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Ideological Commitments in the Inauguration Speeches of Governor Godwin Obaseki: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

This study deploys Searle's commissive act to critically analyze the inauguration speeches of Governor Godwin Obaseki in order to make obvious the ideological underpinnings and trends of politics in Edo State and by extension Nigeria. Edo State, just like every other state in the country, carries the cancer of electoral malpractices orchestrated by the intrigues of the drama of Nigerian politicians. This study is motivated by the need to find out how Governor Obaseki deploys commissive acts in his inauguration speeches, the inherent ideological underpinnings and the discursive placement of inaugural speeches in political discourse. The study observes the following: the governor made use of commissive verbs to foreground his futuristic actions in his promises, he anchors his commitment on his ideology of industrialization which is one of the cardinal points in his campaign. All the excerpts of the governor's commitment to job creation are only found in the 2016 speech. Finally, this study concludes that inauguration speeches are testaments which discursively document and report the intrigues of pre-election and election drama.

Keywords: Governor Obaseki, Commisive, Edo State, Ideology, Promise, Inauguration

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1. Introduction

That politicians of the world deploy commissive acts in their inauguration speeches to build a connection and a sense of trust with the populace and to foreground future actions is no longer novel in the field of critical discourse analysis and pragmatics. In fact, in critical discourse analysis, language used in context is seen as an act by which humans navigate their ways and intentions (Syal and Jindal 42). In a strict sense, the International Pragmatics Association (IPrA) defines pragmatics as "the science of language use, in its widest interdisciplinary sense as a functional (i.e. cognitive, social, and cultural) perspective on language and communication" (Mission, https://pragmatics.international/page/Mission). This study, not only articulates the commissive acts in Governor Obaseki's inauguration speeches, but also draws attention to their underlying ideologies, thereby interrogating the current state of the Nigerian politics where rather than discussion on on-going technological policies in software advancement, spatial explorations, etc., African leaders are still preoccupied with basic welfare packages such as industries, job creation and infrastructural developments.

This study uses Searle's commissive act to analyze the inauguration speeches of Governor Godwin Obaseki. Also, it relies on the tool of critical discourse analysis to draw out the inherent ideologies in those acts. The governor uses commissives to commit himself to the development of industries, the creation of job opportunities and infrastructural expansion in Edo State.

One of the thirty-six states in Nigeria, Edo State is located in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The state's population as of 2022 is about 4,777,000. The state was supposed to conduct its gubernatorial election alongside the national general elections but for some electoral complications which brought Governor Adams Oshiomhole in 2008, the state now conducts its gubernatorial election approximately two years after the national general elections. In 2016, the state conducted another gubernatorial election which brought in Governor Godwin Obaseki. In 2020, he won a second term. These two elections, which provide an appropriate study context and data, have their unique intricacies and dynamics. Logically, it follows that the intricacies around that period are found in the documents of language use before, during and after the elections. One of such documents is the inauguration speeches delivered in both 2016 and 2020. This study presumes, and rightly so, that the inauguration speeches provide the governor a platform to remark the hurdles of electoral campaigns and assure the citizens that he still remains the best choice.

1.1 Research Problem

Mr. Godwin Obaseki became governor after the administration of Comrade Adams Oshiomhole who relatively performed well. That time, citizens of Edo State were concerned about the ability of the incoming governor to sustain and outdo Comrade Adams Oshiomhole. Governor Obaseki was aware of the daunting task ahead of him. He was also aware of the concerns of the people and his capacity of delivery. So, his inauguration speech became a platform for articulating his qualities, and wining the trust of the people.

This study has earlier noted that commissive acts are relevant pragmatic tools for political promises. However, how does Governor Obaseki deploy commissive acts to build a sense of trust with the people and allay their fears and concerns? What inherent ideologies are in those acts, and how does it depict the Nigerian political discourse space? It is against this background that this essay examines Governor Obaseki's deployment of the commissive acts in order to show how the governor commits himself to the ideology of infrastructural expansion, job creation, and dedication to the previous administration.

