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## REALISM AND ILLUSION: AN ANALYSIS OF SANUSI'S SPEECH ON GOVERNANCE AND VIEWPOINT OF AN NIGERIAN POLITICIAN

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### ABSTRACT

Present-day leaders and/or politicians are experts at using language to manipulate the electorate and the people they lead. This statement infers that leadership and political discourse operate indexically, in other words, every single word being used either implicitly or explicitly, expresses some political viewpoint. This could be illusionary or realistic based on how subtle people are addressed, the information provided, and the impression the speech carries based on the words used to convey the impressions. In this study, the researchers considered the different political comments inherent in the speech of Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, the Emir of Kano (henceforth referred to as SLS), particularly at the birthday celebration of Nasir-EL-Rufai, former governor of a Northern State in Nigeria. The aim of the researcher is to find out how these utterances he made at the birthday party of his friend were able to betray and bring out to the fore, the inner struggles of his mind concerning the socio-political and economic situations in the North of Nigeria. The theory that underpins this study is the speech act theory; This theory is concerned with specific social acts performed in making utterances. This theory can be traced originally to the view expounded in Austin's seminal publication, 'How to Do Things with Words' The analysis will be done according to Searle's five taxonomies of speech acts: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. This study significantly addressed the problems of the North from the viewpoint of the language of SLS's mind, and expressions, embedded in realism and illusion, and concluded by expressing the thoughts of the disgust, and visible frustrations of the situation in Northern Nigeria that have been going on over time.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

All language is political in that every act of language is in one way or the other potentially political (Van Dijk 1995:243-287). This means given the fact that there are no preconceived political motivations and desire in making a given utterance; that which has been uttered is very capable of "poisoning" the speaker in a particular way, about the listener/hearer believing strongly that there were political intentions and undertones in the speech or utterance heard or read even when such is not the case. However, Njemanze (2012a) asserts that communication is concerned with "the use of language in running sentences, involving the interaction of speaker (or writer) and listeners (or

reader) in a diverse situational context and framework, especially one of social and cultural conventions. This is part of the review in this research.

The linguistic creativity Chomsky calls infinite is on the production side, while the interpretation aspect of language (the political aspect) is highly constrained and finite. We can, therefore, confidently say that language is by every means, a very strong tool for communication. It can have a great influence on the way the speaker thinks and subsequently acts. So, language can have far-reaching consequences, well beyond common expectations. It can influence the politics of a state, nation, or a group of people.

A frontline cerebral linguist with a keen interest in politics and political discourse, Avram Noam Chomsky (Language and Politics Chomsky: 1988) succinctly explains how words are the currency of power in politics. He further maintains that communication and speech writing are the keys to swaying voters and the masses in a democracy. As far as he is concerned, language obviously is the cornerstone of politics and democracy and when it deteriorates, we lose a lot more than just nice speeches.

Dijk (1998:14) in furtherance to Chomsky's ideas, describes political discourse thus: political discourse is always aimed at interaction, including interruption, debate, and negotiation. Political discourse also tends to be vague; leaving the masses up to interpret what is being said as they would like to understand it. That is why the speeches of politicians and political commentators are given multiple interpretations by as many as get to hear them.

### **1.1. A Brief Overview of Sanusi Lamido Sanusi and His Speech**

SLS was the 14th EMIR of Kano in Nigeria, (the highest ruling position in different parts of Northern Nigeria) a position he occupied for six years. He is one of the most influential Muslim leaders in Northern Nigeria and a first-class religious cum traditional authority in Nigeria. In the organogram of traditional cum religious authority in Northern Nigeria, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi is the second in command as far as Islamic religion is concerned. It is however on record that he is the most popular, vocal, and fearless political cum socio-economic commentator and critic from the north. He leaves no stone unturned, in his quest for social change and reforms, in a decadent, decrepit, and graft-riddled society, whose proclivity for selfish acquisition of wealth is second to none.

SLS is known by his close friends and associates to be a verbally combative and outspoken person. In October 1998, SLS was among a group of young Northern leaders called the Young Northern Turks who gathered at the Arewa House in Kaduna and strongly criticized the Northern political elders as the major problem of the north. They accused the Northern elders of going about with expired ideas and collaborating with violent Military dictators (referring to Mohammed Abacha and Ibrahim Babangida). SLS did not spare Balarabe Musa, a frontline Northern Nigerian politician whom he accused of spearheading the call for a power shift and rotational presidency which he felt was undemocratic, divisive, and tribalistic. Sanusi and his group voted for a balanced federation, responsible governance, and a realistic revenue distribution formula.

