

# A discourse analysis of the acceptance speech of President Goodluck Jonathan after his victory at the 2011 presidential polls

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## Abstract

Speeches are meant to communicate the intentions of the speaker. Elected African leaders and other political office holders around the world normally make speeches during campaigns to communicate their manifestoes to the electorate. Acceptance speeches are also made after their victories at the polls. This is followed by inaugural speeches on the day they assume office. Apart from these events that require speeches, there are also many other circumstances or events that call for speeches from political leaders during their reign. This study analyses the acceptance speech made by President Goodluck Jonathan following his victory in the 2011 presidential election. The speech act theory propounded by J.L. Austin was adopted in the analysis of the speech. The result indicates that President Jonathan utilized assertive and directive statements during the said speech. This indicates that whereas he implied a certain degree of commitment on the one hand, he was nevertheless evasive in terms of committing himself to the expectations of the citizens.

**Keywords:** Speech, discourse analysis, political leaders, acceptance speech, President Goodluck Jonathan

## Introduction

The concept of discourse is nebulous. While some scholars have very limited or restricted view of the concept of discourse, others consider it from a broader standpoint. For instance, the term discourse can be considered as a stretch of spoken or written language in a sentence often constituting a coherent unit such as sermon, argument, joke or narrative (Crystal, 1992). This can be complemented when it is simply defined as language in use (Brown et al., 1983). In sum, it is defined as a serious speech or piece of writing on a particular subject (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2014).

Analysis of discourse necessitates a thorough evaluation of speech or language in use. However, different speeches call for a shift of attention from language form to language function. This means that attention is focused on what people *do* when they use language. This is because humans use their speech to perform actions. In a bid to study the actions performed with speeches, the Speech Act Theory was introduced by a British philosopher, John L. Austin, in 1962 and modified by J.R. Searle in 1969. Political speeches, especially when made during campaigns, are geared towards

mobilizing and persuading the electorate to win their votes. Most of the time, these kinds of speeches are made in the form of propaganda. Also, politicians make acceptance or nomination speeches when they are either selected or elected to represent their parties. On the other hand, a concession speech is made by a candidate who lost an election, while an inaugural speech is delivered by the winner of an election during the swearing-in ceremony.

This study focuses on the acceptance speech of President Goodluck Jonathan after he was declared the winner of Nigeria's 2011 Presidential Election. The speech was delivered on the 18 April, 2011. The study therefore examines the various categories of illocutionary acts found in the speech using the Austin's Speech Act Theory.

## Methodology

The data for this study is the acceptance speech of President Jonathan after his victory in the 2011 Presidential Election in Nigeria. It was culled from the official website of Vanguard Newspapers. A total number of thirty-one (31) extracts representing the five (5) illocutionary acts were extracted from the speech. The simple percentage was adopted in

computing the percentage of each illocutionary act in the entire speech. The formula used is:

$$\frac{\text{Number of kind of illocutionary act} \times 100}{\text{Total number of Extracts}}$$

Table 1

Total Abstracts	No. of	Illocutionary acts extracted	Formula used	Total
31		5	$\frac{5}{31} \times \frac{100}{1}$	16.12

**Justification of study**

While previous studies on the inaugural speech of President Goodluck Jonathan adopted mostly pragmatic approaches, this study is underpinned by discourse analysis. The perspective seeks to highlight an evaluation of not only the linguistic content, but also the sociolinguistic implication of the speech. This has the additional advantage of bringing to the fore the concept of language in use in relation to the socio-cultural, political and historical backgrounds that prompted the generation of speech. This thinking is not unmindful of the fact that the core of the speech is assertive and directive rather than involving. This research can therefore be justified through the uncovering of the motivation behind the speech through the discovery of its underlying meaning dimension.

**Studies on political speech act**

An attempt at justifying our research choice is premised against what others have done with respect to the inaugural speech by President Goodluck Jonathan and, of course, other political leaders. Starting with the pragma-stylistic approach, one discovers the complementarity between language and politics. Generally speaking, pragmatics has to do with the effects of context on meaning in language use. It is the core of why context and meaning are inseparable. Thus, language is not only relevant in discourse analysis but also as an indispensable tool in politics (Eremosele, 2012). Furthermore, there is a need for a thorough evaluation of the implication of language in use in political speeches by which one can sieve through and arrive at an acceptable

comprehension of coded meaning. Supporting the need for a deep knowledge of such speech acts, one discovers that a lack of it might result in harm (even if minimally) in the comprehension process. It, therefore, becomes obvious that comprehension of the meaning dimension of political speeches is the channel through which politicians can be held accountable, whenever they default, with respect to the sincerity and functionality of their administrative policies (Waya in Okoye & Mmadike, 2016).

