

Analysis of Polarity and Modality in Former President Olusegun Obasanjo's Open Letters: A Critical Discourse Approach

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ABSTRACT: *This study is an analysis of the deployment of polarity and modality in the open letters of former president Olusegun Obasanjo. The study examines how Obasanjo has used language to construct meaning and convey his perspective on the goings-on in the Nigerian society. The study captures various scholarly works in the area of critical discourse analysis, which is the theoretical framework of the research and further incorporates this theory into the analysis of the data. Data analysis focuses on the assessment and evaluation of the writer's deployment of polarity and modality in his narrative, and it thus revealed that the writer has dexterously used polarity to assume a position of neutrality, without tilting more or less to either the negative or positive; it has also revealed that the writer's deployment of modality has helped him express his core concerns, expectations and objectives for a better Nigeria, through the use of certain modal verbs. The study further recommends that future studies should harness other areas of critical linguistics, such as transitivity, mood and intertextuality to help construe the ideational motivations of the writer.*

KEYWORDS: polarity, modality, critical, discourse

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Nigeria has faced a myriad of social challenges, ranging from security threats and breaches, to economic downturns, religious and cultural intolerance amongst the various religious sects, to political dysfunction and other attendant sub-issues springing up from such generic challenges as listed above. Amidst this turmoil, experts, stakeholders and patriots alike have offered objective views and suggestions on what they feel would better the fortunes of the country. Amongst a frenzy of submissions and opinions, are two open letters from former President Olusegun Obasanjo. First, in this context, is tagged a "pre-election open letter", written to the

youth, urging them to eschew tribalism and all forms of nepotism in the forth-coming elections and vote for competent leaders with a track record of excellence and honesty. In the second letter, specifically directed at the president, which in the context of this paper is tagged “post-election open letter” former president Obasanjo has charged the president to prevail over the perceived anomalies perpetrated by various candidates and political parties across the federation, which he claims have been overlooked by the election umpire, INEC.

Offering recommendations for the country's future, former president Obasanjo has in his letter, urged the youth to take the forthcoming 2023 general elections seriously, as he claims the country is at a precipice, and needs purposeful leadership to rejuvenate and earn it a positive position amongst the committee of states. The letters have garnered widespread attention and have sparked debates across Nigeria and beyond, opening a vault of replies from various individuals around the world.

This paper aims to analyze the open letters from a critical perspective, exploring their contents, and investigating the deployment of modality and polarity within the discourses, and the implications for Nigerian politics and society. Furthermore, we will evaluate the effectiveness of Obasanjo's suggestions and show how his ideology is indexed within the context of his linguistic choices, and how this ideology is framed to appeal to the youth and the common Nigerian. Through this analysis, we hope to shed light on the complex issues facing Nigeria and contribute to a deeper understanding of the country's political landscape. The open letters represent a significant moment in Nigeria's history and provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Theoretical Framework

Analysis of data will be hinged on the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA Henceforth) theory. CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to language study that emerged in the late 1970s and has since gained significant popularity in linguistics, sociology, political science, media studies, and other fields. At its core, CDA seeks to uncover the ideological and power dimensions of language, examining how discourse is used to construct and reinforce social hierarchies, identities, and relations of domination. One of the key tenets of CDA is its rejection of the traditional view of language as a neutral and transparent tool for communication. Instead, CDA sees language as a socially constructed phenomenon that reflects and shapes the underlying power structures of society. As Fairclough (2015:2) notes, "language is a site of struggle over meaning and power, and discursive practices are implicated in the reproduction or transformation of social structures and relations".

Van Dijk (1993: 251), sees CDA as “a cognitive approach to the study of discourse that aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and; (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations, and

processes”. Van Dijk emphasizes here that CDA focuses on language use at multiple levels, from the micro-level of grammar and syntax to the macro-level of social and historical context – and further examines how language is used to construct and reinforce social categories such as gender, race, and class, and how these categories are linked to unequal power relations.

