
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Pragmatic Acts in Selected Sermons of Bishop David Oyedepo: A Jacob Mey's Approach

Dr. Anjola Robbin¹ ✉ and **Oludolapo Olufunmilayo Adelakun²**

¹*Department of Languages and Literature, Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria*

²*Dominion University, Oyo-State, Nigeria*

Corresponding Author: Dr. Anjola Robbin, Associate Professor. **E-mail:** robbin.anjola@lcu.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

This study carried out a review of selected sermons of Bishop David Oyedepo in order to highlight the contexts and pragmatic acts deployed in the sermons, as no scholarly work has been done on Oyedepo's sermons using Jacob Mey's pragmatic act theory. The objectives are to ascertain the underlying contexts of the themes in the selected sermons and to examine the pragmatic acts performed. Using exclusively Jacob Mey's pragmatic act theory as a theoretical framework, the methodology is qualitative in its approach. The design is content analysis. From an average of eleven thousand eight hundred and eight sermons, four sermons spanning varying human endeavours are purposively selected. Data was sourced and collected online, employing the top-down analytical approach to revealing the context and pragmatic acts deployed. Findings reveal the contextual constraints of history and war employing the practs of assuring, informing, and re-enlightening. The summary of the findings reveals that ten excerpts were analysed from the data, two pragmatic contexts were established, and three practs were classified, all interjected with pragmatic tools of REL, INF, REF, SSK, VCE, M and conversational acts which runs through the entire data. Through this study, a framework has been provided for the interpretation of Bishop Oyedepo's sermons which religious scholars and teachers would find a veritable tool for advancing pedagogical skills in mission schools and churches. The study recommends further studies on the phonological acts performed in sermons.

KEYWORDS

Pragmatics, sermons, Bishop David Oyedepo, pragmatic act theory

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1. Introduction

Language is a social phenomenon in Systemic Functional Grammar of Linguistics (SFL). Language is used to perform functions. These functions are identified as Metafunctions, which include Ideational metafunctions, Interpersonal Metafunctions, and Textual Metafunctions (Michael, 2019). 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.

In Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG) theory, linguistic behaviour is incited by social and discourse context (Noam, 1968). Grammatical knowledge is the competence aspect which is quite different from the performance aspect. Grammaticality does not automatically mean acceptability (Noam, 1968). This is where pragmatics complements structural linguistics. The social context is crucial to the interpretation of the linguistic structure. 'The use of language in human communication is determined by the conditions of society'. This is the goal of pragmatics. The mathematical approach summarises pragmatics as PRAGMATICS = MEANING - TRUTH CONDITIONS (Stephen, 1983), making syntactic structure generation limited.

In Critical Discourse Analysis, linguistic communication is on three dimensions. That is the Text level, Discourse, and Social Practice level (Norman, 1989). Hence, no linguistic communication is balanced without its social context.

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The speech acts theory (SAT), 'doing things with words,' categorised the speech acts into three, which are, Locutionary, Illocutionary, and Perlocutionary acts (John, 1962). Locutionary force is the sound made in an utterance comprising phonic, phatic, and rhetic acts (Daniel, 2021). The rhetic act contextualises an expression, the phonic utter vocal sounds, and the phatic act creates well-organized strings of sounds and hieroglyphs (Daniel, 2021). What the speaker has in mind is the illocutionary force, and the perlocutionary is the responsive effect of the linguistic code expressed by the hearer.

Gricean pragmatics in enhancing the speech act theory gives importance to Implicatures (Herbert, 1989). It is known as the Theory of implicature and the cooperative principle. This encodes both the direct speech act and the 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 the principle of quantity, quality, relation, and manner (Herbert, 1989). 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 evidence, 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.

The meaning of any linguistic code must be determined from the outside, which is the context in which the utterance is made (Jacob, 2021). The meaning of language should be outside in instead of vice versa and should embed the real human theory of action. PAT has birthed quite a number of scholars because the theory captures both the linguistic part and the activity part. However, 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 applied (Istvan, 2010). 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 traits must be weighed on the same scale (Istvan, 2010). In line with SBU, a communicative act or event should be determined by both its linguistic style and the contextual frame. 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 specific (Alessandro, n.d).

