



Power and Ideology Through a Pragmatic Analysis of Wole Soyinka's *A play of giants*

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Abstract - This paper has applied the Speech Act Theory (SAT) to a few extracts from Wole Soyinka's *A Play of Giants* (1984). It endeavors to explore the illocutionary forces deduced from participants' utterances, the manifestation of power use and the ideology behind leaders' deeds. It is revealed that assertive and directive speech acts have covered the highest proportions of the utterances. Directive speech acts, vocatives denoting power and the relationships between the despotic masters and their submissive subjects have helped to unveil the ideology of subjugation in a context of a repellent dictatorship.

Key Words: Dictatorship, illocutionary force, power, speech act.

Résumé - Cet article a appliqué la théorie des actes du discours à des extraits tirés de *A Play of Giants* de Wole Soyinka (1984). Il s'évertue à explorer les forces illocutoires déduites des propos des participants, la manifestation de l'usage du pouvoir et l'idéologie qui a soutenu les actions des leaders. Il a été révélé que les actes du discours assertifs et directifs ont occupé les proportions les plus élevées. Les actes directifs, les termes d'appellation dénotant le pouvoir et les relations entre les maîtres despotiques et leurs sujets soumis ont permis de révéler l'idéologie de la subjugation dans un contexte de dictature répressive.

Mots Clés: Dictature, force illocutoire, pouvoir, acte du discours.

Introduction

People interact by means of language to perform various types of speech acts. This implies that they can use it to command, assert, innovate, create, transform, express emotion, etc. In the words of Austin (1962: 101), utterances are not simply statements intended to seek for or convey information, for instance, but they are rather turned into actions once pronounced. So, uttering entails performing something accordingly. Austin's (1962) Speech Act Theory (henceforth SAT)

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provides a tool to help in the pragmatic analysis of texts. It is concerned with the meanings assigned to speech acts by participants based on their relationship and the context. This scholar is credited as the founder of SAT, where the performative use of language is ascribed a major role. After calling into question Austin's (1962) taxonomy, Searle (1969) framed a general theory of meaning and use, according to which the primary units of meaning and communication in the use and comprehension of language are speech acts, or in Austin's (1962) terms, 'illocutionary acts,' which involves such functions as assertions, promises, orders, etc.

Applying the theory of speech acts to extracts from Wole Soyinka's *A Play of Giants* (1984), this work specifically aims at exploring the illocutionary acts based on Searle's (1976) taxonomy and at unveiling the use of power and ideology behind leaders' deeds. In keeping with the purpose of this study, two research questions are worded:

- (1) What are the illocutionary acts in the selected extracts?
- (2) What power relation and dominating ideology can be deduced from the analysed linguistic data?

The present work provides insight of great significance to the application of the SAT to literary texts. The work not only unveils what is meant by what is said but it also uncovers what it left unsaid in people's utterances and the functional implication of each utterance. It finds out the meaning of utterances based on their context of production and the intentions of the latter. More importantly, this work points out the link between what is said, what is meant, and the actions generated by what is said. It offers a wide range of theoretical details which help to have a full grip of the SAT and contributes to the understanding Wole Soyinka's message to African and international readership.

1. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This section mainly deals with the theoretical underpinning of SAT, dedicates a short subsection to vocatives and overviews the suggested methodological perspective.

1.1. Theoretical Framework: Overview of SAT

This subset essentially tackles Speech Acts, Searle's (1976) classification of Speech Acts and vocatives.



1.1.1. *Speech Acts*

For Austin (1962: 1-2), people can do all sorts of things when speaking, from aspirating a consonant, to constructing a relative clause, to insulting a guest, to starting a war, etc. These are all, pre-theoretically, speech acts, that is, acts done in the process of speaking. In the same vein, by means of language “we tell people how things are, we try to get them to do things, we commit ourselves to do things, we express our feelings and attitudes and we bring about changes through our utterances” (Searle, 1979: 29). Austin’s (1962) SAT provides a tool which helps a lot more in the pragmatic analysis of texts. But, in 1969 & 1976, Searle and many others have developed the basic elements of Austin's speech acts to become what is known as SAT.

1.1.2. *Searle’s Classification of Speech Acts*

Searle (1976) identifies five illocutionary forces which are the simplest possible forces as an improvement of the classification of the speech acts (verdictives, exercitives, commissives, expositives, behabitives) proposed by Austin (1962: 150-163). Searle’s (1976: 10-14) five categories are as follows:

- **Representatives:** these speech acts carry the values ‘true’ or ‘falls’, i.e., they commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition such as asserting, reporting, instructing, concluding, etc.
- **Directives:** the speaker’s role is to get (to direct) the hearer to do something (or towards some goal)
- **Commissives:** These are called "unexceptionable", i.e. the obligation is created on the speaker’s side not on the hearer’s one. So, they commit the speaker to some future actions, such as offering, threatening, promising, etc.
- **Expressives:** these express an inner state of the speaker. They tend to be intrinsically polite as in greeting, thanking, congratulating, etc.; and the reverse is true as in blaming and accusing.
- **Declarations:** these show the correspondence between the prepositional content and reality and they are a very special category of speech acts, such as resigning, dismissing, christening, naming, sentencing, etc. These are the five types of speech acts that the present study has identified and analyzed in the selected extracts.



