A Speech Act Analysis of Governor Nyesom Wike's 2015 Inaugural Address

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to analyse Governor Wike's 2015 inaugural address using Speech Act Theory. Twenty (20) selected utterances from the speech were analyzed to find out how the speaker deployed speech acts that are germane to the psychological context of the speech, occasioned by the past administration. Hinging on J. L. Austin's (1962) Speech Act Theory as well as Searle's (1969) Speech Act Typology, the study revealed that the speaker used four speech acts: *expressive, assertive, commissive* and *directive* acts. The Governor used the *expressive* act nine (9) times which accounted for 45%, due to the Governor's intention to express his disappointment, anger and dissatisfaction over the last administration. *Assertive* act occurred seven (7) times and this accounted for 35 % because the Governor is poised to inform the listeners about the ineptitude of the previous government and pledged to make a new Rivers State through *Commissive* act which occurred three (3) times and accounted for 15%. And finally, *directive* occurred once in the speech and accounted for 5 %. This act was used by the Governor to instruct the listeners that all hands must be on deck to move the State forward. The study concludes that speech acts have intentional contents which are products of speaker-hearer shared knowledge, and persuasive use of language in political speeches presupposing the use of different communicative strategies.

Keywords: Inaugural address, Governor Wike, Speech act, Expressive act and Rivers State.

INTRODUCTION

Inaugural address or speech refers to the first official address by a newly elected political office holders, which is a formal speech delivered during a President or Governor's inauguration ceremony. An inauguration is a formal ceremony to mark the beginning of a major public leader's term of office. Lagu (2021) sees inaugural speech as a speech given during a ceremony which informs the people of the intentions of their elected leader. Political inaugurations often feature lavish ceremonies, in which the politician publicly takes his or her oath of office in front of a large crowd of spectators. The equivalent ceremony in another jurisdiction may be called a "swearing-in". A monarchical inauguration is similar to what in another jurisdiction may be called a coronation or enthronement (Kazemian, 2014).

Wang (2010) opined that inauguration is a ceremonial site that is for someone of a public figure. The inauguration of Nigerian governors takes place after every four-year tenure of previous administrations. The ceremony has only one mandatory element, which is the taking of the oath of office by the governor-elect. However, over the years, other celebratory elements have been added to this ceremony, creating an entire day of special events (Loudenslager, 2012).

More so, Governor Wike highlighted several key areas in his inaugural speech. Some of them are: Unity and inclusivity: Wike emphasized the need for unity and inclusivity, stating that there were no losers or winners in the election, and that only Rivers State as the winner. Restoration and repair: Governor Wike highlighted the need to restore and repair the state, which had been rescued and reclaimed from the previous administration. Economic challenges: The Governor acknowledged the economic challenges faced by the state, including poverty, unemployment, and debt. Infrastructure development: the Governor promised to prioritize infrastructure development, including healthcare, water services and education. Good governance: He

emphasized the importance of good governance, rule of law, and separation of powers. Accountability: he promised to be accountable to the people and to ensure that power is returned to them. Restoration of institutions: Wike vowed to restore the autonomy and dignity of institutions, including the judiciary and the House of Assembly.

In addition, inaugural speeches are crucial because they outline the new administration's goals and plans. The speech is a crucial component of a new administration's governance since it discloses the Governor's thoughts on his upcoming administration. The inaugural speech serves as a road map for the new Governor's administration, outlining the guiding ideas. The inaugural speech is a chance for the new Governor to set the tone for his administration and established his priorities. And finally, the inaugural speech is a symbol of the peaceful transfer of power and a declaration of the new Governor's commitment.

