An Analysis of Assertive Speech Acts in Post Handshake Speeches of President Uhuru Kenyatta and the Former Prime Minister Raila Odinga in Kenya

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Abstract

Verbal communication through speech acts allows human beings to interact within the society. However, the goal of communication is only met if the speaker and listener understand one another. This research aims to analyze assertive illocutionary speech acts in post handshake speeches of President Uhuru Kenyatta and the former Prime Minister Raila Odinga in Kenya. The research applied the Speech Act theory by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) since the goal of communication through language is constrained by Speech Acts. The research was anchored on a descriptive research design. Data was collected from recorded speeches on you-tube through checklists. The sample size consisted of 20 selected speeches that were sampled through downsizing sampling techniques. Through descriptive quantitative analysis 125 assertive utterances were revealed. The analysis reveals that both President Uhuru Kenyatta (52%) and Former Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga used assertives in their post handshake speeches (48%). In both speeches asserting was the most dominant act (33%) uttered by both President Uhuru Kenyatta and former Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga. Other acts included reporting (23%), explaining (22%), showing something (12%) and suggesting (10%). The findings also show the use of language in political speeches aims at achieving a certain communicative intent such as persuasion. The study recommends that the government, policy makers, and stakeholders should always pay close attention to the political leaders' language use in regard to a key subject such as peace, nationhood and unity. This is because the politicians may misinterpret any ideology and political intentions in illocutionary acts that it being sold to masses.
Keywords: Assertive acts; Illocutionary acts; Political speeches; Handshake.

1. Introduction

According to Bloomfield (1933), language is a code whereby ideas about the world are presented through conventional system of arbitrary signals for communication. Ndimele (2001) identifies different functions of language such as; language aids in passing information from one person to another; it helps people to express their emotions and feelings; it helps people to establish contact or relationship; it is a means by which behaviour or attitude are influenced; it is a tool for controlling or seeking compliance with the forces of nature; it serves as an instrument for effecting a sudden change in the state of affairs in the real world; and it helps in the creation of amusement for entertainment. Verbal communication through speech acts allow human beings to interact within the society. However, the goal of communication is only met if the speaker and hearer understand one another. Communication, therefore, becomes meaningful if it is attached to a given context.

The study of language with a close reference to its context is known as pragmatics. According to Leech (1983), pragmatics is the study of how utterances have meanings in situations. That is, explaining how people use language. Pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society (Mey, 2001). In a nut shell, pragmatics involves interpretation of what people mean in certain context and how context influence what is said (Yule, 1996). Pragmatics puts contexts at the center of meaning. Political speeches provide a rich ground where meaning is closely tied to context. Political speech can be seen as a means of establishing and maintaining social relationships, expressing feelings and selling ideas, policies and political projects in any society. Searle (1969), observes that to understand language one has to understand the speaker's intention. According to him, language is intentional behavior. Therefore, it should be treated like a form of action. Searle refers to this as statements as speech acts.

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The speech act is the basic unit of language that expresses meaning. There are various studies on speech acts that make a contribution in the interpretation of the current data. Adetunji (2009), studied speech acts and rhetoric in the second inaugural address of President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and President George Bush of America. The paper, employs a combination of speech act and rhetoric, proves that two contextually contiguous speeches may not have similar illocutionary forces and rhetorical elements even when they belong to the same discourse genre. Hamdani (2011), analyzed the kinds of speech act in the dialogue of Peter Morgan's movie script. Hamdani deals with explanation of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts produced by the main characters. This research used the theory of speech act types (Austin, 1962) and the theory of illocutionary functions (Searle in Levinson, 1983:240) to probe into brief analysis of the use of speech acts in daily communication. The results showed that there were many kinds of speech act produced by the main characters. Taufik *et al.* (2014), carried out a research study of persuasive utterances used by the campaign speakers of the regent and vice regent election at Pasuruan, East Java, Indonesia. The specific aim of the study was to describe the patterns, strategies and culture- social norms of persuasive utterances used in the political campaigns. In Nigeria, Waya (2013) analyzed victory and inaugural speeches of former President Jonathan Goodluck. The article intended to give an awareness and insight into the pragmatic features in President Jonathan's victory and inaugural speeches. This was done with the view to determine the speakers Programme in relation to pragmatic choice and function of language in the selected political speeches. In USA, Suhair (2015) investigated on the role of language in the communication and interpretation of intentions by examining selected political speeches of John Kerry in Presidential Campaigns in 2004 and George Bush-inaugural address in 2001 since they had the same purposes as pieces of discourse with specific goals. The findings of the study showed that the overall relative frequency percentages for the selected speeches were: assertive 35%, commissive 40%, directive 20% and expressive 5%. The results further indicated that Kerry relied more on sentences that performed commissive acts than other speech acts since he committed to some future actions. Bush used sentences with assertive acts more than other speech acts since the assertive had a truth value which could only enhance the effect of the asserted preposition.

