



A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF SPEECH ACT THEORIES IN CHRIS ABANI'S *GRACELAND* AND *SONG FOR NIGHT*.

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Abstract

The present paper based on the compared of trilogy speech acts of three famous and much valued authors in linguistics (pragmatics) mainly: Austin, Searle and Paul Grice. The reading of Abani's novels through their speech act theories. In one hand, the speech act theories of Grice, Austin and Searle are linked in their first speech act theories (Locutionary act for Austin, Declarative act for Searle and Maxim of Quantity in Grice's taxonomy) which are concerned with Semantic meaning of words. Here the speech is clear, universal and easy to use and reply by everyone. In the other hand, their speech acts divorce in many aspects when the language expects a meta-linguistic meaning. Austin's Illocutionary speech acts itself has five sub-categories which are quite different from Searle's five Assertive acts. The same with Grice's maxim of relation is not related to Austin's Perlocutionary speech act.

Keywordsd: *Speech acts, Maxim, Illocutionaty, Assertive and Perlocutionary*

1. Introduction

The present paper focuses on pragmatic analysis of speech act theories used in Chris Abani's *GraceLand* and *Song for the Night*. A speech act theory, argues Napoleon M. Mabaquiao, Jr. (2010), is a theory in the philosophy of language which rigorously attempts to systematically explain the workings of language. Its wide influence has transcended the confines of the discipline of philosophy as it is currently one of the standard theories that are being studied seriously in the areas of linguistics and communication. J. L. Austin and John Searle, accordingly, were the two main pioneers of the theory. Austin initiated the work and laid its foundations, while John Searle, Austin's most illustrious student, further systematized it and solidified its foundations.

The main aim of this paper is to highlight the speech act theories and maxims used by the author (Chris Abani) in his fictional novels under exam. In other terms, this paper aims at briefly analyzing the ways speech acts are used by Chris Abani in his two fictional works. To reach this aim, qualitative method has been used within the present paper. In fact, the choice was put on Qualitative method because it is characterized by its aims, which principally relate to understanding certain aspects of social life, here, the speech act. The importance of this paper lies on helping readers to avoid miscommunication (to allow clear communication of feelings, thoughts and ideas) and to communicate as they wish across cultures and languages.

2. Austin's Theories of Speech Acts

Speech Act Theory originated with J. L. Austin, summarized in his William James Lectures presented at Harvard University in 1955 (Austin 1962). Austin started by examining the view that a statement of fact ought to be verifiable in some ways. He believed that many philosophical problems had arisen because of a desire to treat all utterances as verifiable statements. He gave the term "constative" to straightforward statements of fact. However he also described statements which

*... do not 'describe' or 'report' or constate anything at all are not 'true' and 'false' and [for which] the uttering of a sentence is, or is a part of the doing of an action which would not normally be described as saying something.
(Austin op. cit. p. 3)*

He was referring here to utterances such as I name this ship..., and he called this class of utterance performative. Additionally, he stated that when performative utterances of this type go wrong, they are not so much 'false' as 'unhappy'. This doctrine of the things that can be and do go wrong with performatives, he described as infelicities. Having made this apparently clear cut distinction between constative and performative utterances, Austin then went on to compare the 'implications' of performative utterances with 'certain discoveries made about constative utterances'. He analysed performative and constative utterances with respect to entailment, implicature and presupposition.

Although he saw some sort of entailment involving performative utterances, for example, I promise entails, I ought, he was not entirely happy with the notion that performative and constative utterances both have entailments.

But I do not want to say that there is any parallel here; only that at least there is a very close parallel in the other two cases... (Austin op. cit. p. 54).

Austin's sense of unease here has often been overlooked by many who have attempted to extend his ideas. Austin started by identifying a specific problem viz. that not all statements could be verified as true or false. He then analyzed in some detail the nature

of performative statements, but then attempted to relate these ideas in a more general way to all types of statements and, at the end of his book, had left many loose strands and a lot of unanswered questions. He concluded that all utterances that he had examined had a happiness or unhappiness dimension, an illocutionary force, a truth/falsehood dimension and a locutionary meaning; and he argued that what was required was a study of the range of illocutionary forces of an utterance.

