



Hate speech and security challenges: A pragmatic study of Nnamdi Kanu's speeches in the south-eastern Nigeria

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Abstract

In this paper, we examine the utterances of Nnamdi Kanu, the self acclaimed leader of Independent People of Biafra (IPOB), a secessionist group based in the South- Eastern part of Nigeria from a pragmatic perspective, with the aim of determining whether they constitute hate speech, capable of creating security challenges in Nigeria's socio-political environment. As language is an instrument of action, Lawal's (2003) "Aspects of Pragmatic theory" serves as our theoretical framework. The data analysis was retrieved online. A total number of 20 (twenty) expressions were purposively extracted from Kanu's speeches for analyses. Contexts and competencies of each utterance were measured using both surface and background information of the interlocutors. The perlocutionary effect of each locutionary was also measured from the illocutionary force of each utterance. Our findings reveal the preponderance use of assertives, commissives, verdictives, declaratives and directives. It equally shows the utterances were full of inflammatory rhetoric and verbal attacks which classify them as hate speech, capable of inciting hatred and violence within the polity and as such constitute threat to national security and unity.

Keywords: hate speech, pragmatic perspective, surface and background information, independent people of Biafra (IPOB), security challenges

1. Introduction

Nigeria is today faced with series of security challenges. These include Boko Haram insurgency, kidnapping, Niger Delta Militants' activities, herdsmen's killings and call for secession by Independent People of Biafra (IPOB). The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), which is the focus of this paper, is a separatist organization based in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria. The group, which emerged in 2012 and led by Nnamdi Kanu, has vigorously campaigned for a number of states in south-east Nigeria, made up mainly of Igbo ethnic group, to breakaway from Nigeria and form an independent nation of Biafra. The group claimed that without an independent Biafran state, the people of southeast Nigeria would not be able to realize their socio-economic and political aspirations. Giving credence to this, Thompson, Ojukwu and Nwogu (2016:1) claimed that IPOB's grievances were fuelled by the view that they have been politically, socio-economically, and culturally marginalized in the Nigerian project. To achieve the goal of an independent Biafra, the group called on the Nigerian government to fix a date for referendum in order "to settle the issue of Biafra in a civilised and democratic manner" Chinedu (2017) ^[9]. This demand was met with brute force by Nigeria's security agents after President Muhammadu Buhari had declared that Nigeria's unity is not negotiable.

In order to put an end to separatism in Nigeria, Nnamdi Kanu, the IPOB leader was arrested on October 14, 2015. He was later arraigned in court on charges of criminal conspiracy and treason. The Nigerian government accused him of inciting hatred, threatening state security, and mobilizing for secession – an offence which carries a maximum sentence of death. Kanu was eventually released on April 28, 2017 under stringent conditions which included an order not to be seen in a gathering of more than 10

persons. But rather than resolving the crisis, his release from detention heightened the tension in the already tensed southeastern Nigeria. Kanu and his supporters staged rallies, announced that they had set up their own security arm, and clashed with government security forces. Kanu made anti-government remarks at different forums in the southeast. As the agitation begins to spread and gain more followership in the southeast, the federal government launched a military operation tagged "Operation Python Dance II", which sought to tackle violent agitations and put an end to it. Many pro-Biafra activists were reportedly brutalised, arrested, and the whereabouts of Nnamdi Kanu was unknown until he resurfaced in Israel on October 19, 2018.

However, of importance to this study is the use of language within the contexts of discourse. According to Adeyanju (2007) ^[3] "a political discourse in a crisis situation would probably not do without certain expressions that clearly show that there is a threat to peace, law and order." Discourse during protests is usually marked by certain linguistic expressions symbolic of chaos and acrimony. Thus, what we hear Kanu say are not mere utterances but statements often loaded with various kinds of information about feelings, perception, belief, power, and ideological viewpoint. Previous studies have examined IPOB activities from historical perspective (e.g. Taiwo, 2017; Julius-Adeoye 2017) ^[22, 13], socio-political (e.g. Ibeanu, Orji and Iwuamadi, 2016; Ugorji, 2017) ^[11, 24] discourse structures (e.g. Chilwa, 2018) ^[8]. This paper examines Kanu's speeches from a purely pragmatic perspective with the aim of determining the contextual meaning associated with each utterance, how listeners react to each utterance, and whether the utterances constitute hate speech capable of jeopardizing Nigeria's national security and unity.

