COHESION BETWEEN DEIXIS AND ILLOCUTIONARY FORCE IN

SPEECHES OF NASARAWA STATE GOVERNOR

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Abstract

This study examines cohesion in selected speeches of the governor of Nasarawa State. It explores the language of political speeches using some pragmatic approaches, namely, deixis, exophora and illocutionary acts to determine coherence between the cohesive devices as exemplified by deictic and exophoric references, and illocutionary force (the intent) of the speaker. The study was carried out through the examination of the data as presented in different occasions. It explores the speaker’s use of person deixis specifically to reflect on the assumptions he shares with his listeners. This, again, was used to relate with his intent; i.e. illocutionary acts, to see how they cohere to bring out the shared assumptions, or understanding between the speaker and the listeners. From the findings, the results show that there is a significant relationship between the two pragmatic aspects as the deictic and exophoric references cohere remarkably with the illocutionary acts of the speaker such as ‘expressives’ and ‘commisives’. However, whether or not the cohesion or coherence truly reflects the assumptions between the speaker and the audience was not investigated.

1.0 Introduction

Language is very diverse in terms of what human beings do with it. This is what Akmanjian et al said while distinguishing between using language “in doing something” and using language “to do something” (244). While the former, according to them, could be used in abstract thinking, the latter has to do with “what a person is doing with words in particular situations (i.e.) the intentions, purposes, beliefs, and desires that a person has in speaking. Language, as a means of communication, therefore, is recognized in terms of human social interactions.

Thus, according to Akmajian et al, language “usually takes place within the context of a fairly well defined social situation”, where the speakers share common knowledge. In this situation thus, “rather than spell everything out, the speakers rely on shared understandings to facilitate communication” (245). This is what Levenson refers to as the connection between what the speaker says and the assumptions he holds, or shares with the hearer. Language, therefore, is the most vital tool of communication.

Accordingly, the aim of this research is to explore cohesive features which are to be present in a speech to make communication meaningful. Cohesion, as a linguistic term, is defined by Halliday and Hassan as a text or a passage, spoken or written, of whatever length that forms a coherent whole. It refers to a relation of meaning that exists within the text whose occurrence is a presupposition of one lexical or linguistic stretch into another whereby the interpretation of the latter depends on the realization of the former.

The study is, thus, looking at cohesion as related to, but not restricted to the formal system of language, but extended to extra-linguistic conditions. In other words, the research is to examine cohesion as a pragmatic inference which, according to Levinson “connects what is said to the assumption held by the speaker and the hearer, or on what is said before, which becomes basic for language understanding” (34). This is to basically find out how such reference (cohesion) connects what the speaker and the audience share as experience which comes to bear in their conversational interaction. With this contextual relation, therefore, the second aspect of this research is to look at the concept of illocutionary force as propounded and developed by Austin and Searle, respectively. The research is, thus, set to examine whether or not the presence of the cohesive features exemplified above, cohering with the speaker’s illocutionary force, would account for the meaning and understanding of language.

It is important to acknowledge that there have been researches to investigate either textual or contextual cohesion. However, to the best of our knowledge, these researches are more or less based on abstract analysis without connecting the text with the context to determine how such coherence brings about the function of language. It is for this reason that this study attempts to look at both the cohesion in the ‘text’ which Halliday and Hassan say “is not a structural unit but a semantic relation with no necessary syntactic definitions” (6), or what Levinson says “connects what is said with the assumption held by the speaker and the hearer, or what is said before” (34). The study is, thus, examining the coherence between that (i.e. cohesion) and the intent of the speaker. By so doing, it is meant to determine how the written language coheres with the context of utterance to bring out the appropriate use of language in the context it is serving. The research intends to explore and analyze selected speeches presented by the late governor of Nasarawa State, Alh. Aliyu AkweDoma. This is to establish the relationship between text and context; that is the connection between deixis as well as exophoricreference, with illocutionary force in language use.

