

Pragmatic Acts in Selected Sermons of Bishop David Oyedepo

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**Being an M A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Languages and Literature,
Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria**

**In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of Master of Arts
Degree (MA) in English Language**

Supervisor; Ass. Prof Anjola Robbin

2022

Certification

This is to certify that Oludolapo O. Adelokun with matriculation number LCU/PG/001854 carried out this research work titled 'Pragmatic Acts in Selected Sermons of David Oyedepo: A Jacob Mey's 2001 Approach' in the Department of Languages and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo state, for the award of Master Degree (M.A) in English and that this has not been previously submitted.

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Dedication

This research work is dedicated to the TRINITY

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Acknowledgments

This is to formally acknowledge the opportunity given to me by Lead City University, Ibadan, to do my master's programme. It has been a memorable and instructive period in my life. Appreciating also the access to the use of the libraries of Lead City University, Ibadan, University of Ibadan, Ibadan and Dominion University, Ibadan. The encouragement of the Provost of Postgraduate College, Prof. Afolakemi Oredein and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Education, Prof. Donald Odeleye.

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Even though the above-mentioned institutions and persons have assisted in the process of this research work, I alone stand responsible for the errors, if any, found in this work

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Abstract

This study examined the pragmatic acts in selected sermons of Bishop David Oyedepo accounting for the pragmatic features of the sermons. The study identified the thematic preoccupation of the sermons, described the underlying contexts, analysed the pragmatic acts and explained the pragmatic implications of the sermons. Using exclusively the resources of Jacob Mey's 2001 pragmatic act theory as framework, the methodology is qualitative. The research design is content analysis of four purposively selected sermons out of an average of eleven thousand, eight hundred and eight sermons. Data was sourced and collected online employing the top-down content analytical approach in revealing the thematic content of the sermons, the underlying context of the themes, the pragmatic acts and their implications. The work highlights the themes of gratitude, faith, marriage, financial dominion, giving and humility within the contextual constraints of history, philosophy, prayer, war, relationship and thanksgiving. The themes and underlying contexts runs through the cores of the practs performed, the practs of assuring, informing, re-enlightening, notifying/clarifying, illustrating/exemplifying, prompting/ instructing/ directing, confessing/prophesying, warning/advising. The findings reveal that fifty-nine excerpts were analysed from the data, six pragmatic themes identified, six pragmatic contexts established, eight practs classified with four pragmatic implications discovered all interjected with pragmatic tools of relevance (REL), inference (INF), reference (REF), shared situation knowledge (SSK), voice (VCE), metaphor (M) and conversational acts which runs through the data. The pragmatic implications explained the evocation of the power of God, demystifying the personality of God, lexicalizing historical antecedents and reiterating divine assurances. The study is a significant addition to existing studies on the application of Mey's Pragmatic theory to the study of religious discourse and a veritable tool for advancing pedagogical skills in mission schools and churches. The study recommends further studies employing multiple theoretical frameworks.

Keywords: pragmatics, sermons, practs, pragmatic act theory, prayer

Word Count: 300

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List of Acronyms

Abbreviation	Meaning	Page
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome	4
#EndSARS	End Special Anti - robbery Squad	5
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis	7
EC	Ethnography of Communication	7
AT	Action Theory	7
AVCNU	Association of Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities	11
SFG	Systemic Functional Linguistics	26
TGG	Transformational Generative Grammar	27
SAT	Speech Act Theory	28
PAT	Pragmatic Act Theory	29
SBU	Situation Bound Utterance	29
SCA	Socio-Cognitive Approach	29
ACS	American Christian Sermons	40
WAP	White American Preachers	40
AAP	African American Preachers	40
SCK	Shared Cultural Knowledge	45
VAT	Visual Act Theory	50
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease	53
MPT	Mey's Pragmatic Theory	62
INF	Inference	68
REF	Reference	68

REL	Relevance	68
VCE	Voice	69
M	Metaphor	69
SSK	Shared Situation Knowledge	69
VLC	Visible Light Communication	96
BDOS	Bishop David Oyedepo's Sermon	98

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

Among all the creatures on Earth, human beings are unique.. Language sets him apart from every other beings. Language is the backbone of every communication transaction in every human community. Language is a community tool that helps to grow and enrich the culture of a given community or people. In the account of the tower of Babel¹ in the Bible, language was what gave the people a unifying purpose for their proposed project and it is the same tool, God used language also to stop the dream and its fulfilment. Language is a force that is as old as man.

The founding fathers of Sociology all agree that Language is a communicative tool that binds society to give it a human face². Language is pervasive³. It is found everywhere you find a human society. There is no human cluster where language does not take the leading role. It is the means of communication within and outside a community. Language possesses characteristics² as systematic, arbitrary, dynamic, and vocal. This is similar to the definition of language as being a vocal human sound⁴.

The Prague school accounts for language as a social phenomenon which can be analysed synchronically and diachronically having in mind the forms and changes it undergoes at different times⁵. In this school, language is classified into two parts: langue which is the structure or grammar and parole which means language in use⁵. To the structural grammarians language study was referred to as Linguistics⁵. Having defined Sociology as the science of society, every component of society which

includes language must be studied from a scientific perspective⁶. Structural grammarians see Linguistics as the scientific study of the human language⁵.

The study of language from a scientific stand has generated a field of language theories. These theories form the framework by which language is analysed, researched, scrutinised and studied. This includes the language of religion. One of the stages of societal growth is theological⁷. Religion is a social institution and a concept for growth within a society, its language attracts scholastic appraisal.

Religious beliefs might not be verifiable scientifically, its language can, to a large extent, be studied except the spiritual language which pentecostals refer to as speaking in tongues or 'glossolalia'⁸. To the pentecostals, it is a heavenly language which is sacred and can only be decoded by spiritual beings. Buttressing this with the symbolic interactionist theory, religion consist of a frame of hieroglyphs employed by the society to derive meanings to the complicated issues of human existence⁹. To the many complex matters of existence, even when it is due to share ignorance, it is thrown back to religion and this is why religion is defined as the worshipping of society¹⁰. The breath of a good number of societies is religion, the language of religion is therefore attracting linguistic appraisal all over the academic sphere. This study adds to the well of robust studies already done to language and religion.

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics. In the linguistic family, phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics all have specific meanings irrespective of where they are deployed except for pragmatics¹¹. Pragmatics is language in use where the user is at the center of attention, Pragmatics takes its meaning from its environment. It is

contextual. It is concerned with activities around the context of a speech phenomenon¹². Pragmatics derives its meaning from a number of environmental factors such as the interactants age, gender, time, academic qualification, culture, event and many others and not from the linguistic codes or sound alone^{4,13,14,15}. It is a speech act within a situated context. Pragmatics subdivides context into linguistic and non-linguistic context¹⁶. The latter encompasses event, time, participants, code, channel and setting. An utterance meaning can only be decoded when you understand the timing as regards date and period, the event in question, the channel which could be verbal or non-verbal, the interlocutors age, status, literacy, dialect, and such parameters, the setting whether formal or informal are all determinants in explaining a communicative interaction and transaction in the field of pragmatics¹⁶.

There are several sub-fields of pragmatics among which are these five listed: Discursive, cognitive, clinical, intercultural and multimodal¹⁷. The subfields of pragmatics are captured under theoretical and social pragmatics¹⁸. Pragmatic runs through every area of human endeavour.

Language acquisition goes beyond competence. Performance is also vital to its interpretation and understanding. This is where pragmatics shows up even in transformational generative grammar¹⁹. There are seven functions of a toddler's language evolution out of which the heuristic, interactional, imaginative and informative are pragmatic in essence²⁰. Pragmatics is everywhere. It is ubiquitous¹⁸. It is a universal tool in the study of language. Pragmatic scholars have emerged over time. Contemporary scholars as^{12, 15, 21, 22, 23, 18,} to mention a few.

Pragmatics spans through a wide purview. From speeches of presidents all over the world to literary volumes, political campaign jargons, media adverts, newspaper cartoons, civil right campaigns, medical interactions, classroom modalities of language. Pragmatics has been used in decoding speeches of Presidents all over the world. Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari²¹, Barak Obama's Political Propaganda²⁴, Donald Trump's inaugural speech²⁵ and his remarks at the Women Empowerment Panel²⁶. Pragmatics is also deployed to examine communication in the medical sphere^{15, 27}. Speech acts in United Nations Treaties is also under the scrutiny of pragmatics²⁸. Outdoor HIV/AIDS campaign messages²⁹, the #EndSARS movement in Nigeria, cartoons, literature are not left out of the research purview. Speech acts of congregational sermons are not left out³⁰. No speech act whether direct or indirect in communication is devoid of pragmatics even when it is not directly labelled so.

The cascading of other theories dovetailing into 2001 Pragmatic act theory will be further discussed. The rationale for the adoption of pragmatics in this work is that it captures both verbal and non-verbal context and content of the communication in the sermons. The verbal and non-verbal in pragmatics is captured as context and cotext³¹.

Religious discourse has become a robust field at all levels of language study. At the phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels, the language of religion has been in focus. So many linguistic studies have been done on religious discourse by scholars. Sermon lexes³², preaching styles³³, rhetorical strategies^{34, 35}, humour in sermons³⁶, interreligious peace³⁷, functions of 'amen'³⁸, syntactic devices³⁹, deliverance discourses⁴⁰, language and style in sermons⁴¹ have all had a touch of pragmatic analysis over the years. As discussed earlier, religion is a vital element and

tool in different cultures and societies. Some non-secular sovereign states have adopted state religions making a particular religion a state religion or an official religion. In the middle east, most of the states have Islam as their official religion. States like Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and coming to the west most of the European states have Christianity as their state and official religion^{42, 43, 44}. With religion ranked so high in most societies and cultures, its linguistic inquiry becomes engaging and appealing.

Citing from the paper on Christian Deliverance Discourse⁴⁰, the journey of religious appraisal has been for a while. Religious discourse have been scrutinised from different angles of linguistic modes^{45,46,47,48}. From pragmatic presupposition⁴⁰ to religious media adverts¹⁵, communication code of religion⁴⁵, the concept of religious language from a sociolinguistic approach⁴⁷. The Islamic concept of 'Insha Allah' is also a religious discourse⁴⁹.

Religion has had a great impact on language use especially in Nigeria³⁹. Language being dynamic has further enhanced religious dynamism as it helps to mould human activities, behaviour and decision making in religious communities. In 'Elementary forms of the religious life'¹⁰ where the importance of religion is enumerated, religion is purviewed in the volume as a tool for social integration and unity, a means to control stress in the society with a view to provide emotional and psychological support to a group of people within a society⁵⁰. Religion has engaged language in shapening the thoughts and nomenclatures which have come to be termed religious registers. From the view point of language as a social semiotic⁵¹, religious events have

influenced the choice of language use in diverse communication settings³⁹. The role of religion is positive and complicated as it is mixed with the culture of the people⁵².

Scholarly works on religious discourse is attracting and undergoing different linguistic analysis from different theoretical viewpoints. From Critical Discourse Analysis⁵³ (CDA) to Ethnography of Communication¹⁴ (EC), Speech Act Theory^{54, 55} (SAT), Pragmatic Act theory¹² (PAT), Situation Bound Utterance⁵⁶ (SBU), Action Theory⁵⁷ (AT) to mention a few. This study engages 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory¹² (PAT).

A sermon is an instructive oration or lecture by a preacher. It addresses a scriptural, theological or moral topic^{40, 49, 58, 59}. The word 'sermon' comes from a Middle English word derived from old French, which in turn originates from the Latin word, 'sermo'⁶⁰ meaning 'discourse'.

Sermons are a product of religious discourse basically for the purpose of instruction and exhortation communicated by a clergy from a text of scriptures derived from a holy book^{61, 35, 62, 63}. Different denominations refer to sermons employing different terms. Catholics call it homily, protestants call it sermon, charismatics and pentecostals tag it message. Sermons are either scripted or orated or both.

Sermons deploy language in interactions. Language has been a great instrument to the enhancement of the common ties of the society especially in religious discourse. Language and social institutions and commitments are interwoven. Language is culturally communicated and sermons deploy language which in turn is culturally flavoured⁶⁴. Communication is made alive via language so an ingenious instructor

should be able to make use of diverse linked materials to accomplish sound and instructive communication as language and communication are interwoven⁶⁵. In the same vein, the language of religion helps to express religious beliefs. There are different shades of the language of religion as the language of worship, preaching, theism and various biblical transcriptions⁴⁵.

As noted earlier, some sermons are scripted while others are not. With the move of the Holy Spirit, preachers who do not script down their sermons, hold on to *Matthew 10: 19-20*⁶⁶ which paraphrases that the Holy Spirit will give you what you will say. This style is referred to as extemporaneous preaching⁶⁷. It is a frame that includes only the topic, basic structure and scripture (absence of precise wordings). Sermonic elements often include homily, peroration, reprimand, exposition, exhortation and practical application.

The Christian religion has its own linguistic signs for formatting texts that belong to a particular register which are spiced with religious registers. The distinct forms of language utilized in a sermonic transaction is formal, ritualized and conservative⁴¹. Sermons are a persuasive genre to inform, instruct, and educate the hearers which is referred to as congregants³⁵. It can also be used for civil and communal mobilisation. Sermons are God's truth well laid out in a coherent discourse with the purpose of stimulating the cognitive power of a Christian audience⁶¹. Their imagination is ignited through the choice of words used to convey a sermon. Sermons are used to exhort and compel a change of behaviour in the hearts of the listeners³⁹.

The positive influence of sermons over political behaviour cannot be overstressed⁵⁸. The Christian message is channelled through sermons and for proper understanding,

both literal and metaphorical acts must be incorporated⁶⁸. Imageries and speaker's religious prowess are factors for understanding a sermon⁶⁸. Sermons employ rhetorics in order to arouse the emotions of the hearers and move them to do something⁶⁹. There is an emotional dimension to preaching of sermons.

Every preacher has unique idiosyncrasies. The Idiolect of one differs to the other. You can easily identify a preacher without seeing the preacher. Over time, he develops a particular style that is exclusive to him. The preacher is the one who considers the appropriate variety of the language to use at a particular time using a specific medium⁷⁰. There are three levels of discourse in every communication transaction including sermonic discourse. They are: the field of discourse which has to do with context, the mode of discourse which is oral in the context of this article, and the tenor of discourse which has to do with the speaker/ preacher idiolect⁷¹. Everything done in religion is a communicative transaction either between the human and a supreme being or among individuals⁷².

Religion is about communication, and communication in sermons travel on the wings of words⁷². The Pentecostal sermons are linguistically and pragmatically coded so they embrace a lot of style and activity as will see in the analysis of this present study. There is a dialectic and dialogic approach to every communicative process⁷³. These two are a regular occurrence in the sermons⁷⁴. Every preacher expresses his messages in his own style and also engages the congregation in a participatory continuum discourse. It is far different from Inaugural Speeches of Presidents as some preachers move around from the pulpit to the audience which is not the practice in inaugural

speeches hence Pragmatic Act Theory becomes the tool for framing both the textual and activity part of this work.

This work is on the transcribed part of selected sermons. These sermons are two-sided. The textual and activity part. The preacher in his effort to communicate with his congregation moves around with gestures which illustrates illocutionary act and perlocutionary acts⁵⁴ but more explicit with PAT approach.

Bishop David Oyedepo is the founding Pastor of Living Faith Church worldwide. a.k.a. Winners Chapel, Founded in 1981. Born on September 27, 1954, a native of Omu Aran, a town in Kwara State in Nigeria. He studied architecture at the Kwara State Polytechnic with an honorary Doctorate in Human Development from Honolulu University, Hawaii, United States of Louvain Lakasi America.

Written over seventy titles in Christian Literature. He is the Chancellor of two private Universities in Nigeria..... Covenant University in Ota and Landmark University in Omu Aran both in the South west of Nigeria. Born again in 1969. Got the Holy Spirit baptism in 1975. Called to be a preacher on May 1, 1981 with the liberation mandate.

His preaching and style has placed him in the category of Word of Faith movement where he publicly acknowledges the mentorship of faith preachers as Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, T.L. Osborn, Smith Wigglesworth, Benson Idahosa and Enoch Adeboye. His sermons are centered around Faith in God, Prosperity and Miracles. He was named the richest pastor in Nigeria by Forbes Magazine in 2011.

He has a network of Churches in all states of Nigeria, across forty-five African nations, and a spread over United States and United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates

included. Building a fifty thousand capacity auditorium debt free in 1999 earned him a place in the Guinness Book of Records.

His style and use of language is unique. His delivery is creative and compelling. His choice of words is very persuasive and his sermons very forceful. He moves around and swings from a low pitch to a high pitch intermittently. Gestures, inferences, dialogue, shared cultural knowledge are few of the Pragmatic Acts that stands his sermons out which will be discussed elaborately in Chapter four.

In Oyedepo's delivery of sermons, PAT has catered for every part. The sermons use inferences, references from the Bible, relevant to the day to day life of the congregation, voice shift and voice clash are very conspicuous, shared situation knowledge, metaphors are used in all the sermons.

On the activity part, the choice of words by the speaker births the activities. Oyedepo's sermons are full of action. He moves from one point to another, he makes declarations with voice shifts at different points, he engages the audience so there is a consistent dialogue act throughout the speech transaction. PAT has an answer for every communication code in Oyedepo's sermons. The choice of PAT is most accurate for the style of Oyedepo's delivery of sermons.

The few existing works on Oyedepo's sermons are: 'Unity and Diversity within African Pentecostalism comparing the style of Daniel Olukoya with that of David Oyedepo'⁷⁵, linguistic analysis of Christian and Islamic sermons where Oyedepo was mentioned⁷⁶, Pentecostal paradigms of national economic prosperity in Africa⁷⁷, 'Prosodic Analysis of English Sermons of selected Pastors in South West Nigeria' uses Oyedepo's sermon as one of his data⁷⁸. Daniel Olukoya, David Oyedepo and Oyakhilome are employed as data in 'Contextual Considerations in the use of

Metaphors in Nigerian Pentecostal Christian Discourse⁷⁹. Bishop Oyedepo's Keynote Address at the 26th Conference of the Association of Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (AVCNU)⁸⁰, an appraisal analysis of verbal hygiene in Bishop Oyedepo's crisis motivated sermon⁸¹. An appraisal of one of his sermons on vengeance was done which is quite different from the focus of this present study. None of these papers did a pragmatic study of Oyedepo's sermons.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Quite a number of religious research has been documented by scholars from the semantic, phonological, grammatical and pragmatic point of view, no work has been done on a pragmatic approach to Oyedepo's sermons using Jacob Mey's 2001 approach.

1.3. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to account for the pragmatic act features of Bishop David Oyedepo's sermons deploying Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory. The objectives are to;

- i. identify the thematic preoccupation of the sermons;
- ii. describe the underlying contexts of the sermons;
- iii. analyse the pragmatic acts in the sermons;
- iv. explain the pragmatic implications in the sermons

1.4. Research Questions

- i What are the thematic preoccupations in David Oyedepo's sermons?
- ii What are the underlying contexts of the themes in David Oyedepo's sermons?

iii What are the pragmatic acts performed in David Oyedepo's sermons?

iv What are the pragmatic implications of David Oyedepo's sermons

1.5. Significance of the Study

The study is a significant addition to existing studies on the application of Mey's Pragmatic Theory to the study of religious discourse. It is also significant in elucidating the contextual features of David Oyedepo's sermons in particular and religious discourse in Nigeria generally.

Religious scholars and teachers would find the knowledge provided in this study as a veritable tool for advancing and upgrading pedagogical skills in mission schools and churches. The curriculum of schools of theology will also be enriched from this study.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The study is the analysis of the sermons of Bishop David Oyedepo. Out of over eleven thousand, eight hundred and seventy-two sermons from the inception of his ministry in 1981 with at least four sermons in a week till date, apart from the special meetings and festivals, four of his sermons are purposively selected. The sermons are selected based on themes of. Marriage, Holiness, Kingdom Advancement and Thanksgiving. Prior to this, many believe he is an icon of prosperity and that he teaches only on prosperity. These four sermons span through every human endeavour and will be relevant to every reader. The four sermons are four hours, twenty-eight minutes and fifty-nine seconds. All the four sermons are orally delivered in English. They have been transcribed for analysis. One sermon each on Marriage, thanksgiving, kingdom advancement and holiness.

The analysis of the study is restricted to the pragmatic acts in the conscripted sermons using the Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory as Framework.

1.7 Limitation of the study

As mentioned in the statement of the problem, not much review has been done on Oyedepo's sermons except on his prosperity messages. Many of the journals are preoccupied with the theme of prosperity which was not of much help to this work. Literature on religious discourse did not meet up with the five year recency rule as most of the books were written long ago. More recent books on religious discourse apart from journals would be beneficial to further research projects.

1.8 Operational definition of terms

Terms

Pract/Allopract	Instantiated speech acts in Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Act Theory
Pragmeme	Generalised speech acts in Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Act Theory

Endnotes

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Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

In this chapter, pragmatics as a concept is defined with the input of various scholars.

