

HAGGLING AS A SOCIO-PRAGMATIC STRATEGY IN SELECTED URBAN MARKETS: AN AMALGAM OF ENGLISH AND NIGERIAN LANGUAGES

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Abstract

This study undertakes a socio-pragmatic investigation of haggling exchanges between vendors and their customers in three large open-air market locations in southwest Nigeria; one in Ibadan (Bodija market) and two in Lagos (Katangwa and Agege) metropolises respectively. Audio recordings of haggling exchanges between selected vendors and their prospective customers were analysed in order to identify and categorize various socio-pragmatic elements and functions in the encounters. The study employs Dell Hymes' ethnography of communication and aspects of the pragmatic theory of Mey and Gricean Cooperative Maxims. Findings reveal that several languages come into contact with one another, including English, Yoruba, Pidgin, Igbo and Hausa in the market transactions in Lagos and Ibadan metropolis in Nigeria. Respondents employ various bargaining and pragmatic strategies which include greetings, humour, cajoling, flattery, pleading, swearing, abuse as well as code-switching and code-mixing. This study helps to establish some socio-pragmatic patterns in language use in contact situations in the Nigerian multilingual/multicultural market contexts. It also shows the pragmatic use of Interrogatives, Declaratives, Exclamatives and Imperatives in bargaining interactions.

Keywords: Socio-pragmatics, haggling, Nigerian languages, pragma-intonation

1. Introduction

Socio-pragmatics concerns "language use which derive from the social situation" (Crystal, 2006:364). In this regard language is explicated from the point of view of the users, their specific choices and situational constraints. In this study, we examine how Nigerians employ language as a socio-pragmatic strategy in haggling during the process of buying and selling. Haggling in the market place, generally, is an age-long phenomenon in human societies. Scholars have observed various aspects of the phenomenon. For instance, it has been observed that the market place is a site where the buyer, who is a bargain hunter, is in diametrical opposition to the vendor, who is out to make profit. In the case of the latter, the line between profit making and profiteering becomes quite thin in a market place where the norm is for the vendor to name an unusually high price with the expectation that

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the buyer will respond by haggling tenaciously until they arrive at a purchase price that is acceptable to both parties. Bargaining often involves the speech acts of negotiating, compromising, and manoeuvring which sometimes falls into conflict (Ayoola, 2009).

Haggling occurs in everyday life of the Nigerian people and strongly impacts on their linguistic climate. Generally, haggling is an important aspect of the social activity of buying and selling in which vendors and their prospective customers engage in different socio-pragmatic acts in the processes of negotiating and making compromises, using a language or different languages. Traders and buyers tend to behave in ways that have the potential for achieving their goals, while interacting. On the part of the seller, the goal is to ultimately maximize profit while the buyer strives to obtain the goods at the lowest cost. Ayoola (2009) identifies such discourse strategies of haggling in the Nigerian context as dysphemism and euphemism, cajoling, flattery, and flirting. The interactional strategies of bargaining in other multilingual contexts such as in Iran, have also been carried out where code-mixing, honorific, face and politeness strategies among others are used (see Moseri, 2010). The socio-pragmatic aspects of bargaining in the Nigerian context have not been sufficiently explored hence the need for the present study.

In a multilingual/multicultural Market setting in Nigeria, English and indigenous languages including Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa and Nigerian Pidgin feature prominently in market transactions. Previous studies on market discourse in Nigeria have adopted different approaches including sociolinguistics, stylistics and discourse analysis. This study investigates peculiar social and pragmatic behaviours associated with bargaining exchanges between vendors and buyers in the multilingual/multicultural market contexts in Nigeria. It aims at discovering how these behaviours vary with linguistic choices and cultural backgrounds of the interactants. In order to do this, a socio-pragmatic approach is adopted.

The present article undertakes a socio-pragmatic investigation of bargaining exchanges between vendors and their prospective customers in three major markets in Lagos and Ibadan, Nigeria: Bodija market in Ibadan and Katangwa and Agege markets in Lagos, Nigeria. As languages and cultures differ, it is expected that there would be differences in the use of specific speech acts in bargaining. In the Nigerian context, interaction between English and other indigenous languages on the speech behaviour can be expected to have significant sociolinguistic and pragmatic effects. It is assumed that peculiar socio-pragmatic features in the Nigerian environment different from the English may influence the linguistic behaviour of sellers and buyers in bargaining and marketing exchanges.