Furthermore, in September 2001, he vehemently rebuffed the planned construction of a N770 million government house in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, for the Kano state government at a time when taps in Kano state had no

running water. This criticism was not well taken by the Kano State government at that time. The Kano State governor demanded that he, (SLS) should be sacked from the United Bank of Africa where he worked at that time.

In 2011, he was eminently listed as one of TIME Magazine's most influential people in the world, at the events: Africa Leadership Person of the Year 2011, and Forbes Africa Magazine Person of the Year 2011. The IMF Managing Director, Christine Lagarde once called SLS the most influential man in Nigeria. During his tenure as Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, he carried out extensive reforms that earned him the name, Sanusi Tsunami in the banking and financial sector.

Most of SLS's public utterances, criticisms, and condemnations are strong advocacies for change in the prevalent status—quo in their social setting. The Northern Nigerian society bedeviled by a feudal system and establishment almost totally constrained by tradition to chase parity with the rest of the modernizing world is what SLS is out to correct. SLS seems to advocate for a significant change visible in character, context, depth, and adequate mobility. He is the most influential and vocal advocate for change in Northern Nigeria, in the 21st century whose strategy and platform for chronicling change is different from those of his predecessors and even a few of his contemporaries.

Sanusi used the emir's stool as his platform to launch himself into public consciousness, telling the bitter and biting truth to the Northern political leaders and his people. He gives near-accurate statistics of how poor the North is in terms of poverty, out-of-school children, insecurity, girl child education, and health issues. SLS was a radical Emir who told the truth to everybody regardless of position, status, age, and place of domicile.

### **1.2. Statement of Problems**

The researcher reviewed and addressed the problem of how the illocutionary acts presented by Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, in the speech he gave at the birthday celebration of Nasir-El-Rufai, governor of Kaduna State, Nigeria, was used to reveal the overwhelming feeling on him occasioned by the change mantra he has always carried with him everywhere he went. It is important to note that striving to reach the inner thoughts of speakers, particularly socio-political commentators on critical issues like SLS's utterances at a ceremonial gathering has been a problem to most scholars of language. The act of making a very deep foray into the mind of a speaker to bring out the innermost thoughts of his mind is a task alien to many language scholars. The lacuna created by this problem is what this researcher is out to review and discuss.

Sanusi Lamido Sanusi is a very controversial and fearless social critic and commentator from the Northern part of Nigeria who has not been studied by language scholars. This scholar, therefore, wishes to study him through his utterances and social comments from the viewpoint of his use of language.

### **1.3. Purpose of Study**

The researchers have set out to investigate the illocutionary force with which SLS renders his speech, and how he is able to bring to the fore the inner thoughts of his mind which his audience will see and be moved to react positively. The researchers describe the scenario pertaining to SLS speech as embodied with realism and illusion because they had expected SLS to come and only sing praises to Governor El Rufai and make merry and go. They were disappointed. Hence, the researchers believe that by the end of this research, the following outcome will be realized.

1. There would have been a significant addition to the knowledge in the study of how speech act analysis of controversial commentators like SLS can bring out their inner thoughts about positive social change.
2. An existing gap in knowledge which is the investigation of SLS and his use of language to express the need for change in his immediate society as a case study would have been realized.
3. The research or study would have devised a modus operandi where language can be used to decipher what is going on in the mind of a speaker at each point in time. Based on this, further research and investigation can be done on Sanusi Lamido Sanusi and other Nigerian language elites who are also social critics and like-minds as SLS.

The research intends to contribute immensely to the body of knowledge in political discourse analysis and pragmatics, specifically in the study of Speech Acts analysis of texts. Language scholars and researchers, especially those involved in the language of politics will benefit from this study. In addition, researchers in the social sciences and sociolinguistics will benefit from the study when they see how language can unearth the inner thoughts of a speaker through his utterances.