Statement of the Research Problem

Inaugural speech according to Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere (2012) are used by politicians to reaffirm their commitment to serve by reiterating the programmes of their party and electioneering campaign promises. It is in line with this view that Denton and Hahn (1986) opine that the presidency or governorship office has been recognized as a rhetorical institution whose speeches are enlivened by power to persuade and convince the nation or society. Campbell and Jamisson (1990, p. 29) in Amaechi (2016) are of the opinion that inaugural addresses are "essential elements in a ritual of transition in which the covenant between the citizenry and their leaders is renewed. They categorise inaugural addresses as a type of discourse that Aristotle called epideictic discourse. The present study is informed by dearth of studies on governorship inaugural speeches. Many scholars such as Awonusi (1996); Opeibi (2003); Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere (2012) and Akinwolu (2013) have investigated speech acts in political discourse but not much has been done in the area of inaugural speeches to the best of the researcher's knowledge. Further, other scholars have done similar research on speeches. Some of these scholars are; Gunn & Ekoro, 2018, Gunn & Ishaya, 2020, Gunn & Ishaya, 2021, Ekoro & Gunn, 2021 and Uduk & Gunn, 2022. This study, thus, has the intention to attempt to narrow this existing gap.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section contains a review of past studies on the subject of discussion. The literature has shown that a number of persons have carried out numerous researches on topics related to the one at hand. Quite a vast number of researchers such as Alo (2012); Waya and Nneji (2013); Aboh (2016); Chukwu's (2016) and Nwoye (2017) have carried out researches on speech especially political speeches which show similarities with the one under study.

In a study conducted by Alo (2012) on "A Rhetorical Analysis of Selected Political Speeches of Prominent African leaders" examined the political speeches of well-known African leaders especially how politicians beg the Africans on the expediency of different political and socio-economic policies and pretense to facilitate their economic recovery and development. The study adopted Critical Discourse Analysis as its theoretical framework with purposive sampling technic as the research methodology. The study also looked at a rhetorical analysis of selected political speeches of famous African leaders where it gathered that the speeches of African leaders are preoccupied with the political and socioeconomic problems of the continent and the need for change. The findings showed that four dominant ideological preoccupations were revealed which are: national unity, nationalism, globalism and self–reliance. The study is relevant to the present study, as the present study also looks at the political speech of a Nigerian leader. However, differs in the area of theoretical framework.

Waya and Nneji (2013) in their work, "Pragmatic Analysis of Victory and Inaugural Speeches of President Jonathan: A Measure for Transformation and Good Governance in Nigeria". The study adopted Speech Act Theory of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) in the analysis of the speech corpus. Using the Overall Relative Frequency Percentage (ORFP) as a methodological technique, the study discovers that Jonathan made use of assertive acts than other speech acts. The study revealed that the sentences that were vindictive and directive made way for him to assert authority and exercise constitutional power as the President. The study concluded

that good governance becomes visible and possible if the leaders work in line with their beautiful promises. Waya and Nneji's (2013) study is relevant to this present study as this present study's corpus is also an inaugural speech of a prominent politician, however, differs in the area of methodological technique. Therefore, this present study seeks to fill a major gap by examining the ideological component of change adopted by Governor, Nyesom Wike in his 2015 first tenure inaugural speech.

Aboh (2016) in his work, "A Sociolinguistic Study of Jega's Speeches during the 2015 Nigeria's General Election" studied Jega's speeches during the 2015 Nigerian General Elections. The main purposes of the work were to identify the extent to which Jega's speeches reflect the values of INEC and the outcomes of Jega's electoral speeches. The researcher adopted Cooperative Principle and Critical Discourse Analysis for analysis of data. For the analysis of Jega's two speeches, he adopted the Descriptive Method. Having used the maxims of Cooperative Principle, the researcher observed that the whole sections fulfilled the maxim of quantity. He added that the speech A fulfilled the maxim of quality but speech B flouted the maxim, thus committing a conversational implicature. The researcher also noted that Jega's speeches reflected the values of INEC. The values include: autonomy, integrity, credibility, equity, impartiality, dedication, excellence, transparency and teamwork. The study also stated that the informative power of Jega's speeches is very strong as it lured people to act positively towards the information. The study recommended that anyone preparing for a speech should do that meticulously in order to ensure a value-added speech. The study concludes that researchers should endeavour to study the speeches of various stakeholders who are not really politicians. Aboh's study is relevant to this present study because it studied a political figure's speech (Jega). However, Aboh's study did not look at the functions of language use, this is the gap this present study tends to fill.

