

Pragmatic Analysis of Hate Speeches from Selected News Media in Nigeria

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Abstract

Speeches are a typical example of public speaking, a linguistic situation in which communication occurs between a speaker and hearer (s) through the medium of language. Language as a tool for communication can be used to perform certain conventional acts such as directing, asserting, informing, requesting, or promising which elicit actions or reactions because of the utterance by the speaker. This is to say, an utterance can trigger certain actions, which in essence are the outcomes of speech acts. It is the goal of speech to generate actions on the part of the hearers. Speakers of hate speeches use various types of speech acts to communicate their messages, as evident in the discussion the speeches prompt in the public domain in days after they are made. This paper intends to examine some speeches using the pragmatic theory of Speech Act. The analysis of some speeches shall identify the different Speech Acts that make the speeches to generate discussions by the public. The focus is on the effect the context of utterance, generally observed principles of communicating, and the goals of the speaker have on the speakers' choice of expressions, and the hearers' interpretation of the utterance.

Keywords: *Hate speech, Pragmaticism, and Speech Acts.*

Introduction

Two words need elucidation here, to help in the understanding of the plethora of political, religious, social, and sexist hate speeches and the reactions they have generated in Nigeria. The first word is hatred. Ordinarily, this word needs no explanation because of the frequency of its use, the meaning is easily accessible. But there is something in its meaning that is often missed by canny readers. Hate is to dislike intensely, feel antipathy or aversion towards something or someone. It equally means to detest a particular person, region, or religion. It is an emotion of intense dislike; a feeling of dislike so strong that it demands action =hatred. The often-missed implied meanings are 'intense abhorrence' and a propensity that is 'so strong, it compels action of hatred'. The second word is speech, the act of delivering a formal spoken communication to an audience; Communication by word of mouth, a characteristic style or manner of expressing oneself orally; a lengthy rebuke. Again, the often-missed aspects are 'characteristic style or manner of expression' and 'a lengthy rebuke'. These aspects will take centre stage in our analysis of hate speeches in Nigeria.

The data at our disposal suggest that most of the hate speeches emanated during President Buhari's tenure in office, which, we will briefly review. Since 1999, in Nigeria, the date 29th May is looked forward to, with the feelings of great expectations. The

rational for this is not far-fetched; it marks the inauguration of a new administration to oversee the affairs of the nation. As in other countries where democracy is practiced, inauguration day is an important official event. It offers the president a unique platform to publicly declare his allegiance to the country he will be leading by taking an oath of office to work for her best interests, as well as address the citizenry for the first time as the new leader of the country. It also creates an opportunity for citizens to know the policy direction of the new administration, and the set goals to be achieved.

When compared to previous presidential inaugurations, the presidential inauguration of 29th May 2015 is historic and significantly different. It was the first time in Nigeria's political history that power transited from the ruling political party (party in government) to the opposition political party. In addition, the opposition candidate who took over the mantle of leadership, prior to winning the election that birthed the inauguration had contested for the Presidency thrice and failed. Besides, the turnout of witnesses to the event was massive, such that many people walked miles to be part of the event, and surely, the most well organized. Expectedly, after the solemn ceremony of oath-taking and swearing-in, President Buhari gave his inaugural speech.

The presidential inaugural speech is a typical example of public speaking, a linguistic situation in which communication occurs between a speaker and hearer(s) through the medium of language. Language as a tool for communication can be used to perform certain conventional acts such as directing, asserting, informing, requesting, or promising which elicit actions or reactions because of the utterance by the speaker. This is to say, an utterance can trigger certain actions, which in essence is the outcome of speech acts. As it is the goal of speech like this to generate action on the part of the citizens, Buhari, in his inaugural speech used various types of speech acts to communicate his message, as evident in the discourse the speech prompted in the public domain in days after the inauguration.

Thus, this paper intends to examine some of the hate speeches over the years since President Buhari took over office, using the pragmatic theory of Speech Act. The analysis of the speeches shall identify the different Speech Acts that made the speeches generate such discussion by the public. The focus is on the effect, the context of utterance, generally observed principles of communicating and the goals of the speaker have on the speakers' choice of expressions and the hearers' interpretation of the utterance. This paper develops a typology of hate speeches in the Nigerian nation. The data available for analysis suggest four typologies, examining the sources of the hate speeches: political, religious, social and sexist.

Political transition in Nigeria since independence has been a chaotic process warranting several military takeovers of the government. From 1999 the process has been relatively stable leading to successive transition of political power from one civilian government to another, though tainted with accusations and counter accusations of electoral frauds by the political parties. Notwithstanding the promises of successive administration of the same political party, to reform the electoral process, the failure to fulfill earlier campaign promises, did prompt the desire of the citizens for a change of government. Taking advantage of the desire for change, the opposition political party campaigned and won the just concluded election. The interest of this study, therefore, is

to show how these hate speeches reflect the change promised during, as well as the determination of the leaders to transform the country for the better. The study intends to identify and analyze the different types of speech acts and sentence structures that occur in the hate speeches. Using the speech act theory to show how the identified acts convey the message of change or lack of change in the speeches and examine the effects of the context on the presented speeches.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis of some of the hate speeches is premised on the Speech Act Theory of Pragmatics. Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that has its roots in philosophy of language and the contributions of British and American Philosophical Schools of Pragmatics led by G. Frege, L. Wittgenstein, J.L. Austin, J. Searle, P. Grice and Sbisu who developed theories for doing Pragmatics. Its evolution is because of the limitation of structural semantics to capture satisfactorily the sociological and other non-linguistic dimensions of verbal communication (Lawal 1995). According to Crystal (1985, p. 240), Pragmatics is the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication. Similarly, Yule (2003, p. 3) describes 'Pragmatics as concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by the speaker and interpreted by a listener.' Thomas (1995) defines Pragmatics as 'meaning in use and meaning in context.' The deduction from the definitions is that Pragmatics is an organized way of explaining language use in relations to the users, interpreters, and the factors that affect the making of utterances and the effects of the utterances in everyday communication. Highlighting the merits of pragmatics, Udofot (1998, p. 127) in Aqeomoni and Akinkuolere (2012) states:

Knowledge of pragmatics, for instance, enables one to interpret not only the literal meaning of an utterance but also the meanings that derive from the rules of formality and politeness that exist in the society where the language is used as well as the shared meanings that derive from the shared previous knowledge of the speaker and hearer and the situation in which the utterances are used.