1.1.3. Vocatives

Teruya and Lam (2010: 239) use the term '*vocative*' as "the interpersonal element of a clause identifying the addressee of the clause as a move in dialogue". Also known as social deixis, two major types are distinguished: '*absolute social deixis*' and '*relational social one*' (Amoussou, 2017: 230). The former relates to vocatives that are reserved for authorized speakers or recipients, such as the form '*Zheng*' solely used by the emperor to refer to himself in China and such others as '*Your Majesty*,' '*Mr. President*,' '*Your Excellency*' and '*Professor X*', etc. that are limited to authorized recipients (Levinson, 1983: 91). *Relational social deixis* are of four subtypes: referent honorifics, addressee honorifics, bystander honorifics and speaker-setting axis (Huang, 2007: 164-5). The first type refers to forms that are used by the speaker to show respect or honor to the referent and the second does to those that show reverence to the addressee (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 180). With regard to the bystander honorifics, "they refer to forms used by the speaker to show respect to a bystander" (Huang, 2007: 164). The speaker-setting axis relates to the link between the speaker and the speech situation, as a formal register suits some cases better than others (Dixon, 1980: 65-8; Brown & Levinson, 1987: 181; Amoussou, 2017: 231).

Vocatives are not only known to play the interpersonal function of expressing relationships such as friendship, enmity, hierarchy, contact, desirability, undesirability, anger, indignation between interactants (Fillmore, 1997: 111-2; Eggins, 2004: 100), but they also play the cultural, ideological and political functions. 'Cultural vocatives' are those used to reflect features of context of culture or literary genre or mode of discourse (Eggins, 2004; Amoussou, 2014; Amoussou, 2017). 'Ideological vocatives' refer to ones that shed light on the speaker's beliefs about the addressee or reference (Amoussou, 2017: 232). 'Political vocatives' relate to flattery-oriented uses of vocatives for relations that are actually not true or real (Brown & Levinson 1987: 182-5). Finally, vocatives can also function as *doublespeak* (Orwell, 1989: 135), which means that they can be used to express other things than what they generally do.

1.2. Methodology and Data Processing Procedure

This sub-section discloses the methodological perspective and the process of data analysis. The extracts under analysis have been methodically and pragmatically parsed into constituent locutions. Following Searle's (1976) taxonomy, each locution is then numbered and labelled with a view to quantifying and categorizing utterance and vocative types. The figures and rates are



tabularized and stand for the backbone to the analysis. The statistics of speech acts and vocatives have been prone to comments for a communal understanding. It is worth recalling that the identified and labelled utterances are expected to fully appear in the analysis, but they have been partially displayed in the appendix not only for space constraints but also for the long break such long data would produce in this story line. In the identification of locutions, the following clues are used: ASA (Assertive Speech Act), DeSA (Declarative Speech Act), DiSA (Directive Speech Act), ESA (Expressive Speech Act) and CSA (Commissive Speech Act).

2. Analysis of Speech Acts in the Excerpts

Drawing on the speech act identification exercise (appendix), the following table displays the frequencies (F) and percentages (P) of speech acts and their distribution among the participants.

Table 1. Distribution of Speech Acts

SA F&P	Participants										Totals
	Gunema	Gud- rum	Kasco	Chairman	Kamini	Ambas- sador	Sculptor	Tuboun	Mayor	Batey	
ASA	37 10.57	20 05.71	29 08.28	23 06.57	115 32.57	38 10.85	46 13.14	03 00.85	22 06.28	17 04.85	350 68.22
DiSA	07 06.66	04 03.80	04 03.80	04 03.80	71 67.61	00 00.00	04 03.80	02 01.90	07 06.66	02 01.90	105 20.46
ESA	04 12.12	00 00.00	06 18.18	01 03.03	14 42.42	01 03.03	02 06.06	00 00.00	01 03.03	04 12.12	33 06.43
CSA	02 08.69	02 08.69	00 00.00	00 00.00	07 30.43	04 17.39	05 21.73	00 00.00	02 08.69	01 04.34	23 04.48
DeSA	00 00	00 00	00 00	00 00	02 100	00 00	00 00	00 00	00 00	00 00	02 00.38
Total	50 09.74	26 05.06	39 07.60	28 05.45	209 40.74	43 08.38	57 11.11	05 00.97	32 06.23	24 04.67	513

In table 1, the statistics reveal a total number of 513 locutions. There is an overabundance of assertive speech acts as they cover up to 68.22%. It can thus be inferred that these excerpts are statement-based. The predominance of this type can be accounted for by the fact that the participants are more interested in explaining, depicting, clarifying, elaborating (Koussouhon, Akogebto and Guezohouezon, 2016; Akogebto and Koutchade, 2014; Waya and Nneji, 2013) on their management of the social, political and economic issues. In addition, it should be stated that the grammatical structures used by the participants have weighted a lot more in the high rate of assertives. It is widely held that these are much more found out in declaratives with 'Illocutionary Act Potential' including acts of stating, claiming, testifying, describing, compelling, etc., (Searle, 1976: 3).



So, this overuse of statements has blossomed rightly because representative and declarative utterances share much in common and that the more there are declaratives in a text the more assertives can be identified. It exudes, therefore, that the predominance of statements attests to an assertion-inclined passage.