Wodak and Meyer (2009:1) see CDA as “a research approach that explores the ways in which language is used to construct social relations and reproduce social structures”. CDA here is seen as a concept that emphasizes the role of discourse in shaping and reflecting social identities and subjectivities. Discourse is considered as a key mechanism through which individuals come to understand and interpret the world around them, and through which they construct and negotiate their own meanings and identities. CDA thus, aims to reveal the power relations and social ideologies that are embedded in language use, and challenges dominant discourses that sustain inequality and injustices.

Furthermore, CDA is interested in the ways in which language use reflects and reinforces power relations in institutional and organizational settings. Blommaert and Bulcan (2000;448) see CDA as “an approach to the study of discourse that treats discourse as social practice and focuses on the ways in which language use is affected by, and in turn, affects social practices, institutions, and structures”. Fairclough (1992) shows how management discourse in a factory in the UK is used to construct workers as passive and obedient, thereby legitimizing exploitative labor practices and reinforcing the dominant ideology of capitalism.

Overall, CDA provides a powerful framework for analyzing the role of language in social life, and for uncovering the underlying power structures and ideologies that shape our understanding of the world. Its interdisciplinary approach and focus on the intersection of language, power, and social context make it a valuable tool for researchers in a variety of fields.

Empirical Review

Modality and polarity are two important linguistic features that are frequently analyzed in critical discourse analysis (CDA) research. Modality refers to the expression of possibility, probability, and necessity in language, while polarity refers to the expression of positive or negative sentiment. Both modality and polarity are closely tied to the ideological and power dimensions of language use, and can reveal how language is used to construct and reinforce social hierarchies and asymmetrical power relations.

Several studies have deployed CDA to analyze modality and polarity in different contexts. For instance, Reisigl and Wodak (2001) used CDA to analyze the discourse of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPO) and its role in the construction of national identity. They found that the FPO used a high degree of modality to express certainty and necessity in its discourse, thereby projecting a

sense of authority and legitimacy. Similarly, they found that the FPO used negative polarity to construct a sense of crisis and threat, which helped to mobilize support for its exclusionary policies. Another study by Van Leeuwen (2007) examined the use of modality in Dutch news media coverage of immigration. He found that the media tended to use modal expressions that projected a sense of uncertainty and ambiguity about immigration, which he argues reflects the ambivalent and contradictory attitudes of the Dutch public towards immigration. Additionally, he found that the media used modal expressions that reinforced the dominant discourse of assimilation, projecting a sense of necessity for immigrants to conform to Dutch cultural norms and values.

In another study, Van Dijk (2011) analyzed the use of polarity in the discourse of the European Union (EU) and its member states towards migration. He found that negative polarity was used to construct migrants as a threat to national security and cultural identity, while positive polarity was used to construct policies aimed at reducing migration as necessary and beneficial for the EU. He argues that this use of polarity reflects the dominant ideology of the EU as a fortress, which seeks to exclude non-European migrants in order to protect its own interests.

Overall, these studies demonstrate the value of CDA for analyzing modality and polarity in a variety of contexts, and for uncovering the underlying power structures and ideologies that shape language use. By examining the linguistic features of modality and polarity, CDA researchers can reveal how language is used to construct and reinforce social categories, identities, and relations of domination.

Data Analysis

Here, we will conduct distinct analyses of the two letters to see how the writer has been able to handle modality and polarity in the two narratives.

Data 1 (*Pre-election Open Letter*)

“My Appeal to All Nigerians Particularly Young Nigerians” (See Appendix A)

Modality

In discourse, modality refers to the speaker or writer’s attitude towards the information being conveyed. It involves expressing the degree of possibility, necessity or certainty of a statement, and can be conveyed through modal verbs such as “could”, “should”, “might”. Below is an analysis of the deployment of modality in the letter under study.