In other words, there are three essential factors for the discovery of meaning, as suggested by Pragmatics, they are:

- a) The society or setting wherein the utterance is made.
- b) The shared previous knowledge between the speaker and the hearer, and
- c) The linguistic context in which the utterances are used.

The variety of uses of words in language to perform different actions has been the interests of linguists for decades. The interest in studying the actions performed with words (utterances) brought about the introduction of the Speech Acts theory, which refers to an utterance and the total speech situation wherein the utterance is issued (Thomas 1995, p. 51). Speech Act theory was the propelling force behind the Anglo-American prominence in Pragmatics. It is originally formulated by Austin (1962) and improved

upon by Searle (1969). Speech acts are staples of communicative life, but only became a topic of sustained investigation in English-speaking world, in the middle of 20th century. Since then, the speech act theory has become influential not only within philosophy, but also in linguistics and other scholarly disciplines (Mitchell 2015).

Speech Act is a minimal functional unit in linguistic activity (Searle 1976, p. 16). It is a communicative act performed with the use of oral or written language to bring about change in a situation. It requires not only knowledge of the language but also appropriate use of that language within a given setting. Austin (1969) asserts, many utterances (things people say) are equivalent to actions, and the utterance creates a new social reality. His aim thus, is to focus on what is done in discourse rather than on what is said, as what is said is depending on what is done (Ambrose 2010). Concerned with utterances (language in use), which he distinguishes from sentences, Austin proposed the concept of performative utterances to show that all utterances are speech acts, as they perform specific actions. He made a distinction between performatives and constatives; by classifying performatives as utterances which cannot be said to be true or false but can be evaluated by the dimension of felicity and constatives as utterances that can be evaluated along the dimension of truth. To avoid vagueness, Austin listed three aspects or ways an utterance can be seen as action, known as: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. The locutionary act simply is the “actual words uttered” (speech that has taken place). To produce a meaningful linguistic expression is to perform a locutionary act (Yule 2002, p. 48). Illocutionary act is the real actions which are performed by the utterance: where saying equals doing as in request. Perlocutionary act is the effects the utterance has on the listener. Furthermore, Austin stated that there are felicity conditions necessary for the success of utterances as speech acts. This is to say, each utterance has presuppositions, implications, and commitments conditions.

Some of Austin's claims, however, were refined by John R. Searle in a more systematic and mentalistic way. Whereas Austin tried to escape the truth-conditional orthodoxy of analytic philosophy, Searle tried to give an analysis of speech acts phenomena in line with this orthodoxy (Sbisa 2009, Ambrose 2010). In other words, speech acts are a theory of constitutive rules for performing illocutionary acts by adopting a social view of linguistic meaning (Korta and Perry 2006). Although Searle adopted the three aspects distinction by Austin (1962), he paid more attention to illocutionary acts, which he sees as having both a force and a propositional content. It is important to note that while Austin wanted to distinguish force from meaning, Searle deals with force as an aspect of meaning. He went on to classify the illocutionary act into five categories or types based on the functions assigned to them.

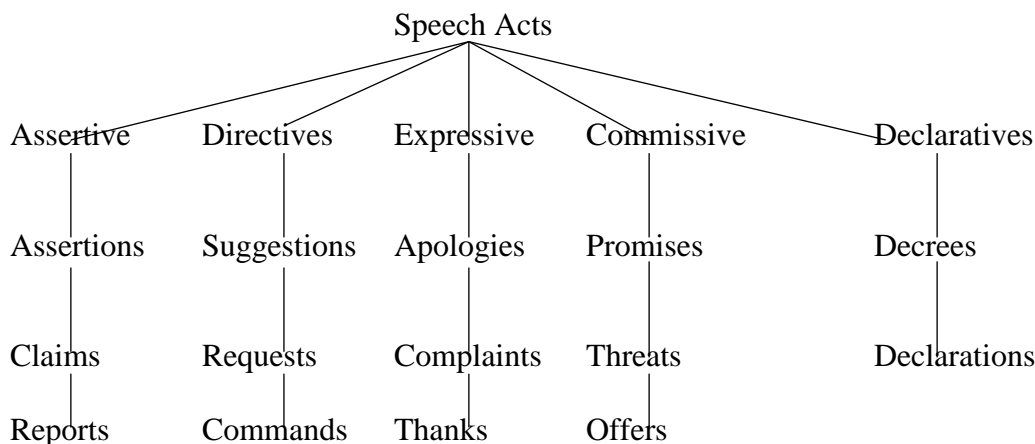


Figure 1: Speech Acts

Assertive: the speaker states a proposition which could be true or false using such verbs as: affirm, believe, conclude, deny, report. **Directives:** the speaker tries to make the hearer do something using such words like: beg, challenge, command, dare, invite, insist, request. **Commissive:** the speaker pledges himself to a future course of actions, using verbs like guarantee, pledge, promise, swear, vow, undertake, warrant. **Expressive:** the speaker states an attitude about a situation, using such verbs as: apologies, appreciate, congratulate, deplore, defeat, regret, thank, welcome. **Declaratives:** the speaker alters the external status or conditioning of an object or situation, solely by making the utterance, for instance:

1. I now pronounce you husband and wife.
2. You are guilty.

Furthermore, Searle formulated another felicity conditions on illocutionary acts (Searle 1969, p. 54) in Sbisa (2009) as necessary and sufficient conditions for their performance. They are preparatory condition, condition for execution and sincerity conditions. Preparatory conditions include the status or authority of the speaker to perform the speech act, the situation of other parties and so on. Condition for execution can assume an exaggerated importance. Here ceremonies or rituals are considered to accompany the execution of the act, such that it is believed that the act is invalidated, if the action is lacking. Sincerity of conditions shows that the speaker must really intend what he says (43). In addition, Searle introduced two types of speech acts: Direct and Indirect Speech Acts. According to Searle (1969) in Thomas (1995, p. 93), indirect speech act is one performed by a 'means of another speech act.'

