeches, also acknowledges that concepts enhance discourse presentation on the perception of the electorate. These studies no doubt contribute to establishing the impact of specific word categories on discourse interpretation. None has, however, examined the role pronouns play in expressing the pragmatic as well as semantic facts embedded in memoirs. As a corollary and in contrast to these studies, an analysis of the choice of pronouns in *My Transition Hours* and their strategic contribution to national integration and good governance will suffice. This leads to the following research questions that will form the judgement parameters for this study:

- i. Are the pronouns deployed in *My Transition Hours* strategic or non-strategic, deliberate or unintentional, effect targeted or not, intended, appropriate or inappropriate?
- ii. How are the various forms of pronouns deployed in *My Transition Hours* relevant in analysing the pragma-semantic notion of national integration?
- iii. Can the pronouns and co-occurring elements serve as classificatory schema for national integration?
- iv. Does *My Transition Hours* contain indices of national integration?

In order to answer the questions above, all pronouns in selected excerpts are isolated based on the pragma-semantic interpretations deducible from their concatenations. Their meanings in isolation as well as in syntactic frames help to identify their effect on the overall notion of national integration being sought based on which thematic indicators such as governance, empathy, inclusivity, peace, national integration, stewardship etc. will be ascertained. Hence, the study does not only examine the thematic and social indicators of national integration but also elucidates the contextual and strategic/non-strategic affordances of national integration resources in the memoir. Data for this study is analysed through the lenses of Grice's (1987) Conversational Maxims, as elaborated upon in Brown and Levinson's (1987), politeness principles, common ground theory, speech acts and social integration theory.

## **2. Statement of Problem**

Extant studies and relevant literature are replete with scholarly efforts to investigate issues relating to national integration in Nigeria. Though a lot seem to have been done from the perspective of language related disciplines (Ralph et al., 2016; Opeibi, 2009; Ajala, 2017; Ezeobi et al., 2019; Chattaraj, 2021;

Ojo & Taiye, 2020; Ohia, 2018) and non-language based disciplines (Ogbonnaya & Oshinfowokan, 2015; Joshua, 2019; Akinyetun, 2020, and Edosa 2014), there exists a gap in investigating memoirs from the choice of pronouns used to categorise political personages in their efforts at consolidating national integration. Non-language based studies, for instance, seem to be more concerned with the history, security and identity relations in relation to national development. Such discourses are often centred on the political trajectory of party formations, elections in the country, inaugural speeches and other attendant issues and challenges that define the complexities of the multicultural Nigeria nation without recourse to the pragmatic as well as semantic contributions of the words deployed. Conversely, language-based perspectives have focused on the place of language in the enforcement of national cohesion in national integration. Only a few have been centred on the structures in *My Transition Hours*. Ugoala (2020), for example, is on the strategies deployed by GEJ to mitigate face threatening acts (FTAs). The study, however, does not include the effect of the concatenations nor the word categories on the theme of national integration for national development.

There is, therefore, a need to bridge the gap by focusing attention on the pragma-semantic indicators of national integration in the pronouns deployed in Nigerian memoirs which is the concern of this study. This study, therefore, does not only serve to explore the subtle ways of ensuring national integration as presented in *My Transition Hours* but also serves to reveal the importance of pronoun choice and use in ensuring national integration in Nigeria.

### **3. Theoretical Orientation**

This study employs an eclectic approach as analytic instrument for the data drawn from *My Transition Hours*. An eclectic approach often combines several theories with distinct methods from different fields as analytical lens for data collected. The choice of this paradigm, therefore, stems from its ability to provide clear analyses and understanding of the topic under examination and most importantly, analyse each facet of excerpt distinctly for achieving the overall aim of the study.

Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) is considered the father of modern sociology and first to conceptualise the idea of social integration. He believed that people's norms, beliefs, and values contribute to their consciousness, and pave ways for their understanding and behaviour in life. Thus, Turner (1981) reports that for Durkheim, collective consciousness binds individuals together and creates social integration. For the purpose of this study, excerpts from *My*

Transition Hours which indicate Goodluck Jonathan's policies and actions aimed at encouraging social integration within and outside Nigerian shall be examined. By analysing how his policies encourage oneness and social cohesion, reduce inequality, and uphold inclusiveness, the study determines if GEJ's policies, as stated, integrate the multi-ethnic Nigerian society or otherwise.

