Original Research Article

Textual Analysis of the Speech Acts Present in President Buhari's Speech During the #Endsars Protest

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Abstract: This study provides a pragmatic analysis of the speech acts present in President Muhammadu Buhari's address during the #EndSARS protests of October 2020. Grounded in J.L. Austin's Speech Act Theory, the research explores how locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts were employed to convey, perform, and elicit actions and reactions. Through a descriptive qualitative methodology, the speech was analyzed to determine its effectiveness in addressing public grievances and its broader impact on Nigerian youth. Findings reveal that while the speech contained elements of Austin's speech acts, including appeals, assertions, and subtle warnings, its reception by the youth was predominantly negative. Historical context, including previous speeches perceived as dismissive of Nigerian youth, influenced the audience's response, resulting in heightened tensions and continued unrest. The analysis underscores the critical role of language in governance and public communication, highlighting how linguistic choices can shape societal reactions. The research concludes that President Buhari's speech, while linguistically aligned with speech act theory, failed to achieve its intended conciliatory effect, instead amplifying dissatisfaction among the youth.

Keywords: Speech Act Theory, #EndSARS Protests, President Muhammadu Buhari, Pragmatic Analysis, Political Discourse Analysis (PDA).

INTRODUCTION

In his 1909 article *Social Organization: A Study of the Larger Mind*, Charles Horton Cooley defines communication as the mechanism through which human relations develop, involving both the symbols of the mind and the means of conveying them across space and time. Building on this, Child (2019) defines communication as the process of using messages to generate meaning, emphasizing that meaning is created when an utterance is properly understood by the intended audience.

Speech, according to Edward Sapir (1921), is a human activity that varies across different social groups and is a product of long-standing social usage. He views speech as the capacity to orally communicate with a group to express viewpoints, share ideas, or deliver important speeches. This ties into J.L. Austin's theory of speech acts, as presented in his work *How to Do Things with Words*, where he argues that speech is not just about delivering words but also involves taking actions. According to Austin, every speech act has three components:

1. Locutionary Act: The literal meaning of the utterance (e.g., saying "It is too loud outside").
2. Illocutionary Act: The intention or purpose behind the utterance (e.g., requesting that the students close the door).
3. Perlocutionary Act: The effect the utterance has on the listener (e.g., the students closing the door as a result of the statement).

Understanding these categories of speech acts allows the audience to grasp the speaker's intended message more fully. Context plays a crucial role in helping listeners understand the meaning of speech, and cultural experiences influence

how speech acts are used and interpreted. Austin's theory shows that speech is not just a verbal exchange but also involves actions that are aimed at achieving specific outcomes.

Speech Acts

The theoretical framework of Speech Acts, developed by J.L. Austin in *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), is used in this study to analyze language data. Austin's theory, rooted in the philosophy of ordinary language, asserts that to speak is to act, and divides speech into two categories: constatives and performatives.

- Constatives are expressions that describe facts or states of affairs, which can be judged as true or false (e.g., "The door is open"). They do not perform actions but simply convey information about the world.
- Performatives, on the other hand, perform actions when spoken, such as making promises, issuing commands, or enacting legal deeds (e.g., "I do" in a marriage ceremony or "I name this ship"). These do not describe or report a state but constitute the act itself, like marrying or naming something.

Austin's attempts to distinguish between constatives and performatives based on truth-value and appropriateness led to the realization that these categories are not rigid. Both constatives and performatives can be either true or false and may be deemed appropriate or inappropriate in different contexts. Thus, Austin shifts from this binary classification to a more general theory of speech acts, where every speech act can be understood as consisting of three parts:

1. Locutionary Act: The basic act of producing meaningful linguistic expressions (e.g., saying "I promise").
2. Illocutionary Act: The function or purpose behind the utterance, such as making a promise or a request.
3. Perlocutionary Act: The effect the utterance has on the listener, like persuading, convincing, or surprising them.

Austin identifies five main types of illocutionary acts based on their force: *verdictives*, *exercitives*, *commissives*, *behavitives*, and *expositives*. Each type refers to a different kind of action or role a speaker performs through their words.

