

PRAGMATIC ACTS IN PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU'S SPEECH ON END BAD GOVERNANCE PROTESTS

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the pragmatic acts deployed by President Ahmed Bola Tinubu in his speech on End Bad Governance protests. The speech of the President downloaded from the internet served as the data for the study. The study adopted Mey's (2001) pragmatic acts theory as its theoretical framework and deployed qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis to analyse its data. The results of the analysis show that the president employed pragmatic acts of bothering, sympathising, promising, pleading, threatening, directing, informing, assuring, ordering, aiming, advising, requesting, thanking and praying in his speech. The dominant pragmatic acts deployed by the President in his speech are pragmatic acts of informing and advising; they occurred with a frequency of 5 or 17.86% each. The second dominant pragmatic acts the President used in his speech are pragmatic acts of directing and promising; they occurred with a frequency of 3 or 10.71% each. The third predominant pragmatic acts the president used in his speech are pragmatic acts of bothering and assuring, they occurred with a frequency of 2 or 7.14% each. The fourth predominant pragmatic acts utilised in the President's speech are pragmatic acts of sympathising, pleading, threatening, ordering, aiming, requesting, thanking and praying; they occurred with a frequency of 1 or 3.57% each. The study concludes that the President deployed different pragmatic acts in his speech to unearth new government's policies to ameliorate economic crisis and hardship Nigerians were experiencing.

Key words: Bad Governance, Pragmatic Acts, Protest, Speech, Bola Tinubu.

1.0 Introduction

The President of any country in the world may deliver a speech when occasion calls for it. The speech may focus on Independence Anniversary, Workers' Day, Democracy Day, Victory Day, among others. Although the office of the President is the highest office in a country, there is the need to set up a link between his office and the natives of the country. The President's speech serves as a link between the President and the society and its members (Nedashkivska, 2006, p.41 as cited in Osisanwo, 2017, p. 297). Under normal circumstances the President of Federal Republic of Nigeria is supposed to deliver six speeches from January to December. While the inaugural speech signifies the inception of a newly elected or re-elected administration, the Democracy Day speech serves to commemorate the restoration of democracy in the country. An Independence Day speech is delivered on 1st October of every year to commemorate the country's Independence. A Workers' Day speech is often delivered on 1st May of every year to appreciate the contribution of the country's workers to the development of the country. A New Year speech is often delivered on 1st January of every year to welcome citizens to the New Year and take a stock of the administration's achievements in the preceding year. (Osisanwo, 2017, p.297 - 298).

Once in a while, special speeches are made on emergency situations such as insecurity, national disaster, and violent protest and so on; hence the speeches made by a Nigerian President in a year may not be fixed. Among the types of speeches listed, special speech is designed to address End Bad Governance Protest embarked upon by the youths from 1st to 10th August, 2024. The speech was delivered by the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to communicate Nigerians his government's plans and initiatives towards ameliorating economic crisis and hardship Nigerians were experiencing. Vivid language usage in the speech enabled the audience to understand what the President related to them.

Language and Politics

Chahbane and Zrizi (2023) point out that language and politics depend on each other. They further explain that politics needs language more than language needs politics since the latter depends greatly on linguistic elements. Furthermore, they explain that politics and language formed relationship that will be difficult to break. These assertions indicate that language and politics are interdependent, although politics counts on language more than language counts on politics. Besides, there is a tight relationship between language and politics that will be hard to break. Wilson (1990, as cited in Lin, 2011, p. 471), asserts that metaphor is a sort of language form which plays three roles in political communication. It can help simplify complicated political argument by reducing it to a metaphorical form; it may also evoke emotions and make emphasis on a particular goal. Finally, politicians may utilize metaphor to present themselves better than their opponents in order to achieve certain political goals.