2. Theoretical Background

Speech Act Theory

J. L. Austin, an Oxford philosopher, originally put forward the speech act theory that was further developed by John Rogers Searle. Austin equates action with performativity (5). He says that 'perform' is the usual verb with the noun 'action.' That is to say, in any instance of an utterance, an action is performed. Language not only serves as information carriage, but also performs actions. Austin distinguishes between the locutionary, illocutionary and the perlocutionary acts (5). However, Searle devises a system for speech act categorization.

When we make an utterance, an act is performed. This act is an action performed through utterance. According to George Yule, when we speak, we do not just produce well-formed utterances with no purpose, we form an utterance with some kind of intention in mind (48). We perform acts by using language just the same way we perform physical actions. In linguistics, a speech act is any utterance defined in terms of the intention of the speaker and the effect it has on the listener. Actions that are performed while saying something are generally called speech acts and they can be in the form of an apology, complaint, promise, or request. Speech acts are verbal actions happening in the world. When uttering a speech act, we perform

an activity that brings about a change in the existing state of affairs (Yule 47). The speech event largely determines how a speech act is to be interpreted. Depending on the circumstances surrounding a particular utterance, it can be interpreted as a complaint, compliment, etc.

Austin stresses that language does not only describe reality but can be used to act. For Austin our utterances have a variety of different uses. This theory started with Austin's preliminary distinction between two kinds of utterances which he referred to as constative and performative utterances. Constative refers to linguistic expressions that are either true or false and are often used to describe facts or the state of affairs in the world. They are in conformity with statements or propositions. Performatives on the other hand refer to linguistic expressions that we act while saying them. For instance, "I order you to keep quiet." In effect, this means the act of making an order. The acceptable class of performative seems to admit to some specific verbs like to promise, to bet, to apologize, to order. Austin stresses that the traditional distinction between constative and performative is inadequate because all sentences are used to accomplish some kind of action to perform a function (25). For instance, when a person says "I promise to be at your residence by 5pm," the person is not only making a promise but also performing the act of promising itself. He, therefore, offers the three kinds of acts performed when we utter a sentence or when language is used. Austin offers a three-way contrast among the kind of acts that are performed when language is put into use:

(i) **Locutionary Act:** This is simply the activity we engage in when we say something. According to Austin, locutionary acts are acts of speaking, acts involved in the construction of speech such as uttering certain words and using them in conformity with the grammatical rules of a particular language.

(ii) **Illocutionary Act:** This is the communicative intention of an utterance. The communicative intention is often regarded as the illocutionary force. It is what is done by what is said, the acts done in speaking. An illocutionary act is the underlying purpose or function of the speaker's words, which may be to make a request, offer an invitation, give a warning, make a promise, apologize, or perform other types of communicative acts.

(iii) **Perlocutionary Act:** This is the effect of what is said or the consequence of speaking, whether intended or not. It is the effect of the illocutionary act. It is a type of speech act in which the speaker intends to produce a certain effect on the listener or the audience through their utterance.

Searle offers five speech act categories:

(i) **Representatives:** This kind of speech act states what the speaker believes to be the case or not. Statements of fact, assertion, conclusions, and descriptions are examples of the speaker representing the world as he or she believes it is. This is also a type of speech act used to convey information that the speaker believes to be true.

(ii) **Commissives:** They are those kinds of speech acts that speakers use to commit themselves to some future actions. They express what the speaker intends. They are promises, threats, refusals, and pledges. They can be performed by the speaker alone or by the speaker as a member of a group.

(iii) **Declaratives:** They are those kinds of speech acts that change the world via their utterance. According to Searle, a declaration brings about some alternation in the statutes or condition of the object. In other words, it is the kind of act which affects the institutional state of affairs. It also means when a person uses language to convey information, to state a fact, or to express an opinion.

(iv) **Expressives:** They are those kinds of speech acts that state what the speaker feels. They express psychological states and can be used to express emotions and feelings. An expressive speech act is a type of speech act in which the speaker communicates their feelings, attitudes, or emotions towards a particular situation or event. In other words, the speaker expresses their thoughts or feelings.

