



# A Speech Act Analysis of Bola Tinubu's Election Victory Speech

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## ABSTRACT

*Bola Tinubu of the All Progressive Party became the President-elect after Nigeria's Presidential Election which took place in March 2023. The central goal of an election victory speech such as that of Bola Tinubu is to persuade, unify and mobilize the audience. The speech analyzed in this study is the election victory speech delivered by the President-elect. Selected utterances from the speech are analyzed to find out how the speaker skillfully deployed speech acts that are germane to the psychological context of the speech, occasioned by the opponents' claim that the election was rigged. Hinging on two theoretical frameworks (Bach and Harnish's Speech Act Theory as well as Stance and Engagement theory), 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 presupposes the use of different communicative strategies: skillful selection and sequencing of speech acts, personal pronouns, emotional appeals, exploring speaker-hearer shared knowledge, establishing speaker hearer bond, among other strategies.*

**KEYWORDS:** pragmatics, speech act, rhetoric, Bola Tinubu, Bach and Harnish's Speech Act Theory, Stance and Engagement Theory

## INTRODUCTION

Bola Tinubu's election victory speech is an example of a political discourse, in which language essentially plays a pacifying, unifying and mobilizing role. Language is endowed with the potentials to convey a wide range of messages across genres, including political speeches in which speakers demonstrate their mastery of the basic functions of language: interactive (used for communication among human beings); domain-based functions (as in politics); symbol of identity, etc. In analyzing Bola Tinubu's election victory speech, this study aligns with Adegbija [1] who submits that "questions to ask when analyzing discourse include:

What is the conversation or discourse about?

What comments are being made about this topic?

Who are the speakers and addressees?

How is reference made to different objects, persons, things, places? Is this done backwards, within the text, or outside the text?

How is meaning decoded from the discourse?

What contributions do the contexts of discourse make to the encoding and decoding of the meaning?

What specific and overall functions do the different utterances in the discourse perform?

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As a fact in academic research, a research topic is crucial if it is recent. The speech analyzed in this study is so recent that there can hardly be any available linguistic analysis of it. A speech act analysis of Bola Tinubu's election victory speech is therefore very significant.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions are germane to the study:

a. What are the motivations for deploying speech acts in Bola Tinubu's election victory speech?

b. How is language manipulated to convey message in a political discourse such as the election victory speech of Bola Tinubu?

## SPEECH ACTS

Speech acts are essentially action words that are potently and discretely communicative in varied contexts and situations. Austin [2] is a pioneering work on speech acts. He extensively categorized and elucidates the notion of speech act. According to David A. Brenders, [3], "speech act theory, as a part of the philosophy of language, has been concerned with analyzing the performance of linguistic acts (asserting, promising, questioning) as a rule-governed form of behaviour." Sentential propositions are conveyed



via speech acts because speech acts have special meanings that are immersed in socially realistic phenomena. Labov [] avers that “no use of language can be divorced from its social context since special meaning is parasitic upon language.” Without speech act theory, it is difficult to explain the principles that underpin the encoding and decoding of utterances. The normative rules of language cannot account for the intentions, attitudes, and other dynamics of human communication.

Austin [2] establishes the difference between performatives and constatives. Constatives are statements which have been traditionally treated as having the property of truth or falsity. But performatives may not meet this criterion. Performatives are either “felicitous” or “infelicitous”. Austin [2] contends that performatives and constatives differ in terms of “doing” and “saying”. The felicity condition for performatives is that certain conventional procedures should be fulfilled; that is, certain words have to be uttered in certain circumstances, all participants of the discourse must execute such procedures correctly and completely, the particular persons and circumstances in a given situation must be appropriate for the particular procedure, and their thoughts and feelings should also be germane to the situation.

Early theorists of pragmatics evolve speech act classifications. Austin [2] proposes five classes: Verdictives, Exercitives, Commissive, Behabitives and Expositives. He submits that “Verdictives are typified by the giving of a verdict by a jury, arbitrator, or umpire. They may be an estimate, reckoning, or appraisal”. Examples are: acquit, convict, reckon, diagnose and analyze.

Exercitives involve “the exercising of powers, rights, or influence”. Examples are: appointing, advising, warning, ordering, etc.

Commissives are characterized by promising or undertaking. The whole point of Commissives is “to commit the speaker to a certain course of action”. Examples include promise, undertake, contract, covenant, etc.