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Conceptual Review

Since the evolution of language from its philosophical point of view, there has been continued dichotomy between form and function of language; the aim of which is to see how the written words are related with things in the world, i.e. the relationship that exists between the form or structure of language and the function it performs in the context of utterance. The notion of form or structure as the most important aspect of language could be traced to the Renaissance period when the theoretical or technical grammar shifted to “prescriptive grammar” suited for pedagogical purposes. This was more clearly seen in the works of Wilhelm von Humboldt who, in his emphasis on “the connection between national languages and national character” evolved a theory of ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ forms of language. He identifies “the outer form” as the ‘raw material (the sound)’… and ‘the inner form’ was the pattern or structure of grammar and meaning…” This structural conception of language was to become dominant up to the 20th Century trough the works of De Saussure, Noam Chomsky, et cetera.

However, later linguists tried to relate the form of language and the context of utterance. Mey, for instance, says that:

A linguistic description that has been syntax based, or at least, syntactic oriented has been overtaken by extra syntactic or extra linguistic factors which play a major role in what is called “the rules of the language…” and problems having to do with users and contexts turn out to be the decisive factors in determining what is being uttered at any given time, at any given place, (2).

It is this recognition of the relevance of extra-linguistic or contextual factors in language use that informed this research. This is to say that, though the textual coherence plays an important role in language formation, what is most crucial is how the text is connected to the context. In other words, there should be connectivity between what is said (as indicated in the text), and how the speaker says it using his intent, i.e. illocutionary force. The research, therefore, specifically examines the concept of deixisand exophoricreference. It also explores illocutionary force of the speech acts theory to bring out the cohesion between text and context of utterance.

1.2.2 Theoretical Review

The theoretical framework in this study is eclectic, investigating the relationship between text and context which Halliday and Hassan say are “the examination of the relation within the language and the relation between the language and the relevant features of the speaker’s and hearer’s material, social and ideological environment”, (20). The research, thus, looks at deicticand exophoric features which the speaker makes use of to represent the assumptions he holds with the audience, on the one hand. On the other hand, the study examines the illocutionary force; speaker’s intent which connotes how the speaker uses his communicative intentions, relying on what he shares as experience or assumptions with his audience, to present his message. Both the aspects; deixis and exophora are the elements of cohesion which Halliday and Hassan say “refer to relations of meaning that exist within the text whose occurrence is a presupposition of one lexical item into another; whereby its interpretation lies outside the text; but linking the text with its situational context…” what they refer to “cohesive ties”, i.e. a semantic relation between an element in the text and some other element that is crucial to its interpretation, (4 and 8).

The term cohesion, as also contended by Levenson, is seen as a pragmatic factor or phenomenon that accounts for “inferences that connect what is said to the assumption held by the speaker and the hearer, or what is said before”. “To an extent”, he argues further, “cohesion also connects what the speaker and the hearer share as an experience that serves as a common bond to them, and how this comes to bear in the event at hand. This is basic to an account of language understanding”. So, though there is a reference (cohesion) within the text “where the same entity is referred to twice in the sentence”, and whose grammatical (pronominal) rules give the structural cohesion, reference is actually situational”, according to Halliday and Hassan (49).

This is whydeictic and exophoric references, which interpretation is with reference to the context of utterance, is chosen as the basis of this study. Deixis, which comes from Greek word ‘deiktikos’ i.e. ‘able to show’, ‘pointing’ or ‘indicating’ is defined by Levinson to concern the ways in which languages encoded features of context of utterance. . . in which the interpretation of the utterances depends on the analysis of that context of utterance” (57). The traditional meaning of the term deixis therefore refers to a set of words whose meanings are conditioned by contexts in which they are used… deixis is used to account for how the features of context of an utterance or speech event are encoded in the grammar of a language, making it necessary that deictic utterances are interpreted with reference to the context in which the utterances are made.