#### **1.4. Theoretical Framework**

This study utilized the speech act theory, which is concerned with specific social acts performed in making utterances. This theory can be traced originally to the view expounded in Austin's (1962), seminal publication, 'How to Do Things with Words'. Austin (1962) strongly opines that there are many utterances whose production constitutes, partly or wholly, the performances of an action. The theory believes in identifying utterances... as actual actions. The theory not only considers language used by the speaker, but studies changes in the state of behavior of the speaker, as well as the listener at the time of communication.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Njemanze, (2012b) posits that the greater value of language lies in its communicability, which is the individual's ability to use and decode the words in each context. This portrays language as an organized activity that uses words to accomplish its designated function. Review of speeches has always provided diverse dimensions of linguistic analysis. Consequently, scholars have subjected several of these speeches to linguistic analysis. Within the Nigerian political landscape, speeches of different occasions and scenarios have been discussed using various linguistic analytical tools. Examples include Oha (1994), Emeka-Nwobia (2013) and Akinmameji (2018a & 2018b). These scholars have attempted a linguistic analysis of the speeches of Nigeria's former rulers, both Military Heads of State and Executive Presidents.

In a similar vein, Ways et al (2013), Yunana and Eje (2015) and Ashipu and Odey (2016) carried out linguistic analyses of various speeches given by former president, Goodluck Jonathan. Ways et al. (2013) carried out a pragmatic analysis of the victory and inaugural speeches of Goodluck Jonathan and concluded that Jonathan deployed more speech acts that depended on collectivism rather than as a sole responsibility. Adekunle (2011) and Abuya (2012) investigated pragmatic and stylistic analyses of selected speeches of Goodluck Jonathan. Ashipu and Odey (2016) also examined the speech given by Jonathan at the 2014 national conference. Drawing from Systemic

Functional Grammar (SFG), with interest in assessing the accuracy of Jonathan's speech. The study concludes that a well-composed speech goes a long way in achieving the desired purpose for which it is delivered.

Oni (2012) investigated the lexical choices of leadership ideology in selected speeches of Olusegun Obasanjo. This researcher selected her data from speeches produced by Obasanjo when he was both Military Head of State and executive president, with emphasis on lexical indices and how they reflect the leadership ideology of Obasanjo. Another scholar in language and politics discussed what he calls the "manufacture of consent" in modern democracies. This scholar makes strong references to one of Noam Chomsky's monumental volumes in language (Chomsky 1986:286) in showing how propaganda is used by the political and mass media of a given democratic nation to ideologically conform political views while maintaining an illusion of political freewill. He goes on to maintain that "propaganda is to democracy as violence is to totalitarianism" (Chomsky 1986:286)

Joseph, (2006:123) one of the eminent scholars in politics and language studies, developed a pet idea that was called "the manufacture of consent". This researcher placed his idea in juxtaposition to Chomsky's idea of "infinite linguistic creativity" where he now arrived at the conclusion that both his views and Chomsky's belong to different sides of the language equation; one belongs to the production of the language while the other, centered on its interpretation (Chomsky 1986:286).

Again, Austin began his theory by distinguishing between performative and constative utterances. According to him, "While constative could be evaluated based on whether they are either true or false, the performatives can be evaluated based only on whether they are happy or unhappy (Felicitous or infelicitous) Amaechi and Ononiwu (2020:68). Austin studied language from a different point of view and came up with the notion, that apart from statements true and false and truth conditions, there are other possibilities in language which are non-assertive categories that include questions, commands, exclamations, etc. Austin studied language from a non-conventional perspective which is a kind of reaction to the traditional view of language. This reaction, emanating from Wittgenstein and Austin's postulations, carefully emphasized the ways in which natural language works.

These two scholars are often seen as the major exponents from which flowed a naturalistic usage-focused tradition in the post-positivist philosophy of language. Similarly, Njemanze and Ononiwu, (2020), see language and communication are twin concepts that are basically essential to man. Both concepts are intrinsically connected because language gives life and power to communication and has always been central to the study of man in his environment. It is also a dynamic construct that has social relevance, especially in its environment of usage.

This usage-focused tradition strongly holds the opinion that words do not merely "say something" but "do something". An action is performed by means of language. Different kinds of actions are performed by language, e.g., promising, requesting, challenging, warning, information, describing, narrating, etc. A speaker does not merely express meaning when he makes an utterance but also expresses an attitude. The attitude is expressed by the performance of a speech act.

It became very clear to Austin also that uttering a constative completely involves saying something, and uttering a performative also starts first with saying something. This implies that both classes of utterances are intertwined with

each other. This made him review his stand on his performative versus constative categories and renamed everything, the locutionary act.

He went further to illustrate what he means by a locutionary act. Whenever one directs language or speech at a particular audience, one performs three acts at the same time: a locutionary act, an illocutionary act, and a perlocutionary act. A locutionary act is performed when something said makes complete sense. Whatever is said, Austin classifies it into three acts: the phonic, phatic, and rhotic acts. The three acts we have discussed above constitute the illocution of the act. It is however very important to note that any time a locutionary act is performed, the performer is performing illocutionary acts of perhaps warning, betting, promising, apologizing, stating, and complaining.