2. Hate speech

In recent time, hate speech has gained prominence in Nigeria's socio-political and ethno-linguistic contexts. It has crystallised and served as the bedrock of socio-political and ethnic aggression being experienced in the country. The UNESCO (2015)^[25] report defines hate speech as:

The expression that advocate incitement to harm (particularly, discrimination, hostility or violence) based upon the target's being identified with a certain social or demographic group. It may include, but is not limited to, speech that advocates, threatens, or encourages violent acts. For some, however, the concept extends also to expressions that foster a climate of prejudice and intolerance on the assumption that this may fuel targeted discrimination, hostility and violent attacks.

In other words, hate speech is considered as "words that wound". It refers to a whole spectrum of negative discourse, stretching from hate or prejudice and inciting hatred, with the aim to degrade, intimidate, or incite violence or prejudicial action against a person or group of people based on their race, gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, language ability, moral or political views, etc. Without any doubt, hate speech is capable of creating national conflict and disunity if allowed unabated.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

The data analysed in this study were retrieved online. A total number of 20 (twenty) statements were purposively extracted from Kanu's speeches for analyses. The data collected were subjected to analysis using Lawal's (2003)^[5, 15] 'Aspects of Pragmatic theory' as our analytical tool. Context and competencies of each utterance were measured using both the surface and background information of the interlocutors. The presence of both direct and indirect speech acts brings the total speech acts performed to 40 (forty). The perlocutionary effects of the locutions were equally measured from the illocutionary force of each utterance. Efforts were made to calculate the percentage of each speech act type based on its frequency so as to make the interpretation of the table clear and empirical. Thus we have:

$$\frac{\text{Frequency of a speech act}}{\text{Total number of speech acts}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

4. Theoretical Framework

Pragmatics, as a field of language study, deals with language in use with considerations for the context of usage for meaning explication. Pragmatics has emerged as a reaction to the polemics from the inadequacies of semiotics, semantics and sociolinguistics in handling meaning related philosophies (Thomas, 1995; Levinson, 1983; Lyons, 1977 and Adebija, 1999)^[17, 18, 2]. The field of study deviates from the purely formalist approach to language study by replacing the idea of "linguistic competence" with "communicative competence".

Scholars have attempted a definition of pragmatics in a bid to capture what the field of study stands or should stand for. According to Bloor and Bloor (2007:176)^[7], pragmatics is the "study of meaning in context"; that is, language is context dependent as sentences can have different meanings depending on the context of use. Pearce (2007) sees pragmatics as "a branch of language study which focuses on

the relationship between meaning and situational, social and cultural contexts". For Yule (1996:127)^[26], pragmatics is "the study of intended speaker meaning"; that means, it involves the understanding of what the speaker or writer intends to convey even when he or she has not obviously stated it. Corroborating this view, Mey (2001:194)^[19] describes pragmatics as "the science of the unsaid". Pragmatics emphasizes that adequate decoding of meaning is done when the context of discourse is put into consideration. Thus, pragmatics may be captured as that aspect of meaning that neither rests solely on the truth condition of an utterance nor derived from the formal properties of words and sentences but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are produced.

The ever-growing interest of scholars in pragmatics and pragmatic problems has led to emergence of different theories and concepts of pragmatics such as the speech act theory, face theory, relational theory, cooperative and politeness principles, relevance theory, intention and inference theory, pragmatic act theory, deixis, implicature and explicature, presupposition, hedging, and lately, the socio-cognitive model.

As a study in pragmatics, the thrust of our analysis in this paper is centred on Lawal's (2003)^[5, 15] "Aspects of Pragmatic theory" which is an updated version of Lawal (1995, 1997)^[14]. Lawal's (2003)^[5, 15] "Aspects of Pragmatic theory" tries to accommodate some elements of the previous theoretical approaches of Austin (1962), Grice (1975), Searle (1976), Bach and Harnish (1979), Levinson (1983)^[17], Adebija (1982)^[1] and Lawal (1992). It explains message-driven use of linguistic and extra-linguistic elements of communication to arrive at meaning. In this sense, the theory accounts for the pragmatic mappings of general factual knowledge of the world, local factual knowledge, socio-cultural knowledge and knowledge of context as useful for constructing meaning out of an utterance (Ayodabo 2003, p. 135)^[5]. According to Ayodabo (ibid), understanding of the mappings helps to illustrate that a pragmatic interpretation of utterances goes beyond the meaning of lexical components and the structural semantic relations among them. The diagram below illustrates Lawal's (2003)^[5, 15] updated model of pragmatic theory.