The chronological views of scholars on pragmatics is reviewed as well as Jacob Meys 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory which is the framework for this research. Other related works by other scholars in the field of pragmatics is also reviewed.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.5 Appraisal of literature

2.1 Conceptual Review

Pragmatics is from the Greek word "pragma" meaning deed or action. The word pragmatics has been traced back to the American philosopher Charles Morris¹ who opines that pragmatics is an aspect of semiotics. Semiotics into three areas of inquiry which are; syntax, semantics and pragmatics¹. Pragmatics investigates the correspondence between signs and its users, syntax examines the connection between signifier and signifier while semantics explores the sign connection between signifier and signified. This makes pragmatics a core field of discourse in linguistics. Pragmatics has been purviewed under two schools of thought: The British and American analytical philosophy school and the European and American continental

school. The former's research scope of pragmatics is narrow and specific. The latter school of thought gives a broader meaning to pragmatics². The pragmatics of the first school of thought emerged from the semiotic theory of Morris¹. In *Semiotic Analysis of Pragmatics*, pragmatics is disengaged from semantics. Semantics is sentence meaning as against utterance meaning in pragmatics³.

Semantics is fixed and does not reflect the motive and intention of the speaker while pragmatics is active in context and reflects the purpose of the speaker. Pragmatics therefore is semantics in context. In pragmatics, a speaker must have both linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge. The latter is the social models of distinct cultures and the regulations that guide their daily conversations, their shared knowledge of topic, time, place, interest are all categorised as non-linguistic elements in pragmatics³. Beyond the study and researches on deixis, presupposition, conversational implicature, speech act and conversational complex is the survey of culture and society. This is pragmatics to the European and American continental school of pragmatics².

Interdisciplinarity in Pragmatics and Linguistics submits that pragmatics cuts across all disciplines of human behaviour for the true meaning of an utterance or an action⁴. An interdisciplinary approach must be engaged before classifying the meaning of any communicative act or event⁴.

A gamut of scholars has done extensive work on pragmatics which is of great help to further researches. Different scholars have defined and simplified pragmatics making its study very attractive and accessible. Scholars especially from the 1970's have had their touch on pragmatics leaving behind varied definitions of interest but geared towards the same goal.

Pragmatics is said to be an intelligent way of retrieving facts and figures from any given expression.⁵ It is generally understood by the manner in which speeches are manoeuvred in relationship with its surroundings and circumstances.⁶ Pragmatics concerns itself with the interpretation of an utterance and not its semantic interpretation⁷. The choices and the constraints the user encounters with the application of the language and its consequences on the setting⁸ is also a consideration in pragmatics. Pragmatics explores the procedure language undergoes for the purpose of communication⁹ so it concerns itself with how the interlocutors understand and interpret what is communicated¹⁰. It therefore means a piece of language cannot stand on its own without other external factors such as the place, the time and the manner language is applied¹¹.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Systemic Functional Grammar

The Systemic Functional Grammar was propounded in 1985 by Michael Halliday. Language is a social phenomenon in Systemic Functional Grammar of Linguistics (SFL)¹² as Language is used to perform functions. These functions are identified as Metafunctions which includes the Ideational metafunctions, Interpersonal Metafunctions, and Textual Metafunctions¹². In SFL, language is used as symbols to express ideas, used to establish relationships with others and used to create text for the purpose of generating cohesion and coherence. This does not rule out pragmatics. The interpersonal metafunction goes back to some of the meanings in pragmatics.

2.2.2 Transformational Generative Grammar

Noam Chomsky propounded the theory of Transformational Generative Grammar(TGG) in 1957. In TGG, linguistic behaviour is incited by social and

discourse context¹³. The grammatical knowledge is the competence aspect which is quite different from the performance aspect. Grammaticality does not automatically mean acceptability¹³. This is where pragmatics complements structural linguistics. The social context is crucial to the interpretation of the linguistic structure¹⁴. 'The use of language in human communication is determined by the conditions of society'⁴. This is the goal of pragmatics. The mathematical approach summarises pragmatics as PRAGMATICS = MEANING - TRUTH CONDITIONS¹⁵, making syntactic structure generation limited.

There are four dimensions of meanings in pragmatics: speaker meaning, contextual meaning, how more gets communicated beyond what is said and the expression of relative distance^{10,16,17}. An expression could be grammatically correct but not socially appropriate depending on the environment it finds itself². This is what makes meaning in pragmatics unstable compared to other linguistic forms.

In Critical Discourse Analysis, linguistic communication are on three dimensions. That is the Text level, Discourse and Social Practice level¹⁸. Hence, no linguistic communication is balanced without its social context.

2.2.3 Speech Act Theory

In 1962, The speech act theory (SAT), 'doing things with words'¹⁹ categorised the speech acts into three which are, Locutionary, Illocutionary and Perlocutionary acts¹⁹. Locutionary force is the sound made in an utterance comprising phonic, phatic and rhetic acts^{14,20}. The rhetic act contextualises an expression, the phonic utters vocal sounds and the phatic act creates a well organised strings of sounds and hieroglyphs²⁰. What the speaker has in mind is the illocutionary force and the perlocutionary is the responsive effect of the linguistic code expressed by the hearer¹⁴.

Speech act encapsulates an activity accomplished through the spoken word²⁰. A modified speech act theory classifies the illocutionary of speech acts as declaratives, representatives, expressives, directives and commissives^{21, 22} as against categorisation into verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behavitives and expositives¹⁹.

2.2.4 Theory of Implicature

The Theory of Implicature was propounded by Paul Grice in 1981. Gricean pragmatics enhances the speech act theory and gives importance to Implicatures²³. It is known as the Theory of implicature and the cooperative principle. This encodes both the direct speech act and indirect speech act. What you say and what you do not say both have implications. Four maxims are identified to further explain the conversational implicatures relying on the Cooperative Principles. They are, principle of quantity, quality, relation and manner²³. Every linguistic code in communication is expected to go through these four levels in the Gricean maxim. The communication should be informative, based on truth and evidences, be relevant to the topic and clear of obscurity and ambiguity. Texts should be used to generate implicatures. This is a step above the modified speech act theory proposed.

2.2.5 Pragmatic Act Theory

The Pragmatic Act Theory (PAT) which serves as the framework of these sermons was propounded by Jacob Mey in 2001. Jacob Mey's argument on SAT is that it is too speaker concentrated and limited only to speech acts without considering the indirect speech acts which most of the time determines the medium the interlocutors have, the freedom of what to say and what is not allowed^{4, 24}.

The meaning of any linguistic code must be determined from outside which is the context in which the utterance is made⁴. The meaning of language should be outside in instead of vice versa and should embed the real human theory of action⁴. PAT has birthed quite a number of scholars because the theory captures both the linguistic part and the activity part.

2.2.6 Situation Bound Utterance

Istvan Keskes propounded this theory in 2010. the theory disagrees with PAT on the grounds that both the linguistic codes of a language and its context are equally important in meaning. In 2010, the outside-in concept of linguistic and pragmatic analysis was subject to debate. The argument is that the wording of any linguistic expression is as important as the situation in which they are applied²⁵. The Socio-Cognitive Approach (SCA) to human communication was birthed which postulates that the decoding of any linguistic communication should be both outside-in and inside-out. The intention and attention of the interlocutor should be motivated by socio-cultural backgrounds which is flagged as Situation Bound Utterances (SBU) where the individual knowledge of grammar and social trait must be weighed on the same scale²⁵.

In line with SBU, a communicative act or event should be determined by both its linguistic style and the contextual frame²⁶. The rules of language should not be overlooked while the environment in which the event has taken place should be detailed in its analysis. Every utterance or pragmeme is embedded at three levels: The embedding of a speech act in a context of use, the embedding in rules that convert what is said to what is intended and the embedding in the text which makes the interpretations specific²⁶.

2.2.7 Ethnography of Communication

In 1964, Dell Hymes propounded the theory of Ethnography of Communication in 1964. The theory acknowledges the concept of context in defining communication transactions with a Mnemonic of S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G as²⁷

S- Setting or scene

P- Participants

E- Ends or goals

A- Acts sequence

K- Key

I- Instrumentalities

N- Norms

G- Genre

This approach captures all that pragmatic act theory explicates. Communication cannot be meaningfully decoded without context²⁸. The mnemonic captures both the textual and activity part. Context in pragmatics is defined as the strength of meaning²⁹. Context of any text is better understood within the culture and situation of the communicative event.

On context, *Ethnography of Speaking* lists six features as features of context. They are participant, topic, setting, channel, code and message²⁷. Language is meaningless without these features. There is nothing like communication without these extra linguistic machineries. Key and Purpose were added to these features of context³⁰.

Four spheres of context are analysed as: physical context which involves participants, activities, place and time. The second is socio-cultural context. As every language is deployed through its culture, the meanings also differ from culture to culture. Next is the psychological context. What is the state of mind of the interlocutors? Are they

happy, sad, confused? This colours their use and choice of words. The fourth is the linguistic context. In Africa, the culture, age difference, education all determine the kind of words used¹¹. In Africa, elderly ones speak more in proverbs to code their messages. All these views on context as being dynamic⁴ foregrounds the 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory as will be used as framework in Oyedepo's sermons.

Psychological context has to do with emotions¹¹. Context is what determines the use of language. When a preacher replies those who vow to destroy a nation, the language would be violent. This principle was flouted in the work on the appraisal analysis of verbal hygiene in Bishop David Oyedepo's crisis motivated sermon³¹. The service in question is a vengeance service. In the paper, the sermon was a reply to those who vowed to destroy a nation and its people. The choice of words in reply will also be military and harsh. Context is what propels act and utterance in pragmatics. It would be balanced when the context that triggered the crisis is put under scrutiny as the response has been under scrutiny.

Theories are never stagnant because the foundation for all theories is language and language is dynamic.

The role of pragmatics in social cohesion and nation building in Africa submits that the application of pragmatics of African languages will enhance and stimulate a positive communication philosophy for the indigenous units and also speed up development across the continent of Africa³². Pragmatics is what we exhale and inhale and the instrument for a peaceful and harmonious Africa. Theoretical pragmatics should be interlaced with social pragmatics to give it a slot in Africa as the African culture is integrated with honorifics, pedagogy and the likes which are alien to the

western culture³². The pragmatic tool in PAT, shared situation knowledge (SSK) has been given a culture veil tagged shared cultural knowledge (SCK) to reinforce the dimension of social pragmatics^{29, 32}.

Drawing a pragmatic persuasion frame to assimilate the African socio-cultural behaviour into pragmatics will aid the growth and unity of the continent. The pragmatic persuasion frame: Persuader Persuasive language Persuadee³². Pragmatic acts are a must in every field of endeavour. From the media to the markets, schools, banks politics, medical. A journal of African pragmatics, running short courses in pragmatics for public office holders, making pragmatics a core subject at the undergraduate level among others will further strengthen the importance of pragmatics in Africa³².

The Speech Act Theory (SAT) forms the basis for all pragmatic theories as there is no pragmatics without a speech act. Modified SAT and Implicatures came along with the inclusion of the Theory of Implicature and the cooperative principle. Not satisfied with the pragmatic concept of SAT, PAT, came up with the argument that SAT lacks action and too speaker concentrated. Other scholars^{25, 26} have disagreed with the outside-in concept as too context structured. Both the context and content are to be embedded in the meaning given to an utterance. Scholars have done quite a number of studies on pragmatics in different areas including religious discourse, political discourse, medical, literary genres, humour, civil right movements and much more which has been of benefit to this present study. It is clear, pragmatics multidisciplinary cuts across all fields of discourse as long as verbal and non-verbal interactions takes place. It is important to note that every pragmatic analysis is resting

on speech acts whether direct or indirect. Scholars have employed different tools to analyse speech acts and this has been of help to this work.

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

Works on sermons have been of help to this work and a number of journals are reviewed in this work.

In pragmatics, especially sermons, the main goal of rhetoric devices is to make sermons ‘impactful, memorable and persuasive’³³. The author uses Cooperative Principle as framework with two recorded messages of Paul Eneché, *Created for a Purpose and The Harvest of His presence*, as data. The submission concludes that rhetoric devices in sermons are not only speaker focused but are used for audience participation and the preacher is not in a monologue kind of oration but a responsive one where the hearers and speaker do it together³³.

The study of rhetorical devices in selected sermons of Bishop David Oyedepo agrees with the contextual harmony of language use³⁴. Context is the compass of the speaker or preacher purposely engaged persuasion but beyond persuasion, the rhetoric devices are used to perform pragmatic functions which are speech acts and Implicatures³⁴.

An author highlights the rhetorical efforts of preachers to arouse their congregations’ emotions of feeling. Preachers use words to trigger the positive emotions of the congregation referring to scriptures to keep the communicative event relevant to the context³⁵.

Using North America and its environs, an author addresses both the theory of cultural intelligence and its practice preparing preachers for the C21st diversities of culture in different congregations³⁶. The author enumerates the mnemonic of preaching as:

follow your habit, build the bridge, speak their dialect³⁶. Speak their dialect is contextual and pragmatic. This points to the fact that language derives its meaning from the environment in which it is activated. The delivery and understanding of sermons does not only depend on its linguistic codes but on the contextual elements surrounding the speech communication. The interlocutor must therefore have an understanding of the situation for him to have the desired response from the hearers.

Religion is both Intellectual and affective³⁷. The use of language, must be relevant to the culture of the people for it to have a generational impact and longevity. The use of language therefore must be dynamic for religion to take its root in different cultures. Religion is a belief in a God who is alive which triggers faith and emotions and also gives a feeling of dependence on a higher and stronger being³⁷.

An author deploys Jacob Mey's 1993 proposal on pragmatic acts, modification of John Austin's 1962 and John Searles 1969 speech act theories to analyse two sermons as data, justifying the initiative of government in regulating and putting in check religious activities³⁸. The paper submits that language employed in delivering messages should be civil and tolerant for the communicative event to be achieved.

Examining the language of religion through John Searle's 1969 theory of speech acts, an author concludes that communication is a social exercise and invariably, speech is not only a linguistic phenomenon but a social phenomenon³⁹. Classifying linguistic strategies into imperatives, declaratives, interrogatives, modality, conditional sentences and agentive sentences⁴⁰, an author employs the speech act theory of John Austin¹⁹ and John Searle²² and Holger Limberg and Miriam Locher's 2012 model. The data is sourced from the book titled *Al - Khutab Al - Mukhtarah* where three of

the sermons 'The five pillars of Islam', Humility in the prayer', and Honoring the ties of kinship'. The language of advice - giving is emphasised as very essential in the delivery of sermons. This style of language use helps to calm down disturbances and bring calmness to an environment⁴⁰. The speech act of advice leaves the hearer to decide the effect of the sermon. Different from speech acts of giving orders, the speech act of advice is more civil and polite in its employment.

A pragma - rhetorical study of selected pentecostal sermons employed twelve sermons, four each of three pentecostal preachers in Nigeria as data to highlight the use of rhetoric questions, acts of asserting, assuring, encouraging⁴¹, which are also highlighted in David Oyedepo's sermons. The paper submits that sermons are persuasive in delivery and concludes that sermons utilise language as tools of public mobilisation⁴¹.

In 'The Sermon on the Mount' the theory of speech act is classified as declaratives, representatives, expressives, directives and commissives^{42,10}. Another author engages three pentecostal sermons in Ubungu, Kimara, Mkwawa in Tanzania as data. The paper concludes that sermons employ and combine metaphoric and literal speech acts for effective and affective communication⁴³. Speech acts among interlocutors especially in Christian messages could only be meaningful when factors as image schemas, the ecclesiastic knowledge of the preachers and their choice of pronouns are addressed⁴³.

Thirty-two pulpit excerpts from sermons of Reverend Emmanuel Oshoffa are used as data in a paper. The paper examines the regular linguistic prototypes and its pragmatic elements in the sermons⁴⁴. Insights are drawn from the theory of generic structure potential developed in 1989, which scientifically compiles and compresses the

possible patterns and features of a text in a particular field⁴⁵. The theory is engaged to draw out the pattern and elements in the sermons of Oshoffa to analyse the field, tenor and mode of a discourse. The theory emphasises the contextual configuration of a speech act where the text and context of the sermons are interwoven. The words used are angelic registers which can only be interpreted within the context of use which is the Celestial Church of Christ⁴⁴.

Sermons of Kumuyi's Sunday service and Monday bible study with the conceptual framework of subject-oriented variation where different human activities employs different peculiar styles to disseminate information⁴⁶. The study reveals that syntactic and rhetorical features among others are prominent in Kumuyi's delivery of his messages to his audience which results in a successful sermonic discourse⁴⁶. Williams Kumuyi's style in the paper concludes that his language is official, ritualised and not modern⁴⁶.

An author uses as data a semi-structured interview with a priest working in a key parish in southern Italy. The paper draws on Jacob Mey's 2001 pragmatic act theory, applied perspective of communication accommodation theory of Giles et al. The paper concludes that pragmemes employed in funerals are subject to the changes linguistic systems have undergone over time and its use at every particular season and time⁴⁷. The choice of words engaged in a funeral are determined by the social occasion, which is death. The context determines the language that can be afforded which gives it its pragmatic approach and perspective. The pragmemes and practs employed are funerary and dependent on changes and variations over time.

An author who worked on the evaluation of the speech acts used in sermons from selected pentecostal churches in Eldoret Town, Vasin Gishu county in Kenya explains that every speech act is to accomplish goals⁴⁸. Speech acts are not just to exhibit grammatical prowess but to understand the intentions and judgements of the interlocutors which is referred to as Pragmatic Knowledge⁴⁸. Preaching through sermons is a dynamic act that requires the totality of the preachers being. Gestures, voice, the speakers idiosyncracies are all embodied in communication. This is also a reflection of individual idiosyncracies.

The Congregational Sermons of the Grand Ayatollah AL - Sistani on Iraqi Society 2014 - 2016, also came under pragmatic scrutiny which is similar to the goal of this paper. The sermons of Ayatollah have an affective input⁴⁹ on the society, the same for Oyedepo's sermons. The paper uses the Felicity Conditions FC as encoded in John Searle's 1969 Speech Act Theory and his 1975 classification of speech types - Assertives, Directives, Commissive, Expressives, Declaratives. Saiyd al Sistani uses language to advice, to assert, to promise, to warn and to keep order in a larger society⁴⁹.

Preaching is a Communicative Event⁵⁰. Employing a discourse analysis of Robert Rollock's sermons, the author views all communicative interactions as contextual. The situation around the event determines its interpretation. In the paper, communication is at three levels. The communicative Act, Communicative Event, Communicative Link⁵⁰. The preacher achieves cohesion and coherence in the sermons, connecting them in an overshadowing bond and maintains the contextual meaning of all strings. The communicative act is the patterning of language at the levels of phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis. The communicative event as explained by the researcher is the historical, political, cultural and theological background of any

utterance⁵⁰. Back to situated context in PAT, the third level of communication is the communicative link: how one communication influences the other without a break in thoughts. This author explains that sermons are not preached to provide documents for archives, they are communication between the speaker or preacher and his hearers or audience. The communicative event which is contextual is most important in the delivery of sermons.

Two authors⁵¹ analysed American Christian Sermons (ACS) from pragmatic perspectives using the frameworks of John Searle's²² Speech Act, Paul Grice's²³ Conversational maxims. Using four American preachers, two African Americans and two White Americans. WAP to represent White American Preachers and AAP to represent African American Preachers. One message each is used for the analysis from pragmatics view point. Pastor MacArthur's sermon on Presidential Election and the Christian Vote. Pastor Lawson's sermon 'America in Peril'. Pastor Dyson's 'Waiting for the Real Trump' and Pastor Luter's sermon on 'Matthew 26' where four preachers' sermons were employed. This present study focused only on one preacher but four sermons. Prominent in the analysis is the activity aspect which is similar to an aspect of Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory. In PAT, the textual and activity part consist of inference, reference, shared situation knowledge, metaphor, voice, conversational acts, physical acts, body gestures, indirect speech acts are all enumerated in these sermons using other terms. This work catalogues different speech acts such as advising, asserting, thanking, laughing, applause, asking questions, mutually shared knowledge. In Jacob Mey's 2001 theory, these analyses will be referred to as Pragmemes, Practs and Allopracts.

Context of any communication is evident at two levels²⁹. The Language level and Situational level. Context is divided into three aspects. One is the shared knowledge of topic or subject, second is the shared knowledge of word choices, referents and references and the third is the shared socio-cultural experiences, previous or immediate which is coded as (SCK)²⁹. Practising resolves the difference between illocutionary force from perlocutionary force²⁹. In Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic acts theory, practicing is the language for illocutionary and perlocutionary forces and this is the term this study will be deploying in its analysis.