2.1 Locutionary Act

Being an act of saying something and giving a clear and understandable information or declaration by fully respecting semantic and syntactic orders of words, the passage below presents a statement using locutionary act:

The King puts his steaming mug down carefully between them. Picking up a twig, he began to pick his teeth with it. Elvis watched warily. There was something disturbing about it. If the King had pulled out a long blade and begun cleaning his nails with it, Elvis couldn't have been any more afraid than he was then. (GraceLand, 110)

The novel's speaker explains an event involving the action of tritagonist (The King: the actor who played the third role) in which the protagonist quietly observed the scene without reaction. This syntactic well-formed word with a clear meaning full is also seen in My Lucky's speech in Song for Night as the abstract below shows:

If you are anything like Ijeoma you will say that I sound too old for my age. She always said that: said, because although her name in Igbo means Good Life, she died young, a year ago, aged fourteen, her wiry frame torn apart by an explosion. Since she couldn't speak either, it might be misleading to say she said, but we have developed a crude way of talking, a sort of sign language that we have become fluent in. For instance, silence is a steady hand, palm flat, facing down. The word silencio, which we also like, involves the same sign with the addition of wiggling fingers, and though this seems like a playful touch, it actually means a deeper silence, or danger, and as in any language, context is everything. Our form of speech is nothing like the kind of sign language my deaf cousin studied in a special school before the war. But it serves us well. Our job is too intense for idle chatter. (Song for Night, 17)

Song for Night's second paragraph continues with declarative sentences as the first in which the protagonist explains his health condition. This choice of locutionary speech acts by Abani has as main purpose, to inform the readers or audience without expecting any kind of reaction or answer from them.

2.2 Illocutionary Act

Illocutionary act is different from locutionary act in the sense that its main purpose is to give order, to request to blame or to modify the reaction of the interlocutor. To quote Searle, illocutionary act is performed for applying one of the following actions:

- Asking or answering a question,
- Giving some information or an assurance or a warning,
- Announcing a verdict or an intention,
- Pronouncing sentence,
- Making a appointment or an appeal or criticism,
- Making identification or giving a description, etc.

These mentioned actions are summarized in five basic types of illocutionary speech acts described by Austin in his famous book: *How To Do Things With Words*. They are:

2.2.1 Verdictives

Verdictives, asserts Austin (1955:152), consist in delivering of a finding, official or unofficial, upon evidence or reasons as to value or fact, so far as these are distinguishable.

In Chris Abani's works, some verdictives are:

- *"Leave your shirt off until after breakfast so you don't stain it" (Graceland, 120)*
- *"What kind of God makes a world like this?" (Song for Night, 105)*

In the first example, the verdictive speech expresses unofficial finding using the imperative sentence, while in the second, the speech act using interrogation and apostrophe points the finger to God as responsible of all sorrows in the life of the protagonist.

2.2.2 Exercitives

It is a giving of description in favor of or against a certain course of action, or advocacy of it. It is a decision that something is to be so. Searle (1955: 154).

The examples bellow show exercitives in Abani's works:

"Good children do not concern themselves with adult problems."

Elvis opened his mouth to speak, but Aunt Felicia got there first.

"Elvis, time to leave if you want me to walk you to school." (GraceLand, 121)

These lines use exercitive speech to give advice to Elvis. His aunt didn't appreciate that he deeply involves with adult problems while he was still young.

In Song for Night, the following sentences are used as exercitive:

If we are the great innocents in this war, then where did we learn all the evil we practice? I have seen rebel scouts cut off their enemies' ears or fingers or toes and keep them in tin cans as souvenirs. Some collect teeth, which

they thread painstakingly into necklaces. Who taught us this?