The distribution of assertives among the four Excellencies amounts to the following: Kamini (32.57%), Gunema (10.57%), Kasco (08.28%), Tuboom (00.82%). In their relationship with their compatriots, these Excellencies hold up and incarnate power, which is mirrored through the statistics above. The lower rate of directives used by Tuboom can be explained by the fact that he is much less involved in the conversations but this does not deprive him of his role of leader and his function of despotic Head of State. It should be revealed that the four Excellencies are fictional reflection of real messianic personalities who have marked the African political governance and have left indelible blemishes in the collective memory of Africans. These are: (i) Benefacio Gunema: Macias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea, (ii) Emperor Kasco: Jean-Baptiste Bokassa of Central African Republic, (iii) Field Marshal Kamini: Idi Amin of Uganda and (iv) General Barra Tuboom: Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire (Soyinka, 1984: iii).

Other characters also take an active part in the use of assertions: Sculptor (13.14%), Ambassador (10.35%), Chairman (06.57%), Gudrum (05.71%), Mayor (06.25%) and Batey (04.85%). Their representatives' rates justify their positions of subjugated, controlled and terrified subjects. It is worth noting that the Sculptor's rate (13.14%) is much higher than those of the other characters in lower positions because he is so close to the African leaders' western cronies, who have influenced African leaders so much so that some of them are considered as superpowers' puppets, which protect and serve their interests. Soyinka (1984: ii) confirms this assumption as he says: "Mobutu [...] should have received his *coup de grace* [...] for the resolute interests of the western powers – Belgium, France and West Germany most directly". This view is much more sustained in that western powers not only prop up unpopular regimes and use them to satisfy their own politico-economic interests, but they also stir up conflicts on the continent and sell arms to warring parties, whereby profiting from other nations' misery and woes (Adeyoka, 2005). The support of interest-oriented western countries coupled with the regimes of dictatorship in place has only contributed to the underdevelopment of African nations. In such a climate, "they mismanage the resources of their various countries with the aid of their western imperialist friends" (Tengya, 2015: 214).

More importantly, the extracts are made up of 105 directive speech acts (20.46%), which cover the second highest rate. Most of them have the function of



commands and on this very ground, it is inferable that they are most likely identifiable in imperatives, which are used to give instructions, orders, dictates, etc. (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 107; Eggins, 1994: 179). It is rightly significant to call to mind that this category of speech act is identified with verbal operators which order, command, direct, plead, beg, recommend, entreat and advise (Searle, 1976: 11). In fact, Kamini has used 67.61% of the directives, Gunema (06.66%), Kasco (03.80%) and Tuboum (01.90%). The higher rate of directives used by Kamini particularly means that he is more involved in the role of commander-in-chief whose subjects must discharge the duty of theirs. Akogbeto and Houessou (2014: 86) rightly find out that “the language Kamini speaks best is the language of force and violence.” This also confirms the undemocratic and authoritarian nature of the main character (Kamini). The high rate of directives by the Excellencies similarly unveils their autocratic position and endowment with power of governing and dominating as compared with the lowest rates of 00%, 01.90% and 03.80% by Madame Ambassador, Batey and Sculptor respectively. This abundant use of directives by the leaders uncovers the deployment of power in control of the masses and mainly their immediate collaborators. In contradistinction to that, the negligible use of commands especially by Madame Ambassador, Batey and Sculptor implies that they are under the repressive authority of Kamini. This excess of power sounds loudly in locution [413] in that the length of the denomination shows a highly pompous title which is all about supremacy. This is not only comforted by the expression itself but also by the statistics of directives (67.61%) as used by Kamini. It is worth mentioning that participants have established some relationships which are characterized by unequal power since some are entitled to order whereas others are deprived of this right (Kamini versus Madame Ambassador).

Despite their minority, the extracts can boast of having 33 expressive speech acts (06.43%). This means that the passages are not populated with “promises, threats, offerings”, etc. (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012: 122). Still in their positions of authority, Kamini has voiced 14 expressives (42.42%), Gunema 04 (12.12%) and Kasco 06 (18.18%). On the contrary, such participants of the lowest ranks as Mr. Chairman, Madame Ambassador, and Mr. Mayor have respectively come up with 01 of this type each (03.03%). This implies that the relationship between the subjugators and dominated people is characterized by a limitation of the subjugated people to loudly and easily voice their psychological state. More particularly, this fact restates the extent to which excess of power can control and manipulate people’s feelings, psyche and even reasoning in a regime of terror. The



negligible proportion of expressives can be commensurate with the tiny presence of exclamatory clauses, which are the ones most likely employed to primarily express feelings and emotions (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 138; Eggins, 1994: 171).

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that the participants are somehow committed "to a certain course of action" (Austin, 1962: 151). In fact, commissive speech acts have covered 04.48%. This rate shows the lowest degree of commitment of the fictional messianic personalities. Actually, Gunema has used only 02 (08.69%) and Kamini 07 (30.43%). In other words, these leaders are thirsty for power and are deprived of any commitment or decorum to develop and liberate their countries, the freedom and independence of which all the people enlisted and fought for at the age of decolonization. The rates of commissives as used by Madame Ambassador (17.39%), the Sculptor (21.73%), Mr. Mayor (08.69%), Gudrum 08.69% and Batey (04.34%) evidence that these characters of lower positions are much more ready and devoted to performing all that is ordered by their dictatorial masters. They are really committed to some future actions as requested or required by the African masters therein and indirectly by westerners. In short, the utterers of commissives intend to take some future actions or keep some promises or want the listeners to do so. Finally, the almost absence of declarative speech acts is exhibited by only 02/513 change-oriented utterances (00.38%). This potential change of the state of affairs might have some effects on the Sculptor since he is proposed a wife for a possible marriage, which might take place in Bugara. In light of what has been discussed so far, it can be summed up that the presence of massive declaratives have highly bloomed the identification of assertive speech acts (Jarraya, 2013; Nischik, 1993), which have outstripped all the other categories (directive, expressive, commissive and declarative).