Generally, speech act theory deals with communication. Hence it views utterances as acts and consider the production of words or of sentences as the performance of speech acts and posit the speech act as the unit of linguistic communication. It is the task of the speech act theory to explain in which senses and under which conditions uttering something can be doing something, thus providing a conceptual framework for describing and understanding the various kinds of linguistic action (Sbisa 2009). Speech

act theory attempts to explain how speakers use language to accomplish intended actions and how hearers infer intended meaning from what is said.

Methodology

In this study, qualitative and quantitative approaches are applied in analyzing the hate speeches. The descriptive method is employed for the qualitative analysis, describing content of collected data in relation with context, shared previous knowledge and situation, as well as using the Speech acts theory to show what the acts performed in course of delivery. The data for this study is the published texts of hate speeches in some Nigerian papers.

Using the computation of frequencies and percentages technique for the quantitative approach, it focuses on the number of times the speech acts occurred in the hate speeches, the length and number of sentence structures used in the speech. For concise presentation and clear analysis, the speech has been produced according to the number of sentences and paragraphs as seen in the publication before analysis (see Tables 1-4). The analysis of the sentence structure in the speech is based on Ngulube's (2015) explanation of sentence types. According to him English sentences are classified using the distribution of independent and dependent clauses. Using this classification he presents the simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, compound-complex and multiple sentences. We briefly summarize his analyses here.

1. The simple sentence

A simple sentence is an independent clause. It is made up of one subject and one predicate. In other words, the simple sentence contains only one finite verb, and so carries only one idea. The number of words or the length of the sentence does not matter. The simple sentence can take the form of a statement, Question, or interrogation, imperative (command, request, warning, invitation), Affirmative, Negative.

2. The compound sentence

A compound sentence has two or more independent clauses. In other words, it has two simple sentences joined together by a coordinating conjunction. The two sentences that make up a compound sentence must have equal rank and status. Please note that punctuation marks such as the colon or semicolon can also be used to join simple sentences to yield compound sentence.

3. The complex sentence

A complex sentence has an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. Stated differently, a complex sentence has one main clause with one or more subordinate clauses.

4. The compound-complex sentence

A compound-complex sentence has two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses. As the names implies, a compound-complex sentence has both the features of the compound as well as the complex sentence. It is a combination of unified and coordinated thoughts expressed in at least two independent clauses in combination with one or more dependent clauses.

5. The multiple sentence

A multiple sentence has at least three principal clauses without a subordinate clause; that is to say, it has three coordinated thoughts expressed in at least three independent clauses.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Political Hate Speeches

S/N	Hate Speech	Source
1	Buhari is only fit for the museum as a tourist attraction to offer understanding on the physical appearance of failure. APC...apes!	PDP member to Buhari (Daily Sun, 23) 16 th March 2017
2	If I say you are an idiotic imbecilic cringe worthy Fulani stooge, you will start raving mad that I am insulting you. How does cross your legs mean spread your leg? Are you that daft or is it the idiotic transmission commission fluid that is running through the blood of APC e-rats that's worrying you?	PDP member to former IGP Idris (Premium Times, 12) 19 th November 2018)
3	Senator Ali Ndume, a foolish tribalistic man, went against his party decision and supported a fellow northerner now the foolish senator say Saraki betrayed him when he was the product of betrayal that brought Saraki to power.	PDP stalwart to Senator Ali Ndume (Vanguard Newspapers, 75) 5 th May 2016
4	APC Fulani members are conglomerate of murderers and blood sucking group ever known to mankind.	This day (54) & The Nation Newspapers (34) 2017
5	See why I detest you? Is Thiefnubu a saint? Is Hell-Rufai a saint (MOP)? You reason from your anus. What strand of Zombie DNA manipulates imbeciles like you to always sound foolish??...Moron!	Lika Binniyat in (Vanguard Newspaper, 12) 15 th May 2016)
6	Under PDPigs Lucifer have become pastor, e.g., Rhino Omokri and Oritsejefor even wish to enter heaven before any PDPig.	The Guardian Newspaper, (21) 2018
7	APC!! Let's just hope that Buhari dies soon so this nonsense can end.	
8	Shut your lying, halitosis infected mouth you APC pig.	Punch Newspaper (87) 2017
9	Buhari has 53 suitcases filled with hard currency that flew away in 1984 to account for also. So shut that you're lying mouth, you swine.	Premium Times (17) 13 th November 2016
10	IPOB (Idiotic Pigs of Biafra) praising members for being cowards and encourage them to continue the chest beating online.....morons.	Daily Sun (24) 24 th March 2018
11	If the 2015 elections are rigged, the party will not recognize the outcome and will go ahead and form a parallel government.	Leadership (34) 21 st November 2014

