



Pragmatic Analysis Of Mr. Peter Obi’s Speech At Chatham House United Kingdom On Monday, February 27, 2023 During The Building Up Of The 2023 General Elections In Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study sets out to introspect the pragmatic acts of locution, illocution and perlocution in Mr. Peter Obi’s speech at Chatham house United kingdom during the build up to February 25, 2023 general election in Nigeria. The speech act theories of J.L. Austine (1962) and Searly (1969) are the adopted frame work, through the deployment of illocutionary acts of: Expressive, declarative, directive, assertive and commisive. The data for this study is Mr. Peter Obi’s speech at Chatham house United Kingdom on Tuesday January 17, 2023. The qualitative research methodology is adopted for the study, and descriptive survey method employed for data analysis. The findings of the study reveal that Mr. Peter Obi used more of assertive illocutionary speech act in his speech. Assertive illocutionary speech act recorded the overall frequency of 20 and (42%) to affirm, report, and announce the parlous state of affairs in Nigeria. This is closely followed by commisive and expressive illocutionary speech acts which recorded the frequency of 9 (32%) each. Finally directive illocutionary speech act has the frequency of 5 (14%). The perlocutionary effect of the Speech on Nigerians is the unprecedented massive turn out of voters that came out and voted for his party Labour Party, and moved it from its former place of obscurity to a place of lime light.

Keywords: Mr. Peter Obi, Chatham house, Labour Party, Pragmatic Analysis, General Elections. 1.

INTRODUCTION

The indispensability of language in human relationship and association can never be overemphasized. Language is a unique human attribute which distinguishes humans from animals. Through language man had been able to interact with one another and communicates his feelings, thoughts and needs. Language does not exist in a vacuum, it operates within a context of situation. (Martinet, 1970, p.20) posits that “language is a formidable instrument of communication by which human experience is analyzed.” This implies that language is employed to carry out some specialized activities like: informing, persuading, entertaining and educating. The primacy of language cuts across all facets of all human life: government, education, health, politics, etc.

Omachanu cited in (Okolo 2016, p.1) opines that:

“Language is a facilitator of human essence for all inventions and achievements ever recorded in human existence have their roots in language as their veritable instrument of thought and an indispensable channel of communication”

