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An Analysis of the Slogans of the Quota Movement 2024 in Bangladesh Using Speech Act Theory: A Pragmatic Perspective

Shorna Akter *, Md. Minhajul Abedin**

Abstract: The study aims to analyze the use of speech acts in the slogans of Quota Movement 2024 in Bangladesh. Using Searl's (1969) taxonomies of Speech Act Theory (SAT), the researchers analyzed the selected slogans following a qualitative approach from a pragmatic perspective. The findings show that all the illocutionary acts have been used in the concerned slogans. Also, the study has shown how the slogans of the Quota Movement 2024 in Bangladesh played a crucial role in driving the listeners from the micro level to the macro level based on the situation demand of an ultimate goal.

Keywords: Movement, Pragmatics, Quota, Slogans, Speech Act Theory

Introduction

While communicating people use language to share ideas and at the same time, get their necessities fulfilled through different functional languages like request, order, narration, asking, etc. Apart from the use of language for oral communication in any

* Dr. Shorna Akter, Associate Professor, English, Dhaka City College,
Corresponding Author: email: shorna.akter@gmail.com

** Md. Minhajul Abedin, Associate Professor, English, Stamford University
Bangladesh

negotiation, it is also used for conveying messages through posters, slogans, speech, and so forth. The discourse of the slogans has the artistic potential to pursue political groups and common people (Halim, n.d.). The development of ideas in the slogans is likely to be influenced by the development of the movement. While analyzing any slogan, it is not enough to consider only its semantic aspects to make sense. In other words, any communication is likely to be analyzed in its context (Iqbal, Najmi & Dara, 2022; Manouchakian, 2018). So, through the lens of pragmatics within the framework of relevant social context, slogans must be scrutinized to make sense of apparent and not-so-apparent meanings. In the present study, the discourses of the slogans of Quota Movement 2024 in Bangladesh have been chosen by the researchers to explore using speech act theory in the background of the then social context.

Merriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary defines the term 'slogan' as "a word or phrase used to express a characteristic position or stand or a goal to be achieved." The slogan is structured in the fewest possible words to portray the biggest scenario on a tiny canvas (Gounari, 2018). Terseness, constancy, imperative expressions, association with a certain group being easy for memorization, and catchy word selection are the idiosyncrasies of slogans (Leopold, 1942). Ford (2019) opines that slogans are not only a juxtaposition of some words to display on posters, boards, and to chant. They have many important functions to play; for example, they are to familiarize common people with the latest happenings so that they can express their viewpoints and take their stands. In doing so, slogans can unite people from all walks of life and they also have some educative value. Above all, this can help raise awareness among the commoners (Ford, 2019).

The discourse of slogans can influence tremendously any movement (Gounari, 2018). Perhaps slogans are one of the most effective linguistic means that can deliver a detectible note with greater simplicity. The audience's reaction can help identify the effectiveness of the discourses of slogans. Slogans can also give

directives to the people in society to develop social awareness and take steps for reformation (Sardoč & Prebilič, 2022).

Background of the Study

The Quota Reform Movement 2024, though initially was a movement for a discrimination-free quota system, later turned into a movement for justice, and at last, the common people joined, and it became a movement against the government claiming the step down of the then Prime minister. Al Jazeera Explainer (“What’s behind Bangladesh’s violent quota protests?”, 16 July, 2024), Borthakur (2024), and Prothom Alo English (“Central Shaheed Minar turns turbulent with slogans”, 2024, 3 August; “Quota movement timeline: Unfolding events”, 2024, 2 August) are the sources of the following background information.

Sheikh Mujinur Rahman introduced the Quota system in 1972. Initially, 80 percent of government jobs were reserved as quotas. However, in 1976, it was restructured, and merit-based recruitment was increased to 40%, and then by 1996, it became 55%. At different times, because of the misuse and also for anti-discrimination issues, the students raised their voices, but it was not a regular activity. Up to 2018, there was provision for a 56% quota for the freedom fighters, disabled, and other categories. Because of the students’ movement for reducing the quota to 10%, the High Court verdict went in favor of the cancellation of the Quota Act in the case of 9th to 13th-grade jobs. After that, protests continued concerning the quota issue at different levels during other periods. Later, due to the students’ protest, the authority declared the cancellation of the reserved quota in the face of protest by the students in 2018.