Proposed by Herbert Clark and Brennan (Clark & Brennan 1991), the Common Ground theory, defined as the sum of the information that people assume they share (Clark 2006), posits that participants in speech events already possess and often share some background knowledge which they deploy in their interactions. Clark (1996) distinguishes two types of common ground: the Communal Common Ground – the information common to all members of a speech community such as shared beliefs, assumptions, and presuppositions based on community membership, religion, tribe profession etc. and Personal Common Ground which refers to the personal experiences of the participants of the speech event. Specifically, it pertains to what individuals jointly perceive, namely see, smell, feel touch or hear. For Kecskes (2014), two linguistic common grounds are delineated: Core Common Ground (that which exists prior to conversation) and Emergent Common Ground (that which is based on actual context of situation). For a concise and explicit x-ray which this study deserves, the common ground theory shall serve as lens for all constructions semantically interpretable as background knowledge assumed by the Goodluck Jonathan to be shared by readers of the memoir.

The Politeness Theory examines how speakers interact to avoid causing pain or discomfort to co-interactants. Its basic tenet is the belief that users of language strategise to mitigate the effect of impolite language during communication. Such strategies include: showing some empathy, listening with rapt attention, apologising, silence, employing self-inclusive lexemes such as the pronominals I, we, us, rather than distancing oneself by employing pronominals like they, you, them etc. The origins of Politeness Theory are traceable to Brown and Levinson (1978), elaborated upon in Yule (1996). It has been applied by several researchers including Adegbite and Odebunmi (2006), Odebunmi (2009) and Ugoala (2020), just to mention a few. A thorough elucidation of the excerpts with reference to the strategies used and other subtle language deployed to mitigate the effect of his policies makes for

an objective classification of Goodluck Jonathan as a lover of peace and national integration.

The Speech Acts theory developed by Austin (1962), simply focuses on a complete speech act performed through language use and encompasses three acts; locutionary (the meaning), illocutionary (the intention) and the perlocutionary acts (the actual effect). The excerpts selected will be analysed using this theory to determine the correlation of the three language acts as used by the author and their pragmatic interpretation.

The Conversational Maxims also referred to as the Gricean maxims were first proposed in Grice (1975) with four maxims which requires an interactant to contribute in a conversation but not so much as to be too superfluous, but truthful, relevant and clear. The maxims are;

Quantity (provide only information that is necessary and required);

Quality (always stick to the truth capable of been confirmed to be the case);

Manner (be clear and concise. Avoid the use of verbose language);

Relevance (only say things that are relevant to the conversation).

In addition to the Grician Maxims, Leech's (2014) six politeness maxims namely; tact, approbation, generosity, modesty, agreement, and sympathy, necessary for a speech event to be successful shall be employed. Politeness is, sometimes, culture-specific. Hence, a speech act that is regarded in a particular culture to be impolite, may very well be seen as a norm in certain other cultures or even within similar cultures. These maxims simply require interactants to minimise or maximise belief to self or others, respectively. This principle shall also be employed as instrument for analysing the selected excerpts in this study, where necessary.

#### **4. Methodology**

The data for this study are purposively selected from Goodluck Jonathan's memoir, *My Transition Hours*, consisting a total of fifteen (15) chapters. Since the focus of this study is to determine the pragma-semantic affordances of the pronouns deployed in the memoir and to ascertain the latter's veracity as tools for national integration, care is taken to isolate only the excerpts that show

through their component parts (pronouns and co-occurring constituents) that they possess the pragma-semantic indices of peace and national integration. The memoirist's strategic responses, in terms of declaratives, to his traducers on governance, politics, insecurity, peace, inclusivity, etc. will constitute the major themes and subheadings to be analysed.

## **5. Thematic Isolation and Analysis of Data**

The sub-headings in this section are targeted towards isolating and analysing distinct thematic indicators of national integration and any others indicators that are incidental to the socio-political needs in Nigeria as indicated in selected excerpts. All pronouns in each excerpt shall be categorised and analysed based on their morpho-syntactic and pragmatic affordances relative to meaning construction. For the purposes of this study, all pronouns in the excerpts are in boldfaced by the present researcher for emphasis.

### **5.1 Peace and National Integration**

Excerpts under this sub-group show how the pronouns deployed by Goodluck Jonathan contribute to peace and national integration. The semantics of each pronoun in isolation and together with other constituents is analysed based on the pragmatic facts in the political space. Consider the excerpts below. The pronominal elements are emboldened for emphasis.