(v) **Directives:** This is a type of speech act where the speaker uses language to try to get the listener to do something or take some specific action. In other words, the speaker attempts to direct the behaviour of the listener through their use of language. It includes making requests, giving orders, making suggestions, giving advice, and making invitations. Directive act involves using language to get someone to do something and can be further categorized into various types such as ordering, requesting, warning and advising.

3. Critical Discourse Analysis

This paper also utilises the analytical tools of Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth referred to as CDA). Deborah Schifrin, Deborah Tannen, and Heidi E. Hamilton state that "discourse has generally been defined as anything beyond the sentence

(1). They postulate that the study of discourse is the study of language use" (1). That is, a discourse study looks at how language is used and to what end which usually tilts towards knowledge construction, ideology and power. CDA is an approach to the study of discourse which cuts across many disciplines. CDA "provides theories and methods for the empirical study of the relations between discourse and social and cultural developments in different social domains" (Jorgensen and Phillips 60).

Norman Fairclough divides the stages of doing a critical discourse analysis into three, thus: (a) analysis of text, (b) analysis of processes of text production, consumption and distribution, and (c) socio-cultural analysis of the discursive event (23). The present study adopts Fairclough's social theory of discourse. Fairclough uses discourse "to refer to spoken or written language use" in which case he regards "language use as a form of social practice, rather than a purely individual activity or a reflex of situational variables" which "implies that discourse is a mode of action, one form, in which people may act upon the world and especially upon each other, as well as a mode of representation (23)." According to Fairclough, discourse is a type of social act in which actors influence society, and are in turn influenced by society (16). He continues by saying that social conditions determine properties of discourse (Fairclough, 16). This means that language is a social practice determined by social structures.

This paper examines commissive acts enacted by the governor through promises and declarations. Although, the commissive act commits the speaker to a future action, CDA exposes the underlying ideology which is a reflection of a society bedeviled by mental backwardness.

4. Previous Studies

The field of political discourse analysis is awash with research that deploys the speech act theory to examine texts. Pradeep Kumar's article "Katherine Mayo's *Mother India*: A Discourse" is an example of "the wrong assertions and distorted perception of Katherine Mayo's book *Mother India* which was published in 1927." (68) Mathias, et al. analyze President Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural Covid-19 address of 29th March 2020 using J. L. Austin's Speech Act Theory. They examine how illocutionary acts are employed to motivate the public and to draw the intended conclusions in the practical situation where the speech was given. The President's speech is said to relatively inform and persuade as outlined by Searle's theory (Mathias, et al. 160). They opine that assertive speech acts have the highest occurrence while declaratives have the lowest (161). In deploying the theory, the

address is broken down into 65 units, and 98 sentences were analyzed. Mathias, et al. also added that the President performed 38 assertions by ordering a plain declarative. Their work shows that President Mohammadu Buhari used assertives to affirm that the proposition is true when he performed the act of informing and confirming the news of Covid 19 to Nigerians. The analysis also shows where he used a commisive speech act to show his commitment to Nigerians on what he will do concerning the virus. The analysis also shows where the president uses expressive speech acts to express his personal feelings and lastly, President Muhammadu Buhari used declarative in his speech to declare who the central coordinating body is and also declare the personnel involved as true heroes. Mathias, et al. thus conclude that President Buhari used Austin and Searle's speech act classes of assertive, commissive, expressive, declarative, and directive to shape the Covid 19 news in its proper context (162).

Osisanwo analyzes the inauguration speech of President Muhammadu Buhari using Jacob Mey's pragmatic act theory. He states that the speech uses ninety-nine practices that perform nineteen pragmatic functions, some of which are: proposing, acknowledging, promising, thanking, stating, assuring, remarking, appealing, reminding, instructing/calling, and advising (Osisanwo 300). The products are achieved by the pragmatic tools of shared situation knowledge, relevance, reference, and inference to reveal the president's intentions, present and characterize the problems in the administrative system and give directives. Osisanwo notes that the president uses the pragmatic function of proposing, promising, stating, and assuring to reveal his intention while admitting the existence of political problems and showing appreciation (301). To give directives, he uses acts that appeal, remind, and inform.

