

# Speech Acts Analysis of Ola Rotimi's, *the Gods are not to Blame*

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## **Abstract**

*This study aims at analyzing speech acts and the classification of illocutionary speech acts that occurred in Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to Blame*. This was a descriptive, qualitative study. The data were analyzed based on the theory of speech acts proposed by Searle (1969) and Yule (1996). Findings of this study showed that there were 191 utterances of speech acts. The types of direct speech acts were 190 utterances (99.5%) while the type of indirect speech act was 1 utterance (0.5%). The five classifications of illocutionary speech acts found were 191 utterances analyzed as illocution: assertives were 38 utterances (20%), commissives, 2 utterances (1%), directives 95 utterances (49.5%), expressives 55 utterances (29%), and no declarative (0%). This study showed that Ola Rotimi utilized the direct speech acts more in his play, *The gods are not to Blame*, than the indirect speech act. Among the types of illocutionary speech acts, directives were the most dominant. Thus, the theory of speech acts can be explored to understand the speaker's intention in literary texts. The reader can learn about pragmatics, especially speech acts by examining the dialogues and their context in every scene of the play. The importance of speech acts is recognized in keeping steady progression of the story lines of the play. This reveals that social interactions cannot be detached from human life because this is what keeps a smooth flow of communication. Hence, plays as literary texts portray this continuity in keeping steady tide in social interactions among humans. This research also contributes significantly to Speech Acts in Nigerian English and its interface with the Yoruba culture. This study recommends that pragmatics can be learnt and mastered within stylistics*

**Key Words:** Pragmatics, Speech Acts, The gods are not to Blame.

## **Introduction**

As social beings, people always relate with one another. They need to communicate with each other by using language. Therefore, language is crucial to humans for communication and interaction. In communication, language plays an essential role because it is used to convey ideas, feelings, or the speaker's intention to the listener. . By using language, people are able to share and express their ideas, thoughts, and

feelings (Marzuki, 2019). The play, *The gods are not to Blame* deals with the issue of death and kingship. An evasive boy, Odewale, killed his father and then married his mother after becoming a king. His quest to unravel this mystery that has plagued his town sets in motion the conflict in the play. This study aims at applying the speech acts theory to Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to Blame* in order to reveal the in-depth textual resources of the play. It is given a pragma-stylistic approach because pragmatics studies language use in context and language. Austin (1975) asserts that we act through language, do things through communication, and get others to do things for us through our expressions.

The purpose of communication is informative, while the motives of the speaker are delivered through language. When people communicate to others, they make use of words to express their intentions toward the listener. Humans speak to assert beliefs, interrogate, promise action, make enquiries, express wishes, or ask for information. Listeners, as a result, register this purpose and act accordingly. In every life situation, listeners record belief, provide explanations, record promises, and supply information. They also comprehend how the sentence is meant to fulfil the purpose of the speaker's utterances.

Yule (1996) posits that the use of indirect utterance can be considered with greater politeness than direct. Thus, the theory of speech acts is the theory of how the speakers accomplish their intention using utterances. The utterances can be a declarative, an interrogative, or an imperative. The function of the utterances can be as a statement, a question, and an order/a request. All of the forms and their functions in the utterances are to express a certain attitude and the type of speech act that is performed corresponds to the type of attitude being expressed.

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics that studies the use of language in a context and ways in which a context contributes to meaning. Yule (1996) states that pragmatics discusses the study of meaning as communicated by the speaker or writer and interpreted by the listener or reader. There's an avalanche of studies done on speech acts analysis. However, little research has been carried out on Searle's speech acts theory on the classification of illocutionary speech acts relating it to understanding the speaker's intention in the African play, *The gods are not to Blame* by Ola Rotimi.

Hence, the interest of the researcher to conduct this research and explore the literary text to portray the steady tide in social interactions among humans. The reader can learn about pragmatics, especially speech acts by examining the dialogues and their context in every scene of the play. The importance of speech acts is recognized in keeping the steady and polished progression of the story lines of the play and its significant contribution to the Speech Acts in Nigerian English, and its interface with the Yoruba culture. This study aims at applying the speech act theory to Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to Blame* to unravel the in-depth textual resources of the play through a pragmatic approach.

