

PRAGMATIC ACTS IN ALMS BEGGING IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

BY

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ABSTRACT

Previous studies on alms begging in the fields of medicine, psychology, sociology, journalism, and discourse analysis have depicted the phenomenon as a simple activity of requesting by indigent individuals who were often viewed as linguistically deficient. These studies did not adequately account for the context-driven and implicit communicative acts performed by beggars, thus limiting the understanding of this pragmatic phenomenon in society. Therefore, this study examined alms begging in Lagos state with a view to describing its distinctive pragmatic acts and implications.

The study applied a modified version of Pragmatic Act theory, which is suitable for describing and interpreting speeches and communicative behaviours in naturally occurring conversational interactions. Using the observation method, speeches and other communicative behaviours of 100 purposively selected beggars were collected from 4 types of locations (public institutions, venues of social events, vehicle stations, and on the streets) in all the 20 local government areas of Lagos State by tape recording and note taking, in order to have a balanced representation of various types of begging behaviours. The data were subjected to pragmatic analysis.

Discourse Conditioning Acts (DCAs) and Purpose Execution Acts (PEAs) are the two distinctive but intertwined pragmatic acts found in alms begging. Discourse Conditioning Acts were executed verbally (indirect speech acts) and non-verbally (psychological and physical acts). Beggars' indirect speech acts comprised arguing (attention-seeking, affinity negotiating, claiming, denying, complaining, protesting, questioning and threatening), use of politeness (tact, positivism, quietism, and sympathy) and appropriation of idioms. Beggars' psychological acts manifested as strategies of mood variation (weeping, sobbing, hissing and laughing), while their physical acts consisted of the strategies of body moves (posing, gazing, beckoning, nodding, bowing, waving and dancing). Both the psychological and the physical acts were extra-linguistic behaviours which beggars used to reinforce their verbal acts in order to emphasise their goal-driven, situation-constrained desperation. Beggars used DCAs to set-up and co-opt others, thereby compelling their target to give alms. Purpose Execution Acts used in obtaining alms, were direct acts, which included three types of direct speech acts (expressives, commissives and directives) together with their corresponding features of (telling, promising and requesting respectively). On the streets, beggars were inclined to use more PEAs than DCAs but in the other types of begging locations (public institutions, venues of social events, and vehicle

stations) they use more DCAs than PEAs because of temporal and spatial contextual advantages.

While beggars in Lagos state rely on Discourse conditioning acts to set-up and to co-opt potential alms givers, they employ Purpose execution acts to obtain alms from their targets. Thus, begging in the state is a complex, skilled activity which exhibits a considerable level of beggars' pragmatic competence. A comparative pragmatic study of alms begging in the Northern and Southern regions of Nigeria is expected to reveal more pragmatic acts performed by beggars.

Key words: Alms begging, Pragmatic acts, Discourse conditioning acts, Purpose execution acts, Lagos State

Word count: 462

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this study was carried out by Okpeadua Sony OKPEADUA in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is a concrete evidence of Jehovah's undeserved kindness towards me, by the wife-Angel that he gave me at the appropriate time. Great indeed is Jehovah's loving kindness.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page	i
Abstract	ii
Certification	iv
Dedication	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Table of Contents	vii
List of Tables	xii
List of Figures	xiii

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1	Background to the Study	1
1.2	The Concept of Begging: Definition, Types and Scope	1
1.3	Functional Classification of Alms Beggars in Nigeria	2
1.3.1	The “Not Fine” Beggars	3
1.3.2	The “Fine” Beggars	3
1.4	Alms Begging in the Context of the Nigerian Culture	7
1.5	Alms Begging: Mode of Operation	13
1.6	Statement of the Research Problem	14
1.7	Aim and Objectives of the Study	15
1.8	Scope of the Study	15
1.9	Significance of the Study	15
1.10	Summary of the Chapter	16

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1	Introduction	17
2.2	Language and Context	17
2.2.1	Hymes’ Notion of Context	21
2.2.2	Levinson’s Idea of Context	22
2.3	Pragmatics: Definition and Scope	24
2.4	Pragmatic Theories, Concepts and Principles	25
2.4.1	Speech Act Theory	25

2.4.1.1 Locutionary Act:	26
2.4.1.2 Illocutionary Act	26
2.4.1.3 Perlocutionary Act:	26
2.4.2 Felicity Condition	27
2.4.3 Indirect Speech Acts	28
2.5 Pragmatic Acts	28
2.5.1 Elements of Pragmatic Acting	29
2.5.2 Pragmatic Acts and Action Theory	32
2.5.3 The Notion of 'Common Scene' in Pragmatic Acting	33
2.5.4 Pragmatic Acts and 'Body Moves'	34
2.5.5 Pragmatic Acts as 'Social Empowerment'	35
2.5.6 Mey's Model of a Pragmeme	36
2.6 Speech Act and Pragmatic Act Compared	39
2.7 Pragmatic Concepts	42
2.7.1 Presupposition	42
2.7.2 Implicature	44
2.7.3 Politeness: Definition, Scope and Models	45
2.7.3.1 The Concept of Politeness	45
2.7.3.2 Scope of Politeness	46
2.7.3.3 Models of Politeness	46
2.7.3.3.1 The Traditional view	46
2.7.3.3.1.1 Politeness Principle (PP)	47
2.7.3.3.1.1.1 Tact Maxim	48
2.7.3.3.1.1.2 Generosity Maxim	48
2.7.3.3.1.1.3 Approbation Maxim	49
2.7.3.3.1.1.4 Modesty Maxim	49
2.7.3.3.1.1.5 Agreement Maxim	49
2.7.3.3.1.1.6 Sympathy Maxim	50
2.7.3.3.1.1.7 The Pollyanna Principle	51
2.7.3.3.2 Face Work	51
2.7.3.3.2.1 Face-threatening Acts (FTAs)	52
2.7.3.3.2.1.1 FTA without Redress (bald-on-record).	53
2.7.3.3.2.1.2 FTA with Redress (Positive Politeness).	53

2.7.3.3.2.1.3	FTA with Redress (Negative Politeness).	54
2.7.3.3.2.1.4	FTA using Off-Record Politeness.	54
2.7.3.3.2.1.5	Do not perform FTA.	54
2.7.3.4	The Concept of “Face” and Universality: a Cross Cultural View of Politeness	55
2.7.4	The Post-modern View	56
2.7.4.1	Relational Work	56
2.7.4.2	Frame-based View	58
2.7.5	A Critique across Politeness Models	59
2.7.6	Evidence of Pragmatic Force in Interaction	63
2.7.7	The Interface between Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics	64
2.7.8	Review of Studies on Alms Begging in Nigeria	66
2.7.9	Summary of the Chapter	70
 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		
3.1	Introduction	71
3.2	Research Design	71
3.3	Research Instrument and Method of Data Collection	71
3.4	Choice, Justification of Theory / Analytical Framework For the Study and Application Procedure	73
 CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS		
4.1	Introduction	78
4.2.	The “common scene” of Begging in Lagos State	78
4.3	Categories of Pragmatic Acts of Beggars	79
4.3.1	Discourse Conditioning Acts (DCA) of Beggars	79
4.3.1.1	Arguing	80
4.3.1.1.	Attention Seeking	80
4.3.1.1.2	Affinity Negotiating	81
4.3.1.1.3	Claiming	84
4.3.1.1.4	Denying	85
4.3.1.1.5	Complaining	87
4.3.1.1.6	Protesting	87
4.3.1.1.7	Questioning	88

4.3.1.1.8	Threatening	89
4.3.2	Politeness Strategies in Begging	90
4.3.2.1	Tact	91
4.3.2.1.1	Tact as Addressing	91
4.3.2.1.2	Tact as Greeting	91
4.3.2.1.3	Tact as Minimizer/Down toner	92
4.3.2.1.4	Tact as Hesitating	92
4.3.2.1.5	Tact as Pleading	93
4.3.2.1.6	Tact as Apologising	93
4.3.2.1.7	Tact as Giving of Option	94
4.3.2.1.8	Tact as Expression of Gratitude	94
4.3.2.1.9	Tact as Acknowledging / Praise-singing	95
4.3.2.1.10	Tact as Praying and Sermonising	96
4.3.2.2	Sympathy	97
4.3.2.3	Positivism	98
4.3.2.4	Quietism	98
4.3.3	Rhetorical Strategies: Idiomatic Expressions	99
4.3.3.1	Idiomatic Expressions for Well-wishing	100
4.3.3.2	Idiomatic Expressions for Direct Solicitation of Alms	102
4.3.3.3	Idiomatic Expression for Seeking Empathy	103
4.3.3.4	Idiomatic Expressions for Showing Disaffection	103
4.3.4	Psychological Acts in Begging: Mood Variation	105
4.3.5	Physical Acts in Begging: Body Moves	106
4.3.5.1	Passive Physical Strategies	106
4.3.5.2	Active Physical Strategies	106
4.4	“Setting-up” and “Co-opting” in Begging	107
4.5	Purpose Execution Acts (PEA) of Beggars	108
4.6	Summary of the Chapter	109

**CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS
OF THE STUDY AND CONCLUSION**

5.1	Introduction	110
5.2	Summary of the Findings	110
5.3	Implications of the Study	112
5.3.1	Linguistic Implication	112
5.3.2	Social Implications	114
5.4	Conclusion	116
	References	117
	Appendix	126

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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Taxonomy of Beggars in Nigeria	6
Table 2: Summary of the Review of Politeness Approaches	60

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Halliday's Notion of Register	19
Figure 2: Mey's (2001:222) Conception of Pragmeme	37
Figure 3: A View of Politeness (Traditionalists' Conception)	57
Figure 4: Relational Work (Post-modernists' Idea of Politeness)	57
Figure 5: A Harmonised View of Politeness in both the Traditional and the Post-modern Eras	61
Figure 6: A Proposed Functional Politeness Model	62
Figure 7: A Socio-pragmatic View of Context	65
Figure 8: A Functional Model of Pragmatic Act Theory	76
Figure 9: The Context of Begging in Lagos State	79
Figure 10: Pragma-linguistic Outlook of Alms Begging in Lagos State	111

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Language is a veritable instrument for exploring life; the society around us – the world. Beyond being the basic means by which people conceive of and organise the volume of the recesses of their hearts including thoughts and tricks, and transmitting same to one another, much of the politics of daily social interactions among humans are essentially products of conscious manipulations of language with specific objectives in view. It, thus, implies that this human endowment is a crucial factor for realising aims driven at in many instances of both interpersonal communication and in extended social interactions in different contexts. Arguably, therefore, successes and failures of people in various concerns of life depend significantly on the linguistic resources available to them and the strategies they have fashioned out of these for dealing with each other/one another in social contexts.