3. Analysis of Vocatives

As this pragmatic analysis deals with power and that vocatives contribute to unveiling it, the analysis of this linguistic property (vocative) is deemed crucial. The statistics of the use of vocatives among participants are displayed in table 2 below.

**Table 2.** Distribution of vocatives

	Participants										Total
	Gunema	Gudrum	Kasco	Chair- man	Kamini	Ambas- sador	Sculp- tor	Tu- boun	Mayor	Batey	
Freq & perc	13 08.12	10 06.25	07 04.37	18 11.25	44 27.50	22 13.75	25 15.62	02 01.25	11 06.87	08 05.00	160

As can be observed, the participants have made use of 160 vocatives which are terms of address which characterize the types of relationships existing among participants in any talk-exchange. This linguistic device is of huge help in the exploration of the power relationship among interactants since “their relative social status and power, their degree of intimacy, the degree to which they share common knowledge, the degree to which they are in agreement or share a sense of solidarity” (White, 2000: 20). The vocative types used by participants determine their power status as opposed to their *vis-à-vis*. As a result of this, vocatives help to reveal the tenor of discourse (Koba, 2013). In this analysis, such characters as Gudrum (06.25%), the Chairman (11.25%), Madame Ambassador (13.75%), the Sculptor (15.62%), Mr. Mayor (06.87%) and Batey (05.00%) have used supremacy-related and authority-based vocatives to talk to their addressees (Kamini, Gunema and Kasco), which means these are in position of power. Actually, the use of vocatives “may serve to identify the particular person being addressed, or to call for that person’s attention [...]. The speaker uses it to mark the interpersonal relationship, sometimes thereby claiming superior status or power” (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 134). The table below gives an account of the distribution of vocatives on the basis of their categories/functions: Interpersonal function (a), Cultural function (b), Ideological function (c) and Political function (d).

Table 3. Functions of vocative types

Function-type	Locutions of occurrence	Freq.	Perc.
(a)	1-4-7-9-20-28-29-30-32-36-38-44-46-49-50-52-56-58-60-63-68-70-72-76-77-79-81-87-89-92-105-110-114-117-118-120-123-125-126-127-129-130-135-136-138-140-141-142-144-145-149-155-158-164-169-172-176-179-182-185-192-197-200-201-202-203-205-206-207-215-220-224-233-234-248-254-255-257-264-271-278-279-282-291-300-302-304-309-314-317-324-328-329-333-338-334-345-347-349-354-359-373-389-393-402-412-413-414-420-423-425-430-433-434-443-451-454-455-463-470-471-479-481-485-492-496-505-510-512-514-515-	131	81.87
(b)	93-96-99-212-381	05	03.12
(c)	11-78-101-113-119-183-213-252-285-332-366-473-482-507-	14	08.75
(d)	188-189-258-339-387-418-448-459-469-477-	10	06.25



The statistics in table 3 pinpoint that the interpersonal vocatives take the lead (81.87%) and the ideological ones rank second (08.75%). The political vocatives come third (06.25%) and the ultimate position is held by the cultural function (03.12%). The preponderance of the interpersonal function reveals that vocatives contribute a lot more to the deduction of the interpersonal relationships or discourse tenor (Eggins, 2004). Though the ideological, political, cultural and interpersonal functions overlap (Amoussou, 2017: 248), the researchers have highly focused on the predominant function in the classification of vocatives to avoid major confusions and multifunctional social deixis in this paper.

Thus, the most frequently used vocative in these conversations is the absolute form "**Your excellency/Your excellencies/His Excellency**" as it occurs 78 times (48.75%) in the extracts. One of the addressees who has highly benefited from this vocative is Kamini, the incarnation of power and "the hero of heroes" (Soyinka, 1984: ii). This vocative and its other equivalents like "**Professor Batey**", "**Madame Ambassador**", "**Mr Mayor**", etc. are known to show respect, honor and revere and "are limited to authorized recipients" (Levinson, 1983: 91). It can be assumed that this type of vocative embodies power and authority. In actuality, the person who talks (the addresser) not only shows reverence but also reveals his/her lower power status towards his/her addressee of higher power status. Locution 373 (May I just remind **Your Excellency**...) can be best quoted to corroborate this aforementioned assumption, which supports the existence of unequal interpersonal relationship between the addresser and addressee.

As a matter of fact, such deferential/honorific/reverential/absolute vocatives determine the level of formality in a communicative event. Their use also establishes a polite interpersonal distance between the interactants and characterizes relationships as professional. It must be noted in these conversations that although Kamini has used titles such as "**Madame Ambassador**" and "**Mr. Mayor**" to particularly point at these collaborators, it does not however confer on them some gigantic powers but a kind of reference to the positions they hold. Thus, these vocatives have helped to reveal the inequality of power (Koba, 2015) existing among the Excellencies and the other characters subdued to their lordly despotic leaders.

With regard to the degree of informality, White (2000: 34) points out that it can be determined by: "the use of more colloquial, casual or informal vocabulary, or of slang terms; the use of more familiar terms of address such as first names, nicknames, pet names, etc." This informal use of language offers a big advantage in that it breaks the social class/rank/hierarchy barrier and creates an atmosphere



conducive to successful work and less stressful collaboration. This atmosphere has been created by Kamini to motivate the sculptor to successfully craft his effigy. Though they are neither age mates nor friends, Kamini says so in locution 387: [Ah **my good friend**, how's the work going?].