Behabitives “concern attitudes and social behaviors. They include the notion of reaction to other people’s behaviors and fortunes and of attitudes and expressions of attitudes to someone else’s past conduct or imminent conduct”. An overview of classical and contemporary speech act theories gives a better understanding of speech acts. However, this study does not attempt an extensive presentation of the literature.

## **RHETORIC**

Rhetoric is the use of cross-disciplinary insights in the presentation of a speech<sup>1</sup>. It is a human art or skill (techne), which is based on Aristotle’s “three steps of rhetoric”: invention, arrangement and style; and three types of rhetoric proofs: ethos (how the character and credibility of a speaker can influence an audience to consider him/her believable); pathos (the use of emotional appeals to alter the audience’s

judgments); and logos (the use of inductive and deductive reasoning to construct an argument).

Since the classical period, rhetoric has been viewed as the art of discourse that equips writers and speakers with the necessary skills for using speech acts to communicate effectively. It was one of the three ancient arts of discourse from Greek to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Classical rhetoric thought speakers how to deliver persuasive speeches in different situations and institutions such as courtrooms and assemblies.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

This paper hinges on two theoretical underpinnings: Kent Bach and Robert M. Harnish’s [5] Speech Act as well as Stance and Engagement Theory.

### **Bach and Harnish’s Speech Act Theory**

The theory is based on speakers’ intention and inference-making. Bach and Harnish [5] evolve “Speech Act Schemata (SAS)” which refers to the inferential process in a communicative event. According to them, mutual contextual beliefs (MCBs) enhances inference-making. To infer what a speaker (s) is saying, the hearer (h) depends also on the Presumption of Literalness (PL). The hearer should know when the linguistic communication of the speaker is within or out of the bounds of literalness, and if the speaker is speaking in a non-literal language, the hearer should not only acknowledge it, but should also be able to understand what such speech by the speaker means. They recognize other types of beliefs shared by an entire linguistic community for easy inference-making:

- (i) Linguistic Presumption (LP); and
- (ii) Communicative Presumption (CP).

Linguistic Presumption refers to the moral beliefs that members of a Linguistic Community (LC) share on the particular language (L) in question. Therefore, any expression (e) uttered by a member to any member of the community, is taken by the speaker for granted. The speaker presupposes that the hearer understands what is uttered. An act of communication is successful if the hearer recognizes the speaker’s illocutionary intention. They recognize several types of strategies in the inferential process:

- a. Locutionary Strategy: The hearer’s inference from the locutionary act or the utterance per se and what the utterance means in L. This is based on the hearer’s knowledge of the language, the LP, the CP and MCBs.
- b. Direct Literal Strategy: The hearer infers from the PL whether or not the speaker really means what is said. This helps the hearer to identify the act.
- c. Literally-Based Indirect Strategy: The hearer depends on the MCBs, CP, and the utterance to determine whether, under the circumstance there is some action connected with the literal utterance.

d. Direct Non-literal Strategy: By relying on MCBs, CP, the utterance and the hearer's knowledge of the literal meaning of the utterance, the hearer infers that the speaker's utterance must be non-literal and indirect since another act is connected with the overt one which the hearer recognizes.

e. Non-literally Based Indirect Strategy: The CP, the utterance, and MCBs enable the hearer to infer that the speaker's utterance must be non-literal and indirect since another illocutionary act is connected with it.

Bach and Harnish [5] establish two broad categories of illocutionary acts: communicative and non-communicative illocutionary acts. While the former requires the recognition of S's R-intention, the latter does not. In their theory, there are four main categories of communicative illocutionary acts: Constatives, Directives, Commissives and Acknowledgements. These four main categories correspond roughly to Austin's Expositives, Exercitives, Commissives, and Behabitives respectively and closely to Searle's Representatives (Assertives), Directives, Commissives and Expressives, differing mainly in their characterizations. There are two classes of non-communicative illocutionary acts: Effectives and Verdictives, corresponding roughly to Searle's Declarations. A detailed account of the categories established by Bach and Harnish are speech acts which express the speaker's belief and intention, or, at least the implication or desire, that the hearer form (or continue to hold) a like belief. Fifteen subcategories of this group are recognized as follows: Assertives, Informatives, Confirmatives, Concessives, Retractivives, Assentives, Dissentives, Disputatives, Responsives, Suggestives and Suppositives. Assertives are characterized by "S's expression of belief that the hearer also believes that P" (proposition of a sentence). Examples of Assertives are: affirm, allege, assert, aver, avow, declare and deny. Informatives are speech acts in which the speaker expresses "the belief that P" and "the intention that the hearer forms the belief that P." Examples are: advise, announce, appraise, disclose, inform, insist, notify, point out, report, reveal, tell, and testify. Descriptives declare that a particular quality is possessed by a person, place or thing; that is, the speaker expresses "the belief that O is F" and "the intention that the hearer believes that O is F". Examples are: appraise, asses, call, categorize, characterize, classify, date, describe, diagnose, evaluate, etc. Directives express the speaker's attitude toward a future action by the hearer and the speaker's intention or desire that the hearer considers his utterance as reason to act. Six subcategories of illocutionary acts are listed under this category: Requestives, Questions, Requirements, Prohibitives, Permissives and Advisories.

