Pragmatic Analysis of Political Hate Speeches from Nigerian Newspapers and Social Media Platforms

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Abstract
This paper investigated the interplay between language and political hate speeches through speech acts and ideological analysis of hate speeches in Nigerian newspapers and social media platforms. Defining hate speeches is difficult as any hurtful speech as mostly termed hate speech by Nigerian politicians thereby making the concept more complicated and cumbersome. This study addresses the gap in critical research on identification and interpretation of hate speech from the context of usage, determine the speech acts deployed by the hate speakers to pass their messages. Utilizing a qualitative research methodology, the study employs political hate speeches from Punch, Vanguard, Business Day and Nairaland as the population. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw a working population of five political hate speeches. Data were analyzed using one theory: Mey's Pragmatic Acts,and Descriptive grammar by Ndimele (2008). It was discovered from the data analyzed that there are certain elements that constitute hate speeches and implications of context in hate speech analysis. Ultimately, this study underscores the role of speech act and ideological innuences

of political hate speeches in truncating a Nigeria latent democracy
that is rooted in aesthetics, values and national unity.

Keywords: Pragmatic, Political, Hate Speech, Newspaper, Social
Media

Introduction

Hate speech has become popular in Nigeria of recent due to
loath and bitterness in the polity emanating from gross failure in
leadership, frustration, hardship, and hopelessness. The country
under democracy is gradually becoming intolerant to any form of
protest or opposition against the government that never does well,
as though we are under military regime. This is coming in the face
of great insecurity, high cost of living, inflation, hunger, and
insensitive actions and policies by the government which trigger
what most hate speech advocates in Nigeria consider as unhygienic
utterance. The only way to paint the actions and inactions of the
government in every attempt to push their displeasure and
dissatisfaction. Beside the citizens, hate speech is most profound
among political rivalries prior to and after elections, or at the
juncture of critical decision making by the leaders.

Lately, aggrieved human right activists have queued in
making the concept more pronounced requiring extensive linguistic
investigation from a pragmatic perspective so as to engender a clear
disparity between what really a hate speech is, and legal freedom of
expression deducible from the context of usage. This is an area that
has not been given adequate attention at this needful time that most
politicians are clamouring on criminalizing hate speech to the extent
of proposing life imprisonment as penalty for a convict. This study,
'pragmatic analysis of political hate speeches in Nigerian

newspapers and social media platforms from becomes sacrosanct as a guide to safely define what constitute hate speech in contrast to constructive criticism, speech acts deployed by hate speakers.

Earlier, the phrase, hate speech includes all dissemination of personal ideas based on racial or ethnical superiority or hatred, by whatever means. It is incitement to hatred, contempt or discrimination against members of a group, race, colour, descent, or ethnical origin. To be concise, hate speech is considered as when a speech is baked with hatred; when any action is laced with hatred. This include speeches that are aimed at bringing down, exposing to danger, a person or group of persons.

The language of hate speech comes in different forms and styles by hate speakers. Interpreting such language is tasking due to possible ambiguity, figurative expressions, bombardment, and deliberate cryptic scrabbling to hide the speaker's intent.

Pragmatics deals with the study of language use in any given communicative context. It is an important aspect in linguistic interpretation, especially when ambiguity and contradiction is imminent. Thus, to effectively decode what is said bearing on context, pragmatics is apt for analysis.

Review of Related Literature

Levinson (2018) suggests that the use of the term pragmatics is pioneered by the philosopher Charles Morris denoting a branch of semiotics. Within semiotic traditions, syntax is concerned with the formal, pragmatics is interested in the analysis of meaning as expressed via a speaker and understood via a listener. Thus, it can be said that pragmatic analyses are more concerned with what people convey through using certain utterances than with what the words in those utterances may mean in isolation. It is worth

mentioning that in pragmatics, meaning is not considered to be as
stable as linguistic forms. On the contrary, it is dynamically created
in the course of employing language. Mey (2017) believes that a
genuine pragmatic account has to deal with the language users in
their social context; it cannot confine itself to those grammatically
encoded aspects of context. Broadly speaking, pragmatics is
concerned with those facets of meaning that are context-variable.

Horn and Kecskes (2021) assert that pragmatics is primarily
an utterance-based field. Nevertheless, because utterance is not that
easy to define and because utterance meaning is determined both by
the linguistic components of a specific utterance and subsequent
utterances, pragmatics has looked for meaning elements inside and
outside the utterance. Consequently, three different approaches to
pragmatics have emerged.

Horn and Kecskes (2021) state that discourse pragmatics is
an attempt at widening the realm of pragmatics via emphasizing the
importance of the social and cultural restrictions for interaction
besides the linguistic and semantic properties of utterances. It aims
at producing a sophisticated image of the functions and
connectedness of pragmatics and discourse in the process of
interactional and intercultural interaction. Accordingly, there are
two versions of discourse pragmatics: interactional and intercultural.

Adegbija (2021) describes pragmatics as the study of
language use in a particular communicative context. Pragmatics is
the study of meaning in context. It studies how utterances are
interpreted, taking special note of the situation(s) surrounding such
utterances. Levinson (2016) asserts that it is a branch of study
concerned with the ability of language users to pair sentences with
the context in which they would be appropriate. It is a term coined
out of a Greek word "pragma" meaning action. Adegbite (2002) is

of the view that the term pragmatics originated in philosophical studies; it has however been used in several disciplines both scientific and humanistic. Pragmatics was a reaction to structural linguistics as outlined by Ferdinand de Saussure. The structural linguists believe that language has an analyzable structure composed of parts that can be defined in relation to others. Hence, they believe that the meaning of an utterance is solely determined by its structure (surface arrangement of words).

