

**RHETORICAL DIPLOMACY: A STUDY OF NIGERIA'S PRESIDENT  
MUHAMMADU BUHARI'S SPEECH TO THE 70TH SESSION OF THE UNITED  
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY- SEPTEMBER, 2015**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Diplomatic texts-oral or written-are usually deemed to be of a high significance. The significance of a diplomatic texts is based on the fact that it comes from the personality of a Head of State (or government or his representative) who is a mouth piece of a country by virtue of the office he holds and his utterances are channeled to influence the official relationship of states. This genre, surprisingly, has been given relatively very little attention by scholars and linguists. This study entitled: "Rhetorical Diplomacy: A study of Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari's speech to the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly", is an analytical study of the pragmatic strategies of the President with the aim of determining their effectiveness in conveying the speakers intentions to his audience. The analysis, carried out in this study, was based on the theoretical backcloth of the Speech Act theory by Austin (1962) and Searle, (1969, 1999). Specifically, the study adopted Searle (1999)'s taxonomy of speech acts which gave primacy not to the types of speech acts, but to their illocutionary points /forces. As a result of this, the utterances were analysed as diplomatic actions taken by the President, in terms of their illocutionary points/ forces and the perlocutionary effects they have on his audience. Our basic findings show that the President made use of expressive, assertive, commissive, and directive speech acts to perform various direct and indirect interactive acts which were found to be diplomatically correct in foregrounding and communicating Nigeria's challenges and policies to the global community. The data however, revealed no instance of the use of verdictive and declarative acts by the President. The paper concluded that the study of the deployment of speech acts as a strategy in political and diplomatic speeches, contributes to a better understanding of multilateral and bilateral communication and provides insights into presidential outputs in diplomatic meetings.*

**KEYWORDS:** Rhetoric, Diplomacy, Speech Acts.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, Nigeria has been confronted by a number of challenges: the *Boko Haram* insurgency in the North East, the falling oil price, the crashing of the Naira, the resurgence of militancy in the Niger Delta region, climate change, unemployment and corruption. For the country to surmount these challenges, it undoubtedly needs ,not only sub-regional and regional support, but also international partnership and collaboration, powered by a well-articulated diplomatic engineering. A country's diplomatic relations are usually managed by the Head of State or Head of Government (often by himself or often via foreign minister or ambassadors "extraordinary" and "plenipotentiary") with the overall responsibility to safeguard their countries' interest at all times through well -articulated dialogue. It is helpful

to note that today, in most countries of the world, it is the head of state/ President that lays down the parameters of foreign policy in both content and form.

Expectedly the coming to power of General Muhammadu Buhari came as a relief to Nigerians who have been subjected to a life of fear and uncertainty. Buhari's coming to power is accompanied with by a lot of expectations especially as he promised to bring about the much needed and desired change to the polity. In addition to the above challenges, the country was also facing the challenge of laundering our dented international image. Some members of the international community have accused Nigeria of human right abuses in their fight against insurgency. For instance, the United states America (USA), during the Goodluck Jonathan's administration, refused to sell arms to Nigeria citing human right abuses. That has left the country with the option to continue to source its arms from Israel, Russia and Great Britain who are also not very willing to deal with Nigeria.

The United State Secretary of State, John Terry, commenting on President Buhari's anti-corruption war at the World Economic Forum in Davos –Switzerland, says:

It has been reported that over 50 people including government officials stole over \$9 billion in Nigeria. Corruption costs global economy more than a trillion dollar a year and complicates every diplomatic and global priority... today corruption has grown at an alarming pace and threatens growth, global stability, and indeed the global future. Corruption is a radicalizer because it destroys faith in legitimate authority.

