

A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF VICTORY AND INAUGURAL SPEECHES OF PRESIDENT JONATHAN: A MEASURE FOR TRANSFORMATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

Waya David T., Nneji, Ogechukwu Miracle

Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Email: david.waya@unn.edu.ng

Received:21 October 2013, Revised and Accepted:8 November 2013

ABSTRACT

This article intends to give an awareness and insight into the pragmatic features in President Jonathan's Victory and Inaugural Speeches. This is done with the view to determine the speaker's programme in relation to pragmatic choice and function of language in the selected political speeches. The data were culled from the Victory speech of 19th April and Inaugural Speech of 29th May 2011. The study adopts Speech Act theory of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) in analysis of the speeches corpora. Over All Relative Frequency Percentage (ORFP) as a methodological technique used establishes the fact that President Jonathan used more of sentences that performed assertive acts than other speech acts. The sentences that were vindictive and directive made way for him to assert authority and exercise constitutional power as the President. Meanwhile sentences that were expressive had the least ORFP; hence, the study proves that the President exploited less of sentences which were meant for indicating sole responsibility in the transformation of Nigeria, rather, he hitched on collectivism. The political speeches delivered by the president further signified that political leaders perform various acts through their speeches which setup as a guide in evaluating the sincerity and functionality of their administrative policies. The paper challenge Nigerian political leaders to note what they say and what they do in practical context

Keywords: Speech acts, Good Governance, Transformation, Pragmatics

INTRODUCTION

Background Study

Language serves as the most vital tool in man's existence. Thus, language is essential in the implementation of successful democratic rule in any country. According to Taiwo (2009), language is the conveyer belt of power. It moves people to demonstrate support, vote, debate or revolt. It is therefore a central explanation of political stability, good governance, security or polarization.

The importance of language in expressing thoughts and ideas cut across all sectors or fields of human endeavour. Language is essential to politicians. Most activities performed by the politicians are done through the use of language. This includes manifesto, campaign, rally, election, victory/inauguration, policy formulation and implementation e.t.c. Political speech is becoming a popular concept especially in the area of linguistic research. The concept of political speech could be said to have originated from the rhetorical works of Greek philosophers like Sophist, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Aristotle therefore describes it as "a faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion in reference to whatever subject" (Agbogun 2011). Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defined political speech as "a speech or writing that is intended to influence people ..., the skill of using language in speech or writing in a special way that influences or incites people". Since the primary purposes of political speeches are to influence, educate, inform, persuade, incite, or entertain the masses.

The status of the office of the president is the highest in any country, yet the president needs constant briefing or link with the people, one of the ways of achieving this is through speech prepare to convey the message to the people. The election of President Umaru/ Jonathan ticket in 2007 made history in Nigeria as it was the first time that a democratically elected president handed over to another democratically elected president. However, the protracted illness of President Yar'Adua necessitated the interpretation and enforcement of the 1999 constitution that brought in Jonathan as the acting president. In a long political battle and propaganda, President Jonathan contested and won a four year tenure election in 2011.

In any civilised society, democratic government places high premium on the people as democracy is popular for being the government of the people, by the people and for the people. Therefore, speech can be seen as a means of establishing and maintaining social relationships, expressing feelings, and selling ideas, policies and programmes in any society.

Theoretical Framework

The linguistic framework of any linguistic research serves as the tool for the analysis of data. The theory of Speech Acts would serve as an appropriate spread sheet for the analysis and evaluation of the selected speeches. The choice of Speech Acts theory as the linguistic framework for the analysis of the two Speeches is premised on the fact that people perform various actions through the use of words. When utterances are made, a particular act is performed; this is called Speech act. The Speech Acts theory is also described as "How to Do Things with Words Theory" since it has its roots in the work of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). They are able to provide a shift from constative notion to performative notion in the empirical verifiability of signs; that is, the truthfulness of signs to what an expression does when it is uttered.