In this updated version of Lawal (2003)^[5, 15], two hierarchical structures are identified: surface and background structures of an utterance. The surface structure is the discourse structure (Levinson 1983, p. 27)^[17], where the overt linguistic performance (locutions) of the speaker is performed. All other necessary tools for a pragmatic analysis are subsumed under the background structure. There are six hierarchical contexts of an utterance. The first is the linguistic context of language, which includes the phonological, lexical and syntactic components and the structure of the sentence. It is a *sine qua non* of linguistic communication (Lawal, Ajayi & Raji, 1997). Next is the situational context, which covers the topic of discourse and the factors of the physical environment including concrete objects, persons and location. The psychological context is higher and largely derives from the preceding context of situation. It covers the background of the mood, attitudes, personal beliefs, and the state of mind of the language user. The next level is the social context which is concerned with interpersonal relations among the interlocutors. Following this is the sociological context, which describes the socio-

cultural and historical settings. The ultimate context, which is the cosmological, appears to be the broadest, in that it refers to the language user's world-view, and the implicit

references to the world or aspects of it, and to certain universally established facts (Ayodabo, 2003)^[5].

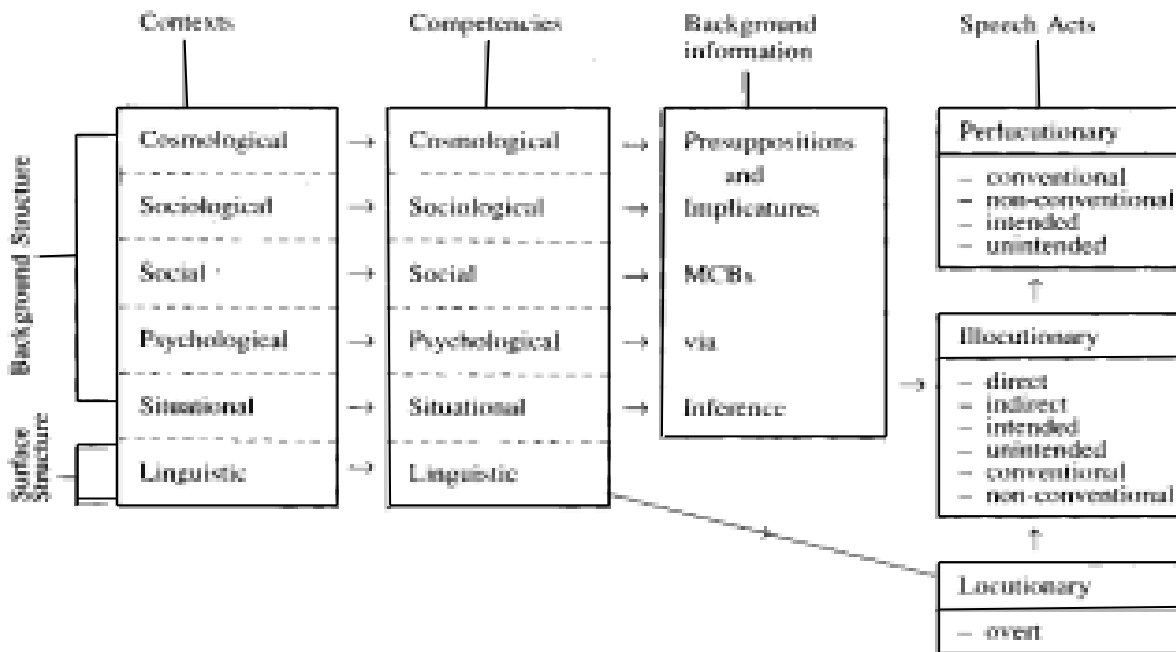


Fig 1: Lawal's 2003^[5, 15] model of "Aspects of a Pragmatic theory"

The next column deals with levels of background knowledge or competence needed for the production and interpretation of language in use. The levels of context, earlier discussed, relate symmetrically and hierarchically to the corresponding levels of competence. The competencies include: linguistic competence (involves lexical, phonological, morpho-syntactic and micro-semantic knowledge), psychological competence (i.e. awareness of, and sensitivity to moods, attitudes and points of view), situational competence (refers to the knowledge of, and familiarity with the topic of discourse, location, objects and persons in the physical setting), social competence (knowledge of social factors and principles governing conversation), sociological competence (knowledge of the socio-cultural and historical background to the utterance) and the cosmological (which is the language user's knowledge of the world, his factual knowledge and general world-view) (Lawal, Ajayi and Raji, 1996)^[16]. The language user employs some or all of these competencies as pragmatic mappings not only to interpret and classify an utterance into a particular type of speech act and to give an appropriate response or reaction but to also identify and understand presuppositions, implicatures and MCBs through inference.