Thus, politicians use language in different ways to influence the electorates with a view to attaining their political targets and aims. Okoye and Mmadike (2016) studied the concession speech by President Goodluck Jonathan, which he made on the 31 March 2015. They examined the classes of illocutionary acts therein. The study revealed that there is a preponderance of assertiveness in the speech with a total percentage of 52.3%, followed by expressiveness with a proportion of 33.3%, and directives and commissives, each accounting for 9.5% and 4.7% illocutionary acts respectively. On the other hand, the declarative dimension was lacking entirely in the speech.

Similarly, another study observed that the speeches of both Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Chief MKO Abiola, in their respective nomination acceptance speeches, were characterized by illocutionary acts which were employed to achieve persuasion (Akinwotu, 2013). The author equally found that the speeches were inundated with assertive, expressive and commissive acts, which are generally used by candidates as mobilization strategies during political campaigns to persuade the electorates to win their votes.

Another investigation of the language of political campaigns and politics in Nigeria discovered that language as a means of communication is a double-edged sword. It can be used either positively or negatively (Onuoha, 2017). The researcher applied a purposive sampling method to identify and analyze sixteen political campaign messages of the 2011 general elections in Nigeria.

Importantly, research on campaign language used by some selected politicians in Nigeria shows that political speeches are coded (Fuddy in Onuoha, 2017). The researcher adopted John Austin's speech act theory to analyze the data. Furthermore, the researcher avers

that the success of political aspirants depends on the effective manipulation of linguistic facilities. The author maintains that politicians employ some plausible methods or strategies for campaigns, such as holding public meetings, organizing open-air rallies, displaying posters, and so on. The study concluded that politicians adopt different strategies in their use of language for campaigns to gain the support of the electorate, adding that all campaigns attempt to inform, educate, persuade or convince, woo or compel the electorate to vote or support a particular candidate.

Going through the speech acts and rhetoric during the second inauguration of President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and President George W. Bush of America, one discovers two speeches of the same discourse pattern, although without the same illocutionary force and rhetorical patterns. In another study of the pragmatic analysis of President Goodluck Jonathan's inaugural speech, (Adekunle in Onuoha, 2017) examined encoded utterances and how meanings are derived from their communicative effects. However, one can highlight aspects of the utterances of President Jonathan's speech through transcription and analysis with the aid of pragmatic

tools such as speech acts, context, indexicals, implicature and relevance. Whereas the effects of cognition, social principles and context on President Jonathan's utterances show that he is a careful user of words, who performs many actions with few utterances, one observes that for politicians to achieve their communicative aims, they must be able to master how to manipulate words and other linguistic factors in order to achieve their political ends, such as convincing the electorate to vote for them.

### **Theoretical framework**

Generally speaking, utterances are used to perform speech acts. It is therefore not surprising that studies on utterances led to the propounding of the Speech Act Theory by John L. Austin. He presented the result of his research in his widely circulated publication of 1962 titled *How to do Things with Words*. Thus, Austin's Speech Act Theory is a reaction to some traditional and influential attitudes to language credited to some philosophers called logical positivists (Agbedo, 2008). These attitudes involve three-related assumptions as outlined by Saeed (2007). They are a) basic sentence types in language and declaratives, b) the fundamental use of language to describe

the state of affairs in the use of statements, and c) the meaning of utterance as described in terms of their truth or falsity.

However, there was opposition to the view of the logical positivists because language has far more uses and implications than just making statements. Austin made a distinction between constatives and performatives. He equally classifies constatives as utterances that can be evaluated along a dimension of truth; performatives as utterances which cannot be said to be true or false but can be happily or unhappily performed.

However, realizing that there are problems associated with this distinction, Austin (1975) replaced the constative – performative elements with a threefold distinction. He maintains that communicating a speech act involves three elements: what the speaker says, what is signalled in the speech act and the effect it produces on the audience. These threefold distinctions are known as the locutions, illocutions and perlocutions.

