

Self-Identity Construction: The Pragmatics Of Jane Naana's Inaugural Speech

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Abstract

The paper examines the pragmatic usage of the first and second person pronouns in the outdoor speech of Jane Naana Opoku-Agyeman delivered in the University of Professional Studies' auditorium. The study employs the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) theory. The study draws on the qualitative descriptive analytical approach to flesh out the discursive interpretations of the pronouns in the speech. The study seeks to identify the first and second-person pronominal choices and their different realizations utilized in the text. It also aims at finding out how the speaker used these pronouns to construct different identities of "self." The paper observes that the pronoun *we*, and its variants have greater difference score in the text followed by *I* and its related forms. The less visible pronoun is *you* and its related forms. The paper reveals that the pronoun *I* is used to construct the speaker's "self" as a vice-presidential candidate, less privilege girl and a parent. The pronoun, *you* is employed to make generic and specific reference to the audience while *we* was used to show both political and national inclusion.

Keywords: Critical Discourse, identity, pronominal, construction of "self", pragmatics

1. Introduction

Politics is a "struggle for power, between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it" (Chilton, 2004, p. 4). It is a communication-oriented persuasion and discussion activity aimed at reconciling differences of parties (Hague et al., 1998). Undeniably, politics depends heavily on discourse and interactions among people in various forms that are powered by the use of language (see Agyekum, 2017). Political discourse embodies campaign songs, campaign slogans, billboards, party paraphernalia, campaign speeches, inaugural speeches, victory speeches, concession speeches, political interviews, panel discussions, press briefing, parliamentary debates and state of the nation address (Dautey et al., 2025; Zardari, 2025). According to Bramley (2001, p. 11) any of these political communications, political actors "represent their different 'selves' and 'others' in such a way as to construct a reality that positions themselves in a positive light whereas positioning the 'other' in a way that reflects the type of relationship that they have with the 'other' (Abdullahi, 2024). The various channels of political communication are conveyed by language serving as the special purpose vehicle. This is consistent with Taiwo (2009) observation that language is the medium of exercising power and authority, convincing electorates to vote as well as making peace and declaring war. It suffices to say that language is the fulcrum on which communication revolves. Political activities are not effective without the employment of language. This, therefore, suggests that language and politics are related such that the mention cannot be made of one without the other. Chilton (2004) opines that

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human beings are endowed with language for the performance of the function of pointing, indicating, warning, commanding, promising etc. People in positions, particularly political leaders use language as a tool for the construction of “self” and “others”.

Language use reveals how the politician thinks, feels and behaves. The linguistic expressions political actors use to present themselves, others, show in-group and out-group attitude can be the pronominal system of a language. Political actors according to Allen (2007) make speeches to positively present themselves and negatively portray their opponents by a careful choice and selective usage of personal pronouns. “The personal pronouns chosen can be used to refer to themselves and to others, and to evoke multiple identities of themselves and others, presented from a range of perspectives” (Allen (2007, p. 2). An effective and scholarly analysis of any political discourse pays attention to the details of both the linguistic and political behaviour of political actors. This is achievable by looking at language at the micro and macro-levels. The former takes critical analysis of the functions of specific word choice or syntactic structure whereas the later concentrates on the “communicative situation and the function of a text, and ask which linguistic structures are used to accomplish this function” (Bayram, 2010, p. 31; Hasan 2013, p. 6). This paper focuses on the micro-level analysis focusing on the choice of specific pronouns by politicians for persuasive and other tactical political functions.

Deixis is a means of social construction fundamental to the communicative event, which is understood only in relation to the sociocultural context (Duranti, 1997; Fillmore, 1966). In a language there are some group of words that help both speakers and addressees to be able to point at person, place, time, social relations and pointing within discourse. Grundy (2008) postulates that the reference that these lexical items index is dependent on the context of use. Hence, these linguistic items are sometimes referred to as “shifters” as their meaning shift from one context to another. Political speeches are full of expressions and lexical items that point at people, at places and time based on the context. Duranti (1997, p. 209) and Fillmore (1966, p. 220) identify five major categories of deixis; “personal deixis, temporal deixis, spatial deixis, social deixis and discourse deixis” (Cruse, 2000). However, this paper focuses on personal deixis particularly the 1st person singular and plural: I, we, the 2nd person singular and plural you, together with their variants; my, me, your, our, us, as the subject of our analysis. The possessive object variants: mine, yours, ours were insignificant in the data and had little or no effect on the speaker’s construction of ‘self’ and ‘others.’