Humour is not left out of the purview of pragmatics. Employing Jacob Mey's 2001 PAT and humour theories the study reveals that humour has a place in religion⁵². The praxis of warning, condemning, teaching, encouraging, and affirming are very vivid even in humour. Humour is language encoded in a particular context situation which gives it a pragmatic face⁵². The paper observes there is humour in religion even when it appears to be too serious to embed humour but this work has established otherwise. Humour is used to correct and persuade and it serves a social, physiological and psycho emotional needs⁵². The pragmatic approach to humour in the work makes it interesting and relevant to this present work.

Insights from Aristotle's theory of rhetoric was employed as framework for the rhetorical strategies in selected sermons of Chris Oyakhilome. The paper submits that the communication success of a preacher is anchored on his aptness to deploy language coherently, meaningfully, appropriately in a rhetoric discourse such as sermons⁵³. The preacher has a target audience with the goal of communicating effectively his instructions. He preaches with the consciousness of the congregation's emotional state, reasoning back and forth with his congregation with his integrity as the backbone of his discourse. The author uses sermons from the purview of a speech

event to dispense moral, social and political instructions in the larger society⁵³. Oyakhilome like Oyedepo's sermons provide a righteous culture, socially and politically.

The work on Linguistic Strategies and Discourse Functions of Appeals in Christian Religious Tracts assembled eleven tracts as data from fifteen ministries in Ondo State. The paper highlights four major categories of appeals as it is employed in Christian literature. Appeal to the congregations' faith, their belief, intimacy and introspection using different models such as questions and answers, conditional clauses, direct address and declarative clauses⁵⁴. The goal of every religious literature as tracts is affective. It is either to enlist, to convince, or to convert⁵⁴. The paper employs Aristotle theory of rhetoric.

A sermon each of Pastor's Paul Enenche and Chris Oyakhilome: 'The mystery of the blessing' and 'Spiritual blessing' was used as data for investigating the Syntactic Devices in Selected Nigerian Preacher's sermons. Halliday's¹² SFL is used as framework. The paper examines the use of language in religion and its effect on the hearers. The goal of religious language is to persuade and subtly compel a change in conduct for a better and healthier society⁵⁵. Religious language is viewed as a unique style that accommodates specific terminologies for its use at different religious communicative events. This is what is referred to as registers. The authors postulate that registers put the language of religion in its sacred and unique role⁵⁵.

Persuasive tone of sermonic discourse applied a corpus-based research and concludes that humour empowers the preacher to bridge the gap between him and the congregation. Humour helps to convey the doctrine through persuasion⁵⁶.

Investigating how the illocutionary force 'Amen' is used to maintain interpersonal connectivity in the traditional and pentecostal churches, the paper concludes that the word 'Amen' serves as a gospel truth marker in both the protestant and pentecostal churches and it is far spreading into the field of politics⁵⁷. The author employed field notes, tape recording and participant observation.

Employing Mey's PAT and van Dijk's context models, the author worked on Pentecostalism and Nigeria's English Usage⁵⁸. Expressions such as 'it is well', 'I am strong', 'the devil is a liar', 'we thank God' were investigated and the findings indicate that these expressions are contextual (mis) appropriation of religious transactions into the Nigerian English space⁵⁸. These expressions are biblically appropriate as interruptive markers to exhibit religiosity. The participant observation in formal and informal settings was employed as methodology.

The figure ground metaphor is used to explicate the connect between text and context. Text is viewed as the figure while context is the ground on which the figure is viewed. The author differentiates between regular sermonic discourse and academic sermon⁵⁹. The latter is delivered in a stage managed surrounding where the congregation are not the real audience for the purpose of examination. The former is conveyed in a real audience congregation setting. The artificial environment of the delivery of the students' sermons was a major constraint as the young preachers were conscious of the stage managed context⁵⁹. The dynamics of context emerge strongly in the paper with the classification of the theories of context in three dimensions⁶⁰. The indexed features, indexicals and the indexed/indexical relationship. These three dimensions of classifying context is argued as very narrow compared to his other five dimensions of

context. These are better understood in context. They are the linguistic context, physical context, social context, interlocutors background knowledge and channel of the interaction⁶⁰. These have been discussed earlier from the point of view of other scholars all merging into the same exposition.

Sermons examining the language adopted for an effective communication success have been analysed by various authors. Emphasis has been made on the workings of the Holy Spirit as the key to the transformative experiences the language of pentecostal sermons achieves in its communication^{61, 62}.

An author who worked on the Lexis of Christian Sermons in English⁶³, engages the sermons of four sermonist: Billy Graham, D.G.S. Dhinakaran, Joyce Meyer, and Benny Hinn. The researcher submits that the lexis of Christian sermons is different and distinct from other genres since the content and context are pragmatic in delivery. The language of sermons is captivating, motivating and germane to religious discourse. The lexis engaged are well organised in a comprehensible discourse to vivify the curiosity of the adherents⁶³.

From a different perspective on divorce, the author uses cartoons as the data. The paper adopts Jacob Mey's 2001 pragmatic act theory to examine the practs used in three different contexts. The social, financial and cultural circumstances are subjected to analysis from the Mr and Mrs Cartoons in the Vanguard Newspapers⁶⁴. Out of one hundred and twenty cartoons, twenty-five are purposively selected for analysis. Ten practs stood out. The practs of accusing, challenging, concealing, condemning and others⁶⁴. The theoretical framework of Jacob Mey⁴ utilized is of great help to this study on Oyedepo's sermons.

An extensive work on pragmatic acts in Divorce cases⁶⁵ using Jacob Mey,s 2001 Pragmatic Acts Theory which is also the theoretical framework is under review. A blend of Odebunmi's²⁹ model of Shared Cultural Knowledge (SCK) is also used. The paper explicitly decodes and explains in practical terms the meaning of *practs* and how they are deployed in divorce cases. The study identifies the practs of adjourning, dissolving, accusing which is relevant to divorce cases and not to religious discourse⁶⁵. The field of discourse is different but the instrument of analyses overlap with this present study. The data was sourced from three widely read newspapers namely the Nigerian Tribune, The Guardian and The Punch.

Works on proverbs have also attracted pragmatic analysis from different scholars.

An author adopts Jacob Mey,s Pragmatic Acts to examine crisis motivated proverbs in Ola Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame*²⁹. The study brings out the practs of counselling, cautioning, persuading, encouraging, prioritizing, threatening which are very vivid in David Oyedepo's sermons. The proverbs are inferential, relevant, metaphorical, psychological²⁹. The paper has provided helpful tools in this study of David Oyedepo's sermons though the field differs.

Pragmatic acts and function of proverbs in Igbo novels⁶⁶ have also been researched using Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory as its framework. Proverbs from two of Tony Ubesie's Igbo language novels, *Juo Obinna and Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala* are deployed as data. The proverbs are analysed based on their functions and their different pragmatic acts. The practs of informing, advising, counselling, assuring, cautioning, persuading, pleading is identified⁶⁶. These are similar to the practs in David Oyedepo's sermons which is the field of this study. The pract of invoking and inciting which runs in the work is absent from those in David Oyedepo's sermons as

the situation and what is allowed differs. They concentrate on the use of proverbs for illustrative emphasis and clarity. In sermonic discourse, effort is also made to achieve clarity, authenticity and emphasis using suitable textual references from the Bible.

Still on proverbs, selected Ebira proverbs have been researched on using Jacob Mey's 2001 pragmatic act theory as framework. It is observed that the pragmeme of admonishing is dominant in Ebira proverbs in naming ceremonies, burial, marriage and coronation events⁶⁷.

English Postproverbials on *Twitter* 2020⁶⁸ have also had a pragmatic approach to its analysis. The author lists ten practs and allopracts from the thirty postproverbials discovered on Twitter. The practs of affirming, insisting, informing, warning, counselling and others. These practs are similar to those discovered also in David Oyedepo's sermonic discourse.

Kimeru proverbs employing SAT has also been researched. With a descriptive qualitative study design, thirty Kimeru proverbs were retrieved from five Meru elders. The study reveals that language and culture are inseparable with context being a vital tool in understanding and defining proverbs⁶⁹. Proverbs do not have a specific once and for all meaning. They deduce their meanings from the context of the situation. This is pragmatics! Language use and language in use.

In another paper, Igbo proverbs are explicated as linguistic communication employed to address various socio-cultural issue⁷⁰. The use of proverbs has given the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria an identity. Twelve Igbo proverbs that cuts across the five Igbo speaking states are adopted as data with Jacob Mey's 2001 PAT as framework. The paper concludes that proverbs are pragmatic in use as they vividly expose contextual topics of morals and values that reflect the background in which they are spoken⁷⁰.

Two authors⁷¹ examine a study of Pragmatics of Yoruba proverbs in Sola Mike-Agboola's *O To Gee* which employed Searle and Grice's pragmatic models as framework. The authors submit that proverbs are language embedded in culture⁷¹. Proverbs thrive and function in the context in which they are adapted. The proverbs in the text are contextual as it is better understood by the Yoruba speakers and hearers. The society in which the proverbs are expressed give meanings to the linguistic codes⁷¹.

The Pragmatics of proverbs in Ola Rotimi's *Kurunmi* emphasising the context of culture as the strength of meaning⁷² has been given scholarly attention. The authors postulate that proverbs rely on tribes and cultures to draw their meanings because they are rooted in the peoples' ideology, values and religion⁷². Using content analysis as design, thirty proverbs were evaluated and pragmatic acts of warning, commending, encouraging, insulting, abusing, advising were extracted from the analysis.

The pragmeme 'Defending a Thesis' engages the practs of arguing, challenging, disclaiming, defending, substantiating, authenticating⁷³. These are practs common to Christian apologetics. They are either substantiating a scripture reference or challenging the devil or defending the faith. Sermons are like defending a thesis.

A review on how rhetoric devices in language is used to empower communities is of interest to this paper. Using Ella Baker's 1969 speech: *The Black Woman in the Civil Rights Struggle* as data, the author⁷⁴ analyses how Baker used language to challenge her audience to become leaders and take a personal stake in the fight for freedom. Baker uses appeals which PAT encodes as practs to engage the audience in participation. Everywhere, civil rights struggle is contextual⁷⁴. The language is always

at the macro-level where the crowd is persuaded to rise up against injustice. Similar to sermons where the speaker persuades the audience to rise against the devil and live above sin.

Two separate papers on the #EndSARS movement^{75, 76} have also drawn from Jacobs Mey's 2001 pragmatic act theory. These papers have enriched this present study in the explication of Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic act theory which is the framework of the sermons in discourse. The two papers draw their framework from Jacob Mey's 2001 pragmatic act theory (PAT) and Hoye and Kaiser's 2007 visual act theory (VAT). Their conclusion is that visual pragmatic acts and social pragmatic acts augment each other in multimodal communication. Pragmatic acts of accusing, condemning, challenging among others are highlighted in the papers.

Also applying Jacob Mey's 2001 pragmatic act theory and Francis Hoye and Ruth Kaiser's 2007 visual acts theory is the work on the Abducted Chibok Girls in Nigeria⁷⁷. Pragmatic acts of urging, shaming, challenging, condemning and others are enumerated in the paper.

Still on humour but in a literary genre, Mey's 2001 pragmatic act theory and insights was adopted from the linguistic concept of context and relevant humour theories. The paper reviews humour functions at both the communicative event level and the textual level of the utterance⁷⁸. Some of the tools employed to analyse the characters in their varied contextual space are similar to those employed in Oyedepo's sermons. The tools of reference, inference, situation cultural knowledge, shared situation knowledge and voice. The practs of rebuking, cautioning, justifying misdeeds and the likes are analysed from the polygamous rivalry contextual background of the data⁷⁸. Mey's 2001 PAT is used as a socio-cultural interactive framework while Nigeria

serves as the socio-cultural context criticising illiteracy, male superiority, patriarchy, polygamy, and social decadence⁷⁸. The paper concludes that pragmatic implications of a literary text should be drawn not only from the text but also from the writer's intention. Stylistics should merge the strength of the text with the authors intent⁷⁸.

Pragmatic acting in Sir Shina Peters' *Shanmania* employs Mey's 2001 PAT as tool to analyse the work⁷⁹. Pragmatic acts are identified in the album especially the practs of warning. The album is a satire on the cultural and socio-political traits in African men that tend to dominate the female specie⁷⁹. The practs of warning stand out to halt further male chauvinism in the African society.

Pragmatics in literary discourse is also extended to Wole Soyinka's satiric comedy: *The trials of brother Jero and Jero's metamorphosis*⁸⁰. The author works on the Pragmatic roles in the novel employing Mey's 2001 PAT. The practs of denying, forecasting, lying and others are identified. The author concludes that the pragmatic tools employed helps to reveal and clarify the interactants disguised and concealed motive in literary discourse⁸⁰.

A combined theory of PAT and John Meyer's functions of humour was employed to investigate the pragmatic acts adopted to correct and mirror the ills in the society under the guise of humour⁸¹. The data is a situation comedy and not a stand-up comedy. The practs of warning, informing, advising are explicated to divulge, expose and address the issues of lying, indecent dressing, domestic violence and the likes⁸¹. The study concludes that sitcoms double up as amusement tools and social correctional mediums.

The Dining Table in Elvis Gbanabom Hallowell's poem investigates the relationship between referents and their context⁸². Studying the poem, content analysis is adopted

as its method. The author submits that a referent is only meaningful when the contextual knowledge is shared and understood by the interlocutors⁸². The setting and context of communication is critical in pragmatics. Pragmatic referents can only be interpreted by people who share the same culture or are a part of a shared knowledge⁸². Referents will not be understood without the knowledge of context which is the spine of pragmatics. The author evaluates referents used in the poem and the meaning it offers. The setting of the poem is the war in Sierra Leone so the choice of words is pragmatically coded. Words as dinner, gun wounds, vegetable, pepper, scorpion, table all infer meanings based on context. Table refers to Sierra Leone, dinner refers to war, gun wounds refer to meals, vegetables refer to butchered human beings. All the words portend a gloomy picture based on the context. Referents are meaningful when the context of situation is understood⁸². The use of referents in the poem paints horror and brutality and ends up giving it a gloomy and sad tone. The pragmatic nature of referents is highlighted in the poem and in the paper.

The paper on President Muhammadu Buhari's March 29th 2020 address of Covid-19 pandemic draws its insights from PAT. The author examines the use and choice of suitable pragmatic tools to disseminate information in a crisis situation. Employing the wrong pragmatic devices obstructs the cooperation of the followers and makes a mockery of the whole essence of the information⁸³. The paper employs one hundred and fifteen pragmatic acts categorising twenty-four functions of informing, assuring, stating, ordering, thanking, identifying and many others.

The pragmatic approach to political discourse has also enriched this work in spite of being a religious discourse. The goals and dynamics are similar. The frameworks overlap.

President Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural speech⁸⁴ employs Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Theory (MPT). Nineteen practs were engaged in the speech. Practs such as proposing, promising, stating, assuring, acknowledging, appealing and others. These practs are similar to practs common to religious discourse. The authors use of MPT makes his paper relevant to this present study.

Very close to the former paper⁸⁴ is this work also on President Buhari's speeches⁸⁵ Employing Norman Fairclough's¹⁸ critical discourse analysis as framework, Buhari's choice of action verbs is highlighted for unity of purpose, shared glorification and responsibility⁸⁵.

A cross-cultural pragmatics on lexical cohesion in President' Obama and Buhari's inaugural speeches adopting a qualitative discourse analysis approach has been in review⁸⁶ The two speeches of the two presidents were analysed. The researcher submits that the lexical items engaged served different purposes. The two speeches were full of repetition but Obama's speech engaged his audience and was more interactional but Buhari's speech was a lone voice without an inclusive audience⁸⁶. The goals of the two communication event were to persuade the hearers but one was more convincing than the other.

Investigating the use of linguistic procedures in Bush's Second Inaugural Speech the paper submits that language is a vehicle of persuasion and the relationship between language and society must be clearly understood by the speaker⁸⁷. Citing Aristotles elements of ethos, logos and pathos, every language transaction must be credible, reasonable and appealing. Three slants of persuasion listed in his work are the quasilogical, presentational and analogical⁸⁷. In a rhetoric, the communication is

expected to be scientifically reasonable and logical, there should be a rhythmic flow with aesthetic grazing and usually spiced with relevant stories to analyse the content. Using Aristotle and Atkinsons 1984 model as framework, the work enhanced this present study especially in the purview of rhetorics which in PAT is referred to as conversational acts. The goal of any rhetoric is considered to be persuasive including religious discourse. The use of language within its context is clearly captured in Bush's inaugural speech which is an element in PAT, where context is very dominant in the analysis of any communicative act or event.

Indirect speech acts of presidents have also come under review. Using President Widodo's state address in Indonesia as data, the paper engages a qualitative descriptive method similar to the research method used in this paper, the use of indirect speech is employed and conditioned by situation. The president in an attempt to be polite and less aggressive employs indirect speech acts to pass across his message⁸⁸. To avoid being overbearing and controlling, he engages in a pragmatic approach which intentionally selects the choice of language based on the event or communication situation. This event is a state address which requires a bit of caution from the speaker in other to reach the hearers without being confrontational. The speaker having an understanding of the context, uses indirect speech acts as a conversational strategy to reduce possible conflicts that arises between the leader and followers, the rulers and the ruled⁸⁸. He utilizes declaratives to change the listeners view, representatives to express his own view, expressives to communicate his emotions, directives to get the listeners to do something and commissives to earn allegiance from the hearers⁸⁸. These are all functions performed in the deployment of

indirect speech acts. Passing across a speech act across cultures requires a pragmatic approach in order to achieve communication success.

Two researchers both worked on Nelson Mandela's speeches at different times. One worked on Nelson Mandela's Inaugural Speech adopting Austin and Searle's SAT⁸⁹. The speech acts in the inaugural speech met the felicity conditions which made his delivery competent. This in turn aided the collapse of apartheid in South Africa.

The other duo engaged a different approach in their work on Selected Political Speeches of Nelson Mandela⁹⁰. The paper examined his first speech when he was imprisoned for twenty-seven years in 1964, and three other speeches in 1990 and 1994, years after he was released. At those spaced periods, Mandela's use of language has been consistent and very engaging. He used language as a search light for the political thoughts and ideologies of politicians. The authors adopt Austin's SAT and Grice's cooperative principles of quantity, quality, relation and manner concluding that the speeches succeeded to achieve its intention which is to bring apartheid to an end⁹⁰. Mandela engaged his choice of words to achieve his purpose.

In a paper on selected speeches of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan the researchers investigated the speech acts in Jonathan's speeches⁹¹. His inaugural speech, Independence anniversary speech and the speech on government's approval of fuel price at ninety-seven Naira. All the speeches were retrieved from the media platform of the Nigeria Television Authority. The selected speeches reveal that President Goodluck Jonathan's artful control and deployment of language is intentional and engaging⁹¹. The choice of words is employed to generate reactions from the populace which fits into the framework adopted in the paper. Austin and Searle's SAT,

explicates the intention of the speaker and the reaction the speaker intends to obtain from the hearers. The analogy between a speaker's intention and the reactions that play out is clearly seen in the three speeches delivered at different communication events⁹¹.

Inaugural Speeches of Sierra Leonean and Gambian Presidents investigates ten utterances from the 2017 inaugural speech of President Julius Bio and the 2018 inaugural speech of President Adama Barrow⁹². The utterances are contextual in delivery with the speakers having a knowledge of the setting, culture and expectation of the people. They engage appealing, winsome and persuasive words as a way to promise the people a better transformation in governance⁹². The speeches are not only linguistically coded but contextually delivered. The speakers understand what the people are going through and their expectations so the utterances are manoeuvred around the people's expectations.

An author investigates the relationship between the utterance and context of a speaker. Using Selected Political Speeches of President Uhuru Kenyatta and the Former Prime Minister, Raila Amollo Odinga⁹³. The paper explores the function of language in its communicative and interpretative form. Deploying Austin and Searle's SAT and Fairclough's CDA as framework, twenty speeches using the downsampling technique were retrieved. The speeches performed the illocutionary acts of assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declaratives. The choice of language in the speeches initiated reconciliation of the two leaders. Language has been deployed intentionally to bring about the speaker's motive and struggle to achieve peaceful cohabitation in a politically strived context⁹³.

The language employed at the Ekiti State 2014 Governorship Election Campaign⁹⁴ has also been subjected to pragmatic analysis. The paper draws from John Austin 1962 and John Searles 1979 Speech Act Theory. The explication of speech act theory in the paper has enhanced this present study. The paper classifies utterances into Constatives and Performatives⁹⁴. Performative verbs are John Austin's locution, illocution and perlocution forces. These forces also characterise political language.

