

Constructing Urgency through Religious Communication: A Pragmatic Act Analysis of Nigerian Pentecostal Prayers During National Insecurity

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Abstract

Religious discourse has long been recognised as a powerful medium for shaping collective perceptions of social realities, yet little attention has been paid to how urgency is pragmatically constructed in Pentecostal prayers responding to national crises. This study examines the pragmatic organisation of urgency in selected Nigerian Pentecostal prayers addressing national insecurity. Drawing on Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Acts Theory, the study adopts a qualitative discourse-analytic approach to investigate how linguistic choices interact with contextual affordances to construct insecurity as an immediate spiritual emergency requiring collective intervention. The data comprise purposively selected prayer texts obtained from Pentecostal prayer meetings, published prayer manuals, and publicly available online broadcasts. The analysis identifies seven interrelated pragmatic acts through which urgency is progressively constructed: instilling fear, warning, directing, predicting, mobilising, complaining/lamenting, and repairing. Rather than functioning as isolated communicative actions, these acts operate sequentially to transform national insecurity into a discourse of collective spiritual action, emotional engagement, and anticipated divine restoration. Building on these findings, the study proposes a Sequential Pragmatic Model of Urgency Construction, demonstrating that urgency is realised as a dynamic communicative process rather than as a static linguistic or rhetorical feature. The study extends the explanatory scope of Pragmatic Acts Theory by showing that pragmatic acts may function as interconnected stages within larger discourse structures that accomplish complex institutional goals. It further contributes to scholarship on religious discourse and crisis communication by demonstrating that Pentecostal prayer functions simultaneously as spiritual practice, social action, emotional regulation, and organised crisis communication. The findings provide a framework for future studies of urgency in institutional and religious discourse across diverse socio-cultural contexts.

Keywords: *Pragmatic Acts Theory; Religious Discourse; Crisis Communication; Pentecostal Prayer; National Insecurity; Urgency; Discourse Pragmatics.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Religious discourse constitutes one of the most influential forms of public communication through which individuals and communities interpret social realities, negotiate uncertainty, and construct collective responses to crises. Beyond its devotional function, religious language performs important social, ideological, and communicative roles by shaping beliefs, reinforcing shared identities, and providing interpretive frameworks through which societies make sense of complex events (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1998). During periods of

political instability, armed conflict, economic hardship, and natural disasters, prayer frequently transcends private spirituality to become a public communicative practice through which believers articulate fear, construct hope, negotiate uncertainty, and collectively respond to perceived threats. Consequently, religious discourse provides an important site for investigating how language constructs meanings of crisis, urgency, and collective action.

Within linguistics, such communicative practices are most appropriately examined through pragmatics, which investigates how meaning is generated through the interaction between linguistic expressions and the contexts in which they are produced and interpreted. Unlike semantics, which focuses primarily on conventional meaning, pragmatics recognises that communicative meaning depends upon speakers' intentions, hearers' interpretations, shared background knowledge, and socio-cultural circumstances (Levinson, 1983; Mey, 2001). Language therefore functions not merely as a vehicle for transmitting information but as a form of social action through which speakers perform communicative acts that influence beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour. As Mey (2001) argues, utterances derive their pragmatic force from the contextual affordances surrounding their production rather than from linguistic structure alone. This perspective is particularly relevant to religious discourse, where prayers, declarations, lamentations, and prophetic utterances frequently perform multiple communicative functions simultaneously.

Among the numerous communicative resources available to speakers, urgency represents one of the most significant yet comparatively underexplored pragmatic phenomena. Urgency may be understood as the discursive construction of situations as requiring immediate attention, immediate response, or immediate intervention. Rather than functioning merely as an emotional reaction, urgency is pragmatically realised through linguistic choices that minimise temporal distance between crisis and response, intensify perceived threats, and encourage immediate action. Such choices include imperative constructions, performative declarations, repetition, evaluative expressions, intensifiers, present-tense assertions, and ritual formulae that collectively position particular situations as demanding urgent intervention. Consequently, urgency is best understood not simply as a rhetorical feature but as a context-dependent communicative accomplishment emerging from the interaction between language, context, and shared social knowledge (Mey, 2001; Odebunmi, 2006).

The communicative significance of urgency is particularly evident within Pentecostal Christianity, where prayer occupies a central position in religious life and public engagement. Pentecostal theology places considerable emphasis on direct encounters with the Holy Spirit, spiritual warfare, prophetic declarations, miraculous intervention, and the transformative power of spoken prayer. Consequently, Pentecostal prayers frequently extend beyond personal devotion to become collective performances through which worshippers interpret contemporary social conditions, negotiate existential uncertainties, and express expectations of divine intervention (Marshall, 2009; Ukah, 2008). Prayer meetings, revival programmes, intercessory gatherings, and digitally mediated worship services therefore constitute important communicative spaces in which religious leaders interpret public crises through theological frameworks and mobilise believers towards collective spiritual action.

The Nigerian context provides a particularly significant setting for examining these communicative processes. Over the past two decades, persistent insecurity characterised by insurgency, terrorism, kidnapping, armed banditry, communal conflicts, and other forms of organised violence has generated widespread social anxiety while simultaneously challenging public confidence in governmental institutions. Alongside political debates and security

interventions, religious communities have increasingly interpreted these crises through spiritual frameworks that present insecurity not merely as a political or socio-economic problem but also as a manifestation of spiritual conflict requiring divine intervention (Marshall, 2009; Ellis & ter Haar, 2004). Within Pentecostal discourse especially, prayer has emerged as an important communicative resource through which believers collectively interpret national insecurity, negotiate uncertainty, sustain hope, and construct expectations concerning divine restoration.

These communicative practices demonstrate that Pentecostal prayer performs multiple pragmatic functions beyond devotional expression. Through carefully selected linguistic choices, prayer leaders construct insecurity as an immediate existential threat, represent divine intervention as the principal solution to national crises, and mobilise congregations towards sustained spiritual engagement. Prayer therefore functions not only as communication with the divine but also as a form of public discourse through which national realities are interpreted, evaluated, and symbolically contested. In this respect, the language of prayer operates simultaneously as persuasion, social action, emotional regulation, and collective meaning-making.

Although scholarship on religious discourse has expanded considerably across pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and theology, existing studies have predominantly examined speech acts, metaphorical expressions, rhetorical strategies, identity construction, persuasion, and the social functions of religious language (Chilton, 2004; Fairclough, 1995; Odebunmi, 2006). Research on Nigerian Pentecostal discourse has similarly demonstrated how prayer and other religious communicative practices shape spiritual experience, social cohesion, ideological positioning, and communal resilience (Ukah, 2008; Marshall, 2009). While these studies have significantly advanced understanding of Pentecostal communication, they have devoted comparatively little attention to the pragmatic organisation of urgency within prayers responding to national crises.

More specifically, existing studies frequently treat urgency as a rhetorical or emotional feature embedded within persuasive discourse rather than as a context-dependent pragmatic accomplishment realised through identifiable communicative acts. Consequently, relatively little is known about how Pentecostal prayer leaders employ specific pragmatic resources to transform national insecurity into an immediate spiritual emergency requiring collective intervention. This limitation is particularly significant because the construction of urgency shapes how worshippers interpret crisis, evaluate institutional responses, negotiate collective emotions, and participate in organised religious action. A systematic investigation of these pragmatic processes therefore extends current understanding of religious discourse while contributing to broader discussions of language as social action, crisis communication, and institutional discourse.

The present study addresses this gap by examining how urgency is pragmatically constructed in selected Nigerian Pentecostal prayers addressing national insecurity. Drawing on Jacob Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory, the study investigates how linguistic choices interact with contextual affordances to produce communicative acts that intensify perceptions of crisis, invoke immediate divine intervention, and mobilise collective participation in prayer. Unlike previous studies that primarily identify isolated pragmatic or rhetorical features, this study demonstrates that urgency is progressively realised through a sequence of interconnected pragmatic acts that collectively organise emotional orientation, spiritual action, and expectations of national restoration.

Accordingly, the study makes four principal contributions. First, it reconceptualises urgency as a dynamic pragmatic accomplishment rather than a purely rhetorical or emotional phenomenon. Second, it proposes a Sequential Pragmatic Model of Urgency Construction, demonstrating how urgency emerges progressively through seven interconnected pragmatic acts operating within Pentecostal prayer discourse. Third, it extends Mey's Pragmatic Acts Theory by showing that pragmatic acts may function sequentially to accomplish broader institutional communicative objectives rather than merely operating as isolated context-dependent actions. Finally, the study contributes to scholarship on religious discourse and crisis communication by demonstrating that Pentecostal prayer functions simultaneously as spiritual practice, public discourse, emotional regulation, and organised crisis communication. Collectively, these contributions reinforce the central proposition that language not only reflects social realities but also actively participates in constructing, negotiating, and responding to moments of profound national uncertainty.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Religious Discourse as Pragmatic Action

Religious discourse has increasingly emerged as an important area of inquiry within pragmatics because it provides a rich context for examining language as social action. Unlike ordinary conversation, religious communication is inherently performative: utterances are intended not merely to convey information but also to accomplish spiritual, interpersonal, ideological, and institutional objectives. Consequently, the interpretation of religious language depends not only on linguistic forms but also on the socio-cultural, institutional, and theological contexts within which communication occurs (Mey, 2001; Odebunmi, 2006; Jaworski & Coupland, 2006).

