Research Article

The Role of Language in Emotions: A Pragmatic Analysis of the Naked Man's Utterances during the Naira Scarcity in a Banking Hall in Nigeria

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Abstract

The unique socio-economic contexts known as trendy speech events take place especially in commercial banking halls as the result of a tensed political situation in Nigeria. Against this backdrop, this paper focuses on the use of speech act theory in pragmatics by a naked man to explicate the various illocutionary acts of the data for this study. The data comprises 45 sentences of the viral video used for this analysis. The mixed method design was adopted for this study. The qualitative method accounted for the content and the textual analyses, while the quantitative method was used for the percentile findings. The purposive random sampling technique was used to select utterances for this study to avoid redundancy and tautology typical of many spoken discourses. With the analysis of selected utterances using the speech act theory by J.R Searle, the findings revealed the speech acts express anger and frustration, they also assert, tell, describe, inform, remind, command, and make a request. Thus, the findings of the study recommended that linguistic communication should be carefully and appropriately done because the language use expresses more actions, emotions as well as intentions than what is actually expressed. Furthermore, the assertive showed that the speech acts of language users are capable of defining their different hidden emotions, personalities, and other intentions in different communicative contexts. This study is important as it unveils the understanding of communication in crisis situations, that is, how people communicate under stress and reveals how cultural and social factors influence communication styles.

Keywords: Pragmatics, speech act theory, illocutionary acts, naira scarcity

Introduction

Humans and language are inseparable. Humans as social beings use language to communicate. Language is used to reveal their ideas, thoughts, and feelings. Insup Taylor and Martin Taylor opine that a language is a system of signs used to convey messages (79). By engaging in the act of either spoken or written language, thoughts,

ideas, and feelings are expressed. This makes language unique to humans. It is important in daily communication because it is a medium for transferring and receiving a meaning which is key to communication. According to Owen, communication is an act to express what is in one's mind (5). It is a process of exchanging information and ideas. For any effective communication to take place, there is a need for the speaker to encode correctly and the listener should be able to decode perfectly. People use spoken language for different purposes. The utterances of any interlocutor project different meanings apart from the literal meanings. This is greatly influenced by the context of the speech. A particular sentence that is spoken in a certain context, if spoken in another context, may mean something different entirely. Thus, the context impacts the meaning to a great extent.

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that is concerned with the meaning as communicated by a speaker or writer and decoded by a listener or a reader. Yule opines that pragmatics is of a contextual meaning (17). This paper tries to interpret what people mean in a particular context, in this case, a naked man in a Nigerian banking hall during the new note's scarcity. The introduction of the new naira notes and the accorded policy of twenty thousand naira daily maximum withdrawal make people react (both in written and spoken discourses) differently especially due to its scarcity at the various payment outlets.

Some speakers organize what they want to say in accordance with whom they are talking to and the context of discussion while some of these spoken discourses are not planned, like in the case of this naked man. The context of the naked man's utterance is more of psychological than physical, since he was greatly affected by the new notes scarcity, it was from this context, he made his utterances with Speakers B and C interjecting with few utterances. There is a mutual understanding between the naked man and his hearers, they are aware of the situation on ground. The naked man decided to use language to perform an action or speech acts, his utterance is used to deliver specific purposes. The speech acts performed by the naked man are known as illocutionary acts. It is against this background that this study makes use of the theoretical framework of speech act with a particular focus on the illocutionary acts as proposed by J.R Searle. In analyzing this spoken discourse, the illocutionary acts performed by the naked man in the banking hall are identified by using a descriptive qualitative approach.

Consequently, this research is necessitated to understand communication in crisis situations, that is, analyzing how individuals express frustration or complaints during economic or financial crises that can provide insights into how people communicate under stress. In addition, this study reveals how cultural and social factors influence communication styles and expectations in financial contexts. In essence, this type of research is important as it helps bridge the gap between linguistic theory and practical application, providing valuable insights for improving communication.

The purpose of this study is to examine the speech of a naked man in a Nigerian banking hall during the naira scarcity. It has been observed that people mean more than what they say, although this may not be projected in their speeches. Hence, this paper aims at examining how utterances are contextually conditioned to achieve communication. It also tries to establish the relevance of what people say using certain pragmatics strategies. Finally, this paper exposes the speakers intended meaning which is embedded and hidden in the spoken discourse.