Lawal (1997) explains speech act from the views of earlier works of Austin (1962)^[4] and Searle (1969)^[21]. He therefore follows the trichotomy of speech act into locution, illocution and perlocution which follow hierarchical order and are somewhat related to the contexts and competencies that produce them. The locutionary act, which is the most basic, is the overt linguistic behaviour of a speaker and the competence and context relative to their interpretation are also referred to as the 'surface structures'. Its identification and comprehension depend purely on the linguistic constraint of lexical, morphosyntactic, phonological, phonetic and micro-semantic structures of the sentence. The

illocutionary act is a higher order act which can be direct or indirect, intended or unintended, and conventional or non-conventional, depending on the highly variable vagaries of the context of communication. The third and ultimate level of the speech act is the perlocutionary act which is the conventional or non-conventional, intended or unintended consequences of utterances (Ayodabo op. cit, p. 139-140). The three acts form the nuclei of the Lawal's pragmatic model in the light of how they relate with their counterparts – context, competencies, etc.

We try to apply Lawal's model to the selected expressions under study by situating each thematically within the above named subset of hierarchical contextual levels. Thus, the study tries to identify the types, sequences and patterns of speech acts in our data. The inferential pattern of analysis adopted helps to recognize speaker's intention through listener's use of MCBs and shared world knowledge.

5. Analysis of selected extracts from Kanu's speeches

Sample 1

If you find anybody in your village asking after Radio Biafra kill the baboon Awusa Foolani or Yoruba bastard.

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) stating

Indirect: (Directive) ordering

Contexts/ Competencies

- a. Linguistic: Basic understanding of the syntax and semantics of the statement is required.
- b. Situational: The speaker ordered death for anyone from the other two major ethnic
- c. groups in Nigeria (Hausa and Yoruba) who might be inquisitive about the operation of
- d. radio Biafra.
- e. Psychological: There speaker's tone was full of hatred for the other two tribes in Nigeria (Hausa and Yoruba) which he attempted to register in the psyche of his listeners. This hatred was reflected in his choice of

adjectives for the two ethnic groups ‘baboon’ and ‘bastard’ and the bastardisation of “*Hausa Fulani*” as “*Awusa Fool+ani*”.

- f. Social: A strong ethno-linguistic relationship existed between the speaker and the listeners. They are both “Ibos” mostly found in the southeastern part of Nigeria and as such nurse similar intention for secession.
- g. Sociological: knowledge of the ethno-geographical composition of Nigeria and the operations of the secessionist group (IPOB) in the southeast Nigeria is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Violence.

Sample 2

Nigeria is a zoo and everybody living in that Godforsaken zoo deserves to die

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) stating
Indirect: (Verdictive) judging

Contexts/ Competencies

- a. Linguistic: Basic knowledge of grammar and meaning of the utterance is required.
- b. Situational: The speaker, who was the IPOB leader, compared Nigeria to a zoo where
- c. lawlessness, injustice and inequality exist. He therefore found it inescapable that such a
- d. country and its people seize to exist .
- e. Psychological: The speaker was harsh and repulsive towards Nigeria and its citizens as reflected in his derogatory remarks.
- f. Social: A close ethno-linguistic relationship existed between the speaker and the listeners, who both believed they should seize to be part of the zoo called Nigeria.
- g. Sociological: Knowledge of the geographical composition of Nigeria and the long-standing repulsion for Nigeria by the Ibo ethnic group is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Incitement.

Sample 3

Eri Nigeria should prepare for war, we are coming to annihilate you, my secret service is already studying the zoo and strategising.