However, specific use of pronominals to construct ‘self,’ and ‘others’ in in-group and out-group membership in Ghanaian political speeches is at its juvenile stage. This is corroborated by Mwinwelle et al. (2012, p. 14) when they state that the “analysis of person deixis in Ghanaian political speeches has been largely under-researched.” This suggests that there is a gap in the literature on the investigation of person deixis in Ghanaian political speeches. In view of this, this paper seeks to investigate the use of the 1st and 2nd person pronouns for the construction of ‘self’ and ‘others’ in the outdoor speech of the running mate (Jane Naana Opoku-Agyeman) to the National Democratic Congress (NDC) flagbearer (John Mahama) for the 2020 general elections. The maiden speech was chosen for its significance in the run-up to the December 7, 2020 polls because it is coming from the first female running mate of a major political party in Ghana.

1.1 The political context in Ghana

The inception of the 1992 constitution had brought Ghana out of over a decade military rule to civilian rule. This was a giant stride made in the democratic dispensation in the history of Ghana after several Coup d’états had destabilized constitutionally elected presidents after Independence. Ghana’s democracy has since been sustained, maintained and stabilized. The conducive political atmosphere led to the proliferation of political parties. In spite of the plurality of political parties within the Ghanaian political landscape, Ghana’s democratic system since 1992 has been

dominated by two major political parties; namely: The National Democratic Congress (NDC) which metamorphosed from the PNDC and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) sprouted out of the UP tradition. Both political parties and independent candidates keenly contest presidential and parliamentary elections. These two political parties have alternated power on three occasions; 2000, 2008 and 2016. What is worth noting is the fact that, in 1992, the NPP participated in the presidential elections but boycotted the parliamentary. They subsequently wrote the “stolen verdict” a phrase introduced into the political lexicon of Ghana. The Fourth Republic began with the 1992 election. Successive elections were peaceful and power changed hand smoothly between the two parties. However, the New Patriotic Party's (NPP) presidential candidate, Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo in 2012 headed to the Apex court of Ghana due to what he and his party described as irregularities in the polls that resulted in his main contender the NDC candidate (John Mahama) winning the elections. The case ran for 8 months but at the end, John Mahama of the NDC was declared winner. John Mahama had already been sworn into office as the president of the Republic in accordance with the constitution of Ghana (Agyekum, 2017, p. 104).

One important factor in Ghana's political landscape is the choice of a running mate. The running mate becomes the Vice president if the presidential candidate wins the polls. In view of this, a lot of consultations go into the choice of the person despite the assertion that the choice is the prerogative of the Presidential candidate. From 1992 to 2016, the running mate position had remained the preserve of men for the two major political parties NPP and NDC until recently when there was a turn of event. Interestingly, the smaller parties in the previous elections only thought of the issue of a female running mate. This suggests that the choice of a female running mate in Ghana was not a novelty. However, what made the choice of Jane Naana Opoku-Agyeman, an educationist and a former Vice Chancellor unique was the fact that she was chosen by one of the major political parties capable of winning elections in Ghana. The likely event that the NDC wins the 2020 general elections, Ghana will record the first female Vice president. This would be the highest representation of women at the top echelon of decision making in the country.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Political speeches are channels for convincing the populace to show their support to speakers. Because of this, politicians carefully choose words to represent themselves in a positive light. They technically choose and use personal pronouns to persuade their addressees. Pronouns are one category of word class that political actors across the world employ in their speeches to express their relationship with the audience, present themselves positively and others negatively (Abdullahi, 2024). Chilton (2004) and Addo–Danquah et al. (2023) have all studied the use of deictic words in political speeches. They suggest that the pronouns (**we**, **us**, **our**) in political discourses are employed to convince listeners to conceptualize group identity. In the view of Odebunmi & Olaniyan (2005, p. 7) “the first-person and the second person pronouns include the speaker and the addressee.” They concluded that the personal pronouns and their variants; the possessive forms are deictic words. Zardari et al. (2025) examine Kamala Harris' concession speech after she loss to Donald Trump in the 2024 polls. The authors note that Harris employed communicative strategies to demonstrate her political resilience and commitment to democracy. Using the critical discourse analysis framework, Abbas (2024) examines Kamala Harris' positive self-representation in her concession speech. The study concludes that Kamala Harris depicted herself positively using several linguistic and communicative strategies.