This study presents a speech act analysis of assertive in selected political speeches of President Uhuru Kenyatta and the former prime minister, Raila Odinga after the handshake on 9th March, 2018. According to Searle (1969) assertive are the speech acts in which the speaker asserts 'a proposition to be true, using such verbs such as affirm, believe, conclude, report, deny among others. Handshake being a new political strategy in Kenyan context the paper reveals the effectiveness of discourse tact in ensuring the speech act force is achieved in discourse. Kenya as a country has been experiencing several episodes of political violence after every general election. In 2007/2008 there was countrywide violence over the contentious elections being claimed as rigged elections (Ndegwa, 2008). The violent aftermath of the election necessitated the formation of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) as a means of dealing with the root causes of the Post- Election violence. The handshake between the two principals was due to the spate of violence after the presidential elections in Kenya in 2007. The political system in Kenya is prone to conflicts and show of power that is usually common during campaigns. It is from this background, that the study investigates how meaning of utterances is based on the context of the speaker by interpreting the assertive acts of post handshake political speeches of President Uhuru Kenyatta and the former Prime Minister Raila Odinga in Kenya. This research is therefore saddled with two general quests:

- To describe assertive speech acts in post handshake speeches of President Uhuru Kenyatta and the former prime minister Raila Odinga in Kenya
- Investigate the how both President Uhuru Kenyatta and the former Prime Minister Raila Odinga created persuasion in their assertive speeches.

The research is thus expected to be beneficial in terms of theory and practice. The study contributes to studies of pragmatics by offering insights regarding the analysis of political speeches. The research on political speeches also adds value on research on social sciences. The pragmatic and discourse approach therefore:, enables the researcher to explore how government officials use power to make to make decisions, to control resources, to control other people's behavior and often   control their values. The study restricted itself to speech acts and the context in which they occur.

2. Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory was propounded by Austin (1962) and further developed by Searle (1969). According to Austin people perform various actions through the use of words and when utterances are made, a particular act is performed; this is called Speech act. Austin in his book describes a speech act as "How to Do Things with Words". Thus, a particular sentence performs some actions. Bach and Harnish (1979), observe that an action in verbal communication has message in itself, so the communication is not only about language but also with action. Brown and Yule (1983) agree that sentences perform more special functions than mere reporting of states of affairs. Hence, speech acts could be defined as the adequate use of language by a language speaker to address the audience in a social gathering in order to have a new dawn. Yule (1996), defines a speech act as a study of how the speakers and hearers use language. Bonvillain (2003), puts it rightly that when speaking a person accomplishes goals; and this goals are speech acts. Speech act analysis involves an utterance which has both a literal meaning and a particular illocutionary force (Paltridge, 2000) and it also actions that performed via utterances. In speech act analysis utterances are the focus.

Austin (1962), classifies speech acts into three   classes,   which   are: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. A locutionary act is an act of saying something; that is, the act of producing an utterance. The locutionary act is the speech or the actual utterance. Illocutionary acts are the core of any theory of speech acts. The

illocutionary act is what the speaker does or intends to do with the utterance. The perculotionary act is the effect or influence on the feelings, thoughts or actions of the listener/hearer unlike locutionary acts. Perlocutionary act could be positive or negative depending on the perception and interpretation of the utterance by the hearer which will be seen or noticed by the hearer's reaction. Perlocutionary acts could be inspiring, persuading, consoling, promising, encouraging etc. Perlocutionary acts bring about an effect upon the beliefs, attitudes or behaviours of the addressee. It is in consonance with this that Levinson (1983) describes perlocutionary act as the intended or unintended consequences of the speaker 's utterance.

Searle (1969) improves on Austin (1962) Speech by focusing on illocutionary acts. Searle (1969) categorizes the illocutionary act into five classes: First are assertive: these are statements that describe a state of affairs in the world which could be true or false. They commit a speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition. Second are directives: these are statements that compel or make another person's action fit the propositional element. It is usually used to give order thereby causing the hearer to take a particular action, request, command or advice. Third are commisives: These statements commit the speaker to certain future action. It could be in the form of a promise. Forth are the expressives: The purpose of expressive statements is to express sincerity of the speech act like excuses and sympathy. Fifth are the declaratives: These statements are used to say something and make it so, such as pronouncing someone guilty and declaring a war. This study applies Speech Act theory in the analysis of Political discourse which can activate all components of any illocutionary forces. The researchers applied the aspect of illocutionary forces in the analysis and descriptions of assertives.