The objectives of this research are to:

- 1) identify the types of speech acts, direct or indirect, as produced in Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to Blame*.
- 2) find the classifications of illocutionary speech acts: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives as produced in Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to Blame*.
- 3) discover the underlying reasons for the occurrence of the speech acts that are found in Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to Blame*.

### **Speech Acts**

Putri, Sartini & Al Fajri (2020) investigate speech acts performed by judges of model competitions in American and Asian TV series: *America's Next Top Model and Asia's Next Top Model*. The aim of the study was to find out the illocutionary acts of the judges since they were considered as the decision makers in a competition. In cross-cultural pragmatics point of view, the results of the study concluded that Asians were more expressive than Americans. The findings also revealed that Americans were more overt than the Asians.

Okoro (2017) examines a locution, illocution, and perlocution speech act types of two political speeches of President Muhammad Buhari. It was analyzed using the Speech Acts Theory of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). The outcome of the study disclosed that the President used more assertives and commissives speech acts in order to show the sincerity of his intentions, to make promises, and to assure the masses.

Haucsa, Marzuki, Alek, & Hidayat (2020) conduct a study on the types and functions of illocutionary speech acts performed by both the interviewer and the interviewee. It describes the most and the least used illocutionary speech acts performed in the interview. The finding of the study demonstrated that Tom Cruise tended to convey his utterance to give statements of fact and to describe things that he believed to be true.

### **Speech Acts Theory**

This study adopts the speech act theories proposed by Yule (1996) in his theory of types of speech acts: direct and indirect speech acts, and Searle (1969) in his theory of the classification of speech acts. The term 'speech acts' is derived from the work of the Cambridge Philosopher J. L. Austin in the series of William James' lectures he delivered at Harvard in 1955. Later on, his work was published in the book entitled *How to Do Things with Words* (1965). Speech act theory believes in identifying utterances and turns as actual actions. This theory not only considers language used by the speaker but studies change in the state of behaviour of the speaker as well as the listener at the time of communication.

According to Sadock (2009), when people communicate, the basic communication framework 'simultaneously' consists of three types of speech acts.

- a. Locutionary act: It means that certain sounds are produced that comprise identifiable words, arranged on the basis of a particular grammar and has a

certain sense and reference.

- b. Illocutionary act: This is the conventional force associated with the uttering of the words in a particular context.
- c. Perlocutionary act: This refers to the effects the utterance has on the hearer.

Searle (1969) categorizes speech acts according to their illocutionary purpose (i.e.) what the speaker is doing with the utterance, how they fit in the world, their expressed psychological state, and their propositional content. According to Searle, there are five categories of speech acts: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations.

### ***Assertive Acts***

An assertive act counts as an attempt to explain the actual state of affairs comprising phrases used to address a specific idea, proposition or belief. These acts include asserting, concluding, informing, predicting and reporting.

### ***Directive Acts***

These are employed to get the addressee to do something. For instance, commands, orders, requests and suggestions.

### ***Commissive Acts***

In these acts the speakers commit themselves to future actions. The act can be a promise, a simple statement but the function is that the person is committed to the statement s/he has given. The intention behind commissive acts is that of offering, promising, refusing, vowing and volunteering.

### ***Expressive Acts***

These speech acts state what the speaker feels, his/her psychological state. These can be statements of pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy or sorrow.

### ***Declarative Acts***

Declarative acts are statements or expressions that change the world by their utterance, for example a minister saying: "Now I pronounce you husband and wife" and the judge saying: "The court sentences you to ten years imprisonment".

## **Method of Analysis**

The research method employed in this study was descriptive and qualitative. It is analyzed to explore the types of speech acts in Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to Blame*: direct and indirect speech acts and their classifications of speech acts, which are formulated into assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations (Searle, 1969). The researcher focussed on the characters' utterances by examining the dialogues and their context in every scene of the play. The frequency of the utterances for each type of speech act was illustrated in a tabular form and bar chart was used for explicit explanation, and to assess the extent to which the theory of speech acts can be explored to understand the speaker's intention in literary texts.