***Who taught me to enjoy killing, a singular joy that is perhaps rivaled only by an orgasm?** It doesn't matter how the death is dealt—a bullet tearing through a body, the juicy suck of flesh around a bayonet, the grainy globular disintegration brought on by clubs—the joy is the same and requires only the complete focus on the moment, on the act. (Song for Night, 107)*

The interrogations in this passage are used by the character to express a self claim. The conflict inside My Lucky and the memories of civil war created a kind of self-hate and denunciation. He used rhetoric questions all over the novella to try to explain the evil things he did in war.

2.2.3 Commissives

The whole point of commissive, wrote Austin (155: 157) is to commit the speaker to a certain course of action. Example in the novel is:

*This **new prophesy** came in the middle of the imam's latest fast and he had been in the mosque for days. **It was inconceivable to either of us to tell him, to disturb his communion with angels and jinn.** That morning as she went about the making of breakfast, her tears fell freely, if silently, over-salting the eggs and making the milk turn rancid so that the eucalyptus tea became undrinkable. If we were back in the south, with Grandfather, mother might have been able to work some counterspell, but the imam's faith forbade anything not of the one **God**, be it **Christian** or **Muslim**. For him, there was little difference, believing that both religions were brothers of the one father; a pair from the triplets— **Judaism, Christianity, and Islam**—a (...). Now **I wonder if she was crying also for the more distant future she saw coming.** If I blamed her, blame her, I blame the imam equally for his own death. The seed of it was his greatest arrogance, the belief that he knew the will of the unknowable. **Grandfather always said that believers are like unschooled children holding onto the essence of a truth merely because they have spoken it.** But now that I have seen a soul all brittle and flaky like coughed-up biscuit crumbs leave a man, blame is not so easy to lay on another. (Song for Night, 113-114)*

Abaini's description of My Lucky's mother prophecies requested the action to both the protagonist and his mother. Different situation and sorrows she faced in life caused a lot of trouble in the memory of the young characters.

His sadness when he saw his mother crying and denied many foods pushed My Lucky to ask himself many questions of the prophecy, religions and the kind of actions he might have taken to help his mother.

2.2.4 Behavitives

Behavitives include the notion of reaction to other people's behavior and fortunes and of attitudes and expressions of attitudes to someone else's past conduct or imminent conduct. Searle (1955: 159).

In *How to Things With Words*, Searle (1955) mentions some expressions grouped in seven categories:

1. For apologies: "apologize"
2. For thanks: "thank"
3. For sympathy: deplore, commiserate, compliment, condole, congratulate, felicitate, and sympathize.
4. For attitude: resent, don't mind, pay tribute, criticize, grumble about, complain of, applaud, overlook, commend, deprecate and the non-exercitive uses of blame, approve and favor.
5. For greeting: welcome, farewell.
6. For wishes: curse; bless, toast, drink to and wish.
7. For challenges: defy, protest and challenge.

In *Song for Night*, this paragraph contains some of the seven expressions.

It is late evening when the coffin finally bumps up against the opposite shore. Wearily, I climb out. There is a house on the bank and all the lights are burning. I drop my gun and my bayonet and my machete. I am too tired, I can't do this anymore. If death is what awaits me, I want to face it without fear. I've had enough of that. There is a woman sitting on the veranda on a porch swing.

She is young and smiling and happy. As I approach, I realize she is. It can't be, but it is. My mother looks toward me and holds out her arms. I stumble into them and she pats me on the back.

"My Luck, My Luck," she says. "You are home."

I pull back and look at her. I am trying to make sense of it, to think, but I can't focus.

"Mother," I say, and my voice has returned. (Song for Night)

My Lucky presents in the final lines of the books the events that happened when he returned home. After opening books by saying that he was mute, he finally retake his speech after having meet his father. The nostalgic situation of his return home, after having been in civil war where he was trained to kill and shed blood, where he lost all his best friends, where he thought he too will die, My Lucky was not sure to meet his mother alive, at home, waiting for him.

This extract above contains indirect behavitives of Searle. The sympathy that his mother felt for him, the greeting of welcoming or being back home safe and alive, the internal apologies of his murders in civil war, the challenge and attitude of new life far from gum and the thanks for being home again; all these seven speech illocutionary speech acts of behavitives are present and used in the paragraph above.