Conversely, scholars interested in pragmatics believe that language use is of crucial importance and they draw attention to the fact that, the occasion of an utterance is important and that the specific context of such occasion must be fully understood before the meaning of an utterance can be fully grasped. Udofot (2019) states that while nominal theories, conceptual theories and contextual theories are the early theories of semantics, componential analysis and truth conditional semantics are its later theories, while pragmatics falls into the category of the theory of semantics which evolved as a result of further advance in the study of meaning.

However, Adegbite (2005) asserts that pragmatics can be studied atimes, as part of semantics, only if semantics is considered with the wider consideration of meaning as cognitive meaning plus social meaning and contextual meaning but if semantics is considered in the narrow sense of cognitive meaning alone, then pragmatics will function alone to cater for the remaining aspects of meaning. The purpose of pragmatic deployment, according to Olukoya (2022), is to enable listeners to deduce the overall meanings of the utterance within which hate speeches are formed or used.

Elements of Pragmatics

Pragmatics has certain elements that define it. It is to be noted that the elements are peculiar to one particular pragmatic theory, while some others, to two or more theories 'within and outside' the scope of pragmatics. The following are the identified elements of pragmatics.

Intention: Kent Bach and Robert Harnish (1979) in their theory on inference and intention propounded that almost any speech act is really the performance of several acts at once, distinguish by different aspects of the speakers intension. "There is the act of saying something, what one does in saying it, such a requesting or promising and how one is trying to affect ones audience.

Presupposition: This element is an offshoot of Tarski's (1956) 'correspondence theory of truth' which was later extended to semantics and later to pragmatics. Verschueren (2020) asserts that, presuppositions are relations between a form of expression and an implicit meaning which can be arrived at by a process of (pragmatic) inference. It is therefore what the speaker assumes the hearer will see as part of the context in the discourse which he deliberately does not state with the utterance. There are basically six identified types of presupposition (Yule, 1992).

Existential presupposition: This is when a speaker calls a name or refers to a definite noun phrase. Verschueren (2020) believes it usually presupposes the existence at a given time and/or place, of entities in real world. For example, `Here is the book` or "Napoleon" was defeated in 'waterloo'.

Factive presupposition: He explains that when a speaker uses some particular verbs such as know, realize, regret before a piece of

presupposed information for examples, `The man didn't realise that his money was missing', he/she is making a factive presupposition. Lexical presupposition: According to him, this is when an expression presupposes a lexical entity that has not been stated. For example,. `She is broke again` presupposes that `she was broke before`.

Structural presupposition: He says that, this is when the structure of a sentence or some tangible part of a sentence has a traditionally recognised presupposition. He illustrates with the WH-question construction in English and reveals that the information that comes after the WH-form is already known to be the case. Thus, 'who bought the new car?' presupposes that 'the new car was bought' or 'where did you leave your course form' presupposes that 'you left your course form somewhere; Verschueren (2020).

Non-factive presupposition: Further, he explicates that this is when the nature of the utterance presupposes that the utterance is not true. He exemplifies with pretence in the sentence: 'the lecturer pretended as if he was asleep' and reveals that it presupposes that 'the lecturer was not asleep'. He also itemized other examples: dreams, imaginations among others.

Counter-factive presupposition: - This is when the message presupposed is not only untrue (false), but also contrary to fact. The `if…' clause` is often used. "if I were the Vice-chancellor of Unilorin…"presupposes that "I am not the Vice-chancellor of Unilorin and factually do not have any chance of becoming it, at that particular point in time.

Inference: Kent Bach and Robert Harnish in their 1979 theory on "inference and intention," propounded that there is a deductive

process through which the addressee or hearer progresses from the literal meaning of an utterance to what the speaker actually intends to express.

Osisanwo (2003) defines it as that process which the hearer (or reader) goes through to get from the literal meaning of what is said (or written) to what the speaker (or writer) intended to convey.

Reference: This element is found to be the major concern of "the nominal theory of meaning" whose genesis can be traced to the Greek philosophers and also to Frege's(1892) "Denotation theory". Reference is the relationship that exists between language and extra linguistic reality. Olukoya (2022) asserts that it is the relationship between a linguistic expression and the entity in the external word which it refers to.

Implicature: Implicature was first propounded and used by Paul Grice (a language philosopher) in 1975, Odebunmi (2021) cited in Olukoya (2022) defines it as what the speaker implies, suggests, or means apart from his literal expression. He identifies two major types: conventional and conversational implicature. According to him, conventional implicatures are the information implied by the speaker which depend more on the conventional meanings of the words used in an utterance. Udofot (2019). Illustrates thus, ''he is a Warri man, he never allows defeat in an argument'', conventionally implicates that it follows from him being a Warri man that 'he knows how to argue very well'. Conversational implicature on the other hand, is a message that is not found in the plain sense of the sentence (or utterance). The speaker implies it. Medubi (2020) agrees that conventional implicature is somewhere between what is actually said and what it implies.

Speech Act: This was propounded by John Langshaw Austin in 1962, in his post- humously published book named "How to Do

Things with Word." Adegbija (2021) citing Austin (1962) defines it as "doing things with words." It encompasses actions we perform while we utter expressions using words. Linguists have formulated a theory to explicate this. It is tagged the speech act theory. It broadly explains that utterances have three parts which are locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Locutionary acts are simply the speech acts that take place immediately an utterance is made.

Context: Proponents of this idea include anthropologist, Malinowski, who evolved the context of situation in 1949 and Wittgenstein; a philosopher who worked more on it in 1953. Leech (1992) asserts that we should study meaning in terms of situation, use, context, outward and observable correlates of language behaviour. From this assertion, we can see that context is the social or physical settings of a discourse, it is the situation or environment surrounding the utterance of an expression which automatically dictates what the meaning of the expression will be. Adegbija (2021) identifies four major types of context that aid utterance interpretation, they are physical, temporal, social-psychological and cultural context.

