

A Pragmatic And Structural Analysis Of An Address By Prophet Moses Kasali

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Abstract:

This paper takes a closer look at the address by Prophet Moses Kasali, a renowned Christian cleric, during his visit to the palace of Oloyan of Oyan in Odo Otin Local Government Areas of Osun State. This particular address forms the basis for this study because of the different illocutionary acts performed in the address but which some speakers of Yoruba, especially those that are averse to the culture and traditions of the Yorùbá people are most likely to interpret differently. Thus this study explores the illocutionary mappings of the address and shows how the pragmatics and the syntactic structure of the address are able to aid the intelligibility of the audience. Based on the speech act theory used for the analysis of the address, the study reveals that the speaker uses a number of illocutionary acts exemplified by assertion, claim, scolding, emphasis and blame among others to achieve his communicative goals which range from negotiating his deep cultural ideas to his perceptions about Yoruba value systems. On the other hand, the lexical and structural characteristics of the address which help to build clear logical connections within and between clauses and sentences of the text are also examined. In all, this paper examines the address in terms of the function it is meant to serve and underscores the rich linguistic ability of the speaker, and how he uses language to indicate some culturally and linguistically rich aspects of the Yorùbá speech community.

Key Word: pragmatic analysis, culture, traditional institutions, structural analysis, figurative expressions, Prophet Kasali, Yorùbá.

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I. Introduction

When an individual or a speaker directs an utterance toward a hearer, the utterance serves a specific/particular purpose, which may be to deceive, to abuse, to call attention, to inform, to accuse, to amuse, to warn, to give an order, to describe, to report, to tell a story, to criticize, and a host of others. This assumption follows from the basics of the speech act theory, which avers that the language that humans use can constitute an infinite variety of social actions, Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). Correspondingly, the listener infers the underlying intent of the speaker, based on the one hand, the form and content of the utterance, as part of the hearer's understanding, and on the other hand, the shared common cultural orientation between the speaker and the hearer. In the spirit of the foregoing, language can intricately be connected with or tied to action but which is difficult for a researcher to dissect. The difficulty in this sense comes from the awareness that the same utterance can perform a variety of acts, which may be due to the kind of participants involved or the context of language use. It is on this background that this study intends to interrogate the illocutionary forces of the different utterances contained in the address by Prophet Moses Kasali, which he gave at the palace of Oloyan of Oyan in Odo Otin Local Government Areas of Osun State. The analysis of the address relies heavily on the context of the address, which is the palace of Oloyan and the people that constitute the audience, who are drawn largely from members of his church congregation. These two indices play a pivotal role in the interpretation of his utterances. Undoubtedly, language use in context is crucial for effective communication because it helps individuals, most especially the speakers, to adapt their language to suit the situation, to avoid misunderstandings, and to convey their message appropriately to the interested or affected audience. It is a practical aspect of human existence that no matter how hard an individual may strive to avoid being misconstrued in conversations, it remains a difficult, if not an impossible feat, even for the best speaker to achieve.

This work is being done because of the pragmatic and structural peculiarities of the address. The pragmatics of the address depicts Prophet Kasali as a controversial personality; his utterances at the palace reveal his penchant for deep Yoruba thoughts and beliefs which superficially pitch him against his religious callings and practices. The contents of his utterances are not completely in agreement with his religious adherence; in terms of allusions and teachings, his choice of dictions in the address at the palace of Oloyan of

Oyan makes direct and significant reference to his rich linguistic knowledge of Yoruba language. Though the address, in the eye of this paper, contains information about the speaker's linguistic competence in Yoruba, many of the utterances that competent native speakers of Yoruba will consistently describe as a form of incantation renditions are found in the address. This is so, if Olatunji's (1987: 139) description of incantation as a restricted poetic form that is cultic and mystical in its expectations is anything to reckon with. Nonetheless, this study recognises the speaker's use of language as appropriate because of the context, which is the palace, a traditional institution, which in the beliefs of the Yoruba people is sacred, and must be preserved by all who share the language and the culture. Given his religious callings, a man of God of Prophet Kasali's pedigree is expected to be formal, though he is not in real religious engagements, what he did with his choice of words and the accompanying semantic imports at the palace is to obvious linguistic effects. As a public and religious figure, who has a large number of religious followership, Prophet Kasali is not at any situations expected to toy with his use of language because what he says is a direct representation of what he does and believes in. This scholarly adventure is faced with two tasks: the first is to examine the pragmatics of the address with a view to discussing the various illocutionary acts that the speaker performed and their effects and functions alongside the situations around which the address is given, and the second is an investigation of some notable linguistic features of the utterances and the processes involved in the rendition and the coherence they help to achieve.

II. Literature Review

On a large scale, the main thrust of this paper comes under the broad umbrella of the discipline called Pragmatics, which Levinson (1983: 27) defines as a branch of study concerned with the ability of language users to pair sentences with the context in which they would be appropriate. Sociolinguistics also takes cognizance of how people use language in their everyday life and also studies the effect of various aspects of what constitute the society, including culture, norms, and contexts. On the strength of the aforesaid, we shall present a brief review of relevant literature in what follows.

Dozie and Madu (2012) examine the uniqueness of slang in terms of how it is created and its use as a language of communication among students of Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Nigeria. The study shows that slangy expressions are used to create or form an in-group identity among undergraduate students of the university, and by extensions, a veritable means of communication among Nigerian youths. Bamgbose (2016) dwells on the role of context in interpreting verbal indirection in Yoruba proverbial and common expressions. The study reveals that proverbial and everyday expressions are linguistically rich to the extent that only those who have the required knowledge of Yoruba cultural and social norms are able to associate appropriate meanings to them. These Yoruba expressions, whether simple or otherwise, can be used to warn/caution, explain, tell a story and perform several other actions without necessarily being explicit. Ajayi (2016) examines the pragmatics of commendation among Nigerian youths in Ibadan, and reveals that certain utterances that are apparently abusive and face damaging are indeed speech activities that interact with contextual features such as shared situational knowledge, voice, relevance and inference to realise their interpretations as commendations. Ehineni (2016) is a discourse and structural analysis of Yorùbá proverbs collected from oral interviews and native Yorùbá texts. The study argues that Yoruba native speakers use proverbs as a linguistic strategy to negotiate deep ideas and intentions and that the Yorùbá proverb is structurally characterized by some lexical and grammatical devices which help to reinforce its communicative intelligibility and textuality.