2.2.5 Expositives

Searle (1955) wrote: “Expositives are used in acts of expressions involving the expounding of views, the conducting of arguments, and the clarifying of usages and references.

*“My father says that the only creatures who love forest fires are kites. He says they soar above the flames and ash, razor-sharp eyes hunting for prey, swooping down on confused creatures, snatching them up to some distant height where they can eat their catch in peace.”
(GraceLand, 125)*

The passage above uses expositive acts by giving arguments and explaining reasons justifying them.

To conclude this section, Searle (1955) said: “To sum up, we may say that the verdictive is an exercise of judgment, the exercitive is an assertion of influence or exercising of power, the commissive is an assuming of an obligation or declaring of an intention, the behavabitive is the adopting of an attitude, and the expositive is the clarifying of reasons, arguments, and communications. (*How To Do Things With Words*: 162)

2.3 Perlocutionary Act

The perlocutionary act is the effect caused by utterances that are uttered by the speaker to the listener. It is said that it is the act of affecting someone, the act that is carried out by the saying one sentence in a specific context (Fala et al., 2019)

*“Don’t turn away from death. We must face it. We are men,” Sunday said.
Elvis turned to him, tears brimming.
“But it stinks.”
“So does life, boy. So does life,” Joseph said. “Come, Sunday, leave your son to join his mates. He is a man now. Come, we still have to finish dat whiskey.”
Sunday nodded. He looked at Elvis for a long moment before putting him down. (GraceLand, 20)*

In the passage above, Sunday’s simple words on death made Elvis cry. The power of speech in Sunday’s mouth created a sudden reaction in the protagonist’ felling and action to confirm Austin’s meaning of perlocutionary act.

3. Searle's Theory of Speech Acts

Searle's taxonomy of speech acts consists of five broad categories (Searle 1979).

3.1 Description of Assertive Speech Acts

The assertive class commits the speaker to something's being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition. Examples include assert, predict and insist.

The extract below will be analysed in every aspect of Assertive speech acts:

If you are anything like Ijeoma you will say that I sound too old for my age. She always said that: said, because although her name in Igbo means Good Life, she died young, a year ago, aged fourteen, her wiry frame torn apart by an explosion. Since she couldn't speak either, it might be misleading to say she said, but we have developed a crude way of talking, a sort of sign language that we have become fluent in. For instance, silence is a steady hand, palm flat, facing down. The word silencio, which we also like, involves the same sign with the addition of wiggling fingers, and though this seems like a playful touch, it actually means a deeper silence, or danger, and as in any language, context is everything. Our form of speech is nothing like the kind of sign language my deaf cousin studied in a special school before the war. But it serves us well. Our job is too intense for idle chatter. (Song for Night, 17)

- **Claim**

"... If you are anything like Ijeoma you will say that I sound too old for my age..."

Searle and Van der Veken (op. cit. p. 183) state that claim may be treated in exactly the same way as assert. However, there are significant differences between them that need to be explored. Claim puts forward some views, like assert, but it is a more forceful act because the speaker in making a claim is expecting opposition and (presumably) has evidence to back up the claim.

- **Assure**

"Since she couldn't speak either, it might be misleading to say she said..."

Searle and Van der Veken (op. cit. p. 184) describe assure as: asserting with the perlocutionary intention of convincing the hearer of the truth of the propositional content in the world of the utterance. Wierzbicka states that assure is also concerned with the removal of "worry" from the mind of the hearer. Assuring is specifically concerned with people (as contrasted with confirm, where one can confirm reports etc.), additionally assure means assuring someone of the truth or accuracy of something.

- **Argue**

"...The word silencio, which we also like, involves the same sign with the addition of wiggling fingers, and though this seems like a playful touch, it actually means a

deeper silence, or danger, and as in any language, context is everything...”

Searle and Van der Veken (op. cit. p. 184) define argue as differing from assure only in that the speaker gives supporting evidence for P. Wierzbicka states that arguing implies a collective speech activity extended in time (Wierzbicka op. cit. p. 125).