One of the areas of social life in which language is prominently functional is business transaction. Of course, there are so many different types of businesses. In Nigeria, there is no scientific parameter for determining what should be included in the list of businesses. For instance, alms begging, as practiced in Nigeria is a social development that has raised this kind of argument with reference to its status. While many would readily classify the practice as a type of business, others see it as a mere social menace. Whatever the case, begging is a human behaviour and activity that is almost entirely language dependent. The skills of this social behaviour is developed and rehearsed by the aid of linguistic resources, in the silent workings of the human mind and is given substance through several intriguing verbal and non-verbal linguistic strategies which characterise and describe the discourse.

1.2 The Concept of Begging: Definition, Types and Scope

There are several definitions of the term “begging”, all of which have been ideologically positioned to reflect the various underlying social assumptions motivating its use at the time. However, there is a denominator to all the views which derives from the basic meaning of the verb “beg”. To beg is for someone to ask another or others for something, such as a hand in service or some material or financial support (Jelili, 2006).

When viewed this way, to beg or begging only reflects a natural human tendency, part of what describe people in general as a social group with biologically super-imposed need for interdependency through mutual cooperation in organised societies.

However, there is a conception of begging that signals a departure from the common view as explained above. This form of begging involves asking, requesting or seeking as a matter of habit and/or public practice. It often involves emotions of the one asking or begging. This disposition further betrays a low sense of personal dignity, honour, self-esteem/respect on the part of those involved. The contrast between the form of begging as a common natural human characteristic and as a habitual public practice is further made clear by the fact that while the former does not often attract public concern, the latter does, raising a lot of reactions from the government and the general public. Those involved in it constitute a social group known as beggars, while their form of asking, requesting or begging is called street (peripatetic) or alms begging. Thus, with reference to begging, people may either be accused or excused.

Alms begging is a universal phenomenon. It is a social activity that is observed to have a worldwide appeal and subscription, including the developed, socio-economically more comfortable nations such as the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) (Adedibu, 1989). Membership of alms beggars include all age groups; from the very young to the very old of both sexes. They are also from various social classes and religious convictions.

Adedibu (1989) observes that the problems of begging especially in the developing countries of the world are similar and that a thorough knowledge of one may help in understanding the situation in another. For example, Fabregas (1971) and Adedibu (1989) claim that the situation in Nigeria and Mexico reveal similarities in problems and reasons for begging. In the light of this fact, the begging phenomenon has attracted the attention of, and challenged the will of governments of many nations (Ogunkani, 2009, Adewuyi T. 2007).

1.3 Functional Classification of Alms Beggars in Nigeria

Alms beggars in Nigeria could be classified variously, depending on suitability to the purpose of the classification. Our classification is based on the factors of beggars' mode of operation (between traditional & modern), citizenship (between local & international) and personal health; physical, mental, psychological condition which reflects essentially in the beggar's use of language (between "not fine" & "fine"). Each

of these broad categories has a number of different sub-classes of beggars who share common characteristics and motivations. This classification does not indicate a strict distinction among the identified categories. Rather, they overlap one another in terms of the many psycho-social features that beggars share. However, this study recognises two broad classes of beggars in Lagos state; i.e. the “not fine” and the “fine”.

1.3.1 The “Not Fine” Beggars

A good number of beggars in Nigeria fall under this category. This may include physically handicapped and/or sick persons, such as those with naturally or biologically defective or disease health conditions, victims of accidents with physical injuries of various degrees of seriousness, patients of terminal illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, cancers, diabetes, and the mentally unstable. The language of this class of beggars apparently reflects their distress situation. In many instances, the discourse is perceived as amalgam of several incoherent but explicit utterances which these beggars utter in their frustration or depression with very little or no regard for social etiquette, such as the need to observe politeness.

1.3.2 The “Fine” Beggars

Beggars under this category are considered as ‘fine’, relative to their “not fine” counterpart, essentially on the basis of observable health conditions. Many in this class claim to be compelled into the alms begging undertaking. Some of these are retirees and pensioners, job losers/seekers, apprentices and trainees, students, widows, orphans, mothers of twins or more children in one pregnancy, sufferers of various forms of abuses - child, parental or spousal, victims of crimes and disasters such as armed robbery and fire incidences which result in colossal loses for them.

Many more in this group of beggars practice alms begging as a hobby, an extracurricular activity or an alternative means of livelihood. This category enlists such persons as the ceremonial beggars who as non-professionals provide various forms of unsolicited social entertainments and petty personal services to guests at social occasions. They are smart at taking note of dates and venues of important and promising social ceremonies such as traditional festivals, weddings, burials, coronations, birthdays, university matriculations and convocations. Usually, they attend these gatherings uninvited, where they do a lot of jokes cracking, praise singing and waiting on

dignitaries. These entertainment and personal services all of which are begging-inclined and alms seeking-focused sometimes amuse or even embarrass guests.

There are also impostors – pretenders who feign identity in order to attract sympathy from unsuspecting benefactors. Among these are those who deceptively assume and act out other people's (real or imagined) personalities / roles. Some of these pretend to be some kind of responsible guests, supposedly on visit to a not-at-home potential host in a neighbourhood. Some others even pretend to have some sensory problem such as speech, hearing or sight impairment. Still, others appear as appointed representatives of some needy individuals or institutions such as the orphanages. They sometimes attempt to perfect and validate this trick of theirs by approaching their prospective benefactors with certain documents such as personal identity cards, gory pictures either of themselves or others, hospital prescriptions and bills, public appeal handbills, or even, dangling catheter and bloody bandages over their body as (self- considered) proof of integrity.

Other members of the “fine” beggars’ category include those that may be regarded as the ‘executive’ beggars. This unique class of beggars has subscribers from all fields of endeavour and social strata. It exhibits the most subtle manifestation of the begging characteristics. This exclusive class of beggars includes members of the public service, both governmental and private institutions and establishments, such as the ministries, banks, colleges, universities, hospitals/clinics. Majority of the beggars as we observe, are middle and lower class earners, such as office secretaries, clerks, messengers, drivers, security personnel, technicians, teachers and lecturers, journalists, medical doctors, nurses, social health workers, cleaners, porters and attendants. These ones carry on begging at their various offices and duty posts. In some cases, they rely on and take advantage of the official resources in their trust, both time and materials, in engaging others in alms seeking interactions.

There are also the international (cross-border) beggars. These are foreigners from other countries such as Niger and Benin Republics. This category is a coalescence of the “not fine” and “fine” classes of beggars. Many among these have learnt one or more Nigerian languages, particularly Yoruba and Nigerian pidgin to facilitate their begging activity. Some of them even claim Nigerian citizenship and profess the faith of popular religious or social groups to reduce the psycho-social distance between beggars and their potential benefactors so as to attract more sympathy from them.

The language of the “fine” beggars is markedly different from that of their “not fine” counterparts. There is a perceived higher consciousness, a more pragmatic deployment of linguistic resources/positioning in the language use of the “fine beggars”. For instance, while the “not fine” beggars merely express their desire in some explicit, disjointed utterances and relying more on the discretion and mercy of their potential benefactors to fill the gaps, the “fine” beggars masterfully manipulate linguistic resources to express psychosocial state and ideological views, given that most of them are educated and “fine” enough to know the underpinning socio-cultural politics that describe the Nigerian society as a people. We, therefore, present a taxonomy of beggars in Nigeria, in our conception.

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Taxonomy of Beggars in Nigeria

Nigeria			
Begging			
Traditional			Modern (e-begging)
Local		International	Not determined
The 'not fine' beggars	The 'fine' beggars	The 'fine'/'not fine' beggars	
<p>* Handicapped/Sick beggars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defective health condition (Natural/biological) - Accident victims (physically injured) - Patients of terminal illnesses - Mentally/Psychologically unstable 	<p>*Circumstantial Beggars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retirees/pensioners - Job losers/seekers - Apprentices/Trainees - Students - Widows -Orphans - Victims of crimes/disasters <p>* Ceremonial Beggars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non professional social entertainers/petty personal service providers <p>* Executive Beggars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professionals - Administrative officers -Field workers (skilled/unskilled) - Academics/teachers <p>* Impostors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pretenders/impersonators 	<p style="text-align: center;">Cross – border (foreigners) Beggars</p> <p style="text-align: center;">From</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Republic of Niger - Republic of Benin 	

Table 1: Taxonomy of Beggars in Nigeria

Key to Table

- Column: i** **Nigeria:** This is the socio-geographical environment for the practice of alms begging.
- ii** **Begging:** This is the common form of the phenomenon. It is not habitual and not public. To beg is a natural tendency, part of the characteristics of humans as social creatures.
 - iii** **Traditional and Modern:** These are methods of alms begging. From casual field observation, the traditional approach is quite profound in Nigeria and more widespread than its modern alternative, hence the imbalance in their occupied spaces on the table.
 - iv** **Local and International:** This relates to the status of the beggars. While the local refers to Nigerian beggars, the International describes the non-Nigerian beggars in Nigeria. There are overwhelmingly more local than international beggars in Nigeria. The imbalance on the table reflects this view.
 - v.** **The “Not Fine” and the “Fine” Beggars:** These descriptions are functionally adopted to refer to the somewhat confusing characteristics of the different classes of beggars in Nigeria, in terms of their health status. There are three identified categories thus: The ‘not fine’ refers to beggars whose body and health conditions apparently betray evidence of destitution even from a non expert’s, casual observation and assessment. whereas the ‘fine’, identifies beggars who may not be exactly fine in some sense of the term, but are adjudged “fine” in the ‘court’ of public opinion, given the same standard by which the “not fine” are so considered. This category has four sub-classes under it. ‘Fine’/‘not fine’ category describes the mix group of beggars from outside Nigeria. They are the international or cross-border beggars on the table.