In the same vein, Chukwu's (2016) study on President Muhammadu Buhari's Language Use: A critical discourse analysis, looked into President Muhammadu Buhari's language use using Critical Discourse Analysis as its theoretical framework. The speeches for this work were gotten via internet and newspaper and were selected using purposive sampling method. The study provided insights to the strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari in his speeches. These include: deployment of pronouns, propaganda and presentation of topical issues, etc. The study exposed the fact Buhari made use of adequate pronouns in uniting and aligning himself with the electorates and masses. The study also revealed his use of propaganda which served as a linguistic tool for the defamation of rival's character and upliftment of personal image. Conclusively, the study noted that Buhari's language use was aimed at diverse purposes ranging from manipulation of the mindset of the electorates so as to get their trust and his desire to impress the masses and foreign representatives. Chukwu study is relevant to this present study as this present study is also on political speeches but differs on aspect of theoretical framework. This present study is hinged on Speech Act.

Nwoye (2017) study on "A Critical discourse analysis of selected media interviews of government spokesperson and the citizens of Nigeria" evaluated selected media interviews of Government spokesperson and the citizens of Nigeria. The study investigated the discursive strategies employed by the government and Nigerian citizens on some crucial national issues in order to reveal power and dominance. The study adopted Critical Discourse Analysis as its theoretical framework. The study sampled twenty media interviews from which forty-seven were utterances extracted and analyzed. The research revealed that both the government and citizens used these pro-forms: 'we', 'I', 'our', 'you' and 'me' respectively. The study stated that it is within solidarity that their pronouns were used to establish oneness and attraction of public sympathy. The government used some of the pro-forms to represent the government as an entity that is inclusive in their discharge of duty, while the citizens used the pro-forms to attract sympathy, challenge and encourage the government. Framing as a strategy was employed by both sides of the discourse as pointed out by the researcher. On the side of the government, framing accounted for the ways government's spokesperson apportioned blames on the past government. On the part of the citizens, blames are shifted to the government and the President respectively. Nwoye's (2017) study is relevant to the present study as this present study is poised to analyse political issues. However, it differs in areas of theoretical framework.

From the reviews thus far, it is true that researchers have investigated political speeches in Nigeria using different theoretical frameworks and methodologies. This study employs Speech Act to investigate inaugural

speech of Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State. The reviews show that political speeches have several effects on the citizens. Governor Wike's inaugural speech is worth studying.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Speech Acts Theory

Austin's 1962 Speech Act Theory as expounded by Searle (1969) served as the theoretical framework in this study. Speech Act Theory is a crucial aspect of pragmatics. It is based on how a speaker understands an utterance. This theory was put forward firstly by Austin in 1962 in his work entitled "how to do things with words". Austin (1962) notes that one thing many utterances do is to make propositions. Propositions are presented basically in form of statements, questions or other grammatical forms. These utterances are linked with happenings in a world possible. Searle (1969) further threw more lights on the theory. Speech act is seen as the actions performed in saying something (Austin, 1962). The utterances are classified into two: constatives and performatives. Constatives are seen as utterances that can be evaluated along a dimension of truth. According to Morris (2007), Austin began not by focusing on sentences which seem to belong grammatically to that type but which look odd in a more unsettling way. These sentences which Austin called performatives, seem not to describe anything in the world at all, and so seem not to be true or false. Instead, Morris notes further that they seem to get something done. In using performative utterance, a person is not just saying something but is actually doing something at the same time if certain real-world conditions are met. In the world of speech acts, attention has been shifted to realizing an utterance in a speech act situation rather than on sentence construction (Wardhaugh, 2006).

Austin noted clearly the contrast between constative utterances and performative utterances. Performative utterances consist of performative verbs which spell out clearly the illocutionary forces of the sentences. Examples of such verbs are: acquit, abolish, accept, admonish, advise, affirm, announce, apologise, ask, assent, authorize, beg, query, promise, order, recommend, resign, swear, reject, christen, sanction, and prescribe (Agbedo, 2015). Osasinwo (2003) notes that constatives are verbs that are used to make statements, describing situations, events, state of affairs, observing phenomena and asserting their truth or otherwise.

According to Babatope (2017:24), "Speech Act Theory is an important concept which relates utterance meaning in context". The idea of the Speech Act Theory is that when a speaker or a language user makes use of certain utterances, there are some acts inherent in the speech. Austin (1962) termed these utterances performatives. According to him, a speaker can perform three acts concurrently. These three acts propounded by J.L Austin are listed below:

Locutionary act-This simply refers to the exact utterance

. Illocutionary act-This refers to a speaker's intended meaning of the utterance.