From a pragmatic perspective, prayer extends beyond devotional expression to become a multidimensional communicative practice through which speakers construct identities, negotiate shared beliefs, express emotions, and organise collective action. Mey (2001) argues that utterances acquire meaning through their situated performance rather than through linguistic structure alone, while Odebunmi (2006) emphasises that communicative acts derive their meanings from contextual affordances. Within Pentecostal worship, prayer therefore functions as a socially situated discourse through which religious leaders interpret contemporary realities, legitimise theological positions, and shape congregational responses to social events.

Recent scholarship further reinforces this pragmatic orientation. Cap (2021) argues that institutional communicators strategically mobilise contextual resources to shape audience interpretation and behavioural responses, while Kádár and Haugh (2013) demonstrate that ritual communication derives its communicative force from shared cultural expectations and institutional conventions. Although these studies are not confined to religious discourse, they provide valuable insights into how context-dependent communication operates within institutional settings.

Studies of African Pentecostalism similarly show that religious discourse functions as an important medium through which believers interpret public realities. Marshall (2009) observes that Nigerian Pentecostalism increasingly engages political, economic, and social issues through religious language, while Ukah (2008) argues that Pentecostal prayer reinforces institutional authority, theological worldviews, and collective participation. Ellis and ter Haar

(2004) likewise contend that religion in Africa provides a significant framework through which communities interpret public life and respond to social crises.

Despite these contributions, existing scholarship has primarily examined religious discourse in relation to ideology, persuasion, institutional authority, ritual communication, and identity construction. Comparatively less attention has been devoted to explaining how urgency is pragmatically constructed during periods of national crisis. Consequently, while Pentecostal prayer is widely recognised as an important communicative practice, the context-sensitive mechanisms through which urgency is progressively realised remain insufficiently theorised.

2.2 Pragmatic Studies of Pentecostal Prayer

The growing body of scholarship on Pentecostal prayer reflects increasing recognition that prayer constitutes a legitimate object of linguistic and discourse-pragmatic inquiry. Contemporary studies have moved beyond theological interpretations to examine prayer as an organised communicative practice characterised by identifiable pragmatic strategies, rhetorical patterns, interactional structures, and institutional functions. Collectively, this scholarship demonstrates that Pentecostal prayer is a highly structured discourse through which religious leaders construct authority, regulate congregational participation, negotiate shared beliefs, and perform social action.

One major strand of research has examined Pentecostal prayer through Speech Act Theory, demonstrating the predominance of directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative acts in religious communication. While this approach has been valuable for identifying communicative intentions, scholars increasingly acknowledge that the interpretation of prayer cannot be adequately explained through illocutionary classifications alone because the communicative force of religious utterances depends upon contextual, theological, and institutional knowledge (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Mey, 2001). This limitation has encouraged greater reliance on context-sensitive pragmatic approaches.

Accordingly, Odebunmi (2006) argues that religious utterances derive their meanings from the affordances of their communicative contexts rather than from lexical meanings alone. From this perspective, repeated imperatives, prophetic declarations, scriptural allusions, ritual formulae, and communal responses function as pragmatic acts whose communicative force depends on shared theological assumptions and institutional practices. Such an approach is particularly appropriate for Pentecostal prayer, where identical linguistic forms may perform different communicative functions across interactional contexts.

Beyond pragmatics, discourse analysts have examined Pentecostal communication as institutional discourse. Fairclough (1995) argues that institutional language simultaneously reflects and reproduces ideology, power, and authority. Applied to Pentecostalism, this perspective explains how prayer functions not merely as devotional language but also as a socially organised discourse through which religious leaders construct authority, interpret public realities, and mobilise collective participation (Marshall, 2009; Ukah, 2008). Ellis and ter Haar (2004) similarly contend that religion in African societies provides an influential framework for interpreting political and social realities, making religious discourse an important site for understanding collective responses to crisis.

Research on ritual communication further reinforces these observations. Kádár and Haugh (2013) argue that ritual discourse relies heavily on shared expectations and contextual knowledge, while Jaworski and Coupland (2006) emphasise that institutional discourse is shaped by cultural practices and interactional conventions. Within Pentecostal settings, these

insights explain why repeated prayer formulae, performative declarations, and ritualised expressions function as communicative resources that sustain congregational participation and reinforce shared theological commitments.

Despite these contributions, existing scholarship has focused predominantly on speech acts, institutional authority, ideological construction, ritual communication, and persuasive discourse. Comparatively little attention has been devoted to explaining how multiple pragmatic acts interact to construct urgency during collective prayers responding to national insecurity. Consequently, while previous research has significantly advanced understanding of Pentecostal discourse, the pragmatic organisation of urgency remains insufficiently explored.

2.3 Urgency as a Pragmatic Resource in Religious Crisis Communication

Although urgency is frequently discussed in studies of persuasion, institutional discourse, and crisis communication, comparatively few studies examine it as a distinct pragmatic accomplishment. Within discourse studies, urgency is increasingly understood as a context-dependent communicative construction through which speakers minimise the temporal distance between an existing threat and the required response, thereby encouraging immediate action. Rather than arising from isolated lexical choices, urgency is realised through contextual assumptions, evaluative language, directive forms, emotional framing, and shared social knowledge that shape audience interpretation (Cap, 2021; Mey, 2001).

Recent scholarship similarly demonstrates that language plays a central role in constructing perceptions of crisis. Morehouse et al. (2025) argue that religious language shapes audience trust and supportive responses during organisational crises by activating shared identities and contextual beliefs. Likewise, Kádár and Haugh (2013) observe that ritual communication derives its force from shared contextual expectations, making religious discourse particularly effective in coordinating collective responses during periods of uncertainty.

Studies of Nigerian Pentecostalism further show that prayer functions as an organised communicative practice through which social anxieties are interpreted and negotiated. Richman (2020) demonstrates that Pentecostal warfare prayers transform prayer into an embodied performance where language functions simultaneously as spiritual engagement and social action. Similarly, Ekechi (2025a) argues that Pentecostal prayer language increasingly shapes public interpretations of fear, insecurity, and vigilance beyond church settings, while Ekechi (2024) shows that crisis situations intensify the pragmatic functions of prayer by enabling believers to negotiate fear, uncertainty, and existential threat through religious discourse.

Despite these contributions, existing scholarship has largely examined urgency from theological, rhetorical, or organisational perspectives, paying limited attention to how it is pragmatically organised within Pentecostal prayer. More specifically, little attention has been given to the interconnected communicative acts through which prayer leaders progressively transform national insecurity into an immediate spiritual emergency requiring collective intervention. Consequently, the pragmatic architecture through which urgency is constructed remains insufficiently theorised.

Addressing this limitation, the present study conceptualises urgency as a context-sensitive pragmatic accomplishment realised through recurrent communicative acts. Drawing on Pragmatic Acts Theory, it demonstrates that urgency emerges progressively through seven interrelated praxis: instilling fear, warning, directing, predicting, mobilising, lamenting, and

repairing, which collectively organise emotional engagement, communal participation, and expectations of divine intervention during periods of national insecurity.

2.4 Research Gap

Previous studies have established Pentecostal prayer as an important site for examining religious discourse, speech acts, persuasion, and identity construction (Marshall, 2009; Ukah, 2008; Ekechi, 2024). They demonstrate that prayer functions as a performative communicative practice through which religious leaders interpret social realities, reinforce theological beliefs, and mobilise collective participation. Recent scholarship has also highlighted the role of religious language in shaping responses to crises (Morehouse et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, important gaps remain. Existing studies have focused primarily on sermons, general prayer practices, speech acts, and rhetorical strategies, paying limited attention to how urgency is pragmatically constructed in prayers addressing national insecurity. Consequently, urgency has largely been treated as a rhetorical feature rather than a context-dependent pragmatic accomplishment realised through interconnected communicative acts.

Addressing this gap, the present study employs Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory to examine how urgency is constructed in selected Nigerian Pentecostal prayers. It demonstrates that urgency emerges through seven interrelated pragmatic acts: instilling fear, warning, directing, predicting, mobilising, lamenting, and repairing and proposes a Sequential Pragmatic Model of Urgency Construction, thereby extending Pragmatic Acts Theory and contributing to research on religious discourse and crisis communication.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored in Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Acts Theory (PAT), which provides the analytical framework for examining how urgency is pragmatically constructed in selected Pentecostal prayers addressing national insecurity. The theory is particularly appropriate because the communicative strategies investigated derive their meanings primarily from contextual rather than purely linguistic resources. Since urgency in Pentecostal prayer discourse is realised through context-sensitive communicative actions, Pragmatic Acts Theory offers a more comprehensive explanation than approaches that focus primarily on grammatical or semantic properties of utterances.

Pragmatic Acts Theory emerged as an extension of Speech Act Theory developed by Austin (1962) and later refined by Searle (1969). Austin argued that language performs actions rather than merely describing reality and distinguished three dimensions of speech: the locutionary act (the production of an utterance), the illocutionary act (the communicative intention), and the perlocutionary act (the effect produced on the hearer). Building on this framework, Searle (1969) classified speech acts into five categories: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Although these classifications significantly advanced pragmatic inquiry, they have been criticised for treating communicative actions as relatively fixed categories while paying insufficient attention to the dynamic role of context in meaning construction.

Responding to this limitation, Mey (2001) argues that human communication extends beyond fixed speech-act categories because language users continually adapt linguistic resources to particular social situations. Meaning therefore emerges not solely from illocutionary force or sentence structure but from the interaction between linguistic expressions and the contextual conditions under which they are produced and interpreted. Odebunmi (2006)

similarly maintains that utterances become meaningful only when interpreted within the affordances of their contexts. Consequently, speech acts become pragmatic acts only when situated within the socio-cultural and institutional environments that enable interlocutors to infer intended meanings.

