A CHILD OF NECESSITY: AN ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria, which is variously described by some people as ‘a geographical expression’, ‘a unique nation’, ‘the giant of Africa’, ‘the most populous black nation on earth’, among several others, had three distinct governments in the year 1993 alone. Against this background of political instability, numerous discourses which should be of interest and significance to linguists, political scientists, historians, social anthropologists and discourse analysts of various persuasions are examined in this work. Notable is the emergence of the metaphorical use of the word *child* in the farewell speech of the deposed Head-of-State, Chief Ernest Oladeinde Shonekan, when he spoke of the interim regime as ‘a child of circumstance’ and in the inaugural speech of the then new Head-of-State, General Sani Abacha, as ‘a child of necessity’. These expressions were used not only as part of the reasons for either taking up or rather seizing the mantle of leadership but also as descriptive signals both to the state of the nation and the kind of government that they purported to lead. Using articles in some national newspapers, I attempt in this paper a functional-semiotic discourse analysis of the relevant statements, responses and comments on these national, dramatic, political changes. This paper is therefore an analysis of aspects of the linguistic features of discourses engendered by the diverse problematic, economic, socio-cultural and political events within the Nigerian polity and the political implications for putting in place adequate democratic principles in a developing nation.

Keywords: Nigeria; Systemic Functional Theory; Discourse; Pragmatics; Military; Semiotics; Register; Lexicogrammar; Politics; Metaphor; Democratic process; Genre; Contextual configuration.

1. Introduction

1.1. *Background to the study*

This paper is concerned with an aspect of political discourse in Nigeria. Specifically, it is an examination of the relevant aspects of the speeches made by two Heads-of-State and responses given by notable political leaders and institutions in and outside the country¹. These speeches and corresponding responses were connected, unfortunately, with the unprecedented evolvement of three distinct national governments in Nigeria in the year 1993 alone. The year witnessed the termination of an eight-year dictatorial rule of General Ibrahim Babangida followed by the interim civil rule of Chief Ernest

¹ Throughout this paper, I used the word ‘country’ rather than ‘nation’ because I want to recognize the different philosophical meanings often associated with the two words. A country is merely a geographical entity which may not necessarily fit into the definition of a nation. A nation has a unifying goal whereas a country may not. Nigeria is seen often by most Nigerian philosophers as a country rather than a nation. It is a country whose unity is still very much questioned.

Shonekan that lasted about three months (eighty-two-days, specifically) when General Sani Abacha seized power in a palace coup. Significantly, a pictorial representation of the three governments reveals a military-cum-civilian-cum-military conglomeration or configuration.

These events did not only attract attention, comments and reactions from individuals inside and outside Nigeria, but also incurred wrath and condemnation and, in the world of subjectivity, were praised by a few people – especially the minions of the Nigerian politics. Responses poured into the country from Nigerian groups abroad, the American, Canadian, British, Australian and European governments as well as political and economic experts. More importantly, reactions from and demonstrations by democracy groups, trade and workers unions, interest groups of various associations and persuasions led to the intermittent disruptions of political, economic, social and religious activities all over the country, and Lagos (the former federal capital and the most populous business and commercial heart of the country) in particular, for days and weeks.

Any brief history of Nigeria would most probably underscore the unfortunate interference of the military in politics. The military, whose traditional role is to defend the territorial integrity of the country against any external aggression, had imposed themselves on the Nigerian people for several years since the country attained independence from Great Britain in 1960. To an average educated Nigerian, a frightening number of military men, albeit women, in the three armed forces – the army, the air-force and the navy – were perceived as stark illiterates who could hardly write their names by themselves until, perhaps, very recently when a few top military officers could answer questions posed to them directly by media men without reading from an already prepared answer or speech. The situation is, however, very different now, as many of them, beginning from General Yakubu Gowon in the nineteen seventies, have gone back to school. Many of them have realized that conventional, other than military education, was missing from their lives.

Worse still, the military politicians² (one of the new coinages added to the Nigerian political vocabulary since the emergence of the ‘soldier-boys’ who were mostly uneducated) were regarded by most Nigerians as far more corrupt than their mostly educated civilian counterparts. Holding a loaded gun in his left hand to silence any possible opposition, a typical soldier-politician used his right hand to plunder the country’s economic resources. Other than their lack of education and superior mode of corruption, the soldier-politician’s stentorian voice and oracular posture were enunciated in uncivil and destructive decrees. Hiding inside the cloak of decrees, the soldier-politician committed untold atrocities such as issuing orders to murder people, though surreptitiously, with dissenting political opinions regardless of number, position, etc, seized other people’s landed property and possessions and attempted to perpetuate himself in power. Military tribunals were set-up where civilians were tried and jailed at-will. Their rulership³, which was replete of deceits, inefficiencies and ineptitudes, was

² Its singular form ‘soldier-politician’ is far more commonly used.

³ In one sense, there is a difference between a ruler and a leader. This is the philosophical sense. Usually, a ruler may be elected or forced upon a group of people as is the case of the military in Nigeria. The military boys, by virtue of their owning guns and having tasted political power in 1966 imposed themselves on their people. Leaders are normally elected because they are well-known to the people.

practised in a very tense atmosphere in which the ruled lived in perpetual fear and domination. The result was the evolvment of a clique of blithering bourgeoisies, junketing in stolen booties while their fellow country men and women walloped in an ocean of poverty. Sadly enough, in the Nigeria context, those military politicians would not have been able to plunder the country as they did but for the collaboration of an extremely few credible and numerous discreditable civilians, most of whom were intellectuals, who constantly lobbied for and procured participation in governance in one capacity or another. They, as a result, often procured ministerial and advisory appointments in governments (Federal and States) and their quasi-government corporations or parastatals. No sooner most of them became ministers than they became very corrupt. Hence, instead of raising up the pivot on which the wheel of an enduring democratic principles and practices would turn to flourish, the military-politicians have continuously cleared a path to abject poverty, the end of which was the dehumanization of the people and the soul of the country.