Three scholars also employed pragmatics in their analysis of doctor-patient interaction. In the paper on discursive repetitions and voices in clinical meetings²⁹ the author analyses the discursive practices that goes on in a Doctor-Patient interaction and how repetition is used to negotiate health care delivery. The 'polyphonic'²⁹ dimensions to communication stating that clinical voices show that medical doctors are at the same time counsellors, law enforcers, empathisers and physicians²⁹. This is similar to the voice of preachers in a single sermon wearing different garbs to communicate to their listeners. The voice shift and voice clash in Jacob Mey's 2001 PAT is also very similar. Theoretical insights were drawn from Martin and Rose concept of tracking and the theory of polyphony, complemented by insights from Istvan Kecskes 2014 linguistic approach, Caffi's (2002, 2007) and Mey's 2017 'concept of (de) resposibilisation and conversation analysis'²⁹

The use of pragmatic tools to explicate the communication transaction between medical doctors and patients with impaired speech, aphasic to be precise was researched using Jacob Mey's PAT to examine the pragmemes used by both parties within the context of communication. The practs of diagnosing, prescribing,

encouraging, empathising and others are identified in the speech event⁹⁵. Like preachers, the voice of the doctor comes to the fore while that of the patient is subordinate. Mey's PAT is further expounded in this work from another contextual environment which is medical.

Doctor-Patient interaction in private hospitals in Akure postulates that the position of the doctor is clearly evident that he is superior to the patient⁹⁶. The doctor like the preacher uses the practs of explaining, prescribing and the likes. The work draws from hierarchy politeness as developed by Akio Yabunchi 2006 and Jacob Mey's 2001 pragmatic act theory. The researcher explains the two crucial functions of language as having both transactional and interactional capacities⁹⁶. Using language to retrieve information is transactional while using it for social connectivity is interactional. The sermons of Oyedepo exhibits these two levels of communication.

Coming from another perspective of a medical subject is the work on The Pragmatics of Coronavirus Motivated Humour⁹⁷. Adopting Jacob Mey's 2001 PAT, Seven purposively selected humour on coronavirus from social media platforms, Facebook and Whatsapp are employed as data. Practs of mocking, informing, satirizing is analysed to expound humour as a tool to comment on societal abnormalities⁹⁷.

Pragmatics must take into consideration the sociocultural context of an environment before names are given even to cars⁹⁸. Analysing names of cars in Nigeria, the researcher submits that the nicknames resonate the socio-cultural sensibilities of Nigerians⁹⁸. Employing Mey's 2001 PAT, the tools of S.S.K., reference and metaphor are engaged to highlight the practs of informing, condemnation and commendation.

The context of the situation and condition of the environment are factors to be considered in pragmatics⁹⁹. Every word in linguistics should have a context. A word

without a context has no meaning so utterances by interlocutors only become meaningful when it exists in a context situation. The verbal and non-verbal acts of the parties involved, the appropriate goals and purpose and the outcome of the verbal activities are all features of the context of the situation. The author postulates that the material articles present at the speech event affects the contextual meaning of the speech act especially in a communication act that cuts across cultures⁹⁹.

Every speech event is sub-divided into Context and Cotext¹⁰. The context is the physical surroundings in which a locution is used and the cotext are the linguistic data employed. In cross - culture, pragmatics plays a very major role in communication and understanding. Where the interlocutors do not share a similar language use, the situation and material environment becomes the unifying object of understanding or else there will be what^{100, 101, 102} crepe pragmatic failure. Pragmatic failure occurs not because of linguistic errors in diction but a failure to achieve communication due to inappropriate expressions as a result of cultural differences in values and style of communication¹⁰⁰. Earlier, one of the cross-cultural pragmatic scholars categorises pragmatic failure into two: pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failure¹⁰¹. The latter emerges from differences in cultural norms and laws that guide and govern linguistic bearings in different cultures. Interlocutors with different cultures have varied understandings of appropriateness of linguistic terms.

What is appropriate in one culture might not be in the other culture and so communication breaks down. In a culture where honorifics are essential especially in Africa, there will be a breakdown when conversing with a speaker from another culture who has no single idea of the importance of honorifics in these cultures. This is why the paper³² solicits for pragmatics as an essential course in schools and government. He proposes short courses on pragmatics in every field of human

endeavour. The pragmalinguistic failure¹⁰¹ is when a speaker transfers his mother tongue to the target language and when the force of a locution by a native speaker is not understood by the L2 speaker, there will be pragmatic failure.

Pragmatic failure also occurs when the speaker is grammatically accurate but fails to observe societal rules of relationship or gives minimal regard to the physical environment in which the speech act occurs¹⁰². He does not consider the addressee, the platform given and the timing of the conversation. All these end in pragmatic failure and this is why pragmatics is much concerned about the context of language use. The environment and situation gives expression to utterances in any communication interaction and transaction. In pragmatics, meanings are not as fixed as they are in linguistic characters. Pragmatics has to do with more of what is implied than what is uttered.

2:4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Act Theory which is abbreviated as MPT. Jacob Mey propounded the Pragmatic Act Theory (PAT) in 2001 after his criticism of the limitations of John Austin's 1962 Speech Act Theory (SAT) of *How to do things with words*. Jacob Mey argues that John Austin's Speech Act 'lacks the theory of action'⁴ and it is too speaker concentrated. John Austin's Speech Act is subdivided into three stop forces. The first is the Locutionary act which is the sound made by the speaker. The second is the Illocutionary act which is the intention of the speaker and the third level is the Perlocutionary act which is what the hearer does with the illocutionary force heard. Mey in his criticism of John Austin's Speech Act Theory postulates that for every speech act to be well understood, 'it must be contextualised, instantiated and situated'⁴.

The meaning of every linguistic code is solely determined by the environment in which the speaker/hearer finds their 'affordances'²⁴ of what can be said and what is said. He further postulates that communication must be 'outside in' rather than 'inside out'²⁴ which has been criticised in 'Situation Bound Utterance' theory²⁵. In SBU, every speech act must take its meaning and usage from the society and from its linguistic codes. Not only 'outside in' but also 'inside out'. The linguistic code and contextual elements both make up for communication²⁷.

The theory of action is the rationale for the selection of PAT for the analysis of Oyedepo's sermons. The activity act in Oyedepo's sermons are as forceful as its linguistic codes. Although SAT has its limitations, it serves as a referent point for PAT as all communication theory are sourced from speech acts.

However, the adoption of Jacob Mey's 2001 PAT is premised on the accommodation of the activity element of speech acts.

Pragmatic tools such as inference, reference, relevance, shared situation knowledge, voice, metaphor and metapragmatic are engaged to mark pragmatic acts. The pragmatic acts deployed are: conversational acts, psychological acts, prosody and physical acts. All these acts are shown in Jacob Mey's schemata represented in figure 2.1 below

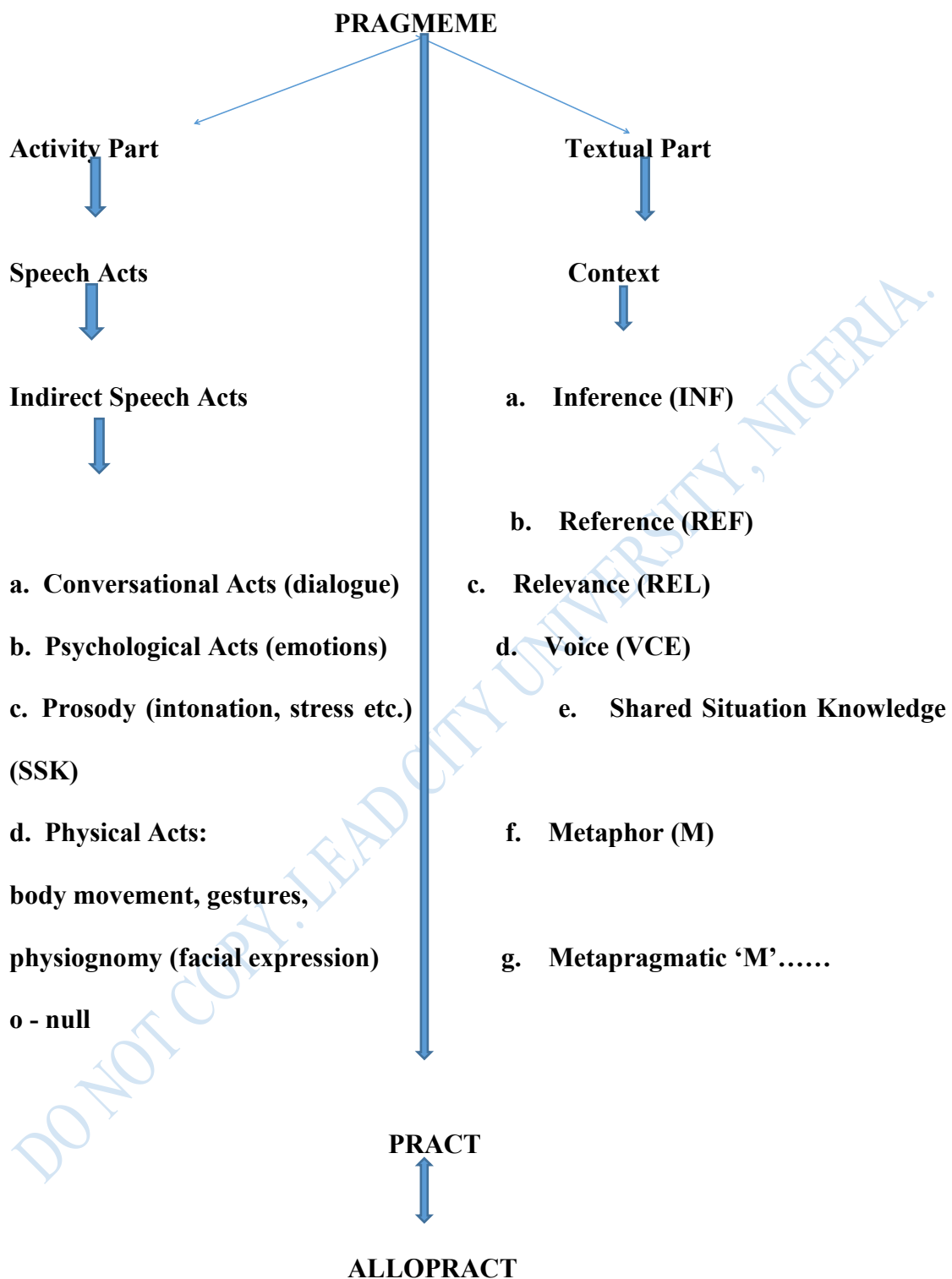


Figure 2.1: Schemata of Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory

Source: 2nd edition 'Pragmatics an Introduction' pg 222

2.4.1 Pragmeme

Jacob Mey⁴ defines a pragmeme as ‘a generalised pragmatic act’⁴. Pragmeme is the speech act which embodies the textual and activity part of any communication contract.

‘It is the locus on which all linguistic and semiotic structures converge and are properly ordered in communication’⁴.

The pragmeme in Mey’s theory can be likened to Austin’s locutionary force. The utterance made by the speaker exclusive of meaning. The pragmeme is divided into acts and tools. These are deployed to mark the pragmatic acts as seen in table 1.

PRAGMEME

Table 2.1: Jacob Mey’s description of pragmeme.

Pragmatic Acts	Pragmatic Tools
Indirect Speech Acts	Inference
Conversational Acts (Dialogue)	Reference
Psychological Acts (Emotions)	Relevance
Prosody (Intonation, Stress)	Voice
Physical Acts: gestures, facial expression, bodily expressions of emotions.	Shared Situation Knowledge
	Metaphor
	‘Metapragmatic’

2.4.1 Practs and Allopracts

Jacob Mey⁴ defines practs and allopracts as the different manifestations of a pragmeme as conditioned by the event or condition. This makes meaning contextual so no two utterances or pragmeme means the same. What is being said or intended in a particular context is what the theory refers to as Practs and Allopracts. A pract is a concrete instantiation of a particular pragmeme. When a pragmeme is put within a context, the meanings it offers are what is called Practs and Allopracts. From figure 1, practs and allopracts function between the textual and activity part. There are practs of persuasion, practs of advice, practs of warnings, practs of appeal and others as the context permits. The practs are actually the goal of the pragmeme.

2.4.2 Textual Part of Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Theory (MPT)

The textual part of Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Theory is illustrated in Figure 1. It comprises the Inference INF, Reference REF, Relevance REL, Voice VCE, Shared Situation Knowledge SSK, Metaphor MPH and Metapragmatic Joker 'M'. Jacob Mey⁴ breaks the pragmeme into two distinct parts. There is the activity part and the textual part. The textual part is what gives room for the activity part so the textual part will precede the activity part in this discourse. The activity part does not stand in isolation. The choices made from the activity part are conditioned by the features in the textual part. The textual part is discussed in this segment.

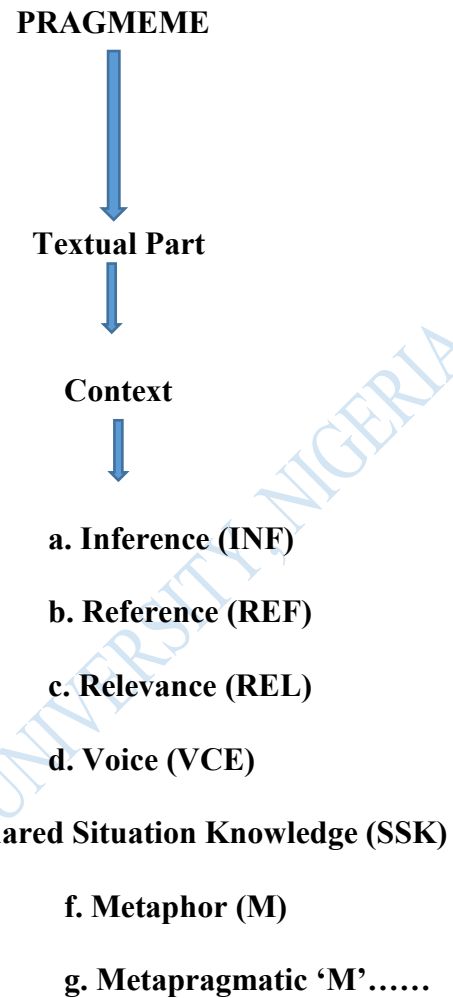


Figure 2.2 Textual Part of Mey's Pragmatic Act Theory

2.4.2 Inference. INF

Inference is meaning deduced from what is said and interpretation given to a pragmeme is what PAT refers to as inference. It is abbreviated as INF. When there is a communication in pragmatics, even what is not verbally voiced has a meaning. Inference is what is assumed or concluded from what is heard this is why PAT strongly argues for the context infusion. Context in PAT is what decides what is said and what is not said.

2.4.2 Reference. REF

Reference is defined in PAT, as what a speech act refers to at the utterance level. Abbreviated as REF. It has no bearing on the linguistic interpretation of the symbols used. The context is what defines what is being referred to. Dog for example means animal linguistically but it is context that gives it meaning in PAT. It could refer to an immoral behaviour or a faithful companion.

2.4.2 Relevance. REL.

The context or condition of society is what determines the choice of linguistic code in use. The relevance of the pragmeme to the event is what is referred to as relevance. Abbreviated as REL. Affordances allowed in a given communication environment is what gives relevance to an utterance. Linguistic codes are only relevant in the environment they are used. The speaker has the right to choose which words he wants to deploy within the context of the speech act. Not all speech acts are relevant in all situations. Eg. Jokes will not be appropriate or relevant in a sorrowful atmosphere.

2.4.2 Voice. VCE.

PAT expounds voice shift and voice clash in a speech transaction. When interactants take their turn in speech acts, it is called voice shift. When the speaker's voice changes based on the mood and emotions, it is voice clash explaining that the mood or emotions of the interactants will always reflect in the speech acts and this to him is also important in analysing a speech act or event. Language is a 'human vocal noise'¹¹. Every voice is a noise and in PAT there is Voice Shift and Voice Clash.

2.4.2 Shared Situation Knowledge. SSK

For a speech act to have meaning, the conditions of society are crucial to its meaning and understanding. Shared Situation Knowledge is the understanding between the speaker and the hearer. The interactants must have a common play field for there to be any meaningful transaction. The speaker uses a common ground of experiences to buttress his points. This is what is simplified as 'shared cultural knowledge'³⁰(SCK). The speaker tries to draw the attention of the interlocutors by sharing a similar common experience which all can relate to. The Holy Book uses a lot of this via parables to drive home the message¹⁰³.

2.4.2 Metaphor

Metaphor is defined as 'wording the world'⁴. Wording is the process through which human beings understand their world. These words mostly have originated from its immediate environment which makes it clearer for the interactants. These words are analogies. Illustrated with the example of water and electricity in explaining how one thing is understood by way of another. It is abbreviated in figure 1 as MPH.

Metaphor is defined as a discourse device and a matter of 'extraordinary use of Language'¹⁰⁴. Another scholar evaluates metaphor as a 'part of human conceptualisation rather than mere linguistic expression'¹⁰⁵. Metaphor is included in the textual part of pragmemes to foreground literary style and devices.

2.4.2 Metapragmatic Joker

Metapragmatic joker is the correct or accepted way a speech act is used in conversation. This is what PAT refers to as metapragmatics. Abbreviated as 'M' with

an inverted comma around it to avoid complications in contextual meanings since there is no permanent meaning to a speech act until the speech environment is understood.

2.4.3 Activity Part of Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory (MPT)

The activity part of PAT is the indirect speech acts. Indirect speech acts are the non-verbal outcome of a speech interaction which only pragmatics can account for. The indirect speech act is subdivided into four. They are: conversational acts, prosody, psychological acts and physical acts.

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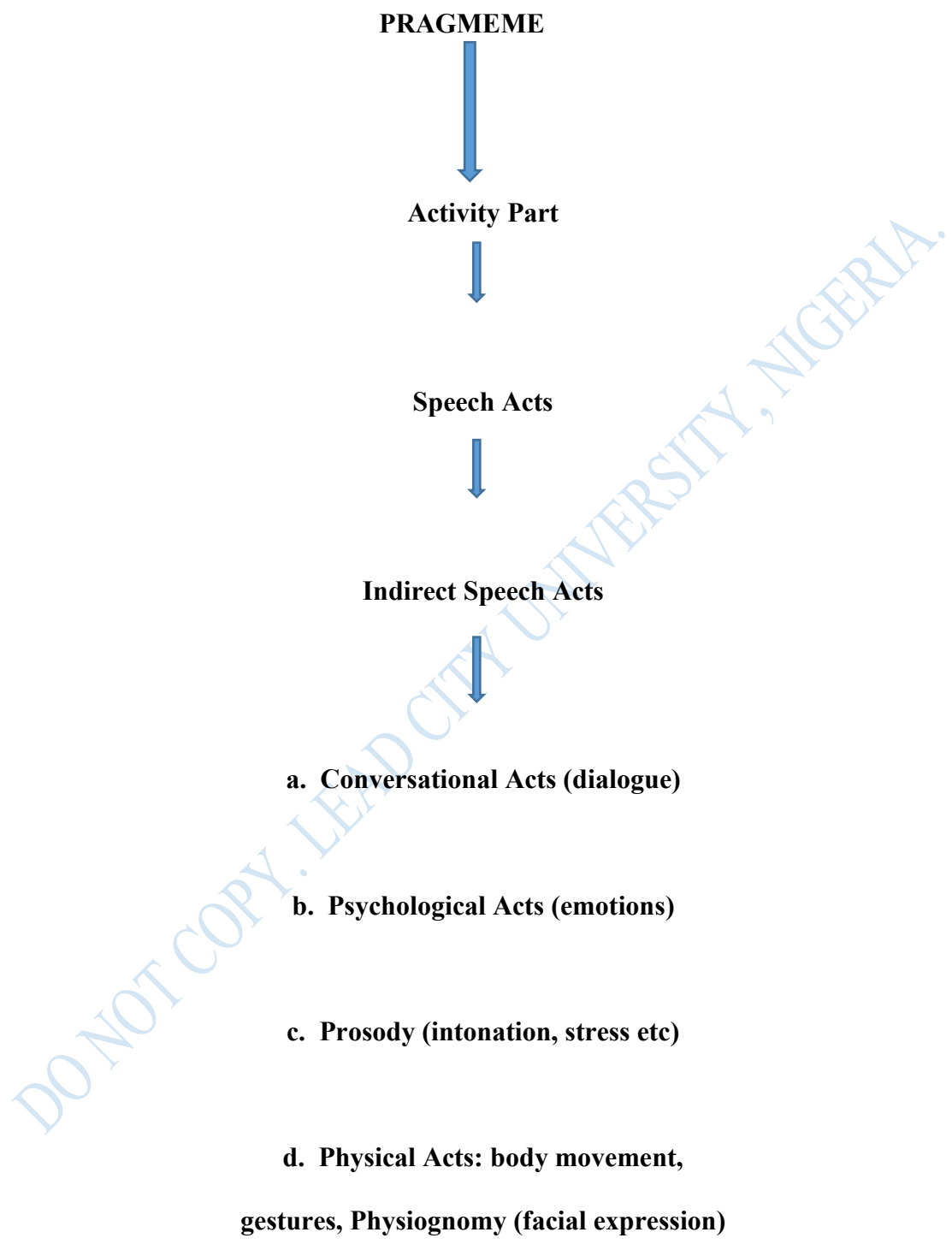


Figure 2.3: Activity Part of Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory (MPT)

2.4.3 Conversational Acts.

Conversational acts are what Mey⁴ refers to as dialogue which is reflected in figure 1 & 3. Dialogue involves more than one speaker. The speaker and hearer both take turns in the speech acts in order for them to understand one another. This is where we have voice shift in the textual part.