The central concept in Pragmatic Acts Theory is the *pragmeme*, the abstract context-dependent communicative practice underlying social interaction. Its actual realisation in discourse is the *pract*, which represents the concrete manifestation of a *pragmeme* in naturally occurring communication (Mey, 2001; Odebunmi, 2006). Since every communicative event occurs under unique contextual conditions, no two *practs* are identical; each is a context-specific instantiation shaped by the affordances of a particular communicative situation.

Mey (2001) further explains that pragmatic acts emerge through the interaction of two dimensions: the Agent Part and the Action Part. The Agent Part comprises speakers' background knowledge, institutional membership, cultural experiences, religious beliefs, and other contextual resources that shape interpretation, together with the constraints and affordances governing communication. The Action Part concerns the linguistic choices through which communicative intentions are realised. Meaning therefore arises from the interaction between contextual knowledge and linguistic performance rather than from linguistic forms in isolation. Pragmatic Acts Theory is particularly suitable for analysing Pentecostal prayer because prayer is fundamentally a context-dependent communicative activity. The interpretation of prophetic declarations, repeated imperatives, lamentations, scriptural allusions, and ritual formulae depends not merely on lexical meanings but also on shared theological assumptions concerning divine intervention, spiritual warfare, faith, prophecy, deliverance, and collective worship. Consequently, identical linguistic expressions may perform different communicative functions depending on the contextual assumptions shared by prayer leaders and congregants.

The theory is equally appropriate for analysing urgency because urgency itself is a contextual accomplishment rather than a purely linguistic phenomenon. Within Pentecostal prayers addressing national insecurity, urgency is realised through communicative acts that construct insecurity as an immediate spiritual emergency demanding divine intervention. The pragmatic force of these utterances derives from the interaction between linguistic choices and shared beliefs concerning national crisis, collective vulnerability, divine power, and the efficacy of prayer.

Accordingly, this study employs Pragmatic Acts Theory to identify and interpret the recurrent *practs* through which urgency is constructed in selected Pentecostal prayers on Nigeria's security crisis. The analysis demonstrates that urgency is systematically realised through seven interrelated pragmatic acts: instilling fear, warning, directing, predicting, mobilising, lamenting, and repairing, which collectively construct insecurity as a spiritual emergency requiring immediate divine intervention. By foregrounding context, communicative intention, and social action, Pragmatic Acts Theory provides the most appropriate analytical framework for explaining how urgency is progressively realised in Pentecostal prayer discourse.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research design, employing descriptive and interpretive approaches to investigate how urgency is pragmatically constructed in selected Pentecostal

prayers addressing Nigeria's security crisis. A qualitative design is considered appropriate because the study seeks to explain how context-sensitive communicative actions are realised through naturally occurring religious discourse rather than to measure linguistic variables quantitatively. The approach enables an in-depth interpretation of the contextual meanings, inferential processes, and communicative intentions underlying Pentecostal prayer performances.

The study is further situated within the tradition of discourse analysis, where prayer texts are treated as performative and socially embedded communicative events. This orientation allows the analysis to account for the interaction between linguistic expressions and the socio-religious contexts in which they are produced. Since the primary concern of the study is the pragmatic construction of urgency, attention is directed to how prayer leaders employ language to construct immediate threat, invoke divine intervention, and mobilise collective participation during prayer.

The data comprise both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained through direct participation in Pentecostal prayer meetings, during which prayers addressing national issues were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. The secondary data were drawn from published Pentecostal prayer manuals and publicly available YouTube prayer broadcasts. In total, fifteen prayer texts were collected to constitute the sampling frame.

From this corpus, six prayer texts were purposively selected for detailed analysis. The sample comprised two prayer sessions obtained from YouTube broadcasts and four texts extracted from published prayer books produced by major Pentecostal ministries in Nigeria, including Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, Our Daily Manna, Rhapsody of Realities, and Living Faith Church Worldwide. Purposive sampling was adopted because the study specifically required prayer texts that explicitly addressed Nigeria's security challenges and contained rich instances of context-dependent pragmatic constructions of urgency. This sampling strategy ensured that the selected texts provided sufficient linguistic evidence for addressing the objectives of the study.

Because a substantial proportion of the data existed in spoken form, all recorded prayer sessions were transcribed verbatim before analysis. To enhance transcription accuracy and efficiency, the recordings were processed using **Otter AI** and **Transcribe** software, after which the transcripts were manually checked against the original recordings to ensure fidelity. The resulting texts were subsequently edited, compressed, categorised according to thematic focus, and line-numbered to facilitate systematic referencing during analysis.

The data were analysed qualitatively using Jacob Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory as the analytical framework. Each prayer text was read repeatedly to identify utterances that constructed urgency within the discourse. Rather than analysing isolated lexical items, the study examined utterances within their immediate communicative contexts to determine how contextual affordances contributed to meaning construction. Similar pragmatic patterns were identified, compared across the corpus, and grouped into analytically meaningful categories.

This inductive analytical procedure resulted in the identification of seven recurrent pragmatic acts through which urgency is constructed in Pentecostal prayers addressing national insecurity: **instilling fear, warning, directing, predicting, mobilising, lamenting, and repairing**. These pragmatic acts were subsequently interpreted in relation to their linguistic realisation, communicative functions, and contextual significance within Pentecostal prayer discourse. The analysis therefore demonstrates how urgency is systematically accomplished

through context-dependent communicative actions rather than through isolated grammatical structures or speech acts.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the pragmatic acts through which urgency is enacted in selected Nigerian Pentecostal prayers addressing the country's security crisis. Drawing on Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Acts Theory, the analysis demonstrates that urgency is not merely an emotional reaction to insecurity but a context-dependent communicative accomplishment realised through identifiable pragmatic acts. These acts derive their force from the interaction between linguistic forms, shared religious beliefs, socio-political realities, and the performative expectations that characterise Pentecostal worship.

The analysis reveals seven recurrent pragmatic acts through which urgency is constructed and sustained throughout the prayer discourse. These include **instilling fear, warning, directing, predicting, mobilising, complaining/lamenting, and repairing**. Rather than functioning independently, these acts operate sequentially and interactively. Prayer leaders first construct insecurity as an immediate and overwhelming threat, warn against the consequences of delayed intervention, direct both divine and congregational action, predict imminent transformation, mobilise collective participation, articulate communal suffering, and finally project divine restoration as the ultimate resolution of the national crisis. Collectively, these pragmatic acts transform prayer from a devotional activity into a coordinated discourse of national intervention, where language performs religious, emotional, and social actions simultaneously.

5.1 Pract of Instilling Fear

One of the most prominent pragmatic acts through which urgency is realised in the selected Pentecostal prayers is the pract of instilling fear. Within Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory, this pract functions as a context-dependent communicative action through which prayer leaders deliberately construct insecurity as immediate, overwhelming, and intolerable in order to legitimise urgent divine intervention and collective participation in prayer. Fear, in this context, is neither accidental nor merely emotional; rather, it is strategically produced through linguistic choices that shape congregants' perception of national insecurity as an existential crisis requiring immediate spiritual response. Consequently, fear becomes a mobilising rather than paralysing resource, encouraging intensified participation in warfare prayers.

The data show that prayer leaders consistently construct Nigeria's security situation as a present and escalating threat. Instead of describing isolated incidents of violence, insecurity is represented as a coordinated assault on the nation's collective existence. This pragmatic construction is evident in the following extracts:

Extract 1

"Every power assigned to make Nigeria ungovernable through bloodshed, confusion, and terror, be disgraced by fire, in the name of Jesus." (Line 47)

"Any hidden agenda to plunge this nation into chaos, violence, and fear, scatter by fire, in Jesus' name." (Line 43)

"Every demonic network sponsoring kidnapping, banditry, and ritual killings in this land, be exposed and destroyed." (Line 48)

"This nation is under serious attack; if God does not intervene now, we may lose everything." (Line 95)

These utterances pragmatically perform what may be described as a **threat-escalation act**, in which insecurity is amplified beyond individual criminal incidents to a comprehensive national emergency. Lexical items such as *bloodshed*, *terror*, *chaos*, *ungovernable*, and *lose everything* project catastrophic consequences and compress the temporal distance between crisis and response. Within the contextual affordances of Nigerian insecurity and Pentecostal spirituality, these expressions become felicitous praxis because they resonate with congregants' lived experiences of violence, kidnapping, terrorism, and institutional inadequacies. Rather than presenting insecurity as a political problem alone, the prayers reconstruct it as a spiritually orchestrated assault requiring immediate divine intervention. Fear therefore functions pragmatically as a mechanism for legitimising collective spiritual action.

A closely related strategy involves the compression of time through immediacy framing. Prayer leaders repeatedly eliminate any temporal distance between violence and prayer, presenting insecurity as unfolding simultaneously with the prayer event itself.

Extract 2

"As we are here praying, lives are being taken..." (Line 263)

"...Amen as we command peace over Nigeria." (Line 172)

These utterances perform an **immediacy-framing act** by collapsing the distinction between present experience and ongoing violence. The expression *as we are here praying* positions congregants within the unfolding crisis, thereby intensifying the perceived necessity of immediate prayer. Urgency is consequently constructed not through emotional exaggeration but through temporal compression, where delay becomes spiritually and morally unacceptable.

Closely associated with immediacy is the projection of catastrophic outcomes. Prayer leaders frequently extend the consequences of insecurity beyond individual victims to the continuity of the Nigerian state itself.

Extract 3

"...If God does not intervene now, we may lose this nation." (Line 95)

"...Ransom this nation from every power that want to destroy her destiny." (Line 189)

Here, insecurity is represented as an existential rather than episodic threat. The expressions *lose this nation* and *destroy her destiny* perform a **catastrophic projection act**, constructing national survival as contingent upon immediate divine intervention. Such pragmatic framing legitimises heightened emotional engagement and prepares participants for sustained spiritual warfare.

