

**PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF NIGERIA'S PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI'S MAIDEN COUP ADDRESS OF JANUARY 1, 1984 AND HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF MAY 29, 2015: A COMPARATIVE APPRAISAL**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The quest for and exercise of power is characterized by ingenious use of language. Persuading and convincing the masses to obtain their support and acceptance, legitimizing political authority and policies, manipulating the citizenry towards accepting a particular ideology, etc, depends to a large extent, on the kind of language a political protagonist employs and its appropriateness to the context of use. The study is a comparative analysis of President Muhammadu Buhari's Maiden Coup Address of January 1, 1984 and his Inaugural Address of May 29, 2015 from a general pragmatic perspective. Adopting the Speech Act theory of Austin (1962) as revised by Searle (1962, 1999), the study was aimed at unveiling the illocutionary forces of the speech acts employed in both speeches to manipulate and galvanize the populace into making the intended and desired inferences in the pragmatic contexts in which the speeches were made. The result showed that the speech acts used in each of the speeches, though used by the same protagonist, depend on the socio-political context in which the speeches were made. In a general term, our analysis revealed that President Buhari's use of language in his maiden coup speech reflects his military disposition as his utterances were seen to be authoritative, forceful, preemptory, and direct as he needed to exercise a solid control through commands, orders, firm request, and threats. In contrast to the above, his use of language in his inaugural address which was made in the context of popular democracy, was relatively informative and persuasive, and reflects ingredients of social relations and interactions.*

**KEYWORDS:** Pragmatics, Maiden Coup Address, Inaugural Address, Comparative Appraisal.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Politics in its classical sense is the art of governance and power. Larswell (1965) corroborates this when he states that politics is the "science of power" which invariably means that politics is power. Politics is inextricably connected to power: power to make decisions, control resources, other people's behaviour, thoughts, values and actions. Politics is pervasive as it permeates every sphere of human social activity and contexts: religion, academic, business, community, institutions, and so forth. In these contexts and situations, man is constantly contesting for authority, domination and management of power through physical coercion or persuasion. In fact, politicians aim at having the power to tell people what to do and how to live. Language has proved to be a powerful instrument for those who crave to control peoples' thoughts, values and actions.

Every regime, whether civilian or military, has to be traditionally ushered in by a political speech by the Head of State or President. In Nigeria, the military has usurped power and ruled for over 13 years. In specific terms, Nigerians have witnessed several coup d'état, since January

15, 1966. On each occasion, the incident was followed by an announcement by a military protagonist and usually directed to “fellow Nigerians”. These initial announcements are also followed by a more detailed speech often referred to as “maiden coup speeches”. The maiden coup speech was usually given by the one chosen by the junta to head the new government. These speeches function in much the same way as presidential inaugural addresses usually given by elected presidents to inform, sensitize, convince and persuade the people to support and accept them or their administrations. Akambi (1999: 1) explains a coup speech as “an address prepared by coup plotters and read by their representative usually over the radio and/or television to announce a change of government”. In the same vein, Abaya (2004:4) defines a coup speech as a “broadcast to the nation on military intervention in the government of the day through illegitimate and violent means”. From the foregoing, we can rightly conclude that a coup address has the features of all public communication that is meant for public consumption. Therefore the present study subscribes to the view that maiden coup addresses are sub-types of political speeches in the folds of presidential inaugural addresses, campaign speeches, and so forth. This view is premised on the fact that whether the setting is military or civilian, the purpose is a political one - to usher in a new regime; one of which is military and the other civilian. Given that maiden coup addresses share the same features with presidential inaugural speeches, there are still some uniqueness associated with them in terms of the ideological underpinnings, and the situational contexts in which the speeches are produced. It is this uniqueness of maiden coup addresses that provides the motivation for the present study which is a comparative analysis of the speech act types deployed in Buhari’s maiden coup address of January 1, 1984 and his inaugural address of May 29, 2015.

Nigeria and Nigerians have also witnessed many successful transitions to civil rule. Each transition has always been followed by a presidential inaugural speech. According to Hinckley (1990:21) “the peaceful transition of political power that defines presidential inaugurations is often considered a celebration of the democratic process”. Though not strictly considered as being statutory, the president’s inaugural address in an anticipated feature of all inaugural ceremonies. Campbell and Jamison (1990:34) observe that “certain inaugural addresses have articulated the notion that the President becomes the President through delivering the inaugural address “. They further contend that the inaugural address is viewed as an extension of the oath of office. The inaugural speech, just like the maiden coup speech, also provides the incoming President with the first opportunity to display the power of language in the capacity as a President. An inaugural speech is also a unique form of political discourse as it is usually given at a time when the nation listens for a moment as one people to the words of the man they have chosen for the highest office of the land. Campbell and Jamison (1990:29), in their comprehensive study of inaugural addresses, argue that inaugural addresses are “essential elements in a ritual of transition in which the covenant between the citizenry and their leaders is renewed”. They go ahead to categorize inaugural addresses as a type of discourse that Aristotle called epideictic discourse which, they say is:

a form or rhetoric that praises or blames on ceremonial occasions invites the audience to evaluate the speaker’s performance, recalls the past and speculates about the future while focusing on the present, employs a noble, dignified, and amplifies or rehearses admitted facts. (p. 29).