Moreover, Balogun and Murana (2018), explain that language gives opportunities for politicians to explore their verbal communicative resources and manipulate words to suit their intentions. This assertion suggests that language enables the politicians to deploy words verbally to convey their intentions to the people. Opeibi (2009, as cited in Balogun and Murana, 2018, p.65), points out that language is the means of expressing the candidate's manifesto, superior political thoughts and party's ideologies. This assertion indicates that language is the medium through which politicians express their manifestos, superior political thoughts and their parties' ideologies. Ezema (2009), explains that the usefulness of the English language in Political Education in Nigeria is quite outstanding. He explains further that the language is an important medium through which politicians acquire political knowledge from both books and speeches of other politicians who have more experiences. Furthermore, he explains that politicians who are versed in the English language can easily win support from their listeners via the way they manipulate the language.

Scholars have carried out pragmatic studies on speeches delivered by President Muhammadu Buhari, Nigerian Presidents between 1979 and 2015 and speeches delivered by president Nana Akufo-Addo. However, these studies have not examined pragmatic acts in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's speech on End Bad Governance protests. Therefore, this study examines pragmatic acts deployed in the speech of the President by

1. identifying the pragmatic acts deployed in the speech of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on End Bad Governance protest and discuss them in accordance with the text preoccupation and;
2. calculating the frequencies of occurrence of the pragmatic acts and their percentages.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

Israel et al (2023) conducted research on president Nana Akufo-Addo first official address on Ghanaian economic crisis. The study applied concepts from semiotic model and pragmatic acts, and employed qualitative method of data analysis to analyse its data. The result of the analysis revealed that the president deployed different semiotic elements and pragmatic acts through which he effectively communicated his audience on government plans and initiatives towards ameliorating the escalating inflation and the resultant economic hardship Ghanaians were experiencing. The findings revealed that semiotic elements such as the coat of arm, the president's outfit, the national flag, the microphone and the outfit of the sign – language interpreter effectively acts as signifier and immensely contributed to meaning. Again, the findings showed that the President employed several pragmatic acts in his address. The pragmatic acts he employed are pragmatic acts of informing (47.06%), pragmatic acts of tasking (13.37%), pragmatic acts of cautioning (7.45%), pragmatic acts of sympathising and recounting (3.16%) each; pragmatic acts of promising (16.01%), pragmatic acts of pleading/praying, reporting and instructing (2.11%) each; pragmatic acts of saluting (9.06%), pragmatic

acts of suggesting and urging (1.05%) each. The paper, therefore, concludes that through shared situational knowledge, reference and inference, Ghanaians were able to understand what the President wished to communicate. The study is different from the present one because while it concerns a Ghanaian president the latter concerns a Nigerian president. Besides, the former examines both semiotic features and pragmatic acts in the Ghanaian president's speech but the latter focuses on only pragmatic acts in the speech under study.

Aremu (2017) engaged in pragmatic analysis of conceptual Mapping in inaugural speeches of Nigerian Presidents between 1999 and 2015. The study adopted Lakoff's and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory and modified model of Mey's (2001) pragmeme. The findings revealed that Nigerian Presidents' inaugural speeches are characterised by several metaphorical mapping such as characterising an election as a battle, or a sport or a journey. Mapping in the text are used as pragmatic strategies for appealing, remembering, thanking, warning and promising. The paper concludes that understanding cognitive metaphor in the text requires the knowledge of the participants' shared cultural knowledge and world view. This study differs with the current one in the areas of title and theoretical framework. The study explores from pragmatic point of view, conceptual mapping in inaugural speeches of Nigerian presidents within a specific period but the current study looks at pragmatic acts in the speech of only one president about an occurrence in Nigeria. Also, while the former adopts conceptual metaphor theory and Mey's modified model of pragmeme, the present study adopts Mey's pragmatic acts theory.

