

# Pragmatic Acts in Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari's Democracy Day and Independence Day Broadcasts in 2021

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## Abstract

The speeches of President Muhammadu Buhari have been studied from linguistic and non-linguistic perspectives. However, little attention has been given to his 2021 Democracy Day and Independence Day speeches, especially from pragmatic purview. Therefore, this study analyses the pragmatic acts in the broadcasts. Jacob Mey's pragmatic act theory served as the theoretical framework for the analysis. The analysis is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The data were downloaded from YouTube, transcribed, and subjected to pragmatic analysis. Based on quantitative analysis, act of informing appears twenty-nine (29) times representing 21.2%; boasting twenty-three (23) times, covering 16.8% and reassuring ten (10) times, representing 7.3%. Advising had seven (7) times, representing 5.1%, while other acts appeared below five (5) times. Also, the findings show that President Muhammadu Buhari performed one hundred and thirty-seven (137) acts in the broadcasts. All these acts were grouped into major categories: President Buhari informing Nigerians what his administration has achieved and set to achieve; promising to do better; boasting about his administration by comparing it to others', and reassuring Nigerians to do better if they shun those condemning his administration. All those acts were realised through voice (VCE), ref (REF), inference (INF), metaphor (M) and shared situation knowledge (SSK).

## 1. Introduction

Since Nigeria became independent on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1960, every Nigerian president or head-of-state presents a speech commemorating the historic event (Akindede, 2016). Nigeria started to celebrate Democracy Day on 29th May, 1999 to commemorate the day the military handed over to civilian government. This was done when General Abdulsalami Abubakar, the then Head of State handed over governance to President Olusegun Obasanjo. However, it was changed in 2018 by President Muhammadu Buhari from 29th May to 12th June in order to commensurate with June 12, 1993, which was believed to be the most free and fair election Nigeria had. Moreover, the essence of either the independence day or the democracy day broadcast by the head of government (president or head-of-state) is to send congratulatory messages to Nigerians; give a review of the state of the nation in terms of challenges and prospects (Olaniyan, 2016). In this current study, only the broadcasts made on Independence Day and Democracy Day celebrations of 2021 are relevant. It is on this backdrop that this study investigates the pragmatic acts in President Muhammadu Buhari's 2021 democracy and independence days' broadcasts.

President Muhammadu Buhari was born on 17<sup>th</sup> of December, 1942 in Daura, Katsina State, Nigeria. He ruled as the Head of State of Nigeria from 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1983 to August, 1985. He contested for the presidency several times before he later won in 2015. He assumed office on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2015, and was re-elected in 2019 for a second tenure.

## 2. Literature Review

Extant studies have been carried on the speeches of presidents and heads-of-state of some countries in the world. All these studies were either from linguistic or non –linguistic perspective. Such works include Kamalu and Iniworikabo (2016), Osisanwo, (2016), Osisanwo, (2017) Olaniyan (2016) Fram and Mcphil (2005), Ayeomomi and Akinkuolere (2012) and Ekhareafu and Ambrose (2015). Others are Amale, John and Zwalwap (2022), Amale, Barnabas and Likita (2022), Akinseye (2015) Koussouhun and Dossoumou (2015), Idegbekwe (2017), and Amale and John, (2022).

To this extent, Buhari speeches have been analysed both linguistically and non-linguistically. There is a myriad of works from the pragmatics (Osisanwo (2017) and discourse analysis (Amale, Barnabas and Likita, 2022; Amale, John and Zwalwap, 2022; Amale and John, 2022) purviews on President Muhammadu Buhari’s speeches, however, little attention has been given to his Democracy Day and Independence Day broadcasts of 2021. And this is the crux of this research. Therefore, this study was designed to investigate the dominant pragmatic acts in his 2021 Democracy Day and Independence Day celebrations. This is to determine the pragmatic acts and the pragmatic tools deployed by President Muhammadu Buhari. Moreover, those studies on President Muhammadu Buhari depended on secondary sources of data (newspapers) that have the tendencies for misrepresentations, misconstructions and misappropriations. Therefore, uncovering the pragmatic acts in his 2021 Independence Day and Democracy Day broadcasts becomes imperative, as this helps to investigate how he uses language to perform different acts.

Akinseye (2015) examines Buhari’s inaugural speech of 2015. She considers the speech titled: “I Belong to Everybody and I Belong to Nobody”. The study used the interpersonal metafunction of Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistic as its theoretical orientation. The study concentrated on the elements of mood, modality and pronouns in the speech. It shows that Buhari used subject-finite choice mood to inform and convince Nigerians of his commitments in his regime; modal verb “will” was used to express willingness, volition and commitment to good governance, while the pronouns “I” and “we are used as participants to enforce good governance.