The UN's Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon also in a statement on Jan 24, 2016 says this about the global menace of terrorism:

Violent extremism is a direct assault on the United Nation's charter and gave threat to international peace and security. Terrorist groups such as: *Daesh*, *Boko Haram*, and others have brazenly kidnapped young girls, systematically denied women's right, destroyed cultural institutions, and brutally murdered thousands of innocent people around the world. . . Addressing this challenge requires a unified response, a concerted action at the global, regional and national levels. I intend to strengthen UN system-wide approach to supporting member states' efforts to address the drivers of violent extremism. Together, let us forge a new global partnership to prevent violent extremism.

Buhari's administration has waged the *Boko Haram* war with renewed energy strategy and tactics. He has reorganized, repositioned, reequipped, retrained and inspired the armed forces with better incentives and conditions of service. The national armed forces are also supported by the regional Multi-national Joint Task Force, though their operations are restrained to the border areas. The President, determined to win the war against insurgency in Nigeria and to overcome the myriads of other problems facing the country, knew that Nigeria really need to forge a new global partnership as pointed out above by the UN Secretary General. He knew that to address the present challenges, the country needs a unified response, a concerted action at the global, regional and national levels. The above scenario provides the background under which Nigeria's President Buhari addressed the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2015.

The above also has also provides the background to this study as we aim to explore how the President succeeded, by his use of language to convince and persuade the global community

to assist and to co-operate with Nigeria as well as to dissuade those who may have been convinced to antagonize the country. Diplomatic texts-oral or written-are usually deemed to be of a high significance. This significance of a diplomatic texts is based on the fact that it comes from the personality of a Head of State (or government or his representative) who is a mouth piece of a country by virtue of the office he holds and his utterances are channeled to influence the official relationship of states. This genre, surprisingly, has been given relatively very little attention by scholars and linguists. It is this perceived paucity of enquiries in this area and the enormity of the task before the President, as well as the prospects that this maiden address holds for the country and for his rhetorical prowess as the mouth- piece of the country that provide a justification for the present study.

### **Language and Diplomacy**

Diplomacy is the means by which nations and groups throughout the world co-operate and collaborate to ensure peaceful relations. This concerns efforts that are geared towards the promotion of political, economic, cultural and scientific partnership and collaboration to achieve international peace, security, defence of human rights and the environment. The world is said to have become a global village and for the nations of the world to live harmoniously, peacefully and collaboratively, there must be diplomatic relations. The world is said to have become a global village and for the nations of the world to live harmoniously, peacefully and collaboratively, there must be diplomatic relations. Diplomacy takes place in two major dimensions: the bilateral and the multilateral relations. Bilateral diplomacy deals with relations between two states (like the recent agreement between Nigeria and the united Arab Emirate in January, 2016), while multilateral diplomacy deals with relations and contacts among several nations and states often within the institutionalized contexts of international organization (like the united Nation). Multilateral diplomacy in the context of international organizations started to gain importance after the First World War and especially following the Second World War.

The oxford learners' dictionary defines diplomacy as "the management of relations between countries . . . art of or skill in dealing with people . . . "in deed it is the art of convincing others to perceive things your way or at least to have second thoughts about theirs". In this light, it is the combination of logic and science on the one hand, with the gift of proper language structuring composition and presentation necessary to convince or dissuader others. Language therefore is the heart of diplomacy. The use of well- articulated and sophisticated language as a medium of communication, beyond mere sounds or gestures, is an exclusive attribute of man among all other creatures. Language is therefore an important component of the personality and identity of individuals, groups and nations. The use of language in diplomacy is majorly important as language is not only a basic tool; a vehicle for the transmission of thoughts, or an instrument of communication, but also the very essence of diplomatic activities. Diplomatic language is a specialized variety of language for communication which has been formalized with special patterns and cadences which have been designed to oil the joints of relationships between people and nations. The choice of the right words and phrases is extremely important in diplomacy. Over the centuries, a very carefully, balanced, restrained, and moderate vocabulary has been developed which provides a particular way of refined control over nuances in the meaning of words both when agreeing with one's interlocutor (without giving the impression of being over enthusiastic), and as well as when rejecting a view ensuring that you show enough concern, to avoid undesired offence. In diplomacy, any choice of words or phraseology an interlocutor makes is interpreted not at

its face value but taken to have been conscientiously and deliberately made. In the same vein, a speaker or an interlocutor, who knows that his text will be sanctioned in such a way, will accordingly, be careful about the formulations he uses.