Searle (1999), building on Austin's work, proposed a different classification of illocutionary acts: assertives (representing the world), directives (attempting to get the hearer to act), commissives (committing to an action), expressives (expressing attitudes), and declaratives (changing the world by saying something). This study focuses on the classification of speech acts, particularly locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, to explore how people perform various actions through language, emphasizing the functions of language over its structure.

Austin's Classification of Speech Acts

Austin divided speech acts into three categories: locutionary, illocutionary, and per-locutionary in his course work and article on *"How to do things with words."* These three speech actions are extensively discussed for the sake of this study because the analysis of the president's speech is be based on these theories.

1. A locutionary act is when something is said. It is the act of speaking specific statements that are both meaningful and syntactically well-formed.
2. Illocutionary act: It is carried out either as an act of speaking or as an act of not speaking. The illocutionary utterance carries some weight. It is adept in using particular tenors, attitudes, sentiments, or emotions. Illocutionary speech always contains the speaker's or listeners' intended meaning. In day-to-day living, it is frequently used as a tone of warning.
3. Per-locutionary act: The audience typically gets a feeling of the consequences of their actions. The results could manifest as ideas, fantasies, emotions, or sentiments. The primary characteristics of per-locutionary statements are their effects on the recipient.

For Example

The locutionary act describes a dangerous situation, the illocutionary act acts as a force of the warning and per-locutionary acts frighten the addressee.

Distinction between the following Locution / Illocution / Per-locution

Locution => ("the words that are uttered or written")

Illocution => ("the speaker's or writer's intention")

Per-locution => ("the intended effect") (Archer, D. and Grundy: p.12)

Austin acknowledges that these three aspects of utterances are not entirely distinct from one another. If we want to understand the similarities between assertions and performative utterances and how each can go wrong, we must take into account the entire situation in which the utterance is issued—the entire speech act. Maybe there isn't much of a difference between assertions and performative utterances (Austin 1975:118).

SARS

The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) was a unit within Nigeria's police force, established in 1992 under the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department (SCIID). Its purpose was to combat violent crimes such as

kidnapping, armed robbery, and car theft through covert operations. However, SARS gained notoriety for widespread human rights abuses, including unlawful arrests, extortion, torture, extrajudicial killings, and harassment, particularly of young Nigerians. These abuses sparked protests, starting with social media campaigns like #EndSARS, which called for the disbandment of the unit.

The protests gained momentum in 2017 and culminated in a massive national outcry in October 2020, following a viral video showing the shooting of an unarmed boy by SARS officers. Demonstrations, largely led by young Nigerians, spread across the country, especially in Lagos and Abuja, demanding reforms. Activists and celebrities rallied behind the cause, with international support coming from figures like Beyoncé, Rihanna, and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

The October 2020 protests intensified, with demands including:
1. Immediate disbandment of SARS
2. Release of arrested protesters
3. Justice for victims of police brutality
4. Prosecution of SARS officers accused of abuse
5. Psychological evaluation of non-culpable officers

Despite the protests being peaceful at first, the situation escalated on October 20, 2020, when soldiers were reported to have opened fire on peaceful protesters at the Lekki Toll Gate, resulting in numerous injuries and fatalities. This violent crackdown sparked further unrest, including looting, arson, and attacks on police stations.

In response to the protests, on October 11, 2020, the Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Adamu, announced the dissolution of SARS, though a new unit, SWAT, was quickly established. SWAT was meant to replace SARS, but with promises of improved training, psychological evaluations, and stricter oversight.

The protests did not end with the dissolution of SARS; they expanded to include broader demands for police reforms and social justice. President Muhammadu Buhari addressed the nation on October 22, 2020, after the Lekki shooting, but his response was widely seen as inadequate, leaving many Nigerians disappointed and further angered. The protests remain a significant moment in Nigeria's fight for police reform and human rights.