1.4 Alms Begging in the Context of the Nigerian Culture

The use of such phrases as “good morning” and other forms of greetings and ritual exchanges about personal affection and concern about issues such as health matters or weather conditions, do not “communicate ideas” in the usual sense of the term “communicate”. Rather, they function as socialising strategies to facilitate a basic level of mutual co-operation and ensure harmonious interaction. The idea is that language is

used in this way to build and maintain rapport between people and not necessarily to communicate any specific idea with them. Crystal (1993) observes that the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski's coined 'phatic communion' refers to this social function of language which arises out of the primary human need to signal friendship or at least avoid enmity, friction, conflicts or disagreements with others. This, therefore, constitutes the frame of expectation of most societies including the crowd of Nigerians and others in Lagos, such that a deliberate refusal to co-operate with this form of language use at appropriate occasions could be read as a possible sign of distance or a signal of disapproval between the interactants. Hence, it is not surprising to see that in Nigeria, when someone sneezes for example, somebody else who is around may offer the one who sneezed, remarks such as "Bless you!" or "sorry". 'Bless you' in this context does not necessarily mean a prayer for the hearer, neither is "sorry" suggesting an admission/acknowledgement of guilt on the part of the speaker, but both expressions function as socialising strategies toward the ultimate purpose of securing and/or sustaining relationship, perhaps with some specific personal objectives in the minds of interactants. It is this social function of language that seeks to link language and culture as inseparable. Akindele and Adegbite (2005) observe:

Language does not exist in a vacuum. It is always contextualized, that is, it is situated within a socio-cultural setting or community. There is a necessary connection between language and society. It is a means of expressing society's tradition and culture: so language exists as an aspect of culture.

The issue of language and culture arose out of the need to explain the striking relationship between language and social realities. Sapir (1929) argues: "the fact of the matter is that the real world is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group." Whorf (1956) developed upon this thought in what came to be known as the Sapir Whorf hypothesis, termed Linguistic Relativity. Concerning this hypothesis, Stafford (1994) explains:

This states that language is not simply a way of voicing ideas, but it is the very thing which shapes those ideas. One cannot think outside the confines of their language. The result of this process is many different world views by speakers of different languages.

The Whorfian thesis claims that people who speak different languages perceive and think the world quite differently. In other words, the way people see the world around them is a function of the language they speak. This view is often taken as the 'strong', extreme or deterministic version of the hypothesis. A 'weaker', more moderate or limited version opines that people's world view may be influenced by the language they speak. In fact, it is also suggested that the language of a people is potentially shaped by their culture (Chandler, 1994). Although in the many research that follow, there have been critical reactions, and sometimes, outright objections to the claims held in the famous Whorfianism, there are however evidences of its (Linguistic Determinism) credibility as a basis for carrying out studies in several areas of linguistics. For one thing, several studies in language find the Whorfian Hypothesis relevant – wholly or partly. A more objective evaluation of the hypothesis, therefore, would mean that the question is not that of its significance or credibility, but of the extent and scope of applicability under a given context.

It is against this assumption that language is seen as an expression of culture, because most linguistic interactions are predicated upon cultural norms which are not only held in high esteem by the community of language users, but more importantly, these norms are seen as constituting frames of expectations among interactants. These frames invariably become the common standard by which the community of speakers judge utterances along such considerations as "good" or "bad", (in)appropriate, (im)polite, rude or even taboo expressions.

This argument is apt with regards to beggars' language in Lagos state. One of the major languages and dominant culture in this state is Yoruba. The Yoruba language is generally considered to be very polite because "Deference" (Thomas 1995:150); some form of respect that people show to others by virtue of greater age, higher status, or cultural obligations is built into its grammar. Deference in Yoruba is expressed in both non-verbal and verbal forms. The non-verbal form of Difference includes such acts as having to bow to another, kneel before another, conscious avoidance of eye contact with another, etc during interactions. The verbal forms involve the employment of formulaic and borrowed terms, whose use is constrained by the social context of an interaction. Examples are commonly observed in the address system and the greetings formula in the Yoruba language. Some of these include the unconventional use of baba (father), mama (mother), oko (husband) to refer to other(s) and the use of honorific pronouns such as the

plural pronoun to refer to an individual i.e. “e” as opposed to “o” in addressing other, for whom one reserves some respect.

The obvious implication of the above is that beggars of Yoruba origin and others who acquired or learned the Yoruba language find an enabling socio-cultural/linguistic environment for carrying on their adventure. For instance, they have imbibed the culture that perceives the concept of (im)politeness as essentially a linguistic phenomenon, which is principally aimed at negotiating and securing favourable position before another, during interactions. This conviction is, therefore, a vital motivating factor behind the activities of alms beggars in interpersonal interactive encounters in this Yoruba dominated state.

Religion is another vital aspect of the culture of a society. In Lagos state, the two dominant religions are Christianity and Islam. People’s beliefs and sets of values which motivate their behavioural choices and styles are expressions of strong conviction on the dictates of some linguistically enriched holy books such as the Bible and the Koran and other related religious materials from which they read and are taught. For example, the belief in alms giving as a religious practice is taught in both Christianity and Islam as divinely obligatory for their faithful with giver-focused benefits or blessings. The following excerpts from the Bible and Bible-based publications, and the Koran illustrate our argument:

Practice giving, and people will give to you. They will pour into your laps a fine measure, pressed down, shaken together and overflowing. For with the measure that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you in return. (Luke 6:38)

You should by all means give to him, and your heart should not be stingy in your giving to him, because on this account Jehovah your God will bless you in every deed of yours and in every undertaking of yours. For someone poor will never cease to be in the midst of the land. That is why I am commanding you, saying, ‘you should generously open up your hand to your afflicted and poor brother in your land. (Deuteronomy, 15:710 &11)

But whoever has this world's means for supporting life and beholds his brother having need and yet shuts the door of his tender compassions upon him, in what way does the love of God remain in him? Little children, let us love, neither in word nor with the tongue, but in deed and truth. (1John 3:17)

Do not hold back good from those to whom it is owing, when it happens to be in the power of your hand to do [it]. Do not say to your fellowman: "Go, and come back and tomorrow I shall give," when there is something with you. (Proverbs 3:27&28)

If a brother or a sister is in a naked state and lacking the food sufficient for the day, yet a certain one of you says to them: "Go in peace, keep warm and well fed," but you do not give them the necessities for [their] body, of what benefit is it? (James 2:15&16)

... There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving. (Acts 20: 35).

Similarly, The Watchtower of June 1, 2003 page 4, under the article: "To give or not to give" and Awake of June 8, 1993 pages 26 and 27 with the subject: "Charitable contributions – a Christian obligation" comment:

It would be a shame, however, to allow the actions of a few individuals or organizations to squelch our genuine concern and compassion for others. The Bible says: "The form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their tribulation." (James 1:27) Yes, active concern for the poor and disadvantaged is an integral part of Christianity.

The Bible's view, then, is to be kind, generous, and practical. It reminds us that material help is often needed, and the need should not be ignored. ... Imitate Jesus in being observant of and responsive to the needs of others—spiritually and materially. In the words of Hebrews 13:16: "Do not forget the doing of good and the sharing of things with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

By no mean shall you attain piety, righteousness here it means Allah's Reward, i.e. Paradise unless you spend (in Allah's cause) of that which you love, and whatever of good you spend. Allah knows it well. (Q3 vs 92)

It is not piety, righteousness and every act of obedience to Allah that you turn your face towards east and or west in prayers but the quality of the one who believes in Allah. The last Day, the Angels, the look, the prophets and gives his wealth in spite of love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans and to the poor and to the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free, performs As-Salat and gives Zadakat... (Q2 vs 177)

The likeness of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah, is as the likeness of a grain (of corn); it grows seven ears, and each ear has a hundred grains. Allah gives manifold increase to whom He will. And Allah is All sufficient for His creatures needs, All knower. (Q2 vs 261)

Those who spend their wealth (in Allah's cause) by night and day, in secret and in public, they shall have their reward with their lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. (Q2 v 274)

As for him who gives (in charity) and keeps his duty to Allah and fear Him. And believes Al-Husna he shall smooth for him the path of ease (goodness). (Q92 vs 5-7)

Interestingly, as a matter of linguistic manipulations, these religious injunctions have often been redefined, (mis)interpreted and/or expanded to accommodate some personal and institutional views with concealed interests. In any case, it is arguable that the doctrine of alms giving thrives in Lagos state not only because these major religions advocate it, but also because Nigerians, like most other Africans traditionally maintain close-knit societies with a strong sense of commitment (moral, religious/superstitious) towards others. Logically, therefore, for diverse reasons and/or expected returns, alms givers have as much motivation as alms seekers (beggars) have.

1.5 Alms Begging: Mode of Operation

The basic operational mode of alms begging in Nigeria is the traditional method. Beggars adopt the physical presence/direct contact approach with their prospective benefactors. Beggars are seen everywhere in the streets and in many public places where people usually meet for private or official purposes.

There are the complacent beggars who prefer the “sit-at-a-place and God-will-provide” attitude to moving from person to person as their style of approaching people. These ones sit or wait at locations of their convenience, expecting passers-by to use their initiative to offer them alms. Beggars in this class are less ambitious and aggressive. Conversely, there are other beggars who are more proactive in the trade. These ones wake up from wherever, even as early as 5:00 a.m. to take their positions in choice centres such as vehicle stations and taxi/bus stops where they expect to find travellers/commuters so early in the day. After the early morning rush, they swiftly change locations to places such as markets, schools, shops, banks, government secretariat, political parties’ secretariat, eateries, etc.

Many of the beggars are healthy and strong enough to walk around these places of interest. Sometimes though, some of them pay and enjoy public transportation to cover long distances, particular when they want to catch-up with some important events in progress at specific distant venues. Some beggars have their personal means of movement such as the wheelbarrow and the roller wheels. Both devices are common only among the crippled beggars.

Beggars also enjoy the services of paid personal assistants. For example, some of the cripple beggars who resort to the use of wheelbarrow for movement engage the services of able-bodied assistants to push them around. Some even carry their beggar “bosses” on their backs. Similarly, the blind beggars are often led about by personal assistants who see for them. Some other beggars need the services of assistants as alternative voice because of their linguistic limitations. These assistants either interpret the beggars’ message of request or speak on behalf of the beggars to potential benefactors.