Politicians are reputed for their ability to manipulate language to their own advantage in order to appeal to the senses of the governed. Mr. Peter Obi's speech at Chatham house United Kingdom on Tuesday January 17, 2023, on the invitation of Dr. Alex Vine to interrogate the vision of those seeking to rule Nigeria, is one out of many political speeches made by politicians during campaigns. Language and politics have an inextricable affinity; hence language is the force that drives politics. Chilton (1998, p.20) opines that "politics is the art of governance and power, while on the other hand language is the universal capacity of all humans to communicate in all societies". Aligning to Chilton's postulation (Bayram 2010, p.23) asserts that "politics is the struggle for power for the purpose of putting certain political, economic and social ideas into practice". The inextricable relationship between language and politics made it mandatory that politics must go with the appropriate language to carry it out. Language plays a very important role in political activities because of its multi-facet function in different political situations which enable politicians form stable social relationship. Proper language use is indispensable in the successful implementation of any democratic process. (Taiwo, 1980, p.92) concurs to this assertion and stated that "Language conveys power; it moves people to exercise their franchise, debate and even revolt". It is, therefore, central to political stability or polarization. Re-echoing the inextricable affinity between language and politics (Wodak 2001, p.11) opines that "the constant unity of language and other social matters ensured that language is enter-wined in social power in a number of ways: language indexes power, expresses power and is involved where there is a contention of power and where power is challenged." The primary objective of this study is to examine Mr. Peter Obi's speech at Chatham house United Kingdom, through the instrumentality of pragmatics and to ascertain the perlocutionary effect of his speech on Nigerians during the February 25, 2023 general elections.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies how humans produce and understand everyday use of language which are apparently peculiar (Grundy, 2008, p.3). Language use is not done in isolation of the social context in which it is used. This informs the core objective of this study which is the pragmatic study of Mr. Peter Obi's speech at Chatham house in the United Kingdom. Concurring with the above assertion (Mey, 2001, p.6) avers that "pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the condition of the society". Bieswanger & Becker (2006, p.7) posit that "Pragmatics examines how speakers understand and communicate more than the literary meaning of words or sentences, the type of meaning that is studied in pragmatics is known as utterance meaning, ie meaning in context or meaning in interaction." Verschueren (1999) puts it more technical when he stated that: "pragmatics can be seen as general cognitive, social, and cultural perspectives on linguistic phenomenon that relates to their usage in form of behavior". These authors, by their definitions, point to the fact that speech making is the act of producing an utterance that is meaningful. Aligning with this (Griffiths 2006, p.148) states that: "speech act is the basic unit of linguistic interaction" In the same vein, Osisanwo (2003, p.55) opines that "an utterance is a speech act", which implies that in any utterance a person makes an act is performed. Joan (2002, p.13) sees speech act as the action performed in saying something. Acts performed includes the following: stating a fact, an opinion, confirming or denying something, issuing an order, apologizing, etc. Verschueren (1999, p.131) explains that speech acts are tied to sentences. In this case, a ceremonial or political speech is not a speech alone but a sequence of series of speech acts. Speech act theory introspects the underlining meanings of utterances made by people in different speech activities; this invariably means that people do more things with words than what such words mean on the surface level. Speech acts are made up of verbs and these verbs play important roles in performing actions with words, these verbs are divided into performative and constative verbs. Performative verbs are used in Performative utterances. (Gernnaro & Gnet 1990, p.174) are of the view that "a performative utterance does not simply convey a message but performs some substantive action". This is to say that as one is uttering the sentence an act is being performed and carried out, an example of Performative action is "I pronounce your husband and wife" as in the case of religious priest. The Performative verb in the utterance is "pronounce". Constatives are different from Performatives in that they are ordinary statements that can be appraised as true or false in a particular circumstance. Gennaro and Gnet (1990)

stated that constative verbs are used to state a fact or a state of affairs. Example, he is a young man (176). Speech acts are divided into three broad acts these are: **locutionary acts**, **illocutionary acts**, and **perlocutionary acts**. The **locutionary act** has to do with the act of saying something or the act performed by making an utterance, the **illocutionary act** is what one intends to do or achieve by producing an utterance. **Perlocutionary act** is seen as the emotional effect of an illocutionary act on the addressee. Several studies have indeed been carried out on the communicative strategies employed by politicians through the perspective of Pragmatics and discourse analysis. This study reviews quite a few of them as follows: Akinwotu S. Alaba investigated speech act analysis of the acceptance of the nomination speech of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Chief Moshood Abiola, using J.L. Austin's (1962) speech act theory as modified by Seale (1962 and 1969). The data of the study was the selected speeches of Chief Awolowo (the presidential candidate of the Unity Party of Nigeria, UPN in 1979) and Chief Moshood Abiola (the presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party- SDP in 1993). Chief Awolowo's speech, "The Challenges of the New Era" was delivered at the UPN National Convention in Lagos on the 6th of October, 1978 and was later published in a collection of his speeches titled "Path to Nigeria Greatness" while that of Abiola "Hope for Nigerians" was delivered at the Social Democratic Party national convention in Jos on the 29th of March 1993 and published later as "Hope 93, Fare Well to Poverty". The result of the study revealed that the illocutionary act of assertive had the highest percentage and frequency of occurrence among all the other speech acts such as: directive, commissive, expressive and declarative. The study was concluded on the note that unlike presidential inaugural speeches acceptance of nomination speeches were mostly used as mobilization strategies especially in political campaigns where it was necessary for candidates to persuade their listeners towards the desired goal of winning elections. Olaniyi Oladimeji and Bamigbola Esther investigated contextual acts in former president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's declaration of presidential candidacy under the political platform of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), using context and speech act theory. The study's aim was to examine how contextual illocutionary acts have been used to achieve a coherent speech delivery. Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere examined the pragmatics of victory/inaugural speeches of President Umaru Musa Yaradua using Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) the speech act theory. The data for the study (victory/inaugural) were the first speech delivered by President Umaru Musa Yaradua in 2007. The selected speech were extracted from specific portions of the speech, thus a total of ten sentences were selected comprising the first five and the last five making a total of forty speech acts (direct and indirect illocutionary acts). The study revealed that the president exploited fewer sentences to indicate the sincerity of his intentions. The study concludes that the speech act analysis of the political discourse of President Yaradua provided the understanding that political leaders in Nigeria perform various acts through their speeches which assist in the understanding and interpretation of the messages in their speeches. The political speeches reviewed above are either acceptance speeches or inaugural speech and none has been made on the invitation of Dr. Alex Vine to introspect politicians on their vision for seeking to be elected to rule Nigeria which this study seeks to address. This is where this study finds its relevance as it is to the best knowledge of these researchers the first to address Mr. Peter Obi's speech at Chatham house during the building up of the February 25, 2023 general election in Nigeria.

3. THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

The theoretical framework of any research work serves as the tool for analyzing the research data. This study is anchored on J.L. Austin (1962) and Searle's (1969) speech act theory and will be used for the analysis and evaluation of Mr. Peter Obi's speech at Chatham house United Kingdom on Tuesday January 17, 2023. The choice of this framework was borne out of the fact that people perform different actions through their words and when utterances are made a particular act is performed. This is what the theory intends to explore in this study via the data analysis. This study adopts the categorization of illocutionary force of utterance as enunciated by J.L. Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) John Searle's (1969) improved on Austin's classification of illocutionary act into verditives, exercitives, commissive, behavitives and expositives. He thus categorized the illocutionary act of utterance into five classes of: expressive, directive, assertive, commissive and declarative.

Expressive: this illocutionary act expresses a psychological state, which includes, thanking, apologizing, congratulating, welcoming and greeting.

Directive: this illocutionary act is an attempt by the speakers to get the addressee to do something such as, ordering, requesting, begging, and questioning.

Assertive: this is also called representative; it commits a speaker to the truth of the same proposition. They are statements that describe a state of affairs in the world which include stating, claiming, reporting and announcing.

Commissive: this group of illocutionary act tends to commit the speaker to some future course of action which include promising, threatening, and swearing to do something.

Declarative: this class of illocutionary act effects immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs and tends to rely on elaborate linguistic institutions which include excommunicating, marrying, firing from employment, declaring a war, resigning, sentencing, dismissing, and christening.

4.0 Research Design

In this study we adopt the qualitative research method, and descriptive survey method is used for the data analysis.

4.1 Sample And Sampling Technique

The sample for this study is Mr. Peter Obi's speech at Chatham house United Kingdom on Tuesday January 17, 2023. The speech is segmented into eleven extracts for the purpose of proper analysis.

4.2 Instrument For Data Collection

Mr. Peter Obi's speech at Chatham house on Tuesday February 17, 2023, during the buildup to 2023 general elections in Nigeria, was downloaded from the internet. The researchers also sought for materials on Pragmatics from the library in order to carry out a detailed analysis of the speech using the speech act theory.

4.3 Method Of Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study is concerned with the eleven extracts from the speech of Mr. Peter Obi at Chatham house during the buildup to the 2023 general election in Nigeria using the speech act theory of John Searle (1969) to show how Mr. Peter Obi through his speech was able to encode his intended meanings to his audience at Chatham house, Through the illocutionary acts of: **assertive, commissive, expressive, directive** and **declarative**, and also to find out the perlocutionary effect these speeches have on the Nigerian masses. Each illocutionary act is divided into direct and indirect Illocutionary act. In order to carry out a thorough analysis of Mr. Peter Obi's speech at Chatham house. The percentage of the direct and indirect illocutionary acts and speech act type were calculated and their frequencies were generated on a table.