This study focused on assertive illocutionary acts. The speech act theory is applied in the analysis of assertive speech acts in post handshake speeches of President Uhuru Kenyatta and the former Prime Minister Raila Odinga in Kenya. The theory allows the researchers to give an in-depth research into political speeches of the two leaders thus providing the linguistic features they explore to attain their communication intent.

3. Material and Research Methodology

The researcher aimed at descibing assertive illocutionary speech acts in post handshake speeches of president Uhuru Kenyatta and the former Prime Minister Raila Odinga in Kenya. Descriptive research design method was adopted in this study (Cf. (Creswell, 2012; Mugenda and Mugenda, 2009)). Descriptive analysis is composed of raw data transformed in a form that is easy to comprehend and explain rearranged, organized, and manipulated data that produce descriptive information (Kothari, 2004). Descriptive quantitative method was also used to identify all utterances representing the different types of assertive acts in the data collected. The following formula was used:

P=F/N times 100

Where: **P** = The percentage of utterances **F** = Frequency of utterances and **N** = the total number of each assertive acts:

The study used downsampling procedures to select samples of political speeches made by President Uhuru Kenyatta and the former Prime Minister Raila Amollo Odinga. Downsampling is decreasing the sampling rate of a signal. In this context, 20 speeches were selected for analysis. These texts were selected from You Tube after the famous handshake on 9th March 2018 to June 9th 2020.

The audio-recorded utterances made by President Uhuru Kenyatta and the former prime minister, Raila Amollo odinga after the 9th March 2018 were transcribed and translated into English where appropriate. These speeches were obtained from the national and media archives, as well as other platforms such as YouTube. The data procedure included watching the recorded speeches repeatedly so as to understand their intent of communication, identifying speech acts and categorizing them. Through the checklist the researcher established speeches, locutionary acts, illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts that led to a discourse analysis of political speeches of both President Uhuru Kenyatta and the former prime minister, Raila Amollo Odinga.

The selected speeches were downloaded from the internet and analyzed to show the speech acts performed in the course delivering the speeches. The linguistic approach adopted is based on the linguistic framework of Speech Acts Theory of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). The calculation of the percentages of the assertive speech acts in speeches was also made so as to make interpretation of the tables clear and empirical.

4. Results and Discussion
4.1. Assertive Acts in Post Handshake Speeches

This section focuses on assertive acts as reflected in the data collected on post handshake speeches. Assertive are utterances where the speaker is committed in varying degrees to the truth or false of a preposition. The speaker here makes a statement about something that can be judged for truth value. The analyzed data revealed that there are 125 assertive utterances uttered by President Uhuru Kenyatta and former Prime Minister Raila Amollo Odinga in the 20 speeches that were selected. The assertive speeches were therefore classified basing on Speech act theory by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) Searle (1979) about assertive illocutionary acts which are categorized into some functions namely *asserting, reporting, explaining, showing something, suggesting,* and *refusing*. These classifications are presented in the Table 1. It is completed with the total utterances and the percentages of each type. The classification is presented in Table 1 below:

Table-1. Assertive Classification of post handshake speeches

Assertive Classifications	President Uhuru Kenyatta	Percentage	Former Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga	Percentage	Overall percentage
Asserting	22	18	19	15%	33
Reporting	16	13	12	10%	23
Showing Something	8	6	8	6%	12
Explaining	12	10	14	12%	22
Suggesting	8	6	6	4%	10
Refusing	0	0	0	0	0
Total	66	52	59	48%	100

Table 1 above shows that both President Uhuru Kenyatta and Former Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga used assertives in their speeches that were proposed by Searle (1969). From the classification of assertive in table 1, there were no significant differences of the number of assertive illocutionary act performed by President Uhuru Kenyatta and former Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga. The analysis shows that both President Uhuru Kenyatta (52%) and Former Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga use assertives in their political speeches (48%). The data also show that both President Uhuru Kenyatta and former Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga use all categories of assertive illocutionary acts in their Post handshake speeches except for illocutionary act of refusing.

