

# THE PRAGMATICS OF NPP PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN PROMISES IN GHANA'S 2008 ELECTIONS

Kofi Agyekum<sup>1</sup>

## *Abstract*

*The paper discusses election campaign promises under Commissives, an aspect of Speech Act Theory, and Political Discourse Analysis (PDA). It considers the importance of context and looks at the social settings that are connected with promises. It examines the semantics, pragmatics and the structure of campaign promises. The paper focuses on the top two of the seventeen aspirants of the then ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) who ran the race for the presidential slot to contest in the 2008 general elections in Ghana. The paper finds that persuasion, rhetoric and commissives are used to influence voters (party delegates).*

**Key Words:** campaign promises, commissives, Political Discourse Analysis (PDA), Media Discourse, persuasion, rhetoric.

## **1.0 Introduction and Background Information: Commissives and Promises**

The NPP, which ruled Ghana from 2001-2008, is an offshoot of the United Party (UP) of the Busia-Dankwa tradition that fought for independence with Kwame Nkrumah's CPP.<sup>1</sup> The NPP was formed in 1992, when Ghana returned to civilian rule after 11 years of military rule, and campaigned for the December 1992 elections.<sup>2</sup> However, the NPP boycotted the parliamentary elections in protest against perceived vote rigging. The NDC thus became almost the only party in parliament, with a few independent and opposition parliamentarians from other parties.

The NPP stayed outside parliament till the 1996 elections, when it lost to the NDC. In the 2000 and 2004 elections, the NPP won both the presidential and the parliamentary elections, with J.A Kufour as the president of Ghana.<sup>3</sup> The NPP had 17 aspirants vying for the presidential slot in the 2008 elections. The party lost power to the NDC in the December 2008 elections.

The two candidates whose campaign promises are the subject of this study belong to the same ideological wing of the NPP that believes in the rule of law and capitalism. The language of their speech indicates that they share a common goal of a better future where there will be jobs,

---

<sup>1</sup> Kofi Agyekum is Professor of Linguistics and Director of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana

where poverty will be eradicated and where there will be development for individuals and the nation.

My interest in campaign promises was heightened by the fact that 17 aspirants of the then ruling NPP of Ghana contested for the position of flag-bearer to lead the party in the 2008 national elections. The rush for the presidency was because President J.A. Kufour was leaving office, and because of his achievements, the aspirants thought that whoever became the NPP flag-bearer could win the 2008 general elections. They embarked on many promises and used rhetoric and persuasive language in their bid to influence the party delegates.

### 1.1 Commissives and Promises

Commissives are speech acts in which the speaker is committed to the truth of the proposition of his utterance and has the intention to perform some posterior action or event (see Leech 1983: 206). Commissive verbs include *promise, vow, swear, offer, volunteer, pledge, contract, bid, bet, accept* and *assure* (see Duranti 1997: 224). A promise (one of the commissives) is a declaration or assurance made to another person. It is a linguistic display of commitment and obligation with respect to a posterior action or event, and must be separated from the fulfilment of the act since not all promises are acted upon (see Duranti 1997: 230). Salgueiro (2010: 221) asserts that “Promises constitutively generate for the speaker an obligation to keep his or her promise, without which obligation no promise is made.” A promise is an illocutionary act of a pledge that affords strong and reasonable grounds for one to confidently expect better results from the promiser (see Wardhaugh 1992:285).

A promise is a communicative event that depicts the reality, sincerity and morality of the speaker. The effect and authenticity of the promise depend upon the credibility, sincerity, trustworthiness and the track record of the promiser’s utterances or behaviour. In the view of Jamieson (1985:142), “A credible communicator can influence acceptance (persuasion), whereas a non-credible communicator can have the reverse effect, he can cause resistance to the contents of his message.” The promiser should be a credible person with a good profile, so that people can trust what he is capable of doing. It is not ideal if one is labelled as always giving

glib promises that cannot be fulfilled. Chilton (2004:32) suggests that in such promises, the intentions are decoupled from capabilities. Every promissory event has a promiser and a promisee, and what connects them is the message or mand.<sup>4</sup> I have proposed the frame below to cater for promises.

Promiser —————> Mand (Message) —————> Promisee

In this frame, the promiser sends a mand in the form of persuasive language to the promisee who accepts or rejects it depending on the pragmatic context, contents and language and the credibility of the promiser. Salgueiro (2010: 217) also posits that “promised future action is beneficial for the receiver and/or is at least believed to be so by the promiser, the receiver, or both.” The perlocutionary effect is meant to be positive and generally beneficial to the promisee. Searle (1969) identified four major rules that govern promise-making, namely (1) the propositional content rule, (2) the preparatory rules, (3) the sincerity rule and (4) the essential rule. They are explained as follows:

- *The propositional content rule:* The promise is uttered only in the context of an utterance, which predicates some Action from the Speaker.
- *The preparatory rules:* The promise is uttered only if the Hearer would prefer the Speaker to perform an Action and the Speaker believes the Hearer would prefer this; and if it is not obvious that the Speaker will perform the Action.
- *The sincerity rule:* The promise is uttered only if the Speaker intends to perform the Action.
- *The essential rule:* The promise counts as an undertaking and an obligation to perform the Action.

A perfect combination of these rules will make promisers achieve their goals. Searle indicates that if these conditions are not met, the speech act is misfired and the felicity conditions are not met. Chilton (2004:31) summarises the conditions for the enactment of promises as follows:

- (a) the utterer makes an assertion about a future event of which s/he is the agent;
- (b) the utterer sincerely intends to execute the event;
- (c) the utterer believes s/he is capable of executing the event;

- (d) the event is not believed to be likely to happen as a matter of course;
- (e) the receiver of the promise desires the event;
- (f) the utterer intends to put her-/himself under an obligation to execute the event.

We see from the above that promises are not easy tasks to be performed, especially political promises whose failure can affect the politician's future votes.