Modal Verbs: In the open letter, former president Obasanjo uses modal verbs to express his opinions and beliefs. For example, he uses the modal verb “should” to implore Nigerians to apply caution and not be given to deceit by politicians. He also uses the modal verb “must” to stress the

importance of choosing a leader with the right qualities. Modal verbs are often used to express modality as they indicate the speaker's attitude towards the discourse.

Modality of Certainty: Former president Obasanjo uses language that expresses a high degree of certainty about his opinions and ideology. For example, he uses phrases such as “without prejudice, fear or ill-will” to emphasize that his analysis is impartial and fair; again, he says “such a government must have representation from all sectors of our national life” to convey a sense of urgency and necessity, indicating that he considers this to be a crucial requirement. He also uses the phrase “make bold to say” to indicate that he is confident in his judgement.

Modality of Obligation (Deontic modality): Former president Obasanjo uses modality of obligation to stress the importance of Nigerians choosing the right leader. He uses such phrases as “we must assess judiciously and choose wisely” to express the obligation that Nigerians have to make the right decision in electing a president that will uplift the nation to the next level.

Modality of Possibility (Epistemic modality): In his letter, Former president Obasanjo deploys the modality of possibility to relay his ideological motivations to his readers. This can be seen in the expression, “genuine competence can be found in any region or section of Nigeria through track record and performance”. The use of the word “can” show optimism, and suggests that there is a potential for the much-needed change the country yearns for.

Polarity

In discourse, polarity refers to the sentimental or emotional valence expressed in a text or speech, typically on a positive-negative continuum. Polarity can be used to express a range of emotions, such as happiness, sadness, anger or surprise. Polarity can be an important factor in discourse, as it can affect how the message is received and interpreted by the audience. For example, a speaker may use positive polarity to appeal to an audience's emotions and sentiments, and create a sense of enthusiasm or optimism, while negative polarity can be used to express dissatisfaction or to criticize something. Polarity can also be used to create contrast or emphasize a particular point. Below are some examples of polarity deployed in the letter under study.

Positive Polarity: The writer expressive positive polarity when he talks about his vision for Nigeria. He uses phrases such as “future of liberation, restoration and great hope and expectation” to convey a positive view of Nigeria's future.

Negative Polarity: The writer uses negative polarity when he talks about the current state of Nigeria, and the perception of many Nigerians to the country's worsening situation. He uses such phrases as “hell on earth”; “I understand that this has caused inconvenience for you”; “pervasive and mind-numbing insecurity”, to describe the challenges faced by Nigerians as a result of what he had earlier called “rudderless leadership”. These expressions help to frame Nigeria in a negative

light, consequent upon the struggles and challenges facing the country that had earlier on been highlighted in the letter.

Polarity shifter: Polarity shifters are content words that have semantic properties similar to those of negation words like “not”, “no”, or “without”. Within the context of the letter under study, the writer has used polarity shifters to strike a balance so as to be perceived as objective. Below are some expressions that mark polarity shifters in the letter.

- “Not all is lost with democracy in Nigeria” - This polarity shifter introduces a shift in polarity from a negative perspective to a positive perspective, suggesting that while there may be challenges with democracy in Nigeria, there is still hope for positive change
- “We must accept that Nigeria is not where it should be” - This polarity shifter moves the polarity from a negative statement about the current state of Nigeria to an affirmation that change is necessary and possible.
- “We must continue to try until we succeed” – this polarity shifter tilts the polarity from a potentially negative ending, such as “we may fail”, to a more positive one that emphasizes hope and the need for persistence and perseverance.
- “We must focus on moving Nigeria Forward” – This polarity shifter moves the polarity from a potentially negative statement, such as “we need to fix Nigeria”, to a more positive one that depicts the need for forward thinking and action to foster growth and development.