Hence, the effect of the illocutionary act on the hearer or the consequences and outcome of the illocutionary act on the target audience is called the perlocutionary act. The utterances that make up perlocutions are warnings, surprise statements, jokes, persuasive utterances, convincing or deterring utterances, and misleading utterances. This is what these researchers have set out to review through this investigation using the methods outlined below.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

SLS is bold, courageous, and not afraid to take risks. He is equally known for voicing liberal and controversial issues; hence, this research will be limited to the single speech of SLS at the birthday ceremony of Nasir-El-Rufai, Governor of Kaduna State. The speech deals with the unsavory state of socio-political and economic affairs in the Northern part of Nigeria as a whole and was delivered on the 23rd of February 2020. The population for this study revolves around the Northern part of Nigeria. The theory that underpins the research is Searle's Speech Act Theory. The researchers focused on the illocutionary acts used by SLS to demand a change in the prevalent status, situations, and state of Northern Nigerian citizens.

The population of this study includes the elites in the north of Nigeria who are the listeners and are overtly and covertly (realistically and at the same time illusionary) spoken to. They are particularly addressed in this speech, using language that expresses realism and illusion as it is presently experienced by the people. The speech in this study expressed their situation in the language they understood.

The data was analyzed using SLS's speech, delivered at the 60th birthday celebration of Nasir-El-Rufai, governor of Kaduna State, North-West Nigeria. The analysis was done according to Searle's five taxonomies of speech acts: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. The speech was each isolated and analyzed effectively.

### **4. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

Austin (1962) categorized speech acts which Thomas (1995:51) referred to as illocutionary acts, illocutionary force, or pragmatic force into five classes - verdictives, exertive, commissive, habitives and expositives. However, he has been criticized on the basis of his claim that English verbs correspond to these speech act categories. As a result of this criticism, Searle (1969: 1976) modifies this classification of Austin upon the recognition of the illocutionary

force of utterances. Searle's classification is as follows: Assertive, directive, Expressive, Commissive, and declarative. Our present study is going to adopt Searle's taxonomy of speech acts for the purpose of this analysis.

#### **Assertive:**

These are utterances that commit the hearer to the truth of the expressed proposition. For example, stating, claiming, announcing, and reporting. Assertive are illocutionary acts that state the facts representing a situation in the world. This is why they are called representative acts by some scholars (Searle 1976:10). They present propositions as representing a situation in the world. Further examples of assertiveness are statements of facts, assertions, and definitions. Searle strongly establishes the fact that speech acts that are assertive possess a "word-to-world fit." This means that they have the capacity to make words that have been uttered to fit the situation in the world.

#### **Directives:**

These are utterance acts used by a speaker who attempts to get the addressee to carry out an action. Directives clearly try to make the world fit the world. It is an illocutionary force that gets things done by the audience. Examples are ordering, requesting, asking, begging, challenging, commissioning, daring, inviting, insisting, commanding. When we say, "Could you close the window?" We expect action to take place immediately. Other examples are, Could I borrow your pencil? Take my son to Sweden, Hand in your scripts. I advise you to leave.

#### **Commissive:**

These are utterances that commit the speaker to some future course of action. It is a type of illocutionary act that commits the speaker to do something in the future. For example, I am going to London. From now on, I will participate in our group activity. Words where they occur are promising, planning, vowing, and betting.

#### **Expressive:**

Searle (2014:92) defines the expressive thus "the illocutionary point of this class, is to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content". Expressive verbs pointed out by him include, thank, congratulate, apologize, condole, deplore, and welcome. It is worthy of note that in expressive, there is no direction of fit, rather "the truth of the expressed proposition is presupposed" (Searle 2014:92). The speaker expresses his/her feelings or emotional reactions. For example, the sentence "I am really sorry for not assisting you in decorating the wedding hall, you had to do the work all alone"! Also, the sentence, "I apologize for stepping on your toes" is an expressive utterance.

#### **Declarative:**

Searle's opinion about declarative speech acts is quite interesting. To him, they are cases where we bring a situation into existence by declaring it to exist, cases where, so to speak, "saying makes it so". Examples are, "I resign", "you are fired", "I excommunicate you", "I Christen this ship, NNS Beecroft", and "War is hereby declared".

