

## Pragmatic Acts in the Inaugural Speeches of Military Heads of Government in Nigeria

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### INTRODUCTION

An Inaugural speech can be described as the first official speech delivered by an individual on assumption of any office of public trust. The inaugural speech is an important formal presentation that allows the presenter to express certain views and ideas relating to particular situations. For the presidential inaugural speech however, we can go a step further by saying that the inaugural speech is a public piece of discourse that is usually formally presented by the president as a political office holder and which signifies the commencement of a particular administration. For a military head of government, the inaugural speech is almost in all cases, a post-coup presentation where the speaker attempts a justification of the change in government. Abaya (2008:5) defined a coup speech as “a broadcast to the nation on military intervention on the day to day administration of a country”. This intervention is sometimes executed through illegitimate and violent means. Thomas and Wareing (1999) argued that when people engage in politics, they make use of a wide range of linguistic choices to build up their discourse and these usually have crucial effects on shaping an ideology that will lead the people to accept their argument more easily. We can infer from the foregoing that a coup speech, being a form of communication meant for the citizens will focus on issues that are of interest to the generality of the people.

As opined by Adebisi (2006), the inaugural speech, whether it is prepared, memorised or delivered without formal preparation or notification, is geared towards motivating, mobilising, educating, informing and in some cases entertaining the target audience. It can however be argued that Adebisi (2006) is perhaps oblivious of a salient point. This is the fact that a presidential inaugural speech, being a form of political discourse, can equally be deployed as a tool for criticism which is the case in Ademilokun (2016) where the author examined the lexical choices of President Buhari’s inaugural speech. He concluded that the lexical choices in the speech under review were meant to praise his supporters and condemn the activities of the previous governments. This shows that the inaugural speeches are not only used for motivating and mobilising as suggested by Adebisi, but are also used to criticise and condemn previous administrations which is always the case especially in post-coup speeches where ‘military politicians’ make every effort to condemn the activities of previous regimes in order to justify the current government. This criticism can be in form of institutional or attitudinal criticism. It is therefore apt to describe the presidential inaugural speech as a comprehensive piece of discourse that addresses various aspects of a nation’s life in one clean sweep. In the views of Akinrinola (2016), presidential inaugural speeches are crafted to achieve specific objectives. This crafting therefore takes cognizance of certain factors which in turn determine the linguistic choices of the speech encoder which eventually will make him or her achieve his or her pragmatic intent in order to successfully achieve the objectives of this discourse genre. It is therefore on this basis that this study examines the pragmatic actions performed in the inaugural speeches presented by Nigeria’s military heads of government.

### METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive research that is based on observable data. The data samples used for the research are archival materials sourced from different online sources. The data comprises all the coup speeches delivered by Nigeria’s military heads of state from January, 1966 to June 1998. The data excerpts were purposively selected to achieve the stated objectives of the study. The excerpts were then analysed, using Jacob Mey’s model of pragmatic act.

### AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this study is to provide insight for a clear understanding of the inaugural speeches of past military rulers in Nigeria. This is informed by the fact that pragmatic scholars had been focused on speeches delivered by civilian leaders. It is expected that the study will reveal the various linguistic acts performed by the military in their inaugural speeches. The study also seeks to provide a contextual underpinning for a detailed understanding of coup speeches.

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## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts Jacob Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Act Theory (PAT) as the theoretical springboard for its analysis. The Pragmatic Act Theory (PAT) proposed by Jacob Mey is a model of practical language use. Within the framework of the Pragmatic Act Theory, Mey (2001) highlighted the centrality of context. The theory focuses on the environment in which language users find their affordances such that the entire communicative acts performed are brought to bear on what is linguistically permissible in particular situations, as well as on what is actually being said (Mey 2001). Mey (2010:2883) explained that "the difference between a pragmatic act and what is called a 'speech event' is that the pragmatic act, as an instantiated and situated act, not only depends on the situation, but is also itself part of the event; it shapes and conditions the speakers and the way they interact, and can interact, in a particular situation". It is evident from the foregoing that the pragmeme emphasises contextual variation as an important feature of any theory of pragmatics. Political communication involves a focus on meaning. This suggests that politicians will employ different pragmatic strategies to pass their message across. Politicians couch a lot of intentions in their speeches: they seek to inform, inspire, assure, accuse, promise, direct, suggest, apologise, disagree, criticise, etc. This captures the relevance of the pragmatic act theory to the analysis of political discourse.

