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Context, meaning and communicative intentions: A pragmatic study of selected segments of kapital FM radio's daybreak programme

Faith Ojochokobimi Ammeh*, Simon Itine Abochol

Department of English, University of Abuja, NIGERIA
*Email: ammehfaith@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0004-1805-1655
Email: simon.abochol@uniabuja.edu.ng

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Abstract - This study examines how participants use speech acts to construct meaning in selected editions of Walk the Talk, a segment of Kapital FM Radio's Daybreak programme in Nigeria. It investigates the categories of speech acts employed, their communicative purposes, and the contextual factors shaping interpretation. A qualitative descriptive design was adopted. Seven purposively selected editions from a population of ten were organised into five condensed analytical episodes covering labour, education, politics, population planning and economic affairs. Utterances were interpreted principally through Searle's classification of illocutionary acts, supported by Austin's distinction between locution, illocution and perlocution and Grice's Cooperative Principle. The analysis identifies assertives, directives, commissives and expressives; no clear declarations occur in the selected material. Assertives present information, explain developments and qualify claims, while directives elicit explanations, challenge allegations, recommend policies and encourage practical action. Commissives communicate commitments and conditional warnings, whereas expressives convey evaluations and attitudes. Participant roles, preceding contributions and institutional expectations influence the interpretation of these acts. Some interrogatives function as indirect criticism rather than straightforward requests for information, demonstrating the importance of contextual inference. The findings suggest that speech acts organise interaction and support accountability in public-affairs broadcasting. However, the condensed data do not establish category frequencies or actual audience effects. The study contributes to pragmatic research on Nigerian radio by explaining how speakers combine informational, interpersonal and argumentative functions. It concludes that meaningful analysis of broadcast interaction requires attention to communicative force alongside grammatical form and context.

Keywords: communicative functions, contextual interpretation, radio discourse; cooperative principle; walk the talk; kapital fm radio

1. Introduction

Language enables speakers to exchange information, establish relationships, express attitudes and perform social actions. Pragmatics examines these functions by relating utterances to speakers' intentions and the circumstances of communication. Yule (1996) foregrounds speaker meaning, while Thomas (1995) emphasises interpretation through interaction. Accordingly, understanding an utterance requires more than identifying its grammatical structure: a question

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may challenge a claim, and a statement may function as advice or a warning. Interactive radio provides a productive setting for examining such distinctions. Presenters introduce topics, allocate turns and request explanations; guests interpret developments and defend positions; callers contribute concerns and proposals. These contributions address both immediate interlocutors and an unseen audience. The selected material from Walk the Talk, a segment of Kapital FM Radio's Daybreak programme, brings these functions together through discussions of pensions, educational reform, politics, census planning and economic policy.

The problem motivating this study is the need for closer explanation of the communicative actions performed within this particular programme. Existing studies reviewed here address political interviews, television discussions, institutional briefings and Nigerian news bulletins, but do not establish how participants in the selected Walk the Talk editions negotiate meaning through speech acts. Ammeh and Abochol's (2026) analysis of broadcast news provides a related Nigerian perspective, although scripted reporting differs from exchanges involving questions, challenges and responses. The study therefore aims to examine speech acts in the selected broadcasts. Its objectives are to identify the categories employed, explain their communicative purposes, analyse the contexts shaping their interpretation, and discuss their meanings and functions in programme interaction. Searle's classification supplies the principal analytical framework, complemented by Austin's foundational distinctions and Grice's account of conversational inference.

The study contributes to understanding language as social action in Nigerian public-affairs broadcasting. It also offers teaching material for pragmatics and encourages reflection on questioning, evidential responsibility and clarity in public communication. Its scope is restricted to the selected English-language editions, represented as five condensed episodes. It does not provide a comprehensive phonological, syntactic or ideological analysis, measure audience responses, or generalise to Nigerian radio as a whole. This delimitation prioritises contextual interpretation of the selected interactions over claims of representativeness.

Pragmatics investigates meaning in use, connecting linguistic expressions with participants, intentions and situations. Yule (1996) emphasises speaker meaning; Levinson (1983) relates interpretation to context; Thomas (1995) foregrounds interaction; and Mey (2001) situates communication within social conditions. These perspectives explain why identical expressions can perform different functions across settings. Context includes participant relationships, shared knowledge, preceding contributions and institutional expectations. Grice (1975) explains conversational inference through expectations concerning informativeness, truthfulness, relevance and clarity, while Leech (1983) highlights interpersonal considerations. Adegbija's discussion of Nigerian English and Odebunmi's account of meaning further support attention to sociocultural circumstances.