## **Synopsis of *the gods are not to Blame***

In Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to Blame*, King Adetusa and his wife Ojuola reigned over the land of Kutuje. When their first son was born, they consulted the soothsayer Baba Fakunle about the child's future, but he was foretold that the son would kill his

own father and marry his mother. Accordingly the King's special messenger, Gbonka was sent to kill the boy in the bush. Two years later, another son was born and named Aderopo. After a number of years, Adetusa was killed in mysterious circumstances and the people of Ikolu took advantage of this to attack the land of Kutuje. A stranger named Odewale, from the tribe of Ijekun Yemoja, rallied the people of Kutuje and defeated their enemies. As a reward, they made him king and he married Ojuola and subsequently, four children were born of this marriage.

After eleven years, however, a plague breaks out in Kutuje. Aderopo brings the message from the oracle of Ifa, He hesitates for a moment to reveal the feedback from the oracle before the chorus of elders who represent the people. Baba Fakunle hurls a reproach at Odewale, namely "bed-sharer". Alaka, a friend of Odewale from his youth, reveals the true nature of the King's parenthood. He has been searching for Odewale for a long time and they are overjoyed to see each other. When Alaka asks why Odewale left Ede, where he originally went after leaving his own village, Odewale tells how he killed an old man in a quarrel about a farm. This is the reason why he flees from Ede and finally comes to Kutuje.

Odewale finally tells Ojuola why he quarrelled with Aderopo, and she tries to reassure him by declaring that prophecies cannot be trusted. As a proof, she tells him about Baba Fakunle's prophecy that her son would bring bad luck and had to die. She adds that Baba Fakunle later also declared that Adetusa had been killed by one of his own blood. Then, she mentions, by chance, that Adetusa was killed near Ede, at a place where three footpaths meet. He has brought Odewale the news of the death of his father Ogunde. Odewale reveals the reason why he left his native village: a priest of Ifa had told him that he would kill his father and marry his mother. He is jubilant because this oracle has been proven wrong. Now Alaka reveals that Odewale is not really the son of Ogunde, but that they found him in the Ipetu bush, his arms and feet tied with strings of cowries. Gbonka is summoned to give more details about the murderer(s) of Adetusa, but on his arrival he has to reveal the identity of Odewale's parents. Odewale finds that Ojuola has committed suicide and then plucks out his own eyes. However, he does not stay in Kutuje, but immediately goes into exile together with his children.

## DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

### *Directives*

Through the analysis of Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to Blame*, it is the directive speech acts that is highly used with (95) instances and represents 49.5% out of the total number of 191 utterances in the whole text:

1. Narrator: what is it that the child has brought as duty to this earth from the gods? Pg.. 2
2. First citizen: what use are greetings to a dying body? Pg.. 9
3. Third citizen: when the chameleon brings forth a child, is not that child expected to dance? Pg.. 9
4. First chief: do you think we have no thoughts in our mind for your good? Pg..9
5. Second woman: What has the king done about it? Pg.. 10