- **Inform**

“...Our form of speech is nothing like the kind of sign language my deaf cousin studied in a special school before the war. But it serves us well...”

Searle and Van der Veken (op. Cit. p. 185) state that: To inform is to assert to a hearer with the additional preparatory condition that the hearer does not already know what he is being informed of. This rather simplistic explanation of the difference between inform and assert does not seem to encapsulate the essential difference between the two speech act verbs.

- **Conjecture**

“...Our job is too intense for idle chatter...”

Searle and Van der Veken (op. cit. p. 266) state that conjecture is to weakly assert that P while presupposing that one has at least some evidence for P. Conjecture implies that the Speaker has at least thought about P but does not know the answer, effectively; it is based on some evidence but not enough to form a complete picture. My first condition is that the speaker wants to know P or what P is and hence can be represented as: want(S know(P))

- **Swear**

“...If you are anything like Ijeoma you will say that I sound too old for my age...”

To swear that P is an attempt to make the hearer have to believe that what we are saying is true often by calling upon something that is sacred to the speaker as a witness to the truthfulness of the statement. It causes no problems for the cognitive state approach, except that there is an "external" element to the speech act, namely calling upon a deity or some other sacred object.

3.2 Commissive Speech Act Verbs

This is the first of the speech acts that fall into the commissive group. Commissive verbs involve an obligation on the part of the speaker, and one of the measures used by Searle and Van der Veken for commissive verbs is the degree of strength of the commitment (Searle and Van der Veken op. cit. p. 192) This linear measurement needs close scrutiny.

In *GraceLand*, Chris Abani used this conversation by using commissive speech act:

Just to annoy her, he strolled over to the kitchen, where she sat gossiping with some women. The laughter died on her face when she saw him.

“Good evening, Ma,” he said. He was met with stony silence. “Is there any food for me?”

“Look at dis mad boy O! Since morning he go out only to walk around. Him don come back, the only thing him can do is to find food. Get job like him mates he cannot. Oga sir!” she said, addressing Elvis. “I wait for you until I give dog your food. Food no dey for you.” As if to confirm this, the family mongrel licked his empty plate with a scraping sound.

Sighing, he turned and left the kitchen. “God, I hate her,” he muttered under his breath as he walked away, contemplating setting her aflame with the smoldering remains of the charcoal fire. He didn’t know why he bothered; he only ever succeeded in annoying himself. He lay on his bed and tried to read.

*But he couldn’t concentrate and soon dozed off.
(GraceLand, 15)*

The example bellow in GraceLand contains the commissive speech act verbs:

- **Promise**

*“...**God, I hate her,**” he muttered under his breath as he walked away, contemplating setting her aflame with the smoldering remains of the charcoal fire...”*

When we promise to do P, we are making a commitment to undertake P, even if we promise that someone else will do P (Boguslawski 1983 and Wierzbicka op. cit. p. 205) we are still making an undertaking to see to it that that person will do P. The effect of promise is to cause the hearer to believe that the speaker will undertake to do P. Additionally the obligation itself is such that what the speaker is doing is to place his credibility on the line (Verscheuren 1983, p. 630)

- **Consent**

***“I wait for you until I give dog your food. Food no dey for you.”** As if to confirm this, the family mongrel licked his empty plate with a scraping sound...”*

In her description of consent, Wierzbicka (op. cit. p. 112) spends some time comparing consent and agree, stating that: consenting is dependent upon the speaker's goodwill whereas agree: [takes place] on an equal basis However, as Wierzbicka later states (op. cit. p. 113), although consent and permit form two comparable speech acts, the difference between the two is that consenting is active in that it takes place in response to a particular request, whereas permit may take place without the knowledge that the hearer is actively seeking permission. It is curious that Searle and Van der Veken in

their taxonomy of speech acts include consent as a commissive speech act whereas permit is included in the list of directives.

