Explicit Illocutionary Acts in Legislative Discourse

Clara Unoalegie Bola Agbara[1] and Kayode Omole[2]

[1]English Studies Department, Nigerian Turkish Nile University, Abuja, Nigeria; [2]Department of English, University of Abuja, Nigeria

[1]bolegie@gmail.com, [2]kayomole@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract - The fundamental role of legislators is to make laws which would bring about positive changes in the lives of the electorates whom they represent. Consequently, it is expected that every legislator's utterances are made with the intention to bring about a "change in the existing state of affairs" in the country. One linguistic theory which has demonstrated that speaking is acting is Speech Act Theory. This theory states that speakers perform three communicative acts: locutionary, illocutionary and performative acts. Illocutionary acts could be performed either implicitly or explicity. Therefore, using Speech Act Theory, this study sets out to identify and explain the various illocutionary acts performed by Nigerian legislators during bill debates. The data for the analysis were taken from Nigeria Senate Hansard of the 6th National Assembly. The study is constrained by the fact that the Hansard which is a verbatim recordings of the senate official interactions is devoid of phonological and other non- verbal pragmatic clues. The study reveals that Nigerian legislators perform mostly four types of explicit illocutionary acts – representative, affective, effective and conditional acts. The study concludes that the speakers' utterances are characterized by two levels: surface and deep levels. The surface level of the locution is the act of representative, affective, effective and conditional and the deep level is the act of persuading the other senators to accept the speaker's view on the topic of discussion.

Key words: language communicative acts, speech acts, performative utterance, linguistic tool, sentence function.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a vital linguistic tool used by speakers to express opinions, views, ideas and feelings. It is a delicate tool whose inappropriate usage can mar or distort the speaker's opinions, views, and feelings. To accentuate this aspect of language, Austin opines that whenever words are uttered, the speaker actually perform certain acts. Many linguists have carried out series of researches on Austin's Speech Acts Theory using different communicative contexts. Austin identifies three distinct acts performed by speakers to include locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. The paper however, is interested in the various illocutionary acts performed by legislators during official interactions. Searle, Austin's student, setting aside the master's classification of illocutionary acts, re-subdivided illocutionary acts into representative, commissive, directive, effective and declarative acts.

Speech Act Theory which was propounded by Austin in his work 'How to do Thing with Words' (1962) explains how speakers perform real acts with their utterances. In his theory, Austin opines that a special and peculiar type of utterance which he calls 'performative utterance'. Explaining the term, Wardhaugh (2006) notes that "in using a performative utterance, a person is not just saying something but is actually doing something if certain world conditions are met" (p. 285). Thus, utterances such as

> I declare this meeting close
> I name this child…
> I sentence you…

perform specific actions and in some ways change already existing situations in real world (Wardhaugh 2006). Austin states that these utterances, unlike constative utterance, are not true or false but must be uttered under appropriate circumstances and by appropriate persons; otherwise the utterances will have no effects. He identifies some "felicity conditions which must be present for the performative utterances to be successful.

The fact that words can be used to change the world is an important linguistic discovery of speech act theory. Austin isolates three different aspects of doing something with words:

Locutionary aspect: uttering a sentence that is not ambiguous;

Illocutionary aspect: the actual act performed by the utterance, such aswarning, apologizing, promising, threatening, etc.

Perlocutionary aspect: the effect the utterance has on the addressee; that is, what the addressee must do or feel or think, such as deceived, impressed, enraged, protest, persuaded, inspired, etc.

He also identifies two types of performative utterances: explicit performative utterance which requires conventional procedure and the less explicit performative which lacks any conventional procedure. He classified performatives into Verdictive, Exercitive, Commissive, Behabitive and Expositive. Commenting on Austin's performatives, Wardhaugh states; "once we begin to look at utterance from the point of view of what they do, it is possible to see every utterance as speech act of one kind or other,… these acts may not be explicit…"(p. 286) She argues that different languages do not have or employ the same performatives.

Searle (1969) in his attempt to improve the notion of speech act distinguishes three different acts performed by a speaker:

Utterance act: this expresses the intent which the speaker has.