At last in 2024, when the High Court of Bangladesh restored the provocative quota system, labeling the government’s pronouncement for quotas in 2018 as “unconstitutional, illegal, and ineffective,” and instantly, a group of students, primarily through nonviolence, voiced across the country, protesting the latest development in the Quota act. At first, under the banner

of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement (ADSM) in support of the reformation for quota, the students raised their voices just on the quota issue, but later, in the following days of the movement, that is, from July 5 to August 5, 2024, the torture, oppression, arrest, and massacre against the students and people who supported the movement changed the direction of movement.

During the entire movement, students protested from time to time staying on the highway and some other important points of the country. They created slogans based on the movement's sequence to express their demands. The present researchers chose the discourse of the slogans to explore using speech act theory with a pragmatic perspective.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to bring to light the illocutionary points and their effects as reflected in the slogans of the Quota Reform Movement 2024. Through an in-depth analysis of the background with a pragmatic perspective, this study also attempts to demonstrate how the changes in the movement got the discourse of the slogans featured with dynamism.

Literature Review

Speech act theories and pragmatic perspectives are used to study the discourses of slogans, speech, or any form of communication. Speech Act theory is presumably the most effective approach to explore the functionality of language use as Mabaquiao (2018) mentioned that analysis of discourse using SAT can help understand the function of language. In addition, among the three types of speech acts, the illocutionary act can potentially operate the functions of language (Brown, 2000). Moreover, one can develop communicative skills by gaining knowledge of the SAT (Brown, 2000). Acquiring virtuosity over SAT in analyzing discourse with a pragmatic perspective can ultimately ensure effective communication. Speech act theories and pragmatic perspectives are used to study the discourses of slogans, speech,

or any form of communication. Also, the role of slogans in different social and political movements has been a research topic for a long time. For example, Ford (2019) shows the types and roles of slogans applicable to different contexts in different critical situations during the Russian revolutionary movement 1971. Slogans have many different facets to demonstrate in terms of the settings, motto, and structures (Ford, 2019).

Kaleem (2022), through a qualitative analysis, exposes how the choice of words, sentence structure, and figure of speech can help convey a desired ideology through slogans, create a good image of a political party, and discard the discourse and ideology of other groups. Likewise, Anyanwu and Onuoho (2022) show through their research that convincing the commoners through the well-structured discourse of slogans in the election campaign is possible. In Bangladesh, an investigation was conducted on the Quota Movement 2018 by Hasan and Biswas (2020). They found that the impetus behind the success of the Quota Movement 2018 was 'technological determinism'. Facebook and messenger chat groups played key roles in the movement's success. On the other hand, using the perspective of Aristotle, Newsome (2002) has researched the political rhetoric of slogans to show the structures, semantics, and word arrangement of the discourse of slogans and, above all, the motivational function in pursuing the audience for a noble cause.

Again, focusing on a variety of formerly ignored features related to slogans and governmentality, Sardoć and Prebilić (2022) showed the emblematic nature of zero tolerance in the ideology of slogans and emphasized the likelihood of utilizing slogans for confrontation. On the other hand, Hartig (2018) investigated Chinese political slogans to increase their comprehensibility and presented the fact that the discourse of the slogans of the concerned type can be of great use sometimes and some other times, which may cause a dilemma for the government. Likewise, the article of Kovalevska (2020) explicitly discovered the idiosyncrasies of political slogans that are created in promotion of an election. He analyzed the incongruities between the political

and business slogans. Using the Speech Act theory, Rahayu, Arifin and Ariani (2018) investigated the speech of the main character of the 'Mirror Mirror movie and showed that the protagonist mainly used directive points through request, order, asking, and command.

In many research works, SAT has been used to analyze discourse of different communicative situations. To the best of the present researchers' knowledge, no research has ever been conducted on the slogans of the Quota Movement 2024 using SAT and a pragmatic perspective. The present study is an attempt to start working on this area.

Conceptual Framework Based on Theoretical Concept

Language should always be considered as a context-dependent phenomenon and along with the setting, language-based communication involves social and psychological factors (Rahayu, Arifin and Ariani, 2018; Yule, 1996). Asserting, informing, requesting, commanding, praying, asking, and expressing excitement are the different purposes for which language is employed. "Discourse is always socially and culturally constituted and conditioned, it constructs situations, identities, social and cultural relationships between people and groups" (Kaleem, 2022, 263).