Related Nigerian linguistic scholarship offers insights without constituting direct evidence about radio. In the account supplied for this study, Ogolekwu (2020) discusses forensic interpretation of expressions and statements, connecting linguistic choices with intended meaning. Its relevance here lies in the broader need to examine utterances within their communicative circumstances. Ogolekwu and Ekpang (2025) describe specialised lexical and syntactic features in judicial proceedings (162). Their findings concern legal language, but suggest a useful comparative question: how do institutional purposes shape linguistic choices? Likewise, Ogolekwu et al.'s (2026) stylistic investigation of legalese provides a point of comparison for institutionally conventional language; it should not be treated as demonstrating speech-act patterns in broadcasting. Ekpang and Ogolekwu's (2024) socio-legal discourse study offers another institutional comparison, directing attention to how language operates within socially organised encounters. These connections justify contextual comparison without collapsing courtroom and broadcast discourse into identical settings. Broadcast interaction involves distinctive participant roles and audience orientations. Clayman and Heritage (2002) examine the news interview, Hutchby (1996) investigates argument and asymmetry in talk radio, and Ilie considers the semi-institutional character of talk shows. Such perspectives help situate presenters' questions and guests' responses within organised interaction. In the selected Kapital FM material, discussions concern pensions, educational restructuring, elections, census planning

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and economic developments. The programme therefore supplies a focused setting for examining information, evaluation, disagreement and recommendations.

Empirical research reviewed in the manuscript demonstrates varied approaches to mediated language. Alroumi examines assessments in Arabic broadcast political interviews, connecting evaluation with interactional action. Schueler and Marx (2023) apply speech-act analysis to Dutch COVID-19 press conferences, illustrating its relevance to institutional broadcasting. Omer and Al-Azzawi (2023) investigate humour in American television talk shows, while Ningsih et al. examine speech acts in The Oprah Winfrey Show. These studies foreground different communicative purposes rather than a single uniform broadcast style. Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere's (2012) analysis of Nigerian presidential speeches supplies a further comparison with public institutional communication.

The study of speech acts and pragmatic meaning has continued to attract scholarly attention, particularly in relation to how language functions within specific social, cultural, and institutional contexts. Research on police investigative reports in Nigeria demonstrates the importance of examining lexical and syntactic choices in understanding how institutional experiences and events are linguistically represented. Such studies provide insights into the relationship between linguistic structures, meaning, and communication in forensic contexts (Ekpenyong et al., 2025). Similarly, research on Nigerian newspaper reports highlights how shared perceptions, experiential meanings, and stylistic variations influence the representation and interpretation of security-related events in the media (Bassey et al., 2026).

Context remains a fundamental consideration in pragmatic interpretation because utterances derive meaning not only from their linguistic structures but also from the circumstances surrounding their production. Studies have emphasised that contextual knowledge plays a significant role in determining speakers' intended meanings and listeners' interpretations (Yusrina et al., 2024; Musaeva, 2025; Pranowo, 2020). In addition, research on purpose-oriented textual units demonstrates how illocutionary meanings can be identified and interpreted through the communicative functions of linguistic expressions (Voronina, 2021). The relationship between speakers' intentions and hearers' interpretations has also been examined, particularly in relation to the limitations of Gricean explanations of meaning (Kim, 2025).

Furthermore, pragmatic communication involves the interaction of meaning, intention, context, and conversational principles. Research examining Gricean pragmatics demonstrates the relevance of speakers' intentions and inferential processes in understanding communication (Zorić, 2024). Similarly, studies on face management, common ground, and intention in Nigerian Pidgin health conversations reveal how interpersonal relationships and shared knowledge influence communicative meaning (Caroline, 2018). The sociopragmatic perspective also establishes that meaning is shaped by social interactions and the discourse environments in which language is used (Agu, 2026). These perspectives reinforce the importance of examining language beyond its literal and grammatical interpretations.

Studies on speech acts and conversational implicatures have further demonstrated that linguistic expressions perform communicative functions that extend beyond the transmission of information. The relationship between speech acts and implicature illustrates how speakers communicate intended meanings through explicit and implicit linguistic strategies (Suryawin et al., 2022). Similarly, the pragmatic structure of dialogues provides insight into how participants organise their contributions, negotiate meanings, and establish communicative intentions during interactions (Macagno & Bigi, 2017). Research on podcast communication also highlights the significance of inferential and ostensive processes in interpreting messages within contemporary media discourse (Rahardi & Noviance, 2025).

In broadcast and digital communication, pragmatic analysis provides a useful framework for examining how language performs interpersonal, informational, and persuasive functions. Research on mood and speech acts in radio news demonstrates the relationship between grammatical mood and communicative intentions in broadcast discourse (Ammeh & Abochol, 2026). Similarly, studies on grammatical features and discourse intonation among Nigerian radio broadcasters highlight how linguistic and prosodic choices contribute to meaning construction and message delivery (Udoudom & Essien, 2026). The pragmatic analysis of

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WhatsApp conversations also demonstrates the relevance of speech acts in understanding meaning and communicative intentions in computer-mediated interactions (Rashida, 2026). Moreover, pragmatic development research underscores the importance of understanding how individuals acquire and develop the ability to interpret context-dependent meanings in communication (Papafragou, 2018).

Collectively, these studies establish the relevance of pragmatics, speech act theory, contextual interpretation, and discourse analysis in understanding language use across institutional, media, interpersonal, and digital contexts. However, the reviewed studies reveal the need for further investigation into how specific speech act categories function within particular discourse environments, especially in relation to the communicative intentions, linguistic strategies, and contextual meanings embedded in Nigerian institutional and broadcast discourse. This provides a basis for the present study to extend existing scholarship by examining how utterances perform communicative functions and generate intended meanings within its selected discourse context.