The events of #EndSARS have continued to shape conversations about police brutality, governance, and accountability in Nigeria, with ongoing calls for justice and structural change.

Speech
Speech is a vocal form of communication where humans convey meaning through language. Words are formed from combinations of vowel and consonant sounds, each unique to a language, and are used in sentences according to grammatical rules. Speaking involves various speech acts such as informing, stating, questioning, persuading, and directing, and includes paralinguistic features like tone, volume, and rhythm that further shape the message.

Speech also unintentionally conveys information about a speaker's background, including factors like gender, age, origin (through accent), physical or psychological states, and education. Additionally, speech can be used for personal purposes like self-reflection, memory testing, prayer, or meditation.

Linguistics, cognitive science, psychology, and other disciplines study speech, comparing it to written language, which may differ in vocabulary, grammar, and phonetics, a condition known as diglossia.

Types of Speeches:
1. Informative Speech: Aims to educate the audience on a topic using facts, data, and figures, without attempting to persuade.
2. Entertaining Speech: Intended to amuse, often with humor or anecdotes, typically at social events like weddings or parties.
3. Demonstrative Speech: Educates and shows how to perform a task, often with visual aids.
4. Persuasive Speech: Seeks to convince the audience of the speaker's viewpoint, often backed by evidence and emotional appeals.
5. Oratorical Speech: Formal speeches, such as those at graduations or funerals, that express thoughts on a specific topic.
6. Debate Speech: Delivered in a structured debate, aiming to support a particular position with evidence, not necessarily to persuade the audience.
7. Special Occasion Speech: Tailored to specific events like weddings or award ceremonies, focusing on the occasion rather than facts.

8. Pitch Speech: Seeks to persuade the audience to support or purchase an idea, product, or service.
9. Motivational Speech: Aims to inspire and uplift the audience, often used by coaches or leaders to encourage improvement or achievement.
10. Impromptu Speech: Delivered without preparation, often in spontaneous or unexpected situations.
11. Farewell Speech: Delivered to say goodbye, often emotional, at events like job departures or relocations.
12. Explanatory Speech: Provides a detailed explanation or step-by-step breakdown of a process, without visual aids.
13. Eulogy or Funeral Speech: Pays tribute to a deceased person, often delivered by a loved one or clergy at a funeral.

These categories reflect the diverse contexts and purposes of speeches, allowing speakers to select the most appropriate style to achieve their communicative goals.

Theoretical Review

The study of speech acts cannot be regarded as strange because over the years, other researchers have found the topic of speech acts interesting enough to look into. As can be seen of Mochamad Rifki (2015) a master degree student of the Faculty of Language and Arts from the Ypgyakarta State university In Indonesia who wrote a master's thesis on A Pragmatic Analysis of the Speech Acts of Requests Expressed By the Characters in Office Space. In his research, he focused on the analysis of speech act of requests as reflected in the film entitled Office Space, in his research he aimed at investigating the types of request and identifying the strategies of request employed by characters in the movie. Nihat Bayat (2012), an assistant professor at the University of Akdeniz in Turkey, conducted a study on the use of speech acts as well. It attempted to ascertain the methods used by 150 participants pursuing their education in the Preschool Teacher Education Programme to perform the acts of apologising, complaining, refusing, and thanking.

Researches on speech acts have also been carried out by researchers in Nigeria; in 2021, B. Odeh, A. Ngozi, and B. Dioka conducted a study on the Speech Acts Analysis of Dame Patience Jonathan's Speeches, a former first lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The speech act analysis of Dame Patience Jonathan served as its focal point. The primary goals of the project were to categorise the speech actions in the chosen speeches by Dame Patience and to ascertain the impact of such acts on the nation's population. The addresses featured the Calabar and Umuahia campaign speeches, as well as the Chibok girl's speech. According to the study, the speeches might have incited rivalry and chauvinism in addition to demonstrating the incompetence of the previous administration in handling the issue at hand. By applying Searle's classification of speech acts, the results also demonstrated the many speech acts that Dame Patience Jonathan employed. The work distinguished between the Directive Speech Act, the Commissive Speech Act, the Representative Speech Act, and the Declarative Speech Act. The research also revealed how politicians, like Dame Patience Jonathan, manipulated listeners and country citizens using words. The study also covered how the public responded to Dame Patience Jonathan's remarks and their impact on the public. According to the study, a political figure should consider the speech's potential consequences before giving a speech or addressing the public. C. Agbara and K. Omole (2014) conducted a pragmatic analysis of speech acts in Nigerian legislative discourse. They are among the several researchers from Nigeria who have studied speech actions. The research aimed to illustrate that speech acts are executed not only at the individual level but also at several levels of the collective persona. With particular reference to Nigerian legislative discourse, the study will identify and describe the many forms of collective speech actions that are typical of institutional discourse using Senate Hansard on Consideration of Bills.