Searle emphasised the illocutionary force and proposed the term 'fit' that expresses the relationship between our words and the real world. Physical things, concrete behaviour, violence and abstract notions are all expressed using language. Our world is fitted to words that are also fitted to the world and there is a strong relationship between the world (reality) and the word (language). Language and the external world are thus interwoven because any description of the real world employs language and language can only function very well within the real world. The words in any language do not have independent meanings unless they are linked to certain contexts that guide their meanings and interpretations.

Mey (1993:132) states that "through the use of words I make the world fit my language and change the world in accordance with my directions as given through the use of language." A person's commissives operate a change in the world by creating an obligation in the speaker. Coulthard (1985:24) posits that "commissives are concerned with altering the world to match the words, but the point is to commit the speaker to acting and it necessarily involves INTENTION." In commissives, the speakers connect the linguistic elements with the social world, and must sincerely abide by the contents in the proposition. Political persuasive language and promises are meant to influence voters in all types of elections.

We have seen that the various quotations from the scholars above tally with the notion of promise that we will see in the data from the two aspirants focused on in this paper. Their speeches and promises echo Ghanaian sociocultural mores. The literature on promises can therefore be appropriately applied to the Ghanaian political situation.

## **1.2. Methodology**

The data for the paper were collected from (1) personal interaction with the two selected presidential aspirants (November 2007), (2) campaign messages of the aspirants that I recorded from their rally grounds, and (3) reports published in selected Ghanaian newspapers between June and November 2007, especially the promises given on the day of the party's congress to elect a flag-bearer. I contacted the two presidential aspirants to cross-check the truthfulness of the reports published in the newspapers and they confirmed the veracity of the information. I also took photographs of the various slogans from the aspirants' billboards; these slogans attracted the attention of the delegates and gave possible views of the candidate (Beard 2000:58). Nana Akufo Addo's promises were captured from his 27-page brochure.

The various texts are analysed under commissives and Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) to see how promises are integrated into PDA. I wanted to find out whether the contestants' promises were just manipulative speeches meant to influence delegates, or whether the aspirants actually meant whatever they said. The speeches reported in the newspapers are examined to ascertain those attributed to the candidates and those that were the newspapers' opinion.

In discussing political campaigns, we will consider the microstructures (the lexical items and the grammatical structures), and the macrostructures (the themes expressed). The macrostructures focus on extra-linguistic social issues referring to what the presidential aspirants want to achieve. In terms of period, utterances made very close to an electioneering period are normally exaggerated to lambast opponents to win the favour of the audience.

## **2. Political Discourse Analysis (PDA)**

Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) considers how discourses on politics are analysed. Political activities cannot exist without the use and manipulation of language (cf. Chilton 2004:6). Language is used to convince people to vote for politicians by incorporating some aspects of speech acts, rhetoric and persuasion. Chilton (2004:8) considers the indispensable role of language in politics and emphasises that political

parties and government agencies employ publicists (“spin doctors”) of various kinds. The publicists’ roles are to control the flow of, and access to information, as well as design and monitor words and phraseologies meant to help their parties and agencies. Politicians use indirection in interacting with the masses.

PDA is based on the language and political ideology of a particular group.<sup>5</sup> Ideology is made up of political or social systems of ideas, values or prescriptions of a group that can organise or legitimize their actions (see Van Dijk 1998:3). In our discussion, language use is influenced by one’s philosophical, cultural, religious, social and political ideology. Political discourse aims at persuading the audience to accept the politician’s ideology, manifesto and programmes, and to identify with him/her (Jucker 1997: 121).

PDA focuses on political discourse such as presidential addresses, parliamentary proceedings, electioneering campaigns, propaganda, political advertisements, political slogans, political speeches, and political talk shows on TV and radio. It centres on texts and talks of professional politicians, such as presidents, prime ministers, members of parliament and various political figures and participants in political communicative practices and events (see Van Dijk 1997:12, 14; Obeng 2002b: 83; Davies 1994).

These participants include voters, pressure groups, demonstrators, political research institutions and NGOs. Obeng (2000:341) posits that “the complete communicative context and text are important in determining whether a text or discourse qualifies as political discourse.” Any communicative event that has a direct political function within the overall political process is a political discourse. In every political discourse there is a *political goal, an action to achieve* that goal and a *process* for achieving it. The politician usually employs some speech acts in the actions and processes involved in achieving these goals.

PDA examines the identity politics of inclusion and exclusion. In the view of Reisigl (2010:251), “Political speeches are most generally speaking, interactional contributions to identity politics and accomplish the two political purposes of inclusion and exclusion.” In campaign promises the speaker uses speech to get people into his camp by using the strategy of inclusion. A speaker could however use violent verbal attacks on and mudslinging against his opponents. However, in this paper, since the contestants were from the

same party and also knew that whoever won the race must be supported by all to win the national elections, they refrained from exclusive strategies. In political campaigns, the goals of the speaker are to mobilise all potential voters, supporters and floating voters, and also snatch voters from the opponents' camp. These goals can be achieved through the use of persuasive language (see Reisigl 2010:253).

A successful politician is an orator with political language full of varied and elaborate persuasive and rhetorical skills that can convince, manipulate and lure potential voters. These strategies are the core of political campaigns (see Duranti 2006:469).<sup>6</sup> These include the use of oratory, politeness, indirection, speech acts and persuasive strategies in public speech meant to create common ground between them and their addressees so as to influence them. Politicians adopt strategies of indirection such as evasion, innuendoes, metaphors, proverbs and circumlocution in political discourse to avert Face threatening acts and avoid conflicts (Obeng 1997:64).