Table 1 reveals that asserting (33%) was the most dominant act uttered by both President Uhuru Kenyatta and Former Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga. Hornby (1995) defines asserting as the act of conveying information about the truth and fact. The forms of asserting are claiming, stating, affirming, and so forth. According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997) political discourse is well understood in relation to context. The notion of context embodies psychological, political, ideological, and historical components. Thus, the context of each speech was considered in the analysis of the data in terms of field, tenor and mode. While President Uhuru Kenyatta used assertive at (18%) and former Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga used them at (15%). The analysis of asserting act in political post handshake speeches of both President Uhuru Kenyatta (A) and Former Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga (B) is shown in excerpts below:

The following speech acts analysis represents analysis of excerpts is an asserting utterance by President Uhuru Kenyatta. The excepts are labeled A

Excerpt A1
Locution
In 2007, Kenya witnessed the worst cycle of election violence but with the intervention of friends, a coalition government was formed with Kibaki as President and honourable Raila as Prime Minster.
Illocution: Stating
Expected perlocutionary effect: Acceptance of the handshake by both political divide

Excerpt A2
Locution
Once again when we thought we had got the solution to our problems, we proceeded to the elections of 2013 which again left Kenya divided along ethnic lines.
Illocution: Affirming
Expected perlocutionary effect: Acceptance of the handshake by both political divide

In terms of tenor these excerpts are from a speech that was given by President Kenyatta after meeting with Raila Odinga on Friday, March 9, 2018. The field of the excerpts is at Harambee house immediately after the handshake between President Kenyatta and the former prime minister. In terms of mode, excerpts 1A to 2A are utterances that belong to asserting type that is in the form of stating and affirming as shown. In 1A President Uhuru begins his speech by providing and stating facts about the cause of post-election violence in 2007 which finally led to a coalition government of Kibaki as President and honorable Raila as Prime Minster. These statements lay a background for the cause of a hand shake between him and the former prime minister. In excerpt 2A he uses the asserting acts of affirming. Affirming is an illocutionary act which has proportional content positions and sincerity conditions such as assert. He states that despite the promulgation of the 2010 constitution, political violence still occurred in 2013 and 2017 general elections.

The analyzed data shows that 13% of assertive acts of president Uhuru's speeches were made of reporting while 10% of former Prime Minister Post handshake speeches of Raila Amolo Odinga were made of assertive speech acts of reporting. According to speech act theory reporting is one of the functions of assertive illocutionary act that aims to inform on something that has been done. While reporting the speaker tries to embrace the hearer to know about something that happens in speaker's life as shown in excerpts from former Prime Minister's Raila Amollo Odinga speech labelled (B) below:

Excerpt 1B
Locution
We agreed with my brother Uhuru that we can have something to bequeath the future generation with; a country that is united.

Illocution: informing
Expected perlocutionary act: Hopefulness

Excerpt 2B
Locution
And we agreed with my brother, yes, he had said he would take people to Egypt and I had said we would take people to Canaan.
Illocution: Informing
Expected perlocutionary act: Hopefulness

The context of Situation for the above excerpts in terms of field is at Harambee House on Friday 9 March 2018. In terms of tenor the speaker is former Prime Minister Raila Amollo Odinga and he makes this speech immediately after the handshake. The mode includes the reporting assertive speech of informing and persuading. The excerpts inform the public on the importance of the handshake and the former Prime Minister seem to persuade his political followers to accept the new political development that he had taken. Language in these excerpts is used to perform the speech acts of informing and persuading.

The third type of assertive is explaining. The data collected show that the former Prime Minister used explanation assertive illocutionary acts slightly higher (11%) than President Uhuru (10%). According to Hornby (1995) explaining is the way of telling something in detail and the speaker usually utters long sentences to describe something. Explaining is used to make information clear enough to be understood by the hearer. The excerpts below give a speech act analysis from President Uhuru speeches where he employs explaining as an assertive speech act:

Excerpt 1A
Locution
Let me begin by saying with deep honour and how privilege it is to join all of you this afternoon as we pray together and as we share experiences on reconciliation. Reconciliation is easier said than done. Reconciliation in situations where deep divisions have existed for many years and some cases are even generational differences passed on from one generation to the next.
Illocution: Explaining
Expected perlocutionary act: Reconciliation among the political divide

The context of Situation for the excerpt 1A in terms of field is that the speech happens at Safari Park during the national prayer day. The speaker is President Uhuru Kenyatta as the hearers are the dignitaries that have been invited for the prayer meeting. In terms of mode the utterances include explaining with a purpose of persuading the listener. The president uses this speech acts to explain the process of reconciliation. The President recognizes that reconciliation process has been hard especially in cases where generational factors have been an issue. The president utterances also reflect on the post-election violence in 2007. The reason for the president utterances is basically to persuade different leaders on the need for unity and peace in the country.