Illocutionary act: this makes the addresses to do something and this action must be performed 'intentionally'.

Propositional act: using language to refer to things in the world and to make predictions about such matters.

Searle criticizes Austin's classification of performatives because the categories are not mutually exclusive and some elements in the categories do not match the definitions of the class. Hence, Searle reclassifies the acts into:

Representatives: are utterances which represent state of affair in the world and hence they must commit the speaker to the truth of the expression.

Directives: utterances which make the addressee to do something as express in the speech. The speaker gives directives to the listener and the listener carries out the wishes or directives as intended. Austin classifies this under exercitives.

Commissives: utterances which commit the speaker to carry out the course of action stated in the proposition expresses.

Expressives: utterances that express an inner or psychological state of the addresser.

Declaratives: utterances which effect changes – change the state of affair in the world.

Searle's classification is not based on performative verbs but on certain conditions /rules which the illocutionary force must fulfill; such as content rule, sincerity condition, preparatory condition, mode of achievement condition and essential condition.

Mey (2001) argues that all utterance acts "perform something in the world" (p.125). Therefore, all utterance have illocutionary character, hence linguists and philosophers interest should be solely "on illocutionary aspect of language use, rather than on distinction between locutionary and illocutionary act" (p.125). Criticizing both Austin's and Searle's categorization, Mey states that both of them use "one sentence, one case principle… to illustrate their theory, they use sentences that are characteristics of the 'case' under discussion…" (p.125) In most communicative situation, communication is not carried out on one case sentence. Hence it is important to analyze varied types of sentences in diverse human socio-political endeavour of which Nigeria Senate is one.

Legislative discourse is argumentative in nature. Argument comes into place because the legislators often express, defend and attack the views of others, especially those speakers who belong to the opposition parties. Legislative debates are not simply debates but are "confrontation[s] between political parties, between government and opposition, and parliament as an institution that does things also as an institution" (Van Dijk,2004). Also, time economy influences linguistic behavior of legislators and hence 'speakers are visibly and hearably [sic] aware of time constraints, and much of their talk is summaries' (p. 357). By implication speakers' utterances must be characterized by sound structured rhetorical devices as well as non-verbal expressions in order to achieve efficient time management and effective communication.

The speeches of the legislators are of utmost importance not just to legislators only, but also to the people whom they represent and the entire country

because "the ultimate point of their speeches or questions, is making or amending laws, or discussing, amending and usually ratifying Bills (as proposed by the government)" (p.356). Therefore, legislators' communicative behaviours are highly constrained not just by the structures of the House but also by other socio- cultural and political factors.

The focus of this paper is only on the performance of direct (explicit) speech act in Nigeria legislative discourse. The analysis of the performance of indirect speech acts is not within the scope of this study. Suffice it to say that the legislators also perform indirect (implicit) speech act in their interaction

OBJECTIVES
The objective of this study is to examine:
1. How Nigeria legislators use language in policy making for the well being of the society and the people whom they represent. That is examining the language features, patterns and peculiarities of discourse by identifying and analyzing the speech act frequently employed in the discourse?
2. Which speech acts have any impact on societal or political tenor, commitment and patriotism?

Thus, the study "lift[s] speech acts out of the domain of descriptive to that concrete action" (May 102).

METHOD
The frame work for the analysis of this study is Speech Act Theory, a pragmatic principle which treats most utterances, when performed under certain felicitous conditions, as real actions which bring about changes in world affairs. The data for the study is taken from the Nigeria Senate Hansards; sequence of speeches channeled through the presiding senator to other co-participants. It is a verbatim documented proceeding of the senate sittings.