Neutral Polarity: The writer expresses neutral polarity when he provides a list of characteristics that Nigerians should look for in a leader. He uses phrases such as “track record of ability and performance”, “vision that is authentic, honest and realistic”, “character and attitude of a lady and gentleman who are children of God, and obedient to God”, and “physical and mental capabilities with soundness of mind” to provide an objective list of qualities without expressing any ideological polarity.

Data 2 (Post-election Open Letter)

“Election Result: Don’t Toy with Future of Nigeria” (See Appendix B)

This letter from Obasanjo exhibits various subsets of modality and polarity. Below is an analysis of the letter, highlighting the various subsets of modality and polarity.

Modality

Modal Verbs: The modal verbs used in the letter are “should”, “must”, and “can”. Obasanjo uses “should” to urge the INEC Chairman to save Nigeria from the danger looming ahead. He uses “must” to emphasize the need to cancel elections that do not pass the credibility and transparency test and to declare manipulated or inactive results void and inadmissible for election declaration. He uses “can” to imply that the INEC Chairman has the ability to rectify the errors of the results.

Modality of Certainty: Obasanjo uses the modality of certainty to assert that the President has proved beyond reasonable doubt that he wants to leave a legacy of free, fair, transparent, and credible elections.

Modality of Obligation: Obasanjo uses the modality of obligation to suggest that the INEC Chairman should change BVAS and Server officials and that a Committee of INEC staff and representatives of the four major political parties with the Chairman of the Nigerian Bar Association should look into what must be done to have hitch-free elections next Saturday.

Modality of Possibility: Obasanjo uses the modality of possibility to imply that INEC officials have been allegedly compromised, and to suggest that some results that were brought outside BVAS and Server are not a true reflection of the will of Nigerians.

Polarity

Positive Polarity: Obasanjo uses positive polarity to describe the good and noble plan and preparation for the elections until February 25, 2023. He also uses positive polarity to describe the hope for a greater future for Nigeria.

Negative Polarity: Obasanjo uses negative polarity to describe the danger looming ahead due to the alleged compromise of INEC officials and the perversion of election results.

Polarity Shifters: Obasanjo uses polarity shifters to suggest a shift from negative to positive polarity, such as when he urges the INEC Chairman to save Nigeria from the danger looming ahead.

Neutral Polarity: Obasanjo uses neutral polarity to provide factual information about the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the Server for immediate transmission of results from polling units.

CONCLUSION

This study has conducted a critical analysis of modality and polarity of the open letter written by former president Olusegun Obasanjo to the current president of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari. Analysis has revealed that the letter under study is appropriately laced with extensive deployment of modality and polarity that sets out to index the ideology of the writer.

The deployment of modality in the first letter shows the writer's expectation and optimism for a better Nigeria that can be actualized through an unbiased participation in the forthcoming general elections that will consequently produce leadership at various political positions, earned on merit and competence, and not on nepotism, bigotry or selfishness. Also, the writer's use of polarity in

the first letter shows that he sets out to index himself as an objective observer who has not set-out to write for his own self-gratification or adulation. This can be seen in his balanced use of negative and positive polarities, and ultimately, his skillful use of neutral polarity to douse any kind of tension. The writer is aware that the country is presently facing various challenges of ideological dichotomy and contradictions on several fronts, and is also aware that his social status as a former president, present stakeholder and senior citizen of the country, his words, actions and ideologies wrongly expressed, have the potential of triggering civil unrest and mass hysteria – he adeptly uses polarity to navigate through his narrative while maintaining extreme neutrality and objectivism. In the second letter also, it shows that Obasanjo uses various subsets of modality and polarity to convey his message effectively. He uses modal verbs to make suggestions, express urgency, and convey possibilities. He uses the modality of certainty to assert the President's intentions, and the modality of obligation to suggest what the INEC Chairman should do. He uses the modality of possibility to imply that some results were not a true reflection of the will of Nigerians. He uses polarity to convey his message, using positive polarity to describe the good and negative polarity to describe the danger looming ahead. He also uses polarity shifters to suggest a shift from negative to positive polarity.