Perlocutionary act- This refers to the expected outcome of the utterance made by the speaker. It is simply the perception of the illocutionary act.

However, it is important to note that Searle (1999) outlined a classification of the Illocutionary Acts. The illocutionary acts classified by Searle goes thus:

Assertives: These can also be referred to as representatives. These are utterances that reveal the belief(s) or positions of a speaker concerning a particular thing or situation. Searle (1999:28) writes that, "it is used to present the proposition as representing the state of affairs in the world". Examples of assertives are factual statements e.g. Bola Ahmed Tinubu is President of Nigeria; assertions e.g. we have won the elections; definitions e.g. democracy is the government of the people for the people and by the people; conclusions e.g. we are at cross road etc

Directives. These utterances are used by a speaker to make his listeners/hearers to operate based on his directive. It simply means that it is used to make a listener/hearer do what the speaker pleases. According to

Searle (1999:28), "the illocutionary force of a directive is to try to get the hearer to behave in such a way as to make his behaviour match the propositional content of his directive". Examples of directives are orders, instructions, orders and suggestions.

Commissives: Commissives are acts used by a speaker to reveal his/her future intentions to his listeners. Searle (1999:29) defines commissives as, "those illocutionary acts whose point is to commit the speaker to some future course of action". They are expressed in the form of pledges, vows, promises, refusals, covenants and oaths.

Expressives: These are statements that capture the thoughts, state of mind, feelings and emotions of a speaker. Searle (1999:30) posits that "the illocutionary point of this class is to express the psychological state specified a state of affairs specified in the propositional content.". The expressives are known for revealing the psychological state of mind of a speaker. According to Enyi (2015), "these utterances state what the speaker feels" (p.49). Examples of expressives are statements of apology, appreciation, condolence, congratulations, happiness, pain and thanksgiving.

Declaratives: These can also be referred to as declarations. According to Yule (1996), declarations are those kinds of speech acts that change the world via their utterance." In this type of act, the utterances used by the speaker have an institutional role within a particular context.

Various scholars/studies have presented different subdivisions of Speech Acts. This study however accedes to Searle's (1999) typology of Speech Act.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The descriptive qualitative method of analysis was employed in order to foreground the illocutionary acts within the inaugural speech. This is in consonance with the works of Creswell (1998) and Moleong (2006) on descriptive qualitative method of research which states that descriptive qualitative involves detailed description of a phenomenon in words and classify features, count and construct statistical model to explain what is observed. The data for analysis were retrieved from the internet, that is, the inaugural speech of Governor Nyesom Wike. Using the purposive random sampling technique, due to the nature of this presentation only twenty (20) locutions (excerpts or utterances) were selected. This selection was based on the fact that the governor's inaugural address is heavily loaded with various illocutionary acts. The researcher labelled the excerpts 1-20'. The choice of 20 excerpts was precipitated on the desire to carry out a detailed analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Structure of the Speech

The structural element of any given speech presupposes the structural arrangements of the speech in terms of paragraphing and sentences that make up the speech. Analysis Wike's Inaugural Speech of 29th May, 2015, marked his official inauguration as the Executive Governor of Rivers State for a single term of four (4) years. It is a speech of 53 paragraphs; about 301 lines with a total number of about 5, 117 words.

Table 1: Expressive Acts

S/N	**Excerpt**
	My beloved people of Rivers State. It is with great humility and gratitude to God Almighty, who makes all things well that I address you today. Lines 1-2
	Friends, let us be frank to ourselves. Today, Rivers State is at the crossroads. The economy is in shambles and retrogressing by the day. Poverty is pervasive. The rate of unemployment remains a nightmare to our youths. Workers and pensioners salaries are months in arrears unpaid. Lines 23-

