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Declarative and Commissive Acts an Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf's 2023 Inaugural Address

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Abstract
This study examines Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf's 2023 Inaugural address through the lens of Searle's (1979) taxonomy of Speech Acts, focusing specifically on declarative and commissive Acts. Using a qualitative content analysis approach, the study extracts, categorizes, and interprets relevant utterances from the address to explore their speech act functions within a political context. Declarative Acts are shown to perform immediate institutional effects (such as dissolving boards, reclaiming public assets, and reopening institutions) thereby asserting political authority and enacting administrative change. Commissive Acts express the Governor's commitments to future-oriented goals, including economic relief, infrastructural development, anti-corruption reforms, and social investment in health, education, and agriculture. These Speech Acts function not only as communicative tools but also as strategic mechanisms for constructing political identity, projecting ideological stance, and negotiating power relations in Kano State. The study concludes that Governor Yusuf's strategic deployment of Speech Acts serves as both a performative and ideological instrument for legitimizing authority and fostering a reformist governance agenda.

Keywords: Speech Act Theory, declaratives, commissives, political communication, performativity.

Introduction
Inaugural addresses serve as crucial rhetorical events through which political officeholders project their visions, establish legitimacy, and forge social contracts with the public (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2023; Hassan, 2021). These Speeches are not mere ceremonial discourses; they are strategic Acts of communication embedded with

ideological cues and performative intentions, typically marked by high-stakes promises and institutional affirmations. Speech Act Theory, as developed by Austin (1962) and elaborated by Searle (1969), provides a useful analytical framework for understanding the illocutionary forces embedded in political utterances, especially in contexts such as Inaugural addresses where performativity and commitment are central.

Among the various categories of Speech Acts, declaratives and commissives are particularly salient in political rhetoric. Declarative Acts are those that bring about a change in the institutional or social reality by virtue of being uttered (Searle, 1979). These include pronouncements such as appointments, policies, or structural reforms, which rely on the speaker's institutional authority. Commissive Acts, on the other hand, express the speaker's commitment to a future course of Action, typically through promises, vows, or guarantees (Al-Khazraji, 2022). Political leaders often employ commissives to construct trust and build rapport with citizens, signalling their intentions to fulfil campaign pledges or address pressing social concerns (Mohammed & Ahmed, 2023).

The 2023 Inaugural address of Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf of Kano State presents an ideal context for the exploration of declarative and commissive Acts in contemporary Nigerian political discourse. Governor Yusuf's assumption of office was not only politically significant, following a contentious electoral process, but also symbolically loaded as a return to a populist political ideology grounded in public welfare, anti-corruption, and infrastructural development. His Speech, therefore, functions as both a performative instrument of governance and a rhetorical space for constructing a new political order.

Previous studies have examined the linguistic and speech act elements of Nigerian political Speeches with a focus on Speech Act categories, rhetorical devices, and ideological projections (Adegbola, 2020; Ogunleye, 2021; Eze & Nwasogwa, 2023). However, there is a relative dearth of empirical attention given specifically to the strategic deployment of declarative and commissive Acts in gubernatorial Inaugural Speeches, especially in Northern Nigeria. This gap is particularly pertinent in the context of Kano State, a socio-politically dynamic environment where language use is both ideologically charged and communally consequential.

A speech act analysis of the declarative and commissive Acts in Governor Yusuf's address not only offers insights into the rhetorical construction of political authority and commitment but also contributes to the broader field of political linguistics by interrogating how illocutionary Acts mediate the relationship between political Actors and the governed. Furthermore, such an analysis can provide a template for evaluating the congruence between political promises and governance outcomes, particularly in emergent democracies where accountability is still evolving.

By foregrounding the intersection of language, politics, and speech acts, this study aims to illuminate the ways in which Governor Yusuf uses declarative and commissive Acts to Act authority, articulate intentions, and shape public expectations. In so doing, it extends the scope of Speech Act Theory in political discourse and adds to the growing body of scholarship on language use in Nigerian political communication. Thus, the specific objectives are to: i.

Identify and categorise the declarative and commissive Speech Acts employed in Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf's 2023 Inaugural address; ii. Analyse the speech act functions of these Speech Acts in projecting political authority, commitment, and ideological stance; and iii. Evaluate how declarative and commissive Acts contribute to the construction of political identity and the negotiation of power relations within the sociopolitical context of Kano State.