According to Mey (2001:217), the focus of a pragmatic model that is primarily and genuinely concerned with the things we do with language should not be on the individual and conventional conditions guiding a particular speech act, but on explaining the general and practical characteristics of a prototype pragmatic act.

As expressed by Emike (2015), the Pragmeme is an improvement or a reactionary model on the previous individual framework of Austin, Searle and Grice. Mey (2001) argued that Austin's speech act theory is at best, a theory of reference where context is far removed from language. Mey submitted that context is more than a mere referential element, context in itself is action; it is about understanding. Osisanwo (2017) contended that the context of a language actually explains what language is used for as well as what gives our utterances their true pragmatic meaning and allows them to be counted as true pragmatic acts. The pragmatic act theory focuses on the situational affordances. In other words, the theory annexes every atomic pragmatic model under one theoretical roof. For example, Mey (2001:91-93) explained that the atomic nature of the speech act theory is attestable in the fact that the model focuses more on spoken language. However, Capone (2005:1355) says that a pragmatic model is expected to be comprehensive both in approach and application. He argued that language, either spoken or written, is a tool deployed for social interaction and integration. In essence, a pragmatic act is achievable only in a situation where language users are able to adapt to variations in situation and participants. In essence, Austin's speech act model falls short of anticipating the likelihood of a variation in situation and participants. Thus, the pragmatic act model becomes the most appropriate model for a pragmatic foray into communicative activities that involve a shift or change in participant and contextual functions as is the case in the subject matter of the current study.

A pragmeme can therefore be described as an utterance that is intended to achieve particular goal(s). Yule 1996 had earlier contended that pragmatics is a sociolinguistic subfield that investigates the method by which language is used for communication purposes. Blum-Kulka and Hamo (2004) argued that the pragmatic import of a text is determined by the language choices made by speakers and writers. It can however be argued that the knowledge of the workings of a particular language is not all that is required in the study of pragmatics, as Pragmatics being the study of language choices is a linguistic discipline that is context sensitive. Words for example, can mean more or something other than they say. Mey (2001) therefore presents the argument that textual and discourse interpretations depend on a multiplicity of factors which include; contextual familiarity, intonational cues, cultural assumptions, mutually shared knowledge, metaphorical expressions etc. The pragmatic act (pragmeme) is divided into two main parts of activity and textual. The textual part is situated on the right hand side while the activity part is situated on the left hand side. The implication is that a piece of discourse or a pragmeme is made up of activity, text and context. Akinwotu (2018) contended that language users, in creating pragmemes, employ one or more of the communicative elements identified in Mey's pragmatic act model. The activity as a component of communication is made up of speech acts, indirect speech, conversational acts, psychological acts, prosody, gestures and emotions. Out of these, speakers make choices and in situations where no choice is made, the slot goes to null. The textual part is determined by a combination of the linguistic acts uttered by the participants as well as the environment. This brings to the fore the view by Halliday & Hassan (1989) that a text is either written or spoken language that is functional. By the term functional, we refer to language that is used in specific, physical and contextual situations. While a text is manifested as a combination of linguistic choices made up of words and sentences, Halliday & Hassan argued that a text is actually made up of intended meaning which implies that a text is actually a socio-pragmatic bundle. The succeeding subsections will examine the components of the pragmeme.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The data employed for this study were extracted from the inaugural speeches of Nigeria's Military heads of government who ruled the country between 1966 and 1998.

## Pragmatic Acts in the Inaugural Speeches of Military Heads of Government in Nigeria

Table 1:

S/N	Date	Military Head of State
1	Jan-Jul 1966	Aguiyi Ironsi
2	1966 – 1975	Yakubu Gowon
3	1975 – 1976	Murtala Mohammed
4	1976 – 1979	Olusegun Obasanjo
5	1983 – 1985	Muhammadu Buhari
6	1985 – 1993	Ibrahim Babangida
7	1993 – 1998	Sani Abacha

Table 2: Table showing percentage distribution, classification and summary of the pragmatic functions identified in the inaugural speeches of Nigeria's military heads of government