The study examines six bills from 2009 and 2010 of the 6th National Assembly, clustering each year into three sampling units and selecting one sample from each sampling unit. Our data which can be described as a "performance data" (Brown & Yule, 1983), is a collection of semi-dialogues, and to a certain level, are not spontaneous. They are semi-dialogues because often the speakers make their contributions not necessarily in reply to previous speakers, though reference may be made to previous contributions. Thus, the verbal output is one sided and is directed to the Chair. The speeches are not spontaneous, although the speakers are not reading out their speeches because it is against the rules of the senate debate. However, the speeches may have been

prepared before the debate. This preparation is made possible due to the fact that before any bill is debated upon, such a bill has been read at least once during previous senate sittings and a copy of the bill is also circulated to members of the senate (Senate Standing Order p.60). As a result, speakers have the opportunity to prepare their contributions before the issue is debated on the floor of the senate.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Senators' utterances are influenced by the Lead Paper on the Bill, their past experiences on the topic of the Bill, their shared expectations and knowledge. Although the discourse is characterised by both Explicit Performative Acts and Implicit Performative Acts, only Explicit Performative Acts are examined in this paper. Explicit Performative Acts refer to those utterances in which the sentence form corresponds with the linguistic communication function of the sentence. Traditionally, there are "three major sentence types in English, namely the imperative, the interrogative and the declarative." (Levinson, 1983) These sentence types are traditionally associated with specific linguistic communicative functions such as Commanding or ordering, questioning, and informing or describing respectively that concrete action" (May 102).

Although, Searle classified speech acts into five basic groups; namely, Representatives, Directives, Commissives, Expressive and Declaratives, these five sets of speech acts are not all present indDiscourse. Only the acts that feature in the data are discussed below.

Representatives
Representative (assertive) acts in Nigeria Legislative Discourse often do not contain performative expressions like "I wish to state", "I want to inform", etc. They are assertive because the speakers are presenting a state of affairs. The purpose of doing this is to persuade the listeners to accept the views of the speakers through illustrations, description, clarifying, or affirming a state of affair. Assertive are employed by the speakers to inform other participants how things are with the intention of convincing the participants to accept or reject the amendment of a bill or enactment of a new bill.

The following locutions are used by various speakers as act of illustration by providing the listeners with examples; as well as a means of persuading them to accept the speakers' points of view.

1. For instance, there have been various cases where a government in Nigerian [Sic] was dragged outside for the settlement of a contract that was adjudged to be shoddily done… (1st speaker: Arbitration Bill)
2. ... for example, they said that it is a general practice that disputes between Nigeria and Western entities are often required by Arbitration Clauses in their contractual agreement to be settled in London, Paris or Geneva under their Laws. (3rd speaker: Arbitration Bill)
3. The community where Senator X comes from is almost in extinction just….
     (3rd speaker: Petroleum Bill)
4. This senate passed the solid minerals Acts and section 116 of that Acts talks about…. (3rd Speaker: Petroleum Bill)
5. The issue here is about documentary evidence which is captured in section 93 to 96 of the Evidence Act. They are talking about photocopies but no mention is made electronic printouts... (3rd speaker: Evidence Bill)
6. Let me just use one example … If a famous terrorist; a well known terrorist is found on Nigerian soil today, we have no law to deal with him. (3rd Speaker: Terrorism Bill)
7. In the submission by … said: *propagation and dissemination of information in any form calculated to cause panic, evoke violent….* This type of clause can give a leeway to state actor…… (4th speaker: Terrorism Bill)
8. Under domestic Terrorism, the vandalisation of PHCN conductor can be regarded as terrorism. Puncturing oil pipeline can be regarded as domestic terrorism. (9th speaker: Terrorism Bill)

These samples are utterances used as **act of illustration**. They are assertive acts because they represent states of affair in the world and the various speakers are committed to the truth of the utterances. Only samples1, 2, and 6 contain illustrative expression like "for instance" for example", "use one example" which are used as introducing 'concrete assertive'. Although, the other samples do not have illustrative expressions, the listeners are able to decode them as illustrations based on the contextual usage. These locutions are used as devices for argument with the aim of persuading the listeners to accept.