	26
	For four years my predecessor ruled over us with the mindset of a dictator and promoted impunity to levels unimaginable. For as long as he presided, all his actions and inactions were prodded by obsessive lust for power actuated by a self-indulgent messianic gusto. Lines 33-35
	In his desperation to sabotage our vision, he refused to consent to a smooth transition and mischievously left us to wallow in the dark. He prevented us from accessing even the most elementary ceremonial facilities in his custody. Lines 38-40
5	Unfortunately, these hallowed principles of democracy and good governance meant nothing to my predecessor in office who, despite being the direct beneficiary of the rule of law, became its greatest betrayer with imperious rascality. Lines 53-55
6	Not done with his destructive agenda, the former Governor descended on our traditional institutions. He deliberately bastardized and desecrated our time-honoured traditional institutions by the wanton balkanization of a number of such stools as it suited his ego. Lines 69-71
7	I commend you all on the pains you have had to bear and the inconveniences you have had to endure while the macabre dance lasted from a truly bitter ruler on an imaginary vengeance mission. But the good news is that it is over! It is indeed over. I salute the warriors of our struggle who made today possible. Lines 75-78
8	Congratulations again my dear people of Rivers State. Let the freedom bells ring! Let the people shout for joy. Let them leap and sing to God, who heard our cries and today impunity and tyranny have been put to rout. The vicissitudes of the old ignoble order have come to pass. Lines 80-83.
9	Thank you all for coming. Thank you all for your attention and May God continually bless our land. Lines 300-301.

Table 2: Commissive Acts

S/N	**Excerpt**
	Rivers State has been rescued and reclaimed. It is a new day in our history, a new dawn to repair and restore our dear State to the path of sanity. Lines 8-9
2	But this we promise. Never again, shall our people and our land be subjected to destruction and waste by those we mistook, perhaps, for builders. They failed us. They took away our mandate, pilfered our resources and, like the prodigal son, wasted them with strangers. Lines 87-90
3	As we reiterated at several fora during the campaigns, our blueprint is an agenda of hope. We pledged to offer a New Rivers Vision based on a new thinking. Lines 92-93.

Table 3: Assertive Acts

S/N	**Excerpt**
	During the campaigns, we visited several communities in all the local government areas. We met with thousands of people including civil servants, teachers, students, doctors, lawyers, traders, market women, the business community, pensioners and the unemployed. Lines 12-14.

	We noticed that so many people were worried about the pervasive poverty in the land and the hardship they and their families were going through. Lines 17-18.
	No doubt, Rivers State has just been relieved of the most decadent case of maladministration in our history – an administration that mindlessly borrowed and frittered public resources on wasteful projects, sold our valuable assets at underpriced rates to fronts and cronies and left the State financially crippled with a heavy debt burden. Lines 30-33.
4	As you know, every democratic government rests on a tripod. Good governance principles always dictate the supremacy of the rule of law as well as the equality, autonomy and interdependence of the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary. Lines 48-50.
5	For four years our dear Rivers State was denied the electoral services of the State House of Assembly. For reasons of self-preservation the Assembly was sharply divided and the Governor's lackeys exchanged their dignity for wraps of rotten porridge from Government House. Lines 58-61
6	For the same reasons of self-preservation, the outgone administration deliberately contrived a needless succession crisis in the State's judiciary and instigated an irrational strike among the staff of the Judiciary to completely dislocate the judicial system. Lines 64-66.
7	Now that we have become victorious and have arrived at the home ward end of our beautiful water-side, it is time to work, to erect landmarks of progress and prosperity. Lines 98-99.

Table 4: Directive Act

S/N	**Excerpt**
1	Now is the time for us to rebuild. To rebuild our State; to rebuild our educational and health institutions; to rebuild our occupations and to rebuild our infrastructure. 101-102.

Data analysis

Expressive Acts

Expressive acts state the opinion of the speaker by stating what he feels. They are acts that perform functions of showing or revealing the state of minds of the speaker in the form of statement which include praising, thanking, encouraging, assuming, inspiring, apologizing, congratulating etc. The following extracts exemplify the expressive acts in the speech.

Excerpt 1: My beloved people of Rivers State. It is with great humility and gratitude to God Almighty who makes all things well that I address you today.

Intention: The Governor shows his gratitude to God while addressing the people of River State.

Excerpt 2: Friends, let us be frank to ourselves. Today, Rivers State is at crossroads. The economy is in shambles and retrogressing by the day. Poverty is pervasive. The rate of unemployment remains a nightmare to our youths. Workers and pensioners salaries are months in arrears unpaid.

Intention: Expressing and revealing the psychological state of the speaker

Excerpt 3: For four years my predecessor ruled over us with the mindset of a dictator and promoted impunity to levels unimaginable. For as long as he presided, all his actions and inactions were prodded by obsessive lust for power actuated by a self-indulgent messianic gusto.