2. Theoretical framework

A functional-semiotic discourse analysis, as I have used in this paper, takes into account the now fast-growing wave of interdisciplinary approaches to the study of problems and issues in the social sciences⁴. Perhaps the most widely acknowledged functional approach to the study of language is the Hallidayan Systemic Functional Theory (henceforth, SFT). Its functional potential being both an abstraction and universal, resides in the semiotic metafunctions. The ideational function deals with the construction of experience of the external world by the speaker or writer using his or her own world of consciousness. The interpersonal metafunction concerns the participants in discourse, thereby presenting language as doing something by and to the people. It deals with the role relationship among the participants in a universe of discourse. The textual component complements the ideational and the interpersonal by creating what is commonly referred to as relevance, that is relevance to the environment, both situation and culture. Any attempt to provide a full description of SFT and, indeed, the metafunctions in this piece of work will be sheer oversimplification. Detailed accounts of the theory are found in Halliday 1973, 1976, 1978; Halliday and Martin 1981; Halliday 1985; and Daramola 1990: 31-52, 1992: 23-31, 1996: 99-112, 2004a: 23-31, 2004b: 119-139, 2004c: 139-165, 2004d: 242-255 and 2005: 57-72.

Almost at the same time as the functional aspect of the theory became established in the early seventies, Halliday introduced and integrated the concept of semiotics with his theory. This made him one of the few scholars who blazed the trail in the introduction of the interdisciplinary approach to academic research in linguistics. Today, intellectuals encourage interdisciplinary research because no single theory, in most cases, can adequately cater for all research needs. The integration of semiotics into the theory became concretized by his 1978 seminal publication, *Language as social semiotic* (see also Daramola 2005).

The most immediate source of inspiration for my approach is Ventola's systemic analysis⁵. According to Ventola (1988: 52-77), a systematic approach in Systemic

⁴ Linguistics is regarded by most its practitioners as a social science.

⁵ Ventola's paper is an advancement of the integration of systemic linguistics and semiotics. There are several groups all over the world whose research goal is to advance the frontiers of the theory.

Functional Linguistics (henceforth, SFL) is a consideration of texts as structures which are generated by system choices on three semiotic planes, namely, GENRE, REGISTER and LANGUAGE (capitals are hers)⁶. The following diagram (Figure 1) shows their interrelationships.

Figure 1: The semiotic planes⁷

The hierarchical organization of the semiotic planes above is indicative of the fact that genre belongs to a ‘higher’ semiotic plane than both register and language. Register is, of course, ‘higher’ than language. The meaning of ‘higher’ is conceptualized in abstraction; that is, the distinction being made is not as distinctive as perceived physically. The two arrows have the meaning of REALISATION (capitals mine), which depicts the interdependency of *genre*, *register* and *language*. In other words, genre and register can be meaningful only if instances of linguistic structures are analyzed as I have done here. Correspondingly, linguistic structures can be understood fully as instances of genre and registers. These terms are explained further briefly as follows:

The plane of genre

As already stated above, genre is related to and realized by register. In a similar vein, genre shapes the choice of the form of register. The structure of genres may be organized by the application of the concepts of *field*, *tenor* and *mode* – the unfolding of contextual configurations (CC).

Field refers to the ongoing activity and the particular purpose that language is serving within the context of the activity. That is, what is “going-on” has some meanings in the social system, and these meanings have a well-ordered configuration. Field is particularly relevant to making predictions about longer stretches of text or about the most typical kinds of processes that will occur.

Tenor refers to the interaction among participants (status and role-relationships). These role-relationships are situation-specific. More importantly, these concern aspects of the exchange of meanings among interlocutors. **Mode** covers the channels of linguistic interactions. This is the symbolic organization with particular reference to the form of the text concerning its channel or medium. The two modes commonly referred to are the spoken and the written modes. The three CC’s assist in focusing attention on the particular situation.

In most cases, these groups come up with concepts which are different from but have their roots in Halliday’s ideas. Such groups have evolved in Great Britain, the United States of America and Australia, amongst other places. In Australia some groups led by Gunther Kress at the University of Technology, Jim Martin at the University of Sydney, Peter Collins at the University of New South Wales, Ruqaiya Hasan and David Butt at Macquarie University.

⁶ The organization of these concepts was introduced first by Jim Martin of the University of Sydney, Australia, in 1985.

⁷ See Ventola (1988: 57).

A more explicit description of genre may be provided by the construction of a system network⁸ - the delicate network of a genre shows systems choices of sub-categorizations. Such a network may not be constructed if the generic potential (Hasan's Generic Structure Potential (GSP; Halliday and Hasan 1985: 63-69), is an inconclusive or rather unfolding, elaborate, yet-unexplored activity or process. Indeed, as either a separate or a second option, these choices may then be constructed as Schematic Structures (SS) or generic choices which represent a particular social process that is appropriate to the particular genre.

The plane of register

The meaning of language as realized by systems and structures begins to open up to analysts on the plane of register. That is to say, register is the semiotic plane which uses language as its mode of expression. The language of a particular register becomes patterned because it consists of certain linguistic structures which are different from other registers. These patterned structures realize Field, Tenor and Mode options which are constructed on the system network. Examples of registers are: 'language-as-action' (e.g. football commentary), 'language as face-to-face interaction (e.g. buying and selling) and 'language-as-reflection' (e.g. the content of a novel or other texts such as instances of political discourses).

The plane of language

The plane of language may be organized into three strata, namely discourse, lexicogrammar and phonology. This concept may be illustrated further as in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2: The Language Stratum

An explanation of Figure 2 should begin from right to left, which shows that phonology comes first. Being basically sounds, phonology presents language as social behavior. According to Halliday (1970), the phonological units of English are phoneme, syllable, foot and tone. A tone unit or group consists of feet, a foot of syllables and syllables of phonemes. Meaning is constructed in English on the phonological stratum as these units combine to form structures.

The lexicogrammar, which is the unity inherent in the combinatory possibilities of lexis and grammar, function as the level of the clause in English. A clause may function in various ways depending on the type of process which has been selected to realize the meaning of the clause (Halliday 1985; Daramola 1996, 2004d: 242-255).

⁸ The System Network (SN) is the 'formal construct', that is, the main theoretical component of the SFT-Halliday (1985: x and xxvi; Berry 1975: 188; Fawcett *et al.* 1984: 135-177). It shows a set of features of the language from which the paradigmatic options can be drawn (Joia and Stenton 1980: 4). Fawcett observes specifically that the SN is a tool that can be used for modeling relationships between meanings in language.