It must be complemented that the appellatives: "**My life President**" (50), "**Dr. Life President** (60)", "**Your Excellency, My Life President**" (76), "**Dr President** (89)", "**Life President Dr. Kamini** (100)" and "**His Excellency Dr Kamini**" (282) are used to point out the density of power conferred on President Kamini. He is surrounded by his '**Brother Excellencies**', but aside from the appellative "**Your Excellency**", which is commonly used to refer to high level professions or titles, phrases such as "**Dr Life President, Field Marshal, El-Hajj Dr. Kamini**, etc" are used to make his personal title more pompous and haughty. This power rise through bulky repetitive concepts differentiates interpersonally Kamini from his counterparts Kasco, Tuboum and Gunema. He is more powerful than his brother Excellencies as shown through locutions 105-107: [**My friend**, you are not *um hombre ordinario*. Why you think we rule our people? Some people are born to power.] The vocative proposals – after "Your Excellency": "**Life President the Field-Marshal El-Haji, Dr Kamini, DSO, VC LD, PhD, DSc**, etc. – demonstrate how deferential/honorific and pompous titles can be used to lift, elevate and raise authorities to supreme positions.

Besides, such vocatives as "**my friend**" (36), "*mon ami*", (234), '*amigo*' (117) etc., used by Kamini (27.50%) and his counterparts Kasco (04.37%) and Gunema (08.12%), are employed to interpersonally address one another. This reflects the nearness or propinquity among Kamini and the other leaders. These friendly vocatives reveal the companionship bond that has characterized these interactants and the friendly tenor that has been set up among them.

But, the term "**friend**" as used chiefly by Dr Life President when conversing with the Sculptor is characterized as a 'doublespeak' one in locutions 387-389: "[Ah **my good friend**, how's the work going? Oh I didn't hear you come in. Er...to be honest **Your Excellency**, this doesn't look like it will be ready on time.]" The use of "**my good friend**" by Dr Life President is to shorten the distance between the Sculptor and he himself for the foreign artist is invited to perform some tasks in the suburb. The fact that the sculptor benefits from this friendly consideration is due to his origin as shown in locutions 466 and 469: [I like Queen Elizabeth, the royal family is very good friend. Hey **my Friend, white Makongo carver**, you are still hearing me.] This deceptive or tactful use of "**friend**" by Dr. Life President is a strategy for higher-status negotiators to lower themselves and raise the addressee



just to get what they want (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 178-9). Dr Life President has accepted to be called "**Sir**" by the common Sculptor to have his jobs done faster on their first encounter as displayed in locutions 448-452: [Ho, listen **my friend**, because I like you so much, I tell you of project. Sit, sit... Actually, if you don't mind, **sir**, I'd rather remain standing.]. The acceptance of "**Sir**" by Dr Life President makes show of a strategic self-lowering to not only put his collaborator at ease but also to tactfully exploit him to reach the set objective, which is to have the wood worker sculpted him (Locution 374: "when I came here, it was only to sculpt the President and the President only").

More importantly, the vocative "**my friend**" can also play an interpersonal affective role in the sense that Dr. Life President departs from formality with "**Mr Sculptor**" to informality with "**my friend**". It must additionally be mentioned that despite the abridged distance created between Dr Life President and the Sculptor, their relationship has predominantly been characterized by unequal power with Kamini in a higher position of authority. In reality, the distance has just been shortened but the social class and power difference have prevailed over their relationship. In short, the Sculptor's move from "**Sir**" to "**His Excellency**" showcases an upsurge of some hierarchical power on behalf of Kamini.

However, the fact that Kamini has stopped using "**my good friend**" and has shifted to the use of "**you common Makongo carver**" uncovers both the political function of "**my friend**" and the replacement of the Sculptor in his rightful lower position. The use of "**you common Makongo**" also uncloaks a dis-honorific and humiliating appellation since Dr Life President has deceptively used "**my friend**" for the successful making of his sculpture and after the maker has ended his job there is no room to revere him.

Another vocative of great importance in this work is "**brother**" or "**sister**". Although the vocatives "**my brother**" and "**my sister**" are constantly considered by Amoussou (2017: 234) as "kinship vocatives", their use in these conversations by the participants is dissimilar. In fact, when Kamini says "**my brothers**" (35; 109; 285; 366) or "*mon frère*" (26) and "**my brother excellencies**" (504), these vocatives covertly show the relationships among the members of an association or a political gathering, who share almost the same opinions, who are oriented/guided by the same beliefs, who are fighting against the same opponents, and who are stirred by the same driving energy. In other words, the vocative "**my brother**" in this context is best classified as an ideological one in that Kamini and his brother excellencies have been ruling countries under dictatorship regimes and whose populations are



best regarded as “**subjects**” (185). The domination machine is on and the dominated or oppressed people are defenseless for a very long period.

