

# Corpus Based Study of Personal Pronoun's Rhetoric in Obama's and Xi Jinping's Diplomatic Discourse

Irungu Wageche<sup>1</sup> & Changhai Chi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> School of Humanities, Department of Linguistics, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China

Correspondence: Irungu Wageche, School of Humanities, Department of Linguistics, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China. E-mail: markwageche@gmail.com

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## Abstract

This paper examines how first personal pronouns in English aid president Obama and president Xi Jinping to speak persuasively on international platforms. Drawing on four speeches, this paper explores the frequency of first person pronouns realized in both singular and plural forms and analyzes, within a framework of Critical Discourse Analyses (CDA), how these pronouns are exploited using modal verbs and tenses to attain and sustain rhetorical appeal. This paper found out that Obama deploys personal pronouns selectively with more I-pronouns realized in his speech in Africa and more we-pronouns realized in his speech in Europe, has a bias towards modal verbs that highlight ability and intention: *can* and *will*, and prefers the future tense. On the other hand, this paper found out that Xi deploys both the I-pronouns and the We-pronouns equally in his speeches in both Africa and Europe, has an inclination towards we-pronouns in his diplomatic discourse, a bias towards modal verbs highlighting necessity: *should* and *need*, and prefers the future tense.

**Keywords:** diplomatic discourse, personal pronouns, realization, rhetoric, collocation, cooperation

## 1. Introduction

21st century is so far characterized by shifting trends in global power with the emergence of new strong economies into the global political power equation. China's burgeoning economy has catapulted its political significance in global affairs in as much as it has necessitated China to reach out for other nations in search for development partners. The US has maintained its prominence in global affairs albeit some difficulties occasioned by the Iraq war in the Bush era and the financial meltdown forcing Obama to come out aggressively to repaint America's global image. Data from the World Bank 2013 indicate that China is the second largest economy in the world after the US and that China's economic growth is projected to continue burgeoning to match and perhaps surpass the US economy in less than two decades. Be that as it may, 21st century is also marked with growing challenges that pose enormous threat to peace and stability. Challenges such as the international financial crisis, nuclear proliferation, climate change, terrorism, mistrust, and the race for resources have pitted China and America into an unprecedented tussle for global political influence. Across Africa, Asia, Europe and South America, we witness spirited diplomatic activities from both China and the US directed at expanding and safeguarding global political power and influence. This paper explores diplomatic activities in both Africa and Europe as championed by China's president, Xi Jinping (the name to be used interchangeably with Xi), and the US president, Obama, with a view to unraveling the power of personal pronouns in diplomatic discourse.

Africa holds a critical repository of natural wealth that is necessary to propel giant economies such as China and the US well into the future. Africa's ongoing economic renaissance and population provides fresh market frontiers for goods and services from both China and the US going forward. Africa also holds significant votes at the United Nations that could influence decisions in favour of or against China or the US. The European Union (EU) on the other hand is home to first world economies and thus a critical market for goods and services from and/or to China and the US. EU nations also hold critical votes and veto power at the United Nations. In essence, modern day and future global challenges cannot be comprehensively tackled without real engagement with and contribution of both Africa and Europe. Undoubtedly then, Africa and Europe are to China and the US what oxygen is to living things. This awakening compels China and the US to draw and exploit their most convenient diplomatic tool: language. Language provides a platform for Xi and Obama to ventilate their rhetoric and persuasive strategies and draw their African and European audiences to form allegiance with them and their

primary message.

At the very basic level, this paper interprets diplomacy as outright manipulation of language by political leaders abroad hoping to form allegiances with other nations and to elevate their country's global power and influence. We see Xi and Obama exploit personal pronouns in their global discourse with the broad intention of mobilizing allegiance from Africa and Europe. We see China's global power and influence strengthening, thanks to effective persuasive discourse complementing a burgeoning economy. We see America's global image at stake, thanks to the Bush era. Ideally, Xi's diplomatic discourse is focused on reinforcing China's global image while Obama's diplomatic discourse is focused on re-imaging America.