More directly, Ammeh and Abochol (2026) examine mood and speech acts in Radio Nigeria's Network News Bulletin. Their emphasis on informational broadcasting provides a relevant comparison, but news presentation differs from interactive questioning and response. The reviewed studies therefore motivate, rather than settle, analysis of Walk the Talk. The present study examines how assertives, directives, commissives and expressives function in its selected discussions, whether declarations occur, and how contextual inference supports interpretation. Its contribution is a programme-specific account of communicative action, not a claim that Nigerian radio pragmatics has otherwise remained unexplored.

The study adopts Speech Act Theory as its principal framework, drawing on Austin and Searle, with Grice's Cooperative Principle as an interpretive complement. Austin distinguishes the locutionary act, or production of a meaningful utterance; the illocutionary act, or action performed in saying something; and the perlocutionary act, or consequence produced through speaking. This distinction prevents grammatical content, communicative force and audience effects from being treated as interchangeable. Searle's classification organises illocutionary acts into five categories. Assertives commit speakers to the truth of propositions, including reports, explanations and claims. Directives attempt to obtain an action or response through requests, questions, instructions and recommendations. Commissives commit speakers to future conduct, including promises and pledges. Expressives communicate psychological attitudes, such as gratitude, regret or dissatisfaction. Declarations alter institutional status when the speaker has the appropriate authority and the relevant conditions are fulfilled. The five-category taxonomy is explicitly developed in Searle's later classification of illocutionary acts, complementing his earlier account in Speech Acts.

These distinctions guide interpretation of presenters', guests' and callers' contributions. Classification depends on communicative force rather than sentence type alone: an interrogative may challenge a policy, while an imperative may offer advice rather than exercise authority. A single turn may contain several acts, requiring attention to its component utterances and their sequential relationship. Grice (1975) supplies a complementary explanation of inference through the maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner. These concern adequate information, evidential responsibility, relevance and clarity. Apparent departures require contextual examination; disagreement or rhetorical questioning does not automatically establish a maxim violation. In this study, the framework supports discussion of indirect criticism and the qualification of claims. Analysis concentrates on illocutionary force and contextual meaning because condensed transcripts cannot independently establish actual listener effects. Interpretations therefore remain grounded in participant roles, preceding turns and the issues under discussion rather than presumed audience responses.

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2. Method

The study adopted a qualitative descriptive design to interpret speech acts within their broadcast context. Creswell and Poth provide a methodological basis for investigating situated meaning. The population comprised ten editions of Walk the Talk, a segment of Kapital FM Radio's Daybreak programme. Seven editions were purposively selected for interactive content, public-interest topics, identifiable communicative acts and recording availability, consistent with Patton's emphasis on information-rich cases. Related editions were organised into five condensed English-language episodes covering pensions, education, politics, census planning and economic affairs. Recordings were obtained from Kapital FM archives and verified official sources. Audio recordings, orthographic transcripts and a speech-act coding framework constituted the research materials. Speaker roles and turn order were marked, and transcripts were checked against recordings for accuracy. Ochs's account of transcription as a selective practice informs recognition that condensed representations omit interactional detail. Pauses, intonation and other prosodic features were not systematically represented.

Utterances were identified and classified as assertives, directives, commissives, expressives or declarations using Searle's framework. Analysis then examined communicative purposes, participant roles, preceding contributions and the public issues being discussed. Austin's distinctions supported separation of utterance content, illocutionary force and possible consequences, while Grice's Cooperative Principle informed interpretation of indirect meaning and evidential qualification. Excerpts and a summary table present the qualitative findings; no statistical distribution or directly observed audience response is claimed. Following Lincoln and Guba's emphasis on trustworthiness, trustworthiness was supported through repeated transcript checks, consistent application of categories and contextual reconsideration of ambiguous utterances. Public broadcast material was acknowledged and used for academic analysis without introducing private information. Condensation limits sequential and pragmatic detail, so interpretations apply only to the supplied extracts. Broadcast dates, archive identifiers and full transcript references should be added before submission to strengthen traceability and enable independent checking of the selected programme material.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Summary of Speech Acts based on the data

This chapter presents and analyses the speech acts identified in the five selected condensed editions of Walk the Talk. The analysis is guided by Searle's classification of speech acts and focuses on the forms, communicative purposes, contextual meanings and pragmatic implications of the utterances produced by presenters, guests and callers. Particular attention is given to how participants use language to provide information, ask questions, make recommendations, express attitudes, defend positions and influence public discussion. The analysis is organised into five sections covering the identification of speech acts, their communicative purposes, their contextual interpretation, their meanings and functions in programme discourse, and a discussion of the major findings.

Table 1. Summary of Speech Acts in the Data

Speech acts	Meaning	Excerpts	Pragmatic implications
Assertives (informing)	Reports the IMF's forecast and its cause.	"The IMF cut the forecast to about 1.4% because the Middle East war raised energy costs." (Episode 5)	Presents the guest as a credible source and supplies context listeners need.
Assertives (conceding)	Admits the allegation lacks proof but keeps it as an observed pattern.	"No. It is a pattern I observe, not evidence." (Episode 3)	Protects the guest's face after a challenge and implicates that the claim rests on inference.