In conclusion, the open letters of President Obasanjo use language to construct and maintain power relations in society. His modality and polarity reveal his concern and urgency about the state of the nation, and positions him as an authority figure and mentor to the youth and contestants.

Recommendations

This study thus recommends:

1. That further studies should harness such aspects of linguistics like transitivity and mood in the analysis of the open letters - primarily for their potentiality in helping to construe experiences and revealing ideologies;
2. That further studies should analyze sentence structure and formation to reveal the style of the author and help ascertain if the letter has been written in simple and straight forward language that can be comprehensible to the commonest uneducated Nigerian;
3. That further studies should analyze allusions and intertextuality in the letters to check for textual connectedness and how they align ideologically within the context of the present letters. These recommendations will further strengthen the findings of the present study and positively increase the body of literatures in the domain of critical discourse analysis of particularly pollical speeches.

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Appendix A

Pre-Election Open Letter

DEAR Compatriots and Friends,

MY APPEAL TO ALL NIGERIANS PARTICULARLY YOUNG NIGERIANS

Happy New Year! May all our national calamities disappear this year.

I am constrained to write this letter to all Nigerians especially young Nigerians, friends of Nigeria globally as well as our development partners because of the gravity, responsibility and implications of the collective decision Nigerians, both young and old, will be making within the next two months.

The last seven and a half years have no doubt been eventful and stressful years for many Nigerians. We have moved from frying pan to fire and from mountain top to the valley.

Our leaders have done their best, but their best had turned out to be not the best for Nigeria and Nigerians at home and abroad. For most Nigerians, it was hell on earth.

Those of us who are alive should thank God for His mercies, brace ourselves for the remaining few months of this administration and pray and work very hard for an immediate

better future – future of liberation, restoration and great hope and expectation.

We have had campaigners going up and down the country feeding us with what they mean and what they do not mean, what they understand and what they do not fully understand, what is possible and what is not possible, what is realistic and what is unrealistic, what is true and what is untrue. I believe that we need not be confused nor be gullible. Let us be cautious, not to be fooled again.

I have interacted with the major contestants and I find it interesting that, in one form or the other, each of them claims to want to do what I did during my Presidency and to take Nigeria back to where it was at the height of my Presidency and immediately after. I was pained that most of them do not realize that the Nigeria of today had been dragged down well below Nigeria of the beginning of my Presidency in June 1999.

Although at that time, Nigeria was in very bad shape and was tottering on the verge of collapse and break-up.

Even then, Nigeria was not faced with the level of pervasive and mind-numbing insecurity, rudderless leadership, buoyed by mismanagement of diversity and pervasive corruption, bad economic policies resulting in extremes of poverty and massive unemployment and galloping inflation.

For these reasons, I kept pointing out to them that the instruments used in 1999 to 2007 and methodology used will grossly be inadequate for the perilous situation we now find ourselves.

Without prejudice but with greatest respect to each individual with utmost regard for the best for Nigeria and all Nigerians and from my personal experience, all the major contestants claim to be my mentees. I will not deny such positions since I have worked with all of them directly and indirectly in government.

I have come to realize a number of factors in character, attributes and attitude that are necessary in the job of directing the affairs of Nigeria successfully and at a time like this. These characteristics or attributes are many but let us be mindful of some key ones together.

From interaction and experience, and as mentees as most of them claim, I will, without prejudice, fear or ill-will, make bold to say that there are four major factors to watch out for in a leader you will consider to hoist on yourself and on the rest of Nigerians in the coming election and they are what I call TVCP: Track record of ability and performance; Vision that is authentic, honest and realistic; Character and attributes of a lady and a gentleman who are children of God and obedient to God; and Physical and mental capability with soundness of mind as it is a very taxing and tasking assignment at the best of times and more so it is at the most difficult time that we are.

Let me say straight away that 'Emi Lokan' (My turn) and 'I have paid my dues' are one and the same thing and are wrong attitude and mentality for the leadership of Nigeria now.