### **3. The Language and Rhetoric of Election Campaign Promises**

This section concentrates on the major linguistic and rhetorical aspects of political discourse. A politician needs to organise and structure the elements of the political discourse logically in terms of the exordium (introduction), narratio and argumentatio (the body, the narration of statements of facts and argumentation); and the peroration (the conclusion). These are meant to enhance his delivery and memory, ensure appropriate style, and achieve rhetoric and the eloquent use of language (see also Reisigl 2010: 253). The style is made up of an elaborate and lengthy repertory of verbal embellishments, ornaments and literary devices. These include metaphors, allegory, irony, personification, ideophones and humour. (see Chilton 1998:689, Prentice and Payne 1994: 33).

A campaign message works effectively when there is a good delivery. In delivery, a politician can add nonverbal cues such as voice control, gestures, facial expressions, physical appearance and costume such as party paraphernalia. The politician needs good memory and psychological techniques for storage of ideas, arrangement, delivery and effective style for free flow of the message (cf. West and Turner 2000:264-268).

Political discourse differs in terms topics, syntax, lexicon and language from other kinds of discourses (see Van Dijk 1997:24). Most political discourses use very formal language in government decisions

and policies, e.g., parliamentary debates, bills, legislation and laws. The most popular structures and features in political discourse are those full of speech acts and rhetoric that help the politician's language to be more functional. They employ commissives and persuasive language that portrays positive pictures to improve the living standards of the people and convince the electorate to vote for them and not their competitors. In doing these, political speakers must support their utterances with evidence, credibility and truth to legitimise their positions and the trust people have in them (cf. Chilton 2004:23).

The main challenges facing politicians is that they must strive to create and maintain a positive value face for themselves and thereby attack the face value of their opponents. They can achieve this through proper manipulation of linguistic and political discourse strategies and the use of propaganda (see Gruber 1993, Obeng 1997: 59).

Political discourse is reflexive, hence most political discourse topics and style of rendition are very predictable; listening to politicians during electioneering campaigns, one can predict, with a high level of precision, what they will say about themselves and their opponents. Campaigners speak positively about themselves, their party's ideologies or their government and their better policies, but they say negative things about their opponents and their policies, and how they worsened or can worsen their people's living conditions. Political aspirants make references to the "negative present" and promise a "positive future" for the electorate if they vote for them. If they are in power, they persuade the masses to resist a change, stick to their existing allegiances, and continue with an established voting pattern. Politicians use such persuasive language to identify the problems that will accrue from voting for their opponents (see Agyekum 2004:63). For instance, in Ghana's 2008 general elections, the then ruling party's (NPP) slogan was *yerekɔ yen anim*, 'we are moving forward', and the NDC's was *yeresesa mu*, 'we are changing for the better'.

Political discourse always hangs on ideological prominence. The term "argumentation fallacies" describes a situation where good policies of opponents are discredited and bad policies of the persuaders are concealed. According to Van Dijk (1997:30), "each argumentative move will follow the overall principle of the Ideological Square of positive self-representation and negative other-representation." This is a polarization phenomenon where good deeds of the speaker are described in detail and

exaggerated, while his/her bad deeds are understated and made brief. On the contrary, the bad deeds of the opponent are generalised to cover all the members of the party while his/her good deeds are personalised. (see also Obeng 2002a:7).<sup>7</sup>

Chilton and Schaffeur (1997) refer to these techniques as legitimisation and delegitimation respectively. Chilton (2004:46) reemphasises that “The techniques used in legitimisation include arguments about voters’ wants, general ideological principles, charismatic leadership, projection, boasting about performance, and positive self-representation.” These are realised through self praise, self apology, self-explanation, self-justification and self-identification as sources of authority, reason, vision and sanity. Deligitimation, the negative representation of the other, is usually achieved through acts of blaming, marginalising, scape-goating, excluding, attacking the moral character of some individuals or group, attacking the communicative cooperation of the other, and attacking the rationality and the sanity of the other (cf. Chilton 2004:47).

#### **4. Media Discourse and NPP Aspirants’ Campaign Promises**

The NPP aspirants engaged in media discourse on TV and on the radio. Peace FM, an Accra radio station, had a programme *Meye ɔmampanin*, ‘I will be president’, where the 17 NPP aspirants were interviewed on their aspirations, vision, mission and achievements. This platform was meant to exhibit the aspirants’ intelligence, knowledge, credibility and objectivity to the masses.

In newspaper reports on campaign promises, there were elements of recontextualisation where certain forms and meanings were shifted for some effect to satisfy the aspirant and also the interest of the newspaper’s reporter. Van Leeuwen & Wodak (1999:96) identify (i) *deletion*, (ii) *rearrangement*, (iii) *substitution* and (iv) *addition* as the major linguistic transformational processes in recontextualising political discourse (cf. Blackledge 2005:121). For instance, in reporting the campaign message of Alan Kyeremateng in section 7.2, the newspaper reporter alternated between direct and reported speeches. This is a clear indication of deletion, substitution and rearrangement. In this transformational and recontextualisation process, the 1SG, I, is substituted with 3SG, he and hence expressions like “*he stated, he added and he explained*”. The first paragraph of Mr. Kyeremateng’s message is in reported speech, so that we have “Mr. Kyeremateng said.....

his...” Rhetorical devices like persuasion, apologies, disclaimers, irony, hyperboles, emphatic expressions, humour and “charismatic” voicing were also employed. Recontextualised political texts are made more powerful and authoritative for positive or negative effects. Implicit items are made explicit; ambiguous expressions are made clearer and the arguments are strengthened.

## 5. Linguistic Analysis of the Excerpts.

The linguistic analysis will first look at the discourse strategies and then consider the pragmatics of the excerpts.

### 5.1 The Discourse Strategies of Campaign Promises

In campaign promises, the politicians speak as if “they are responding” and/or reacting to some challenges from other contestants (see Blackledge 2005:15). This is done through rhetorical questions, analogical expressions, emphatic and qualitative adjectives. In some instances, there are reactions to what they have heard or read from other competitors. We will see these in section 6. For example, in excerpt 1, Nana Addo posited that he was going to pursue a broad based, inclusive and sustainable developmental agenda and effective humane healthcare.

Campaign discourse employs some discourse strategies as recorded by Reisigl and Wodak (2001). These are (a) *referential*, (2) *predicational*, (3) *argumentation*, (4) *perspectivation* and (5) *intensifying and mitigation strategies*. Our discussion will focus on *referential and intensifying and mitigation strategies* since they reflect directly in the data. Let us briefly look at these and how they are employed in the campaign speeches..

**Referential strategies** deal with how persons, names, parties, programmes and policies are linguistically captured in political discourse. The references could be linked to linguistic, cultural, ethnic, occupational, status, religious or gender issues. Kyeremateng used these referential forms in sections 7.2. He remarked

“I believe I am the best candidate, considering my professional and educational background; I have run the most efficient, effective campaign among all the aspirants in this contest.”

The referential strategies depicted the aspirants’ qualities and the display of their worth. Van Dijk (1998) refers to these as **evidentiality** and says they refer to information or knowledge, personal experience and observation of

political parties or politicians and these portray the speaker's credibility. We will notice that both aspirants used these in various ways.

There are discriminatory and derogatory references where selected expressions are foregrounded on egoistic and group levels.<sup>8</sup> There are positive evaluations of the pronouns I, ME, WE, US and OUR that show "in-group allegiance" against negative evaluations of YOU, HE, THEY, YOUR, THEM and THEIR that show "out-group prejudice". These pronouns draw a clear distinction between a politician's group and his opponent's. The choice falls on the political discourse strategy of lexicalisation (see Obeng 2002b:84). Van Dijk (1997:28) refers to this as "**semantic and ideological polarization.**" We often hear "OUR policies were perfect and THEIRS were bad". Politicians normally select only the information helpful to their course and delete information hurtful to them for partisan reasons (see Obeng 2002a:9). The NPP aspirants were very careful and tried to avoid using malicious terms against their own party members and hence minimised the polarisation.

In **predicational strategies**, persons, animals, objects, events, actions and social phenomena are described. These entities are specified in terms of quality, quantity, space, time, etc. for evaluation by using analogical and comparative literary devices. They include metonymy, synecdoche, metaphor, personification and simile (see Beard 2000). We have examples like; (a) *I come from a background where public service is considered a duty, and* (b) *After 30 years in frontline politics...*. These two examples fall under predicated strategy; they describe the background and give information about time.

In **argumentation and perspectivation** strategies, parts of an argumentation are used to represent the common sense reasoning of specific issues. Nana Akufo Addo stressed the argument and the logic for leaving office as follows: "I left office to contest and win the NPP presidential nomination." And why should he win? The logical explanation given by him "is to serve the people of Ghana" because, as he claims, leaders are to serve. Another argument put up by Nana Akufo Addo is as follows: "If a free society cannot help the many poor, it cannot save the few who are rich." This was to support the claim that the nation has to pursue a development agenda that is broad-based, inclusive and sustainable.

Finally, political discourse can employ *intensifying and mitigation strategies*. Mitigation strategies include *I think, I suppose, it seems to me that, it appears that* and *I believe that*. In section 5.1, the aspirant Nana Akufo used the expression “I believe” 17 times. Other structures include the use of questions instead of assertions and the use of mitigating adverbs such as *fairly, quite, possibly, probably* as well as hesitations and false starts. These are non-factive and non-committal strategies where speakers are not so blunt to be wholly accused of malicious utterances (see Blackledge 2005:26). We will examine these in section 6.

## **6. Analysis of Excerpts from the Newspaper and Campaign Brochure**

In this section, we will focus on the two most popular aspirants whose campaign promises were very strong. We will look at the latest promises recorded from the *Daily Graphic* of 22nd December 2007 because they were made a day to the congress for the voting. We will underline the items that are meant for analysis and also examine the major themes of the aspirants’ campaign promises. We will also look at the emphasising and qualitative adjectives and adverbs, the pronouns, the repetitions of certain lexical items and the metaphorical language used. We will further consider the use of direct and indirect speeches as reported by the newspaper and the slogans and catchy phrases of each contestant. All the underlined expressions have been chosen to link our discussions and to illustrate the incorporation of political discourse, speech acts, structure and strategies of promise outlined in section 5 above.

In analysing the language of each contestant, we will be looking at the use of discourse markers. Discourse markers are linguistic expressions used to signal the relation of an utterance to its immediate context. Their primary function is to bring to the listener’s attention a particular kind of linkage between an upcoming utterance and the immediate discourse context (Redeker, 1990). Blakemore (2006:221) posits that, “the term Discourse markers (DM) is generally used to refer to a syntactically heterogeneous class of expressions, which are distinguished by their function in discourse and the kind of meaning they encode.” The most common ones are deixical expressions, including *personal, spatial, temporal, social, and discourse deixes*. Other discourse markers are demonstrative pronouns such as *I, you, here, now, this* and *that*. The rest

are connectives such as *moreover, however, in addition to, nevertheless* and others like *so, but, and, etc.* These discourse markers also mark the management of the information as well as the speaker's attitude to the message s/he is presenting.

The discourse markers operate as indicators at the level of the discourse and mark the relationships between the units and the basic message of the ongoing discourse. They signal the participants, time, space and portions of the discourse, and even the social status of the participants. To analyse a discourse very well, we should rely on the discourse markers that show the connections between the units and also provide the textual unity of the discourse (see Blakemore 2006:222). In the campaign promises, these markers are prevalent. The connection between the discourse markers and the text brings about cohesion and facilitates understanding of the discourse. Let us start with the winner of the contest.

### **6. 1. Nana Akufo-Addo (1096 votes)**

Let us start with a brief political profile of Nana Akufo-Addo. Nana Akufo-Addo was the New Patriotic Party (NPP) Member of Parliament for Abuakwa constituency from 1997-2008. When the NPP came to power in 2001, he was appointed the first Attorney General and Minister for Justice (2001-2003), and later the Minister for Foreign Affairs from April 2003 to July 2007. He was elected the NPP presidential candidate for both the 2008 and 2012 elections but lost to the National Democratic Congress candidates John Evans Atta Mills and John Dramani Mahama respectively. When the Supreme Court ruled against the petition by Nana Akufo-Addo on the 2012 elections, he peacefully accepted the outcome.

Slogan: *Yenim wo firi tete*: 'We know you from time immemorial.'

Nana Akufo-Addo pledged to do everything in his power to work to grow good governance and accelerated economic growth, stressing that "I will not let you down". He asked for the forgiveness of anybody he might have wronged during the heat of the campaign.

#### **Source: A brochure on Nana Akufo-Addo**

I am analysing some excerpts from Nana Akufo Addo's 27-page brochure about himself, the NPP and his aspirations as a politician. My emphasis will be on areas bordering on his campaign promises. He says:

“I left office in order to contest to win the NPP presidential nomination for the singular opportunity to serve the people of Ghana as their next leader. I come from a background where public service is considered a duty, and where privilege and good fortune demand even greater commitment to the common good. Generations of my forbearers and relations established this rich tradition of public service, of which I am proud; it gives me constant inspiration (pg.16).

I am fully aware of the responsibility the job of leadership brings. Crucial to the future is how to unleash energies to broaden the horizon, and to realise the hopes of every man, woman and child in Ghana.

After 30 years in frontline politics, the more I travel around the country canvassing for votes, the more I see the urgency for waging and winning the war against poverty. To achieve social justice for every Ghanaian, whether rural or urban dweller, the only logical step to the next level is to intensify our efforts in pursuing a development agenda that is broad-based, inclusive and sustainable. If a free society cannot help the many poor, it cannot save the few who are rich. All Ghanaians have a right and duty to engage in, and profit from the country’s economic growth.

Thankfully, the NPP has shown through our policies in education, health, youth employment, small loan schemes, etc. that we fully subscribe to the notion that government has a responsibility to provide all its citizens with skills and opportunities to create their own wealth.

There are no short-cuts for Ghana. Only hard work, creativity and a sense of enterprise can produce the accelerated economic development that will bring to all Ghanaians the basic deliverables, including an effective, humane healthcare system, access to a secure and reliable justice system and access to a quality education in Ghana that rivals any in the world.”

Nana Akufo-Addo continued with some of the things he strongly believes in as follows:

“I believe in leading by example. I believe in the cohesive richness and the manifest destiny of this great nation’s diversity. I believe in the can-do spirit of our people. I believe in Ghana. I believe in hard work and in service to the nation. I believe we can defeat mediocrity. We are peace-loving people, who are among the best people of this planet. I believe in Ghana.

I believe in the constitution and the indigenous democratic heritage of Ghana. I believe in the rule of law and justice for all, regardless of status. I believe in rewarding those who play by the rules, and giving credit to high achievers. I believe in freedom, and sense of national responsibility. I believe in competition. But, I also believe in the economic empowerment of the Ghanaian and Ghana's economic operators as a deliberate policy of government. I believe in equal opportunity and a fair deal for everyone. I believe in caring for the vulnerable, in a society that respects everyone. I believe in the Ghanaian, as a leading citizen of an integrated, united Africa; and most of all, I believe in God” (pg.20).

Nana Akufo-Addo continued: “In my mind there are five qualities which delegates should focus on when they choose a presidential candidate and these are:

- (i) Record of Active work for the party
- (ii) Ability to Unite the party
- (iii) Capacity to win the Presidential election
- (iv) Leadership Qualities
- (v) Vision.”

Nana Akufo-Addo elaborated on each of these and claimed as follows:

“I believe that if Government focuses on what it is elected to do, the Ghanaian will be free to go about his or her lawful business. We do not believe in taking power away from the people. We trust that people are capable of managing their own affairs; if only politicians will trust them to do so. The Task ahead is more than just creating jobs. It is about building a competitive economy with a competitive work force. As I see it, the task is also to get Ghana thinking...thinking out of the box...thinking big...and thinking deeply about the little things we do or don't do that hold us back.”

He concluded that:

“I believe I have the confidence in the integrity and wisdom of the delegates to my Party's Congress. Come 22nd December, 2007, the delegates will vote 'one touch' for the candidate who can win the presidential election in December 2008...I hope that the delegates in December will see the leader in me, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. Let me end by wishing all my colleagues who are in the race with me the best of luck. Let the best man win.” (pg 25)

### 6.1.1 Pragmatic Analysis

The analysis under this section is of pragmatics and rhetoric based on topics like deixes, metaphor, referencing, commissives and apology. Nana Akufo Addo's slogan *Yenim wo firi Tete*, 'We know you from time immemorial', is based on his loyalty to the NPP party for a long period. He uses the personal deixis *yɛn*, 'we' to refer to the members of the party. In both 1996 and 1998 he contested with President Kufour and lost; he is thus not a new fish in the sea. He buttresses this with the expressions "After 30 years in frontline politics...." The expressions, "longer period, after 30 years, the NPP, my Party's Congress, our policies, and we", are parts of referential discourse markers of time and social deixes that show his strong commitment and the length of affiliation with the party. The verb 'grow' in the expression grow governance is used metaphorically, derived from the growing of crops which involves care, nurturing and commitment.

He makes a contextual reference to his kinsmen (social deixis) and also uses the personal deixis (I ISG) to refer to himself as the speaker. He says "I come from a background where public service is considered a duty and where privilege and good fortune demand even greater commitment to the common good". This draws attention to his grandparent, J.B Danquah, the founder of the NPP tradition, and to his father who was the president of Ghana from 1969-1972. Nana Akufo-Addo used this narrative strategy and discourse markers to link the past to the present so as to win votes (see Duranti 2006:490).

Nana Akufo-Addo commits himself to the task ahead by saying that "privilege and good fortune demand even greater commitment to the common good." The expressions, "urgency for waging and winning the war against poverty, sense of national responsibility, government has a responsibility", are all allusions to commissives. Poverty is metaphorically conceptualised as an opponent in war; and to wage war and win, requires commitment, proper planning, preparation and strategies. One needs to weigh one's strengths and weaknesses against one's opponent's. Nana Akufo sees the winning of the poverty "war" as an urgent task. War is one of the source domains for political metaphors.

He also employed an indirect expressive speech act of apology by asking for forgiveness from anybody he might have offended in the heat

of the campaign. This borders on the sincerity conditions in speech acts. As a human being, he might have offended someone through utterances or behaviour that might be unacceptable and hence the need to stabilise the social and party relations through an indirect apology (see Agyekum 2006).

Nana Akufo-Addo concentrated his promises on the use of evidentials and factive verbs. In this short piece he uses “I believe” seventeen times. Factive verbs commit the speaker to the truth of the proposition expressed in the clause (see Crystal 1991: 133). This type of repetition, called anaphora, was meant to emphasise the expression “I believe” and thus plant it firmly in the minds of the people. The repetitive use of I believe in several scenarios commits Nana Akufo-Addo to the presidency. The use of the 1SG in I believe is in conformity with the felicity conditions on performative verbs in speech act theory that demands a first person singular subject, I, especially of commissives, and it directs us straight to the speaker who must account for the propositions in his utterances.

Nana Akufo-Addo’s expression I believe is used as a mitigating strategy and is a little milder than other commissives. The verb ‘*believe*’, used consistently, belongs to Rosaldo’s (1982) group of speech acts called “declaratives” which are acts of assertion and comment through which speakers express their beliefs, opinions and feelings.

Nana Akufo-Addo used the word “thinking” in the form of a pun to appeal to Ghanaians to bring their ideas together to develop the country in expressions like:

“the task is also to get Ghana thinking... thinking out of the box... thinking big ... and thinking deeply about the little things we do or don’t do that hold us back.”

In playing with the word “thinking”, Ghana has been personified, and the scope of thinking has been exaggerated with the expressions think big and think deeply. The expression is also considered a metonym in which Ghana stands for the people.

Givon (2002:154) states that the verb “*thinks*” belongs to perception, cognition or utterance (PCU) verbs that indicate a mental state, event or an idea. The mental verb think is put in the form of an appeal to the Ghanaian populace. There is an ellipsis to indicate that certain expressions have been deleted and substituted with others and these are discourse

strategies mentioned in section 5. He also persuaded the delegates by acknowledging the works of the NPP on whose ticket he wanted to run by saying:

“Thankfully, the NPP has shown through our policies in education, health, youth employment, small loan schemes, etc.”

These are part of the macrostructures of PDA. Some ideological expressions and values mentioned in Nana Akufo’s message include: *freedom, sense of national responsibility, competition, economic empowerment, equal opportunity and fair deal for everyone.*

He describes the work of the NPP by using a referential strategy and multiple classifying and qualitative adjectives to identify the class that the concepts belong to. Examples are broad-based, inclusive and sustainable developmental agenda.

He assures them of continuing the policies of the NPP. He respectfully leaves the decision to the delegates by saying “I believe I have the confidence in the integrity and wisdom of the delegates and they will not and cannot make a mistake by not voting for me”. The use of triple negatives in a sequential manner emphasises the appositive notion of trust that he had in them that they will never fail him; and they did vote for him. There was a pronoun shift from “I” (1SG), referring to himself, to “we” (IPL), referring to the party and the tradition. He states as follows:

I believe that if government focuses on what it is elected to do, the Ghanaian will be free to go about his or her lawful business. We do not believe in taking power away from the people. We trust that people are capable of managing their own affairs.

Nana had the slogan “*vote one touch*” that was dubbed from the name of the telecommunication company, Ghana Telecom (now Vodafone) that claimed that its network services were very effective; and to call somebody, you need just to touch your phone set once. An analogy of this in voting was that Nana Akufo-Addo was going to win massively after the first run and there was no need for a second run, hence “one touch”.

## 7. 2. Alan Kyeremateng (738 votes)

**Source: *Daily Graphic*, Dec 22, 2007, page 10 (27/12/07)**

### **I am NPP/s Best- Alan**

Mr. Alan Kyeremateng is a staunch member of the NPP. He was the first runner-up to Nana Akufo-Addo in the NPP presidential race in 2007 and also in 2010. During Kufour's regime Kyeremateng served as the Ghanaian Ambassador to the USA and later as the Minister of Trade and Industry in 2005. Mr. Alan Kyeremateng said if elected, his presidency would focus on industrialization, particularly towards agro-industry, as well as infrastructural development with a focus on energy, water, rail, air and water transport. Mr. Kyeremateng said his agenda would work for the ordinary Ghanaian, create more jobs and put more cash into people's pockets. The value and attraction of that development paradigm was to shift the focus of the NPP's third term in government from the macro-economic stabilization and social development to the production sector of the economy. He said:

“The only way a new President can add value to what the Kufour government has done is to expand the economy through increased production and productivity”.

Mr Kyeremateng said he would enhance the key pillars of government and work to effectively implement the major reforms in the educational sector and the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). “This will help Ghana to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) relating to health and education,” he stated.

“I believe I am the best candidate, considering my professional and educational background, career exposure and track record, to lead this new development agenda. The combination of skill and expertise that I have acquired gives me a unique solid foundation to lead Ghana's march to become a middle income country and usher in a period of prosperity;” he added.

“I have run the most efficient, effective campaign among all the aspirants in this contest. The success of my campaign has been based on effective strategy, robust and efficient field machinery, a good quality message that appeals to the rank and file of the party and the nation at large, as well as effective resource mobilisation and development,” he explained.

“To have developed a brand, “**Jobs and income for the people**”, and effectively communicated such a brand to become a household name, is in itself a remarkable achievement and a testimony to my ability to lead NPP to victory in 2008,” he added.

### 7.2.1 Pragmatic Analysis

We are analysing Kyeremateng’s speech as reported by the newspaper. I consulted him later and he confirmed that it was a true reflection of what he said. The reporter used both reported (indirect) and direct speech, with an interplay between 1SG, I, and 3SG, He. Examples are:

1. 1SG:

(a) “the major thrust of my presidency would focus on industrialization with emphasis on agro-industry,”

(b). “I believe I am the best candidate, considering my professional and educational background.”

These are referential and predicational strategies discussed in section 5. Kyeremateng seems to be answering the question “who is the best candidate among the aspirants from an unseen questioner?”

His major themes hinge on social and economic issues. These include *industrialization, agro-industry and infrastructural development; energy, water, rail, air and water transport; creation of more jobs and putting more cash into people’s pockets; increased production and productivity; reforms in education and the national Health Insurance Scheme*. These themes were captured by using qualitative, classifying and emphasising adjectives and adverbs to depict his credibility. His slogan on jobs and cash was:

**Slogan:**       Jobs for the People  
                    Cash for the people.

On his billboards was the inscription,

- Alan K. for the New Ghana.
- The nation builder with a Mission to Deliver Jobs & Cash to the people.

He was therefore nicknamed Alan Cash.

The noun phrases have been put together in parallel structures and they can be well interpreted using implicature. Kyeremateng meant that there were no jobs for the people and he would create jobs and thus put cash in the pockets of the people. He was making a direct analogy between jobs and cash; between the people's emotions of desperation for lack of jobs and cash and a future state of more income with joy.

The emphasising and superlative qualitative adjectives and their collocated nouns are: (1) more jobs, (2) more cash, (3) the best candidate, (4) unique solid foundation, (5) most efficient, effective campaign, (6) increased production and productivity, (7) effective strategy, (8) robust and efficient field machinery, (9) good quality message, (10) effective resource mobilisation and (11) remarkable achievement. The emphasising and classifying adjectives were pragmatically used to convince the people to focus on him and not on the others.

He also used the following manner adverbial constructions. (1) effectively implement and (2) effectively communicated, to indicate his approach to events. The most frequent emphasising adjective and adverb is "effective/effectively" and it was used five times. The repetition of effective and effectively is meant to foreground his major theme on development. He also employed the comparative and superlative forms of qualitative adjectives like more and most, and described himself as the best candidate with the most effective campaign. These expressions are discourse markers that indicate the attitude of the speaker towards the content of his message.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, we have discussed how two top NPP aspirants incorporated rhetorical devices of indirection and commissives into political discourse to articulate their campaign promises. We have looked at the interface between language and politics. We have noted that political intentions can best be realized through the proper use of persuasive language and strategies in Political Discourse Analysis that are meant to influence the audience. We treated campaign promises under commissives and PDA. In the aspirants' texts, they promise and commit themselves to a posterior event, namely voting by the party's delegates. We paid attention to the lexicon, syntax, semantics, and literary devices used in the campaign messages.

We have analysed their campaign promises by looking at the major themes of each aspirant. We realised that each aspirant expressed some sense of high confidence and commitment and claimed to be a better candidate than the others. We noted that promises are aspects of commissives that bind speakers to better posterior actions, events and results. Each aspirant said he was highly committed to the party, to the nation and to the masses, and this was expressed by the use of commissives and discourse strategies. These strategies are reflected in the constant use of qualitative, emphasising and classifying adjectives, intensified adverbs, nouns and mitigating persuasive expressions.

We have seen that both aspirants used positive self-impression and representation of themselves in an effort to positively appeal to the emotions of the electorate (see Chilton 2004 chapter 4). The major difference between the polarisation of these aspirants and what we meet in other political discourse is that the contest was among members of the same party. The aspirants therefore chose the right political discourse strategies to avoid being offensive to one another. They knew that all of them were going to rally behind the winner to contest against the other parties and any mudslinging would affect them negatively. That is why negative strategies like innuendo, invectives and name-calling were avoided. Both resorted to persuasion and performative verbs and hammered on what they could do best to convince delegates for their votes. Each aspirant had catchy slogans that were easy to memorise and were used frequently. These slogans became household names and thus contributed to the political popularity of the aspirants.

This paper has revealed that research in pragmatics and discourse can be carried out using both primary and secondary sources. We have seen that the context and social settings are very crucial and connected with campaign promises. To understand politicians, their behaviour and speech very well, we should be well informed about the context of their discourse.

## References

- Agyekum, K. (2004). Aspects of persuasion in Akan communication. *International Journal of Language and Communication RASK*, 21, 63-96.
- Akufo-Addo, N. A. D. (2007). *Taking Ghana to the next level*. Accra: Danquah Institute Press.
- Beard, A. (2000). *The language of politics*. London: Routledge.
- Blackledge, A. (2005). *Discourse and power in a multilingual world*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishers.
- Blakemore, D. (2006). Discourse markers. In L.R Horn and G. Ward (Eds.). *The handbook of pragmatics* (pp.221-265). Malden: Blackwell Publishers.
- Blommaert, J. (1997). Introduction: Language and politics, language politics and political linguistics. In J. Blommaert & C. Bulcaen (Eds.) *Political Linguistics: Belgian Journal of Linguistics*, 11, 1-10. Amsterdam. John Benjamins Publishing
- Chilton, P.A. and Schäffner, C. (1997). Discourse and politics. In T. van Dijk (Ed.). *Discourse as social interaction* (pp. 206-230). London: Sage.
- Chilton, P. A. (1998). 'Politics and language.' In L. J. Mey (Ed.). *The Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics* (pp. 668-695). Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Chilton, P. A. (2004). *Analysing political discourse: Theory and practice*. London; Routledge.
- Coulthard, M. (1985). *An introduction to discourse analysis*. London: Longman Group Ltd. New Edition.
- Crystal, D. (1991). *A Dictionary of linguistics and phonetics* 3rd edition. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Davies, A. (1994). Politicised language. In R. E. Asher and J. M. Y. Simpson (Eds.). *The encyclopaedia of language and linguistics*. Vol. 6 (pp. 3212-3214). Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Duranti, A (1997). *Linguistic anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Duranti, A. (2006). Narrating the political self in a campaign for U.S. Congress. *Language in Society* 35, 467-497.

Givon, T. (2001). *Syntax: An introduction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Gruber, H. (1993). Political language and textual vagueness. *Pragmatics* 3,1,1-28.

Jamieson, G. H. (1985). *Communication and persuasion*. London: Croom Helm.

Jucker, A. H. (1997). Persuasion by inference: An analysis of a party political broadcast. In J. Blommaert & C. Bulcaen (Eds.) *Political Linguistics: Belgian Journal of Linguistics*, 11-1997,121-137. Amsterdam. John Benjamins Publishing.

Leech, G. N. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. New York: Longman Group Ltd.

Mey, J. L. (1993). *Pragmatics: An introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Obeng, S. G. (1997). Language and politics: Indirectness in political discourse. *Discourse and Society*, 8 (1), 49-83.

Obeng, S. G. (2000). 'Doing politics on walls and doors: A sociolinguistics analysis of graffiti in Legon (Ghana). *Multilingua*, 19 (4), 337-365.

Obeng, S.G. (2002a). 'The language of politics.' In S.G. Obeng and B. Hartford (Eds.). *Surviving through obliqueness: language of politics in emerging democracies*. (pp. 1-18). New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Obeng, S.G (2002b). Metaphors in Ghanaian political communication.' In S.G. Obeng and B. Hartford (Eds.). *Surviving through obliqueness: language of politics in emerging democracies* (pp. 83-112). New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Prentice, D. and Payne, J. (1989). *Public speaking today*. Illinois Lincolnwood National Textbook Company.

- Redeker, G. (1990). Ideational and pragmatic markers of discourse structure. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 14, 367-381.
- Reisigl, M. (2010). Rhetoric of political speeches. In R. Wodak and V.a Koller (Eds.). *Handbook of communication in the public sphere* (pp.243-269). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Reisigl, M. & Wodak, R. (2001). *Discourse and discrimination: Rhetorics of racism and anti-Semitism*. London: Routledge.
- Rosaldo, M. Z. (1982). The things we do with words: Ilongot speech acts and speech act theory in philosophy. *Language in Society* 11, 203-237.
- Salgueiro, A. B. (2010). Promises, threats, and the foundations of speech act theory. *Pragmatics* 20,2, 213-228.
- Searle, J. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1997). 'What is political discourse analysis?' In Jan Blommaert and Chris Bulcaen (eds.) *Political Linguistics: Belgian Journal of Linguistics* 11-1997, Pp 11-41.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. London: Saga Publications.
- Van Leeuwen, T. & Wodak, R. (1999). Legitimizing immigration control: A discourse historical analysis. *Discourse Studies*, 1,1, 83-118.
- Wardhaugh, R. (1992). *Introduction to sociolinguistics*. 2nd Edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- West R. & Turner, L. H. (2000). *Introducing communication theory analysis and application*. California: Mayfield Publishing Company.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Nkumah's government was toppled by the 1966 military coup and that ended the first republic. The United Party (UP) was later named the Progress Party. It won the 1979 election and Dr K. A. Busia became the Prime Minister of Ghana from 1969-1972. His government was toppled by the military government of General Kutu Acheampong. In 1979, when the ban on political parties was lifted for the return to a civilian regime, the Dankwa-Busia tradition formed the Popular Front Party (PFP) but lost narrowly to the People's National Party (PNP), an offshoot of the CPP. The Dankwa-Busia tradition sat on the fence from 1981 till 1992 when the country returned to civilian rule and they formed the New Patriotic Party (NPP) that campaigned for the December 1992 elections. They however won the 2000 and 2004 elections, and ruled the country from 2001-2008.

<sup>2</sup> The National Democratic Congress (NDC) was formed in 1992 as an offshoot of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) military regime. The PNDC overthrew the People's National Party (PNP, an Nkrumaist party) that ruled Ghana from 1979 to 1981. The PNDC regime under Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings ruled Ghana from 1981-1992. When the ban on political parties was lifted, the PNDC metamorphosed into the National Democratic Congress (NDC). The NDC won both the 1992 and 1996 elections with J.J Rawlings as the president of Ghana. It lost the 2000 and 2004 elections to the NPP and regained power in the 2008 elections.

<sup>3</sup> The NPP is a capitalist party that believes in privatisation, the rule of law and democracy. The NPP has its stronghold in the Akan areas, namely the Ashanti, Eastern, Brong Ahafo, Western and Central Regions. It is less popular in the Volta, Northern, Upper-East and Upper West Regions of Ghana, which are the stronghold of the NDC.

<sup>4</sup> The promiser is the one that promises and the promisee is the recipient of the promise.

<sup>5</sup> Blommaert (1997:3) posits that "Language ideologies or ideologies of language are shared perceptions of what a language is, what it is made

up of, what purpose it serves, and how it should be used.” The ideology, policies and the direction of a particular presidential aspirant are realised through the frequent use of particular ideological terms like “*freedom*”, “*peace*”, “*democracy*”, “*corruption*” “*indiscipline*” and “*economy*”.

<sup>6</sup> Political language refers to the terminology, slogans, rhetorics and discourse of political activities of politicians and their supporters (see Davies 1994:3212).

<sup>7</sup> In the 2008 elections, the opposition NDC described the NPP as a cocaine and narcotics party just because an NPP parliamentary candidate called Eric Amoateng had been arrested in the US for cocaine trafficking.

<sup>8</sup> These are portrayed in generic terms in which, for example, the positive value of an individual is attributed to all the members of the group whilst the vices of an individual from the other side are used to denigrate all the members of that group.