The power of language depends on the choice of words. Words carry and contain ideas and ideas according to Plato, are more concrete and more permanent than objects. Ideas can be suppressed but unlike monuments, statues or any other things, they cannot be shattered. They can only be challenged by other ideas. History attests to the magic of words that bewitched, enthrall and sometimes intoxicated people and lead them to great or mean deeds. The language of diplomacy, often like poetry, has the potency to move people from mood to mood. Indeed, language use in whatever field of the diplomatic activity has the momentum and an inner driving force that is ageless.

### Speech-Acts Theory

J. L. Austin, A British Philosopher has been in the center of the development of the speech-Act theory. Other scholars who have played prominent roles in the nurturing of the theory include Searle, Wittgenstein, Levinson, Ross, Lakoff, Sadock, Hebermas, and others. The crux of the speech act theory lies on the quest to understand and explain how speakers and hearers use language or to put aptly, to understand what language is capable of doing or to understand ways in which language could be used as an instrument of performance rather than just a tool to describe reality. Austin (1962) examined how speech utterances can effect a change in the world by virtue of having been uttered.

It was far too long the assumption of philosophers that the business of a 'statement', can only be to 'describe' some state of affairs or to 'state some facts' which it must do either truly or falsely (p.1).

The Austin's thesis is that language, apart from being used to describe the state of affair in the world, can also be used to perform actions especially if the propositional content, intentions, and the outcomes of utterances are to be considered. Early in the development of his speech act theory, Austin was led to classify utterances into two possible types: performative utterances and the constative utterances. Austin (1962) describes the performatives as utterances which:

do not describe or report or constitute anything at all, are not true or false, and ... the uttering of the sentence is, or is part of the doing of an action which again would not normally be described as saying something (p.5).

On the other hand, he describes the constatives as utterances that have the property of being true or false. Therefore, constative utterances include all descriptive statements, statement of facts, definitions, and utterances which report, inform and state (Searle 1971:39). Austin (1962:5) gives the following examples of performative utterances:

- i. I do take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife.
- ii. I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth.
- iii. I give and bequeath my watch to my brother.

- iv. I bet you six-pence, it will rain tomorrow.

These are archetypal examples of performative speech acts as they do not serve to describe or report upon an action but rather serve to 'indulge' in action and can never be evaluated in terms of whether they are true or false. Austin was eventually led to conclude that all utterances are performatives in the sense of constituting a form of action rather than simply saying something about the world. He draws a distinction between explicit, performatives:

- v. I promise that I shall be there, and primary performatives,  
vi. I shall be there.

Later in the development of the theory, Austin realised that uttering a constative is, in a sense, to perform an 'act' of saying, an 'act' of defining, an 'act' of informing and so on. Therefore, the constative can be viewed as a subcategory of the performative in certain circumstances. In addition, uttering a constative is to 'say something' and uttering a performative cannot be done without 'saying something' first, and thus, both classes of utterance, can include each other. This realisation forced Austin to rethink and review his performative versus constative categories and renamed the basic act of communication as a 'locutionary act':

Locution includes the utterance of certain noises, the utterance of certain words in a certain construction, and the utterance of them with a certain meaning ... with a certain sense and with a certain reference ( p.108).