One defining characteristic of declarative is that the successful performance of one of its members brings about the correspondence between propositional content and reality. Successful performance of this speech act totally guarantees that the propositional content corresponds to the world. This means that, if I successfully perform the act

of declaring you husband and wife, you and your partner become automatically bound in the sacrament of matrimony. The act of bringing two of you together as husband and wife has been successfully performed. This, therefore, makes you and your partner husband and wife.

*Locations A: Assertive – Between Realism and Illusion*

1. *“Now, we talk about birthdays, we talk about happiness.”*
2. *“I remember a few weeks ago, someone asked me “Are you happy?” and I said, “I hope not.”*
3. *“The truth is nobody who is a leader in Northern Nigeria today can afford to be happy.”*
4. *“You can’t be happy with 87% of the poverty in Nigeria being in the North.”*
5. *“The real change in the North will come from the mavericks, those who are considered mad people.”*
6. *“And the truth is “If you look at what Nasir is doing in Kaduna, with 40% of his budget in education, that is the only thing that is going to save the North.”*
7. *“I know that when we say these things they do not go down well.”*
8. *“The quota system everybody is talking about must have a sunset clause.”*
9. *“The reason people like Nasir stand up and they are Nationalists is that you don’t have any sense of inadequacy, you are from Kaduna State or being from North or being a Muslim to get a job.”*
10. *“The rest of the country cannot be investing, educating its children, producing graduates, and then they watch us, they can’t get jobs because they come from the wrong states”.*
11. *“Let me tell you something if you take Nasir out of the government house today and put him in a two-bedroom apartment if he has a light and his books, wallahi! (Honestly,) It would not matter to him”.*
12. *“... you owe it to yourself for the years you are given that opportunity... to do something to leave a mark and to impact on people’s lives.”*

Locutions A<sub>1</sub> - A<sub>12</sub> are assertive. The point or purpose of making these assertive speech acts is according to Searle (1976:10) “to commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition.” This proposition could be true or false. Searle adds that the direction of fit is words to the world; the psychological state expressed is belief (that p).

SLS starts his speech by expressing the proposition which suggests that obviously, birthdays should bring about happiness, but this birthday being spoken about should not bring about happiness at all. This proposition is reinforced by locutions A<sub>2</sub> - A<sub>4</sub>, where the speaker, SLS, strongly asserts that happiness should be far from the emotional state of any reasonable leader or stakeholder in Northern Nigeria. In the context of SLS’s speech at this point, it will be true to agree with Searle’s postulations that the psychological state expressed is belief (that p). In this case, SLS believes that no leader in the North should be happy for obvious reasons. He believes for all intents and purposes that with 87% of the poverty index coming from the north of Nigeria, nobody should be happy. This,

the researcher believes, is why he started the speech on a paradoxical note that this birthday should not bring about happiness, though it is expected to do so.

Locutions A<sub>5</sub>-A<sub>9</sub> are candid utterances made by SLS where he states what he succinctly believes to be the case or as Searle puts it, “the truth of the expressed proposition” (Searle 1976.10). Locution A<sub>5</sub> posits that the real change in the North will come from the mavericks, people considered to be mad people; a statement which shows that there has been no real change in the North over time. The statement equally makes subtle reference to SLS himself who is considered a maverick by many people from the North.

Locutions A<sub>6</sub>-A<sub>9</sub> further stress what will save the North. Allusion is made to Nasir-El-Rufai’s strength and sense of adequacy and to his contributions to education. Also, the need to bring to a necessary end the quota system in Nigeria’s political and educational system is mentioned as part of his belief about what will bring about the much-needed change for development and growth in the North of Nigeria; what J. Searle will refer to as “belief that p”.

For a man from the North to strongly assert that the quota system he and his people have been gaining from should be outlawed is not only surprising but worthy of note. It shows his great inclination to change, the change mantra that many have merely paid lip service but have not been able to implement.

Locutions A<sub>10</sub>-A<sub>12</sub> are statements of fact that cannot be denied and whose illocutionary points are so forceful that their truth value is felt by the hearer immediately. SLS uses these assertive illocutionary acts to represent his strong belief in justice and equity. To him, the rest of the country has moved on and will very soon refuse to wait for the supposedly indolent north, hence the need for a rethink in the progressive direction.

SLS makes the words fit the world (as J. Searle would put it, “the direction of fit is words to the world”) when he talks about Nasir-El-Rufai’s character as an avid reader whose dedication to studies is so keen, that if he is denied everything but his books, he would survive because of the discipline and training he has. The words used by SLS fit the character analysis of the person of El-Rufai and the prevalent status quo of the North, which is the world and social situations SLS is out to describe.