The above different researches carried out by various authors on Speech Acts prompted the author to explore the world of speech acts, and experience the beauty of understanding why certain speeches are made and the effects these speeches have on the audience/ listeners/ readers, hence the purpose of this research.

METHODS

The objective of a descriptive qualitative research is to gain an understanding of phenomena by analysing its traits and attributes. When we wish to investigate a subject that hasn't been thoroughly examined before, or when we want to inquire more about a subject that has been investigated before but from a new angle, we employ this kind of study. The descriptive qualitative method is the methodology that was used by the researcher for this investigation. The speech delivered by Nigeria's immediate past President Muhammadu Buhari is considered standard presidential speech in the country. Furthermore, the former president delivered the address in his capacity as the Federal Republic of Nigeria's commander in chief in an effort to defuse the rioting and soothe the youths' outrage. The speech was examined using the J.L Austin's Speech Acts Theory. In order to facilitate the analysis, utterances were explicated for analysis. The speech was divided into three sections: an introduction and greeting, the major body, and the conclusion. The speech was broken into thirty-eight (38) simple and complex sentences. Selected utterances comprised the first three and last three sentences as it is expected that the introduction and conclusion of any speech are usually embedded with meanings that are significant for the intentions of the speakers, the utterances are labeled Data 1 to 38. Each utterance will be analyzed based on the pragmatic functions of locutionary, illocutionary and per-locutionary acts of the speeches.

The researcher used descriptive qualitative method to describe and analyse the different speech acts which were taken from the President Buhari's speech. The researcher analysed the data according to the Austin's concept of the three major types of speech acts, which are the locutionary, illocutionary and per-locutionary acts.

The data for this study is the speech given by President Muhammadu Buhari during the #EndSARS protest in October 2020. The speech lasted for twelve minutes in which he addressed the issues that were currently happening in the country; he also admonished Nigerians to take advantage of some of the poverty alleviation initiatives by his administration. This speech was given on the 22nd of October 2020, it was given via a tele-broadcast on Channels Television, a 24-hour news broadcasting channel in Nigeria at 7pm Nigerian time.

The secondary data used are extensive library-based research and works produced in related areas. Hence, textbooks, journals and internet sources relevant to the research are consulted in order to make the study relevant.

The broadcast was played repeatedly to obtain complete and accurate transcription of data, and online searches were done to get written transcription of the speech by other authors. Considering that the study is basically inclined towards the analysis of the use of the different speech acts, the focal point of the data transcription process was on how to effectively extract spoken speech and convert it to written form while ensuring that the intended message was conveyed. The instrument employed in the transcription of the data include: paper, biro and online resources. This was carefully done for accuracy of utterance in the speech.

The study is a pragmatic analysis of President Buhari's speech during the #EndSARS protest which happened between 0ctober 8th -20th 2020. This researcher singled out this particular speech during the #EndSARS protest because it was a speech that was very paramount in resolving the issues on ground when President Buhari was still in office, and it can be said to be his final most important speech before leaving the office in 2023.

Some of the limitations encountered in the process of this study include accounting for the tone and mood of the President during the broadcast. This served as a limitation because the tone and mood of the president were paramount to analyse his selection of words and how the speech was given. Also, the prospect of the broadcast being an edited speech or a pre-recorded speech, where important parts of the speech were removed was also a concern to the researcher.