The initially recognized five main types of deixis according to Alan Cruse arepersondeixis, spatial deixis, temporal deixis, social deixis, and discoursedeixis. For this study, however, the research is set to concentrate on person deixis and spatial deixis which would be briefly explained as follows:

i. Person Deixis: Cruse says person deixis “involves basically the speaker, known as the first person, the addressee, known as the second person, and other significant participants in the speech, neither speaker nor hearer. . .” (333). Because this research is based on ‘text’ that relates to ‘context’ in which the speaker and the hearer are at the centre, it is imperative to note that the analysis of deictic reference would concentrate more on the first and second person forms whose reference Halliday and Hassan say “are defined by the speech roles of the speaker and the hearer, hence they are normally interpreted exophorically by reference to the situation…” (48). This is because, as argued by Nwogu, the second person pronoun ‘we’, for instance, is sometimes used by royal people, or people in authority to reflect the assumptions the speaker holds with his audience. By the same token, person deixis is realized by means of kinship terms such as; tittles or proper names often in form of vocatives or honorifics, (e.g. cousin, uncle, sir, madam et cetera) which are separated by a comma (,) from the body of the sentence.

Example:

“the reality is, fellow citizens, we have to sacrifice”.

In the sentence above, the vocative “fellow citizens” implies the second person ‘you’ which refers to the hearer(s).

Vocatives, which are identified in the corpus as representing the second person ‘you’, are such written to denote a reference to the addresses, as explained by Portner. They are pragmatic in nature because their contribution to the meaning of a sentence, according to Zwicky (qtd. in Portner) is that “the meaning expressed by the clause is of special relevance to the referent of the vocative (the addressee)” (5). Their contribution can, thus, be analyzed as expressive meaning, as they indicate the attitudes of the speaker towards the audience, as well as the event (content).

Accordingly, like honorifics, vocatives are, according to Potts (qtd. in Portner), basically references to emphasize the presence of, and respect for the addressee (s) in which the information that follows “is mutually presupposed by the speaker and the hearer(s)” (5). What this implies is that,vocatives, representing the second person ‘you’ in a sentence or clause is made by a speaker emphasizing the relevance of the addressees to the clause or information that follows to their shared understanding, or what Levinson refers to as assumption held between the speaker and the hearer.

For instance, the following statement:

“My dear compatriots, the importance of each one of us at this event is a testimony of our corporate determination” as presented in the corpus indicates that thevocative “My dear compatriots” is an emphasis on the relevance of the audience to the statement “the presence of each one of us at this event is a testimony of our corporate determination…” which the speaker assumes the addressees share with him. Therefore, vocatives, concluded by Portner, “are pragmatic in nature as their contribution to the meaning of a sentence does not seem to be truth-conditional in nature, but can be analyzed as ‘expressive meaning’ (1).

ii. Spatial Deixis: This is manifested in adverbs and demonstratives/determiners such ashere, there, thisand that, to show location.

They are, again, categorized into ‘distal’ and ‘proximal’. The term proximal according to Cruse is referred to as referent (region) close to the speaker as denoted by the adverbs here, while there (distal) means relatively distant from the speaker. However, Cruse emphasized that all these are “contextually determined” (Cruse: 334). This view was supported by Nwogu (2004) who contends that here could contextually have no defined space as it includes the location of the speaker in, say, a classroom, and refers to the entire school as here, which, by implication, he is not in view of the whole school apart from the square-meter of the classroom in which he stands. Again, there, which is a distal location, or distance away from the speaker’s location at coding time (CT), could also mean close to the addressee at receiving time (RT), or a place previously mentioned in the text. The same could be said about the word this, whose interpretation could either be proximal or distal, depending on the context of utterance. Some instances are given by Nwogu below:

i. “I will buy a car this week” and ii. “I will buy a car this August”

The utterance in (i) is proximal as it implies the week in which the speaker is making the utterance. Utterance (ii) however is distal, being that this in the context of utterance “does not necessarily mean the month in which the speaker is making the utterance. Rather, it might mean the ‘August’ of the year” while the utterance might be made in the preceding month (s).