Similarly, however, from pragmatic purview, Osisanwo (2017) investigates “I Belong to Everybody yet to Nobody” like Akinseye (2015), and Koussouhun and Dossoumou (2015). The target is to examine the pragmatic acts and the goals of the acts in the speech. The paper aimed at the understanding of the rhetorical and political agenda of President Muhammadu Buhari. Qualitative and quantitative analyses were used for the study. The Study used Jacob Mey’s (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory. The result of the study shows that there are nineteen (19) practs in the speech, and a total of ninety-nine (99) acts, which was targeted at achieving four (4) goals. Proposing, promising, stating, and assuring achieved the goal of revealing intention; acknowledging, thanking, remarking; saluting achieved the goal of admitting and appreciating;

appealing, reminding, instructing/calling, advising, hoping, charging, informing, extending achieved the goal of direction/directives; and identifying, describing and defining achieved the goal of giving detail on issues. In addition, the pragmatic acts were marked with some pragmatic tools, including shared situation knowledge, relevance, reference and inference.

In addition to studies on Buhari from pragmatic perspective, Okoro (2016) carried out a pragmatic analysis of selected speeches of Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari. The study adopted the Speech Act Theory of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), considering the illocutionary acts of expressive, commissive, declarative, directive, assertive and verdictive. Five Buhari speeches were purposively selected for the study. Examples of such speeches are: his formal declaration of interest for presidency, "My Manifestoes and Vision for Nigeria;" his speech at Chatham House, London; acceptance and inaugural speeches. Quantitative research methodology and descriptive survey method were used for the analysis. Based on the result, directive has 28%, assertive 60%, expressive 16%, declarative 20%, commissive 42%, verdictive 34%. In addition to the result obtained during the course of the research, it revealed that these speeches were characterised by a preponderance of assertive and commissive acts, which are mostly used as mobilization strategy, especially in political campaigns by candidates to persuade the electorate in order to be voted in.

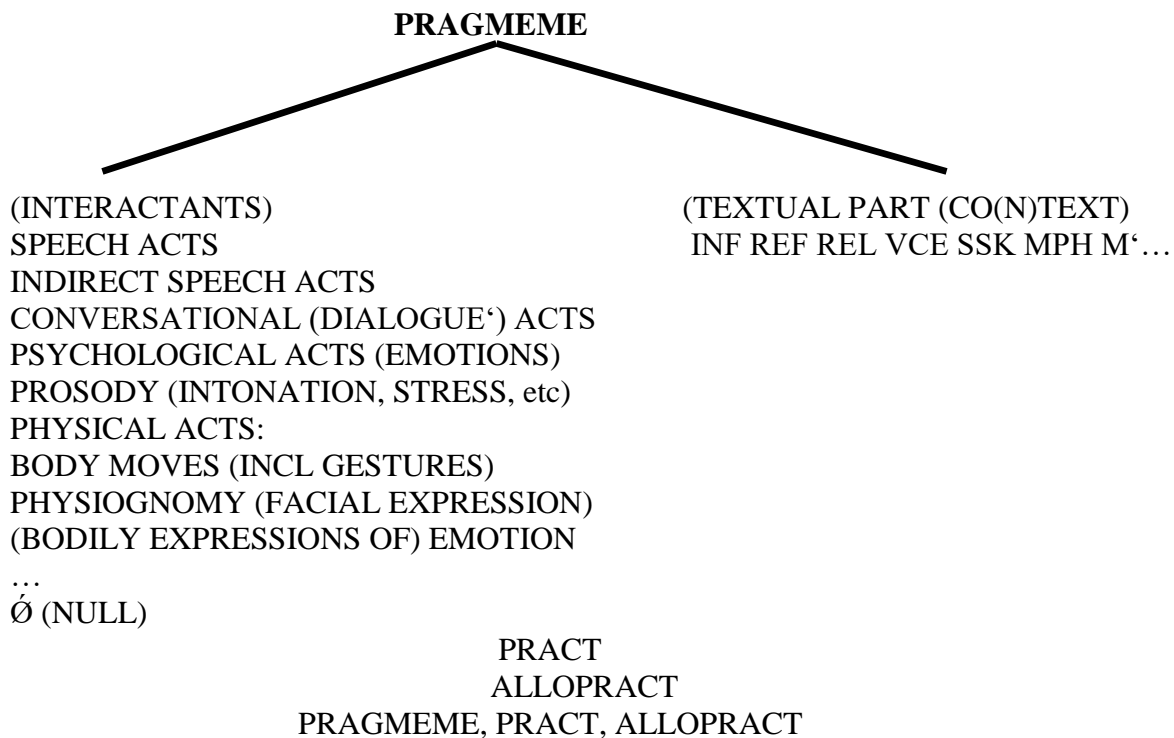
While from discourse analysis, Amale, Barnabas and Likita (2022) examine social actors' representations in President Muhammadu Buhari's Democracy Day. The data for the study comprises Buhari's broadcasts of 2021 and 2022 Democracy Day, and 2021 Independence Day of Nigeria. The transcribed texts of the broadcasts were downloaded from *The Guardian Newspaper's* website, and the excerpts needed for the analysis were extracted. The data were subjected to discourse analysis. Theo van Leeuwen's (2008) Social Actor Representation Theory served as the theoretical anchorage. The study revealed that President Muhammadu Buhari represents himself as the president of Nigeria, represents his administration as goal-oriented with priority on women and youths. The study is different from others in terms of theoretical perspective and methodology. Also, only 2021 Independence Day and Democracy Day's broadcasts served as data.