### **Stance and Engagement Theory**

Ayo Osisanwo [6] presents Stance and Engagement Theory elaborately:

Stance, according to Hyland (2005:176), expresses a textual 'voice' or community recognized personally. Stance can be seen

as an attributional dimension and includes features which refer to the ways speakers or writers present themselves and convey their judgments, opinions, and commitments about a particular topic. It is the ways that writers intrude to stamp their personal authority into their arguments. According to Bibber and Finnegan (1989:124), "stance is the lexical and grammatical expression of attitudes, feelings, judgments or commitments concerning propositional content of a message." Specific word choices are made to convey such judgments and opinions. Other scholars have used words such as appraisal, attitude, evaluation, among others, to represent the concept. Stance, therefore, gives the speaker an opportunity to present his views on a propositional content ... The four elements of stance as identified by Hyland include Hedges, Boosters, Attitude markers, self-mention.

Engagement, according to Hyland (2005:176), is "an alignment dimension where writers acknowledge and connect to others, recognizing the presence of their readers, pulling them along with their argument, focusing their attention, acknowledging their uncertainties, including them as discourse participants, and guiding them to interpretations." Hyland acknowledges that stance and engagement overlap; they are two sides of a coin and contribute to the interpersonal aspect of discourse<sup>2</sup>.

### **Presentation and Analysis of Data**

This section presents and analyzed seven utterances selected from the macro-structure: Bola Tinubu's entire election victory speech. The utterances (henceforth U.1-U.7) are gathered from television news captions (as presented). In the analysis, we choose to simply indicate the illocutionary forces (illocutionary acts) performed in each utterance and proceed with an integrative explanation of the pragmatic underpinnings (motivations) of such deployed illocutionary acts, in relation to insights from the literature of speech acts.

#### **U.1**

#### ***No more strikes in our universities***

Illocutionary acts: informative, promise, declaration, condemning

The encoder is aware of the incessant strikes embarked upon by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) over the years and its negative implications on tertiary education in the country. The speaker promises (commissive) to reverse the ugly trend. The notion of "felicity condition" makes it clear that U.1 is not supposed to be uttered by anybody who is not in a position to do so. Being the President-elect of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the speaker makes an authoritative declaration that there will be a new status-quo (a paradigm shift), even though it is futuristic. By making his position clear, the speaker aligns with Stance and Engagement Theory. Therefore, U.1 is uttered to condemn the present status-quo in the country's university education. The utterance performs tripartite speech acts via sequencing: declaration, promise

and condemning. Scholars of pragmatics align with the view that multiple speech acts can be performed in an utterance due to the versatility of speech acts (verbs). For example, “to advise” a person is “to suggest” to the person in a particular speech situation or context. The psychological context of the utterance is obvious; students and their parents are perturbed by the incessant strikes embarked upon by ASUU and the resultant negative effects: waste of funds, depression, poor results, inability to meet labour-market requirements, crimes, youth restiveness, producing half-baked graduates, low-quality teaching owing to the compression of academic calendar to fill gaps created by strikes, etc. These negative implications are essentially ascriptive components (giving quality to a referent such as “Nigeria’s public university system”). Indeed, the psychological context of an utterance is crucial for a meaningful interpretation of it. There is speaker-hearer shared knowledge about the disgusting and suffocating effects of strikes in the nation’s public universities.