However, delivering a speech does not only mean uttering a string of meaningful words. Rather, based on the pragmatic aspects, a speaker has always some message or intention to convey. That is why it is imperative to find out the psychology and the story behind any speech. Therefore, to analyse a speech taking into account its background information is important.

Manouchakian (2018) says that Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics, which reviews the features of language to make sense in context. In other words, this is a logical means of elucidating the use of language in context. When a person utters a discourse in the communicative situation he/she intends to convey some information to influence the hearers. In this regard, speech act

theory is relevant to refer to as it has issues with the context and the purpose of a speech. Yule (1996) states that a Speech Act (SA) is a concept that examines an act done through articulation. He emphasizes the use of pragmatics for discourse analysis, defining it as “Pragmatics is the study of the relationships between linguistic forms and the users of those forms” (1996, 4).

SAT can be treated as an effective tool for analyzing different discourses in the domain of pragmatics. Searle (1969, 1979) and Grice (1975) have significantly contributed to promoting research through the speech act framework. Concentrating on Searle’s (1969) opinion, Nordquist (2024) and Mukhroji et al. (2019) mention that a speaker can transfer five illocutionary points embedded in discourses:

- The assertive (subtypes: inform, conclude, assume, confirm, accept and so on)
- The commissive (subtypes: promise, suggest, agree and so on)
- The directive (subtypes: question, request, suggest, hope, instruct, invite, order and so on)
- The declaratory (subtypes: thank, apologize, welcome, congratulate and so on)
- The expressive (subtypes: greet, thank, compliment and so on)

Certainly, a speaker has a certain purpose while delivering a discourse irrespective of its structure (Yule, 1996). The illocutionary points each have their way of conveying meaning and it is the speaker who utilizes or even can manipulate the mindset of the readers or the listeners (Yule, 1996). According to Vanderkeven and Kubo (2002), the speakers manage the following purposes when they speak about something:

The *assertive point* when they represent how things are in the world;

The *commissive point* when they commit themselves to doing something;

The *directive point* when they make an attempt to get hearers to do something;

The *declaratory point* when they do things in the world at the moment of the utterance solely by virtue of saying that they do;

The *expressive point* when they express their attitudes about objects and facts of the world (Vanderkeven and Kubo (2002) in Nordquist, 2024, para. 6)

In this regard, Adiniu and Uchenna (2023) explicate that slogans carry illocutionary forces to convince the listeners to agree with their discourse and get the perlocutionary reaction from the audience whereas Oishi (2024) presents a complete framework by analyzing the illocutionary acts giving special importance to context.

In the present study, the researchers aim to analyze the discourse of slogans meant for the Quota Movement 2024, taking into account the five illocutionary forces (proposed by Searle, 1969) and their subtypes and the context in which they are voiced in front of the people in Bangladesh to draw the attention of the government.

Methodology

The present research is qualitative. It has followed qualitative approaches both at the data collection and analysis levels.

Sampling

The researchers have collected 21 most famous and repeatedly chanted slogans during the quota movement 2024 from July 1 to August 5, 2024. These slogans were the means of vocal protest for the students only initially and later for the commoners. Data was collected from online and offline newspapers, Facebook, Instagram, online documents, and YouTube videos during the protest.

Data Analysis

The data regarding the background of the movement in which

slogans were chanted has been collected from online and offline newspapers and online documents. To be more specific, Prothom Alo English (2 August 2024; 3 August 2024), The Daily Star (6 August 2024) and Al Jazeera Explainer (16 July 2024), Corea and Erum (2024) and Borthakur (2024) are the sources of information in this respect. The slogans are divided according to the phases of the movement. After selecting the data, they have been translated from Bengali to English, and only one has already been in English, whereas the researchers have translated the rest.

Context-dependent information has been incorporated into the analysis of slogans following the development of the movement since the slogans were created based on the particular consequence of the movement. Both speech act points and pragmatic perspectives have been considered while analyzing the data.

Discussion and Findings

The total movement from 1 July to 5 August 2024 has been organized into four phases. The protesters' demands to the government and the counter-narratives are reflected in the discourse of the slogans selected for the research.