Intention: Speaker expressing his pains and anger over the last administration.

Excerpt 4: In his desperation to sabotage our vision, he refused to consent to a smooth transition and mischievously left us to wallow in the dark. He prevented us from accessing even the most elementary ceremonial facilities in his custody.

Intention: Expressing his feelings (pains) over the previous administration.

Excerpt 5: Unfortunately, these hallowed principles of democracy and good governance meant nothing to my predecessor in office who, despite being the direct beneficiary of the rule of law, became its greatest betrayer with imperious rascality.

Intention: Expressing his anger and pains over the previous administration.

Excerpt 6: Not done with his destructive agenda, the former Governor descended on our traditional institutions. He deliberately bastardized and desecrated our time-honoured traditional institutions by the wanton balkanization of a number of such stools as it suited his ego.

Intention: The speaker is expressing his feelings of pains over the last administration.

Excerpt 7: I commend you all on the pains you have had to bear and the inconveniences you have had to endure while the macabre dance lasted from a truly bitter ruler on an imaginary vengeance mission. But the good news is that it is over! It is indeed over. I salute the warriors of our struggle who made today.

Intention: Speaker commending and appreciating the citizenry for their resilience to stand strong in the last dispensation.

Excerpt 8: Congratulations again my dear people of Rivers State. Let the freedom bells ring! Let the people shout for joy. Let them leap and sing to God, who heard our cries and today impunity and tyranny have been put to rout. The vicissitudes of the old ignoble order have come to pass.

Intention: Speaker congratulating the citizens for the election victory.

Excerpt 9: Thank you all for coming. Thank you all for your attention and May God continually bless our land.

Intention: Speaker showing gratitude to the electorates/citizens for election victory.

Commissive Acts

Excerpt 1: Rivers State has been rescued and reclaimed. It is a new day in our history, a new dawn to repair and restore our dear State to the path of sanity.

Intention: Speaker promising better days for the citizenry.

Excerpt 2: But this we promise. Never again, shall our people and our land be subjected to destruction and waste by those we mistook, perhaps, for builders. They failed us. They took away our mandate, pilfered our resources and, like the prodigal son, wasted them with strangers.

Intention: Speaker promising the electorate a better administration in the State.

Excerpt 3: As we reiterated at several fora during the campaigns, our blueprint is an agenda of hope. We pledged to offer a New Rivers Vision based on a new thinking.

Intention: Speaker vows and pledges to deliver its best for the State.

Assertive Acts

Excerpt 1: During the campaigns, we visited several communities in all the local government areas. We met with thousands of people including civil servants, teachers, students, doctors, lawyers, traders, market women, the business community, pensioners and the unemployed.

Intention: The speaker is making factual statement on his campaign tour.

Excerpt 2: We noticed that so many people were worried about the pervasive poverty in the land and the hardship they and their families were going through.

Intention: The speaker is stating the reality of things he saw during his campaign tour

Excerpt 3: No doubt, Rivers State has just been relieved of the most decadent case of maladministration in our history – an administration that mindlessly borrowed and frittered public resources on wasteful projects, sold our valuable assets at underpriced rates to fronts and cronies and left the State financially crippled with a heavy debt burden.

Intention: The speaker is lamenting the state of things in Rivers State.

Excerpt 4: As you know, every democratic government rests on a tripod. Good governance principles always dictate the supremacy of the rule of law as well as the equality, autonomy and interdependence of the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary.

Intention: The speaker is stating the actualities of things for the citizens to know.

Excerpt 5: For four years our dear Rivers State was denied the electoral services of the State House of Assembly. For reasons of self-preservation the Assembly was sharply divided and the Governor's lackeys exchanged their dignity for wraps of rotten porridge from Government House.

Intention: The speaker telling the listeners how the last administration was run through corrupt means.

Excerpt 6: For the same reasons of self-preservation, the outgone administration deliberately contrived a needless succession crisis in the State's judiciary and instigated an irrational strike among the staff of the Judiciary to completely dislocate the judicial system.

Intention: The speaker telling the listeners how the last administration was run through corrupt means.

Excerpt 7: Now that we have become victorious and have arrived at the home ward end of our beautiful water-side, it is time to work, to erect landmarks of progress and prosperity.