DISCOURSE AND POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Discourse, as a theoretical construct, has evolved beyond the traditional boundaries of linguistic analysis to encompass broader issues of ideology, identity, and power relations. At its core, discourse refers to language as it is used in real contexts for communication. However, in modern linguistic and social theory, discourse is not simply a set of connected utterances; it is a form of social practice that both reflects and shapes the sociocultural realities within which it occurs (Zhang & Liu, 2020; Kumar, 2021). It involves the use of language in context and highlights how meaning is co-constructed through interaction within specific institutional, historical, or ideological settings. Recent scholarship has advanced the notion of discourse as a historically situated system of knowledge that defines what can be said, thought, and known within particular socio-political frameworks (Anderson, 2022). In this view, discourse goes beyond linguistic expressions to include the institutions, practices, and power structures that sustain and regulate communication. Thus, discourse does not merely reflect social processes; it Actively participates in producing and maintaining them. This conceptualization underscores the constitutive nature of language in the construction of reality.

Building on this perspective, political discourse is viewed as a specialized subset of discourse that operates within the domain of politics and governance. It refers to the structured use of language by political Actors (such as government officials, legislators, party leaders, and public administrators) in contexts that are explicitly political in purpose and audience (Williams, 2021; Chen, 2020). Political discourse encompasses a wide range of communicative events including debates, campaign Speeches, policy statements, manifestos, parliamentary proceedings, and Inaugural addresses. Its primary goal is to persuade, mobilize, legitimize authority, and shape public opinion (Rahman & Singh, 2022; Johnson, 2023).

One of the defining features of political discourse is its ideological dimension. Politicians use language strategically to reinforce specific worldviews, manage impressions, and align with or challenge existing power structures (Martinez, 2021). As such, political discourse is not neutral; it is value-laden and ideologically driven. It encodes and reproduces dominant beliefs and social relations through carefully crafted rhetorical structures and linguistic choices. The framing of issues, the repetition of certain lexical patterns, the use of metaphors, and the manipulation of presuppositions are all examples of how language functions persuasively in political contexts (Thompson, 2020).

Moreover, political discourse often functions intertextually; it draws from, references, and responds to other discourses. An Inaugural address, for example, does not exist in isolation but is linked to prior campaign discourses, national constitutions, party ideologies, and public expectations. This interdiscursivity situates the address within a continuum of political

communication that seeks to consolidate legitimacy, assert leadership, and articulate a vision for governance (Abdullah, 2023; Park, 2021).

INAUGURAL SPEECHES

The Inaugural address is a genre of political discourse that performs a symbolic and functional role in the transition or commencement of leadership, particularly within democratic or representative political systems. As a rhetorical Act, it formally marks the assumption of office and serves as an opportunity for the political Actor to establish ethos, communicate intentions, and align with the expectations of the electorate (Davies & Miller, 2022). Inaugural Speeches are thus highly structured, ideologically loaded, and rhetorically strategic forms of political communication.

Conceptually, Inaugural addresses are situated within the broader genre of political epideictic discourse, which focuses on the articulation of values, the reinforcement of collective identity, and the ceremonial legitimisation of power (Roberts, 2020). They are often delivered shortly after an election or appointment, and they carry a ritualistic significance as they signal the peaceful transition of authority and the speaker's readiness to govern. The structure of such Speeches is typically marked by calls for unity, acknowledgements of predecessors, the articulation of national or regional challenges, and the declaration of governing principles (Finlayson, 2021).

Inaugural addresses do more than celebrate or acknowledge; they project a vision of leadership. Through carefully chosen language, the speaker constructs a new political reality that often blends continuity with change, reassurance with commitment, and identity with responsibility. According to Smith (2021), the Inaugural address functions as a constitutive Act it not only reflects political authority but also enacts it by positioning the speaker within the institutional framework of governance. The performative aspect of the address allows leaders to invoke national values, affirm democratic ideals, and propose moral narratives that justify their policy directions. Moreover, Inaugural addresses are inherently intertextual and interdiscursive, drawing from party ideologies, national history, religious or cultural values, and often previous political declarations (Wilson, 2022). They operate within a discursive tradition that expects the speaker to engage in specific linguistic rituals, expressing gratitude, invoking unity, and offering assurance of service. The language of Inaugural Speeches, therefore, is not only formal and ceremonial but also persuasive, attempting to construct legitimacy and secure political alignment with various stakeholders (Brown, 2023). In the Nigerian political context, Inaugural addresses have become essential tools through which Governors and Presidents negotiate legitimacy, outline policy priorities, and define the tone of their administrations (Ajayi, 2020; Ayoola, 2021). Given the country's ethno linguistic diversity and political complexity, these Speeches often serve not only administrative or ideological functions but also symbolic ones, attempting to balance regional interests, calm post-election tensions, and reframe national conversations.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE STUDY OF INAUGURAL SPEECHES