Pragmatic acts	Individual Frequency	Pragmeme	Frequency of occurrence	Number in Percentage
Re-affirming	1	Capturing the past	13	4.2%
Confirming	1			
Criticising	5			
Accusing	5			
Reporting	1			
Promising	43	To reveal the speaker's intention	91	30.3%
Assuring	17			
Proposing	1			
Requesting	3			
Inviting	2			
Advising	4			
Hoping	1			
Banning	1			
Proscribing	1			
Abrogating	1			
Establishing	1			
Stating	13			
Cancelling	1			
Restating	1			
Repealing	1			
Acknowledging	2	To reveal the speaker's psychological state	51	17.7%
Expressing	13			
Commending	1			
Praying	3			
Thanking	2			
Greeting	1			
Appreciating	3			
Condemning	10			
Regretting	3			
Boasting	2			
Admitting	1			
Accepting	1			
Justifying	3			
Blaming	2			
Introducing	1			
Mourning	1			
Concluding	1			
Recognizing	1			

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Directing	30	To issue commands	89	27.6%			
Saying	38						
Ordering	5						
Appealing	5						
Insisting	2						
Threatening	9						
Explaining	7	Providing extra information	63	20.2%			
Informing	24						
Claiming	1						
Declaring	8						
Describing	5						
Reminding	6						
Announcing	12						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>307</b>					<b>307</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Criticising

The pragmatic acts of announcing, criticising and informing are important features of the inaugural speeches delivered by Nigeria's military heads of government because they afford them the opportunity to propagate the news of the often forceful change of leadership. It is also used as a means of intimating the citizens of the future actions of the government.

Going by the nature of military take-over of political leadership, it becomes expedient that military heads of government provide justification for taking over power either from a military or civilian administration. The pragmatic acts of criticising, accusing and reporting are effectively employed to achieve this purpose. The speaker explains *Nigeria has been left to drift... This situation, if not arrested, would inevitably have resulted in chaos and even bloodshed...*

Military leaders make reference to past occurrences as a way of criticising the past administration and to provide justification for staging the coup that brought the present military government to power. In deploying this pragmeme, the speakers make effort to cast aspersions on and condemn, in very strong terms, the activities of previous administrations. This is often done by drawing the attention of the audience to the shortcomings of the previous administration as seen in the excerpt above. The speakers explore the context of the speech to criticise the failure and the inability of the past administration to ensure stability in the country. In the views of the speaker, the people had expected the immediate past administration to correct the administrative, political and economic errors of previous governments. However, the people soon became disillusioned as a result of government's failure to meet this yearning. The speaker goes ahead to provide justification for the coup which brought him into power. The coup is justified as an effort meant to avert the chaos and bloodshed that could follow the citizen's loss of confidence in the immediate past administration. The speakers further present a justification for the coup which brought the speaker to power. This justification is premised on the ousted administration's failure to adopt a consultative and disciplined approach to the business of governance. Being the mastermind of a coup that toppled a democratically elected government, the speaker draws relevance from the shared knowledge that corruption was gradually becoming a norm while the legislators were more interested in amassing personal goodies instead of focusing on making life better for the electorate.

### Announcing

Making announcements is also an integral part of military coup speeches. In the excerpt above, the speaker announces government's desire to suppress the disorder currently experienced in certain parts of the country. This pragmatic strategy makes it possible for the addresses to understand the fact that the speaker believes that certain sections of the country is engulfed in violence, that there is a likelihood that the violent activities continue and that the declaration and deployment of military force. This viewpoint pitches the speaker against his civilian counterpart who often expresses the opinion that dialogue is the appropriate tool to settle any outbreak of violence. In the sample presented, the speaker presents an indirect condemnation and criticism of the military coup of July 29 1966 in which the head of state was assassinated. The speaker goes further to express displeasure in the country's system of government. The speaker refers to the unitary system of government which the country adopted at independence.

To show the emotional situation of the speaker, he expresses strong grief and sorrow on the death of the late head of state and those murdered with him. This is a way of showing empathy. The speaker refers to the killings because it sent shock waves through the country. The excerpt draws relevance from the situational context. It was actually the first time that a sitting president would be murdered in the country. The speaker in essence understands the need to address this sensitive subject. The acts were intended to convey actions that the government will take either immediately or in the future.

It can be argued that the pragmatic acts identified are meant to present a picture of the hope and aspirations of the government to the citizens. This group of pragmeme constitutes

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These pragmatic acts point the attention of the addressees to certain future undertakings. The speakers make certain promises to the people to assure them of continuity in financial and international relations. In the excerpt, the speaker employs the intransitive verb 'intend' to convey a personal desire not to jettison the policies initiated by his predecessor.