Halliday's theorises of context as register which divides context into categories of field which lines with the (ideational metafunction) 'tenor' which lines up with (interpersonal metafunction), and 'mode' which lines up with (textual metafunction).
George Yule in his works on linguistics, identifies different types of context that influence how languages is interpreted. One primary distinction he makes is between linguistic context and physical context.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is masterminded by Van Dijk. Critical discourse analysis operates on the crossroad of language, discourse, and social structure (McKenna, 2019). CDA explores the connections between the use of language and the social and political contexts in which it occurs (Fairclough, 2016).

> The objective of CDA is to perceive language use as social practice. The main assumption is that the users of language do not function in isolation, but in a set of cultural, social and psychological frameworks that affect language, grammar and vocabulary. Teun Van Dijk (1995)argued that critical discourse analysis goes beyond the immediate, serious or pressing issues of the day: to him, among the descriptive, explanatory and practical aims of CDA-studies is the attempt to uncover, reveal and disclose what is implicit, hidden or otherwise not immediately obvious in relations of discursively enacted dominance or their manipulation, legitimation, the manufacture of consent and other discursive ways to influence the minds (and indirectly the actions) of people in the interest of the powerful this observation is not all there is when analyzing political hate speech as speakers may antagonise the powers or authorities as is seen in political hate speeches.

With CDA, one can analyse any piece of speech written or oral critically, not as it is. Subsequently it can give us insight into the intentions of the speaker/orator behind these particular set of words. CDA assumes that discursive practices are never neutral, but rather that they possess a clear ideological character; ideologies are shaped and echoed in the use of discourse. They are the construction and deployment of meaning in the service of power (Jackson, 2015). CDA aims to systematically explore relationships between

discursive practices, texts, and events and wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes. Even more so, by doing a critical discourse analysis, we can unlock the beliefs and ideologies of the orator and recover the social meanings expressed in discourse (Teo, 2020). This contribution touches on the macro level of analysis that will be utilised in the present study.

Fairclough identified three stages of CDA (2016): The micro-level or description is the stage which is concerned with the formal properties of the text. It involves studying metaphoric structure, syntax and rhetorical devices; Themeso-level or interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction – with seeing the text as a product of a process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation. The meso-level of analysis consists of looking at the text's production and consumption and the power relations involved; The macro-level or explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context – with the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and their social effects. In this particular study, the social analysis will focus specifically on feelings of victimhood.

The researcher is interested in using Van Dijk socio cognitive theory to present and analyse the data for this work in consideration to context and implicit consideration. CDA considers discourse — the use of language in speech and writing — as a social practice (Wodak, 2018) that involves a dialectical relationship between a particular ideological perspective and the context, organization, and social system it frames. Ideologies and the ability to account for and explain larger social phenomena are revealed through the methodical analysis of semiotic data, whether written, spoken, or visual (Wodak & Meyer, 2019); this goal links to the aims of the present study: To examine how selected hate speeches

production have likely influenced public opinion through ideological reshaping and indoctrination through salient language use or innuendo.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the study and analysis of talks and texts from a politically committed perspectives which focuses on the ways language exercises power in a society. Both written and spoken discourses have power.

Speech Act Theory

To Bloomington (2015), speech act theory is not only designed to analyze stretches of utterances in a given social interaction; it also provides a base for the analysis of social action. The locutionary act is the act of saying, speaking something meaningful, it refers to the act of uttering a sentence from the literal sense (referring and to predict). Illocutionary act is achieved by saying something that has a conventional and conversational force: it is found in ordering, informing, warming, threatening, denial, requesting, complaining or forcing.

Perlocutionary act is what we achieve by saying something. It is the resultant effect, or response to illocutionary act. It comes in form of convincing, surprising, persuading and misleading. This contribution is also very important at it arrays the flow of information from the speaker to the listener in a chain relation moving from meaningful utterance (location), followed by conversational force (illucutioanry), and the effect of such meaningful force on the hearer that attracts reaction of being depressed, feeling excited, provoke or demoralized depending on the illocutionary act force (perlocutionary). Thus speech act is out not just to analyze stretches but to define how stretches contextually classify a given character in a given work of art.

Thus, Saeed (2003) declares that the use of the term speech act carries actions like requesting, questioning, informing, threatening and commanding, just the way we have names that reflect acceptance, deceived, thanking, praising, pleading, ruling, serving, blessing, joyful triumphing and overcoming. These are all illocutionary acts that have corresponding effects on the listener who feels been questioned, threatened, informed or commanded (perlcutionary act). To Yoshitake (2004), Austin, the propounded of speech act theory focuses most on the illocutionary act due to the force it carries. Illocutionary act is superior to the others because for a speaker to perform an illocutionary act, he must rely on social accepted convention without which he, the speaker, cannot activate a social force into his utterance.

Locutionary Act is an act of uttering any sentence with determinable sense and reference. To Courthard (1985), and Saeed (2003), locutionary act is the actual words of the message. It is the actual construction of utterance by abiding with grammatical rules and vocalizing the utterance. For example, the sentence, 'you cannot leave here', has the locutionary act to merely articulate the sentence as it reads 'you cannot leave here', by producing the relevant sounds. Mey (2011), observes that locutionary act implies any activity we do when we say something. Thus, to say, "it is cool in here", the speaker merely utters a statement and not a wish, threat, command, promise, which are features of illocutionary act. Illocutionary act is what the speaker means to convey (the message or real context of locutionary act). Ndirible (2019), further explains that the concept denotes the central component act of speaking that describes what a speaker does by his utterance, that is performing the locutionary act. This concept covers area of commanding, promising, threatening, inducing, depressing, e.t.c. thus, 'don't do that' implies, warning, order or request depending on the context. Mey (2011), further

affirms that by merely saying 'it is cold in here', the speaking is appealing to the listener to close the door due to variable locutionary force caused by context. This concept deals with the speaker's purpose or intent. Perlocutionary Act focuses on the listener as to the way and manner he receives and understands the message conveyed by the illocutionary act. Saeed (2003) declaims that perlocutionary act is concerned with what follows an utterance, the effect or take up of the illocutionary act. It could be understood as the hearer's reaction to the speaker's message. The effects are special to the situation and context and may not be what the speaker intends. Thus, 'don't touch that thing'' implies either the speaker succeeds in preventing the listener from touching the harmful object or not. To Searle (1969), speech acts stand relevant in both pragmatic analysis and discourse analysis to solve some linguistic deviations in language study. To him, to speak is to do something i.e. every speech is performative as it carries illocution. Both discourse analysis and pragmatics are out for linguistic deviations from the norms due to context and intention.