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Speech acts	Meaning	Excerpts	Pragmatic implications
Directives (questioning)	Asks why population data matters for development.	"Why does a census matter for development?" (Episode 4)	Lets the presenter control topic and turns while voicing listeners' concerns.
Directives (recommending)	Advises workers to verify their pension records themselves.	"Check your statement against your payslip and go to IPPIS yourself." (Episode 1)	Casts the guest as adviser and shifts responsibility to the listener.
Commissives	Pledges that labour will press for full implementation, with a strike as backup.	"Labour will insist on full, non-selective implementation, by strike if necessary." (Episode 1)	The pledge doubles as a threat, pressing government to comply.
Expressives	Expresses doubt that the policy will succeed.	"I am pessimistic." (Episode 2)	States a stance and invites listeners to share the doubt.
Declarations	Would change an institutional status through the utterance itself.	No clear instance in the five episodes.	Participants lack the institutional authority to change status by utterance alone.

The table presents the major speech acts identified in the selected editions and illustrates how their meanings extend beyond their grammatical forms. Assertives communicate information and positions, directives seek explanations or recommend actions, commissives express commitments, and expressives convey attitudes. The absence of a clear declaration suggests that the programme primarily operates as a forum for public discussion rather than as an institutional setting in which participants possess the authority to create new statuses through speech alone.

3.1.2 Identification of Speech Acts in Selected Episodes

The analysis of the five selected editions of Walk the Talk identifies four of Searle's five major categories of illocutionary acts: assertives, directives, commissives and expressives. These categories reflect the programme's communicative orientation towards informing the public, managing discussion, recommending solutions and expressing evaluations of public issues. Assertives and directives are particularly prominent because the programme requires guests to explain issues and presenters to elicit information through questions. Commissives and expressives also contribute to the interaction by communicating commitments and attitudes.

The distribution of the identified categories reflects the different institutional roles of the participants. Presenters primarily use directives in the form of questions to introduce issues, clarify claims and maintain the direction of discussion. Guests use assertives to provide explanations, evaluate policies and defend their positions. They also employ directives to recommend actions and commissives to communicate commitments. Callers contribute by making proposals, expressing concerns and challenging the positions presented during the programme. This pattern indicates that speech act selection is closely related to communicative responsibility. The presenter is expected to facilitate public discussion, whereas the guest is expected to provide explanations and informed opinions. Callers, in turn, introduce public concerns that may require clarification or response. The findings therefore suggest that speech acts help organise the interaction and establish the relationship between the programme's participants.

Assertives

Assertives are utterances through which speakers present information, report events, make claims, explain circumstances or evaluate situations. In the selected editions, they are particularly important because the programme addresses economic, political, educational and social issues that require explanation and interpretation. Consider the following excerpt:

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> **Respondent**: The IMF cut the forecast to about 1.4% because the Middle East war raised energy costs. (Episode 5)

The respondent reports a revision to an economic forecast and provides a reason for the adjustment. The utterance functions as an assertive because the speaker presents the information as a description of an economic development. The causal relationship established through the word because makes the statement explanatory rather than merely informative. It enables listeners to understand the reported forecast in relation to developments in the international energy market.

Pragmatically, the utterance also contributes to the construction of the guest's authority. By referring to the International Monetary Fund and explaining the economic implications of conflict in the Middle East, the speaker presents an informed account of a public issue. Such an utterance can strengthen the guest's credibility, particularly when the audience relies on the programme to interpret complex economic developments. However, the assertive function does not automatically establish the truth of the proposition. Its classification concerns what the speaker does through the utterance, while the factual accuracy of the information would require independent verification. This distinction is important in analysing media discourse because an utterance may function as an assertion regardless of whether its content is subsequently confirmed.

A further example illustrates how assertives can be used to defend a position while acknowledging limitations:

> **Respondent**: No. It is a pattern I observe, not evidence. (Episode 3)

The respondent initially rejects the implication that the allegation has been substantiated and then qualifies the earlier position by distinguishing observation from evidence. The statement is assertive because the speaker presents an account of the epistemic status of the claim. The expression not evidence explicitly limits the strength of the assertion. The pragmatic significance of this utterance lies in the speaker's attempt to preserve credibility. Instead of insisting that the allegation is proven, the respondent acknowledges the limitation and reframes the claim as a personal observation. This response reduces the risk of appearing to present an unsupported allegation as an established fact. At the same time, the speaker does not completely abandon the original position. The two excerpts demonstrate that assertives perform more than one function in the programme. They communicate information, provide explanations and qualify claims. They also help participants establish credibility and manage challenges during interaction. Thus, assertives are central to the programme's informational purpose and to the negotiation of positions on matters of public interest.

