

A LEXICO-PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE INAUGURAL SPEECH OF NIGERIAN SPEAKER OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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ABSTRACT

Studies abound on language and politics in Nigeria. Indeed, the nexus between the two central terms can never be overemphasized. It is noteworthy that although various studies abound on political speeches, the speeches of Nigerian Speakers of House of Representatives have not received much attention. Hence, this study intends to provide an elaborate analysis of the Inaugural speech of Nigerian Speaker of the House of Representatives in 2011, Rt Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, through lexical cohesion theory, to demonstrate the inherent lexical choices as devices deployed to perform accentuation, which is primarily and traditionally, as a pragmatic function. The lexical choices made by the speaker demonstrated him as a politician who has employed the choices to achieve pragmatic functions to fulfil social functions.

Keywords: Lexico-pragmatic analysis; politics; Nigeria; Lexical devices; Speech

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, there are three arms of government, Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. According to the legislative structure of Nigeria as guided by the 1999 Constitution as amended, the Legislature is powered to provide laws for the state-Nigeria. At Federal echelon, the legislature is divided into the Chambers (Upper and Lower Chambers). As such, the Upper Chamber is the Senate while the Lower Chamber refers to the House of Representatives. On legislature, Akinkurolere (2016) explained thus:

The Legislative arm is important and significant as the arm saddled with the responsibility of making and amending laws. These laws are implemented by the Executive while the Judiciary interprets the laws for the country. The government rules through a set of laws made by the legislators as the representatives in their respective constituencies.

The speaker of the House of Representatives is regarded as the legislative leader of the Assembly. The Assembly comprises Three hundred and Sixty members. Each of the members represents two Local Government Areas in any state of the country.

The House of Representatives and the Senate constitute the legislative institution at the federal level in Nigeria. In the same vein, state houses of assembly serve as the legislative institutions for the various states in the country. Akobi (2011) argued that a major transformation and radical departure from the traditional legislative practice of Nigerian societies under the British colonial overlords is the setting up of legislative institutions patterned after the Westminster model with certain modifications.

Rt Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal emerged as the Speaker of House of Representatives in 2011 after he was elected as a member on the platform of People's Democratic Party (PDP). He successfully led the House from 2011 to 2015 when he contested as a Governor and won. He later emerged as the Governor of Sokoto State under the umbrella of All Progressive Congress (APC). It is imperative to state that the Speaker defected, as an effect of perceived crisis, from PDP to APC as a speaker of the House of Representatives. History has shown that individuals, political systems or institutions have demonstrated a kind of dynamism orchestrated by factors of change which could be internal or external (Akobi 2011). The speaker who was elected as the Speaker in 2011 displayed enthusiasm and emerged as a Governor in 2015. Hence, the Inaugural Speech of the Speaker, in 2011, deserves scholarly attention.

In recent times, theories in the sphere of stylistics or pragmatics have been employed in the analysis of various literary and non-literary discourses. Farinde and Ogunsiji (2010) opined that stylistics describes a text and interprets with a good degree of objectivity while Nurhayati, Wahyu & Yuwartatik (2016) posited that pragmatics is concerned with people's intention, assumptions, beliefs, goals, and the kinds when they are using language.

Indeed, Achoeah and Adelodun (2013) noted that the use of insights from pragmatics and stylistics in the analysis of a variety of texts across disciplines is widespread. It is also important to note that the inaugural speeches of various executive leaders have been explored through theories and principles of stylistics and pragmatics. Despite this, little attention has been paid to the political speeches of parliamentarians, especially, speeches of Speakers of the House of Representatives in Nigeria.

There are studies, which have provided pragmatic interpretations to techniques and strategies that are primarily non-pragmatic. It is attention-calling that Sandová (2011) analysed the frequency of sender-oriented boosters per 10,000 words, using gender's classification of political interviews of prominent leaders. The results showed that boosters perform pragmatic functions through subjectivity, degree of

quality, assurance, and agreement boosters. It was, indeed, a comparative study, which uncovered the fact that female politicians employ more sender-oriented boosters in their speech than male politicians. In another study, Hayne and La Rotta (2017) argued that the attitudinal boosters that express the degree of a certain quality (ADCQs) in a parallel subtitle transcript corpus perform pragmatic functions. This was studied by expounding the supportive theory regarding the functional approach to traductology, accentuation, and the communicative situation.