### 3. Theoretical Perspective

This study adopted Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Act. It was propounded by Jacob Mey in 2001. The theory was formed to carter for the shortfall of Speech Act Theory of J.L. Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). Although Pragmatic act and speech act theories are similar on the account of both being on language usage and pragmatic inclined, however, pragmatic act does not necessarily include specific acts of speech that could be said to pass for any particular illocutionary act, such as inviting, requesting, denying' and so on (Ikpeadua, 2012). Another noticeable is difference is that the pragmatic act prioritises on context as a central factor in determining meanings in a speaker's speech (Olorunsogo and Chukwu, 2021).

According to Odebunmi (2006), pragmeme is the central concept in the theory of pragmatic acts, while practs are the concrete occurrences of a pragmeme. Every pract is also an allopract (sub-pract) that is; a concrete and different realisation of a particular instantiation of a particular pragmeme. Mey's theory consists of a super-ordinate term, Pragmeme, which anchors "activity" and "textual" components of discourse. The activity part shows the roles of

the participants of discourse (interactants) while the textual part concerns the various contextual variables that interplay in discourse situations. Invariably therefore, the metapragmatic indexicality explains how pragmatic acts generate discourse.



**Fig. 1: A model of Pragmatic Acts (Mey 2001: 222)**

**4. Methodology**

The data for the study comprised President Muhamadu Buahri’s 2021 Democracy Day and Independence Day’s broadcasts. Jacob Mey’s 2001 Pragmatic Acts served as the framework. The research design is both qualitative and quantitative. The quantitative research design was used in calculating the frequency of each act identified in the two broadcasts. The two broadcasts were chosen as they marked the period where there were increased and consistent agitations on how the president tends to salvage Nigeria from challenges confronting her such as insecurity, COVID-19, poor infrastructural developments and others. Two of these broadcasts were purposively sampled because of their subject matters. The broadcasts were downloaded from YouTube; transcribed and the excerpts necessary for the analysis were elicited. The data were subjected to pragmatic analysis in order to observe the pragmatic acts performed by President Muhammadu Buhari through the use of the pragmatic tools in Mey’s Pragmatic Act Theory.

## 5. Analysis and Discussion

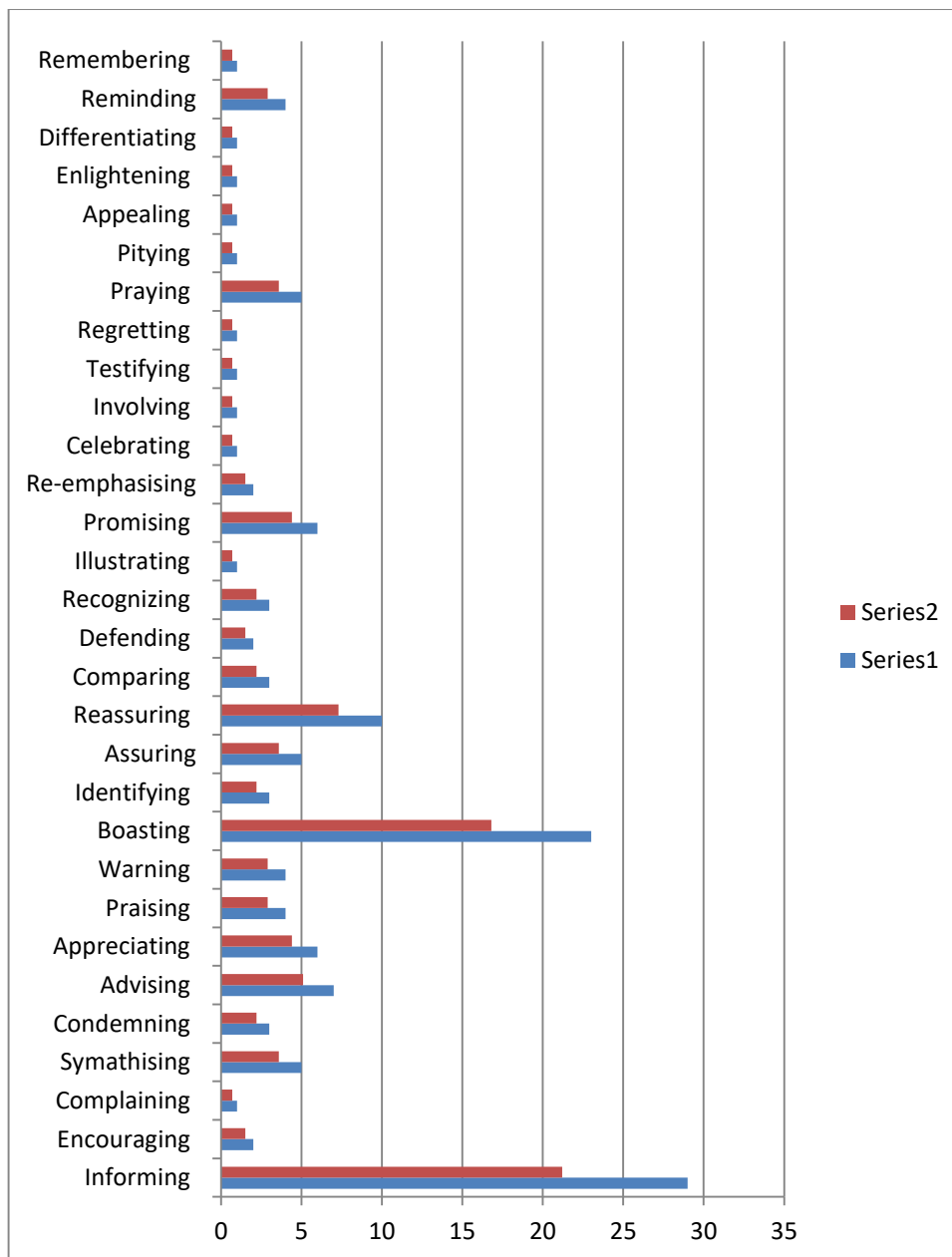
From the broadcasts of President Muhammadu Buhari on 2021 Democracy Day and Independence Day showed that he performed one hundred and thirty-seven (137) acts. These acts include informing, encouraging, complaining, sympathising, condemning, advising, appreciating, praising, warning, boasting, identifying, assuring, reassuring, comparing, defending, recognising, illustrating, promising, re-emphasising, celebrating, involving, testifying, regretting, praying, pitying, appealing, enlightening, differentiating and reminding. All these practs can be grouped into major categories: Buhari informing Nigerians about what his regime has achieved and it is set to achieve; promising to do better; boasting about his administration by comparing with that of his predecessors and reassuring Nigerians that he will do more if they shun those condemning his administration.