The present study is inspired by the prominent place President Buhari occupies in Nigeria’s socio-political history having ruled Nigeria for 20 months - January, 1984 -August, 1986- as a

military Head of State, before winning the 2015 General Elections after contesting and losing three previous elections. Muhammadu Buhari, a Muslim, from Daura in Kastina state, was selected to lead the country by middle and high ranking officers after a successful coup d'état that overthrew the civilian President, Shehu Shagari on December 31, 1993. His regime was a period remembered for a strict campaign against indiscipline and corruption and also for his human right abuses. During his regime, about five hundred politicians, officials and businessmen were jailed, as part of the campaign against waste and corruption. Also as part of his war against indiscipline, he ordered Nigerians to form neat queues at bus-stops under the sharp eyes of whip-welding soldiers. Even civil servants who were late to work were publicly humiliated by being forced to do frog jumps. Again, as part of his anti-corruption measures, he also ordered that the currency be replaced and the colour of the Naira notes was changed, forcing all holders of old notes to exchange them at banks within a limited period.

The verdict on Buhari's 20 months as a military ruler is mixed. Some saw it as a period of high - handed and repressive military rule while some others remember it as a praiseworthy attempt to fight the endemic graft that prevented Nigeria's development. During the build-up to the 2015 elections, many Nigerians shared the opinion that Buhari's military background and his disciplinarian credentials are just what Nigeria and Nigerians needed to get to grips with the Islamists insurgency in the North and the surging corruption in our public life. That probably accounts for his victory in the 2015 polls which is said to be unprecedented in the history of the country. Some Nigerians however remained suspicious and unconvinced that he will not pursue a radical Islamist agenda, if voted to power. This suspicion is however not unfounded since he is known to, not only be a radical Muslim but also known to be popular among the poor of the north (the *Talakawas*). The present study finds justification by the quest to interrogate his philosophy and ideology as engendered as a result of his dual capacity and designation as a military Head of State and as a democratically elected President, and how these are reflected in the two speeches. The basic assumption is that no speech can be rhetorically more compelling and captivating than one that is made by a protagonist that has had the experience of heading a military junta, acquired such an awe- inspiring profile of discipline and incorruptibility, suffered the pain of being overthrown in a palace coup, suffered defeats in three previous elections before finally savouring the victory of a popular election.

The present study also finds justification by the paucity of studies on coup speeches in Nigeria (Adegbija, 1995; Abaya, 2004; Ayeomoni, 2011). In addition to that, scholarly enquiries into President Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural speech, probably because of its currency, are not enough. Therefore, a comparative appraisal of his maiden speeches both as a military Head of State and a democratically elected civilian President (from a pragmatic perspective), is deemed to be of a high scholarly prospect.

### **Language and Politics**

Harris (1979) observes that in politics, words have a powerful effect. He goes on to say that language is the means by which political ideas are transmitted to the community. According to Fairclough (1989) and Thomas and Wareing (1999), the acquisition of power in politics is primarily founded on the persuasion of citizens that the ideas of their political leaders coincide with their own views and interests. They reason that politicians make use of a wide range of linguistic resources and choices to build up their discourse and these usually have crucial effects on shaping an ideology that will lead the people to accept their argument more easily. In fact, the ability to accurately and creatively exploit the appropriate linguistic resources to suit specific communication situation, is the most valuable asset a politician could have to

achieve his personal or public objectives. Again Thomas and Wareing (1999) capture the influential power of language in politics thus:

By a subtle manipulation of language skills, skillful orators have traditionally been able to exert great influence on the preconceptions, presuppositions, beliefs, aspirations and fear of the masses to the extent of causing people to accept false assertions as true postulates, or even to support policies contrary to their interests. (p.34)