Further justification for this study is premised on the fact that stylistic features of discourse could be deployed to achieve pragmatic functions. These pragmatic functions are context-dependent concerning the linguistic, physical, epistemic, and social-cultural contexts. Therefore, the orientation of this study is indeed to justify the fact that primary stylistic features could achieve pragmatic functions in discourse.

Objectives of the Study

The study is to carry out a lexico-pragmatic analysis of the Inaugural speech of the Speaker of the House of Representatives (2011-2015) with a view to identifying their lexical devices and pragmatic functions. The specific objectives are to:

1. identify the lexical devices in the speech;
2. analyse the identified devices; and
3. relate the devices to the pragmatic functions in the context.

METHODOLOGY

All the sentences in the speech were identified and numbered. The speech comprised one hundred and one sentences and they were analysed for lexical cohesion devices in line with the analytical frameworks of lexical cohesion as used by Bloor and Bloor (2004) and accentuation category of Urbanová (2000). Tables were drawn to further demonstrate the results of the lexical devices. Discussion and conclusion were based on the results from the tables. It is important to note that the grammatical model is based on Systemic Functional Grammar of Bloor and Bloor (2004). This is a sociological approach that focuses on language function rather than knowledge. On SFL, Awolaja (2016) posits that:

Systemic Grammar generally tends to see language data, text, in terms of substance(at which level the physical manifestation of language is displayed, that is, in terms of sounds and symbols); form(the organization of phonic/graphic substance into patterns that convey meaning); and situation, which relates to context. Therefore, this grammatical model is adopted for the research paper.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

As earlier stated, the Inaugural speech of the Speaker of the House of Representatives was analysed based on the lexical cohesion and accentuation category frameworks. The sentences (1-101) were analysed in line with Bloor's and Bloor's classification of lexical devices into Repetition(R), Synonymy(S), Antonymy(A), Hyponymy(H) and Collocation(C). Repetition is a term that involves the repetition of the same lexical item in successive sentences; synonymy implies meaning relations that exist between lexical items that have a similar meaning; antonymy means oppositeness in the meanings of lexical items; hyponymy indicates inclusion; and collocation refers to the relationship between lexical items that could 'go together' in usual occurrence (Ayeomoni 2007; Akinkulore 2016; Wu 2010).

Accentuation is a discourse tactic which modifies the illocutionary force of a statement, contributes to positive politeness, and intensifies meaning. According to Urbanova (2000), accentuators are divided into three principal categories: hearer-oriented boosters, sender-oriented boosters, and discourse-organizing boosters, all of which are unified by "a high degree of subjectivity". Therefore, the table of analysis is drawn for all the sentences in the speeches while the devices are discussed as techniques of accentuation from the pragmatic perspective.

Table 1: Lexical Devices of the Inaugural Speech

S/N	No of Ties	Connective Tie	Type	Presupposed Items and Sentence Number
4	2	House of Representatives	R	House of Representatives(2)
		Honourable colleagues	C	Honourable of Representatives(2)
5	1	tasks	S	responsibility(4)
6	1	trust	R	trust(4)
7	1	election	R	electing(2)
8	2	Honourable colleagues	R	Honourable colleagues(4)
			C	Honourable of Representatives(4)
9	2	constituents	S	people(4)
		trust	R	trust(6)
11	5	part	H	all(5)
		responsibilities	R	responsibility(4)
		Speaker	R	Speaker(2)
			C	Honourable of Representatives(2)
		success	R	succeed(10)
14	2	country	S	Federal Republic of Nigeria(2)
		Nigeria	R	Nigeria(2)