Linguistically, Nigeria is heterogeneous and “vastly multilingual”, with over four hundred indigenous languages but only three (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) national languages (Igboanusi, 2008a:68). “In Nigeria, the national function allocated to Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo is directly related to the fact that the speakers of these languages have the largest number of speakers.” (Adegbija, 2004: 66-67). As a culturally pluralistic society, Nigeria is characterized by differences in religion, cultural traits and ethnicity. English is a second language (L2) and serves as the official language and lingua franca in the country. Meanwhile, the English-based

Nigerian Pidgin (NP) also exists as a lingua franca, particularly of a lower status. Arabic is used by Muslims for religious purposes, and French is learnt as a foreign language for communication across French-speaking neighbouring countries and for tourism and business purposes. In the area of business, trade and commerce in Nigeria, language plays a highly significant role. Market interactions and settings provide a good site for the study of languages in contact and context, particularly in bilingual/ multilingual contexts. This situation is interesting for language contact researchers.

The socio-pragmatic perspective to the study of bargaining exchanges carried out in this study provides a potential insight into language use in the market place within bilingual/multilingual/bicultural/multicultural settings.

2. A Brief Review of Literature

2.1 Market Discourse/Haggling

The work of Mitchel (1957) on the language of buying and selling in the market place is one of the pioneer studies on this thematic interest. According to Mitchel, the “business of language ...is to express thoughts and emotions, to convey information, to influence behaviour in others, to act as a tool in co-operative action and so on” (p.165). Mitchel’s study was done within seven months with the special purpose of investigating Bedouin Arabic of Jebel. He selected for particular attention, the language of buying and selling in many of the markets visited. According to Mitchel, the markets visited are animal markets, cereal market in Baghasi, Barce, D’Annuzio and Gubba. Describing the activities found in these markets, Mitchel (1957) divides the method of transaction into many stages. He discusses the features of the language that are typical of each of the stages. Elements that correlate exclusively with features of buying and selling situation are termed technical while other elements operative in other situations but customary in buying and selling are termed non-technical. Customers’ activities are generally four-fold, namely, the auctioneer’s opening, investigation (including descriptions by the auctioneer of the objects of sale), bidding and conclusion. There are five stages for the normal market (non-auction) and shop transaction namely:

- I. **Salutation:** This is the beginning of the proceedings with appropriate salutation by the participants. When it occurs, it involves at least two speakers – a buyer and a seller.
- II. **Enquiry-** as to the object of sale which consists of question and answer pairs
- III. **Investigation** of the object of sale which may involve at least two people
- IV. **Bargaining:** This takes place between the buyer and the seller until an agreement is reached
- V. **Conclusion:** This may involve the final tone of one of the participants or both.

2.2 *Threats and promises as coercive strategies*

Threats and promises play roles in coercive strategy and the following are some features of these acts:

2.2.1 Lie

Lie is “an utterance that the speaker intends to convey to the listener (speaker believes “W”) when in fact he believes the opposite (“speaker actually believes not “W”)”. In negotiation, bluffing is also a part of lie. Bluffing occurs when negotiator A wants negotiator B to believe that A has the capacity to implement a threat when, in fact, A does not have the capacity. A bluff can become a tricky message when its phonetic or pragmatic form makes the speaker unaccountable for the hearer’s belief that the threat was real when indeed it was not. A tricky bluffer may produce a logically ambiguous utterance in which the speaker presents both “W” and “not W” as believable propositions. The bluffer believes that some feature of the hearer’s context, for example, cognitive tendencies or past bargaining, favour the “W”, inference and “W” is the inference that the bluffer wants the listener to believe.

2.2.2 Evasion

Evasion is important in situations of goal incompatibility. Evasion is an utterance to keep and to increase the hearer’s uncertainty about the speaker’s intention, especially about the willingness to follow on a threat or promises. The speaker produces an utterance that influences the hearer not to form a belief about whether the speaker intends “W” or “not W”. When a negotiator does not have enough resources to support a threat or does not want to lie, he/she may use evasion to anticipate the opponent’s actions and to maintain uncertainty.

2.2.3 Sentence structure of a threat

This strategy has question-imperative form that obligates the opponent to respond and produce more verbal compliance than do demands, imperative requests, need statements or resource inquiries. This question-imperative syntax leads to a sequence of questions and answers that accommodate verbal responsiveness, especially when the negotiators know each other and the procedures are flexible. In this strategy, there are also explicit threats and promises. They contain outcome statements set in a null form (“if you perform normally, I won’t penalize you”) and are less likely to produce compliance than parallel threats in which the preferred outcomes are coded positively (“if you don’t perform normally, I will penalize you”).