Beggars use several other aids to win sympathy from people. Some beggars use sets of children – twins, triplets, quadruplets, etc. as a front to ‘justify’ their demands. Beggars equally use fully developed pregnancies; real or costumed, to persuade others to give in their support. The deaf and dumb beggars use placards and other documents such

as personal identify cards, letters, hospital diagnoses and prescriptions bills and printed appeal fund envelopes.

All the perspectives that describe the mode of alms begging in Nigeria converge on the beggars' passionate desire to obtain alms from others. To this end, they do many things in the process including sing, dance, joke, play, quarrel, cry, preach, pray and curse; all of which depend on, and task their linguistic competence and practice.

1.6 Statement of the Research Problem

Language is unequivocally crucial to human interactions for all purposes. To a large extent, people's successes and failures could be interpreted as a function of their linguistic power and limitations. This is especially arguable for such category of people as alms beggars, who almost entirely rely on the tool-box of language for creating or enhancing their means of survival or continued sustenance through alms seeking. To this end, beggars are considered in Nigeria as heavy investors on the dynamics of linguistic resources which they cleverly manage in the context of their operation.

The argument is that through the facility of linguistic resources and manoeuvres, beggars seem to enjoy tremendous success leading to many and serious social, economic and political implications. The begging undertaking is no longer for the destitute; less privileged, or unfortunate ones alone, rather, there is a perceived steady growth in the membership of alms beggars in Nigeria. Many of these new entrants are "fine"; able-bodied men, women and children who in our consideration are hardly truly needy. This development suggests implications for Nigeria society in two principle perspectives: socio-economic and linguistic. The apparent imbalance that begging potentially creates in the national economy vis-à-vis the disparity between production and consumption levels as a direct effect of the gross manpower/man-hour losses that result from begging rather than working is a serious problem for a growing economy. This is besides several other social vices including criminality which is often associated with begging in Lagos. In recent times, there have been several reports which indict beggars with cases ranging from stealing to kidnapping and ritual killings, and this, in an era of national transformation. Perhaps, this partly explains the reason for government's efforts at curbing the excesses of beggars in Nigeria, such as the 2009 massive eviction of beggars in Lagos state, by the state government. Equally significant is the observable linguistic innovation in begging, which provide insight for improved understanding of the nature (motivations and implications) of the social problem.

Despite the above, available body of literature indicates abysmally scanty studies on alms begging. Previous research in the fields of medicine, psychology, sociology, journalism, and discourse analysis have depicted the phenomenon as a simple activity of requesting by indigent individuals who are often viewed as linguistically deficient. Those studies have not adequately accounted for the context-driven and implicit communicative acts performed by beggars, thus, under representing and limiting the understanding of this pragmatic phenomenon in society. A pragmatic examination of alms begging as a linguistic activity is a crucial prerequisite for understanding and managing the associated diverse challenges for the society. Therefore, this study examines alms begging in Lagos state with a view to describing its distinctive pragmatic acts and implications.

1.7 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to provide a pragmatic description of alms begging in Lagos State, Nigeria. Therefore, the objectives of the study include:

- i. To describe the context of begging in the State;
- ii. To identify the various pragmatic acts in alms begging, according to their functions;
- iii. To interpret the various pragmatic strategies to the specific objectives of the different acts; and
- iv. To indicate the implications of alms begging in Nigeria.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The study is limited to the application of Pragmatics to a corpus of naturally occurring alms begging data, comprising speech and other communicative behaviours including the verbal and non-verbal/extralinguistic acts of both the “not fine” and the “fine” beggars in Lagos State.

1.9 Significance of the Study

This study which is expected to be a thorough application of pragmatic principles and procedures to the natural data of alms begging in Lagos state is significant in the following ways:

- i. The study will contribute to the volume of available literature in Sociolinguistics, Discourse Analysis and Pragmatics, in particular, thus,

expanding the frontiers of knowledge in these society-development based sub-disciplines of linguistics.

- ii. Expectedly, it will motivate linguists and many inter-disciplinary researchers to further work in cross-cultural discourse pragmatics.
- iii. The study will constitute a reference document for makers of government policies, especially now in the era of national transformation, toward the management of alms begging implications in Nigeria.

1.10 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter which serves as a general background to the study has provided a basis for a good understanding and objective evaluation of the discussion of alms beggars' use of language in Lagos state. In this effort, we have explored the major and relevant conceptual issues in connection with our subject focus by providing essays on the pivotal and roles of language and its functions in the human society. The chapter also described the phenomenon of begging and beggars in Lagos state. The chapter concludes by identifying the research problem which motivates the study, and states its aim within a defined scope.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the broad theory that is at the basis of the study. This includes the complex notion of context as conceived of by scholars of various persuasions from different sub-disciplines of linguistics, and a number of pragmatic theories, concepts and principles, as well as their functional relationships i.e. their convergences and divergences. The chapter concludes with a review of previous works on alms begging in Nigeria.

2.2 Language and Context

Context is inextricably linked with linguistic meaning and its explication. Mey (2001) argues: “Linguistics will have to be extended on extralinguistic terms by breaking away from the strict, local paradigm of grammar”. This is where the notion of context comes in as being crucial to the determination of meaning in social interactions.

The term context relates to and is subsumed under a broader term, “Context of Situation”. This concept originates with the anthropologist, Malinowski (1923), and popularised in the works of J.R. Firth between the 1930s and 1950s. Firth explores the importance of context in the process of language acquisition, and argues that most utterances are entirely context-dependent. Thus, contexts generally constitute an important factor in the study of conversations and the determination of linguistic appropriateness such as the idea of polite and implied expressions. Context is a dynamic concept. By this is suggested that it is to be conceived of as a continually changing phenomenon i.e. surroundings in an interaction situation that enable the participants in the communication process to interact, and in which the linguistic expressions thereof become intelligible. Context spreads across the social and psychological world in which language users operate at any specific time. Ochs (1979) opines that an effective communication would require that interactants are alert to the cues that are betrayed by the totality of the locale in temporal, spatial, cultural, psychological and physical terms. “Context provides the background from which the meaning of a word springs” (Odebunmi, 2006:25). Within the concept of context, Odebunmi (2006:24) explains the idea of contextual beliefs as assumptions or beliefs held by interactants prior to or during

occasions of interactions, which facilitate the communication process. Contextual Beliefs is variously termed: “Mutual Contextual Beliefs”, “Shared Contextual Beliefs”, Shared Assumptions, Shared Knowledge, etc., and is further classified into two levels: at the level of language and at the level of situation (Odebunmi, 2006). At the level of language, meaning is potentially understandable based on the shared linguistic knowledge between interactants. At the level of situation though, contextual beliefs go beyond linguistic to include non-linguistic codes and experiences that are held in common between interactants. According to Odebunmi (2006), “it is at this level that both the variety or dialect of the language that is selected and other situational variables are used to process meaning”. He explains further that at the situational level, there are three types of shared knowledge which include: shared knowledge of subject/topic shared knowledge of word choices, referents and references and shared socio-cultural experiences, both previous and immediate. Context is central to several other pragmatic and discourse concepts such as understanding polite speech and behaviour, determining implicature and making inference in interpersonal communication. Alms beggars’ discourse, thus, requires much from the knowledge of the role of context, for any objective analysis and evaluation of interactional strategies that are explored by beggars in Nigeria. Egging (2004:87) opines: “to negotiate more pragmatic, everyday texts, we generally try to reduce indeterminacies by anchoring a text firmly in its immediate context of situation”. One prominent feature of context is register.

Register refers to a variety of language which is determined according to its use in social situations such as in legal, medical, scientific and religious discourses. Hallidayan linguistics conceives of register as particularly opposed to the varieties of language which is defined according to the characteristics of the users in terms of their regional or class dialects (Crystal, 1991:295). On the concept of register, Gregory and Carroll (1978:64) observe: “register is therefore a useful abstraction linking variation of language to variation of social context”. Hence register could be said to account for a basic observable fact of language use, namely: that users use language quite differently, as influenced by changing circumstances and situations.

There are two angles to register usage thus: narrow and broad. The narrow angle seeks to equate register with jargon. In this view, the body of terms available for describing particular fields of activity constitutes the register of such fields. For example, while syringe and stethoscope will belong in the register of medicine, tithe and offering will readily be associated with the register of religion. The broad angle though views

register as a kind of social genre of linguistic usage (Stockwell 2002:7), whereby register is considered as a sociolect, such that the language of alms begging would be seen as different from that of hawking of goods on the street much the same as the difference between language of advertising as different from the language of classroom teaching.

Halliday (1985b) suggests that there are three dimensions of register that make a difference to how we use language. In other words, that there are three aspects in any situation which are consequential upon language use. These are Field; which is what the language is being used to talk about, Mode; the role language is playing in the interaction and Tenor; the role relationships between the interactants. These three are sometimes referred to as the register variables as sketched thus:

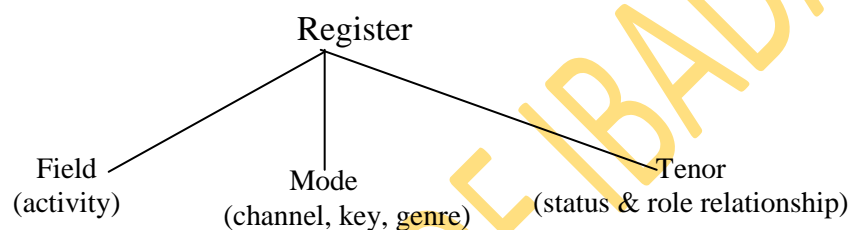


Fig. 1: Halliday's notion of register

Field refers to the “on-going activity and the particular purpose that the use of language is serving within the context of that activity” (Halliday 1978:65). This simply means that by the language user's utterance i.e. through the choices of words s/he consciously or unconsciously employs, s/he gives away the kind of activity that is going on at the time. This suggests that vocabulary is a significant factor in determining a field of discourse. Nearly every social group in Nigeria has evolved a “speech community” into which even the most accomplished learns to fit, in terms of vocabulary and general discourse style. Alms beggars have also developed and maintained a “speech community” into which the uninitiated listens hard to make meanings of the vast collection of words and metaphoric expressions that characterise alms beggars' language in Nigeria. It is by the kind of vocabulary that a field could further be classified as either technical or non-technical. Eggins (1994:74) points out the differences between technical language and everyday language. According to him, technical language involves technical terms, acronyms, technical action processes and abbreviated syntax, while everyday language engages everyday terms, full names, identifying processes and

standard syntax. However, many vocabulary items are potentially capable of describing several activities and thus could function in the register of more than one field, such as “pure water” as in direct reference to portable (drinkable water) by those in the business of the commodity, or as some amount of money in beggars’ terms.

