
AN ANALYSIS OF REPRESENTATIVE ACTS IN THE ALÁÀFIN OF ÒYÓ'S PRAISE POETRY

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Receive: 29 July 2024; accepted for publication 29 November 2024.

DOI: 10.13165/SMS-24-13-1-05

Abstract. In everyday interactions, people often convey their intentions indirectly, a concept explored in the realm of illocutionary Acts (Searle, 1967), which examines how speakers convey meaning and achieve communicative goals beyond the literal words spoken. This research is aimed to analyse one of the classes of illocutionary act of Representative in the praise poetry of the Alaafin Oyo. The classes of representative speech acts were analysed based on the Searle theory. The illocutionary representative acts in the Oriki are claiming, reporting, stating, informing, affirming, declaring, concluding. This research was analysed by applying descriptive qualitative method and data were taken from the Oriki Alaafin that contain representative illocutionary speech acts. The researcher used observational method, Participatory and note taking technique method in collecting the data. It is found that there are representative illocutionary speech Acts in the Oriki Alaafin in different context and these are there to state the fact about the Alaafin's power of authority as believed by the chanters.

Keywords: praise poetry in Oriki of Alááfin Oyo, illocutionary acts, chanting.

Introduction

This study seeks to decipher the representative acts in the Oriki of Alaafin Oyo. The three sorts of acts that make up a speech are locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. A locutionary act is the act of “saying something,” an illocutionary act refers to the manner and context in which locutions are utilized¹, and a perlocutionary act refers to the potential impact on the listener². Searle³ later proposed the following division of illocutionary acts: Assertives(Representatives, Commissive, Declaratives, Directives and Expressives speech acts. Moreover, this research chooses one illocutionary act, that is, Assertive also known as Representative speech which is often found in Oriki Alááfin of Òyó. There are many speech acts that attracts attention from linguists for different reasons. Assertive not only contributes to the main essence in question of an utterance, but rather it commits the speaker to the truth. They are fact statements⁴. These expressions are related to facts like stating, information, confessing, boasting, predicting, or speech that are facts only in the oriki of Alaafin Oyo.

Early Scholarly Works

Many scholars have researched on Speech acts. Amongst whom are Austin (1962), Searle (1967,2014), Yule (1996), Adegbija(1999), Friday-Otun (2012), to mention just a few. The speech acts used in the Alááfin's Oriki are heavily loaded with meaning. The analysis of these speech acts reveals to us the intentions of the chanters as well as the authorial intentions and therefore is of great significance. Searle ⁵(1969) came up with five basic kinds of speech act that one can perform in speaking depending on what the speaker's purpose is in expressing the proposition. He classified speech acts into five categories of representatives or assertives, directives, commissives, expressive, and declarations. First and foremost, representatives or assertive. According to Searle⁶, the purpose of Assertive class is to commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition. That is to say the speaker wants to make the listener believe the truth of what he or she said. It is the Assertive speech act that most closely resembles Austin's constative utterance. The speaker asserts a proposition that represents a condition or a state of affairs that in principle could be true or false. Assertive speech acts are statements of fact, getting the viewer to form or attend a belief. Here, the speaker's words reveal his beliefs, and he/she is uttering about the external world. This class includes stating, suggesting, criticizing, replying, concluding, predicting, denying, disagreeing and reporting. Directives: are characterized by their attempts

1 Searle, John. (2014). What Is a Speech Act?. *Philosophy in America* 221–39.

2 Morales-Ramirez, Itzel, & Anna Perini. (2014). Discovering Speech Acts in Online Discussions: A Tool-Supported Method. Pp. 137–44 in *In CAiSE (Forum/Doctoral Consortium)*.