2.3 Linguistic Strategies of Persuasion

Description of Language Contact in Market Situations

In market situations, especially the area studied, Yoruba language is used without any inhibition. However, because of the language situation in Nigeria, there are a series of occasions when more than one language is used. There are switches and mixing of languages as well as the use of pidgin.

2.4 Pidgin

The Nigerian Pidgin is used in an informal situation between the buyer and the seller. In pidgin, interference is what Weinreich (1974) refers to as a deviation from the norms of either of the languages of a bilingual. Interference in pidgin is a result of contact between at least two languages, i.e. in the Nigerian situation, English and other local languages. In Nigeria, and more especially in our present area of study, the variety of English used has been completely hybridized such that the variety created seems to be a different language entirely. This is why there is a series of arguments as to whether Nigerian Pidgin is a variety of English or not. According to Igboanusi (2008b), pidgin is assuming a significant role in Nigerian social transactions. Such a language is created for very practical and immense purposes of communication between people who otherwise have no common language.

In Nigeria, such language use is common in the market situation especially in the discourse of buying and selling between diverse groups whether educated or not. This then shows that pidgin can be extended and restricted. The restricted type is commonly used for limited communication like in buying and selling situation. The extended type goes beyond the original limited function and it is of vital importance in any heterogeneous speech community. In our area of study, there is the use of pidgin by many participants who are competent in the language. This becomes necessary since it is often difficult to know the ethnicity of the customer and consequently their language. Tribal marks which often serve as determinants are no more common. So, aside from most of the shops owned by non-Yoruba sellers, pidgin also occurs in many shops owned by Yoruba sellers whenever transaction is between the shop owner and a non-Yoruba customer.

2.5 Code-Switching and Code-Mixing

Code-switching and code-mixing contain elements of at least two languages in a communicative process. These terms are prominent features of the language of different situations in a multilingual country like Nigeria (Banjo 1996). The switching and mixing of codes can be seen as markers of some sort of familiarity as well as a kind of distancing device; the prevailing situation surrounding the use is a determining factor.

In the discourse of buying and selling, switching and mixing of codes abound and these can be noticed in the discourse of both buyers and sellers. It should be understood that while code-switching occurs inter-sententially, code-mixing takes place within the sentence. In the data collected for this particular study, both mixing and switching of codes are noted.

The mixing and switching of codes are the consequence of the multiple language situation in Nigeria. Participants in a market situation use these with a view to communicating effectively with one another. Among the highly educated participants who are competent bilinguals, the mixing and switching of codes are highly noticeable as well. The major focus of communication is however, proper understanding. The change of codes helps people of different linguistic backgrounds to grasp the major registers that are needed in the market situation.

3. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The data were collected by means of audio recording of interactions between the vendors and their prospective customers, and also by means of participant observations in three large open-air locations in Ibadan (Bodija) and Lagos (Katangwa and Agege) markets in Nigeria. The data were collected between June 3 and July 3, 2011 in a natural speech situation while the buying and selling were going on. The recordings were done surreptitiously, in order to allow for naturalness and not to deter buyers from patronising the selected sellers. The data were subsequently transcribed. The interactants involve participants from different linguistic, ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds. No attempt is made here to describe linguistic or interactional behaviour in relation to these categories. Rather, the analysis focuses on social and pragmatic behaviours of the participants based on their verbal and non-verbal performances at the scenes of business transactions.

This study, as earlier mentioned, is socio-pragmatic in nature and adopts Levinson Pragmatic model of Context and Persuasive Strategies in which “negotiation” is defined as a method of social decision making, one that is accomplished through persuasion and haggling. Persuasion entails the use of message tactics and might involve threats and promises that are the exemplars for understanding how language functions in a negotiation process.

In order to further understand how language functions in a negotiation process, analysts examine the role of language in negotiation more. They find out that language operates at two levels: proposals at the logical level and semantics, syntax, and phonetics (words and sounds that constitute style) as well as the pragmatics level. Each of these levels is explored in the negotiation process and illustrated by focusing on threats and promises in bargaining. Threats and promises are selected as exemplars because of their significance as key coercive moves. These are already expatiated in the section on literature review.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The analysis in this study has the following aims:

- a. to determine socio-pragmatic patterns in language use in contact situation in the Nigerian multilingual/multicultural market context;
- b. to determine language choice pattern in these situations, and
- c. to establish peculiar socio-pragmatic features with reference to specific speech acts and their function?

Interactants' switch from one language to another is the most noticeable trait in the various interactions observed. Instances include:

- “Iya ala apo, (bag carrier) carry that thing well” (text 4);
 “Omode omode (young person) here! (text 7);
 Ara oko (rural person) dey carry *nylon now* (text 8).