Methodology

The study used a mixed method design: the qualitative method accounted for the content and the textual analyses, while the quantitative method was used for the percentile

findings. The data were taken from the man's utterances such as words, phrases, and sentences. To collect the data from the man's utterances, three steps were taken by the researcher: downloading the video clips from the online source (two minutes and fifty seconds-2:50), watching the video several times, and listening and writing down the man's utterances. The purpose random sampling technique was used to select 30 utterances for this study to avoid redundancy and tautology typical of many spoken discourses. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, insights from speech act theory are deployed, focusing on the types of illocutionary act by the naked man through his utterances. This determines the extent to which speech acts convey meaning and elicit appropriate responses and actions from interlocutors within a speech context.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework
Speech Act Theory

This paper adopts Speech Act Theory which is a pragmatic theory built on the foundation of Wittgenstein and J. L Austin, though often associated with J.R Searle. J. L Austin was a British philosopher of language and leading proponent of ordinary language philosophy. He was the first proponent of Speech Act Theory. Austin points out that people use language to do things as well as to assert things. In line with this assertion, Ogbulogo states that in speech act theory "every utterance has a communicative purpose which derives from specific context" (25). The language use depends on such contextual factors as social and physical circumstances, abilities, attitudes, beliefs, and the relationship between the speaker and the listener (Stockwell 32). Thus, the language use is contextual and people speak and understand through the particular contexts.

A major task for the theory of speech acts is to account for how speakers can succeed in what they do despite the various ways in which linguistic meaning underdetermines use. The theory posits that people do more things with words. They convey more than the words they encode. Green asserts that although the focus of speech act theory has been on utterances, especially those made in conversational and other face-to face situations, the phrase 'speech act' should be taken as a generic term for any sort of language use, oral or otherwise (228). It takes a close look at what we say, how we say it and what it really means.

Speech act theorists hold that the basic unit of human communication is the utterance which is not only used to convey statements that may be true or false, but also to perform a range of actions (Austin 53). A speech act is an act performed with an utterance in accordance with the conventions of the speaker and hearer. The meaning of an utterance is in its use.

The philosophers like Austin, Grice, and Searle offered the basic insight into this theory of linguistic communication based on the assumption that "the minimal units of human communication are not linguistic expressions, but rather the performance of certain kinds of acts, such as making statements, asking questions, giving directions, apologizing, and thanking (Beebe and Tomoko 205). Austin defines the performance of uttering words with a consequential purpose as "the performance of a locutionary act, and the study of utterances thus far and in these respects the study of locutions or of the full units of speech" (102). He further says that these functional units of communication have a prepositional or locutionary meaning that is the literal meaning of utterances, the act of saying something reasonable. It is a combination of 'phonetic act' and 'rhetic act' (119). Austin posits further that a locutionary act is the production of any meaningful utterances following the conventions or grammar of a given language (88). There is also an illocutionary meaning, the social function of the utterance. When we speak to people,

we often have something in mind which can be to make a request, to issue an order, to state a fact etc. (such as verditives, exercitives, commissives, expositives, and behabitives). The last is the perlocutionary force that is the effect produced by the utterance in a given context. It comprises both the achievement of a perlocutionary object (convince, persuade) and/or the production of a perlocutionary sequel.

The functions of speech act according to Austin start with the sender, the message (gestures, whistling, drumming, speech), topic (what the message is about), code (signaling units of which a message is composed-based on a set of conventions for communicating meaning), receiver (hearer) and setting (context) (112). Austin argues that language is not only a tool for constative assertions but also a tool for the creation of reality (78). He claims that while some utterances are used to describe or state how the world is, there are a number of utterances which do not perform such a function at all (65). He names utterances in the former category "constatives" and those in latter "performatives" noting that the uttering of a performative utterance constitutes the performance of the action specified in its prepositional content (82). Here are some examples:

Constative = Meals cooked with Maggi Chicken are irresistible.

Performative = I name this child Joy (naming).

According to Austin, the performative utterance is both an action and an utterance. Rather than being true of false, can be happy (felicitous), unhappy (infelicitous) for varied reasons (122). An utterance is said to be happy if it achieves its desired effect which can also be termed as positive face, and it is unhappy, if it fails to bring about the type of act it is supposed to bring about (negative face).

John Searle in his own view on speech act theory proposes a rule-governed approach. To him, the most important aspect of a speech act is the illocutionary act (15). There are essentially two types of rules. The first regulates antecedently existing forms of behaviour - rules of etiquette that govern social relationships. The second creates the behaviour and is exemplified with the rules of a game such as football. He names the former regulatory rules, and the latter constitutive rules. He further argues that there are at least 12 areas of differences existing between one illocutionary act and another but later arrives at five classifications of illocutionary speech acts: representatives/assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives (20).