5.0 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF MR. PETER OBI'S CHATHAM HOUSE SPEECH

Here we attempt to make a pragmatic analysis of Mr. Peter Obi's speech at Chatham house United Kingdom, titled "Policy and Institutional reform at the heart of 2023 Elections in Nigeria.

Extract 1

Locution (The physical act of producing understandable utterances)

In agreement to the primacy of gratitude among human virtues, please allow me to begin today with words of gratitude. I am most grateful to Chatham house, Dr. Alex Vine and his team for the global impact of their mission and commitment to engagement with nation building in Nigeria. In providing this global platform to interrogate the vision of seeking to lead Nigeria, at this time when clear existential threats as I will discuss shortly are pervasive across our dear country, this Chatham house event challenges us to new thinking. We have alarming insecurity that has led to loss of many lives and properties, significant decline in food and economic output, immense trauma that has compromised the mental health of communities, and in some cases irredentist pressures and disaffection with the Nigerian project. The economy is in crisis with troubling debt profile worsened by oil theft of proportion once hard to even imagine, two economic recessions in six years and a lamentable power sector that significantly constrains manufacturing and social

life. The Nigerian state is captive to an elite gang up and a rentier political economy that has concentrated political power in the hand of those who come to power and influence through their own contrivances and not through the affirmation of the people, and therefore do not have the incentive to serve the people's interest.

Illocution (What a speaker intends to achieve by producing a particular utterance)

The above utterance is made by Mr. Peter Obi, the presidential candidate of the labour party for February 25, 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The speech has an indirect illocutionary act of expressive. The speaker expresses his discontentment and disappointment with the state of affairs in Nigeria ranging from bad economy to insecurity. The utterance also have a direct illocutionary act of assertive. The speaker stated the bad shape of the country occasioned by self- serving politicians who does anything humanly possible to grab power at all cost

Per locution (The cognitive and emotional effect of an illocutionary act on the addressee(s))

The per locutionary effect of Mr. Peter Obi's speech is the large support from Nigerians especially the youth which his party Labour Party enjoyed during the election.

Extract Two (Locution)

How did Nigeria plunge into such economic decline that we have overtaken India as home to the biggest pool of the absolute poor in the world? While the poverty rate in India is about 16%, that of Nigeria is about 63% with about 133 million Nigerians classified as multi-dimensionally poor! This is unacceptable and needs to change! What Nigeria needs is a Great Escape as the 2015 Nobel prize winner in Economics, Angus Deaton, of Princeton University elucidated, that what separates poor and rich is attributed to health and Education. But what provides Quality Health and Educational systems for a society? Committed and focused leadership that can build and sustain public wealth as I was told by professor Donal Jacobson of the Kellogg School of management

Illocution (What a speaker intends to achieve by producing a particular utterance)

The above speech has the indirect illocutionary act of expressive the speaker expresses his dismay at the level of want and need in Nigeria, and how Nigeria has become the world poverty headquarters despite being richly endowed by God, it also has the direct illocutionary force of assertive, the speaker stated that a very high percentage of Nigerians are poor. The speech also has an indirect illocutionary force of commissive, the speaker has indirectly told Nigerians not to accept this state of poverty and if he is elected as the president of Nigeria this current state of poverty will change.

Per locution (The cognitive and emotional effect of an illocutionary act on the addressee(s))

The illocutionary effect of the above speech is that of desire for a change,

Extract 3

Locution (The physical act of producing understandable utterance)

Senator Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed, my running mate, and I are committed to a new politics that starts with the ethics of servant-leaders and anchored on the marriage of clean hearts and skilful hands. We know that unless we change our politics by changing our political leadership, we are stuck with this terrible state of underdevelopment and misery. We will patriotically reform our institutions particularly ones directly responsible for implementing Government policies to make them fit for purpose. It is not to be doubted in the global scene that Nigeria is blessed with some of the most entrepreneurial youths in the world, in science in business, in art and entertainment. We believe that what remains is to change the leadership class from predators to creators of value; from those whose wealth and power are derived from the destitution of the nation and its people to those who have demonstrated the competence, character and capacity to invest in human development, create prosperity, and instil the right values and ethical conduct deserving of servant leaders.