*I intend to continue the policy laid down in the statement by the Supreme Commander on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1966 published on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1966.*

The pragmatic act of promising is evident in the use of the modal auxiliary *shall* which explains another anticipated action of the speaker. Each of the excerpts is contextually relevant in many ways. For example, they both address the psychological expectations of important sections of the immediate and the extended communities. It is noteworthy that Nigerians were just recovering from the shock of the murder of a sitting head of government. Without doubt, the event will have an effect on the general psyche of Nigerians. It therefore becomes necessary for the speaker to assure the audience of policy continuity and cordial international relations. This is attributable to the fact that Nigeria, being a third-world country is one where a change in government is usually characterised by policy summersault especially in a situation where the life of a government had being cut short in its early days.

The sample above also represents another instance where the speaker becomes deeply committal. He touches on very sensitive national issues that are of interest to the majority of Nigerians. These are democratic transition or political participation, the creation of new states and the plan to relocate the federal capital territory. The speaker infers that the audience needs to be assured that these sensitive issues will not be neglected by the government. The pragmatic act of promising is performed with the modal auxiliary *will* which serves to give force to the commitment expressed in the act.

### Assuring and Stating

The pragmatic act of assuring is employed in the excerpts presented above. The act becomes a necessary pragmatic strategy for this group of leaders because having attained leadership through unconstitutional means; they identify the need to win the trust of the people (military and civilians). This act serves to reinforce the stated commitment contained therein. Different lexical elements have been employed to perform the act. Some of the commitments include *substantially reduce and eventually nail down rises in budgetary deficits and weak balance of payments position, prioritising training and retraining of the military*. The assurance contained in the excerpts above were conveyed with the words 'confident', 'assure' and the phrase 'determined to substantially reduce'. The essence is to express the speaker's undiluted commitment towards fulfilling the promises contained in the proposition. The pragmatic act of stating as observed in this excerpt is employed by Nigeria's military heads of government to explain their objectives and individual opinion about the state of the country. This opinion may be about the social, political or economic situation of the country. This strategy often affords the speaker an indirect opportunity to present a subjective or individualistic scorecard of the nation. This pragmatic strategy serves to emphasise the numerous challenges confronting the country as well as the need to address them immediately. The pragmatic act of stating sometimes describe the state of the economy, security, inter or intra-ethnic relations, relationship between the nation and the international community etc. The speaker focuses on security and assures the audience of his desire to stop further bloodshed and restore law and order. The choice of the lexical items 'further bloodshed and 'restore' conveys a personal belief that the country had been faced with deaths of the innocent as well as breakdown in law and order which must not be allowed to continue. The speaker uses excerpt 33 to challenge the people to make the necessary sacrifices for the good of the nation. The excerpt also identifies two different situations prevalent in the country at the time. These are budget deficits and lack of trust in the presidential system of government. The excerpts present the view that these two situations stand the country in bad stead towards the needed development.

The speaker employs the pragmatic act of advising to achieve the pragmeme of giving orders. The act serves to convey specific instructions meant for the generality of the people.

*...we must avoid any adhoc or temporary solutions. The problems must be addressed firmly, objectively, decisively and with all sincerity of purpose.* The directive is contained in the modal verb 'must' which expresses a tone of certainty. This modal verb indicates the speaker's expectation that the directive contained in the proposition should not be compromised. The speaker directs the audience to avoid all form of short term solutions to the challenges facing the country. The speaker is of the opinion that seeking firm and objective solutions to the countries' challenges and facing them with all sincerity are the ingredients needed for the much desired long term solution. The speaker then directs the audience to act in a way he believes will transform the fortunes of the nation permanently

*...we will not condone nor tolerate any act of indiscipline. Any attempt to test our will be decisively dealt with...*

As is typical of the military, the speeches contain direct instructions to specific members of the society who occupy important and sensitive positions to either continue to function in, or vacate, their current positions. While one directs the various officials to continue to function as government officials, the other terminates the appointments of the concerned addressees. Both excerpts are used to convey instructions that are backed with military authority. From the excerpts presented above, it can be observed that Nigeria's military heads of government use the pragmatic strategy of directing to achieve different communicative goals. Apart from using the excerpts to give instructions to people who run the administrative aspect of governance, they also use it to assert their authority as heads of government by either directly or indirectly threatening or warning the audience. Examples are presented hereafter.