From the various opinions stated above, it is apparent that language is the key factor in political behaviour concerning controlling people's ideas and mobilizing them for support and followership. Apart from keeping the citizenry informed, the ultimate goal of political language is to convince, take and exert control. Whether a regime is civil, democratic or military, it has to use language to communicate in order to inform, persuade, advertise, issue their rules and regulations, decrees, announcements, pronouncements, legislate and so forth. Subsequently, language inevitably constitutes a veritable tool in politics as it is a general element in gaining public support for and acceptance of political policies and programmes. Kress (1989) and Fairlough (1989) posit a view, which the present study subscribes to, when they observe that political discourse is mediated by institutions which in turn position readers and writers, speakers and listeners in different positions of power and knowledge. For Rozina and Karapetjana (2009), language has an influential and instrumental relationship with power. They explain that the influential power of language inclines people to either behave in certain ways or makes people to adopt opinions/attitudes without exerting obvious force on them. It applies in such contexts as advertising, culture, media and politics. In such contexts, people are not usually penalized or punished for resisting influential power. They contrast this with instrumental power which they say is explicit power which is usually imposed by the state through its laws and conventions, institutions, agencies, and organizations that people work for. This operates in such social spheres as: business, education, and in various types of management. It can also be asserted that, in most cases, the resistance of instrumental power often attracts sanctions or some kind of penalty. Relating the foregoing to the present study, we can say that politicians use instrumental power of language when they use language to impose laws, taxes and bureaucratic system etc. and influential power when they seek to influence us to endorse their policies or call us to vote for them during elections in order to invest them with the executive power to direct, influence and control some important aspects of our lives.

### **Theoretical Perspectives**

The speech Act theory as propounded by Austin (1962) and as expounded by Searle (1969) becomes handy to serve as the theoretical backcloth to this study. J. L. Austin, in his (1962) model of the speech act theory, sets out to demonstrate how acts of speech can constitute a change in the world simply by virtue of having been uttered. He sets out to challenge the long-held assumption by philosophers that declarative sentences, (statements) are always used to describe some states of affairs or some facts which must be evaluated based on their truth-conditions. Austin points out that there are many declarative sentences which do not describe, report, or state anything, and cannot be evaluated in terms of their being true or false. The uttering of such sentences, according to him, 'is, or is part of, the doing of some action- an action which would not normally be described as simply saying something' (Austin, 1962:3). He gives a number of examples:

- i. "I do" - as uttered as part of a marriage Ceremony.
- ii. "I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth"- as uttered by the appropriate person.
- iii. I gave and bequeath my watch to my brother, "as written in a will (p.5).

He argues that to utter the above utterances, in the appropriate circumstances, is not to describe a state of affair or what you are doing, rather it is doing it or part of doing it.

Austin calls such utterances as the above – performatives or performative utterances which he contrasts with constatives or constative utterances which are used to state a fact or describe a state of affair. He explains that while constatives could be evaluated based on whether they are either true or false, the performatives can be evaluated based only on whether they are happy or unhappy (felicitous or infelicitous). The criterion of happy or unhappy has to do with the circumstance under which a performative is uttered. For an utterance to be said to be happy, it has to be uttered under an appropriate circumstance.

The realization that uttering a constative is, in a sense, to perform an "act" of saying or defining or informing and so forth, forced Austin to have a rethink in his performative/constative categorization. It becomes possible to view a constative as a sub-class of performatives in certain circumstances. In addition to this is the realization that uttering a constative is to say something and one cannot utter a performative without saying something first, so both classes of utterances can therefore include each other. He therefore went ahead to review his performative versus constative categories and renamed this basic act of communication as a 'locutionary act'. He explains this classification thus:

"Every time we direct language at some audience, we perform three simultaneous acts: a locutionary act, an illocutionary act, and a perlocutionary act" (Austin, 1962: 94)

To perform a locutionary act is to say something in what he calls "full normal sense and that includes:

- i. The "phonic" act- uttering noises "phones".
- ii. The "phactic" act- uttering noises as belonging to a certain vocabulary and conforming to a certain language. The noises seen from this perspective are called "phemes".
- iii. The "rhetic" act- using this noise with a certain sense and reference. - "rhemes".

These three simultaneous acts constitute the locutionary act. However, each time one performs a locutionary act, one is thereby performing some illocutionary acts of maybe: stating, promising, warning, betting, complaining, apologizing, and so forth. Sadock (1974) observes: "illocution is what is accomplished by communicating the intent to accomplish something" 'I pronounce the defendant guilty', when uttered by a judge, is the act of sentencing. 'I pronounce' ... can neither be said to be true or false if uttered under the right conditions as the utterance is not describing anything, rather it is proclaiming a state of event that will occur if the utterance is made sincerely and in the appropriate circumstances (felicitous)"

The effect the illocutionary act has on the hearer is called the "perlocutionary act". They are utterances that are supposed to have effect on the hearer as they are generally meant to illicit a

response. Examples of perlocution include: jokes, persuading, warning, deterring, misleading, surprising, convincing, etc.

### **Searle's Classification of Speech Acts and Forces of Illocution:**

Different scholars have come up with different taxonomy of speech acts. The present study subscribes to Searle (1999)'s classification, in which he identified five different types thus:

1. **Assertives:** This could be called representative acts. According to Searle (1999: 148) , “it is to present the proposition as representing a state of affairs in the world”. They are utterances that state what the speaker believes to be the case or not the case. Examples include: statements of facts, assertions, conclusions, descriptions, definitions, reporting, claiming, etc. Assertives have a word to world fit and as such, can make words to fit the world (of belief).
2. **Directives:** Searle (1999:48) posits that “the illocutionary force of a directive act is to try to get the hearer to behave in such a way as to make his behaviour match the propositional content of the directive”. The speaker, in uttering a directive, tries to get the hearer to do what he wants. Examples include: commands, orders, requests, suggestions, as in the following sentences:
  - i. Pass the salt, please
  - ii. Don't take it away.
  - iii. Could I use your car?