2.4.3 Psychological Acts

Psychological acts are the emotions brought into a pragmeme as conditioned by the situational event in the communication activity. It could be emotions of anger, joy, surprise and others.

2.4.3 Prosody

Prosody is the intonation and stress in the tone of the interactants. When the situation is joyful or otherwise, it reflects in the mood of the dialogue.

2.4.3 Physical Acts

In MPT, physical acts comprise body moves, gestures, emotions, physiognomy which means facial expression. All these are physical acts displayed in the process of communication.

The activity part are the various choices interlocutors have at their disposal to communicate with. There is a feature scale where the interactants may choose one or more of the choices. Where none of the activities is involved the Null matrix is activated. This is very rare because even in silence, there is a possibility of body movements and gestures.

2.5 Appraisal of literature.

A hundred and eighteen scholarly books and journals on pragmatic discourse in various areas of human endeavour are reviewed in this work. Thirty-six journals on sermons, twenty-eight books on pragmatics, nineteen journals on politics and activism, thirteen on journals of the concept of pragmatics, nine on proverbs from different cultures, six from different literary genres, five from the medical field and two on marriage. All attesting to the truth that pragmatics is everywhere as Agyekum³⁴ submits.

Table 2.2: Analysis of Literature reviewed

Journals on Sermons	36
Journals of Political Discourse and Activism	19
Journals on the Concept of Pragmatics	13
Journals on Medical Pragmatics	5
Journals on Pragmatics of Proverbs	9
Journals on Marriage and Pragmatics	2
Journals on Literary genres	6
Books on Pragmatics	28
Total	118

Divers Theories were adopted in the works in the literature reviewed. The theories overlap with use. As language is dynamic and not static so are theories. Like the chassis of an automobile, literary studies cannot be carried out without theoretical frameworks. From the pragmatic works reviewed, theories overlapping with Mey's

PAT are highlighted in the different literature reviews. The theories are Charles Morris 1938 semiotic theory, Michael Halliday's 1985 theory of Systematic Functional Grammar SFG, Noam Chomsky's 1957 theory of Transformational Generative Grammar TGG, Norman Fairclough's 1995 theory on Critical Discourse Analysis CDA, Paul Grice 1981 theory of Implicature and Cooperative principle, John Austin's 1962 John Searle's 1969 Speech Act Theory SAT, Dell Hymes 1964 Ethnography of Communication, Istvan Kecskes 2010 Situation Bound Utterance SBU, Akinola Odebunmi's 2006 model of shared cultural knowledge, Charles Goodwin's 2000 theory of action, Van Dijk's 2006 Socio-cognitive theory, Charles Cooley and George Mead's 1934 Symbolic Interactionist Theory, Holger Limberg and Miriam Locher's 2012 linguistic model, Alessandro Capone's 2005 theory of Pragmemes, Francis Hoye and Ruth Kaiser's 2007 Visual acts theory, Akio Yabunchi's 2006 Hierachy Politeness theory, Mikhail Bakhtin's 1975 theory of Polyphony, Jim Martin and David Rose 2005 concept of tracking, John Meyer's 2000 Incongruity theory of humour, Julia Wilkins and Amy Eisenbraun 2009 Relief theory of humour, Tabea Scheel and Christine Gockel 2017 Superiority theory of humour. Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic act theory. These theories have been used as frameworks in the different literature reviewed.

The literature review cuts across all fields of study and human endeavour as far as pragmatics is concerned. Pragmatics is everywhere as discussed in Chapter One and this is clearly amplified in the literature review.

Sermons of religious diversities employed in the literature review are not only limited to Christian sermons; it also captures papers on Islamic sermons. Sermons whether

Christian or Islamic have the same goals. The language of sermon is to unify the adherents, to bring order and good behaviour in a society, to correct government and make the society cohabit able for others in the community.

The Sermons of religious preachers reviewed are as important as the religious figures who deliver these sermons. Their person and preaching affects the society positively, changing systems of government and reforming the societies as the language employed in sermons are very distinct and weighty because of the messages they dispatch. Diverse scholarly papers and works have been examined in this study.

Works on Christian sermons from different denominations across the globe have been reviewed. The sermons of Nigerian preachers as David Oyedepo, Daniel Olukoya, Paul Eneche, Enoch Adeboye, Emmanuel Oshoffa. Chris Oyakhilome, Scottish priest, Robert Rollock, Grand Ayatollah Al-Sistani, the spiritual leader of Iraqi Shia Muslims. Black and White American preachers, Pastor MacArthur, Lawson, Dyson and Luter, Joyce Meyer, Billy Graham, Benny Hinn, Indian pastor, D.G.S. Dhinakaran. Anglican Church services in Kirinyaga County in Kenya and preachers in a part of Kenya also a priest in Southern Italy was also interviewed

In the papers reviewed on medical interactions, the doctor like the preacher's voice is superior to that of the patient. The doctor gives the diagnosis and the prescription just like the preacher in his delivery of sermons. Medical discourse and interactions are complementary to sermonic discourse.

Political discourse analysis form a bulk of the literature reviewed. Political discourse is complementary to religious discourse as you have a preacher and his sermon delivered to persuade and convince the congregants to adhere to the doctrines he is

delivering. The same goes for politicians who do everything with words to draw the people to believe in their ideologies and promising them a better future. Both are persuasive in delivery. It is either to align the hearers to the camp of the speaker, to convert the hearers, to win over, to exhort, to cajole, to brainwash. This is what makes it relevant to this present study.

This paper reviews political discourse as the inaugural speech of presidents Donald Trump, Olusegun Obasanjo, Goodluck Jonathan, Muhammadu Buhari, Nelson Mandela, Uhuru Kenyatta, Raila Odinga, Joko Widodo, Barak Obama's political propaganda, Ella Baker's human rights speech, Ekiti State 2014 governorship election campaign. Hate utterances of politicians also came under pragmatic review. The role of pragmatics in social cohesion and nation building, human rights issues in Nigeria, The #Endsars movement and the Chibok girls abduction were not left out of pragmatic review which makes it of interest to this present work.

Different literary genres are also captured under pragmatics in the literature review all adopting Jacob Mey's 2001 PAT. This is what makes it relevant to this present study. Wole Soyinka's *Trials of brother Jero*, Lola Shoneyin's *The secret of baba Segi's wives*, Jenifer's *Diary* by Funke Akindele, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novels, Car nicknames in Nigeria, Sir Shina Peter's *Shinamania's* record label, Elvis Gbanabom Hallowell's *The Dining Table*.

The field of marital relationships is also captured under pragmatics and it is of interest in view of the theoretical framework adopted which is similar to that employed in this paper.

Proverbs whose goals are very similar to that of sermons are also not left out in pragmatic discourse reviewed in this work. Epira proverbs, Igbo proverbs, English proverbs, Yoruba proverbs, Kumeri proverbs in different scholarly journals In seven different papers, proverbs are employed to warn, to encourage, to direct, to philosophise, to mock. All these are agnate to the practs engaged in sermons as will be highlighted in Oyedepo's sermons.

Jacob Mey's 2001 PAT featured in most of the papers reviewed. This makes it complementary to this study as this is the framework adopted. SAT and CDA are two other major theories adopted. Speech acts and every form of discourse are foundational to pragmatic approach. A number of literature has been reviewed in this scope to buttress the fact that PAT is built on other theories. No pragmatic without speech acts: No discourse without language. Other theories employed in the literature reviewed are visual act theory, humour theories, semiotic theories and others. All the theories are interwoven in pragmatics.

Data of literatures reviewed are sourced from diverse founts. Data from sermons, tracts, bible study outlines, pictures, placards, literature, songs, newspaper cartoons, newspaper commentaries, WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter, you tube channels, all social media platforms. The present study also sourced its data from the you tube channel, a social media platform.

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Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter captures the research design, the population of the study, the sample and sampling techniques adopted, description of the research instrument, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative research approach. The research design is content analysis. It is explanatory. The sermons of Bishop David Oyedepo serve as data for this study.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study includes numerous sermons of David Oyedepo which cuts across diverse topics. The population of the study spans through forty-one years of preaching six times in the week on the average. This is apart from special programmes he conducts. At an average of six sermons per week in forty-one years, a total of an average of eleven thousand, eight hundred and eight sermons are available to select from. Over eighteen million people have listened to these messages according to MyNewDawn media through the link: <http://www.youtube.com/c/MyNewDawn> where the data was collected.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques.

The purposive sampling techniques was used for the selection of four sermons out of an average of eleven thousand sermons of the preacher. The choice of this sampling

technique is to pick from a general consensus that unifies humanity especially in the Christian community. The choice of this technique is also to establish the fact that Oyedepo’s sermons spread across discourse on varying human endeavours such as marriage, godliness, thanksgiving and kingdom advancement.

Four purposively selected sermons for this research are used to identify and discuss the thematic preoccupation, evaluate the underlying contexts of the sermons, examine the pragmatic acts performed in the sermons and determine the pragmatic implication of the practs performed in the sermons.

The four sermons as shown in table 3 are: Miracle Marriage part 1, (One hour, fourteen minutes and seventeen seconds video) Godliness is warfare, (One hour, thirty-seven minutes, forty-four seconds video) Understanding the power of thanksgiving (Fifty-two minutes, two seconds video) and Kingdom advancement (Forty-four minutes, fifty-six seconds video). An aggregate of four hours, twenty-eight minutes, fifty-nine seconds.

Table 3.1: Selected sermons and duration of Bishop David Oyedepo’s sermons.

	Title of message	Duration		
		Hr	min	sec
1.	Miracle Marriage (part 1)	1	14	17
2.	Godliness is warfare	1	37	44
3.	Understanding the power of Thanksgiving	-	52	2
4.	Wonders of sowing into Kingdom endeavours	-	44	56
	Total hours	4	28	59

3.4 Description of the Research Instrument

The research instrument used is Jacob Mey’s 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory.

3.5 Method of Data Collection.

The data for the study was sourced and collected on line, the video messages were downloaded on VLC from *Youtube* Channel of NewDawn TV through the link:

<http://www.youtube.com/c/MyNewDawn> Media. The *You tube* channel of NewDawn TV is Based in United States since 29th October 2011 with eighteen million, eight hundred and twenty thousand, one hundred and forty four viewers as at 2022.10.24

Thereafter, the researcher subjects each sermon to thematic and contextual pragmatic analysis using exclusively the insights in Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory in order to carry out a detailed analysis of the sermons.

The purposive sampling techniques is used for the selection of four sermons out of an average of eleven thousand sermons of the preacher. The choice of this sampling technique is to pick from a general consensus that unifies humanity especially in the Christian community.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

The analysis is contextual, employing the top-down analytical approach in revealing the thematic content of the sermons, the underlying context of the themes, the pragmatic acts and their implications. In this approach, the patterns and themes of the data are categorised to classify, summarise and tabulate. Following these steps, the pragmatic tools in Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Theory are employed. These analysis foregrounds the impact of language in the society via sermons. The essence of context in the understanding of linguistic codes in a communication transaction is also highlighted.

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion of Findings

This chapter takes a systematic top-down analytical approach to the realization of the objectives of the study. Within this framework, the thematic preoccupation of Bishop David Oyedepo's sermons (BDOS, hereafter) will first be projected and followed by the underlying contexts. Other complementary sections then veer through the cores of the pragmatic acts (practs) performed in the sermons and the chapter concludes by exploring the pragmatic implications established and concretized through and from thematic concerns, contexts and practs of BDOS.

4.1 Data Analysis

4.1.1 Analysis of the dominant themes in the sermons (Answering R.Q. 1)

Themes in the sermons

Theme of Gratitude

Gratitude is the act of being grateful. It is a positive way of acknowledging an act of generosity, kindness and warmth. It involves being thankful about someone or something. It could be for past happenings and experiences, present happenings or for things that are yet to happen. In BDOSs, the theme is expressed in the context of relationship and thanksgiving.

Theme of Faith

Faith is confidence in the abilities of a person which could be as a result of earlier experiences or evidences. It could also be an obligation of belief or dedication to

someone or something. The theme of faith in this study is based on context of history and finance.

Theme of Financial Dominion

Dominion can be equated to power or supremacy over something. It is exerting overpowering governing influence over someone or something. In relation to this study, financial dominion is authority over financial needs, certain mindsets and situations. This is set in the context of philosophy, financial struggles and prayers.

Theme of Marital Breakthrough

One paramount thematic preoccupation of BDOSs is that of marital breakthrough. It is contextualized in the quest for singles to have companions of their own. Marital breakthrough can be described in the light of its presentation in the data as the dominion one receives from marital delays.

Theme of Giving (in righteousness)

It is a form of transfer of possession and sometimes ownership of something to someone. The concept of giving is usually an act of obedience in the operationalization of BDOS, in that, the giver and the receiver share an asymmetric status. Giving as a theme is constructed doctrinally in the sense that it portrays God's kind of love about the giver. Two forms of giving were further stressed: sowing in righteousness and sowing in love.

Theme of Humility

Humility is described as the act of being humble. BDOSs are replete with the thematic preoccupation seeking humility from congregants. In its construction in the sermons, humility is the attributing of glory and credit to whom it is due and not taking praises for what. It is basically established in the contexts of relationship and honour.

Relationship is a union between persons, humility, however recognizes, within the relation, who is greater in the union

4.1.2 Analysis of the underlying contexts in the sermons (Answering R.Q. 2)

Contextual issues in the sermons

Context of History (or Historical context)

History can be said to be an aggregate record or narrative of what has happened before. It deals with events of the past especially when relating them to current happenings or events. The context of history is usually a presentation of past events in a way that shows their relevance on the issues being discussed in the present. In this study, the context of history is employed to inform the congregation of happenings that are relevant to the present issues.

Context of War

War can be construed as a form of conflict that is usually organized between large scale groups which could be countries or organizations'. It could also be a form of campaign against something. In this study, the concept of war is used to portray Christianity as adventure that is confronted with several battles. The context help conceptualizes the fact that wars can be spiritual, physical, emotional and financial. Three main sub-types of the context of war were presented in BDOSs: war of godliness/defilement, war of obedience and war of the mind.

The Context of Relationship

The context of relationship can be likened to connection or relation between two or more people. It is the condition or state of being related. It defines the connection of someone to another which could be by blood or association. Relationship could be by blood or by socialization. More often than not, there are a number of relationships that

moves from one stage of familiarity and intimacy to another. In this study, BDOSs show the two kinds of relationship contexts: covenanted/particularized relationship and generic relationship. This has been validated in excerpts 25 & 26.

Context of Thanksgiving

Giving thanks is an act that is usually propelled by an act of kindness. Thanksgiving usually occurs as a form of public declaration of acknowledgement of an act of kindness and favour. More often than not, it involves more people because of the involvement of the public in carrying out. In BDOS, thanksgiving that is, giving of thanks is prioritized. It manifests in two ways: thanksgiving based on future promises and thanksgiving based on past miracles. This is instantiated in the following excerpts.

Context of Prayer

Prayer is a form of communication that involves a mortal and an immortal being. It is a form of communication that involves man and his God. It is directing words or thoughts to God for adoration, appreciation, or petition. Within the ambience of BDOSs, the context is consistently activated. Manifestly, the context presents the preacher giving instructions to the congregation to assume specific positions (e.g., standing up etc.) or re-echo certain phrases.

Context of Philosophy

The philosophical context deals with propositions that tend to affect the understanding of concepts through the deployment of metaphorical images. It deals with rational, analytical, critical and thoughtful thinking. In BDOSs, the context of philosophy is a strategic way of coding messages for practical understanding of a thematic focus of a message. In the sermons, the philosophical context is exuded in two dimensions: object-related philosophical context and human-related philosophical context.

4.1.3 Analysis of the Pragmatic Acts in the sermons (Answering R.Q. 3)

Pragmatic Acts in the sermons

Assuring pract

Assurance can be interpreted as a declaration that kindles and inspires confidence. It is a form of persuasion that comes with firmness without any room for doubt. It is used to depict trust and confidence about someone or something and leaves no room for doubt. The act of assuring is usually done by a speaker to ignite hope and confidence in the listener. The pract assuring is usually characterized by emphatic statements and convincing historical facts. In BDOS, this pract is intended as a faith booster.

Informing pract

The act of informing entails communicating knowledge in order to influence or affect someone consciously or unconsciously. Informing pract is constrained by all the thematic concerns as well as contexts that are geared towards sharing information. Principally, the informing pract evinces two dimensions: Scripture-informing pract and Church-foundation-informing pract.

Re-enlightening pract

This is the act of double-emphasis. Sometimes when enlightenment seems not to be enough, there usually is the need to re-give and supply the knowledge and understanding in order to remind and bring back to their consciousness the necessary understanding. The re-enlightening pract runs the largest portion of BDOSs such that he imports the presuppositional elements and literary parallelism sometimes to forge out the relevance of the re-enlightening pract.

Notifying/Clarifying pract

Clarification depicts an act of straightening records. The need to clarify often comes with the need to communicate a thought from one person to another. It usually occurs after information has been passed across and there is need to remove any form of doubt. In BDOSs, the pract clarifying is used in the context of history. The two excerpts below solidify this instantiated act.

Prompting/Instructing and Directing practs

Prompting practs are strategically designed to command compliance or response to a propositional act. Prompting is literally the act of saying or doing something in order to encourage and persuade someone to do or say something. Instructing and directing practs are allopracts that are extended constructed to educate, guide, direct, command or order. It is mostly done in the context of prayer. In BDOSs, prompting, instructing and directing practs are employed to get worshippers to assume certain postures or take up a task while praying or worshipping.

Illustrating/ Exemplifying pract

Illustrating is exemplifying, serving necessary comparison in order to shed light upon something. It is usually done with demonstration. This pract is commonly used in BDOSs as evidential to bolster the effectiveness and authenticity of the theme that is constructed while preaching. It relies chiefly on the historical and analytical contexts wherein illustrations are made.

Confessing/ Propheying pract

This is an act of speaking in faith. These practs are basically inspired by either the scriptures or prophetic declarations. They are commonly characterized by self-mentioning and good wishes upon oneself. Customary of these practs are

declarations that are made to stir self-deliverance and breakthrough. In BDOSs, they occur general declaration or conversion/altar-call moments.

Warning/Advising practs

Warning/advising practs form a crucial part in BDOSs. Warning is a correctional act that is intended to reveal the danger of certain actions and the need to avoid taking such actions. Advising pract, as revealed in the data for this study, is ingrained in the warning pract because in the course of offering a piece of advice, warning props up. Warnings practs are activated when the negative implications of the attitudinal dispositions of men are emphasized. This is realized through REF to biblical narrative.

4.1.4 Analysis of the pragmatic implications in the sermons (Answering R.Q. 4)

Pragmatic Implications in the sermons

Evocation of Power and Authority in/of God

Evocation of power and authority in God in the sermons of David Oyedepo is anchored on the preacher's recourse to the verbal demonstration of God's ability. This is realized through the practs of assuring, and informing. The assuring practs help in establishing through referencing of the terrible acts of God, while preacher's personally encounter the testimony of God's ability. This confirms that BDOSs are grafted in exuding the power and authority of God and the power and authority, people have in God.

Demystification of God's personality/identity

This pragmatic implication enables the lucid and practical understanding of God's reality that is supposedly implicit to worshippers Here, BDO tries to get his congregation accustomed to the desires of God, in other words, what God actually

wants in the Christian walk with Him. It is concretized by the clarifying and sensitizing practs and basically relies on the historical context.

Lexicalization of historical antecedent

Historical antecedents are lexicalized when references are made from extant events in order to bolster and validate the authenticity of the proposition made at the time of delivering the sermons. Indices that mark off this pragmatic implication are grounded in indexical referring to time, place and persons. It thus naturally prompts the pragmatic acts of reminding and sensitizing and cautioning – all ingrained in the pract re-enlightening.

Reiteration of Divine Assurances

Reiteration is a tool of emphasis that is relied on to amplify the relevance and importance of the message or theme constructed at that moment. The congregation is made at this point to re-echo the promises of God prophetically by the presiding bishop. (Re) affirming and assuring practs are deployed in the realisation of this pragmatic implication.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

4.2.1 Discussion of the Themes in the sermons

Theme of Gratitude

Excerpt 1

Bishop: Now, we have learnt it over time that there are four reasons we give thanks...one is a debt we owe. Anytime God does anything, he's waiting for acknowledgement. You saw that in the story of the one leper.

Excerpt 2

So we are here this morning to offer timely praise, what do I call it?