- **Refuse**

*“Good evening, Ma,” he said. He was met with stony silence. “Is there any food for me?”
“Look at dis mad boy O!”*

A refusal is a fairly blunt way of saying no, I will not do it. Searle and Van der Veken (op. cit. p. 195) suggest that refuse is the illocutionary denegation of consent. It is like consent in that it is a response to an actual or implied request.

3.3 Directive Speech Act Verbs

- **Request**

Elvis had no idea why his father had summoned him to the backyard, away from the toy fire engine he was playing with. He had no idea why he had been asked to strip down to his underwear, or why Uncle Joseph first strapped a grass skirt on him and then began to paint strange designs in red and white dye all over his body. But he was five years old, and had learned not only that no one explained much to him, but that it was safest not to ask. Uncle Joseph had a habit of expressing his impatience in slaps. (GraceLand, 17)

Searle and Van der Veken (op. cit. p. 199) describe REQUEST as: a directive illocution that allows for the possibility of refusal.

Smith (1970, p. 123) describes request as: a more polite word for the same thing as ask. At the same time he goes on to point out that there is often an implied sense of authority that makes it akin to a command.

- **Tell**

I am part of a platoon of mine diffusers. Our job is to clear roads and access routes of mines. Though it sounds simple, our job is complicated because the term access routes could be anything from a bush track to a swath cut through a rice paddy. Our equipment is basic: rifles to protect against enemy troops, wide-blade machetes for clearing brush and digging up the mines, and crucifixes, scapulars, and other religious paraphernalia to keep us safe. (Song for Night, 18)

Both Searle and Van der Veken (op. cit. p. 200) and Wierzbicka (op. cit. p. 41,286) seem to be in agreement that there are two different meanings of tell: firstly it can be used in the sense of telling someone to do something and secondly in the sense of telling a story. The easier of the two meanings is probably the first. This meaning is

similar to ask and request in that it is a way of expressing the fact that the speaker wants the hearer to do something.

- **Require**

I am part of a platoon of mine diffusers. Our job is to clear roads and access routes of mines. Though it sounds simple, our job is complicated because the term access routes could be anything from a bush track to a swath cut through a rice paddy. Our equipment is basic: rifles to protect against enemy troops, wide-blade machetes for clearing brush and digging up the mines, and crucifixes, scapulars, and other religious paraphernalia to keep us safe. (Song for Night, 18)

Searle and Van der Veken (op. cit. p. 201) suggest that require differs from telling someone to do something only in that it carries with it a greater degree of strength, and that there is an additional preparatory condition that it needs to be done. Require appears to imply an element of obligation, but the speaker has no authority over the hearer.

- **Permit**

*Elvis had no idea why his father had summoned him to the backyard, away from the toy fire engine he was playing with. He had no idea why he had been asked to strip down to his underwear, or why Uncle Joseph first strapped a grass skirt on him and then began to paint strange designs in red and white dye all over his body. **But he was five years old, and had learned not only that no one explained much to him, but that it was safest not to ask.** Uncle Joseph had a habit of expressing his impatience in slaps. (GraceLand, 17)*

A good example showing the distinction between permit and allow is given below. The person who permits something is not concerned so much with the action itself as its effect on something.

3.4 Declarative Speech Act

If death is what awaits me, I want to face it without fear. I've had enough of that. (Song for Night, 122)

Declare is the first of the declarative acts described by Searle and Van der Veken (op. cit. p. 205). Speech acts that appear in Searle's declarative category generally have some extra linguistic dimension. They can only be used in very specific circumstances, examples of these are baptize or excommunicate.

3.5 Expressive Speech Act

"My Luck, My Luck," she says. "You are home."