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) saying
Indirect: (Commissive) threatening

Contexts/ Competencies

- a. Linguistic: Basic knowledge of grammar and meaning of the utterance is required.
- b. Situational: The speaker expressed the readiness of his separatist group to go to war with Nigeria as preparations are in advance stage.
- c. Psychological: The speaker prepares the mind of his listeners in anticipation of a battle for independence.
- d. Social: The relationship of a trusted leader and loyal followers existed between the speaker and the listeners.
- e. Sociological: Knowledge of the composition of Nigeria and the long-time struggle for secession by the Ibo extraction is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Exitement and preparation for war of freedom.

Sample 4

No Ibo man should attend any church where the Pastor is a Yoruba man, they are criminals and fools.

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Directive) commanding
Indirect: (Verdictive) judging

Contexts/ Competencies

- a. Linguistic: Basic knowledge of syntax and semantics is required.
- b. Situational: The speaker forbade people of Igbo extraction from attending churches led by Yoruba Pastors whom he regarded as criminals and probably not wise enough to see reason for Igbo secession.
- c. Psychological: The tone of the speaker loathsome, geared towards creating religious division and intolerance.
- d. Social: A close relationship existed between the speaker and the listeners who are both from the same Ibo ethnic group in Nigeria.
- e. Sociological: Christianity in Nigeria has long enjoyed harmonious relationship among its members irrespective of tribal differences. No Christian discriminates against whoever is the pastor of the church he attends. This knowledge is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Religious hatred and discrimination.

Sample 5

It is either Biafra or death

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) stating
Indirect: (Commissive) vowing

Contexts/ Competencies

- a. Linguistic: Basic knowledge of syntax and semantics of the utterance is required.
- b. Situational: The speaker expressed determination and readiness to sacrifice their lives if need be to gain independence for Biafra.
- c. Psychological: The tone of the speaker was resolute as he prepares the minds of his listeners for the task ahead.
- d. Social: A close relationship existed between the speaker and the listeners who are members of the Ibo ethnic group with similar secession motive.
- e. Sociological: Knowledge of series of actions taken by the federal government to thwart all agitations for the actualisation of Republic of Biafra is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Desperation and more violence.

Sample 6

If I’m rearrested, this country will burn

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) predicting
Indirect: (Commissive) threatening

Contexts/ Competencies

- a. Linguistic: Basic knowledge of grammar and meaning of the utterance is required.
- b. Situational: The speaker stated the consequences of any attempt by the federal government to incarcerate him again.
- c. Psychological: The tone of the speaker reflected authoritative assertion to scare whoever might be interested in his incarceration again.
- d. Social: The relationship between the speaker and the listeners was that of a leader, who represents the symbol of the struggle and the loyal supporters who are prepared to protect their leader from FG’s further incarceration.

- e. Sociological: Knowledge of the previous harassment and incarceration of the IPOB leader by the FG is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Vigilance.

Sample 7

We are assembling weapons and we need some more money to thoroughly equip our military to enable us unleash mayhem on Nigeria.

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) informing
Indirect: (Commissive) threatening

Contexts/ Competencies

- Linguistic: Basic knowledge of syntax and semantics of the utterance is required.
- Situational: The IPOB leader expressed the level of preparation in their quest to unleash violence and war on the Nigerian nation.
- Psychological: The speaker's utterance was a plea for more funds from the listeners by getting them informed on the present level of preparation for independence.
- Social: A close relationship existed between the speaker and the listeners who are both interested in a secession from Nigeria.
- Sociological: There was a similar agitation in Nigeria by the same ethnic group which led to civil war between 1967 and 1970. Knowledge of this is required to connect the past with the present reality.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Optimism for freedom and donations.

Sample 8

By the time we finish dealing with the animals in the zoo, there'll be none left to tell the story.

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) predicting
Indirect: (Commissive) threatening

Contexts/ Competencies

- Linguistic: Basic knowledge of syntax and semantics of the utterance is required.
- Situational: The speaker promised to overrun Nigeria which he regarded as a Zoo, with no soul spared from the onslaught.
- Psychological: The speaker encourages the listeners that Nigeria would be defeated and destroyed.
- Social: A close relationship existed between the speaker and the listeners who are both from the same ethnic group with similar intention for secession.
- Sociological: Knowledge of the intensity of the struggle and the determination for a sovereign state of Biafra is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Jubilation and more violence.

Sample 9

Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers, Edo and Cross Rivers State are our territory and anybody who tries to oppose us will be crushed.