Representative acts are also seen in locutions which denote **reasons of an action or opinion**. Below are samples:

1. This is because in the pursuit of the war on terror various human rights considerations have been ignored… (4th speaker: Terrorism Bill)
2. … it is because we are not involved in international terrorism.
     i. (5th speaker: Terrorism Bill)
3. This was because Nigerians could not meet the requirements for the development of marginal fields vis-à-vis the owners of the fields; … (2nd speaker: Petroleum Bill)
4. This is because we have given a timeline of 90 and 30 days which makes it mandatory for INEC of today or INEC of tomorrow to conform within 90 and 30 days. (9th speaker: Constitution Bill)
5. It was only amended because of convenience and … (18th speaker: Constitution Bill)
6. We signed because the Nigerian Company is anxious to raise funds to start the business and … (2nd speaker: Arbitration Bill)
7. We really need to look at the Bill again because despite the good intentions there are still some problems. (6th speaker: Arbitration Bill)

These locutions are used to perform **representative act of reason**; providing raison d'être for an action or opinion. Demonstrative pronouns – 'this and that' are used to refer back to the immediate point made for which reason is being provided. All the locutions above contain adverbials of reason marker – 'because'. These utterances, therefore, perform the act of reason to demonstrate the stand point of the speaker apart from the deep level function of the act of persuasion. They are assertive because they refer to various states of affairs in the world and the speakers can affirm the 'truth' of these utterances.

The following locutions are used to perform representative act in various forms:

1. ... technology has moved on to a point where the Act has not contemplated. (2nd speaker: Evidence Bill)
2. This bill…. is an update waiting to happen and being implemented in the last 30 years. It is long overdue… (6th speaker: Evidence Bill)
3. At the time oil was discovered in Nigeria, … we lacked the capacity to provide necessary legislation to regulate the industry. (1st speaker: Petroleum Bill)
4. The industry has never seen any landmark development, remarkable reforms all encompassing national desires than this bill. (7th speaker: Petroleum Bill)

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These locutions above are used to **affirm** the points being made by the various speakers; samples 16 and 17 affirm the need to pass Evidence Bill while samples 18 and 19 are used to affirm the importance of passing Petroleum Bill. They are assertive because they denote states of affair in the world.

In samples 20 and 21 below, the locutions are used **to emphasize** the need to pass Evidence and Appropriation Bills.
1. We live in a digital age and government agencies are advocating for e-payment, e- ticketing, and the rest of them. (4th speaker: Evidence Bill)
2. Generally, when we pass a Bill and it is subject to amendment that is the beauty of our law - the flexibility and accommodating the reality on the ground, ...(2nd speaker: Appropriation Bill)

But, samples 22 and 23 are used **to criticize**:
1. There are provisions investors entering a particular community and how they would go into community development agreement for the provision of social amenities (3rd Speaker: Petroleum Bill)
2. ... I want to stress that over time this country has been getting the issue of budgeting really wrong; … (6th speaker: Appropriation Bill)
3. It has become an annual ritual. (10th speaker: Appropriation Bill)

Sample 22 criticizes the lapses in Petroleum Bill while samples 23 and 24 criticize the annual amendment of budgets already passed into law.

The various samples above show that Nigerian Legislative Discourse is characterized by representative acts of **reason, illustration, affirming, emphasizing and criticizing**. The locutions sampled are assertive act because they denote different states of affair in the world and the various speakers are committed to the 'truth' of the utterances. However, most representative illocutions do not contain assertive verbs like 'affirm', 'emphasize', 'illustrates', etc. still the listeners are able to decode that they are assertive used to illustrate, affirm, emphasize or criticise because of their contents and contexts.

Affective Acts
The propositional contents of this set of acts influence the other participants to action. These acts are also referred to as directives. The intention of the speaker is to use such locutions to make the participants carry out what is stated in the utterances. Unlike, representative (assertive) acts, this set of utterances contain performative markers which help

the participants to infer, to a reasonable level, the speaker's wish. There are various strategies a speaker can employ to express the intention which the listener should carry out. These strategies, depending on the social status between the speaker and the listener as well as the aim of the speaker, include command, request, suggestion, advice, recommendation, etc.