From Halliday’s (1978) point of view, mode parallels Hyme’s channel, key and genre, as reflected on the chart above. Principally, mode captures the role that language plays in the interaction. Martin (1984) provides a way of understanding mode as involving two simultaneous continuum describing two different types of distance in the relation between language and situation; these are spatial/interpersonal distance, and experiential distance. Spatial/interpersonal distance describes the degree of possibility for feedback between interactants. At one extreme, no feedback is at all possible such as in the case of written language e.g. novel. At the other extreme though, feedback is immediate, i.e. between interactants at a face-to-face contact such as in beggars’ interactions. Typical of mode is the issue of spoken and written media of communication. Unlike the written language, the spoken language situation is interactive, face-to-face, language as action, spontaneous and casual.

Tenor refers to the relationship that holds between/among participants as a function of their status and social roles in the interaction i.e., doctor/patient, student/teacher, parent/child, friend/friend, beggar/benefactor, etc. Of course, it is a commonsense knowledge that people talk to others with a degree of consciousness of the language they use in terms of the selections they make, based on their status and role in relation to their addressees.

Poyton (1985) suggests that tenor can be discussed from the three continua of power, contact and affective involvement. In other words, the idea of role relationship is an embodiment of these three simultaneous dimensions. The power continuum indicates the role that participants play in an interaction in terms of whether they (interactants) are of equal or unequal power, such as obtains among friends (equal) or as between a boss and a subordinate (unequal). Contact relates to the level of frequency in contact between interactants, i.e. whether the role they play are those that bring them into frequent contact as in the case of parent/child, or infrequent contact as may obtain between buyer/seller in an open market, or a beggar and a potential benefactor on. Eggins (1994:64) describes the continuum of affective involvement as having to do with the extent to which interactants are emotionally involved or committed in a communicative situation, i.e. affective involvement could either be high or low. For instance, friends, lovers or

spouses are apparently affectively involved in most instances of interaction, whereas business clients and work colleagues are almost always not so involved, let alone beggars and supposed benefactors who are almost always strangers to each other.

Following the principles of tenor as discussed above, it is assumed that these various roles occupied by participants in given situations will have impacts on how they use language. For instance, the difference between the social status of alms beggars and their expected benefactors, and the degree of affective involvement between them, exercise significant influence on the choices they make in terms of language use during interactions.

2.2.1 Hymes' Notion of Context

Hymes (1962) notion of context is what translated into the famous Ethnography of speaking which he represented by the mnemonic; SPEAKING and subsequently developed into the broader concept known as Ethnography of Communication. The expansion is to accommodate paralinguistic and non-verbal cues in communicative exchange. By this approach, Hymes argues that talk in social interactions is a complex activity and that any particular bit of talk is indeed a piece of 'skilled work' because if it is to be successful, the speaker must reveal a sensibility to, and awareness of each of the eight factors enshrined in the SPEAKING formula. Interactants in a speech event must also ensure that nothing goes wrong; otherwise such wrongs as may sometimes be experienced are often describable in terms of non observance of one or more of the factors (Wardhaugh, 2006). Of course, since speakers vary widely in speaking ability, we can often expect different levels of successes as the outcome of different speakers under the same context. Duranti (1997:85) observes: "an ethnography is the written description of the social organisation, social activities, symbolic and material resources and interpretive practices characteristic of a particular group of people". Johnstone (2004:76) similarly opines:

Ethnography presupposes ... that the best explanation of human behaviours are particular and culturally relative rather than general and universal ... the focus is on the language the participants are using and the cultural practices such language reflects. They very often deal with issues of identity and power.

Ethnography of communication which is a framework that originated in sociolinguistics is also being used by pragmaticists for describing context. Thomas (1995:188) observes: “it is not obvious that it [ethnography] is the most appropriate one”. He argues further that Hymes model was basically met to describe rather formal, strictly ritualised speech events such as weddings, funerals or welcoming ceremonies rather than less formal, less predictable ones, such as a casual interaction with a friend in the neighbourhood or a first time with a stranger on the street. As we pointed out earlier, much credit is due Hymes’ framework for bringing to the fore, the often taken-for-granted aspects of interactions. However, it does not provide explanation for why it is that even under the same context (linguistic situation) such as in a job interview, one person performs differently i.e. better or worse than another. Hymes’ model seems to ignore this factor of the individual’s contribution which possibly would explain how one speaker successfully exploits a situation to reach his/her goal while the other fails as a result of his/her failure to recognise and follow the socio-linguistic cues. Thus, Hymes model is significantly limited as a framework for handling a pragmatic study of speech interactions in social contexts. Although, pragmaticists might want to appropriate it, perhaps as a point of departure, there is need to think beyond the submissions of Hymes’ ethnography.

2.2.2 Levinson’s Idea of Context

In what he termed “Activity type”, Levinson (1979) provides the much needed complement to Hymes’ (1962) framework. Levinson (1979:368) defines an activity type as:

... a fuzzy category whose focal members are goal-defined, socially constrained, bounded, events with constraints on participants, setting and so on, but above all on the kinds of allowable contributions. Paradigm examples would be teaching, a job interview, a jural interrogation, a football game, a task in a workshop, a dinner party and so on.

This rather condensed definition may be expanded in some six-point descriptive statements thus:

- i. **The goals of the participants:** The goals of the participants refer to the individual’s focus in the speech event, which focus often varies from one person to another. This is different from the goal or focus of the speech

event. For instance, the goal of a job interview is to determine as objectively as possible, the qualifications of applicants, whereas the goal of an applicant is to get the job. An individual's goals may even change in the course of an interaction.

- ii **Allowable contributions:** This describes the social or legal constraints that limits how much a speaker can (allowed to) say or contribute in some kind of interactions. This necessary conscious observance of these restrictions by speakers while trying to achieve their aims, therefore, becomes an interesting matter of pragmatics.
- iii **The degree to which Gricean maxims are adhered to or suspended:** This relates to the varying degree of speakers' observance of the conversational maxims proposed by Grice (1975). Of course, this is expected to also vary considerably from culture to culture and from activity type to activity type.
- iv **The degree to which interpersonal maxims are adhered to or are suspended:** This is similar to the view in point iii above. It is expected that the degree of speakers' observance of interpersonal conversational maxims would be largely culturally motivated and activity type constrained.
- v **Turn-taking and topic control:** This reckons with the extent to which an individual takes advantage of turn-taking norms so as to gain considerable control over another, establish his/her agenda etc. in an interaction.
- vi **The manipulation of pragmatic parameters:** This describes how much an interactant can use language in a way to either increase or decrease social distance, power, rights, obligations and size of imposition, or even increase or decrease the formality of the speech situation.

2.3 Pragmatics: Definition and Scope

The earliest use of the term pragmatics can be traced to scholars who find interest in questions bordering on the concept of meaning, such as the works of the linguists philosophers Morris and Peirce in the late 1930s and early 1940s; in which attention is given to the relation of 'signs' to interpreter and users. According to Wales (1997:368) "pragmatics ... can be defined as the study of language use". Beyond this rather simplistic definition though, pragmatics is thought of as the study of language from the

point of view of the user (speaker/writer), especially with respect to the selections s/he makes, the constraints met with or involved in using language in social exchanges, and the effect such use of language has on the other participant(s) in a given act of communication and as deriving from a definable context. In this sense, pragmatics is seen as the study of the principles and practice of conversational performance, which includes all aspects of language usage, language understanding and language appropriateness. Pragmatics also explains the way conditions on language use derive from the social situation (Crystal 1991).

Pragmatics maintains a different stance from that taken in semantics. Its focus is on the meaning of utterances rather than of sentences and propositions. Of course, there is difference of meaning in the utterance: *when are we celebrating your new wife?* given varied context and participants such as when: uttered in Nigeria to a friend who recently got married or to an unmarried colleague who just bought a brand new car. Hence, Wales (ibid: 369) opines that pragmaticists do not ask what X means, but what is meant by X". Leech and Short (1981) corroborate this position when they remark that the pragmatic analysis of language is about the investigation into that aspect of meaning that is derived from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered, rather than from the formal properties of the language.

Although that understanding utterances is a function of both semantic and pragmatic processes, the role of pragmatics is far more extensive in terms of the functionality of language as socially realised human behaviour. While semantic process involves the computation of the basic content of the mental representation of the utterance, the pragmatic process determines how that content is related to previous (background) knowledge and its intended/expected meaning. The representation is then fleshed out into a mental model by knowledge of the world, which enables inferences to be made about details that are not actually mentioned in the utterance, but are more often than not true. This second (pragmatic) process explains why people generally do not experience any avoidable difficulty in working out the meaning of most of the utterances that they hear (Garnham 1985). It seems even easier for speakers to use language to mean in as many different ways as their intentions guide them. In pragmatics, this phenomenon is accounted for by a number of somehow related pragmatic theories (models) and concepts including Speech Act; which defines and classifies the functions that utterances can have, Pragmatic Act; which emphasises 'situation' and 'action' features in language use, by which factors it sees language users as performing pragmatic

acts rather than speech acts. Presupposition; which describes what is taken for granted in what is said, Implicature; how the intended message can be computed from the literal meaning, using a set of general principles governing linguistic interchanges such as the Gricean conversational maxims as embedded in the more general pragmatic principle known as the Cooperative Principle (CP), with its extension as Politeness Principle (PP).

2.4 Pragmatic Theories, Concepts and Principles

Several pragmatic theories, concepts and principles are available in literature as established approaches in discourse studies. Some of these that are relevant in this study are reviewed below.