Directives attempt to make world fit the word. They can be obeyed or disobeyed, complied with, granted, denied etc., by the hearer

3. **Commissives:** These are acts that are used to commit the speaker to some future action. In uttering a commissive act, the speaker has revealed his intention and thereby stays committed to carry out the action expressed by the statements. Examples include: promises, vows, threats, pledges, refusals, covenants, and so forth.

Directives attempt to make the world fit the words and they can be kept, or broken by the speaker.

4. **Expressives:** These utterances state what the speaker feels. They express psychological states in the form of statements of feelings of joy, sadness, happiness, pain, likes, dislikes, sorrow, joy, condoling, thanking, apologizing, congratulating and so forth.

Expressive acts attempt to make the words fit the world.

5. **Declaratives:** Declaratives are speech acts that change the world by virtue of their being uttered. In order to perform a declarative act, the speaker has to have a special institutional designation in a particular context in order for the declaration to be appropriate.

## Data Analysis and Discussion

### Text A: Muhammadu Buhari's Maiden Coup Address-January 1, 1984.

Relevant sections of the speech have been identified for analysis below:

#### Locutions:

1. *In pursuance of the primary objective of saving our great nation from total collapse, I, Major-General Muhammadu Buhari of the Nigerian Army, have ... been formally invested with the authority of the Head of the Federal Military Government and the Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.*
2. *It is with humility and a deep sense of responsibility that I accept this challenge and call to duty.*
3. *... the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1979) has been suspended...*
4. *Consequently, the Nigerian Armed Forces have constituted themselves into a Federal Military Government comprising Supreme Military Council at the centre and the State Executive Councils to be presided by military governors in each of the states of the federation.*
5. *Members of the councils will be announced soon*

#### Discussion:

Locutions 1-5 are declarative acts that carry the illocutionary force to bring about a change in the world by virtue of their being uttered. They are forceful, direct, and preemptory. They carry the obvious illocutionary force of changing the status-quo by bringing to an end the regime of President Shehu Shagari and ushering in the regime of Muhammadu Buhari. The use of these declaratives, as we can see, reflects the authoritative nature of military language and their being cast in the declarative mode conveys the perlocutionary effect of compulsive obedience and compliance from the listeners. The speaker and his group, even without any claim of legitimacy, still have authority bestowed on by the large amount of arsenal at their disposal which could readily be deployed to compel obedience and compliance to their order.

#### Locutions:

6 *It is true that there is a worldwide economic recession... In the case of Nigeria, its impact was aggravated by mismanagement.*

7 *...the legislators were preoccupied with determining their salary scales, fringe benefits and unnecessary foreign travels ...*

8 *As a result of our inability to activate financial discipline and prudent management of the economy, we have come to depend largely on internal and external borrowing to execute government projects... thus aggravating the propensity of the outgoing civilian administration to mismanage our resources.*

9 *Nigeria was already condemned perpetually with the twin problem of heavy budget deficits and weak balance of payments position.*

10 *The last general election was anything but free and fair.*

11 *There is ample evidence that rigging and thuggery were relative to the resources available to the parties.*

12 *The corrupt, inept and insensitive leadership in the last four years has been the source of immorality and impropriety in our society.*

13. *Arson has been used to cover up fraudulent acts in public institutions.*

14 *Corruption has become so pervasive and intractable that a whole ministry has been created to stem it.*

### **Discussion.**

Locutions 6-14 are assertive speech acts that were used to paint a gory picture of the shortcomings and failure of the ousted regime. They were intended to discredit, smear and criminalise the displaced leadership, thereby justifying their actions of overthrowing them. Nigerians are reputed to be constantly yearning for a change of leadership. This could be attributed to the persistent feeling of discontentment and dissatisfaction with the status-quo. So they see each change of government as a dawning of a new era with new and fresh hopes, aspiration and expectations. Adegbija (1995) captures this scenario thus:

Given the psychological and pragmatic context of coup addresses, the words have a great prospect for achieving maximum perlocutionary effect: that of discrediting the incumbent regime, making the need for a change incontrovertible and to further implicate that the incoming regime will definitely make a difference. (p.261).

In corollary to the above observation is the fact that the socio - political context of the Buhari's maiden Coup address was, to a large extent, hinged on corruption and indiscipline. As a result, the citizenry were presumed to have been disillusioned with the status-quo.

And because the speaker, with the people he is representing, and his listeners share the same background, they deemed their action to be in the line of their duties as soldiers to act to defend their fatherland against internal aggression and decadence.