First Phase

The Context of the First Phase

Students of ADSM rallied and demonstrated at the University of Dhaka and different other universities. They declared 4 July 2024 for meeting the demands for Quota reformation by giving the verdict in favour of staying reestablishment of the Quota Act of 2018. In the following days, they blockaded the Dhaka-Aricha highway in front of the campus of Jahangirnagar University and other places. The Appellate Division went against the stay of the High Court verdict that canceled the 2018 circular on the cancellation of quota. Because of the blockade activities named 'Bangla blockade,' Dhaka came to a standstill, students refused

to attend classes. Later, the blockade activity extended to other highways despite the police's hindrance.

The Slogan of the First Phase

1. কোটা না মেধা?/মেধা মেধা

Quota or Merit? /Merit! Merit!

Both directive and assertive acts are used here through a rhetorical question, “Quota or Merit?” to reflect the speakers’ standpoint regarding the ongoing quota issue. “A *rhetorical question* is not a question about the art of speaking effectively; it is a question that is asked for effect, rather than from a desire to know the answer” (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*). The protesters assert their demands that merit should be emphasized in the reformation of the Quota Act 2024. This slogan marks the start of the July-August movement.

The Second Phase

The Context of the Second Phase

The protesters got agitated because of Sheikh Hasina’s (the then-prime minister of Bangladesh) comment about the movement. On 14 July 2024, she said, “Why do they have so much resentment towards freedom fighters? If the grandchildren of the freedom fighters don’t get quota benefits, should the grandchildren of *Razakars* get the benefit?” (What’s behind Bangladesh’s violent quota protests? 16 July 2024, para 7) and this speech gave a new dimension to the movement. Through the placement of a memo before the president, the protesters gave an ultimatum of 24 hours for the reformation of quotas in all the grades of government jobs. The students of Dhaka University assembled at Raju Memorial Sculpture. Later, being instigated by Obaidul Quader, Bangladesh Chatro League (BCL) started oppressing the students who protested, and later, the injured received treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Slogans for The Second Phase

2. তুমি কে আমি কে? রাজাকার! রাজাকার!

কে বলেছে? কে বলেছে?/ বৈরাচার বৈরাচার

Who are you? Who am I? /Traitors! Traitors!

Who said? Who said? /The Autocrat! The Autocrat!

This slogan reflects both the directives and expressive acts, ironically stating the standpoint of the protesters. The protesters caught the moment in this slogan. Through a question-and-answer structure, this slogan creates a dramatic moment to expose the anarchy going on with them to the country and the whole world. The use of irony is present in this mini dialogue form of slogan. In this regard, Reboul (1974) is relevant in that he says, “The most effective slogans are those we do not recognize as slogans” (62). The form of interrogation through the illocutionary force makes the audience speculate otherwise.

The word *rajakar* in Bengali is a derogatory term used to describe individuals who collaborated with the Pakistani military during the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971. This is an encumbered term, arousing memoirs of war misconducts, which include the murder and sexual abuse of the Bengali population and other racial sectors in 1971 (Zakaria in Hussain, 22 Jul 2024). “They were a force of collaborators used by Pakistan to try to crush the movement for an independent Bangladesh” (Hussain, 2024, *para 1*).

Specifically, this slogan catches the moment when the government in a speech, called student protesters, ‘traitors’ or ‘perfidious’ (*rajaker*). In the first part of this slogan, apparently, the protesters identified themselves as traitors but in the next question and answer form of the slogan it gets clarified that this is the statement of the government. Through directive and assertive speech acts, the protesters explicitly addressed the problem they were facing. They expressed their reaction declaring the then prime minister ‘autocrat’ on hearing her comment.

3. “চেয়েছিলাম অধিকার/হয়ে গেলাম রাজাকার”

“We struggle for rights. /But turn out to be conspirators.”

4. “এক, দুই, তিন, চার/আমরা হলাম রাজাকার”

“One, two, three, four/We all are traitors!”

These two slogans were chanted using assertive speech acts to protest the then-prime minister’s comment that the protesters were traitors. The protesters expressed their demands for a discrimination-free Quota act, but ironically, they were wrongly accused of treason while seeking rights. The protesters could not bear the insult of wrong acquisition while raising their voices against malpractice and so chanted this slogan. In short, through a statement or assertive expression, the students stated the consequences of how the government wrongly accused them.