Al-Haq & Al-Sleibi (2015) in a similar fashion examined King Abdullah II's speech in the purview of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. They observed that the King employed four political discourse persuasive strategies in the delivery of his speeches. Notable among the strategies is reference. The paper established that the strategy of reference was achieved using the first and second person pronouns in creating mutual relationship between the speaker and the

audience to work in conjunction with each other. In addition, it came to light that the state of intimacy between interlocutors in any discourse is built by the use of pronouns. They found out that, using pronouns help to set up a state of familiarity between political actors and their audience. Hamdaoui (2015) argues that, the most predominant and strategically used linguistic items by political actors to influence and represent themselves are the person deixis. He observes that, **we**, is frequently used to establish a harmonious relationship between the speaker and the hearer. He argues that political actors use 'we' to share the load of responsibility among "in-group" members. This validates the view of Agyekum (2017, p. 115) that political actors use the plural **we** to indicate a sense of "collectivization, humility, inclusion and solidarity" more often than the individualistic singular pronoun **I**. In a related development, Mwinwelle et al. (2012) used the CDA to examine person deixis in the concession speeches of Presidents John Mahama and Nana Akuffo-Addo in 2016 & 2012 respectively. The paper investigates the various ways by which the two political leaders actively utilize person deixis to portray themselves and their political parties during their electoral defeat. It further sheds light on how these politicians see themselves in relation to their defeat and how such posturing serves their purpose as matured politicians and their parties. The study reveals that the two astute politicians preeminently deployed the singular and plural pronouns to represent themselves in addition to their parties in a positive light as peaceful and suitable leaders of the nation in spite of the defeat they both suffered. Dautey et al. (2025) investigate the pragma-rhetorical strategies in the New Patriotic Party (NPP) 2024 flagbearer's concession speech through the lens of the pragmatic acts theory. The findings suggest that the flagbearer leveraged on expressive, directive and commissive speech acts to influence the Ghanaian electorates to support his candidature. From an ideological square framework perspective, Abdullai (2024) examines the discursive strategies Bawumia employed in representing himself positively and others negatively in his outdoor speech. The paper reveals that Bawumia employs linguistic and metaphorical strategies in representing himself and the government positively while obscuring the negatives. The foregone review is relevant to the current study as it contributes immensely to understanding the pragmatic implications of the communicative roles, and ideological underpinnings of political speeches. It shapes and puts the analysis and discussion in the right perspective. Significantly, the article contributes to the extant literature on inaugural speeches.

2.1 Theoretical framework

The paper adopts Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the theory for the discussion and analysis. It is an interdisciplinary theoretical approach for analyzing and describing the relationship between language and power, equity and social change. Fairclough & Wodak (1997) report that CDA offers an insightful understanding of discourse practices that are shaped by the situation, institution and the context of the discursive event. In the view of Fairclough (1995, p. 57) discourse analysis "involves the understanding of the relationships between the text; using functional linguistics to give detailed description, discourse practice; how the text is produced and consumed and sociocultural practice." CDA has been recognized as a solid framework for analyzing, describing and interpreting discourses particularly, political discourse. CDA has been employed by several scholars for analyzing political speeches such as victory and inaugural speeches, state of the nation address (Agyekum, 2017), declaration speech (Bello, 2013), independence speech (Uduma, 2012) and concession speeches (Mwinwelle et al., 2019). This is largely appropriate for deconstructing the complicated manipulation of text and ideas found in a given discourse.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) presents itself as suitable toolkit for investigating and analyzing both opaque and transparent texts in relation to power and control, dominance, gender discrimination articulated in linguistic structures. Political speeches are carefully crafted with

particular attention to the choice of lexical items as well as syntactic structures to fit the context of the discourse (Bello, 2013; Raza et al. 2024). Bramley (2001) remarks that pronouns are not only meant for expressing person, number and gender but also perform referential and deictic functions. Pragmatically, the context of the discourse, the cultural environment and the communicative event help us understand identity functions a pronoun performs. It is based on this, that we have anchored the present paper on the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to unravel the pragmatic functions of pronouns that would have otherwise remain opaque. We therefore consider the analysis of the outdooing speech vital to map out the pronouns employed by Jane Naana Opoku-Agyeman and the usage of same in the construction of identities and showing group inclusion and exclusion. The CDA aided in identifying the pragmatic meanings and how they serve political goals and unmask the complicated linguistic structures in the speech.