Meaning of Hate Speech

Traditionally, the definition of hate speech had tended to include any form of expression deemed offensive to any racial, religious, ethnic or national group. In the 1980s, the definition was broadened to include gender, age, sexual preference, marital status, physical capacity and other categories. Human Rights Watch defines hate speech as any form of expression regarded as offensive to racial, ethnic, and religious groups and other discrete minorities and to women (Haupt, 2005). At the Centre for Information

Technology and Development (CITAD) (2018), The definition of Hate speech is seen as:

> Insult of people for their religion; abuses of people for their ethnic or linguistic affiliation; contempt because of their place of origin; disparage or intimidation of women or girls because of their gender; discrimination against people living with disability; desecrate or abuse of symbols of cultural or religious practices; denigrate or ridicule traditional or cultural institutions of other people; and deliberate spread of falsehood or rumour that demeans, demonise , maligns, or otherwise ostracises other people on the basis of religion, ethnicity, gender or place of origin for the accident of one form of disability or the other.

Hate speech directed at racial, ethnic or religious groups is a particularly pernicious form of speech manifestations which causes emotional as well as psychological distress and in extreme cases incites violence against members of the racial, ethnic or religious groups at which it is targeted(Benesch,2014)

> From every indication, it appears that incidences of hate speech have been around from the 1920s and early 1930s in the US and Germany where it was simply known as "race hate". By 1940s, it was generally called group libel. Specific groups in each of these countries have been the target of discrimination. In the case of Germany, after the Holocaust, a heightened sensitivity prevailed when speech that has the potential to harm Jews as a group is discussed. In the case of the United States, the history of slavery and racial segregation led to non-white groups, especially blacks desiring protection against harmful speech (CITAD, 2018).

Hate speech is loosely defined as any speech act that denigrates people on the basis of their membership in a group, such as an ethnic or religious group. It is, thus, in a class of genre of offensive speech. However, unlike offensive speech, which may or may not be targeted at a group, hate speech is specifically defined in terms of its direction in addressing an identified group. The distinction is important because while we cannot criminalize all offensive speech, since the "offensiveness" of a given speech act is situational; it is usual to focus on the segment of it that has clear ability to deliberately expose some of the people to harmful disadvantage. The idea here is that some people can focus on the segment of hate speech which through its evoking of a sense of negative difference invites the audience to act out the consequences of that difference. Hate speech can be harmful, directly or indirectly, or both. Dangerous speech has a reasonable chance of catalysing or amplifying violence by one group against another due to the circumstances in which it is made or disseminated. A speech act in this context includes any form of expression, including images such as drawings or photographs, films, etc. Specifically, dangerous speech is part of hate speech, which is capable of mobilizing people to action.

The dimensions of hate and dangerous speech that are of greater concern include the following:

Insulting people for their religion, race, ethnic group, linguistic affiliation or place of origin; Disparaging or intimidating women or girls because of their gender; Condoning discriminatory assertions against groups because of their difference; Denigrating or otherwise ridiculing traditional, religious or cultural institutions of other people; Spreading falsehood or rumours that demeans or maligns or ostracises other people on the basis of

religion, ethnicity, gender or place of origin for the accident of one form of disability or the other (Teo, 2020).

Common forms of hate or dangerous speech include the description of groups as invaders, foreigners, or interlopers, asserting or suggesting that the other group will contaminate, pollute, or despoil the audience group, setting out to dehumanize its targets, e.g. compare them to vermin or insects, asserting that a target group posed or poses an existential threat to the audience group and thereby setting them up for attack.

Elements of Hate Speech

It isn't a case that speech is either dangerous, hateful or not dangerous at all. Rather, more or less dangerous speech can be imagined along a spectrum, or like dominoes in which each piece affects its neighbor. As people come to accept a moderately dangerous message, they also become a bit more likely to accept an even more dangerous one. In this way, normal social barriers to violence erode as increasingly dangerous speech begins to saturate in the social environment.

In general, hate speech that comes just before violence breaks out is easiest to identify since its meaning tends to be clear and it often calls for, or at least endorses, violence. Violence is thus the first resultant element of hate speech. Months or years earlier, speech is often expressed in ambiguous, coded language, so that both its meaning and its impact are less apparent. This doesn't mean that it can be safely disregarded. Witnesses and scholars generally agree that speech helped to catalyse the 1994 Rwanda genocide in which thousands of Hutu men massacred between 500,000 and 800,000 people, mainly of the Tutsi ethnic group, and mainly by hand, using machetes.

Hate Speech is first initiated by a speaker thus the second element (Sanghvi, 2018). This means that there cannot be hate speech without a speaker of hate or initiator. Hate speaker could be a person, group of persons, organization, or a representation.

There is also the Second Speaker as sub-element. In many cases, a speaker makes a message dangerous not by creating it, but by distributing, and often distorting, someone else's content. As many such rumors circulated online and offline, mobs killed 33 people in India between January 2017 and July 2018 (Sanghvi, 2018). Second speakers may also play an important role by carrying messages to a new audience, or to a much larger one than the original speaker could reach.