12	You should not be bothered with ‘cockroaches of politics.’ Cockroaches are only in the toilets even at home. If you see a cockroach in your house, crush them.	Premium Times (23) 19 th November 2014
13	There will be bloodshed and those who feel short-changed may take the war path and the country may not be the same again.	Osun Defender (10) 2 nd December 2013
14	2015 is more than do-or-die. You are a man, and I am a man, we are going to meet at the battlefield.	News Express (16) 3 rd May 2014
15	If what happened in 2011 should happen again in 2015, the dog and the baboon would all be soaked in blood.	Vanguard Newspaper (9) 15 th May 2012
16	Nigerians be warned! “I have set before thee life and death...”	Sahara Reporters (7) 29 th January 2015
17	Will you allow history to repeat itself?	Sahara Reporters (6) 29 th January 2015
18	On Saturday, if anyone of you go (es) against Ambode, who I picked, that is your end.	The Herald, 6 th April 2015
20	Don’t vote bloodletting.	Punch Newspaper (4) 22 nd January 2015
21	No matter how many pretty robes you wear, once a tyrant is always a tyrant.	The Guardian Newspaper (8) 23 rd January 2015
22	...now they’re shouting Biafra want to go, Biafra want to..., why won’t they go when you think that the north owns the whole the country	Sahara Reporters (5) 22 nd June 2017
23	Anybody that comes to you and tell you change, stone that person.	The Nation (7) Sunday 15 th March 2015
24	Those who want to take power through the back door will die. They will die.	Punch Newspaper (2) 17 th July 2014
25	We assure those cold-blooded murderers that this time, their blood thirsty campaign will not go unreplied.	Vanguard Newspaper (12) 5 th December 2014
26	It’s going to be rig and roast. We are prepared not to go to court but drive them out.	Tell Magazine (9) 7 th July 2014
27	Unless efforts are made to ensure that the 2015 general elections are free and fair, it may be the last election in the history of the nation.	Leadership (4) 29 th March 2012
28	God willing, by 2015, something will happen. They either conduct or go a very disgraceful way.	Vanguard Newspaper (4) 15 th May 2012
29	President Goodluck Jonathan should not contemplate contesting the 2011 presidential election. Any attempt by him to contest amounts to incitement and	The Nation (3) Sunday 10 th Jan 2018

	a recipe for political instability.	
30	God willing, by 2015, something will happen. They either conduct a free and fair election or they go a very disgraceful way. If what happened in 2011 should again happen in 2015, by the grace of God, the dog and the baboon would all be soaked in blood.	Vanguard Newspaper (6) 2 nd Feb 2014
31	The Yorubas are ungrateful kind of people, who do not appreciate what others have done for them.	Lika Binniyat in Vanguard Newspaper (7) 15 th May 2016
32	That short man called Ngige, we gave him power and he joined the Awolowo people; the people that killed Igbos.	Vanguard Newspaper (5) 2 nd January 2019
33	We assure those cold-blooded murderers that this time, their blood thirsty campaign will not go unreplied.	Punch newspaper (2) 2014
34	Anybody that come and tell you changes, stone that person... What you did not do in 1985, is it now that old age has caught up with you that you want to come and change... You cannot change rather you will turn back to a baby.	Premium Times (4) 13 th Mar 2014
35	You see how they (Igbos) are being slaughtered in South Africa. That is what is going to happen to them in Lagos... When are they (Igbos) going to be slaughtered in Abuja? We will continue to bus them to Onitsha.	Punch Newspaper (2) 19 th June 2014
36	On Saturday, if anyone of you, I swear in the name of God, goes against my wish that Ambode will be the next governor of Lagos state, the person is going to die inside this water.... For the Igbos and others in Lagos, they should go where the Oba of Lagos heads.	The Nation (3), Sunday 11 th Jan 2015
37	Wetin him dey find again? Him dey drag with him pikin mate, old man wey no get brain, him brain don die pata pata- What is Buhari looking for? Old man that does not know his age. Your brain is dead.	Tell Magazine (1) 3 rd February 2014
38	It is going to be rig and roast. We are prepared not to go to court but drive them out.	Nigerian Tribune (6) 30 th January 2015
39	Those who want to take power through the back door will die. They will die.	Vanguard Newspaper (2) 15 th May 2012
40	2015 is more than do-or-die. You are a man, and I am a man, we are going to meet at the battlefield.	Sahara Reporters (2) 20 th January 2015

41	The challenge of the Nigerian military is not funding but corruption. Now they want to kill some 50 officers for their own failure to equip them properly to fight terrorism. The soldiers have the right to protest for the federal government's failure to fully equip them.	The Herald (3) 9 th April 2015
42	The Igbos are also responsible for Nigeria's cultural and moral degeneration with their involvement in all kinds of crimes, including international networking for drug and human trafficking, violent robberies and kidnappings, high-profile prostitution, and advanced financial fraud.	Sahara Reporters (3) 2 nd January 2019)
43	You need helps of brain surgery urgently, but you can as well try Synagogue since he also threatens peoples of your kind conditions.	Punch Newspaper (1) 17 th April 2016
44	Next Step. To become the popularly elected Governor of Lagos state in 2007, by the grace of God and the will of the people. Because he whom God favours, no number of witches and wizards with broomsticks can prevail against! Musiliu Obanikoro For Lagos state Governor 2007.	Nigerian Tribune (2) 30 th March 2006
45	The cruel Igbo have done and are doing more damage to our collective nationhood than any other ethnic group, being responsible for the first violent interference with democracy in Nigeria, resulting in a prolong counter-productive chain of military dictatorship.	Facebook
46	I'm a Biafran and we are going to crumble the zoo. Some idiots who are not educated said that they'll arrest me, and I ask them to come. I am in Biafra land. If any of them leaves Biafra land alive know that this is not IPOB. Tell them that's what I said. (From Nmadi Kanu)	Sahara Reporters (3) 15 th January 2015
47	Amaechi, you fuck up. You no come see as you come carry number one biggest traitor in the South? Kai! I shame for you. I no fit dance for you. You fuck up, well, well. Tufiakwa!	Punch Newspaper (2) 17 th January 2015
48	If there are fisticuffs in Yola arising from super imposition of infidel leader on Students Union, I won't bulge if it escalates to full-fledged bloodbath.	Instagram

49	Aah! Unamumu o. I don dey believe Charlie Boy weh say una be really mumulistic people. Ah! The man sabi lie. E even say his sickness na unknown sickness. Wetin be unknown sickness? Una no fit answer me? Una be mumu. Una be mumu.	Instagram
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Here, we present the data that we shall be analyzing and discussing.