Exophoric reference, on the other hand, according to Halliday and Hassan, does not contribute in the interpretation of lexical items to form part of the same text. It only contributes to the creation of text by linking the language with the context of situation. They identify we, you, that, et cetera as exophoric reference which do not make verbal cohesion but are identifiable in the context of situations. This is because reference to them implies making sense to the addressees in the context in which they are uttered. And specifically, they, Halliday and Hassan, identify the first and second person forms to be the most dynamic in making reference to the context as they (first and second person form) “do not normally refer to the text at all, (but) their referents are defined by the speech roles of the speaker and the hearer. Hence, they are normally interpreted exophorically by reference to situation…” (48).

The second aspect we found suitable for this linguistic investigation is the illocutionary force of the speaker. According to Para, (qtd. in Levinson) “Utterances are only explicable in relation to the activities or ‘language-games’ in which they play a role” (9). What this means is that language is not just making utterances but carrying the utterances along with action to make the language meaningful. This is the principle underlying the concept of ‘Speech Acts’ as propounded by John L. Austin, in a series of lectures he delivered entitled ‘How to Do Things with Words’. This was later systematized by Searle and called “Speech Acts Theory”. The concept is so attached to language use that Brunner, argues that “the acquisition of the concept underlying speech acts “may be a prerequisite for acquisition of language in general” (27).

The concept of illocutionary force, one of the fundamental aspects of SpeechActs is, thus, a proposition that language is not merely the making of statements, or what he, Austin, refers to as ‘constatives’, but by saying something about the world. And when uttering the words, the speaker is concurrently performing the action for the purpose of achieving some aims. Austin calls such illocutions as “the intent of the speaker” where he, the speaker is seen making the utterances as well as performing the action.

At the end of the decade, John Searle systematized, or standardized the theory with some modifications that give the theory some extra-linguistic shape. Instead of Austin’s conventional utterances governed by the performative verbs which have little or nothing to do with the context of utterance, Searle deviated to what he (Searle) calls “essential condition”, that is the speaker’s utterances would only have the understanding of the audience if the utterances fulfill all the conditions that reflect the context, or the assumptions shared between the speaker and his hearers. Illocutionary Acts are, thus, classified by Searle into; representatives, commissives, expressives and directives. But for the purpose of this research, we are going to look at expressives and commissives to determine whether they can account for the data set for analysis of the following categories to express the intent of the speaker:

ii. Commissives: These are statements which indicate the speaker’s commitment to a certain course of action. They are indicated by verbs to strengthen or weaken the speaker’s commitment to the statement. They include verbs such as promise, intention, et cetera, to proclaim the speaker’s attitudes or commitment towards some state of affairs.

Example:

1. “I promise to approve the undertaking of the project”

This is different from

1. “we may approve the undertaking of the project”.

While the audience may be certain of the commitment in sentence (a) because of the verb promise, not the same could be said of sentence (b) as indicated by the verb may.

To ascertain the strength of the speaker’s commitment (illocutions), as contended by Searle, in, for instance, commitment for promising, such that if the speaker says; “I promise to approve the undertaking of the project”, the following ought to take place;

1. There should be instances that the speaker must carry out the thing promised.
2. The thing promised must be something that the receiver (audience)

wants to see happen.

Such, inferred from Searle’s opinion, links what would produce the understanding of language as used in the context to fulfill the assumptions shared between the speaker and the audience.

iv. Expressives: These are forms of illocutionary acts in which the speaker expresses an attitude about some state of affairs such as:

* 1. I sincerely apologize for the shortcomings
  2. I thank you for your support throughout the execution of this project (c) I congratulate you for attaining to this height. et cetera.

In the example above, the verbs; apologize, thank, and congratulate represent the attitudes the speakers show towards some state of affairs.

For the illocutionary force of the speaker to bring about the meaning of language in context, therefore, the assumptions or beliefs shared between him, the speaker and his audience, is very important, whereby the audience believes that the speaker is capable of what he said. Supporting this, Lyons contends that “speakers should be able to make explicit the illocutionary force of this utterance… (250), such that his illocutionary acts could readily agree with what he shares as assumptions or experience with his audience.