Much of research work done on linguistic and rhetoric techniques utilized in speeches dwell heavily on political discourse. While the overall understanding, methodology and techniques in political discourse can be replicated in diplomatic discourse, there exist one radical challenge in diplomatic discourse: ethnographic heterogeneity. For example, when Xi is delivering a speech in either Africa or Europe, he begins from the disadvantaged "outsider" position. Against this backdrop, the speaker is urgently compelled to utilize efficacious rhetorical strategies to draw an ethnographically different audience closer to him. This paper examines Xi and Obama's first speeches in Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe as president within their very first year in office. As such, we see them tasked with the urgent and critical responsibility of building a credible self-image and mobilizing their addressee to build rapport with them.

In some different veins at recent annals of literature, some other salient studies have also been carried out in CDA to investigate multiple texts and discourses and highlight multiple strategies employed by orators and authors in political, scientific, religious etc. texts in order to make the texts persuasive, significant, engaging and obscure as well (Cap & Okulska, 2013; Kazemian et al., 2013; Kazemian & Hashemi, 2014a, b; Noor et al., 2015a, b; Ali & Kazemian, 2015; Ali et al., 2015; Zhou & Kazemian, 2015). Prior studies have tended to concentrate on some other genres, strategies and discourses. This study is unique in the sense that it attempts to examine how first personal pronouns in English aid president Obama and president Xi Jinping to speak persuasively on international platforms. Drawing on four speeches, this paper explores the frequency of first person pronouns realized in both singular and plural forms and analyzes, within a framework of Critical Discourse Analyses (CDA), how these pronouns are exploited using modal verbs and tenses to attain and sustain rhetorical appeal.

### *1.1 Materials*

We examine four speeches by both Xi and Obama, two from each leader, each speech from Africa and Europe. Xi's speech in Africa was delivered in Tanzania on 25th March 2013 at Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre and contains 2936 words while his speech in Europe was delivered in Paris France on 27th March 2014 and has 2711 words. Obama's speech in Africa was delivered in Ghana at Accra International Conference Centre on 11th July 2009 and contains 4028 words while his speech in Europe was delivered in France at Strasbourg town hall on 3rd April 2009 and has 3363 words. For consistency, we utilize their English version speeches. All the four speeches convey a message that is largely meant to target and persuade members of the entire continent and not merely members of the countries in which the speeches were delivered. The speeches were delivered within the first year of both Xi and Obama's first term as presidents and during their first visit to Sub-Saharan Africa and to Western Europe as presidents.

### *1.2 Methodology*

This paper adopts "mutually supportive methodologies" (Mautner, 2009) interfacing corpus linguistic approach and the critical discourse analysis (CDA) programme to unpack the first person pronoun rhetoric in diplomatic discourse. Several successful research works have already been conducted utilizing corpora data and CDA (Mautner, 2009; Fairclough, 2000; and Barker & Galasinski, 2001).

Corpus linguistics approach provides this paper with a means for setting up corpora data of the first person pronouns from the speeches. With the help of a computer-aided concordance software, we designed a corpora of frequencies of all the first person pronouns used in both singular (I-pronoun) and plural (we-pronoun) including their respective objective and reflexive forms from all the four speeches. We begin with a corpora for I-pronoun (I, me, my) and we-pronoun (we, us, our) usage for both Xi and Obama as used in Africa and in Europe (see table 1 and table 2 below). From the corpora data for both *I* and *we* pronouns in each speech, we adopt a formula of pronoun/1000 ( $p/1000$ ) to come up with a representative number of pronouns in every one thousand words. A representative number of the pronouns form the basis for empirical analysis and comparison (see table 4).

We further analyze the we-pronoun clusivity. We manually go through the entire we-pronoun corpus and

distinguish inclusive from exclusive pronouns before we set up a corpora data (see table 3) showing the distribution of inclusive we-pronouns in all the four speeches. We see inclusive we-pronouns as lexical networks for rhetoric geared towards enhancing the spirit of togetherness between the speaker and the audience. Finally, we have established a corpora data showing we-pronoun and collocation with modal auxiliary verbs as well as the concomitant tense structure. With such an empirical data harnessed using corpus linguistics approach, we move on to interpret the data using the CDA programme.