They cannot form the new pedestal to reinvent and to invest in a new Nigeria based on an All-Nigeria Government for the liberation and restoration of Nigeria. Such a government must have representation from all sectors of our national life – public, private, civil society, professional, labour, employers, and the diaspora. The solution should be in 'we' and 'us' and not in 'me' and 'I'.

Mind you, I reiterate that no human being is an angel let alone a Messiah, but there are elements of these attributes and on comparative basis and by measure of what we know of,

and what some of us have experienced from the front-runners, we must assess judiciously and choose wisely.

If anybody claims he or she has anything to the contrary, it will be up to him or her to prove to us.

I pray not to be proved right again in the bad sense but rather to be proved right in the positive and glorious sense of Nigeria becoming what God had created it to be – a land of plenty and prosperity united for common purpose of inclusive society, common security, shared prosperity, equity, egalitarianism, justice, and equal stake in the Project Nigeria with leadership role of Nigeria for the black race and fair share of global division of labour.

One ridiculous point that has been touted to justify unjustifiable appointments and selections is 'competence'. In truth and in reality, genuine competence can be found in any region or section of Nigeria through track record and performance if only people will honestly and sincerely look hard for people with such attainment and attribute.

Most of us in good conscience can testify to competence when we see any anywhere. What is masqueraded as 'competence' is self-interest and nepotism.

We have a unique opportunity to correct ourselves by ourselves for the good of ourselves. Those who are preaching division, segregation, separation, and want to use diversity for their own self and selfish interest are enemies of the nation, no matter what else they may disguisedly profess or proclaim.

The Challenge Is For Nigerian Youth:

If we fall prey again, we will have ourselves to blame and no one can say how many more knocks Nigeria can take before it tips over. To be forewarned is to be fore-armed.

Future is not emotion. I challenge the youth to arise. Let nobody pull wool over your eyes to divide you and/or segregate you to make you underlings. Nigerian youth, wherever they

come from, North or South, East or West need education which is now denied to over 20 million children; Nigerian youth also need skills, empowerment, employment, reasonably good living conditions, welfare and well-being.

My dear young men and women, you must come together and bring about a truly meaningful change in your lives. If you fail, you have no one else to blame. Your present and future are in your hands to make or to mar. The future of Nigeria is in the same manner in your hands and literally so. If for any reason you fail to redeem yourself and your country, you will have lost the opportunity for good and you will have no one to blame but yourselves and posterity will not forgive you. Get up, get together, get going and get us to where we should be. And you, the youth, it is your time and your turn. 'Emi Lokan' (My turn).

The power to change is in your hands. Your future, my future, the future of grandchildren and great grandchildren is in your hands. Politics and elections are numbers game. You have the numbers, get up, stand up and make your numbers count.

Let me say it again, loud and clear, Nigeria has no business with insecurity, poverty, insurgency, banditry, unemployment, hunger, debt, division and disunity. We are in these situations because advertently or inadvertently, our leaders have made the choices. They have done the best they could do. Let them take their rest deservedly or not and let them enjoy their retirement as Septuagenarians or older.

I became Head of State at 39 and at 42, I had retired into the farm. When it was considered necessary, I was drafted back into active political life after twenty years of interregnum. I came back at 62 and by 70, I was on my way out. Others like General Gowon and Enahoro became national leaders at 33 and 27 respectively and General Gowon at the helms of leadership of Nigeria at the highest level. The vigour, energy, agility, dynamism and outreach that the job of leadership of Nigeria requires at the very top may not be provided as a septuagenarian or older. I know that from personal experience. And it is glaring out of our current experiences.

Otherwise, we will be fed with, "The President says" and we will neither see nor hear him directly as we should. Yes, for some, age and physical and mental disposition are not in tandem.