**Table 1:** A Tabular Representation of the Acts in PMB's Broadcasts

<i>Practs</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Informing	29	21.2
Encouraging	2	1.5
Complaining	1	0.7
Sympathising	5	3.6
Condemning	3	2.2
Advising	7	5.1
Appreciating	6	4.4
Praising	4	2.9
Warning	4	2.9
Boasting	23	16.8
Identifying	3	2.2
Assuring	5	3.6
Reassuring	10	7.3
Comparing	3	2.2
Defending	2	1.5
Recognizing	3	2.2
Illustrating	1	0.7
Promising	6	4.4
Re-emphasising	2	1.5
Celebrating	1	0.7
Involving	1	0.7
Testifying	1	0.7
Regretting	1	0.7
Praying	5	3.6
Pitying	1	0.7
Appealing	1	0.7
Enlightening	1	0.7

Differentiating	<i>1</i>	<i>0.7</i>
Reminding	<i>4</i>	<i>2.9</i>
Remembering	<i>1</i>	<i>0.7</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b><i>137</i></b>	<b><i>100</i></b>

From the above table, there are twenty-nine (29) acts of informing which represents 21.2% of all the acts observed. This act of informing has the highest percentage in the whole broadcasts. Boasting appeared twenty-three (23) times, covering 16.8%, while reassuring has ten (10) representing 7.3%. Also, advising had seven (7) representing 5.1%, while appreciating and promising have six (6) representing 4.4%; sympathising, assuring and praying occurred five (5) times with 3.6%; praising and warning have four (4) with 2.9%, while condemning, identifying, comparing and recognizing appeared three (3) times, which covered 2.2%. In addition, encouraging, re-emphasizing and defending appeared two (2) times covering 1.5%, while other acts such as complaining, celebrating, involving, testifying, regretting, praying, pitying, appealing, enlightening and differentiating appeared one (1) time each representing 0.7%



**Figure 1: A chart representing frequency of each pract identified in the broadcasts**

The second segment of the analysis was qualitative. This is where some of the practs identified were discussed, using the various pragmatic tools such as voice (VCE), reference (REF), metaphor (M), shared situation knowledge (SSK) as identified by Mey (2001).

## **Appreciating**

It is obligatory for president, head of government and other political holders to appreciate their followers anytime a platform is provided in a democratic system of government. And this is not left out in PMB's administration. This is typically exemplified in the excerpts 1-3 below:

**Excerpt 1:** It is with full **gratitude** to God that today, we celebrate Nigeria's sixty-first independence anniversary (Independence Day Address by President Muhammadu Buhari, 1st October, 2021).

President Muhammadu performs the act of appreciation in excerpt 1 to thank Nigerian on the occasion of 2021 Independence Day celebration. This was done through various pragmatic tools as recognized by Mey (2001). The first element that is evident is reference (REF). He made reference to the sixty-first independence anniversary of Nigeria. The use of collective voice (VCE) was deployed by President Muhammadu Buhari through the use of "we" to refer to all Nigerians showing their gratitude to God. There is shared situation knowledge (SSK) in the above excerpt, in the sense that those listening to President Muhammadu Buhari know that this is not the first independence of Nigeria, and during Independence Day celebration, the president, who is the head of government of the country, is expected to deliver a speech to commemorate that celebration.

Similarly, during the Democracy Day of 2021, President Muhammadu Buhari carried out the act of appreciation to all Nigerians unlike the first excerpt on Independence Day where the appreciated is channelled to God. In this President Buhari thanks Nigerians for their patience, attention, and how they joined hands to see Nigeria as the country they dreamed of.