Audience is the third element of hate speech. Even the most inflammatory message cannot inspire violence if its audience is not susceptible to such notions. A group may be fearful about past or present threats of violence, or already saturated with frightening messages. Economic hardship, alienation, unresolved collective trauma, or social norms in favor of obedience to authority may also make people more susceptible to dangerous speech. Hate speech is often false, so audiences are more vulnerable to it when they can be duped into believing what is false – or are not skilled at distinguishing lies from truth. As false content propagates more and more widely online, it can lead to violence, and it seems to diminish participation in civic life. Researchers are trying to understand why people are more or less easily convinced by lies, to learn how to change this for the better.

Context is the fourth element of hate speech. The social and historical context in which speech spreads also affects the extent to which it is dangerous, since any message may be understood in dramatically different ways in one place or time versus another. Any

number of aspects of context may be relevant. When conducting a dangerous speech analysis, one should consider as many of those as possible. For example, is there a history of violence between the groups? Messages encouraging violence, or describing another group as planning violence, are more inflammatory where groups have exchanged violence in the past, or where there are longstanding, unresolved grievances between them.

Medium is the fifth element of hate speech. Speech may take any number of forms, and can be disseminated by myriad means. It may be shouted during a rally, played on the radio as a song, captured in a photograph, written in a newspaper or on a poster, or shared through social media. The form of the speech and the manner in which it is disseminated affect how the message is received and therefore, how dangerous it is. There are several factors to consider when analyzing a medium. The first is whether the speech was transmitted in a way that would allow it to reach a large audience. Private conversation around a dinner table, for example, will not reach as many people as a post on a public Facebook page with many followers.

The particular language used by the speaker may also play a role. In fieldwork on violence prevention efforts in Kenya following the 2007-2008 post-election violence there, more than one Kenyan told one of us (Benesch, 2014) that if they heard a message in English or Kiswahili (Kenyan national languages), they heard it with their heads. If the same message came in the listener's vernacular language (or mother tongue), they said they heard it with their hearts— suggesting the message was more liable to rouse their emotion. Messages also tend to have a greater capacity to persuade if there are no alternative sources of news available, or if other sources don't seem credible.

Law Prohibiting Hate Speech in Nigeria

In law, hate speeches include any speech, gesture, any body language, conduct, writing or display which is forbidden, because, it may incite violence or prejudicial action against or by a protected individual or group or because it disparages or intimidates a protected individual or group. In Nigeria today, we do not seem to have a law against hate speech. Many Television and radio stations not excluding Newspapers, fail to live up to their social responsibilities in Nigeria as many politicians use them as propaganda tools during campaigns, prior or even after elections. They are used after elections to water-down the good and laudable programmes of many seating governments. The media has since become a tool for negative mobilization and dissemination of hate speech, which appeals mostly to the irrational impulses of the unemployed hungry and angry youths.

A concerted effort should be put in place regulating the use of hate speeches for political reasons. Let hate speeches be condemned in its entirety and such actions be termed defamation of character, which should be punishable by the law of the land. The bidding of Lt General Abdulrahman Dambazzau that the office of the Attorney-General would soon submit a bill to the National Assembly that aimed to curtail hate-speech should be put in a fast-lane in the house (Omotoyinbo, 2019).

This observation is a further affirmation that there has been a bill pending to be passed into the low that proposed five years' jail term against any person found culpable over hate speech. The researcher considers the call necessary but with certain reservation in order to be objective in the fight against hate speech in Nigeria, and not an attempt by heartless politicians to silences objective criticism, oppositions and public outcry against perpetual bad

leaders. The fact that there is no substantive legislation against hate speech, there are laws in place to tackle defamation and slander in Nigeria, offences that are closely related to hate speech, the crux of this work.

Theoretical Framework
Mey's Pragmatic Act Theory

The theory of Pragmatic act as proposed by Mey(1993) which is in response to the limitations of Speech Act Theory(SAT) as originally conceptualized by J.L Austin (1962) will be used to determine the illocutionary act deployed by the hate speakers to pass their messages in relation to the purpose of the research and creates theoretical basis for this research. The Central tenet of Mey's Pragmatic Act Theory is that language used should be analyzed not just based on what you see but also considering the broader situational context including the environment and social factors, to understand the "action" being performed through speech, essentially focusing on what is being done with language.

In the submission of Mey (2001), pragmatic act theory focuses on environment in which both speaker and hearer find their affordances, such that the entire situation is brought to bear on what can be said in the situation, as well as what is actually being said (2001:221) . This theory is used by the researcher to provide the basis for hate speakers goals of inciting messages by identification and interpretation of political hate speeches, from the context of usage, determine the speech act deployed by the hate speakers to pass their message, as well as exposing the perlocutionary effect of political hate speeches on the addressee and the reading public.

Politicians and hate speakers are humans and are vulnerable to the existential threat of death and violence that has currently put their careers on the line. The choice of language in this situation becomes constrained both by their status on the one hand and for self-preservation, on the other. However, targeted audience that read or listen to or read hate speech are usually drawn from diverse background with the requirement that the speaker would have to maintain a delicate balance staying aloof of perceived bias and political affiliation, making the masking of hate speech expedient. Pragmatic acts enable the speaker to easily achieve his objective without directly saying the obvious. The researcher intends to use this theory to complement speech act by relating the illocutionary act to its context of usage to arrive at the anchorage (the intended meaning by the speaker). This will be best achieved through the identification of hints and prompts as found in the selected hate speeches. Also, the activity and the textual part, as proposed by Mey, is useful to this study and will be applied to best identify and interpret hate speech from contest and anchorage perspective. Mey's Pragmatic Act theory is a theory of action that places speech acts in social and cultural contexts.

Pragmatic acts look at discursive elements holistically, that is, they signify human's acts with everything that humans bring into their interactional forum. Mey's pragmatic acts theory is an approach to explain the way pragmemes are represented in pragmatic acts in speech situations. A pragmeme is a situated speech act in which the rules of language and that of society combine to give meaning. Mey's major criticism about speech act is that for speech acts to be effective, they have to be situated: "they both rely on, and actively create, the situation in which they are realised.