2.4.1 Speech Act Theory

The speech act theory is particularly associated with the work of the British philosopher, J.L. Austin (1962) and J.R. Searle (1969). The theory is basically concerned with the linguistic acts that are performed while speaking, which acts have some social and/or interpersonal purpose and pragmatic effect. Austin's work was significant in the 1960s for turning attention from sentences as syntactic units, to sentences as utterances in speech situations with defined intentions and objectives. Speech acts could, therefore, be considered as the basic unit of discourse.

Austin's argument is that many utterances do more than just communicate information. They are equivalent to actions. For example, the utterances; 'I apologise...', 'I promise...' or the 'I do' as expected of engaged couples in a wedding ceremony constitute appropriate actions of apologising, promising and vowing respectively. The utterances, thus, convey a new psychological or social reality, in which case, according to Crystal (1993), 'to say is to perform'. This distinction between forms of utterances is what Austin describes as "constatives" and "performatives". Constative utterances are utterances that are used to state a fact or describe a state of affairs, the value of which could be true or false e.g. *the boy is good, I have a car*, while Performatives on the other hand, does not only say, but do something verbally. Unlike constatives, it is not subject to the conditions of truthfulness and falsity.

Speech act analysis examines the effect of utterances on the behaviour of a speaker and a hearer, using a threefold distinction; which Saeed (2005) calls "three facets of a speech act; these are: locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act.

2.4.1.1 Locutionary Act:

This first element recognises the bare fact that a communicative act takes place, by which act is meant the saying of something that makes sense in a language; i.e. such an utterance observes the phonological and grammatical rules or is at least meaningful.

2.4.1.2 Illocutionary Act:

Here, we consider the action that is performed as a result of the speaker's utterance – this is the instance of saying translating into doing, such as betting, promising, vowing, cursing, blessing etc. This is the core of the theory of speech act. Saeed (2005) opines that the term speech acts is often used with just this meaning of illocutionary acts in mind. Evidently, this is the central concern of Austin and his successors; the uses to which language can be put in society.

2.4.1.3 Perlocutionary Act:

This act relates to the resultant effect of the speaker's utterance on the listener who may feel: pleased by an act of apologising, assured by an act promising, or threatened by an act of threat, as the case may be. It is notable though that the illocutionary force of an utterance and the resulting perlocutionary effect may not always coincide. For example warnings have often been ignored by many hearers.

There have been a number of works after Austin's on the exploration of the speech act theory. One important area of attention has been to categorise the types of speech act possible in languages. J.R. Searle's (1969) categorisation is one influential approach. Although Searle agrees that there is a myriad of language-particular speech acts, he proposed five main types with which he believes all acts can be associated. These are:

1. **Representatives:** Commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition e.g. asserting, concluding.
2. **Directives:** Speaker's attempts to get his listener to do something e.g. questioning, requesting.
3. **Commissives:** Commit speaker to future course of action e.g. threatening, promising.
4. **Expressives:** Express a psychological state e.g. apologising, congratulating.
5. **Declarations:** Effect changes in the institutional state of affairs e.g. marrying, christening.

Speech act posits that utterances are actions performed, provided the circumstances in which they are made are appropriate. This appropriate situation for an utterance to amount to a performative or action is what Austin calls felicity condition.

2.4.2 Felicity Condition

Wales (1997) defines felicity conditions as “particular kinds of appropriateness valid for the successful functioning of speech acts”. In other words, utterances which do not satisfy these criteria (conditions) are said to be infelicitous, and, in a sense, considered invalid speech acts. Austin (1962) states: “besides the uttering of the words of the so-called performatives, a good many other things have as a general rule to be right and to go if we are to be said to have happily brought off our action”. Austin explains that what these are could be reasoned out or discovered by “looking at and classifying types of cases in which something goes wrong” in such acts as marrying, betting, bequeathing, baptizing, etc. so that they are seen as failure. These factors are what Austin calls infelicities. He, therefore, provides the following scheme which he claims may suffice for the “smooth or happy” (felicitous) functioning of a performative.

- (A.1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstance, and further,
- (A.2) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.
- (B.1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and
- (B.2) completely.
- (C.1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts and feelings and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves and further
- (C.2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently.

2.4.3 Indirect Speech Act

Searle (1979) Reviews speaker's meaning and sentence meaning, both of which come apart in a number of ways. In a literal utterance, a speaker means exactly that which the sentence means, in which case both the sentence (grammatical) meaning and the speaker's intended meaning coincide. Whereas, in such utterances as hints, insinuations, irony, metaphor and what Searle calls indirect speech acts, a speaker means what he/she says (sentence meaning) and beyond. According to Malmkjær (2002), such speech acts have two illocutionary forces. For a hearer to grasp the two forces at play he/she requires the knowledge of the rules for performing speech acts, share some situational (background) information with the speaker, exercise his/her power of rationality and inference in general, and have knowledge of certain conversational principles of the type Grice (1975) calls co-operative principle (CP).

In some cases, speech acts directly address a listener, more often though the acts in everyday conversation are indirect. Rather than say; *shut that door, move away*, speaker may say: *could you shut the door? Would you mind moving away a bit?* Given such factors (conversational principles) mentioned above, as holding between interactants, under appropriate situations, both utterances would be considered, and so function as request for action and not a question needing a verbal answer. This situation in the way language is used to mean, describes the concept of indirect speech acts.

2.5 Pragmatic Act

The more recent and apparently more versatile Pragmatic Acts Theory is credited to the works of Jacob L. Mey (2001). What a pragmatic act is or involves is better explained, illustrated and/or exemplified, than attempts at pegging it down to any concise definition.

In his introduction to the theory, Mey provides ample cases as examples of pragmatic acting, one of which we shall review here for our purpose. He reports on an advertisement in the August 21, 1992 issue of the Chicago alternative cultural weekly Reader for a down town Cocktail lounge called Sweet Alice. The advert includes the text: "*I brought some Shushi home and I cooked it; it wasn't bad*". Ordinarily, the relationship holding between the item *Shushi* and the verb *cooked* in this text can not pass for meaning on the corridors of grammatical rules. It is apparent incompatibility from a semantic interpretation, since Shushi is conventionally known to be eaten raw and never cooked. Mey 2001 observes:

This is where pragmatic act comes into the picture; pragmatics tells us that it's all right to use language in various unconventional ways, as long as we know as language users, what we're doing. That implies letting ourselves be 'semantically shocked' if it is done for a purpose (Mey 2001: 207).

The effectiveness of the above joke serving as an advert of invitation to join the crowd in Sweet Alice, derives from its euphoric effect by which it invokes the unserious state of mind that usually becomes the case with those who engage in drinking. This example is a typical pragmatic act of inviting. A pragmatic act is performed when language users communicate implicitly, in which process, others may be co-opted, set-up, influenced or even have certain claims denied (Mey 2001), without making such acts explicit from the lexical selections made by the language user, under a particular situation. Pragmatic acts are the practical realisations of the theoretical notion underlying pragmatics as a branch of linguistics. For Mey, "pragmatics studies language as it is used by people, for their own purposes and within their own respective limitations and affordances" which is why we have this kind of a pragmatic explanation of a linguistic fact in the example above.

2.5.1 Elements of Pragmatic Acting

In our attempt at defining pragmatic acts, we referred to Mey's observation that pragmatic acts often involve such concepts as 'co-opting', 'denying' and 'conversational influence attempt' (CIA). One or a combination of these elements is often found at the basis of interactants' pragmatic acting. We shall now discuss these in turns with relevant examples.

i Co-opting

The term 'co-opting' refers to implied identification with somebody or some persons; 'co-opting' them as it were, the target of the speaker's intentions. In Mey's (2001:210) terms:

This act - which can not be reduced to, or pinpointed as, any (number of) specific speech act(s) – is a frequently used (not to say overused) element of advertising techniques which basically try to seduce the viewer or reader through a promised identification with some prestigious environment or a set of right people.

This could also include identification with supposedly 'superior' products and services.

This strategy of co-opting can be deduced from the following products and service adverts:

Cow bell, our milk.

Rothmans king size, the best tobacco money can buy.

Premier FM! Your dependable companion.

In these examples, the products and service respectively, that are on sale are sketched as being desirable, but the invitation to subscribe is by innuendo only, rather than a specific, codified Language formula of the speech act type. Notice the use of the collective pronouns; ‘our’, and ‘your’, which are explicitly used to include, that is; ‘co-opt’ others in the first and last examples, whereas in the middle example, the attempt is absolutely implicit.

ii **Denying**

On implicit denial, Mey (ibid) opines that ‘this technique of persuading relies primarily not on what is said, but the ‘unsaid’, a term he borrowed from Tyler (1967). For example, a particular brand of alcohol is so flamboyantly presented on a media advert in Nigeria as though to suggest to everyone to drink with impunity. Yet the advert concludes with the text: “drink responsibly”. The pragmatic act here is one of denying implicitly, what has been explicitly claimed concerning this liquor at the outset of the advert, without having to employ the speech act type of denying.

iii **Conversational Influence Attempt (CIA)**

This pragmatic device involves manipulations of some sort; some subtle persuasions or influencing, meant in the ‘engagement field’ of conversation, to guide someone to a desired/predetermined action or position on a matter, without having to necessarily spell it out in words that could count as any specific speech act. Here, Mey identifies another factor of pragmatic relevance; what he calls “setting up”. For him, a situational setting up is an important integrated and constitutive element of the pragmatic act whereby the context of the acting carries more weight than the spoken act itself.