CDA programme as posited by Fairclough & Wodak (1997) provides a “critical” variety in our attempt to unpack sustained manipulation of the first person pronoun in diplomatic discourse. As cited in Mautner, 2009; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997 states that CDA “analyzes real and often extended instances of social interaction which take a linguistic form or a partially linguistic form”. Fairclough & Wodak then name eight principles of CDA none of which Mautner finds “inherently inimical to a corpus-linguistic approach”. CDA overall concern with power dynamics in a social context provides valuable insights that befit our analysis.

Overall, this paper is grounded in Aristotelean rhetoric particularly his model of persuasion appeals. The model provides three stages of appeal; ethos, pathos and logos. Ethos is the rhetorical appeal to the authority hereby seen as representing the need for Xi and Obama to use language to boost their credibility in both Africa and Europe. A credible leader’s message is likely to be trusted and accepted by the audience. Pathos is the rhetorical appeal to the emotion and hereby represents the need for the speakers to deliberately trigger emotions throughout their speeches in order to draw the audience close to the speaker and his primary message. An emotionally charged audience is likely to connect with the speaker and the speaker’s primary message faster. Logos is the rhetorical appeal to the logic representing a conscious attempt for the speaker to utilize logical maneuvers in his message. A reasonable message is sensible and likely to be accepted and ratified by the audience.

Based on the high frequency of different key themes and lexical items on Xi and Obama’s speeches, we have identified *cooperation* as the primary target in their diplomatic discourse. In their speeches, we see quest for allegiance and cooperation as the mother agenda around which Xi and Obama evoke and exploit personal pronouns to drum up rhetoric and spin linguistics. From the speeches, Xi is more concerned with mutual understanding and respect, peaceful development and trade while Obama is more concerned with nuclear proliferation, terrorism, climate change and trade. They both believe that these concerns can be mutually addressed within a framework of cooperation with other nations.

In his discussion of rhetorical skills Beard (2000) notes that to give a successful speech is not merely about presenting good ideas, but also about having the skills of speaking persuasively. This paper is directed at unpacking and analysing persuasive discourse in diplomacy looking at one aspect of rhetoric: the first person pronoun. We examine how Xi & Obama frame the first person pronouns, their verbal collocation (table and concomitant tense structure to invent rhetorical means for achieving cooperation with nations of Africa and Europe.

## **2. First Person Pronoun in Diplomatic Discourse**

As a persuasive strategy, the choice of personal pronouns is a subtle and clever way to guide the thinking of the audience (Halmari, 2004). Pronouns are explained on the basis of their anaphoric and referential nature (Bramley, 2001).

In this paper, we examine how Xi and Obama align first personal pronouns and assign them different rhetorical roles. With respect to first person pronoun usage in diplomacy, we witness how speech delivery is largely about lurching and perching from one frame of persuasive personal pronoun to another.

### *2.1 I-Pronoun Usage*

“I” in English is written in capital letters not just to make the small letter stand out but also to highlight its power and significance. Beard 2000 points out that “I” among others demonstrate a clear sense of personal involvement which is especially useful when information favourable to the audience is being conveyed. Such favourable information cutting across achievements and involvement on an issue dear to the audience portrays the speaker as sensitive and appealing to the audience’s immediate interests. In our case, Xi and Obama’s message of personal commitment to win-win trade discussions and to nuclear proliferation cast them as in control and even ready to bear the brunt in the event of failure in the intervention. This tactic conveniently portrays the speaker as a credible figure resonating with the audience’s primary interests. This way, I-pronoun effectively satisfies Aristotle’s rhetorical appeal to the ethos. Both presidents use the I-pronoun to deploy various persuasive appeals as analyzed below. Table 1 below examines how both presidents use the first person singular pronoun (hereby marked as I-pronoun for simplicity) in nominative case *I*, oblique case *me* and as a possessive *my* in both Africa

and Europe. We begin with a quantitative data for the I-pronoun and proceed to critical analysis of the rhetorical nature of the data.

Table 1. I-Pronoun realizations

REGION	Xi Jinping						Obama					
	Words	I	me	my	Total	p/1000	Words	I	me	my	Total	p/1000
Africa	2936	8	7	6	21	7	4028	33	5	15	53	13
Europe	2711	15	5	3	23	8	3363	27	4	2	33	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5647</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7391</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>23</b>
%						<b>39%</b>						<b>61%</b>

Note. Numbers are rounded off to the nearest whole number. P/1000 formula is applied for uniform representation; it means the number of I-pronouns in every 1000 words.