Speech acts according to Austin (1962) fall into three classes, which are: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. A locutionary act is an act of saying something; that is, the act of producing an utterance. Dada (2004) submits that illocutionary acts are the core of any theory of speech acts. The perlocutionary act is the effect or influence on the feelings, thoughts or actions of the listener/hearer unlike locutionary acts. Perlocutionary acts could be inspiring, persuading, consoling, etc. It brings about an effect upon the beliefs, attitudes or behaviours of the addressee. It is in consonance with this that Levinson (1980) describes perlocutionary act as the intended or unintended consequences of the speaker's utterance (Adeyanju, 2009). Searle (1969) improves on Austin's (1962) Speech Act theory by distinguishing between two types of speech acts: Direct and Indirect Speech Acts. Searle (1969) categorizes the illocutionary act into five classes.

The Philosophy in Speech and Politics

Several speeches are made to address the people before election; these speeches could also be referred to pre-election special addresses especially at rally and campaign. After the election, speeches are made from time to time as the situation dictates. It is expected that a candidates that wins an election should address the people that have voted him or her to power, such is known as Victory Speech. Inaugural Speech is usually made on the occasion of official inauguration of an elected candidate. It is the point of delivering the Victory and Inaugural Speeches that elected politicians reaffirm their commitment to serve by reiterating the programmes/manifestoes of their party and electioneering campaign promises. No wonder, Denton and Hahn (1986) in Agbogun (2011) posit that the presidency or governorship office has been recognized as a rhetorical institution whose speeches are enlivened by power to persuade and convince the nation or society on the one hand; and provided avenues for familiarizing the audience with the organization and recognisability of the presidency or governorship office on the other hand, as they encapsulate the nation's or state's. The Victory and Inaugural Speeches were the first two speeches that presented Jonathan as the President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria in 2011.

It is clear that, the concept of "language and politics" are interwoven. Beard (2000) claims that, language of politics helps us to understand how language is used by those who wish to gain power, those who wish to exercise power and those who wish to keep power. This appears to be in consonance with the claim of Opeibi (2009) that language is a vital process of setting the personality and the programme of the candidates to the public, with the primary aim of gaining their support and mobilizing them to participate in the process of securing and controlling power. It is quite conceivable that politics has become a linguistic issue while language has become a political issue.

The degree of support that citizens have for the politicians will be determined by what they say and how they say it for success to be achieved whether in candidacy, programmes or policies. No wonder, Opeibi (2009) refers to the relationship that exists between language and politics as symbiotic.

Language of politics has been widely studied by various scholars. Taiwo (2009) gives a rather insightful perspective of the subject by claiming that: the study of language of politics has been carried out within the framework of political rhetoric, linguistic stylistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis. Aspects of political communication include but are not limited to statements made by politicians, writings of politicians, political speeches, election campaign, parliamentary debates and political interviews.

Beard (2000) observes that political campaigns, speeches, written texts, broadcast are meant to inform and instruct voters about issues that are considered to be of great importance. From these submissions, it is crystal clear that speech making is one of the political activities of politicians which are made possible through the channel opened up by language. Opeibi (2009) emphasizes the fact that:

"No matter how good a candidate's manifesto is; no matter how superior political thoughts and ideologies of a political party may be, these can only be expressed and further translated into social actions for social change and social continuity through the facilities provided by language".

The philosophical concept in any political speech serves as a text, as an output and as a process which may be spoken or written (Opeibi 2009).

Language and Good Governance

The terms "governance" and "good governance" are being increasingly used in development literature. Bad governance is being increasingly regarded as one of the root causes of all evil within our societies. Major donors and international financial institutions are increasingly basing their aid and loans on the

condition that reforms or ensure "good governance". This article tries to explain, as simply as possible, the role of speech act in governance.

The concept of "governance" is not new. It is as old as human civilization. Simply put "governance" means: the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented) (Wikipedia 2012). Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance. Since governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented, an analysis of governance focuses on the formal and informal actors involved in decision-making and implementing the decisions made and the formal and informal structures that have been set in place to arrive at and implement the decision.