On the one hand, phonology and lexicogrammar deal with constituency structures. The discourse analysis on the plane of language, on the other hand, establishes the fact that though a clause may occur by itself (i.e. independent) it functions among other clauses. It is discourse which underscores the textual interdependence of clauses (i.e. dependency structures). No sooner an analyst begins to examine texts on the discourse stratum than meaning becomes elaborately open and explicit. This results from the fact that meanings are generated by certain discourse systems and structures some of which are reference, lexical cohesion, conversational structure etc. (For detailed discussions on this system, see Halliday and Hasan 1985; Ventola 1984; Daramola 1990).

Before analyzing actual political discourse in this paper, a consideration of the mode of political discourse in Nigeria becomes necessary.

3. Political discourse in Nigeria

The state of the analysis of political discourse in Nigeria may be appreciated better if a brief analysis of the subject in general is provided. Political discourse of scholarly standard dates back to (or may predate) Aristotle (Gastil 1985). In the last centuries, political theorists, philosophers and rhetoricians have published extensively on the language of politics (Black 1965). In roughly the last three decades, the subject has attracted a great deal of attention, particularly in critical writings and from interdisciplinary perspectives (Kress and Hodge 1979; Fowler *et al.* 1979). Emphasis in the study of political discourse has been placed, however, on the media, particularly the reporting of political news in both the print and electronic media (van Dijk 1985, 1987; Geis 1987). Among other forms of political interaction, the media play a very important role in shaping political talks and opinions among politicians themselves as well as among citizens.

Scholarly works on political discourse in Nigeria from the interdisciplinary perspective are indeed very limited. From the literary and journalistic perspective however, there have been substantial writings⁹ on politics, some of which are temperate, others radical and explosive (Agye 1986: 127-145; Elimimian 1987: 207-233). One of the events which culminated in the attainment of independence in 1960 from Great Britain was the diverse polemic writings. Protests against the British rule, domination and exploitation of Nigeria were boldly expressed in pamphlets and on pages of newspapers. Writers of extreme radical literature¹⁰ had to face the wrath of the law enforcement agents in various forms on different occasions. Some were put in police custody for days and weeks; others were jailed for months and years while many lost their lives.

As examples of the literature concerning the analysis of political discourse from the interdisciplinary perspective, I will briefly discuss the work of Adegbija (1988: 151-160), Daramola (1992: 103-122) and Akioye (1994: 7-31).

Adegbija analyzes an utterance that was made by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the Inspector-General of Police. The utterance is: 'My friend,

⁹ What is meant by writings may be viewed from two perspectives. One, I meant standard and substandard writings. Two, these two writings may be descriptive, and analytical or critical.

¹⁰ I use "literature" in its original meaning, which is 'whatever is written', whether journalistic or literary (the latter including prose, poetry and drama).

where is Anini?” Anini was a notorious, fearless armed robber who stole, unlike in the style of Robin Hood, both from the rich and the poor. Motivated perhaps by kleptomania, and buoyed by the protection and cooperation he enjoyed from some police officers, he struck with unrestrained brutality. At the time the utterance was made, Anini was still at large and the police were desperately looking for him. In his analysis, Adegbija investigates factors that help language users in inferring meaning vis-à-vis the utterance. One of these factors is the placement of emphatic stress on different lexical elements of the utterance except the nominal phrase, ‘my friend’. He also examines the utterance from different intonational and paralinguistic cues. He proffers interpretations: The first part of the analysis is the utterance’s linguistic micro-decomposition at the primary level; the second part, the utterance’s micro-level analysis which draws on the prevailing socio-cultural context which reveals that the utterance is intended to be understood beyond its ordinary meaning. Drawing from different pragmatic backgrounds, he concludes that the utterance is an indirect speech act, which conveys an entirely different meaning within the Nigerian socio-political milieu than it would elsewhere.

Daramola’s analysis is a criticism of Adegbija’s. He believes that Adegbija’s analysis focuses inexplicitly on the textual, and unsystematically on the contextual. He uses, among other things, three of his interpretations as points of discussion. One of these refers to Anini as an ‘ordinary’ person and the second refers to him as ‘invisible’. The third considers the utterance as ‘a comic relief’. He states that Adegbija’s explanation of placing the emphatic stress on Anini to imply, for example, that the speaker might wish to compare him with another human being appears unconvincing. Such a placement, he stresses, is even unnecessary because Anini leaves no one in doubt concerning his brutal activities. He also disagrees with Adegbija that the use of intonation and paralinguistic cues to assume that the utterance could be interpreted to wish to establish the person of Anini and his whereabouts introduces some elements of doubt into the meaning of the utterances. This need not be so because there is no doubt regarding the existence of Anini, even though the police could not locate his whereabouts at the time the utterance was made. The interpretation that the utterance may be used as a “comic relief” to defuse the tense political atmosphere is also not convincing because the President would then be presented as treating a national problem with utmost levity¹¹. Using the SFT, he analyses the text from the linguistic and extralinguistic environments. Linguistically, it is analysed from a Theme/Rheme perspective as a means of interactive exchange. Its Mood Analysis sets the Theme in a speaker-oriented prominence; the speaker is thus able to seek information from the listener. Being a relational process, the verb *be*¹² expresses the circumstance which describes Anini as the ‘Carrier’ of the relation to a ‘place’ where he could be located. Extralinguistically, the contextual configuration of Field, Tenor and Mode supports the linguistic analysis by providing the relevant context to the utterance.

Akioye examines a three-part construction of a radical African stance through the use of metaphor in Nigeria’s United Nations (UN) addresses. Since the formation of

¹¹ During this incident, political agitators criticized and threatened the military government of General Ibrahim Babangida who, on several occasions, cancelled political programmes, which have led him to hand over power to civilians. He failed to do this in 1986 and several times later until he was ousted in 1993.

¹² The verb ‘be’ is procurable, grammatically, from ‘is’ in the utterance. “My friend, where is Anini?”

UN in 1945, leaders and representatives of member-nations have, during plenary meetings, delivered addresses that expressed their views on national, regional and global issues. His analysis includes, firstly, the redefinition of Africa and Africans' identity; secondly, the construction of grim conditions in Africa, and the blame of foreign adversaries, and thirdly the construction of force. Drawing from Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Akioye suggests that it is possible for a metaphor to focus on one aspect of a concept while keeping people from focusing on other aspects that may be consistent. His conclusion is that this submission applies to the Nigerian Heads-of-State and delegates' uses of metaphor to project a radical Africanist viewpoint. Lurking beneath this radical posture, he asserts, is the fact that many African forms of leadership and colonial policies had adverse effects on the continent. Many of their subjects are still subjugated and exploited while there is little or no improvement on their divisive and often turbulent ethnic groupings. Most importantly, the metaphor of economically sick Africa shifts the national and international attention from the waste, corruption and mismanagement of resources by the rulers. His study, in conclusion, shows how metaphors have been used in the addresses to project a radical African viewpoint in order to procure a favourable attention at the U.N. In the process, they have redefined Africa even as they have blamed foreign adversaries on the grim conditions of the continent.