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) stating
Indirect: (Commissive) vowing

Contexts/ Competencies

- Linguistic: Basic knowledge of syntax and semantics of the utterance is required.
- Situational: The speaker claimed that some states in Nigeria would eventually be part of independent Biafra and no opposition would be allowed to that.
- Psychological: The speaker raised the hope of his

listeners for a prosperous Biafra as those states he mentioned as Biafra's territory are the major oil producing states in Nigeria.

- d. Social: Both the speaker and his listeners were on the same page to subsume the states mentioned under the republic of Biafra.

- e. Sociological: Knowledge of the geographical composition of Nigeria and the geo-political zones of the oil producing states is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Cheers, accolades and optimism.

Sample 10

Nothing seems to be working in Nigeria. There is pain and hardship everywhere. What we're fighting [for] is not self-determination for the sake of it. It's because Nigeria is not functioning and can never function.

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) stating
Indirect: (Verdictive) evaluating

Contexts/ Competencies

- Linguistic: Basic knowledge of syntax and semantics of the utterance is required.
- Situational: The speaker condemned the failure of Nigeria to function effectively as a nation which necessitated their call for secession.
- Psychological: The speaker registered the need to secede from Nigeria in the minds of the listeners.
- Social: The relationship between the speaker and the listeners was that of a leader and his loyal supporters.
- Sociological: Knowledge of the socio-economic situation in Nigeria is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Repulsion for Nigeria.

Sample 11

We have one thing in common, all of us that believe in Biafra, one thing we have in common, a pathological hatred for Nigeria. I cannot begin to put into words how much I hate Nigeria.

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) saying
Indirect: (Declarative) confirming

Contexts/ Competencies

- Linguistic: Basic knowledge of grammar and meaning of the utterance is required.
- Situational: The speaker confirmed how he and his followers loathe Nigeria as a nation.
- Psychological: The speaker felt compelled to align his mood with that of the listeners to raise their spirit of comradeship and solidarity.
- Social: A close relationship existed between the speaker and the listeners who both abhor hatred for Nigeria.
- Sociological: Knowledge of their past unpalatable experiences in Nigeria which culminated to the passionate call for secession is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Cheers and more loyalty to the struggle.

Sample 12

We are going to boycott Anambra state election. After Anambra 2017, in 2019, there'll be no elections in Biafra land. Signed and sealed. My message is that there'll not be an election in Biafra land ever again until they give us a date for a referendum.

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) stating
Indirect: (Commissive) vowing

Contexts/ Competencies

- a. Linguistic: Basic knowledge of syntax and semantics of the utterance is required.
- b. Situational: The speaker promised the FG that no election would hold in the entire South-east Nigeria (Biafra land) henceforth unless the government conducts a referendum in that part of the country.
- c. Psychological: The speaker wanted the federal government to know that IPOB and its members have the backing of people and the power to boycott elections in the south-eastern Nigeria.
- d. Social: A close relationship existed between the speaker and the listeners who both share similar wish for secession.
- e. Sociological: Knowledge of the long- time struggle and clamour for independence by the people of south-eastern Nigeria is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Jubilation and political apathy.

Sample 13

Tell Buhari that I'm in Aba and any person who comes to arrest Nnamdi Kanu in Biafra land will die here. I'll never go on exile I assure you.

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) stating
Indirect: (Commissive) threatening

Contexts/ Competencies

- a. Linguistic: Basic knowledge of grammar and meaning of the utterance is required.
- b. Situational: The speaker confirmed his presence in Igbo land and dared the Nigerian government (led by President Muhammadu Buhari) to arrest him as death awaits those on that mission.
- c. Psychological: The speaker's utterance was a direct confrontation to the Nigerian government.
- d. Social: The relationship between the speaker and the listeners was that of a leader and his loyal supporters.
- e. Sociological: Knowledge of the previous arrests and incarceration of the speaker by the Nigerian government is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Vigilance and preparations for violence.

Sample 14

Our promise is very simple. If they fail to give us Biafra, Somalia will look like a paradise, compared to what happened there. It is a promise, it is a threat and also a pledge... we have had enough of this nonsense....

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) predicting
Indirect: (Commissive) warning

Contexts/ Competencies

- a. Linguistic: Basic knowledge of syntax and semantics of the utterance is required
- b. Situational: The speaker promised a grievous consequence if the federal government refused to grant their demand to form a sovereign Biafra republic.
- c. Psychological: There was obviously frustrated and angered by refederal government's rigid stand against their secession plan.
- d. Social: The relationship between the speaker and the listeners is that of a leader and his loyal supporters.