6. Second citizen: when rain falls on the leopard, does it wash off its spots? Pg.. 10
7. Fifth citizen: how long must feverish birds tremble in silence before their keeper? Pg.. 10
8. Odewale: does the rain fall on one roof? Pg.. 10
9. Odewale: Sickness is in your houses? Pg.. 10
10. Fifth citizen: How long must feverish birds tremble in silence before their keeper? Pg.. 10
11. Odewale: does it fall on one body and not on another? Pg.. 10
12. Odewale: See... see the mucus on his nose? Pg. 11
13. Odewale: .... Soponna, the god of the poxes? Pg. 11
14. Second chief: Which of you knows where Aderopo is now? Pg. 12
15. Third citizen: Has the sickness killed him? Pg. 12
16. Odewale: where is Aderopo? Pg. 12
17. Townspeople: Where is he then? Pg. 12
18. Odewale: ... what have you now to say? Pg. 12
19. Odewale: Is that so? Pg. 12
20. Odewale: But what about you yourselves? Pg. 12
21. Odewale: Bring the children here. Pg. 11
22. Odewale: Wake her up...Pg. 11
23. Odewale: bring them all. Pg. 11
24. Odewale: sacrifice, did you say? Pg. 11
25. First citizen: let us sacrifice ram to the gods. Pg. 11
26. Odewale: Elder one, you tell them. Pg. 12
27. Odewale: And nothing happened? Pg. 13
28. Odewale: For how long did you boil it? Pg. 13
29. Odewale: And how does the body feel? Pg. 13
30. Odewale: Who is your neighbor? Pg. 14
31. Odewale: Who else? Pg. 14
32. Odewale: What herbs did you boil? Pg. 16
33. Odewale: Women stay at home and look after the children...Pg. 14
34. Woman: Women too? Pg. 14
35. Odewale: Up, all of you ... into the bush! Pg. 14
36. Odewale: Go and get cutlasses- go on... Pg. 14
37. Odewale: what is private about a whole kingdom in pain? Pg. 14
38. Odewale: ... what is private about a whole kingdom in pain? Pg. 14
39. Odewale: Bring me those herbs I cut from the bush last night. Pg. 15
40. Odewale: Everybody come and see...Pg. 15
41. Odewale: Labata! Take that baby from her. Pg. 16
42. Odewale: Ojuola, from this day on you care for the baby. Pg. 16
43. Odewale: Quickly take that...Pg. 16
44. Odewale: Do not rush her Pg. 16
45. Odewale: Hear me? Pg. 16
46. Odewale: ...is it good or bad? Pg. 18
47. First chief: Speak openly, son. Pg. 19
48. Odewale: Details, give us details. Pg. 19



49. Odewale: ...go and cure your son Pg.20
50. Chiefs: killed another man? Pg. 20
51. Odewale: And who is this man? Pg. 20
52. Odewale: ...what did he do, what offence? Pg. 20
53. Odewale: ...Go summon the Townspeople here. Pg. 21
54. Priest: Ifa did not mention the name of this murderer? Pg. 21
55. Aderopo: What will you do to him then? Pg. 21
56. Chiefs: A killer in our midst? Pg. 21
57. Ojuola: Who are we to trust, then? Pg. 21
58. Aderopo: My lord, may I go now to bring Baba Fakunle from Oyo? Pg. 22
59. Odewale: ...what about the loyal bodyguard who came back? Pg. 22
60. Odewale: I should one? Pg. 23
61. Odewale: what happened to the other four? Pg. 23
62. Baba Fakunle: Hand him back nine. Pg. 28
63. Second chief: What weapon is it you have used? Pg. 28
64. Odewale: what truth? Pg. 28
65. Odewale: Do you feel better now? Pg. 28
66. Third chief: is it because the king called... you called him murderer? Pg. 28
67. Baba Fakunle: How much did he give you boy? Pg. 28
68. Odewale: what did he say? Pg. 22
69. Odewale: Block that door. Pg. 27
70. First chief: Well then, Talk! Pg. 27
71. First chief: Haste to your husband, woman. Pg. 29
72. Ojuola: Balogun, what is the matter? Pg.29
73. First chief: Enough. Everyone to his home. Pg. 30
74. Odewale: Go, go, go, woman. Pg. 32
75. Odewale: Come and listen to your son! Pg. 32
76. Odewale: Get you out of this land! Pg. 34
77. Odewale: Go to the homes of all the chiefs in the land, tell them to be quick and meet me here. Pg. 40
78. Ojuola: Bring him something to drink. Pg. 41
79. Alaka: Go back to him...! Pg. 42
80. Old man: I said bundle the goat up! Pg. 47
81. Odewale: You leave for Ilorin now. Pg. 55
82. Odewale: I want him here! Pg. 55
83. Odewale: come, come, come my elder brother,... Pg. 59
84. Odewale: Bring stools here...Pg. 59
85. Odewale: I said get me the armed guards! Pg. 62
86. Odewale: Come this way! Pg. 65
87. Odewale: what was your job in this land? Pg. 65
88. Odewale: who slew him? Pg. 66
89. Odewale: Answer my question! Pg. 66
90. Odewale: Stop him! Pg. 68
91. Ogun priest: Is he dead too? Pg. 69
92. Aderopo: Why didn't anybody stop him? Pg. 70
93. Odewale: ...where is Adewale?