The foregoing introductory literature review may be used, then, as a basis for the following analysis of the political discourse engendered by Nigeria's political changes in 1993 alone. Its relevance may be pivoted on the fact that all these discourses concern leadership and citizenship problems in Africa.

More importantly, I have chosen two major political speeches – one civilian and the other military. In this regard, the choice provides a balance between two modes of leadership in Nigeria and, indeed, two points-of-view. Linguistically, it provides two reflections of meaning vis-à-vis the country, Nigeria. Most importantly, the two speeches are sequential – one event leads to another. Hence, the two speeches go together naturally for the production of an explicit meaning in an aspect of the Nigerian political landscape.

4. Analysis

In this analysis, I focus on the Schematic Structures (SS) of the two speeches and organize their PARTICIPANTS and EVENTS in instantial networks. The SS concerns the analysis of the text's sequential organization of Field, Tenor and Mode, which provides its generic potential. While the SS may be universal, that is, realize all texts belonging to that genre; the instantial network is a realization of a particular text.

4.1. *Shonekan's resignation speech*¹³

Unlike most speeches by Nigerian leaders which are addressed to 'fellow Nigerians' or 'fellow citizens' or still, 'fellow countrymen and women', this speech is strikingly

¹³ The full text of the article which has the title: 'Shonekan resigns, Abacha takes over' can be found, firstly on page 1, columns 2 and 3, secondly columns 3-7 on page 2 in *The Guardian* newspaper of Thursday, November 18, 1993. The article is preceded by a very brief introduction stating that Chief Shonekan took the mantle of leadership from General Ibrahim Babangida on August 26, 1993.

directed to Shoneken and his colleagues in the Interim National Government (henceforth, ING)¹⁴. I shall use some extracts to do the analysis:

(Extract 1)

“Fellow Colleagues of the Interim National Government, I have summoned you this evening on an unusual occasion. Earlier today, I met with the Secretary of Defence, in company of the Chief of Defence, and the Chief of Army Staff, and we discussed the state of the nation. They expressed serious concern about the general uneasiness in the country and the apparent lack of stability over the last three months. They spoke about the restiveness of the rank and file of the military.”

Three aspects of the introductory part of the speech are important. One is the channel of interaction between the addressers and the addressee(s). This is, no doubt, part of the Tenor and Mode of the speech. Two is the Field of discourse; and three the ‘entry behaviour’ by its SS.

The channel concerns the PROCESS SHARING, how do the addressers (i.e. of a speech, rather than a speaker) in a conversation) interact in the process of discourse creation or sharing? In conversations, both the speaker(s) and addressee(s) take turns to produce discourse. Such a production is dialogic and, as a result is dynamic. Dynamism is the sense that the foregrounding of conversations demonstrated several factors; namely, spontaneity, knowledge of participants, topic of discourse, immediate environment, etc. The above speech, being a televised one, the addressees were invited to share from it as a finished product. Speeches as finished products are written for Heads-of-State in Nigeria by professional writers most of whom are intellectuals, not simply because it is conventional to do so (as elsewhere), but also because they (the military Heads-of-State) neither can write nor read them. Unlike in developed countries where the Heads-of-State can address members of an audience orally, and even impromptu, most Heads-of-State in Nigeria, particularly the military ones are not capable of doing so¹⁵. The Channel of a speech delivered on television is first of all different from one occurring in a conversation in which both the speaker and the listener as participants are present in the same physical environment. Secondly, it is different from the one delivered on the radio in which both the addressee and the members of the audience lack visual contact. The channel for any dialogic speech, for example, is PHONIC because it creates a dynamic environment for active process sharing. Even in a situation of dialogic process in which the addressee appears to be a passive participant, he or she can contribute still to the complete meaning of the text by providing some kind of feedback through non-verbal modalities such as eye contact, facial expression, a yawn or body posture (e.g. head or shoulder or movement). The interactive mode of this text does not wholly belong to either of the ones described above. Its lack of provision for a dialogue and any kind of eye or body contact between the addresser and the addressee suggests an absence of any direct process sharing (i.e.

¹⁴ This is an unusual style of address in which the Head of State addresses his colleagues in government rather than the nation. It may be a pointer, on the one hand, to the way the less than three-months-old government was established and aborted in a palace coup. On the other hand, it points to its ‘interimness’.

¹⁵ As already stated in the introductory section to this paper, most of the military officers are not really educated or refused to be educated but surely are not politicians by their training. I must add quickly that Chief Ernest Shonekan is both academically qualified and professionally competent and versatile to read and present addresses orally and impromptu as any leader in any part of the world.

participation), hence a completely passive response from members of the audience to the addresser when the speech is being delivered¹⁶. The speech is therefore mediated as it shares the following complete characteristics. It is GRAPHIC because it is written to be read. It is also PHONIC because its medium is spoken even as the Head-of-State reads it on the television. Its complexity does not reside only in the congruency of both graphic and phonic channels alone, but also because it can neither be classified as monologic nor dialogic. This is caused by its mediated medium – both the addresser and the addressee are unable to interact with each other face-to-face.

Field concerns the kind of social activity inherent in a piece of discourse and its goals. The Field of this speech is politics and its goal is the resignation of a Head-of-State in order to pave the way for another one. The ‘entry behaviour’ here is the GREETING (G) as enunciated in ‘Fellow Colleagues’ (see extract 1 above). The ‘G’ signals the addresser’s recognition of the presence of another person or a group of persons in the immediate or distant environment as a potential participant in a universe of discourse.