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The speakers also employ the pragmatic strategy of warning and threatening to achieve the pragmatic goal of directing or commanding. The speaker warns the addressees not to test the resolve of the military government of the day because the government will deal decisively with anyone who takes it for granted. The speaker further directs the international community to suspend all judgement against Nigeria as the country focuses on the task of rebuilding the nation. This excerpt draws relevance from the general attitude in the western world to place sanctions on military governments. Going further, the speaker warns that the government will not tolerate inefficiency or improper conduct from any public official. This warning is followed with the advice to anyone with genuine grievances to seek redress through constitutional means. The excerpt closes with a threat to anyone who flouts the laws of the land. It is instructive that Nigeria's military heads of government as observed in the data directs the addressees to be guided by the laws of the land notwithstanding the fact that the first action of any military government is the suspension of the said constitution. The use of the directives as implied in the excerpt can therefore be explained along the lines of established channels which may vary from government to government.

### Appealing

The pragmatic act of appealing is also employed to indirectly express the speakers' view of what roles are expected of the addressees. This act is often performed by persuading the addressee to act in certain ways. The speaker also tries to show reason(s) why the addressee should obey the act conveyed through this pragmeme. Examples are presented below.

*I appeal to all the trade unions to return to work immediately. We cannot afford further dislocation and destruction of our economy. I appeal to you all to cooperate with the Government in our endeavour to give this nation a new lease of life.*

In the excerpt presented above, the speaker appeals for the cooperation of the people with the government because he understands that it is a pre-requisite for the development of the nation. The appeal in this excerpt is equally followed with a subtle threat. The reference to the bloodless nature of the coup that brought the government to power and the desire to maintain the status is a subtle reminder that the military government will not hesitate to shed the blood of anyone perceived as not cooperating with the government. The speaker also appeals for calm on the part of trade unions. The speaker issues a direct command to the trade unions to immediately return to work because he believes that staying off their duties will further destroy the country's already comatose economy.

...I will therefore like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to him for his selfless service to the nation. I thank you all for your cooperation and understanding. God bless Nigeria.

### Appreciating

Thanking and appreciating are two of the pragmatic acts employed by Nigeria's military heads of government. The study observed that these two acts are among the least employed acts by the military leaders. They each account for two pragmatic functions making a total of four. This is attributable to the fact that the military don't owe their emergence as leaders to the goodwill of the members of the public. Thus, there is little or no need to show appreciation for the support enjoyed from the people unlike their civilian counterpart. In the excerpts presented above, the speaker rounded up his speech by thanking the audience. The speaker expresses appreciation to the addressee for agreeing to hold the forte in the country in the time of crisis. The excerpt draws relevance from the fact that the situational context of the speech and the speaker's believe that the decision to serve as interim president at such a sensitive period was a huge sacrifice. After spelling out the desires of the military government, issuing orders and making series of pronouncements, the speaker thanks the audience in anticipation of their cooperation with his government.

### Condemning

*...Things got to a stage where the head of administration became virtually inaccessible even to official advisers; and when advice was tendered, it was often ignored.*

Another pragmatic act employed by Nigeria's military heads of government in expressing emotion is condemning. This is done by identifying certain institutional or personal failings and pointing the attention of the audience to it. The aim is often to present a negative picture of the ousted government and provide indirect justification for their own coup. In employing this act, the speaker in the excerpt presented above, the speaker seeks to gain the support of the audience by informing them that certain negative actions had been taken against the civilian populace by the military. The speaker in this excerpt came into power after a foiled coup attempt that terminated Nigeria's first civilian republic. He therefore condemns the inactions of a section of the army which choses to go against the wishes of the people. This condemnation is conveyed with the use of the adjectives 'grave' and 'unfortunate'. The speaker also condemns institutional failure by making reference to the shortcomings of the government. The speaker condemns the ousted administration by claiming that the government failed to meet the post-civil war expectations of the citizens. It is important to state that the civil war is an event that continues to define the social life and inter-relationship among Nigerians. The speaker identifies the previous administration's failure to embark on adequate consultations in arriving at important national decisions. The speaker further condemns the previous administration's indiscipline and total neglect of the people.

Other pragmatic acts employed in achieving the goal of emotional expression as identified in the study are; blaming, boasting, consoling, encouraging, hoping, praising, recognising and regretting. While blaming was employed three times in the inaugural speeches, the others were employed only once. This means that the deployment of the pragmatic goal of expressing emotion is generally considered insignificant by the military heads of government.