15	3	humble	R	humbled(8)
		support	R	support(2)
		sacrifices	R	sacrifices(2)
16	4	acknowledgement	R	acknowledgement(15)
		humble gratitude	R	humble gratitude(15)
		constituents	R	constituents(9)
		trust	R	trust(9)
17	3	constituents	R	constituents(16)
		children	H	families(5)
		communities	C	constituents(16)
18	2	mandate	R	mandate(17)
		trust	R	trust(16)
19	3	men	H	people(4)
		women	H	people(4)
		Executive	C	Federal Republic of Nigeria(2)
20	2	support	R	support(15)
		support	R	support(15)
21	6	humble	R	humble(15)
		respect	R	respect(16)
		His Excellency	R	His Excellency(19)
		the President	R	the President(20)
		distinguished	S	eminent(19)
		Federal Republic of Nigeria	R	Federal Republic of Nigeria(2)
22	5	Judicial arm	H	Federal Government(19)
23		recognise	R	recognise(22)
		members	C	House of Representatives(4)
		respected	S	distinguished(21)
		colleagues	R	colleagues(8)
24	2	appreciate	S	acknowledge(16)
		Nigeria	R	Nigeria(14)
25	1	support	R	support(15)
26	5	pay	R	pay(19)
		tribute	R	tribute(19)
		fathers	H	families(16)
		nation	R	nation(20)
		our nation	S	Nigeria(24)
27	10	Honourable colleagues	R	Honourable colleagues(8)
			C	Honourable of Representatives(4)
		Honourable of Representatives	R	Honourable of Representatives(4)
			R	remaking(13)

		Nigeria	R	Nigeria(24)
			S	our nation(26)
		Nigeria	R	Nigeria(24)
			S	our nation(26)
		citizens	S	people(4)
			C	Nigeria(24)
28	2	Nigeria	R	Nigeria(27)
			S	our nation(26)
29	2	distrust	A	trust(18)
		disunity	A	unity(27)
31	2	Nigeria	R	Nigeria(27)
			S	our nation(26)
32	2	divide	R	divide(30)
			A	unite(30)
33	1	national	R	our nation(26)
35	1	rule of law	R	rule of law(23)
36	2	representatives	R	representatives(27)
		citizen	R	citizens(27)
37	2	constitution	R	constitution(35)
		nation	R	nation(26)
38	1	sacrifices	R	sacrifices(15)
39	3	tough	S	hard(38)
		decisions	S	choices(38)
		economy	R	economy(38)
41	2	Nigeria	R	Nigeria(31)
			S	our nation(26)
43	1	expand	S	revive(42)
44	1	sector	R	sector(42)
45	2	creative	S	productive(27)
		enterprise	R	enterprising(27)
46	2	support	R	support(25)
		sector	R	sector(44)
47	2	Nigerian	R	Nigeria(41)
		economy	R	economy(39)
48	1	sector	R	sector(46)
49	4	productively	R	productive(47)
		sector	R	sector(48)
		Executive	R	Executive(19)
			C	Federal Republic of Nigeria(1)
50	1	citizens	R	citizens(27)
51	2	reassess	S	reengineer(44)

		improve	S	revive(42)
52	1	representatives	R	representatives(36)
53	4	review	S	reassess(51)
			S	reengineer(44)
		a nation	S	country(14)
		federating units	H	Nigeria(41)
54	3	laws	S	constitution(36)
		laws	S	constitution(36)
		new	R	new(48)
55	9	tear	S	divide
			A	unite(30)
		distrust	R	distrust(29)
			A	trust(18)
		disunity	R	disunity(28)
			A	unity(27)
		people	R	people(4)
			S	citizens(27)
			C	Federal Republic of Nigeria(1)
56	2	peace	R	peace(27)
		justice	R	justice(27)
57	7	people's representatives	S	elected representatives(52)
		representatives	R	representatives(52)
		people	R	people(55)
			S	citizens(27)
			C	Federal Republic of Nigeria(1)
		our nation	R	our nation(26)
			S	Nigeria(41)
58	4	redeem	S	revive(42)
			S	improve(51)
		political predecessors	S	heroes past(56)
		work	R	work(49)
59	6	redeem	R	redeem(57)
			S	revive(42)
			S	improve(51)
		Nigeria	R	Nigeria(51)
			S	our nation(57)
		work	R	work(58)
60	1	sacrifices	R	sacrifices(38)
61	2	Honourable House	S	Assembly(52)
		acknowledge	R	acknowledge(16)
63	1	Nigerians	S	citizens(27)