The next aspect of the SS is BACKGROUND INFORMATION (BI). No speech is given in a vacuum; there must be relevant explanations to it. In the subsequent two paragraphs of roughly the same length as the above extract, Chief Shonekan reveals the mission of the military men with whom he held a meeting earlier on and begins to comment on his ING team which had spent barely three months in office. According to him, that is Shonekan, the Secretary of Defence (a military person, who succeeds him) and army chiefs have come to discuss the state of the nation. They express ‘uneasiness’ in the country and ‘the restiveness of the rank and file in the military’. (see the instantial network below consisting of the EVENTS in his speech). The meeting leads apparently to Shonekan’s resignation and consequently the full return of the military to politics.

Extracts (2) and (3) below from his speech provide further analysis:

(Extract 2)

“I want to put it on record that I have enjoyed the period we worked together in the Interim National Government. It is common knowledge that ING is a child of circumstance. (underlining is mine). It was conceived in crisis and born into crisis”.

(Extract 3)

“If I may recount some of the achievements of the Interim National Government to which you have all living witnesses, we may not have recorded landmarks, but we have taken the first step. In the social sector, we have brought back normalcy in the institutions of higher learning¹⁷. On human rights, our records are impeccable and perhaps, unbeatable in the annals of our country. We freed all jailed human right activists; we pardoned all political offenders both dead and alive; we allowed all politicians in exile to return home; and we have not restricted the free movement of any activities in and out of the country. We also took the appropriate step to deproscribe the newspapers proscribed by sending Bills to the National Assembly to be repealed”.

Both extracts (2) and (3) above are classified as ASSESSMENT (A) in the SS. In a valedictory speech such as this, it is very important to assess the general and specific

¹⁶ Members of the audience do interact, of course, as the address unfolds but not to the immediate knowledge of the addresser.

¹⁷ The use of ‘institutions of higher learning’ instead of ‘higher institutions of learning’ is a feature of the Nigerian English (NE) dialect. Although such a localized expression is understood in Nigeria, I am afraid that it may be difficult to comprehend by native speakers of English internationally.

performance of the political class or group regardless of the length of service. The first sentence of extract (2) introduces the assessment (i.e. 'I want to put it on record'). The collective term 'we' is hereby integrated with the addresser's 'I' to express the responsibility expected of any progressive political class and their achievement in this direction. The second sentence provides, on the one hand, the historical basis to the achievements enumerated beginning from extract (3). Specifically on the other hand, it relates to the topic of this paper concerning the metaphor of the word 'child' in the phrase, 'a child of circumstance'¹⁸. The third sentence in extract (2) presents, as it were, a literal underpinning of the childbirth event although not without the apparently odd word 'crisis'. However, the metaphor of 'child' may be explained politically and, of course, ideologically to presuppose the mitigation of blame and responsibility on the part of the Head-of-State; to wit, his political group. It is a pacifist explanation of the time-frame of political 'birth' refers to none other than the annulment of the Presidential election of 12 June 1993 which was conceived and executed by the military themselves and the people's attendant reaction and counter-reactions in opposition.

Most importantly, Shonekan recounts his achievements (in conjunction with other members of his team) in the social, political and economic arena. Socially, on human rights, using very strong epithets (impeccable, unbeatable), they freed all jailed human rights activists. They also pardoned all political offenders dead and alive. As a result, all politicians in exile were asked to return to the country. Furthermore, they deprocried all the newspapers proscribed by the previous military government of General Ibrahim Babangida. From his own assessment, his government has brought honour to the nation by its collective transparency and integrity and campaigns against corruption and indiscipline¹⁹.

Extract 4

"On the political arena, we have continued to work ceaselessly towards full democratization of our dear country. We have extended our right-hand of fellowship to the legislature and have put in place the machinery for local and Presidential election next February".

(Extract 5)

"On the economic scene, we were able to put in place an Economic Action Agenda for the nation in conjunction with the private sector operators. Let me assure you that our seemingly tough policies had received commendation from near and beyond".

(Extract 6)

Distinguished colleagues, most importantly, the Interim National Government has tried very hard to bring honour to government and had taken steps to campaign against the incidence of corruption and indiscipline in the society..."

Extracts (4) and 5 above are basic to the country's problems – politics and economics. Politically, the country is unstable. On the one hand, the urge to democratize is very salient in the minds of most Nigerians. On the other hand, the military men do not want to hand over political power to the civilians who, by learning from whatever errors they may commit over a number of years, can become good managers of democracy. Chief

¹⁸ A very similar expression 'a child of necessity' occurs in Abacha's maiden speech, which is also discussed in this paper.

¹⁹ Most people hold a contrary view to his assessment.

Shonekan's reference to 'full democratization' (see extract 4) is a pointer to the erroneous claim by the military men that their government is 'democratic'. The civilized members of the Nigerian society and the world at large know, nevertheless, that the practice of democracy is by no means synonymous with the issuing of decrees and the partial or total pushing of the civil courts to the background. As found in extract (4), the machinery set up for various elections has always been 'put in place' but to no fruition because of the recurrent military coups and countercoups.

Economically, (see extract 5), most Nigerians live in abject poverty. Ironically, the country is blessed with abundant human and natural resources. Again, just as elaborate and very expensive plans are made to democratize the government, so are efforts made to liberate the country from economic mismanagement (see extract 6 – corruption and indiscipline). No matter how impressive any economic plan is, as in this extract (i.e. Economic Action Agenda), if there is no follow-up exercise to carry it to any logical conclusion because of political instability and the absence of an enduring democracy, it would not work. Extract (6) opens with 'Distinguished colleagues'. In a similar way to (G) in the SS (i.e. Fellow Colleagues) this phrase is a recognition of the presence of members of ING in the physical environment. In the discourse structure of political speeches, this form of recognition occurs in the middle position hence we shall describe it as MEDIAL GREETING (MG). Although its occurrence in any speech is optional, it is quite a common feature. Indeed, it may occur more than once in longer speeches than this one is. The word *distinguished* is a stronger and more noteworthy one than *fellow* as used in the opening part of the speech.

Extracts (7) – (9) below are used to conclude Shonekan's resignation speech:

Extract (7)

"However, I regret to inform you that in the light of recent events and after due consideration of all the facts, I am left with no alternative but to take the most honourable and dignified step of resigning, with immediate effect, my appointment as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria".

(Extract 8)

"Once more, I thank you very much and hope that the fellowship we have shared in this past period will continue to be the basis of good memory for long".

(Extract 9)

"May God Bless and LONG LIVE THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA"
(capitals his).