Tifili (2023) engaged in a pragmatic analysis of President Muhammadu Buhari's selected speeches on climate change. The study aims to interrogate the pragmatic implications of linguistic resources employed by the president in his selected speeches on climate change. The study adopted Mey's (2001) pragmatic acts theory as its theoretical framework. Three speeches of the president were purposively sampled between May and August, 2020. These speeches were analysed and the

result of the analysis revealed that the dominant in the corpus was that of informing. The pragmatic was expressed by means of eight (8) allopracts, namely, reporting, advocating, appraising, reminding, directing, assuring, asserting and appreciating. These nuances were anchored on pragmatic strategies such as shared situational knowledge (SSK), inference (INF), and Reference (REF). The study concludes that the choice of linguistic resources in the corpus was appropriate to the end that the perceived information needs of the masses seemed factored into the diction, as evidenced by the pragmatic strategies utilised. The study examined pragmatic implication of linguistic resources in selected speeches of President Muhammadu Buhari while the present study focuses on pragmatic acts in only one speech of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu which makes it different from the former study.

Ugoala and Israel (2020) carried out research on practs in first official speeches of presidents Muhammadu Buhari and Nana Akufo-Addo on coronavirus pandemic. The study adopted Mey's (2001) Pragmatic acts theory as its theoretical framework and deployed content analytical method which involves qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis to analyse its data. The study revealed that both presidents deployed different types of pragmatic acts to make their intentions of combating the virus known to their subjects. It was discovered that President Muhammadu Buhari deployed 95 pragmatic acts in his speech to achieve five pragmatic functions, namely, to reveal achievements and further action (53.69%), to instruct and direct (28.41%), to commend (4.21%), to pacify/encourage (10.55%), and to persuade (3.16%). President Nana Akufo-Addo, on the other hand, deployed 39 pragmatic acts to achieve six pragmatic functions, namely, to reveal achievements and further actions (56.41%), to instruct and direct (25.64%), to pacify (7.69%), to commend (5.13%), to persuade (2.56%), and to warn (2.56%). It was also discovered that shared situational knowledge, reference and inference enable the citizens of both countries to understand what both presidents wish to communicate to them. The study concludes that through the analysis of different pragmatic acts in speeches, thematic focus of speech can be

ascertained. The study is different from the present study just in the area of coverage or scope. While it considers practices in the speeches of two presidents the current study examines same but the speech of just a president.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

Pragmatic acts theory is a theory of language study developed by Jacob Mey in 2001. What triggered the development of the theory were weaknesses found in Austin's (1962) speech acts theory which was later developed by Searle in 1969. According to Odogwu (2017) speech acts is abstract and does not consider context its analysis. To understand the meaning of a text fully, the text need not to be studied in abstraction. Explaining the importance of context in language study, Mey (2001, p.41, as cited in Osisanwo, 2017, p.300) asserts that context is an action; it is about grasping what things are for. It is also what gives our expressions their true pragmatic meanings and grants them the right to be considered as true pragmatic acts.

Besides, Mey (2001, p.43, as cited in Osisanwo, 2017), further explains that context exerts influence on "what one can say and what one cannot say." This assertion connotes that some words may be appropriate to use in a particular context while some may not be appropriate to use in such a context. As a result of flaws of Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) speech acts theory explained above, Mey (2001) proposes what he calls theory of action which takes into consideration the individual involved in the pragmatic process and the context of situation (Odogwu, 2017). This theory deals with language users and context in which linguistic and paralinguistic features are deployed to achieve communicative goals. It is not like speech acts theory which focuses on verbal communication alone and does not consider context in its analysis.

Moreover, Mey (2001, p.221, as cited in Odogwu, 2017, p.107) explains again that pragmatic acts theory focuses on "the environment in which both speaker and hearer find their affordances, such that the entire situation is brought to bear on what can be said in the situation,

as well as what is actually being said.” The rule here is not on individual speech acts, but on the whole situation in which interactants realise their communicative goals.