### 2.1.1 Analysis

Overall, Obama deploys 23 I-pronouns while Xi deploys 15 I-pronouns in both Africa and Europe. This represents 39% for Xi and 61% for Obama from the total I-pronouns realized by both presidents in the four speeches. We see a fairly even distribution of how each president deploys the I-pronoun in both Africa and Europe. We then went ahead to investigate how Xi and Obama utilize the I-pronouns in their speeches. Table 1 show that nominative case *I*, represents the highest application of the first person singular pronoun in all the four speeches.

We found a wide spread tendency for both leaders to collocate the I-pronoun with specific kinds of “hedging” verbs. For example, private verbs (verbs expressing mental stages) such as *I believe*, *I want*, *I wish*, *I hope* in (1-9 below) and modal verbs (hereby verbs expressing the speaker’s ability/credibility) such as *I can*, *I will*, *I know* and *I have* (in 10-20). On private verbs we see Obama’s heavy bias towards *I want* and Xi’s bias towards *I wish*, *I believe* while on modal verbs Obama leans heavily on *I will*, *I can* and Xi on *I have*. We find these two strategies highly dissimilar but oriented towards similar rhetoric goal. Obama choose to be assertive through “I will” because “I can” and “I want” you to know that “I know” what it takes. Xi, however, takes a modest appeal through “I wish” “I believe” you can trust that “I have” what it takes. By being assertive, Obama is able to frame issues emphatically and advance chances of having the audience’s support and confidence in both Africa and Europe. By being modest, Xi is able to frame issues without risking impositions by strategically leaving a window for the audience to decide whether to support him. Xi further chooses to deploy a modal auxiliary verb *I have* to highlight his achievements and thus raise his credibility. We argue that both strategies highlight timely and tactical diplomacy and leadership from the two leaders.

#### Private verbs

##### Obama

- 1) *I want to see you exporting food to other countries* Obama Africa.txt
- 2) *I believe that this moment is just as promising for* Obama Africa.txt
- 3) *I believe that we have begun that effort. The G20 s* Obama Europe.txt
- 4) *I hope you don't mind me making a few remarks about* Obama Europe.txt

##### Xi Jinping

- 5) *I believe that there will always be more oppor* Xi Africa.txt
- 6) *I believe that in-depth dialogue and concrete actio* Xi Africa.txt
- 7) *I wish to extend, on behalf of the government and p* Xi France English.txt
- 8) *I wish him the best of luck. There is a French sayi* Xi France English.txt
- 9) *I wish to take this opportunity to pay high tribute* Xi France English.txt

#### Modal verbs

##### Obama;

- 10) *I have no doubt that Africa holds the promise of a* Obama Africa.txt
- 11) *I can promise you this: America will be with you ev* Obama Africa.txt

- 12) *I'll focus on four areas that are critical to the f* Obama Africa.txt  
 13) *I've pledged substantial increases in our foreign a* Obama Africa.txt  
 14) *I can tell you there's no decision more difficult,* Obama Europe.txt  
 15) *I've sent a clear message to the leaders and people* Obama Europe.txt  
 16) *I can stand here today and say without equivocation* Obama Europe.txt

Xi Jin Ping;

- 17) *I have gained a better perspective of the laws gove* Xi France English.txt  
 18) *I have deepened my understanding of how progress of* Xi France English.txt  
 19) *I have refined my artistic taste. And by reading sc* Xi France English.txt  
 20) *I have discovered a new world where imagination kno* Xi France English.txt

We also note that I-pronoun is deployed by both leaders at the beginning of and throughout their speeches (21-30) as a personal anecdote in order to draw their audience's attention and build emotions. For example;

Obama

- 21) *I am deeply grateful for the welcome that I've rece* Obama Africa.txt  
 22) *I am proud that this is my first visit to sub-Sahar* Obama Africa.txt  
 23) *I'm speaking to you at the end of a long trip. I be* Obama Africa.txt  
 24) *I have the blood of Africa within me, and my family* Obama Africa.txt  
 25) *I want to make just a few acknowledgements. I want* Obama Europe.txt