#### Excerpt 1

**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. (*My Transition Hours*, p. 18)

In excerpt 1, the author employs the three emboldened pronouns; the 1st person singular pronoun, **I**, the singular possessive pronoun **my** and 1st person plural possessive marker **our**. These markers help to show his personal involvement and nature as a peace lover. **I** shows his personal worries as regards the lacklustre attitude of politicians to his philosophy, '**my political ambition is not worth the blood of any Nigerian**' even when the political landscape was frenzied.

Again, by deploying the possessive determiner *my*, the author foregrounds his peaceful nature as against that of his opponent who he strategically underspecified by not explicitly naming, assuming that his readers have background knowledge of his successor's speech in 2012, *Threats of violence to 'soak' people in 'blood'*. This is strategically chosen to endear him to his readers. This constructs a peace lover identity for the author in contrast to his opponent Muhammadu Buhari. Recall that Buhari had on May 14, 2012, spoken in Hausa while addressing members of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) using the above phrase and metaphorically referring probably to members of other regions, tribe, and religion in their domain.

#### Excerpt 2

It details the months and weeks leading to my unprecedented and unanticipated phone call to Major-General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd) on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2015 to concede the 2015 Presidential election. It captures my return to private life in the days which followed that very deliberate and well thought out concession call. (My Transition Hours, p. 8)

Excerpt 2 is effect-targeted and effect-achieved. Three pronouns are deployed: two possessive determiners *my*, and two neuter pronouns, *it*. While the possessive *my* serves as a determiner co-occurring with noun phrases, namely “unprecedented and unanticipated phone call ...” and “return to private life...”, the two instances of the neuter pronoun *it* make an anaphoric reference to the memoirs.

His choice of the nominal phrases “unprecedented and unanticipated phone call” and “deliberate and well thought out concession call” is strategic but flouts the maxim of modesty as he maximises praise to self. Moreover, the phrase helps to construct a trouble-shooter identity for the author and positions the readers to empathise with him on his return trip to his home. His deployment of the possessive pronoun *my* again endears his readers to him and completes his intention of effectively placing himself above others in his act of making the concession call. More importantly, it is worthy to note that his *unprecedented phone call* helped in keeping the sovereignty of the nation intact as opposed to the violence that had often characterise presidential elections in the country. This evidently qualifies the author as a lover of peace and integration.

Excerpt 3

The essence of **my** campaign was to promote democracy and social justice which encompasses love, peace and togetherness. **I** did not preach hate. Other political parties had other ideas and it was clear as soon as **our** campaign train entered the northern part of Nigeria, especially the North West and East which were the strongholds of **my** opponent. The attack happened in Katsina on January 21, 2015, in Bauchi on January 22, 2015 and in Yola, Adamawa on January 29, 2015. (*My Transition Hours*, p. 58)

Two possessive determiner and a pronoun are deployed in excerpt 3, **my** and **I**. In this excerpt, the author informs his readers about the essence of his campaign, namely to promote democracy and social justice through three vital principles of love, peace and togetherness. He is emphatic about this and by deploying the subjective pronoun, expresses his dislike of hate which his opponent supposedly displayed. Moreover, he uses the in-group identity marker and pronominal **our** to indicate that he together with his team physically experienced the attacks during the campaigns prior to the 2015 presidential elections. His three-point agenda of love, peace and togetherness together endears him to his readers, as these are indicative of a man who appreciates peace and integration.

Excerpt 4

**I** felt so sad for the youth prepped to kill and destroy. **I** was apprehensive of human life that would be lost, properties and investments worth trillions of naira going up in flames. **I** had genuine fear that **my** country would no longer be one if **I** took to serve **my** personal interest.

... '**my** ambition is not worth the blood of any Nigerian'. The unity, stability and progress of **our** dear country are more important than anything else. (*My Transition Hours*, p. 74)

Excerpt 4 consists of two paragraphs. In paragraph one, the subjective pronoun, **I**, is used four times, all expressing the author's state of being: "I felt..., I was apprehensive..., I had genuine fear...", and an adverbial clause of condition, "if I took...". In paragraph two, the possessive pronoun **my** indicates his conviction that the general well-being of others is more paramount, hence the use of the popular statement that his ambition is not worth the blood of any Nigerian. This places him as a man with the intent to

integrate the nation. He adheres to the relevance maxim as he is explicit about and sticks to his mantra, “my ambition is not worth the blood of any Nigerian”, having prioritised the integration of the nation. Once more, his choice of the lexemes, unity, stability and progress and the possessive determiner **our** in the affairs of the nation, underscores his unalloyed love for national integration and self-inclusion. The declaratives in both paragraphs, together with the phrase, “my ambition is not worth the blood of any Nigerian”, specify the writer’s value for human life helping to endear him to his readers. Deploying the sympathy maxim, the author is able to maximise sympathy for others which further endears him to his readers.

