Influence of Indexicals in *President Muhammad Buhari's Speech at the First National Executive Congress (NEC) of All Progressives Congress (APC) At the Party's Headquarters, Abuja.*

Abdullahi Muhammad Sani

B. A. Ed. (Language Arts), M. A. (ESP)
Department of English Language Education, Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola, Nigeria

Abstract: **This work investigates the use of Indexicals in the speech delivered by President Muhammad Buhari at the first national executive summit of All Progressive Congress (APC) held on 14th of July, 2015 at Abuja. Though, Indexicals are expressive words that signal the appropriate use of information in text. They serve to point to objects, personalities and ideas particularly in art works. This paper was targeted at examining the characteristic indexical used as text creating linguistic features in the selected text. The corpus for the study consists of fourteen paragraphs. The method of data analysis was descriptive. The findings show that Indexicals are significant features in the printed text. Pronoun Indexicals point at personalities and topics, while adjectives describe events, and adverbs point at times and manners in which such events occur. The paper, suggests students of ESP and journalists should be encouraged to use Indexicals as they undergo formal writings.**

Key words: **indexical, summit, APC, speech, deixis.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Linguistics and philosophy define indexical as the features of a language that refer directly to the circumstances or context in which an utterance takes place. An indexical expression (such as today, that, here, utterance, and you) is a word or phrase that is associated with different meanings (or referents) on different occasions.

In conversation, interpretation of indexical expressions may in part depend on a variety of paralinguistic and non-linguistic features, such as hand gestures and the shared experiences of the participants.

> *"Among philosophers and linguists for instance; David Kaplan (1989) and Braun David (2001) view the term indexicality is used to distinguish those classes of expressions, like this and that, here and now, I and you, whose meaning is conditional on the situation of their use, for example, noun phrases that refer to a class of objects, whose meaning is claimed to be specifiable in objective, or context-free terms. But in an important sense, namely a communicative one, the significance of a linguistic expression is always contingent on the circumstances of its use. In this sense, deictic expressions, adverb, i.e. place and time, and pronouns are just particularly clear illustrations of a general fact about situated language."(Jauro, 2011)*

Indexical expressions are not necessarily put to deictic use. Definite noun phrases and third person pronouns allow for anaphoric and cataphoric use. During anaphoric indication, the expression remains the same, but the field undergoes a change.

Indexicals can also be referred to as signs sent by a sender to a receiver for interpretation. This is derived from Moris '(1938) characterization of semiotics into syntactic, semantic and pragmatic entailments in line with Montague's (1970) proposal that pragmatics should be considered with the study of signs and their users in contexts including indexical. Filmore (1972, 1975: 369 - 378) and Lewis (1983) on the other hand, point out those utterances such as (*come, go, left, and right*), which seem to invoke different points of reference, or different perspectives in different contexts. Based on this, they contend that indexicals make a speaker to engage in gesticulatory expressions of what is intended and conclude that indexicals are determined in part by the extra- linguistic features of time and location of the speaker's intention. Indexicals can also be varying from context to context; hence they are commonly referred to as context-sensitive expressions. In the same vein, words and morphemes that indicate tense are also indexicals, because they refer to different time intervals from context to context.

Indexicals are therefore expressive words that point to the truth of a proposition. Such expressive words are found in all languages. The general phenomenon of the occurrence of such words in any language is known as deixis. Deixis is realized by means of demonstratives, first and second pronouns, and specific time and place adverbs such as now and here, and any other grammatical features that are connected to the circumstances of utterance. Thus, Perry (2001) contends that not all pronouns are indexicals, and not all indexicals are pronouns. Levinson (1983) points out that deixis or deictic words and expressions can also be referred to as indexical.

Statement of Problem

The researcher observed the use of deixis in printed speech had created bridge of comprehension to most average audience. This research is restricted to examine on the use of deixis in printed speech in order to overcome the problem of indexicals in speeches and come up with the significant of using them to arrive at cohesion in printed text.

Inherent in the multiplicity of meanings is the recognition that only one meaning will be primary within the context of a given situated activity. The dominance of that primary meaning can lead to the mistaken impression that such meaning is indexical. Actually, it is rare that we all agree on one set of labels and adopt the same model. Often two or more stories emerge to describe a situation. We learn to co-interpret and jointly share circumstances. Stories we have heard and explanations that we have received make circumstances recognizable and sensible. Managers or politicians, or healthcare professionals, or teachers, etcetera, may like to assume that what their audiences hear is what they think they are communicating, but their labels often can be experienced every-which-way. Many like to treat their labels as if context and situation did not exist, and the labels were mono-interpretable. Thus, the nub of the managerial problem: to choose a label is to limit one's possibility space or degrees of freedom, choices and boundaries; and it imposes a set of constraints. If the limitation works --- i.e. leads to the desired results --- in the present environment, then "all is well" for the moment. By imposing limitations, one risks compromising one's potential. Gloms have more "space" for action than indexical."

