

# A Speech Act Analysis Of Obama's Speech: Politics And Faith

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**Abstract-** Politicians, in legitimising their ideologies exploit language. They consciously produce specific kinds of speech acts in order to covertly authorise their beliefs and persuade their audience. A plethora of studies exist on propositional meanings in Nigerian political speeches nonetheless a paucity exists on utterance meanings in foreign political speeches and on discordant concept of Religion and politics. Therefore, this paper investigated the kinds of speech acts Obama employed in legitimising his ideology about religion in his 2006 political speech titled *Faith and Politics*. The mixed method was adopted. A total of 182 sentences in the speech formed the population of the study while only 18 purposively selected sentences tagged utterances (UT) constituted the sample size of the study. Allan Speech Acts Theory was employed. The findings revealed that Obama used both direct and indirect speeches. In the direct category, the speaker used a preponderance of Constative Assertive acts 10 (94.4%) and only 1(3.57%) directive act for affirming his beliefs about religion and the interconnection between religion and politics. However, for the indirect category, the eloquent speaker employed verdictive acts (55.5%), 1(5.5%), directive requestive acts (33.3%) and assertive act 1(5.5%). The indirect verdictive acts were used to covertly judge the aberration of religion-its reduction to a tool of discrimination, terrorism, and manipulation of believers' minds etcetera. Obama thus, employed the directive requestive act in imploring his listeners to turn a new leaf to religion and rather exploit religion to teach moral values-discipline, tolerance and ultimately give hope to the people thereby making religion serve as a panacea to critical social ills, and thus a veritable complement for global politics. This paper, therefore, concludes that the combination of religion and politics is required for an effective global politics. This paper recommends that religious-political discourse should not be parochial so it can cater for the needs of the pluralistic world.

**Index Terms-** Language, Pragmatics, Politics, Speech Acts.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Generally, the genres of religious and political discourse are not exactly under-researched. Pioneering linguistic works on religious discourse have been undertaken mainly within the framework of stylistic analysis especially regarding graphological, semantic, syntactic and morphological features that characterise the discourse (e.g. Crystal and Davy (1969) Oladosu (2003)). On the other hand, political discourse has attracted the attention of linguists from Systemic Functional Linguistics (Osisanwo 2017,

Arema 2015, Kalejaiye 2012Opeibi 2009, Odebanmi 2008) (in Soyombo 2019). However, there is a paucity of studies on utterance meanings on the discordant concepts of religion and politics.

This paper presents a Speech Act analysis of President Barack Obama, the first black American president's speech titled 'Politics and Faith'. It applies Allan's Speech Act model which originated from Austin 1962's notion of 'speeches are actions'. The significance of this paper is to establish and imports of the speech acts President Obama exploited in articulating the synergising the divergent concept of religion and politics.

Religion and Politics have both been adjudged divergent and yet intricately connected. Mark (2018p.1) tracing the concept to two Latin words *Religio*, meaning 'restraint' and *Religiosum*, which denotes 'to show respect for something sacred, defines religion as an organised systems of beliefs and practises revolving around or leading to a transcendent spiritual experience'. This definition contrasts greatly with politics. According to Obafemi (1961 p1) 'politics is the science or the art of the managing public affairs'. Obama (2006p1) maintains that 'Politics depends on man's ability to persuade his fellow humans of common aims based on a common reality.

Despite the divergence hinted at above, religion and politics are reliable because they are both concerned with power, are both interdependent and expected to solve human problems. Buttressing the foregoing, Obafemi (ibid) posits that although they are different- religion being spiritual and politics being materialistic, nonetheless 'living man is a combination of matter and spiritand for him to be the real image of God,he must not only be well-developed and wealthy but must also function in harmony with and under the control of his spirit...Explicating the connection, Obama (2006 p1) averred that politics involves the compromise, the art of what's possible, but religion does not allow for compromise- It's the art of the impossible'. He affirms that religion seeks the interest of few; Politics seeks interest of all.

Language is a veritable instrument of power exploited by both politics and religion. It is not just a human vocal sound or graphic symbol via which man communicates- ideas, emotions, or achieves other communicative human purposes but an instrument of instilling and legitimising power. The foregoing is certainly true as the acquisition of power and its enforcement can be achieved in a number of ways: one of the obvious is through physical coercion, which involves the imposition of desire on a people, via force or violence- a style of leadership common with the military rule. However, in democracy, just like in religion, leaders depend on the onus of effective use of language to