94. Adebisi: To where, father? Pg. 72

95. Adewale: To where? Pg. 72

### ***Expressives***

The realization of expressive speech act is shown in 55 utterances representing 29% out of the total (191):

1. Townspeople: ...we shall go! Pg. 15
2. Townspeople: ...the royal shoes on your feet! Pg. 15
3. Odewale: private! Pg. 19
4. Second chief: A man! Pg. 20
5. Odewale and chiefs: king Adetusa! Pg. 21
6. Baba Fakunle: Don't come near me!
7. Baba Fakunle: You called me pig! Pg. 27
8. Odewale: Listen to that! Pg. 29
9. Baba Fakunle: bed sharer Pg. 29
10. Baba Fakunle: Indeed! Pg. 31
11. Baba Fakunle: the seer is sick in the head! Pg. 29
12. Odewale: No, you are a tortoise Pg. 34
13. Odewale: Oohh! Pg.35
14. Aderopo: ...out of this land! Pg. 35
15. Aderopo: do as you wish! Pg.35
16. Odewale: listen to that rudeness! Pg. 19
17. Odewale: Hm! Pg. 38
18. Odewale: ...Hunh! Pg. 40
19. Akilapa: ...Aha! Pg. 40
20. Alaka: ...Aha! Pg. 42
21. Alaka: A-ah! Pg. 43
22. Odewale: my master! Pg. 43
23. Odewale: so I am thief! Pg. 46
24. Olojo: Aha! Pg. 46
25. Odewale: Enough! Pg. 54
26. Odewale: Now! Pg. 55
27. Odewale: ...sleep! Pg. 55
28. Body Guards: Ilorin! Pg.55
29. Body Guards: Ah! Pg. 55
30. Agidi, Labata, Akilapa: Ah! Pg. 55
31. Agidi, Labata, Akilapa: Gbon-n-k-a-a! Pg. 55
32. Akilapa: A-ah Pg. 56
33. Odewale: you are wasting time! Pg. 56
34. Odewale: Now! Pg. 56
35. Alaka: ...a killer! Pg. 57
36. Ojuola: *Awu!* Pg.58
37. Odewale: Ojuola! Great woman! Ideal of all women! Pg. 58
38. Alaka: ...ooh! Pg. 59
39. Odewale: me! Pg. 60
40. Ogun priest: the bush in Ipetu! Pg. 64



41. Ojuola: ifa!...m-e-e-e! Pg. 64
42. Alaka: Ahaa! Pg. 66
43. Alaka: Aha! Pg. 66
44. Gbonka: Huh! Pg. 66
45. Gbonka: A-ah! Pg. 67
46. Gbonka: Hunh! Pg. 67
47. Oyeyemi: Leave me alone! Pg. 72
48. Chief: Aha! Pg. 6
49. Fourth citizen: We have silence! Pg. 10
50. Townspeople: we are suffering my lord Pg. 12
51. Odewale: erhhh! Pg. 11
52. Townspeople: we shall go! Pg. 15
53. IyaAburo: looking left! Pg. 15
54. All: Help us! Pg. 10
55. Townspeople: oh, pity! Pg. 11

### ***Assertives***

The analysis of an assertive illocutionary speech act is shown in 38 utterances representing 20% out of (191) realized as follows:

1. Priest: He said robbers lay in wait for them in the bush near Ede and killed the king. Pg.22
2. Odewale: There is the plague in this land...Pg. 26
3. First woman: Yesterday, my twins died- both of them. Pg.9
4. Second citizen: When the head of a household dies, the house becomes an empty shell. Pg.9
5. Second chief: We have also sent for Baba Fakunle, the greatest of all medicine men in this World. He will be here soon. Pg. 12
6. Priest: We have sent Aderopo to Ile-Ife...Pg. 12
7. Second woman: lemon grass, teabush, and some limeskins. Pg. 13
8. Second woman: I and my household drank the medicine, yet we do not get better, my lord. Pg. 13
9. Second woman: As soon as it boiled, I put it down... Pg. 13
10. Third woman: I boiled mine longer – a long time. I even added *dogo-yaro* leaves to it.
11. Fourth woman: My trouble is that I drink medicine from herbs, my husband drinks it too. Pg. 14
12. Body guard: My lord, Aderopo has come back from Ile-Ife... Pg. 14
13. Aderopo: The oracle of ifa at the shrine of Orunmila has found the cause of the sickness... that there may be peace of mind again in every home. Pg.19
14. Aderopo: ...Ifa oracle says the curse, your highness, is on a man. Pg. 20
15. Ojuola: On the road from Oshogbo. Pg.22
16. Priest: Five bodyguards were in his company, but only one of them came back. Pg. 22
17. Second chief: They ran away after the killing your highness. Pg. 22

18. First chief: Out of fear that our people would kill them in anger, I think. Pg.22
19. First chief: He said robbers lay in wait for them in the bush near Ede and killed the king. Pg.22
20. Aderopo: I have brought Baba Fakunle...Pg. 25
21. IyaAburo: He was coming, then he went and got all dressed up, and went directly to the farm...Pg. 15
22. Odewale: Our talk is of illness, sister. To get fully cured one needs patience...patience Pg.14
23. Odewale: ... You must boil it longer, woman longer... woman longer Pg. 13
24. Baba Fakunle: This boy, he will kill his own father and marry his own mother .Pg. 3
25. Narrator: The struggles of man begin at birth... Pg. 1
26. Narrator: Mother weeps, Father weeps.  
The future is not happy, but to resign oneself to it is to be crippled fast. Pg. 3
27. Narrator: Baba Fakunle, oldest and most knowing of all Ifa priests in the world, it is you I greet. Pg. 2
28. Narrator: Now Baba Fakunle, tells Mother, tells Father, tells the priest of ogun...Pg. 2
29. Narrator: Two years later, King Adetusa and his wife Ojuola have another son Pg. 4
30. Narrator: Queen Ojuola herself is not getting younger. Pg. 5
31. Narrator: The land of Kutuje had known peace and seen quiet for some time until the people Ikolu, taking advantage of death in the palace, attacked Kutuje. Pg. 5
32. Narrator: They killed hundreds, They seized hundreds, they enslaved hundreds more, And left behind in the land of Kutuje. Pg. 5
33. Odewale: I heard their wailings, first as rumour; I heard them far, far away... Pg. 5
34. Odewale: For eleven years now. I Odewale, the only son of Ogundele Have ruled Kutuje and have taken for wife,... Pg. 7
35. Royal Bard: There are kings and there are kings: king is greater than king. It is not changing into the lion that is hard, it is getting the tail of a lion. Pg. 7
36. Second woman: Your highness...I have tried, in my own house, I have tried...I boiled some herbs, drank them, yet sickness remains. Pg. 13
37. Priest: Five body guards were in his company, but only one of them came back...Pg. 22
38. Ojuola: Listen all of you. Come, come, come closer. Listen: Father is not happy today, and I want you to behave yourselves. Pg. 36

### **Commissives:**

Through data analysis, it is noticed that commissive speech act has only 2 references in the text representing 1% out of 191 utterances:

1. Odewale: Later then, later. The blood is still hot...later. Pg. 39
2. Odewale: Before Ogun the God of Iron, I stand an oath...I, Odewale, the son of Ogundele, shall search and fully lay open before your very eyes the murderer, I swear...Pg. 24

### **Declaration:**

It is observed that there is no declarative illocutionary speech acts in Ola Rotimi's *The*

*gods are not to Blame*. It carries 0% out of the 191 utterances.