According to Mey (1993), there are no speech acts, but only

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situated speech acts, or instantiated pragmatic acts. A particular pragmeme can be substantiated and realised through individual pragmatic acts. In other words, a pragmatic act is an instance of adapting oneself to a context, as well as adapting the context to oneself. There are two parts to this theory: activity part and textual part. The activity part contains indirect speech acts, conversational ('dialogue') acts, psychological acts, prosodic acts and physical acts which the interactants rely on for meaningful communication while the textual part contains the contextual features within which the pragmeme operates, and which include INF representing "inference"; REF, "relevance"; VCE, "voice"; SSK, "shared situation knowledge"; MPH, "metaphor"; and M "metapragramatic joker" (Mey, 2001).

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question One: How is hate speech identified and interpreted from the context of usage?

S/N	Data	Elements of Hate Speech	Context of Use	
1	Nnamdi Kanu: "Buhari married his wife after raping her several times, the records are there." (Nairaland, Jan. 23 2019) 11:12 am	The speech contains element of hate, bitterness and dislike for Buhari as the then president of Nigeria. Above all, it is subjective as there is no direct proof to establish his claim. It is meant to defame the victim and make people disdain him. The speaker's intention is to profane the victim and subject him to public ridicule.	The activity part of the speech portrays Buhari as a criminal, a rapist and so immoral to be president. The speech presupposes that the wife he married was a forced into marrying him due to constant rape. It presupposes that Buhari is a criminal that ought to be in prison. The speech refers to Buhari as a man that had forced carnal knowledge of his wife over and over again before marrying her. One could infer that Buhari is a chronic rapist and unfit for any political office. Coming from the textual part which has to do with	IPOB Secession Movement by their Leader Nnamdi Kanu

			context, the hate speech is borne out of the factual practice of early and forced marriage in the north. It could be safely concluded that northerners rape their girls before marriage as their girls are in most cases below the age to consummate marriage.	
2	Femi Fani-Kayode. The Igbos are collectively unlettered, uncouth, uncultured, unrestrained and crude in all their ways…Money and the acquisition of wealth is their sole objective and purpose in	The hate speech is conceived with the intention to defame, ridicule and abash the Igbos. There are elements of hate, bitterness, insult and the push for others to see them from that perspective of been uncultured and money mongers. The speech is malicious and subjective and not the real portrayal of the Igbo race.	From the connotative perspective, the speech refers to the Igbos as wild and uneducated beings without decorum of modern culture thus inhuman. It presupposes that the speaker and his tribesmen are standing directly opposite the sect referred to. Thus, the Yorubas are assumed to be lettered, cultured and restrained in all their ways; and money acquisition	IPOB Condemnation of Nigerian Government by their Leader Nnamdi Kanu

	life (Business Day, August 8, 2019) pg 7		is not their sole objective. It could be inferred that the speaker hates the Igbos dearly. The textual part, contextual interpretation, communicates a socio-politicasl reality in Nigeria where the IPOB negative active, money-making desperation among the igbos and outright condemnation of Nigerian government by Nnamdi Kanu was established thus the out-burst by the speaker. From the context, the hate speech is an insult to the Igbos as what the speaker said is not an apt description of the Igbo people.	
3	Dr. Junaid Mohammed - Second Republic lawmaker,	There is element of loath against the Igbos, threat and provocative tendency capable	In relation to the activity part of pragmatic act, the speaker emphasizes that the Igbos don't	Imaginalization of Igbo tribes in Nigeria/political

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"I don't believe Buhari or Nigeria owes any Igbo anything. I don't care what Ezeife says – if they (Igbo) had seceded, there would have been no Nigeria today. As people who acted outside the interest of Nigeria as a country, to expect compensation is a very odd logic. If the Igbo don't like it, they can attempt secession again. If they do, they must be

of undermining the democratic ties between the North and the Eastern part of Nigeria. Above all, there is no objectivity and sincerity in his submission as, of fact, the Igbos are highly marginalized in Nigeria since the civil war ended. It is also a fact that Nigeria owe the Igbos an unreserved apology for the massacre and subjugation during and after the Biafran war. The speaker's intention is to hurt the Igbos and make them feel unequal to others.

have the right to complain but to take whatsoever they see. The speech refers to a social political reality in Nigeria in relation to marginalisation of the Igbos and their inability to get justice. The speech presupposes that the suffering of the Igbos in Nigeria is a deliberate ground plan that the North are happy and delighted with. The textual aspect of pragmatic act which deals with the context of utterance points to a socio-political scenario in Nigeria where the igbos are highly religated in political appointments and democratic dividends, forced to stay even when they dearly wish to exit Nigeria; and every expression of their state vocally

sphere in Nigeria

	prepared to live with the consequences – nobody owes them anything and nobody is out to compensate them for anything." (Nairaland, August 25, 2019) 9:28 pm		to amaeliorate their situation is faced with fierce opposition from the North, the major force that puts them in bondage in Nigeria. The hate speech is borne out of the passionate outburst of Ezeife who believe that the Igbos are not fairly treated in the country, thus sought for a way to appease them for the hurts the country has caused them. A rational and sensible appeal that ought to be received with tensed emotion of acceptances, but as usual, is followed by back-clash, culminating into the present hate speech that portrays the Igbos as inferior species.	
4	Alhassan Ado Doguwa, the	The speech has element of hate and bitterness borne out of subjective and	From activity perspective, the speaker predominantly used	Presidential election campaign

majority leader in the House of Representatives, was seen in a video threatening to beat anyone caught voting for a party other than the ruling APC in the upcoming election. "If we catch you voting for any other party apart from APC, we will beat you to pulp," he said. (Punch, February 2, 2019). pg 11

malicious selfishness against opposition. The intention is to marline the opposition. The comment is devisive and czpzble of making the listeners hate and despise the victim, other political parties. It is also a crime to do that during election in Nigeria.