#### **Locution B: Directives Between Realism and Illusion**

1. *“So, when we wish Nasir a happy birthday, we do not want him to be happy as a leader”.*
2. *“If this is the way we have been doing things and this is where we have ended up, maybe we need to do things differently”.*
3. *“If we have populated the government with middle-aged men, maybe we need to try younger people”.*
4. *“Maybe we need to try women”.*
5. *“... maybe we need to invest more in the education of our children”.*
6. *“Maybe we need to invest more in nutrition”.*
7. *“Maybe we need to invest more in primary health care”.*
8. *“We need to get our Northern youths to a point where they don’t need to rely on being from a part of the country to get a job”.*
9. *“As we celebrate Nasir at 60, we need to celebrate him as a public officer who is addressing the core problems of his constituency, which is education”.*

10. *“Out of most of the qualities he has, there are two that I would like him to work on more; one quality is diplomacy, the other is to be more patient with people...”*

Yule (1996:54) is of the opinion that “directives are those kinds of speech acts that speakers use to get someone else to do something”. It is observed that in this speech, SLS has approximately twelve directive illocutionary acts, where he succinctly expresses his requests, suggestions, orders, and what he wants his audience to do at the birthday celebration and beyond.

Locution B<sub>1</sub> is pointedly making a request from Nasir-El-Rufai; he should not be happy as a leader. By this directive speech act, SLS advises Nasir, his friend, to eschew happiness from his mindset for many obvious reasons; one of them being the prevalent backwardness in the Northern part of Nigeria which he discusses copiously in his speech.

Locutions B<sub>3</sub> - B<sub>10</sub> sound like entreaties on what is needed to put the North on a sound footing and SLS tactfully puts it across to his audience as an immediate need, a sine qua non. As Searle would put it, “They may be ‘modest attempts’ as when I invite you to ‘do it’ or suggest that you ‘do it’” (J. Searle 1996.11). So, we see SLS saying, “Maybe we need to do things differently” in locution B<sub>2</sub>. The same grammatical structure, “maybe we need to...” is used repeatedly in locutions B<sub>3</sub>—B<sub>10</sub>. SLS uses these parallel structures to tell the Northern elite and society at large gently but firmly what they must do to keep abreast with modernism and move away from the prevalent decadent status quo. He talks about:

“Maybe we need to invest more in nutrition”.  
do things differently”.  
try younger people”.  
try women”.  
invest more in the education of our children”.  
invest more in primary health care”.  
get our Northern youths to a point where they don’t need to rely on being from a part of the country to get a job”.  
celebrate him (Nasir-El-Rufai) as an officer addressing core problems of his constituency; education”.

These are subtle commands and directives given by SLS as the possible recipe for the much-needed change in the North of Nigeria. The total and actual “propositional content here is always that hearer H does some future actions A. The hearer H will stand for Sanusi’s audience, both immediately (at the venue of the birthday celebration) and afterward. What his speech will result in in the future, the much-needed change that will be carried out is the A.

Locutions B<sub>11</sub> and B<sub>12</sub> are pieces of advice SLS gives to Nasir-El-Rufai and sincerely desires results. They are diplomacy and patience. He strongly wished that Nasir would adopt and embrace the two virtues.

For the entire utterances or locutions B<sub>1</sub> - B<sub>12</sub>, the direction of fit will be “world to words”. The needs, hopes, and aspirations of SLS in this world for Northern Nigeria are represented in words and given as directives, tacit requests, and pieces of advice to his teeming audience. His sincerity condition here is ‘want’.

*Locution C: Commissive*

1. *“There will be a day when there will be a constitutional amendment that addresses the issue of the quota system and federal character”.*
2. *“When I saw his reaction, I did not deliver the second one. I was waiting for the right time to deliver the message”.*
3. *“Each of us has to think, in the next 50 years or 100 years, when I am gone, when the history of this office is being written, what will it be said that I did?”*
4. *“If the people of Kaduna State want to vote me out because I want a good education for their children, then let them vote me out.”*
5. *“I do hope that for the rest of our lives, we continue to give back”.*
6. *“... advice your friend, he is on his first term, he should not take this risk, he can lose the election. So, I said OK, I will advise him”.*

SLS’s entire speech has six illocutionary acts which are commissive. Here, he commits himself to some future course of action through his utterances. Yule (1996:54) agrees that “commissive are speech acts that speakers use to commit themselves to some future action. They express what the speaker intends”.