Another important strategy is the totalisation of threat. Rather than restricting violence to particular regions or communities, prayer leaders extend insecurity across all geographical and social boundaries.

Extract 4

"...No place is safe; anyone can be next." (Line 264)

"Everywhere we turn, there is fear; Lord, intervene now." (Line 248)

"No one under this covering will be taken captive! Amen." (Line 177)

These utterances perform a **threat-totalisation act**, employing expressions such as *no place, anyone, everywhere*, and *no one* to erase distinctions between safe and unsafe spaces. Fear therefore becomes collective rather than selective, compelling universal participation in prayer. Within Mey's framework, this pract succeeds because it draws upon shared experiential knowledge that insecurity is unpredictable and potentially affects every member of society.

The construction of fear is further intensified through the denial of human containment. Prayer leaders repeatedly present insecurity as exceeding the capacity of political institutions, security agencies, or human strategies to resolve.

Extract 5

"This situation has gone beyond human control." (Line 265)

"...before the nation descends into chaos." (Line 103)

"This battle is not against flesh and blood." (Line 142)

These utterances perform a **containment-failure act**, removing confidence from secular institutions and repositioning divine intervention as the only viable solution. Within Pentecostal ideology, this framing authorises aggressive warfare prayers because insecurity is reconstructed as fundamentally spiritual rather than merely political.

The linguistic realisation of fear is reinforced through emotionally charged laments that transform sorrow into urgent appeals.

Extract 6

"Oh God, how long will this bloodshed continue in this land?" (Line 149)

"Father, Nigeria is bleeding; killings have become normal, and life has lost value." (Line 150)

"O Lord, how long shall innocent blood continue to flow in this Land?" (Line 151)

These lamentative expressions perform an **alarm act** in which interrogatives such as *how long* presuppose that continued violence has exceeded acceptable limits. Rather than requesting information, the interrogatives communicate moral protest and intensify the urgency for immediate divine intervention.

Fear is equally sustained through grammatical choices that represent insecurity as continuous and unresolved.

"They are killing innocent people every day." (Line 152)

"Every altar speaking violence against Nigeria, catch fire and be consumed, in Jesus' name." (Line 266)

"Enough of killings, enough of fear, enough of blood on our streets!" (Line 46)

"Every power sponsoring violence in this nation..." (Line 53)

The recurrent use of present continuous constructions performs a **threat-persistence act**, portraying violence as active, ongoing, and resistant to ordinary intervention. Consequently, prayer becomes an equally continuous act of resistance in which urgency is repeatedly renewed.

Finally, the data demonstrate the strategic deployment of negative polarity items to universalise insecurity and eliminate any perception of safety. Expressions such as *none of us*, *any power*, *anyone*, *never again*, *no longer*, *at all*, and *a single innocent life* extend fear across persons, places, and time, thereby strengthening the pragmatic force of urgency.

Extracts 7–8 illustrate this pattern:

"...none of us can travel freely anymore." (Line 252)

"Do not allow any power to continue this bloodshed in Nigeria." (Line 153)

"Let anyone plotting violence against this nation be exposed." (Line 267)

"Let innocent blood never be shed in this land again in the mighty name of Jesus." (Line 268)

"May Nigeria no longer be a place of fear and terror." (Line 96)

"Do not let a single innocent life be wasted." (Line 269)

"Lord, how long will this violence continue...?" (Line 149)

"Is there any peace left in this land for Christians?" (Line 270)

Within Mey's Pragmatic Acts Theory, these negative polarity constructions perform a **totalisation act**, expanding insecurity across temporal, spatial, and social boundaries while simultaneously intensifying the necessity for immediate divine intervention. By removing possibilities of moderation or exception, they transform urgency into a collective moral imperative that legitimises persistent prayer, reinforces communal solidarity, and sustains the perception that divine intervention cannot be postponed.

5.2 Pract of Warning

Following the construction of fear, the discourse progresses to the pract of warning, through which urgency is projected into the future by presenting impending catastrophe as the inevitable consequence of delayed divine intervention or collective spiritual complacency. Whereas the pract of instilling fear foregrounds the immediate reality of insecurity, warning extends this perception by constructing future scenarios that become increasingly disastrous if prompt action is not taken. Within Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory, warning functions as a future-oriented pragmeme that links present circumstances with anticipated consequences, thereby legitimising sustained prayer, spiritual vigilance, and collective responsibility.

The analysis reveals that warning is primarily realised through conditional constructions that connect delayed intervention with national collapse. Prayer leaders consistently employ hypothetical projections not merely to predict disaster but to compel immediate participation in spiritual warfare.

Extract 9

"If these powers of bloodshed are not stopped now, Nigeria will descend into chaos." (Line 260)

This utterance performs a **conditional catastrophe warning act**. The conditional marker *if* establishes a causal relationship between inaction and national breakdown, while the temporal marker *now* narrows the available response time. Pragmatically, the utterance functions as more than a prediction; it assigns urgency by presenting immediate prayer as the only available strategy for preventing catastrophe. Within the Pentecostal communicative

context, such warnings legitimise aggressive warfare prayers by portraying divine intervention as both necessary and time-sensitive.

Warning is further reinforced through threshold logic, where insecurity is represented as approaching a critical point beyond which recovery may become impossible.

Extract 10

"If we ignore this violence, the consequences will be heavier than what we see now."
(Line 277)

Rather than projecting sudden destruction, this utterance performs a **future-intensification warning act**, suggesting that insecurity will progressively worsen if collective action is delayed. The comparative expression *heavier than what we see now* constructs violence as an escalating phenomenon rather than a stable condition. Consequently, urgency is sustained without creating uncontrolled panic, encouraging continued participation in prayer while maintaining emotional discipline among congregants.

A similar pattern occurs where warning is explicitly tied to temporal immediacy.

Extract 11

"If we don't pray now, this crisis will overtake the nation completely." (Line 283)

The utterance performs a **time-sensitive warning act** in which *now* functions as an urgency marker that collapses the temporal distance between present action and future consequence. Prayer is therefore represented as emergency intervention rather than routine religious practice. Within Mey's framework, this warning derives its pragmatic force from shared Pentecostal beliefs that delayed spiritual action increases vulnerability to demonic activity. Consequently, the utterance legitimises prolonged fasting, prayer vigils, and intensified intercessory programmes.

Beyond appealing to divine intervention, warning also redistributes responsibility to the Christian community itself.

Extract 12

"If the Church does not rise now, this nation will keep bleeding." (Line 281)

This utterance performs a **collective-responsibility warning act** by repositioning the Church as an active participant in addressing national insecurity. Rather than locating responsibility exclusively in divine action, the prayer leader expands accountability to include the congregation. Urgency is therefore intensified through obligation; failure to pray is implicitly represented as contributing to the continuation of national suffering. This construction reflects a distinctive feature of Pentecostal discourse in which believers are viewed as authorised participants in spiritual warfare rather than passive observers of divine activity.

Warnings also function pastorally by balancing urgency with emotional restraint.

Extract 13

"If we do not cry to God now, this land may experience greater sorrow." (Line 285)

"If one part of the nation is bleeding, all of us must cry out." (Line 168)

These utterances perform **pastoral warning acts** that transform fear into collective responsibility without encouraging despair. The modal expression *may experience* softens certainty while preserving seriousness, allowing the speaker to maintain emotional control over the congregation. The second utterance further expands warning beyond individual experience by framing national suffering as a shared burden requiring collective spiritual response. Consequently, warning becomes an instrument for sustaining vigilance rather than generating panic.

The data further demonstrate that warning operates through two complementary orientations: alerting divine attention and awakening congregational consciousness. Although God is the explicit addressee in many prayers, the warning simultaneously functions as a performative invocation through which divine intervention is represented as urgently required.

Extract 14

"Father, send your rescue angel to deliver Nigeria from every force of destruction." (Line 246)

"Lord, if you do not step in now, this nation is heading for destruction." (Line 279)

These utterances perform **divine-alert warning acts**. Rather than implying that God lacks knowledge of national events, the warnings ritualise urgency by foregrounding impending catastrophe and invoking immediate intervention. Within the Pentecostal worldview, such expressions reinforce the belief that fervent prayer activates divine response. Warning therefore functions less as information than as performative invocation.

At the congregational level, warning seeks to awaken collective consciousness and discourage passivity.

Extract 15

"Church, if we keep quiet, this crisis will consume us all." (Line 275)

"If the Church does not rise now, this nation will keep bleeding." (Line 281)

These utterances perform **congregational-alert acts**, repositioning silence as complicity in national decline. By employing the inclusive pronoun *we*, the prayer leader transforms insecurity from an external event into a shared moral responsibility. Within Mey's Pragmatic Acts Theory, the warning becomes meaningful because participants recognise themselves as legitimate actors within the communicative event. Urgency is therefore distributed collectively rather than remaining the exclusive responsibility of religious leaders.

Linguistically, warning is realised through recurrent formulaic expressions, conditional structures, and eschatological projections. Formulae such as *This is not the time to sleep* and *We are getting to a point where it may be too late* function as ritualised alerts whose warning force depends upon shared cultural and religious assumptions.

Extract 16

"This is not the time to sleep..." (Line 242)

"We are getting to a point where it may be too late." (Line 278)

These expressions perform **formulaic warning acts** by replacing complacency with vigilance. Within Pentecostal discourse, *sleep* metaphorically represents spiritual negligence

rather than physical rest, enabling the warning to operate simultaneously at literal and symbolic levels.