4.1 Lexical Choices and Language Choice

The lexical choices include “Pomo” (Cow skin), “jara” (gratuitous items), owo” (money), “change” (balance) and “Aunty” in Text 1; “garri” (cassava product) “efisi” (add more), “o se” (thank you) and “kongo” (measuring vessel) in text 8; “last price” in text 3; “Oyinbo” (White man) and “Okirika” (fairly used clothes) in text 7; “Oga” and “Madam” in text 6. Noteworthy, is the accent on “aunty” which is not only pronounced differently from the monosyllabic British equivalent ‘aunt’ but becomes a di-syllabic word in Nigerian English and pronounced the same way as the prefix “anti-”. The lexical item “Madam” is also pronounced with stress on both syllables in the word instead of only on the initial syllable as in British English. Besides, there is usually an elongation of the length of the vocalic element in the initial syllable and phonemic difference as Alo (2008) suggests could affect meaning. The elongation of “aunty” in this context could suggest the buyer’s special plea for a concessional price from the seller. “nko” is one of the socio-cultural lexical choices that occurred many times in the texts. “This one **nko**? (What of this one?), (Text 1 and Text 6); Owo **nko**? (What of money?) (Text 8). In texts 1, the buyer used it to inquire about the price of a particular pomo (cow skin) while in text 6, the seller used it to lure/persuade the buyer to buy a particular laptop bag. However, in text 8, the seller used “nko” to demand for money for the nylon.

4.2 Discourse Markers as Expressions of Emotions

Buyers tend to use different specific discourse markers to express specific emotional responses to the sellers’ price. Such emotion includes surprise, alarm, shock, anger (negative). Such emotions are negative and reactionary. The expression of such emotion tends to encourage the buyer to continue with the bargaining.

Examples:

Emotion (Text 4)

- (1) Eh! (a discourse marker in Yoruba expressing surprise)
- (2) Ah! (a discourse marker in Yoruba expressing shock)
- (3) Eeh! (a discourse marker in pidgin English expressing anger) Eeh! Nooo!

The effect of the buyer's expression of surprise, shock and anger in the above is a strategy to make the seller reconsider lowering the price. In sum, the buyers leave the scene without buying. Although, Chapman and Routledge (2009) state that "talk in Social interactions is a collaborative process, (in which), a conversation is not ended in an abrupt manner that would deprive any of the participants of the right to contribute" (p.30), yet in haggling, perhaps due to the economic crunch and the very little resources of some buyers, they leave abruptly without using "expressions that signal the end of the conversation" (p.30). This phenomenon is observed among the users of language in text 5 and text 7, respectively:

Text 5:

Seller: How much you want pay?

Buyer: How much for this one?

Seller: Na the same price... If you check am, you go know say the bag ee dey

Buyer: Bag wey done dey peel?

Seller: Wetin peel there? Na bag inside bale,...

Buyer: How much you go sell last?

Seller: How much you want pay?

Buyer: That your price too go up

Seller: E go up for market,... na so we buy am

Buyer: 4500?

Seller: How much you want pay? This na okrika o?

Buyer: I know now, this na okrika market before.

Seller: Eeh, na okrika

Buyer: How much is this one?

Seller: 3500

Buyer: Ah! (Leaves abruptly without buying any)

Text 7

Seller: You know, Oyinbo make this for children. You see this one 100 for adult.

Buyer: Na children own suppose cheap pass.

Seller: Na the same price. ... For children

Buyer: I say na children own suppose cheap pass now.

Seller: En?

Seller: You know them dey import the material

Buyer: Hmn! (buyer departs and conversation ends abruptly)

4.3 Greetings: (*Phatic Communion*)

Conversation initiators (e.g. greetings) are often highly ritualized. In this case, this is a "greet illocution" which simply means that a speaker communicates his awareness that the addressee is a potential interactant. Crystal (2010) explains Bronislaw Malinowski's "phatic communion to refer to this social function of language which arises out of the basic human need to signal friendship, or at least, lack of enmity" (p.10). In such a communion, words fulfil a social function. Expressions like "Nice day!", "How do you do?" and "Good afternoon" are a special kind of speech that is called "phatic communion". The whole situation consists in what happens linguistically. Each utterance is an act serving the direct aim of binding seller and customer by the tie of some social sentiment or other. Once more, language appears to us in this function not as an instrument of reflection but as a mode of action. Excerpts from texts 1 and 2 below show some aspects of phatic communion.