Illocution (What a speaker intends to achieve by producing a particular utterance) the above speech by Mr. Peter Obi, has the direct illocutionary act of commissive he affirms that he and his running mate are committed to good governance and will change the status quo which Nigerian politicians are known with, which is the embezzlement of public fund. It also has a direct illocutionary act of assertive, he stated that Nigeria is blessed with some of the most enterprising youths in the world.

Per locution (The cognitive and emotional effect of an illocutionary act on the addressee(s))

The per locutionary effect of Mr. Peter Obi's speech is that of hope and optimism for Nigerians particularly the youths.

Extract 4

Locution (The physical act of producing understandable utterance)

Nigeria today is at a critical juncture and the people led by the youths brutalized by bad leadership, are awake and leading the movement to transform Nigerian politics and restart the engine of economic growth and social stability. We count ourselves honoured to be trusted especially by the youths, to lead this democratic revolution and we deeply pledge to do so with sincerity, accountability and unquenchable love and desire for a better Nigeria. We are simply the symbol of Nigerian youths' struggle to reverse the ugly trend that keeps driving them into social anomie, despair and rejection of their own country. We are determined to do everything that needs to be done to rescue and lead our beloved country to prosperity, freedom, security and peace. We will use merit to assemble competent Nigerians from all sections of Nigeria to form and effective government of national unity.

Illocution (What a speaker intends to achieve by producing a particular utterance) The above utterance has a direct illocutionary force of assertive, and an indirect illocutionary force of expressive. The speaker stated the effect of bad governance in Nigeria and the plight of the Nigerian youths who are facing acute unemployment. The speaker expresses his gratitude to Nigerian youths for their massive support for Labour party. The utterance also has a direct illocutionary act of commissive the speaker reiterated his commitment to good governance and equity for all Nigerians devoid of sectionalism.

Per locution (The cognitive and emotional effect of an illocutionary act on the addressee(s))

Mr. peter Obi's speech imbued the Nigerian youths with hope for better days, and this can be seen from the massive support that Labour Party got during the 2023 general elections.

Extract 5

Locution (The physical act of producing understandable utterances)

At the heart of my goal here today is to look at our Labour Party's key policy pranks and how they will drive up the quality of life of the average Nigerian, dramatically reduce poverty and return Nigeria to a place of strategic relevance in a world that needs a thriving and well governed Nigeria stabilizing the continent of Africa, making it a high value add for a planet imperilled by environmental challenges, terrorism and inequity. I also plan here to speak on institutions and how the leadership we offer can facilitate the evolution of stronger institutions, with the rule of law a key anchor of nation building in Nigeria .I have no doubt the policy choices we favour, and the strong institution, Labour party will facilitate, we will move Nigeria from a country of rent seekers sharing oil receipts and consuming conspicuously, to one that produces, based on vast factor endowment whose value chains can move us towards a high employment economy. We will turn our youth bulge to a demographic dividend rather than today's harvest of time bomb of violence and insecurity from the uneducated, unemployed and marginalized. This forms the first and most important thrust of my governance priorities without which the rest may not be achieved. "To secure Nigeria, end banditry and insurgence, and unite our dear nation to manage our diversity such that no one is left behind" The growing insecurity in Nigeria is not because the enemy is formidable, it is rather because of lack of focused leadership, ineffective security governance structure and poor coordination from the centre, all these need to be addressed by first projecting strong leadership signals that allow both state and non- state actors

to be mobilized around a single vision. Then pursuing a robust reform of the security governance structure with a strong coordinating mechanism that assure that all level of government- Federal, state, local government (with three level policing structure) are aligned with strong collaboration with partners from both the private sector and development groups to provide the required services and deliver result for every Nigerian. Ones this is done it is also important to have a single, clear, coherent, and consistent communication system to keep the government accountable, citizens engaged and involved in the development process. It is important for institutions to be able to provide strong leadership coordination capability, partner and engage collaboratively with all relevant stake holders in a environment that mutually reinforces value.