Extract (7) may be regarded as COMMENT (C) in the SS. In most cases, there may be comments throughout any speech. Other than and before this extract (7) above, there is a comment in the penultimate paragraph as follows:

I can only hope that the successor administration will take off from where we are leaving and continue courageously with the budgetary and other reforms we have adopted as well as our campaign for debt relief".

Extract (7) is however a comment of regret concerning how Shonekan resigned. His resignation appears a forced rather than a voluntary one particularly as the meeting was held with the military Chiefs. In military terms, such forced resignations are referred to

as 'palace coups'. Chief Shonekan is reported by some Nigerians to be visibly shaken on television as he reads his resignation speech. Extract (8) may be regarded as FUTURE INDICATOR (FI). In most cases, there would be a reference(s) to future plans for individuals, groups or the nation. 'Future' in the usage synchronizes with 'memory'. Memory is, generally a product of past, present and future. As the past is already concretized (see 'enjoyed' in extract (2) and 'fellowship' in extract (4) in the text, it forms still a springboard to the yet unfold future. Finally, extract (9) may be regarded as FINIS because it signifies the end of the speech. Unlike the language of buying and selling for example, in which Finis is optional (goodbye, bye etc.), it is obligatory in the language of politics, particularly in formal speech delivery. The addition of 'God bless' or 'May God bless' may serve as examples.

Before I provide a display of the elements of the SS of Shonekan's speech, explanations regarding optional attributes are necessary. In discourse analysis, the set of variables of option and obligation (i.e. obligatory) represents some specific value(s). Either one functions as a possibility to some specific meaning. The optional element may or may not occur therefore in the SS while the obligatory element *must* occur. It is the latter which defines the genre of a text because of its importance. When the optional elements occur, they contribute to a text's complexity. Most importantly, they do not stop the analyst's explanation or recognition of a particular genre. Also the obligatory element operates from the opposite direction; it must occur in the SS and its absence may distort the text's structure. The SS of Shonekan's speech is:

$$G \wedge (BI) \wedge A \wedge (MG) \wedge (C) \wedge (FI) \wedge F$$

The caret sign (^) indicate sequence. The brackets enclosing some elements indicate optionality. The elements without brackets are obligatory.

Shonekan's speech is also displayed in the following PARTICIPANTS and EVENTS networks. The system network which may be drawn at all levels of linguistic description is used not only for modeling relationship between meanings in speech, but also for explaining the choice of subcategorisations. It provides a paradigmatic but not always symmetrical patterning of language. The networks are therefore models of participants and events in a universe of discourse. They reflect the concept of delicacy (a scale of depth of differentiation in grammatical analysis) in their organization from left to right.

Figure 3 – Shonekan’s resignation speech: Instantial network of participants

Figure 4 – Shonekan's Resignation Speech – Instantial Network of Events

4.2. Abacha's maiden speech

The following extracts are used to explain the SS in Abacha's speech. It should be kept in mind that this text belongs to the same political time-frame as Shonekan's resignation speech. They are both products of the same context or event, at least in terms of sequence.²⁰

(Extract 10)

Fellow Nigerians, sequel to the resignation of the former Head of the Interim National Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Chief Ernest Shonekan, and my subsequent appointment as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief, I had had extensive consultations with the Armed Forces hierarchy and other well-meaning Nigerians in a bid to find solutions to the various political, economic and social problems which have engulfed our beloved country and which have made life most difficult for the ordinary citizens of this nation".

(Extract 11)

"Chief Ernest Shonekan took over as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces at a most trying time in the history of the country. Politically, economically, and socially, there were lots of uncertainties. However, driven by a belief in himself, his countrymen, and love for his country, he accepted to face the challenges of our time. I will, therefore, like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to him for his selfless service to the nation. He showed great courage at taking on the daunting task of heading the Interim National Government, even a greater courage to know when to leave".

The speech has the same Field as the first one; that is, politics. It is the maiden speech of the new Head-of-State which follows the resignation of the previous one. Its entry behaviour is again the Greeting (G) as enunciated in the utterance – 'Fellow Nigerian' (see 10 above). The next aspect is the BACKGROUND INFORMATION (BI) because the sudden appearance of a new Head-of-State demands explanation to the people (see extract 10 and 11 above). So, the first information after the obligatory greeting is the resignation of the last Head-of-State consequent upon the 'appointment' of the new one. To support his 'appointment' as the new number one citizen of Nigeria, he has had consultations with members of the armed forces as well as with civilians regarding how to solve the country's myriad problems (see the instantial networks of events (Figure 5) of Abacha's maiden speech below).

The next aspect of the SS is the ASSESSMENT (A). As expected, he assesses the performance of the last Head-of-State who took over from the penultimate one in the most trying time in the history of the country and awards him a very high credit. In specific terms (see extract 11), he pays tribute to him for being able "to face the challenge" of such an odd time to lead the government and "to show great courage when to leave".

Several COMMENTS (C) follow his assessment of his predecessor as well as himself. See extract (12) below:

(Extract 12)

²⁰ The full text which has the title: 'The new order' is published in *Daily Champion*. Volume 6, No. 277 of Friday, November 19, 1993, columns 1 – 3 on page 3.

Many have expressed fears about the apparent return of the military. Many have talked about the concern of the international community. However, under the present circumstances, the survival of our beloved country is far above any other consideration. Nigeria is the only country we have. We must, therefore solve our problems ourselves. We must lay a very solid foundation for the growth of true democracy. We should avoid any ad hoc temporary solutions. The problems must be addressed firmly, objectively, decisively and with all sincerity of purpose.

Abacha expresses the fears of various segments of the Nigeria society of the return of the military. Firstly, to the informed (e.g. educated, politically alert) members of the populace, the military which is supposed to be a corrective or ad hoc group is derailing the political process and, indeed, the life of the country by edging out the civilians who are the real practitioners of the political game. Secondly, it is an indication to the polity that it wants to perpetuate its rulership (not leadership). Part of the people's fear concern that of the international community which may wish to see that democracy is established in Nigeria rather than military dictatorship.