Indexical is having the condition of pointing. So an indexical proposition is something that points, usually to a state of being or condition. The word "you" points to you, but if you use the same word, it points to me. So, it's meaning changes with the context. A more complex example is the proposition "I am fast." If this is true, then you couldn't necessarily say the identical proposition, you'd have to say "you are fast." I think the issue in your example has to do with God's knowledge of propositions. If "I am fast" is true, it means something different if I say it and if God says it. So it is not the same proposition. Indexicals are linguistic expressions whose reference shifts from context to context. Indexicals are concepts that we make use of nearly every day but, for most of us, they are unknown and unthought-of. The dictionary or encyclopedia entries are actually of little help. Take this entry from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Indexicals is linguistic expressions whose reference shifts from utterance to utterance. (*I, here, now, he, she, and that*) are classic examples of indexicals. Two people who utter a sentence containing an indexical may say different things, even if the sentence itself has a single linguistic meaning. For instance, the sentence "I am female" has a single linguistic meaning, but Fred and Wilma say different things when they utter it, as shown by the fact that Fred says something false, while

Wilma says something true. (Braun 2001:103-219) Indexicals are words used to stand for a set of other words; that is, they function like an index on the stock market. The Dow Jones Industrial average, for example, stands for a basket of particular stocks and stands for many of us as an indicator of the market as a whole. Pronouns as described above are indexicals in that they stand for the noun and take on different meanings in different situations. "Where a word acquires its sense from the context in which it appears; in different contexts, it changes its sense" (Vygotsky, 1986).

In American society the most commonly heard indexical is the mythical "they" who do things to us or others. "Look at what they are doing now." Perhaps the second most popular indexical is "You know…, you know who I mean." Indexicals are often distinguished by the fact that their reference systematically varies with the context of usage. Indexicals offer a simple means of making, expressing, and communicating our references, and they are particularly useful when proper names or descriptions are either cumbersome or unavailable. Similarly, in interpreting someone's "that way" in response to a request for direction, one must be able to determine independently what direction the person is indicating.

One must discover what relations one bears to the indexical referents in order to locate and act on them but there is nothing indexical about these relations themselves. To interpret an indexical, therefore, is to establish what other items, entities, and representations it coincides with. By itself, it tells us neither about its contents — what it bears its adapting relation to — nor about its contexts; which determines the indexicals' content, but context is not what content is about. Indexicals remind us that words evoke families of meanings. The most notorious example of this is the word "set" with more than a hundred meanings. We refer to these families of meanings as a glom. (Vygotsky, in his work, used a word that is usually translated as "complex." We have opted for "glom" so as to avoid confusion.) The multiplicity of meanings implicit in a glom allows, when each such meaning is viewed as a medium, new possibilities for action.

Vygotsky's work highlights architecture of development that brings forth the Wittgenstein viewpoint in a practical manner. He does this by distinguishing between more primitive gloms -- a word that does not function as a carrier of a concept but rather as a family name for a group of objects belonging together not logically but factually – and higher level concepts. First come the gloms, and then when abstracted traits are synthesized anew and the resulting abstract synthesis becomes the main instrument of thought does a concept emerge. Both gloms and concepts are ascribed words. To us the important observation is what Vygotsky says occurs when there is dissonance between the understood meaning of a concept and new input, whatever it might be. When a concept breaks down there is reversion back to the glom. That reversion allows for change. The dissonance produced thereby

forces a reversion in the perceived meaning of the word. Context dependence takes over. "It is not merely the content of a word that changes, but the way reality is generated and reflected in a word" (Vygotsky, 1962).

Objective of the Study

The primary objective of the study was to determine the influence of indexical in printed speech of political speech.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the use of indexical in President Muhammad Buhari's Speech at the First National Executive Congress (NEC) of All Progressives Congress (APC) at the Party's Headquarters, Abuja.
2. Identify the influence of referents in printed speech of President Muhammad Buhari.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does President Muhammad Buhari use indexical in his speech?