The excerpts below from former Prime Ministers speech show explaining as an assertive act:

Excerpt 1B
Locution
The founding fathers of our nation coined the Kenyan dream; The National Anthem. Kenya is always a dream waiting to happen… May we stay united… There should be no discrimination either on the basis of ethnicity, or the bases of gender, or on the basis of race, or on the basis of religion. Peace is not merely the absence of war.
Illocution: Explaining
Expected perlocutionary act: There would be unity

The field of the excerpt 1B above is at Harambee house immediately after the handshake between President Kenyatta and the former prime minister. In terms of tenor the speaker is former Prime Minister Raila Amollo Odinga and the listeners include invited guests, government officials, members of parliament and a few leaders of opposition party. The mode includes explanation, narration and persuasion. The speaker is explaining the key words from the national anthem – *Justice be our shield and defender*. When there's democracy, people will dwell in unity and there would be no discrimination either on the basis or ethnicity, gender, race or religion. This narration is meant to persuade the other leaders and citizens to accept the concept of handshake. The excerpt below is from per

The forth assertive act that was analyzed was showing something. Showing something is the way the speaker indicates something. Usually the speaker informs, gives a sign or points out on something to be clear. Strategies of elaboration are entailed in showing something. The speeches of president Uhuru and former Prime Minister Railla Amollo Odinga had equal number of assertive act of showing something (6%). The data from the former Prime Minister's speech below show the assertive acts of showing something:

Excerpt 1B
Locution
South Africa had been under apartheid and the people of South Africa suffered some of the greatest injustices in the world, and when he came out, he decided to shake hands with De-Klerk who defended the system that had put him in prison for 27 years.
Illocution: Elaboration through comparison
Expected perlocutionary act: The hearers will be persuaded

The context of situation of Expert 1B above in terms of field is that the speech takes place at Safari park in 2019 during the national prayer breakfast. The speaker is former Prime Minister who is addressing the dignitaries who had been invited to the occasion. The mode of this speech is showing something through elaboration and comparison. Language is used in excerpt 1 to persuade the hearers. The former Prime Minister compares the situation at hand with that of South Africa with a purpose of affirming the audience that what the country needed for peace to prevail was handshake.

The last assertive act that was revealed in the data collected was Suggesting. Suggesting is the speech act that is used to say that something should be chosen. In this type of assertive, the speaker usually conveys an idea or a plan to be considered by the hearer. The data collected showed that both President Uhuru Kenyatta (6%) A and former Prime Minister (6%) B used speech acts of suggestions in their speeches. The excerpts below from president Uhuru's speech show examples of suggesting as an assertive speech act:

Excerpt 1A
Locution
And this is why me and my brother Raila have agreed that starting from today, we will begin a process of bringing our people together...
Illocution: Suggesting
Expected perlocutionary act: Hopefulness

Excerpt 2A
Locution
So to me, this marks a new beginning for our country, a beginning in which we hope that we shall march together as Kenyans and that we can differ in terms of political alignments but always remain steadfast and united in matters Kenya.
Illocution: Suggesting
Expected perlocutionary act: Hopefulness

In terms of Context of Situation the excerpts are extracted from a speech that takes place at Harambee House on 18th March 2018. The speaker is president Uhuru and the hearers were the public. The utterance is in the form of suggesting and requesting Kenyans to come together and join them to attain their goal. The suggesting utterances by President Uhuru request the masses to join them in their journey to unite the country.

4.2. Persuasion in Post Handshake Speeches

This section focuses on how persuasion was created in post handshake speeches of President Uhuru and former prime minister Raila Amolo Odinga. According to Widdoson (1979) knowing a language does not mean to understand, speak, read and write sentences, it means to know how sentences are used to communicate effect. In discourse analysis, language use should aim to serve a particular communication purpose. Hence, an analysis of post handshake speeches with an aim of understanding the literal meaning of utterances is deemed important. Yule (2010) describes speech acts as actions performed via utterances in an actual situation of language use bringing the functions the speaker intends the hearer to take or interpret.