Table A: Summary of Speech Acts in Hate Speeches

Speech Acts	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Assertives	21	23.33
Directives	11	12.22
Commissives	13	14.44
Expressives	08	08.88
Declaratives	18	20.00
Interrogatives	10	11.11
Insults	09	10.00
Total	90	99.98

To aid our discussion, it is necessary to present the frequency distribution of the various speech acts in tabular forms. On Table A above, all the speech acts manifested in the hate speeches. Apart from assertive, directives, commissive, expressive and declaratives, we have added two more speech acts, which we have tagged interrogatives and insults. Assertives have the highest occurrence of 21 which is 23.33% of the total speech act types. This is followed by declaratives which occur 18 times which is 20% of the total speech act types. This is followed by commissive which occur 13 times with a percentage of 14.44%. Whereas directives occur 11 times which is 12.22%, Interrogatives occur 10 times in the data, which is 12.22%. Insults and expressive occur 9 and 8 times in our data, which are 10% and 8.88% respectively. The analysis demonstrates that the hate speeches have more assertive speech acts consisting of claims, reports, statements of facts, conclusions, suggestions, and predictions. Some examples of assertive in the speeches are:

Buhari is only fit for the museum as a tourist attraction to offer understanding on the physical appearance of failure. APC...apes!
APC Fulani members are conglomerate of murderers and blood sucking group ever known to mankind.

The Igbos are also responsible for Nigeria's cultural and moral degeneration with their involvement in all kinds of crimes, including international networking for drug and human trafficking, violent robberies and kidnappings, high-profile prostitution, and advanced financial fraud.

The above statements are instances of personal claims, which cannot be taken for a statement of facts. In hate speeches, persons prone to it do not consider the facts on ground. The claims are often fallacious and sweeping at the same time. For instance, there are no grounds on which we can put Buhari in the museum, and APC members said to be apes. Even in the second assertion all Fulani APC members cannot be murderers and blood-sucking group. Hate speakers are often blinded by sentiments so strong that facts, figures and science melt into fog, hazy vision. In the third example, the Igbos may be involved in crimes, drug, human-trafficking, violent robberies, kidnapping, high-profile prostitution, and advanced financial fraud. But they are not alone; all segments of the Nigeria society are equally guilty. Besides, there are decent Igbo people doing genuine businesses around the globe.

Another feature of hate speech is the use of vicious vocabulary of the most ribald, insolent, choleric, horripilation, and vexatious words. It contains the most flagitious words, scabrous stories, whimsical and galling statements. We have extracted from our data some of the vicious expressions and situate them under insults as speech acts. The examples are:

If I say you are an *idiotic imbecilic cringe* worthy Fulani *stooge*, you will start raving mad that I am insulting you. How does cross your legs mean spread your leg? Are you that daft or is it the *idiotic* transmission commission fluid that is running through the blood of APC e-rats that's worrying you?

See why I detest you? Is *Thiefnubu* a saint? Is *Hell-Rufai* a saint (MOP)? You reason from your anus. What strand of *Zombie* DNA manipulates imbeciles like you to always sound foolish??...*Moron!*

Under *PDPigs* Lucifer have become pastor, e.g., *Rhino Omokri* and Oritsejefor even wish to go enter heaven before any PDPig. Shut your lying, *halitosis* infected mouth you APC pig.
[Italics ours]

The italicize words in the passages are vicious, acidic, and extremely uncalled for. They can only come from God-forsaken derelict, deriding Momus, and derisive detractor. But at the same time, we cannot brush aside the fact that these words land the punch squarely.

Another speech act employed in these hate speeches is what we have labeled interrogatives. Again, we extract some examples to illustrate how effective they are:

See why I detest you? Is *Thiefnubu* a saint? Is *Hell-Rufai* a saint (MOP)? You reason from your anus. What strand of *Zombie* DNA manipulates imbeciles like you to always sound foolish??...*Moron!*
Wetin him dey find again? Him dey drag with him pikin mate, old man wey no get brain, him brain don die pata pata. (What is Buhari looking for? Old man that does not know his age, your brain is dead.)

In these sets of data, the interrogatives are very prominent. Although, they are rhetorical in nature, the stylistic foregrounding, and parallelisms they provide are next to none. The statement option would have been weak if employed in place of the questions. The commissives in the speeches comprise promises/vows, challenges, guarantees, assurances, and warnings. Some examples are:

There will be bloodshed and those who feel short-changed may take the war path and the country may not be the same again.

To demonstrate how committed they are to their goal and to the promise, they used 'will' which gives no room to question or doubt, but only a definite outcome to the set goal, a certainty. Expressive in speech act comprise thanks, appreciation, greetings, and congratulations. The sentence below exemplifies some of the expressive acts seen:

The Yorubas are ungrateful kind of people, who do not appreciate what others have done for them.

No one really expects positive expressives in hate speeches, but what we do anticipate are negative expressives in hate speeches and are what we have here; a whole region been labeled as ungrateful. Hate speeches are directed towards individuals, groups, political party, region and even nations. These Hate speeches have heated up the polity, aggravated insecurity, led to agitation for secession and fuel religious riots and insurgency.