Inaugural Speeches, as pivotal moments in political communication, have attracted scholarly interest across various disciplinary perspectives. These Speeches are not merely ceremonial; they serve complex rhetorical, ideological, and sociopolitical functions. Scholars have approached Inaugural addresses from multiple analytical lenses, each offering unique insights into their structure, purpose, and effect. Below are key perspectives from which Inaugural Speeches have been studied (and can continue to be studied) in academic research:

i. Rhetorical Perspective

From a rhetorical standpoint, Inaugural Speeches are examined for their persuasive strategies, appeals (ethos, pathos, logos), and rhetorical devices such as repetition, parallelism, and antithesis. Researchers study how Presidents or Governors craft their persona; connect emotionally with citizens, and articulate visions of national unity or renewal. This perspective focuses on how leaders use language to persuade, inspire, and legitimize their authority (Garcia, 2020; Campbell & Jamieson, 2022).

ii. Speech act and Speech Act Perspective

Speech act analyses focus on the functions performed through language. Drawing on Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), scholars investigate the illocutionary Acts embedded in Inaugural addresses, such as commissives (promises), declaratives (policy statements), and expressives (empathy and gratitude). This perspective reveals how Speech serves as Action, with language used to perform governance-related tasks like committing to reforms, declaring intentions, and acknowledging public support (Ayoola, 2021; Anyanwu, 2023).

iii. Discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Perspective

Through CDA, Inaugural Speeches are explored as sites of power, ideology, and hegemony. Researchers examine how politicians construct national identities, other social Actors, and policy agendas through discourse. They also interrogate the underlying ideologies and power relations that inform the lexical choices and framing devices in such Speeches (Taylor, 2020; van Dijk, 2021). This perspective helps uncover how language is used to naturalize certain political narratives or delegitimize opponents.

iv. Stylistic and Linguistic Perspective

Some studies focus on the stylistic elements of Inaugural Speeches, analyzing sentence structures, lexis, figurative language, and cohesive devices. This includes foregrounding and back grounding, modality, metaphors, and diction. Stylistic approaches reveal how aesthetic language use supports or undermines rhetorical aims and political identity (Lee & Kim, 2021; Eze & Nwasogwa, 2023).

v. Functional Grammar Perspective

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly Halliday's (1994) model, has been employed to explore how Inaugural Speeches construct ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings. Through the transitivity system, mood choices, modality, and thematic structures, researchers investigate how leaders represent reality, build rapport with their audience, and organize discourse to achieve coherence and impact (Evans, 2020; Jingxia, 2021).

vi. Ideological and Political Philosophy Perspective

From this view, Inaugural Speeches are analyzed as reflections of political ideology, governance philosophy, or even populist sentiment. Scholars explore how democratic ideals, nationalism, reformism, or conservatism are projected. This perspective connects discourse with broader political contexts, often integrating sociopolitical theories to explain how Speeches resonate with or resist dominant ideological trends (White, 2020; Bayram & Can, 2020).

vii. Comparative and Intercultural Perspective

Inaugural Speeches can also be studied comparatively, across time, cultures, or political systems. This perspective sheds light on how global and local political cultures influence rhetorical conventions, leadership styles, and communicative strategies. It allows for contrastive discourse analysis between countries or political figures, revealing culturally specific and universal patterns in political communication (Wu, 2022; Mwinlaaru & Xuan, 2021).

viii. Socio-cognitive Perspective

Recent socio-cognitive models allow for the investigation of how mental models and social cognition inform political language (Clark, 2021). In this frame, Inaugural Speeches are examined as expressions of shared knowledge, beliefs, and ideologies that help shape public perception and institutional memory. It provides a framework for analysing how political figures build trust, invoke collective history, and justify political agendas. Inaugural Speeches are rich, multifaceted texts that serve communicative, ideological, and symbolic functions. The perspectives reviewed above demonstrate the range of approaches available to scholars. These lenses can be applied singularly or in combination to provide deeper insights into how political Actors use language to enAct authority, connect with citizens, and shape political realities. In this study, the speech act perspective has been adopted to examine how the Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf used language to perform declarative and commissive Acts in his Inaugural Speech to achieve certain goals.

