

SPEECH ACT ANALYSIS: HOSNI MUBARAK'S SPEECHES IN PRE-CRISES AND IN-CRISES EGYPT.

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Abstract

Language is critical to governance. It determines the success or failure of any government at the international, national or local level. This is because communication is central in government and language remains the most productive tool of communication. The goal of communication through language is constrained by Speech Acts identified by Austin (1962). The central idea here is that sentences perform more special functions than mere reporting of states of affairs. Thus, each time a speaker/writer makes an utterance an act has been performed, such as requesting, issuing a threat, promising, issuing an order, stating a fact, asking a question, thanking somebody. This paper performs a Speech Act Analysis of Hosni Mubarak's pre crises speeches and notes the various factors inherent in the speeches that manifested and determined the psycho-social situation of the country.

Introduction

The New Encyclopedia Briannica (Macropaedia vol. 10p. 642A) defines language as

A system of vocal communication that comprises a circumscribed set of noises resulting from movements of certain organs with his (man's) throat and mouth.... By means of these (man) is able to impart information, to express feelings and emotions, to influence the activities of others, and to comport himself with varying degrees of friendliness or hostility towards persons who make use of substantially the same set of noises.

The above is corroborated by Bloom (1933) who notes that language is "a code whereby ideas about the world are presented through conventional system of arbitrary signals for communication". Again, Sapir (1921) sees it as "a purely human and non instructive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols".

The tenor of intellection in the above submissions seems to suggest that language is used in communication. Ndiemele (2001) lists the communication roles of language thus: it 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. Evaluating these communicative roles, Mbagwu (2007) holds that language is the essence in the existence of humans. Moreover, he argues that there is nothing associated with the life of man that does not

engage language. In other words, government engages language; and how this affects the response of the masses to the government is crucial to the success of the government. To determine the various ways by which language affects hearers, the Speech Act theory (SAT) is applied. In the section below, notes on the Speech Act Theory are presented. This section is followed by the data selected from Hosni Mubarak's pre-crisis and crisis Egypt and its analysis. The analysis is done by the principles of the Speech Act Theory as proposed by Austin (1962).

Speech Act Theory (SA) Theory

This theory was propounded by Austin but was published after his death in 1962. Brown and Yule in Agbedo (2008a) agree that sentences perform more special functions than mere reporting of states of affairs.

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. Bourdieu and Coupland in Nwankwere (2009:331) affirms that performative speech also has a political dimension. Osisanwo (2003:58) and Agbedo (2008a:4) aver that elites differ on the number of types of Speech Acts. To them Speech Acts are of three types which are: locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. Locutionary act is the speech or the actual utterance. The illocutionary act is what the speaker does or intends to do with the utterance while perlocutionary act is the effect of the speaker's utterance on the hearer which 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.

There are principles that apply in the analysis of speeches. They are called Felicity conditions (FCs). Crystal says that FCs refer to those criteria which must be satisfied for a speech act to achieve its purpose. They are four in number namely: **preparatory, sincerity executive and fulfillment conditions.**

Preparatory Condition: Nwankwere (2007) defines this condition as “the status or authority of the speaker to perform the speech act. He or she is required to perform the act under the right or appropriate condition or circumstances, otherwise the SAs will be invalid or infelicitous.

Executive Condition: This condition demands every SA to be supported by favorable action.

Sincerity Condition: This condition is seen by Osisanwo (2003) on the ground on how appropriate are the participants in the speech act as well as the circumstances of the speech act to the successful performance of the speech act? The speaker is judged based on what he promised to do. If he promises something and goes ahead to fulfill it the illocutionary act is felicitous. On the contrary, if he fails the illocutionary act is infelicitous.

Fulfillment Condition: What is the perlocutionary effect of the speech act? Is it the desired effect? If yes, it is also felicitous on this condition.

Data and Analysis

The data here constitutes some statements from Hosni Mubarak speeches in his pre-crisis and in-crisis governance of Egypt. The pre-crisis speech used was made in 1981 while the in-crisis speech was extracted from his speeches on 28th January, 1st, 10th and 11th of February 2011.

Hosin Mubarak's Statement 1981: The following sentences are selected:

1. Mubarak in 1981 promised to ask the parliament to change article 76 and 77 of the Egyptian Constitution.
2. He promised to end emergency rule while campaigning for his sixth presidential term in 2005.