Adeniyi and Bamigbade (2017) is a research that is largely contemplated within the phonological features of the speeches of Reverend Gbade Ogunlana, a public speaker popularly known as *Paito wa* 'our Pastor'. The study interrogates how the Pastor deploys the Ibadan dialect in his preaching to obvious effects. The authors presume that preaching is supposed to be associated with formality, where processes like vowel elision and consonant deletion are minimized with a view to enhancing intelligibility in addition to the use of Standard Yoruba. Due to his use of a dialect for preaching, the authors feel that *Paito wa* is a lot informal, explaining why features such as eliding vowels, deleting consonants as well as making use of a lot of phonological processes and unusual innovations are found in his utterances. Ubaidullah's (2018) work is a pragmatic study of President Muhammadu Buhari's Democracy Day Speech, 2018 and takes into cognizance a performative speech act as the crux of his study. The finding of Ubaidullah's study reveals that speech act brings to the fore meaning in speeches and that in the process of saying something that refers to a particular speech act, other speech acts are also performed or implied. On his part, Raj (2021) examines illocutionary acts in a press conference of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria, where illocutionary mappings such as; representatives, commissives, expressive, declaratives and directives are explored to determine how such pragmatic inferences make or mar the success of language use. The outcomes of the study show that the speaker made a remarkable use of the illocutionary mappings exemplified by 'expressive' illocutions more frequently than the others to suggest that the speaker used emotional appeal to persuade his members who are his co-equals.

Olaogun and Adeleke (2022) is undoubtedly a study on language use whose major concern is an investigation of the pragmatic functions of Rhetorical Questions, using *Efunroye Tinubu*, a Yoruba drama text written by *Akinwumi Ishola* as the repertoire of its primary data. Drawing insights from the text, the authors identify the following context-based functions of rhetorical questions: assertion, complain, surprise, inquiry, reminding, accusation and blame. The position of the authors is that rhetorical question is a perfect discernment of indirect act because it mainly has assertive act which is originally known as a functional peculiarity of declarative sentence. Farinde and Omolaiye (2020), in conducting a socio-pragmatic investigation of insults in the utterances of Yoruba natives, explore the offensive speech act by establishing a pattern of ethnically motivated verbal slurs and slights that denigrate members of specific ethnic groups with a view to creating a sense of 'otherness' and exclusion. In another vein, Farinde and Omolaiye (2023) did a pragmatic analysis of cultural influence on politeness markers in the Yoruba context and observed that indirect speech acts can be used as politeness markers in Yoruba language. The results of their findings show that indirect speech acts are a face saving strategy often used by the speakers as a form of conversational repairs.

As much as all the studies reviewed above are central to discussions on language use, this present work is different in terms of its scope which is grounded in variations based on the context of use. The attempt in this study is to discuss the speech of Prophet Moses Kasali with regard to its contents which appear to show him as an unbeliever or one who can simply be described as a contradicting personality. In a very clear term, the present study examines the variation in Kasali's choice of diction and its attendant semantic import at the palace of His Royal Majesty Oba Dare Kelani, Oloyan of Oyan, different from what his preachings would have conveyed were he to be in a religious setting i.e. the church or public crusade.

III. Research Method

The main source of the data used for this study is the video recording of the address presented by Prophet Kasali during his courtesy visit to the palace of His Royal Majesty Oba Dare Kelani Oloyan of Oya which was downloaded from the large depository of videos of Prophet Kasali public preachings on YouTube. The sample used for this study is purposively selected because of its contents, which provide interesting evidence for the role of context in the use of language. The collected data were transcribed and translated to their English equivalents. They were subjected to an analysis using the speech act mappings of commissive, directive, expressive, declarative and representative to determine their illocutionary force as well as discover the relationship between the speaker's intent and the assumptions he shares with his audience while conveying his impressions of what he observes in and around the palace of the king and the Yoruba social cultural setting at large.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework deployed for this study is the theory of Illocutionary Force "Intent of the Speaker" as propounded by Austin (1962) and later popularized and standardized by Searle (1969). This theory was so selected considering that it communicates the speaker's intent in relation to the assumptions he shares with his audience. The concept of illocutionary force, one of the fundamental aspects of Speech Acts, is a proposition that language is not merely the making of statements, or what he, Austin refers to as 'constatives', but by saying something about the world. And when uttering the words, the speaker is concurrently performing the action for the purpose of achieving some aims. Austin calls such illocutions as 'the intent of the speaker' where he, the speaker, is seen making the utterances as well as performing the action. Performative utterances, on the other hand, though also made along with actions, they differ from the illocutionary force in the sense that they are made in fixed circumstances and are not governed by the 'speaker's intent', rather, by his role in the society.

IV. Pragmatic Acts In Prophet Kasali's Address

This section focuses on the critical engagement of the data used for this study by interrogating the discourse functions of the different acts performed by the speaker. In light of the foregoing, I examine the extent to which Prophet Kasali uses his utterances to perform specific acts in the speech situation. The acts discussed hereunder are: representative, expressive, directive, commissive and declarative acts.

Representative Acts

Representative acts are used to describe events, processes and states as well as to assert, make claims, give reports and provide suggestions. In all, representatives indicate the degree of the speaker's commitment to the truth of their propositions. Let us consider the following excerpts:

Sé ẹ mọ pé ojú mosiinni ni òyinbó òlò, gbogbo nàkan kọ ni mosiinni se é wá

[You know that the white man is technology inclined and technology is not capable of detecting everything]

Prophet Kasali's perception of the world with respect to the allusion he draws between the tree and the white man is based on his cultural belief and understanding of the Yoruba worldview about tree. Thus, he contrasts the white man (representing foreigners) with the natives, emphasizing that only the indigenous people truly understand the deeper spiritual and historical connections with the land, symbolized here by the tree. The white man is depicted as having limited perception-he 'has the eye of a machine,' which he cannot use to decipher the spiritual connections between the people and their ancestors. The illocutionary force of this expression is to assert the superiority of indigenous knowledge over the western ideologies. Another representative act is given as follows:

Mo bá igi gbáyé, mo gbédè igi, mo sì gbédè òpẹ

Igi tútù ó ma a sòrò pé ñ só niwájú, igi gbígbe lò ó kàn to bá ti kúrò lódò o tẹmi, mó gé mi lulẹ

[I lived with tree; I understand the language of the tree and that of the palm tree

Living tree will request that dead/dry tree should instead be felled]

In this particular excerpt, the speaker uses a narrative style to share his personal experience and connection with nature, particularly with trees and palms. He claims to understand the 'language' of tree, which creates an image of deep familiarity and communication with nature. This metaphorical use of language, which is a core aspect of Yoruba oral tradition, presents the tree and the palm as animate entities with distinct voices and clear thoughts. The efficacy of this expression is borne by the richness of the Yoruba language in proverbs, idioms, metaphors, cultural depictions, myths and legend (Barber, 1991), and only those who share his views and cultural background can actually make the very right sense out of it. In fact, I assume that Prophet Kasali's style of communication causes misunderstandings and misrepresentations of linguistic cues, literarily leading to an expression of microaggressive acts. The living tree pleading not to be cut down shows how nature, in the narrative, is given human-like qualities. This interaction suggests a relationship of mutual understanding and respect between humans and nature, as the speaker 'hears' the tree and engages in a symbolic struggle. The illocutionary force in this narrative is to highlight the speaker's connection with the natural world, especially through traditional wisdom. The speaker is not only sharing a story but also asserting his deep knowledge and strong bond with nature, which the audience is expected to appreciate. By presenting this as a common interaction, which is beyond religious association, the speaker recreates the belief that nature communicates with those who are attuned to it. The narrative conveys a message of cooperation between humans and nature, reinforcing traditional beliefs about living in harmony with the natural world. Another case of the representative act is captured as follows:

Igi osè kan wà níbẹ̀ ó ju iyá a bàbá mi lọ

Ìsọ́jì yàn dì mẹ́ta ní ẹ̀bọ́ra tí ńgbé inú igi yàn bá yojú

Orí i pápá bá dàrú

Gbàmígbà mí ò yẹ àgbà

Ẹranko ńlẹ̀ mi í ẹ̀bọ̀ kò yẹ ọ̀dẹ

[There was an osè tree there which was older than my paternal grandmother

The revival was three days old when the spirit living inside the tree came out

And the field became chaotic

Pleading for safety does not fit the elderly

Animal is chasing me is not right for the hunters]

The speaker uses the proverb put in bold in this excerpt to acknowledge his avowed conviction in the power of faith and his strong belief that the intrigues of devils cannot overcome God's potent power. The analogy that the speaker draws with the use of the proverb is that of the elderly and hunters, who in their separate areas of influence have special power and authorities. Thus, a devout Christian of Prophet Kasali's caliber should not be scared of any devilish beings in the class of the spirit that emerged from within an *osè* tree while a religious crusade or revival, which he superintended, was ongoing. By using this proverb, he appears to restate his unshakeable belief in the power of God over the devil and to also strengthen the faith of his followership. The proverb is a form of metaphors meant to emphasize that those who hold authority or expertise, such as the elderly, who are deemed to have vast life experience and hunters, who are considered to be brave and brutal in their encounters or dealings with wild animals, should be able to confront daring situations without a moment of panic. The illocutionary force of the proverb is that of encouragement; it serves to boost the belief of his teeming followers, who form the majority of the interlocutors at the palace, in the power of Christ. The correct interpretation of the proverb is congenially restricted to the physical situation of the conversation, which in this case is the palace of the king. We also find a representative act in following excerpt:

À ńpẹ̀ àwọn ọmọ kan ní jòjò ní ilẹ̀ ẹ̀ Yorùbà, ọ̀ba tó le sàlàyé jòjò ò tó ńkan mó ní ilẹ̀ ẹ̀ wa

Jòjò ní ọmọ tí iyá ẹ̀ bí, tí iyá rẹ̀ ò dúró wò

[We refer to one kind of children as *jòjò* in Yoruba land

The Obas who still know something about these children are very few in our land

They are children whose mothers died shortly after giving birth to them]

The excerpt begins as a form of explanation on the speaker's knowledge of Yoruba diction and culture, as well as his understanding of Yoruba panegyric. The speaker made allusions to an unusual name calling among the Yoruba people, which most Yoruba natives, including many highly revered kings do not know its use and meaning. Apparently, the expression - *Ọba tó le sàlàyé jòjò ò tó nkan mó ní ilẹ ẹ wa* 'kings or traditional rulers with proper knowledge of the word *jòjò* are rare in our land' is used to perform a face threatening act because it casts aspersion on the personal image and the self-esteem of the new generation of kings in Yoruba land. Consequently, the illocutionary force of the statement is an indirect way of calling the attention of Yoruba kings to why they need to build strong connections between the throne, the culture and traditions that birth the institutions they superintend. Similarly in the next excerpt, the speaker throws a jab at the majority of Yoruba people who lack the requisite knowledge of or competence in their language. This does not exclude the kings who are the supposed custodians of the people's culture, a major part of which is their language.

Èdè tí a ọ gbọ mó ló nífi yà á jẹ ọpọlọpọ èniyàn

Bí ó tí nífi yà á jẹ ilú, náà ló nífi yà á jẹ ọba

[That we no longer understand our language is the reason why we are all suffering

As the entire town is suffering so are the kings]

He uses the expression to show his worry and discontent over the abandonment of the Yoruba language, which by his estimation has caused damnable consequences to the entire Yoruba nation. In short, the illocutionary force of the above excerpt is clearly an expression of worry. In the same vein, the following contains a representative act:

Ọtọ ni ẹsìn, ọtọ ni ibínibí

Tí a bálo èdè bí won tí bí wa, ẹbọ ní à ní í gbé, ètùtù ní à ní í se

[Religion is different from relations or culture, if we use language accordingly

It is sacrifice that we will not offer and it is rituals that we will not perform]