RESULTS
Speech Acts Analysis of data
Data 1
Locution: Fellow Nigerians
Illocutionary: Expositives, address
Per-locutionary Act: Nationalism, reflection

Data 2
Locution: It has become necessary for me to address you having heard from many concerned Nigerians and having concluded a meeting with all the Security Chiefs.
Illocutionary: Expositives, inform
Per-locutionary Act: Relief, apprehension

Data 3
Locution: I must warn those who have hijacked and misdirected the initial, genuine and well-intended protest of some of our youths in parts of the country, against the excesses of some members of the now-disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS).
Illocutionary: Direct: threat, bahabitives
Per-locutionary Act: annoyance, irritation, confusion

Data 4
Locution: On Monday 12th October, I acknowledged the genuine concerns and agitations of members of the public regarding the excessive use of force by some members of SARS.
Illocutionary: express of concerns, bahabitives
Per-locutionary Act: awareness, reflective.

Data 5
Locution: The choice to demonstrate peacefully is a fundamental right of citizens as enshrined in Section 40 of our Constitution and other enactments; but this right to protest also imposes on the demonstrators the responsibility to respect the rights of other citizens, and the necessity to operate within the law.

Illocutionary: subtle threat, informing them of their given rights, subtle way of telling them they have a right to protest but not go over their boundaries, exercitives
Per-locutionary Act: will power, offered a choice, subtle threat, reflective

Data 6
Locution: As a democratic government, we listened to, and carefully evaluated the five-point demands of the protesters. And, having accepted them, we immediately scrapped SARS, and put measures in place to address the other demands of our youth.
Illocutionary: verdictives, describe, explain
Per-locutionary Act: reflection, hope, assessment

Data 7
Locution: On approving the termination of SARS, I already made it clear that it was in line with our commitment to the implementation of extensive Police reforms.
Illocutionary: affirming, clarity, expositive
Per-locutionary Act: apprehension, clarity

Data 8
Locution: Sadly, the promptness with which we have acted seemed to have been misconstrued as a sign of weakness and twisted by some for their selfish unpatriotic interests.
Illocutionary: stating, confirming, disappointment, expositive
Per-locutionary Act: indifference

Data 9
Locution: The result of this is clear to all observers: human lives have been lost; acts of sexual violence have been reported; two major correctional facilities were attacked and convicts freed; public and private properties completely destroyed or vandalised; the sanctity of the Palace of a Peace Maker, the Oba of Lagos has been violated
Illocutionary: disappointment, dismay, disapproval
Per-locutionary Act: reflection, disappointment, resentment

Data 10
Locution: So-called protesters have invaded an International Airport and, in the process, disrupted the travel plans of fellow Nigerians and our visitors.
Illocutionary: disappointment, condemnation
Per-locutionary Act: indifference,

Data 11
Locution: All these executed in the name of the *END-SARS* protests. I am indeed deeply pained that innocent lives have been lost.
Illocutionary: regret
Per-locutionary Act: sadness, anger

Data 12
Locution: These tragedies are uncalled for and unnecessary. Certainly, there is no way whatsoever to connect these bad acts to legitimate expression of grievance of the youth of our country.
Illocutionary: condemnation, criticize
Per-locutionary Act: apprehension, indifference, doubt

Data 13
Locution: The spreading of deliberate falsehood and misinformation through the social media in particular, that this government is oblivious to the pains and plight of its citizens is a ploy to mislead the unwary within and outside Nigeria into unfair judgement and disruptive behaviour.
Illocutionary: criticism, disappointment,
Per-locutionary Act: indifference

Data 14
Locution: On the contrary, both our deeds and words have shown how committed this administration has been to the wellbeing and welfare of citizens, even with the steadily dwindling revenues, and the added responsibilities and restrictions due to the Coronavirus pandemic.
Illocutionary: assurance, affirmation