2. To what extent do the referents enhance in comprehending the message delivered by the President

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework adopts in this work, is anchored by Kaplan's theory (1989a:481 -563) which describes the concept of indexicals systematically. So, this study will solely adopt his theory. Kaplan identifies three categories of indexicals as: pronoun, (I, he, she, this, that, etc.); Adverb, (here, now, actually, today, and yesterday and tomorrow), and adjectives (actual, and present). He further distinguishes between two types of indexicals, pure indexicals such as: I, today, tomorrow, actually, present, and (perhaps), here and now which are not determined by the speaker's actions or intentions are true demonstratives which are determined (in part) by the speaker's accompanying pointing gestures, or by the speaker's intention to refer to a particular object. Thus it can be said that reference to pure indexical is automatic while reference to true demonstratives requires the use of extra-linguistic factors. (Jauro, 2011)

One of the fundamentals of Kaplan's theory is that linguistic expressions have contents or contexts. He refers to the content as 'C'. Each context has at least one agent, time, location, and possible world associated with it. Kaplan points out that the content of a sentence with respect to context has a truth value at the world of the context.

The frame for this analysis is therefore based on Kaplan's (1989a: 481 -563) classification of indexicals into: pronouns, adverbs and adjectives. (Kaplan, 1989: 481-563).

III. METHODOLOGY

This was a corpus-based study. The researcher adopted fourteen paragraphs speech of President Muhammad Buhari. It was delivered on 14th of July, 2015 at the APC's headquarters in Abuja. The bulletin was selected by stratified random sampling from his political speeches. The analytical procedure is based on Kaplan's classification of indexicals into: pronouns adverbs and adjectives. The corpus for the study was provided in the order below:

The Speech of President Muhammad Buhari Presented on the First NEC Summit of APC held on 14 July, 2015 at APC Headquarters Abuja.

"The elections have come and gone, the APC has won the battle, but lost the war. This is the paradox of democracy, and we shall see how we can manage it going forward.

I have already addressed you through the chairman, through the leadership of the party, through your Excellencies, the governors and through our Senators and House of Representatives members.

The APC must not disappoint its constituency, that's the nation state. We have to convince our various constituencies that we are individually worthy of the sacrifices that they have made.

They stayed awake day and night, travelling all over the country and made sure as a party, we emerged victorious. What subsequently happened is human, and as human beings we are not perfect, but let our collective actions in this party prove that we have won the elections, the battle and we will win the war.

As for me as a president, I have to clearly understand the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria, the constitution of APC, and having tried three times and successfully lost three times and successfully ending up at the Supreme Court, I think I have tasted the bitter disappointments and the sweetness of success.

What happened to APC must be given to God almighty. The opposition party, has ruled the country for sixteen years, with all the treasuries, literally in their pockets and all the coercing forces and their command, under their command they still meekly conceded defeat. We congratulate them for that.

I clearly understand the constitution from which INEC was developed with clear terms of reference and one of its important responsibilities is to register political associations as political parties, and whoever wants to participate in elective office as a Nigerian must seek a platform. That platform is the political party, hence, the superior state of the parties. APC has been damn lucky, if I can use that.

The way the opposition parties realized, agreed and accepted that the only way through which we can be in the system is for us to come together. The ACN, the ANPP, the CPC, APGA and DPP wanted to come to participate fully in the negotiation, but they have court cases at various levels, and we suspected that if we allow them to participate actively in the negotiation for merger, their being in court can cause either delay or deny us registration.

So we persuaded our colleagues in APGA and DPP that please stay out of the negotiation, but when we eventually get the registration, they can join in block or individually.

Along the line, I assure you that nothing is done by impulse in our process to merger. There have been various committees, quite a number of you sitting here have been members of committees either leading them or being a member and we agreed. At some stage or the earlier stages, we agreed that nine people should form the interim committee, that's the national chairmen of the parties, the secretaries and the treasurers. We thought we have done a wonderful work, so we sent our application.

For the first time in this sixteen or twelve years of my participating actively , I thanked INEC for what they did to us; they sent back our application and said we must have 25 to 35 people to manage your interim if you get registration, and they must come from all the geo political zones. Why I thanked INEC in particular was because if it has been bloody minded, again ladies close your ears, if they have been bloody minded, they would have kept on raging until it was almost too late for us to get the merger.

So they advised us and we sat down, we got I think 35 people to manage us and they are here personally, and on behalf of you now congratulate Chief Bisi Akande, it's a pity he is not here, he led the interim party with dexterity and integrity. I respect his patriotism. When we got the APC name through the agreement of various committees of the respective parties, we started working from polling unit upwards, eventually we ended up in the convention which gave us the leadership of the party.

After that the election started, and again it started from the bottom top. I have gone to this extent because not all of us here participated in it and for you to reflect and thank the leadership of the party at various stages for going through all this, which is not easy. But God in his infinite mercy has helped by giving us acceptance. Let us not throw this success to the wind.