*I pull back and look at her. I am trying to make sense of it,
to think, but I can't focus.
"Mother," I say, and my voice has returned. (Song for
Night, 122)*

Expressive speech acts on the other hand are a rather mixed group of acts. Some of them appear to be largely formulaic, such as greetings, but others do seem to have a function similar to the other communicative speech acts. Because of their nature, i. e. that they express feelings such as regret, it is rather difficult to define them in the same way as has been done for the other types of communicative speech act. However, it is still possible to explore their use within discourse. Searle and Van der Veken (op. cit. p. 205)

4. Paul Grice's Marxism

Grice suggested that "talk-exchanges" are governed by an over-riding principle, called the co-operative principle, which may be subdivided into various conversational presumptions (called maxims, by Grice). In any conversational/social situation, these maxims must be mutually recognized if they are to apply and are thus elevated to the status of rules.

The co-operative principle consists of four sets of maxims: **quantity**, **quality**, **relation** and **manner**. The quantity maxim exhorts us to give the right amount of information, the quality maxim enables us to be truthful and not to say that for which there is insufficient evidence. The maxim of relation simply states that we should be relevant and the maxim of manner motivates us to be perspicuous.

Applying the Gricean maxims, wrote Mohammed Jasim Betti (2021), is therefore, a way to explain the link between utterances and what is understood from them (Betti and Igaab, 2016: 51). According to Grice, our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did (Betti, 2002c: 87). They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction (Betti, and Hashim, (2021: 38).

4.1 Maxim of Quantity (*content length and depth*)

In simple terms, the maxim of quantity is to be informative (Okanda, et al. 2015; Betti, 2021m: 2; and Al-Seady, 1998a: 12).

The submaxims of this maxim are:

- a. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange) (Betti, and Hasan, 2020: 73).
- b. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Grice uses the following analogy for this maxim:

*"If you are assisting me to mend a car, I expect your
contribution to be neither more nor less than is required.
If, for example, at a particular stage I need four screws, I*

expect you to hand me four, rather than two or six." (Betti, 2013: 2; Betti and Igaab, 2018: 3)

Example in the novel:

Elvis ate in silence as Okon studied him. The buka's radio sounded like someone had drowned its speaker in muddy water; still, Elvis could clearly hear the Wings singing, "Please catch dat love dat is falling on you ... Don't let it drop, it is not made of wood ..." Elvis sang along in his head, wondering if it would be rude to ask Okon how he got the money he was spending.

"So why are you home so early?" Okon asked.

"I was fired."

"Oh. I'm sorry to hear dat. Why? You are a good person."

"You hardly know me," Elvis protested.

"I know you better dan you think." (GraceLand, 55)

This extract from the novel matches well with Grice's first maxim. When Okon asked Elvis why he returned back home so early, the protagonist's short answer exactly explained the matter without going beyond what was asked by his interlocutor. Elvis should start explaining how he was late to work, how the boss called him, how he rudely interrogated him and how he was asked to leave the office by force. But to the simple question "So why are you home so early?" his short answer "I was fired" contains a quantity of Grice's maxim.

4.2 Maxim of Quality (truth)

In simple terms, the maxim of quality is to be truthful.

Supermaxim:

Try to make your contribution one that is true.

Submaxims:

a. Do not say what you believe is false.

b. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. (Bach, 2005; and (Betti, 2021c: 1).

Grice uses the following analogy for this maxim: "I expect your contributions to be genuine and not spurious (Al-Sheikh, 2006b: 62). If I need sugar as an ingredient in the cake you are assisting me to make, I do not expect you to hand me salt; if I need a spoon, I do not expect a trick spoon made of rubber." (Bach, 2005; Betti, and Igaab , 2019: 238).

Example in the novel:

Now, sitting here, I realize that was important because it reminds me that even if water won't wash me clean, hope might. (Song for Night, 105)

My Lucky's metaphoric comparison between water and hope uses the maxim of truth called by Grice as the Maxim of quality. The dirtiness of his skin in beyond the physical one. The protagonist remembers all people he had killed in war, all innocent parents and

children he was obliged to shout, and all murders he had committed in the civil war as a child soldier, he called all that *Dirty*. He thought that take bath, swimming in the river or running in rain can never wash him clean. Only, he hoped, his hope or conscience can succeed to forgive himself to be seen clean in his own eyes.