Per-locutionary Act: indifference, dissatisfaction

Data 15
Locution: Government has put in place measures and initiatives principally targeted at youths, women and the most vulnerable groups in our society.
Illocutionary: confirming, affirmation, assurance, evaluation
Per-locutionary Act: indifference, dissatisfaction

Data 16
Locution: These included our broad plan to lift 100 million Nigerians out of poverty in the next 10 years; the creation of N75 billion National Youth Investment Fund to provide opportunities for the youths and the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Survival Fund, through which government is.
Illocutionary: commendation, affirmation, verdictives, stating value
Per-locutionary Act: indifference, mistrust, dissatisfaction

Data 17
Locution: paying three months salaries of the staff of 100,000 micro, small—and medium—enterprises,
Illocutionary: commendation, affirmation, promoting achievements
Per-locutionary Act: indifference, dissatisfaction, distrust

Data 18
Locution: paying for the registration of 250,000 businesses at the Corporate Affairs Commission
Illocutionary: commendation, affirmation, promoting achievements
Per-locutionary Act: indifference, dissatisfaction, distrust

Data 19
Locution: giving a grant of N30,000 to 100,000 artisans; and guaranteeing market for the products of traders.
Illocutionary: commendation, affirmation, promoting achievements
Per-locutionary Act: indifference, dissatisfaction, distrust

Data 20
Locution: These are in addition to many other initiatives such as; Farmermoni, Tradermoni, Marketmoni, N-Power, N-Tech and N-Agro.
Illocutionary: commendation, affirmation, promoting achievements
Per-locutionary Act: indifference, dissatisfaction, distrust

Data 21
Locution: No Nigerian Government in the past has methodically and seriously approached poverty-alleviation like we have done.
Illocutionary: pride, estimating value, stating unique difference, stating achievements
Per-locutionary Act: indifference, judgements, dissatisfaction

Data 22
Locution: With regard to the welfare of police personnel, the National Salaries, Income and Wages Commission has been directed to expedite action on the finalization of the new salary structure of members of the Nigeria Police Force. The emoluments of other paramilitary services are also being reviewed upwards.
Illocutionary: reward, appreciation, commendation
Per-locutionary Act: rage, indifference, anger. How???

Data 23
Locution: In order to underscore the importance of education in preparing youths for the future, this administration has come up with a new salary structure and other incentives for our teachers
Illocutionary: pledge, affirmation
Per-locutionary Act: appreciation, commendation,

Data 24
Locution: Let me at this point reaffirm the Federal Government's commitment to preserving the unity of this country
Illocutionary: reaffirmation, pledge
Per-locutionary Act: distrust, uncertainty. How is this an expression of distrust?

Data 25
Locution: We will continue to improve good governance and our democratic process, including through sustained engagement.
Illocutionary: reassurance, pledge
Per-locutionary Act: hope

Data 26
Locution: We shall continue to ensure that liberty and freedom, as well as the fundamental rights of all citizens are protected.
Illocutionary: reassurance, pledge
Per-locutionary Act: hope

Data 27
Locution: But remember that government also has the obligation to protect lives and properties, as well as the right of citizens to go about their daily businesses freely and protected from acts of violence.
Illocutionary: stating, affirmation,
Per-locutionary Act: uncertainty

Data 28
Locution: To our neighbours in particular, and members of the international community, many of whom have expressed concern about the ongoing development in Nigeria, we thank you and urge you all to seek to know all the facts available before taking a position or rushing to judgment and making hasty pronouncements.
Illocutionary: admonishment, disappointment, appreciation
Per-locutionary Act: indifference, discontentment

Data 29
Locution: In the circumstances, I would like to appeal to protesters to note and take advantage of the various well-thought-out initiatives of this administration designed to make their lives better and more meaningful, and resist the temptation of being used by some subversive elements to cause chaos with the aim of truncating our nascent democracy.
Illocutionary: admonishment, encouragement
Per-locutionary Act: indifference

Data 30
Locution: For you to do otherwise will amount to undermining national security and the law-and-order situation. Under no circumstances will this be tolerated.
Illocutionary: admonishment, subtle threat, warning
Per-locutionary Act: enragement, anger, feeling threatened