This study therefore examines the illocutionary force or communicative competence of the speaker vis-à-vis the deicticand exophoric references which in themselves are reference to the context of situation in the selected speeches of the governor of Nasarawa State. This is to determine how such combination accounts for language use.

1.3 Research Methodology

The corpus for this study consists of about 214 complex sentences used in situational contexts out of which about 163 are found to contain the linguistic features set for the study. However, only 25 sentences would be explored and analyzed through simple sampling method. The reason is that most of the sentences contain similar linguistic features. Thus, analyzing all would duplicate our effort in the research.

The method used in collecting the data depends on primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are the two selected speeches in the series of speeches as presented by late governor, Alh. Aliyu AkweDoma of Nasarawa State from 2007 – 2011. The secondary sources are textbooks and other materials on Pragmatics, Discourse Analysis, Semantics, and General Linguistics from which the models set for exploration are derived.

The research design is descriptive, exploring some pragmatic factors or conditions that constrain the speaker’s choice of language. The models set for linguistic analysis, thus, are the concepts of deixis and its exophoris reference as well as illocutionary force in the Speech Acts Theory. The aim, as explained earlier, is to look at how the occurrence of these factors, side by side, contributes to the meaning of language in context, taking into cognizance, the participants, their relationships and the assumptions they share that become the context of situation.

The analysis and interpretation of the data were carried out by means of two context-based pragmatics phenomena or models. First, it analyses the concept of cohesion, as discussed by Halliday and Hassan. Specifically in this angle, the research settles on deixis and its exophoric reference whose basic notion is that language understanding is based on the assumptions held between the speaker and the audience which become features of context encoded in utterances. Second, the speeches were analyzed using ‘the intent of the speaker’ or illocutionary force in the “Speech Acts Theory” as propounded and standardized by Austin and Searle, respectively. The second part of the analysis was done to corroborate the first analysis, i.e. deictic and exphoric references, to determine how the speaker makes use of his communicative intent, relying on the assumptions he holds with the audience to bring about language understanding; what Searle refers to ‘essential condition’.

1.4 Findings and Analysis

In analyzing the data collected, attempt was made to relate the text with the context of situation. In this regard, the research first looked at Person deixis which are characterized by first, second and third person references, as could be realized in the extract below:

“We believe that we had enough energy in our hands to spur the kind of development that will benefit our people”.

In the extract above, it could be seen that the use of ‘we’ represents first person that is “defined by the speech roles of the speaker and the hearer”, Halliday and Hassan (48). ‘We’ in this connection thus, could be interpreted to presuppose the speaker and, or the inclusion of other persons “among whom the addressee(s) may or may not be included. ‘We’ in this context therefore implies the speaker’s assumptionor understanding of his audience’s frames of mind. Thus, instead of using ‘I’ as a singular pronoun to signify an exclusive preserve of the speaker, so to speak, the use of ‘we’, which Halliday and Hassan call “the royal we” is meant to present the assumptions held between the speaker and the listeners as contended by Levinson.

This is different from some few instances of first person singular ‘I’ in the data which implies that only the speaker can represent himself as is done in the following extract:

“… I took the oath of office with a pledge to work for the peace, growth, development and economic transformation of Nasarawa State”, (appendix 11, paragraph 5).

Here, in the context in which the utterance is made, the use of first person singular ‘I’ as the speaker chose is understandable since what he is saying, or what ‘I’ carries, is only a matter of his mind that the audience do not share.

Found in the corpus also, is the use of vocatives which are also persondeixis in form of kinship, tittles, proper names et cetera, that represent second person form ‘you’.

Some examples could be given below as explored in the texts:

“I wish to thank you, Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members of the Nasarawa State House of Assembly, for graciously accepting to receive me today…” (Appendix I, paragraph 1).

In the extract above, the noun phrase “Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members…” which is separated by comas is a vocative that indicates the title of the addresses.