Also, Odeh et al analyze some selected speeches of Dame Patience Jonathan by deploying Searle's speech act theory. The data selected for their analysis are the two speeches of Dame Patience Jonathan which are the speech in reaction to the abduction of the Chibok girls, and the campaign speech at Umuahia. The research design is qualitative. The speeches were sourced from the Internet. From their findings, Dame Patience Jonathan uses declarative speech act, representative speech act, commissive speech act, directive speech act, and expressive act (Odeh et al., 240). For the declarative speech acts, some utterances establish that Dame Patience Jonathan knows a particular issue and also her stance on the issue. She uses representatives to state some facts. They observe that Dame Patience Jonathan uses commissive acts to promise and commit herself to some duties, she uses directive

acts to make the hearer do some things, and she uses expressive to show how she feels (242).

Furthermore, Purwandari uses J. L Austin's commissive speech act to analyze utterances in the Zootopia movie. He notes that Judy Hopps performed a commissive utterance when she informed her friend about her intention to become a police officer in the future. He also opines that she made an utterance where she committed herself to the future action of writing a hundred tickets before noon. He notes that the sample of the commissive utterances that has been taken from Zootopia movies has a special intention, the speaker has performed the illocutionary action of promise by saying those utterances (Purwandari 5).

Okunbor, et al. examine the macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure of Governor Obaseki's Independence Day speech. Their study is anchored on Van Dijk's triadic model. They examine how the governor uses themes to refer to the global pandemic and economic challenges the country faces, and observe that the speech has a powerful political undertone. Findings from the study reveal that the macrostructure (thematic) of the governor's speech centered on the Independence Day celebration and the 30th anniversary of the state and the steps his government is taking to deliver the dividend of democracy to all Edo people (Okunbor, et al. 38). They add that microstructure which covers the meaning of the speech is simple and easily understood by the audience; that is to say, the speech is devoid of ambiguity with no high-sounding word. Also, Okunbor, et al. anchor observation of the democratic and inclusive nature of Obaseki's government on his persistent use of the inclusive personal pronoun 'we'. Their study has a close affinity with this study because both examine Governor Obaseki's speeches, however, the motivations are different; while Okunbor, et al. examine the cognitive structures in the speeches, this study critically examines the interplay of knowledge construction, power and ideologies in Governor Godwin Obaseki's speeches.

From the studies reviewed above, it is clear that scholars in political discourse analysis have shown little interest in the politics of Edo State. What this extensively implies is that not much of the knowledge of the socio-political lifestyle of Edo State is out there within the circles of political discourse analysis. This study, therefore, becomes significantly relevant because it foregrounds the different ideologies that permeate the politics of Edo State as documented in the inauguration speeches of Governor Godwin Obaseki. Second, by examining the commissive acts in the governor's speeches, this study reveals the pragmatic strategies by which the governor

commits himself to the ideology of infrastructural expansion, job creation, and dedication to the previous administration.

5. Methodology

This study is qualitative, and by design, interpretative. Observations are drawn from an analysis of the inauguration speeches with an adequate application of theoretical frameworks. The data for this research was sourced from Governor Obaseki's first and second inauguration speeches of 2016 and 2020 respectively. The speeches were published by an authorized news channel on the internet, and appropriately transcribed. The data was sampled and relevant sentences were transformed into excerpts. Each excerpt is presented and immediately analyzed. We sampled and analyzed twenty excerpts purposively selected based on their relevance.

6. Data Presentation and Discussion

The excerpts are sectioned along ideological lines observed in the data. The ideologies observed in the analysis are: infrastructural expansion and development, job creation and loyalty to the previous administration. Because the data includes two tenures (2016 and 2020), the researcher indicates the year to mark out the tenure of the inauguration speech. Beneath each excerpt is an analysis where the researcher deploys the theoretical tool of speech act to identify the act and describe its illocutionary functions. Thereafter, the researcher unearths the inherent ideologies in those acts and explains its implications within the Nigerian socio-political space.