**Indirect Speech Acts:**

There is only 1 utterance of Indirect Speech Act, 0.5% out of the 191 utterances:

1. Odewale: Do not cut in, I pray you. Pg.19

**Speech Acts Statistical Table**

**1. Directives:** 95 utterances, e.g.

- i. Narrator: what is it that the child has brought as duty to this earth from the gods? Pg.. 2
- ii. First citizen: what use are greetings to a dying body? Pg.. 9
- iii. Third citizen: when the chameleon brings forth a child, is not that child expected to dance? Pg.. 9
- iv. First chief: do you think we have no thoughts in our mind for your good? Pg..9
- v. Second woman: What has the king done about it? Pg.. 10
- vi. Second citizen: when rain falls on the leopard, does it wash off its spots? Pg.. 10

**2. Expressives:** 55 utterances, e.g.

- i. Townspeople: ...the royal shoes on your feet! Pg. 15
- ii. Odewale: private! Pg. 19
- ii. Second chief: A man! Pg. 20
- iii. Odewale and chiefs: king Adetusa! Pg. 21
- iv. Odewale: Oohh! Pg.35
- v. Baba Fakunle: You called me pig! Pg. 27
- vi. Odewale: Listen to that! Pg. 29

**3. Assertives:** 38 utterances, e.g.

- i. Priest: He said robbers lay in wait for them in the bush near Ede and killed the king. Pg.22
- ii. Odewale: There is the plague in this land...Pg. 26
- iii. First woman: Yesterday, my twins died- both of them. Pg.9
- iv. Second citizen: When the head of a household dies, the house becomes an empty shell. Pg.9
- v. Second chief: We have also sent for Baba Fakunle, the greatest of all medicine men in this World. He will be here soon. Pg. 12
- vi. Priest: We have sent Aderopo to Ile-Ife...Pg. 12

**4. Commissives:** 2 utterances, e.g.

- i. Odewale: Later then, later. The blood is still hot...later. Pg. 39
- ii. Odewale: Before Ogun the God of Iron, I stand an oath...I , Odewale, the son of Ogundele, shall search and fully lay open before your very eyes the murderer, I swear...Pg. 24

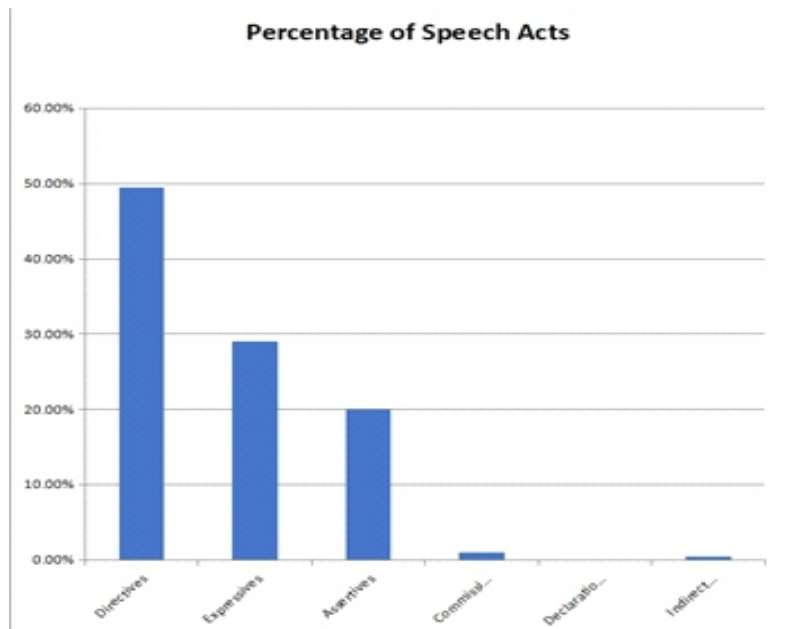
**5. Declaration:** 0 utterance

**6. Indirect Speech Acts:** 1 utterance e.g.

- I. Odewale: Do not cut in, I pray you. Pg.19

Speech Acts	No of Utterances	Percentage
1. Directives	95	49.5%
2. Expressives	55	29%
3. Assertives	38	20%
4. Commissives	2	1%
5. Declarations	0	0%
6. Indirect Speech Acts	1	0.5%
TOTAL	191	100%