These various ways of making known the act to be carried out by a listener, often employ similar auxiliaries which are closely related in meaning. However, the social relationship between the senators (the speaker and the listener) is that of equal status. This social position enables the listener to decode that the act to be performed is not an order, or a command but a suggestion, or an appeal is being made by the speaker.

Below are some examples:
1. I **urge** our dear colleagues to support this Bill and give it an expeditious passage. (1st speaker: Petroleum Bill)
2. I **urge** all my colleagues to please, in our patriotic zeal, support the Bill… (12th speaker: Petroleum Bill)
3. …. I **support** the Bill and I encourage the rest of us to do so (1st speaker Evidence Bill)
4. I **urge** all my colleagues to support this Amendment…. (3rd speaker: Evidence Bill)
5. I support this amendment and I **urge** my colleagues to support   is (3rd speaker: Appropriation Bill)
6. I would **urge** my colleagues that we should pass this very Amendment ... (3rd speaker: Constitution Bill)
7. ... I do support that we **go ahead** as speedily as possible to make sure that the amendment is done (6th speaker Constitution Bill)
8. I am therefore **appealing** that it should stop at the Court of Appeal. (10th speaker Constitution Bill)
9. … I would like to **urge** my colleagues to support the proposed Amendments, … (16th speaker: Constitution Bill)

The above samples are uttered by the various speakers as acts of appeal to other participants to support the Bill being discussed. The performative verb often employed is 'urge'; very few samples used a different word: in sample 27 the verb used is encourage; while in sample 31 the performative word is 'go ahead', but in sample 32, the word 'appealing' is used.

The verb 'urge' is preferred by most of the speakers because the word implies 'to encourage'

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somebody strongly to do something or 'to advocate' something earnestly and with persistence (Encarta Premium Electronic English Dictionaries, 2009). According to The New Webster's Dictionary, 'urge' is a verb used to '… earnestly persuade or encourage…; to make earnest recommendations or entreaties.' Thus, 'urge' is a persuasive linguistic tool in Legislative Discourse.

Another major affective act performed by the senators is **suggestion**. Suggestion is distinct and different from appeal. Appeal is a formal request asking the other person to carry out an action while suggestion is the act of putting forward a plan or proposal by a speaker so that the addressee can reflect on it and accept or reject it. According to Leech and Svartvik (2002), putting suggestions forward 'leave[s] the decision about what to do in the hand of the hearer' (p. 176). Suggestions are put forward using various performative verbs as illustrated below:

1. We **need** to make provision for environmental impact assessment (3rd speaker: Petroleum Bill)
2. They **should** be patriotic when considering the Bill so that…(10th speaker: Petroleum Bill)
3. I **would like** those who will deal with the nitty-gritty of the Bill to find a way of compelling Nigerian Government as a matter of policy to invest certain percentage of the proceeds… (15th speaker: Petroleum Bill)
4. I will, therefore, **suggest** strongly that when the Bill is sent to a committee the need to liaise with the Law Reform Commission… (1st speaker: Evidence Bill)
5. We **should** quickly call in what has been proposed by various initiatives so that… (2nd speaker: Evidence Bill)
6. In as much as we want to fight terrorism, we **must** also consider human rights in the pursuit of this noble act. (4th speaker Terrorism Bill)
7. We **must** ensure that we keep in tune with the global village. (8th speaker: Terrorism Bill)
8. We **should** do everything possible to ensure that Nigeria is in the fore front of the fight against terrorism... (12th speaker: Terrorism Bill)
9. We **have to look** into this more closely, study it and come up with something that … (2nd speaker: Arbitration Bill)
10. What we **ought to do** is to strengthen our lawyers and study it and arbitrators so that ... (6th Speaker: Arbitration Bill)

These locutions do not contain the performative verb 'suggest'. Most of the samples contain auxiliary verb + the plan of action to be carried out. The

auxiliary verbs frequently used to convey suggestion are 'should' and 'must'. 'Should' is often used by most speakers because it is an auxiliary which tactfully expresses the probability of the action to be carried out; the action is a proposal and not a force; 'should' connotes 'obligation and logical necessity' (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1979). 'Must' is also very productive because it implies certainty of the actions which is of 'logical necessity and compulsion' (p.56). The actions being conveyed using 'must' are of 'logical necessity' and 'compulsion', because both the speakers and listeners owe the electorates the duty to make laws and also pass Bills that will improve the lives of Nigerian citizenry. 'Should' and 'must', are therefore persuasive language in Legislative Discourse.