Illocution (What a speaker intends to achieve by producing a particular utterance)

The above extract has an illocutionary act of commissive. The speaker stated how his party labour party has intended to improve the quality of lives of Nigerians from poverty, and return Nigeria to the path of prosperity. He promised to change Nigeria from consuming to producing country. He also stated his commitment to secure Nigeria from insecurity and banditry through three level security governance structure (3-level policing structure).

Per locution (The cognitive and emotional effect of an illocutionary act on the addressee)

The per locutionary effect of the above utterance on Nigerians is that of hope and optimism for a better Nigeria devoid of insecurity and economic hardship.

Extract 6

Locution (The physical act of producing understandable utterances)

The second plank of my policy thrust is to shift emphasis from consumption to production by running a production centred economy that is driven by an agrarian revolution and export oriented industrialization". With about 70 million hectares of arable land, we will pursue an Agricultural revolution through proper segmentation of Nigeria to activate and harness the factor endowments of different parts of the country for both rapid and mechanizes Agricultural development and as a pillar for Nigeria's other sectoral development and industrialization. We will incentivise and invest in Agro-cluster and industrial cluster development across our geo-resource zones to take advantage of agglomeration and scale effects particularly in North west, North-East, and North Central regions of Nigeria. We will dredge both rivers Niger and Benue, build dams and massively support the planting of economic trees across the country for local usage, poverty elimination, export, and revenue generation.

Illocution (What a speaker intends to achieve by producing a particular utterance) The above utterance by Mr. Peter Obi is replete with direct illocutionary act of commissive in it he reiterated his commitment in changing the economic narrative of Nigeria, by running a production based economy instead of the consumption based economy of the past and present leaders. He promised to put the vast arable land in various parts of Nigeria into use for robust agricultural revolution, this he stated will enhance export oriented and industrialized economy.

Perlocution (The cognitive and emotional effect of a perlocutionary act on the addressee)

The perlocutionary effect of this speech on Nigerian is that of strong belief that the much desired and expected change has finally come to change the old narrative of mono economy that has impeded economic growth and development in Nigeria.

Extract 7

Locution (The act of producing understandable utterances)

A key task is to sequentially but decisively, dismantle the inefficient and anti-market distortionary structures restraining the Nigerian economy from creating the preconditions for pro market economy. We will employ entrepreneurial governance to dismantle impediments to free trade and easy of doing business and implement radical economic policies that will drastically reduce our debt service-a major drain on government revenue today. Our Micro, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (MSMEs) will be robustly supported. Further borrowing will be strictly for

productive purposes. While we will aggressively pursue the activation of all opportunities in the oil and gas value chain, we will use targeted incentive schemes that will professionally administered to diversify our non-oil export portfolio with proper consideration and management of climate change risks and opportunities.

Illocution (What a speaker intends to achieve in producing a particular utterance)

In the above extract the speaker Mr. Peter Obi, outlined how his administration will enhance economic development of Nigeria through governmental policies that will encourage the development of both micro, small and medium scale enterprises, proper monitoring of borrowings and debt service management. The above speech has the direct illocutionary force of commissive.

Per locution (The cognitive and emotional effect of an illocutionary act on the addressee)

The per locutionary effect of the above speech on Nigerians is that of hope and optimism for a better Nigeria.

Extract 8

Locution (The act of producing understandable utterances)

The third pillar of our governance priorities is to restructure the polity through effective legal and institutional reforms to entrench the rule of law, aggressively fight corruption, reduce cost of governance, and establish an honest and efficient civil service, reducing the cost of governance and streamlining government operations for efficiency and effectiveness, we will ensure that reforms are pursued in a way that protects the livelihood of our hard working and efficient civil servants. Critical to fighting corruption to, we shall install a new budgeting system founded on the cardinal principle of accountability, objective setting and program implementation. This is against the extant budgetary principle of revenue mobilization, expenditure, allocation, borrowing, without emphasis on monitoring, evaluation and feedback. We will enforce the principle of performance auditing and institutionalize monitoring and evaluation process of the entire public service delivery as the principal means of actualizing our vision of a new Nigeria. This reform will institutionalize the personal involvement of the president in setting budgetary objectives of MDAs, and monitoring and evaluation capacity will be strengthened with the presidency.