Directives

Directives are speech acts through which speakers attempt to get others to perform an action or provide a response. They include questions, requests, instructions, recommendations and commands. In the selected editions, directives occur in the presenter's questions and in the recommendations offered by guests. The following excerpt illustrates a questioning directive:

> **Presenter**: Why does a census matter for development? (Episode 4)

The presenter asks the guest to explain the relationship between population data and development planning. Although the utterance is grammatically interrogative, its pragmatic function extends beyond requesting a simple answer. It introduces a topic, establishes the direction of the discussion and encourages the guest to explain the practical importance of conducting a census. The question also represents the interests of listeners who may not fully understand the relationship between population statistics and public policy. By framing the issue in accessible terms, the presenter transforms a technical subject into a question that can be addressed through public discussion. The directive therefore serves both an interactional and an informational purpose. The presenter's control over questioning also reflects the institutional organisation of radio discourse. The presenter determines which issues receive attention, when

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explanations are required and which contributions need further examination. This does not mean that the presenter controls every aspect of the interaction, since guests and callers can introduce competing perspectives. Nevertheless, questioning provides an important means of directing the discussion.

A second example illustrates the use of directives for recommendation:

> **Respondent**: Check your statement against your payslip and go to IPPIS yourself. (Episode 1)

The respondent uses imperative constructions to advise workers to verify their pension records. The verbs check and go present the recommended actions directly, without the qualifications commonly associated with tentative suggestions. The directive is therefore action-oriented, as it seeks to influence what listeners do after hearing the programme. Pragmatically, the utterance positions the respondent as a source of practical guidance. Rather than merely explaining pension administration, the guest identifies specific steps that workers can take to investigate possible discrepancies. This makes the contribution particularly relevant to listeners who may need to verify their employment or pension records.

The recommendation also transfers part of the responsibility for verification to individual workers. Although the utterance encourages personal action, it does not necessarily remove the responsibility of relevant institutions to maintain accurate records. Its immediate communicative purpose is to empower listeners with a practical course of action. The findings show that directives have different functions depending on the participant and the situation. Presenters primarily use them to obtain information and manage the discussion, while guests use them to recommend practical measures. Their common feature is that they seek a response or an action from another party, thereby making them important to the interactive and advisory functions of the programme.

Commissives

Commissives are speech acts through which speakers commit themselves or the groups they represent to future actions. Their defining feature is the commitment undertaken by the speaker rather than the mere description of an existing situation. The following excerpt illustrates this category:

> **Respondent**: Labour will insist on full, non-selective implementation, by strike if necessary. (Episode 1)

The respondent expresses labour's intention to demand the full implementation of an agreement and identifies a strike as a possible means of enforcing that demand. The future-oriented expression will insist communicates determination, while the phrase by strike if necessary identifies a possible consequence if the demand is not met. The utterance functions as a commissive because it presents a commitment to future action. However, its pragmatic force is not limited to commitment. The reference to a strike also introduces a threatening or warning dimension because it signals the possibility of industrial action. The utterance consequently combines an expression of determination with pressure directed at the institution expected to implement the agreement.

The context of labour relations is important to this interpretation. A commitment to industrial action may be intended to reassure workers that their representatives will defend their interests. At the same time, it communicates to government that failure to comply may have consequences. The utterance therefore addresses more than one audience: workers may interpret it as a pledge of representation, while government may understand it as a warning. The finding demonstrates that commissives can serve both interpersonal and institutional purposes. They establish expectations about future conduct, communicate resolve and attempt to influence the behaviour of other parties. In the programme, this function allows guests to move beyond describing public problems to stating what they or the groups they represent intend to do about them.

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Expressives

Expressives communicate the speaker's psychological state, attitude or evaluation of a situation. They include expressions of doubt, approval, disappointment, regret and other subjective responses. The following excerpt illustrates an expressive:

> **Respondent**: I am pessimistic. (Episode 2)

The respondent directly expresses a negative expectation concerning the policy under discussion. The first-person construction I am explicitly attributes the attitude to the speaker, while pessimistic communicates an expectation that the outcome may be unfavourable. Unlike the economic report in Episode 5, this utterance does not primarily provide factual information. Its central function is to communicate the respondent's evaluation. Nevertheless, the statement can influence the direction of the discussion because it establishes a position that may subsequently require explanation or justification.

The pragmatic significance becomes clearer when the utterance is considered alongside the respondent's subsequent questions about possible curriculum changes and regulatory arrangements. These questions suggest that the pessimism arises from concerns about the policy's practical implementation and institutional clarity. The expressive therefore introduces an evaluative position that is developed through further questioning. The utterance may also influence listeners' interpretations of the policy. By openly communicating doubt, the respondent encourages the audience to consider whether the proposed changes are sufficiently clear and likely to achieve their stated objectives. However, the expression of pessimism should not automatically be treated as proof that the policy will fail. It communicates an attitude rather than an established outcome. The finding indicates that expressives contribute to the evaluative dimension of the programme. They allow participants to communicate personal positions, signal reservations and establish the emotional or attitudinal orientation from which further arguments are developed.

Declarations

Declarations are speech acts that bring about changes in institutional or social reality when uttered by speakers who possess the relevant authority and operate within an appropriate institutional context. Their effectiveness depends not simply on the words used but also on the speaker's recognised status and the circumstances of the utterance. No clear instance of a declaration was identified in the five selected editions. The participants mainly report information, ask questions, make recommendations, express opinions and commit themselves to future action. Although some utterances express strong intentions or demands, these do not independently establish a new institutional status. For example, the respondent's declaration that labour will insist on the implementation of an agreement does not itself implement that agreement. Similarly, a guest's recommendation that government change a policy does not automatically bring about the proposed change. Such utterances may influence institutional decisions, but their immediate illocutionary force is different from that of a declaration.