Similarly, conditional threat structures strengthen the logical relationship between action and consequence.

Extract 17

"If we keep quiet, this violence will consume the nation." (Line 275)

"If we do nothing, this crisis will overtake us." (Line 295)

These utterances perform **conditional threat warning acts**, establishing a cause-and-effect model through which silence becomes directly associated with escalating insecurity. Rather than presenting catastrophe as inevitable, the warnings portray it as preventable through immediate collective prayer. This construction intensifies urgency while simultaneously preserving hope that the projected outcome can still be reversed.

Finally, warning assumes an eschatological dimension by locating national insecurity within broader Christian narratives of judgement and divine intervention.

Extract 18

"If God does not intervene now, we may lose everything." (Line 95)

"If we do not repent, judgment is coming upon this land." (Line 287)

These utterances perform **eschatological warning acts**, extending urgency beyond physical insecurity to include moral and spiritual consequences. Shared biblical knowledge authorises these warnings, enabling them to function with heightened legitimacy and persuasive force. By connecting national insecurity with divine judgement, the prayer leaders reinforce the necessity for immediate repentance, sustained intercession, and spiritual renewal.

5.3 Pract of Directing

Having established insecurity as an immediate national emergency through the practs of instilling fear and warning, Pentecostal prayer leaders proceed to the pract of directing, through which urgency is transformed into immediate spiritual action.

Unlike warning, which projects future consequences if intervention is delayed, directing is present-oriented and interventionist. It seeks to influence divine action and congregational behaviour through authoritative commands, exhortations, and ritual instructions. Within Jacob Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory, directing constitutes a high-authority pragmeme whose force derives from shared Pentecostal beliefs regarding spiritual authority, divine responsiveness, and the efficacy of faith-filled speech.

Consequently, directing is not interpreted as impolite or coercive; rather, it is recognised as a legitimate performative strategy through which believers actively participate in confronting national insecurity.

A defining characteristic of directing in the selected prayers is the construction of believers as authorised spiritual agents capable of demanding immediate divine intervention. Rather than presenting themselves as passive petitioners awaiting divine initiative, prayer leaders employ directive language that reflects confidence in their delegated spiritual authority.

Extract 19

"God, arise now and put an end to this violence!" (Line 296)

This utterance performs an **urgent divine-command act**, realised through the interaction of imperative verbs (*arise*, *put an end*) and the temporal marker *now*, which compresses the interval between supplication and expected divine response. Pragmatically, the command does not challenge divine authority but presupposes an intimate covenantal relationship between believers and God within Pentecostal theology. Its felicity depends upon the shared assumption that faith-filled declarations provoke immediate divine action. Consequently, urgency is enacted not by describing crisis but by initiating intervention through language itself.

The data further indicate that imperative constructions constitute the most explicit linguistic realisation of directing. High-force imperatives dominate the discourse, reflecting the transition from crisis recognition to decisive spiritual engagement.

Extract 20

"Arise, O Lord, and scatter every power of violence." (Line 154)

This utterance performs a **direct imperative act**, characterised by forceful verbal constructions that leave little room for negotiation or delay. Verbs such as *arise* and *scatter* construct divine intervention as immediate and decisive, while simultaneously reinforcing the Pentecostal ideology of spiritual warfare. Within Mey's framework, the imperative derives its pragmatic force from contextual assumptions shared by both speaker and congregation, namely that God intervenes actively in human affairs and that authoritative prayer constitutes an appropriate means of invoking such intervention. The imperative therefore functions not merely as a grammatical form but as a contextually licensed communicative action that embodies urgency.

Another significant feature of directing is the strategic deployment of repetition to intensify directive force. Rather than functioning as stylistic ornamentation, repetition serves to sustain pressure, reinforce authority, and increase emotional momentum within the prayer event.

Extract 21

"Stop it now! Stop it now! Stop it now!" (Line 288)

The repeated imperative performs a **directive intensification act**, amplifying the illocutionary force of the command through rhythmic recurrence. Each repetition renews the demand for intervention while simultaneously aligning the congregation around a shared communicative focus. Within Pentecostal worship, repetition also performs an interactional function by maintaining congregational engagement and preventing any weakening of interpretive commitment. The repeated command therefore transforms urgency into sustained spiritual pressure directed against the perceived sources of insecurity. In addition to imperatives and repetition, directing is reinforced through the extensive use of strong modal verbs that encode obligation, inevitability, and certainty. Unlike modal expressions that merely suggest possibility, these forms construct desired outcomes as binding realities.

Extract 22

"This bloodshed must stop now..." (Line 297)

"Nigeria, you shall not be shattered..." (Line 213)

These utterances perform **modalised directive acts**, where modal verbs such as *must* and *shall* eliminate uncertainty and portray national restoration as compulsory rather than optional. The modal *must* projects necessity, while *shall* conveys prophetic certainty, together transforming prayer into an act of authoritative declaration. Within the contextual affordances of Pentecostal discourse, these modal constructions reinforce urgency by presenting peace and national restoration as immediate expectations rather than distant aspirations.

Beyond their grammatical form, these directing strategies produce important interactional and ideological effects within the prayer discourse. First, they reposition believers from passive observers of insecurity to active spiritual participants responsible for confronting national crises through prayer. Secondly, they collapse the temporal distance between crisis and response by insisting that intervention occur *now*, thereby maintaining the atmosphere of urgency established by the preceding practs of fear and warning. Thirdly, directing legitimises confrontational prayer language characterised by commands, warfare metaphors, and authoritative declarations, all of which are interpreted as appropriate within Pentecostal understandings of spiritual conflict. Finally, the pract reinforces collective confidence in the transformative power of prayer by presenting spoken language as an instrument capable of producing immediate spiritual and social consequences.

From the perspective of Pragmatic Acts Theory, the effectiveness of directing lies in the interaction between linguistic choices and contextual assumptions. Imperatives, repetition, and strong modal constructions derive their pragmatic force not from their grammatical structures alone but from the shared beliefs, institutional conventions, and religious expectations that govern Pentecostal worship. The congregation recognises these utterances as legitimate acts of spiritual authority because they are performed within a communicative environment that presupposes divine responsiveness and the efficacy of spoken faith.

5.4 Pract of Predicting

Following the pract of directing, the discourse advances to the pract of predicting, through which urgency is projected into anticipated outcomes that are presented as divinely authorised and spiritually certain. Whereas directing seeks to initiate immediate intervention through commands and imperatives, predicting performs a different pragmatic function by linguistically presenting the desired transformation as already guaranteed. In the selected Pentecostal prayers, prediction does not function merely as speculation about future events; rather, it constitutes a performative act through which speakers proclaim future realities with unwavering certainty. Within Jacob Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory, such utterances derive their pragmatic force from the institutional authority of Pentecostal prayer, shared theological beliefs concerning prophetic speech, and the collective expectation that spoken declarations can influence material reality.

The data reveal that Pentecostal prayer leaders frequently announce peace, restoration, and national transformation as accomplished realities despite the continued empirical existence of insecurity. This communicative strategy collapses the distinction between request and fulfilment, thereby intensifying urgency through immediate cognitive realignment.

Extract 23

"This violence is over in Jesus' name." (Line 289)

"...I speak peace over this nation and your household." (Line 245)

These utterances perform **change-enforcement declarative acts**, presenting national transformation as spiritually accomplished through the very act of speaking. Rather than expressing hope for future change, the declarations linguistically enact that change within the prayer event itself. Their pragmatic effectiveness depends upon shared Pentecostal assumptions that faith-filled utterances possess performative efficacy and that spiritually authorised declarations participate in bringing about the realities they proclaim. Consequently, urgency is realised not through emotional escalation but through the immediate assertion of divine intervention as an accomplished fact.

A prominent linguistic strategy employed in this pract is the use of prophetic performatives, where speakers explicitly attribute their utterances to divine authority rather than personal opinion. Such constructions elevate declarations beyond individual conviction and position them within a recognised prophetic tradition.

Extract 24

"Hear the word of the Lord: peace has come to this land." (Line 280)

"Thus says the Lord, we will enjoy peace all round this nation." (Line 92)

These utterances perform **prophetic declarative acts** by transferring authorship from the human speaker to God. Expressions such as *Hear the word of the Lord* and *Thus says the Lord* function as institutional markers that legitimise subsequent declarations. Within Mey's framework, their pragmatic force derives from shared scriptural knowledge and congregational acceptance of prophetic authority. Because the declarations are interpreted as divine rather than merely human speech, they become highly authoritative and less susceptible to contestation. The urgency embedded within these utterances therefore rests on the assumption that divine pronouncements require immediate acceptance and spiritual alignment.

Another important feature of the pract of predicting is the strategic deployment of assertive present-tense constructions. Rather than projecting peace into a distant future, prayer leaders consistently describe it as an existing reality.

Extract 25

"...Peace reigns in Nigeria." (Line 200)

This utterance performs an **assertive declarative act** by representing national peace as already established. The present tense removes temporal distance between prayer and fulfilment, encouraging congregants to align their beliefs with the declared reality despite contrary empirical evidence. Pragmatically, the utterance functions as an act of cognitive reorientation, replacing prevailing narratives of insecurity with a divinely authorised discourse of restoration. The declaration therefore strengthens urgency by encouraging immediate faith rather than deferred expectation.

The data further demonstrate the recurrent use of ritual formulae that seal declarations and reinforce their finality.