Further on extract 12 above, hardly can one find a Nigerian who thinks really that the circumstance of his seizure of power is as chaotic as the time that General Ibrahim Babangida annulled the presidential election in June. Hence his placing the survival of Nigeria above other considerations in this context begs the question. Similarly the statement that Nigeria is the only country we have is uninteresting. Worse, the claim that Nigeria can solve its own problems is not very inspired at a time when the entire earth has become a global village. Worse still, the Head-of-State must have his tongue in his cheek to claim that the military can be the source of a "true democracy". Rather, the institution is seen to act to the contrary not only in Nigeria but also in other parts of the world where they have seized power from the civilians. His comments end with a sentence (see the last sentence of extract 12 above) already classified by linguists to belong to the arsenal of military language full of deceit – "firmly, objectively, decisively and with all sincerity of purpose". Rather, they want to govern to enrich themselves.

(Extract 13)

"Consequently, the following decisions come to immediate effect".

Extract (13) above is an introductory sentence to an IMMEDIATE PLAN(s) (IP) of the Abacha regime. The plan of the regime is to *dissolve, ban, proscribe, deproscribe* and *abrogate* some of the existing institutions. These IPs are organized further as follows:

dissolved

the Interim National Government (ING)
the national and state assemblies
the executive council
all local governments
the National Electoral Commission (NEC)
all former secretaries to federal ministries
the new political parties.

Banned

abrogated

all processions
all political meetings
all political associations

Decree 61 of 1993

proscribed
Consultative committee

deproscribed
close media houses

The IP includes the establishment of a Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) with the Head-of-State who is also the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as Chairman. The Council comprises the following positions in the descending order of importance from the Head of State.

the Head-of-State
v
the Chief of General Staff
v
the Minister of Defence
v
the Chief of Defence Staff
v
the Service Chiefs
v
the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice
v
the Internal Affairs Minister
v
the National Security Adviser

The IP, as an important aspects of the SS for political speeches, cannot be better shown than in extracts (14) and (15) below:

(Extract 14)

“On the current strike throughout the nation, following the increase in the price of fuel, I appeal to all the trade unions to return to work IMMEDIATELY (capitals mine). We cannot afford further dislocation and destruction of our economy”.

(Extract 15)

“On the closed media houses, government is hereby lifting the order of proscription WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT (capitals mine). We, therefore appeal to the media houses that in this spirit of national reconciliation, we should show more restraint and build a united and peaceful Nigeria”.

Along with *firmly*, *objectively*, *decisively* (see sentence of extract (12) above), *immediately* or *with immediate effect* forms an important feature of the militant (e.g. unrealistic, impolite but appropriate to ‘force’) language of the “military boys” in Nigeria. Extract (14) provides the tacit agreement by government that the anarchy which followed the election was nationwide. While both extracts (14) and (15) contain the discourse of appeal (a juxtaposition with the militant language in the same

sentence), extract (15) demonstrates, in particular, the generous disposition, as it were, of a new military government towards the members of the mass media. No sooner a military government settles down to the business of governance than the generous disposition of the spirit of reconciliation towards the media men vanishes.

Following the IP is the MG as illustrated in extract (16) below:
(Extract 16)

“Fellow Nigerians, the events of the past months, starting from the annulment of June 12 Presidential election, culminating in the appointment of the former Head of State, Chief Ernest Shonekan, who unfortunately resigned yesterday, are well known to you....”

The MG of Abacha’s political speech occurs in exactly the same way as its G (i.e. Fellow Nigerians). There is, however, a variation in both the G (Fellow Colleagues) and MG (Distinguished Colleagues) of Shonekan’s political speech (see extract (1) and (6). Also in terms of content, the MG of Abacha’s political speech contains, in part, the BI. Most importantly, the positioning of the MG is not located up to half-length of the speech but towards its end.

The FI of the SS of Abacha’s speech may begin with the establishment (IP) of the PRC. As at the time the speech was broadcast, only the membership of the Head-of-State was certain. The names of the other members of the PRC had not been mentioned. Members of two other institutions – states administrators and the Federal Executive Council (FEC) - were yet to be named. Other aspects of FI in the speech are as follows:

(Extract 17)

We require well thought-out and permanent solutions to these problems if we are to emerge stronger from them. Consequently, a constitutional conference, with full constituent power will be established soon to determine the future constitutional structure of Nigeria. The constitutional conference will also recommend the method of forming parties which will lead to the ultimate recognition of political parties formed by the people”.

(Extract 18)

“While the conference is on, the re-organisation and reform of the following major institutions will be carried out...”

From extract (17) above, a conference, which would be established, may bring about a permanent solution of the political problems in the country. Yet, before and after the country-attained independence in 1960, series of ideologically motivated constitutions have been drawn and adopted for use. British Parliament System was jettisoned for the American Presidential System. Both systems have been said to be unsuitable to Nigeria and Nigerians.

As the conference goes on, several re-organizations will be embarked upon in government and its parastatals (e.g. the military, the police, the judiciary, etc. (Extract 18). Illustrative of the language of the military in Nigeria is also the following extract:

(Extract 19)

“This regime will be firm, humane and decisive. We will not condone, nor tolerate any act of indiscipline. Any attempt to test our will, will be decisively dealt with. For the international community, we are asked that you suspend judgment while we graph with the onerous task of nation building, reconciliation and repairs.

In spite of all these promises of justice-firmness, being humane and enforcing discipline, the military personnel are seen by the people to act very contrary to these beautiful tenets. Instead they are seen to be very corrupt, insensitive and oppressive to the people irrespective of class or status. And very often, each military regime contrary to the statement often accredited to them that Nigeria is self-sufficient to look after itself (see extract 12) always appeals later to the international community surreptitiously and openly for its moral support, monetary and military aids.

The last extract below contains the topic metaphorical expression for this paper and its FINIS.

(Extract 20)

“This government is a child of necessity with a strong determination to restore peace and stability to our country and on this foundation, enthrone a lasting and true democracy. Give us the chance to solve our problems in our own ways. Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria”.

The metaphorical expression – “a child of necessity” is very similar to the earlier one “a child of circumstance”. If examined together, both expressions, being grammatically nominal, are very similar even though ‘circumstance’ and ‘necessity’ are different in terms of meaning. The similarity between them is inherent in the crises that form the basis for the evolution of the governments in one year alone. The word ‘child’ which is also common to both expressions may be explained to mean a political product in its inception. The last expression in extract (20) is the obligatory FINIS. The SS for Abacha’s speech may be described as follows:

$$G \wedge (BI) \wedge A(C) \wedge (IP) \wedge (MG) \wedge (FI) \wedge F \wedge$$

The option (IP) is absent in Shonekan’s speech because he has resigned his appointment while the military government of Abacha has just been sworn in. The speech is also represented in the PARTICIPANT and EVENTS (capitals mine) instantial networks below. Figure 5, which is the instantial network of events, is far more complex than figure 6, which contains instantial network of participants. This brevity becomes more striking if compared with figure 3, which contains the instantial network of participants in Shonekan’s speech. This results from the fact that members of Abacha’s government have not yet been chosen fully when the broadcast is made.