64	1	past	R	past(55)
65	2	responsibility	R	responsibility(63)
		new	R	new(64)
66	2	House	R	House(66)
		responsibly	R	responsibly(66)
67	1	responsive	R	responsibly(66)
68	2	people's representatives	R	people's representative(57)
			S	elected representatives(52)
69	1	House of Representatives	R	House of Representatives(27)
70	2	activities	S	agenda(54)
		legislative	R	legislative(54)
71	8	Speaker	R	Speaker(11)
			C	House of Representatives(69)
		Hallowed Chamber	S	House of Representatives(69)
		restore	S	redeem(58)
			S	revive(42)
			S	improve(51)
		House of Representatives	R	House of Representatives(69)
72	1	Intra House affairs	R	people(68)
			R	people(68)
73	2	partnership	S	legislative activities(70)
			S	unity(27)
74	5	elected	A	disunity(29)
			R	elected(5)
		Speaker	R	Speaker(71)
			C	House of Representatives(71)
		House	S	assembly(52)
75	2	Honourable colleagues	R	House(72)
			R	Honourable colleagues(27)
76	2	Speaker	C	House of Representatives(71)
			R	Speaker(74)
77	2	House	R	House(74)
			C	Speaker(76)
79	1	debates	S	dialogue(79)
80	5	unity	R	unity(18)
			A	disunity(55)
		conflict	S	disunity(55)
			S	discord(55)
			A	unity(18)
81	4	people	R	people(71)
			C	Nigeria(59)

		country	R	country(27)
			S	nation(57)
82	6	work	R	work(59)
		parties	C	political(81)
		Honourable House	C	Speaker(74)
		House	R	House(77)
		people	R	people(81)
			C	Nigeria(59)
83	5	House	R	House(82)
		divide	R	divide(32)
			S	unite(30)
		new	R	new(54)
		legislature	H	Federal Government(19)
84	9	trust	R	trust(18)
			A	distrust(27)
		trust	R	trust(18)
			A	distrust(27) confidence(18)
		confidence	S	trust(18)
			A	distrust(27)
		confidence	S	trust(18)
			A	distrust(27)
85	6	colleagues	R	colleagues(75)
		executive	R	executive(19)
			H	Federal Government(19)
		constituents	R	constituents
		people	R	people(81)
			C	Nigeria(59)
86	5	Assembly	R	Assembly(52)
			S	House of Representatives(71)
		preceding	S	past(64)
		harmony	S	unity(80)
			A	disunity(55)
87	4	political	C	parties(82)
		political	C	parties(82)
		constitution	R	constitution(54)
			C	laws(54)
88	4	country	S	nation((57)
		legislative arm	H	Federal government(19)
		public	R	public(87)
		domain	S	sector(49)

89	4	duty	S	responsibility(65)
		reverse	A	promote(87)
		constitution	R	constitution(87)
			C	laws(54)
90	7	brothers	H	families(15)
		sisters	H	families(15)
		people	R	people(85)
			C	Nigeria(59)
		country	R	country(88)
			S	nation(57)
91	6	Nigeria	R	Nigeria(59)
		National Assembly	R	National Assembly(86)
		National Assembly	R	National Assembly(86)
		National Assembly	R	National Assembly(86)
		House of Representatives	R	House of Representatives(69)
		work	R	work(82)
92	4	this day	S	today(18)
		Honourable colleagues	R	Honourable colleagues(75)
		House	R	House(83)
		mandate	R	mandate(17)
94	4	leadership	S	administration(73)
		stand	R	stand(60)
		justice	R	justice(27)
		promote	R	promote(87)
96	2	promote	A	reverse(89)
			R	promote(87)
98	1	thank	R	thank(90)
99	1	God	R	God(95)
100	2	God	R	God(99)
		bless	R	bless(99)
101	3	God	R	God(100)
		Bless	R	Bless(100)
		Federal Republic of Nigeria	R	Federal Republic of Nigeria(1)

Table 2: Table of the lexical Devices

Types of Lexical Device	Frequencies	Percentages %
Repetition	137	54.1
Collocation	26	10.3
Synonymy	62	24.5
Antonymy	16	6.3
Hyponymy	12	4.7
Total	253	100

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of the lexical cohesion devices portrayed a sequence of repetition at 54.1%, synonymy at 24.5%, collocation at 10.3%, antonymy at 6.3% while hyponymy at 4.7%. These devices were employed to emphasise and reiterate the state of the nation and the need for repositioning. Repetition was used to achieve rhetorical effects in the speech. For example, the Speaker repeated the name of his country and words associated with the National Assembly severally in his speech. Apart from the rhetorical effect, the emphasis on the legislative body implied that the speech was important and central to governance in the country.