PREVIOUS WORKS ON SPEECH ACTS ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL SPEECHES

This section reviews some scholarly studies that have employed Speech Acts Theory to examine political Speeches, highlighting how political Actors use language to perform Actions, establish credibility, construct authority, and negotiate social realities.

Several researchers have drawn on Searle's (1969) taxonomy of Speech Acts to explore the functional dimensions of political language. Oladele (2021), for instance, analyses selected Speeches of African leaders, identifying assertive and commissive Acts as dominant tools for persuasion and ideological projection. The study concludes that Speech Acts are integral to the strategic construction of political authority and alignment with public sentiment.

In a related Nigerian context, Bello (2023) examines Inaugural Speeches delivered by Nigerian Presidents. The study reveals that directives and assertives are frequently used to articulate national visions, address concerns, and project solidarity. Bello's findings

underscore the speech act intentions embedded in Inaugural discourse and how these are linguistically realized.

Focusing on a more recent Speech, Anyanwu (2023) evaluates President Tinubu's Inaugural address using the framework of illocutionary force. The study identifies the preponderance of commissive Acts, through which the speaker makes policy pledges and moral commitments. This approach reveals the performative role of Inaugural Speeches in shaping political ethos and legitimacy.

Ibrahim (2022), in a recent important contribution, studies Speech Acts in the announcements of Nigerian political transitions. He finds that declarative and directive Acts dominate, enabling the reconfiguration of political order. His analysis foregrounds the institutional power embedded in performative utterances during constitutional transitions.

Similarly, Hassan (2020) conducts a speech act analysis of Nigerian political Speeches, finding that expressive and assertive Acts are employed to reflect empathy, affirm shared values, and enhance trust. His work illustrates how politicians use Speech Acts to navigate the dynamics of political communication and public engagement.

Eze and Nwasogwa (2023) provide a stylistic but also speech actally informed analysis of Tinubu's Inaugural address. By identifying commissives and directives as pivotal Speech Acts, they reveal how political figures blend stylistic elegance with speech act intent to frame governance agendas.

Adeagbo (2023) examines Tinubu's popular "Emilokan" campaign Speech through a socio-cognitive and Speech Act lens. The study shows how assertives are used to claim entitlement, while commissives are used to project readiness and resolve. His approach combines linguistic performance with mental representations of political entitlement.

Although primarily rooted in critical discourse analysis, Badmus and Kilani (2024) also adopt elements of Speech Act Theory to discuss the ideological implications of declarative and commissive statements in Tinubu's Inaugural Speech. The findings point to how performative language supports political myth-making and the construction of national identity.

Wu (2022), while focusing on American political discourse, incorporates Speech Act categories to compare President Biden's and former President Trump's rhetorical styles. Biden's use of commissives and expressives contrasts with Trump's reliance on assertives and directives, revealing divergent political personas and strategic communication goals.

Finally, although Akinkuotu's (2023) study is primarily a media-based analysis, it draws attention to the public's response to Tinubu's Speech Acts (particularly commissives and directives) on fuel subsidy removal. The study illustrates how political Speech Acts can trigger policy interpretations and sociopolitical reactions.

Collectively, these studies affirm that Speech Acts are central to political discourse, offering insights into how political Actors mobilize language to construct realities, perform leadership, and influence the public sphere.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Speech Act Theory (SAT) as developed by J. L. Austin (1962) and further systematized by John Searle (1969). The theory posits that language is not merely a

vehicle for conveying information but a means of performing Actions. This insight is particularly pertinent to political discourse, wherein utterances often go beyond description to performative functions such as promising, declaring, commanding, or committing to future Action.

Austin (1962) initially distinguished between locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary Acts, with illocutionary Acts representing the speaker's intention behind the utterance. Searle (1969) refined this concept by offering a taxonomy of illocutionary Acts, comprising assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Of particular relevance to this study are commissives and declarations; the two categories that frame the analytical lens of the present investigation.