Church: Timely praise

Bishop: there are times you give thanks that are considered belated. If a friend does you a favor today and it's about 3months time and you're saying oh thank you for that thing you did the other time, he says carry your thanks and go... it is belated

I'll like us to Celebrate Jesus for a few minutes this morning for what he has done. Can I tell you something? We never took an offering to buy this land, no... he bought 530acres of land without taking an offering... (clapping) now, we never had the money to build this place so he built it with his resources yet we never borrowed, we never took bank overdraft, we never called members of the church on private calls... He's been too much, this God has been too much. We need to acknowledge him in heart seated praise. I'll like you to dance unto him as if he did it for you alone... amen

All kinds of miracles... All kinds

Excerpt 3

So, wherever you see addition, it is God

You see increase, it is God

You see Multiplication, it is God

You see expansion, it is God

Common, give the lord a big hand of praise (clapping)

Nothing can grow behind God in the kingdom... Jesus gave thanks and the bread and the fish multiplied supernaturally, it only multiplies in his hand, it can't multiply without his hand

Excerpt 4

Church turned 21years in this facility (church roars and clapped)

There is one habit that God has; he's always waiting to be acknowledged for whatever he does. God has done us very well.... Amen

And we owe him thanks... To take God for granted is to be grounded, we owe him thanks. Since September 18, 1999, God has not stopped working in our midst. Common now, give the Lord praise (church claps).

He allocated this place to us as a commission, he laid the foundation of it by himself, he built it at his own speed and filled it over and over and over again... common give him praise

The theme of gratitude runs through all the sermons selected for this study. It is conspicuously stamped by the Bishop who has shown the relevance of being grateful and how he has made it his lifestyle. From excerpts 1 to 4, this theme resonates with the biblical REF that typifies what God did and the historical encounters the church had with God and why God should be glorified in the light of that. The theme of gratitude as discussed in excerpt 1 is based on the knowledge that the speaker has of God. This is because he understands what God wants and how he wants it. He emphasizes that this knowledge that he has about God is based on the story of 'the one leper' making a biblical reference to the story of the 10 lepers who were healed by Jesus in the bible.

Similarly, he emphasizes that 'we have learnt it over time that there are four reasons we give thanks'. This shows that both he and the congregation have a good level of relationship and understanding about God. Excerpt 2 is also based on the context of relationship which slightly shifts from the God-man kind of relationship to the man-to-man relationship. This way, he directly compares the relationship of God and

man to a man to man relationship. He further urges the congregation to 'dance unto him as if he did it for you alone...'. He desired through these words that the congregation should approach God in a dance one on one; as though the reasons for the gratitude were just personal.

Excerpts 3 and 4 are based on the context of thanksgiving. The theme of gratitude usually exists on the context of public appreciation of a generous act. With special reference (REF) to excerpt 3, the bishop was precise in itemizing the wonderful acts of God before enjoining the congregation to praise God. The gratitude is systematically shown by the preacher stating the specific act as contained in excerpt 4 "Since September 18, 1999, God has not stopped working in our midst. Common now, give the Lord praise (church claps).

He allocated this place to us as a commission, he laid the foundation of it by himself, he built it at his own speed and filled it over and again and again"

Theme of Faith

Excerpt 5

Bishop: So we owe God thanks... can I tell you one very strange thing God said to us in 1982, April 10... You will soon see millions gathering to hear the word... what!!!... Millions!!! Millions!!!

Unthinkable... incredible

This should not be imagined by anybody who is not mad... but that's God

He speaks above you because he speaks according to himself... So, don't think you are to perform the word... you are to believe... do what he says, leave him to the rest...

And now suddenly, we begin to see the millions... suddenly... suddenly...

suddenly (people clap)

Why am I saying this?

Yours is to believe, God's is to perform

Excerpt 6

Please, anything God says, receive it, believe it and leave him to perform it.

And when you see his finger, dance, shout, celebrate him... he will do the next one for you... so the millions are here.

We crossed 2million in the whole nation last year and you know the percentage over again this year. Jesus... only his hand can deliver his plan.

Please relax, God is not in your class, God is not in my class, his ways are higher than your ways, his ways are higher than my ways.

Whatever you have seen here since the beginning, it is Jesus behind the scene.

Who is behind the scene?

In the context of finance, excerpt 5 presents the theme of faith as complete trust in God as one who says what he wants to do not depending on the ability of man. He begins by stating that the event happened in 1982, April 10, some years before. This shows that the event is not current and is therefore historical. He goes on to state how his confidence in God resulted in the manifestation of what He said he will do and says that it sounded 'Unthinkable... incredible. This should not be imagined by anybody who is not mad...' He was thus thought mad for believing in such which eventually came to pass because God speaks according to his ability to perform and not based on human capacity. As a way of encouraging the congregation, he says that:

'Yours is to believe, God's is to perform'. Excerpt 6 begins by stating that God means what he says by bringing it to pass, this is the only role that man is to do, it is to believe, receive and watch it come to pass. This shows that he trusts God's ability to bring whatever he says to pass. He therefore has faith in God and wants the congregation to join him in believing in God's ability as much as he does.

Theme of Financial Dominion

Excerpt 7

The knowledge of the truth, is the key to abundant life... Luke said to them in those days... 'Woe unto you, lawyers! For ye have taken away the keys of knowledge Luke 11:52. My prayer is that you will leave this service in the morning with the key to financial dominion in your hand

Excerpt 8

Bishop: I mean your own struggles must end here tonight

Church: Amen

Bishop: Father, I desire the key, grant me access to the key to a world of financial dominion... I've heard the first word, I thank you forward to release it unto me. I'm Waiting on you right now (people praying)

In Jesus precious name we pray.

Excerpt 9

Bishop: we have never played financial game in this church since inception... God is witness... so financial favour rushes at us as a commission. We've never been under any financial tension since this commission began, we have never played any form of financial gimmicks, no one has ever been under any form of pressure to give, no method has ever been used other than scriptures to

enlighten people on the power that lies in giving... and people made their choice, nobody records whether you give or not, you have a need, we still rush at it as we are able.

The theme of financial dominion is set in the context of prayer and philosophy in excerpt 7. The speaker's intention is to bring to the knowledge of his listeners the wisdom of financial dominion. He does this by not only making reference to the Holy Bible but by praying to God that the congregation will not leave without the needed wisdom of financial dominion which he refers to as 'key'. Excerpt 8 is set in the context of prayer. The speaker first, prays for the congregation before asking them to pray for themselves. He specifically prays that their financial struggles will end. This infers that the congregation is made up of people who are under one form of financial struggle or the other. This includes having a financial need, having a wrong mindset or information about finances or having unpleasant financial situations. He goes on to pray and leads the congregation to pray for the wisdom needed to be free from financial struggles and hardship.

Excerpt 9 depicts how financial wisdom has worked in the life of the speaker. he shares how much dominion he has financially by stating the benefits that he has enjoyed in following certain biblical principles. He clearly states that: '...no method has ever been used other than scriptures to enlighten people on the power that lies in giving'. This infers that amongst the principles that make for financial dominion is giving as stated in the scriptures. Furthermore, he clarifies that his church has never played any form of financial game such as coercing or forcing people to make sure they give outside their will. The theme is thus a representation of the state of the

speaker and what he desires his congregation to learn about having dominion financially even in the midst of challenges.

Theme of Marital Breakthrough

Excerpt 10

Bishop: Psalm 68... we read in verse 6

God setteth the solitary in families: by bringing them out which are bound with chains... but the rebellious remain in their captivity.

That means many are made solitary by the wicked chains of the devil...

Hmmmm

Well-built and favored individuals just won't get married because they are held bound by chains and God breaks the chain to set them in families. So, today, every form of marital chains that may have held anyone bound, I decree they be broken now in Jesus name...

Excerpt 11

So, God is still a marriage maker God, I will make an help meet for him and God made Eve for him because it was not good for Adam to be alone. I want you to understand that your father is a marriage maker. God, your father, is a marriage maker. (smiles) Your father is a marriage maker and until he has made for you, nobody else in the world is entitled to it. He said, let the children first be filled, so if unbelievers are getting married, then yours is even settled longest time.

Marital breakthrough was a prevalent thematic preoccupation as exerted in excerpts 10 and 11. The context of this breakthrough draws strong inferences (INF) that the

devil is the architect of many people who are in marital chains. This is overtly amplified in excerpt 10 in the lexicalization that "...many are made solitary by the wicked chains of the devil... HmMMM". Owing to this proposition and its accompanying phono local act "hmMMM" the seriousness of the issue is established. The church which by extra-linguistic knowledge is set out to destroy the works of the devil thus through the sermons reveals that marital breakthrough is paramount importance. The preacher made it known to the congregation that "God breaks the chain to set them in families".

This is corroborated by excerpt 11 when through REF the bishop evoked the relevance (REL) of marital as an institution orchestrated by God "So, God is still a marriage maker God, I will make a help meet for him and God made Eve for him because it was not good for Adam to be alone" and that it is God's idea that the referent Adam is not left alone in the garden of Eden. He thus emphasized it that it is the believers' right as children of God to get married if unbelievers also do "He said, let the children first be filled, so if unbelievers are getting married, then yours is even settled longest time." It goes to therefore establish that marriages are under attack because it is God's design and so the preacher's assurance of the members is a reminder of the fact "So, God is still a marriage maker God".

Theme of Giving (in righteousness)

Excerpt 12

You have to sow the seed in righteousness

You don't deal in drugs and give an offering...it doesn't add any value to you

You are devaluing the lives of other people, you can't have value...

You don't steal to give, you are only reporting yourself to God... this is how much I stole

Excerpt 13

God's love is a giving love, if you are not a giver, you are not a true lover. He said, we can prove the sincerity of our love by our giving life 2Corinthians 8:8 he this to prove the sincerity of your love.

Abraham, God's friend so loved God that he will give his only son that he waited for 25 years, for free... And Abraham was old and stricken in age and the Lord had blessed him in all things and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed because thou hast obeyed my voice Genesis 22:18...

David so loved the Lord, a man after God's own heart and David so blessed of the Lord that what David gave was above what elders of Israel gave.

And Solomon loved the Lord and God made him a showpiece of his prophetic agenda on the earth... He became the wealthiest King that ever lived.

Giving becomes a delight when you have the heart for God, Giving becomes a delight when you have a heart for God, Giving becomes a delight when you have a heart for God... Many will come under sworn blessing this week

Excerpt 14

Bishop: So, giving does not help the ones to whom you give, it helps in changing your levels. Giving is for your profiting, far beyond the profiting of the people you give. My prayer is that each one will return home today with this covenant mentality

BDOSs are inundated with the thematic preoccupation to sow seeds which translate to mean giving. In excerpts 12, 13 and 14, this thematic concern is stressed with the

co-text showing the nature of giving that the preacher wants the congregation to opt of. The first is explicit lexicalized as sowing seed in righteousness. This automatically presupposes that any seed sown outside of righteousness is unacceptable before God.

Taking recourse to referencing (REF) illicit acts that people engage in, such as drugs, and stealing, the preacher is tactically disabusing the minds of the congregants that there can be seeds that would not be acknowledged by God because of their sources. In excerpt 12, the preacher went ahead to deploy relevance (REL) by citing examples of in the Bible that gave honest seeds and much of it and got tremendously blessed by God. REF is made of Abraham, David and Solomon and the events that characterize their type of giving and the accompanying blessings. For Abraham, God demanded his son to be sacrificed and he obeyed, for David, he willingly decided to give a bountifully expensive offering to God while Solomon gave a humongous sacrifice and offering that forced God himself to bless him with wisdom and wealth. These referential exemplifications are hinged on the shared situational knowledge (SSK) that the preacher and the congregation have. This implicates that giving when done righteously attract blessing, whereas, offering or giving from ill-gotten serves as self-report to God by the giver which indeed is an invocation of God's wrath.

Another cause and effect perspective was further stressed in excerpt 13 when the preacher revealed that the act of giving is a window for the giver's blessing and not the receiver. It became pragmatically marked when he added that it is a "covenant mentality". By implication, it is the doctrinal of the church – a belief system that drives the attitude of members of the church when it comes to sowing of seeds.

Theme of Humility

Excerpt 15

Bishop: Well, I'm here to tell you, I've told you before but I need to tell you again, I am not responsible for the happenings. Every marvellous happening here would still have happened if I were not here, it's the hand of God. And the glory must constantly go to him.

It's purely the hand of God, and that hand will be fully manifest in your life this coming year

Church: Amen

Bishop: Let me hear your loudest amen

Church: Amen (**context of relationship**)

Excerpt 16

Bishop: It is God in the midst of his people that we celebrate, not the people...not the leaders, but God in the midst of them. It is not enough for us to know it but you must know it. Praise God...

Church: Hallelujah

Bishop: You saw Nebuchadnezzar, this great kingdom which I've built by my might and that ended it... seven years on sabbatical, with the wild beasts... his fingers like bull dog and then there was this Herod... The voice of a God and not of a man, he nodded his head and God struck him and he died on the spot.

He will not share his glory with any man or with any graven image Isaiah 42:8, we are here this morning to give the glory which is due to him and all the glory is due to him... all the glory, all the glory, all the glory, all the glory... when God sent us to go to Africa, we had an elderly missionary who had travelled a bit around Africa so it was important for us to contact him but he

was trying to do as if he's the custodian of the agenda, I said leave him... we went to places we have never been and we were gorgeously welcomed..

Humility is defined in excerpts 15 and 16 in evidential terms. The Bishop in excerpt 15 described humility in dissociating himself from the wondrous works that are done through him by ascribing it to the "hand of God". Using the personal pronominal "I" it is inferable that the Bishop does other things but not the wonderful things happening in the church. One striking presupposition that is projected in the construction "I have told you before, and I need to tell you again" is that the Bishop re-asserts its role in his relationship with God, by making it glaringly known that God does the miracles in the ministry and not him. That is also an instance of the preacher relying on the cognitive context that triggers SSK among the members on the importance of abasing themselves for God to be exalted.

After self-exemplification of the act of humility, the Bishop again reiterated this virtue in another context of pride and disobedience REF(ING) Nebuchadnezzar of the scriptures and another practical experience which brings REL to the discourse of humility in the macro-religious context. Here the relationship expresses who should be celebrated between God and leaders generally. He made the proposition emphatic by hammering on the fact that God should be celebrated not leaders. He made REL to the punishment King Nebuchadnezzar served when he accrued to himself glory that was meant for God. Extra-linguistic and SSK enable the understanding that pride is the opposite of humility and the consequences of being proud. Herod was cited as an example then he supplemented it with contemporary encounter he had with a man in the course of touring Africa.

4.2.2 Discussion of the Contexts in the sermons

Context of History

Excerpt 17

...glory... when God sent us to go to Africa, we had an elderly missionary who had travelled a bit around Africa so it was important for us to contact him but he was trying to do as if he's the custodian of the agenda, I said leave him... we went to places we have never been and we were gorgeously welcomed.

Excerpt 18

Bishop: What if they believe not, yet, he abides faithful, he cannot deny himself 2Timothy 2:13. So, to walk in financial dominion, we must come to understand the conditions attached to the provision of the financial dominion in the scripture. That was the motivation that drove me into God's presence in 1982 for 3days. Jesus, show me the secret of Kingdom prosperity, that's what I call it

Excerpt 19

Bishop: 1987, we were out to plant the first five churches in our ministry by the commandment of the Lord, it's time to spread out and so, we were prepared to take Maiduguri, to take Azare, to take Beu, to take Mubi and to take Bauchi and I said where is money not coming and he said... give me that car

Excerpt 20

1984, October 3, we had a little meeting in our little church in Kaduna, a few of us who are leaders and I said now we needed three thousand Naira to pay

off our rent of the church facilities... that will tell you how costly things were then... three thousand Naira

Excerpt 17 above is a historical narrative of what happened years before the meeting. The speaker points in a bid to relay a message on how God works, presents the experience he had years before with an older minister. This was done to drive home his teaching on the subject of believing in God as the one who does things only he can do. In excerpt 18, the speaker drives his point home by recounting his experience in 1982 when he had to seek for some truths about finances for 3 days. This is done to inform the congregation that he is sure of what the conditions for financial dominion are. This is a way through which he clears doubt from his congregation. In excerpts 19 and 20, the speaker tries to similarly bring the congregation to his past experiences with God by telling them what happened and how God was able to meet the needs in His own way. As aforementioned, the speaker intends to bring the conversation into past events that have led to where he is and to show how the things he is teaching them are valid. In other words, he is not just telling them what works or how the teachings were supposed to work, he is telling them how the teachings have worked for him in time past and how the congregation can be partakers of what he is enjoying as an individual.

Context of War

Excerpt 21

Bishop: To deal with forces of ungodliness, to overcome forces of ungodliness, what do we do? Please, first note that Godliness is warfare, Godliness is warfare... it's a spiritual battle and it's a lifelong battle. We saw an incidence

in scriptures Number 21, David woke up one morning and say they should go and number the whole of Israel... get out, Joab... and number the whole of Israel, I want to know the number.

Joab said, that is not permitted by scripture 2Samuel 24 but we are told that Satan stood against David to number Israel, he stood against David... Satan was involved so it's a battle...Satan said, it doesn't matter what God said, go and number it, all nations know the number of people that they have, he refused to listen and you saw the plague that followed... terrible

Excerpt 22

Bishop: an angel of the Lord showed and said the Lord rebuke you Satan, is this not a branch plucked out of fire!!!

Take that garment from him... it was warfare

Whatever filthy garment came with anyone to this service, the forces of heaven will remove them this morning

Excerpt 23

Bishop: But, our mind is the battle field and until we win the war within, we remain victims without...

We must therefore continue to guide the loins of our mind if we must live a godly life. 1Peter1:13- 16 wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.... As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy...

Excerpt 24

Bishop: Winning that battle is having a great adventure on earth and with guaranteed eternity with Christ... we can't afford to toil with that. In the name of Jesus, all the forces of defilement, by the anointing today, shall be destroyed in everyone's life

Church: Amen

Bishop: He said, you have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin...Now, that paints the picture of how fierce the battle is. But they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony.

Our greatest weapon to winning the war within is the blood... For thou has power to purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

The context of war is established in excerpts [21-24] under the auspices of different micro contexts. It is revealed that war in the Christian parlance could be encountered in the quest for godliness, in the bid to obey the ordinances of God, and the control of the mind. In excerpt 21, the preacher registered the fact that "godliness is warfare" and a "spiritual" and "lifelong battle". This is further bolstered by the fact that every good step taken by man is closely monitored and interfered with by Satan. This coincides with what the preacher was emphasizing in that same Excerpt 22 when David fell into the influence of Satan to go against God's will in numbering the people of Israel. Filthiness is a battle when attempts are made for the filthy to be free. This is demonstrated in excerpt 23 where at the point of being blessed Joshua the High Priest was contended with by Satan until the angel of the Lord rebuked him.

In excerpt 28, the mind of men is presented as the battle field for the all shades of defiling thoughts that are there to prevent one from living a godly life. And in excerpt 24, the preacher again amplified the context of war in the construction the race to make eternity another form of battle. All these micro-contexts identified in BDOSs relied on REL, REF and SSK for their validation such that he consciously quoted the scriptures to drive home the thematic context upon which the context is established. Lexicalizing the context of war is largely dependent on the co-textual indices such as forces, overcome, warfare, battle against, plague, rebuke, fire, winning and weapon – all pointing the environment of conflict and chaos. Context provides the understanding of the fact that life is not free of battles but the battles are most often fought between evil and good, or godliness and ungodliness.

Context of Relationship

Excerpt 25

Then I said my God, how reliable is this covenant... then heaven broke lose, I mean heaven broke loose. That scripture, heavens open it to me, I have never read it, if I did, I didn't understand it. Right in that vision... Except my covenant be not with the day and the night, you can't break my covenant of the day and the night, then may also my covenant with my servant David be broken that he should not have a son to reign in his place and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.

Excerpt 26

Healing is the children's bread, until one is saved, he's not entitled to it. You may have drops of mercy but you can't have the substance. Wherever you are please stand to your feet I'll like to pray with you. Jesus loves you, you don't

pay anything for it, just Jesus save my soul, forgive my sin and then you are saved... somebody else is standing up wherever you are, I'll pray for you there where you are, we don't have the time, so stand to your feet

The contexts of relationship instantiated in excerpts 25 & 26 are demonstrative of dual particularized and generic relationship contexts. One on the one hand, Excerpt 18 provides the congregants with the covenant God made with the bishop and therefore an exclusively personal encounter that defines the rarity of the relation between God and the man of God. On the other hand, the relationship context is constructed as an invitation from the bishop to congregants to have a relationship with God in order to partake in some designated type of blessings. The latter is a mediated type of relationship tied to the acceptance of Jesus Christ which invitation is anchored by the bishop himself to members and all who are yet to have relationship with God before they can enjoy "healing".

The relationship context in excerpt 25 is built significantly on the accounts of a vision which is practically a dialogic act, a communicative scenario where the preacher is; able to ask questions and get response "Then I said my God, how reliable is this covenant? Then heaven broke...the scripture, heaven opens it to me". This conversational act, although in the reported act, depicts an engagement that involves two active referents. For the relationship context constructed in excerpt 26, the only active referent is the preacher trying to connect entities – Jesus and any ready person ready to begin such relationship. By extension, it is understandable that the context of relationship provides the background upon which the themes of giving, dominion and others are enacted. As can be seen, the preacher employs co-texts that concretize the

context of relationship in the use of the lexical choices such as covenant, my ministers, my God, children's bread and Jesus 'loves' you.