### **Locutions**

15...*Every effort will be made to ensure that the difficult and degrading conditions under which we are living are eliminated.*

16 *We are determined ... to do our best to settle genuine payments to which government is committed including backlog of workers' salaries...*

17 *The economy will be given a new impetus and better sense of direction.*

18 *Corrupt officials and their agents will be brought to book*

19 *The Federal Government will ... import foodstuff to supplement the shortfalls suffered in the last harvest.*



20 *Our foreign policy will both be dynamic and realistic.*

21 *Africa will of course continue to be the centerpiece of our foreign policy.*

22 *The morale and combat readiness of the armed forces will be given high priority.*

23 *Officers and men with high personal and professional integrity will have nothing to fear.*

24 *The Federal Military Government will maintain and strengthen existing diplomatic relations with other states and...*

25 *The Federal Military Government will honour and respect all treaties and obligations entered into by the previous government...*

### **Discussion**

Locutions 15-25 are commissive acts. In uttering a commissive act the speaker has revealed his intention and thereby stays committed to carry out the action expressed by the statements. The atmosphere following a coup d'état is always that of uncertainty, apprehension and insecurity. Hence the characteristic use of commissives by coupists to pragmatically calm frayed nerves, dispel fears, restore confidence and to assure the populace that they are on course to salvage the country. The use of commissive acts carries a strong implication that the speaker and his cohorts are committed to fulfill the propositional content of their utterances. Adebija, (1995:266) captures the use of commissive acts in coup speeches thus: "coup speeches contain commissive acts in which the speaker puts himself and those he represents under obligation to create a secure future". He follows this up by saying:

The use of such speech acts seem crucial in a military coup speech in creating the inference that the speaker and the group he represents will be dependable, will ensure that all is well, will be trustworthy, will not allow the ship of state to capsize, and will provide a secure anchor for the populace (p.266).

The use of commissive acts in this speech is a forceful, military-fashion projection of the policy thrust, programmes and action plans of the regime which this speech is ushering in. Most of the commissive acts were crafted with the modal auxiliary "will" which, in military language, is used to express future actions and to convey information and order. According to Colby (1936:24) "the statement of what is to be done is sufficient in military service when the officer making the statement is in authority"

### **Locutions:**

26 *The Chief Justice of Nigeria and all other holders of judiciary appointments within the Federation can continue in their appointments and the judiciary will continue to function under existing laws, subject to such exceptions as may be decreed from time to time by the Federal Military Government.*

27 *All holders of appointments in the civil service, the police and the National Security Organisation, shall continue to exercise their functions in the normal way subject to changes that may be introduced by the Federal Military Government.*

*28 All those chairmen and members of statutory corporations, parastatals and other executive departments are hereby relieved of their appointments with immediate effects.*

### **Discussions:**

Locutions 26- 28 are directive acts of command and order. It is characteristic of the military to use the directive acts blatantly to exercise solid control through commands, orders, firm requests, and threats. These directives were intended, not only to stamp their authority as “the powers that be”, but also to ensure compliance. In the text, these directives can be superficially interpreted as advice which the addressee (the subjects) may have the discretion to obey or disobey, but in the real sense, they are orders or commands which have to be obeyed by the addressee. According to Adegbija (1995: 264) “such exercitive (directive) speech acts as attested in all coup speeches are intended to demonstrate or at least create the inference that a new order has begun, has to be reorganised, respected and accepted”

In communicating the order, the speaker tactfully mitigates the force or effects, by casting the utterances in the passive forms. Passivization functions not only to depersonalize the message, but also to bring the “act” not the “actor” to focal prominence. Passive and impersonal forms are marked features of all public pronouncements. They pragmatically function to dissipate the impression of rudeness, disrespect, and totalitarianism which the military has often been identified with.

*29: Fellow Nigerians, finally we have dutifully intervened to save this nation from imminent collapse.*

*30: We therefore expect all Nigerians, including those who participated directly or indirectly in bringing the nation to this present predicament, to cooperate with us*

*31: This generation of Nigerians, and indeed future generations, have no country other than Nigeria*

*32: We shall remain here and salvage it together..*

*33: May God bless us all..*

*34: .Good morning!*

### **Discussion.**

Locutions 29 - 34 are a mixture of assertives: (29, 31), a directive: (30) a Commissive: (32) and expressives speech acts (33 and 34) that have been used to bring the address to an interactive close.

Locution 29 is an assertive that carries the illocutionary force of projecting the speaker and his group in a positive light. To assert that “they have dutifully intervened to save the nation from imminent collapse”, conveys the implication that their intervention is a nationalistic and selfless enterprise and they, as actors, are heroes and great patriots who have saved the nation at their own peril.