Text 1:

Buyer: Good afternoon (greeting)
Seller: Good afternoon (greeting – response)

Text 2:

Buyer: e ku ise o! (Well done)
 Se aje wa? (Hope you have had high
 customer-patronage?)
 E lo ni? (How much is it?)
Seller: Se efe ba mi ra eran ni? (Do you want to buy meat
 from me?)

One would expect that with the hustle and bustle in Lagos and Ibadan cities, buyers and sellers would have little time to exchange pleasantries. However, because phatic communion is a linguistic exercise that signals friendship it plays a very significant role in especially haggling and bargaining.

4.4 Honorifics as a Bargaining Strategy

One of the haggling strategies is the application of honorific tags such as giving titles to either the customer or the seller. An honorific is a title of respect:

S: Oga... (Text 6)
 A: Madam.... (Text 6)
 B: Aunty... (Text 1)

Honorifics such as "madam" and "oga" are used by the sellers to appeal and persuade prospective buyers. By addressing the buyers using the honorific, the

buyers feel esteemed and appreciated, thus, are lured into purchasing from the seller.

4.5 *Lexical Pragmatic Forms transcending regular global meanings*

The use of 'now' is remarkable. Apart from its meaning of time reference, 'now' also serves as a discourse marker with additional pragmatic meanings of an appeal or a plea:

“Now”, as in “Oga”, enter inside now (Text 6)
Sell for me, now (Text 8)

The buyer intends to work on the emotions of the seller so that they are not able to pause to think carefully on the purchases. However, it is important to note that the intonation of the lexical pragmatic form “Now” as used by the buyers is fall-rise [$\nabla \searrow \nearrow$] instead of the rise-fall to which “Now” [$\nearrow \searrow \wedge$] in terms of time refers. Fuchs, Gut and Soneye (2013), describe how some pragmatic articles are used with a different range of pragmatic meanings in Nigerian English. “Now” has similar usage in this context.

4.6 *Flouting Cooperative Maxims*

Text 1: Buyer: Who is selling pomo?

Seller: Come buy pomo

The conversational excerpt in text 1 above violates Grice's maxim of Relevance. This is because the customer sought to know who the seller of the pomo is, as there was more than one person at the shop. The seller neither answered the question nor identified himself. He simply beckoned on the buyer to buy the pomo. However, due to shared socio-cultural knowledge, the buyer was able to identify the seller as the one who invited her to buy. According to Grice (1975), for conversations to be successful, the interactants must cooperate. In text 1 below, there is non-cooperation on the part of the seller.

Buyer: What of this one that you call 200?

Seller:..... (Silence)

Buyer: Ah, aunty you no like us? You “for give” us this one or this one.....for customer sake (ah aunt don't you like us? you should sell this or that to us for being your customers)

Seller: (Silence)

Silence in the conversation reveals the seller's weariness of the buyer's tireless negotiation. But due to shared socio-cultural knowledge between them (that a customer has the right to bargain), the buyer did not feel insulted but continued with the bargaining. “You forgive us” is pidgin and not Standard English, which means you should agree to sell to us at the price we can afford to pay. A lot

of pidgin is noticed in interaction and negotiation in the market place even by educated Nigerians. It is generally believed in Nigeria, that using standard English especially with a native speaker accent while haggling or intending to purchase goods could hinder the buyer from achieving a good bargain as the seller would immediately conclude that the buyer is “Abinto” or “Tokunbo” both of which are slangy words for Nigerians that have just arrived from abroad, especially from Europe or the United States. The Maxim of Quantity is not observed in text 3:

Seller: 2000

Buyer: I don't have...What I really want is shoe. We want to use it for a programme and we are a group. They said we should get it in group, that it's gold.

In text 3 above, the seller simply asked the buyer to pay 2000 for a pair of shoes. The buyer violates the maxim of quantity by making his contribution more informative than is required. Other instances where there are violations of maxim of quantity include:

Text 8:

B – You no sell ₦35

S – Na ₦40 last, garri don dear (the last price is ₦40, Cassava is expensive now)

S – How many kongo?

B – Na one I go buy as you no carry nylon (I am buying one since you have no plastic bag)

4.7 *Other Bargaining Strategies*

4.7.1 Undervaluation of the product by buyers

In the process of bargaining, customers sometimes degrade the products. Instances include:

Buyer: Hold this, no be cover shoe. (Text 3)

Seller: one of this one, that you call 200? Na small one? (Text 1)

Buyer: No, this one don tear (Text 4)

Buyer: Bag wey done dey tear? (Text 5)

Buyer: No, this one no good (Text 6)

4.7.2 Crediting products by Sellers

Sellers, on their own part, praise their products:

Text 6

S: You know, Oyinbo make this for children.