3. METHODOLOGY

Data for this paper is the maiden speech delivered by Jane Naana Opoku-Agyeman on her outdooing as the running mate to the NDC flagbearer on 27th July, 2020. The speech was delivered at the University of Professional Studies (UPS) auditorium between the hours of 7 o'clock and 9 o'clock pm. Attendance was restricted to only the core members of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and some traditional leaders across the country. The ceremony was televised on private Television stations across the country. It was broadcast on most radio and FM channels in order to ensure nationwide coverage. The radio broadcast was to serve those travelling with both public and private transports and rural dwellers. As usual, highlights of the speech were captured in both state owned and private print media the following day to serve the reading public. Most private FM stations summarized the speech into the various Ghanaian languages for mass consumption. Television and radio panel discussions on the speech were held across the country in English and some Ghanaian languages. The online portals of the various media houses including *Ghanaweb*, *citionline*, *myjoyonline*, *peacefmonline* and *starfmonline* were flooded with the summary and full text of the maiden speech of the Vice-Presidential candidate nominee. We listened, and recorded the live audio of the speech on GHOne Television network and later downloaded from the online portals of *Ghanaweb* & *myjoyonline* respectively. We compared the original audio with the typescripts downloaded from the online portals and realized that both synchronized. The data was purposively selected from the speech. Data was categorized based on the various 'self' representations that they portray. The text was analyzed by identifying the pronominals deployed in the construction of "self" and "other." Drawing on the qualitative and descriptive analytical approaches, we examined the use of personal pronouns to evoke the several identities of the speaker to serve the intended political purpose. Finally, the paper seeks to find out how language was employed with respect to the socio-political context to assure the citizenry of how the running mate intends to execute her political activities devoid of insult and acrimony. Excerpts from the data are discussed under the results and discussion section of this paper. The pronouns are identified in the data and are shown in bold font. Same is extended to all figures including percentages for the purposes of emphasis.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The usage of personal pronouns is one selective window through which politicians during political speeches, present themselves and other supporters positively and their opponents negatively. They are exploited as the medium of constructing political identities either in terms of group membership or differentiating a category of *we* and *they* or *us* and *them* (Agyekum, 2017). The first and second person pronouns naturally denote the speaker and hearer in the speech event. We

therefore reason that, politicians use the pronominal system in a language as a platform to identify themselves as well as ventilate their political message to influence and woo the electorates. A comparative survey of the frequencies of other words with the personal pronouns in the speech shows that the pronominal class outnumbered any group of words. This is illustrating in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of the 1st & 2nd person pronouns in the speech.

Pronoun	Frequency	Percentage	
I	53	17 %	27%
Me	11	3 %	
My	21	7 %	
You	37	12 %	19%
Your	22	7 %	
We	79	24 %	54%
Our	81	25 %	
Us	15	5 %	
Total	319	100	100

4.1 The pronoun *I* and its variants

The pronoun **I** refers to the speaker herself in the discourse. It cannot be used to substitute for the speaker’s name as it pertains to the third person pronoun. **I**, indicate the person who is speaking at a communicative event or speech delivery. The Vice-presidential candidate in her speech skillfully represented herself with the use of the deictic word **I** and its variants (**my, me**). The pronoun **I** has been used as subjective for **53** times to refer to the speaker. Again, the related forms **me** and **my** were used **11** & **21** times as objective and possessive in the speech. This is illustrated in this line:

1. “**My** parents’ conviction made **me** believe in **my** own ability to pursue any goal.”

All these referred to the speaker. The use of **I** and its different realizations make the speaker to be in charge of the speech. It personalizes the speech and shows commitment to the addresses and personal attachment to the issues been talked about. One significant thing to note about the use of **I** is that it clearly indicates the individual to whom blame must be apportioned should there be any wrongdoing or misrepresentation in the speech. It also provides an opportunity of indemnity and exemption of the speaker to place herself outside the collective responsibility of the group members (see Beard, 2000; Bramley, 2001). These different facets are shown in the data below. The multiple identities constructed by the speaker in the data is determined based on the communicative and cultural contexts of the wider sociocultural environment together with the political context.

4.1.1 “Self” as Vice-Presidential candidate

In the excerpts below, Jane Opoku Agyeman identifies herself as a vice presidential candidate.