Table B: Summary of Sentence (Types) in the Hate Speeches

Sentence Structure	frequency	Percentage (%)
Simple sentence	52	57.77
Compound Sentence	7	07.77
Complex Sentence	13	14.44
Compound-Complex sentence	8	08.88
Multiple Sentence	10	11.11
Total	90	99.97

Table 1 has 90 sentences in all. On Table B, we also have 90 sentences; simple sentences are 52, about 58% of the total number of sentences. The structure of the simple sentences varies from SV, SVO, SVCOA, (where S stands for subject, V for verb, O for Object, C for complement and A for adverbials) etc. Compound sentences are 7, about 8% of the total number of sentences. The structure of the compound sentence is mainly MC + MC. The complex sentences are 13 in all, about 14% of the total number of sentences. The structure of the complex sentence is SC+MC and MC+SC (where MC stands for main clause and SC for subordinate clause). The compound complex sentences are 8 in total, which is 9%. The Structure varies thus MC+MC+SC, SC+MC+MC, MC+SC+MC. Finally, the multiple sentences are 10 in all, about 11% of the total number of sentences.

The structure is MC+MC+MC. The question facing us presently is why hate speech is done more in simple sentences. Constructing compound, complex, multiple, and compound-complex sentences in extreme emotional state, such as hate, is psychologically difficult. Secondly, the forms and functions of the simple sentence are varied: statement, question, or interrogation, imperative (command, request, warning, and invitation), affirmative, and negative. We shall provide one example each.

Statement: IPOB (Idiotic Pigs of Biafra) praising members for being cowards.

Command: If you see a cockroach in your house, crush them.

Question: How does cross your legs mean spread your leg?

The English language use in this section breaks down into British Standard English, Nigerian Standard English, Broken English, and Pidgin English. This suggests that hate speakers use every resource of language to achieve their dastardly intentions. We provide one example each of Standard British English (SBE), Nigerian Standard English (NSE), and Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE):

SBE

I'm a Biafran and we are going to crumble the zoo. Some idiots who are not educated said that they'll arrest me, and I ask them to come. I am in Biafra land. If any of them leaves Biafra land alive know that this is not IPOB. Tell them that's what I said.

NSE

The Igbos are also responsible for Nigeria's cultural and moral degeneration with their involvement in all kinds of crimes, including international networking for drug and human trafficking, violent robberies and kidnappings, high-profile prostitution, and advanced financial fraud.

NPE

Aah! Unamumu o. I don dey believe Charlie Boy weh say una be really mumulistic people. Ah! The man sabi lie. E even say his sickness na unknown sickness. Wetin be unknown sickness? Una no fit answer me? Una be mumu. Una be mumu.

The Communicative Principle

We now turn our attention to Table 2 below. On this Table, we intend to use the communicative principle otherwise known as the principle of relevance to analyze the data. Before attempting any analysis, we seek to clear the grounds through the explication of the concept of principle as employed in pragmatic analysis. The concept of principle is a familiar one in linguistics as well as in other branches of science.

Hermann Paul's work *Prizipien der Sprachgeschichte* (1874; English translation 1891), through Louis Hjelmslev's theoretical exposition *Principles de grammaire générale* (1923) to contemporary dissertation in the Chomskyan tradition, such as Eric

Reuland's Principles of Subordination and Construal (1979). Scientists use the concept 'principle' with reference to elementary understanding, as in Euclid's famous Principles of Geometry (410 BC). Principle is not only 'elements of understanding' but even 'prerequisite to understanding', it begins with elementary knowledge to high-level, theoretical and metatheoretical speculation. A similar use of the term is found in another work by Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language* (1943); in which he lays down three methodological principles for linguistics: simplicity, non-contradiction and exhaustivity (1953, p. 15). Reuland takes 'principle' as equal to 'proposal for description' (1979, p. 2); in the parlance of Chomskyan grammatical writing, 'principled' is a synonym for 'reasoned', or simply 'justified' (1965, p. 27). We want to say that the above applies a fortiori to pragmatics, where the point of view of the user is paramount. There, if anywhere, the user 'rules the waves' (and, as the case may be, waives the rules). Leech (1953, p. 5) has suggested that in pragmatics, we prefer to work with principles.

People talk with the intention to communicate something to somebody; this is the foundation of all linguistic behaviour. We call this the communicative principle or the Principle of Relevance; it is nevertheless the hidden condition for all human pragmatic activity (Mey, 2006, p. 69). It is impossible not to communicate. According to Watzlawick (in Mey, 2006, p. 69) 'no matter how one may try one cannot not communicate'. In other words, as Leech (1983, p. 9) puts it, speakers often 'mean more than they say.' Speakers, un- or subconsciously, express thoughts or feelings that they consciously would have liked to suppress. Secondly, there seems to be a general understanding that people, when they give out information, prefer to do so with certain parsimoniousness (the maxim of quantity). But what we're confronted with here is, rather, an instance of the communicative principle: when communicating, speakers try to be understood correctly, and avoid giving false impressions. No matters how logically correct and true our speech is, if it is confusing or misleads our hearer, then our utterance will not have its proper effect: we would not have communicated what we had in mind.

In Gazdar's terminology, we can talk about a 'strength' scale of expressions, ranging from stronger to weaker, an example is the following scale adapted from Levinson (1983, p. 134): all, most, many, some, few, none, where the strongest scalar expression occurs to the left, with strength decreasing as one moves right. Normally, by using a weaker expression, we exclude the stronger ones; the use of 'many' implies that 'all' cannot be used. The use of a vague expression such as 'some' or 'many' tells our interlocutors that (all other things being equal) we want to be vague; and we want them to correctly assume that we would have used a more rigorous expression (such as 'all', 'none') if, and only if, there was indeed a need for it. In accordance with the communicative principle, we avoid giving our interlocutors either an over- or under dose of information. We shall apply this principle to the analysis of the data in Table 2.