Xi Jinping

- 26) *The moment I set foot on this beautiful land, I was impressed* Xi Africa.txt  
 27) *Whenever I come to Africa, two things always strike me the m* Xi Africa.txt  
 28) *Each time I come to Africa, I am deeply impressed by new deve* Xi Africa.txt  
 29) *I am visiting France, bringing with me a fond memor* Xi France English.txt  
 30) *I developed a keen interest in French culture and p* Xi France English.txt

Separately we see Obama extensively deploying the I-pronoun to take personal credit for actions and accomplishments. For example;

- 31) *I've made a commitment to Afghanistan, and I've ask* Obama Europe.txt  
 32) *I've asked our NATO partners for more civilian and* Obama Europe.txt  
 33) *I've ordered the closing of the detention center in* Obama Europe.txt  
 34) *I've pledged substantial increases in our foreign a* Obama Africa.txt  
 35) *I have directed my administration to give greater a* Obama Africa.txt

## 2.2 We-pronoun Use

Halmari (2004) indicates that, as a persuasive strategy, the choice of personal pronouns is a subtle and clever way to guide the thinking of the audience. Wodak (2005) sees especially personal plural pronouns as being able to, among other ambitions, be "used to induce interpreters to conceptualize group identities". The first person plural reference builds rapport and fosters a sense of community with the audience. It is a positive technique adopted to create and consolidate the "we" feeling as well as reduce the distance between the speaker and the audience. Biljana Scott (2013) argues that "we" pronoun is notable when the speaker want to share responsibility for actions undertaken and perhaps even diffuse blame. This technique significantly accords the speaker and the audience a common identity with shared aspirations hence the speaker and the audience do not feel like divided entities. Table 2 shows the level of we-pronoun usage by both Xi and Obama.

Table 2. We-pronoun realizations

Reg	Xi JinPing							Obama						
	words	we	us	our	c-c	p	p/1000	words	we	us	our	p	p/1000	
Africa	2936	31	4	15	32	82	28	4028	57	5	24	86	21	
Europe	2711	27	4	30	28	89	33	3363	100	22	51	173	51	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5647</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>7391</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>72</b>	
%							<b>46%</b>						<b>54%</b>	

Note. Reg= region, Words= words in a speech, c-c=China-country (Africa/Europe), p=total amount of first person plural pronoun, p/1000=amount of p in every 1000 words.

### 2.2.1 Analysis

As compared to the I-pronoun usage, table 2 shows that Xi seem to uphold the we-pronoun (46%) and invest less in I-pronoun (39%) while Obama prefers to uphold the I-pronoun (61%) and invest less in we-pronoun (54%). If we take that the I-pronoun can be used to conceptualize power and credibility and that the we-pronoun is used to conceptualize group identities (Wodak, 2005), then we can highlight Xi and Obama's diplomatic motivations from this comparison.

Overall, there is no wide variation on the amount of we-pronoun used by both Xi and Obama in both regions. Xi deploys 46% while Obama deploys 54% of the total number of we-pronouns used by both leaders (table 2). This clearly demonstrates that both Xi and Obama are well committed to build group identities with both Africa and Europe.

A closer look at the distribution of we-pronoun across Africa and Europe casts an interesting scenario. Xi deploys fairly similar amount we-pronouns in both Africa and Europe illustrating similar desire to persuade the two regions to forge stronger ties with him. Both regions are a critical backbone of China's economy. Africa is a major source for natural resources while Europe is China's largest trading partner. In both Africa and Europe, we see Xi deploying the we-pronoun to outline gains realized for working together and the need for stronger ties (36-41). For example,

36) *we have always worked with one heart and one mind an Xi Africa.txt*

37) *As we move ahead, we can always draw strength from history. A rev Xi Africa.txt*

38) *if we are to maintain the strong vitality of China-Afri Xi Africa.txt*

39) *We have maintained close communication on internatio Xi France English.txt*

40) *we should build on what we have achieved and chart the future course of our XiFrance English.txt*