6.1 Infrastructural Expansion and Development

Excerpt One

> Rapidly develop our critical energy, housing, digital and road infrastructure, which provides a framework to drive inclusive growth. (2020)

The above statement was made when the governor got re-elected for a second term. The statement is a commissive act. The first word, "rapidly develop," implies a commitment or pledge to take action. The clause suggests that many forms of infrastructure will continue to expand in Edo State. The promise is specifically made to the construction of vital road, digital, energy, and housing infrastructure. The stated purpose of the promise is to establish a framework for promising equitable growth. The statement demonstrates a commitment to the development of vital infrastructure in the areas of roads, housing, digital, and energy. The aim is to establish a framework that promotes inclusive development. By making this statement, the

speaker commits himself to taking the necessary steps and making the necessary investments for the development of the state. The adverbial underscores the intended pace of the speaker, and this draws attention to the expectation of the people. In fact, development in the energy, housing, digital and works sectors can only be steady and stable. However, the governor deploys the adverbial 'rapidly' to accentuate the Nigerian ideology of 'get-it-quick' syndrome.

Excerpt Two

> Build the economy and drive industrialization, trade and investment, to solidify our state's status as the choice investment destination in the country. (2020)

Just like excerpt one, the governor made this utterance when re-elected for a second term. In this case, the speaker commits himself to taking specific actions to achieve certain goals. This first part of the statement indicates the speaker's intention to engage in activities that will contribute to the development of the economy. He expresses his commitment to promoting industrialization, trade, and investment, suggesting an active role in fostering economic growth and to integrate structurally. This part emphasizes the speaker's objective to establish Edo State as the preferred location for investment among other options within the country. By using the phrase, he implies that efforts will be made to enhance the state's reputation and attractiveness as an investment destination. The statement as a whole represents a promise to take actions that will strengthen the economy, drive industrialization, trade, and investment, and position the state as the top choice for investments. It is a commissive speech act because it conveys the speaker's desire and commitment to follow through on these activities during his tenure.

Excerpt Three

> Specifically, we will focus on agriculture and agribusiness value chain, entrepreneurship, investments in industries and technical and vocational skills. (2016)

In the above excerpt, the speaker might have literally clarified his area of focus, however the act of the utterance implies a commitment to carry out specified actions or attain specific aims. In this situation, the speaker expresses his intention to address and prioritize areas such as agriculture and agribusiness value chain, entrepreneurship, investments in industries, and technical and vocational skills. The phrase "agriculture and agribusiness value chain" implies a dedication to promoting and enhancing the agricultural industry, not only in terms of production but also of the complete supply

chain involved in getting agricultural products to market. This implies a desire to devote time, effort, and resources to growing and supporting this specific area. The mention of agricultural as well as industrial investment demonstrates a commitment to boosting industrial investment, which is a key ideological position of the governor. The speaker utilizes the inclusive pronoun "we" to establish a strong bond and interpersonal interactions with the audience to prioritize areas such as agriculture, investments in industries, and vocational skills. The pragmatic force of the inclusive pronoun *ostensively* presumes that both the speaker and his audience are bound by the same ideological tenet.

Excerpt Four

> We also need to build and sustain a robust human, intellectual, philosophical and even metaphysical infrastructure for without them, it is virtually impossible to attain significant progress and derive the extraordinary value that we desire from our efforts so as to build the Great Edo State we all yearn for. (2016)

Here, the speaker makes a promise to build and sustain various types of infrastructure in order to achieve progress and create a desired state. The speaker states the need to establish and maintain different types of infrastructure. The term "human infrastructure" refers to the development and support of human resources, such as education, health, and social systems. "Intellectual infrastructure" pertains to fostering knowledge, research, and innovation. "Philosophical infrastructure" refers to the underlying principles and values guiding society, while "metaphysical infrastructure" suggests a focus on the spiritual or abstract aspects of life. The speaker states that the absence of these infrastructures makes it highly unlikely to achieve substantial progress and derive the desired value from collective efforts. This underscores the principle that infrastructural development is a crucial prerequisite for progress in the state.