The two sentences are performatives because they are speech act of a special kind where the utterance of the right words by the right person in the right situation effectively accomplishes the social act.

Mubarak never fulfilled these promises of his until he was forcefully removed from government on February 11, 2011. One of the protesters has this to say: "He lost the trust of every Egyptian now. He keeps promising us without doing anything... We are all disappointed and we want revenge" (Feb. 10 2011).

Under the proposed amendments for the constitution, the future president would only be allowed to serve for four year term, instead of unlimited six-year periods. He or she would also be obliged to appoint a deputy. Something Mubarak avoided until his last stay in office. It was on his speech on 1st February, 2011 that he made mention of amending the constitution after thirty years as a president. He said:

According to my constitutional powers, I call on parliament in both its houses to discuss amending Article 76 and 77 of the constitution concerning the conditions on running for presidency of the republic and it sets specific a period for the presidential term. In order for the current parliament in both houses to be able to discuss these constitutional amendments and the legislative amendments linked to it for laws that complement the constitution and to ensure the participation of all the political forces in these discussion, I demand parliament to adhere to the word of the judiciary and its verdicts concerning the latest cases which have been legally challenged (guardian.co.uk).

This came rather too late. Judging from this, Mubarak's illocutionary act is infelicitous because he was dishonest and insincere and this led to crisis and his forceful removal from the seat of presidency.

Moreso, ex-president Mubarak has the authority as the president of Egypt to ask the parliament to amend constitution but he did not, hence the Speech Acts under preparatory condition is infelicitous. To buttress his unpreparedness to perform the act, his speech on Thursday 10th February 2011 during crisis at Tahir square in Egypt affirms to this, "I am determined to live up to my promises with all firmness and honesty and I am totally determined to complement them without hesitation or reconsideration."

It is obvious that Mubarak has been unwilling to appoint a vice president or establish a clear line of succession, though his son Gamal was his heir apparent, contrary to the wish of his people. If he had kept to his promise, probably he would have handed over smoothly without pressure or crisis and SAs here would have been felicitous but he did not hence the SAs is infelicitous.

In addition, when Mubarak was sworn in 1981 as the president after the assassination of Sadat, his people were happy, because his speeches and the position he held prior to this made

his people to believe that he was going to be a leader and not a ruler like his predecessors. Shortly after that Mubarak started unfolding by introducing the emergency rule and a draconian decree. This decree allows Mubarak to seize or censor all publications and other media outlets, including advertising, search and seize mail, tap phone and internet communication links, require all political meetings to be reported in advance for approval, seize and hold individuals without trial or convict political dissidents and other individuals in secret trials.

Although he promised to end this draconian rule while campaigning for his sixth presidential term in 2005, he did not fulfill this promise. Elections were marred by vote-rigging and fraud. His National Democratic Party (NDP) monopolized political power through a mixture of constitutional manipulation.

Emergency law was still effective, which means oppression, brutality, arrests and torture. Internet was still not working neither did he lift the ban on censorship. There was no freedom of speech, no freedom to form political parties nor freedom to participate in politics without the risk of getting arrested. Corruption in the country was so alarming that an American professor estimated that Mubarak family worth between 50 & 70 billion Egyptian Pounds. Hugo claims that corruption remained a significant problem under Mubarak who promised to do much, but, in fact, neither did anything significant to tackle it effectively (3). The wealth of Ahmed Ezz, the former NDP Organization Secretary was estimated to worth 18 billion Egyptian Pounds (4). The wealth of former Housing Minister Ahmed Maghraby was estimated to be more than 11 billion Egyptian pounds (4). The wealth of former Minister of Tourism Zuhair Garrana was estimated to be 13 million Egyptian pounds (4). The wealth of former Minister of Trade and Industry, Rashid Mohamed is estimated to be 12 billion Egyptian pounds (4). The perception among Egyptians was that the only people to benefit from the Nation's wealth were business men with ties to the National Democratic Party. Yet Mubarak said that he would put anyone responsible for corruption to trial. All these depict that Mubarak's SAs under this condition is very infelicitous because he and his allies supported corruption instead of fighting it.