Illocution (what a speaker intends to achieve in producing a particular utterance). The above extract has a direct illocutionary force of commissive and an indirect illocutionary force of assertive. In it the speaker outlined how committed he will be in the fight against corruption, he promised to over-hall the Nigerian civil service, enthrone the culture of accountability in the budgeting system, revenue mobilization and sharing in the country. He stated that the existing budgetary principle of revenue sharing is done without emphasis on monitoring and evaluation.

Perlocution (The cognitive and emotional effect of an illocutionary act on the addressee). The perlocutionary effect of the above utterances on Nigerians, is that of hope and optimism for a better Nigeria, devoid of massive corruption, where accountability, rule of law and respect for the law reigns.

Extract 9

Locution (The act of producing understandable utterances).

The fourth plank of our governance priority is to “Leapfrog Nigeria into the fourth Industrial Revolution through the application of scientific and technological innovations to create a digital economy”. Building on the gains of the agriculture-led manufacturing and export, we will pursue the development of knowledge and skill to leverage on the emerging disruptive digital technologies, automation, Internet of things (IoT), artificial intelligence, robotics, virtual reality, block chain technology, biotechnology and data science- all of which are at the heart of the fourth industrial revolution.

Illocution (What a speaker intends to achieve by producing a particular utterance)

In the above Mr. Peter Obi, through the illocutionary act of commissive reiterated his commitment to launch Nigeria into a fourth industrial revolution, through the application of scientific and technological

innovations to create a digital economy, and the development of Agriculture to enhance the manufacturing and export of agro based finished goods and raw materials.

Per locution (The cognitive and emotional effect of an illocutionary act on the addressee).

The perlocutionary effect of the above utterances on Nigerians is that of hope that change is on the way.

Extract 10

Locution (The act of producing understandable utterances)

The fifth plank of our governance priorities is to “Build expansive infrastructure for efficient power supply, rail, road and air transportation and pipeline network, through integrated public-private partnerships and entrepreneurial public sector governance”. Our solution to the perennial power problem in Nigeria is a comprehensive one that covers transmission, distribution, generation and financing as detailed in our manifesto. However we will immediately complete the 2.3 billion Dollar, Nigeria-Siemens network improvement deal to achieve 7,000 MW stable capacity by the end of this year (2023), 11,000 megawatts by 2024, 25,000 megawatts by 2025. We will support local manufacturing capacity of power technologies and encourage and expand local R&D in Universities, training centres and workshops through which many jobs will be created.

Illocution (What a speaker intends to achieve by producing a particular utterance)

In the above extract the speaker deployed the illocutionary act of commissive to itemize his fifth industrial plan for Nigeria these include, the expansion of major infrastructures like: Roads, rail, efficient and uninterrupted power supply, air transportation, completion of abandoned projects and the enhancement of electricity generation from 11,000 megawatts to 25,000 megawatts by 2025. He also promised to build technological institutions and training centres to enhance job creation.

Per locution (The cognitive and emotional effect of an illocutionary act on the addressee)

The above speech resonated well with Nigerians especially the youths that have suffered under employment and unemployment for a long time. The speech is imbued with the hope of a better tomorrow.

Extract 11

Locution (The act of producing understandable utterances)

In concluding let me say that the problem with Nigeria is once complex and simple. It rests on leadership. As our erudite professor Chinua Achebe stated, “The problem with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership” In Achebe’s view, there is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. “The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of our leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of leading in the front by example which is the hallmark of true leadership” When people of competence, character, commitment and compassion take over leadership and pursue their mission and task with the seriousness required, a new Nigeria characterized by peace, unity, prosperity, inclusiveness will be achieved and sustained. That is what is driving Datti Baba-Ahmed and I to join and offer to led this desire and crusade of Nigerians particularly our youths for an inclusive and sustainable Nigeria that works for all.