The excerpt above is a product of Prophet Kasali's opinion and belief about separating modern religions i.e. Christianity and Islam from the Yoruba customs and traditions. He mentions without any forms of equivocation that religions, especially Islam and Christianity, should be distinguished from Yoruba customs, ethos and beliefs. He uses the statement to affirm his strong belief in the power of words that come with the proper use of language. His utterance does not demand any forms of response from the audience. This claim is confirmed by the excerpt below:

Àtí mùsùlùmí àtí kristiánítí, kò sí ikankan tí wón fí tẹlú kankan dó

Ní àwọn ilú isẹ́nbáyé ní ilẹ̀ Yorùbá, ifá ní atọ̀nà ohun gbogbo nígbà yan

[None of Islam and Christianity was responsible for founding any towns,

Ifa gave the guidance for founding of ancient towns in Yorùbá land]

Prophet Kasali avers that all towns and settlements occupied by Yoruba people came to be only after due consultations with the Ifa oracle. This directly implies that both Islam and Christianity which are now more popular and endearing than Yorùbá traditional religions had no hands in the formations of the towns and villages, which they now seem to take control of. The illocutionary force of this utterance is purely assertive. The intention of Prophet Kasali is not to request information from the audience but to give information on what he knows about Yorùbá customs and traditions as they relate to locations of settlements. To those who have sound knowledge and understanding of Yoruba language, the statement as a whole is intended to commit the audience to the truth value of the proposition. The statement is restating in a clear and precise manner what he knows but may not be in the knowledge of the audience or to which the audience may not allude to. Furthermore, he uses a representative act to state how a particular health issue is treated by traditional means.

Ẹ wo ọrí b'ose wà yan pẹ̀lú ojúdá oyin

Tí èyàn bá ní ọgbó ñkangí bíi ulcer, lai mix nnkankan mó o

Ó ní bí Yorùbá se ńse ẹ, yóó parẹ̀ fú ẹ̀ ní

[You see shea butter and pure honey

If anyone has chronic ulcer, without mixing anything with it o

There is a way Yoruba people prepare it; it will disappear within few days]

The illocutionary force of this excerpt is one of assertion where an attempt is made to align the audience with Yorùbá traditional ways and means of treating a number of health conditions which have no magical inclinations. For instance, his reference to how ulcer, a health condition described in the orthodox medical practice as a terminal illness, can be cured in the Yorùbá traditional way reinforces his strong belief in the culture and tradition of the Yoruba people, which unfortunately have been forsaken by the people. In the excerpt that follows, the speaker further puts pay to his strong belief in Yorùbá culture and traditions:

À ńpe igi kan ní ẹ̀là ní ilẹ̀ ẹ̀ Yorùbá, Igi ni, bí gbogbo igi oko tó kù bá wówé,

Èlà, Yorùbá sọpé kii bá igi oko o wówé

Sùgbón tí èyàn bá lọ lòhun un ní isin lóri i facebook

[We call one kind of tree *èlà* in Yoruba land, it is a tree, when other trees wilt in the forest, *èlà*, Yoruba people say does not wilt alongside other trees in the forest But if that becomes a subject of debate on Facebook]

The speaker draws an insight from the behaviour of a particular tree in the forest which does not wilt like others, especially during the dry season. By this he means that there is a supernatural power in the name and nature of this tree which knowledgeable people make use of to achieve certain aims. The illocutionary force of the statement is to describe to the audience what they do not seem to have a good knowledge about. However, as the last segment of the excerpt reveals, he is not unmindful of the negative interpretations which the audience and other people of faith can incompetently attribute to the expression, given the lexical items it contains and the overall meaning accruable to it. Nonetheless, no verbal responses are required from the audience, thus, the whole utterance has a descriptive force. Below is another representative act:

Sùgbón l'áàfin la wà yí,

Ọba ní í pe ẹkẹ l'ẹkẹ fí í kú

Ọba ní í p'okùn l'okùn ún r'òrun

But here we are at the palace now

It is king that kills trunk that results in the death of trunk

It is king that destroys rope that makes rope to die

Following Grant and Bauer (2004:51), the above excerpt is figurative in all respects because the expressions compositionally involve an untrue proposition which can be reinterpreted pragmatically to understand the intended truth. For instance, the association of death with *ẹkẹ* 'trunk and *okùn* 'rope does not literally have a truth value but the context, which is the king's palace, is used in this case as a foundation for inferring the referents being talked about, which is the overriding power and influence that the king wields. The context of the address favours the figurative usage because a literal interpretation of the utterances will be untrue and empty of content, borrowing a leaf from Griffiths (2006). The speaker uses this expression to emphasise the important place of traditional institutions in the administration of the Yoruba nation. Though many individuals who are averse to the Yoruba value systems will definitely describe his utterances as a form of incantation, this paper considers it as a pure figurative use of language. Here is another representative act:

Ojùtí nlá ló jẹ fún wa ní ilẹ ẹ Yorùbá

Kí ọba ó má le rin, kó sèsè má a wá bèèrè pé ẹ dákun, ẹ bá mi wò, sé àwọn ajínigbé tí lọ àbí wọn sì wá níta.

Nhkan burúkú ni oo

[It is a big shame for us in Yoruba land that our kings cannot move freely, Demanding to know whether kidnappers have gone or are still lurking around outside? It is a very bad thing (emphasis)]

The speaker uses a representative act in the above excerpt to report his worry. By his words, it is ridiculous and disheartening that kings can no longer move freely within and outside their domains without being harassed or intimidated by rampaging and dare devil kidnappers. The situation has degenerated to the point that kings, who are considered the owners of the land, are afraid of being kidnapped. Thus, he demonstrated his worry by restating the incidence of kings wanting to know whether kidnappers are still lurking around or have disappeared before they could embark on any journey. His belief in Yorùbá ethos is further entrenched in the statement below:

Bèèni l'òjò tí ásá bá gbé omo mókùólú ló yẹ kí ojù òrun ó ti gba àlẹjò

[Yes, it is on the day that hawk preys on duckling that the sky should receive visitors]