Finally, when ex president Mubarak was toiling with his people's faith, little did he know that the youth would ever summon the courage to forcefully bring him and his government down. At the beginning of the crisis, he described the youths as 'wayward youth' but as the protests entered the third week, the authorities changed tone and described the protesters as 'honourable people with honourable aspirations.' Most promises made by Mubarak through his numerous speeches during the crisis included where he was swearing, promising, pleading for the protesters to allow him stay till September when he will hand over to a new government proved abortive because he failed woefully for a period of thirty years as a president of Egypt. Even when he mentioned Allah, "in the name of Allah the most gracious, the most merciful...I ask God to help me to honour this pledge complete my vocation to Egypt..." it all fell on deaf ears because the protesters were completely fed up with him and his regime.

The only thing that would bring happiness, peace and tranquility back to Egypt was for that Mubarak to resign, otherwise the crisis continued. To support this, one of the protesters on February 11 2011 said "We want the regime and the head of the regime down. We don't want this regime anymore. This regime is against us, against our freedom, against the Egyptian people".

Lawyer Aya Badrawi did not stop smiling as she contemplated the future. She said "Today I am extremely happy, finally it is a victory of the people. It is the beginning for freedom and democracy. Definitely these people found their way and definitely we will be having a different Egypt and a better". Another protester says, "This is my first day here, and he is gone.

Mubarak is a liar. When he promised to leave in three or six months we don't believe him. We only believe him when he is gone, now Egyptians are free." Here the SAs are judged to be felicitous because the listeners reacted and got their freedom.

Implications

From the discussion so far we have seen that ex-president Mubarak overstayed his welcome in Egypt. Thirty years on a presidential seat is terrifying and intimidating to the extent that some of the protesters have never witnessed a new Government since they were born. Change is inevitable and should not be neglected at any stage in any country for peace to reign. This change when neglected leads to chaos, loss of property and life, economic crumble and other vices. Ex-president Mubarak's regime could be summarized, by citing Agbede in Nwankwere (2009), "as an undiluted evil who presides over a depraved art of governance characterized by primitive accumulation, misappropriation, of public funds, intimidation of political enemies based by orchestrated media type."

The Way Forward/Recommendation

From the ongoing discussion, we all believe that Egypt is in a terrible mess and need thorough cleansing both inside and outside in order for the Egyptians dream on 11th February 2011 in which they were rejoicing for a new Egypt to be actualized. A number of things have to be done such as:

- Wealth should be equally distributed among Egyptian citizens. More job opportunities and industries should be created to absorb the youths so that the percentage of work force should be higher than the unemployment.
- Articles 76, 77 and 88 of Egyptian constitution should be amended to suit its citizen and also, include that independent candidate should be allowed to contest for presidency.
- There should be a direct link between the president and the governed.
- A constitution should be made in which president has only one tenure and no inheritance.
- Those who embezzled money during Mubarak's tenure should be tried and convicted as this will serve as a deterrent to other successor there by minimizing corruption.
- Egypt needs a leader and not a ruler. A God fearing, transparent as crystal and has the people will being at his heart.
- Leaders should always mean what they say and try to live by it. They should think well before making a promise any try by to fulfill it at all cost.
- More political parties should be formed as election must be free and fair.
- Dilapidated infrastructure and decayed socio-economic condition should be revalorized.
- Mubarak's two sons should be barred from contesting this coming election.
- Leaders should also have a listen ear and use dialogue immediately.
- Finally Egyptian should call for solemn assembly in which they will weep soar before God, confess their sins and the sins in the land, repent of blood shed and other vices and then ask God to take over their land so that the new president will not be worse than the former.

Conclusion

This paper has x-rayed the Speech Acts (SAs) of ex-president Mubarak during his swearing in ceremony in 1981 and in-crisis speeches of 2011 using Austin Felicity Conditions. A very glaring fact is established that ex-president Mubarak's SAs is infelicitous and does not meet the society's condition which led to crisis that started on 25th January 2011 and ends on 11th February 2011. However, ex-president Mubarak made few positive contributions to Egyptians such as being chairman of the non-aligned Movement, chairman of the G-15 (1998 & 2002) chairman of the Arab Summit since 1996, Chairman of the OAU 1993-94 and a host of other achievements. Nevertheless, one can see that ex-president Mubarak did not live up to the expectations of his people and that led to his forceful removal in February 11, 2011 instead of his proposed peaceful handover September 2011.

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