Finally, locution was proposed as a superstrate category which includes all utterances. He goes ahead to sub-divide location into illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts' Locution is the starting point, since to say something, to utter a grammatical form of words which is associated with some propositional content, is to perform an illocutionary act. Locutionary acts could be evaluated based on their truth conditions and need sense and reference for them to be understandable. Austin, (1962:08) explains: "locution is simply saying something; we convey information, we talk inanely, we question etc". Sadock (1974:8) defines illocutionary acts as "acts that are performed in order to communicate". According to Herbermas (1998: 122), "while locution is the act of expressing states of affair, illocutionary acts are utterances in which a speaker performs an act by virtue of having said something". Sadock (1974) further 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 producing a state of event that will occur if the utterance is made sincerely and meant in the appropriate circumstances (felicitous). (p.9)

Therefore, illocution is the performance of an act by saying something .It is not descriptive and not subject to truth conciliations. An Illocutionary act, is what the listener/hearer of the utterance perceives the speaker to be doing with the utterance. The speaker may be asserting,

denying, predicting, warning, confirming, informing, promising, greeting, apologizing, congratulating, judging, condemning, threatening, rebuking, supporting, etc.

Perlocutionary acts refer to the effect a speaker's utterance has on the addressee. They are utterances that are supposed to have an effect on the hearer as they are generally meant to elicit a response from the hearer. Examples of perlocution include: Jokes, warnings, persuading, sarcasm, etc. Austin (1962) includes such things as achieving to inform, convince, warn, persuade, mislead, etc as perlocutionary acts. Sadock (1974) observes that perlocutionary acts are the unsaid by-products of linguistic communication and their effects may be intentional or unintentional as it is the hearer who acts upon an effect produced by the speech act.

### **Modes of speech acts and forces/points of illocution**

Different scholars have come up with different taxonomy of speech acts. Austin (1962:151) classified speech Acts into: verdictive,(casting verdicts, umpiring, judging, vetoing, etc.),exercitive (exercising power or influence, giving a decision, etc), commissive (promise and declaration of intents) behabitives (aspects of social behavior, congratulating, apologizing, condoling, greetings, etc) expositive (fits utterances into argument or conversation).

Searle (1999), criticizing Austin (1962)'s classification for being prone to overlap, re-examined the modes of illocution and proposed a classification where overlapping categories were considered and admitted. He suggests that rather than considering what type of utterance is produced, one should consider what the point or force of an utterance is. He notes that before attempting to ascertain what classification was possible, one should first ascertain what 'direction of fit' an utterance or an act has to the world around us. Searle (1999) expatiating this point, says that there are three ways in which an utterance can be said to relate to reality. These are:

- i. Word to world (whereby the propositional content is said to express reality), (ii) 'world to word' (where, reality is changed or modified in order to fit the propositional content of an utterance) and (iii) null direction of fit (whereby the propositional content is taken for granted especially in emotional use of language) (p .100).

Searle (1999:148) goes ahead to state. "there are five and only five different types of illocutionary points" :

1. Assertive force: These are acts that commit a hearer to a proposition. "It is to present the proposition as representing a state of affairs in the world". Assertive speech acts include: definitions, descriptions, assertions, statement of facts, boast, complains, and so on. Assertive acts usually have a 'word to world' fit and as such they can be true or false.
2. Directive force: "The illocutionary point of a directive 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. (p. 149) .Examples of directives include: orders, demands, instruction, requests, begging, asking, pleading, entreating, inviting, permitting, advice, challenge, command, etc. Directives have a, world to word' fit as they are issued with the desire that the hearer should do what is proposed- should change the world in line with the

uttered propositional content. Directives cannot be true or false, but they can be obeyed or disobeyed, complied with, granted, denied, and so on.

3. Commissive force: Commits a speaker to undertake a course of action proposed in the utterance's propositional content. Utterances that have commissive force include promises, vows, pledges, verbal contracts, covenant e. t. c. A commissive has a world to word fit since the act commits the speaker to act as the utterance suggests. Commissives are essentially expressions of intention to do something and are not subject to truth conditions but can be kept, broken or carried out.
4. Expressive force: These are utterances which state the feeling of the speaker. They express psychological states and can be statements of joy, pleasure, pain, dislikes sorrow, disgust, etc. They also occur in form of condoling, thanking, apologizing, congratulating and all acts that can be performed by the expression of one's inner feelings. Expressive acts have a "null direction of fit" because the truth of the propositional content is simply taken for granted.
5. Declarative force: The illocution force of a declaration is to bring about a change in the world by representing it as having been changed (Searle, 1999:150). This means that one has created something by virtue of one having successfully declared something. In essence, a declaration uttered under all proper conditions creates a state of affairs in the world that did not exist before.