Commissive Acts, according to Searle (1976), commit the speaker to a future course of Action. These Acts include promises, vows, pledges, and guarantees, which are crucial in political Speeches as they serve to construct the speaker's credibility and perceived accountability. In Inaugural addresses, commissives typically manifest in policy commitments, socio-economic pledges, and assurances of reform. By uttering these Acts, political leaders like Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf engage in performative constructions of trust and alignment with the electorate.

Declarative Acts, on the other hand, bring about a change in the institutional or social reality merely by being uttered under appropriate conditions. Austin (1962) notes that such Acts (such as naming, appointing, or resigning) are performative in nature and succeed only when uttered within a recognized authority framework. In the context of an Inaugural Speech, declarations serve as formal recognitions of new governance, institutional intentions, or administrative shifts. By asserting a new governmental order or policy stance, declarative Acts instantiate political power in discourse. Furthermore, the present study recognizes the context-dependent nature of Speech Acts, as emphasized by Searle (1979), who argues that illocutionary force is not solely determined by linguistic form but also by social and institutional contexts. Hence, the Inaugural address, being a formal, ritualistic, and politically consequential event, provides the ideal discursive context for the deployment of declarative and commissive Acts.

In sum, Speech Act Theory provides a robust framework for analyzing how Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf performs both institutional legitimacy and policy commitment through language. It enables a systematic exploration of how certain utterances function not only to convey intentions but also to enact political authority and construct leadership ethos.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design, drawing on speech act linguistic analysis to investigate the use of declarative and commissive Speech Acts in Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf's 2023 Inaugural address. The design is appropriate as it facilitates an in-depth exploration of how language functions as Action within the sociopolitical context of a formal political Speech.

The primary data for this study is the official transcript of Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf's Inaugural address delivered on May 29, 2023, in Kano State, Nigeria. The Speech was sourced from verified government publications and cross-checked against broadcast recordings to

ensure textual fidelity and accuracy. The analysis is guided by Speech Act Theory, as proposed by Austin (1962) and refined by Searle (1969, 1976). Specifically, the study focuses on identifying and categorizing declarative and commissive illocutionary Acts within the Speech. Using Searle's typology of illocutionary Acts, each relevant utterance was classified based on its illocutionary force and communicative intent. This responds directly to the first objective: to identify and categorise the declarative and commissive Speech Acts employed in the address. To address the second objective (analysing the speech act functions of these Acts) each instance of declarative or commissive Speech was examined in relation to its sociopolitical context, intended audience effects, and discursive role in projecting authority, commitment, and ideological alignment. Contextual interpretation relied on both the immediate textual environment and the broader political situation in Kano State at the time of the Speech.

For the third objective (evaluating how declarative and commissive Acts contribute to the construction of political identity and negotiation of power relations) the study adopted a discourse-speech act approach. Attention was given to how these Acts functioned to position Governor Yusuf in relation to key sociopolitical Actors, institutional structures, and the electorate. Here, language is seen not only as performative but as instrumental in identity construction and power negotiation.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf's 2023 Inaugural address serves as a performative and strategic political communication Act aimed at asserting authority, reassuring the public, and outlining a governance agenda. Using Searle's (1979) taxonomy of Speech Acts, this analysis focuses on declarative and commissive Acts. Declaratives are utterances that bring about institutional or social change simply by being spoken, while commissives commit the speaker to future Actions, promises, or intentions. The table below classifies and explains representative examples of these two Speech Act types from the address.

Table 1: Declarative Speech Acts in Governor Yusuf's Inaugural Speech

Speech Act Type	Category	Example(s)	Function
Declarative	Institutional Announcements	"Today is a confirmation that the will of the good people of Kano State has prevailed." "Today marked the continuation of the *Kwankwasiyya* administration…"	Acknowledges political transition and reaffirms continuity of governance.
Declarative	Creation of Taskforces/Commissions	"I am, today, announcing the formation of a Special Joint Taskforce…" "Today, a Taskforce on Refuse Disposal… is approved." "A Judicial Commission of Inquiry will be put in place…"	Performs the institutional creation of new administrative and legal bodies.