- a. **I** assure the leadership and rank and file of the party that **I** come to this position with the mindset of a team player.
- b. **I** belong to you all and will always count on your support and guidance. **I** urge them to do just that
- c. **I** am happy to have accepted the nomination to be the running mate
- d. **I** do not underrate the huge responsibilities and expectations that come with the call.
- e. **I** accepted the nomination because it is an opportunity to serve **my** country once again.
- f. **I** am deeply humbled by the trust of our party and nation and **I** am excited to make the case to the good people of Ghana
- g. **I** want you, all of us in whatever demographic category to know, that **I** will carry your voices forward. This, *I pledge to you*.
- h. **I** have had endless conversations with many of you, and **I** can understand your frustrations and sense of despair.
- i. **I** urge each of us to show up and participate in the ongoing voter registration exercise
- j. **I** wish to assure our Muslim brothers and sisters that as our Leader, John Dramani Mahama has consistently done in the past, going forward, there will be none of the unwarranted discrimination directed at you.
- k. **I** wish you all Eid Mubarak in advance.
- l. **I** extend a hand to everyone, no matter how disappointed you have become; no matter the depth of your frustration, your anger, your despair
- m. **I** thank you for your kind attention
- n. In God do **I** continue to trust...

From the extracts, the Vice-presidential candidate used **I** to represent self as a good politician, a humble individual, a team player and a politician who believes in consensus building. The pronoun **I** is used to affirm her membership to the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and her willingness to work with the grassroots of the party. It is observed in the speech that the politician expressed her excitement and acceptance of the responsibility that comes with the new role bestowed on her. She further expressed her commitment and loyalty to the party. She assures everybody to campaign in every nook and cranny of the country. She sees the call to serve at the higher level as a national duty but not only to serve the NDC party. This is shown in excerpt number (c, d & e). She used the commissive performative verb *pledge* to affirm her commitment to execute the winning agenda of the party by reaching out to the electorates with the campaign message of the party and that no group of people would be left behind in the decision-making process. This is exemplified in excerpt (g) above. **Self** is expressed when she used **I** to show her personal engagement with the youth of the country as well as sharing with them their frustrations and desperations. More so, **self** is represented when the speaker used **I** to show her authority as a running mate and her knowledge of our electoral system by urging Ghanaian to go out in their numbers to register to vote in the presidential and parliamentary elections (see excerpt i). The construction of “self” as a politician and vice-presidential candidate is manifested in the speaker’s assurance of no discrimination of Muslims in the next NDC government. She had invited all Ghanaians who are disappointed, frustrated, angered and despaired in her personal capacity as the vice-presidential candidate to vote for the NDC to restore their hope. Using the expressive speech act of thanking illustrates self/personal appreciation to the audience and her personal trust in God. This is contained in excerpts (m) and (n) respectively. This act of positive ‘self’ portrayal is in tandem with Abdullai’s (2024, p. 18) observation that “Bawumia portrays himself to be a leader who is so committed to solving challenges and problems confronting Ghanaians.”

4.1.2 "Self" as a parent and a woman

The excerpts below demonstrate the portrayal of "Self" as a parent and a woman by Naana Jane Opoku Agyeman.

- a. May **I** say to the SHS students who are in school taking your final exams:
- b. **I** have children of your age in same situation too, even if not biological.
- c. **I** understand the difficult situation you are going through and, especially
- d. **my** condolences to the families; many of us share in your loss.
- e. **I** ask all of us to be very disciplined about following the World Health Organization Guidelines
- f. **I** must also acknowledge that today, **I** stand on the shoulders of many giants who came before **me**
- g. **I** salute those many known women who have made such great contributions to the advancement of our country
- h. **I** pay homage to those many, many unknown women, the silent and invisible and unacknowledged women
- i. **I** know too well and have also lived some of the unspoken and unspeakable weight of responsibilities and concerns we bear as women
- j. **I** call on our security agencies to convince us that she has not died in vain.

Another representation of **self** in the speech is the use of **I** that identifies the speaker as a **parent and a woman**. This is manifested by the speaker's assertion that she had both biological and non-biological children in Senior High Schools writing the 2020 Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination. She expressed a passionate concern about the difficult situation the students found themselves in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students during the COVID-19 pandemic had to combine their academic work with strict adherence of the World Health Organization's protocols. As a mother, she personally employed the performative verb of condoling to express her condolences to the families who lose their wards during the period of preparing for their final examinations. This is illustrated in excerpts (d) & (e). Similarly, Dautey (2025, p. 81) aptly captures that "President Akuffo-Addo expressed his condolences to the families who lost their relatives during the COVID-19 pandemic."