The locutionary act refers to the 'actual words uttered' (Jenny, 1995). It can also be considered as the activity we engage in when we say something (Mey, 2001). In summary, producing a meaningful

linguistic expression is performing a locutionary act (Yule, 2007). Simply put, locutionary acts mean saying something. The illocutionary act refers to the function which we want our utterances to perform. It can be a command, a request, a promise or congratulations. Put differently, it is an act performed by the speaker to accomplish a communicative purpose. For perlocutionary act, it is an action performed by the hearer following the effect or influence of the speaker's utterance. It can be further explained as the effect the locutionary act has on the hearer.

Classifying speech, Austin (1962) puts utterances in different categories. The verdictive act passes a verdict, the exercitive is associated with exercising power or influence, the commissive deals with a promise or an intention, the habitive is about behaviour and the expositive is linked to argument or conversation. However, in spite of his contribution, the theory has been criticized on the grounds that the framework was incomplete.

At the forefront of such criticisms was Searle (1969) who maintained that Austin's illocutionary acts' classification overlaps with and was bedevilled by

incompatible elements. However, given the fact that Austin's Speech Act is open-ended, Searle modified the categories and introduced the dimension of constitutive rules for performing illocutionary acts (Korta & Perry in Nwasogwa, 2017). He adopts the threefold distinction of speech acts by Austin (1962), but concentrated more on the illocutionary acts' classification. Hence, Searle proposed five basic kinds of illocutionary acts that can be performed in the course of speech. In other words, these five illocutionary acts represent whatever intention a speaker can achieve through their utterances. In modifying speech acts, Searle presented the following categories. He talked about assertives which are used to express meaning when one is convinced about something. They include statements of fact, conclusions and reportage. An example is "There are seven days in a week". Secondly, there are directives used by the speaker to get the addressee to carry out an action. These include requests, demands, orders and commands. For example: Open the door! Thirdly, there are expressives which express a psychological state or feeling of the speaker. They include statements of joy, sadness, elation, pleasure, displeasure and contentment, such as thanking, apologizing, congratulating and

welcoming. For example: I thank you all for finding me worthy to lead our great nation. The fourth category is made of Comissives which commit the speaker to some future course of action such as pledging, promising, assuring, reassuring, and oath-taking. For example: I shall be a president for all, irrespective of ethnic affiliations, political party, or religion. Finally, there are declaratives which show the institutional role of the speaker. Here, the speaker pronounces a statement either as an individual or as a member representing a group of people. The speech act includes dismissing, pronouncing, accepting, and excommunicating. For example: I accept this offer wholeheartedly.

### **Analysis of the acceptance speech of President Jonathan using the criteria proposed by Searle**

In Assertive Speech Act, the speaker simply states a proposition that has a truth condition.

Extract 1. (Paragraph 2) « This is a new dawn!»

Extract 2. (Paragraph 3)« Our nation has spoken. At the end of intense and hard-fought campaigns by all the political parties, our people spoke through the ballot. In every city, town, village, ward

and voting unit, Nigerians stood in the sun, some in the rain, some walked long distances and all waited patiently, to vote».

Extract 3. (Paragraph 6, line 3)« With the evident national spread of our victory, we have demonstrated that even in our diversity, the progress of Nigeria remains paramount to all.»

Extract 4. (Paragraph 7)«This is a victory for the sustenance of our democracy; a victory which all Nigerians irrespective of creed, ethnicity, or state of origin should celebrate. It is a triumph for our common destiny as a people with shared ideals, shared dreams and shared hopes».

Extract 5. (Paragraph 8, line 2)«Indeed, some of them have held high public office in the past.»

Extract 6. (Paragraph 18, line 5)« This election is further evidence that Nigeria is secure, that we are stable; and most of all, that the future of Nigeria is bright.»

Extract 7. (Paragraph 21, line 2)«As I have always stated, nobody's political ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian».

Extract 8. (Paragraph 23, line 2)«These men, women and youth are making huge

sacrifices towards the success of the 2011 elections».

Extract 9. (Paragraph 25, line 3) «This is the new dawn we crave».

### Comments

A total of nine (9) extracts are assertives found in the acceptance speech. Given the fact that the Assertive Speech Act involves such cases as drawing conclusions, reporting ideas or issues, and stating facts, one can infer from extracts 1,5,7,8, and 9 that the speaker was rather stating the facts about the mood of the nation then. He mentioned what was practically obtainable at that time. In keeping with the realities of the country then, President Jonathan was intentional in his choice of words. Suffice it to say that President Jonathan had just completed the mandate of his late principal, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua before winning the elections of 2011. However, in extracts 3,4 and 6, the speaker drew conclusions about what was happening in the nation from his own point of view against the backdrop of the prevailing sociopolitical ambience. However, in extract 2, the speaker tends to report to the audience what transpired on the day of the election. One recalls that President Jonathan and his Vice

President Arc. Namadi Sambo ran for elections amidst tension in the land. In an attempt to douse the tension and inspire confidence in the face of despair, he captioned his campaign slogan "A breath of fresh air". This, therefore, explains why the assertives enjoy a pride of place in this speech occupying 29.03% of the entire illocutionary acts captured.