threat to pass his message. The speech presupposes that the only party worthy of voting for is the APC and any attempt to do otherwise is tantamount to severe beating and humiliation. By implication, the speaker makes it clear that there is serious punishment for anybody that fails to vote for his party in the up-coming election as of then. The speech refers to the state of affair in the 2019 general election. From context of testual perspective, the speech is a portrayal of the usual threat to life during elections in Nigeria by political desperados who always go unpunished even if their threats are executed.

| 5 | Abdul Isa: 'The 2019 | It contains element of threat to the | From activity, the speaker uses threat | Governorship election |

gubernatorial election shows that violence pays and since there is no way we can get what we voted for but through preparing for the violence, we are ready for it even though we pray that peace prevails," (Naira land, April 23, 2019) 9:28pm

electorate and the country at large. It advertises violence as the mode of winning election which ought not to. It has the capacity of inciting the electorate into violence and lawlessness. The intention of the speaker is to the affirmative of a will to activate violence and unrest. Though there is no negative appellation and insult here but there is element of hate against politicians who use violence to win election.

predominantly to pass his loath against politicians and incite the electorates. The speech presupposes that the speaker believes in violence as the only way Nigerian election could be done and won. The statement refers to the state of affair in Nigerian political sphere. By implication, the speech presents Nigeria as a country that appoints its leaders through violent election; it implies that no political leader in Nigeria that has ever emerged fairly without thuggery and violence. The textual or contextual analysis is hung on the political reality in Nigeria where leaders emerge viably in court from elections marred by

campaign in Lagos

unprecedented violence, ballot snatching, killing and violence.

Research Question Two: What are the illocutionary act deployed by the hate speakers to pass their messages?

S/N	Hate Speeches	Illocutionary Act
1	Nnamdi Kanu: Buhari married his wife after raping her several times, the records are there. (Nairaland, Jan, 23, 11:12am, 2019)	A constative act is used here because the speaker emphasized on the existence of truth and fact about his speech. It is also a declarative act because the speaker gives name to the state of affairs of marrying.
2	Femi Fani-Kayode. The Igbos are collectively unlettered, uncouth, uncultured, unrestrained and crude in all their ways…Money and the acquisition of wealth is their sole objective and purpose in life (Business Day, Aug. 8, pg7, 2019)	It is a performative act; and a declarative act of abusing and defaming.
3	Dr. Junaid Mohammed - Second Republic lawmaker,"I don't believe Buhari or Nigeria owes any Igbo anything. I don't care what Ezeife says – if they (Igbo) had seceded, there would have been no Nigeria today. As people who acted outside the interest of Nigeria as a country, to expect compensation is a very odd logic. If the Igbo don't like it, they can attempt secession again. If they do, they must be prepared to live with the consequences – nobody owes them anything and nobody	It is a performative act. It is a declarative and commisive act of threatening and warning because it does not only describe a giving reality but also change the social reality they are describing. This speech has effect or consequences on the listener. It is scaring, inciting, persuading to the interlocutor. The statement does not only

	is out to compensate them for anything." (Nairaland, Aug. 25, 9:28pm 2019)	communicates a message but also actively brings about a change in reality by the very act of performing it. It is a concept with speech act theory where utrances like "I promise" constitute an action by saying them.
4	Alhassan Ado Doguwa, the majority leader in the House of Representatives, was seen in a video threatening to beat anyone caught voting for a party other than the ruling APC in the upcoming election. "If we catch you voting for any other party apart from APC, we will beat you to pulp," he said. (Punch, February 2, pg11 2019)	A performative act; declarative and commissive act of threatening and intimidation.
5	Abdul Isa: 'The 2019 gubernatorial election shows that violence pays and since there is no way we can get what we voted for but through preparing for the violence, we are ready for it even though we pray that peace prevails," (Nairaland, April 23, 9:28pm, 2019)	It is a constative act as truth is found in what the speaker said. Of truth, violence pays in Nigerian politics as it is the decider of most elections in Nigeria. There is also a commisive act of threatening.

Discussion of Findings

From the data presented and analysed above, critical discoveries were made in relation to political hate speech in Nigeria within the stipulated time in consideration of the three theories

employed and the four research questions. These findings are discussed below flowing from the four research questions. Result from the first research question, how is hate speech identified and interpreted from the context of usage, shows that most hate speeches are presupposed, have intention and the context in which it was said gives rise to the meaning, inference and implicature. It was found that hate speeches usually exhibit certain elements that define them: hate, dislike, loath, bitterness subjectivity, threat, abusive; dehumanizing, and intent to maliciously do mischief against the target victim. Above all, there must be element of falsehood, lies, deceit and the capacity to mislead. Based on the submission of theory of May's Pgramatic Act (2001) these political hate speeches context is hinged on the social political realities that unfolds in Nigeria during general elections. In the submission of May (2001) pragmatic act theory focuses on the environment in which both speaker and hearer find their affordances such that the entire situation is brought to bear on what can be said in the situation as well as what is actually being said.