Furthermore, affective acts in the discourse employ the use of the transitive verb 'let me/us'. It is a type of **subtle commands** or rather **permission (request)** for the speakers to be allowed to pass some points across or request that collective actions be performed. Examples:

1. **... let me** comment on this very important Bill. (13th Speaker: Petroleum Bill)
2. **Let me** remind us that… (19th Speaker: Petroleum Bill)
3. **Let us** take a cursory look across the globe… (7th Speaker: Terrorism Bill)
4. **Let me** quickly say that I do not subscribe to Nigeria being a terrorist country. (13th Speaker: Terrorism Bill)
5. … **let me** take off from where Senator AZ stopped. (4th Speaker: Appropriation Bill)
6. … **let me** start by endorsing all that have been said. (15th Speaker: Appropriation Bill)
7. If that is the sacrifice we must have to make, **let us** make it. (2nd Speaker: Constitutional Bill)
8. **Let us** go ahead and pass it. (4th Speaker: Constitutional Bill)
9. **Let us** look at what we need to do to make sure that that functions effectively… (12th Speaker: Constitutional Bill)

In using the verb 'let' plus first person singular pronoun 'me', the speaker is making a request to be allowed to express his/her opinion because in argumentative context the speaker's major aim is to persuade the listeners and not to impose his/her view on them and hence the use of 'let' by various speakers. But in using 'let' plus first person plural pronoun, the speaker makes a subtle command with the locution. Although, according to Quirk and Greenbaum (1979), commands can be formed using

let followed by **first or third person** pronouns (p. 202), however, commands are usually issued by a person in high status to a person in a lower status. According to Searle and Vandervekan(1985), mode of achievement for command is that 'the speaker must not only be in a position of authority; he must be using or invoking his authority in issuing the utterance' (p. 122); otherwise the speech act is an unsuccessful or defective command. It is the mode of achievement condition which distinguishes a command from a request or suggestion. And since in legislative discourse all the interlocutors are on the same status; the use of 'let us' is a subtle command or more of a suggestion which includes both the speaker and the listeners to carry out the action stated in the locution of the speaker.

These various sets of illustrations above demonstrate the fact that Nigeria Legislative Discourse is characterized by mild directives termed affective acts in this study.

Effective Acts

Effective (expressive) act refers to those locutions used by the speakers to state the speakers' feelings or psychological states; they are used to convey the emotional behaviour of the speakers such as happiness, approval, disapproval, worry, surprise, appreciation, sadness, regrets, etc. Using different emotive or adjectival terms, speakers express emotive reactions on the Bill or the issue under discussion as shown below:

1. I **thank** you very much Mr. President for giving me the opportunity to add my voice… (4th speaker: Evidence Bill)
2. ... I will… in **thanking** the mover of this Bill… (6th speaker Evidence Bill)
3. Mr President, **thank** you very much for giving me this opportunity…(4th speaker: Constitution Bill)
4. … I would first of all **commend** the DSP and his Committee for bringing this Bill before us, … (18th speaker: constitution Bill)
5. I **commend** this Bill. (1st Speaker: Petroleum Bill)
6. Let me start by **commending** the Senate Leader for his lead debate … (12th Speaker: Petroleum Bill)
7. … I join my Colleagues to **commend** the President, Commander- in – Chief, for bringing forth this very Bill. (16th Speaker: Petroleum Bill)

These samples are used to convey appreciation: appreciating the Presiding officer for permitting the speaker to make contributions to the discussion as seen in samples 53, 55 and 56; and samples 54, 56, 58 and 59 are appreciating the mover of the Bill while sample 57 is praising the Bill. The performative verbs used to convey appreciation are 'thank' and 'commend'.