Furthermore, the issue of gender equality has been on the political table over the years. The speaker recognizes her selection as an honor done to women in Ghana. It is seen as a significant step towards getting to the top most position of the country. The speaker to identify herself as a woman has used the pronoun **I**. She used the first-person pronoun **I** to personally acknowledge the efforts and roles of women towards the development agenda of the country in diverse ways. She associated herself with the countless number of women whose contributions to the advancement of Ghana have gone unnoticed and unacknowledged. See excerpts (f, g & h).

She identified herself with the responsibilities of women in our country. As a woman, she bemoaned the brutalities meted out to Madam Akua Denteh in the Savanna region of Ghana after accusing her of been a witch. She ignited the emotional sensibilities of Ghanaian women against negative cultural practices. The speaker's emotional appeal to end brutalities against women and negative practices resonates with the observation made by Zardari et al. (2025, p. 869) that "Kamala Harris creates a sense of America as a united group of people standing against the political challenges together" in her concession speech. The speaker, in her capacity as a woman, called on the security agencies to bring the perpetrators to book. The call is made in excerpt (j). The other realizations, **me** and **my** function in much the same way as **I**, to signify the speaker. They show that the speaker is committed to herself, responsible for her utterances and claim ownership to her pronouncements.

In summary, the data shows clearly that the vice-presidential candidate used **I** and its other forms of realizations to suggest that she is solely responsible for the statements made to the audience. However, the usage of the deictic word **I** and its variants in this fashion only gives out the speaker (vice-presidential candidate) as the only person responsible should there be any negative effect arising from the speech without having any other person to share the responsibility with.

4.2 The pronoun *you* and its variants

The pronoun **you** denote the audience the speaker is addressing in any discourse event. The second person pronoun **you** is used to perform several functions. Key among the multiple functions are the fact that it serves as definite and indefinite pronoun. It functions as definite when the addressee is present and rightly addressed by the speaker. It can be used as both subjective and objective in sentences while its variant **your** serve possessive purposes. The indefinite **you** refer to everyone or anyone. It therefore, means that it clearly does not point to a particular individual the speaker is referring to (Adetunji, 2006; Håkansson, 2012). **You** can be categorized as **you** singular and **you** plural.

Lerner (1996, p. 281) cited in Bramley (2001, p. 128) argues that **you** “singular provides an opportunity to refer to the addressee of the speaker and is used for addressing a singular recipient while **you** plural is used for addressing multiple recipients.” From a multi-party conversational perspective, **you** becomes quite difficult because it is unclear who is addressed as **you**. Besides, the pronoun **you** assign a hearer or addressee/recipient role to the discourse participants. The social status of the addressee is not recognized when **you** is used by the speaker. Characteristic of the pronoun **you** is the fact that the addressee is involved irrespective of whether **you** is used as singular, plural or generic. El-Saj (2012) notes that the use of **you** can be an effective means of attracting the attention of listeners/hearers involved in any interaction by the speaker.

The excerpts below show the usage of the pronoun **you** and its variants in Naana Jane Opoku Agyeman's speech.

- a. Ebenezer, this is how far **you** have brought **your** handmaids; this is how far **you** have brought Ghana;
- b. **we** thank **you** for all that is past; and trust **you** for all that is to come.
- c. **Your** Excellency John Mahama, **your** singular decision to select me as **your** running mate has generated a whole web of responses and debates.
- d. **You** have respected women; the women of Ghana will not forget; the youth will remember; generations to come will commit **your** decision to memory
- e. By **your** choice, **you** have turned the struggles of so many women who have come before this moment into a probability.
- f. I want **you**, all of us in whatever demographic category to know, that I will carry **your** voices forward.
- g. Do not let anyone make **you** feel otherwise.
- h. I have had endless conversations with many of **you**, and I can understand **your** frustrations and sense of despair.
- i. Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) admonished **you** to fast,
- j. I wish **you** all Eid Mubarak in advance.
- k. **You** can grow to become anything **you** want to be.
- l. Believe that only **you** can stop yourselves. It is not going to be about **your** parents, rich or poor; not the region **you** come from
- m. We are in this together; **you** know I extend a hand to everyone, no matter how disappointed **you** have become; no matter the depth of **your** frustration, **your** anger, **your** despair