The application of repetition on some lexical items drew the attention of the hearers to the area of focus and direction of the speaker. One of the pragmatic functions of repetition is accentuation. This enables the speaker to intensify and reinforce commitment, crucial issues and concepts. Some prominent among the lexical items repeated to accentuate are "House of Representatives", "speaker", "Nigeria", "constituents", "colleagues", "sector", "citizens", "people", "mandate" among others were deployed to elaborate the understanding of the physical context. Also, repetition of some lexical items such as "issues", "trust", "responsibility", "success", "humble", "support", "divide", "sacrifice" are meant to intensify boost hearers' orientation about issues that could promote a successful legislature. Also, repetition was used as an effective discourse-orient booster. These would produce certain perlocutionary effects on the hearers, whether intended or unintended.

Synonymy, in the speech, particularly introduced variety and enabled a better understanding of the messages of the Speaker of National Assembly. This was employed by the speaker to create variability of the same meaning in the process of passing across their messages. As such, a clear understanding of the meaning can be achieved. Synonyms served as accentuators in the speech by not emphasizing lexical items but meaning. This did not only serve as a discourse-orient booster but also a hearer-orient booster to provide an extensive reasoning space for readers to understand the facts, feelings and opinions of the speaker. Also, the device of synonymy improves the credibility of the emphasized meaning of the lexical items to influence views on some issues. Some of the lexical items are "tasks", "constituents", "country", "distinguished", "respected", "appreciate", "tough", "decisions", "expand", "creative", "reassess", "improve", and "review".

Antonymy was employed to indicate variability of meaning. Its percentage in the speech showed that the speech simple. This device also emphasized meaning through a different path of variability. This device enables the understanding of opposite lexical items in the speech by giving room for hearers to explore opposing situations. In another dimension, the deployment of antonymy was to manipulate the hearer towards the preferred intentions of the speaker. In this sense, antonymy

was deployed as hearer-orient and discourse boosters.

Collocation in the speech was at 10.3% while hyponymy at 4.7%. Collocation was deployed to accentuate as a discourse-orient booster. The lexical device of collocation had contributed in no small measure towards cohesion in the speech by enabling readers or listeners to rely on continuity that eventually creates interconnecting relationships of words in the process of filling the missing information. By this, it performed the pragmatic function of accentuation as a discourse-orient booster.

It is noted that hyponymy had the least percentage at 4.7%. This demonstrated that general items and inclusion were less reiterated. Reiteration in forms of repetition, synonymy, antonymy and hyponymy performs the function as it may, the few instances the hearers to understand the general items and items that relate to one another through inclusion in the speech better. By this, lexical devices that manifested in the Inaugural Speech of the speaker of the House of Representatives have enhanced the interpretation of the speech as a message of hope and a promise of the future.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No doubt, the cohesion devices deployed in the lexical analysis of the Inaugural Speech of the Speaker of House of Representatives, have significant pragmatic interpretation and relevance, though primarily stylistic features of the language. This has helped in ascertaining the focus and intentions of the speaker. Thereby, each device has contributed valuable pragmatic functions to the lexical organization of the speech. This is premised on the fact that accentuation is related to the context. It is noted that other features or strategies such as prefixes, onomatopoeia, superlatives, markers and others are employed to perform accentuation hence it is not limited to lexical cohesion devices. It is therefore inevitable that context is crucial in any lexical investigation since most of the devices in speeches are deployed to influence the views of the hearer(s) or reader(s).

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THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF RT HON. AMINU WAZIRI TAMBUWAL, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA ON 6TH OF JUNE 2011.