Excerpt Five

> We will utilize the advantage which we have in generating electricity and our location as the heartbeat of the nation to attract industries to Edo State. (2016)

The speaker makes a commitment or promise about future acts, namely generating power to encourage investors to come to Edo State. In this sentence, the performative verb is "utilize." It denotes the act of putting something into action. This demonstrates the speaker's commitment to attracting enterprises by using the benefits of energy

generation and Edo State's strategic position. The use of the inclusive pronoun "we" by the speaker underscores the inclusiveness of the speaker's government and pontificates the assumption that the government has the people's support which emphasizes that they have the audience's best interests in mind.

Excerpt Six

> The Edo State Government will establish a one-stop-shop to provide incentives and support to make it easier for our people to produce goods and services. (2016)

By using the verb phrase "will establish", the speaker is committing to create a one-stop-shop to give incentives and assistance for its citizens to sell goods and services, and the governor makes a pledge to take action. The statement implies that the government is aware of the challenges people have in supplying goods and services in Edo State and that actions are taken to alleviate those issues. The speaker is making a promise to take action in the future by using the term "will establish," which is a hallmark of a commissive speech act.

Excerpt Seven

> We will consolidate the gains of the last eight years by continuing the infrastructure revolution and urban renewal initiatives. (2016)

The statement is a commissive speech act. The speaker pledges in this statement to consolidate the successes earned over the last eight years by continuing the infrastructure revolution and urban renewal programmes. He uses commissive acts to appeal to the emotions of the populace who had enormous love for the previous administration because of his impact on them. The speaker indicates a future course of action by using the word "will," and by using the word "consolidate," the speaker indicates a commitment to preserve and build on past triumphs. It can be interpreted as a commitment to continue working on the infrastructure revolution and urban revitalization programmes that have already begun.

Excerpt Eight

> We will continue to improve and expand education infrastructure to ensure that education is available to all Edo children. (2016)

The governor commits himself and his government to improving and extending educational facilities and infrastructures during his tenure and also to ensure that education is available to all Edo children. Because the speaker is promising to do something in the future, the statement is also a promise. The word "will" denotes a

future activity, whereas the phrase "continue to improve and expand" denotes an ongoing action. The speaker is committing to a future course of action through language, which can be a crucial tool for establishing trust and credibility with an audience.

Excerpt Nine

> We will equally pay attention to the development of our intra-city road network to enhance urban dwelling comfort and ease traffic circulation and complete ongoing projects. (2016)

Inherent in the above excerpt is a commissive speech act. The speaker pledges to devote equal attention to the development of the intra-city road network to promote urban living comfort, ease traffic circulation, and finish current projects. The word "will" signifies a future action, and the phrase "equally pay attention" implies that the speaker is dedicated to giving fair and balanced attention to all aspects of road network growth. Furthermore, the speaker's use of the phrase "enhance urban dwelling comfort" implies a commitment to improving the quality of life for city residents, whereas the phrase "ease traffic circulation" implies a commitment to reducing traffic congestion and improving transportation efficiency.

Excerpt Ten

> We will make broadband proliferation a top priority in our infrastructure development. (2016)

In this situation, the speaker is pledging to prioritize broadband proliferation in infrastructure development. The statement can be seen as a promise to take particular activities to attain the speaker's objectives. It signifies that the speaker understands the relevance of technology in attaining their goals and is prepared to prioritize the infrastructure development required to make it happen.

Excerpt Eleven

> I plan to extend these gains even further, deploying wherever possible and affordable, the best of science and technology and involve our communities more. (2016)

In this excerpt, the governor promises to build on the progress established by their predecessor in a certain area by utilizing the finest of science and technology and incorporating communities more. The statement's illocutionary force is a promise, as the speaker is promising to conduct certain actions in the future. The perlocutionary effect may be to instill confidence or trust in the speaker's ability to build on previous

reigns and further improve the situation. The statement is a commissive speech act that combines a promise to build on past achievements with a commitment to use the best of science and technology and more involvement of communities. The speaker's use of first person singular subject reveals his perceived personality as a new leader who would bring about the desired changes.