Government is one of the actors in governance. Other actors involved in governance vary depending on the level of government that is under discussion.

According to online Wikipedia, Good governance has eight major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society.

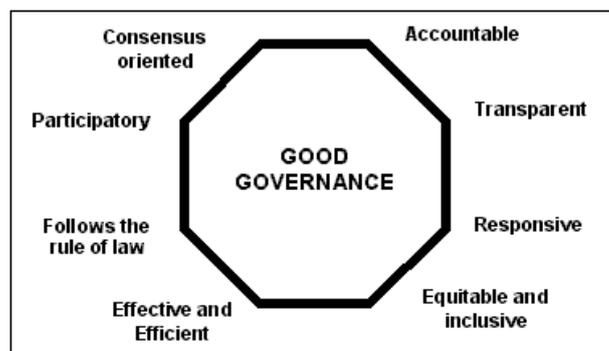


Figure 1

Methodological Approach

In this work, we chose two speeches of Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan. They are Victory and Inaugural Speeches. They were the first two speeches delivered by the president in 2011. We have limited this study to the two speeches in order to be thorough in the analysis of the speeches. The selected speeches were downloaded from the internet and analysed to show the speech acts performed in the course of delivering the speeches. The linguistic theory adopted for the analysis is within pragmatics framework of Speech Acts theory of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969).

The specific portions of the speeches are extracted. Thus, in each of the speeches, ten sentences comprising the first five and the last five were selected from each speech delivered. Twenty sentences in all were selected based on the above criteria. In the course of the analysis, the two speeches selected are labelled X and Y. The Victory Speech is X, and Inaugural Speech as Y. The numbers of sentences in the extracted portion are ten; therefore, we have X1-10 and Y1-10. This was done in order to make the analysis clear and easy to understand. Efforts were made to calculate the percentages of the speech acts types so as to make interpretation of the tables clear and empirical. The calculation of the percentages of the speech acts in a speech was based on the number of sentences and not on the total number of speech acts in each speech. Thus we have;

Total number of speech acts	100
Total number of sentences in the speech	1

The analysis and discussion of the data formed its basis from the formulae stated.

Speeches Excerpts

A. The Speech Acts Analysis of Victory Speech (X)

Data X1

Locution: This is a new dawn! Our nation has spoken.

Illocutionary Act: (a) Direct: assertive (stating) (b) Indirect: declarative (confirming) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: hopefulness.

Data X2

Locution: In every city, town, village, ward and voting unit, Nigerians stood in the sun, some in the rain, some walked long distances and all waited patiently, to vote

Illocutionary Act: (a) Direct: verdictive (assessing) (b) Indirect: declarative (confirming) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: sympathy and appreciation.

Data X3

Locution: At the end of intense and hard fought campaigns by all the political parties, our people spoke through the ballot.

Illocutionary Act: (a) Direct: assertive (stating) (b) Indirect: declarative (confirming) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: excitement.

Data X4

Locution: With a heart full of gratitude to Almighty God, I want to thank Nigerians for the great sacrifice and overwhelming national mandate you have just given to me, to preside over the affairs of this nation for the next four years.

Illocutionary Act: (a) Direct: Assertive (stating)

(b) Indirect: commissive(assurance) Expected perlocutionary Effect: hopefulness

Data X5

Locution. We have, by this election, reaffirmed our unity as one nation under God; reiterated our faith in democracy; and underscored our determination to fully join the free world where only the will of the people is the foundation of governance.

Illocutionary Act: (a) Direct: assertive (stating) (b) Indirect: directives (confirming) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: confidence

Data X6

Locution: We will not let you down.

locutionary Act: (a) Direct: commissive (promising) (b) Indirect: directive (assurance) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: hopefulness.