Table 1
The Illocutionary Acts by Searle

Speech Acts	Performative Element
Representatives/ Assertives	Commits a speaker to the truth/falsity of as statement, for example reciting a creed
Directives	Enforces the hearer to take a particular action, for example- making request, command and advice
Commissives	Commits a speakers to some future action such as promises and oaths
Expressives	Speech acts that are expressive of the speaker's attitude and emotion, such as thanking, congratulating and excuses.
Declaratives	Changes the reality in accordance with the proposition of the declaration, for example baptism, legal and marital pronouncements.

Source: (Ezeh 161)

Pragmatics and Spoken Discourse

Pragmatics is practiced by humans; it is embedded in the society. It is a meaning more than what one said or is saying the opposite of what is meant. It is more than literal meaning or dictionary meanings. Griffths defines pragmatics as the 'toolkit' for a meaning: knowledge encoded in the vocabulary of the language and in its patterns for building more elaborate meanings in meaningful communication (18). This means that pragmatics deals with the interaction of semantic knowledge related to the world as well as contexts of use. Leech in his own definition of pragmatics, states that it is the study of how utterances have meanings in situation (88). Cruse sees pragmatics as those aspects of meaning which are dependent on context. In other words, in pragmatics, meanings are based on context (20). Yule in his opinion, defines, pragmatics as the study of invisible meaning, or how we recognize what is meant when it is not actually said or written (32). Furthermore, Leech and Short explain pragmatics as the investigation into the aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal properties of words and construction but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered (202). Similarly, Levinson sees pragmatics as the study of those aspects of the relationship between language and context that are relevant to the writing of grammars (192), while Yule explains that pragmatics is the study of intended speaker meaning. It can be deduced form the above definitions that context is germane to pragmatics (28). It marks the difference between semantics and pragmatics. In other words, pragmatics can be seen as the contextual use of language.

Pragmatics explains how language users are able to overcome apparent ambiguity since it explains the meaning based on context and shared knowledge. According to Perez-Sabater, pragmatics considers three principles: the negotiation of meaning between speaker and listeners, the context of the utterance and the meaning potential of an utterance (85). In other words, the speakers and listeners must be able to have a clear understanding of the discourse; there must be shared knowledge that is a mutual understanding of the discourse and the additional information that needs to be decoded by the listener or reader.

Spoken discourse is one of the most practical and common ways that language is used. It is used every day for communication. It is an interactive speech between two or more people, which is a broad-based language phenomenon in daily life. Speaking in everyday conversation, usually takes place in real time and it is conducted face-to-face (Cornbleet and Carter 77). This refers to verbal communication between participants as against the written medium of communication. Cornish defines spoken discourse as the ongoing, situated interpretation of a speaker's communicative intentions, of which the addressee's expected, and actual reactions are an integral part (229). Spoken discourse is also known as oral discourse; it is communication or transfer of information using words that are spoken.

Oral discourse that is often referred to as natural discourse has three elements: a speaker, a receiver, and an intended message. This makes it different from utterances that are meaningless. It is usually unplanned and characterized by false starts, contractions, hesitations, partial statements, gestures, body language, and physical mannerisms (Schmied 48). Thus, it lends itself to the use of speech acts which are functions of communication that might include; congratulating, ordering, demanding, promising, hinting, warning, or greeting. According to Kristen, spoken discourse has some distinctive features:

- Words are often not given much consideration before they are spoken.
- It is often less planned and contains less structure.

- There is a tendency to use words with fewer syllables and less complex sentences.
- Once delivered, it cannot be changed or taken back.
- The receiver of information must listen to the whole speech or presentation at once in order to get full meaning.
- Oral information is only permanent if it is continuously passed from one person to the next.
- Meaning is supported by non-verbal communication and other factors such as tone and intonation.
- It can be done spur of the moment.
- The audience is known to the one delivering the message.
- The pace of communication is generally determined by the speaker.
- More personable and involves a shared situation between speaker and listener. (42)

Results and Discussion
Results
      The speech of a naked man in a banking hall during naira scarcity was used. The data covered the various speech act theories according to J.R. Searle. The results have been displayed in the table below:

Table 2
The Naked Man's Utterances during the Naira Scarcity

Speech Acts	The Spoken Discourse of the Naked Man and Two Other Speakers
Directives	The naked man: Give me my money, let me go.
	Give me cash, let me go.
	Pay me now!
	Make dem give me, make I dey go. (give me and let me go)
	Let me go and take care of my family.
	Speaker B: 'Oga,' calm down first now.
	Come and wear your clothes.
	Calm down.
	Wear your clothes.
	Okay, wear your clothes.
Representatives/ Assertives	The naked man: How many years in First Bank?
	More than twenty years!
	They say, they wan change money. (We were told of the change of the currency)
	Five hundred and twenty thousand naira- you are telling me story.
	Na cash, I bring come give una (I deposited cash)
	When I bin wan enter here, I carry cash come here (I brought cash to the bank)
	I didn't do (a) transfer.
	I don't want (a) transfer!
	Nothing! Nothing again.
	I no get something to eat. (I don't have what I can eat)
	How old 'is' (are) my children? 7 years, 4 years.
	Speaker B: Sebi, it's for you to talk, talk to people (you just need to talk)

Expressives	The naked man: What are you telling me?
	Where do I start from?
	Make una shoot me, make I die. (shoot me and let me die)
	Oga, shoot me, make I forget my children, make I forget my wife (Soldier, shoot me so that I can forget my children and wife)
	Shoot me, make I forget my problem. (shoot me so that I can forget my problem)
	You frustrated me!
	Speaker C: He's not even listening to you.
Commissives	I bin wan pay my children school fees, my house rent. (I want to pay…).

Source: "Scarcity of Naira Notes 2023"

Discussion

Yule states that directives are kinds of illocutionary acts that enforce the hearer to take a particular action that is to do something (90). Based on the research results, there are ten (10) utterances found as directives. Commanding and making a request can be seen in utterances between the naked man Speaker B: *Give me my money, let me go, pay me, now, give me cash,* and *'Oga,' calm down, come and wear your clothes.* The naked man is commanding the bank officials to do something - to pay him. Likewise, Speaker B is making a request for the naked man to calm down and wear his clothes. The performative verbs: 'give,' 'pay,' 'come,' and 'wear' indicate that the utterances contain command and request.

Yule states that representatives or assertives are kinds of illocutionary acts that commit the speaker to believe that something is true or not (88). It commits a speaker to the truth/falsity of a statement. Based on the research results, there are 12 utterances made by the naked man and Speaker B that belong to this illocutionary act: stating a fact, informing, reminding, describing, telling, asserting. For examples: *How many years in First Bank? More than twenty years! Five hundred and twenty thousand Naira (N520, 000), I didn't do (a) transfer, I no get something to eat (I don't have what I can eat), how old 'is' (are) my children?* and *7 years, 4 years…*all these utterances are either informing or reminding the hearers. Likewise, utterances like *They say, they wan change money (We were told of the change in the currency),* and *Nothing, nothing again* are stating facts. *I don't want a transfer* is telling or asserting. On the other hand, Speaker B is stating a fact or informing the naked man on what to do, this he did by making an utterance like '*Sebi', it's for you to talk, talk to people.*

There are seven utterances that belong to this illocutionary act; they show the speaker's emotion and attitude, which are anger, frustration, and hopelessness. These illocutionary acts can be seen in these utterances: *What are you telling me? Where do I start from? Make una shoot me, make I die. (Shoot me and let me die) Oga, shoot me, make I forget my children, make I forget my wife (Soldier, shoot me so that I can forget my children and wife) Shoot me, make I forget my problem. (Shoot me so that I can forget my problem), You frustrated me!* These utterances show the feelings of the speaker; he is fed up with life because he could not access his money which he deposited in the bank. In contrast, Speaker C is expressing his feeling of disappointment since the naked man refused to listen to Speaker B. This can be deduced from Speaker C's utterance: *He's not even listening to you.*

Commissives are kinds of illocutionary acts that commit a speaker to some future actions. In the data, there is only one utterance that belongs to this act: *I bin wan*

pay my children school fees, my house rent. (I want to pay…). This utterance shows the action the naked man is planning to take in future, and to pay his house rent and children's school fees.

Declaratives are kinds of illocutionary acts that change the world through their utterances. This type of illocutionary act is not found in this data.

The summary of the findings on the distribution of each act in the data is provided in the table below:

Table 3
Summary of Findings in Percentage

Speech Acts	Frequency Distribution	Percentage	Sub-Acts
Directives	10	33.3	Commanding, requesting.
Representatives/ Assertives	12	40	Asserting, telling, describing, informing, reminding
Expressives	7	23.3	Feeling of anger, frustration and hopelessness, emotional.
Commissives	1	3.3	Committing to a future action
Declaratives	0	0	none