### **Data Analysis and Discussion**

The President, Muhammadu Buhari, addressed the United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 28, 2016. The occasion provided the president an ample opportunity to appeal to the international community for assistance, partnership and interventions in solving the numerous problems confronting his administration. Therefore, the President had clear intentions and set objectives which have to be accomplished through an effective use of language. In other words, for his communicative intentions to be recognized by his audience, his speech has to be diplomatically correct.

In the analysis that follows, some relevant sections of Buhari's speech have been lifted and analyzed, following Searle (1999) taxonomy of speech act which emphasizes illocutionary points/ forces, which allow utterances to be examined in the light of the speaker's intent and the hearer's uptake.

### **Locutions**

1. I would like, Mr. President, on behalf of the Government and people of Nigeria, to congratulate you and your country on your election to preside over the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly.
2. May I also express appreciation to your predecessor, Mr, Sam Kahamba Kutesa and the Secretary General, Mr Ban Ki-Moon, both of whom worked tirelessly to ensure proper articulation of the post- 2015 Development Agenda and to maintain focus and commitment to the ideals of the United Nations.
3. I thank Mr Ban Ki-Moon for his recent visit to Nigeria when he held very useful discussions.

### **Analysis and discussion**

The three locutions: 1, 2, and 3, are expressive speech acts that carry the illocutionary force of congratulating, appreciating, and thanking in that order. Utterances that carry expressive forces are usually found at the beginning and the end of speeches. Here, the president deployed their illocutionary properties to act as courtesy signals usually used by public speakers as phatic tokens to establish common grounds at the beginning of speeches. In the context of diplomacy, speakers, as a matter of protocol, are expected to greet the functionaries, dignitaries and the other members present, especially as they are considered as representatives of their various countries and governments.

President Buhari used expressive acts to show happiness, joy and gratitude to the chairman of the General Assembly and to the Secretary- General of the United Nations for the opportunity, and privilege given to him to address the General Assembly for the first time, and the prospects that such opportunity hold for him, his government and his people.

### **Locutions**

4. Fifty-five years ago, Nigeria's first Prime Minister, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, stood on this forum to declare Nigeria's desire to develop and maintain friendly relations with all countries.
5. He also assured the world of our country's commitment to uphold the principles upon which the UN was established.
6. Mr President, my country Nigeria has lived by this conviction, even when judgment went against us in territorial disputes with our neighbours.
7. We respected those judgments and abided by them as a mark of respect for the rule of law and the charter of this organization.

### **Analysis and discussion**

Locutions 4-7 above, are assertive (representative) speech acts that carry the illocutionary force of defining, describing, asserting and statement of facts. In historical terms, the President used these acts to trace Nigeria's commitment to upholding the rule of law and the charter of the UN from the inception of the organization to the present day. He also used these assertive acts to state the country's continued commitment and support for the ideals of the UN. Assertive acts, as we have stated earlier, represent a state of affairs in the world and are therefore prone to be true or false. The realisation of this may have led the President to cite the well-documented and verifiable facts of the ruling, by the international court in a territorial dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon which was in favour of Cameroon, to buttress his points. He used these assertive speech acts to foreground Nigeria's commitment and loyalty to the UN, and by so doing, to convince and assure the General Assembly of his administration's readiness to remain committed to the goals of the organization.

### **Locutions**

8. Nigeria's record in the UN peace keeping is second to none.
9. Myself, as a young officer in the Nigerian Army did tours of duty in Congo and the Lebanon.