As Robert Denton (1980) emphasizes, “[t]he final rhetorical characteristic of slogans is that they usually attempt to create a blinding effect. They are created in such a way as to blind the targeted audience to alternative ways of thinking” (p.18). Here, the slogans of the third phase are found to make the listeners contemplate otherwise and pursue not to take things at face value.

Third Phase

Context of the Third Phase

The students were shot and attacked by BCL, Jubo League (JL) and the police positioned at different places, especially at different universities. A student named Abu Sayeed from Begum Rokeya University was killed by police. The protesters declared *Gayebana janaza* (a kind of prayer for the salvation of the departed soul of the martyred) and ‘Coffin Procession’ as activities for the following day. Eventually, the activists drove out BCL leaders from different campuses including Dhaka University and declared the campuses ‘free from politics’.

Violent confrontations involving a good number of people, blockades and processions took place countrywide. Along with the police at this time, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) came in action in the whole country on 18 July 2024, ‘Complete

shutdown' was going on in response to the call of the protesters, on the following day the army was deployed at night as curfew was imposed, internet service was not provided and the local people also started joining the movement. On 20 July, three coordinators of the ADSM met three ministers including the state minister and placed their eight-point demands which was increased to 9 point later. On 21 July, the Appellate division of the Supreme Court reorganized the quotas reducing it from 56% to 7%.

On 26 and 27 July at first, the five coordinators and then the fifth one were detained by the DB police. 'Block raids' began in different parts of the country on 26 July 2024. Countrywide attacks on the students went on by BCL and the police at various places during the protest of the ADSM group and some local people.

University teachers, several prominent personalities, students' guardians and common people started joining the protest. They followed the 'March for Justice' program in protest of the mass killings, detentions and all the brutal activities of the government, and continued with both online and offline fights supporting the movement.

On 1 August, the protesters followed the "Remembering the Heroes" program countrywide in commemoration of the martyred, the affected, and the injured. On this very day, the six ADSM coordinators were released, and they declared that the protest would continue.

Slogans for The Third Phase

5. হামলা করে আন্দোলন/বন্ধ করা যাবে না

By attacking people/Movement cannot be stopped.

6. গুলি করে আন্দোলন/বন্ধ করা যাবে না

By shooting people/ Movement cannot be stopped.

Both slogans reflect the use of assertive speech acts. These are the eventual consequences of the attack inflicted on the students whose strong determination to carry on the movement to ensure

justice is evident here. The two slogans vividly demonstrate the brutality done towards them by the government. At this point, the students were shot and beaten ruthlessly so that they may not go ahead on the issue of quota movement.

7. আমার ভাইয়ের রক্ত/বৃথা যেতে দিব না

আমার বোনের রক্ত/বৃথা যেতে দিব না

I will not let the bloodshed of my brother/Go in vain.

I will not let the bloodshed of my sister/ Go in vain.

In this slogan, the commissive point is utilized as the protesters promised not to let the sacrifice of the students go without securing justice for the martyrs. They used expressions like, “আমার ভাইয়ের” ('my brothers') and “আমার বোনের” ('my sister's) which imply their attachment with the comrades in the movement and their onus also gets reflected here. Deeply emotional, this slogan represents students' promises to secure justice, fellow feelings, and responsibilities to their comrades through commissives.

8. আমার ভাই মরল কেন/জবাব চাই জবাব চাই

Why have my brothers died? / I want an answer; I want an answer.

The speakers here demanded an answer when people in authority started oppressing and shooting the students. So, the directive point is utilized to get the desired behavior from the listeners, that is, the ruling party or the government. Again, using the phrase, 'আমার ভাই' (my brothers), the speakers represent their sense of responsibility to their companions in the movement. The protesting spirit and agitation of the activists are obvious in this slogan.

9. ছাত্রলীগের আস্তানা/ভেঙ্গে দাও গুঁড়িয়ে দাও

The Sanctuary of Chatra League! Break Them, Smash Them

The directive act is used in this slogan. The protesters here expressed their reaction against the ill-treatment of Awami

League (AL) and BCL and asked the hearer to smash all the shelters of this group. Here, the directives are for the comrades against CL and AL. The resentment against the wrongdoers is noticeable in this slogan.

10. লাখো শহিদের রক্তে কেনা/দেশটা কারো বাপের না

Bangladesh is achieved at the sacrifice of millions of martyrs. / Our motherland cannot be someone's inherited property.