41) *we need to carry forward friendship from generation Xi France English.txt*

On the other hand, Obama deploys his we-pronouns selectively. With 21 we-pronouns in Africa and 51 we-pronouns in Europe (table 2), this translates to a percentage distribution of approximately 30% in Africa and 70% in Europe. This shows his urgency and priority to "renew this relationship" and have stronger ties with Europe after the Bush era given that EU is America's critical economic, security and political partner. In his speech in Europe, Obama occasionally makes "overtly" persuasive utterances;

42) *We must renew this relationship for a new generation Obama Europe.txt*

43) *we can meet any challenge as long as we are together Obama Europe.txt*

44) *Together, we must forge common solutions to our common problem Obama Europe.txt*

45) *now we need an alliance that is even stronger than when Obama Europe.txt*

46) *we must not give up on one another. We must renew Obama Europe.txt*

We-pronoun can feature in two ways: exclusive and inclusive. Exclusive refers to the speaker and someone other than the audience while inclusive refers to the speaker and the audience. In his discussion of language and power Norman Fairclough (1989) notes that inclusive we-pronoun assimilates the speaker to the audience, possibly as a humbling tactic. Obama's use of inclusive we-pronoun refer to him, America and his African or European audience while his application of exclusive we-pronoun is meant to refer to him and other American government officials. Similarly, Xi's inclusive we-pronoun refers to him, China and his respective audience in Africa and Europe. We observed that personal plural pronouns in diplomacy can be substituted by a personified noun. This is done by joining the names of a country and a continent, as in (47, 48) or of two countries, as in (49, 50). This tactic is pervasively deployed by Xi Jinping (47-50). This paper argues that this as a rhetorical tactic and a step

further to enhancing inclusivity. Xi frequently interchanges the personified nouns with possessive and inclusive pronoun “our”. For example;

47) *History shows that China-Africa relations have not grown overnight. Neither is it* Xi Africa.txt

48) *In recent years, growing China-Africa relations have brought our peoples closer to each* Xi Africa.txt

49) *China-France cooperation is quietly changing the lives of the* Xi France English.txt

50) *China-France relationship has turned 50, we should build on wh* Xi France English.txt

We argue that this is a deliberate rhetorical organization meant to enrich and expand Xi’s pool of inclusive we-pronouns and continuously reminding the audience that it is indeed China-Africa, China-France ties that he is rooting for. Table 3 shows the percentage use of the inclusive we-pronoun by both leaders.

Table 3. Inclusive we-pronoun

REGION	Xi JinPing							Obama						
	p	we	our	us	s-c	incl	%	p	we	our	us	incl	%	
Africa	82	24	13	4	32	73	47	86	28	15	4	47	21	
Europe	89	22	29	4	28	83	53	173	96	49	20	165	79	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100</b>	

Table 3 maintains a pattern closely related to the aggregate use of we-pronoun advanced in table 2. In table 3, Xi spreads his inclusive we-pronouns almost evenly to reach out and persuade Africa and Europe, once again underlining the indispensability of both regions to China. As for Obama though, we see an even deeper need to use the inclusive we-pronoun to persuade Europe to agree to “renew” an alliance with America. Does the disproportionate favour of Europe mean that Obama doesn’t intend to persuade Africa? Our study shows that while Xi’s diplomacy in the two regions is to build a sense of community with both Africa and Europe, Obama is out to bond with Europe and to assure Africa. He invests much of his inclusive pronoun in Europe to “renew” a relationship. He chooses to deploy the exclusive we-pronoun to tell Africans that together with his government, he “will stand behind” (53) Africa’s development efforts. We see Obama’s strategy in Africa tailor-made to make Africa feel that she has a “partner” in America as she struggles to alleviate poverty. This kind of assurance triggers happy emotions and brings Africa closer to Obama. For example;

51) *we want to put more resources in the hands of those* Obama Africa.tx

52) *we stand ready to partner through diplomacy and tech* Obama Africa.txt

53) *we will stand behind efforts to hold war criminals a* Obama Africa.txt

54) *We will fight—we will fight neglected tropical di* Obama Africa.txt

Pennycook (1993) as cited in Bello 2013 sees “we” as always simultaneously inclusive and exclusive as a pronoun of solidarity and of rejection, of inclusion and exclusion. Any construction of a “we” presupposes the existence of a “they” or “you”. Thus by inclusion, it, at the same time excludes and assumes a parallel “other” exists elsewhere. We argue that this phenomenon gathers target group together away from the “other” adverse group. We see Xi and Obama pitching two competing camps on the global stage where struggle to form alliances with Africa and Europe is about wooing audiences by creating notions of inclusivity.