Extract 26

"By the power of the Holy Ghost, it is settled." (Line 292)

"...We need liberation in Jesus name." (Line 271)

These utterances perform **ritual-sealing acts**, employing formulaic expressions that mark declarations as spiritually ratified and irrevocable. Phrases such as *By the power of the*

Holy Ghost, in Jesus' name, and *it is settled* function as institutional closure devices within Pentecostal worship. Their pragmatic significance lies in signalling that the declared outcome has already received divine approval and therefore stands beyond ordinary contestation. Unlike directing, which continues to demand action, ritual formulae present the communicative process as complete, reinforcing confidence in the certainty of the anticipated transformation.

Beyond their linguistic form, these predictive acts perform several important communicative functions within the prayer discourse. First, they sustain congregational hope by replacing narratives of insecurity with confident declarations of restoration. Secondly, they reinforce collective faith by requiring participants to interpret present realities through the lens of divine promises rather than observable circumstances. Thirdly, they stabilise the emotional intensity generated by earlier practs of fear, warning, and directing, redirecting attention from crisis to expected resolution. Finally, they reaffirm the Pentecostal understanding that spoken language constitutes an active instrument through which believers participate in God's intervention within history.

From the perspective of Pragmatic Acts Theory, the pract of predicting illustrates how communicative actions derive their meaning from context rather than linguistic form alone. Prophetic performatives, assertive present-tense constructions, and ritual formulae function effectively because speakers and congregants share theological assumptions concerning divine authority, prophetic speech, and the performative power of faith-filled declarations. The utterances therefore become contextually licensed practs through which urgency is transformed into certainty, expectation, and collective confidence.

5.5 Pract of Mobilising

Having established the certainty of divine intervention through predictive declarations, the discourse proceeds to the pract of mobilising, where urgency is transformed into coordinated collective action. Unlike the preceding practs, which primarily construct crisis, demand intervention, or declare anticipated outcomes, mobilising distributes responsibility across the entire congregation by encouraging immediate participation in prayer. Within Jacob Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory, mobilising functions as a collective-action pragmeme whose force derives from shared participation, institutional expectations, and the Pentecostal belief that national transformation requires unified spiritual engagement. Consequently, urgency is no longer experienced individually but becomes a communal obligation enacted through coordinated religious activity.

The data indicate that Pentecostal prayer leaders consistently frame national insecurity as a shared spiritual responsibility rather than a crisis to be addressed by religious leaders alone. Mobilising therefore converts the emotional intensity generated by fear, warning, directing, and predicting into visible collective participation. Prayer is represented not merely as communication with God but as organised spiritual labour through which believers actively participate in confronting national insecurity.

A major strategy employed in this pract involves summoning the congregation into immediate collective participation.

Extract 27

"Lift up your voices and pray like your life depends on it." (Line 290)

This utterance performs a **collective-summons act**, directing participants toward immediate and synchronised prayer. The imperative *Lift up your voices* transforms congregants

from passive listeners into active participants, while the comparative expression *like your life depends on it* intensifies the perceived seriousness of the prayer activity. Pragmatically, the utterance derives its force from the shared Pentecostal assumption that collective prayer constitutes an effective response to national crises. Urgency is therefore embodied through communal participation rather than remaining an abstract emotional state.

The mobilisation process is further reinforced through the extensive use of inclusive pronouns that eliminate distinctions between leaders and congregants.

Extract 28

"We must not be silent; our nation depends on us." (Line 284)

This utterance performs an **inclusive-alignment act**, positioning every participant as a co-agent in the struggle against insecurity. The repeated use of *we*, *our*, and *us* distributes responsibility collectively and removes the possibility of individual detachment from the national crisis. Within Mey's Pragmatic Acts Theory, such inclusive constructions function as contextual resources that generate solidarity and reinforce collective ownership of the communicative event. Rather than assigning responsibility exclusively to government institutions or church leaders, the utterance constructs every believer as a legitimate participant in national restoration.

A distinctive feature of Pentecostal mobilisation is the use of call-and-response structures that synchronise congregational attention and sustain collective momentum.

Extract 29

Leader: "Are you ready to pray?"

Congregation: "Yes!" (Line 294)

This exchange performs an **interactive mobilisation act** by publicly confirming the congregation's readiness for immediate spiritual engagement. Unlike monologic directives, call-and-response structures require audible participation from worshippers, thereby transforming listeners into co-performers of the prayer event. Within Mey's framework, interaction itself functions as a pragmatic resource through which urgency is collectively negotiated and sustained. The congregation's affirmative response constitutes an uptake that validates the leader's directive while simultaneously signalling communal commitment to the ensuing prayer activity.

Mobilising is equally realised through action-driven verbs that foreground concrete participation rather than passive belief.

Extract 30

"Rise up and take this prayer seriously." (Line 274)

"Are you ready to fight and stand in gap for the nation?" (Line 107)

These utterances perform **action-directive mobilisation acts**, employing verbs such as *rise*, *take*, *fight*, and *stand* to emphasise observable action rather than internal disposition. Such verbs reduce abstraction by encouraging participants to engage physically, emotionally, and spiritually in the prayer process. Within Pentecostal discourse, these actions extend beyond symbolic participation to include standing, shouting, fasting, sustained intercession, and other embodied expressions of collective spiritual warfare. Consequently, urgency becomes

measurable through visible participation rather than remaining confined to individual belief or emotional response.

Beyond their linguistic realisation, the mobilising pract performs several significant communicative and ideological functions. First, it transforms prayer from an individual devotional exercise into a coordinated communal response to national insecurity. Secondly, it strengthens group solidarity by reinforcing the perception that every participant shares responsibility for the nation's spiritual wellbeing. Thirdly, mobilisation sustains the emotional momentum established by the preceding practs, ensuring that fear, warning, directing, and predicting culminate in organised collective action rather than emotional exhaustion. Finally, it reinforces the Pentecostal conviction that divine intervention frequently operates through the united prayers of believers acting in faith.

From the perspective of Pragmatic Acts Theory, the effectiveness of mobilisation depends upon the interaction between linguistic forms and contextual assumptions shared within Pentecostal worship. Inclusive pronouns, call-and-response exchanges, and action-oriented verbs derive their pragmatic force from institutional expectations concerning collective worship, spiritual authority, and communal responsibility. These linguistic resources therefore function not merely as rhetorical devices but as contextually licensed practs that organise participation, coordinate collective behaviour, and sustain urgency throughout the prayer event.

5.6 Pract of Complaining/Lamenting

Following the pract of mobilising, the discourse progresses to the pract of complaining/lamenting, through which urgency is intensified by foregrounding collective suffering, emotional exhaustion, and moral grievance. Whereas mobilisation transforms urgency into coordinated spiritual action, lamenting sustains that urgency by continually reminding participants of the human consequences of insecurity. Within Jacob Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory, complaining/lamenting functions as an affective pragmeme whose communicative force derives from shared experiences of pain, loss, and vulnerability. Rather than signalling resignation or helplessness, lament operates as a strategic communicative act that appeals to divine compassion while reinforcing the necessity for immediate intervention.

The analysis reveals that Pentecostal prayer leaders consistently transform personal sorrow into communal discourse by presenting national insecurity as a shared experience of suffering. Through this strategy, individual grief becomes collective evidence that the nation's condition has exceeded acceptable limits and therefore demands urgent divine response.

Extract 31

"Lord, we are tired; too much blood has been shed in this land." (Line 294)

"Lord, please, please intervene now in the affairs of this nation!" (Line 257)

These utterances perform **sorrow-based appeal acts**, articulating emotional exhaustion while simultaneously intensifying the demand for divine intervention. The repeated expression of fatigue (*we are tired*) and the emphatic plea (*please, please intervene now*) transform emotional distress into a persuasive communicative resource. Within the contextual affordances of Pentecostal worship, such expressions are not interpreted as evidence of weakened faith but as legitimate appeals grounded in the shared recognition of prolonged national suffering. Consequently, lament functions pragmatically as a pressure mechanism

through which continued insecurity is represented as morally incompatible with divine justice and compassion.

The data further indicate that lamenting is linguistically realised through explicit expressions of pain that externalise communal distress and legitimise urgent intervention.

Extract 32

"Our hearts are broken because of what is happening in this nation." (Line 272)

"If one part of the nation is bleeding, all of us must cry out." (Line 168)

These utterances perform **pain-articulation acts** by transforming internal emotional experiences into publicly shared discourse. Expressions such as *our hearts are broken* and *the nation is bleeding* foreground the psychological and emotional consequences of insecurity while simultaneously extending individual suffering to the wider national community. The second utterance further reinforces collective identity by insisting that the pain of one region constitutes the concern of the entire nation. Within Mey's framework, this shared emotional orientation strengthens the contextual conditions under which urgency becomes a collective rather than individual responsibility.

Another significant feature of lamenting is the recurrent use of emotional intensifiers that portray suffering as having exceeded tolerable limits. Rather than merely describing hardship, these expressions evaluate insecurity as excessive, prolonged, and morally unacceptable.

Extract 33

"This pain is too much; how long will we endure this..." (Line 271)

"Lord, we are tired; too much blood has been shed in this land." (Line 155)

"Enough is enough; this killing must end now." (Line 146)

These utterances perform **intensity-escalation acts**, employing expressions such as *too much*, *how long*, and *enough is enough* to amplify the urgency of national suffering. The interrogative *how long* does not seek information but functions rhetorically to challenge the continued persistence of violence. Likewise, *enough is enough* constructs insecurity as having crossed an acceptable threshold beyond which further delay cannot be justified. Such intensifiers therefore increase the pragmatic force of lament by presenting continued violence as both emotionally unbearable and morally indefensible.