In this slogan, a directly assertive point is used to inform. This is chanted when the movement got further development. The students have been tortured and shot to death. This discourse can be explained as Bangladesh is not someone's personal property rather, this is the hard-won achievement of the Bangladeshis. So, the protesters expressed their demands that in their country, the government cannot do whatever they like. This is a matter of liability. Hence, implicitly the protesters were saying that the government had to take responsibility for the happenings in the context.

11. আমার ভাই কবরে/খুনি কেন বাহিরে?

My brothers are in graves. /Why are the killer free?

Both assertive and directive points are used in the slogan. The protesters recited that after killing their comrades the murderers were roaming about free. Through an assertion, the then state of affairs is described in the first part of the slogan and in the second part, there is a demand for an answer from the government to say why the killers were free, which means why the murderers had not yet been punished. In the form of a question, a demand for justice is placed.

12. লেগেছে লেগেছে/রক্তে আগুন লেগেছে

Blood is ignited! Blood is ignited!

The assertive point is used here to express the agitation of the protesters. They assert that their blood was being burnt which indicates that they were in a full swing mood to protest and struggle for their rights.

Final Phase

Context of Final Phase

At this stage, protesters' nine-point demand was reduced to one point. They placed one point by chanting for the step down of the then-prime minister. On 3 August 2024, the protesters refused to join a meeting with Sheikh Hasina as they did not want to negotiate with the government, which is allegedly responsible for the death of their companions. The protesters announced a non-cooperation movement to be observed countrywide from August 4, creating a climactic situation. Eventually, students, including commoners, died because of the open firing of the police, and many got injured.

On 4 August 2024, the protesters asked for a 'Long March to Dhaka' disobeying the curfew imposed by the government. Later, they announced a one-point claim through slogans. On 5 August 2024, the people from outside Dhaka tried to get in very early in the morning. Police continued with shooting, harassing, and torturing at some points in Dhaka. However, later, the crowd started forwarding towards *Gono Bhaban* to seize it, and in such a situation, under pressure from the protesters and the army, Sheikh Hasina resigned from her post.

Slogans of the Final Phase

13. তোমার কোটা ভূমি নাও/আমার ভাই ফিরিয়ে দাও

Take your Quota back. /Give my brothers back.

The use of directive points is observed here. Through the slogan, the protesters placed the demand to take away the Reformed Quota Act and return the martyred protesters. This slogan is structured placing two demands before the authority responsible for the murder of innocent people. When a good number of people were killed, the protesters refused to get reformation in Quota and wanted their dead companions to get back to life.

14. এক দুই তিন চার/শেখ হাসিনা গদি ছাড়

One two three four /Sheikh Hasina step down.

The directive speech act is used here to place a demand through this slogan. Here, rhythmically, the then-prime minister was asked to get down from power. This slogan was used in protest of inhumanity, but here, the context is not confined to ensuring the reformation of the quota; rather, this time, the movement took a broader turn, and at this point, the protesters were struggling for one clause: Sheikh Hasina's stepping down.

15. জ্বালো জ্বালো/আগুন জ্বালো

Lit the light. /Lit the light.

The directive point is used in the slogan. Addressing the people who were supporting the protest, the activists asked them to carry on the fiery protest by fighting against the evil power of the government.

16. Justice Justice /We Want Justice

This is an English slogan where the speakers used the directive act to demand justice. Here, they placed a demand for the punishment of all the people who were instrumental in the mass killing and all the evil activities during the time of movement.

17. এক দফা এক দাবি/হাসিনা কবে যাবি?

হাসিনা তুই এখন যাবি/এক দফা এক দাবি

One point one demand/When will Sheikh Hasina resign?

Step down, Hasina, immediately. /One point one demand

Directive points are used in this slogan. This slogan is chanted at the macro level since placing a one-point claim the protesters demand the stepping down of Sheikh Hasina. At first, they placed their demand before her to leave the power. Through a question she was asked when she would resign. So, indirectly the protesters asked Hasina to get down from the power and then they answered that she had to resign instantly. Interestingly, in a dramatic way, they placed their demands and fixed the moment for the fulfilment of their demand. This slogan belongs to the last phase of the movement and as such, the movement was at its culmination. At this stage, the demands of the protesters

narrowed down and took a unique turn in the form of just one point. Hence, they raised their voice for the resignation of Sheikh Hasina, which can be considered as a demand encompassing all the demands placed before.