Data X7

Locution: Now is time for all Nigerians to reach out to their neighbours

Illocutionary Act: (a) Direct: directive (appealing) (b) Indirect: verdictive (instructing) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: inspiring.

Data X8

Locution: come join me let's continue on the road of national transformation

Illocutionary Act:

(a) Direct: directive (appealing) (b) Indirect: commissive (assuring) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: hopefulness.

Data X9

Locution: I want all of us to join in brotherhood, party affiliation or preferred candidate notwithstanding.

Illocutionary Act:

(a) Direct: assertive (appealing) (b) Indirect: expressive (instructing) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: oneness

Data X10

Locution: we are all Nigerians and I will be president to all

Illocutionary Act: (a) Direct: assertive (stating) (b) Indirect: commissive (promising) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: hopefulness and fairness

B. A Speech Act Analysis of Inaugural Speech(Y)

Data Y1

Locution: my dear compatriots, I stand in humble gratitude to you this day, having sworn in as the president and commander- in Chief of the Armed Forces of our great nation.

Illocutionary Act: (a) Direct: assertive (stating) (b) Indirect: directive (savouring new status) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: cheerfulness

Data Y2

Locution: I want to assure you, that I will do my utmost at all times to continue to deserve your trust

Illocutionary Act: (a) Direct: commissive (promising) (b) Indirect: expressive (assurance) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: determination and commitment.

Data Y3

Locution: I cannot but pay tribute to our late president Umaru Musa Yar'Adua with whom we won the presidential election for years ago

Illocutionary Act: (a) Direct: assertive (stating) (b) Indirect: declarative (confirming) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: Synpathy

Data Y4

Locution: At the polls, we saw the most dramatic expressions of hunger for democracy

Illocutionary Act: (a) Direct: assertive (saying) (b) Indirect: directive (assessing)

Expected Perlocutionary Effect: determination.

Data Y5

Locution: the inspiring story of the one hundred and three year-old man and many like him across the country, who struggled against the physical limitations of age to cast their vote is noteworthy.

Illocutionary Act: (a) Direct: assertive (confirming) (b) Indirect: verdictive (assessing) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: fairness and appreciation

Data Y6

Locution: this is a new dawn for Africa

Illocutionary Act: (a) Direct: assertive (stating) (b) Indirect: verdictive (assessing) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: cheerfulness

Data Y7

Locution: we must develop its vast resources to tackle poverty and under-development

Illocutionary Act: (a) Direct: directive (stating) (b) Indirect: commissive (promising) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: inspiring.

Data Y8

Locution: This time for action

Illocutionary Act: (a) Direct: assertive (stating) (b) Indirect: verdictive (assurance)

Expected perlocutionary Effect: hopefulness.

Data Y9

Locution: I will continue to fight for your future because I am one of you

Illocutionary Act: (a) Direct: commissive (promising) (b) Indirect: expressive (confirming) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: hopefulness.

Data Y10

Locution: what you see in your dream, we can work together, let us build together, let us bequeath a greater Nigeria

Illocutionary acts: (a) Direct: assertive (assessing) (b) Indirect: commissive (promising) Expected Perlocutionary Effect: determination and pacification

DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

In any society, language is considered as a basic tool for existence. It is therefore a powerful weapon for expressing the political thoughts and ideologies. The language pattern of Jonathan is studied through the two selected speeches in order to get to his thoughts. Using the Speech Act theory in line with the five categories of Searle's (1969) speech acts and the verdictives category from Austin (1962), we made some findings. It is also pertinent to point that the speech acts could be intended or unintended, as the speaker is often unaware of some speech acts tactics especially the indirect illocutionary acts.