Sometimes senators express their approval of a Bill by congratulating the sponsors or movers of such Bill as illustrated in the following:
1. I will begin by **congratulating** you and … (3rd speaker: constitution Bill
2. … let me start by **congratulating** our very distinguished Colleagues [sic] for articulating this Bill and presenting it most eloquently. (1st speaker: Evidence Bill)
3. … let me **congratulate** my friend and Colleague, Senator X for trying to make our Evidence Act digitally complaint. (5th Speaker: Evidence Bill)
4. …. I want to **congratulate** the mover of this very important Amendment Bill.
   i. (4th speaker Arbitration Bill)
5. … and to **congratulate** the Federal government for coming up with this novel legislation. (1st Speaker: Petroleum Bill)

In these locutions, the performative verb employed is 'congratulate.'

The two sets of illocutions above connote positive emotional feelings. However, some speakers express negative feelings as illustrated in the following:
1. ... I feel very **sad** that things are going this way and ….. (10th speaker; 2010 Appropriation Bill)
2. I am **worried** about moving governorship matters to the Supreme Court. (10th speaker Constitution Bill)
3. … it is **unfortunate** and highly **regrettable** that the National Assembly is treated the way… (11th speaker: Constitution Bill)
4. My biggest **worry** is that if we proceed with the amendment... (7th speaker: Arbitration Bill)

These locutions are used to express negative feelings of worry, sadness and regrets. The terms used to convey these negative emotions are 'feel very sad', 'worried', 'is unfortunate and highly regrettable'. These terms connote negative feelings of disappointment and disapproval as against the other words of approval like 'happy', 'thank' and 'congratulate'

Sometimes speakers state their emotive feelings without using emotive terms or performative verbs, but through the propositional content of their locutions. Examples:

1. …. this is the first holistic attempt at addressing the multifarious problems that the various Acts…. (2nd speaker: Petroleum Bill)
2. It is a good Bill for Nigeria in the sense that … (4th Speaker: Petroleum Bill)
3. … let me comment on this very important Bill... a reform Bill…. intended to give proper directions and impetus in the oil and gas sector in Nigerian (13th Speaker: Petroleum Bill).
4. This Bill … is an update waiting to happen and being implemented in the last 30 years. It is long overdue. (6th speaker: Evidence Bill)
5. … this Amendment as proposed by the sponsors of this Bill is very timely. (10th speaker: Evidence Bill)
6. This Bill … is very important to us to the sustainability of our democracy, good governance and … (4th speaker: Constitution Bill)
7. … this is a very good Bill that should be treated with speed. (7th speaker: Constitution Bill)

These locutions are used to express the speakers' feelings – the speakers are either recommending or praising a Bill without using the term 'praise or recommend'. The speakers use positive terms such as '… first holistic attempt …', '…good Bill', '…to give proper direction and impetus…', '… update waiting to happen…'etc. These are terms that denote endorsement, recommendation or satisfaction.

One major performative verb often employed by the senators to convey expressive act at the opening and concluding points of their debate is the verb 'support'. The term is used as an act of acceptance and recommendation. The following are illustrations:

1. … I want to begin my submission by expressing my **support** to this very important and timely Bill. (4th speaker: Terrorism Bill)
2. … let me express my **support** for this very important Bill. (6th speaker: Terrorism Bill)
3. …I am in full **support** of this Bill …. (9th speaker: Terrorism Bill)
4. ... I want to give full **support** to this bill… (5th speaker: Petroleum Bill)
5. ... I rise to **support** this Bill. (8th Speaker: Petroleum Bill)
6. … I rise to **support** the Bill in its entirety. (14th speaker: Petroleum Bill)
7. … let me start by **supporting** this Bill….
   i. (1st speaker: Appropriation Bill)
8. … I rise to **support** this amendment… (5th speaker: Appropriation Bill)
9. I rise to **support** this amendment… (11th speaker: Appropriation Bill)
10. …I rise to **support** this Bill… (1st speaker: Constitution Bill)
11. … I rise to add my voice in **support** of this constitutional amendment (6th speaker: Constitution Bill)
12. …I want to first **support** the alterations … (13th speaker: Constitution Bill)