Figure 1: Mey's Scheme of a Pragmeme

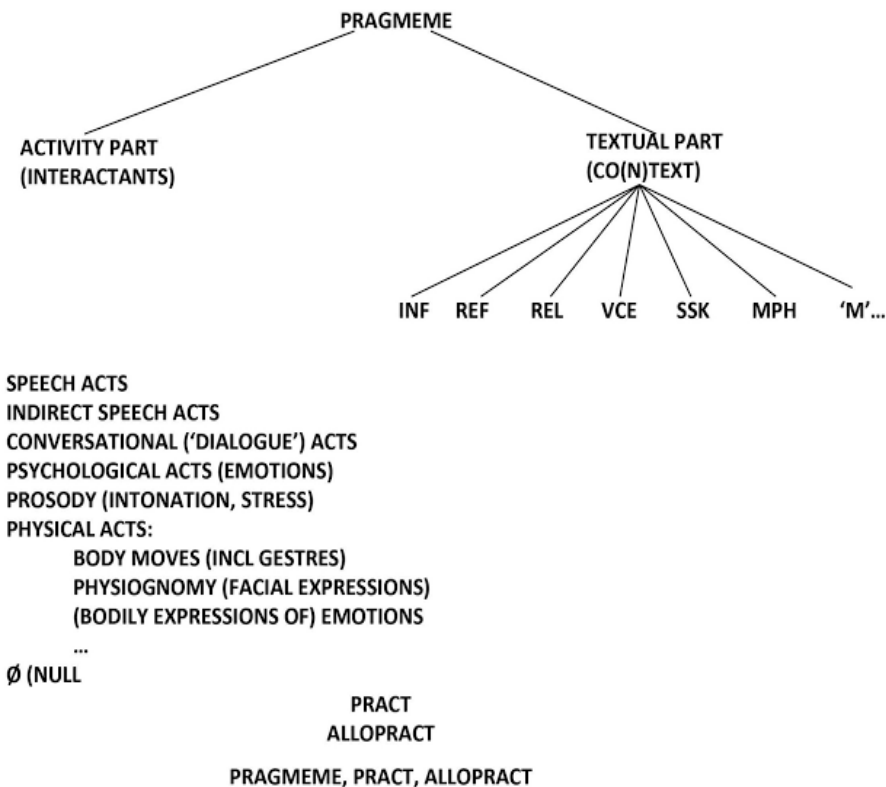


Figure 1 (one) indicates that Mey's (2001) theory of pragmeme has two parts, namely, activity and textual parts. Inya (2012) explains that the activity parts comprises list of options available to language users for their communication purposes. He explains further that the textual part consists of elements such as inference (INF), reference (REF), relevance (REL), voice (VCE), Shared Situational Knowledge (SSK), metaphor (MPH), and metapragmatic joker (M), which interact with the elements on the activity part to realise pragmatic acts.

4.0 Research Methodology

This paper chooses speech of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on End Bad Governance protests. The speech was downloaded from the internet and analysed qualitatively and quantitatively using the Pragmatic Acts Theory of Mey (2001).

4.1 Data Analysis and discussion

Pragmatic acts in the speech. The speech of president Bola Ahmed Tinubu on End Bad Governance Protests is characterised by different pragmatic acts.

Pragmatic acts of Bothering

Pragmatic acts of bothering are concerned with expressing pain someone feels as a result of destruction of lives and properties by others. In the pragmatic acts of bothering below, president Bola Ahmed Tinubu expresses his pain over destruction of properties and the loss of lives as a result of end bad governance protests.

“I speak to you today with a heavy heart and a sense of responsibility, aware of the turmoil and violent protests unleashed in some of our states” para. 1.

“I am especially pained by the loss of lives in Borno, Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna and other states, the destruction of public facilities in some states, and the wanton looting of supermarkets and shops” Para.3.

Pragmatic acts of Sympathising

Pragmatic acts of sympathising deal with sympathising with people for loss of lives. In this pragmatic act of sympathising, president Bola Ahmed Tinubu sympathises with the parents and relations of the people who lost their lives as a result of the protests.

“I commiserate with the families and relations of those who have died in the protests ...” para. 4.