In the sentence above, the speaker uses hawk and wild duck to draw an allusion between the kidnappers and the kings to reinforce his commitment to the proposition about the sacred power wielded by traditional rulers which should not allow kidnappers and bandits to contemplate rough handling them. The hawk is a bird of prey but *mókùólú* 'wild duck' is a dangerous type of duck which does not allow its duckling to be preyed upon. Thus, the speaker compares the king with the wild duck and the kidnappers with the hawk to suggest that kings are not ordinary beings that could easily be attacked by any aggressors whatsoever talk less of them falling preys to kidnappers and bandits. The illocutionary force of the proverb is to sensitize the kings on the need for them to make the maximum use of the traditional power they wield. Another example of representative illocutionary expression is:

Èni tí ó bá jẹ ọba ní ilàà t'ótó, alálẹ ní nsọ ọ

[Anyone who ascends the throne following the traditions will be protected by the ancestors]

This is a direct reaction to what the speaker considers as a desecration of the traditional stool where unqualified individuals find their ways to becoming the enthroned kings when they are not ready or willing to observe the preordination as well as ordination rites. Pastor Kasali uses this statement to assert his belief in the efficacy of the traditional rites usually performed on the anointed candidate before their ascension to the throne. By doing this, a strong relationship is fostered between the ancestors and the enthroned king, which preserves the sanctity of the throne while peace and normalcy in all forms will be guaranteed in the society.

Expressive Act

This is one other illocutionary act used by the speaker to express his feeling about the pitiable state of affairs being witnessed in the society. This is the case with the following excerpts:

Sé ẹ rí àsà a wa tí jànbá se, ni wọn se fi ibọn pa odidi ọba,

Kínni mo wí sir?

Response: àsà a wa tí jànbá se

Tí ó gba ọgbé, ni wọn se jí odidi ọba gbé

Ta le rí t'ógbé olúmèrè kan rí?

[You see, the evil that befalls our culture is the reason they killed a whole king with gun,

What did I say sir?

Response: our culture that is befallen by evil,

Which caused injuries, is the reason they kidnapped a whole king

Who did you ever see that stole an *olúmèrè* before?]

In the above excerpt, the speaker expresses his attitude towards the neglect which the culture and traditions of the Yorùbá people have suffered and which has led to the unpalatable situations of kings being killed by means of guns. The speaker uses the word *olúmèrè*, the sacred crown which no one ever dares to steal in the excerpt to show the important place of the kings and the need to treat them with respect. The statement was not made to provoke any known perlocutionary force but was made for the audience to ponder on. However, at the level of pragmatics, and following Elder (2021), the speaker roughly performs a communicative act that is filled with microaggression because it denigrates the Yoruba race by targeting some important aspects of their socio-cultural identities that have become vulnerable, especially due to imperialism. The following statement is another expressive illocutionary act performed by the speaker to bring about the meaning of language in context.

Ọrọ̀ ní mo sọ ní ọdún méjì sáyìn, sùgbòn nítorí àwon aláìgbédè

Wọn wá ní Kasali tí di babaláwo

[I made some comments two years back but because of those with lack of understanding of the language, they said Kasali has become an herbalist]

Prophet Kasali uses this excerpt to deny the claim by some people he describes as incompetent speakers of the Yoruba language who are not able to provide pragmatic explanations for some of his utterances. It seems that a lot of his utterances are misinterpreted by people whose knowledge of the Yoruba language is not good enough to allow them uncover the different functions that words and expressions are used to achieve. Thus, people in this category do consider most of what he says as forms of incantations with which herbalists are known for. However, he retorted by insisting that those who hold that kind belief about him belong to the class of Yoruba speakers who do not really understand the language. Pragmatically, he uses the utterance as a reminding force to bring back the memory of past time and reassure his audience of his non membership of any cults. But he is consistent in his advocacy for the reawakening of Yoruba consciousness in its speakers. This in effect means that, his profound knowledge of Yoruba customs and traditions should not be misconceived as having to do with occult practices. Contextually, the excerpt has an illocutionary force of clarifications because it was uttered to put the record straight on the incorrect opinion of people about him. The speaker performs another expressive act in the excerpt below:

Igbá ilé kó lékún

Response: àmín Jesu

Pààpá kì í rúbọ̀ àìmódà,

Gbogbo ẹnikẹni tó bá perí oba wa níbi,

Ọbààrànikòsì, ilẹ̀ ní kó pa gbogbo won je

Response: àmín Jesu

Ení bá ronú ibi sí ilú yíi,

Ọ̀súnún máa sún wọn sí ikú o

Response: àmín Jesu

Ení bá pinu ibi fún àaḡfin yíi

Àtòòrì ló ma tò wọn sípò

Response: àmín Jesu

[May there be increase in the house properties

Response: amen!

Pààpá does not offer sacrifice that is not efficacious

All those who harbour grudges against our king,

Ọbààrànikòsì, earth should swallow all of them

Anyone who plans evil against this town,

Ọ̀súnún will push them to death

Response: amen!

Anyone that plans evil against this palace,

Àtòòrì will arrange them in position

Response: amen!

In this excerpt, the speaker performs a series of expressive illocutionary acts to bless and pray for the return of peace to the community. It is couched in a call-and-response format, where the speaker makes declarations, and the audience affirms with responses such as ‘amen’. This participatory style is common in Yoruba oral traditions and religious gatherings to signal communal agreement and shared belief. The words *pààpà* and ‘*òbààrànikòsì*’ are used in the excerpt figuratively and only those who can contextualize their use will have their proper and unbiased interpretations. The same sense can be extended to ‘*òsúnsún*’ and *àtòòrì*, which in addition have poetic inclinations because they have morphological and semantic associations with the verbs *sún* ‘push’ and *tò* ‘arrange’ respectively. The speaker’s use of those words transcends the context-free semantic knowledge which the majority of his addressee has simply because of knowing the Yoruba language and so, misinterpretations or misunderstandings are likely to be reported.

Declarative Act

In the address, the speaker uses declarative acts to make a pronouncement which contains a stern warning to aggressors. This is the case with the excerpt below:

Èni bátún lọ gbé èbọ sí ìdì igi yìí látí yọ ilú yìí lẹnu tàbí látí yọ ẹnikẹni lẹnu, yóò para ẹ sílé ní

Response: Amin Jesu

[Anyone who still goes ahead to put any forms of fetish objects at the base of this tree with the intent and purpose to cause harm on this town or anyone, will commit suicide Response: Amen in Jesus name!]