'TIME TO REMAKE NIGERIA'

- 1) Your Excellencies, Dear Honourable Colleagues, I must begin by saluting the courage, maturity and sportsmanship of Hon. Mulikat Adeola Akande.
- 2) I thank you for your kind support and sacrifice in electing me the Speaker and my dear brother Deputy Speaker of the 7th House of Representatives of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- 3) I am greatly honoured and humbled by your trust.
- 4) I accept this responsibility as a privilege and as a caretaker of the House of Representatives for the Nigerian people and for you, my Honourable Colleagues.
- 5) I am enormously indebted to you all and greatly challenged by the tasks before us.
- 6) I must prove myself worthy of the trust and confidence you have reposed in me.
- 7) I congratulate all of you on your election.
- 8) I warmly welcome our new Honourable Colleagues.
- 9) Your constituents have placed enormous trust in you.
- 10) You must succeed.
- 11) Part of my responsibilities as the Speaker is to ensure success.
- 12) That I will do.
- 13) Public service is a noble calling - the spirit of common good must inhabit in us.
- 14) With our patriotism, optimism and commitment, we shall together become an 'A Team' for the remaking of our dear Country, Nigeria.
- 15) I acknowledge with humble gratitude your families, friends and loved ones for their support and sacrifices.
- 16) I acknowledge with humble gratitude our constituents for their undiminishable trust and goodwill.
- 17) In voting us, our constituents issued us a specific mandate - to make life better for them, their children and their communities.
- 18) Today, we must begin to fulfill that mandate and repay their trust.
- 19) I pay tribute to his Excellency, our President, Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, His Excellency the Vice-President, Arc. Mohammed Namadi Sambo and the eminent men and women that facilitate the work of the Executive Arm of the Federal Government.
- 20) We support and will continue to support the great plans of our President to revamp our economy and renew our nation.
- 21) My humble respect goes to His Excellency, the President of the Senate and all the Distinguished Senators of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- 22) I recognize my Lord the Chief Justice of the Federation and all other Justices and judges of the Judicial Arm.
- 23) Permit me to specially recognize my respected Colleagues, Members of the Nigerian Bar for their role in the Nigerian Rule of Law project.
- 24) I also appreciate the Civil Society Organizations, for their tireless efforts to move

Nigeria forward.

25) We ask all of you for your understanding, support and partnership.

26) I pay tribute to the Founding Fathers of our Nation for the heritage of equity, peace and justice they passed to us.

27) Dear Honourable Colleagues, with your votes for me, you have spoken very clearly and endorsed the new direction the House of Representatives will take - the route to remake Nigeria; to make Nigeria a Country of peace, justice and unity, a Country that protects her Citizens and affords each of them access to opportunities for a productive and enterprising life.

28) That is the Nigeria we shall work for; you and I; propelled by a patriotic zeal and bound by a patriotic bond.

29) For too long have we lived in mutual suspicion, distrust and disunity.

30) For far too long have we dwelled on the things that divide more than the things that unite us. 31) Nigeria is greater than the sum of our individual ambitions and greater than all our differences - be it of tribe, ethnicity, religion, zone, birth, status, association or affiliation.

32) We must dissolve these lines of divide that exist amongst us.

33) We must stop protecting and projecting narrow interests at the expense of national interests. 34) Arise, a compatriot, we share a common humanity.

35) We must work to strengthen our practice of the Rule of Law.

36) As Representatives of the people (the keepers of our Constitution), we must commit our powers to guarantee the rights of every Citizen in every situation.

37) Guided by the Fundamental Principles of our Constitution, we must stand firm on the values that built our nation.

38) Our economy is in a bad shape, mainly because of our inability, over the years, to make hard choices and sacrifices.

39) Now, we have to take the tough decisions that will turn our economy around.

40) We must meet necessity with courage.

41) Unemployment is ravaging our youths at 21.2% unemployment rate, Nigeria can do better and must do better.

42) We have to revive our manufacturing industries and the agricultural sector.

43) We have to massively expand our infrastructure base.

44) We have to re-engineer our services sector.

45) We need to create the enabling environment for creative enterprise to thrive.

46) We must support a private sector led growth.

47) We must make the Nigerian economy more globally competitive.