10. Nigeria has contributed to UN peace keeping efforts in Ethiopia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Darfur.

### **Analysis and discussion**

Locution 8-10 are assertive (representative) speech acts that carry the illocutionary force of defining, describing and stating the state of affairs in the world. In locution 8, the President performed the act of stating, in a rather boastful and exaggerated degree, Nigeria's impeccable record of participation in UN's peace keeping missions in different parts of the world. In location 9, he stated the fact of his personal participation in peace keeping missions in Congo and Lebanon as a member of the Nigerian Army..

The use of assertive speech acts by the president is tactful as they are meant to create the perlocutionary effect of eliciting admiration for and commendation of Nigeria's contribution to global peace by the General Assembly. This will definitely put them in the right frame of mind to recommend and support any collective action that may be required to restore peace in Nigeria.

### **Locution**

- 11 We are proud of our contributions to other activities of the UN, including the peace building commission, the Human Rights council and security sector reforms..

### **Analysis and discussion**

Locution- 11, is an expressive speech-act that carry the illocutionary force of expressing the inner feeling of the speaker. The President used it to express the fact that he, and indeed, the entire people of Nigeria are proud of their contribution and participation in other UN activities or efforts such as the Human Right council and security sector reforms.

### **Locutions**

12. The successor frameworks of the MDGs have com . . . they target development cooperation of the international community up to the year 2020. . . they deserve universal support.
13. I should stress that for the newly adopted sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be truly global, they must be practical.
14. In this regard the SDG's core objectives of poverty eradication and reducing inequalities, must be met . . .
15. In this connection, I would like to appeal to industrialized countries to redeem their pledge of earmarking 0.7% of their GDP to development assistance.
16. The secretary General himself has grouped the SDGs into what he calls "six essential elements" . . . I would like to propose a seventh . . . peace

### **Analysis and discussion.**

Locution 12-16 are directive speech acts with the illocutionary force to make the hearer to behave in accordance with the propositional content of the directive. Directives are used to perform the act of requesting, ordering, proposing, demanding, instructing, and so forth.

Directives are uttered with the desire to get the hearer to do what the speaker proposed ie to change the world according to the intention of the speaker. The President, by the use of these directives, is requesting, appealing and proposing the following action which he desires the international community to carry out.

. . . that the MDGs should be given universal support (Loc.- 12)

. . . that the SDGs . . . must be practical to be truly global (Loc .13).

. . .that the core objectives of the SDGs: eradication of poverty and reducing inequalities, must be met. (Loc. 14)

. . . that the industrialized countries must redeem their pledge. . . (Loc 15)

. . . that peace should be added to the list of essential elements of the SDGs (Loc. 16)

### Locution

17. Peace, Mr. President, is close to the hearts of Nigerians as we are in the frontline in the war on terror.
18. *Boko Haram*'s war against the people of Nigeria chad, Niger, and Cameroon, may not attract as much worldwide attention as the war in the Middle East but the suffering is just as great and the human lost is equally high.
19. This is a war about values between progress and chaos; between democracy and the rule of law.
20. *Boko Haram* celebrates violence against the weak and the innocent and deplorably they hide behind the perverted interpretation of Islam.
21. *Boko Haram* is far away from Islam as anyone can think of.

### Analysis and discussion

Locution 17-21 are assertive speech acts which the President has employed to define, describe, and make fleeting statements of facts about the menace of the *Boko Haram* insurgents in Nigeria in his bid to elicit international attention, sympathy and interventions. Loc. 18 functions as a reminder to the global body that the *Boko Haram* war is not restricted to Nigeria alone but is now a sub-regional challenge as it has spread to other countries like Cameroon, chad, and Niger. He also asserts that the *Boko Haram* war is not less in magnitude in terms of suffering and human cost than the war in the Middle East and so the war against *Boko Haram* should be given the same international attention as the Middle East war.