Pragmatic acts of Promising

Pragmatic acts of promising are concerned with the declaration of assurance that one will do what he has promised to do. In the pragmatic acts of promising below, the president promised that his government would not allow few people with political agenda to destroy Nigeria. He also promised to distribute kits of low or no cost to commercial vehicles and make the result of his work visible and concrete for Nigerians to see, feel and enjoy.

“... our government will not stand idly by and allow a few with a clear political agenda to tear this nation apart.” Para. 5.

“... we will be distributing a million kits of extremely low or no cost to commercial vehicles that transport people and goods...” Para. 17.

“We are working hard for you, and the result will soon be visible and concrete for everyone to see, feel, and enjoy.” Para. 35.

Pragmatic acts of Pleading

Pragmatic acts of pleading deals with earnest appeal to someone or a group of people to do something for one. In this pragmatic acts, the president appeal to the protesters and organisers to shun protest and dialogue with his government.

“... I hereby enjoin protesters and organisers to suspend any further protest and create room for dialogue, which I have always acceded to at the slightest opportunity” Para. 6.

Pragmatic acts of threatening

Pragmatic acts of threatening deals with an expression that indicates intention to hurt someone or a group of people. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu made a statement that indicates that protesters who destroyed lives and properties would face the wrath of the law.

“... the law will catch up with you....” Para. 6.

Pragmatic acts of Directing

Pragmatic acts of Directing deal with utterances that direct a person or group of people to carry out an action. In the pragmatic acts

of directing below, the president directed the law enforcement agencies to protect lives and properties, remove tariffs and other import duties and maintain law and order in the country.

“... Our law enforcement agencies should continue to ensure the full protection of lives and properties of innocent citizens in a responsible manner.” Para. 7.

“... I have directed that tariffs and other import duties should be removed on rice, wheat, maize, sorghum, drugs and other pharmaceutical and medical supplies ...” para. 29.

“... Security operatives should continue to maintain peace, law, and order in our country following the necessary conventions on human rights, to which Nigeria is a signatory.” Para. 37.

Pragmatic acts of informing

Pragmatic acts of informing are concerned with giving information to people. In the pragmatic acts of informing below, the president informed Nigerians what stagnate Nigerian economy, what he has done and is still doing to revamp the country's economy and better condition of living of the people.

“For decades, our economy has remained anaemic and taken a deep because of many misalignments that have stunted our growth...” para. 9.

“In the past 14 months, our government has made significant strides in rebuilding the foundation of our economy to carry us into a future of plenty and abundance.” Para. 11.

“... last month, we increased our oil production to 1.61 million barrels per a day, and our gas assets are receiving the attention they deserve.” Para. 15.

“We have started the distribution of conversion kits and setting up of conversion centres across the country in conjunction with the private sector...” Para. 18.

“I signed the National Minimum Wage into law last week, and the lowest earning workers will now earn at least N70, 000.00 a month.” Para. 26.

Pragmatic acts of assuring

Pragmatic acts of assuring guarantee that something will be done. In the pragmatic acts of assuring below, president Bola Ahmed Tinubu assured Nigerians that he was focused on delivering good governance to them, and that his government was committed to listening and addressing their concerns.

“ I can assure you that I am focused fully on delivering the governance to the people, good governance for that matter.”para.10.

“... I want to assure you that our government is committed to listening and addressing the concerns of our citizens.” Para. 31.

Pragmatic acts of ordering

Pragmatic acts of ordering deal with a statement made by a person with authority telling someone or group of people to do something. In these pragmatic acts of ordering, president Bola Ahmed Tinubu instructed that extra 50 billion naira each be released to NELFUND - the students' loan, and Credit Corporation from the proceeds of crime retrieved by the EFCC.

“...this week, I ordered the release of an additional 50 billion naira each for NELFUND - the Students' loan, and Credit Corporation from the proceeds of crime recovered by the EFCC.” Para. 20.