The firm request and appeal for cooperation and solidarity as conveyed by locution 30 is a clear indication that in spite of the macho posture of the military, they have not taken the cooperation

of the people for granted. The directive act carries the illocutionary force of appealing to the goodwill and patriotic feeling of the people by hinting at their common heritage as Nigerians.

Locutions 33 and 34 are expressive acts of praying and greeting. The speaker prays to God to bless the country and his group and thereby implying that their action was a divine intervention. He ended the address by greeting his hearers also leaving them with the impression that he is after all a gentleman.

### **Analysis of Text (B): Muhammadu Buhari's Inaugural Speech- May 29, 2015.**

The pragmatic context of Buhari's inaugural speech was that of spiraling corruption, high spate of insecurity, and precarious economic situation in the country. Therefore the citizenry were largely disillusioned and dissatisfied with the prevalent situation in the country. So the speech came at an opportune period when Nigerians were full of expectation and were yearning for a change of the status- quo. The speech was analyzed against the backdrop of the inaugural speech as a ceremonial speech in fulfillment of the requirement of official presidential inauguration following a peaceful transition of power.

### **Analysis and Discussion**

#### **Locutions**

1. *I am immensely grateful to God who has preserved us to witness this day and this occasion*
2. *I would like to thank President Goodluck Jonathan for his display of statesmanship*
3. *I Would like to thank the millions of our supporters who believed in us even when the cause seemed hopeless.*
4. *I salute their resolve in waiting long hours in rain and hot sunshine to register and cast their votes . . .*
5. *I thank those who tirelessly carried the campaign on the social media.*
6. *I thank our other countrymen and women who did not vote for us but contributed . . .*
7. *I thank you all.*

#### **Discussion**

Locutions 1-7 are expressive acts that have the illocutionary function of courtesy signals deployed by the President to establish common grounds with the Nigerian electorate, his predecessor and all who played a part in his being elected as President. Buhari used these expressive acts to communicate his gratitude to God for his grace, to his predecessor, for his spirit of sportsmanship, statesmanship and his patriotic disposition; the Nigerian citizenry, for their votes and to his party and their supporters, for their solidarity and support. In addition to the above, Buhari's expression of gratitude in locution -1 carries the implication that he acknowledges that his coming to power at the expense of an incumbent President, after three previous failed attempts, is not by his power alone, but by the divine help and grace of God. He affirms the believe that, it is God that gives power. Secondly, his gratitude to his predecessor, President Goodluck Jonathan in locution 2 has the implication that he recognizes

the political mayhem which Nigeria would have been drawn into, had President Goodluck Jonathan rejected the result of the election. Most important was his expression of gratitude to his countrymen and women who have voted for him and elected him as President. This underscores his new found civil disposition and recognition that power belongs to the people and not to the weapons at one's disposal. This orientation is in contradistinction with his former military disposition which upheld usurpation of power through violence and brute force.

### Locutions.

8. *Having just a few minutes ago sworn on the Holy Book, I intend to keep my oath and serve as President to all Nigerians.*
9. *I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody.*
10. *There will be no paying of old score*
11. *The past is prologue.*

### Discussion

Locutions 8-11 are a mixture of assertives of stating (8 and 9) and commissive acts of promising (10 and 11) that have been used to dispel the fears by some Nigerians, especially Christians, that he has the plans to turn Nigeria into an Islamic state. The President is not unaware of the negative tag of Islamic fundamentalist which some Nigerians have given to him. He used these utterances to dispel these fears and other such insinuations and to reassure Nigerians that he is going to be a fair and just leader who will dispense his duties dispassionately, disinterestedly and justly to all Nigerians, Muslims and Christians alike.

The President, by uttering those commissive acts in locutions 10 and 11, puts himself under the obligation of fulfilling the promises and future commitments contained in the propositional content of the utterances.

### Locutions:

12. *I also wish to assure the wider international community of our readiness to cooperate and help to combat threats of cross border terrorism..*
13. *We are going to tackle them head on*
14. *To achieve our objectives, we must consciously work the democratic system.*
15. *The federal executive . . . will not seek to encroach on the duties and functions of the legislative arms of government.*
16. *The law enforcing authorities will be charged to operate with the constitution.*
17. *We shall rebuild and reform the public service to become more effective and more serviceable.*
18. *We shall charge them to apply themselves with integrity to stabilize the system.*
19. *. . . the legislative arm must keep to their brief of making laws, carrying out over-sight functions.*

20. *The Federal Government . . . will ensure that the gross corruption at the local level is checked.*
21. *. . . I will try to ensure that there is responsible and accountable governance at all levels . . .*
22. *We have to look at the whole field of Medicare.*
23. *We have to update our dilapidated physical infrastructure.*

### **Discussion.**

Locutions 12-23 are commissive speech acts which the President used to express his intention to strengthen democracy and good governance in the country. A commissive force commits the speaker to undertake the course of action proposed in the utterance's propositional content. The President, by virtue of uttering these commissive acts, places his party and his government under obligation to carry out these intentions. For instance, he is committed to rebuilding and reforming the public service, maintaining a cordial and symbiotic relationship with all the arms and levels of government, improving the standard of education, improving healthcare services, encouraging agriculture and improving physical infrastructure. His acts in locution 12-23 have taken on the weight of a verbal contract between him and the citizenry of Nigeria.