This finding highlights the distinction between language that attempts to influence institutional action and language that performs an authorised institutional act. The absence of declarations is therefore consistent with the programme's primary function as a platform for discussion and public accountability. Participants can advocate change, question decisions and pressure authorities without necessarily possessing the power to enact the changes they propose. The identification of the speech acts demonstrates that Walk the Talk relies on language to communicate information, organise interaction, offer advice, express attitudes and establish commitments. These functions reflect the communicative demands of public-affairs broadcasting.

3.1.3 Usage and Communicative Purposes of Speech Acts

The findings indicate that participants use speech acts strategically in accordance with their roles and communicative objectives. Presenters employ questions to introduce issues, request clarification and challenge claims. Guests use assertives to provide information and justify positions, while directives enable them to recommend solutions. Commissives communicate

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commitments, and expressives reveal attitudes towards policies and public developments. These functions are illustrated in the following exchange:

> **Presenter**: Do you have proof the APC is involved? (Episode 3)
> **Respondent**: No. It is a pattern I observe, not evidence. (Episode 3)

The presenter's question functions as a directive because it seeks a response from the guest. More specifically, it challenges the evidential basis of the allegation and requires the respondent to clarify whether the claim can be substantiated. The question therefore serves as a means of accountability rather than merely an invitation to continue speaking. The respondent's answer performs two related functions. The initial No directly answers the question, while the subsequent qualification distinguishes an observed pattern from established evidence. This response allows the guest to acknowledge the limitation of the claim without completely abandoning the underlying observation. Pragmatically, the exchange demonstrates how questions can expose weaknesses in an argument and how responses can be used to manage the speaker's credibility. The exchange also illustrates the complementary roles of the presenter and the guest. The presenter seeks clarification and tests the strength of the claim, whereas the guest explains the status of the information being presented. The interaction consequently enables the programme to examine a politically sensitive allegation without treating the allegation as proven.

Another exchange demonstrates how questions invite explanations and solutions:

> **Presenter**: How do we rebuild trust? (Episode 1)
> **Respondent**: The Pension Protection Fund, a bond of about ₦700 billion, clears accrued rights and raises low pensions. (Episode 1)

The presenter's question establishes a problem that requires a practical response. It encourages the guest to move from describing the difficulties associated with pension administration to discussing a possible intervention. The respondent's contribution functions as an assertive because it presents information about the proposed fund and its intended benefits. The response is significant because it links the general concern about public trust to a specific institutional measure. By identifying the fund and describing its intended functions, the guest offers listeners a policy-related explanation rather than an abstract statement about the need for trust. This makes the contribution more informative and gives the discussion a practical orientation. However, the statement does not by itself establish that the fund has achieved the stated outcomes. It reports the fund's intended functions, which must be distinguished from evidence of its actual effectiveness. The pragmatic value of the utterance lies in explaining the proposed intervention and directing public attention towards a possible response to the problem. Guests also employ directives to recommend policy measures.

3.1.4 Contextual Analysis of Speech Acts

The interpretation of speech acts in Walk the Talk depends on situational, participant and conversational contexts. The situational context includes the programme's public-affairs orientation and its engagement with issues of public interest. The participant context involves differences in the roles and responsibilities of presenters, guests and callers. The conversational context concerns how the meaning and force of an utterance are shaped by preceding contributions and the responses they generate. Situationally, the programme provides a setting in which participants are expected to explain public issues, respond to questions and evaluate possible solutions. This encourages the use of assertives for presenting information and directives for requesting explanations or recommending action. Because the programme addresses listeners beyond the immediate participants, utterances also have an audience-oriented function: they explain issues, clarify disagreements and encourage public consideration of competing positions.

Participant roles further influence interpretation. Presenters generally have the interactional responsibility of introducing topics and eliciting responses. Guests contribute information and opinions associated with their areas of expertise, while callers introduce concerns and proposals from the public. These roles influence the pragmatic expectations

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attached to particular utterances, although they do not determine meaning in every case. The conversational context is illustrated by the following exchange:

> **Caller (A. Williams):** Let us vote electronically. (Episode 3)
> **Respondent**: Not yet, because of hacking risks. Vote buyers should be prosecuted. (Episode 3)

The caller's contribution functions as a directive in the form of a proposal or recommendation. The expression Let us vote electronically advocates a particular approach to voting and seeks to establish it as a possible solution. The respondent's opening expression, Not yet, rejects immediate adoption of the proposal without necessarily ruling out electronic voting permanently. The reason introduced by because provides a justification for the refusal. By referring to hacking risks, the respondent presents a concern about the security of electronic voting. The subsequent statement that vote buyers should be prosecuted introduces an additional recommendation concerning electoral misconduct.