The hate speech, 'let's kill all the Igbos, let's just flush them out of Yoruba land', contains element of threat, hate for Igbos, and has the capacity of misleading people to hate and kill the Igbos as proposed by the speaker. His intention is clear and positive with the might to carry out the act as the threat is made at a point when there was a call to send the Igbos packing from Lagos. The outburst, 'I don't believe Buhari or Nigeria owes any Igbo anything. I don't care what Ezeife says – if they (Igbo) had seceded, there would have been no Nigeria today. As people who acted outside the interest of Nigeria as a country, to expect compensation is a very odd logic.
If the Igbo don't like it, they can attempt secession again. If they do, they must be prepared to live with the consequences – nobody owes them anything and nobody is out to compensate them for anything',

there is element of loath against the Igbos, threat and provocative
tendency capable of undermining the democratic ties between the
North and the Eastern part of Nigeria. Above all, there is no
objectivity and sincerity in his submission as, of fact, the Igbos are
highly marginalized in Nigeria since the civil war ended. It is also a
fact that Nigeria owe the Igbos an unreserved apology for the
massacre and subjugation during and after the Biafran war. The
speaker's intention is to hurt the Igbos and make them feel unequal
to others. More so, the hate speech by Femi Kayode, 'the Igbos are
collectively unlettered, uncouth, uncultured, unrestrained and crude
in all their ways…Money and the acquisition of wealth is their sole
objective and purpose in life', the hate speech is conceived with the
intention to defame, ridicule and abash the Igbos carries elements of
hate, bitterness, insult and the push for others to see them from that
perspective of been uncultured and money mongers. The speech is
malicious and subjective and not the real portrayal of the Igbo race.
However, May (1993) further averts that the individual is situated in
a social context which means that he or she is empowered as well as
limited by the condition of his or her life.

Pondering on the third research question, what are the
illocutionary act deployed by the hate speakers to pass their
messages, it was revealed that all the forms of illocutionary act were
well used in the selected hate speeches. For example, the speech,
'let's kill all the Igbos, let's just flush them out of Yoruba land', has
both a directive and commisive act of threatening. In the utterance
"I don't believe Buhari or Nigeria owes any Igbo anything. I don't
care what Ezeife says – if they (Igbo) had seceded, there would have
been no Nigeria today. As people who acted outside the interest of
Nigeria as a country, to expect compensation is a very odd logic.
If the Igbo don't like it, they can attempt secession again. If they do,

they must be prepared to live with the consequences – nobody owes them anything and nobody is out to compensate them for anything," performative act: declarative and commisive act of threatening and warning were used because the statement is an action that not only communicates a message but also actively bring about a change in reality by the very act of performing it often within a specific social context, where certain utterance like "I promise" contribute an action by saying them.

In 'the Igbos are collectively unlettered, uncouth, uncultured, unrestrained and crude in all their ways…Money and the acquisition of wealth is their sole objective and purpose in life,' performative act; and a declarative act of abusing and defaming was used. 'Buhari married his wife after raping her several times, the records are there.' A constative act is used here because the speaker emphasized on the existence of truth and fact about his speech. It is also a declarative act. Artiku's claim that 'what the average Northerner needs is somebody who's from the north who also understands that part of the country and has been able to build bridges across the country. This is what the Northerner needs, it doesn't need a Yoruba or Igbo candidate, I stand before you as a Pan-Nigerian of northern origin,' carries performative, and commisive act of requesting from Northerners to vote for him as their brother. In relation to frequency of usage, result revealed that performative act predominates with commisive act resonating above declarative and directive.

It was observed that constative act is mostly employed by speakers exercising the right to freedom of expression while performative act is employed by hate speakers. For example, Dele Farotimi, often refering to those who are not in support of Labour Party as "idiots, foolish and stupid" uses constative act as truth if found in the speech: their foolishness brings the present mess upon

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Nigerians. In the submission, 'Tinubu's regime is not only troubling but a disaster to the country,' constative act was used as truth is found in the speech. It is a fact that the present administration is a disaster as cost of living is in the apex amid rising dollar. However, MC Oluomo's warning that, 'we are appealing to them, if they won't vote for us, it is nothing to fight over. Kindly go and meet them and say, Iya Chukwudi, please if you don't want to vote for us, please sit down at home,' used a performative act; declarative, directive, and commisive acts of appealing, threatening and inciting. The researcher also discovered that most of the speeches contain more than one speech act. Some good examples could be seen in the excerpts given above.

Nnamdi Kanu: Buhari married his wife after raping her several times, the records are there. (Nairaland, Jan, 23, 11:12am, 2019). The speech is a hate speech as it is not build on truth and objectivity. It contains element of hate, bitterness and dislike for Buhari as the then president of Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study ponders through some selected Nigerian political hate speeches from 2019 to 2024. It approaches the selected hate speeches from four angles represented by the research questions, to which answers were given using three theories encompassing Mey's Pragmatic Act, and Speech Act. The work attempted to identify and interpret hate speech from the context of usage by supplying certain factual elements of hate speech and its context of usage. This effort is quite vital in the present dispensation that every statement against the government is termed a hate speech.

The actions behind the hate speeches were also explained using speech act which brings for intention and meaning glarier in

political hate speech discourse. The researcher thus wishes to conclude with an emphasis on the paramount nature of hate speech study in Nigeria to create awareness as to what really constitute hate speech, the speech acts in hate speeches and social political ideology of political hate speeches. This will go a long way to ameliorating the friction of discord between the ruling class and the ever-opposing citizens, deepen democracy and foster human right and freedom of expression.

From the findings discussed above, the researcher has the following recommendations to make.

1. The researcher recommends that a further field survey involving legal practitioners should be conducted to better understand what constitute hate speech from the legal perspective. This will go a long way in describing what hate speech is legally. More so, referential theory of meaning should be applied to hate speech analysis to expose the meaning of hate speeches in Nigeria.

2. The researcher solicits that truth conditioning theory should be applied to hate speech so as to better establish the disparity between hate speech and freedom of expression since the major element of disparity is based on truth, fact and objectivity.

3. The researcher directs that hate speeches be subjected to Rhetoric analysis to ascertain the speaker's method of persuasion in relation to the three elements of rhetoric: ethos, pathos, and logos. This will assist in projecting the ideology better and clearer. This will also make motive obvious.

4. The researcher calls for a further study involving systemic functional linguistics so as to establish the functions hate speech is meant to serve. This will add more credence to the illocutionary force

5. To capture the form hate speeches take, the researcher recommends that syntactic approach should be applied so as to define the structure of the language of hate speech in Nigeria.

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