But where and when they are with obvious evidence, they must be taken into account for purpose of reality. And yet it is a job in our present situation where the team leader or captain of the team should be up and doing, outgoing inside and outside and speaking to the nation on almost daily basis visibly and as much as possible interactively and meeting his colleagues all over the world on behalf of Nigeria.

Youth of Nigeria, your time has come, and it is now and please grasp it. If not now, it will be never. I appeal to you to turn the tide on its head and march forward chanting 'Awa Lokan' (Our turn) not with a sense of entitlement, but with a demonstrable ideological commitment

to unity and transformation of Nigeria.

Leave The Past, Face The Future:

Can we let the past go? I appeal to the young Nigerians to stop inheriting other people's prejudices and enemies. Make your own friends and stop inheriting your father's enemies.

Let's stop criminalising and demonising one another on the basis of the civil war on which we are all wrong. And let's praise and thank God for preserving the oneness of Nigeria.

The Scripture says that if God would take account of all our wrongdoings, nobody would be able to stand before Him. While not suffering from amnesia, let us stop still fighting and reacting to the civil war in our hearts, minds, heads and our attitude acrimoniously.

Let's stop living on our different wrongs or mistakes of the past: treasonable felony, Tiv riot and its handling, first military coup and its aftermath, second military coup, araba, pogrom and the civil war, all in the 1960s. And more recently OPC, Egbesu, MASSOB, IPOB, Boko Haram and banditry. No region can claim to be innocent or to be saintly. And no justification will suffice. In our respective individual or regional positions, we have done right and we have done wrong. It is therefore not right for any of us to be sanctimonious to see ourselves as saints and the rest as devils incarnate.

Just let us agree to move forward together in mutual forgiveness, one accord, inclusive society, equality and equity. Together and without bias and discrimination, fear or favour, we can have Nigeria of one nation in diversity, in truth and in practice. Let us honour, cherish, respect and even celebrate our diversity which is the basis of our potential greatness and strength.

If we will only continue to harp on wrongs done by each of us individually or collectively, we will never be able to stand together. If we will continue with wide brush to paint a national or sub-national group as bad and never to be trusted with leadership because of past error or mistakes that some of them were responsible for and treat their offspring as inheritors, it will amount to great injustice that will surely lead to no peace, no security and no stability for development and progress.

First, no group is faultless; second, for the greatness of the whole, we need one another as constituents of the whole; third, we cannot be talking and working for Africa's integration

and for Nigeria's disintegration at the same time. Why for instance should I be stigmatized or despised because of my place of origin, place of birth or where I come from? Where I was born, by whom I was born and when I was born were not choices made by me. They were choices and prerogatives of God.

Any antagonism against me on that basis is unfair and is tantamount to fighting against God,

the Creator. Such derogatory attitude and mindset do not build any human institution let alone a nation. While not forgetting the past, let us put the past behind us for it not to continue to mar our present and our future and that of the coming generation. We must rise above primordial animalistic instincts and behaviour. Yes, we are human and higher than animals in the wild. Let us develop national ethos and national characteristics that can take us collectively to the promised.

My dear young men and women, let me assure you that there are only two tribes of people in Nigeria a tribe of good people and a tribe of bad people. You are either a good Nigerian of Igbo extraction, Kanuri extraction, etc, or a bad Nigerian of Yoruba extraction, Ijaw extraction etc.

I will at this juncture want to commend the politicians as they have generally been reasonably civil in their campaigns without making politics as a call to war against opponents.

Genuine and fair competition conveys greater legitimacy in any political rivalry or competition. A situation where people in authority and power assume such positions through foul and despicable means and continue to espouse and act in ways that only engender conflict or war by subverting legitimacy of power and authority does not augur well for the polity and as such, the moral foundation of the government and the society will be terribly weakened.

May God help, save, protect and sustain Nigeria for all Nigerians, for Africa and for the human race. We can only continue to play politics of ethnicity, religion, region and money bags at the peril of our country and to self-destruction. We need selfless, courageous, honest, patriotic, in short, outstanding leadership with character and fear of God beyond what we have had in recent past.