#### Excerpt 5

Without a peaceful country **you** cannot do well in whatever **you** set **your** sights on. The key thing is the nation first! **You** must have a nation before **you** can have any ambition, so whatever **we** do, anything that threatens the survival of **our** nation should be jettisoned, because when **we** dismember the country, one can never be the president of Nigeria, and at best **you** will be president of one tiny part (*My Transition Hours*, (p. 104).

In Excerpt 5, the writer deploys nine (9) pronouns and possessive determiners in all, comprising: **you**, **your**, **we**, and **our**. He is emphatic about the country’s peace and its attendant benefits to whatever task one sets to undertake. He admonishes his readers by deploying the two singular pronouns **you** to place the nation first before personal ambitions. The clause “dismember the country” is analogous to disintegration and further captures the result of pursuing personal gains at the expense of the nation. Though he excludes himself by deploying the second person pronoun *you*, he is quick to include himself in the admonition by employing the in-group identity marker and first-person plural form **we** and the plural possessive determiner **our**. He ensures that he adheres to the maxims of quality and quantity as he says a lot in a few words which further captures his readers’ interest.

#### Excerpt 6

**My** country, Nigeria, remains fully committed to the goal of an integrated and single West African community of nations and people. **We** have, therefore, spared no efforts in ensuring the early detection of conflict and in taking necessary measures for its elimination in our sub-region. **We** do so on the strong conviction that without peace, there will be no development;

and that **our** peoples cannot be weaned out of poverty and deprivation without development (*My Transition Hours*, p. 90).

In Excerpt 6, Goodluck Jonathan deploys the possessive determiner **my** in a bid to identify with his nation as his possession. He further deploys the in-group identity plural markers **we** and **our** to identify with the country and its people. This completes the semantics of the three-sentence excerpt as he vouches for Nigeria as a member of the West African community of nations and his efforts in ensuring that peace reigned in the sub-region being aware that “without peace, there will be no development”. To crown his efforts, in July 2020, Goodluck Jonathan was eventually appointed special envoy of the ECOWAS.

#### Excerpt 7

Theirs was about an exclusive focus on elections, but **you** had to have a country after elections, **I** think. It was **my** duty to present the country intact after **my** service and **I** was not going to let a tiny patch of Nigeria go under **my** watch. It would be reckless and irresponsible to cede portions of one's country through any form of loss (*MTH*, 51).

In Excerpt 7, the author employs the maxim of relation as well as manner in trying to convince his readers explicitly on the need to “present the country intact after [his] service”. Again, his choice of the subjective pronoun **I** and the possessive **my** is apt in expressing his duty to the nation. That is, his resilience in ensuring that not a “tiny patch of Nigeria” [goes] under [his] watch. His choice of the second person pronoun **you** in “**but you had to have a country after elections**” is self-inclusive and refers to everyone rather than the second person singular.

## 5.2 Governance

#### Excerpt 8

**I** must be emphatic that **My Transition Hours** is not **my** biography. That would come later. Rather, this is a personal and very honest account of **my stewardship** in the heady days in which **brinkmanship** was the order of the day in Nigeria, thrusting upon **us** the responsibility to rein **our** nation from a needless dangerous precipice by a menacing and rather tragic

political mercantilism (*My Transition Hours*, p. 8).

Excerpt 8 is a declarative statement made to intimate readers on the aim and objectives of the memoir. Altogether, three pronouns: one first-person singular subjective pronoun **I**, two possessive determiners **my** and **our**, and one first-person plural objective pronoun **us** are deployed to personalise the meanings that are deduced from the structure. While the subjective pronoun **I** functions as the subject of the verb, to be **emphatic**, all the possessive determiners **my** and **our** function as modifiers of the nouns they co-occur with and indicate that the subjective **I** is in possession of the three nominals with which they occur. Consider the phrases below culled from excerpt 8.

My Transition

- i. My biography
- ii. My stewardship

His choice of the pronouns, **me** and **us** in the objective cases are strategic, indicating that the actions of “brinksmanship” and “the responsibility to rein our nation” lies heavily on not just him but his entire team. These choices endear him to his readers as he involves himself in the task of governance, thus precluding the exclusion of himself.

Excerpt 9

Unity of purpose and action has enabled **us** to build **our** strength as **we** move forward to enhanced sub-regional cooperation and integration. The significant progress **we** have made so far, can only be sustained and built upon through even closer consultations, collaboration and cohesion amongst **us** (*My Transition Hours*, p. 89).

Excerpt 9 again highlights the role played when unity of purpose and action is held sacrosanct in sub-regions as done in his government. He ascribes the success of his government “build our strength, sub-regional cooperation and integration” on unity of purpose by his team (**us**). This conforms to the maxim of quantity by staying within the precinct of needed information rather than giving more than is required. His choice of pronouns and determiners in his phrases is also apt, with a clear indication of inclusivity in governance: “enabled us”, and “our strength as we move forward to enhance sub-regional cooperation and integration”. The plural markers, i.e., the objective plural marker **us**, the possessive plural determiner **our** and the subjective plural pronoun **we** are in-group identity markers to show his inclusiveness in the policies set to build a strong, cooperative sub-region and integration.

Excerpt 10

With regard to **our** integration agenda, it must be said that **we** have achieved considerable progress. **We** have gone beyond **our** Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and Goods, to the harmonisation of trade and **our** customs codes (*My Transition Hours*, p. 89).

By deploying the in-group identity markers **we**, in the clauses, “**we have achieved considerable progress and we have gone beyond...**”, the writer is able to identify with his team and further foreground the high intelligence quotient of his team in the task of governance in the nominal phrase “harmonisation of trade and customs codes integration agenda”. He intimates to his reader on his integration agenda by deploying the possessive plural determiner **our**. He flouts the modesty maxim by praising his team for achieving “considerable progress”. He deploys the plural markers, **we** and **our** in all instances to identify with the impressive job of his team.

### 5.3 Security

The excerpts in this sub-section are indicative of Goodluck Jonathan's deployment of pronouns with other constituents to express his security strategies while in governance.

Excerpt 11

If **you** peruse the official UNESCO literacy rates by country, what **you** will find is that all of the top ten most literate nations in the world are at peace, while almost all of the top 10 least literate nations in the world are in a state of either outright war or general insecurity (*My Transition Hours*, p. 195).

In Excerpt 11, the author deploys the maxim of relation by dwelling within the precinct of peace which can roughly be interpreted as his integration agenda. By tying and analysing the UNESCO literacy rates to education and war (insecurity), he is endeared to his readers as he ensures that he discusses within these relevant issues with precision. His choice of the second person pronoun **you**, in “what you will find is that all of the top ten most literate nations in the world are at peace” is strategic and employed to create awareness to his readers on the importance of education for peace as against the least literate nations that are “in a state of either outright war or general insecurity”. He tries to limit his discourse to relevant issues analogous to the Northern Nigerian situation.

Excerpt 12

There were too many deaths. Too many profanities thrown into the political space by otherwise eminent personality. There were extremely reckless phrases like "do or die, garrison commander etc. **They** all militarised the political space to the extent that peace was in full flight. It took **our** tenure in the presidency to rid the polity and politicians of that mind-set (*My Transition Hours*, p. 10).

GEJ chronicles the events prior to the election by deploying the maxim of relevance. This affords him the opportunity to express his thoughts on the "profanities" that were prevalent in the political space. By employing the tact maxim and deploying the third-person plural subjective pronoun, **they**, the author excludes himself and explains the efforts he put in place "to rid the polity and politicians of that mind-set" of those negative traits which often bedevilled the political space for the sake of peace and security. It is worth noting that Goodluck Jonathan again employs the in-group identity marker **our** in a bid to include himself in the scheme of things that helped to keep the nation intact.

Excerpt 13

**I** did not preach hate. Other political parties had other ideas and **it** was pretty clear as soon as **our** campaign train entered the North. Young people were recruited to attack the presidential convoy of Nigeria by stoning. That never happened in **my** part of the country. It does not matter how **you** treated or twisted **it**, **you** came back to see the radical difference play out again and again. A side of the divide is right and the other wrong, but not on account of superiority, but perspectives informed by education, respect for the dignity of man and broader outlook to life (*My Transition Hours*, p. 41).

Six pronouns and one possessive determiner **our** is deployed in Excerpt 13. The author intimates to his readers that he never "preached hate" but tactfully tells his readers of what other political parties in the north did. He reminds his reader of the experience he had with his convoy using the possessive plural determiner **our**. Though he is capable of instituting charges against the culprits, for the sake of peace, a reprisal attack was averted. He attributes this attack to lack of "education, respect for the dignity of man and broader outlook to life". In this instance, he unpretentiously flouts the generosity maxim, with non-conformity to Grice (1989).

#### 5.4 Empathy

##### Excerpt 14

The corpses were the highlight, but many more people died than was reported. For lovers of peace and country, **we** never could win. **It** was a catch 22 situation (*My Transition Hours*, p. 12).

In Excerpt 14, the author deploys the sympathy maxim again expressing his sympathy for the vulnerable. Though only the corps members who died were reported, he affirms that more people may have died than were reported and therefore, did not want any recurrence. He deploys the in-group identity with the plural pronoun *we* in a bid to include himself as a team who could never win. As a lover of peace and country, he affirms that “It was a catch 22 situation”, i.e., a dilemma obviously difficult for his team to win. He employs the neuter pronoun **it** to refer to the situation he finds himself. This further endears him to his readers.

##### Excerpt 15

**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 (*My Transition Hours*, p. 70).

Two pronouns are employed in excerpt 15: the subjective first-person **I** and its plural counterpart **we**. While the pronoun **I** indicates a singular perlocutionary act, **we** indicates inclusivity when the “wrong call” is made. For him, his decision to make the call would have a great impact not only on Nigeria but also on Africa as a whole. By deploying the maxim of manner, he strategically reiterates his mantra that his “ambition is not worth the blood of any Nigerian”, praising himself for taking the bold step, not minding his personal interest “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”. This endears him to his readers for his obvious show of sympathy and yearning for the wellbeing of “women and children in their millions”.

Excerpt 16

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

In Excerpt 16, the author endears himself to his reader by deploying the modesty maxim. His value for life and his disdain for the waste of human life is made manifest by his use of the first-person-singular subjective pronoun **I**. This portrays him to have the attributes of a steward with obligation to protect the citizens he “had the direct charge to protect”.

Excerpt 17

**I** had always borne a heavy burden to make some difference in the lives of **my** people. To help them as much as **I** could (*My Transition Hours*, p. 30).

Excerpt 17 is the opening line of chapter 1 in which he had the affordance to intimate his readers about the sorry state of his region in Bayelsa State. He sympathises with them over the inattention and purported marginalisation of the area and how he had always had the “burden to make some difference”. His strategy was attention seeking especially to readers and this, he achieved. He deploys the sympathy maxim, signalled by the first-person subject pronoun **I** and further deploys the possessive determiner **my** to identify with his people. These choices make the locutionary force more vociferous and portrays him as a compassionate individual with inherent propensity to build, unify, and a lover of progress rather than a destroyer.

### **Conclusion**

This study sought to isolate and elucidate the pronouns used in Goodluck Jonathan’s *My Transition Hours*. The purpose was to ascertain the affordances of the pronouns within selected excerpts and their variability as tools for national integration. A total of seventeen excerpts were selected and examined from the hard copy comprising fifteen chapters. Each selected excerpt was analysed using the eclectic theoretical lens comprising the conversational maxim, politeness theory, common ground theory, speech act theory, and the social integration theory.

The study found that the pronouns and their co-occurring constituents were strategically deployed for pragmatic reasons. The first- and second-persons singular and plural pronouns and the possessive determiners in his constructions contributed pragmatically, with other syntactic constituents to

the projection of peace, unity, integration, security and empathy. While the first- person singular subjective **I** recurred in almost all excerpts and was identified as semantically relevant in depicting the author's personality, attitude, and desire to take full responsibility of the happenings during his reign, the objective and subjective plural markers **our**, **we** and **us** served as in-group identity markers.

Based on the meanings interpreted from the excerpts, themes such as national integration, sympathy, security, governance etc. were isolated leading to the conclusion that the pronoun choices are strategic, effect-targeting, effect-achieving and influential in the political landscape in Nigeria and Africa in general. This leads to the suggestion that *My Transition Hours* contains indices of national integration and it should serve as an antidote for good governance, peace and national integration. It is believed that this study will prompt other researchers to initiate further studies on other word categories in relation to their occurrence and also investigate the sentence types deployed in memoirs like *My Transition Hours* in order to establish their contribution to peace and selflessness.

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