**Excerpt 2:** I **thank** you for your patience and attention and more importantly your resolve to join hands in making Nigeria the country of our dream. Happy Democracy Day! God Bless us All, God Bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria (President Muhammadu Buhari's Speech on Democracy Day, 12th June, 2021).

In excerpt 2, reference (REF) is made to Nigerians via the use of "you". Most importantly, reference is made to Nigeria as a country in which Nigerians crave its development. Also, reference to God shows the religiosity of Nigerians. Finally, the use of Federal Republic of Nigeria is signified by the use of reference (REF) to Nigeria not being a country under other nations but a republic on its own. The voice (VCE) in the above excerpt is that of Buhari which stamps in his authority as the constitutionally-recognised president of Nigeria. Like earlier stated in the first excerpt on appreciating, both Presidents and Nigerians, and even those who listen or watch the broadcasts that are not from Nigeria know that every 1<sup>st</sup> October is the Independence Day, and in the day as such, the president deliver a broadcast. Through inference (INF) it can be deduced that Nigeria is a religious nation.

Furthermore, the act of appreciating can also be seen where President Muhammadu Buhari thanked the traditional, religious and community leaders in excerpt 3. He also appreciated the effort of some Nigerians who he believes promote peaceful co-existence and ways to settle conflicts in the communities.



**Excerpt 3:** At this point, I would want to sincerely **appreciate** the large number of our Traditional, Religious and Community leaders as well as other well-meaning Nigerians who, in their various fora are openly spreading the message of peaceful co-existence and conflict settlement through dialogue in their respective communities (President Muhammadu Buhari’s broadcast on Independence Day, 1st October, 2021).

The tools deployed by President Muhammadu Buhari are voice (VCE), reference (REF), shared situation knowledge (SSK) and inference (INF). Voice (VCE) was achieved as President used institutional voice to appreciate traditional, religious, community leaders and meaningful Nigerians who are promoting peaceful co-existence, and settling conflicts at different levels. Secondly, he referenced (REF) those who are promoting peaceful co-existence and settling conflict in Nigeria. Those mentioned are the traditional, religious, community and Nigerians who are promoting peaceful co-existence and settling disputes in Nigeria.

### **Informing**

It is a norm for most politicians to update their followers with what they are doing with the opportunity given to them to serve as leaders. It is on this Buhari uses this avenue to tell Nigerians what his administration is doing. Through the excerpts below, Buhari has performed the pragmatic act of informing, by informing Nigerians about the projects embarked upon and those set to be carried out by his administration.

**Excerpt 4: Nigeria’s Roadmap on Local Refining is on track** with the **Commissioning** of a Modular refinery in **Imo State**. A second is scheduled for **commissioning** by the end of this year in Edo State and the third one in Bayelsa State by 2022. In addition to the modular projects, we also have the two mega refinery projects coming up in Lagos and Akwa Ibom States (President Muhammadu Buhari’s Broadcast on Independence Day, 1st October, 2021).

In Excerpt 4, President Buhari informs Nigerians of the projects he embarked on or he is carrying out such as Integrated National Security and Waterways Protection Infrastructure, and the Deep Blue Project. He also informs Nigerians how the Boko Haram terrorists are surrendering; the recruitment exercise by the Nigerian Armed Forces and Police Force. In addition, the purchase of aircrafts for Air Force was not excluded. Through the use of reference (REF) to the Gulf of Guinea, Nigeria, the key projects being embarked by his administration were mentioned. He made use of reference (REF) to authenticate the information about his administration. Another element of reference (REF) is inclusion of the constitution and its subsection that discusses insecurity and welfare of Nigerians. Through the use of ‘I’ in the excerpt above showed the deployment of institutional voice (VCE) as the president of Nigeria who has the constitutional authority to assign responsibilities to whosoever that is fit. Mentioning some important projects showed the deployment of reference (REF) by President Muhammadu Buhari. Both President Muhammadu Buhari and his listeners (Nigerians and non-

Nigerians) ride on shared situational knowledge (SSK) on what is happening in Nigeria especially the case of Boko Haram insurgency and some projects that have been carried out by his administration.

Furthermore, the references to Boko Haram, purchase of fighter jets and the recruitment of personnel in the Nigeria Armed Forces and police force indicated the use of inference (INF). It can be inferred that President Muhammadu Buhari's administration has done justice to the war against insurgency, especially Boko Haram extremists to the extent they are now surrendering. It could also be inferred that Boko Haram would soon be a thing of the past. Another example of the act of informing Nigeria is given below. PMB has used medium to inform Nigerians during the democracy day of 2023 about the investments made by his administration made in order to promote businesses in Nigeria. He informs them that the business cats across agriculture, small and large business scales across all the 774 local governments in Nigeria. It is also a means to tell Nigeria that his administration his not biased in carrying out projects.