The response therefore combines rejection, justification and redirection. The respondent does not simply disagree with the caller but explains the reason for the disagreement and proposes a related measure. The exchange demonstrates that a single turn may contain more than one speech act, with each contributing to the overall communicative purpose. The contextual interpretation of another exchange demonstrates how a response can acknowledge a concern while challenging the conclusion drawn from it:

> **Caller (Emmanuel**): Insecurity makes an accurate census impossible, so keep the estimates. (Episode 4)
> **Respondent**: Insecurity will be tackled, but electricity and water cannot wait. Government should multitask. (Episode 4)

The caller presents an argument against conducting an accurate census under conditions of insecurity. The contribution combines a claim about the effects of insecurity with a recommendation to retain population estimates. The respondent acknowledges the security problem but does not accept the conclusion that other development activities should be postponed. The expression Insecurity will be tackled recognises the concern raised by the caller, while the statement that electricity and water cannot wait introduces competing development priorities. The final recommendation that government should multitask presents the respondent's preferred approach.

Pragmatically, the reply functions as a qualification and correction of the caller's position. It acknowledges one aspect of the argument while challenging its broader implication. The response is therefore better understood as a combination of concession and counterargument than as a simple rejection. These exchanges demonstrate that the interpretation of speech acts depends on more than the literal meaning of individual sentences. The same broad category of utterance may serve different purposes according to the contribution it responds to and the direction in which the interaction develops. A question may challenge a claim, a recommendation may reject an earlier proposal, and an acknowledgement may prepare the ground for disagreement. The findings consequently support a context-sensitive approach to speech act analysis. Examining utterances in isolation may identify their broad categories, but interpreting their pragmatic force requires attention to the surrounding turns, participant roles and public issues under discussion.

3.2 Discussion

The findings reveal that assertives, directives, commissives and expressives perform important communicative functions in the selected episodes of Walk the Talk on Kapital FM Radio. Assertives are used to present information, explain events, report developments and express positions on public issues. For instance, the discussion of the International Monetary Fund's revised growth forecast for Nigeria provides information and explanations that help listeners understand economic developments. This finding agrees with Ammeh and Abochol's

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observation (2026) that assertives are prominent in Nigerian broadcast communication, particularly where the presentation of information is central to the programme's purpose. Directives also feature prominently through questions, recommendations, requests and calls for action. Questions about government policies, electoral practices and national development encourage participants to clarify positions and justify claims. Recommendations directed at government and other stakeholders seek to influence decisions and public conduct. This finding complements Alroumi's study (211-26), which demonstrates that questions and assessments in broadcast political interviews perform interactional actions rather than merely convey information. It also corresponds with Schueler and Marx's demonstration (869-92) that speech acts serve identifiable functions in institutional broadcasting.

The findings further show that commissives and expressives contribute to the communication of intentions, commitments, attitudes and evaluations. Participants use expressions of commitment to indicate intended action, while evaluative statements communicate concern, optimism, pessimism or disapproval. These functions reflect the broader pragmatic significance of utterances identified by Ningsih et al. (174-85) in their analysis of speech acts in The Oprah Winfrey Show. Although the programmes differ in context and subject matter, both studies demonstrate that broadcast language performs interpersonal and communicative actions. The absence of declarations in the selected data suggests that the episodes primarily involve discussion, evaluation and attempts to influence opinion rather than utterances that formally establish institutional or social realities. This does not imply that declarations are absent from radio communication generally; their occurrence depends on context and communicative authority. Overall, the findings demonstrate that speech acts help participants communicate information, scrutinise public issues and advance recommendations. They also support the relevance of contextual interpretation and Grice's Cooperative Principle in explaining how participants construct and negotiate meaning during radio discussions.

4. Conclusion

The excerpt illustrates the directive function of speech acts. The respondent employs imperative constructions such as repeal, re-enact and manage to recommend changes in petroleum and exchange-rate policies. These verbs communicate the speaker's position on the measures required to address the issue. However, the directive functions as a policy recommendation rather than a direct command, as it targets authorities responsible for policy formulation and implementation. Its pragmatic force lies in influencing public reasoning and encouraging policy action, although the utterance does not itself enact the proposed changes. The findings further reveal that speech acts perform interconnected communicative functions. Questions may introduce problems, assertives provide explanations, while directives propose solutions. Thus, participants move from identifying public concerns to evaluating possible responses. The analysis also demonstrates that grammatical form does not always determine communicative function. Questions may challenge claims or demand accountability, while imperatives may express recommendations rather than commands. Therefore, interpreting speech acts requires consideration of the speaker, intended audience, conversational context and communicative purpose.

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APPENDIX

Walk the Talk, Kapital FM 92.9
Condensed Episodes 1 to 5
Episode 1: Gratuity and Pensions for Workers

Part A: Presenter Mayowa Shunameh. Respondent Comrade Martin Agbanovi, General Secretary, JOHESU.
Part B: Presenters Okemute Egurase and Bendodo Oche. Respondent Zachary Amadu, pension expert.
Part A
Presenter: What does the 100% gratuity approval mean?
Respondent: It is a labour victory after a struggle since 2004. It equals total gross monthly emoluments times twelve, for workers with at least ten years' service. It should extend to state and local workers.
Presenter: How ready are the structures, and will it last?
Respondent: Labour will insist on full, non-selective implementation, by strike if necessary. IPPIS should track retirees and prevent "ghost retirees", and governments must remit their pension share.
Presenter: What is the long-term impact?
Respondent: Under ₦10 million is small against living costs. Retirees also need a living wage, housing and health insurance.
Part B
Presenter: Is the pension scheme not already mandatory?
Respondent: Yes, since 2004, with 10% from the employer and 8% from the worker. Since 2014 it covers any firm with three staff. What is new is stricter enforcement, with fines plus repayment of lost returns.
Presenter: Why do colleagues' balances differ?
Respondent: IPPIS may have remitted to a wrong account or administrator. Check your statement against your payslip and go to IPPIS yourself.
Presenter: Can informal workers save?
Respondent: Yes, through micro-pensions. Even ₦500 a day compounds over time.
Presenter: How do we rebuild trust?
Respondent: The Pension Protection Fund, a bond of about ₦700 billion, clears accrued rights and raises low pensions. Success means fast payment, timely enhancements and accountable employers.