3 Searle, J.R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge University Press.

4 Hess, L. (2018). Perspectival Expressives. *Journal of Pragmatics* 129:13–33. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2018.02.007>

5 Searle, *supra note*, 3.

6 *Ibid*.

by the speaker to get the hearer to do something, e.g. ordering, requesting, request, direct, ask, argue, tell, require, demand, forbid, etc. Commissives: are illocutionary acts whose point is to commit the speaker to some future course of action. The class involves performative functions such as promising, vowing, offering, volunteering, accepting, etc. in using commissive, the speaker undertakes to make the world fit the words. Expressives: The illocutionary goal of expressive is to express the psychological state about some affairs. By expressive, the speaker should express his psychological state. Typical cases when the speaker curses, praises, appreciates, apologizes, blames, thanks, pardons, condoles, welcomes, commiserates, complains, laments, protests, etc, the listener are examples of the performative acts of expressives. Declarations: they suggest that successful performance guarantees that the propositional content corresponds to the world, they bring about some change e.g. Demising, Christening, Naming, Baptizing, Sentencing, Firing, Adjourning, Approving, Confirming, Dissapproving, Applying, etc.

These categories enable the better understanding of Oríki meaning and chanters intentions in it. As observed by Yule⁷ (1996), "The usefulness of speech act analysis is in illustrating the kinds of things we can do with words and identifying some of the conventional utterance forms we use to perform specific functions".

Therefore, the five Searle's category of illocutionary speech acts of representative or assertive, commissives, directives, expressive and declarations represent the five different functions or uses of speech acts in the oríki. That is, when chanters speak in the oríki they are doing one or more of the following: asserting, commissing, directing, expressing, or declaring. Assertives or representatives, are speech acts which have a truth value that state what the speaker believes to be the case, or not. In using an assertive, the speaker makes words fit the world. We are going to see examples of assertives in the Oríki as shown below.

Concept of Representative Acts in Oríki of Alááfin Oyo.

The purpose of a speaker in performing representatives is to commit him or herself to the belief that the propositional content of the utterance is true. Statements of fact, assertions, conclusions, and descriptions are the examples of this type of speech acts. The acts in which the words show what speakers believe. It also refers to speech act that describes statement of a fact, a report and a conclusion. Yule⁸ said that this kind of speech act that assert what the speaker believes to be the case or not. It includes the acts of stating, describing, informing, reminding, concluding, and reporting.

We come across some samples of assertive in oríki Alaaafin under consideration. Let us examine the following speech act in the light of Searle's speech act theory. For example, in oríki Alááfin Àtibà :-

⁷ Yule, G. (1966). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press. p.58

⁸ *Ibid*.

Sample 1

Ó pà'ílú méje pò,
Adéwínbí ñbá gbogbo wọn jagun lọ

*He combined seven towns
 Adewimbi fights them all along*

The above excerpt performs the functions of claiming, reporting, stating as well as informing. It is a statement of fact that the chanter wants the listener to believe. Another example in the oríkì Alááfin Àtìbà again.

Sample 2

*O kàrá ìjagà teégún teégún
 Eégun gbogbo wọn a si jó lònngbà-longba*
 You conquered the ijaga people and their masquerades.
 Their masquerades dances lazily

This first line of the chant was directed to the Alááfin, while the second was to him and audience. While the first was to extol his virtues in conquering Ìjaga town, the second was performed with a tone of happiness, about what later happened to the masquerades of Ìjaga people he had earlier conquered. It is a concluding speech act with a tone of happiness from the chanters affirming his power of authority.

Sample 3

Ó gòkè Ọ̀wínnì , Ọ̀yínbọ̀n àgbáánlá
 He climbed on Owinni hill and shot gun

In her oríkì chant, the chanter was telling the audience about Alááfin, informing them about what he did at a place called Ọ̀wínnì, a small village near Ọ̀yọ́ town. Reporting what he did and what happened.

Sample 4

Àísí nílé Mábòòsàjé
 Àwọ̀n ọ̀mọ kẹ́ékẹ́ékéé ilé n dásàa kòlòkòlò
 Because Maboosaje was not at home
 The children are playing hide and seek.