Beyond their linguistic realisation, the pract of complaining/lamenting performs several important communicative functions within the prayer discourse. First, it legitimises emotional expression as an appropriate component of collective prayer, allowing congregants to articulate grief without undermining their faith. Secondly, it sustains urgency by continually foregrounding the human cost of insecurity, ensuring that repeated prayer remains emotionally meaningful rather than merely ritualistic. Thirdly, lament strengthens communal solidarity by transforming individual experiences of loss into shared national concerns. Finally, it prepares the discourse for the subsequent pract of repairing by establishing the extent of the damage that requires divine restoration.

From the perspective of Pragmatic Acts Theory, the effectiveness of lamenting depends upon the interaction between linguistic expressions of pain and the socio-religious context in which they are produced. Expressions of sorrow, emotional intensifiers, and rhetorical questions derive their pragmatic significance from shared experiential knowledge of terrorism,

kidnapping, communal violence, and the broader insecurity confronting Nigerian society. Within Pentecostal worship, these utterances are therefore recognised not simply as emotional reactions but as contextually licensed practs through which believers collectively negotiate suffering and intensify appeals for divine intervention.

5.7 Pract of Repairing

The final pragmatic act identified in the selected Pentecostal prayers is the pract of repairing, through which urgency is redirected from recognising national breakdown to demanding immediate restoration. Whereas the pract of complaining/lamenting foregrounds suffering and moral grievance, repairing projects a solution-oriented discourse that insists upon divine intervention as the only effective means of restoring national order. Within Jacob Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory, repairing functions as a restorative pragmeme whose communicative force derives from the shared Pentecostal belief that God possesses both the authority and the capacity to reverse situations of crisis. Consequently, urgency is no longer expressed primarily through fear or lament but through persistent demands for immediate healing, renewal, and reconstruction.

The data reveal that Pentecostal prayer leaders consistently portray Nigeria as a nation that has been damaged, fractured, and destabilised by insecurity. Rather than treating violence as an isolated social problem, the discourse constructs the nation itself as requiring comprehensive spiritual repair. In this context, repairing presupposes that national dysfunction is both real and extensive, thereby legitimising urgent appeals for divine restoration.

Extract 34

"Lord, fix this nation before it collapses completely." (Line 273)

"Heal this nation now, before it is too late." (Line 93)

These utterances perform **repair-demand acts**, combining diagnosis with urgent appeals for intervention. The imperative verb *fix* presupposes that the nation has become dysfunctional, while *heal* conceptualises insecurity as a condition requiring therapeutic restoration. The temporal expression *before it is too late* further intensifies urgency by presenting continued delay as potentially irreversible. Within Mey's framework, these utterances derive their pragmatic force from shared contextual assumptions concerning divine sovereignty and the Pentecostal conviction that prayer constitutes an effective instrument for national renewal. Consequently, repairing transforms urgency into an active search for restoration rather than a passive acknowledgement of crisis.

A central linguistic feature of repairing is the recurrent use of restorative verbs that explicitly encode recovery, renewal, and reconstruction.

Extract 35

"Heal our land and rebuild everything the enemy has destroyed." (Line 84)

"Holy Ghost fire, restore peace to every troubled region of this country." (Line 137)

"...Lord, restore peace to this land." (Line 262)

These utterances perform **restorative appeal acts**, employing verbs such as *heal*, *rebuild*, and *restore* to project divine intervention as the reversal of national disorder. Unlike the aggressive imperatives associated with directing, restorative verbs foreground reconstruction rather than confrontation. They simultaneously acknowledge the extent of

national damage and affirm the possibility of complete recovery through divine agency. Within the contextual affordances of Pentecostal worship, these expressions reinforce hope while sustaining urgency by insisting that restoration should occur without delay.

Repairing is further strengthened through expressions that explicitly signal emergency intervention. Such constructions repeatedly compress the time available for national recovery and emphasise the necessity of immediate divine response.

Extract 36

"Heal this nation now, before it is too late." (Line 93)

"Every spirit of terrorism troubling this nation, be silenced now." (Line 166)

"Lord, please, please intervene now in the affairs of this nation!" (Line 257)

These utterances perform **emergency-repair acts**, combining restorative requests with temporal markers such as *now* and *before it is too late*. The repeated compression of time reflects the continuing urgency established throughout the preceding practs while simultaneously redirecting attention toward national healing. Rather than allowing urgency to diminish following declarations of hope, these expressions sustain the perception that restoration itself requires immediate action.

The analysis also demonstrates that repairing derives additional legitimacy from explicit biblical restoration frames that connect contemporary insecurity with scriptural narratives of healing, renewal, and divine reconstruction.

Extract 37

"Heal our land and rebuild everything the enemy has destroyed." (Line 84)

"...heal our land and restore peace." (Line 78)

"Let Your healing power begin to operate upon our land, in Jesus' name." (Line 5)

These utterances perform **scripture-aligned repair acts**, grounding appeals for restoration within widely recognised biblical promises of healing and renewal. Such references reduce the possibility of contestation because they derive authority from shared scriptural knowledge rather than individual opinion. Within Mey's Pragmatic Acts Theory, these biblical restoration frames function as contextual resources that legitimise both the urgency and the anticipated effectiveness of divine intervention. National repair is therefore presented not merely as an aspiration but as a continuation of established patterns of divine action recorded within Christian tradition.

Beyond their linguistic realisation, the pract of repairing performs several important communicative and ideological functions within the prayer discourse. First, it provides a constructive resolution to the emotional intensity generated by the preceding practs of fear, warning, directing, predicting, mobilising, and lamenting. Rather than allowing the discourse to conclude with crisis and suffering, repairing redirects collective attention toward restoration and hope. Secondly, it reinforces congregational confidence by presenting divine intervention as both possible and imminent despite the persistence of insecurity. Thirdly, it strengthens the therapeutic dimension of Pentecostal prayer by framing national recovery as a holistic process involving peace, healing, reconstruction, and spiritual renewal. Finally, repairing reaffirms the central Pentecostal conviction that prayer does not merely respond to crisis but actively participates in transforming social realities through divine agency.

From the perspective of Pragmatic Acts Theory, repairing illustrates how context-sensitive communicative actions can simultaneously acknowledge crisis and project its resolution. The pragmatic force of restorative verbs, emergency expressions, and biblical restoration frames depends upon the shared religious knowledge, institutional expectations, and theological assumptions that characterise Pentecostal worship. These linguistic resources therefore function as contextually licensed practs through which urgency culminates in confident expectations of national renewal.

6. DISCUSSION

The present study demonstrates that urgency in Pentecostal prayers addressing Nigeria's security crisis is neither a spontaneous emotional reaction nor a rhetorical embellishment. Rather, urgency is pragmatically organised through a sequence of context-dependent communicative acts that progressively construct insecurity as an immediate spiritual emergency requiring collective intervention. Drawing on Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory, the analysis shows that meaning is generated not merely through linguistic structures but through the interaction between utterances, shared theological assumptions, institutional practices, and the socio-political realities surrounding national insecurity. Consequently, the urgency realised in the analysed prayers emerges as a dynamic discourse accomplishment rather than an inherent property of individual lexical or grammatical forms.

A major contribution of this study is the demonstration that urgency is systematically organised rather than randomly distributed throughout Pentecostal prayer discourse. Existing scholarship on Pentecostal communication has largely examined sermons, testimonies, speech acts, metaphorical expressions, persuasive strategies, and ideological constructions, showing that religious language performs important social and spiritual functions. However, relatively little attention has been paid to the discourse organisation of urgency itself. The present study addresses this gap by showing that urgency is progressively constructed through seven interrelated pragmatic acts—instilling fear, warning, directing, predicting, mobilising, complaining/lamenting, and repairing—which operate together to transform national insecurity into an immediate object of collective spiritual action. Rather than functioning independently, these practs constitute a coherent communicative progression through which participants are emotionally prepared, spiritually mobilised, and collectively oriented towards divine intervention.

This finding corroborates Mey's (2001) central proposition that communicative actions derive their meanings from contextual affordances rather than from linguistic structures alone. Throughout the analysed prayers, imperative constructions, prophetic declarations, interrogatives, lamentative expressions, and restorative appeals perform communicative functions that extend well beyond their conventional grammatical classifications. Their pragmatic force depends upon the participants' shared understanding of divine agency, spiritual warfare, national crisis, and the institutional expectations governing Pentecostal worship. The findings likewise reinforce Odebunmi's (2006) argument that pragmatic interpretation is fundamentally dependent upon contextual knowledge shared by discourse participants. Consequently, identical linguistic forms frequently realise different pragmatic acts according to the communicative circumstances within which they occur, further demonstrating the explanatory strength of Pragmatic Acts Theory for analysing religious discourse.

At the same time, the findings extend existing pragmatic scholarship in an important respect. While Pragmatic Acts Theory conceptualises practs as context-sensitive realisations

of pragmemes (Mey, 2001), the present study demonstrates that practs may also operate sequentially to accomplish broader discourse objectives. The analysis indicates that each identified pract establishes the contextual conditions necessary for the emergence of the next. The pract of instilling fear prepares participants to recognise the seriousness of national insecurity; warning projects the consequences of delayed intervention; directing transforms awareness into immediate spiritual action; predicting reinforces confidence in anticipated divine intervention; mobilising distributes responsibility across the worshipping community; complaining/lamenting sustains emotional commitment through the articulation of communal suffering; and repairing ultimately redirects attention towards national restoration. Collectively, these practs form a coherent communicative sequence through which urgency is progressively intensified, sustained, and ultimately resolved. This sequential organisation represents one of the principal theoretical contributions of the study.