**Excerpt 5:** Several other initiatives, namely AgriBusiness/Small and Medium Enterprise Investment Scheme, the Non-oil Export stimulation Facility, the Targeted Credit Facilities operated across the 774 Local Governments. In the manufacturing sector the CBN – BOIN200 billion facility financed the establishment and operations of 60 new industrial hubs across the country, creating an estimated 890,000 direct and indirect jobs. The CBN's N50 billion Textile Sector intervention Facility increased capacity utilization of ginneries from 30% to nearly 90%. The Economic Sustainability Plan – our rebound plan for the COVID-19 pandemic developed in 2020 is currently being executed. The plan is primarily focused on the non-oil sector, which has recorded phenomenal growth contributing over 90% to the GDP growth in Q1 2021(President Muhammadu Buhari's Speech on Democracy Day, 12th June, 2021).

Reference (REF) was made to the aspects PMB promoted business in the country such as small and large scale businesses. Also, REF was used for local government, COVID, CBN and so on. Both the president and Nigerians have knowledge of those aspects that were referenced in the broadcasts of PMB through shared situation knowledge (SSK) business, numbers of local governments in Nigeria, CBN, COVID-19 and others. Through the use of "our", PMB deploys institutional voice (VCE) to show that his administration comprise others who are in-charge of some government parastatals and ministries.

### **Warning**

In excerpts 6-10, Buhari performs the act of warning. The warning is carried out against both international communities and some people who he believes are causing mayhems to the Nigerian society. And this act of warning is achieved through various pragmatic tools such as voice (VCE), inference (INF), reference (REF) and shared situation knowledge (SSK). This is exemplified thus:

**Excerpt 6:** I will take this opportunity to remind the global community that the current state of access to COVID-19 vaccines is unacceptable. We **cannot afford** a situation where a **handful of countries** keep the global vaccine supply to themselves **at the expense** of other nations. We must **act** now to accelerate equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. This is the message I conveyed to the international community in New York last week (Independence Day Address by President Muhammadu Buhari, 1st October, 2021).

“This is the message I conveyed to the international community in New York last week” authenticated the use of voice (VCE) by Muhammadu Buhari to warn those countries that were hoarding COVID-19 vaccines at the expense of other nations. Reference (REF) was used in the excerpt to reference COVID-19 as the pandemic ravaging the world, and the mentioning of international community and New York also exemplified reference to where the warning against those nations hoarding the vaccines was delivered. Both President Buhari and his listeners rode on the shared situational knowledge (SSK) that there is global fight against the spread of COVID-19 and the promotion of the use of vaccines by nation states. Furthermore, from the excerpt above, it can be inferred (INF) that President Muhammadu is one of the most influential presidents on global issues. Unlike excerpt 6 which indicated the act of warning carried out against nations, excerpt 7 showed the act of warning against those inciting violence through verbal and nonverbal means in Nigeria.

**Excerpt 7:** Therefore, as a Government, we are ready to **arrest** and **prosecute** all persons **inciting** violence through words or action. Our resolve for a peaceful, united and one Nigeria remains resolute and unwavering (President Muhammadu Buhari’s Broadcast on Independence Day, 1st October, 2021).

The first tool deployed by President Muhammadu Buhari is voice (VCE). He deploys a collective constitutional voice to speak as the representative and the head of the Nigerian government, especially through the pronoun “we”. Secondly, reference (REF) was made to the government of Nigeria. And through inference (INF), it can be deduced that President Muhammadu’s administration does not have tolerance for violence and even those who instigate such civil unrest. Finally, both President Muhammadu Buhari and the listeners dwelled on the knowledge that the Nigerian society is characterised by civil unrest in virtually all its geo-political zones.

**Excerpt 8:** The seeds of violence are planted in people’s heads through words. Reckless utterances of a few have led to losses of many innocent lives and destruction of properties. Such unfiltered and unsubstantiated lies and hate speeches by a few evil persons must be stopped. **Our media houses and commentators must move away from just reporting irresponsible remarks** to investigating the truth behind all statements and presenting the facts to readers. We must all come out and speak against the lies being peddled e for a peaceful, united and one Nigeria remains resolute and

unwavering (President Muhammadu Buhari's Broadcast on Independence Day, 1st October, 2021).

Metaphor (MPH) is used where the incitement of violence was directly compared to seed planting in the head of people by President Muhammadu Buhari. The warning was directed to some unspecified individuals and media houses who he believes must desist from disseminating information that would promote the act of violence in Nigeria. In carrying out the warning act, reference (REF) was made to some individuals, media house and Nigeria. Like in most cases, Nigerians and President Buhari rode on the shared situation knowledge (SSK) that the level of hate speeches heightened when he (President Muhammadu Buhari) came into power in 2015. Also, they also have the idea that media houses have been accused of passing pieces of information that are not authentic. Finally, from the excerpt above, Buhari employs collective voice (VCE) to show the necessity to remain resolute in maintaining peaceful co-existence.

**Excerpt 9:** Unfortunately, like in most conflict situations, some Nigerian criminals are taking undue advantage of a difficult situation and profiteering therefrom with the misguided belief that adherence to the democratic norms handicaps this administration from frontally and decisively tackling them. We are already **addressing** these obstacles and we will soon bring some of these culprits to **justice** (President Muhammadu Buhari's Speech on Democracy Day, 12th June, 2021).