### **Locutions**

24. *The most immediate is Boko Haram insurgency.*
25. *Progress has been made in recent weeks by our security forces . . .*
26. *Boko Haram became a terrifying force taking tens of thousands of lives . . .*
27. *Boko Haram is a mindless, godless group who are far away from Islam . . .*
28. *Boko Haram is not the only security issue bedeviling our country.*
29. *The spate of kidnappings, armed robberies, herdsmen/ farmers clashes ,castle rustling, all help to add to the general air of insecurity . . .*

### **Discussion.**

Locutions 24-29 are assertive or representative (Austin 1962) acts. They are used to describe the state of affairs concerning the threat of Boko Haram insurgency and the security situation in the country. The President deployed these acts to foreground the threat of insecurity in the land and by so doing, projecting it as one area where the outgoing administration has failed and where his incoming administration has clear- cut strategies to tackle.

### **Locutions**

30. *The command centre will be relocated to Maiduguri and remain until Boko Haram is completely subdued.*
31. *Government intends to commission a sociological study to determine its origins remote and immediate causes . . .*

32. *For now, the armed forces will be fully charged with prosecuting the fight against Boko Haram.*
33. *We shall overhaul the rules of engagement to avoid human right, violations in operations.*
34. *We shall improve operational and legal mechanisms so that disciplinary steps are taken against proven human right violations by the armed forces.*
35. *We are going to erect and maintain an efficient, disciplined, people- friendly and well-compensated armed forces . . .*

### **Discussion**

Locutions 30-35 are commissive acts which the President used to state his intentions and determination to continue the war against the *Boko Haram* until they are completely subdued. The framing of these acts in commissive mode carries the illocutionary force of assuring the Nigerian citizenry and the displaced persons of the north- east that normalcy will soon return to the region as practical steps have been taken to defeat the insurgents.

### **Locutions**

36. *The amnesty programme in the Niger Delta is due to end in December.*
37. *The government intends to invest heavily in the projects, programmes currently in place.*
38. *As ever, I am ready to listen to grievances of my fellow Nigerians.*

### **Discussion**

Locution 36 is an assertive speech act which the President used to describe the status and nature of the Amnesty programme for the Niger Delta militants. While he tactfully used this act to highlight the issue, he deployed the commissive acts (37 and 38) to state his intention in the matter and his commitments to carry them out.

### **Locutions**

39. *No single cause can be identified to explain Nigerians economic performance over the years than the power situation.*
40. *It is a national shame that an economy of 180 million generates only 4,000mw and distributes even less.*
41. *We will not allow this to go on.*
42. *Careful studies are underway to - - - identify the quickest, safest and most cost effective way to bring light and relief to Nigerians.*

### **Discussion**

Locutions 39-40 are also assertive speech acts which carry the illocutionary force of stating the state of affairs concerning a thing or situation. The President Strategically used the assertives to highlight the problem of power generation and distribution and the effects on Nigerians. He

followed it up with the commissive acts of promising, 41-42 to assure his listeners/ readers of the practical steps which his administration will take to solve the problem of power.

### Locutions

43. *Unemployment, notably youth unemployment, features strongly in our party's manifesto.*
44. *We intend to attack the problem frontally through revival of agriculture, solid minerals, mining as well.*
45. *We shall quickly examine the best way to revive major industries and accelerate the revival and development of our railways . . .*

Locution 43 is an assertive speech act, making a statement of fact concerning unemployment. Having stated the fact about this problem, the President strategically, by the use of commissive speech acts (44 and 45) conveyed his intention and his commitments to confront and tackle the problem of unemployment head on to Nigerians

### Locutions

46. *I appeal to employers and workers alike to unite in raising productivity . . .*
47. *My appeal to the media today . . . is to exercise its considerable powers with responsibility and patriotism.*
48. *I call on the people of the Niger Delta to cooperate with state and Federal Government in the rehabilitation programme.*

Locutions 46-48 are directive acts with the illocutionary force of appeal and request. The President has used it make a passionate appeal for cooperation and understanding on the part of the organized labour, the media and the people of the Niger Delta region particularly, on the issues of industrial harmony and the rehabilitation programme by the Federal Government.

The table below displays the frequency of the different speech acts in the both speeches.