### 2.3 I-pronoun vs We-pronoun Usage

Here, we examine the overall use of I-pronoun relative to we-pronoun by each leader and how their usages compare. Table 4 below can show us not just the category of first pronoun popularly deployed for international diplomacy, but also the level of usage. As illustrated in our findings on table 4, to find the percentage usage of each category of the pronoun, we consider the total amount of each category of first pronoun as the numerator and the combined total usage of the first pronoun as the denominator. That is, we-pronoun/total amount of all the pronouns multiplied by 100.

Table 4. I-Pronoun vs we-pronoun usage

REGION	Xi JinPing			Obama		
	we-p	I-p	total	we-p	I-p	total
Africa	82	21	103	86	53	139
Europe	89	23	112	173	33	206
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>345</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

### 2.3.1 Findings and Analysis

We see that both leaders have a great preference for we-pronoun diplomacy and a closely related tactical limitation of the amount of I-pronoun deployed. Why? For proper appeal to the emotion and subsequent rhetoric function to be attained, the audience must feel drawn closer to the speaker and be allowed to be part of the speaker's message. It's the we-pronoun that's best suited to neat people around the speaker's message as well as to provide the necessary allegiance to the speaker. I-pronoun, has the ability to help the speaker demonstrate power, credibility and confidence all that can appeal to the audience. However, I-pronoun has an imminent risk of casting the speaker as ego-centric, detaching and by extension, unappealing.

### 2.4 We-Subject + Verbal Collocation

Table 4 above shows the great importance attached to we-pronouns in diplomacy. Table 5 below further examines each we-pronoun sentence used to find out the kind of modal auxiliary verb collocated with the pronoun. This is important in understanding each leader's persuasive strategy. Modal verbs can be used to persuade the audience to cooperate with the speaker as a matter of necessity as shown in (55-58) below or as a matter of ability as in (59-62) below. Modal verbs such as *should*, *need*, are used by both leaders to leave room for the audience's self-determination by just highlighting the need to work together while other modal verbs such as *must*, *have to* are used by the leaders to highlight the urgency with which cooperation is needed. Similarly, modals such as *can* and *will* are deployed in we-pronoun constructions to assure the audience that their cooperation can and will yield the intended results.

#### Necessity

- 55) *We should properly handle any problem that may arise* Xi Africa.txt  
 56) *We must start from the simple premise that Africa's* Obama Africa.txt  
 57) *we need to maintain close coordination to jointly me* Xi France English.txt  
 58) *we have to open our hearts to the differences among* Obama Europe.txt

#### Ability & Intention

- 59) *As we move ahead, we can always draw strength from history.* A rev Xi Africa.txt  
 60) *Together, we can partner on behalf of our planet and prosperit* Obama Africa.txt  
 61) *Together, we will realize the "Sino-French dream". Ladies an* Xi France English.txt  
 62) *we will provide new markets, we will drive the growt* Obama Europe.txt

Table 5 below shows the nature of modal verbs used by the leaders in both Africa and Europe.

Table 5. We-subjects + verbal collocations

	Xi		Obama	
	Africa	Europe	Africa	Europe
<b>NECESSITY</b>				
We + must	2	1	5	12
We + should	7	4	-	1
We + have to	-	-	-	3
We + need to	-	6	-	1
<b>ABILITY &amp; INTENTION</b>				
We +can	1	2	4	15
We + will	2	3	9	2



We + have	3	5	-	9
We + shall	1	-	-	-
We + 'd	-	-	-	1
We + did	-	-	-	4
If we + V	1	-	-	-
<b>TENSE &amp; ASPECT</b>				
We + Past	2	4	4	9
We + Present	2	3	7	16
We + Future	13	16	19	30