S: you know them dey import the material

4.8 *Use of various grammatical strategies in haggling*

4.8.1 Interrogatives as Vehicle of Pricing

Text 1

Buyer: how much is this one? (Pointing to one of the items)
(Questioning)

Seller: 100 (response)

Buyer: This one nko? (Pointing to another item) (Questioning)

Seller: 100 (response)

Buyer: No, 50 own

Buyer: what of this one? (Pointing to another) (Questioning)

Seller: 200 (response)

Buyer: Is it not 50? (Questioning)

Seller: No (response)

In the data above, the interrogatives function as vehicles of pricing and bargaining. Here, the bargaining structure shows series of questioning and response between the buyer and the seller. The interaction is mainly in Nigerian Pidgin (NP).

Text 1:

Buyer: One of this one, that you call 200, Na small one. You go help us put jara ooo! See, we are picking one from these.

Yes! Okay, put jara (a mixture of Nigerian Pidgin and English)

Seller: No jara.

4.8.2 Imperatives as Requests

Efisi! (Yoruba) Text 8

Put jara (Pidgin Hausa) Request with politeness marker

Oga buy from me now (Seller, Text 8)

Oga enter inside now (Text 6)

Here “Oga” a Yoruba word expressing the English equivalent word “Master” is a politeness marker. However, the use of “now” as a discourse marker is prominent.

4.8.3 Use of Declaratives

Buyer: Ah, aunty you no like us. You for give us this one or this one... for customer sake.

Seller:

Buyer: (Pays the seller). You don't have change?

Text 5:

B: You get laptop bag? (Nigerian Pidgin)

S: See am here. (Nigerian Pidgin)

The texts above illustrate the use of declaratives as questions. (Compare: “you are going to school today” as an affirmation and “Are you going to school today?” as a question). In the same vein consider the following text:

Buyer: You for give us this one or this one... for customer sake.

The buyer’s statement is actually declarative in Standard English because it means “give us this since we are your customer” but it is posed as a question to prevent the seller’s temper from rising in case their pricing is unreasonable. There are cases where sellers abuse buyers if they feel that what they want to offer for the goods is unreasonably low. We will observe that the seller did not respond to the request of the buyer but simply kept mute as revealed below. The buyer then pays the price earlier mentioned by the seller.

Seller: (Silent)

Buyer: (Pays the seller).

4.9 *Nature of Responses:*

4.9.1. Answering Questions with Questions

In the data, there are instances of either the buyer or the seller using questions to answer questions.

Text 5:

B: Why?

S: How much you want to pay?

B: How much for this one?

B: How much you go sell last?

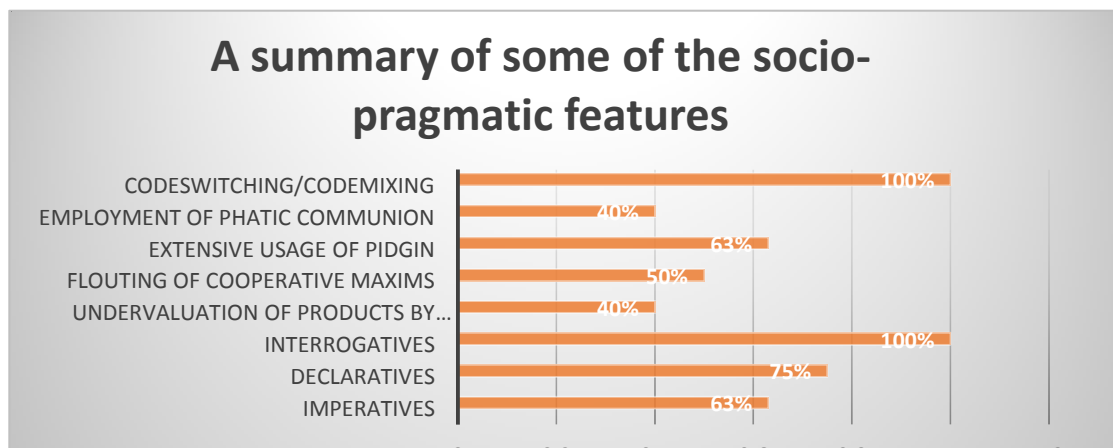
S: How much you want pay?

Text 7:

S: How much you want pay?

B: This one, how much is this one?