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*As Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, he failed to exhibit the appropriate disposition demanded by his position.*

The excerpts presented above are samples of the pragmatic act of blaming in which the speaker apportions blame in order to make the audience see reasons why the current coup should be seen as a right decision. The speaker singles out two people as the reason for the coup. He blamed the former head of state very strongly for his rigidity and uncompromising attitude on issues that have to do with the welfare of the citizens as well as other important national issues. The Chief of Staff is also blamed for his all-knowing approach to governance.

Other pragmatic acts that serve the purpose of emotional expression in the inaugural speeches delivered by Nigeria's military heads of government are: accepting, boasting, recognising, praising and regretting. In employing the pragmatic act of accepting, Nigeria's military heads of government cut a picture of a people that have been invited to serve as leaders of the country. This is despite the fact that they often attain political leadership through violent means, some of which often involve loss of lives. The act of accepting is often used to whittle down the military leaders' desperation for power. The pragmatic act of boasting is employed to express the speakers' pride in individual or institutional achievements. The pragmatic act of boasting identified in the inaugural speeches delivered by military heads of government shows the speaker as reveling in the ability of his team to nip in the bud, the attendant violence that often accompanies a military coup. The excerpt is intended to make the audience believe that there is cooperation between the people and the government and further present the government as making good effort to protect the lives and properties of the citizens. As much as it will appear that boasting will be a reasonable part of the pragmatic act employed by military heads of government, it is noteworthy that the study identified only one instance of its deployment which is presented below.

*...we have not allowed selfish elements or those who appear bent on breaching the solidarity between the government and the people of this our great country to unleash industrial, student, economic and other forms of unrest.*

The act of recognising is employed in expressing the speaker's agreement or disagreement with certain propositions and viewpoints. In monologues, the speaker often expresses a proposition and then follows up with his or her agreement or disagreement. This study observed that the pragmatic act of recognising is one of the least employed communicative strategies in the presidential inaugural speeches delivered by Nigeria's military heads of government. In the excerpt presented below, the speaker recognises and agrees with the proposition that the consent of the governed is important for the success of any government. This recognition is an indirect request for the addressee's cooperation with the current administration.

Praising and regretting are the two other strategies sparsely employed by military leaders to express emotions as they both account for two pragmatic functions. While praising showers encomium on either a direct or indirect addressee, regretting is a way of showing remorse for certain actions or inactions. These pragmatic acts were sparsely employed by Nigeria's military heads of government. Examples are presented below.

## DISCUSSION

### Capturing the past

In achieving the goal of re-presenting history, Nigeria's military heads of government employ the pragmatic strategy of informing, announcing, criticising, reminding, explaining etc. in varying degrees. The act of informing is employed in intimating the addressees of certain past occurrences while the act of announcing intimates the people of events, especially within the military. The pragmatic act of criticising is employed in casting aspersions on previous administrations, individuals, groups or the international community. While explaining gives additional information about an event, reminding is designed to bring the addressees to the knowledge of an occurrence. This category of pragmeme accounts for 31.4% of the acts performed in the speeches. The pragmatic acts employed in presenting a picture of the past are informing, announcing, criticising, reminding, explaining etc.

### Revealing the speaker's plan

The pragmeme that reveals the speaker's intention was performed with a total of forty-one (41) pragmatic acts. Being the least employed pragmatic goal, the acts were intended to convey actions that the government will take either immediately or in the future. It can be argued that the pragmatic acts identified are meant to present a picture of the hope and aspirations of the government to the citizens. This group of pragmeme constitutes 19.8% of the total pragmatic functions identified in the inaugural speeches delivered by Nigeria's military heads of government. The pragmatic acts employed in this category are promising (25), assuring (14) establishing (1) and re-assuring (1). Examples are presented in the following excerpts.

### Issuing commands

Giving and obeying orders is a major characteristic of the military including the Nigerian military. This characteristic is accounted for in the inaugural speeches presented by Nigeria's military heads of government. The pragmatic acts performed here are intended to make the audience yield to the influence or the viewpoint of the speaker. The importance of this pragmatic goal is seen in the fact that it accounts for the highest frequency of 31.9 % of the total pragmatic functions identified in the inaugural speeches delivered by Nigeria's military heads of government. The pragmatic acts employed in performing this pragmeme include warning, directing, threatening, advising, dissolving, appealing, requesting etc. The entire pragmatic acts identified under this pragmeme all work together to make the addressee act in a particular way. They are designed by the users to exert influence on the addressees through

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the instrument of language. The speakers use these acts to give explicit instructions. A total of sixty-six pragmatic acts were performed under this group. The most prominent acts among this group are warning, directing, threatening, advising, dissolving and appealing which constitute more than half of the pragmatic acts identified. Examples are presented in the following excerpts.