Locution C<sub>1</sub> posits in very strong terms that there will be a day when there will be a constitutional amendment that addresses the issue of the quota system and federal character. SLS is making it clear to the North in Nigeria that the authorities of which he may be among will one day put an end to federal character and quota system existence in Nigeria’s political and social systems. From his utterances, one can deduce he will give his support, favor, and blessings to such a proposal when it comes. He predicts it will come.

Locution C<sub>2</sub> presents a message SLS needed to deliver but could not because of what he perceived of Nasir’s disposition to receiving such a message then. Sanusi decided to deliver the message in due course, when the recipient, Nasir, would be in the right frame of mind to receive it. Locutions C<sub>3</sub> and C<sub>5</sub> are illocutionary acts whose major focus is to commit SLS, the speaker, and others, to a one-hundred-year future projection or assignment of what will be said about them, then! In order words, they (Northern elders) will have to work now, in such a way that they will be remembered for good in years to come. Sanusi is implying that everyone should think in such a way that, a legacy will be left afterward in one’s name,

Locution C<sub>4</sub> in SLS’s speech is attributed to the celebrant, Nasir-El-Rufai, who in his normal candid disposition, made the statement when he was told about people’s comments about his governance. Certainly, he refused to heed the advice suggested to him and made an utterance that looked like a vow. At the same time, he dares the people of Kaduna State, if they want him out of office because he wants good education for their children, let them do so. If we look at his response utterance in the light of Searle’s perspective, “a man who promises ... to do A, expresses a

desire (want, wish) that H do A” (Acheoa 2017: 12), we shall deduce that he is totally bent on doing what he has sworn to do as the governor of Kaduna State.

In uttering this commissive act, El-Rufai revealed his unflinching intention to educate the children in Kaduna State and thereby stayed committed to carrying out the action irrespective of whatever anyone says or feels. A deeper look at the implication of the utterance shows us that Nasir-El-Rufai has vowed to educate the young, particularly children of Kaduna State whether they like it or not.

The illocutionary point of El-Rufai’s utterance is very clear here. He promises to deliver his duties diligently to the people of Kaduna State as their governor.

Locution D: Expressive

1. *“You can’t be happy with millions of Northern children out of school”.*
2. *“You can’t be happy with a state in the North contributing almost 50% of the malnutrition burden in the country”.*
3. *“You can’t be happy with the job problem. You can’t be happy with the Boko Haram problem”.*
4. *“You can’t be happy with political ‘thuggery’”.*
5. *“You can’t be happy with all the issues of the Almajiri (Poor Hausa Beggars) problems that we have”.*
6. *“Now, because of the condition of Northern Nigeria, it is almost cliché now to say, if you are seen as normal if you are a governor in the North or a leader in the North, and if you are seen as normal in the sense that you continue to do what your predecessors have been doing, the same thing which has been normalized, then there is something wrong with you. You are part of the problem”.*
7. *“If the North does not change, the North will destroy itself”.*

The expressive speech acts in this study are seven in number. Locutions D<sub>1</sub>-D<sub>7</sub> are expressive illocutionary acts that perform the functions of revealing the psychological state of the speaker, SLS, regarding the state of affairs in Northern Nigeria, which the illocutions presuppose.

SLS expresses statements of feelings of sadness, pain, sorrow, and utter dislike for the prevalent social status quo in the northern part of Nigeria.

The repetition of the clause “you can’t be happy” five times in locutions D<sub>1</sub>—D<sub>5</sub> clearly depicts his level of distaste and revulsion over the nauseating socio-political situation in the North. Thus,

with millions of Northern children out of school.

with nine states in the North contributing 50% of the malnutrition burden in the country.

You can't be happy with the job problem. ←→

with the Boko Haram problem.

political 'thuggery'.

with all the issues of Almajiri (Poor Hausa Beggars)  
problems that we have.

The six utterances above form parallel structures with the clause, "You can't be happy with." The pragmatic force created by this parallel structure is an indication of Sanusi Lamido Sanusi's feelings. Here, Sanusi strongly bares his inner thoughts and feelings. He openly insists that nobody in Northern Nigeria should be happy, given the way things are in 21st-century Nigeria.

To him, the feeling of happiness should not only be alien to any well-meaning member of the Northern ruling class but it should also be considered anathema in the present circumstance. As he enumerated above; millions out of school, high malnutrition index, job problems, Boko Haram problem, political 'thuggery', Almajiri (Poor Hausa Beggars) malaise, etc. should be a source of great pain and concern to all Northern leaders.