The data collected revealed that both the political speeches of the President Uhuru Kenyatta and former prime minister were meant to persuade and convince the listeners about the handshake. According to Ferrari (2007) political discourse is intrinsically persuasive and always informs a power relation. The analyzed data of speech acts shows how the new idea of handshake was presented to the country through persuasive processes and the selection of right words. The data collected revealed use of ideologically laden words about peace and unity. The excerpt below from the president's speech shows the use of nationhood word such as *national good, the national interest* and *our people* to demonstrate the importance of handshake.

But the ***national good***, ***the national interest*** must always prevail over those elections. And this is why me and my brother (Raila) have agreed that starting from today, we will begin a process of bringing ***our people*** together

The above excerpt is a strategy that has been used to create harmony and shared feeling. The former Prime Minister in the excerpt below uses the strategy of consensus to achieve persuasion:

We agreed that if we can address all these things, then we can bring our country together". "After **we agreed**, **we said** that now we can announce to the people of Kenya and we shake hands. That is the handshake. I believe strongly on **what we agreed on**". And **we agreed** that the divisions that have failed Kenya to achieve the Kenya dream must be removed"

The use of consensus in the excerpt above is used to raise the feeling of togetherness and agreement. The speaker also tries to empathize and establish a bond with the people referring to difficulties they have gone through due to divisive politics (And **we agreed** that the divisions that have failed Kenya to achieve the Kenya dream must be removed). Basically consensus is strategically used to convince the audience and the citizens about the handshake. The president also uses consensus as a mean of convincing the masses about the handshake when the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) task force presented the report to him at State House as shown:

We are going to use this as an opportunity **to heal the wounds** and to create an environment that would make **Kenya** peaceful that would make Kenya prosper, that would make **all Kenyans** feel included. I honestly believe that **we have** set the path to long term prosperity and stability for our nation. I think **we can all agree**, we don't want to achieve our individual ambitions on the altar of peace, prosperity, and stability of the people we wish to lead.

The speaker aims at convincing the hearers on the BBI task force which its intention is to unite the country by trying to empathize and establish a bond with all Kenyans by referring to difficulties they have gone through such as

ethnicity. The speaker also wants to persuade the hearers to support the BBI hence uses stative verbs such as *believe, think* and *agree.* Persuasion in the above data has been achieved through the micro act of the commissive act of promising. Convincing and persuasion was also done through the use of rhetoric questions as depicted in the data collected. It is clear that while constructing the idea of BBI and handshake both the principles used rhetorical questions to convince the audience.

The data collected showed the speakers persuading, giving hope, encouraging and relieving tension in the hearer. President Uhuru's speech when the BBI task force presented report to him at state house, reflects cases of commissive illocutionary act that intents to persuade the listener. The president aimed at persuading the listeners to support BBI. He states that BBI *will be used as a means to heal the wounds and to create peace in the country*. The president uses the commissive act of promising to achieve persuasion. He clearly aims at convincing the hearers on the BBI task force which its intention is to unite the country. Persuasion was also reflected in when the president hosted Mombasa leaders at State House. He convinces members that *one can never climb a mountain alone but with others*. The use of a proverb in this speech was meant to persuade members to unite.

The former Prime Minister's speeches also aimed at persuading leaders and citizens to support BB1 when he addresses the masses on tribal differences, he uses various illocutionary acts such as promising and vowing to persuade leaders and citizens to support BB1. He promises the leaders and the citizens that they will never allow diversity to kill the nation and he challenged everyone to be ready for changes. Worth noting is that the illocutionary acts of promising, vowing, challenging and requesting are used to convince the hearers on the importance of BBI which will later prepare them for a referendum.

5. Conclusion

The current study was designed to examine assertivespeech acts in post handshake speeches of both President Uhuru Kenyatta and the former Prime Minister Raila Odinga with the framework of speech act theory. The speeches were analyzed as pieces of discourses with specific communication intent. The study analyzed the assertive illocutionary acts that convey the intentions of the two principals of the handshake. The illocutionary acts ascribes meaning to the speeches made by both President Uhuru and former Prime Minister Raila Amollo Odinga. The study concludes that both the speeches of the two principals reflected five types of assertive speech acts: asserting, reporting, explaining, showing something and suggesting. Assertive acts were intended to tell and inform leaders and the citizens to support handshake. The speech acts also portray the personality of the speakers. The analysis of both president Uhuru and former Prime Minister Raila Amollo Odinga showed that they had great expectations about the handshake. The Speech Act Theory as a framework in the analysis of the selected speech enabled the researcher to explore language use of both President Uhuru and former Prime Minister Raila Amollo Odinga.

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