Table 1 DATA X (VICTORY SPEECH)

SPEECH ACTS (DIRECT AND INDIRECT)	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
Assertive	6	60%
Directive	2	20%
Expressive	1	10%
Verdictive	2	20%
Commissive	4	40%
Declarative	3	30%

TOTAL NO OF ACTS

From the table, the study observed from the Victory speech that the President had used mainly sentences that were assertive as they have a total percentage of 60%, while followed by commissives (40%) and declarative (30%). The President had used mainly assertives, commissives and directives. In most cases, both military and political leaders apt for directive and verdictive acts in order to issue instructions and orders. However, the President having understood the political scenario that brought him in power opted more of assertive acts in his victory speech.

Table 2 DATA Y (INNUAGURAL SPEECH)

SPEECH ACTS (DIRECT AND INDIRECT)	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
Assertive	7	70%
Directive	2	20%
Expressive	2	20%
Verdictive	3	30%
Commissive	4	40%
Declarative	1	10%

TOTAL NO OF ACTS

The assertive act in the Inaugural speech were 70%, which is to say that Goodluck used more of language to state, maintain, inform, and promise his subjects. The speech acts in the Inaugural speech show commissive at 40%, 30% are verdictives, and 20% of the sentences are directives, while the least percentage were directives. With this, the President demonstrated his power as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria through his heavy reliance on the use of speech acts that are assertive by asserting his authority.

A cursory look at the tables, we realized that each of the sentences analysed performed both direct illocutionary and indirect acts. This explained that the President goes beyond saying or stating, in the process of making statements, while certain acts were also performed. The fact that all the sentences have both direct and indirect speech acts brought the total number of the illocutionary acts in the twenty sentences to forty. The indirect acts were mainly in the categories of directives, verdictives, commissives, expressives and declaratives.

Table 3 SUMMARY OF THE TABLE X-Y (ORFPs)

SPEECH ACTS (DIRECT AND INDIRECT)	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGES
Assertive	13	65%
Directive	4	20%
Expressive	3	15%
Verdictive	5	25%
Commissive	8	40%
Declarative	4	20%

In the wider-speech act sense, the totality of the speeches selected and analysed in our data displayed efforts made by President Jonathan to make the public accept his government as collective wish of Nigerians and should co-operate with him. He deployed a high sense of collectivism and politeness in his speeches; both the victory and the Inaugural Speech manifested high frequency of commissives with 40% of the sentences. This was because at the initial stage, he was trying to sustain the hope in the people of his desire to do well as the newly elected President.

The study further observed from the overall relative frequency percentages (ORFPs) tables that the President had used mainly sentences that were assertive with 65% of the total sentences. This is far higher than the ORFPs for directive acts which had a subtotal of 20%. This was followed by commissive acts with 40%, and the verdictives with 15% on the ORFPs table while declaratives had 25% and expressives had 20%. These ORFPs depict a particular style showed by an elected President as evident in his speeches.

It is better to state that the major preoccupation of Nigerian political leaders is the quest for acceptance, propaganda and cooperation which is borne out of the idea that a political leader cannot succeed if he does not enjoy the acceptance and cooperation of the people. Noteworthy is the fact that President Goodluck Jonathan speeches are distinct from what Ahamefula and Eze (2010) describes in Obasanjo's verbal aggression. According to them, rather than been assertive and commissive, he make use of sentences that were more verdictive and directive. In this study, we observed that the sentences that were verdictives in President Jonathan speeches were basically meant for assessing, while directives acts were mainly for appealing, and not commanding which is usually the case with the Military Political leaders' speeches.

CONCLUSION

The study made an insight into the president's blue print as reveal in the speeches. In other words, the speech acts bring to fore the intention and programmes of the administration. In the process or act of saying or doing things with words, direct or indirect acts are performed through speech. The speech acts in a work portrays the personality of the speaker. President Goodluck Jonathan as a political leader acknowledges at every point his family background and circumstances that brought him in power. In a nutshell, the speeches attempt to answer the basic requirements for good governance.

It is therefore clear from the analysis that democratic government places premium on the interest of the people. The president made less of verdictive speech acts that were used in the commanding sense. Speech Act theory as the theoretical framework in the analysis limit the analysis on how the president used the language and to what extent. In reference to this study, one is introduce to an advanced form of analysing the features in the public/political leaders using speech act theory. In conclusion, Good governance becomes visible and possible if the leaders work in line with their beautiful promises.