As a reminder to the reader, the Expressive Speech Act expresses a psychological state such as gratitude, showering of encomium, expressing respect or admiration and congratulating someone. In the speech, the following statements are expressives.

Extract 1. (Paragraph 4) « With a heart full of gratitude to Almighty God, I want to thank Nigerians for the great sacrifice and overwhelming national mandate you have just given to me, to preside over the affairs of this nation for the next four years. »

Extract 2. (Paragraph 8) « I congratulate the candidates of other political parties. »

Extract 3. (Paragraph 9) « Let me pay particular tribute to General Muhammadu Buhari, Governor Ibrahim

Shekarau, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu and other patriots and their running mates. »

Extract 4. (Paragraph 22) « I thank all the nations of the world, their leaders and our friends for their goodwill. I thank our friends from the national and international media, religious leaders, civil society, voluntary organizations, development partners and our talented Diaspora Nigerians that are reporting, monitoring or participating in our elections. We have benefitted from their fair observations ».

Extract 5. (Paragraph 23) « My special thanks go to all our public services, security agencies, academia, members of the National Youth Service Corps and emergency services ».

Extract 6. (Paragraph 24) « I wish to express my profound thanks to Vice President Mohammed Namadi Sambo. He brought strength and commitment to our ticket. I am equally grateful to the leadership and members of the PDP; the governors of the 36 states of the Federation; members of the Presidential Campaign Council and all our supporters across the nation for their great sense of dedication, faith and exemplary conduct ».

Extract 7. (Paragraph 28)«I thank you and may God bless Nigeria.»

### Comments

Expressives occur in seven (7) extracts. Extracts 1,4,5,6 and 7 represent cases of expression of gratitude, while extract 2 depicts a case of congratulation. Extract 3 shows a case of expressing respect or admiration by way of tribute. These expressive statements constitute 22.58% of the entire illocutionary acts obtainable in the speech under review. Taking a holistic view of the expressives, one realizes how important it was for President Jonathan to utilize them at the time to depict not only his happiness of winning the election but also his contentment given the circumstances surrounding his emergence as the candidate of the ruling party. As earlier mentioned, the election of President Jonathan doused the tension in the land and his expressiveness could pass for a representation of his psychological state of mind or feeling, knowing how he emerged and the premise from which he won the election.

The Directive Speech Act as we know, attempts to get the addressee to do something. Here are instances drawn from the speech under review:

Extract 1. (Paragraph 9, line 2)«They all did well and the nation expects their continued demonstration of leadership and commitment to our efforts at nation-building.»

Extract 2. (Paragraph 10)«The elections are not yet over. We still have to elect our Governors and members of our State Houses of Assembly. We must approach the remaining elections with the same level of enthusiasm and seriousness».

Extract 3. (Paragraph 11) «We have to remain vigilant».

Extract 4. (Paragraph 19)«Now, we must all unite. We must quickly move away from partisan battlegrounds and find the national common ground. We must show the world that this nation of many people will always find the love, the courage and the path to move forward as one. Let us join hands to build a prosperous nation».

Extract 5. (Paragraph 21)«I enjoin our political and religious leaders, in their usual sense of patriotism to call on their followers to eschew all acts of bitterness and violence».

Extract 6. (Paragraph 25)«Now is the time for all Nigerians to reach out to their neighbours. I want all of us to join hands in brother hood, party affiliation or preferred candidate notwithstanding».

Extract 7. (Paragraph 26)«Come, join me, and let us continue on the road of national transformation».

Extract 8. (Paragraph 27)«Let us all thank our merciful God for this day. Let us all continue to pray for God's guidance in the years ahead».

### Comments

A total of eight (8) directives were recorded in the speech. In extracts 1,3,5,6,7 and 8, the speaker is making requests, whereas the illocutionary act expressed in extracts 2 and 4 are seen as demands. The directive speech acts captured in this speech are 25.81% of the entire illocutionary acts in the entire speech. Given the mood of the nation, the President-elect had to sound convincing in his speech in order to get the other components of the elections going. Since the presidential elections usually came first and he had been elected, he used his speech to give directives as the 'man of the moment'. He subtly issued directives

to political and religious leaders as well as the entire citizenry to show patriotism and avoid any form of conduct that could breach the peace that his "breath of fresh air" had brought.