### Expressing gratitude and other emotion

This pragmatic goal seeks to express the appreciation of the military heads of government either to the electorates or to those who have contributed in one way or the other to their emergence as heads of government. It equally captures certain emotional expressions of the military heads of government. It is important to note that this goal is the least employed pragmatic goal by Nigeria's military heads of government. It accounts for just 16.9% of the acts identified under this pragmatic goal. This percentage is distributed across thirty-five different pragmatic functions. These include; condemning, acknowledging, appreciating, blaming, greeting, thanking, etc. Examples are presented below.

### Summary and Conclusion

The pragmatic acts identified in the study were categorised along four major lines of pragmatic functions. These are acts that;

- (i) Capture the past or represent history;
- (ii) Express gratitude;
- (iii) Reveal the speaker's intentions;
- (iv) Issue commands.

All the acts identified in the speeches were classified under each of these goals based on the intention they were expected to achieve, the social standing of the speakers and the contextual situation of a military inaugural address. As established in the study, the most important pragmatic goals are those intended to issue commands. This showed that the military heads of government who are also known as 'Commanders in Chief' explored the provisions of the pragmatic act model to issue directives. These acts were meant to initiate or institute actions that are typical of military personnel. The most prominent pragmatic acts deployed in executing this goal are warning, directing and threatening. These acts accounted for a total of 31.9% of the pragmatic functions conveyed in the speeches. The study also established the role of mutual knowledge in understanding the acts deployed in the study because a reasonable number of the acts were conveyed in indirect acts. For example, the statements "any act of looting or sabotage will be dealt with severely (Gowon)... Let me therefore here and now serve notice that we shall not allow inefficiency or improper conduct on the part of any public officer.... But anyone who takes the law into his hands will henceforth have himself to blame. (obj military) are all declarative statements and are at the same time meant to warn the immediate or extended audience of the implications of behaving contrary to expectations. While these statements and others like them are designed to sound a note of warning to the audience, they actually have the pragmatic intention of compelling the addressees to follow a particular line of action. This can be seen in series of follow-up punitive actions stated to be taken against erring individuals. The need to represent history or recall events also account for 31.4% of the pragmatic functions identified in the inaugural speeches of Nigeria's military heads of government. The main acts deployed to achieve this pragmatic goal include; informing, announcing, criticising, reminding and explaining.

The military heads of government achieve this pragmatic function by either announcing what they intend to achieve against the activities of past government. They also make reference to history criticising and condemning, albeit indirectly, the activities of previous governments. This act of condemning can be tied to the need for these military heads of government to provide justification for taking over the political administration of the country. A total of four pragmatic acts were deployed in executing the goal which reveals the intention of the speakers. These are: assuring, promising, establishing and reassuring. This goal accounted for 19.8% of the entire acts identified in the speeches. The goal serves the purpose of conveying the plans of the individual heads of government as well as the various strategies mapped out to achieve the goal. Finally, the study established that the least employed pragmatic goal is the one which seeks to express the gratitude of military heads of government and express personal emotion towards individuals and institutions who contribute towards their emergence as military heads of government. The prominently deployed acts in the execution of this goal include; condemning, acknowledging, blaming and appreciating. This goal accounted for 16.9% of the total pragmatic acts identified in the inaugural speeches. This showed that the nature of the communicative genre under analysis does not allow open identification of individuals who participate in the successful execution of military coups.

The study established a triadic connectivity between the speaker, the society and the audience. The study also established that military heads of government make effort to downplay personal emotion in their inaugural addresses. In conveying their pragmatic objectives, the study established that the percentage occurrence of each of the acts showed the priority of the goals. The most important pragmatic objective is to give orders followed by the desire to re-present history. The third pragmatic objective is the need to express personal intention while the pragmatic objective with the least attached importance is the one that shows gratitude.



## Pragmatic Acts in the Inaugural Speeches of Military Heads of Government in Nigeria

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