Another example is:

“My dear compatriots, the presence of each one of us at this event is a testimony of our corporate determination to achieve what we have all hoped for”, (appendix II, paragraph 7).

Here, the vocative “My dear compatriots” is the preceding phrase to call the attention of the addressees to the importance of the statement that follows.

There are also some few cases of third person reference in the speeches as exemplified below:

“It is in this light that the policy thrust of 2008 budget emphasizes accelerated economic transformation”, (appendix I, paragraph 11).

‘It’ as presented above is a third person deictic reference that denotes an event within the text that refers to neither the speaker nor the audience, thus, “a secondary or derived form of reference”, according to Halliday and Hassan (32).

From the foregoing presentation, apart from some few instances of third person reference, the data are replete with the first person reference ‘we’ and second person reference in form of vocatives. As explained by Halliday and Hassan that person’s deixis is “defined by the speech roles of the speaker and the hearer…” (48). The roles of these participants (the speaker and the hearers) are characterized by the first person ‘we’ and the second person (vocatives above). The few instances of third person deictic reference ‘it’ is therefore understandable. This is because reference to the participants (in this instance ‘we’ and the vocatives) who form the context of the situation is, according to Halliday and Hassan:

the prior form of reference, and reference to another item within the text is secondary or derived form of this relation… it is certainly possible that in the evolution of language, situational reference preceded textual reference… ‘the thing you see in front of you’ evolved earlier than ‘the thing I have just mentioned… (32).

The research ahs also found out that exophoric references such as we, you, this, et cetera were used in the speeches. This could be explored in the extracts from the corpus below:

“We believe that we had enough energy in our hands to spur the kind of development that will benefit our people. That will transform our agriculture and enable our farmers to produce crops…”, (appendix II, paragraph 8).

Here, the use of ‘we’ which has been discussed earlier may denote the shared understanding between the speaker and the listeners. The cohesion here therefore is how this assumption enters into the discourse the second sentence that follows. This is seen in how the entire statement in sentence one (1) was captured in the demonstrative ‘that’ of sentence (2). ‘That’ therefore is the exophoric reference that coheres with ‘we’ as it also refers to the whole statement in sentence (1) which signifies the assumptions held by the participants. The cohesion above therefore is not grammatical but based on the context of situation. This is because the reoccurring linguistic item ‘that’ has no grammatical relation with ‘we’ of the preceding sentence.

Another example is seen in the extract below:

“The sum of Thirty-two Billion, Nine Million, Eight Hundred and Eighty-one Thousand… has been earmarked in 2008 budget… This represents 59.7% of the total budget size”, (appendix I, paragraph 15).

In the above extract, the reference is seen in sentence two (2) with the demonstrative ‘this’ as the exophora referring to, or retrieving the entire information contained in sentence one (1). Thus, ‘this’ becomes the inference (context) that connects “what is said” in the statement that follows to “what is said before” as contended by Levinson.

It is important to state that illocutionary force, as investigated earlier, would be analyzed using the same corpus within which deixis and exophoric reference are also analyzed. Austin’s concept of illocutionary force, which was later standardized by Searle as “the intent of the speaker” is characterized by illocutionary verbs as explained earlier, and are classified into; commisives, expressives, directives, representativesanddeclaratives. The verbs perform the illocutionary acts of; command or request, promise, apology, commitment, or conveying some attitudes towards some state of affairs.

It was, thus, discovered that expressive and commissive verbs were much more in use than the others. This was basically realized to express the speaker’s attitudes towards some particular state of affairs. Example of expressive could be seen in the extract below:

“We believe that through what we have achieved, we are on the right part to attaining the ideals of statehood and goals for which we sought a state of our own”, (appendix II, paragraph 6).

As could be seen in the extract above, the speaker is seen performing the illocutionary act of ‘belief’ as indicated by the verb ‘believe’. It is an ‘expressive’ illocution through which the speaker expresses some attitudes to his audience towards some state of affairs – his belief in “the ideals of statehood and goal…” given the human potentials.