Context of Thanksgiving

Excerpt 27

Bishop: So we owe God thanks... can I tell you one very strange thing God said to us in 1982, April 10... You will soon see millions gathering to hear the word... what!!!... Millions!!! Millions!!!

Unthinkable... incredible

This should not be imagined by anybody who is not mad... but that's God He speaks above you because he speaks according to himself... So, don't think you are to perform the word... you are to believe... do what he says, leave him to the rest...

And now suddenly, we begin to see the millions... suddenly... suddenly... suddenly (people clap)

Why am I saying this?

Yours is to believe, God's is to perform

Excerpt 28

Every prophetic word will always require the hand of God for fulfilment, and what we have seen now is not the hand of man or a team of people, it's the raw hand of God... common give the lord a big hand of praise... (clapping goes on for a while)

Bishop: So, we are here to celebrate him for bringing his words to pass in our midst as a church and in our lives as individuals in the name of Jesus Christ

Basically, thanksgiving underlines the theme of gratitude and this context provides the most expressive background in BDOSs. In Excerpts 27 and 28, the contextual cues are directed at establishing the contexts of thanksgiving. With specific reference to excerpt 27, there is a micro context of testimony upon which the context of thanksgiving hangs. In its build-up, the preacher REF the church's prophetic take off on the promise of having millions of worshippers in the temporal act 1982 and the consequent manifestation of this testimony triggered and substantiated the thanksgiving context lexicalized in linguistic context "so we owe God thanks". Similarly, excerpt 28 demonstrates this context in BDOSs. Using the symbolic "raw hand of God" as signifier for God's prophetic commitments and faithfulness to the preacher's ministry, the bishop enjoined his congregation to "...give the Lord a big hand". The context of thanksgiving as evidenced from the excerpts examined point to the thematic preoccupation of gratitude and in a sense, the preacher is investing that mindset on his members that God deserves appreciation and also to emphasize the importance of God's faithfulness to His promise.

Context of Prayer

Excerpt 29

For everyone standing, both for the first and second call, please bow your head, lift up your right hand to heaven, you way stop filling your forms right now and pray this simple prayer after me. Say after me:

Lord Jesus

Converts: Lord Jesus

Bishop: I surrender my life to you today

Converts: I surrender my life to you today

Bishop: Forgive me all my sins

Converts: Forgive me all my sins

Bishop: Wash me with your blood

Converts: Wash me with your blood

Bishop: I believe you died for me

Converts: I believe you died for me

Bishop: On the third day you rose again

Converts: On the third day you rose again

Bishop: that I may be justified

Converts: that I may be justified

Bishop: Right now

Converts: Right now

Excerpt 30

Can we lift up our two hands to heaven and celebrate this God one more time for another privilege to be in his presence... give him thanks and praise

Would you ask him to speak to you today... Lord I'm waiting for your sent word that heals and delivers. I'm waiting for your word in season that opens up destinies. I'm waiting for your right word, forceful to set free. Let my own word come today.

In Jesus precious name we have prayed

Church: Amen

The context of prayer, a natural resource in the macro-religious context, is manifested in excerpts 29 and 30, typically marked by the communication between man and the divine. In its projection, excerpt 29 is grounded in the typological index of repentance

and consequent conversion prayer. The bishop is heard and seen leading the concerned members of the congregation into the commitment prayer. There is a preparatory act of this context-bound prayers which encompasses the extra-linguistic cues verbalized as “please bow your head; lift up your right hand to heaven”. This context prepares the minds of worshippers for a communicative encounter with God.

As replicated in excerpt 30, the preparatory act is activated by the preacher’s deployment of the interrogatory act which politely requests the worshippers to “lift up” their two hands, and then this is stamped by another polite request “could you ask him to speak to you today?” to further entrench the context of prayer. The theme of prayer encompasses praises and thanksgiving as means of expressing worshippers’ heart to God. This communication is most often in BDOSs led by the bishop into action. These ultimately provide the co-textual indices of the context of prayers in the employment of words such lexical items as “forgive me ...wash me...”, “ask, I’m waiting and let my word come today.”

Context of Philosophy

Excerpt 31

Bishop: you don’t struggle with any door to which you have the key, our struggle is a result of keylessness... If you have the key, you’re smiling as you approach the door. No tension. One way to develop sudden temperature is to lose the key to your car, particularly when you are outside, if you are in the house, no problem, you can take a taxi and go to wherever you’re going. Your temperature shoots up because of loss of key

Excerpt 32

I have never seen a successful son of a native doctor, so, why will you be stupid enough to go and look for him to help you.

Every son and daughter of a native doctor is a miserable citizen of the earth. I grew up in the village and I know them. I know them

They are miserable people. How can the father of a miserable person make you a happy person? If he can make anybody happy, he should make his own children happy first (speaks in tongue)

The philosophical context is constrained by the objectified and human-related cues. As contained in excerpt 31, the bishop, while trying to establish the concept of dominion (financial) evoked the “key and door” mental frame which aligns with the cognitive context of access to financial freedom. This illustration is made understandable because of the SSK between the bishop and the congregation in that the objects key and door are functionally known to them so it was easier to use these items to explain what accessing financial dominion entails.

On the other perspective presented in excerpt 32, there is an illustration that depicts a native doctor and his son’s prosperity. The preacher’s illustration which was garnished with his childhood experience was to prove that native doctors who cannot make their children wealthy cannot do anything meaningful for other people’s children but the Almighty God can. Although, philosophy is sometimes considered contradictory to the biblical truth, it has been seen as a veritable tool for the understanding of biblical truth and illustrations. In BDOSs, there is a constant recourse to exemplification of fact through the philosophical knowledge.

4.2.3 Discussion of Practs in the sermons

Assuring Pract

Excerpt 33

Bishop: Between now and next Shiloh, the shout of joy will never depart from your habitation. There shall be no weeping or mourning in your habitation.

Excerpt 34

Bishop: So whatever prophecy have ever been fulfilled in this church, please know it is purely a proof of the hand of God at work. 1Kings 8:24 Solomon again was in that prayer, he said 'who kept with thy servant David my father what you promised him, you speak with your mouth and has fulfilled it with your hand as it is this day...so whatever God speaks with his mouth, he performs with his hand when you receive and believe it.

Excerpt 35

Bishop: No prophetic word you heard at Shiloh will fall to the ground in your life

Bishop: can I hear your amen

Church: Amen

Bishop: By the impartation service of yesterday, God has launched you into that realm of no limit

Bishop: can I hear your amen

Excerpt 36

You either have the blessing or you retain the struggles but today, the key to the blessings that set people free from struggles will land in your hand in that vision... Except my covenant be not with the day and the night, you can't

break my covenant of the day and the night, then may also my covenant with my servant David be broken that he should not have a son to reign in his place and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.

That's where we come in. So, my covenant with the redeemed is as binding as the covenant with the day and the night... Until you can stop the day and night from changing position, you can't make the covenant of no effect. The covenant reigns as long as the day and the night are in place. While the earth remaineth, as long as we are on this earth, the covenant of seedtime and harvest remains in force, remains in force. Only givers ever prosper, only givers ever prosper. Receivers don't prosper, you don't prosper by what you receive, you prosper by what you give. It is more blessed to give than to receive... You receive to consume, you give to secure the next blessings... Can I hear you amen? 1984, October 3, we had a little meeting in our little church in Kaduna, a few of us who are leaders and I said now we needed three thousand Naira to pay off our rent of the church facilities... that will tell you how costly things were then... three thousand naira. There is nothing since 1976 that I am or have that God has no access to. I deliberately turned my heart on everything and focused my life on Jesus.

He has not disappointed me once.

The semantic import of the excerpts above entrenches God's undeniable authority and faithfulness to His word, the undisputable prophetic declaration, scriptural assurances. Essentially, the assuring pract performed in BDOSs as recorded in excerpts 33 to 36 engages resources from both the activity and the textual parts. From the activity, the preacher through the conversational acts assures the congregation about the shout of joy using the prophetic voice (VCE) stamped by the declaration in excerpt 33 that

“shout of joy will never depart from your habitation. There shall be no weeping or mourning in your habitation.” This assuring act is predicated on the preacher’s faith in the Lord. Whereas, in excerpt 34, the assuring pract is forged out through REF to the scripture 1Kings 8:24 that tells the story of Solomon glorifying God for keeping to the promise He made with his father, David.

This REF empowers the bishop to now activate the assuring pract by yet declaring that “whatever God speaks with his mouth, he performs with his hand when you receive and believe it.” It is already resounding that the assuring pract work hand in hand with the declaring act which is the conveyor of the assurances. This is also replicated in excerpt 35 where the bishop in the context of prayer assured the worshippers of his confidence in the actualisation of all Shiloh prophetic words. Because the sermon at that point became conversational, the worshippers were responding to the assuring practs performed in the declaration of the bishop. Excerpt 36 is richer in the resources that the bishop employed in performing the assuring pract. This is hinged on the fact that he relied on REF through biblical and historical contexts to realise the evocation of the psychological act that will aid the assuring pract. In other words, citing what the Bible says (then may also my covenant with my servant David be broken) and recalling some histories of the church (1984, October 3, we had a little meeting in our little church in Kaduna) and the sharing of personal testimony (He has not disappointed me once.) in a bid to reveal how wonderful and faithful God has been is a pragmatic way of getting the people to believe the fact that God is a covenant keeping God.

Informing pract

Excerpt 37

The bible is a book of covenant; every provision of scriptures has conditions to meet. When the condition is met, it translates to a covenant. That's the simplest interpretation of a covenant... 'meeting the conditions attached to every provision makes it a covenant'. What shall we do to prove that we believe, repent (smiles) repent... there is no free provisions in the scriptures, every provision of scriptures has conditions attached for the provision to become a reality and when you and I fulfil those conditions, it becomes a bidding thing on God, that is a covenant. The word testament and covenant are the same so what you call Old and New Testament will just be Old and new Covenant... both ratified by the blood of Jesus. So, there is nothing mystical about the covenant... okay, covenant, what is covenant, you now go to the stream, go to history, go to Greek... You know, very simple. Covenant.

Now, this is how kingdom mysteries work, you catch it, you run with it

You leave it, it slips off your hands

He said, walk while ye have the light lest darkness overtake thee

Then Jesus said unto them, yet a little while is the light with you, walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you for he that walketh in darkness

knoweth not wither he goeth

Excerpt 38

This commission has been riding on prophetic wings since inception, God just releases his agenda and we see them coming to pass one after the other, one after the other... Please note, that no anointed Apostle or Prophet has power to bring the word of God to pass. No prophet has capacity to decree fulfilment of

prophecy... Every prophecy is fulfilled by the hand of God because he speaks according to himself, according to what he can do, according to his wisdom, according to his creative power, he speaks according to his resources.

Information is key to BDOSs and this is evidently entrenched in the excerpts above. In it the bishop, with particular reference to excerpt 37 embarks on informing the worshippers that the Bible is a condition-tied, book of covenant which when the right conditions are met result becomes a credible book that binds. He further informs the congregation about the procedural steps towards accessing the biblical covenant to which the bishop mention repentance, and the blood of Jesus. While relying on SSK and deploying the pastoral/trainer VCE, to solidify the REL of the processes to the realization of the covenant in excerpt 37, the bishop stressed it that “this is how kingdom mysteries work”. Through REF, the bishop further challenges members to verify the informing by asking them to “go to history, go to Greek”.

The informing act in this context thrives on clarifying the mysteries concerning the bible as a book of covenant. Another instance of the informing pract as resident in excerpt 38 is reported in the formation bordering on the emergence and call of the “Living Faith as a church, and he went ahead to still clarify that it was an agenda of God not of man. This establishes the fact that through the informing pract, members get acquainted with the workings of the Bible and the mantle upon the commission.

Re-enlightening pract

Excerpt 39

In case you want to write it to refresh your mind, four reasons we give thanks among others...One, it's a debt we owe and we must have to pay... were there not ten cleansed, where were the nine? So they missed out of that preservation, out of that perfection.

Excerpt 40

He still controls the whole of creation, up till now by the power of his word. From his word, I gained dominion over marital issues and I've enjoyed hitch free marriage up till now without pretenses (speaks in tongue). This church is an ever growing church by the power of his word... very gorgeous encounter 24th of March 1994.

Re-enlightenment occurs when the propositional act re-echoes a discourse that expected known to the participants. In BDOSs, this pract is preponderant. In excerpt 39, the lexeme “refresh” satisfies this re-enlightenment pract through the injunction of the bishop that worshippers could write down as a way of refreshing their minds. Re-enlightenment is further concretized in REF to biblical narrative where inference (INF) can be made of the study of the ten lepers in the Bible. The functional relevance of this pract is tied to the premium placed on the theme of giving thanks. Partly related to this example is that in excerpt 40 where the lexical cue of the re-enlightening pract is basically anchored on “still” – a presupposition that draws attention to the fact the referent “he” has been in control and therefore reporting His “still” being in control pragmatically construct the need for the congregation to be double aware of the power of marital dominion that God still offers. The bishop

stresses this by self-mentioning as he made reference to his dominion in marriage through the knowledge he is re-enlightening his people about.

Notifying/Clarifying pract

Excerpt 41

This commission has been riding on prophetic wings since inception, God just releases his agenda and we see them coming to pass one after the other, one after the other...Please note, that no anointed Apostle or Prophet has power to bring the word of God to pass. No prophet has capacity to decree fulfilment of prophecy... Every prophecy is fulfilled by the hand of God because he speaks according to himself, according to what he can do, according to his wisdom, according to his creative power, he speaks according to his resources.

Excerpt 42

Please note, no man nor group of people have the capacity to bring God's words to pass. Yours is to believe, his is to perform... You can't do his job and he won't do your job. You are to believe and he is to perform

Inferences (INF) and adverbial phrases are major discourse cues that underline the construction of the notifying/clarifying pract in BDOSs. In excerpt, 41, the proposition "This commission has been riding on prophetic wings since inception" It is studded with presupposition and INF in that the speaker is responding to perceptions that might have conceived the wonderful happening in their commission has entirely new tales. Therefore, the adverbial index "since inception" infers that the ride on prophetic wings is not entirely new to that ministry. This serves as notifying pract for members who are alien to the truth or as a clarifying pract to those who

might have misconstrued the fact about the commission. He thus went ahead to deploy another phrase “please note” to strengthen the fact that prophetic words are brought to fruition only on God’s sanction and not by the might of any apostle or prophet. As an adjunct to the first excerpt, 42 also reiterate this construct by the use of this phrase “please note” as another form of clarification on the possibility of anybody thinking man can ever bring anything to pass outside of God.

Prompting/Instructing and Directing practs

Excerpt 43

Bishop: can I hear your amen

Church: Amen

Bishop: can I hear your amen

Church: Amen

Excerpt 44

Bishop: Bless the name of the Lord, for the package he has reserved for you tonight, bless the name of the Lord. (Church Praying) for the encounter he has reserved for you... Bishop: Bless the name of the Lord, for the package he has reserved for you tonight, bless the name of the Lord. (Church Praying) for the encounter he has reserved for you...

Bishop: Say with me, I belong to a breakthrough family

Church: I belong to a breakthrough family

Bishop: The family of God

Church: The family of God

Bishop: Where we are located on top of the mountains

Church: Where we are located on top of the mountains

The cluster of prompting, instructing and directing shares similar semantic soul that provides the latitude for the preacher to get compliance from the congregation as the worship session progresses. Typically, in excerpts 43 and 44, there is the stereotypical call and response in the context of prayer that concretizes the prompting/directing praxis. In the second excerpt (44), using the tool of SSK, the bishop is seen prompting, instructing and directing the prayer line of the congregation through the propositional act to “bless the Lord”, say with me” and so on. This strongly uncovers the macro religious context where preachers are instructed to undertake certain religious acts by adhering to a defined pattern. This may be conceived differently yet the giving of direction and instruction to congregation is a means of demonstrating leadership and effecting accurate spiritual injunction for them to be on track in the course of the fellowship.

Illustrating/Exemplifying praxis

Excerpt 45

Bishop: you don't struggle with any door to which you have the key, our struggle is a result of keylessness... If you have the key, you're smiling as you approach the door. No tension.

One way to develop sudden temperance is to lose the key to your car, particularly when you are outside, if you are in the house, no problem, you can take a taxi and go to wherever you're going. Your temperance shoots up because of loss of key.

Excerpt 46

Bishop: One of the elders gave a testimony in the in the first service, 29 years' marital spell on her daughter was broken. 29 years, Jesus turned it around. No matter how short or how long that anyone may have been under any form of marital spells or chains, today I decree your release in the name of Jesus

Illustrating/exemplifying acts are evidence-based practs performed to show the miraculous works of God or the wisdom that underlies a critical concept. For instance, in excerpt 45 and 46, the bishop relies on general philosophical truths and member's testimony to illustrate the need for breakthrough stirring knowledge and the power of the Almighty God. Pertinently, excerpt 45 the bishop tries to use the practical concepts of key, and door to explicate the tension associated with loss of vital virtue especially the loss of key to important doors. Similarly, excerpt 46 exemplifies through the testimony of an elder in the church whose daughter had marital breakthrough after 29 years. The pragmatics of this testimony sets the background for the bishop to make a prophetic declaration to unleash another prophetic order to set free people with similar problems. It can thus be submitted that REF to past miracles can trigger the manifestation of others.

Confessing/Propheying pract

Excerpt 47

Bishop: Where we are not permitted to be found in the valley

Church: Where we are not permitted to be found in the valley

Bishop: I also belong to the Winners Family

Church: I also belong to the Winners Family

Bishop: A globally renowned breakthrough family

Church: A globally renowned breakthrough family

Bishop: I refuse to be the odd person out

Church: I refuse to be the odd person out

Bishop: Breakthrough must become my identity tonight

Church: Breakthrough must become my identity tonight

Bishop: And that's for life

Church: And that's for life

Bishop: And for a thousand generation to come

Church: And for a thousand generation to come

Excerpt 48

Lift up your right hand and pray this prayer after me right now

Say after me,

Lord Jesus

I surrender my life to you today

Forgive me all my sins

Wash me with your blood

I believe you died for me

On the third you rose again

That I may be justified

Right now, I proclaim you as the Lord and saviour of my life

And I believe, I'm now saved

I'm restore back into the faith

I'm now a child of God

Thank you Jesus for saving my soul

Amen

Be blessed in Jesus name

The excerpts labeled 47 and 48 are indicative of the confessing/prophesying practs. The realization of these practs in BDOSs hangs on declarations based on the faith and belief in the spoken word. Very traditional of the Christian faith as well as the African culture, premium is usually placed on what is uttered. It is believed that it goes a long way to shape the destinies of the individual or group of people engaged in the confession or prophesying.

In Christianity, as demonstrated in BDOSs, most confessions and prophecies are made during and at the end of a ministration and are usually led by the preacher. As evidenced in excerpt 47 which is traditional prophesying pract, the congregation is led by the bishop to make those utterances in order to define their identity “I belong to the Winners family”, dictate what and where they want to be or happen to them “I refused to be the odd person out”, “breakthrough must become my identity tonight” and so on. These are pragmatically couched in parallelisms that linguistically structure the lines of utterance. However, there is slight difference in the goal of the confessing pract in excerpt 48. There the confessing pract is designed to register a new identity in Christ. In it there is the allopract of reconciliation and relationship building. New converts are seen seeking forgiveness and making commitments to be enlisted into the Christian faith. The confessing pract suddenly turned prophesying when the worshippers started declaring their new rights and identity in the new relationship they built in Christ “I am now a child of God.”

Warning/Advising practs

Excerpt 49

So, we need an understanding of his covenant to be empowered for wealth in a world of wreck, a world of up and down, a world of you are up today, you crash tomorrow. We need an understanding of his covenant because whatever the Lord doeth shall be forever.

Excerpt 50

Bishop: I'll like to show us one thing just before we close in this section.

I caption this clip: 'Wonders of sowing into Kingdom Advancement endeavors'. Haggai 1:2-11... Then came the word of the Lord of hosts saying, this people say, the time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built... Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet saying, is it time for you, o ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; consider your ways

Ye have sown much and bring in little, ye eat but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink, ye clothe you, but there is none warm;

Excerpt 49 adequately defines the essence of the advising pract that embeds in it the warning pract. In the construction of this pract of advising/warning, the adverbial "so" creates the INF of a preceding discourse upon which the advice is given. The preacher went ahead to offer the need for the understanding of the covenant of God. He thus warned them of the kind of world man is: "world of wreck, a world of up and down, a world of you are up today, you crash tomorrow." The advice was for them to understand the covenant so as to sustain the promised wealth while warning them of the cruelty and ephemerality of the world.