# Journal Speech Act Analysis

**Robert H. Brookshire**



## **Journal Speech Act Analysis:**

The Pragmatics of Politeness Geoffrey Leech, 2014-06-16 This readable book presents a new general theoretical understanding of politeness. It offers an account of a wide range of politeness phenomena in English illustrated by hundreds of examples of actual language use taken largely from authentic British and American sources. Building on his earlier pioneering work on politeness, Geoffrey Leech takes a pragmatic approach that is based on the controversial notion that politeness is communicative altruism. Leech's 1983 book *Principles of Pragmatics* introduced the now widely accepted distinction between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of politeness; this book returns to the pragmalinguistic side, somewhat neglected in recent work. Drawing on neo-Gricean thinking, Leech rejects the prevalent view that it is impossible to apply the terms polite or impolite to linguistic phenomena. Leech covers all major speech acts that are either positively or negatively associated with politeness, such as requests, apologies, compliments, offers, criticisms, good wishes, condolences, congratulations, agreement and disagreement. Additional chapters deal with impoliteness and the related phenomena of irony, mock politeness and banter, mock impoliteness, and with the role of politeness in the learning of English as a second language. A final chapter takes a fascinating look at more than a thousand years of history of politeness in the English language. *The Routledge Handbook of Pragmatics* Anne Barron, Yueguo Gu, Gerard Steen, 2017-01-20 The *Routledge Handbook of Pragmatics* provides a state-of-the-art overview of the wide breadth of research in pragmatics. An introductory section outlines a brief history, the main issues and key approaches and perspectives in the field, followed by a thought-provoking introductory chapter on interdisciplinarity by Jacob L. Mey. A further thirty-eight chapters cover both traditional and newer areas of pragmatic research, divided into four sections: Methods and modalities; Established fields; Pragmatics across disciplines; Applications of pragmatic research in today's world. With accessible, refreshing descriptions and discussions and with a look towards future directions, this Handbook is an essential resource for advanced undergraduates, postgraduates and researchers in pragmatics within English language and linguistics and communication studies. **Cycle Of Discourse** Tantri R. Indhiarti, M.A.; Eni Maharsi, M.A., 2022-12-02 Furthermore, in this book, discourse analysis is treated as a rigorous way in texts that are organised as a series of overviews of the research topics such as narrative, media, discourse, gender and discourse, and institutional discourse throughout the social sciences. As seen in the book, the writers set out to answer many kinds of questions about language and about culture and society. It is performed by paying systematic attention to particular contexts and particular sets of utterances. This will help alleviate a problem in teaching discourse analysis that of ending up with the students who are unable to perform analyses going much beyond paraphrasing. **Proceedings of the Twentieth Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society** Morton Ann Gernsbacher, Sharon J. Derry, 2022-05-16 This volume features the complete text of the material presented at the Twentieth Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society. As in previous years, the symposium included an interesting mixture of papers on many topics from researchers with diverse

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**The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy**, 1972 Includes the proceedings of the Southwestern Philosophical Society

**The Journal of the American Forensic Association** American Forensic Association, 1986

**Politics and Identity Formation in Southeastern Nigeria** Apollos O. Nwauwa, Ogechi E. Anyanwu, 2019-05-20 Scholarly studies on the Igbo have been scant and fragmented Politics and Identity Formation in Southeastern Nigeria The Igbo in Perspective fills an obvious gap exploring the social cultural economic political and aesthetic traditions that distinguish the Igbo of southeastern Nigeria from their neighbors In scope content and analysis this book is both multi and cross disciplinary focusing on the experiences and forces that have shaped the Igbo society identity formation and sociocultural political and aesthetic representations Themes such as the importance of Igbo names in understanding the people's social linguistic religious gender and cultural identities as well as the intersection of language politics socialization education and aesthetic expression in the Igbo experience in Nigeria are interrogated in a refreshing fashion with an appreciable level of originality

**Analytic Philosophy of Religion** James Franklin Harris, 2013-03-14 When Gene Long editor of Kluwer's Handbook of Contemporary Philosophy of Religion Series first invited me to write the volume on Analytic Philosophy of Religion I accepted with great enthusiasm My only explanation for that enthusiasm now is that I was younger and more naive at the time Soon after starting work on the volume my enthusiasm was dampened by the daunting magnitude of the task I began as a sprinter and quickly settled into the pace of a long distance runner Although I considered myself well read in the subject I soon discovered that I had a great deal of research to do to be confident that I had considered all of the major contributions to the various discussions issues and of religion As I read more and more problems found within analytic philosophy books and articles I realized that I had rushed into a territory already well trodden by the angels I am greatly impressed by the sophistication and subtlety of philosophical argument that characterize the different debates in contemporary analytic philosophy of religion This volume covers a vast amount of material I have endeavored to provide the fairest possible reading of different authors and in cases where I include my own critical evaluations and develop my own positions I have endeavored to provide the strongest possible interpretations of the positions I criticize

*Journal of Research on Computing in Education*, 1999

**Dialogue Journal Communication** Jana Staton, 1988 The thesis of this volume is that writing done by students who control their own topics who have genuine purposes for writing and have a real known audience is quite different and valuable in its own right It forms a rich source of information about how young students think manage their social interactions and use language with competence to get

things done By selecting dialogue journal writing as a corpus for analysis it is possible to observe children s communicative competence in using written language purposefully apart from their ability to master a particular form of writing The central argument is that dialogue journal communication represents a kind of personal literacy prior to and more comprehensive than the particular literacies emphasized and assessed in schools The contents include a practitioner s view of the practice itself and a summary of the research study methods developed to analyze interactive written conversations

**Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism** ,1993 *Papers and Studies in Contrastive Linguistics* ,2001 Vol 1 contains papers delivered at the 2d Karpacz Conference on Contrastive Linguistics 1971

**Speech Act Performance** Alicia Martínez Flor, Esther Usó Juan, 2010 Speech acts are an important and integral part of day to day life in all languages In language acquisition the need to teach speech acts in a target language has been demonstrated in studies conducted in the field of interlanguage pragmatics which indicate that the performance of speech acts may differ considerably from culture to culture thus creating communication difficulties in cross cultural encounters Considering these concerns the aim of this volume is two fold to deal with those theoretical approaches that inform the process of learning speech acts in particular contextual and cultural settings and secondly to present a variety of methodological proposals grounded on research based ideas for the teaching of the major speech acts in second foreign language classrooms This volume is a valuable theoretical and practical resource not only for researchers teachers and students interested in speech act learning teaching but also for textbook writers wishing to have an informed opinion on the pedagogical implications derived from research on speech act performance

Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts ,2006 *Clinical Aphasiology* Thomas E. Prescott, 1991

Clinical Aphasiology Robert H. Brookshire, 1979 **Clinical Aphasiology** ,1975 Current Index to Journals in Education ,1998-10

**Naturalism and Deontology** Dennis A. Rohatyn, 1975 No detailed description available for Naturalism and deontology

Mental Retardation ,1998

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