Similarly, commissive verbs were used to strengthen or weaken the intent of the speaker. They, thus, indicate the speaker’s commitment to some certain course of actions as would be investigated in the text below:

“We intend to re-invigorate, re-energize, and re-position the service so as to promote competence, professionalism and productivity”, (appendix I, paragraph 18).

The illocutionary verbs ‘intend’ and its associates; “re-invigorate, reenergise, and re-position” used in the extract above are what Searle calls ‘commisives’ which indicate the speaker’s commitment to the actions represented by the verbs aforementioned. The verbs above thus, indicate the speaker performing the action of ‘promising’. The use of the verbal phrase “intend to” as quoted in the extract above however has weaken the functions of such illocutions as the verbs ‘intend’ implies the speaker’s uncertainty of his commitment towards the said course of actions, thus weak commitment.

The following example however is a different commitment:

“we will embark on the transformation of our rural areas with construction of all season roads…”, (appendix I, paragraph 24).

In this extract however, the verb ‘embark’ above is a ‘commissive’ verb indicating a statement that strengthens the speaker’s commitment to his utterance.

From the foregoing, the analysis carried out on deixisand exophoraas elements of cohesion has shown that there is a considerable adherence to the deictic features, especially, the person deixis and exophoric reference in the speeches selected. The result, as stated earlier, has shown that there is a considerable adherence to cohesive devices in the speeches under study. Specifically, the findings indicate that person deixis is more adhered to, followed by exophora. This, as the study verifies, has given credence to the statement by Halliday and Hassan that “first and second person forms are defined by the speech roles of the speaker and hearers, hence, they are normally interpreted exophorically by reference to the situation”, (48).

As explained earlier, since the research is based on ‘text’ that relates to ‘context’ in which the speaker and the hearers are the centre of discussion (the most important part of the context), the use of person deixis, largely to about 70% of cohesive devices under study has significantly satisfied the context, in this perspective.

For the same reason, exophoric reference as explained by Halliday and Hassan earlier, is information to be retrieved from elsewhere, not necessarily encoded in grammatical sequence in the text. As explained earlier, the exhophoric reference is also considerably used in the corpus which has also satisfied what Levinson said, that cohesion should connect what is said (i.e. text) to the assumption held between the speaker and the listeners (the context).

Again, in terms of the illocutionary force of the speaker, commissives, which indicates the speaker’s commitment to some course of actions, according to Searle, are reflected more in the ‘texts’ (speeches) as the study shows. This, to our generalization, is usual with most political speeches, especially of the type set for this study whose contexts are to establish, or present government’s planned policies and programmes (some course of actions) for the development of development. The use of ‘commisives’ is followed by that of ‘expressives’ which, in the same direction, conveys the speaker’s attitudes towards such policies and programmes as the speaker pronounces them before the listeners.

The speaker’s attitudes, as expressed through the ‘expressive’ illocutions are not only towards the state of affairs that call for the utterances, but most importantly too, towards the audience who form the context of utterance, so that when the speaker says:

“I am both humbled and gratified by your deepening acceptance of democracy…”

(appendix II, paragraph 3), not only is he expressing his attitudes (of appreciations) towards democracy’, he is also thankful to the listeners who made the situation of the utterance “your deepening acceptance of democracy” possible. The use of ‘expressives’as done in the corpus under study therefore is a persuasive mechanism the speaker employs to put the audience in particular frames of mind – making them friendly – to enable him convey his conviction appropriately.

From the analysis of the data, the research has been able to observe that, in the writing of the speeches, the principles of cohesion set for the study as discussed by Halliday and Hassan have been significantly adhered to. In the same way, the illocutionary acts of the speaker, which suggest his communicative intent, are also complied with. But how these two pragmatic factors are cohered, to bring about language meaning, is what would be examined in the following excerpt from the corpus.