Data 31
Locution: I therefore call on our youths to discontinue the street protests and constructively engage government in finding solutions
Illocutionary: call for peace,
Per-locutionary Act: indifference, hopeful, dissatisfaction

Data 32
Locution: Your voice has been heard loud and clear and we are responding.
Illocutionary: affirmation
Per-locutionary: indifference, hopeful, expectations

Data 33
Locution: And I call on all Nigerians to go about their normal businesses, and enjoin security agencies to protect lives and properties of all law-abiding citizens without doing harm to those they are meant to protect.
Illocutionary: admonishment, call for peace, settlement, reassurance
Per-locutionary Act: hopefulness, dissatisfaction, reassurance, indifference

Data 34
Locution: Let me pay tribute to officers of the Nigeria Police Force who have tragically lost their lives in the line of duty.
Illocutionary: tribute, appreciation
Per-locutionary Act: patriotism

Data 35
Locution: I would like to thank those state Governors, traditional and religious leaders who have appealed for calm and restraint.
Illocutionary: appreciation, commendation
Per-locutionary Act: indifference

Data 36
Locution: I also thank youth leaders who have restrained their followers from taking the law into their hands.
Illocutionary: appreciation, commendation
Per-locutionary Act: nationalism

Data 37
Locution: This government respects and will continue to respect all the democratic rights and civil liberties of the people, but it will not allow anybody or groups to disrupt the peace of our nation.
Illocutionary: reassurance, affirmation
Per-locutionary Act: hopeful, satisfaction, mistrust

Data 38
Locution: Thank you all. God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
Illocutionary: nationalism, patriotism, Appreciation
Per-locutionary Act: nationalism

CONCLUSION

The investigation gathers that the speech act analysis of former President Muhammadu Buhari's Speech has helped in the process of understanding how language by the president in a country is understood by the citizens. It shows how language is used to exercise authority and drive actions in the country by the President during the #EndSARS protest. The study provides answers to the following research questions:

1. How evident was the use of Austin's classification of speech acts in President Buhari's speech?

It can be stated that the language of the speech given by the president visibly contained elements of J.L Austin's speech acts. The speech when broken down was visibly bearing the qualities of locutionary, illocutionary and per-locutionary speech acts.

2. How effective was the locutionary, Illocutionary and per-locutionary acts in President Buhari's speech?

The language of the speech contained words that were expressive and assertive, words that performed actions like appealing, imploring, subtly threatening, addressing, expressed concerns etc. Particular reactions like annoyance, irritation, awareness, reflection etc., can also be pulled out as it explains the per-locutionary speech act.

3. To what extent were the intended meanings of the broadcast properly assimilated by the public?

From his use of words and language, meanings can be drawn from the mutual understanding of the president's military background and previous speeches that have been given by him over the years. The disappointing reaction from the youths can be said to stem up from the President's use of demeaning words on the youths over the years and his constant reminder to the youths that he thinks little or nothing of them, that can be implied from speeches that contained phrases like 'lazy Nigerian youths', 'uneducated individuals; etc. Actions and reactions that took place after the speech was made can be said to be largely influenced by his previous use of demeaning words on the youths thereby reducing the chances of his speech making any considerable favourable change. When an utterance is made the speech acts come to play and that affects the reaction or actions taken after. Arising from the above therefore, the analysis revealed that the actions of the Nigerians youths after the speech was given stemmed from how they understood the speech given and emotions they drew from the speech. As it is well known the speech didn't lead to the immediate end of the protest, rather as it is recorded it heightened the tension that was on ground, it led to more destruction of lives and properties and a quick response from the security personnel against the rioting youths who were likened to criminals who broke the law, which upholds J.L Austin's explanations of the various types of speech acts and how utterances can lead to various reactions. That is to say the speech was not regarded as successful to a lot of Nigerian youths, neither did they feel the speech contained the necessary emotions and empathy it was expected to have.

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