In **table 1**, the pronominal **you** appear **37** times while its possessive variant occurs **22** times. Within the **37** appearances, it is used variedly as subjective or objective. Relatedly, **you** is employed by the speaker to refer to specific individual addressee or multiple audience. The speaker used **you** and its variant **your** singularly to refer to God and the flagbearer John Mahama separately. She referred to God as **you** when she expressed her gratitude to God for how far he has brought her as a person and Ghana as a whole. This is manifested in excerpts (**a, b**)

Significant to the usage of the singular **you** is demonstrated by the statement in excerpts (**c, d**). The speaker believed that her nomination had demystified the incapability tag on women in Ghana's political space. The decision by the NDC Flagbearer was greeted with a lot of condemnation and vilification from the opponents' camp. Meanwhile, some groups were of the opinion that the choice was a sign of respect and trust for women and that it was a step towards having a woman as a flagbearer to one of the major political parties in Ghana. It is enshrined in the NDC's constitution that it is the prerogative of the Flagbearer to choose whoever he thinks can best partner him as running mate to serve his political purpose. Although the National Executive Council (NEC) and Council of Elders of the party were extensively consulted, the speaker believed that her selection was a singular honor done to women by Mahama. The speaker again used the singular **you** to refer to Mahama for opening doors for women and making the dreams of women and young ladies a possibility. The statement in excerpt (**e**) emphasizes this.

Additionally, the indefinite/impersonal **you** can refer to anyone or everyone. Siewierska (2004) cited in Allen (2007, p. 12) avers that impersonal/generic **you** "include the speaker and addressee among the possible referents." The speaker deploys the generic **you** to make known to every demographic group in the country of her commitment to carry their concerns forward. She, in the same vein, asked everyone in the country including herself not to allow anybody to intimidate and underrate him or her. See extract (**g**). She used the expressive speech act with the illocutionary force of wishing to wish all Muslims well in the Eid Mubarak. This is contained in extract (**i & j**) The implication of this is that Muslims across the globe are all members of the group that is addressed. She used the generic **you** to create a category of disappointed, frustrated and less privileged people. The speaker included herself in this group of less privileged people and motivated them to believe in themselves instead of allowing their environment and their socio-economic background to impede their progress and achievement in life. This is articulated in the extracts (**k, l & m**).

4. 3 The pronoun *we* and its variants

This section discusses the use of the pronominal **we** and its variants in Jane Naana Opoku Agyeman's speech. The pronominal **we** and its related forms (**our, us**) have been used extensively to denote collective identity, group unity or group membership. They are used to convey the speaker's intention of creating a society of oneness and commonality (see Hasan, 2013). Politicians dodge the temptation of portraying themselves as individuals by using the pronoun **we**. The use of **we** take away the focus on the speaker as an individual. **We** embody 'you' and 'I', 'I' and 'others' (Allen, 2007; Bramley, 2001). Importantly, speakers deploy the pronoun **we** as having the authority to speak on behalf of a group. Within the political space and typically in political discourse, politicians employ the pronominal **we** to speak for and on behalf of their parties, to distribute the load of "responsibility, to include or exclude addressees from group membership" and to stoke collective response to issues (Allen 2007, p. 9; Bramley 2001). In political discourse, **we** is used to express institutional identity; speaking on behalf of an institution. Its usage separates **us** from **them**; separate one party from the opponents. All these useful purposes of **we** is basically interpreted with respect to the discourse context of use in connection with the shared knowledge

of the speaker and the audiences. Worth noting is the fact that the referents of **we** in the speech is the different realization of establishing **we** as a nation and as women group. Below are the excerpts of the use of **we** and its variants in the text.

The excerpts below demonstrate the usage of the pronoun **we** and its variants in Jane Opoku Naana Agyeman's speech

- a. **We** are all aware that this is the first time in our history that a major party has nominated a woman on its ticket to become Vice President.
- b. **we** must provide opportunities that transcend political patronage, 'connection' and the practice of whom- you- know.
- c. **We** need to show up and vote come December 7th
- d. Or **we** can continue on a path where a few people attempt to control and dictate the destiny of the people who have given them the privilege to work.
- e. **we** all come together as one people under one flag, inspired by the sacrifices of **our** ancestors to create a great country
- f. **We** have come too far as a nation to still cling to **our** primordial tribal bigotries.
- g. **We** all admit that **we** can put **our** country on a firmer, more sustainable path, a path of peace, in order to move forth in ways that are meaningful and clear.
- h. **We** the People, all of **us**, are the protectors and owners of this country for **our** collective good and for that of generations unborn.