Table 2: Religious Hate Speeches

S/N	Hate Speech	Source
1	If they (Southerners) contest they are wasting their time. He who pays the piper will dictate the tune. We own them. We are feeding them. They are parasites. A beggar has no choice...They are beggars and parasites.	Sahara Reporters (2) 15 th January 2015
2.	Nigeria needs a true Nationalist to pilot its affairs; not an ethnic Jingoist or disguised religious fanatic.	Nigerian Tribune (1) 30 th January 2015
3.	The North will make the country ungovernable if President Goodluck Jonathan wins the 2011 polls... Anything short of a Northern President is tantamount to stealing our presidency.	
4.	Our people do not give birth to uncountable children. Our men don't give birth to children that they dump in streets. We are not like people from that part of the country (apparently the northern Nigeria)	Leadership (4) 20 th March 2014
5.	Kai you people are cursed. Even pigs won't rape your ugly mother or wife. Buhari the skeleton must and will die and then burn in hell fire!	Tell (2) 7 July 2015)
6.	Don't fall for deception or its agents of darkness	The Sun Newspaper (2) 24 th January 2015
7.	The man shares the same vision with "Boko Haram" (terrorists)	Vanguard Newspaper (1) 18 th January 2015)
8.	Nigeria will disintegrate if Jonathan contests in 2015	This day (5) and The Nation (5) 2014
9.	There will be no peace, not only in the Niger Delta, but everywhere if Goodluck Jonathan is not president by 2015, except God takes his life, which we do not pray for	The Guardian Newspaper (1) 2014
10.	Buhari would likely die in office if elected, recall that Murtala Muhammed, Sani Abacha and Umaru Yaradua, all former heads of state from the Northwest like Buhari, had died in office	
11.	Muslims, vote for Buhari. It is a sin to support a non-Muslim	Vanguard Newspaper (2) 2 nd December 2014
12.	Yoruba pastors are "criminals" and "fools."	(From Nmadi Kanu to Yoruba pastros) Vanguard Newspaper (4) 3rd June 2018

13.	No Igbo man should attend any Church where the pastor is a Yoruba man, they are criminals and fools. They are killing my people in public, after killing my people they want to try me in private? That person is mad. I won't allow it. Tell Buhari that's what I said; that he is mad. He cannot jail me. He cannot jail me. He is a mad man.	(From Nmadi Kanu) Sahara Reporters (2) 20 th January 2015)
14.	The imbecilic Goodluck Jonathan is a disgrace to humanity and deserves to be skinned alive for handing over to a Hausa goat. Buhari is a shameless pedophile and rapist.	
15.	Yes, the herdsman values even the life of the cow more than his own life. That is how God has created him. (Dukku's defense of the killings by alleged herdsmen was based on her politically biased explanation of social factors where she declared that the life of a cow is more important than the life of a human being)	The Herald (3) 9 th April 2015
16.	We need to break down infidels, practitioners of democracy and constitutionalism, voodoo and those that are doing western education in which they are practicing paganism.	Instagram
17.	They got a Boko haram member, before we woke up, they said he has escaped. Escaped! And Biafran agitators are still in prison till now, they've not escaped, but Boko Haram member has escaped! Woke up they said he has escaped.	Premium Times (1) 13 th March 2014
18.	We can never be Yoruba allies no matter how hard they try to please or serve us because they are born traitors and infidels.	Guardian Newspaper (3) 2018

Pragmatically, the view of the speaker rules the waves, therefore, if the speaker in Table 2 (1) claims that 'southerners are wasting time contesting elections because they (northerners) pay the piper (chose the chairman of INEC), and that they own and feed the southerners (and that southerners are parasites and beggars)' then that is their perception. This hate speech violates the communicative principle as enunciated above. It confuses and misleads. The choice of adjectives such as parasites and beggars are rather very strong and provocative. The second expression '...not an ethnic Jingoist or disguised religious fanatic' also falls short. The speaker should have 'avoid giving his interlocutors an overdose of information'. The two adjectives 'jingoist' and 'religious fanatic' cast the entire expression in bad light. Of course, that is why it is a hate speech. The comment is not necessary, neither is it relevant in the circumstance.

The speech in Table 2 (3) concludes that the presidency belongs to the north using our 'northern presidency'. The interlocutor here excludes all else. It is in the same vein

that an Igbo man claims in Table 2 (12) that Yorubas ...are “criminals” and “fools”; they are born traitors and infidels (Table 2, 18) and in Table 2 (14) the interlocutor posits that ‘the imbecilic Goodluck Jonathan is a disgrace to humanity and deserves to be skinned alive for handing over to a Hausa goat. Buhari is a shameless pedophile and rapist’. These expressions violate the communicative principle in that they are excessive attacks on peoples’ personality. The tirades are inflammatory, and inciting. This is perhaps responsible for the clamor for breaking up by certain region in the country. If the interlocutors have observed the communicative principle, they would have toned down their rhetoric; cast their utterances in vague and mild forms that will not heat up the polity. We now turn to Table 3 where we shall use the Cooperative Principle for the data analysis.

The Cooperative Principle

We introduced the Communicative Principle earlier, by which it is understood that people, when communicating, have something to tell each other. Communication, furthermore, requires people to cooperate; the ‘bare facts’ of conversation come alive only in a mutually accepted, pragmatically determined context.

Cooperation has itself been elevated to the status of an independent principle in the works of the late British/American philosopher H. Paul Grice (1975, 1989), who’s Cooperative Principle (CP) consists of four pragmatic sub-principles, or maxims. The first is the maxim of quantity: make your contribution as informative as required; do not make your contribution more informative than required. The second maxim is of quality: do not say what you believe to be false; do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. Third, the maxim of relation: make your conversation relevant. Finally, the maxim of manner be perspicuous, and specifically: avoid obscurity and ambiguity; be brief and be orderly. These four maxims can be seen as instances of one superordinate cooperative principle; we shall use it in assessing the sexists hate speeches on Table 3.