REFERENCES

1. Agbedo C (2007) Manipulative Language in President Yar'Adua's Budget
2. Agbogun, A.A. (2011). A Linguistic- Stylistic Analysis of Post-Appeal Court Victory
3. Speeches of Selected Governors of Nigeria" An Unpublished M.A. Thesis of
4. Department of English, ObafemiAwolowo University, Ile-Ife.
5. Ahamefula N. and Eze,Uchenna (2011) Verbal Aggression of Former President
6. OlusgunObasanjo. A seminar paper presented in Linguistics University of
7. Nigeria, Nsukka
8. Adetunji, A. (2006). Inclusion and Exclusion in Political Discourse: Deixis in
9. OlusegunObasanjo's Speeches". Journal of Language and Linguistics 5(2):177-
10. Adeyanju D. (2009). „Pragmatic Features of Political Speeches in English by Some
11. Prominent Nigerian Leaders". Journal of Political Discourse Analysis. Vol. 2(2),
12. U.S.A.: Nova Science Publisher.
13. Austin, J.L. (1962). How to Do Things with Words. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
14. Awonuga, C.O. (1988). „Political Rhetoric: Awolowo's Use of Language". Odu: A
15. Journal of West African Studies 34: 150-196.
16. Awonuga, C.O. (2005). „A Stylistic Study of Sustenance of Democracy by Olusegun
17. Obasanjo". Journal of Social Science 11(2): 111-119.
18. Ayeomoni, M. O. (2005a). „A Linguistic-Stylistic Analysis of Some Political
19. Speeches of Past Nigerian Military Rulers" in Papers in English and Linguistics
20. (PEL) Vol.6, Ile-Ife: The Linguistic Association. 1-13
21. Ayeomoni, M. O. (2005b). „Grapho-Syntactic Analysis of Selected Political Speeches of Some Nigerian Military Heads of State", in Awka Journal of Linguistics and
22. Languages. Edited by Philip, N. Anagbogu. No. 1, Department of Linguistics, NnamdiAzikiwe University Awka. 1-9.
23. Ayoola, K. (2005). „Interpreting Nigeria's Political Discourse: A Study of President
24. OlusegunObasanjo's July 26, 2005 Address to Nigeria's National
25. Assembly". Papers in English Linguistic (PEL) Vol. 6: 1-13. Ile-Ife: The
26. Linguistics Association
27. Beard, A. (2000). The Language of Politics. London: Routledge.
28. Bloor, T., and M. Bloor (2004). The Functional Analysis of English: A Hallidayan
29. Approach. London: Arnold.
30. Dada, S.A. (2004). „Introduction to Pragmatics" In T. Bamisaye (ed.) An Integrated
31. Study in Language and Society. Lagos: Majab Publishers, 141-166.
32. Halliday, M.A.K. (1970). „Language Structure and Language Function". In John
33. Lyons (ed.) New Horizons in Linguistics. U.S.A.: Penguin Books. 142-165.
34. Opeibi, B.O. (2009). Discourse, Politics and the 1993 Presidential Election Campaigns
35. in Nigeria. Lagos: Nouvelle Communications Limited.
36. Searle, J.R. (1969). Speech Acts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
37. Taiwo, R. (2009). „Legitimization and Coercion in Political Discourse: A Case Study
38. of OlusegunObasanjo Address to the PDP Elders and Stakeholders Forum" Journal of Political Discourse Analysis. Vol. 2(2):191-205.
39. Thomas, J. (1995). Meaning in Interaction: An Introduction to Pragmatics. New York: Longman.
40. Omoniyi, M.A and Olajoke, S.A (2012) A Pragmatic Analysis of Victory and Inaugural Speeches of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. Journal of theory & Practice.