These assertions have the illocutionary force of a request for assistance and the perlocutionary effect of arousing emotions, sympathy and galvanizing support for Nigeria and her neighbours in terms of a solidarity and joint action against *Boko Haram*.

### Locution

22. We intend to tackle inequalities arising from massive unemployment and the previous government favouring a few people to the detriment of the many.

23. We intent to emphasize quality technological education for development and lay foundation for comprehensive care of the aged, the disadvantaged and the infirm.
24. Mr. President, one of our major aims is to rescue the *Chibok* girls alive and unharmed.  
..
25. We are working round the clock to ensure their safety and eventual reunion with their families.

### **Analysis and discussion.**

Locution 22-25 are commissive speech acts which when uttered, have the illocutionary force to commit the speaker to undertake the course of action proposed by the speech acts. Specifically, Buhari used them to express his commitment to end terror and insurgency in Nigeria. These commissive acts carry the illocutionary forces of conveying his promises, vows, and pledges to the international community on the deliberate actions and measures he intend to take or to put in place in order to eliminate the immediate and remote causes of insurgency in Nigeria. In specific terms, he vowed to tackle injustices, inequalities, unemployment underdevelopment and to rescue the *Chibok* girls. By using commissive speech acts to express all this, his utterances have taken on the weight of a verbal contract between him and the International community.

### **Locution:**

26. Mr. President,. . . the new Nigerian government which I have the honour to head, moved with dispatch to put a bold and robust strategy in place to defeat *Boko Haram*.
27. Nigeria and her neighbours: Cameroon, Chad, Niger, plus Benin are working together to face this common threat. . .
28. We have established a Multi-national Joint Task Force to confront, degrade and defeat *Boko Haram*.
29. We have driven them away from many of their strongholds, killed or captured many of their operatives or commanders and freed several hundreds of hostages.

### **Analysis and discussion**

Locutions 26-29 are assertive (representative) speech-acts which the President used to state the fact of his administration's achievements, successes and triumphs in the war against the *Boko Haram*. The anticipated perlocutionary effects of the use of assertive speech-acts by President Buhari is to impress it upon members of the UN nations to appreciate the efforts of his new administration in the fight against the insurgent group which is an improvement on the efforts of the previous government. This will expectedly convince and sway members to propose an establishment of a more global multinational Joint Task force that will replace the sub-regional one.

### **Locutions:**

30. Mr. president. . . corruption, cross border financial crimes, cybercrimes, human trafficking, spread of communicable diseases, climate change, proliferation of

weapons, are all major challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century which the international must tackle collectively.

31. In particular, I call upon the global community to urgently redouble efforts towards strengthening the mechanisms for dismantling safe havens for proceeds of corruption and ensuring the return of stolen funds and assets to their countries of origin.

### **Analysis and Discussion**

Locution 30 and 31 are directive speech-acts of request and appeal. The occasion of the General Assembly provides him with an opportunity to demand or request collective efforts by the global community in tackling and solving the problem of repatriation of funds stolen and deposited in foreign banks by corrupt Nigerian officials.

Therefore, his use of these directives is tactful and appropriate to convey his appeal and request. Buhari's use of these directives has highlighted and foregrounded these challenges for them to be noticed and attract a global corroborative attention which is the objective he aimed to achieve.

### **Locutions:**

32. Mr. President, the world is now facing a big new challenge: human trafficking.
33. This is an old evil taking an altogether new and dangerous dimensions, threatening to upset international relationships.
34. We in Africa are grieved to see on international Networks how hundreds and thousands of our able bodied men and women fleeing to Europe and in the process thousands dying in the desert or drowning in the Mediterranean.
35. We condemn in the strongest terms these people traffickers. . .

### **Analysis and discussion**

Locutions 32 and 33 are assertive or representative speech-acts while locutions 34 and 35 are expressive speech-acts. The President made use of assertive acts and followed it up with expressive acts and this forms part of his strategy in this section of his address. The assertives function as introductory utterances which he used to first, bring the menace of human trafficking and the clandestine migration of Africans to Europe through the desert and the Mediterranean sea, to focal prominence, before describing the effects of these menace on his country or sub- region .