Pragmatics is a body part of linguistics. In the linguistic family, phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics all have definite meanings irrespective of where they are deployed, except for pragmatics (Elizabeth, 1980). 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 phenomenon (Istvan, 2010). Pragmatics is a switch from a theoretical prototype to a practical paradigm where the grammatical structure and syntax are not as important as the way it is used.

The study of language from a scientific stand has generated a field of language theories by which language is analysed, researched, scrutinised, and studied. This includes the language of religion. There are three stages of societal growth, one of them being theological (Fidelia, 2022). Religion is a social institution and a concept for growth within a society; its language should attract scholastic appraisal.

Religious beliefs might not be verifiable scientifically, but their language can, to a large extent, be studied, except the spiritual language, which Pentecostals refer to as speaking in tongues or 'glossolalia' (Felicitas, 1972). To the Pentecostals, it is a heavenly language that is sacred and can only be decoded by spiritual beings. Buttressing this with the symbolic interactionist theory, religion consists of a frame of hieroglyphs employed by society to derive meanings to the complicated issues of human existence (George, 1934). 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 society (Emile, 1961). 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 on language and religion.

1.1 Pragmatics of Sermonic Discourse

A sermon is an instructive oration or lecture by a preacher. It addresses a scriptural, theological, or moral topic. The word 'sermon' comes from a Middle English word derived from old French, which in turn originates from the Latin word, 'sermo' meaning 'discourse'. Sermons are a product of religious discourse basically for the purpose of instruction and exhortation communicated by clergy from a text of scriptures derived from a holy book (Emile, 1961). Different denominations refer to sermons employing different terms. Catholics call it homily, protestants call it a sermon, charismatics and Pentecostals tag its message. Sermons are either scripted or orated, or both.

This study highlights knowledge of the field of pragmatics in religious discourse. It highlights Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Act approach, which will be relevant to other critical discourse analysis research that other researchers will find beneficial. Through this study, a framework has been provided for the interpretation of Bishop Oyedepo's sermons.

Bishop David Oyedepo is the founding Pastor of Living Faith Church worldwide. a.k.a. Winners Chapel, Founded in 1981. 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 style and use of language are unique. His delivery is creative and compelling. His choice of words is very persuasive, and his sermons are very forceful.

The study is the analysis of four 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 life categories. Marriage, Holiness, Kingdom Advancement, and Thanksgiving. The analysis of the study is restricted to the pragmatic acts in the conscripted sermons using Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory as a Framework.

1.2 Review of Empirical Studies

In pragmatics, especially sermons, the main goal of rhetoric devices is to make sermons 'impactful, memorable and persuasive' (Peter, 2020). The author uses Cooperative Principle as a framework with two recorded messages of Paul Eneche, *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 together.

As religion is both Intellectual and affective, 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 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 being (Victoria, 2006).

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, encouraging (Samuel, 2020), 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 mobilisation (Samuel, 2020). Sermons of Kumuyi's Sunday service and Monday bible study with the conceptual framework of subject-oriented variation where different human activities employ different peculiar styles to disseminate information (Dele, n.d). Williams Kumuyi's style in the paper concludes that his language is official, ritualised, and not modern.