**Fig1: Frequency Distribution of Speech Acts in the Addresses**

Speech acts	Text A: Buhari's Maiden Coup Address.		Text B: Buhari's Inaugural Address	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Expressives	2	6%	7	15%
Assertives	11	32%	12	35%
Commissives	12	35%	26	54%
Directives	4	12%	3	6%
Declarative	4	15%	Nil	Nil
Total	34	100%	48	100%

President Buhari employed two different opening strategies in the two speeches and each of which reflects the situational and ideological contexts in which the speech was made. As shown in Fig.1, in text B (the inaugural address), he employed 7 expressive speech acts of greeting

and thanking (15%) as phatic tokens to greet, thank, praise and to establish a discourse common ground with his audience. This strategy depicts degrees of gratitude and endearment to fellow Nigerians and to the nation. This gesture portrays him in the light of a liberal democrat who recognizes that power belongs to the people who voted for him. In contrast, to the above strategy, he did not employ any expressive act of greeting and thanking to open his maiden coup address. Rather, the table shows 2 expressive acts which represent only 6% of the data. Apart from the relatively low occurrence of expressive acts in the speech, the few that were used, were deployed at the closing or departure segment of the speech to greet his audience, pray for the nation and to thank God. This strategy has been found to be a marked feature of most military coup addresses where the speakers usually open their address with self-identifying acts (Adegbiya, 1995) rather than, phatic tokens. This discourse tact is due to the fact that the military ride to power on the nozzle of a gun and not on the support and votes of the populace. Therefore, the military when they come to power, do not deem it expedient to greet and thank the citizenry as they owe all the gratitude to the large array of arsenal at their disposal.

Fig 1 shows relative high preponderance of assertive speech acts in both the speeches. President Buhari used 11 assertive speech acts (32%) in text A (the maiden coup address) and 12 assertive speeches acts (35%) in text B (the inaugural address). Assertive speech acts were deployed in text A (the maiden coup address) to discredit and smear the ousted regime and to appeal to the emotions of the public. The assertive acts were put to a different use in text B (the inaugural address). Here, Buhari used the assertives to state, describe and report the situation in the different sectors of our ailing economy and by so doing, highlighting the problems found in each sector, before stating his intentions and determination to tackle and solve them.

The commissive speech acts appear to be the most predominant speech acts in both speeches, especially the inaugural address (text B). The table shows 12 instances of the use of commissive speech acts in text A, representing 35% of the data, and 26 instances in Text B representing 54%. Buhari's use of the commissive speech acts in Text B to make promises, vows and pledges, carries the force of a social contract between him and the citizenry. The high frequency of commissive acts in text B reflects his efforts at persuading and convincing the Nigerian electorates that voted for him that he is going to deliver on his campaign promises.

The commissive speech acts were put to a different use in text A (the maiden coup address). The commissive acts were used to douse the tension and the feeling of uncertainty which followed the ousting of an incumbent regime. The commissive speech acts pragmatically function as assurance and confidence – building devices to assure the citizenry of their commitments and determination to solve the problems which necessitated their ousting the previous regime.

The table shows a relatively low occurrence of directive speech acts: 4 (12%), in text A (the maiden coup address) and 3 (6%), in text B (the inaugural address). Buhari's blatant use of the directive speech acts in his maiden coup address is characteristic of military discourse as they invoke warning, threats, orders, and command which are meant to be complied with by the public. This differs from his use of directive speech acts in his inaugural address (text B). Here, Buhari used the directive acts of request, appeal and advice to solicit the support, understanding and cooperation of the press, the organized labour and the elders of the Niger Delta region.

The table displays 5 instances (15%), of declarative speech acts in text A (the Maiden coup address) and zero occurrence of declarative speech acts in text B (the inaugural



address). Buhari's use of declarative speech acts in the text A is characteristic of the military and invokes the force of sensitizing and sacking of an incumbent regime. On the other hand, the use of zero declaratives in text B portrays Buhari as a cooperative and democratic leader who believes in the rule of law and due process.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis carried out in this study is underpinned by the general pragmatic principles of giving primacy of place to the situational context of the discourse. Halliday (1973:3) observes that "the context" of a discourse plays a part in determining what we say. And what we say, plays a part in determining the context". Though the two speeches were made by the same protagonist-Muhammadu Buhari, but each speech was made under different pragmatic, ideological and social contexts and as such, the speech acts deployed in both speeches have conveyed different illocutionary forces that aligned with the context of the speech. Our analysis of this text A (the maiden coup address) reveals the ideological inclination of the military, whom when they intervene in politics/governance, see themselves as "heroes" and "saviours" who have come to save the nation from collapse. The use of language is therefore blatantly authoritative. It also portrays the culture of masculinity, speed, precision, discipline, comradeship and nationalistic feelings, which the military as an institution is often associated with and which are often reflected in their pronouncements. In the military, words function to enable the speaker to exercise solid control through commands, order, request, threats etc. On the other hand, in civil political discourse language is made to perform more of the informative and persuasive/influential function than the coercive. Language in the context of popular democracy is seen as an embodiment of ideologies that border on human and social relations and interactions.

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