Chanter informed the audience that, young children became so playful when the King wasn't around at a time, claiming and concluding that the children were so free because of his absence.

Sample 5

Ailéri ogunlójú eni ó bá juBabaílá eni ló

Babalááfin, a ò gbòdò sòrò ìjà lójú omọ elépè Ìṣèkè

And none dares boast one's prowess in physical combat in the circle of deft wrestlers

One can not boast of fight in the presence of elépè Ìṣèkè's child

Chanter is in the above informing the hearer of the outcome if a person boast about war where the king is. The speech is indirectly forbidden and warning the listeners not to do so.

Sample 6

Bó n ṣenuwíyé wúyé

Oògùn ní n sà

Bó n lọlọ ṣúkúṣúkú

Òògùn ní n lẹ

He's grinding and mixing up herbs.

When he mumbles to himself,

He's invoking the spirits.

When he's grinding hard on his stone mill.

Another fact from the chanter to her listeners declaring what the king does anytime he performs an action of chewing, mumbling or mixing something people do not know about. The oriki claimed to be the fact since the chanter is closer to the king than any of the listeners or the hearers.

The oriki samples above are either giving out information about the king by concluding, claiming, reporting or stating the statements of facts of the king to the audience or listeners thereby creating fear in most cases to the minds of the listeners and awareness where necessary as well as eulogising their husband and his fore bearers. Most lines gives out a particular information asserting the power and position of the Alaafin

Conclusion

The objective of this research paper was to establish the uses and significance of representative speech acts in Alaafin of Oyo's praise poetry. This study shows that the illocutionary of representative category of speech act used in the oriki has its own significant role to play in the context of the oriki itself. The study demonstrates that the chanters while chanting the oriki under consideration use representative speech acts to assert through their utterances the facts or beliefs and the actual state of affairs which they believe to be true. In other words, by representatives, they represent the world as they believe to be the case. The chanters use representatives to assert and justify their actions, beliefs and assumptions. As shown in the examples above, representative speech act has a specific use and significance

in praising the Alááfin. Thus, the chanters use the speech acts to communicate the meaning intentions.

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REPREZENTACINĖS KALBOS RAIŠKA ALÁÀFIN OF ÒYÓ'S ŠLOVINANČIOJE POEZIJOJE

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Santrauka. Kasdienėje sąveikoje žmonės dažnai perteikia savo ketinimus netiesiogiai. Ši netiesioginė ketinimų išraiška tyrinėjama kaip retorikos ilokuciniai šnekos veiksmai (Searle, 1967), atsižvelgiant į tai kaip kalbėtojai perteikia prasmę ir siekia komunikacinių tikslų pralenkiančių tiesiogines žodžių prasmes. Šiuo tyrimu siekiama išanalizuoti vieną iš ilokucinių veikslių Alaafin Oyo karališkojo šlovinimo poezijoje. Reprezentatyviosios kalbos aktų klasės buvo analizuojamos remiantis Searle teorija. Ilokucinio akto iniciatoriaus veiksmai Orikyje suprantami kaip reikalavimas, pranešimas, pareiškimas, informavimas, patvirtinimas, teigimas, išvados. Tyrimas atliktas taikant aprašomąjį kokybinį metodą, o duomenys paimti iš Oriki Alaafin deklaratyviosios poezijos, kurioje aptinkama reprezentatyvių ilokucinių kalbos aktų. Renkant duomenis buvo taikomi stebėjimo metodas aktyvaus įsitraukimo ir pastabų žymėjimo metodai. Nustatyta, kad Oriki Alaafine skirtinguose kontekstuose aptinkama reprezentatyvių ilokucinių kalbos aktų, jie skirti išreikšti deklamuojančiųjų poeziją Alaafino galios konstatavimui ir šlovinimui.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: šlovinimo poezija Aláàfin Oyo Oríkì, ilokucijos aktai, deklamuojamoji poezija.

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