The statement ‘Anyone who still goes ahead to put any forms of fetish objects at the base of this tree with the intent and purpose to cause harm on this town or anyone’ establishes a clear prohibition against using the tree for harmful rituals or sacrifices. The speaker warns that any such action will result in self-harm, stating that the person ‘will kill himself at home’ i.e. will involuntarily commit suicide. This is an intense and a stern warning purportedly made to dissuade people from having negative things to do with the tree. The audience’s response, “amen in Jesus’ name,” serves as a collective acknowledgment and agreement with the speaker’s pronouncement, blending spiritual authority with Christian religious affirmation. The use of “in Jesus name”, which is uttered in chorus, reinforces the weight of the warning, invoking a higher power to legitimize and solidify the consequences. The illocutionary force of this statement therefore is to warn and deter. This type of declaration is common in traditional and cultural contexts, where warnings are often presented as inevitable truths, meant to create fear and discourage bad behavior.

Commissive Act

The speaker uses this illocutionary act to make a vow by strengthening his intent. This is indicated by the statement below:

Ati wá fí i síbẹ pé ẹnikẹni tó bátún ní nnkànkán tó fẹ ẹ kàn,

È ó ò, orí i rẹ ní ó ti bẹrẹ sí ní í dún látí òní lọ

Response: àmín Jesu

[We have put it that anyone who still plans to infest the tree, È ó ò, the effect of the infestation will be first felt by such person as from today Response: Amen in Jesus name]

The statement ‘*orí i rẹ ní ó ti bẹrẹ sí ní í dún látí òní lọ*’ ‘it is on his head that the hitting will begin as from today’ is a commissive expression which strengthens the commitment of the speaker to his utterance. The speaker issues this statement with a clear illocutionary force of cautioning; suggesting that any future attempt to tamper with the tree will result in consequences for anyone who defies the order; this is what the word *ẹnikẹni* ‘whoever’ reiterates in the excerpt. The illocutionary force in this statement is to warn the audience of potential consequences while also establishing a sense of communal agreement and participation through the response.

Directive Act

This is a form of illocutionary acts where the speaker gives command; makes request or pleads with the listener. It is usually indicated by the imperative form of the verb, an example of such is:

È gbé ayé bí ọba, ẹyin ọba wa,

Kí wọn se kinni sir?

Response: Kí wọn gbé ayé bí ọba

[Live like kings, you our kings,

That they should do what sir?

Response: That they should live like kings]

Prophet Kasali uses this expression to instruct Yoruba kings to behave in some required ways comparable with their position of authority; this in the opinion of Berk (2017) is a form of microinsults because it tends to demean or belittle the kings' identities and experience. The expression has an imperative force with the use of the verb *gbé* 'live' and is reinforced by the question posed to the listeners; that they should do what? The perlocutionary force of this question elicited a chorus answer from the audience, who reechoed the question in an affirmative form; they should live the kind of life expected of Yoruba traditional rulers.

V. Discourse Structure Of The Address

This section of the paper caters for the discourse structure of Prophet Kasali's address, where the structural features of the address are analysed. The features in this regard are discussed under two headings: the lexical devices used and the nature and forms of syntactic derivations deployed by the speaker. The purpose of doing this is to show how cohesion is achieved and how it impacts on the intelligibility of the audience (listeners).

Lexical Devices in the Address

The speaker in the address uses a number of lexical items whose features and characteristics contribute markedly to the intelligibility of the audience as much as the context of the speech situation is concerned. Each of the devices is discussed in turns.

Use of archaic/endangered words

Given the context of the address which is the palace of the Oba, the speaker brings into the fore the deep traditional and cultural accounts of expressions and lexical items that are rarely found in the speech of the majority of contemporary speakers of Yoruba. Examples of words in this category are found in the following sentences:

Òyibo ó mo oríki aláìlẹ̀ ilẹ̀ yí [the white man does not know the oriki of the ancestors]

Pààpá kì í rúbọ̀ àì mó dà, [*Pààpá* does not offer sacrifice that is not efficacious]

Òbààrànikòsì, ilẹ̀ nì kó pa gbogbo won jẹ

[*Òbààrànikòsì*, earth should swallow all of them]

Òsún-sún máa sún wọn sí ikú [*Òsún-sún* will push them to death]

Àtòòrì ló máa tò wọn sípò [*àtòòrì* will arrange them in position]

Bẹ̀nì, l'òjọ̀ tí ásá bá gbé omo **mókùolú** ló yẹ kí ojú ọ̀run ó ti gba àlejò

[Yes, it is on the day that hawk preys on *mókùolú's* chicks that the sky should receive visitors]

The choice of the words in bold is appropriate for the context, and the words introduce maximum cohesion into the discourse although not many of the listeners can fathom out what each of them really means. But the essence of using these words is to connect the listeners and the palace with core Yoruba culture and traditions.

Reiteration

The speaker uses reiteration as a strategy to put emphasis on several utterances which he feels the listeners should take seriously. This is reflected in the following excerpts:

i) Mo gbédè igi, mo sì gbédè ọ̀pẹ

[I understand the language of the tree and that of the palm tree]

ii) Kí se igi osè ló kàn án o, igi osè kó ló kàn án mó ibẹ̀ o

[It is not the osè tree that nailed it, it is not the osè tree that nailed it there]

In the text above, words such as *gbédè* in (i) and *igi osè* and *kàn* in (ii) are repeated by the speaker to form lexical cohesion and ultimately achieve reinforcement.

Reduplication, Inter-fixation and Nominalisation

The speaker scarcely resorts to reduplication as the word *gbàìgbàì* shows, used purposely to create awareness and place a high level emphasis on the semantics of the word as it relates to *àgbà* 'elderly persons'. For the same purpose, the speaker recreates interfixation as in the words *enikèni* and *èdákèdà* to place emphasis on the nature and the depth of the warning he tries to give. The main purpose for their use is to allow or make his listeners understand the relationships among the words in his utterances. The speaker also uses items that are originally minus nominal in nominal positions by nominalizing them. They include *alàìgbédè*, *alàimòṣe* and *aségítà*. The first two items *alàìgbédè* and *alàimòṣe* have negative connotations and they are used to denigrate the referents in question.