Table 3: Sexists Hate Speech

S/N	Hate Speech	Source
1.	“You woman, I would ask you to take care of your husband, you don’t deserve to stand in front of Nigeria and talk about leadership”	Facebook Retrieved 15 th April 2022
2.	“Know yourself you lady (casual). Leave your nonsense (derogatory one) else use microphone and a car to ask. Don’t trouble us here,”	Instagram Retrieved 15 th April 2022
3	YOU ARE STUPID, A PROFESSIONAL PROSTITUTE, OUR PEACE CANNOT BE DISTURBED BY YOU WHO SELLS THE BODY,”	Instagram Retrieved 15 th April 2022
4	Don’t disturb us with your noise, go and satisfy your husband	Instagram Retrieved 15 th April 2022

5	I don't know which party my wife belongs to, but she belongs to my kitchen and my living room and the other room	(Buhari to his wife) Guardian Newspaper (1) 2018)
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On Table 3 (1) the speaker is incensed against women. He believes that the role of women is to take care of their husbands and not to contribute to national issues. This is absurd. In other climes women are making meaningful contributions to development, why not in Nigeria.

You woman, I would ask you to take care of your husband; you don't deserve to stand in front of Nigeria and talk about leadership.

In the first instance, this comment violates the principle of cooperation, communality, oneness, and the 'Aluta' spirit. It totally obliterates the rights of women; they cannot be seen or heard. To paraphrase President Buhari, they belong to the kitchen, living room and the other room.

I don't know which party my wife belongs to, but she belongs to my kitchen and my living room and the other room.

The second aspect is 'you don't deserve to stand in front of Nigeria and talk about leadership'; who decides who deserves and does not deserve to stand for Nigeria. Almost half of the Nigerian population are women, and they deserve representation, no matter how it is viewed. This comment is not made in good faith; it violates the maxim of relation.

On Table 3 (4) the comment, 'don't disturb us with your noise, go and satisfy your husband', speaks of women as sex objects meant to satisfy the loins of men.

Findings

The tables above indicate that the hate speeches have all the five different types of sentences, and the five speech acts, including the two new speech acts which we supplied insults and interrogatives. The speeches demonstrate extraordinary literary achievements. We found out that the personification style is mostly used and the occurrence in our corpus is about four times, - Lucifer have become pastor. It is followed by alliteration style which occur in three speeches - una be mumu. Una be mumu and assonance which occurs twice in our corpora - you who. The next is the use of simile, synecdoche, anastrophe, apostrophes, asyndeton, poly-asyndeton, and chiasmus which appeared once in the speeches. The speeches also used narrative, dramatic, presentation, reportage, dialogue, and humour. The researchers conclude that in the use of personification and alliteration, the creators of the hate speeches mostly seeks to use simple and interesting style to create unpleasant, mellifluous, captivating sentences, which will persuade, influence, and capture the readers' attention to react negatively.

What are some of the linguistic components of that excellence? The first feature is the choice of words – diction. On the first table we find the words like 'Thiefnubu',

'Hell-Rufai', 'Zombie DNA', 'PDPigs', 'Rhino Omokri', 'IPOB interpreted as Idiotic Pigs of Biafra', 'APC pigs' and 'mumulistic'. These words are not ennobling, uplifting, and exhilarating especially when you consider the background of the citizens who were depressed and down casted under the previous regime. The hate speeches provide no assurances of a national better.

Table 2 also has a plethora of depressive, annoying, vicious words and expressions such as 'beggars', 'parasites', 'religious fanatic', 'you people are cursed. Even pigs won't rape your ugly mother or wife.', 'criminals and fools', 'pedophile and rapist' and 'traitors and infidels'.

On Table 3, a good reader will not miss the fine balance in the choice of such words as 'stupid' and 'professional prostitute', which suggest that it is only a stupid person who ends up becoming a professional prostitute. The negative tone in stupid is sustained in prostitution. There are instances of verb clusters used to indicate the readiness for action – woke up...has escaped; Adjectival clusters are also employed to describe the attitude of certain politicians- shameless pedophile and rapist.

The second feature is the clause-patterns employed in the speech. The speech uses more of multiple, compound complex sentence structures but it is the cluster of simple sentences that is most effective:

If I say you are an idiotic imbecilic cringe worthy Fulani stooge, you will start raving mad that I am insulting you. How does cross your legs mean spread your leg? Are you that daft or is it the idiotic transmission commission fluid that is running through the blood of APC e-rats that's worrying you?

The third feature is rhythms and intonations. We observed the occurrence of close front vowel [i] and voiceless velar [k], [g] in 'idiotic', 'imbecilic', 'cringe' and Fulani. The rising tune is sustained until it falls on Fulani. The tone here is indicative of melancholia directed at the political elite who ought to know better. The contextual implication is that the cacophonous velar sounds shoot down the mellifluous approximants, intensifying the melancholic state of the nation.

The fourth feature is the cohesive links tying the various ideas together. The speeches use more additive conjunctions such as 'and', 'but' and disjunctive conjunction such as 'or'. The use of punctuation marks is highly restricted to commas and the full stop. This produces a tight control that the speeches exhibit.

The fifth feature is the choice of voice, perspectives, and transitivity; the speeches use more of the active voice topicalizing the ideas than passivisation. It is this dependence on the active voice and the perspective of the speakers that give the speeches their assertiveness.

In sum, in the speeches, we observe cohesion, patterns, modality and evaluation, the structure of simple narrative and exposition mixed; clause processes and participants intertwine; the dynamics of monologue and dialogue and presupposition interfacing. We also see the use of disproportionate sentence structure; some of the sentences are complex, using several verbs, finite verb with some non-finite progressive forms,

suggestive of ongoingness. The study has shown how important and useful the field of Pragmatics particularly the speech act theory, is used in human communication at different occasions.

Conclusion

These hate speeches are loud, brash, self-serving, incurably, divisive, blighted by bitterness, and pulling down the nation. What we need presently is to display caution, patience, build bridges, seek unity, establish alliances, pursue a common and collective interest. Our situation somehow reminds one of a passage from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar:

There is a tide in the affairs of men which,
taken at the flood, leads on to fortune,
omitted, all the voyage of their life,
is bound in shallows and miseries.

We have an opportunity. Let us take it.

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