4.3 Maxim of Relation (relevance)

Be relevant — i.e., one should ensure that all the information they provide is relevant to the current exchange; therefore omitting any irrelevant information. In his book, Grice uses the following analogy for this maxim: "I expect a partner's contribution to be appropriate to the immediate needs at each stage of the transaction (Betti, 2021: 5). If I am mixing ingredients for a cake, I do not expect to be handed a good book, or even an oven cloth (though this might be an appropriate contribution at a later stage)." (Grice, 1976; Betti, and Mahdi, 2021: 52; Al-Seady, 2002a: 8).

With respect to this maxim, Grice writes:

Though the maxim itself is terse, its formulation conceals a number of problems that exercise me a good deal: questions about what different kinds and focuses of relevance there may be, how these shift in the course of a talk exchange, how to allow for the fact that subjects of conversations are legitimately changed, and so on. I find the treatment of such questions exceedingly difficult, and I hope to revert to them in later work (Betti, 2002a: 13)

Example in the novel:

When he finished, he washed Elvis's scalp in the leftover warm water in the pail. After drying it, he applied palm-kernel oil. When he was done, he turned Elvis around and, holding his face in his hand, spoke slowly.

"I don't want you spending any more time on dat veranda." (GraceLand, 48)

Here, the father's message is without expecting anything else besides what he really told his son. His speech is clear; he doesn't want Elvis to stay in that veranda anymore. Elvis could not dare to go there in the future since his father's instruction is not metaphoric or philosophic.

4.4 Maxim of Manner (clarity)

In simple terms, the maxim of manner is to be clear. Whereas the previous maxims are primarily concerned with what is said, the maxims of manner are concerned with how what is said is said. (Benton, (2016: 701; Betti, 2007: 14)

Be perspicuous.

Submaxims:

- a. Avoid obscurity of expression — i.e., avoid language that is difficult to understand.
- b. Avoid ambiguity — i.e., avoid language that can be interpreted in multiple ways.
- c. Be brief — i.e., avoid unnecessary prolixity.

d. Be orderly — i.e., provide information in an order that makes sense, and makes it easy for the recipient to process it (Grice, 1976; Betti, 2020d: 10 and Hashim, 2018: 281).

Example in the novel:

Ijeoma. She was the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. Skin dark as time-worn wood and smooth to the touch. Eyes that never turned hard, no matter what they were beholding, as if she had an infinite capacity for forgiveness. Teeth that stayed white and fresh from the stick that she chewed on almost constantly. It hung from the corner of her mouth like a cheroot in the old black-and-white movies I saw as a child. I remember she tried to smoke a pipe for a while, in the manner of the older female soldiers, but she kept choking so she gave it up. She had a laugh on her that was infectious, like the sudden pealing of a bell, and she was smarter than all of us. She would draw a circle in the dirt with a stick, and picking a star from the sky, she would chart the direction to follow. Even in the middle of the day, she could tell from the shadows what time it was, and she was the only one of us who understood the arcane markings on maps. How concentric squiggles were hills and how high they were. I miss her. (Song for Night, 98)

In this paragraph, Chris Abani used a clear language to describe one character, Ijeoma. Through the speech of the main character, the author's choice of easy language, less ambiguous language, brief descriptions and easy to understand is quite conform to the maxim of manner that Grice explained above.

5. Conclusion

This paper tackles mainly the pragmatic analysis of speech act theories used by Chris Abani in his two selected fictional works as compared to the trilogy of three famous linguist authors: Austin, Searle and Grice's Speech Act Theories.

This investigation has shown the complexity of languages within human societies to express their thoughts, but they vary in the nature and extent of their literary work (Jim Grossmann: 2018). The use of speech Act Theories of the three famous linguists helped Chris Abani to convey his message. It has been obviously observed that speech acts are commonplace in everyday interactions and very important for the communication, as well as present in many different contexts.

6. Acknowledgements

I'm sincerely grateful towards Ordinary Professors, Norbert Ilunga Bwana and Valentin Mongbolo Ngalima, for their seminars and coaching during my whole career of third cycle studies at Kisangani University.

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