Shared situation knowledge (SSK) shows there are some opportunists who are using some of the challenges in Nigeria to their advantage. It also rode on the shared situation knowledge (SSK) that President Muhammadu Buhari has been fighting against them. A constitutional voice (VCE) was used to indicate that all hands have been on deck to ensure that those who are instigating conflict are brought to book by Buhari's administration. References were made to some Nigerians, Buhari's administration and the justice to be carried out on those who are caught in the act of instigating others into violence. So from the excerpts that signify the act of warning, PMB has deployed various pragmatic tools in his 2021 Independence Day and Democracy Day celebrations as opined by Mey (2001) that nations that are hoarding COVID-19 vaccines would be sanctioned. Also, those who are using the opportunities of the challenges confronting Nigeria at their own advantage, and those instigating others into various violent acts would not be spared. The last excerpt considered the act of warning carried out by PMB, which was sent to Nnamdi Kanu, Sunday Adeyemo, popularly known as Sunday Igboho, and those who are sponsoring them.

**Excerpt 10:** We shall continue to work on dialogue based solutions to address legitimate grievances. But we remain ready to take decisive actions against secessionist agitators and their sponsors who threaten our national security. The recent arrests of Nnamdi Kanu and Sunday Adeyemo, and the ongoing investigations being conducted have revealed certain high-profile financiers behind these individuals. We are vigorously pursuing these financiers including one identified as a serving member of the national assembly. Fellow Nigerians, this is a clear example of how people abandon their

national leadership positions for their selfish gains. Instead of preaching unity, they are funding and misleading our youths to conduct criminal acts that sometimes lead to unfortunate and unnecessary loss of lives and property. As the so-called leaders run abroad to hide, our innocent youths are misled and left in the streets to fight for their senseless and destructive causes (President Muhammadu Buhari's Broadcast on Independence Day, 1st October, 2021).

A collective voice (VCE) is employed to show that Buhari's administration comprise various individuals who work cooperatively to ensure that the agenda of the government is achieved. In this, PMB represents himself as the head of the government. Through reference (REF) Nnamdi Kanu and Sunday Adeyemo are identified as actors who are instigating others to agitate for the secession of the various. And this act of theirs is one of the things that the Nigerian government frowns right, especially considering the experience of the Nigeria-Biafra War of 1967-1970. Also, reference (REF) is made to the position of those sponsoring them. They are identified as members of the National Assembly.

PMB and his listeners rode on the shared situation knowledge (SSK) on the agitation for the secession of Biafra by Nnamdi Kanu and the secession of Yoruba nation by Sunday Adeyemo. Similarly both President Muhammadu Buhari and his listeners have knowledge that there are some financiers of the movements mentioned above.

### **Remembering the efforts of Nigerians**

President Muhammadu Buhari uses the Independence Day and Democracy Day broadcasts to thank God for given Nigerians a day like that. However, he uses this avenue to remember those who fought for the independence of Nigeria irrespective of their ethnic affinities.

**Excerpt 11:** For 1st of October 1960 to happen, all hands were on deck. **East, West, North** all came together to celebrate freedom. Today should not only serve as a reminder of the day the British handed over the reins of power to Nigerians, but also **unified** Nigerians from all ethnic groups, religions and regions.... Today, despite the challenges we face, most Nigerians still **maintain** the spirit of 1st October. That's positive outlook and **determination** to make Nigeria a peaceful and prosperous nation. It is due to this **collective attitude** that Nigeria **doggedly** continues to remain a united and indivisible nation (Independence Day Address by President Muhammadu Buhari, 1st October, 2021).

Buhari performed the act of remembering Nigerians what happened on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1960 through reference (REF). Through this act of remembrance, Nigerians or those listening to the president's broadcasts have idea of what happened when Nigeria gained independence from the Great Britain, and what ensued during the Nigeria Civil War of 1967-1970 through Shared Situation Knowledge (SSK).

### **Promoting and boasting of his administration**

In this situation, the president of Nigeria is not informing his listeners what his government is doing rather, he is trying to promote his government, especially in the aspect of handling COVID-19. He boasts of other measures put in place to ensure the purchase of more vaccines.

**Excerpt 12:** **Despite** the global inequity in access to vaccines, the Government of Nigeria has continued to **explore** all available options to ensure Nigerians have free access to safe and effective **vaccines**. Some five million vaccine doses have been **administered** to Nigerians through efforts led by the National Primary Health Care Development Agency and **we will continue to explore options** for purchase or acquisition of **vaccines** such as through COVAX and the African **Vaccine Acquisition Trust** (President Muhammadu Buhari's Broadcast on Independence Day, 1st October, 2021).

The pragmatic tools deployed in the excerpt above by President Muhammadu Buhari include reference (REF), voice (VCE), inference (INF), Shared Situational Knowledge and relevance (REL). On the aspect of reference, the president of Nigeria on his 2021 Independence Day broadcast, made reference to government of Nigeria, Nigerians, National Primary Health Care Development Agency. This has helped to promote his concerns over Nigerians. The involvement of government in carrying out different responsibilities in ensuring that COVID-19 in Nigeria is combated has brought the institutional authority of President Buhari through the use of voice (VCE) in the excerpt. Both the government and the populace have an idea on how COVID-19 ravaged not only Nigeria, but the whole world.