Episode 2: Upgrading Polytechnics to Degree-Awarding Institutions

Presenter: Mayowa Shuname. Respondent: Abdullahi Saleh, educationist. Caller: Williams.
Presenter: Why is the dichotomy being ended now?
Respondent: It has been debated for over two decades. Leaders have not clarified the separate mandates of universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. The real grievance is the Level 14 cap on HND holders. Fix that policy rather than abolish HND.
Presenter: Should the curriculum change?
Respondent: The polytechnic curriculum is among the best. The problem is career progression and the lack of working factories, textiles and tourism to absorb graduates. Nigeria imports instead of producing.
Presenter: How will the upgrade affect graduates?
Respondent: I am pessimistic. Will curricula change? Will the National Universities Commission replace the National Board for Technical Education as regulator? Is it only a change of name? A College of Education that became a university shows the confusion.
Caller (Williams): I support the upgrade. HND should run five years so holders reach the same level as degree holders.
Respondent: Entry should be Level 8, but technical education must not be diminished.
Presenter: What would make it succeed?

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Respondent: Honest government, civil society involvement, properly equipped laboratories and workshops, and a conversion route for HND holders.

Episode 3: Party Crises and the FCT Area Council Election

Part A: Presenters Okemute Egurase and Ben Ododo. Respondent Dr. Abdulraman Hamisu, political analyst.
Part B: Presenter Okemute Egurase. Respondent Austin Igwe, political analyst. Callers: Isaac, A. Williams.

Part A

Presenter: Are party crises normal?
Respondent: Factions are normal, but our parties lack ideology, depend on godfathers and chase personal gain. I allege external actors sponsor the crises.
Presenter: Do you have proof the APC is involved?
Respondent: No. It is a pattern I observe, not evidence.
Presenter: Are INEC and the courts partisan?
Respondent: Courts treat party matters as internal, yet now issue injunctions. Parties must enforce their constitutions against anti-party activity.

Part B

Presenter: How would you assess the FCT area council election?
Respondent: Largely peaceful, but turnout was very low, perhaps under 10%. Early materials and faster BVAS were improvements.
Presenter: What caused low turnout?
Respondent: Weak local government, poor publicity of the mock election, and late notice of moved polling units. The educated and wealthy stay home, so vote-buying decides outcomes.
Caller (A. Williams): Let us vote electronically.
Respondent: Not yet, because of hacking risks. Vote buyers should be prosecuted.

Episode 4: Census and Development

Presenters: Okemute Egurase and Ben Ododo. Respondent: Dr. Hari, development communication lecturer. Caller: Emmanuel, Maitama.

Presenter: Why does a census matter for development?
Respondent: Planning needs data. Without population figures, resources are wasted, projects misplaced, and engagement and investment suffer. Estimates of Nigeria's population range from 200 to 300 million.
Presenter: Why has the census stalled, when money was spent and staff trained?
Respondent: Government may prioritise insecurity, fuel prices and hunger. It should explain the delay, because the UN recommends a census every ten years and Nigeria has exceeded that.
Caller (Emmanuel): Insecurity makes an accurate census impossible, so keep the estimates.
Respondent: Insecurity will be tackled, but electricity and water cannot wait. Government should multitask.
Presenter: What practical steps are needed?
Respondent: The media must keep pressing government. Development communication means involving people in their own development.

Episode 5: IMF Downgrade of Nigeria's 2026 Growth

Presenter: Ben. Respondent: Steve Nwachukwu, economist.

Presenter: What does the downgrade mean for Nigerians?
Respondent: The IMF cut the forecast to about 1.4% because the Middle East war raised energy costs. That cuts purchasing power and raises input costs for manufacturers.
Presenter: Is Nigeria also benefiting from higher oil prices?
Respondent: Yes, it is a double-edged sword. Crude near $90 to $94 against a budget benchmark of about $68 to $70 brings windfall revenue, but Nigeria remains import-dependent.
Presenter: Can government turn the crisis to advantage?

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Respondent: Yes. Raise output toward 2 million barrels a day, stop oil theft, and attract gas investment as Europe seeks supply.
Presenter: What internal weaknesses contribute?
Respondent: A high exchange rate, low consumption and high production costs.
Presenter: What immediate relief is possible?
Respondent: Repeal and re-enact the Petroleum Industry Act to reserve crude for local refining at protective prices, and manage the exchange rate.
Presenter: What is the long-term strategy?
Respondent: Move from consumption to production and reduce dependence on foreign goods.

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