Speech Act Type	Category	Example(s)	Function
Declarative	Reopening of Institutions	"The 44 Schools of Islamic Studies and 47 Technical Colleges… will be reopened." "The Kano State Reformatory Institute… will be reopened…"	Declares reactivation of educational and corrective institutions.
Declarative	Suspension and Dissolution	"All 'Awon Igiya' projects… are hereby suspended." "All political appointees… are hereby relieved…" "All boards… are hereby dissolved…"	Enacts immediate halting of past policies and structural reset of governance.
Declarative	Asset Reclamation	"All these public places and assets… should be taken over by law enforcement agencies…"	Commands asset repossession and directs enforcement Actions.

Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf's inaugural address effectively utilizes declarative speech acts to perform official actions and signal the immediate commencement of governance. These speech Acts are performative in nature, meaning the utterance itself constitutes an action rather than merely describing one. For example, in the category of Institutional Announcements, statements such as *"Today is a confirmation that the will of the good people of Kano State has prevailed"* and *"Today marked the continuation of the Kwankwasiyya administration"* serve not only to mark a political transition but also to legitimize the continuity of the political ideology under his leadership. These declarations establish the authority of the speaker and confirm the successful outcome of the democratic process.

In the second category, Creation of Taskforces/Commissions, Yusuf uses declaratives to officially announce administrative actions such as *"the formation of a Special Joint Taskforce"* and the approval of environmental and legal commissions. These acts are not merely informative but transformative they bring new structures into existence through speech alone, fulfilling the core function of declarative speech acts as outlined in speech act theory.

Another important application of declarative speech acts is seen in the Reopening of Institutions. Statements like *"The 44 Schools of Islamic Studies and 47 Technical Colleges will be reopened"* function as institutional directives, immediately signaling a return to policy programs abandoned by previous administrations. These reactivations are performative declarations intended to restore public confidence and reshape the state's educational and rehabilitative priorities.

Similarly, Suspension and Dissolution declarations such as *"All political appointees… are hereby relieved"* and *"All boards… are hereby dissolved"* reflect a clear institutional reset. These performative utterances function as tools of structural overhaul, used to sweep away the remnants of the previous regime and create a clean slate for new governance strategies.

Finally, the declarative act related to Asset Reclamation, exemplified by the statement *"All these public places and assets… should be taken over by law enforcement agencies"*, commands direct state intervention. This form of declarative speech act not only assigns legal

force to the repossession of misused public property but also underscores the Governor's commitment to justice and the rule of law.

In summary, the Declarative Acts in Governor Yusuf's Speech are primarily institutional and executive in nature. They legitimize authority, signal policy directions, restructure governance systems, and activate legal or administrative mechanisms all through the force of language. These Speech Acts are crucial in asserting leadership, affirming political change, and activating public policy, fulfilling core performative functions as outlined in Searle's theory of Speech Acts.

Table 2: Commissive Speech Acts in Governor Yusuf's Inaugural Speech

Commissive	**Fulfilling Campaign Promises**	**"We shall work deliberately… to turnaround the fortune of our state…" "We shall leave no stone unturned to ensure that we fulfil our promises."**	**Pledges to deliver on electoral commitments.**
Commissive	Governance Reforms	"We shall put in place a structure… for transparency…" "We shall resume the good practice of publishing weekly reports…" "We shall re-introduce the Treasury Single Account…"	Promises to institutionalize transparency and good governance.
Commissive	Economic and Entrepreneurial Development	"All small business owners… are exempted from paying any tax." "We shall create the enabling environment… for entrepreneurs." "We shall reactivate all the 37 Microfinance Banks…"	Commits to economic relief and revitalization of entrepreneurial support systems.
Commissive	Infrastructure and Urban Renewal	"We shall commence the completion of the 5km roads…" "We shall complete these cities…" "We shall resume the street naming and house numbering…"	Pledges continuation and expansion of urban and rural development projects.
Commissive	Sectoral Development (Education, Health, Agriculture)	"We will take emergency measures… to rescue our education system." "The resumption of free maternity services… will be revisited."	Expresses commitment to social sector investment and service delivery.

Commissive	**Fulfilling Campaign Promises**	**"We shall work deliberately… to turnaround the fortune of our state…" "We shall leave no stone unturned to ensure that we fulfil our promises."**	**Pledges to deliver on electoral commitments.**
		"We shall modernize agriculture…"	
Commissive	Anti-Corruption & Justice	"The work to recover public properties… starts now." "A Judicial Commission of Inquiry will be empanelled…"	Promises accountability and enforcement of justice.
Commissive	Personal Dedication	"I guarantee you that I will give my all in the service…" "We will not disappoint you."	Assures personal commitment to leadership and public trust.