The findings also broaden current understandings of religious discourse by demonstrating that Pentecostal prayer functions as a sophisticated form of crisis communication. Previous studies have generally approached Pentecostal discourse from perspectives such as persuasion, identity construction, religious ideology, and rhetorical performance. Although these approaches have generated valuable insights into the communicative functions of religious language, they rarely explain how prayer linguistically organises collective responses to social crises. The present study shows that prayer performs precisely this function. Through the sequential deployment of pragmatic acts, prayer leaders interpret insecurity, regulate collective emotion, coordinate communal participation, sustain hope, and project divine restoration. Prayer therefore functions simultaneously as religious ritual, social action, emotional regulation, and crisis-management discourse.

These findings likewise contribute to broader discussions of urgency within discourse studies. Research on urgency has predominantly focused on political communication, emergency management, institutional warnings, health campaigns, and media discourse, where urgency is often conceptualised as a persuasive strategy encouraging immediate behavioural change. The present study suggests a different perspective. Within Pentecostal prayer, urgency is not realised through isolated lexical markers or individual speech acts but emerges progressively through interconnected pragmatic actions that collectively organise emotional orientation, social responsibility, and expectations of divine intervention. This shifts analytical attention from identifying individual linguistic indicators of urgency towards explaining the larger discourse processes through which urgency is socially produced and sustained.

Viewed collectively, the seven identified practs may therefore be understood as constituting a **Sequential Pragmatic Model of Urgency Construction**. Rather than treating urgency as an emotional state or stylistic effect, the model conceptualises urgency as a progressive communicative process achieved through interdependent pragmatic acts operating within a shared institutional context. This reconceptualisation advances Pragmatic Acts Theory by illustrating that practs need not be analysed solely as isolated communicative events. Instead, they may function sequentially, with the successful interpretation of one pract generating the contextual affordances necessary for the emergence of subsequent practs. In this respect, the study extends the explanatory scope of Pragmatic Acts Theory beyond the analysis of individual communicative actions to the investigation of larger discourse structures through which complex institutional objectives are progressively achieved.

The implications of this reconceptualisation extend beyond Pentecostal discourse. By demonstrating that urgency is progressively organised through interconnected pragmatic acts,

the study broadens the analytical possibilities of Pragmatic Acts Theory within institutional discourse. Existing applications of the theory have primarily focused on identifying individual practs and explaining their contextual meanings (Mey, 2001; Odebunmi, 2006). The present findings suggest that practs may also be examined as components of larger communicative sequences through which institutional actors accomplish complex social objectives. This perspective encourages future pragmatic research to move beyond the analysis of isolated utterances towards investigating how successive pragmatic acts collectively construct persuasion, authority, legitimacy, urgency, and social action within naturally occurring discourse.

The study likewise contributes to contemporary scholarship on religious communication by demonstrating that Pentecostal prayer constitutes a socially consequential communicative practice rather than merely a devotional exercise. Throughout the analysed corpus, prayer leaders do considerably more than petition God. They interpret national events, construct collective understandings of insecurity, regulate emotional responses, distribute communal responsibility, reinforce theological worldviews, and sustain expectations of divine intervention. Prayer therefore functions simultaneously as religious ritual, public discourse, emotional management, and collective crisis communication. This multidimensional character of Pentecostal prayer has received comparatively limited attention within pragmatic research, where religious discourse has often been analysed primarily from the perspectives of speech acts, rhetoric, persuasion, or ideology.

The findings also have broader implications for crisis communication research. Existing models of crisis communication have largely examined governmental announcements, political speeches, institutional warnings, health campaigns, and media reporting as principal sites through which urgency is constructed and public behaviour is influenced. The present study demonstrates that religious institutions likewise constitute significant communicative actors during periods of national insecurity. Within the Pentecostal context, urgency is not communicated simply to inform believers about danger but to organise collective participation, reinforce resilience, sustain hope, and construct shared interpretations of crisis through prayer. Consequently, religious discourse should be recognised as an important dimension of crisis communication, particularly within societies where religious institutions occupy central positions in public life.

Equally significant is the study's contribution to understanding the relationship between language and social action. The analysis illustrates that linguistic choices within Pentecostal prayers perform tangible communicative work by shaping participants' perceptions of insecurity, influencing emotional orientations, encouraging collective participation, and sustaining expectations of national restoration. Language therefore functions not merely as a medium through which reality is described but as a social resource through which communities actively negotiate uncertainty, construct shared meanings, and coordinate collective responses to national crises. This observation reinforces broader pragmatic assumptions that communicative meaning is fundamentally action-oriented and contextually situated (Mey, 2001).

From a methodological perspective, the study further demonstrates the analytical value of integrating qualitative discourse analysis with Pragmatic Acts Theory in the investigation of religious communication. Rather than treating prayer texts as purely theological artefacts, the study approaches them as naturally occurring communicative events situated within identifiable socio-cultural contexts. This methodological orientation makes it possible to

account simultaneously for linguistic choices, contextual affordances, institutional practices, and participants' shared knowledge, thereby providing a more comprehensive explanation of how communicative actions function within religious discourse. The approach may therefore prove useful for future investigations of sermons, prophetic declarations, testimonies, healing services, and other forms of institutional religious communication.

The findings additionally possess practical relevance for scholars of language, religion, and society. By identifying the communicative mechanisms through which urgency is constructed, the study provides discourse analysts with an analytical framework for examining similar forms of religious crisis communication across different socio-cultural contexts. The findings may also assist scholars of religion in understanding how prayer contributes to collective resilience during periods of national uncertainty, while researchers in peace and conflict studies may find the analysis valuable for examining how religious discourse shapes public responses to violence and insecurity. More broadly, the study highlights the importance of recognising religious communication as a significant contributor to public meaning-making in contemporary societies.

Despite these contributions, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The analysis focuses exclusively on selected Pentecostal prayers addressing Nigeria's security crisis and therefore does not claim to represent all Christian traditions or religious communities. The findings are consequently interpreted within the theological assumptions and institutional practices characteristic of Nigerian Pentecostalism. Future studies could profitably extend this line of inquiry by comparing the pragmatic construction of urgency across different Christian denominations, other religious traditions, multilingual prayer performances, or digitally mediated worship contexts. Comparative investigations involving different cultural settings would further clarify the extent to which the sequential organisation of urgency identified in the present study reflects broader patterns of religious crisis communication.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that urgency is neither an inherent linguistic property nor simply an emotional reaction to crisis. Rather, urgency emerges as a context-dependent communicative accomplishment realised through a sequence of interconnected pragmatic acts operating within a shared religious and socio-cultural environment. By identifying this sequential organisation and explaining how each pract contributes to the progressive construction of urgency, the study extends the explanatory scope of Pragmatic Acts Theory while simultaneously enriching scholarship on religious discourse and crisis communication. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that Pentecostal prayer constitutes a highly organised discourse of social action through which language is employed not only to interpret national insecurity but also to mobilise collective participation, sustain communal hope, and envision national restoration.

7. CONCLUSION

This study examined how urgency is pragmatically constructed in selected Pentecostal prayers addressing Nigeria's security crisis. Employing Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Acts Theory, the analysis demonstrated that urgency is realised through a systematic sequence of context-dependent communicative acts rather than through isolated linguistic expressions. Specifically, the study identified seven recurrent practs; instilling fear, warning, directing, predicting, mobilising, complaining/lamenting, and repairing through which prayer leaders construct insecurity as an immediate spiritual emergency, sustain congregational engagement, and project divine restoration as the desired outcome of collective prayer.

The findings underscore the importance of context in the interpretation of religious discourse. The pragmatic force of the identified practs derives not simply from grammatical structures but from the interaction between linguistic choices, shared theological assumptions, institutional conventions, and the socio-political realities surrounding Nigeria's security crisis. Consequently, Pentecostal prayer emerges as more than an act of private devotion; it functions as a strategic communicative practice through which believers interpret crisis, negotiate collective emotions, mobilise communal participation, and articulate hope for national renewal.

The study contributes to pragmatic scholarship by extending the application of Pragmatic Acts Theory to the analysis of religious crisis communication. While previous studies have focused primarily on speech acts, stylistic features, or persuasive strategies in Pentecostal discourse, this study demonstrates that urgency itself constitutes a systematically organised pragmatic phenomenon. The identification of the seven interrelated practs provides a more comprehensive account of how language functions as social action within Pentecostal prayer and highlights the explanatory value of Pragmatic Acts Theory for understanding context-sensitive communicative practices.

The study also contributes to the broader field of religious discourse by illustrating how prayer functions as a communicative resource for responding to national emergencies. Through the pragmatic construction of urgency, Pentecostal prayer not only reflects social realities but also actively shapes communal interpretations of insecurity, reinforces collective resilience, and sustains hope during periods of uncertainty. These findings suggest that religious discourse constitutes an important yet underexplored domain of crisis communication deserving of continued scholarly attention.

Notwithstanding these contributions, the study is limited to selected Pentecostal prayers addressing Nigeria's security crisis and is therefore not intended to represent all forms of Christian prayer or religious discourse. Future studies may extend this line of inquiry by comparing pragmatic constructions of urgency across different Christian denominations, other religious traditions, or diverse socio-cultural contexts. Comparative investigations involving digital prayer meetings, transnational Pentecostal networks, or multilingual prayer performances would further enrich understanding of how urgency is pragmatically negotiated across contemporary religious communication.

Ultimately, the study demonstrates that urgency in Pentecostal prayer is neither accidental nor purely emotional. Rather, it is a carefully organised pragmatic accomplishment through which language constructs crisis, mobilises collective action, sustains communal hope, and projects divine restoration. By foregrounding the interaction between language, context, and religious practice, the study affirms the central role of pragmatics in explaining how communities employ discourse to respond to moments of profound national uncertainty.

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