In light of what has been developed so far, it must be summed up that the transition from the interpersonal “**my friend**” to the ideological “**my brother**” discloses that friends, who share the same ideology, are most likely to become brothers and therefore a sibling relationship sets up. The philosopher Aristotle might be right when he says: “without friends no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods; friendship ... is a virtue and is besides more necessary with a view to living”. In the same perspective, an African proverb from the Yoruba culture says: “the stick of brotherhood may bend but will never break” [researchers’ translation]. So, no matter how deep and critical problems between siblings are, they should always find out a common ground of understanding. It is thus a widely and culturally accepted view in solidary Africa that old friends are metamorphosed into brothers and therefore friends and brothers are conflated because brotherhood prevails over friendship.

In the same vein, the vocative “**comrade**” in clause (82) reinforces the above mentioned ideological “**brother**” in that the people at issue are considered not only as groupmates or social class mates, but also as fighters of the same cause. Kamini, Gunema, Kasco and Tuboum are all fighting brothers whose motto is to dominate with a view to eternizing in office as it is peculiarly indicated by Kamini’s name, “**Dr Life President**”, which insinuates a *president-king*, a president with no alternation in power. This title – **Dr Life President** – is much more the reflection/mirror-image of a king/queen ruling his/her kingdom, where his/her people are really subjects, who are all subjugated by his/her might. It can be deduced that kings or leaders exert their power on their subjects.

The cultural affectionate vocatives such as “baby” (92), “Pero” (93) and “papa’ (99) are used to pinpoint the affective involvement that is born in the collaboration between the participants in such a way that they are able to employ affective appellatives to address each other during the conversations. To sum up on the one hand, the masters hold up and exert power by dominating through the autocratic regimes and the subjects are manipulated and controlled by the people in power for keeps, on the other.

4. Recapitulation and Interpretation

This analysis of the extracts from *A Play of Giants* has started with the identification of speech acts, which results in the predominance of assertives. The regime of terror is reflected in the high rate of assertive speech acts. In other words,



this regime is formalized and its deeds and operational mode are described through the characters at play as painted by Wole Soyinka, who did not make any effort to hide the identity of the leaders in question as he explained in the preface to the play (Soyinka, 1984: iii). Wole Soyinka succeeded in satirizing the mode of governance of post-colonial and dictatorial leaders who were supposed to restore peace and freedom and start up the development of the African countries. But, “the certified psychopath” (Soyinka, 1984: iii) who is imbued and drunk with power has not hidden his desire to eternize in power and get himself baptized: Life President Dr. Kamini [locution 300]. This revelation of autocratic power is manifested in his record of directives (67.61%) whereby he has made his hearers do things. On his pedestal, Life President Dr. Kamini “was sustained in power by interest and ideologies” (Soyinka, 1984: iv). The influence of western powers is satirized by Wole Soyinka who “points an accusing finger on some western sycophants and apologists” (Tengya, 2015: 212) who sustain and install some African tyrants in power. It is revealed the ideology of subjugation where “power calls to power” in the despotic regime of Kamini (fictional Idi Amin). In this formalization of the reign of terror, it is no exaggeration to say that even Kamini’s immediate collaborators have undergone his mindless terror. Their use of power-related vocatives “your gracious Excellency or Dr Life President” testifies to the gigantic power which Kamini has got. Using these prior terms of address is symbolic of the authority incarnated by the addressee. This simply means that the addresser must comply with all for fear of being oppressed and massacred as a repellent dictator is in office. In line with the above assumption, Tengya (2015: 212) finds out that these dictators “are ruthless and find no room for freedom of human expression and rights.”

Conclusion

All in all, this study has drawn on Searle’s (1976) five-categorization approach of illocutionary forces (assertive/representative, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative/declaration) and vocatives to reveal the power and ideology conveyed by Wole Soyinka in *A Play of Giants*. It has been disclosed that, though all the speech act types do exist in the scrutinized extracts, assertives are statistically denser than the other categories. This considerable proportion is favored by the high rate of declarative clauses therein, which are mostly intended to describe, relay and represent facts or acts. This means that the preponderance of declarative clauses in texts is a fertile ground for representatives’ identification. Everything being equal, the high presence of interrogatives and imperatives, whereby the



speaker makes the listeners do some things, eases the identification of directives. This assumption is enhanced and really proved by the second rank occupied by directives. Expressive, commissive and declarative speech acts respectively show that there are expressions of inner states, commitments on behalf of the participants and new states of affairs in this satire. The analysis of vocatives has revealed the unequal power dimension among the masters and their subjects. It is found out that populations are incapable of getting out of the box of the despotic leaders since “the longer a people are subjected to brutality of power, longer, in geometric proportion, is the process of recovery and dehumanization” (Soyinka, 1984: vi). It is clear that the ideology of subjugation has prevailed at the age of a repellent dictatorship. This despotism has spared not a single Bugara’s citizen and the excessive desire for power has enhanced “African leaders’ lack of understanding of the political, social and economic problems” (Tengya, 2015: 212) of their citizens. It stands to reason that African countries do not need a repellent or terror-based dictatorship but one of development and progress where social injustices and inequalities are revamped for the wellbeing of the whole populace.