- e. Sociological: Knowledge of the war, hunger and famine that ravaged Somalia some years ago as a result of war is required to understand the gravity of the speaker's utterance.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Apprehension and violence.

Sample 15

Kumuyi should be stoned and dealt with thoroughly if he comes to Aba for his planned crusade.

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) saying
Indirect: (Directive) commanding

Contexts/ Competencies

- a. Linguistic: Basic knowledge of grammar and meaning of the utterance is required.
- b. Situational: The speaker directed the listeners to humiliate Pastor Kumuyi, who is the Pastor of Deeper Life Christian Ministry in Nigeria.
- c. Psychological: The speaker's tone was loathsome.
- d. Social: There existed a leadership and followership relationship between the speaker and the listeners.
- e. Sociological: Pastor Kumuyi, as one of the most famous pastors in Nigeria with large congregation, is a Yoruba man who preaches unity rather than secession. This knowledge is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Religious division and violence.

Sample 16

They thought we are joking and God gave us a simple message that no one can stop us. The movement to restore Biafra is unstoppable.

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) stating
Indirect: Expressive (affirming)

Contexts/ Competencies

- a. Linguistic: Basic knowledge of grammar and meaning of the utterance is required.
- b. Situational: The speaker asserted that their struggle for independent Biafra is divine and cannot be stopped.
- c. Psychological: The speaker applied religious sentiments, putting himself as the mouthpiece of God almighty to appeal to his listeners.
- d. Social: The relationship between the speaker and the listeners was that of a divine leader and faithful followers.
- e. Sociological: Many Nigerians' level of spirituality hinges on their unquestionable willingness to carry out a divine call for a particular action. This knowledge is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Obedience and increased commitment to secession plan.

Sample 17

We need guns and we need bullets

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Directive) requesting
Indirect: (Commissive) threatening

Contexts/ Competencies

- a. Linguistic: Basic knowledge of syntax and semantics of the utterance is required.
- b. Situational: The speaker requested for ammunition to execute the war for independence.

- c. Psychological: The speaker made an appeal to the listeners in a definite and determined manner
- d. Social: The relationship between the speaker and the listeners was that both look forward to the actualization of independent Biafra.
- e. Sociological: This was not the first time that such preparation for war would be made in Nigeria. As a matter of fact, Nigeria went to war with people from the Southeastern part of the country (named Biafra) between 1967 and 1970 over their secession plan. This knowledge is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Donations and expectation of violence.

Sample 18

Some people talk about restructuring, are we doing the restructuring of Nigeria now? Are we doing fiscal federalism? Are we doing devolution? What we want is Biafra!

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Directive) questioning
 Indirect: (Expressive) complaining

Contexts/ Competencies

- a. Linguistic: Basic knowledge of grammar and meaning of the utterance is required.
- b. Situational: The speaker questioned the reasons why the FG has failed to implement series of policies suggested by the people.
- c. Psychological: The speaker and the listeners felt disappointed.
- d. Social: The relationship between the speaker and the listeners was that of a leader and his loyal supporters.
- e. Sociological: Nigeria, as a nation, has faced series of socio-political problems drawn along ethnic boundaries which necessitated the call for restructuring of the country. This knowledge is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Agitation and violence.

Sample 19

They shot and killed us in other places in Biafra land when they were protesting for my release. As our people rest in the grave, we'll never rest until Biafra is restored. I don't care what they say in Abuja. I don't give a damn what they say in Lagos.

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) saying
 Indirect: (Commissive) vowing

Contexts/ Competencies

- a. Linguistic: Basic knowledge of grammar and meaning of the utterance is required.
- b. Situational: The speaker lamented the death of IPOB members killed by security agents during protest and promised the actualization of their goal.
- c. Psychological: The speaker and the audience felt sorrowful.
- d. Social: The relationship between the speaker and the listeners was that of a leader and supporters who felt sad at the demise of their members.
- e. Sociological: In Nigeria, protests usually attract brutality from the security agents. This knowledge is required.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Anger and more violence.

Sample 20

From today forward, I put the protection of Biafra land in the hands of the Biafra Security Services.