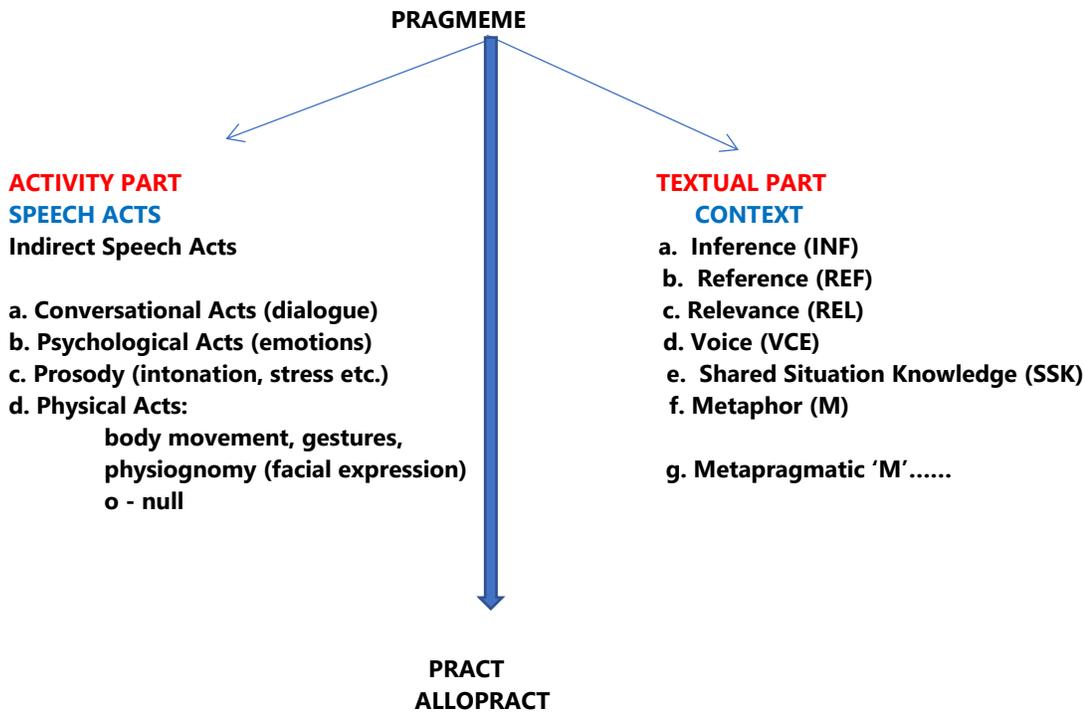
The author uses as data a semi-structured interview with a priest working in a key parish in southern Italy. The paper draws on Jacob Mey's 2001 pragmatic act theory applied perspective of communication accommodation theory of Giles et al. The paper concludes that pragmemes employed in funerals are subject to the changes linguistic systems have undergone over time and their use at every particular season and time (Elvira, n.d).

The Dining Table in Elvis Gbanabom Hallowell's poem investigates the relationship between referents and their context (Olusegun, 2020). In 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 interlocutors. The setting and context of communication are critical in pragmatics.

President Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural speech (Ayo, 2017) 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 author's use of MPT makes his paper relevant to this present study.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Act Theory which is abbreviated as MPT. Propounded in 2001. 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 the figure below:



Schemata of Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory

Mey described a Pragmeme as 'a generalised pragmatic act' (Jacob, 2001), while Practs and Allopracts are the different manifestations of a pragmeme. The textual and activity parts are shown in the tables below:

Inference INF	meaning deduced from what is said and its interpretation
Reference REF	what a speech act refers to at the utterance level.
Relevance REL	the context/condition which determines linguistic code
Voice VCE	turn taking or voice shift changes due mood and emotions
Shared Situation Knowledge SSK	mutual understanding between participants
Metaphor	textual part of pragmemes that foreground literary style.
Metapragmatic Joker	accepted way a speech act is used in conversation.

Table 1-Textual Part of Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Theory (MPT)

Conversational Acts	dialogues which involve more than one speaker.
Psychological Acts	emotions brought into a pragmeme.
Prodosy	intonation and stress in the tone of the interactants.
Physical Acts	body moves, gestures, emotions, physiognomy.

Table 2-Activity Part of Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory (MPT)

The aim of this study is to carry out a review of selected sermons of Bishop David Oyedepo in order to highlight the contexts and pragmatic acts deployed in the sermons using the Pragmatic Act Theory as described by Mey; The objective of ascertaining the underlying contexts of the themes in David Oyedepo's sermons and to examine the pragmatic acts performed in David Oyedepo's sermons.

To this end, the following Research Questions guide the study:

1. What are the underlying contexts of the themes in David Oyedepo's sermons?
2. What are the pragmatic acts performed in David Oyedepo's sermons?

3. Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative research approach. The research design is content analysis. Four sermons of David Oyedepo are employed as data that cuts across diverse topics. The population of the study spans forty-one years of preaching six times a week

on average. 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.

The purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of four sermons out of an average of eleven thousand sermons by the preacher. The choice of this sampling technique is to pick from a general consensus that unifies humanity, especially in the Christian community. It cuts across discourse on varying man's endeavours such as marriage, godliness, thanksgiving, and kingdom advancement.