### **Appealing to Nigerians**

**Excerpt 13:** I will therefore **appeal** to Nigerians not to take COVID-19 lightly, adhere to public health and social measures, **put your mask** on and **get vaccinated**. We can control this pandemic, but it requires effort on everybody's part. The investments we made in response to COVID-19 will also serve our country to tackle any future disease outbreaks or pandemics (Independence Day Address by President Muhammadu Buhari, 1st October, 2021).

The pragmatic act that is carried out in the above excerpt by President Muhammadu Buhari is appeal. This is seen where he appealed to Nigerians not to take the COVID-19 pandemic lightly. This pragmatic act is achieved through different pragmatic tools. Voice (VCE) was deployed to show Buhari's authority as the president of Nigeria. Also, reference was made to COVID-19, mask and vaccine. Furthermore, Buhari and the addressees, Nigerians, are aware of COVID-19 and the measures of avoiding contracting it such as the use of face mask and getting vaccinated.

### **Reassuring Nigerians to do better in his administration**

In this segment, PMB has reassured Nigerians of his efforts to provide adequate protection to lives and property; putting an end to insecurity; combating COVID-19 and other challenges confronting Nigeria. And these acts of reassuring were carried out using some of the pragmatic tools identified by Mey (2000). Examples of excerpts where the act of reassuring was performed are given below:

**Excerpt 14:** Dear Nigerians, I will be the first to admit that in spite of our efforts and achievements which are there for all to see, there is still much more to be done and we are doing our best in the face of scarce resources and galloping population growth rate that consistently outstrips our capacity to provide jobs for our populace. Our over-all economic target of lifting 100 million Nigerians out of poverty in 10 years is our goal notwithstanding COVID-19 (President Muhammadu Buhari's Speech on Democracy Day, 12th June, 2021).

Well, in the first part of the excerpt indicated the act of identifying; however, the concentration of the analysis is on the part where he reassured Nigerians that the challenges confronting them would not make him stop. The first noticeable pragmatic tool deployed by President Muhammadu Buahri was reference (REF). This was through referencing of the addressees, Nigerians. Similarly, those who have benefitted from the programme set by his administration were statistically represented. Secondly, PMB employs authoritative voice (VCE) to address Nigerians as their president. In the same vein, he uses institutional voice to indicate that his administration comprise other officials who are working effortlessly to ensure that Nigerians enjoy the dividends of democracy.

In addition, PMB made reference to the challenge confronting his administration in achieving its set goal. And this challenge is COVID. Furthermore, through shared situation knowledge (SSK), Nigerians and PMB have ideas on what happened during COVID 19 pandemic, and some of the projects being embarked upon by PMB are not new to them.

**Excerpt 15:** As your President, I remain committed to providing an enabling environment for a free, fair and credible electoral system under my tenure (President Muhammadu Buhari's Speech on Democracy Day, 12th June, 2021).

In the preceding excerpt, the president uses institutional voice to identify himself as the constitutional head of government in Nigeria. He reassures Nigerians in conducting free and fair election come 2023.

**Excerpt 16:** Government will continue, with greater level of peoples' participation and in collaboration with our international partners, to improve the security architecture, reduce enabling environment for criminality to thrive and eliminate opportunities for terrorism financing (President Muhammadu Buhari's Broadcast on Independence Day, 1st October, 2021).

The major tool deployed to reassure Nigerians in is reference (REF) to government. He made reference to government as an institutional arm which is saddled with the responsibility of partnering with other international bodies to ensure peace and stability in Nigeria. The use of shared situation knowledge (SSK) has made the listeners to know that Nigeria has been bedeviled with various criminal activities not only during PMB's regime, but which started from other regimes. It can be inferred (INF) too that Nigerians and some international bodies have questioned the capability of PMB's administration in tackling insecurity, and this has made him to reassure Nigerians and other listeners that his administration will partner with other bodies to see that lasting solutions are proffered on insecurity.

## 6. Conclusion

To sum it up, this work analyses the pragmatic acts in the broadcasts of President Muhammadu Buhari's Democracy Day and Independence Day of 2021. And this was done through the application of Jacob Mey's (2000) Pragmatic Act theory. The findings showed that act of informing appeared twenty-nine (29) times representing 21.2%; boasting, twenty-three (23) times covering 16.8%; reassuring with ten (10) representing 7.3%. Advising had seven (7) representing 5.1%, while other acts appeared below five (5) times. Also, it was discovered that PMB performed one hundred and thirty-seven (137) acts in the broadcasts. All these practs were grouped into major categories: Buhari informing Nigerians about what his regime has achieved and set to achieve; promising to do better; boasting about his administration by comparing it to others, and reassuring Nigerians to do better if they shun those condemning his administration. All those acts are realised through voice (VCE), ref (REF), inference (INF), metaphor (M) and shared situation knowledge (SSK). The study concludes that the broadcasts of presidents and heads of government like that of President Muhammadu Buhari are characterised with various pragmatic acts, and it recommends that further studies should be conducted on the ideologies underpinned in his broadcasts.

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