For example, the speaker says:

“We believe that through what we have achieved, we are on the right path to attaining the ideal of statehood and goals for which we sought for a state of our own”, (apendix II, paragraph 6).

‘We’ in the extract above is a deictic reference used by royal people, or people in authority to reflect the assumptions he, the speaker, holds with his audience. It is used to describe such assumptions in the context in which the utterance was made. ‘Believe’ on the other hand is an illocutionary act of ‘expressive’ that describes the speaker’s attitudes, what Portner calls “expressive meaning” towards the state of affairs based on the assumptions the speaker shares with his recipients. Another example, as used in the data is:

“We intend to re-immigrate, re-energize, and reposition the service so as to promote competence, professionalism and productivity, (appendix I, paragraph 18).

Also, as could be seen in the extract above, ‘we’ which has been explained above, coheres with the word ‘intend’ which is a ‘commissive’ illocutionary act that describes the speaker’s commitment to the course of action of promising to “re-invigorate, re-energize and re-position”. The inference therefore is that the actions carried out by the illocutionary verbs above are shared understanding between the speaker and the listeners as indicated by the deictic reference ‘we’ which Halliday and Hassn say “is defined by the speech role of the speaker and the hearer” and which Nwogu said is used by royal people or people in authority to reflect the assumptions of the speaker and the audience.

Having established this coherence, however, whether or not such descriptions, i.e. the coherence between ‘we’ (deictic reference) and ‘believe’ (illocutionary act) is a true reflection of the assumptions held between the speaker and the audience depends on what Searle calls ‘essential condition’, that is the condition that necessitates the context of utterance; or what he refers to as ‘felicity condition’ which according to Nwogu refers to conditions that must be fulfilled in the situation in which the act is carried out if the utterance is to be appropriate. For instance, the condition for promising, as indicted in the second extract cited earlier include:

i. the speaker must be seen intending to carry out the action promised ii. the thing promised must be something the receiver wants to see happen.

So, the statement “we intent to re-invigorate... the service so as to promote competence… by the speaker, would be felicitous, i.e. reflective of their shared assumptions if truly the audience shares, or considers the ‘intention’ of the speaker that the service lacks competence and professionalism, thus, needs re-invigoration, as clamed. But if on the other hand the audience does not share in his intention, his use of ‘we’ is defeated thus, defeating the illocutionary act ‘believe’.

1.5 Conclusion

So far, this research has been able to explore political speeches, and has seen how some aspects of pragmatics, namely,deixis andexophora agree with illocutionary acts of the speaker. The study, thus, has tried to establish the relationship between the form and function of language that make for excellent communication to foster language understanding. The formof language examined in this respect is cohesion, as discussed by Halliday and Hassan, with specific reference to deixisand exophoric references which, according to the scholars, refer to the context of situation, (and not necessarily the text). The function of language, as explored here, is the concept of illocutionaryforce of a speaker as propounded by Austin and Searle respectively.

From the first section, the analysis has revealed that the speaker makes use of ‘person deixis’ more frequently than others, and this too, he (the speaker) refers more to “first and second person forms” than others. This explains his adherence to the proposition by Halliday and Hassan (48) that “first and second person forms are defined by the speech roles of the speaker and the hearers; and their reference is a prior reference. By these findings, thus, the research has established the fact that reference to person deixis, especially, first and second person forms, is done to satisfy the assumptions shared between the speaker and the hearers as opined by Levinson which form the context of communication. From the second analysis, the study has also shown that “illocutionary acts” of the speaker are much realized in the use of commisivesand expressiveswhich according to Searle indicate the speaker’s commitment to some course of action and his attitudes towards some state of affairs, respectively.

Pragmatic analysis of selected speeches of the Governor of Nasarawa State is a research informed by the need to examine how language functions in government activities. It is an attempt to investigate how government makes the public understand its policies and programmes presented through political speeches. This, as explained earlier in the research, is important because political speeches are some of the viable means through which government presents its policy directions to, and seeks consent from, the civil society. Language therefore has to be used systematically to understand human nature and social behaviour.

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