18. জেগেছে জেগেছে/ছাত্রসমাজ জেগেছে

The students of the society /Got awake, got awake.

The assertive point is in use in this slogan. The activists mentioned here about their reaction to the injustice. The students became alert and were ready to move further in the protest. This slogan states the condition of the protesters explicitly but implicitly the slogan indicates their uplifting consciousness of the injustice. It is relevant here to mention Reboul (1979), who says 'True slogans are those that succeed best in concealing their real nature' (p.296). So, the real feature of the slogan here is identified through pragmatic analysis.

19. দিয়েছি তো রক্ত/আরও দেবো রক্ত

রক্তের বন্যায়/ভেসে যাবে অন্যায়

We have already bled. /If needed, we will bleed further.

All the injustice will be/ Washed away by profuse bleeding.

Here, assertive, commissive, and directive acts are used in the slogan. At first, using assertive and commissive acts, the protesters stated that they sacrificed and experienced bleeding while protesting. They were even ready to sacrifice further, so they promised to go with the same experience in time of need. At last, using the directive act, they hoped that through their blood, all the impurities of the society would be removed. So, the protesters here expressed the state of protest, sacrifice, and the injustice (done towards them), then they promised to protest further, and at last, they hoped the country would be free from all the injustice.

20. ছি ছি হাসিনা/লজ্জায় বাঁচি না

Shame! Shame! Hasina /We can't tolerate this shame.

The activists used the declarative act to express their deep hatred, and since ‘to hate’ is a stative verb, the task is accomplished simply by uttering the words. The protesters expressed their reaction to the heinous deeds of genocide by the government, and as such, they directly chanted the slogan, expressing their abhorrence for Sheikh Hasina. Boldly, the protesters articulate this highly emotive slogan against Sheikh Hasina, the former Prime minister of Bangladesh, expressing their abhorrence, disappointment, and disgust.

21. ভূমি কে? আমি কে? বাংলাদেশ! বাংলাদেশ!

Who are you? Who am I? / Bangladesh! Bangladesh!

Here directive and assertive points are used to give the motto of the movement a broader shape. The slogan starts with questions, ‘Who are you? Who am I?’ and then the speakers themselves replied ‘Bangladesh!’, ‘Bangladesh!’. So, at first, the directive point and then the assertive point are used. At the beginning of the movement, out of agitation for the humiliation of the students by Sheikh Hasina, the ADSM group chanted, “Who are you? Who am I? / Traitors! Traitors!”. This slogan was uttered by a limited portion of the citizens of Bangladesh in the protest. However, eventually, this tension spread and took a broader shape and in the end, transformed to “Who are you? Who am I? / Bangladesh! Bangladesh!”. Surprisingly, an ironic expression has gone through a process of paradigm shift and reached a macro level from a micro level, involving people from all walks of life singing in the same tune for justice and ensuring the stepping down of the government.

Conclusion

Slogans have the potential to strike a moment to encourage a social movement. According to Ford (2019), a significant role of slogans is that they can be influential to the extent of starting a mass movement for restructuring or rebellion in a society. All the illocutionary speech acts are utilized in the discourse of the

slogans of the Quota Movement 2024. The use of speech acts is explicitly noticeable in the slogans which were repeatedly recited during the time of the July-August movement. With the development of the movement, the slogans had dynamic roles to play, through asserting the state of affairs, expressing mood or reaction, giving directives, promising to take initiative and acting to encourage the activists and inform the people of the country and the external world. The ADSM group for quota reformation in 2024 sang a series of slogans. Initially, the protesters just raised their voices on the quota issue with the slogan ‘Quota or Merit? /Merit! Merit!’ through non-violence and later, the reaction of the ruling party and the consequential feedback from the protesters created a scope for further development of slogans. Literally, the initial significant slogan creates the context for the generation of a series of slogans, firstly for one particular cause and eventually for a good number of humanitarian causes and at last, it is reduced to one single cause again. The development of one point to nine points was just the demands of the situation and finally reduction from nine points to one point hit the end of the struggle. Hence, with the dynamism of the movement, the slogans get vitality and portray the picture of a paradigm shift in Bangladesh’s social context.

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