The data clearly shows the speaker used the pronoun **we** to demonstrate that the referent in the above excerpts are Ghanaians of which the speaker is a member. The speaker emphasized her choice as historic since 1992. See excerpt (a). She decried the situation in the country where job opportunities are available to the few who have relatives in the ruling party that can influence their employment. This is seen in excerpt (b & d). The speaker therefore, called for equal opportunities and a level playing field for all Ghanaians irrespective of ethnic, religious or political affiliations. She remarks that **we** are all Ghanaians. The speaker used what (Wales, 1996; Allen, 2007, p. 10) refer to as the *patriotic we* to remind all Ghanaians to eschew "primordial tribal bigotries" as it has the tendency of destroying the very "sacrifices of **our** ancestors to create a great country." See excerpt (f). She made the call to Ghanaian to collectively come together to put the nation on a stronger, more sustainable path and that "all of **us**, are the protectors and owners of this country for **our** collective good and for that of generations unborn." See excerpt (h). The speaker asked Ghanaian to show the patriotism by coming out to vote in the general elections. See excerpt (c).

The excerpts below illustrate the use of **we** to represent women in the text.

- a. **We** are in this together; you know I extend a hand to everyone,
- b. **We** all have in mind great heroines who, by their actions, shattered the concept that women alone must be restricted by ceilings and limitations
- c. **we** will partner with **our** men and youth, as **we** have always done,
- d. **We** do not intend to disappoint **you**
- e. **We**- men, women, **our** youth and children- **we** all have a chance to finally make real **our** dreams of serving this country at high levels, of removing doubts and proving once again that **we** are capable.
- f. This is the time **we** have been waiting for
- g. **We** earn **our** seat at the table and **we** excel. **Our** results transform **our** families, communities and country; and sometimes, go beyond **our** borders, porous or otherwise

Another representative use of **we** in the text is to help the speaker achieve an effect of group membership. The impression created with the use of **we** is the group identity of women. The speaker being a woman creates a representation of women by bringing to the fore the limitations,

restrictions as well as impediments put in the way of women in Ghana to prevent them from holding certain positions and attaining certain heights. This is articulated in excerpts (a & b). She used **we** in the text in the context of been clothed with the authority to speak as a representative of the women group to express the view that women have long waited for this opportunity. Again, she assured the NDC Flagbearer and the audience that the women group would not disappoint them. For that reason, they would mobilize their men; husbands, sons, the youth and children to support the course of nation building. See excerpts (c, d & e). She suggests that her nomination would be the proven record of the capability of women to serve this nation at higher levels. The speaker fluently made the point that “**we** earn **our** seat at the table and **we** excel. **Our** results transform **our** families, communities and country; and sometimes, go beyond **our** borders, porous or otherwise.” It therefore implies that women are “result oriented” group of people whose achievements are not only visible in Ghana but also within the global arena. See excerpt (g).

5. CONCLUSION

Working within the theoretical lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the paper examined person deixis particularly the first and second person pronouns in the outdoor speech of the National Democratic Congress' (NDC) Vice-Presidential candidate. It also focused on the multi-faceted constructions of “self” based on the context of usage of the pronominal in the text. The study reveals that **I** and its related forms appear **85** times representing **27%**. The speaker in the text used the pronoun **I** to construct multi-faceted identities of ‘self’ of the speaker as vice-presidential candidate, a parent and a woman. It found out that the speaker in the speech employs the pronoun **you** and its possessive variant to make specific and indefinite /generic/impersonal referents of the audience.

In conveying the notion of group membership, unity and solidarity, the speaker used **we** subjectively for **79** times, **us** occur **81** and **us** appear **15** times all accounting for **54%** of **we** and its variants. El-Saj (2012) submits, “**we** is used as a collective pronoun.” The use of **we**, **our** and **us** in the text according to Agyekum (2017, p. 113) was to indicate group identity and unity, group ownership of responsibility as well as group benefit. The pronouns were used in their variants forms to perform subjective, possessive and objective functions and identifications. The paper contributes significantly to the existing body of literature on deixis and discourse as well as highlights the discourse and political rhetoric interface. We recommend that future researchers focus on the pragma-rhetoric of the speech.

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