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Appendix: Identification of Speech Acts and Vocatives

1 [*Ah el poder*, ^(a) *amigos*, ⁽¹⁾ to seek the truth of the matter, these subversive, *guerilleros*, they do not really seek to rule, no, not to administer a space, not to govern a *pueblo*, *comprendo?* (DiSA)] 2 [No, mostly they seek power. (ASA)] 3 [Simply power. (ASA)] 4 [Of course **Your** ^(a) **Excellency** ⁽²⁾. (ASA)] 5 [They have become part of the culture of drug dependency. (ASA)] 6 [A **continent** of the future, which Africa is, does not need their type. (ASA)] 7 [They would -builders. (ASA)] 8 [Today, we are lucky to have in yours their reincarnation. (ASA)] 9 [Those statues, ^(a) **my Life President** ⁽³⁾ - a very brilliant idea. (ASA)] 10 [It will serve to prick the conscience of the United Nations. (CSA)] 11 [You very good ^(c) **lady Gudrum** ⁽⁴⁾. (ASA)] 12 [Just remember to give names of these subversives. (DiSA)] 13 [Even if they refuse to come home, we find their villages. (ASA)] 14 [Only one treatment good for family which supports guerillas hiding in Scandinavia and other American-type countries. (ASA)] 15 [Executioner of the French Revolution. (ASA)] 16 [He take care of



Danton - guillotine. (ASA) 17 [Saint-Just was a soul-brother to the immortal Robespierre. (ASA) 18 [Is why I like voodoo. (ASA) 19 [That also secret power? (DiSA) 20 [(a) *Mysterioso, pero amigo, tambien - muy peligroso* (5). (ASA) 21 [For those who are not chosen, very dangerous, (ASA) 22 [Is not suddenly that it manifest itself, like Red Brigades. (ASA) 23 [All of them very sudden, like ejaculation. (ASA) 24 [Voodoo power is tranquil, (ASA) 25 [extendido, like you making love to woman you really love possess. (ASA) 26 [You dominate her (ASA) 27 [but still you make the love prolong not to body alone but to her soul. (ASA) 28 [May I come in (a) **Your Excellency** (6)? (DiSA) 29 [*C'est sage. (a) Mon vieux* (7). (ASA) 30 [(a) **Your Excellency** (8), it was a difficult meeting. (ASA) 31 [The world bank was not very cooperative. (ASA) 32 [Not exactly, (a) **Your Excellency** (9). (ASA) 33 [They simply insisted on certain conditions...(ASA) 34 [What I care about conditions? (DiSA) 35 [Agree to any conditions just get the loan. (DiSA) 36 [It is not quite as easy as all that (a) **Your Excellency** (10). (ASA) 37 [They want to mortgage Bugara body and soul. (ASA) 38 [There is more to it, (a) **Your Excellency** (11). (ASA) 39 [They don't even want to hand over the money directly. (ASA) 40 [In fact, the Board dismissed that request outright. (ASA) 41 [There was no discussion. (ASA) 42 [What they mean by that? (DiSA) 43 [You not tell the bank of Bugara is her in Person. (ASA) 44 [(a) **Your Excellency** (12) may I reassured that I explained the position very thoroughly. (DiSA) 45 [But their decision is that they would only fund specific projects with the loan. (ASA) 46 [(a) **Your Excellency** (13), I did outline that possibility to them. (ASA) 47 [I left them in no uncertainty of such a consequence. (ASA) 48 [And still they say no? (DiSA) 49.....57 58 [that is a fact, (a) **Your Excellency** (18). (ASA) 59 [When the economy was buoyant Bugara never missed a payment. (ASA) 60 [I beg your pardon (a) **Dr life President** (19)? (DiSA) 61 [What the man talking about? (DiSA) 62 [You short of good currency paper at government mint? (DiSA) 63 [I'm trying to explain, (a) **Your Excellency** (20). (ASA) 64 [Even now, at this moment, our national currency is worth its size in toilet paper. (ASA) 65 [If we now go ahead and print more, it would... (ASA) 66 [What? (DiSA) 67 [What you say just now? (DiSA) 68 [(a) **Your Excellency** (21)? (DiSA) 69 [No, You said Bugara currency only worth something this and that. (ASA) 70 [(a) **Your Excellency** (22), I was only trying to illustrate...(ASA) 71 [...You think World bank give Bugara loan when you calling national currency shit paper. (ASA) 72 [(a) **My Life President** (23). (ASA) 73 [I assure Your Excellency I never...(ASA) 74 [Today I make you eat good old Bugara shit. (ASA) 75 [He reaches for the bell. (ASA) 76 [(a) **Your Excellency, my Life President** (24)...(ASA) 77 [(a) **Your Excellency** (25)? (DiSA) 78 [*Mais pas de quoi, (c) mon frère* (26). (ASA) 79 [(a) **Your Gracious Excellency** (27), I think I have found the right spot to