Illocution (What a speaker intends to achieve by producing a particular utterance)

In the extract above Mr. Peter Obi employed the direct illocutionary act of assertive to state the problem with Nigeria and to quote the great novelist, Professor Chinua Achebe. He used the indirect illocutionary act of expressive to express the hope that when people of competence and commitment are at the helm of leadership in Nigeria a new Nigeria will be born.

Per locution (The cognitive and emotional effect of an illocutionary act on the addressee). The perlocutionary effect of the above speech on Nigerians is awareness, the speech made Nigerians that hitherto vote political office seekers across ethnic and religious lines have realized that political leadership is about competence and the will to serve the collective interest of the masses and the country in general. The speech resonated well with the electorates during the February 27, 2023 general election

in Nigeria. The speaker’s party, Labour Party came third in the election, this is unprecedented because the party moved from its former place of obscurity to lime light and popularity.

5.0 RESULT/FINDINGS

The result of this study has shown that Mr. Peter Obi, the presidential candidate of Labour Party made use of a total of three speech acts in his speech at Chatham house on Tuesday January 27, 2023, they are: assertive, expressive, and commissive speech acts. He made use of commissive illocutionary speech act which has a frequency of nine and recorded the highest score of (47.3%) of all the speech acts, to reiterate his commitment to the total overhaul of Nigeria’s economy, tackle insecurity and enthrone an all-inclusive leadership, whose hall mark will be the selection of competent and trusted hands from all sections of Nigeria, to revive the economic and political engine of the country. Assertive illocutionary speech act came second highest and has the frequency of six and recorded (31.5%). He used the assertive speech act to decry the parlous state of the Nigerian nation, a country so richly endowed by God but has become the poverty headquarters of the world, occasioned by mismanagement of resources, and massive corruption by self-serving politicians who came into power not by the will of the Nigerian masses but through their own contrivances. He also affirms the state of insecurity in the country which has compromised the mental health of many Nigerians, and rendered millions of Nigerians homeless. Expressive illocutionary speech act came third highest with the frequency of four times, and (21.0%) He deployed this speech act to express his gratitude especially to the Nigerian youths for their massive support for his party (Labour party). Also through this speech act he expressed his discontentment and disappointment with the state of affairs in Nigeria ranging from bad economy to insecurity. He finally expressed his hope that when people of competence and commitment are at the helm of leadership in Nigeria a new Nigeria will be born.

Figure 1. Summary table of the relative frequency and percentage of speech acts of Mr. Peter Obi’s speech at Chatham house.

	Speech act	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Commissive	9	47.3
2.	Assertive	6	31.5
3.	Expressive	4	21.0
	Total	19	100

6.0 DISCUSSION

This study has successfully carried out a pragmatic analysis of Mr. Peter Obi’s speech at Chatham house United Kingdom on Tuesday February 27, 2023 on the invitation of Dr. Alex Vine, to interrogate the visions of those seeking for the office of president in Nigeria during the build up of March 2023, general election in Nigeria. He made use of three speech acts: commissive, assertive, and expressive to convey his messages to Nigerians and the world commissive speech act recorded the highest frequency by occurring nine times in the speech and recorded (47.3%) this is followed by assertive speech act with a frequency of six, and recorded (31.5 %) expressive has the frequency of four and recorded (21.0 %) the perlocutionary effect of Mr. Peter Obi’s speech on Nigerians is the unprecedented massive turn out of voters, especially the youths, who voted massively for Labour Party and took the party from its former state of obscurity to limelight.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study which is to ascertain the perlocutionary effect of Mr. Peter Obi’s Chatham house speech on the Nigerian masses has been achieved by applying J.L Austin (1962) and Searle (1975) speech acts. This is meant to explore the language use of politicians and to show how effectively language can be used by politicians to persuade and change the people’s world view. This paper is a none electioneering, and none inaugural political discourse under pragmatics. We suggest further researches

from the areas of critical discourse analysis and stylistic and comparative studies of political speeches of heads of government and political officer holders.

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