Figure 1: A Summary of Some Socio-pragmatic Features Manually Sourced from the Texts



5. Conclusion

The two market locations in the analysis provide a valuable site for the investigation of language contact and interaction between English and Nigeria's indigenous languages, e.g. Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin. Words and expressions used in the market context and in the bargaining process are often used beyond their linguistic or referential meaning. That is, they have contextual, pragmatic implicit meaning which can also be derived from the social, linguistic and cultural contexts. Fig. 1 shows at a glance that there is an extensive use of pidgin in the Nigerian market scenario and phatic communion is barely average, perhaps because the city life is bedevilled by the business like outlook with very little room for pleasantries. However, culture still plays a significant role in the case of Nigerian indigenous languages; and greetings are an integral part of that culture and an expression of politeness. Emotions from both buyers and sellers are often expressed using exclamations to show anger, shock and surprise. The use of the discourse marker "now" as discussed in this paper has acquired an additional pragmatic feature. Interrogatives, declaratives, exclamatives and imperatives are used pragmatically in the bargaining interaction to enable especially the buyer to purchase goods at as reasonable-as-possible prices with the economic crunch in the country and the sellers also to get buyers to buy at prices profitable to them.

More could be derived from the data in terms of unique linguistic resources peculiar to Nigerians' usage but that could be research for future investigation.

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Appendix

Transcribed conversational texts of haggling in Nigerian markets ("B" represents buyer and "S" represents Seller, while "A" represents another buyer)

Text 1: Customer and Seller market interactions in Agege market, Lagos between meat vendor and a young lady trying to buy some meat (cow skin) on the 6th July 2011

B: Who is selling pomo?

Seller's little girl (informing her mother in Yoruba that a customer wants to buy some meat): won f era pomo

Seller: Come buy pomo

B: Good afternoon

S: Good afternoon

B: How much is this one? (Pointing to one of the items)

S: 100

B: This one nko? (Pointing to another item)

S: 100

B: No, 50 own

B: what of this one? (Pointing to another)

S: 200

B: Is it not 50?

S: No

B: What of this one that you call 200?

S:.....

B: This one, how much do you sell this?

S: 100

B: One of this one, that you call 200, Na small one. You go help us put jara ooo!
See, we are picking one from these. Yes! Okay, put jara

S: No jara

B: Ah, aunty you no like us. You for give us this one or this one... for customer sake.

S:

B: (Pays the seller) You don't have change?

Text 2: Customer and Seller market interactions in Agege market, Lagos between meat vendor a young lady trying to buy some meat (beef) on the 6th July 2011. The transaction took place in Yoruba

B: e ku ise o! Se a je wa? E lo ni?

S: Se efe ba mi ra eran ni?

B: E lo ni?

S: E mu ₦ 2500 wa

B: E leyii ₦ 1200

S: Se e fe ba mi ra eran ni?

B: Mo f era

B: Se e mo ibi ti emi ti wa ni?

S: ni bo?

B: Nassarawa

S: En north ni eran ti n wa

B: Heem, e je ka san ₦ 700

S: Owo won ni owo wa

B: Aa mu to oye yen dani.

B: E e sa pewa ka to ya

Text 3: Market interactions between a shoe seller and buyer-

S: Wetin you want buy?

B: Shoes

S: See this one

B: Hold this, no be cover shoe

S: Cover shoe

B: Yes, with some gold

S: How much is this?

S: 2500

B: Last price? 800

B: What of this? (Picks another)

S: 2500

B: How much last last?

S: 2:5 (2500)

B: Last price? I will pay 9 (900)

S: 2000

B: I don't have..... What I really want is shoe. We want to use it for a programme and we are a group. They said we should get it in group, that it's gold.

S: Buy from us

B: Lets check, if we don't get we'll come back. But what is the last price?

S: 2000

B: 2000, let me pay, 1000.

S: No, pay 2000

B: Last last? Lets pay.....lets go, if we don't get.....

Text 4: Customer and Seller market interactions in Kantagoa Second-hand clothes market, Lagos between a vendor and a middle aged man trying to buy some fairly used clothes on the 22nd June 2011.

S: Customer

B: (Selects some clothes)

S: How many years?

B: 7 and 9

S: 7? B: 7 and 9.....

S: 7 years, see this.

B: No, this one don tear

S: Wey am?

S: Ok, this one for 7 years

B: Yes, I dey put am down.

S: Dey put am make I see the ones wey you select

B: (Selects more)

S: Take this one

B: So, how much is that one?

S: 400

B: 200

S: Eh?

B: 200, you no sell 200?

S: You want this up and down for 7 years

B: This up and down, how much?

S: Bring money.

B: No, make we settle this one.

S: How much you wan pay?

B: Make we settle this one first.

S: Ok, select now; select the one wey you want. See this one

B: Eh?

S: Put am first

S: Iya ala apo, carry that thing well (addresses a vendor nearby)

S: See this one.