## **U.2**

### ***Four-year course will be four-year course***

Illocutionary acts: informative, declaration, promise, condemning, ascriptive

The utterance conveys a clear message (informative): the incessant strikes in public universities is a reason why undergraduates cannot ascertain their year of graduation. The speaker is displeased with the situation and does not want it to be a recurring decimal. In a country where good governance operates, the education sector is not relegated to the background. In such a country, strike-abating policies are formulated and implemented. Undergraduates will then be able to predict the year that they will graduate. The utterance is therefore not talking about a four-year course. It is talking about any course duration in any academic programme in the university. The use of the modal auxiliary “will” amplifies the illocutionary force of the speaker’s promise; the speaker makes the promise with “certainty, seriousness and willingness”. Searle’s [7] speech act theory submits that varied psychological states are expressed in the use of speech acts. Cognitive pragmatics investigates the mental states (beliefs, thoughts and intentions of speakers-hearers). The modal auxiliary “will” make the audience believe in the speaker’s proposition (the promise).

## **U.3**

### ***I will pay undivided attention to education***

Illocutionary acts: informative, promise, ascriptive, condemning, persuading

The speaker promises to focus on policies that will result in the progress of education in Nigeria. He therefore believes that the divided attention hitherto given to the education sector causes strikes. He thinks that the education sector should be given the priority it deserves. This implies that the

speaker believes solid educational foundation is a catalyst for national growth and development. The speaker ascribes (ascriptive) qualities to two referents: “Federal Government” and “education”. Implied meanings are conveyed in U.3; the encoder qualifies the latter as being reckless, ignorant and indifferent towards education. On the other hand, the former is instrumental in national growth and development. Reference is the relationship between expressions and the things or phenomena that such expressions refer to in the world. The modal auxiliary “will” conveys the seriousness of the commissive; the encoder’s willingness to fulfil it.

## **U.4**

### ***Universities will be given autonomy***

Illocutionary Acts: informative, promise, persuading

The speaker utters U.4 from his background knowledge of one of the demands of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU); the Union had requested full autonomy as obtainable in other parts of the world. The two parties (the Federal Government and ASUU) have conflicting perspectives on the issue. The encoder speaks with absolute confidence on the advantages of autonomy in Federal government-owned universities. As a product of speaker-hearer shared knowledge, U.4 brings respite to the audience. According to Akinnaso [8] “communication is said to be effective when the sender’s aim or objective of sending a message is achieved by acknowledging, understanding and implementing the message<sup>3</sup>.” The speaker believes that a good leader accepts and implements a reasonable proposal such as that presented by ASUU. The utterance essentially negotiates an amicable settlement of the prolonged FG-ASUU rift that has put students at the receiving end. To effectively negotiate an amicable settlement, the speaker skillfully deploys language. For example, if the modal auxiliary “may” (probability) is used rather than “will” (certainty/willingness) in U.4, ASUU will not be satisfied. By making sure that the timely speech is pleasant, unifying and audience-supportive, it can be concluded that the speaker uses speech act persuasively.

## **U.5**

### ***The youths, I heard you loud and clear***

Illocutionary acts: responsive, ascriptive

The speaker strongly shows solidarity with the most vibrant and productive part of the population of Nigeria: the youths. He draws their attention to his willingness to give them a better future not just as a leader, but also as a father. A promising future for youths presupposes the provision of quality and affordable education, job opportunities, entrepreneurship skills, etc. The speaker desires to take the restive youths out of the streets of Nigeria. He is mindful of the expectations of parents for their children, and expects his audience to infer his message appropriately. Adebija [9] posits that “inference involves the drawing of a conclusion from known or assumed facts or statements, from available data or a



particular premise. It is the deductive process through which the addressee or reader progresses from the literal meaning of an utterance to what the speaker/writer actually intends to express. The context of an utterance is often very crucial in making the appropriate inference. Inferences are made on the basis of the background context, our experience of life or world knowledge, and the mutually shared beliefs. Knowledge of the literal meaning of an utterance often contributes to appropriate inference that will lead us to the non-literal meaning." The expression "loud and clear" is very awakening in terms of its potential to generate the listeners' trust. Indeed, it is a glimmer of hope for the target audience. The speaker tries to make the listeners understand that he is so worried about their plight that prompt action has to be taken. The expression "loud and clear" is germane: it shows collocation, it has semiotic potential, it is cohesive, and it is subtly prosodic. The utterance is informed by different antecedents that necessitated anti-government sentiments from the youths. One of the antecedents is the surprising massive votes given to the Labour Party by the angry youths<sup>4</sup>. The speaker feels it is time to correct the misdemeanor in governance.