Illocutionary acts: Direct: (Assertive) stating
 Indirect: (Declarative) pronouncing

Contexts/ Competencies

- a. Linguistic: Basic knowledge of grammar and meaning of the utterance is required.
- b. Situational: The speaker affirmed the operation of Biafra security services in the southeastern Nigeria which he called the Biafra land.
- c. Psychological: The speaker made the listeners happy and more secured.
- d. Social: The relationship between the speaker and the listeners was that both believed in the secession of Biafra.
- e. Sociological: The struggle for independent Biafra has been on for long in Nigeria and the audience were already expectant of such pronouncement. It was a welcome development.

Expected perlocutionary effect: Applause, cheers and jubilation.

6. Findings

Our findings reveal that Nnamdi Kanu, the self acclaimed IPOB leader uses language not only to make assertions but also perform acts at the same time. The utterances were directed towards achieving a particular communicative goal such as inform, request, threaten, command, predict, promise, etc. The twenty sample utterances recorded in our analysis produced forty speech acts made up of both direct and indirect speech acts. Our analysis revealed that the trend of speech acts in a protest discourse, such as the one analysed, reflect a great use of assertive (17), followed by commissive (11), then directive (5), and lesser ratio of verdictive (3), expressive (2) and (2) declarative. This ratio of occurrence is informed by the nature of the speech and its main purpose. Table 1 below shows clearly the number of illocutionary acts in the speech, while the summary of analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 1: A Table of Illocutionary Acts

Samples	Illocutionary acts	
	Direct	Indirect
1.	Assertive	Directive
2.	Assertive	Verdictive
3.	Assertive	Commissive
4.	Directive	Commissive
5.	Assertive	Commissive
6.	Assertive	Commissive
7.	Assertive	Commissive
8.	Assertive	Commissive
9.	Assertive	Commissive
10.	Assertive	Verdictive
11.	Assertive	Declarative
12.	Assertive	Commissive
13.	Assertive	Commissive
14.	Assertive	Commissive
15.	Assertive	Directive
16.	Assertive	Expressive
17.	Directive	Commissive
18.	Directive	Expressive
19.	Assertive	Commissive
20.	Assertive	Declarative

Table 2: Frequency of Illocutionary Acts

Number	Acts	Frequencies	Percentage
1.	Assertives	17	42.5%
2.	Commissives	11	27.5%
3.	Directives	5	12.5%
4.	Verdictives	3	7.5%
5.	Expressives	2	5%
6.	Declarative	2	5%
Totol	-	40	100%

In a global macro-speech act sense, the totality of the speeches selected and analysed in our data displayed efforts made by Nnamdi Kanu to assert a proposition or his authority, command his listeners, make request and warn, threaten or vow to taking a future action against the Nigerian government or the entire nation. This is revealed in the Overall Relative Frequency Percentages (ORFPs) table where speakers had used high number of sentences categorized as assertives 42.5% to state, say or predict doom, lawlessness and violence; commissives 27.5% to make promises, threaten, warn and vow on a future action; directives 12.5% mainly to make request, order or command; verdictive 7.5% to assess and make judgmental comments on Nigeria and its citizens; while expressive 5% and declarative 5% have the lowest occurrence each with lesser functions. From the analysis, it may be safe to conclude that protest speech seems to be meant largely to make assertions while other acts follow. In this sense, the IPOB leader commits himself to the herculean task of making not just statements but locutions that are loaded with meanings, with particular illocutionary force that generated particular perlocutionary effects from listeners, which subsequently effect the Nigerian society at large.

Based on our analysis in Table 1, we discovered that Nnamdi Kanu relies on his pragmatic competence in English language to assert some propositions. Our inferences were made possible because of our understanding of the Nigerian socio-political terrain as well as the MCBs we share with the protesters which aids the harmony of the discourse elements for a correct understanding of Nnamdi Kanu’s utterances.

7. Conclusion

So far in this paper, we have established an interrelationship between utterances and actions, and the society. The results equally validate our theoretical position on the importance of contexts and background information of interlocutors to meaning explication. The surface as well as the background structures interrelates in every discourse as proposed in Lawal’s theory for conversational harmony. The paper has equally demonstrated that a protest discourse is usually characterized by inflammatory rhetoric intended to, in most cases, incite listeners to taking particular negative actions as noted in Kanu’s speeches. Thus, the speech is often characterized by elements of hate, capable of serving as catalyst to violence which will eventually endanger the nation’s security and unity.

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