Four purposively selected sermons for this research are used to ascertain the underlying contexts of the sermons and examine the pragmatic acts performed in the sermons. The four sermons are Miracle Marriage part 1; Godliness is warfare, Understanding the power of thanksgiving, and Kingdom advancement, An aggregate of four hours, twenty-eight minutes, fifty-nine seconds.

The data for the study was sourced and collected online; the video messages were downloaded on VLC from the *Youtube* Channel of NewDawn TV through the link: <http://www.youtube.com/c/MyNewDawn> Media. The *Youtube* channel of NewDawn TV has been Based in the 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

The analysis is contextual, employing the top-down analytical approach in ascertaining the underlying context of the themes and the pragmatic acts deployed in the sermons. 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.

4. Result and Discussions of Findings

4.1 Analysis of Research Question 1

Research Question One: What are the underlying contexts of the themes in David Oyedepo's sermons?

4.1.1 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 to 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.

Excerpt 1

...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 it 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 2

Bishop: What if they believe not, yet, he abides faithful, he cannot deny himself 2 Timothy 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 1 above is a historical narrative of what happened years before the meeting. The speaker points out in a bid to relay a message on how God works and 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 2, the speaker drives his point home by recounting his experience in 1982 when he had to seek 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.

4.1.2 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 an 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.

Excerpt 3

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 said 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 2 Samuel 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 4

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

The context of war is established 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 3, 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 4 when David fell into the influence of Satan to go against God's will in numbering the people of Israel.

4.2 Analysis of Research Question 2:

Research Question Two: What are the pragmatic acts performed in David Oyedepo's sermons?

4.2.1 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.

Excerpt 5

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 6

Bishop: So whatever prophecy has 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.

Essentially, the assuring pract performed in BDOSs as recorded 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 5 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 6, the assuring pract is forged out through REF to the scripture 1 Kings 8:24, which tells the story of Solomon glorifying God for keeping to the promise He made with his father, David.

4.2.2 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.

Excerpt 7

The Bible is a book of the covenant; every provision of the 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 are 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 binding thing on God; that is a covenant. The words 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 a 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

Excerpt 8

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 the power to bring the word of God to pass. No prophet has the 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, and 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 7, embarks on informing the worshippers that the Bible is a condition-tied book of the 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 mentions 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 7, the bishop stressed that "this is how kingdom mysteries work". Through REF, the bishop further challenges members to verify the information 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 the covenant. Another instance of the informing pract as a resident in excerpt 8 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.

4.2.3 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.

Excerpt 9

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 on that preservation, out of that perfection.

Excerpt 10

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 is expected to be known to the participants. In BDOSs, this pract is preponderant. In excerpt 9, 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 a 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 10 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 makes reference to his dominion in marriage through the knowledge he is re-enlightening his people about.

5. Findings

The study came up with findings that emerged from the contextual background and pragmatic acts. Two of these contexts were highlighted and discussed: the context of history (historical context) and the context of war. The context of history is the background on which the issue of faith/belief 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 in 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. 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 study proceeded to examine the principal pragmatic acts (practs) performed in BDOSs. Three dominant practs were identified and discussed accordingly in the sermons selected for the study. These include: assuring pract, informing pract, and re-enlightening pract.

6. Conclusion

A total of Ten excerpts have been subjected to analysis. The study has taken a robust examination of the pragmatics of Bishop David Oyedepo Sermons (BDOSs) using the resources of Jacob Mey's (2001) pragmatic act theory exclusively. The top-down analytical approach is employed in uncovering the contexts of operation and pragmatic acts. Among several, this study added to the existing knowledge in the following principal ways.

- i. Through this study, a framework has been provided for the interpretation of Bishop Oyedepo's sermons.
- ii. Many religious scholars and teachers would find the knowledge provided here as a veritable tool for advancing pedagogical skills in mission schools and churches.
- iii. Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Acts Theory has been duly validated in this study and found to be relevant to the analysis of the sermons of BDO.

6.1 Recommendations

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.

- 1, It is recommended that subsequent research efforts are invested in expanding the theoretical framework of this study to accommodate more theories in other to have more robust and representative findings.
- 2, It is also recommended that a multidisciplinary approach be taken to the study of the sermons to evoke a diverse understanding of the sermons.

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