In his Inaugural address, Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf extensively employed commissive Speech Acts, which are statements that commit the speaker to a future course of action. These promises serve to build trust, foster accountability, and communicate a vision of proactive governance. The first category, Fulfilling Campaign Promises, includes utterances such as *"We shall work deliberately to turnaround the fortune of our state"* and *"We shall leave no stone unturned to ensure that we fulfil our promises."* These statements serve as rhetorical bridges between campaign rhetoric and real-time policy commitments. They also assure the public that the transition from electioneering to administration is underpinned by a clear intent to deliver.

Under Governance Reforms, the governor pledges specific structural changes to improve transparency and efficiency in public service delivery. Commitments such as *"We shall re-introduce the Treasury Single Account"* and *"We shall put in place a structure for transparency"* function as institutional reforms designed to reinforce good governance. These commissive acts reveal an effort to rebuild public confidence in administrative processes and dismantle opaque systems associated with misgovernance.

In the area of Economic and Entrepreneurial Development, Governor Yusuf's speech commits to empowering the business community, particularly small and medium-scale enterprises. Statements like *"All small business owners are exempted from paying any tax"* and *"We shall create the enabling environment for entrepreneurs"* serve both as immediate relief measures and as long-term development strategies aimed at stimulating economic activity. By pledging to reactivate Microfinance Banks, the administration shows intent to facilitate access to capital and financial inclusion.

The category of Infrastructure and Urban Renewal captures pledges related to developmental continuity, such as completing the 5km roads initiated under past administrations and reviving projects for city planning and infrastructure. These commitments demonstrate not just

continuity but also expansion, addressing both urban and rural infrastructural deficits through deliberate planning and execution.

Governor Yusuf also expresses clear intent for Sectoral Development in key areas like education, health, and agriculture. Statements such as *"We will take emergency measures to rescue our education system"* and *"We shall modernize agriculture"* indicate a multisectoral approach to public service delivery. These commissive acts show that the administration views education and health not just as social needs, but as economic and developmental imperatives.

In the realm of Anti-Corruption and Justice, the governor makes binding declarations to hold past offenders accountable. With phrases like *"The work to recover public properties starts now"* and *"A Judicial Commission of Inquiry will be empanelled"*, the speech positions the administration as one that will uphold legal and ethical standards. These promises signal to citizens and political actors alike that malfeasance will not go unchecked.

Finally, the Governor's Personal Dedication is captured in intimate and emphatic commissive acts such as *"I guarantee you that I will give my all in the service"* and *"We will not disappoint you."* These statements reinforce the image of a dedicated public servant who aligns personal integrity with administrative responsibility.

Overall, the commissive speech acts in the inaugural address serve to assure the audience of the governor's forward-looking agenda, accountability, and dedication. They function not only as rhetorical commitments but also as benchmarks against which the administration's performance will be measured, thereby enhancing the speech act force of the Speech.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The analysis of Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf's 2023 inaugural address reveals a dominant use of declarative and commissive Speech Acts, strategically deployed to signal institutional authority and establish a framework for governance. The declarative acts primarily function to perform institutional changes, policy announcements, and immediate administrative actions through language. These include formal announcements such as the formation of new taskforces, reopening of educational institutions, suspension of former political appointments, and directives for asset reclamation. Such statements are performative in nature, enacting what they declare and symbolizing the transition into a new political era. They not only reflect the authority of the office but also assert control, legitimacy, and readiness to govern.

In parallel, the commissive Speech Acts reflect a robust commitment to future-oriented policies, reform, and leadership. The governor uses these acts to pledge fulfillment of campaign promises, institutional reforms for transparency, economic revitalization through tax waivers and support for small businesses, infrastructural projects, and social sector development in areas like education, health, and agriculture. These utterances aim to foster public trust, signal accountability, and outline clear governance trajectories. By embedding his personal dedication within these commitments, Governor Yusuf not only enhances credibility but also emotionally connects with the populace.

Overall, the speech exemplifies a deliberate application of speech acts in political discourse, where language does not merely describe intentions but enacts them. The dominance of

declarative and commissive acts underscores the performative and promissory dimensions of inaugural rhetoric legitimizing authority, initiating governance structures, and cultivating public confidence. This speech act analysis demonstrates how political language functions both as a symbolic assertion of leadership and a binding commitment to deliver change.

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