**FIGURE 1: SPEECH ACTS CHART**



### Discussion

From the analysis of types of speech acts, the researcher found that there were totally 191 utterances analyzed as direct and indirect speech acts. The direct speech acts got 190 utterances (99.5%), while the indirect speech act got 1 utterance, 0.5%. Yule (1996) states that indirect speech acts are generally associated with greater politeness rather than direct speech acts. From the analysis of types of illocutionary speech acts, the directive has the highest percentage of 49.5%, followed by expressives 29%, then assertives 20%, and commissive, 1%; but, the declarative was 0%. From the proportion of five classifications of illocutionary speech acts, the researcher concludes that directives were the most dominant types of illocutionary speech acts because the play, *The gods are not to Blame* is filled with commands, orders, and suggestions. The utterances were made by King Odewale, the chiefs and few of the villagers. Most of the utterances were from king Odewale, followed by his chiefs. This portrays that the words of a king are with force, power, and commands. The expressive is the next in

rank in the percentage of illocutionary speech acts with 55 utterances. This reveals the tone of the play where the king, his subordinates and the villagers express their feelings of pain, surprise, displeasure, and joy. The assertives were 38 utterances, performing the functions of reporting, informing, concluding, etc. Then the least one of those five classifications of illocutionary speech acts were commissives and declaratives. The researcher found nothing (0%) on declarative part.

### Findings

Based on the researcher's analysis on the types of speech acts in Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to Blame*, direct speech act is more dominant than indirect speech act and in the analysis of the classification of illocutionary speech acts, directive is the most dominant type among the others, followed by expressive, then assertive, and commissive. Declaration was not found in Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to Blame*.

Furthermore, the researcher discovered that Ola Rotimi adopted the use of direct speech acts more in his play, *The gods are not to Blame*. This reveals that direct speech acts are basic activities in social interaction. They are also applied in the play. Direct speech acts cannot be detached from daily social interactions.

The researcher reckons that the underlying reasons the types of speech acts occur in Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to Blame*, are because of: (1) The Speaker's Belief, (2) Politeness, (3) Relationship (4) Setting, (5) Feeling or Psychology. The speaker's belief in this case means that a statement refers to the truth of what is said on some matter. For example, "take that baby from her" (Pg. 16). The utterance is a command because of the relationship between the speakers, which is that of a king to the subordinate. There is no politeness in a higher authority addressing his servant. Politeness in this case means to be tactful, generous, modest, and sympathetic towards others (Yule, 1996). He argues that indirect speech act is a part of politeness in English. Relationship is a social distance or social closeness where King Odewale is socially distant from his subordinates.

Feeling or psychology means to show a mental state of the speaker to the hearer, for example, "H-e-l-p us...hoe-lop us...!" (Pg. 10). The utterance shows the speaker's state of helplessness seeking for help. Desire or fulfill desire is a statement delivered by the speaker to have the listener to fulfill the speaker's intention or desire, that is, to be rescued from the impending danger. The researcher realizes that this study of speech acts can be of benefit to the readers, especially in improving the understanding of the study of speech acts.

### Conclusion

Plays can be analyzed pragmatically, similar to other texts of poems and novels. Also, the frequency of the illocutionary forces within each speech act varies from one to another. This reveals that social interactions cannot be detached from human life because this is what keeps a smooth flow of communication.

Hence, plays as literary texts portray this continuity in keeping the steady tide in social

interactions among humans. This study also contributes significantly to Speech Acts in Nigerian English and its interface with the Yoruba culture as there is a robust use of the Nigerian English form of code alternation, that is, code-mixing and code switching which is an outcome of multilingualism in Nigeria, an interference between the British English (L1) and the Yoruba language (L2) resulting into the Nigerian English form of communication.

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