#### **U.6**

##### ***No more selling of handouts***

Illocutionary Acts: directive, informative, dissentive, condemning

The speaker does not view the selling of handouts to students of Nigerian universities as a proper practice. He condemns it in strong terms. This utterance is linked to the previous ones in our corpora because the promise that the speaker makes concerns reviving the entire condition of the Federal Government-owned universities. U.6 has an extra-textual reference (implicature); if poor salaries is a reason for the sale of handouts, the incoming government wishes to pay lecturers better salaries. The speaker is aware of the negative effects of the sale of handouts in tertiary institutions in the country: some lecturers use the same handouts to teach students for several years; many handouts are bereaved of quality content; some lecturers make the buying of handouts a prerequisite for passing their courses; and some lecturers do not even engage in proper teaching after selling handouts to students. The speaker values education. This explains why the chunk of his message is about university education. The utterance (U.6) presents the speaker as a prospective reformer of the country's public universities. In other omitted utterances from the speech (e.g. "Our lecturers will have to write" and "There will be education loan"), the speaker reveals his posture towards tertiary education in the country. The speaker successfully communicates his timely message through appropriate choice of words. **U.7**

##### ***Let us come together to build our nation***

Illocutionary Acts: requestive, persuading

By engaging the audience in the task of nation-building, the

speaker demonstrates the thrust of Stance and Engagement Theory. Exploring the function of language, Bola Tinubu expresses himself accordingly. According to Crystal [10], language is "the systematic conventional use of sounds, signs or written symbols in a human society for communication and self-expression." The utterance is suggestive of what the speaker thinks about leadership. He views leadership as a collective task which necessitates the cooperation of losers and winners in an election, such as the 2023 Presidential Election that made him the nation's President-elect. It is the hearer's task to retrieve information from a speaker's utterance. The implicatures in the utterance can be worked out: the speaker is wise, and understands that at such a post-election moment, there is the urgent need to pacify the political opponents who think that the election was rigged. Kempson [11] defines pragmatics as "the study of the general cognitive principles involved in the retrieval of information from an utterance." Corroborating this submission, Savas L. Tsohatzid [12] asserts that "... knowing what illocutionary act a speaker has performed in uttering a sentence of his language is essential for knowing what he meant in uttering that sentence; it is well known, however, that what speakers of a natural language mean by uttering sentences of that language is not always the same as what those sentences themselves mean ...". The speaker views ideal leadership as service to humanity, not for personal aggrandizement. His view is that nation-building is not about party membership. The speaker is seemingly an advocate of "collective Nigerian project" in governance, rather than using position to punish political opponents. An effective speech at such a time should be about "one nation, one Nigeria". The utterance is soothing, all-embracing, neutrality-laden and reassuring. The indexical expressions (personal pronouns) "us" and "our" establish speaker-hearer bond and give the audience a sense of collective goals and aspirations. Indeed, the speaker uses the personal pronouns to arrest the attention of the audience and get their approval. Conclusively, the utterance is a product of calculated speech delivery.

#### **DISCUSSION**

A good election victory speech should avoid obscurity so as to be relevant. According to Sperber and Wilson's [13] Theory of Relevance, "relevant information is that which yields the greatest change in the hearer's knowledge for the least processing efforts." To make his election victory speech pungently communicative, the speaker explores: shared knowledge, personal pronouns, goal-driven speech acts, speaker-hearer bonding, call to action and emotional appeal. The analysis reveals that a political speech is an ideal genre for exploring the communicative potentials of language in describing state-of-affairs in society, and evolving solutions to societal problems. The speech reveals that indeed, language is action. Political speeches do not exist in a vacuum; they are products of socially realistic phenomena. In the analysis of U.1-U.7, such phenomena are the referents that Bola Tinubu's election victory speech picks in the setting of the discourse

(Nigeria). The speaker manipulates language (“linguistic engineering”) to impress his message in the minds of his varied categories of audience: youths, middle-age people and aged ones. These categories of audience have one thing in common; they desire the dividends of democracy in the incoming administration which will be led by the speaker. The speaker has some political ideologies (as can be deduced from the analysis). He conveys such ideologies both covertly (via implicature) and overtly (via direct speech acts). It is quite interesting that the speaker hinges on implicature to convey his perspectives about the game of politics: the “controversial perspective”, the “do-or-die perspective” and the “service-to-humanity” perspective. These perspectives are essentially social issues that language is used to address. Labov [4] rightly notes that “no use of language can be divorced from its social context since special meaning is parasitic upon language.” In a similar vein, Clement Gwon Omachonu et al. [14] note that “language principally is

human linguistic behavior. Language occupies a prominent position in the affairs of human beings. Despite its crucial role in interpersonal communication and identity formation, it is central in all the activities humans participate in.” See Lyons [15] for corroborating views.