In describing expressive utterances like those of SLS, Searle maintains that "in performing an expressive, the speaker is neither trying to get the world to match the words nor the words to match the world, rather, the truth of the expressed proposition is presupposed" (Searle 1976:12). This is just the case here, the truth of what SLS's proposition stands for is clearly presupposed. In locations D<sub>6</sub> and D<sub>7</sub>, SLS continues to bear his mind to everyone who cares to listen. He uses the phrase, "if you are seen as normal", two times in locution <sub>6</sub> alone. What SLS presupposes here is that if you are seen by leaders in the North as normal, then, you are not normal. Sanusi implies here that what is regarded as normal in the north is the wrong phenomenon. All the normal things and normal people in the North (as he interprets what the North regards as normal) are the problems of the North.

In locution D<sub>7</sub>, SLS clearly expresses the summary of the totality of his inner thoughts. The deplorable situation in the North, if not corrected, will surely destroy the North. He does not mince words about this truth, "If the North does not change, the North will destroy itself".

**Locution E: Declarative**

*"I pray for you that what you are building today remains a legacy.  
that will be remembered after you... You will impact the lives of people.  
who you do not know, whom you have never met in a manner that they will.  
remember you forever".*

So far, the researcher was able to isolate one declarative illocutionary act from SLS's speech at his friend's birthday celebration. SLS as a traditional leader occupied an office (The Emir of Kano) which had a significant undertone in the dominant Muslim Northern Nigeria. When he tells Nasir-El-Rufai at his birthday celebration, "I pray for you that what you are building today remains a legacy that will be remembered after you...", he successfully makes a declarative speech act which brings about "the correspondence between the propositional content and reality.

This successful performance guarantees that the propositional content which is the prayer SLS makes for El-Rufai, corresponds to the world, a world of the belief that prayers from traditional cum religious authorities have the potentials to call into being that which is not. So, what SLS has said, the utterance he made here would be seen as prayers projected into the life and world of Nasir-El-Rufai which would definitely come to pass because he has the authority to make what he said come to pass. As J. Searle (1976:14) would say, "Declarations bring about some alternation in the status or condition of the referred-to object or objects solely in virtue of the fact that the declaration has been successfully performed".

Here, the referred is Nasir-El-Rufai and it is strongly believed that this declaration would alter his status positively. This fact can be corroborated by what Brown and Yule (1983:232) observed in Austin's postulations; "In uttering a sentence, a speaker also performs a perlocutionary act which can be described in terms of the effect which the illocutionary act, use, has on the hearer. In this case, the effect of emotional upliftment, the feeling of psychological contentment and euphoria that the future is assured to be glorious, due to a form of "Deus Est Machina, occasioned by the pronounced blessings on the recipient, who is bodily present at the birthday celebration gives him, (Nasir-El-Rufai) a complete feeling of fulfillment and satisfaction.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This study investigated SLS's speech at the 60th birthday celebration of Nasir-El-Rufai, with a view to identifying the various discourse strategies used in the text and the functions they perform. The study made use of Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis as a theoretical frame of reference. This model provided the platform for the description, interpretation, and explanation of the text used in the research. The SLS's speech was able to underscore a great deal of the very deep thoughts and sub-conscious struggles of SLS on the socio-politico-economic situation of the seemingly poverty-ravaged Northern part of Africa, Nigeria.

The various locations of SLS at the birthday ceremony are analyzed from the viewpoint of the discreet speech act types they belong to. This has been particularly done from the focal lens of J. Searle's perspective on speech act categories. The entire speech at the birthday celebration was critically analyzed from the viewpoint of Seale's five speech acts categories. Assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. Bearing in mind that Speech Act is the core of communication, (as far as Searle is concerned), this research made a deep foray into SLS's utterances and came out with startling discoveries. We can now see the inner wrangling in his mind, in the form of the deep-seated cleavage of distaste, disgust, and near frustrations about matters of the North that have been going on in the mind and consciousness of SLS over time.

Considering the reviews in this research, and Searle's standpoint on the principle of 'expressive / ability to express one thought'; that whatever can be meant can be said, this study deduced that his seemingly unguarded

outbursts and intolerant disposition towards the hypocritical stance of the political class and elite in Northern Nigeria is unparalleled. In addition, it was seen that his loyalty to the change mantra in the North is unalloyed and second to none. He would stop at nothing to bring it to pass or so it seems.

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