6.2 Job Creation

Excerpt Twelve

> To accomplish this, I have pledged to focus on job creation. (2016)

The illocutionary force in the above excerpt is that of a pledge. The statement implies that the governor has made a pledge to take specific actions to promote job creation. The use of the word "pledged" suggests a solemn commitment, indicating that the speaker is serious about his commitment. The use of the phrase "to accomplish this" suggests that there is a specific objective that the speaker wants to achieve, and job creation is seen as a means to that end. The speaker is making a promise or commitment to focus on job creation. The propositional content of the statement is "to focus on job creation." This implies that the speaker intends to prioritize and direct their efforts toward creating jobs. The perlocutionary effect of the statement is to convey the speaker's intention to prioritize job creation. The statement aims to influence the audience's perception of the speaker's priorities and goals, potentially generating support or expectations regarding job creation efforts. The reference of the first person pronoun (I) literally points to the speaker, but pragmatically, it extends within the discourse to refer to his government. This strategy underscores the strength of the speaker's commitment to the act of pledging.

Excerpt Thirteen

> We have promised to create over 200,000 new jobs in the next 4 years and we will achieve this by leveraging our comparative advantages and key factor endowments in production and commerce. (2016)

In this case, the governor makes a commitment on behalf of his government to create over 200,000 new jobs in the next four years. The verb "promised" indicates the speaker's intention to commit to a specific action. The statement mentions a future time frame of "the next 4 years" in which the promise is expected to be fulfilled. The commitment is to "create over 200,000 new jobs." This indicates the speaker's intention to generate a specific number of employment opportunities. The statement suggests that the commitment will be achieved by "leveraging our

comparative advantages and key factor endowments in production and commerce." This implies that the speaker plans to utilize specific strengths and resources in order to fulfill the promise.

Excerpt Fourteen

> We will also fill vacancies in the civil service and optimise the job creation potentials in infrastructure development. (2016)

The speaker expresses a commitment to two specific actions: filling vacancies in the civil service and optimizing job creation potentials in infrastructure development. The key elements that indicate the commissive nature of the statement are the use of the modal verb "will", the main verb "fill", the noun phrase "vacancies", and the clause "optimize job creation potentials." The structure is as follows: MODAL + V + NP + (conj.) C. These indicate a future course of action and an intention to bring about specific outcomes. The speaker commits to filling vacancies in the civil service, which implies an intention to address staffing needs and ensure that vacant positions are occupied. Additionally, the statement expresses a commitment to optimizing the job creation potentials in infrastructure development, indicating a dedication to maximizing employment opportunities in infrastructure projects.

Excerpt Fifteen

> We will create over 150,000 jobs within the next 4 years under a farm ownership and management model built around our out-growers' scheme. (2016)

In the above speech, the governor commits himself to creating 150,000 jobs within the next four years. The speech act is that of promising. The speaker promises that with the management model built, there will be a job creation of over 150,000 within the next four years. The use of the word "will" indicates a future commitment or promise. The governor states his intention to take action and create jobs. This suggests that he has a plan in place to achieve this goal. The speaker promises to create "over 150,000 jobs." This provides a specific target and demonstrates the scale of the commitment. The commitment is limited to the next four years. By specifying a time, the speaker establishes a clear deadline for achieving the goal.

Excerpt Sixteen

> We will support the growth of over 20,000 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with the further creation of over 50,000 associated jobs in the next 4 years through access to low interest financing. (2016)

In the above excerpt, the governor commits himself to the future course of action, which is to support the growth of MSMEs and creating jobs through low-interest financing. The statement specifies a time frame of "the next 4 years" within which the committed action will take place. This indicates a commitment to support MSME growth and job creation within that specified period. The committed action is to support the growth of over 20,000 micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and create over 50,000 associated jobs. The means of achieving this action is through access to low-interest financing. The speaker's intention, as indicated by the statement, is to provide support and enable the growth of MSMEs by facilitating access to low-interest financing. The ultimate goal is to foster economic development and job creation.