Figure 5: Abacha's maiden speech – Instantial network of events)

Figure 6: Abacha's maiden speech: Instantial network of participants)

The structural patterns, networks of events and participants as analyzed above appear incomplete without a very brief discussion of the extent of the implication of the political changes and speeches. The appearance of Shonekan and Abacha as Nigeria's Heads of State in 1993 was a result of the annulment by Babangida of the presidential election which was held of June 12, 1993. Babangida "stepped aside"²¹ on August 22 and Shonekan was sworn in as the Head of the ING. Shonekan resigned his appointment on November 16 and Abacha became the Head of State the next day.²² Many Nigerians thought that it would take many years to again realign Nigerians politically, as a result of the annulment of the June 12 election".²³ From the foreign front, the United States Ambassador²⁴ to Nigeria noted that by these political changes Nigerians achieved

²¹ From this date, the phrase 'step aside' had a specific contextual meaning to Nigerians and became a new addition to the fast-growing Nigerian vocabulary being used in formal and informal situations.

²² This suggestion was made by Dr. Paul Aifuwa to the *Daily Times* (Monday September 13, 1993, page 3).

²³ This statement was made by a former Nigerian Republican Convention (NRC) (one of the two political parties forced on the Nigerian people by General Ibrahim Babangida) Presidential aspirant, Dr. Dalhtu Araf to newsmen in Jos. He added that incalculable and indelible damage had been done to the political psyche and development of Nigeria by Babangida's action (*Daily Times*, Wednesday, October 6, 1993, page 3).

²⁴ The observer was then the U.S. Ambassador designate to Nigeria – Mr. Walter Carrington. He was echoing the U.S. Presidents (Bill Clinton) administration's stand at a farewell reception organized for

‘Government by the People’ when it took over the administration of the country from the British and could have achieved ‘Government of the people’ by the time the democratic process was concluded”. Unlike India²⁵ which maintained ‘dead silence’ over the political impasse in Nigeria, the United States of America (US), Britain and the entire European Community (i.e. European Countries [E.C]) clamped down on Nigeria by imposing various sanctions regarding the issuance of limited visas and military assistance.

The Federal Government’s response to multiple sanctions slammed on Nigeria was that of ‘regret’ and appeal. Furthermore, they argued that the composition of the government reflected national unity and, finally, that the proposed constitutional conference would be used to determine the nature and characteristics of an enduring constitution²⁶ for the nation. However, appeals were continuously made by members of the government to the international community for understanding and patience for Nigeria to solve its internal problems.

It is very useful to provide a succinct summary of the background information, similarities and differences of the above analysis on the following table:

Table 1: A COMPARISON OF THE TWO SPEECHES

SPEECHES	BACKGROUND INFORMATION	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES
SPEECH 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General Ibrahim Babangida “stepped aside” after eight years of military rule 2. There were demonstrations by democracy groups, trade and workers unions 3. Disruption of political, economic, 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Phonic (television) and graphic (newspaper) 2. Field - politics 3. Dialogic (reactions and comments from Nigerians) 4. Head-of-State 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Valedictory / Resignation Speech 2. Directed to “Distinguished Colleagues” 3. Civilian ruler 4. Democratic 5. Metaphor: a child of circumstance 6. A review of achievements 7. Farewell

him by the Nigeria Ambassador to the U.S, Mallam Zubair Kazaure, in Washington D.C. (*Daily Times*, Wednesday, November 3, 1993, pages 1 and 4).

²⁵ India’s High Commissioner in Nigeria, Mr. Lalit Mansingh, disclosed to the Oyo State Governor Chief Kolapo Ishola, in Ibadan (*Daily Times*, Thursday, September 21, 1993 on page 3) that his country will maintain her silence over the political impasse in Nigeria to allow her to independently solve its internal problems peacefully without divisible factors that may result from indiscriminate foreign interference.

²⁶ Several constitutions have been drafted and adopted for Nigeria. The last one was in 1979. Before and after the country attained independence in 1960, Nigerians have been searching for an ‘enduring democracy’. Most of the searching has been done by the military boys. Whereas several enlightened Nigerians have consistently advanced arguments that the constitutions we have had are good, it takes honest men of good will, integrity and patriotism to live by any constitution successfully.

SPEECH 2	social and religious activities 4. Abject poverty	1. Phonic (television) and graphic (newspapers) 2. Field - politics 3. Dialogic (reactions and comments from Nigerians) 4. Head-of-State	1. Maiden/Entry Speech 2. Directed to "Fellow Nigerians" 3. Military ruler 4. Dictatorship 5. Metaphor: a child of necessity 6. Threats to opposition 7. Promises of Reform
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Table 1 above provides a graphic representation of the analysis. Along with the SS and the Instantial Networks, an attempt has been made to construct the meaning potential of the speeches.

5. Conclusion

An attempt has been made in this paper to examine an aspect of political discourse in Nigeria. Its theoretical framework, which follows strictly Ventola's Systemic Functional Theory and semiotics has been used. This was duly explained in the section dealing with theory. A view of political discourse, past and present, in Nigeria was provided. At the core of the paper is an explorative attempt to construct networks of aspects of political discourses of 'participants' and 'event' – the two major parts of this genre of discourse. Since permanent networks may take several years to construct by practising systemists or analysts, I refer to the ones constructed here, as 'instantial'; that is, they are still in the process of development. Further very close observations and analyses in this direction in the next ten to fifteen years may provide permanent networks of participants and events. The section on 'discussion' provides an overview of responses by individuals, groups of people, institutions and governments to the dramatic political changes already analyzed in this paper. In conclusion, the contemporary but researchable nature of these political changes make this paper a relevant attempt at analyzing the political discourse of the on-going processes of establishing an enduring democracy in Nigeria. Indeed, the country now enjoys a democratic governance by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo although many people are still skeptical if a democratic set-up would not be truncated by the military. Yet the analysis may be used to understand, linguistically and politically where we came from – the military incursion into politics before President Olusegun Obasanjo's leadership.

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