Anaphoric Use

With a view to achieving lexical cohesion and draw distinction from among the various generic use to which the word *igi* 'tree' can be put, the speaker makes an anaphoric use of the word *igi* 'tree' as in the sentence below:

À ñpe *igi* kan ní èlà ní ilẹ̀ ẹ̀ Yorùbá, *igi* ni

[We call one kind of tree *èlà* in Yoruba land, it is a tree]

The second *igi* in the above text has its antecedent in *èlà*.

Hyponym-Co-hyponym

We find a kind of lexical relationships in the text where the meaning of a word is included in the other as shown below:

Bẹ̀ni l'òjò tí **àsá** bá gbé omo **mókùolú** ló yẹ kí ojú ọ̀run ó ti gba àlejò

[Yes, it is on the day that hawk preys on *mókùolú*'s chicks that the sky should receive visitors]

Àtigbó-dé-igbó ni tí **alákedun**, àtìjù-wọ̀-jù ni tí **ijímèrè**

[Monkey moves from bush to bush, chimpanzee moves from forest to forest]

In the examples above, *àsá* 'hawk' and *mókùolú* 'specie of local hen' are both birds but with different characteristics, thus the meaning of *àsá* is included in the meaning of *mókùolú*. Similarly, *alákedun* 'monkey' and *ijímèrè* 'chimpanzee' are both animals belonging to the same family such that the meaning of one is included in the other. This kind of lexical relationship is deemed to have been used to foreground the contrast between the set and to reiterate the status that each of them holds. This lexical device is employed to achieve subtle cohesion and assert the force of his message.

Synonym

The speaker uses a relation of synonymy i.e. sameness in meaning to express a relation of sameness in views and perspectives. This is as indicated in the example below:

Láti òní lọ, gbogbo *enikèni*, *èdákèdà* èyàn

[From today onward, anybody, anyone human being]

As used in the excerpt, the two items, *enikèni* and *èdákèdà* have almost the same meaning and they indicate a minuscule of negative connotation. Although not used to express any form of contradiction but have underlying indication of placing emphasis on them to achieve optimum cohesion.

Code Mixing

May be due to the category of people that forms his audience, the speaker code mixes in some of the excerpts, examples are given below:

Well, à ñtẹ̀lé pé eléyí ní ká se, eléyí ní ká se

[Well, we are contemplating doing this, it is this we should do]

But iyẹn ò wá sọ pé ...

[But that does not say that...]

Tí èyàn bá ní ògbó ñkangí bíi **ulcer**, lai **mix** nnkankan mó o

[If anyone has chronic ulcer, without mixing anything with it o]

Sùgbón t'èyàn bá lọ lòhun un ní isín lóri i **Facebook**

[But if one goes ahead to use that on Facebook]

A discoverable external reason for the use of code mixed words (all in bold) in the above sentences is for the speaker to achieve lexical cohesion in the address. It is not likely for the majority of his audience to have the very interpretation for the Yoruba word meaning ulcer if he chooses to use that instead while the use of others might be to identify with a number of his listeners who have a good knowledge of the English language.

Collocation

The speaker makes a good use of a lexical relation of collocation where words are made to habitually go together as in the following examples:

Àtigbó dé **igbó** ni tí **alákedun** àtìjù wọ̀ **jù** ni tí **ijímèrè**

[Monkey moves from bush to bush, chimpanzee moves from forest to forest]

In the sentence above, *igbó* 'bush' collocates with *alákedun* while *ijù* 'forest' goes with *ijímèrè*. This representation places a very strong restriction on the collocability of one word with another, thus *alákedun* cannot go with *ijù* despite the fact that the meaning of *igbó* 'bush' is not too different from *ijù* 'forest'. As shown by the example above, collocation is another lexical device used to achieve cohesion in the address.

Exclamation

È ó ò, orí i rẹ̀ ní ó ti bèrẹ̀ sí ní í dún láti òní lọ

[È ó ò, it will start from such person as from today]

The use of 'è ó ò', which comes in the form of an exclamation, is a way to ensure the audience is paying attention. It acts as a conversational marker, drawing listeners' attention to what has been said or is about to be said, and indicates the speaker's intent to make a significant point. The phrase 'it will start from such person as from today' adds an element of forewarning, suggesting immediate consequences for any violation of the decree. The audience's response, 'amen in Jesus' name,' shows their acknowledgment and agreement with the speaker's declaration.

Syntactic Devices in the Address

It is not an assumption that prophet Kasali uses a number of interesting syntactic devices and derivations that help to achieve sentential and structural cohesion which impact positively on the intelligibility of the audience. In this section therefore, I examine each of the identified syntactic processes as follows:

Substitution

The speaker employs in large scale the syntactic strategy of substitution where a word replaces another one in the next clause or sentence. Consider the following examples:

i) **Alálẹ** ilẹ yí **òun** ló so fún eni tí ó wá láti lẹ̀bù pé wọn kan nńkan

[It was this town ancestor that informed the person from lẹ̀bù that something was nailed]

ii) **Ọba** tí ò bá mọ odù tí wọn fí tẹ ilú ẹ dó

[Any **Ọba** who does not know the odù used to found his town]

In the first sentence, *alálẹ* 'ancestor' is substituted by *òun* while *ọba* is replaced by *ẹ* in (ii). In this regard, *òun* and *ẹ* are in anaphoric relations to *alálẹ* and *ọba* respectively. This syntactic device is deployed to remove or avoid redundancy and ensure proper coordination and coherence within the sentences.

Focus

Another significant syntactic process found in the address is focus, a means by which emphasis or contrast is set between what is given and what is new. This is found in the examples below.

i) Èyàn **ní** ó wọ ọ **ní** ẹwù **aso funfun** yì í **o**

[It was people that dressed it in white cloth o]

ii) Èyin ará lgbájo ló wẹwù yì í **fun o**

[It was you people of lgbájo that dressed it this way]

iii) Èyin **ní** ẹ wọ **ní** **white o**

[**You were the one that dressed it in white**]

iv) Ọrọ ní mo sọ ní ọdún méjì sẹhìn

[It was some comments I made two years back]

In sentences (i-iii), the subjects are emphasised by moving them to a position immediately preceding the focus marker *ní* while the object *ọrọ* is the entity focused in (iv) as the focus marker *ní* helps to signal. This is a cohesive strategy deployed by the speaker to show what is at the centre of his communicative interest.