Pragmatic acts of Aiming

Pragmatic acts of Aiming are concerned with intention to achieving something. In the pragmatic acts of aiming below, the president intends to complete 100,000 housing units within three years.

“..Our goal is to complete a total of 100,000 housing units over the next three year...”para. 28.

Pragmatic acts of advising

Pragmatic acts of advising deal with opinions which people give to others about what they should do or how they should act in a particular situation. In the pragmatic acts of advising below, the president advised Nigerians not to engage in violent protest; listen to those who would tell them that their government did not care for them, and not to let enemies of democracy use them to promote agenda which would set the country back democratically. Besides, he advised Nigerians to work together to build a brighter future, choose hope over fear, unity over division and progress over stagnation.

“... we must not let violence and destruction tear our nation apart...”
Para. 32.

“Let nobody misinform and miseducate you about your country or tell you that your government does not care about you...” para. 35.

“... Do not let the enemies of democracy use you to promote an unconstitutional agenda that will set us back on our democracy journey.” Para. 36.

“Let us work together to build a brighter future for ourselves and for generations to come” Para. 36.

“... let us choose hope over fear, unity over division and progress over stagnation” Para. 36.

Pragmatic acts of Requesting

Pragmatic acts of requesting deals with an utterance made to ask for something politely or officially. The president deployed pragmatic acts of requesting to request Nigerians not to shut down the country's economy which was recovering.

“... The economy is recovering; please, don't shut its oxygen....” Para. 36.

Pragmatic acts of Thanking

Pragmatic acts of thanking are often used to express gratitude to someone who has done something appreciative for one. President

Bola Ahmed Tinubu employed this type of pragmatic acts to thank God and also thank Nigerians for paying attention to his speech.

“Thank God and thank you for your attention.” Para. 38.

Pragmatic acts of praying

Pragmatic acts of praying are concerned with speaking to a God in order to ask for something. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu employed pragmatic acts of praying to supplicate to God to continue to bless Nigeria.

“... May God continue to bless our great Nation.” Para. 38.

5.0 Findings

The research found out that president Bola Ahmed Tinubu deployed pragmatic acts of bothering, sympathising, promising, pleading, threatening, directing, informing, assuring, ordering, aiming, advising, requesting, thanking and praying in his speech. The dominant Pragmatic acts the President deployed in his speech are pragmatic acts of informing and advising, they occurred with a frequency of 5 or 17.86% each. The Second dominant pragmatic acts the President employed in his speech are pragmatic acts of directing and promising, they occurred with a frequency of 3 or 10.71% each. The third predominant pragmatic acts used by the president in his speech are pragmatic acts of bothering and assuring, they occurred with a frequency of 2 or 7.14% each. The fourth predominant Pragmatic acts used by the President in his speech are pragmatic acts of sympathising, pleading, threatening, ordering, aiming, requesting, thanking and praying, they occurred with a frequency of 1 or 3.57% each.

Table 1:

Pragmatic Acts Summary across Tinubu's Text

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Pragmatic acts of bothering	2	7.14
Pragmatic acts of sympathising	1	3.57
Pragmatic acts of promising	3	10.71
Pragmatic acts of pleading	1	3.57

Pragmatic acts of threatening	1	3.57
Pragmatic acts of directing	3	10.71
Pragmatic acts of informing	5	17.86
Pragmatic acts of assuring	2	7.14
Pragmatic acts of ordering	1	3.57
Pragmatic acts of aiming	1	3.57
Pragmatic acts of advising	5	17.86
Pragmatic acts of requesting	1	3.57
Pragmatic acts of thanking	1	3.57
Pragmatic acts of praying	1	3.57
Total	28	100

Conclusion

The study revealed that president Bola Ahmed Tinubu deployed different pragmatic acts in his speech on End Bad Governance Protests to communicate Nigerians on government plans and initiatives towards ameliorating economic crisis and hardship Nigerians were experiencing. The study concludes that different pragmatic acts deployed in the President's speech assigned a variety of functions to the speech.

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