The expressive act in locs. 34 and 35 carry the illocutionary force of expressing, in very strong terms, his disgust, grief and outright condemnation of this menace which has claimed hundreds and thousands of African lives.

The perlocutionary effect of these utterances, put together, is a clarion call for action on the international community to make collective efforts to apprehend the perpetrators of this crime and bring them to justice.

### **Locutions.**

36. Last year, our continent faced the dreadful occurrence of *Ebola*.

37. We sincerely thank the international community for the collective efforts to contain this deadly disease.
38. We are not out of the woods yet but we would like to record our appreciation to the United States, the United Kingdom, France and China for their understanding, and assistance in arresting the spread of *Ebola* ...

### Analysis and discussion

Locution 36 is an assertive speech act that functions to highlight and bring the issue of *Ebola* disease to focal prominence.

Locutions 37 and 38 are expressive acts which function as follow-up moves to communicate Nigeria's gratitude and appreciation for the international community for their collective assistance and collaboration in arresting the spread of *Ebola* and caring for those affected. Failure to do this by the president would have been "diplomatically in correct"

### Locution

39. We are witnessing a dreadful increase in conflicts fueled by availability of small arms and light weapons.
40. I call upon all member countries to demonstrate the political will needed to uphold the UN charter
- 41 ... a robust implementation of the arms trade treaty will guarantee that small arms and light weapons are only legally transferred.
- 42: Arms traffickers and human traffickers are two evil species which the world community should eradicate.

### Analysis and discussion

Locution 39 is an assertive speech-act used to highlight and foreground the problem of proliferation of small arms and the pockets of intra and international conflicts fuelled by it. Locutions 40, 41, and 42 are all directive acts used to appeal to member states for more collective and collaborative efforts in upholding the UN charter and the implementation of the arms Trade Treaty to check the proliferation of small arms and the accompanying increase of conflicts across the world.

The table below summarizes the pragmatic strategies discussed in the foregoing and their occurrences in the data.

**Table 1: Frequency Table**

Speech Acts	Frequencies	Percentages
Expressive	8	23%
Assertive	20	50%
Commissives	4	10%
Directives	10	25%
Verdictives	00	%
Declaratives	00	0%

Total no acts = 42

The President opened his speech with expressive speech acts which are traditionally deployed at the margins of diplomatic interaction as opening or closing formula.

The President also made preponderant use of assertive or representative acts which he strategically used to foreground the issues or problems as they affect Nigeria and her neighbours and to describe and state his country's positions and expectations on the issues.

Commissive speech acts were also used by President Buhari to communicate his administration's future or intended actions and to convince the international community of his seriousness and commitment to carry them out.

Directive speech acts were deployed as requests and appeals to the international community for assistance and collective efforts in addressing some of the issues or solving the problems highlighted.

The data displayed no instance of the use of verdictive and declarative acts as such may be prone to censuring in terms of felicity conditions.

## CONCLUSION

We have shown from the foregoing that the pragmatic strategies of direct and indirect speech acts are involved in speaking diplomatically in multilateral and bilateral meetings. Different speech acts carry the illocutionary force of defining, stating facts, making requests and vows, expressing feelings of joy, disgust and condemnation, as well as stating commitments. Furthermore, the study has shown that different speech acts have different perlocutionary effects such as convincing, arousing emotions, conscientising, appeasing, gratifying etc on the hearers or listeners. Ultimately, the study has demonstrated that there are factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effects of our choice on others. This is predicated on the pragmatic axiom that we use language to make things happen. We have, thus far, demonstrated that a study of the deployment of speech acts as strategy in diplomatic texts, contributes to a better understanding of multilateral and bilateral communication and provides insights into presidential rhetoric in diplomatic meetings.

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