Paraphrase relations

The two sentences below are not different by way of interpretation but there is an apparent alteration in the arrangement of the words in the sentences through transformations to yield structural paraphrase relations:

Kí se igi osè ló kàn án o

[It is not the osè tree that nailed it o]

Igi osè kọ ló kàn án mọ ibẹ o

[The osè tree is not the one that nailed it there o]

The deployment of paraphrase in the above construction is for the speaker to create a lasting impression on the listeners while the repeated use of 'o' at the end of each of the sentences reinforces the speaker's sense of emphasis, a common rhetorical strategy in oral storytelling traditions to ensure that the audience in a speech situation pays attention. The two strategies of paraphrasing and repetition combine to make the elements in the sentences cohere and enhance the intelligibility of the audience.

Command/imperative

To drive home the illocutionary force of instruction, the speaker employs the use of an imperative sentence to compel the kings to do all that are required of them to live a noble life. This is captured in the excerpt below:

Ẹ gbé ayé bí ọba, ẹyin ọba wa

[Live like kings, you our kings]

The sentence has an imperative force, although it spots an overt subject marked with *e*, which is a sign of respect for the personality of the kings and a mark plurality, given the number involved. This syntactic device as contained in the excerpt is to demonstrate the speaker's seriousness and ill-feeling about the ways the kings present themselves to the world.

Recursion

The speaker also makes use of the rule of recursion where the rule of relativization reapplies severally to construct or form a larger sentence. This is the case with the excerpt below.

Tí won fí Ọlórún sí lẹ́ tí won ò sìn, tí wọn sọ́ ọ́ ọ́ di ohun tí ńgba ẹ̀bọ́, tí ńgba ètùtù

[That they refused to worship God, that they turned the tree which God that created the heaven and the earth, which they turned to what takes sacrifice, which takes rituals]

In the above sentence, a series of relative clause forms recursive categories to give the sentence some form of conciseness and to also remove redundancy.

Questioning

As distinguished from a large number of declarative sentences, the speaker uses a few question strategies to demand for responses from his audience. This is shown in the examples below:

i) Kínni mo wí sir?

[What did I say sir?]

ii) Ta le rí t'ógbé olúmèrè kan rí?

[Who did you ever see that stole an Olumere before?]

iii) Kí wọn se kíni sir?

[That they should do what sir?]

The above are sentence types used in the expression of questions. Sentences (i & ii) are a form of direct questions while (iii) is an echo question and each of them is used as a syntactic device by the speaker to elicit information or reiterate his stand on the issue in contention.

Conjunction

The speaker uses some conjuncts primarily to perform a cohesive function. Let us consider how conjuncts such as *àti* 'and' *bíi* 'like/as' and *sùgbón* 'but' are used in the sentences below:

i) *Àti* mùsùlùmí *àti* kristiánítí

[Both muslims and christians]

ii) Á wá dà *bíi* aláimòṣe

[It will look like the incompetent]

iii) Ẹ̀bọ́ ní aà níse, ètùtù ní aà ní í gbé, *sùgbón* ká gbédè ...

[It is sacrifice that we will not offer, it is rituals that we will not perform but to understand language...]

In the examples above, the italicized words are conjunctions used to make the content of the connected speech hangs together. In (i), *àti* 'and' is used to coordinate two nouns and mark emphasis on the conjoined items while *bíi* 'like' functions as a conjunct that compares two objects in (ii). In (iii), *sùgbón* which has English equivalent as 'but' is a conjunct used to connect the sentence '*Ẹ̀bọ́ ní aà ní í gbé, ètùtù ní aà ní í níse*, 'it is sacrifice that we will not offer, it is rituals that we will not perform' with *ká gbédè* 'to understand language' purposely to show contrast between them.

Centre embedding

One remarkable syntactic device used by the speaker to further advance maximum cohesion in the address is centre embedding, where he includes a sentence in the middle of another sentence. This is distinguishable from the recursive process mentioned above. Consider the example below:

Ẹ̀là, Yorùbá sọ́ pé kíí bá ọ́ ọ́ oko o wówé

[Ẹ̀là, Yoruba people say does not wilt alongside other trees in the forest]

In the sentence given above, the clause *Yorùbá sọ́ pé* 'Yoruba people say' which is supposed to function as the upper or main clause is included in *Ẹ̀là kíí bá ọ́ ọ́ oko o wówé* 'Ẹ̀là does not wilt alongside other trees in the forest' which should ordinarily be the dependent or subordinate clause. The speaker uses this strategy to place emphasis on *ẹ̀là* as a kind of tree and to show that the maxim within which the word occurs is not his own but what is literally embedded in the Yoruba culture and tradition. This in effect is a cohesive strategy he uses to magnify the relation of oppositeness between the nature and characteristics of the tree known as *ẹ̀là*.

VI. Conclusion

This paper has attempted an examination of the role of context in utterance interpretation and reveals that Prophet Moses Kasali makes use of illocutionary acts to pass his message across to the listeners and the wider audience. Through the various contextual features such as shared situational knowledge of the speakers and the listeners, the speaker demonstrates his linguistic competence and versatility by deliberately employing the use of expressions and terms that are superficially considered as occult practices but very relevant to the speech situation. In this regard, he employs a number of discourse acts in his address to illustrate some points to discerning minds, oppose or support some views or claims, give instructions on matters that deserve attention, inform the audience on what they have no knowledge of or correct audience perceptions about issues and inspire them to believe in the Yorùbá ethos and tradition. Furthermore, the paper reveals that the address is structurally marked by a number of lexical and syntactic devices that build cohesion into the address. Repetition, code mixing, collocation and semantic relations are among the prominent lexical devices deployed while paraphrase relations, substitution, focus, conjunction, centre embedding and others constitute the bulk of the syntactic devices found in the address. This paper concludes that the speaker deploys the identified discourse acts and lexico-syntactic devices to make his utterance coherent and ensure effective communication and intelligibility and, also to project himself as a speaker with the right and positive attitude toward the speaking and appropriate use of the Yorùbá language.

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