Jacobs and Jackson (1983b) illustrate the workings of CIA vis-à-vis the concept of setting up, with the example of the famous analysis of the Watergate affair in America by Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, who refer to a situation in which Woodward was exposed to what they (Jacobs and Jackson) point out as conversational influence attempt. Woodward senses an attempt by President Nixon’s lawyers to “strike a deal”; by what

seemed to be an offer of information he could use in his reporting so as to keep him out of some particularly delicate areas. Our interest here is on the factor of “setting up” in facilitating the pract, without any explicit speech act of offering by the suspected lawyers. “Setting up” comes in when the conversational context portends something for which the hearer listens accordingly. This example is analogous to the case of a female university student who, having performed poorly in an examination visits one of her male lecturers in his private apartment one late evening and said: *sir`am here because of my result,`am afraid I wouldn't pass your course*, while she grins mischievously in a rather seductive general appearance. This scenario is of course one of pragmatic acting, a CIA. However, whether or not it could ‘count as’ a bribe (of offering herself) to the lecturer under the circumstances, perhaps to have her score upgraded, depends entirely on whether the lecturer was ‘set up’ by the situational/conversational setting (context) to expect a bribe, and was willing to accept it. According to Mey (2001), the uptake is essential. Obviously, no bribe was offered, to speak technically, except in retrospect. If the lecturer did accept the ‘offer’, then, we could conclude that there had been an effort on the student’s part at retroactively bribing him. But if the lecturer were to frown at the ‘move’, the student could have protested her ‘innocence’, claiming to have been grossly mistaken, and her motives, altogether misinterpreted. Most instances of daily alms begging in Nigeria are illustrations of the different faces of pragmatic setting-up. Mey, however, postulates three essential conditions that are necessary for pragmatic acting as follows:

- i. For sequences like the ones described above to ‘count as’ a particular pragmatic act, the circumstances (the ‘setting up’) must be right.
- ii There need not be any speech act involved (whether of bribing, requesting or whatever else). It is the context that determines the nature of the pragmatic act.
- iii Without uptake, there can not be a pragmatic act; however, the uptake can be cancelled by a subsequent act.

2.5.2 Pragmatic Act and Action Theory

The concept of action is central to the theory of pragmatic acts. This view implies that pragmatic acts are not to be thought of as entirely emanating from the individual, as Fairclough (1989) observes in the case of the speech act theory.

Mey (2001) suggests two points of view from which we can look at pragmatic acts: that of the agent and that of the act. From the perspective of the individual agent, there are such factors as his/her class, gender, age, education, previous life history and so on. These can also be characterised as constraints and affordances imposed on the individual, in form of necessary limitations in the degree of freedom that s/he is allowed in society. The other point of view is that of the act which is basically focused on the language that is used in performing a pragmatic act. Here again, are two aspects: from the individual's perspective and from the perspective of the context. The individual's perspective is concerned with the language that the individual can use to perform a specific pragmatic act; while from the perspective of the context, the question is; what language can be used to create the conditions for one to perform a pragmatic act. Mey's opinion on the first is that we invoke the adaptability of language – a situation in which individuals in a society depend on language as their principal instrument for adapting to the constantly changing conditions around them, and thereby, “generate meaning” as Verschueren (1999) puts it. As to the second perspective, Mey opines that the traditional speech acts are part of the tools that are available to us for the control of our environment while respectively adapting to it in various ways.

Verschueren deals more elaborately with the concept of adaptability and linguistic choices. He identifies three different ways of choosing the appropriate linguistic means as follows:

- i. To appeal to the actual circumstances making a particular linguistic choice legitimate (as a matter of presupposition). For example, the utterance: *I'm sorry to hear about your grandpa*, presupposes that something bad had happened to the other's grandpa.
- ii. To create the circumstances that make a particular choice appropriate, as it is in the case of conversational implicatures. For example, the question; do you have *fufu* and *ogbono* soup? in a typical Nigerian restaurant implies that one wants to buy the food.
- iii. An utterance may be well adapted only to certain circumstances that have to be actualised before the act becomes possible, suitable, legally binding

or otherwise effective. For example, in a foundation laying ceremony, the declaration to commence work on the new structure becomes effective, contingent upon the pragmatic act having been performed; namely: The actual laying of the first (foundation stone) block by an appropriate person in harmony with the verbal declaration.

All these cases denote pragmatic acting as a way of adapting oneself linguistically and otherwise to one's own world, wherein all acting is done and within the affordances the world (human society) grants language users.

2.5.3 The Notion of 'Common Scene' in Pragmatic Acting

All conversational contributions can be properly understood if they are situated within a given environment in which they are meant to be so understood. This environment is also known as context. The common scene, therefore, refers to a background – the social behaviour upon which conversation is considered as a pragmatic interaction. Mey (2001) traces the term “common scene” to the French sociologist Jacques Rancière who defines politics as the “battle for the common scene of understanding”. In pragmatics, the common scene is not just an agreement on a common ground, or to maintain some common definitions on some conceptual framework. Rather, common scene involves a contest, a battle, of a kind. In an effort to establish their common grounds, people often contend over issues thought to be ‘common’, but in reality, such issues originate in various kinds of misunderstandings. Pragmatics establishes the common scene properly within the context of the society. It is upon this social scene that the ‘battle’ for domination is going on, and people’s understanding of the common scene is largely dependent upon their understanding of the domineering forces of society. Hence, Rancière’s ‘scene’ according to Mey (2001) “is more than just a context, understood as a common background, or platform, of conversation”. The question is about the underlying presuppositions which make this very context possible. People’s rationality in acting rests on the affordable, that is; what they can do, given the context, rather than exclusively on the thinkable and cognizable, which is, what they can say and understand, given the context. Mey insists that people’s acting is determined by what the scene can afford and by what they can afford on the scene. This implies that a collaboration of affordances (common affordances) make a common platform possible for action. Conversely, a lack of this common affordances renders social acting

impossible, whether in speech or action. Consequently, it can be said that people's acting on the scene, in so far as it relies on that understanding only makes sense, and becomes possible, if the scene has been created as common, in other words, 'affordable' for them and by them. In the same vein, much as the scene determines people's acting, their actions also determine and reaffirm the existing scene. This is so when people acknowledge and cooperate with the prevailing common platform by acting within its boundaries, obeying its limitations and by realising their possibilities on the scene, in which case, such acting (including 'speech acting') is seen as a situated action, in other words; "an action made possible and afforded by, and in a particular situation, on a particular scene" (Mey 2001:219).

2.5.4 Pragmatic Acts and 'Body Moves'

Pragmatic acts involve the entire individual in communication, beyond his/her verbalised (speech) contributions. Kinesics is the technical term for what is normally known and referred to as 'body language' (Malmkjær 2002). Body language is often used to denote the systematic, though possibly unconscious use of 'body moves' such as facial expressions, gestures and postures, as components in speech situations. It is usually considered as a more or less natural accompaniment to verbal signal. Lately though, researchers have come to realise that body language is much more significant in communication than it had been thought of (Good, 1996). As Mey (2001) observes, body language has the potential to restrict (constrain) the delivery of the speech signal and facilitates the choice between the different interpretations that are open to the listener. Thus, Gosling (1981a) suggests that it would be important to establish kinesics (body language) at a formal linguistic level, to include all such meaningful gestures or sequences of gestures from which interactive functions are realised in face-to-face communicative situations. These include some changes in body posture and posture change accompanied by intent gaze at present speaker, both of which appear to be signals of a desire to speak next; a phenomenon Gosling calls 'turn-claims'. Hence, we reason with Mey who opines that the thinking of non-verbal communication as being a simple supplement or aid to verbal exchange is too narrow. Mey (2001:223-4) states: "rather, one must admit that bodily communication (and... such... factors as emotions) is able to 'set the scene' for total communication. In other words, if your body does not follow you, your listener will not, either". Body moves is not a matter of just the movements of the body. It is considered as part of the overall structure of a conversation,

in the same manner as the moves of a conversation are pragmatically enacted on the 'common scene' that is shared by the conversationalists. Body moves is executed in what has been called an 'engagement space' or a 'field of engagement'. This field of engagement changes according to the developments in the communication situation, i.e. when interactants are comfortable or uncomfortable with each other. For example, disagreement or discrepancy can motivate a reconfiguration of the body field of engagement. The body field of engagement is ready from the outset of a conversation, and as the "communication opens, the bodies indicate and signal a willingness to cooperate" (Gill *et al.* 2000). Gill *et al.* identify and distinguish several kinds of body moves including the body move take-turn, which corresponds in its manner of operation to the CA turn-taking. This kind of body move occurs mainly as participants enter or exit the common engagement space. Another is the focusing body move, which has to do with the movement of the speaker's body into the common space of engagement, correspondingly followed by a moment of the interlocutor.

Body moves is an integral part of the action (pragmeme). Thus, as an integral portion of pragmeme, body moves are naturally part of, and may naturally represent, the whole pragmatic act which realises a particular pragmeme" (Mey 2001: 229).

2.5.5 Pragmatic Acts as 'Social Empowerment'

To empower means to invest with power; to put a person in a position of power, or according to Macmillan English Dictionary (2005); "to give someone more control ... more power to do something". This power as we earlier submitted, resides in the society rather than the individual. This means that the individual's position is defined by the society, and that society's empowerment limits his/her acting potential as well as enables him/her to act as a free agent, doing so within the limitations set out by society.

Arguably, pragmatic acting is about the individual's ability to exploit his/her societal empowerment, rather than exercise power autonomously. Pragmatic acting is "contextualized adaptive behaviour", a pragmatic act being an instance of adapting oneself to a context; past and future situations, as well as adapting the context to oneself (Mey *ibid*). In this line of thought, language is seen as the generalised script for all human actions, since it could serve both as a repository of experiences as well as provide for future changes. Language makes it possible to identify and execute in whatever available context, the correct situated act. Mey (2001:227) observes: "it is society itself that speaks through the interactants when they try to influence each other". This speaking

could be in the form of conventions, culture, social structure, felicity conditions and whatever else. What is meant here is that approaches based solely upon rational actions performed by single individuals, who undermine this pre-set by society which is in fact supra-individual, can not succeed.

2.5.6 Mey's Model of a Pragmeme

An important background knowledge to the understanding of how pragmatic act theory functions, is that, rather than trying to explain the use of language from inside out or in Mey's terms, "from words having their origin as a sovereign speaker going out to an equally sovereign hearer...", it is the other way round – from the outside in; the focus being on the existing environment in which speaker and hearer realise their affordances, to the extent that the whole situation is made to bear on what is actually being said. This radically pragmatic view implies that attention is now placed on characterising a general situational prototype that can be applied in the situation, instead of emphasising conditions and rules for an individual's speech act. This kind of a generalised pragmatic act is what Mey calls a pragmeme. Pragmeme is realized through instantiated, individual pragmatic acts which he refers to as practs. According to Odebunmi (2006), "pragmeme is the central concept in the theory of pragmatic acts, while practs are the concrete occurrences of a pragmeme". Every pract is also an allopract (sub-pract) that is; a concrete and different realisation of a particular instantiation of a particular pragmeme. Odebunmi (ibid) opines that the concept of pragmeme is an abstraction.