In the same vein, in excerpt 50, while preparing to conclude his sermon, using REF, he drew the attention of the congregants to Haggai 1:2-11, wherein God himself warned the people of that time about their attitude of neglecting his work for their personal work. The warning came at the end of the REF stating the expected negative outcome of their actions “Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; consider your ways. Ye have sown much and bring in little, ye eat but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink, ye clothe you, but there is none warm.” This is used to warn the congregation of the effects of self-aggrandizement at the expense of pursuing God’s kingdom.

4.2.4 Discussion of the Pragmatic Implications in the sermons

Evocation of Power and Authority in/of God

Excerpt 51

The lord God of your fathers multiply you a thousand times many more than ye are. He’s the multiplier... Out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice that makes merry and I will multiply them, you can’t multiply any church, you can’t even multiply a chicken... he does

So, wherever you see addition, it is God

You see increase, it is God

You see Multiplication, it is God

You see expansion, it is God

Common, give the lord a big hand of praise (clapping)

Nothing can grow behind God in the kingdom...

Excerpt 52

Please, note that God still controls all things by the power of his word Hebrews 1:3. So, your access to his word on any subject, puts you supernaturally in command of it. God still controls all things by the power of his word. I am the Lord, I changeth not and so our access to his word concerning any subject matter establishes our dominion over it (speaking in tongues) this church has been in command by the power of the word (speaking in tongues)

Excerpts 51 and 52 in BDOSs are studded with pragmatic resources that evoke the power and authority of God and His word. This is about the goal of the preacher and his constant recourse to deployment of the assuring and informing practs in order to establish the fact that God controls and still controls “all things”. Pragmatically, these sermons are designed to provide reasons why people, beyond the preacher’s immediate congregation, should hold on to God. Hence, REF to the Bible, the Living Faith commission and several testimonies are all geared towards evoking the power and authority God commands and the power and authority people who believe in these sermons and act accordingly will have in God.

He stressed this in relation to generic propositions such as “nothing can grow behind God in the kingdom” and that “the church has been in command by the power of the word”. This implies that Living Faith, as a church got her power by believing in the word of God. This by extension is intended for churches in the world to take cues from with respect to church growth.

Demystification of God's Personality/Identity

Excerpt 53

God's love is a giving love, if you are not a giver, you are not a true lover. He said, we can prove the sincerity of our love by our giving life 2Corinthians 8:8 this is to prove the sincerity of your love.

Abraham, God's friend so loved God that he will give his only son that he waited for 25 years, for free... And Abraham was old and stricken in age and the Lord had blessed him in all things and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed because thou hast obeyed my voice Genesis 22:18...

Excerpt 54

There is one habit that God has; he's always waiting to be acknowledged for whatever he does. God has done us very well.... Amen

And we owe him thanks... To take God for granted is to be grounded, we owe him thanks.

Since September 18, 1999, God has not stopped working in our midst. Common now, give the Lord praise (church claps).

God's ways are mostly mysterious and often need demystification. Knowing this general truth, BDOSs are replete with ways by which God can be trusted and things to do to attain that height. Excerpt 53 explores the God kind of love. This personality is unearthed through REF to scripture, biblical characters and personal testimonies. Christians believe in the Bible and are fond of biblical characters especially the ones whose actions stand out in faith and good works like Abraham as exemplifies in excerpt 54. Same way, in excerpt 54, God's personality of relishing thanksgiving is explained by the bishop to the congregation "there is one habit that has:" By this

revelation, worshippers will understand the ways of God especially what he likes. It also spells out the fact that they owe God thanks, always.

Lexicalization of historical antecedent

Excerpt 55

Church turned 21 years in this facility (church roars and clapped)

There is one habit that God has; he's always waiting to be acknowledged for whatever he does. God has done us very well.... Amen And we owe him thanks... To take God for granted is to be grounded, we owe him thanks. Since September 18, 1999, God has not stopped working in our midst. Common now, give the Lord praise (church claps). He allocated this place to us as a commission, he laid the foundation of it by himself, he built it at his own speed and filled it over and again and again... common give him praise

Excerpt 56

Now, listen to this, at the base of this ministry, a tent shall be built that will seat fifty thousand people... That's okay. If he left us to plan, we would still be planning till now because of the magnitude of the resources required but he didn't give us that opportunity, he said the tabernacle shall be dedicated 18th September, 1999... I want you to know your hand cannot do it because if you ask us to project on our income, we won't start the foundation in five years, we won't. But he completed it in one year by himself, no debt, no overdraft, no stress, no pressure... (people clap). This is the hand of God

Excerpt 57

One of the elders gave a testimony in the in the first service, 29 years marital spell on her daughter was broken. 29 years, Jesus turned it around. No matter

how short or how long that anyone may have been under any form of marital spells or chains, today I decree your release in the name of Jesus

One significant pragmatic implication of the messages of BDOSs is reliance on history and antecedents. This is a strategic way of recalling the acts of God. The relevance is tied to the fact that history is necessary for the understanding of the ways of God. In excerpt 55, the bishop REF how old the church had come tracing it to 1999 and how God has not stopped working in their midst. In excerpt 56, he re-emphasized the faithfulness of God by giving the historical referencing 18th September, 1999 when God promised them that the tabernacle will be dedicated. Also, in excerpt 57 historical reference of what God did for an elders daughter in the church was stressed by the bishop. It shows that the bishop keeps records of events and that same mentality is invested in the members so as to appreciate God better.

Reiteration of Divine Assurances

Excerpt 58

This is what God said to me, they are not open up to my help, they have not opened up to my help, they have not opened up to my help, they have not opened up to my help

Saints begin to pray in the spirit (people praying in the spirit)

Pray in the spirit, pray in the spirit, pray in the spirit, we are not playing here

Pray in the spirit with all your heart

Pray in the spirit everybody

You're walking free today

Today is your day of salvation

Today is your day of salvation
Today is the day of your salvation
Today is the day of your salvation
Today is the day of your salvation
Halleluyah
(people praying)

Excerpt 59

It's there. Say with me:
My father is a cup marriage maker
Church: My father is a cup marriage maker
Bishop: My father is the Marriage maker
Church: My father is the marriage maker
Bishop: Therefore, I cannot lack what my father makes
Church: Therefore, I cannot lack what my father makes
Bishop: my father is the eternal marriage maker
Church: my father is the eternal marriage maker
Bishop: the same yesterday, today and forever
Church: the same yesterday, today and forever
Bishop: I cannot lack what my father makes

In BDOSs there is commonly the reiteration of divine assurances and these are shrouded in the confessing and prophesying practs in the contexts of prayer. The pragmatic implication of these practs is that believers should work out their deliverance by their confession in faith. This can be found almost in all the sermons. In BDOSs, members are charged to often make declarations in faith. He has linked

this to the divine instructions and therefore through the instructing pract, the bishop also instructs members to declare themselves into the breakthrough realm.

Reiteration is achieved linguistically through repetition, structurally and semantically. Explicit and strategic use of this reiteration allows for faith boosting and because they are collective choruses, the members get used to employing that tool in their personal prayer lives. Another marked deployment of this reiteration is the fact that members are called saints thus, it comes with a lot of speaking in tongue “Saints begin to pray in the spirit (people praying in the spirit)”. This kind of spiritual charging would definitely stir revival in the commission and the Christian community at large.

Table 4.1 Excerpts of Themes in the sermons

Themes	Excerpts
Gratitude	1, 2, 3, 4
Faith	5, 6
Financial Dominion	7, 8, 9
Marital Breakthrough	10, 11
Giving	12, 13, 14
Humility	15, 16

Table 4.2 Excerpts of Contexts in the sermons

Contexts	Excerpts
History	17, 18, 19, 20
War	21, 22, 23, 24
Relationship	25, 26
Thanksgiving	27, 28
Prayer	29, 30
Philosophy	31, 32

Table 4.3 Excerpts of Practs in the sermons

Practs	Excerpts
Assuring	33, 34, 35, 36
Informing	37, 38
Re-enlightening	39, 40
Notifying/Clarifying	41, 42
Prompting/Instructing/ Directing	43, 44
Illustrating/Exemplifying	45, 46
Confessing/Prophesying	47, 48
Warning/Advising	49, 50

Table 4.4 Excerpts of Pragmatic Implications in the sermons

Pragmatic Implications	Excerpts
Evocation of the Power of God	51, 52
Demystification of God's Personality	53, 54
Lexicalisation of Historical Antecedents	55, 56
Reiteration of Divine Assurances	58, 59

Chapter Five

Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study has exhaustively carried out a pragmatic study of the sermons of Bishop David Oyedepo and how they have impacted the congregation and society at large. The study came up with findings that emerged from their themes, contextual background, pragmatic acts, and the implication on the church and the society at large.

The major findings are summarized in the paragraphs as follows:

The study first identified recurring issues in the sermons. These themes, discussed against certain contextual contexts shows the predominant issues discussed in BDOS. The study reveals six principal themes: the theme of gratitude, faith/believe, humility, financial dominion, marriage and giving in (righteousness). The theme of gratitude reveals that gratitude is meant to be one of the primary things that a Christian should do. This is because of the nature and understanding of the personality of God as a friend. It also reveals that gratitude should be carried out in the public as a way of acknowledging the way God desires

The next subject revealed in the study is the theme of faith/ believe. The theme is presented against the background of history and finance. It is revealed as having confidence in the character of God even down to the point of being called 'mad'. The nature of God as a trustworthy being is revealed through the story that the preacher shares with the congregation. Beyond showing the nature of God as one that can be trusted, the theme encourages and in turn builds trust in the people toward God's personality.

Financial dominion is another dominant theme in the sermons. The theme, set in the context of philosophy, financial struggles and prayer shows how the congregation can live above financial struggles by paying attention to the wisdom of finances and prayers. The preacher encourages the congregation to take steps to having financial dominion by praying for them and showing them practical steps that they can follow to live above financial struggles.

Similarly, the sermons discussed the issue of giving. Giving is stressed in two forms: sowing in righteousness and sowing in love. Giving is depicted as an act of obedience on the part of Christians towards God. This is a clear depiction that both parties share an asymmetric relationship and God is the one who gives basically out of love. It is consequently presented as a doctrinal issue that forms the attitude of members when it comes to giving.

Another dominant subject in the sermons is humility. The theme is presented as an act of giving credit to whom it is due. In this study, it is giving due reference and honour to God for what he has done. The theme shows that the supernatural acts that the congregation witnessed earlier and the ones that the preacher shared were not in any way by the power of the speaker. He duly acknowledges this and admonishes the congregation to do the same in similar situations.

In presenting the themes, there are contexts that underlie their presentation. Six of these contexts were highlighted and discussed: context of history (historical context), context of war, context of relationship, context of thanksgiving, context of prayer and context of philosophy. Each of these contexts formed the background on which each

theme is discussed. The context of history is the background on which the issue of faith/believe in God is presented. The speaker, in a bid to boost the faith of the congregation and to make them know that he is not just saying what he knows shares his earlier experiences with the congregation. Beyond recruiting past events, the preacher does this to inform the congregation about what he experienced when he believed God also.

War in this study is construed as an organized form of rivalry between the devil and Christians. The context is used to depict Christianity as an adventure that comes with many challenges. The context shows that wars can be spiritual, physical, emotional or financial. The three sub-types of the context of war presented in BDOSs are: war of godliness/defilement, war of obedience and war of the mind amplified. These micro-contexts identified in BDOSs relied on REL, REF and SSK for their validation as the preacher purposefully made reference to the scriptures to drive home the thematic context upon which the context is established.

The context of relationship is another background on which some themes were discussed. The context in this study is shown in two kinds: covenanted/particularized relationship and generic relationship. The study established the preacher had a relationship with God that had sustained the commission for the years it has grown. In addition, the context was demonstrated in a union as only being constructed for newly converted Christians into the faith. This was followed by the context of thanksgiving which was shown to be an integral part of the commission's doctrinal principles. In BDOSs, thanksgiving is described as an act of showing gratitude. This context type bifurcates into two: thanksgiving based on future promises of God to the church and

thanksgiving based on future miracles. The study clearly demonstrate that thanksgiving is central to BDOSs particularly because of the goodness of the Lord the bishop and the church had received in the past. The REF was constantly as a pragmatic resource used to construct this context.

Also central to the identified context is the context of prayer. Prayer was construed as a channel through which humans engage the divine. In the sermons examined it was revealed that prayers were basically led by the bishop and most often are extra-linguistically instructed. Hence, extra-linguistic cues such as standing, lifting up of hands were common features that define this context. Typical prayers were undertaken through repetitions and re-echoed utterances in the course of the sermons. Then the study dovetailed to the context of philosophy. The context provides the basis for the understanding of thematic foci through metaphorical images and illustrative narrative. It could be tagged the context of appeal, as presented in the study because it enforces the mental representation that aided the interpretation.

The study proceeded to examine the principal pragmatic acts (practs) performed in BDOSs. A cluster of eight practs were identified and discussed accordingly in the sermons selected for the study. These include: assuring pract, informing pract, re-enlightening pract, notifying & clarifying practs, prompting/instructing and directing practs, illustrating exemplifying pract, confessing/prophesying pract and warning/advising practs.

As revealed in the study, the assuring pract demonstrates assurances and firm conviction. In BDOS, it was found that this pract is intended for faith boosting and is

characterized by emphatic statements and historical facts. The preacher through REF and the prophetic VCE established the ever abiding faithfulness and power of God in his life, and ministry. On the part of the informing pract, there is the dolling out of information. Customary to the information provided through this pract are scripture-informing and church-foundation-informing practs. Here the bishop provided certain information from the Bible while he also made available information regarding the existence of the church.

Closely related to the informing pract is the re-enlightening pract. This type of pract, according to the study entails double emphasis that is placed on a thematic preoccupation. It relies on presuppositional elements and literal parallelism to re-echo the theme in a sermon. It engages INF and REF to project these said themes in a sermon. Then the study also established in the sermons, the clustered notifying and clarifying pract. Here, there is the act of disabusing in the minds of members and various congregants some misconstrued information about God, and the commission. It is ingrained in the context of history and so necessarily invokes resources such as REF and INF. For the prompting/instructing and directing practs, it was understood that the practs were performed to command compliance from the members and to get them to take prescribed steps and postures in the course of the sermons. It dwells on the SSK of the preacher and the congregants into performing these acts.

The study also found present the recurrence of the clarifying/exemplifying pract. These practs were as the lexemes imply were performed when practical references made using biblical or historical facts. They were basically performed in strengthening the propositional and truth contents of the sermons in order to make

concepts easily understood. The study in furtherance defined the confessing/prophesying practs as acts of faith declaration. They occur in general declarations and conversion-call declaratory moments. It also reveals that the practs share similarities with the African cultures where it is believed that utterances carry power and so confessing and prophesying are made to enforce good wishes. The final one evaluated in the study was the twin-phased warning and advising practs. These were described as correctional practs geared towards preventing members from falling into the wrath of God by according Him the glory due to Him. These practs showed that in BDOSs, there is a constant active engagement that runs through the sermons orchestrated mostly by the bishop.

From the themes, contexts and practs, certain pragmatic implications were culled. These are: evocation of the power and authority in/of God, demystification of God's personality and identity, lexicalization of historical antecedents and reiteration of divine assurances. In the evocation of God's power and authority, the study showed that BDOSs, through the various practs that were underlining the themes and contexts, demonstrated the power and authority one can have in God and what God Himself can do for those who have faith in Him.

Through the sermons, the study found that there is the demystification of the personality and identity of God. The pragmatic study enabled not only members of the church but all Christians who came across BDOSs as the study showed how the preacher through various thematic foci, contexts and practs, unearths the workings of God, his attitude and personality. The study went ahead to demonstrate how the past was deployed in showing forth the wonderful acts of God through the lexicalization of

historical antecedents. Testimonies and recourse to the past would definitely help in establishing the covenant God had kept with the commission and the bishop. Reiteration of divine assurances was revealed in the study as a mechanism through which premium was placed on critical issues raised in the course of the sermons.

Table 5.1: Summary of Findings

Themes	Contexts	Practs	Pragmatic Implications
Gratitude	Historical	Assuring	Evocation Of the Power Of god
Faith	War	Informing	
Marriage	Relationship	Re-enlightening	Demystifying Of God's Personality
Financial Dominion	Thanksgiving	Notifying/ Clarifying	
Giving	Prayer	Prompting/ Instructing/ Directing	Lexicalisation Of Historical Antecedents
Humility	Philosophical	Illustrating/ Exemplifying	
		Confessing/ Prophecying	Reiteration Of Divine Assurances
		Warning/ Advising	

5.2 Conclusion

A total of fifty-nine excerpts have been subjected to analysis in this chapter. The study has taken a robust examination of the pragmatics of Bishop David Oyedepo Sermons (BDOSs). Using exclusively the resources of Jacob Mey's (2001) pragmatic act theory, the chapter adopted the top-down analytical approach in uncovering the thematic preoccupation of the sermons and their constraining contexts of operation. The chapter progressed to account for the recurring pragmatic acts performed in the sermons and the pragmatic implications exuded by the conflation of the themes, contexts and the practs. It was revealed that BDOSs are characterized by the thematic foci bordering on gratitude, faith, marriage, financial dominion, giving and humility.

These were consequently found be underlined by the contextual indices of history, war, relationship, thanksgiving, prayer and philosophy. All these are explicated to shed better understanding on the thematic preoccupation of the sermons. In the sermons, there are fuses of pragmatic acts such as assuring, informing, re-enlightening, notifying, and clarifying, illustrating/exemplifying, prompting/instructing and directing, confessing/prophesying and warning/advising. The study circumspectly evaluated these and came up with some pragmatic implications that are projected in the long run. These encompass evocation of the power of/in God, demystification of God personality and identity, lexicalization of historical antecedents and reiteration of divine assurances. These pragmatic implications provide the bases for individuals within and outside the Living Faith commission to understand the structuration of the bishop's sermonic style and the things the commission places premium on.

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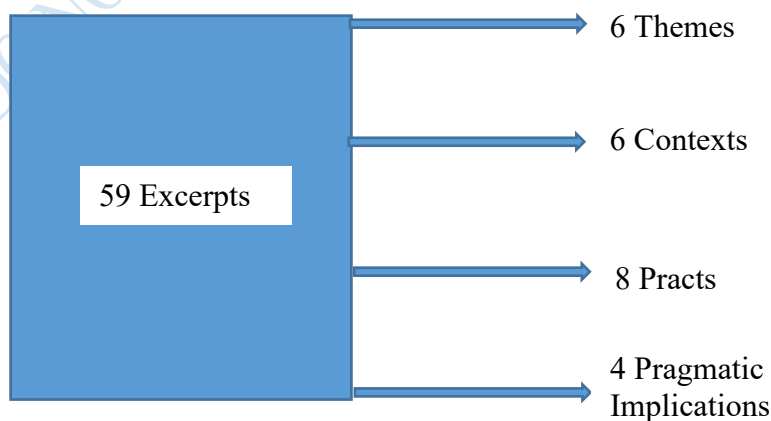


Figure 5.1: Conclusion

5.3 Recommendations

Owing to the evaluation of the findings recorded and summarized earlier, it is expedient that substantial recommendations are made in order to drive better subsequent venture into this nature of religious discourse. These recommendations are drawn with respect to the data, goal, objectives and theoretic choices made in this current study.

1, It is thus recommended that subsequent research efforts are invested on expanding the theoretical framework of this study to accommodate more theories in order to have more robust and representative findings.

2, The study also recommends that attention should be given to contrastive study of BDOSs and those of other ministries and pastors in order to come up with a generic structure potential of Christian sermons. This would go beyond the spiritual structure, it would provide a set of standard and structure for sermonizing.

3, It is also recommended that a multidisciplinary approach be taken to the study of the sermons to evoke diverse understanding of the sermons. To achieve this, researchers can safely combine resources from religious studies to realize disciplinary representation and epistemic enlargement.

5.4 Contribution to knowledge

Among several, this study adds to the existing knowledge in the following principal ways.

- i. This study takes a novel course in examining the sermons of Bishop David Oyedepo through the lens of Jacob Mey's (2001) pragmatic acts. This has offered the opportunity for a holistic exploration of the resources of the theory which other researchers will find beneficial

- ii. This study elucidates the contextual features of David Oyedepo's sermons in particular and religious discourse in Nigeria generally.
- iii. The study is a significant addition to existing studies on the application of Mey's Pragmatic theory to the study of religious discourse.
- iv. Through this study, a framework is provided for the interpretation of Bishop Oyedepo's sermons.
- v. Many religious scholars and teachers would find the knowledge provided here as a veritable tool for advancing pedagogical skills in mission schools and churches.
- vi. Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Acts Theory is duly validated in this study and found to be relevant to analysis of sermons of BDO.

5.5 Suggested Area of Further Research

Sermons constitute a vast measure of data. Hence, doing only a pragmatic study of them would not be sufficient. It is also safe to suggest that analysis is devoted to phonological acts performed in the sermons as evidently shown in the data.

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This is to certify that, this Thesis was written by **Oludolapo Olufunmilayo Adelakun** with Matriculation number **LCU/PG/001854** in the Department of Languages and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State is in full compliance with the approved University format and style.

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