48) The implementation of our Power sector reforms demands new process energies.

49) We must work productively with the Executive to grant these.

50) Our Citizens live in daily fear due to poor security.

51) We must re-assess and improve our security systems and mechanisms to guarantee safety of lives and properties.

52) We must be a listening Assembly of elected representatives.

53) We should review how we federate as a nation with the aim of achieving more cumulative efficiencies in the federating units, based on comparative endowment

advantages.

54) Our legislative agenda must focus on making new laws and strengthening existing laws to grant all of these.

55) Post-election and sectional violence and other crises have sought to tear us apart and plant distrust and disunity amongst our people.

56) Peace and justice are our heritage from our heroes past and our hope for today.

57) As the people's representatives, we must heal our people and heal our nation.

58) We must work to redeem the efforts of our political predecessors.

59) We must work to redeem Nigeria.

60) We must stand united in our efforts and sacrifices to build a worthy future for our people.

61) We acknowledge that the dignity and integrity of this Honourable House have been called to question.

62) We must possess the humility that commands introspection.

63) We accept responsibility for our failures and ask Nigerians for their forgiveness.

64) Mindful of lessons of the past, we will open a new chapter.

65) We will commence a new era for responsibility.

66) This House will act responsibly in all its endeavours.

67) We will be responsive, transparent and accountable in all we do.

68) We must recognize one common truth -- we are the people's representatives.

69) This is their House of Representatives and we are here as their trustees.

70) The primary focus of our legislative activities should therefore, be about our constituents.

71) My period of service as the Speaker of this hallowed Chamber will restore the House of Representatives as an institution where the will of the people is done.

72) In intra- House affairs, dialogue shall be our most potent weapon.

73) Our administration's modus operandi shall be partnership and not partisanship.

74) You elected me to be the Speaker of the whole House.

75) All of you, my Honourable Colleagues, are my immediate constituency.

76) I shall be a Speaker of and for all.

77) Every voice in this House must be heard and respected.

78) We can disagree without being disagreeable.

79) Our decision-making process shall be predicated on rivers of ideas and robust debates.

80) I choose unity of purpose over conflict and discord.

81) We may be of differing political persuasions but we are one people and we serve one country.

82) In accepting this challenge, I commit to work with all the parties in this Honourable House, for the greater benefit of our people.

83) Your overwhelming support for us to lead this House irrespective of our partisan divide represents a promising new beginning for the independence of the legislature.

84) We are humbled by this demonstration of confidence and therefore challenged to uphold your trust as we are determined to justify this trust and confidence.

85) My dear colleagues, in the course of discharging our responsibility to appropriate

and oversight for and on the executive, we owe it a duty to our constituents (the Nigerian people) to positively deploy the instrumentality of this sacred trust to make life better for our people.

86) The National Assembly has recorded remarkable strides in the preceding periods but we need to do more in reasonable harmony with the Executive.

87) In political public relations, shaping perception to promote political harmony has assumed universal application.

88) In our country, in the last 12 years of our return to constitutional democracy, the Legislative Arm of Government has had a less impressive perception in the public domain.

89) We therefore have a duty to reverse this trend through actions and performances within the context of our defined roles as provided in the constitution.

90) Accordingly, may I appeal to our brothers and sisters in the media to partner with us in this endeavour for the good of our people and country Nigeria.

91) I thank the Clerk to the National Assembly, the Deputy Clerk to the National Assembly, Clerk House of Representatives and other Management staff of the National Assembly for all the work they have put in to make this day historical.

92) Dear Honourable Colleagues, this is your House, this is your leadership, this is Your Mandate.

93) Run with it.

94) Let us all stand up and pray.

95) Almighty God, Ruler of Heaven and the Earth, we beseech Thee to inspire and guide all our Counsels and Actions, so that we may always walk in the path of Justice, Love and Charity to one another.

96) Help us with Thy Grace to do only those things that will promote the Unity, Happiness and Prosperity of Nigeria. Amen.

97) The work starts now.

98) Thank you very much.

99) MAY GOD BLESS OUR EFFORTS.

100) MAY GOD BLESS US.

101) MAY GOD BLESS THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA.