A Pragma-Stylistic Study of George Manneh Weah's Defeat Acceptance Speech

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Abstract: *This paper analyses the pragma-stylistic features that the president of Liberia Dr George Manneh Weah deploys in his defeat acceptance speech he delivered on November 14th, 2023, in Monrovia, Liberia. Drawing its theoretical insights from Pragma-stylistics and the descriptive mixed-method research design, the study specifically examines how the speaker deploys such pragmatic features as speech acts, conversational implicatures, presuppositions, deixis and tropes to produce stylistic effects in his speech. The findings reveal that the speaker uses in total 31 utterances to encode his message. Out of the 31 utterances, representatives and directives come first with a count of 11 utterances each (i.e. 35.48%). They are followed by expressive speech acts which figure 7 times (i.e. 22.58%) in the speech. Commissive speech acts rank last with only 2 utterances representing 6.45%. The analysis also exudes that the speaker deploys, in varying proportions, person, spatial, temporal, social and discourse deixis. The dominant type is person deixis. Again, the study shows that the speaker employs a significant number of presuppositions and implicatures in his speech. It indicates too that he uses tropes like neologism, personification, hyperbole, paradox, synesthesia, alliteration, assonance, rhyme, repetition, anastrophe and parallelism. The study concludes that the speaker deploys the aforementioned pragma-stylistic features to accept his defeat and call his fellow citizens and partisans to accept this with a view to preserving peace, unity, and patriotism in post-electoral Liberia.*

Keywords: *Defeat acceptance speech, Dr George Manneh Weah, pragma-stylistic features, stylistic effects*

1. INTRODUCTION

Pragma-stylistics or Pragmatic stylistics is part of the manifestations of Linguistics Stylistics in particular and Applied Linguistics at large. It is the variety of Stylistics that shows the meeting point between Pragmatics and Stylistics (Barakhas and Khlil, 2021). This is to say, Pragma-stylistics deals with how pragmatic resources such as speech acts, (im)politeness, implicatures, presuppositions among others can be employed to achieve stylistic effects. Scholars have demonstrated that the objective of pragmatics is to show how users of any language can use the sentences obtainable in such a language to convey messages which are not directly or explicitly shown in the propositional content of the sentences. Stylistics actually shares some qualities with pragmatics and this is said to have strengthened their partnership. For instance, both Pragmatics and Stylistics are interested in (the study of) language features that are beyond the sentence boundary. Human beings in their communicative endeavours, more often than not, apply some discourse strategies in order to say what they want to say in a clear, precise, concise and intelligible way. It is these strategies that scholars of Stylistics and Pragmatics and other branches of Linguistics strive to unravel. Therefore, in this paper, the analysis focuses on Dr George Manneh Weah's defeat acceptance speech which he delivered on November 14th, 2023 using Pragma-stylistics as a theoretical framework.

Dr George Manneh Weah is the former President of the Republic of Liberia who ruled the country from 2016 to 2023. He vied for the position a second time but was unfortunately defeated by Ambassador Joseph N. Boakai. So, he made this speech to accept his defeat and urge his fellow Liberians to do likewise. His speech can also be seen as a call for peace in a Liberia that had suffered many years of war and conflict in the past. President Weah actually understands that peace is the

backbone of every human development because without peace nothing can be achieved in this world. In this perspective, we presuppose that he employs language to encode both his intention and distinctive style in his speech. This study intends to examine the speech to find out the pragma-stylistic features the speaker deploys therein to encode stylistic effects. It seeks to answer the following questions:

i.   What pragma-stylistic features does President Weah deploy in his speech?

ii. To what extent do these features help him achieve his intended goal and produce stylistic effects?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There exists a fairly increasing body of works which have applied Pragma-stylistics. These works include Muhammed, Hasson and Thalab (2022), Barakhas and Khlil (2021), Chinelo (2015), Shafiq (2019), Amoussou, Allagbé and Zounhin Toboula (2024) and Ibrahim and Waheeb (2017). Muhammed, Hasson and Thalab (2022), for instance, investigate how educated Iraqi parents deploy pragma-stylistic devices to instruct their children. The study analyses the dominant speech acts and the politeness strategies inherent in the data. A questionnaire of ten different scenarios concerning some basic daily instructions that are often likely to be given to sons or daughters who are between the age of 12 to 16 was delivered to Iraqi parents who are English graduates. The study finds out that educated Iraqi parents prefer the indirect way of giving instructions to their teens concerning the daily practices regardless of the importance of these instructions in life while they use speech acts of advising when giving daily instructions to their teens. Direct instructions are rare and if found, they are softened with polite expressions.

Unlike the foregoing, Chinelo (2015) investigates newspaper headlines to unveil how the use of speech act ambiguity serves as a pragma-stylistic strategy that editors utilise to provoke inquisitiveness and interest in the reader to read the main story. The scholar also interrogates the pragmatic considerations that guide editors into choosing such ambiguous speech acts as headlines in four Nigerian national dailies. The findings show that editors often allow two or more speech acts to run concurrently in one headline to arouse the reader's interest. The choice between ambiguous and unambiguous speech acts in a headline is often shaped by the mood of the story, writers' communicative goals and socio-linguistic considerations. The equivocation enables the writer to exonerate him/herself from taking a definite stance on the subject-matter and allows the reader to isolate the relevant illocutionary force based on the reader's pragmatic competence. The study concludes that the use of ambiguous speech acts in newspaper headlines may be a stylistic device to spark off the reader's interest, inducing him or her to read deeper and more critically. The writer's expectation, if met, can be interpreted as the perlocutionary effect of the headline on the reader.

In the same vein, Amoussou, Allagbé and Zounhin Toboula (2024) explore the pragmatic and stylistic resources Nigeria's newly elected president, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, deploys in his inaugural speech delivered on May 29th, 2023, at the Eagle Square, Abuja. Drawing on Pragma-stylistics, the study specifically examines such features as speech acts, tenses, deictic expressions and tropes encoded in the speech. The findings show that the speaker employs, in varying proportions, four out of the five illocutionary acts: representatives, expressives, commissives and directives. They also indicate that the speaker deploys the simple present, present perfect, simple past and imperative tenses. Again, the findings exude that the speaker uses person, temporal, spatial, discourse and social deictic expressions in his speech. They prove too that he employs such pragma-rhetorical features as parallelism, hyperbole, metaphor, personification, alliteration, assonance, gradation, synonymy and antonymy therein. The scholars conclude that the speaker deploys all the aforementioned features for ideological purposes in order to (i) restore Nigerians' trust and faith in his forthcoming governance, (ii) persuade the audience, and overall (iii) manage his message for effective communication.

As for Shafiq (2019) and Barakhas and Khlil (2021), they use Pragma-stylistics to investigate poems. Shafiq, on the one hand, compares two different translations of Bulleh Shah's poem entitled 'Ilmon Bus Kren, O Yaar' so as to evaluate how the translators: Taufiq Rafat and R. A. Nicholson deployed pragma-stylistic devices in translating the poem. The findings reveal that Rafat mainly sticks to sense-for-sense translation, whereas Nicholson translates word-for-word using parallelism as a device to make the translation correspond to the original poem. Barakhas and Khlil (2021) on the other hand, apply pragmatic theories like speech acts, cooperative principles and deixis to find out the style of two

poets namely: Lowell and Snodgrass, who write confessional poems. The study reports that representative speech acts are performed more than other types, most of Grice's maxims are flouted, but the quantity maxim is the most flouted by both poets. The findings also exude that both poets use person deixis more than other types.

Drawing insights from Pragma-stylistics, Ibrahim and Waheeb (2017) examine the role of hybrid speech acts in understanding dramatic texts, most especially the stylistic effects of such speech acts and their implications in conveying the theme of the play and the intentions of the characters therein. After analysing eight extracts from Harold Pinter's Plays: A Night Out and The Birthday party, the study finds out that speech acts are grouped into a systematic combination depending on the purpose of the speaker or the playwright. Direct speech act is the most decisive aspect of the combination of some hybrid speech acts. The pragma-stylistic analysis of hybrid (SAs) also reveals the importance of these speech acts in conveying the intended message of the dramatist through the contextual details offered about by the characters and events. These details can secure a proper interpretation of the socio-psychological relationships between the characters and the audience of the play.

From the above reviewed works, it is clear that Pragma-stylistics has been applied to a multitude of text-types (literary and non-literary) including parents' instructions to their teens, newspaper headlines, political discourse, poems and plays. Although the current study applies Pragma-stylistics like the preceding works, it differs from them in that it applies it to a new corpus, a defeat acceptance speech delivered by President Dr George Manneh Weah on November 14, 2023 in Monrovia, Liberia.

Conceptual Clarification

This section clarifies the following concepts: pragma-stylistics, speech act, deixis, presupposition, conversational implicature and trope.

Pragma-stylistics

The discipline of Stylistics has enjoyed striking advances in the past few decades. One of its outstanding growths is its interdisciplinary nature that has granted it the potential of partnering with some major fields such as Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics, Literary Criticism, Error Analysis among others (Ufot, 2013). In the current study, the major concern is the partnership between Stylistics and Pragmatics. It has been established above that Pragmatic stylistics or Pragma-stylistics is one of the branches of Stylistics. It is the stylistic study of language with pragmatic components. Some scholars like Simpson (2011) are of the view that Pragmatics is one of the seven stylistic levels of language analysis. Others view Pragma-stylistics as a branch of Stylistics that has its origin around the 1960s and emerges as an essential approach to language (written or spoken) study because of the need to understand meaning aesthetically and contextually (Muhammed, Hasson and Thalab, 2022). Simply put, Pragma-stylistics is a discipline that aims at applying pragmatic theories to explain the way language is used in context or how a language user creates powerful structures to communicate his/her views (Mubarak and Abd-Aun, 2019). For Huang (2012), Pragma-stylistics is the application of the findings and methodologies of Theoretical Pragmatics to the study of the concept of Style.

From the above definitions, it is obvious that Pragma-stylistics is an offspring of Stylistics which is the scientific study of Style. Defining the concept of Style is not an easy task. Many scholars have approached it from numerous angles. Crystal and Davy (2013), for instance, have proposed four major definitions of the term 'style'. First, they believe that Style may refer to some or all of the language habits of one person as everybody has his/her own way of expressing him/herself. Second, Style may also refer to the language habits of a group of people at one time or over a period of time. Third, Style can be used to the effectiveness of someone's mode of expression. This implies making value judgment about somebody's oral or written performance so as to show that the person has said "the right thing in the right way" or he/she has "good manners". Crystal and Davy's fourth meaning of Style, also considered as the most widespread use of the term, refers solely to the literary language where such qualifications as aesthetic, good, or beautiful writing can be found. As for Semino (2011), Style is the results of patterns of choice at different linguistic levels that may be characteristic of a text, the oeuvre of an author, a genre, etc. In the same vein, Leech and Short (2007, p. 9) define Style as the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a given purpose and so on and so forth. In this study, Leech and Short's definition seems to capture more what the researchers intend to do; i.e. to examine how President Weah uses language in an electoral context for the purpose

of calling his fellow citizens to accept the results of the elections. To achieve his goal, Weah makes use of a lot pragmatic resources such as speech acts, presuppositions, deixis, conversational implicatures and tropes. This explains the use of the compound term 'pragma-stylistics' as it helps to encapsulate more the aim of the current study. The next section clarifies the concept of speech act.

Speech Act

The concept of speech act is a pragmatic theory that studies how words are used not only to present information but also to carry out actions (Ibraheem and Waheeb, 2017). The speech act theory was introduced by the Oxford philosopher John Langshaw Austin in *How to Do Things with Words* (1962). The theory considers the degree to which utterances are said to perform locutionary acts (the actual utterances produced by the speaker), illocutionary acts (the real intended meaning of the utterance), and/or perlocutionary acts (the actual effect of the utterance). The speech act theory has been modified and developed by the American philosopher John Rogers Searle (1969) in his influential book entitled *Speech Act* (Verschueren, 1999). Black (2006) highlights five types of speech acts. They are: Representatives which are speech acts in which the speaker presents his/her views on how she/he understands the world. Expressives unveil the speaker's attitude such as congratulating, condoling and or expressing pleasure. They have a strong interpersonal function. Directives are essentially commands and they are used when the speaker is trying to get hearers do what is said in the proposition. Commisives direct the hearer to a future course of action. They include promises, threats, etc.; all depend on how the hearer is affected by the speech act. And finally, Declarations denote a unique form of speech act, in that their successful performance depends upon the status of the speaker, and the precise circumstances surrounding the event. They are institutionalised in society. Declarations include sacking a worker, performing a marriage, and sentencing a criminal. The researchers adopt Black's speech act theory in conducting the analysis.

Deixis

Deixis or deictic expressions help to establish deictic roles which derive from the fact that in normal language behaviour the speaker addresses his/her utterance to another person and may refer to him/herself, or to a certain place (Song, 2010). This makes the context of the utterance very central in the interpretation of deictic expressions (Barakhas and Khlil, 2021). According to Levinson (1983, p. 54), deixis means "pointing or indicating" while Yule (1969, p. 9) views deixis as a Greek term that is used to refer to "pointing in language". Barakhas and Khlil (2021) differentiate between proximal and distal deictic expressions. Proximal deictic expressions which are used to show proximity to the speaker include such expressions as *here*, *now* and *this*, while distal deictic expressions, as the term indicates, which mean away from the speaker are indicated by terms like *there*, *then* and *that*.

Yule (1996) states that there are three types of deixis: person, place and time. However, Levinson (1983 quoted in Archer, Aijmer and Wichmann (2012, p. 27)) goes further by proposing five categories of deixis: person, spatial, temporal, social and discourse. Person deixis refers to the people involved in a conversation. These are manifested in personal pronouns like *I, you, he, she, him, yourself, myself*, etc., and possessive adjectives such as *my, her, his*, etc. Spatial deixis includes words that denote a position or location in relation to the speaker. Spatial deictic expressions precisely consist of adverbs (here, there), verbs of motion (come, go), demonstratives (that, those, this), and specific locations (in, on). Temporal deixis refers to the time of the speaker's utterance and it includes such expressions as now, then, next year, this month, etc., as well as verb tenses as past, present, future etc. Social deixis encodes the relationship between the speaker, the addressee, and others. Levinson (1983) differentiates between two types of social deixis: the absolute expressions like Mr, Mrs and Miss, and the relational expressions like kinship terms which are determined by the relationship between the speaker, the addressee, and bystander. (Archer et al., 2012, p. 27). Finally, discourse deixis is used to indicate a prior or upcoming part of the discourse and it is encoded in such expressions as *besides*, *moreover*, *also*, etc. In this study, Levinson's model of deixis is applied to Weah's defeat acceptance's speech.

Presupposition

Analysing every bit of conversation between two or more interlocutors will reveal and prove the complexity of human language and communication. Language performs the vital role of communicating people's ideas and maintaining the social bond amongst them (Mey, 1995, p. 3 quoted

in Al-Sheikh and Lazim, 2017). While people use language in their daily interactions, there are many parameters that interplay to give a successful conversation and comprehension at large. The concept of presupposition is one of such parameters. Allagbé and Amousou (2023, p. 204) believe that in every conversation, the speaker and hearer usually share in common some background assumptions about the content of discussion. Those background assumptions which precede the talk help the interactants to economise their words (Grundy, 2000 quoted in Allagbé and Amoussou (2023)). It is these shared assumptions that are referred to as presuppositions. In the same vein, Stanalker (1974, quoted in Saeed, 2003, p. 104) defines presuppositions as part of the set of assumptions made by participants in a conversation which he labels as the common ground.

According to Saeed (2003, p. 98) there are two approaches to presupposition: pragmatic and semantic. In semantic presupposition, sentences or utterances are seen as external objects and their meaning as an attribute of such utterances. In other words, the process of producing utterances or the participants producing them are less important than the utterances they construct. On the other hand, pragmatic presupposition views sentences as utterances of individuals engaged in a communication act. In this approach, presupposition can either be seen as part of the task of packaging an utterance by a speaker or as one of the numerous inferences that a listener might make on the basis of what a speaker has just said. In this study, it is the second approach to presupposition that is adopted.

Conversational Implicature

According to Saeed (2003, p. 210), the term 'conversational implicature' was introduced by the philosopher Herbert Paul Grice around the mid-70s to the late 80s who proposed an approach to the speaker's and hearer's cooperative use of inference. Likewise, Black (2006, p. 26) holds that conversational implicatures arise from a combination of language and situation because every utterance must be interpreted taking the context into consideration. For Saeed (2003), the same utterance on different occasions might not generate an implicature, or might suggest a different one. In clearer terms, conversational implicatures suggest that every utterance might or should have an implied meaning and interpreting an implicature is partly the responsibility of the hearer, as well as being encouraged by the encoder of the message (Leech, 1983 quoted in Black, 2006, p. 27). Grice states that in every conversation between two or more interlocutors, there is a communicative principle that has to be respected for people's utterances to have "natural" meaning (Allagbé and Amoussou, 2023, p. 205). This is what he labels 'cooperative principle' which comprises four maxims:

i. **Maxim of Quantity**

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).

2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

ii. **Maxim of Quality**

Try to make your contribution one that is true.

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.

2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

iii. **Maxim of Relation**

Be relevant.

iv. **Maxim Of Manner**

Be perspicuous.
1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief.
4. Be orderly (Black, 2006, pp. 23-24).

Grice further avers that when people flout these maxims in their conversations, they make their utterances have non-natural or non-conventional meaning. It is this non-natural meaning that is referred to as "implicature" (Allagbé and Amoussou, 2023, p. 204).

Trope

Tropes are generally defined as rhetorical figures of speech that have long been used by writers and rhetoricians to create specific stylistic effects in texts. In other words, they are figures of speech in which words are used in non-literal ways; i.e. words and phrases function symbolically to evoke meanings and ideas (Oswick, Putnam and Keenoy, 2004, p. 105). According to Runjic-Stoilova (2016, p. 23), figures of speech do not tell us more than their non-figurative correlates but they tell us something in a more alive, more charming and more refined way. Figures of speech are just semantically equivalent substitutions for simple words. This is in line with Harris (2023, p. 227) who views tropes as stylistic acts of conceptual salience that foreground meaning in marked ways, most frequently by redirecting the entrenched (literal) expectations of lexical semantics. In clearer terms, a trope is a figure of speech that says one thing while artistically and imaginatively implies another (Amoussou et al., 2024, p. 43). Tropes have such a powerful persuasive thrust in that they "can crystalize a moment in a text—an argument, a poem, a conversation—to make its claims or its themes more compelling and memorable" (Harris, ibid.). This entails that, rhetorical tropes can be employed not only in literary texts such as poems, proses and plays but also in non-literary endeavours such as newspapers, speeches and everyday conversations among others. Before applying the aforementioned pragmatic theories to President's George Weah's defeat acceptance speech, it is important to state the methodology this study employs.

3. METHODOLOGY

The corpus for this study is the complete speech delivered by President George Weah that was downloaded from https://businessday.ng/opinion/article/george-weah-concedes-defeats-to-boakai-full-speech/ on November 14th, 2023. President Weah gave the speech to call his fellow citizens and party members to accept the results of the presidential elections out of which Ambassador Joseph Boakai emerged as a winner. The speech is analysed using the descriptive mixed-method research design in order to highlight, quantify and explain the pragma-stylistic features deployed by the president to appeal to his fellow citizens, urging them to accept the results of the elections. The pragmatic features like speech acts, presuppositions, deixis, conversational implicatures and tropes have been identified and explained in context so as to show how Weah uses language to convince and persuade his fellow citizens to cultivate peace rather than post-electoral conflict in a Liberia that is dear to all of them. However, only the speech acts have been quantified. Due to space limitations, the full speech is not given here.

3.1. Analysis of the Speech and Discussion of the Findings

The analysis of the speech starts with the identification of speech acts.

3.1.1. Analysis of Speech Acts

The speech acts used by President Weah in his speech are given in Table 1 below:

Table1. *Distribution of speech acts in the speech.*

Speech acts	Representatives	Expressives	Directives	Commissives	Declarations
Utterances	1; 3; 4; 5; 9; 11; 15; 16; 25; 26; 28.	6; 2; 12; 14; 19; 20; 31.	8; 7; 10; 17; 18; 21; 22; 24; 27; 29; 30.	23; 13.	-
Total and percentage	**11 (35.48%)**	**7 (22.58%)**	**11 (35.48%)**	**2 (6.45%)**	**0 (0.00%)**

From the above table, it is clear that the speaker uses four out of the five types of speech act in his speech. The speech acts used include representatives, expressives, directives and commissives. As it appears, the speaker does not make use of declarations in his speech. Declarations, as abovementioned, are a unique form of speech act, in that their successful performance depends upon the status of the speaker, and the precise circumstances surrounding the event. They are institutionalised in society. Declarations include sacking a worker, performing a marriage, and sentencing a criminal (Allagbé and Amoussou, 2023, p. 23). Table 1 also shows that the speaker employs in total 31 utterances to encode his message. Out of the 31 utterances, representatives and directives rank first with a count of 11 utterances (35.48%) each. They are followed by expressive

speech acts which figure 7 times (22.58%) in his speech. Commissive speech acts rank last with only 2 utterances representing 6.45%.

Contextually, the speaker uses representatives to describe and make claims about the outcome of the elections and the situation going on as he knows that some of his citizens are not happy about the results, himself included. For instance, all the representative speech acts that the speaker deploys talk about the winner and the loser of the elections (3, 4, 5 and 26), the credibility of the results, the Liberian people (1, 9, 11, 15 and 25), and the aftermath of the elections (16 and 28). Below are the representative speech acts that prove the claims made above:

1) MY FELLOW LIBERIANS, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: (**Rep**)

3) As your President and the leader of the Coalition for Democratic Change, I want to address you on the outcome of the run-off elections held on November 14, 2023. (**Rep**)

4) The results announced tonight, though not final, indicate that Ambassador Joseph N. Boakai is in a lead that is insurmountable. (**Rep**)

5) A few moments ago, I spoke with President-elect Joseph N. Boakai to congratulate him on his victory and to offer my sincere commitment to working with him for the betterment of our beloved Liberia. (**Rep**)

9) Through your peaceful and orderly exercise of your constitutional right to vote, you have once again demonstrated your commitment to the democratic principles that bind us together as a nation. (**Rep**)

11) Under my leadership, these elections were organized with a promise to the Liberian people – a promise of fairness, transparency, and credibility. (**Rep**)

15) You have earned the respect of all Liberians, our foreign partners, international observers, and the world at large for completing this difficult task to the satisfaction of all stakeholders, including the contesting parties. (**Rep**)

16) However, the closeness of the results reveals a deep division within our country. (**Rep**)

25) MY FELLOW LIBERIANS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: (**Rep**)

26) Tonight, the CDC has lost the election, but Liberia has won. (**Rep**)

28) I remain your President until the handover of power, and I will continue to work for the good of Liberia. (**Rep**)

Beside representative speech acts are directives which are also 11 in number. The speaker deploys these acts to make 5 queries (8, 21, 22, 24, and 29), 2 warnings (17 and 18), 2 indirect requests (10 and 27) and 2 prayers (7 and 30). As a matter of fact, the identified directives are meant to encourage Liberians to acknowledge the outcome of the elections and to call them to unite for the well-being of Liberia. The aforementioned observations are illustrated below:

Queries

8) Tonight, as we acknowledge the results, let us also recognize that the true winners of these elections are the people of Liberia. (**Dir**)

21) I urge you to follow my example and accept the results of the elections. (**Dir**)

22) Go home tonight with the knowledge that our ideals and vision for Liberia remain strong. (**Dir**)

24) Tomorrow, resume your daily activities in a normal way, and come and join me at our party headquarters to reflect on our journey and plan for our return to political leadership in 2029. (**Dir**)

29) Let us heal the divisions caused by the campaign and come together as One Nation and One United People. (**Dir**)

Warnings

17) As we transition to the new Boakai administration, we must be vigilant to the dangers of division and work together to find common ground. (**Dir**)

18) Now, more than ever, unity is paramount for the love of Mama Liberia. (**Dir**)

Indirect requests

10) This is a time for graciousness in defeat, a time to place our country above party, and patriotism above personal interest. (**Dir**)

27) This is a time for graciousness in defeat, a time to place our country above party, and patriotism above personal interest. (**Dir**)

Prayers

7) May his presidency be marked by success for all Liberians, and may our nation prosper under his leadership. (**Dir**)

30) May God bless Liberia, and may we continue to strive for a brighter future together. (**Dir**)

The analysis also shows that the speaker deploys expressives to show his feelings (2, 12 and 19) of despair and pride. He also uses 2 expressives to congratulate the President-elect and the winning party (6) and the National Elections Commissions (14), and 2 others to thank his followers and partisans (20) and the entire audience who's listening to the speech (31). These claims are exemplified below:

Feelings

2) I stand before you tonight with a heavy heart, but with the utmost respect for the democratic process that has defined our nation. (**Exp**)

12) I am proud to say that, for the most part, we have fulfilled that promise. (**Exp**)

19) To the members of the Mighty Coalition for Democratic Change, fellow partisans, CDCians, Weahcians, auxiliaries, first-time voters, campaign managers, and party leaders, I understand that this is not the outcome we desired. (**Exp**)

Congratulations

2) I stand before you tonight with a heavy heart, but with the utmost respect for the democratic process that has defined our nation. (**Exp**)

14) At this juncture, I would like to congratulate the National Elections Commission for a job well done. (**Exp**)

Thanking

20) Although we did not emerge victorious, your hard work and support have been the backbone of our campaign, and for that, I am deeply grateful. (**Exp**)

31) Thank you, and good night. (**Exp**)

Moreover, the analysis of the speech unveils that the speaker uses commissive speech acts to make 2 promises: one to the people of Liberia that their choice will be obeyed and honoured (13) and the other to his fellow partisans encouraging them to take heart as their time will come again because they are a young organisation. Below are the two commissives that the speaker employs in his speech:

Promises

13) The Liberian people have spoken, and their choice will be honored and obeyed. (**Com**)

23) We are a young movement, and our time will come again. (**Com**)

The above analysis shows how the speaker deploys speech acts to address his fellow citizens and partisans on the outcome of the elections. It is obvious in the analysis too that the ultimate goal of the speaker in using speech acts is to ensure that everybody accepts the results and puts Liberia above their personal interest so as to cultivate peace without which no development is possible.

3.1.2. Analysis of Deictic Expressions

A careful scrutiny of the speech under investigation proves that the speaker uses a significant number of deictic expressions. It has been established above that deictic expressions help speakers to address listeners with contextually specific and appropriate expressions that will help them point directly at what they want. These deictic expressions as used by the speaker are shown in the table below:

Table2. *Distribution of deictic expressions in the speech.*

Deixis	**Person**	Personal pronouns	I (11) We (7) You (2)
		Possessive adjectives	My (6) Your (7) His (5) Our (13) Their (1)
		Object pronouns	Him (2) Me (1) You (4) Us (3)
		Relative pronouns	That (9)
	Spatial	Verbs of motion	Come (3) Go (1) Resume (1) Join (1)
		Demonstratives	That (1) This (5) These (2)
		Specific locations	In (5) out of which (1) specific date, others are prep. On (4) out of which (1) location, others are prep.
	Temporal	Time expressions	Now (1) Tomorrow (1) Tonight (5)
		Verb tenses	Present simple (29) Simple future (3) Present perfect (7) Passive voice (6) Simple past (4)
	Social	Absolute expressions	Ambassador (1) President-elect (2) President (2)
	Discourse	Upcoming	But (2) Also (1) And 27) At this juncture (1) However (1)
		Prior	A few moments ago (1)

The above table clearly displays how the speaker deploys deictic expressions to encode his message. For person deixis, for instance, it is clear that the speaker makes an extensive use of I (11) and we (7) on the level of personal pronouns, and our (13), my (6), your (7) and his (5) at the level of possessive adjectives. This can be explained by the fact the three major social identities constructed in the speech are the speaker, the speaker and his partisans and the speaker and the citizens of Liberia addressed respectively by **I, We, Our, Your**, and lastly the President-elect addressed by **His**. However, the use of **our** (13 times) outnumbers all of the other person deixis. This is because the speaker wants not only to show sympathy and gratefulness to his fellow party members but also to unite the entire country behind their new President, Joseph N. Boakai. Below are some extracts from the speech which illustrate this claim:

2) …that has defined **our** nation. **(Liberians)**

5) … working with him for the betterment of **our** beloved Liberia. **(Liberians)**

7) … may **our** nation prosper under his leadership. (**Liberians**)

10) …, a time to place **our** country above party, and patriotism above personal interest. (**Liberians**)

15) You have earned the respect of all Liberians, **our** foreign partners, international observers, and the world at large… (**Liberians**)

16) However, the closeness of the results reveals a deep division within **our** country. (**Liberians**)

20) …hard work and support have been the backbone of **our** campaign, and for that, I am deeply grateful. (**Partisans**)

22) Go home tonight with the knowledge that **our** ideals and vision for Liberia remain strong. (**Partisans**)

23) We are a young movement, and **our** time will come again. (**Partisans**)

24) … and come and join me at **our** party headquarters to reflect on **our** journey and plan for **our** return to political leadership in 2029. (**Partisans**)

Concerning spatial deixis, the demonstrative pronoun **This** is the most frequently used deictic expression as it has been deployed five (5) times throughout the speech. This is so, because the speaker wants to call everybody's attention to unity. The speaker urges all Liberian citizens to look beyond the outcome of the elections and place the interest of their country above their party and personal interest. He cogently believes that peace and stability can only be achieved through the acceptance of the results of the elections though it is not the desired outcome he and his partisans have expected. As for the verb of motion, **Come**, the speaker deploys it three (3) times. The first 2 instances are used to encourage his partisans to keep hope as they are a young movement and to invite them to join him at their party headquarters in order to reflect on how to win the 2029 elections. The aforementioned claims are illustrated below:

This

10) **This** is a time for graciousness in defeat, a time to place our country above party, and patriotism above personal interest. (**Unity**)

14) At **this** juncture, I would like to congratulate the National Elections Commission for a job well done. (**Unity**)

19) To the members of the Mighty Coalition for Democratic Change, fellow partisans, CDCians, Weahcians, auxiliaries, first-time voters, campaign managers, and party leaders, I understand that **this** is not the outcome we desired. (**Acceptance of results**)

27) **This** is a time for graciousness in defeat, a time to place our country above party, and patriotism above personal interest. (**Unity**)

Come

23) We are a young movement, and our time will **come** again. (**Encouraging partisans**)

24) Tomorrow, resume your daily activities in a normal way, and **come** and join me at our party headquarters to reflect on our journey and plan for our return to political leadership in 2029. (**Encouraging partisans**)

29) Let us heal the divisions caused by the campaign and **come** together as One Nation and One United People. (**Unity**)

As far as temporal deixis is concerned, the speaker makes more reference to the present moment so as to call the attention of Liberians to what is going on at the moment of his speech. The time expression **Tonight** (5) and the Present Tense (**Simple Present** (29) and **Present Perfect** (7)) are the two most frequently used temporal deictic expressions. This can be explained through the fact that everybody in and outside Liberia wants to know the winner of the elections. As the defeated candidate himself comes out to acknowledge the results of the elections, it shows that **this** moment is historic. And it is a time to put the interest of the country above personal and party interest. It is also important to acknowledge the credibility of the results and the defeated candidate himself recognises that the NEC (National Election Commission) has done a good job. **This** time is historic knowing the context in

Africa where it is rare to see a ruling party lose presidential elections. Thus, the extensive use of present tense and time expressions referring to the present time by the speaker is justified.

Next to **present tense** are **past** (4) and **future** tenses. The speaker deploys **past tense** to give evidence that he has truly accepted his defeat by congratulating the President-elect and not only to show that the promise of fairness, transparency and credibility he has made to his fellow citizens has been fulfilled but also to show his partisans that he understands their feelings because these results are not the ones they have expected. Through this, the speaker wants to prove that he is a good and faithful leader who fulfils his promises and cares about the psychological well-being of his followers. Concerning the deployment of **future tense**, it is to make two other promises to Liberians: first they should rest assured that their choice will be obeyed and honoured and that they should know that he will hand over power to his successor and continue to work for the betterment of Liberia. He also uses future tense to tell/encourage his partisans that it is not finished, their time will come again. The above claims are evidenced below:

Past tense

5) A few moments ago, I **spoke** with President-elect Joseph N. Boakai to congratulate him on his victory and to offer my sincere commitment to working with him for the betterment of our beloved Liberia. (**Acceptance of his defeat**)

11) Under my leadership, these elections **were organized** with a promise to the Liberian people – a promise of fairness, transparency, and credibility. (**Good and faithful leader**)

19) To the members of the Mighty Coalition for Democratic Change, fellow partisans, CDCians, Weahcians, auxiliaries, first-time voters, campaign managers, and party leaders, I understand that this is not the outcome we **desired**. (**Psychological well-being of partisans)**

Future tense

13) The Liberian people have spoken, and their choice **will be honored and obeyed**. (**Second promise to Liberians**)

23) We are a young movement, and our time **will come** again. (**Encourage partisans**)

28) I remain your President until the handover of power, and I **will continue** to work for the good of Liberia. (**Third promise to Liberians**)

Besides, the analysis of the speech exudes that the social deictic expressions deployed by the speaker are absolute expressions. These absolute expressions are used to address four types of people: the speaker himself (President (2)), the winner of the elections (President-elect (2), his fellow citizens (My Fellow (2)) and the remaining audience of his speech (Distinguished (1)). This shows the respect the speaker has for the office of the President, the President-elect and all the unnamed audience (stakeholders, international partners etc.). By calling Liberians "My Fellow", the speaker encodes a deep sense of consideration and love for his people. He specifically wants to prove his equality with every other Liberian though he has been their President for seven (7) years. He also shows familiarity and concern for all Liberians without exception. The following extracts from the speech prove these claims:

President and President-elect

3) As **your President** and the leader of the Coalition for Democratic Change, I want to address you on the outcome of the run-off elections held on November 14, 2023. **(The speaker)**

A few moments ago, I spoke with **President-elect Joseph N. Boakai** to congratulate him on his victory and to offer my sincere commitment to working with him for the betterment of our beloved Liberia. **(The winner of the elections)**

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to **President-elect Boakai**, his supporters, and his campaign team. **(The winner of the elections)**

28) I remain **your President** until the handover of power, and I will continue to work for the good of Liberia. **(The speaker)**

My Fellow

1) **MY FELLOW LIBERIANS**, … **(All Liberians)**

25) **MY FELLOW LIBERIANS**, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: **(All Liberians)**

19) To the members of the Mighty Coalition for Democratic Change, **fellow partisans**, CDCians, Weahcians, auxiliaries, first-time voters, campaign managers, and party leaders, I understand that this is not the outcome we desired. **(Partisans only)**

Distinguished

1) … **DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN**

The final deictic expression employed by the speaker his speech is discourse deixis. In point of fact, he deploys two types of discourse deixis: the upcoming and the prior. As for the upcoming, the speaker extensively uses **and** (27 times) followed by **but** (2) and **also** (1), **at this juncture** (1), and **however** (1). In almost all the usages of the coordinating conjunction **and** (22), the speaker draws the attention of his fellow Liberians and partisans to peace and unity through the acceptance of the outcome of the elections. He also calls on the international partners, the stakeholders and the world at large to witness that he has conducted peaceful and fair elections at the end of which he has lost and he is willing to hand over power to the President-elect. Moreover, the speaker uses **but** (2) to show that these results are not the ones they (he and his partisans) have expected, but the interest of the country is more important than their expectations. The analysis further unveils that "**however**" has been deployed by the speaker only once to talk about the aftermath of the electoral campaigns which gives a sense of division among Liberians while the phrase "**at this juncture**" is used after the speaker has given his views concerning the outcome of the elections in order to congratulate the NEC for doing a good job. Besides, the speaker employs "**also**" once to show that the true winners of the elections are the people of Liberia. Below are some extracts from the speech that illustrate the above claims:

And

5) A few moments ago, I spoke with President-elect Joseph N. Boakai to congratulate him on his victory **and** to offer my sincere commitment to working with him for the betterment of our beloved Liberia. **(Call to peace and unity)**

6) I extend my heartfelt congratulations to President-elect Boakai, his supporters**, and** his campaign team. **(Call to peace and unity)**

7) May his presidency be marked by success for all Liberians, **and** may our nation prosper under his leadership. **(Call to peace and unity)**

9) Through your peaceful **and** orderly exercise of your constitutional right to vote, you have once again demonstrated your commitment to the democratic principles that bind us together as a nation. **(Call to peace and unity)**

10) This is a time for graciousness in defeat, a time to place our country above party, **and** patriotism above personal interest. **(Call to peace and unity)**

11) Under my leadership, these elections were organized with a promise to the Liberian people – a promise of fairness, transparency, **and** credibility. **(Proof of a peaceful electoral exercise)**

13) The Liberian people have spoken, **and** their choice will be honored and obeyed. **(Call to peace and unity)**

15) You have earned the respect of all Liberians, our foreign partners, international observers, **and** the world at large for completing this difficult task to the satisfaction of all stakeholders, including the contesting parties. **(Proof of a peaceful electoral exercise)**

But

2) I stand before you tonight with a heavy heart, **but** with the utmost respect for the democratic process that has defined our nation. **(Unexpected results)**

26) Tonight, the CDC has lost the election, **but** Liberia has won. **(Unexpected results)**

Also

8) Tonight, as we acknowledge the results, let us **also** recognize that the true winners of these elections are the people of Liberia. (**Liberians, true winners**)

At this juncture

14) **At this juncture**, I would like to congratulate the National Elections Commission for a job well done. (Job well done by NEC)

However

16) **However**, the closeness of the results reveals a deep division within our country. **(Sense of division)**

The prior discourse deixis expression "**A few moments ago**" is employed by the speaker to show what he did before coming to deliver his speech. As a matter of fact, he congratulated his opponent and winner of the election President-elect Joseph N. Boakai. By this, he wants to prove to Liberians and everybody else that he agrees with the results and accepts to hand over power and work together with the President-elect for the overall interest of Liberia. Here is the concerned passage from the speech:

A few moments ago

5) A few moments ago, I spoke with President-elect Joseph N. Boakai to congratulate him on his victory and to offer my sincere commitment to working with him for the betterment of our beloved Liberia.

3.1.3. Analysis of Presuppositions

The analysis of the speech also reveals that the speaker employs a lot of presuppositions to encode implicit meanings in his message. He mostly deploys presuppositions to call the attention of his fellow citizens to acknowledging the results and putting patriotism over personal and party interests. Some of such presuppositions are highlighted and discussed in the table below:

Table3. *Distribution of presuppositions in the speech.*

No	Utterances	Presupposed Meaning
1	2) I stand before you tonight with a heavy heart, but with the utmost respect for the democratic process that has defined our nation.	The speaker presupposes that their country, Liberia, is defined by a democratic process that has been there long ago. This triggers the following meaning: **Though the speaker is not happy about the results of the elections, he has no choice but to bow down and accept them because of the democratic process that their country has enjoyed for long.**
2	8) Tonight, as we acknowledge the results, let us also recognize that the true winners of these elections are the people of Liberia.	The speaker presupposes that the Liberian people should consider themselves as the true winners of the elections. This triggers the following meaning: Though **Boakai and his partisans have literally won the elections, the people of Liberia are the true winners because they have shown maturity during the voting exercise.**
3	10) This is a time for graciousness in defeat, a time to place our country above party, and patriotism above personal interest.	The speaker presupposes that now that they have lost the elections, the interests of the country shall prevail overall. This triggers the following meaning: **Before this time, some people were not comfortable with the results and they want to contest them.**
4	16) However, the closeness of the results reveals a deep division within our country.	The speaker presupposes that the results of the elections are too close and it portrays a deep sense of division among the citizens of Liberia. This triggers the following meaning: **Before this time, the people were united; it is the electoral process that wants to divide them.**

5	18) Now, more than ever, unity is paramount for the love of Mama Liberia.	The speaker presupposes that now is the time for Liberians, more than ever to be united. This triggers the following meaning: **Though before this time Liberians were united, now they should be more united if they truly love Mama Liberia.**
6	23) We are a young movement, and our time will come again.	The speaker presupposes that their party is a young movement and their time will come again. This triggers the following meaning: **Though they have lost the elections, the speaker's partisans should not lose hope as they will come back to power again considering the youthfulness of their party.**

3.1.4. Analysis of Conversational Implicatures

Beside presuppositions, the speaker makes use of conversational implicatures in his speech. Some of them with their implied meanings are displayed in the table below:

Table4. *Distribution of conversational implicatures in the speech.*

No	Utterances	Implied meaning
1	4) The results announced tonight, though not final, indicate that Ambassador Joseph N. Boakai is in a lead that is insurmountable.	i. It is not all the results that have been announced. ii. From the results communicated, Joseph N. Boakai has won the elections and even after the compilation of all the results he cannot be beaten.
2	5) A few moments ago, I spoke with President-elect Joseph N. Boakai to congratulate him on his victory and to offer my sincere commitment to working with him for the betterment of our beloved Liberia.	i. Though the speaker has been defeated, he cares about Liberia more than everything. ii. He is willing to work together with the Boakai administration.
3	21) I urge you to follow my example and accept the results of the elections.	i. Some of the speaker's partisans do not want to accept the defeat. ii. The speaker calls for peace and stability within the country iii. There was no fraud during the elections
4	24) Tomorrow, resume your daily activities in a normal way, and come and join me at our party headquarters to reflect on our journey and plan for our return to political leadership in 2029.	i. Some of the speaker's partisans were so discouraged that they felt like it is the end of the world. ii. Life goes on after the elections. iii. There is hope as the speaker's party can still return to power in 2029.

3.1.5. Analysis of Tropes

The analysis of the speech exudes that the speaker deploys many rhetorical tropes to encode his message. Some of them are: neologism, personification, hyperbole, paradox, synesthesia, alliteration, assonance, rhyme, repetition, anastrophe and parallelism.

Neologism

In other to appeal to his partisans and allies, the speaker leans on the trope of neologism. As a matter of fact, he coins two new words: CDCians (19) and Weahcians (19). It is clear that to arrive at these coinages, the speaker modifies the two words — CDC (Coalition for Democratic Change) and Weah (the speaker's last name) — by adding suffixes to them. The aforementioned invented words have a nominative and stylistic function. The speaker deploys these coinages to sympathise with his partisans and allies as they have lost the elections, that which they have not desired. The utterance in which these two new words appear is given below:

19) To the members of the Mighty Coalition for Democratic Change, fellow partisans, **CDCians**, **Weahcians**, auxiliaries, first-time voters, campaign managers, and party leaders, I understand that this is not the outcome we desired.

From the above passage, it can be seen that the speaker uses the two new words for stylistic purpose. A close look at the utterance shows that he has already mentioned them in the beginning of the utterance. This shows concern and emphasis.

Personification

Like neologism, the speaker deploys personification to encode metaphorical meanings in his speech. Some instances of personification in the speech are:

5) A few moments ago, I spoke with President-elect Joseph N. Boakai to congratulate him on his victory and to offer my sincere commitment to working with him for the betterment of **our beloved Liberia**.

18) Now, more than ever, unity is paramount for the love of **Mama Liberia**.

22) Go home tonight with the knowledge that **our ideals and vision for Liberia remain strong**.

26) Tonight, the CDC has lost the election, but **Liberia has won**.

In all of the uses of personification, the speaker ascribes human attributes to Liberia (5, 6 and 26) and to his and his partisans' ideals and vision (22). In (5), for example, the speaker calls Liberia their beloved, as if Liberia were a woman. Likewise, in (18), he considers Liberia as their mother. In (22), the speaker wants to prove their (his and his partisans') commitment and love for Liberia through their ideals and vision by ascribing the human attribute of strength to them. Lastly, in (26), he considers Liberia as a person who has won the elections.

Hyperbole

Another pragma-rhetorical trope used by the speaker to encode his message is hyperbole. Hyperbole is considered as an extreme exaggeration for dramatic or comedic effect. In the speech under study, the speaker employs this trope in the following utterance:

2) I stand before you tonight with a **heavy heart**…

Another instance of hyperbole in the speech includes where the speaker announces the victory of his opponent Ambassador Joseph N. Boakai, and informs his fellow partisans that the results indicate that they cannot win the elections. Here is the utterance:

4) The results announced tonight, though not final, indicate that Ambassador Joseph N. Boakai is in a **lead that is insurmountable**.

A third instance of the use of hyperbole is when the speaker expresses his sympathy to his partisans and strengthens them to take courage and concede the results. The following excerpt is a proof to this claim:

22) Go home tonight with the knowledge that our ideals and vision for Liberia remain strong.

Paradox

Paradox is a figure of speech in which a writer or speaker uses contradictory ideas to make a valid point. This trope is deployed by the speaker to ask his fellow partisans to be kind, civilised and polite even though they have lost the elections. In point of fact, he employs the same statement twice (10, 27) in his speech. Below is the said utterance:

10) This is a time for **graciousness in defeat**…

Synesthesia

This trope takes words specific to one of the five senses and uses them to describe a different sense. In the speech under scrutiny, the speaker uses such a device to show that he agrees with the results of the elections. The evidence of this claim is given below:

6) I extend my **heartfelt congratulations** to President-elect Boakai, his supporters, and his campaign team.

The feeling is for the touch but it is used here to prove that the speaker concedes his defeat.

Alliteration, Assonance and Rhyme

These are phonological devices that a speaker or writer uses to create rhythmical or musical effects in texts. The excerpts below illustrate this claim:

10) Th**is** **i**s a t**i**me for grac**i**ousness **i**n d**e**feat (**Assonance**), a t**i**me to **p**lace our countr**y** above **p**arty, and **p**atriotism above **p**ersonal **i**nte**re**st (**Alliteration**).

16) However, the closeness of the r**e**sults r**e**v**ea**ls a d**ee**p d**i**v**isi**on w**i**th**i**n our countr**y**. As w**e** trans**iti**on to the new Boakai adm**i**n**i**str**ati**on, w**e** must b**e** v**i**g**i**lant to the dangers of d**i**v**isi**on (**Assonance**)

29) …c**o**me together as **One** Nation and **One** United People (**Alliteration/Assonance/Rhyme**)

30) **M**ay God **b**less L**i**beria, and **m**ay we continue **t**o st**ri**ve **f**or a **br**i**gh**t**er** fu**t**u**re** tog**et**h**er** (**Alliteration/Assonance/Rhyme**)

From the above passage, it is evident that, on the one hand, the speaker employs the front short vowel /ɪ/ and the diphthong /**ai**/ in (10) in order to call his partisans to concede the results with civility and peace. He also deploys the vowel /ɪ/ in (16) to highlight the implications of the gap between contestants in a vote count and call his fellow citizens not to allow this division to foster in the new Boakai administration. On the other hand, the front long vowel / **i:** / as in (rev**ea**l, d**ee**p, w**e**, etc.) is used in (16) to insist on the fact that Liberians should resist division and embrace peace and work together with their newly elected president. In the above, another figure of speech that is evident is that of rhyme as in (29 and 30) that the speaker deploys to call his fellow citizens to come together as one and united nation so as to build a brigh**ter** fut**ure** toge**ther** which is only possible through the peaceful acceptance of the results.

Repetition

This trope which consists of repeating ideas, expressions or words for emphatic purposes has been utilised by the speaker to encode his message to both his partisans and Liberians at large. Here are some examples from the speech:

1) MY FELLOW LIBERIANS, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

25) MY FELLOW LIBERIANS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

10) This is a time for graciousness in defeat, a time to place our country above party, and patriotism above personal interest.

27) This is a time for graciousness in defeat, a time to place our country above party, and patriotism above personal interest.

In the examples above, it is clear that in (1 and 25) as well as in (10 and 27) the speaker repeats two utterances twice. The first repetition consists of an affectionate way of calling or addressing his audience through the use of honorific social deictic expressions (My Fellow Liberians, (distinguished) Ladies and Gentlemen). This shows concern and respect to the audience, even with the knowledge that they did not re-elect him as president. In the second repetition, the speaker puts emphasis on the way he wishes his fellow partisans to deal with the results of the run-off elections; i.e. they should accept them with a gracious attitude and value their beloved Liberia more than their party and personal interest.

Anastrophe and Parallelism

Two other pragma-rhetorical tropes the speaker employs in his speech are anastrophe and parallelism. He deploys these tropes for emphatic purposes. Consider how he does so in the utterances below:

5) A few moments ago, I **spoke** with President-elect Joseph N. Boakai to congratulate him on his victory and to offer my sincere commitment to working with him for the betterment of our beloved Liberia. (**Acceptance of his defeat**)

11) Under my leadership, these elections **were organized** with a promise to the Liberian people – a promise of fairness, transparency, and credibility. (**Good and faithful leader**)

19) To the members of the Mighty Coalition for Democratic Change, fellow partisans, CDCians, Weahcians, auxiliaries, first-time voters, campaign managers, and party leaders, I understand that this is not the outcome we **desired**. (**Psychological well-being of partisans**)

As it appears, in the three utterances, the speaker places adjuncts in Thematic position. This denotes foregrounding. Again, while in (5) and (19) the adjunct is followed by a subject, in (11) it is followed by the complement. From this, we can infer the parallel structures in the utterances (**A + S + V + C**; **A + C + V**). We also have **S + V + O + A**; **V + A**; **A + V + A**, etc. in the speech as indicated by the utterances below:

21) I urge you to follow my example and accept the results of the elections. (**Dir**)

22) Go home tonight with the knowledge that our ideals and vision for Liberia remain strong. (**Dir**)
24) Tomorrow, resume your daily activities in a normal way, and come and join me at our party headquarters to reflect on our journey and plan for our return to political leadership in 2029. (**Dir**)

4. CONCLUSION

The paper has analysed the pragma-stylistic features that the President of Liberia, Dr George Manneh Weah deploys in his defeat acceptance speech delivered on November 14th, 2023 in Monrovia, Liberia. It has drawn its theoretical insights from pragma-stylistics and the descriptive mixed-method research design to specifically examine how the speaker employs such pragmatic features as speech acts, conversational implicatures, presuppositions, deixis and tropes to produce stylistic effects in his speech. The analysis has yielded significant findings. As a matter of fact, the findings exude that the speaker uses four types of speech act in his speech. These include representatives, expressives, directives and commissives. Specifically, out the 31 utterances, representatives and directives come first with a count of 11 utterances (35.48%). They are followed by expressive speech acts which figure 7 times (22.58%) in the speech. Commissive speech acts rank last with only 2 utterances representing 6.45%. As for the deictic expressions, the speaker deploys all the five types (person, spatial, temporal, social and discourse) in his speech.

Moreover, the findings also reveal that the speaker employs a lot of presuppositions and conversational implicatures to encode implicit meanings in his message. Last but not least, the speaker deploys such pragma-rhetorical tropes as neologism, personification, hyperbole, paradox, synesthesia, alliteration, assonance, rhyme, repetition, anastrophe and parallelism in his speech. In conclusion, the study establishes that the speaker deploys the aforementioned pragma-stylistic features to accept his defeat and call his fellow citizens and partisans to accept this with a view to preserving peace, unity, and patriotism in post-electoral Liberia.

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