display the sculpture. (ASA) 80 [Yes. (ASA) 81 [I think not only (a) **Your Gracious Excellency** (28), (ASA) 82 [but your comrade Presidents, their Excellencies will be pleased. (ASA) 83 [... Visitors who come to consult the delegates cannot fail to see your Excellencies commanding figures. (ASA) 84 [My brothers approve. (ASA) 85 [See that the Secretary General is informed. (DiSA) 86 [The protocol officer will see me to arrange the unveiling ceremony. (CSA) 87 [(a) **Gudrum** (29), you will give him advice? (DiSA)] 88 [I think you have informed the World Press. (ASA) 89 [Of course (a) **Dr President** (30). (ASA) 90 [I am looking forward to the historic moment. (ASA) 91 [In fact, maybe I ought to go and inspect the location myself. (ASA) 92 [*Si*-(a) *Pero* (31), him *nino*. (ASA) 93 [(b) *Baby* (32), no, hum like child, *pequeno*. (ASA) 94 [Not understand power. (ASA) 95 [Not use power. (ASA) 96 [(b) **Good man** (33), *si muy simpatico pero*, not man of power. (ASA) 97 [What you think of Papa? (DiSA) 98 [I think he makes good Secretary-General. (ASA) 99 [(b) *Papa Doc Duvalier* (34)? (DiSA) 100 [*Si* he is a man of Power but er... (ASA) 101.....249 250 [But – is it choice? (DiSA) 251 [Or are you trapped? (DiSA) 252 [Lunch (c) **my brothers** (87), lunch! (ESA) 253 [Are we hungry or not? (DiSA) 254 [(a) **Your Excellencies, the Honorable Mayor of Hyacombe and his party** (88)! (ESA) 255 [(a) *Your Gracious Excellency* (89), we did not know that you had guests. (ASA) 256 [I mean...and such guess. (ASA) 257 [(a) *Your Excellencies* (90)! The entire continent of Africa is here. (ASA) 258 [(d) *My friend Mr Mayor* (91). (ASA) 259 [These are my brothers, (ASA) 260 [they are not guests. (ASA) 261 [So His Excellency General Barra Tuboum was able to visit us after all. (ASA) 262 [The media said there were some problems... (ASA) 263 [No. Like Napoleon! (ESA) 264 [(a) **Your Excellencies** (92), you will have to excuse me. (DiSA) 265 [I feel rather embarrassed. (ESA) 266 [You see, (ASA) 267 [we did not expect to meet (ASA) 268 [...I mean we have only one key. (ASA) 269 [Key? (DiSA) 270 [What Key? (DiSA) 271 [The key to the city of Hyacombe (a) **Your Excellency** (93). (ASA) 272 [We had made an appointment with President Dr Kamini to make a presentation today. (ASA) 273 [Freedom of the city of Hyacombe. (ASA) 274.....284 285 [(c) *My brothers* (98), this is Professor Batey, very good friend. (ASA) 286 [He is writing book on me which he calls *The Black Giant at Work*. (ASA) 287 [You know Gudrum is doing the other one, *The Giant at Play*. (ASA) 288 [People think Big Uncle Kamini never play, (ASA) 289 [but Miss Gudrum will show them. (CSA) 290 [This is President-for-life, Signor Gunema of... (ASA) 291 [Let me save you the trouble (a) **Your Excellency** (99), (DiSA) 292 [I know everyone of their excellencies, although I have not had the honour until now. (ASA) 293 [They are all proud of me anyway. (ASA) 294 [Professor Batey is like that, a very kind person. (ESA) 295 [When he visited me in Bugara too, he cried, just like that. (ASA) 296 [And you know why



he cried? (DiSA) 297 [Because of all the bad propoganda which the imperialist' press was making against me. (ASA) 298 [They said I killed people, (ASA) 299 [(They said) that I tortured people and lock them in prison (ASA) 300 [- all sort of bad things about me because I, (a) **Life President Dr Kamini** (100), I tell them to go about me and lock them to go to hell. (ASA) 301.....349 350 [I regret that I ever placed such reliance on him. (ESA) 351 [I have sent to inform the Secretary-General. (ASA) 352 [After all I come here on the affairs of the United States. (ASA) 353 [I want him to know what bad things the imperialists are doing to me just because I champion the cause of our people. (ASA) 354 [It is sad (a) **Your Excellency** (117), very sad (ESA).] 355 [I shall certainly lend a hand with your delegation while you are here, (a) **sir** (118). (CSA) 356..... 481 482 [Go and tell (c) **my brother Excellencies** (156) (DiSA) 483 [I am coming now. (ASA) 484 [Serve them drinks. (DiSA) 485 [I have been looking everywhere for you, (a) **Your Excellency** (153). (ASA) 486 [Your guests are waiting to...(ASA) 487 [You! If you are not careful I dismiss you. (DiSA) 488 [I am looking everywhere for you (ASA) 489 [and you tell me now you are looking for me. (ASA) 490 [Where you go all this time? (DiSA) 491 [Why you are not looking for my brother Excellencies. (DiSA) 492 [(a) **Your Excellency** (154), I was on the phone talking to Secretary-General. (ASA) 493 [He called on the emergency number over the matter of Your Excellencies statues. (ASA) 494 [I have no emergency when it is my lunch time, (ASA) 495 [how many times I tell you that? (DiSA) 496 [But I know that, (a) **Your Excellency** (155). (ASA) 497 [That is why I undertook to discuss the matter with him myself. (ASA) 498 [He has been in contact with Russians and the Americans. (ASA) 499 [Good. (ASA) 500 [The secretary General is a civil servant, that is all. (ASA) 501 [I should call him, (CSA) 502 [not that he should call me. (DiSA) 503 [Next time he wants to call, (ASA) 504[tell him he must make an appointment. (DiSA) 505 [I will (a) **Your Excellency** (156). (CSA) 506 [What you doing there waiting? (DiSA) 507 [Go and tell (c) **my brother Excellencies** (156) (DiSA) 508 [I am coming now. (ASA) 509 [Serve them drinks. (DiSA) 510 [They've been served, (a) **Your Excellency** (157). (ASA) 511 [I shall inform them you are on your way. (CSA) 512 [I am sorry (a) **Your Excellency** (158), very sorry. (ESA) 513 [I just did not know whether (ASA) 514 [...I mean you yourself ordered me to sit down (a) **Your Excellency** (159). (DiSA) 515 [Still no get sense, (a) **you white Makongo carver** (160). (ASA) 513 [No get sense at all. (ASA)]