None of the contestants is a saint but when one compares their character, antecedent, their understanding, knowledge, discipline and vitality that they can bring to bear and the great efforts required to stay focused on the job particularly looking at where the country is today and with the experience on the job that I personally had, Peter Obi as a mentee has an edge. Others like all of us have what they can contribute to the new dispensation to liberation, restoration and salvaging of Nigeria collectively.

One other important point to make about Peter is that he is a needle with thread attached to it from North and South and he may not get lost. In other words, he has people who can pull his ears, if and when necessary.

Needless to say, that he has a young and able running mate with clean track record of achievement both in public and private life.

Appendix B

Post-Election Open Letter

An Appeal for Caution and Rectification

February 27, 2023

Nigerian Brothers and Sisters, greetings to you all.

I am constrained to speak at this point.

I crave the indulgence of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency General Muhammadu Buhari, to make this statement because I have had the opportunity to keep him aware of what I know is happening and the danger looming ahead.

ON MANY OCCASIONS IN THE PAST, I HAVE NOT HESITATED TO POINT OUT LACUNAS IN THE ACTION OF THE PRESIDENT AND HIS GOVERNMENT. BUT AS FAR AS THE ELECTION ISSUES ARE CONCERNED, THE PRESIDENT HAS PROVED BEYOND REASONABLE DOUBT THAT HE WILL WANT TO LEAVE A LEGACY OF FREE, FAIR, TRANSPARENT AND CREDIBLE ELECTIONS.

Until last Saturday night, February 25, 2023, the good and noble plan and preparation for the elections seemed to be going well. For the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), a lot of money was spent to introduce Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), and the Server for immediate transmission of results from polling units.

It is no secret that INEC officials, at operational level, have been allegedly compromised to make what should have worked not to work and to revert to manual transmission of results which is manipulated and the results doctored.

The Chairman of INEC may claim ignorance but he cannot fold his hands and do nothing when he knows that election process has been corrupted and most of the results that are brought outside BVAS and Server are not true reflection of the will of Nigerians who have made their individual choice. At this stage, we do not need wittingly or unwittingly to set this country on fire with the greed, irresponsibility and unpatriotic act of those who allegedly gave money to INEC officials for perversion and those who collected the blood money.

Let me appeal to the Chairman of INEC, if his hands are clean, to save Nigeria from the looming danger and disaster which is just waiting to happen. If the Chairman can postpone elections four days to the election, he can do everything to rectify the errors of the last two days – no BVAS, no result to be acceptable; and no uploading through Server, no result to be acceptable.

Whereas BVAS and Servers have been manipulated or rendered inactive, such results must be declared void and inadmissible for election declaration. Chairman INEC, I thought you would use this wonderful opportunity to mend your reputation and character for posterity.

Your Excellency, President Buhari Muhammadu, tension is building up and please let all elections that do not pass the credibility and transparency test be cancelled and be brought

back with areas where elections were disrupted for next Saturday, March 4, 2023, and BVAS and Server officials be changed.

To know which stations or polling units were manipulated, let a Committee of INEC staff and representatives of the four major political parties with the Chairman of the Nigerian Bar Association look into what must be done to have hitch-free elections next Saturday. Mr President, may your plan and hope for leaving a legacy of free, fair, transparent and credible election be realised.

Mr President, please don't let anybody say to you that it does not matter or it is the problem of INEC. On no account should you be seen as part of the collusion or compromise. When the die is cast, it will be your problem as the Chief Executive of the nation. The Chairman of INEC may sneak out of the country or go back to his ivory tower. Your Excellency, thank you for hearing me out.

Compatriot Nigerians, please exercise patience until the wrong is righted. I strongly believe that nobody will toy with the future and fortune of Nigeria at this juncture. Long live Nigeria in peace, security, stability and in the hope for a greater future.