Let us as members of the APC no matter our personal differences get together and use the mandate given to us by this country. This is my personal appeal to you in the name of God. Whatever your personal interest or ambition, please keep it close to your heart and in your pocket. Let APC work, let the system work and let us have a government that will earn the respect of our constituencies.

My problem is the constituencies. I thank you very much for listening to me, and I thank the leadership across the board, and I appeal to you to please continue to work together.

Please accept the superiority of the party. I cannot confine myself to the cage or Sambisa forest and refuse to participate in NEC or BoT so I respect the superiority of the party."

Meanwhile, there is speculation that <u>the crisis in the APC</u> might result in some party chieftains defecting to the Peoples Democratic Party.

Source: Naij.com news

Tags: All progressives congress apc Apc nec meeting in abuja Nigerian president muhammadu buhari

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis goes to show that pronouns, adjectives and adverbs are important linguistic features used in establishing relationship between propositions in printed text. They are all significant in the study. In the   selected speech under study, three types of indexicals by Kaplan (1989a:481-563) were identified. They   are: pronouns, adjectives and adverbs.

In paragraph 1:

> *"The elections have come and gone, the APC has won the battle, but lost the war. <u>This</u> is the paradox of democracy, and <u>we</u> shall see how we can manage <u>it</u> going forward.*
>
> *I have already addressed <u>you</u> through the chairman, through the leadership of the party, through your excellencies, the governors and through our Senators and House of Representatives members.*

In the above paragraph some indexicals were identified:

'**this**', '**we**', '**it**', '**you**'.

It is understand that the indexical sign '**this**' underlined is used to point back at a referent in the statement for emphasis. 'This' is an example of anaphoric reference, pointing at 'the success' of the battle of democracy. However, 'this' is demonstrative indexical that points back to the referent - 'the battle'.

'**We**:' is indexical pronoun that points at National Executives of APC. It shows third person plural and also serves as exophoric referent, as it does not appear in the paragraph.

'It' as it appears in the above paragraph, is an indexical that indexes a referent in the text – the administration mandatory on the party's custody.

'**You**': this is a personal indexical of second person singular and plural. It is a referent to the executive members of the party.

In paragraph 2:

> *The APC must not disappoint <u>**its**</u> constituency, that's the nation state. We have to convince our various constituencies that we are individually worthy of the sacrifices <u>**that**</u> they have made.*
>
> *<u>**They**</u> stayed awake day and night, travelling all over the country and made sure as a party, we emerged victorious. What subsequently happened is human, and as human beings we are not perfect, but let our collective actions in this party prove that*

we have won the elections, the battle and we will win the war.

In the above paragraph the following indexical were identified: 'its, that, they' respectively.

'its' is a possessive pronoun that points back to APC's possession – constituency.

'that' is an indexical that highlights the nouns that precedes it – sacrifices. It is also a relative pronoun that links the main clause and subordinate clause together.

'they' indexes back to referent APC executives for their tireless efforts for the prosperity of the party's victory.

It is also third person plural and subjective case.

In paragraph 3:

*As for me as a president,** I** have to clearly understand the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria, the constitution of APC, and having tried three times and successfully lost three times and successfully ending up at the Supreme Court, I think I have tasted the bitter disappointments and the sweetness of success.*

In the above paragraph, the first sentence – As for me as a president, I have to clearly understand the …

The personal pronoun **'I'** is anaphoric reference that points back to the referent 'president' in the sentence.

In paragraph 5:

I clearly understand the constitution from <u>which</u> INEC was developed with clear terms of reference and one of its important responsibilities is to register political associations as political parties, and whoever wants to participate in elective office as a Nigerian must seek a platform. <u>That</u> platform is the political party, hence, the superior state of the parties. APC has been damn lucky, if I can use that.

The extract in the above paragraph: I clearly understand the constitution from **which** INEC was developed …

The adjective indexical 'which' describes the plain comprehension of the constitution by the INEC.

The word '**that'** in the above sentence is demonstrative pronoun that indexes platform. It points forward to the referent – platform.

In paragraph 8:

Along the line, I assure you that nothing is done by impulse in our process to merger. There have been various committees, quite a number of you sitting <u>here</u> have been members of committees either leading them o r being a member and we agreed. At some stage or the earlier stages, we agreed that nine

people should form the interim committee, that's the national chairmen of the parties, the secretaries and the treasurers.   We thought we have done a wonderful work, so we sent our application.

An adverbial indexical *'**here'*** points at a particular place that is close to the speaker. This is the avenue where summit is holding.

In paragraph 10:

So they advised us and we sat down, we got I think 35 people to manage us and they are here personally, and on behalf of you <u>now</u> congratulate Chief Bisi Akande, it's a pity he is not here, he led the interim party with dexterity and integrity. I respect his patriotism. <u>When</u> we got the APC name through the agreement of various committees of the respective parties, we started working from polling unit upwards, eventually we ended up in the convention which gave us the leadership of the party.

In the above paragraph two indexical were identified 'now' and 'when'.

The first indexical 'now' is an adverbial indexical that points to specific time of the event. The president at that time instantly congratulated Chief Bisi Akande for his tireless and relentless efforts for this achievement of the party.

The reference 'when' points to a particular time. The referent is the period of attaining the formal registration of the party by the INEC.

In paragraph 12:

*Let us as members of the APC no matter our personal differences get together and use the mandate given to us by this country. <u>**This**</u> is my personal appeal to <u>**you**</u> in the name of God. Whatever your personal interest or ambition, please keep <u>**it**</u> close to your heart and in your pocket. Let APC work, let the system work and let us have a government that will earn the respect of our constituencies.*

In the above paragraph three indexicals were identified – *'this', 'you' and 'it'*.

Demonstrative indexical 'this' points back to the referent earlier mentioned in the previous sentence in the paragraph. It is also used to index singular object that is near. Members should sideline their personal differences and cooperate in order to serve the country.

The personal pronoun 'you' points back the members that was mentioned at beginning of the paragraph.

The third person singular 'it' indexes back to personal interest of the executive members in order to achieve their set goals to serve the nation.

In paragraph 13:

*My problem is the constituencies. **I** thank you very much for listening to me, and I thank the leadership across the board, and I appeal to you to please continue to work together.*

Please accept the superiority of the party. I cannot confine myself to the cage or Sambisa forest and refuse to participate in NEC or BoT so I respect the superiority of the party."

Meanwhile, there is speculation **that** the crisis in the APC might result in some party chieftains defecting to the Peoples Democratic Party.

In the above paragraph, the pronoun indexical 'I' is exophoric as the referent is not found within the paragraph. Though, the pronoun 'I' refers to President Muhammad Buhari. He expresses his gratitude of thanks for their attention given to him during the presentation.

Also the relative pronoun 'that' is an indexical that highlights what the President speculated in the above statement. The word 'that' plays double functions – as demonstrative pronoun or adjective and relative pronoun in discourse. He speculated the crisis in the house of APC if care is not taken.

V. CONCLUSION

In this work, efforts were implored to identify the significance of indexicals in political speech of the president. It was discovered that indexical in speeches were salient. Pronoun indexicals complement the attainment of coherent in the speech discourse. They highlight the subject matter of the discourse and the personalities involved in the text. This will give the listeners or the readers focus to digest the message easily and it also devoid the constant repetition of nouns.

Adjective indexicals illuminate the details more clearly on the events. However, it describes the referents in the text. It points and clarifies the nouns or events in the text. The adverbial indexicals play a vital roles in discourse. Adverbs explicate the manner, the place, the time of the events. As it was identified in this work, 'when' shows the particular time of that event. Also 'here' indicates the place of the summit which in the APC's headquarters in Abuja. Such indexicals highlight to the time, place and manner of the events in the discourse.

With these, it was recommended the use indexicals effectively and judiciously in speech or written discourse, so as to break through bridge of communication. This enhances easy comprehension of the listeners or readers of the text

REFERENCES

[1] Filmore, C. (1972). '*'How to know whether you are coming or going*'' in Karl Hylguard. Jensen (Ed)Linguistik 1971: Konigstein, Germany: Anthenaum – Verlag.
[2] Jauro L., and N. John. (2012). Indexicals in Television News Broadcast: In Research on Humanities and Social Science Vol 2, IISTE's homepage: http://www.iiste.org
[3] Kaplan, D (1989a) '*'Demonstratives*'' in Almog Perry J, and Wettstein, H (1989) Themes from Kaplan. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[4] Levinson, S.C. (1983), *Pragmatics*: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[5] Lewis, D (1983), Philosophical papers Vol. 1 Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[6] L. Vygotsky, *Thought and language*. edited and translated by Eugenia Hanfmann and Gertrude Vaka1962, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press; NY: John Wiley
[7] Moris, C. (1938), *Foundation of the theory of signs* Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.
[8] Naij.com news (2015, July 14) Tags: All Progressives Congress apc APC NEC Meeting in Abuja Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari
[9] Perry, J. (2001), *Reference and Reflexivity*, Stand Ford: CSLI Publications.