Excerpt Seventeen

> We will help local businesses particularly SMEs by creating the enabling environment for them to thrive. (2016)

In this excerpt, the governor commits himself to a future course of action by expressing his intention to help local businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and create an environment in which they can thrive. The use of the modal verb "will" signals the speaker's intention to take action, and the phrase "enabling environment" implies that the speaker is aware of the various factors that may impede the success of local businesses and will work towards addressing them.

The governor is tactical with his deployment of the act on job creation. Just like in many other excerpts, he commits himself to an act, and then provides a framework for achieving it. The effect of this tactics on the discourse is that the governor is portrayed as knowledgeable, pragmatic and transparent.

6.3 Loyalty to the Previous Administration

Excerpt Eighteen

> I will always respect and hold very dear his love, trust, confidence, counsel and inspiration. (2016)

The governor expresses his commitment to treasure the counsel and inspiration of the previous government. The speaker uses the adverbial "always" to pontificate the continuity of his loyalty to his predecessor who almost singlehandedly installed him as governor. The action he commits himself to is the obligation to follow the footsteps of the previous administration. The phrase "and hold very dear" indicates that the speaker strongly values and intends to cherish the predecessor's love, trust,

confidence, counsel, and inspiration. Furthermore, the phrase "I will always" emphasizes the enduring nature of their commitment, indicating that it will persist into the future without hesitating. He uses commissive acts to appeal to the emotions of the populace who had enormous love for the previous administration because, during his tenure, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole made studious efforts to fix several roads, renovated hundreds of public schools across the state, and also paid for all outstanding pensions including that of the Oba of Benin in his first four years. In the same period of eight years, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole built an ultra-modern state-of-the-art specialist hospital, he laid a solid foundation for the infrastructural deficit state such that the subsequent government would have no option but to build on his legacies, regarding structural development.

Excerpt Nineteen

> I want to assure you that as we take over today from where you stopped, I have resolved to build on your legacy. (2016)

The governor commits himself to specifically build on the legacy of the previous government. This suggests that they will carry on the job and sustain the achievements of the previous administration. The speaker's goal is to reassure the addressee and instill confidence in their abilities to continue working. The legacy is continuing the numbers of good work started by the previous administration. The strategy in excerpt nineteen is that the governor appears conversational with Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, and this underscores the impression that all is well between them and sooths the minds of those who may have been concerned about the policy of the incoming administration. So, by pledging to build on the legacy of the past administration, the people's minds are at peace.

Excerpt Twenty

> We take that leadership responsibility seriously with total commitment and with a full and sober understanding of the enormity of doing so. (2016)

The governor commits himself to accept full responsibility and absolute commitment to leading the people of Edo state to greater heights, notwithstanding the obstacles that come with it. The previous administration took governance seriously, and this is reflected in the gamut of infrastructural developments noticed across the state. Thus, by pledging to take leadership responsibility seriously, Governor Obaseki accentuates his commitment to toll the line of his predecessor. This is an extension of loyalty. It allays the fears and doubts that the people may have had on the speaker's capacity to deliver good governance.

7. Conclusion

This study using Speech act theory and critical discourse analysis as its theoretical frameworks has analyzed the two inauguration speeches of Governor Godwin Obaseki. It shows how Governor Obaseki utilized the commissive speech act to commit himself and his government to tackle the issue of unemployment, lack of infrastructure, poor education, and underdevelopment that can pose a threat to the success of his administration. It is discovered that the speaker made use of commissive verbs to foreground his futuristic actions in his promises. The governor anchors his commitment on his ideology of industrialization which is one of the cardinal points in his campaign in 2016. Surprisingly, industrialization still remains a major point in the inauguration speech of 2020 which raises questions about the successful execution of the 2016 agenda. Furthermore, all the excerpts on the governor's commitment to job creation are extracted from the 2016 speech. This is significantly noteworthy because its absence in the 2020 speech suggests its successful implementation. However, in the real socio-economic space of Edo State, unemployment is a conspicuous menace ravaging the society. This goes to show that Edo State, just like any other state in Nigeria, is bedeviled by government's poor performance. Finally, this study concludes that inauguration speeches are testaments which discursively document and report the intrigues of pre-election and election drama.

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