The **Commissive Speech Act** commits the speaker to some future actions such as pledging, promising, assuring, reassuring, and pronouncing, as can be seen in the following instances culled from the speech under consideration.

Extract 1. (Paragraph 5, line 3)«We will not let you down. We will not let Nigeria down».

Extract 2. (Paragraph 11)«On our part, we continue to assure you that the mechanisms that were put in place to assure free and fair elections are maintained».

Extract 3. (Paragraph 15)«Indeed, I reassure all Nigerians that we would continue to run a government that is committed to fairness, equity and justice to all».

Extract 4. (Paragraph 19, line 5)«On my part, I promise to run an all-inclusive government».

Extract 5. (Paragraph 25, line 3)«We are all Nigerians and I will President to all».

### Comments

The commissive speeches made by the speaker consist of five (5) extracts as shown above. Meanwhile, the entire five cases were promises of different kinds. These commissive speeches are 16.13% of the whole illocutionary acts captured in this acceptance speech. From the foregoing, one understands why the president had to commit himself to certain promises when he won the election. The mood of the nation was charged and therefore he had to reassure the entire citizenry of his inclusiveness in order to gain their confidence. He, therefore, had to make promises of running an inclusive government and also being a president to all regardless of sociopolitical and cultural diversity.

Declarative Speech Act is meant to effect instant changes in the institutional state of affairs, under which comes traits like dismissing, accepting, acceding, excommunicating, pronouncing, surrendering and yielding. The following are instances drawn from the speech.

Extract 1. (Paragraph 6)«My brothers and sisters, fellow citizens, we are all winners.

In this context, there is no victor and no vanquished».

Extract 2. (Paragraph 14)«During that declaration, I said that I had no enemies. Let me say it again, I have no enemies to fight».

### Comments

Only two (2) declaratives were found in the speech. Both extracts are pronouncements in nature. They make up 6.45% of the entire illocutionary act found in this speech. The limited presence of declarative speech acts in the speech under review can be attributed to the prevailing circumstance that saw President Jonathan win the elections in 2011. Given the mood then, he had to consolidate his hold on power first before venturing into declaratives. Having completed his principal's remaining two years in office amid the tense atmosphere that led to his emergence, the situation could not permit him to start his mandate with declaratives after his victory in the subsequent election. The ambience was just not ripe for such. Thus, there was a very limited occurrence of declarative speech acts in the entire speech.

### Findings and conclusion

The results show that there were more assertives than other speech acts. They were used the most when compared with other illocutionary acts. Thus, assertives accounted for 29.03% of the entire illocutionary acts extracted from the said speech. This is followed by the directives occupying 25.81% because the president needed to inspire the nation in a new direction. This is followed closely by the expressives which took 22.58% of the whole illocutionary acts extracted from the speech. The commissives and the declaratives account for 16.13% and 6.45% of illocutionary acts respectively because the president was being cautious about making promises as well as issuing orders.

In conclusion, we discover that President Jonathan applied more assertives and directives during his acceptance speech than other speech acts. In other words, his speech is made up of mainly statements of truth conditions and requests, while promises for which commitments are required are on the

fringes. This is usually what an average African voter expects to hear from a president-elect. From the analysis, it becomes obvious that the nexus between language and politics cannot be neglected. In this instance, the in-coming president knew better and decided to lace his words more in the direction of assertiveness and directives rather than being commissive and declarative. He understood the mood of the nation and therefore decided to encode his speech in order to be politically correct and accepted rather than opening up whole new cans of worms that will result in initial criticism. This paper, therefore, anticipates further research in the area of speech acts in order to uncover other dimensions inherent in the inaugural speech of President Jonathan in 2011.

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## Appendix

Acceptance speech by President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, following his declaration as the winner of the 2011 presidential election, today, 18<sup>th</sup>April 2011.

My dear Countrymen and women;  
This is a new dawn!

Our nation has spoken. At the end of intense and hard-fought campaigns by all the political parties, our people spoke through the ballot. In every city, town, village, ward and voting unit, Nigerians stood in the sun, some in the rain, some walked long distances and all waited patiently, to vote.

With a heart full of gratitude to Almighty God, I want to thank Nigerians for the great sacrifice and overwhelming national mandate you have just given to me, to preside over the affairs of this nation for the next four years.