#### 2.4.1 Findings and Analyses

From the verbal collocation chosen to match with the we-pronouns, this paper argues that Xi's diplomatic discourse highlights the necessity for cooperation while that of Obama highlights ability for cooperation. Xi strives to draw his audience closer by enriching his persuasion with modal verbs such as *should*, *need* to bring up issues that exemplify benefits (63-66) for cooperation and the risks (67-69) for non-cooperation. On the modal verbs showing abilities, Xi prefers to engage *have* in order to cite past incidents of successful cooperation that he hopes *should* form bases for trust and confidence in future cooperation. Technically speaking, Xi's diplomacy is framed to underscore the fact that ability derived in the past should inspire necessity for further cooperation. For example,

- 63) *We have set up the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation* Xi Africa.txt  
 64) *We have always worked with one heart and one mind an* Xi Africa.txt  
 65) *We have maintained close communication on internatio* Xi France English.txt  
 66) *What we have achieved gives me more confidence in advanci* Xi France English.txt

Therefore;

- 67) *We should build on what we have achieved and chart t* Xi France English.txt  
 68) *We should improve economic cooperation, promote trad* Xi France English.txt  
 69) *We should properly handle any problem that may arise* Xi Africa.txt

Obama takes a different diplomatic orientation. He employs the we-pronoun to build a community around his message from which he then deploys modal verbs *can will* to underscore ability and intention for cooperation and for better ties. As a necessity, Obama tells his audience that they *must* (70-74) renew ties in order to succeed together. He frames diplomacy to underscore the fact that necessity for cooperation should inspire ability and intention to work together. For example;

- 70) *we must learn from the past to build on its success.* Obama Europe.txt  
 71) *we must not erect new barriers to commerce; that tra* Obama Europe.txt  
 72) *We must start from the simple premise that Africa's* Obama Africa.txt  
 73) *to realize that promise, we must first recognize the fundamental truth that y* Obama Africa.txt  
 74) *we must make the journey together. We know that tran* Obama Europe.txt

And if we do;

- 75) *we will look back years from now to places like Accr* Obama Africa.txt  
 76) *we can partner on behalf of our planet and prosperit* Obama Africa.txt  
 77) *we can meet any challenge as long as we are together* Obama Europe.txt  
 78) *we will drive the growth of the future that lifts al* Obama Europe.txt  
 79) *we can do improbable, sometimes impossible things. W* Obama Europe.txt  
 80) *we can achieve the promise of a new day. Thank you v* Obama Europe.txt

On the application of tense, we found that the two leaders are heavily concerned about the future. However, this does not mean that the past is irrelevant to their diplomacy. Xi's consistently refer to the past/history in his speeches in both Africa and Europe while Obama consistently reminds Europe of historical successes that were achieved through cooperation. The past tense helps them refer to the past and establish a foundation for putting up future tenses. This framework helps the two leaders build momentum in the audience and draw them to ratify

their message. The future tense is important for the two leaders to form allegiances with Africa and Europe for future cooperation.

### 3. Conclusion

Both leaders show a bias for using disproportionately high amount of we-pronouns relative to the I-pronoun in their speeches. Specifically, Xi spreads all his we-pronouns and I-pronouns almost evenly in both Africa and Europe while Obama selectively employ the pronouns so as to deploy more we-pronouns in Europe than Africa and more I-pronouns in Africa than in Europe. Overall though, the aggregate amount of all the pronouns used by the two presidents does not show a great variation. They use almost the same amount of the first pronoun.

As for verbal collocation with the we-pronouns, Xi prefers *should* and *need* while Obama prefers *can* and *will*. As for the tense, both leaders are greatly concerned about the future and they want to forge alliances and cooperate for the future. The present and the past are important too as they host rhetorical repository for preparing persuading for the future allegiance/cooperation.

In sum, we find that both Xi and Obama are consciously and consistently engaging personal pronouns in their diplomatic discourse in Africa and Europe as rhetoric and persuasive techniques in what is clearly a competition for global partners and power.

It would be necessary to conduct a large scale study encompassing other continents in order to authoritatively claim the extent to which both Xi and Obama are personal pronouns hustlers.

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