Speech acts performed across U.1-U.7 include: informative, promise, directive, persuading, dissentive, condemning, responsive and ascriptive. These speech acts are not incidental. They are informed by the main purpose of the speech. It is therefore not surprising that the Master Speech Act is informative, used to inform the audience about what to expect in the incoming regime. Adegbija [9] contend that many extended body of discourse perform a Master Speech Act, which anchors all other speech acts that are infused into it, to convey a writer’s (or speaker’s) message.

Consider table 1 for information on speech acts across U.1-U.7:

**Table 1.** Information on Speech Acts across U.1-U.7

Speech Act	Frequency	Percentage	Communicative Function
Informative	5	20%	to make the audience know x
Promise	4	16%	undertaking to do x
Declaration	2	8%	to declare that something is x
Condemning	4	16%	to reject x
Ascriptive	3	12%	to give attributes to x
Persuading	3	12%	to make the audience believe x
Responsive	1	4%	to react to x
Directive	1	4%	to direct the audience to do x
Dissentive	1	4%	to refuse to accept x
Requestive	1	4%	to desire x from the audience

Ten speech act categories are performed in the selected corpora. Table 1 shows the speech acts, their frequencies, percentages and communicative functions in the entire body of discourse. Informative (20%) is used “to make the audience know x” (where x is an infinite, unspecified entity). In a promise (16%), the speaker “is undertaking to do x”. In declaration (8%) the speaker “declares that something is x”. “To reject x” counts as “condemning (16%) x”. An ascriptive (12%) “gives attributes to x”. A speaker is persuading (12%) the audience if the speaker’s utterance is “to make the audience believe x”. “To react to x” is “to make a responsive” (4%). A directive (4%) is “to direct the audience to do x”. A dissentive (4%) is “to refuse to accept x”. A requestive (4%) is “to desire x from the audience”. Interestingly, speech acts can have primary and secondary illocutionary acts in context. This view aligns with the literature. For example, in Bola Tinubu’s election victory speech, informatives, promise, declaration, condemning, ascriptive and responsive are used essentially to persuade (the hearers that things will get better in the incoming administration of the President-elect). The speech successfully aroused the audience’s emotions. Lehtsalu et al. [16] posit that “besides communicating certain ideas an utterance may also produce a definite effect

or arouse an emotion in the listener or reader.” Language philosophers (pragmatic theorists) acknowledge that the goals of pragmatics is to process language for smooth communication.

**CONCLUSION**

In this study, we investigate the functions of speech acts in an extended body of discourse. Classical speech act theorists contend that the minimal unit of communication among humans transcend the use of words or linguistic stretches. It is indeed, the performance of certain acts: making statements, asking questions, giving orders, describing, explaining, apologizing, thanking, congratulating, and so on, as the analysis shows in Bola Tinubu’s election victory speech. According to Fowler [17], “linguistic structure is not arbitrary. It is determined and motivated by the functions it performs.” In U.1-U.7, speech acts are easy to process for meaning. The hearers are able to locate the “world-spoken-of” (the contexts/representations that readers invoke when making inferences on the use of speech acts)<sup>5</sup>. According to Bennett [18], “language does serve as a tool for communication, but in addition, it is a ‘system of representation’ for perception and thinking.” Indeed, language use in political discourses is worthy of contemporary research.



## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The insights can emanate from politics, mathematics, statistics, philosophy, logic, religion, discourse analysis, stylistics, pragmatics, psychology, communication theory, among other disciplines.
- <sup>2</sup> The four elements of engagement as identified by Hyland include reader-pronouns, directives, questions, shared knowledge, personal asides.
- <sup>3</sup> In a similar vein, Baba [19] posits that effective communication “involves giving of understandable information, receiving and understanding the message involved to the extent that the intended response is elicited or gotten.”
- <sup>4</sup> The End SARS protests that almost tore Nigeria apart was one of such antecedents.
- <sup>5</sup> See Allan K. [20] for insights on “world-spoken-of” as a notion in pragmatics.

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Citation: Acheoah John Emike, Balogun Bamitale Janet, Zulfaa Yushau Waziri, "A Speech Act Analysis of Bola Tinubu's Election Victory Speech", *American Research Journal of English and Literature*, Vol 9, no. 1, 2023, pp. 15-21.

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