We have, by this election, reaffirmed our unity as one nation under God; reiterated our faith in democracy; and underscored our determination to fully join the free world where only the will of the people is the foundation of governance. We will not let you down. We will not let Nigeria down.

My brothers and sisters, fellow citizens, we are all winners. In this context, there is no victor and no vanquished. Nigerians have proved to the world that we are capable of holding free, fair and credible elections. With the evident national spread of our victory, we have demonstrated that even in our diversity, the progress of Nigeria remains paramount to all.

This is a victory for the sustenance of our democracy; a victory which all Nigerians irrespective of creed, ethnicity, or state of origin should celebrate. It is a triumph for our common destiny as a people with shared ideals, shared dreams and shared hopes.

I congratulate the candidates of the other political parties. I regard them not as opponents, but as partners. Indeed, some of them have held high public office in the past.

Let me pay particular tribute to General MuhammaduBuhari, Governor Ibrahim Shekarau, MallamNuhuRibadu and the other patriots and their running mates. They all did well and the nation expects their continued demonstration of leadership and commitment to our efforts at nation-building.

The elections are not yet over. We still have to elect our Governors and members of our State Houses of Assembly. We must approach the remaining elections with the same level of enthusiasm and seriousness.

We have to remain vigilant. On our part, we continue to assure you that the mechanisms that were put in place to assure free and fair elections are maintained. When I declared my intention to run for the office of President under the ticket of the Peoples Democratic Party, I reflected on my humble background and the long journey that brought me to that moment.

Eight months later, I stand before you as the winner of the 2011 Presidential election. I am humbled by your overwhelming mandate. During that declaration, I said that I had no enemies. Let me say it again, I have no enemies to fight.

Indeed, I reassure all Nigerians that we would continue to run a government that is committed to fairness, equity and justice for all.

The progress we seek for our country is in our collective hands. I am confident that with this new spirit of national reawakening and our sense of collective ownership of the Nigerian project, a firm foundation has been laid for participatory governance and progress.

Together we will build a new economy that is strong and dynamic and underpinned by a patriotic work ethic. Together we will remake our society to emphasize the most noble of our national values, and together we shall recreate a great nation welded in unity and harmony; a nation marching towards collective progress in which no one is left behind.

This election is the renewal of hope. As we march towards our centenary as a nation in the year 2014, this election will be remembered as that which reaffirmed our faith and strengthened the bond of our nation. We found within ourselves the basis for our national confidence. We demonstrated that we are making great strides in consolidating democratic governance. This election is further evidence that Nigeria is secure, that we are stable; and most of all, that the future of Nigeria is bright.

Now, we must all unite. We must quickly move away from partisan battlegrounds and find the national common ground. We must show the world that this nation of many people will always find the love, the courage and the path to move forward as one. Let us join hands to build a prosperous nation. This is the challenge of our generation. This is our unfinished task. On my part, I promise to run an all-inclusive government.

It is on this note that I am greatly pained at reports of incidences of unnecessary violence and loss of lives and property in some parts of the country over the past twenty-four hours.

I enjoin our political and religious leaders in their usual sense of patriotism to call on their followers to eschew all acts of bitterness and violence. As I have always stated, nobody's political ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian.

I thank all the nations of the world, their leaders and our friends for their goodwill. I thank our friends from the national and international media, religious leaders, civil society, voluntary organizations, development partners and our talented Diaspora Nigerians that are reporting, monitoring or participating in our elections. We have benefitted from their fair observations.

My special thanks go to all our public services, security agencies, academia, members of the National Youth Service Corps and emergency services. These men, women and youth are making huge sacrifices towards the success of the 2011 elections.

I wish to express my profound thanks to Vice President Mohammed Namadi Sambo. He brought strength and commitment to our ticket. I am equally grateful to the leadership and members of the PDP; the governors of the 36 states of the Federation; members of the Presidential Campaign Council and all our supporters across the nation for their great sense of dedication, faith and exemplary conduct.

Now is the time for all Nigerians to reach out to their neighbours. I want all of us to join hands in brotherhood, party affiliation or preferred candidate notwithstanding. We are all Nigerians and I will be President to all. This is the new dawn we crave. What is now required is a new commitment, national solidarity and rededication to service.

Come, join me, let us continue on the road of national transformation.

Let us all thank our merciful God for this day. Let us all continue to pray for God's guidance in the years ahead.

I thank you and may God bless Nigeria.