Intention: The speaker is stating the actualities and expectations of his administration.

Directive Acts

Excerpt 1: Now is the time for us to rebuild. To rebuild our State; to rebuild our educational and health institutions; to rebuild our occupations and to rebuild our infrastructure. Lines 101-102.

Intention: This is a call to action by the speaker on how to rebuild the state with the citizens.

Table 5: Frequency Distribution of Speech Acts in Governor Nyesom Wike's Inaugural Speech

Speech Acts	Frequency	Percentage
Expressive	9	45

Commissive	3	15
Assertive	7	35
Directive	1	5
Total	**20**	**100%**

Source: Field Work 2024

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The data from the study as shown from the table above revealed that Governor Nyesom Wike used four (4) speech acts in his first tenure of 2015 inaugural speech. The speech acts are *Expressives, Commissives, Assertives* and *Directives*. *Expressive* acts account for the highest occurrence in the entire acts used by the governor. The Governor used the *expressive* acts nine (9) times with 45% of the illocutionary acts performed. Next to this are *assertive* acts that occurred seven (7) times which have illocutionary acts of 35%. *Commissive* acts occurred three (3) times with 15%. *Directive* speech act occurred once in the speech with 5%.

Governor Wike used the *expressive* acts to communicate his gratitude to the Almighty God for his grace and who makes all things well (excerpt 1). He also used *expressive* acts to congratulate the people of Rivers State (excerpt 8) for the election victory. The preponderance of *expressive* acts in the speech are due to a series of personal feelings of disappointment and challenges faced by the citizenry during the previous administration, anger and pains meted on the people of the State. This can be seen in excerpts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Next in the act are *assertive* acts, the speaker used this act to vent his anger on the last administration. He makes factual statements, describes and reports situation of things in the state as can be found in excerpts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Further, *Commissive* acts are employed to build trust between the speaker and the listeners. *Commissive* acts in the speech are due to series of promises to restore the state to the path of sanity (excerpts 1 and 2). The Governor also vows and pledges to deliver projects, programmes, innovations and a new 'River's vision'. These promises that normally have perlocutionary force of commitment, loyalty, hopefulness etc. are parts of the efforts made by Governor Wike to persuade and convinced his listeners (electorates) of his intention to deliver dividends of democracy (excerpt 3).

Directive acts recorded the lowest occurrence, because the Governor used it as a way of rounding off the speech. This was used by the speaker to instruct the electorates on how to rebuild the state. The speaker (Governor) also used this speech act to achieve his goals, stabilize his government or deliver dividends of democracy (excerpt 1). Finally, *declarative* acts were not recorded in the governor's speech. This is a cautious attempt by the speaker not to be seen as being draconian or overbearing especially in a democratic setting.

CONCLUSION

This study has investigated the functions of speech acts in an extended body of discourse. It is indeed, the performance of certain acts: making statements, giving instruction, describing, explaining, vowing and pledging, thanking, congratulating, and so on, as the analysis show in governor Nyesom Wike's 2015 first tenure inaugural speech. Indeed, the language language used in political discourses is worthy of contemporary research.

The study analysed the inaugural speech delivered by Nyesom Wike using Speech Act Theory. The speech act analyses have unveiled how the governor has presented modalities of realizing his campaign promises to the people of Rivers State. The analysis has also revealed the predominance of *expressive* acts in the inaugural address as seen in excerpts 1 and 2 "My beloved people of Rivers State. It is with great humility and gratitude

to God Almighty, who makes all things well that I address you today", line 2 and "Friends, let us be frank to ourselves, line 23. Today, Rivers State is at the crossroads. The economy is in shambles and retrogressing by the day. Poverty is pervasive. The rate of unemployment remains a nightmare to our youths. Workers and pensioners salaries are months in arrears unpaid" respectively. The analysis further revealed that the speaker has used language directly to assert and promise his listeners within the contexts in which the address was delivered as seen under commissive acts: "Rivers State has been rescued and reclaimed. It is a new day in our history, a new dawn to repair and restore our dear State to the path of sanity" and "But this we promise. Never again, shall our people and our land be subjected to destruction and waste by those we mistook, perhaps, for builders. They failed us. They took away our mandate, pilfered our resources and, like the prodigal son, wasted them with strangers". Lines 87-90.

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