Table 3 indicated that the naked man's utterances are 30 which are categorized as 12 representatives/assertives (40%), directives are 10 (33.3%), expressives are seven (23.3%), commissives is one (3.3%), and there are no declaratives. It can be deduced that the naked man's utterances are more of asserting, telling, describing, informing, and reminding; this is closely followed by commanding and requesting, then expressives which is showing his emotion and finally, committing to do something.
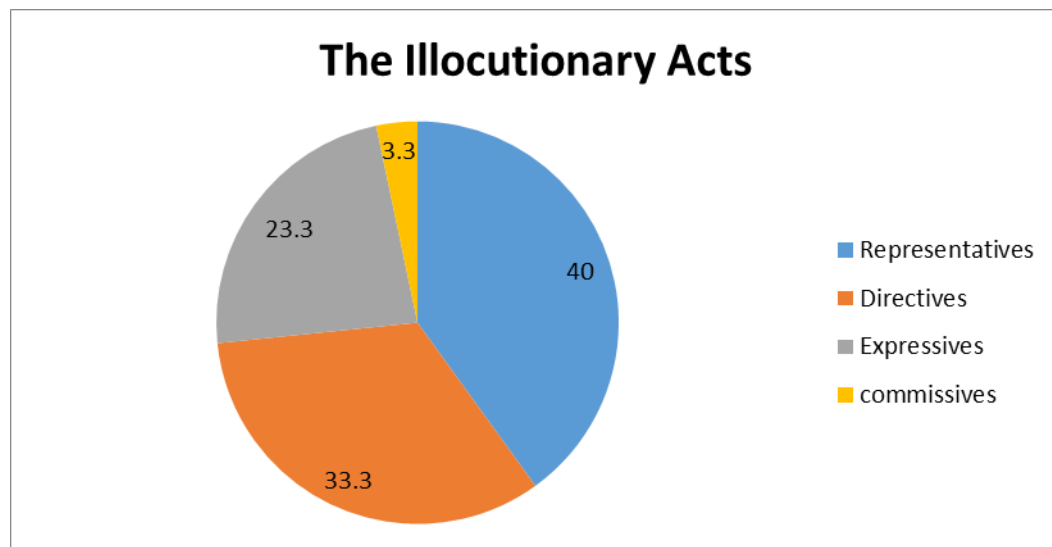

Fig. 1. Percentage Distribution of the Illocutionary Acts

As shown in Fig. 1, the illocutionary acts performed by the naked man are asserting, commanding, and requesting in nature which are prevalent in oral communication. Based on the findings, the hidden message of the naked man is revealed, which is more of informing and describing his situation to his listeners. He also reminded them of his past records with the bank; perhaps this will elicit sympathy and make them do the needful for him. In essence, the assertives showed that the speech acts of language

users are capable of defining their different hidden emotions, personalities, and other intentions in different communicative contexts. The naked man also made use of directives to a great extent; this is commanding and at the same time requesting that his money be paid to him since he feels he has the right to it. It could be deduced from the study that the naked man's speech acts express anger and frustration.

Conclusion

The pragmatic analysis of the naked man's utterances during the naira scarcity in a banking hall in Nigeria reveals a deep connection between language, emotion, and context. The expressions of anger and frustration were not merely spontaneous but they were marked with different speech acts that conveyed his intense emotional state and the urgency of his situation. These utterances were influenced by the socio-economic pressures of the naira scarcity, demonstrating how external stressors can shape linguistic behavior. The study underscores the importance of understanding speech acts in communication, especially in high- stress scenarios, as they provide critical insights into the speaker's intentions, emotions, and the broader social context.

Succinctly, it is evident from this study that illocutionary act is a form of speech act that speaker engages in to achieve something when s/he makes any utterance. It can be an act of stating, promising, apologizing, informing, telling, describing, ordering, asking, threatening, commanding, and predicting. In this study, four types of illocutionary acts are performed by the naked man. He sets out to achieve something; hence, he engages in the illocutionary acts of telling, asking, informing, reminding, describing, commanding, and requesting. The naked man also expresses anger and frustration. He goes ahead to include non-linguistic act of removing his clothes to drive home his point. These linguistics and non-linguistics acts drew the attention of the onlookers, including an armed man who begged him to wear his clothes. However, in this paper, the non-linguistic act was not analyzed; this needs to be added in further research to enrich the results of the study.

Recommendations

Based on the discussion above, the findings of the study suggest the following recommendations:

- Linguistic communication should be carefully and appropriately done because language use expresses more actions, emotions as well as intentions than what is actually expressed.
- Implementing robust feedback mechanisms where customers can voice their concerns and frustrations in a structured manner can provide banks with valuable insights to improving services and address recurring issues proactively.
- Designing banking halls to be more customer- friendly can reduce stress levels of the customers.

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