S: Na children cloth, select now (addresses another prospective customer)

S: See trouser

B: So, how much you talk?
 S: 2: 250
 B: No, na 200 I go pay
 S: Ok
 B: Wait o, make I check first o!
 S: (Selects another) Make I take this one.
 B: You no get the one for 3 years
 S: 3 years?
 B: See 3 years, ...3 years
 B: Another one no dey?
 S: 3 years
 B: Put am down
 S: See this top..... Sir, that one go size 3 years
 B: Make I take one one.
 S: You no take this one again?
 B: Make I take this one first.... I go give you 500
 S: 500? E no dey
 B: 500 e do?
 S: I just give you. This 2: 200 wey I give you no be say ee reach
 B: Why? Make I pay 500
 S: Ee no reach

Text 5: Customer and Seller market interactions in Abule Egba market, Lagos between a vendor and a middle aged man trying to buy Laptop bag on the 22nd June 2011

B: You get laptop bag?
 S: See am here.
 B: This one no be laptop bag
 S: No, one hand dey, two hand dey, anyone wey you want.
 B: How much you go sell this one?
 S: That one 4500
 B: Say wetin happen?
 S: 4:5 (4500)
 B: Why?
 S: How much you want pay?
 B: How much for this one?
 S: Na the same price... If you check am, you go know say the bag ee dey
 B: Bag wey done dey peel?
 S: Wetin peel there? Na bag inside bale,...
 B: How much you go sell last?
 S: How much you want pay?
 B: That your price too go up
 S: E go up for market,... na so we buy am
 B: 4500?
 S: How much you want pay? This na okrika o?

B: I know now, this na okrika market before.

S: Eeh, na okrika

B: How much is this one?

S: 3500

B: Ah! (Leaves without buying any)

Text 6: Customer and Seller market interactions in Abule Egba market, Lagos between a vendor and two middle aged men trying to buy Laptop bag on the 22nd June 2011.

B: I need laptop bag

S: One hand

B: You no get another one? Na only one you get?

S: (Presents another bag)

B: No, this one no good

A: (Another customer comes in) Madam, make I see that bag

S: Oga, enter inside now.

A: No need to enter. This one na how much?

S: 4500

A: What about this? Madam, what of this one?

S: 3:5 (3500)

A: Eeh?

S: 3:5

A: 3:5?

S: Hmn, na laptop bag

A: So, this one is 3:5? This one is how much?

S: 4:5....4500

A: This your bag dey dear o. You no sell am 1:5 (1500)

S: Eeh! No o!

A: You no wan sell?

S: 3, last 3000

A: No, make I dey go

S: This one nko? (Trying to make him buy)

B: So, madam you no get the one wey I want (Leaves)

Text 7: Text 7: Customer and Seller market interactions in Kantagoa Second-hand goods market, Lagos between a vendor and a middle aged man and woman trying to buy some fairly used clothes on the 22nd June 2011.

B: How much is this?

S: Take am 200

B: (picks another set) This one how much?

S: 400

B: 200

S: 300

B: Ah, why?

S: This one, n aim dey cost pass but una no sabi

S: How much you wan pay?
 B: This one, how much is this one? (picks another)
 S: Na the same price
 B: Why e dey cost pass now?
 S: You know, Oyinbo make this for children. You see this one 100 for adult.
 B: Na children own suppose cheap pass.
 S: Na the same price. ... For children
 B: I say na children own suppose cheap pass now.
 S: En?
 S: "For children! I say wey them? For children! Omode omode here!" (advertises his wares)
 S: You know them dey import the material
 B: Hmn!

Text 8: Bodija market, Ibadan, a young man wanting to buy garri, from a middle-aged market woman. Note: "S" refers to the seller and "B" refers to the buyer within this discourse setting. The dot within the parentheses (.), represents short pauses

S – Oga, buy garri from me?
 B - How much?
 S - ₦40
 B – No!, na ₦30
 S – Na ₦40 (.) I no fit....
 B – You no sell ₦35
 S – Na ₦40 last, garri don dear
 B – Sell for me now? (.) eh?
 S – Oga na ₦40 I dey sell am
 B – Nawao, how e kon dey dear like that now? (.) Hum? You go put am for nylon o.
 S – Owo nko? Three for #10 for the yellow one
 B – I go buy nylon? I dey buy something, I dey buy nylon?
 S – Ara oko la wa!
 B – Ara oko dey carry nylon now.
 S – How many kongo?
 B – Na one I go buy as you no carry nylon. (.) Hey no bi nylon be that one? Efisi!
 Oshe!
 S – Bye