The performative verb 'support' is very productive in the discourse. 'Support' is used to convey two different acts. In the first set of 'support' in samples 25, 26 -31 and 33, the speakers are appealing to the listeners to accept the Bill being discussed. And in the second set of 'support' in samples 78 - 84, the speakers express their approval and acceptance of the Bill being discussed. Thus, the first set is used to convey **affective act** while the second set is used to convey **effective act.**

Conditional Act

Conditional Speech Act refers to locution which contains propositional content that is yet to occur and hence in this study, they are not classified under representative act. The locution used to perform conditional speech act is made up of two propositional contents- **the required** and **the possible**. The required (the antecedent) is the condition that must be present for the illocutionary act to become a reality. Leech and Svartvik (2002) identify two types of conditions: 'open condition and hypothetical condition' (p. 110). In open condition, the truth or falsehood of the locution is 'unknown', while in hypothetical or unreal condition, the speaker 'assumes the falsehood or unlikelihood' (p. 111) of the content of the locution.

For example:
1. If they have been completed, we can afford to show people that we have delivered dividend of democracy. (8th speaker: Appropriation Bill)

The required "if they have been completed'' is introduced by 'if', Searle and Vanderveken (1985) call it 'illocutionary connective' (p. 112); and unless this required becomes a reality the second part, the possible cannot be actualized. They define conditional speech act as 'a speech act which is performed on certain condition…' (p. 112-113). Similarly, Quirk and Greenbaum (1979) posit that in clauses of condition, there are real and unreal conditions. The question of fulfilment or non-fulfilment is unresolved

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in real condition while in unreal condition 'it is clearly expected that the condition will not be fulfilled' (p. 324-325). Hence conditional speech act is unique and should be classified separately. The propositional content in conditional speech act may or may not be realized. Thus it cannot be said to be true or false assertive because the propositioned content has not occurred and may not occur. The "truth" about the propositional content is that the realization of the possible (consequent) depends on the required (antecedent). Below are illustrations:

1. … if we do not control them, it could be the beginning of a breeding ground to act of terrorism against Nigeria and by extension against other foreigners that may be here. (13ᵗʰ speaker: Terrorism Bill)
2. If we do not use the opportunity of this petroleum Industry Bill to address some of these issues, honestly, we will not be able to enjoy the support and confidence of the people of Niger Delta Region. (11ᵗʰ speaker Petroleum Bill)
3. … if we are able to make this amendment, certainly, it would go a long way in putting Nigeria ahead of other countries... (4ᵗʰ speaker: Evidence Bill)
4. If the law Reform Commission is ready, then the Executive can come up with either a repeal or Amendment of the Evidence Act. (7ᵗʰ speaker Evidence Bill)
5. If there are cases of conflicting judgments, we have the NJC to address such cases… (9ᵗʰ speaker Constitution Bill)

Conditional Speech Acts are unique and different from representative, directive and expressive acts in that the propositional contents are neither wishes and therefore not yet a state of affair in the world; nor are they actions to be carried out (affective); nor expressing a inert feelings of the speakers. Thus, it is devoid of the notion of 'truth' or 'falsehood'. In other words, the propositional content is 'not truth-functional' (Searle and Vanderveken 1985, p.115).

CONCLUSION

Our analysis shows that the predominant illocutionary acts which featured in the discourse are representative, affective, effective and conditional acts. The locutions used to perform these acts are characterized by two levels: surface and deep levels. The surface level of the locutions are the act of representative, affective, effective and conditional while the deep level is the act of persuading co-participants to accept the speakers' views on the topic of discussion. Through these acts, the speakers express their commitments and patriotism which in the long run would have positive impact on Nigerian political tenor.

This study reveals that not all Searle's sub-classes of illocutionary acts are characteristic of legislative discourse. Of the five sub-types only representative, affective and effective acts are performed by legislators; declarative and commissive acts are not performed due to the context of the discourse. It important to emphasize that illocutionary act is highly context sensitive.

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