The study of practs is not concerned with issues of strict adherence to grammatical rules and standards of correctness. What matters and passes for a pract is absolutely dependent on, and determined by the understanding the individual participants possess of the situation, by which and under which such practs are derived, and the effect that the practs have, or may have in a particular context. This theoretical conception of pragmeme is schematised thus:

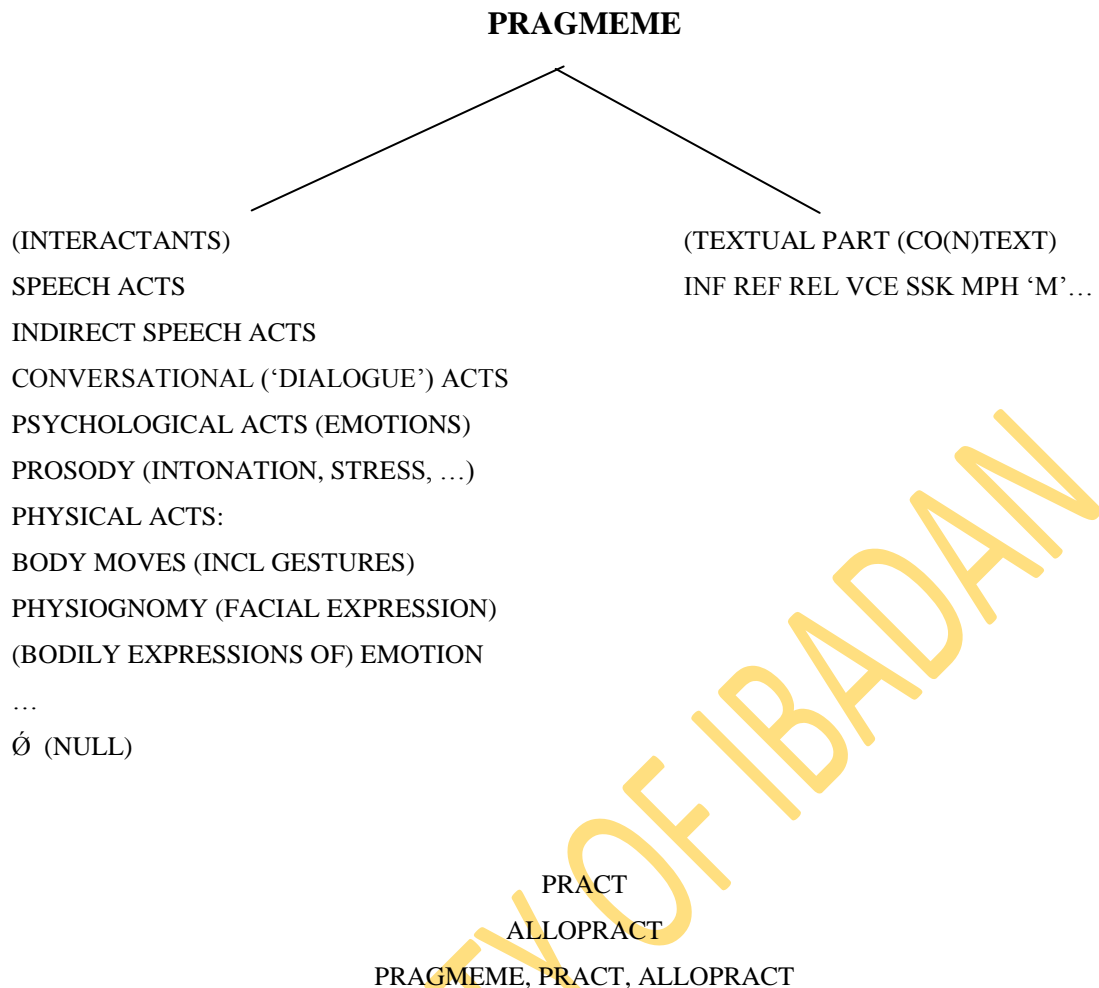


Fig. 2: Mey's (2001: 222) Conception of Pragmeme

The list to the left of the schema shows the choices that are open to the language user in communication. The cells can be either filled or empty. One or more of these available options can be chosen by the language user. When all the cells are empty, then the matrix runs to zero, which is represented on the schema as 'Ø' (NULL). An instance of this situation may be the case of silence. This is not the same as zero or no communication. The features to the right of the schema represent options that are available in the textual chain; these are contextual features that influence communication. The full meaning of these features, in terms of what each type stands for, are as follows:

- INF; inferencing
- REF; reference
- REL; relevance
- VCE; voice
- SSK; shared situation (or dialogue) knowledge

- MPH; metaphor
- M; metapragmatic joker

The sum total of the assumptions of Pragmatic acts is the fact that they are based on language as constrained by the situation, not as defined by syntactic rules or by semantic choices. Pragmatic acts are situation-derived and situation-constrained. By extension, they are determined by the wider social context in which they take place and thus realize their objectives only in the conditions imposed upon human action by the given context. This corresponds to what Levinson (1979) calls “activity type”. The pragmeme determines what can be considered as an allowable contribution to each activity or pract as well as suggests how what is said (the speech act) is to be understood. In which case the ‘setting up’ provides the affordance for the pragmatic act and at same time indicates the kind of pract on board.

We can apply these principles to an example of pragmatic act of ‘co-opting’ as realised in the following advert from Globacom Nigeria: “*check out those who are using glo, big babes!*” this text is back-grounded and reinforced for effect by the visual display of three glamorously looking young girls. Here, a situational context is evoked in which self-acclaimed big babes impliedly spurn the use of other telephone networks for glo. By the same evocation the pract has effectively defined its target audience on address; all those who are supposed to imagine themselves in the status of the ‘big babes’; young and exotic. Thus, they are both invited and co-opted into this fenced-off circle of associates in the glo world. Note, too, the implied discrimination against all those outside this ‘club’ of ‘big babes’. In all of these, no speech act, direct or indirect can be pinpointed as being exactly responsible for the resulting effects of the pract.

The notion of pragmeme as the central idea in the theory of pragmatic acts has apparently resolved the dilemma of illocutionary versus perlocutionary force. Gu (1993:428) argues: “perlocution is not a single act performed by S [‘s’ stands for speaker]. Nor is its effect being caused by an utterance”. Kurzon (1998:41) similarly opines that perlocutionary acts “are not a separate issue in speech act theory”. Mey (2001) concludes: “it would be better just to call them [illocutionary and perlocutionary forces] what they really are, namely: pragmatic acts. There is only one force in any act of uttering, whether illocutionary or perlocutionary, and it is pragmatic: the force of the pragmeme”.

2.6 Speech Act and Pragmatic Act Compared

We shall begin this comparison between speech act and pragmatic act by restating what is rather obvious from the discussion all along, which is that; both theories contrast with the stance of semantics, whose view of linguistic meaning is strictly encoded in the structure of the language. Conversely, Pragmatic Acts and Speech Acts belong in the school of pragmatics. Under this orientation, linguistic meaning is thought of as “derived or deduced from how language is used on a particular occasion, in a particular context” (Goddard 1998), where speaker’s and hearer’s interpretations are highly motivated and influenced by such factors as context of (physical, social and other) situation, including shared background knowledge of the kind Mey calls ‘SSK’ (shared situational knowledge) which Odeunmi (2006) modifies to include ‘SCK’ (shared cultural knowledge). Leech and Short sum up this view thus: “The pragmatic analysis of language can be broadly understood to be the investigation into that aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal properties of words and constructions, but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered”.

The foregoing provides the grounds of convergence between pragmatic acts and speech acts. Beyond this basic assumption though, Mey proposes credible arguments that illustrate areas of divergences between both theories. For example, even though language is a common denominator to both; in other words, like speech acts, pragmatic acts involve the use of language; pragmatic acts do not necessarily include specific acts of speech that could be said to pass for any particular illocutionary act, such as ‘inviting’, ‘requesting’, or ‘denying’ and so on. To illustrate this assertion, we present the following telephone conversation between former University class mates and friends; Sony and Nice. On leaving the university, Sony got married and Nice, a spinster, calling him some six months after:

Nice: (Calling)

Sony: Hello Nice!

Nice: Sony! You just married and forget a friend, just like that?

Sony: Oh, no, Nice (Nice cuts in):

Nice: How’s your wife? I haven’t even seen her and your new ‘set-up’.

Sony: Well, that’s true.

Nice: Anyway, like I said, you're operating at a different level now, and have forgotten about us 'shee'?

Sony: Em, you think so?

Nice: We may not see in a long time as things are now. Even the MTN free night calls might not be convenient, or, I don't know how your wife will feel about it even.

Sony: Nice! You haven't changed a bit; always funny. Thanks for calling. Everything will be alright.

Nice: If you say so. Okay, bye!

In this interaction, nothing is said that could be accounted as a speech act of requesting or denying. No mention of such words as 'invite' or 'visit'. Even so, the conversation betrays these intentions; Nice tries to secure an invitation from Sony to come over (visit him). She also negotiated Sony's approval to utilise the MTN free night telephone calls as a possible alternative. To both attempts, Sony pragmatically acted out his denial or refusal of her propositions without the use of such specific speech acts that could count as such.

This scenario could be contrasted with a similar one: Bimbo and Ese are friends, and have been separated for some time. By coincidence, they met at a park and had the following exchange:

Bimbo: Hi Ese!

Ese: Heh! Bimbo! quite a long a time. How's your husband and the children?

Bimbo: We're all fine and missing you.

Ese: Thanks but (interrupted)

Bimbo: When can we have you again?

Ese: Perhaps, during my annual leave, I shall be with you people, don't worry.

Bimbo: Please, come soon.

Ese: I promise.

Here, unlike the first example, we can identify specific speech acts such as:

When can we have you again? (requesting)

Please come soon (inviting)

I promise (promising)

As we can see, from our earlier discussion, there are acknowledgeable similarities that are shared between pragmatic acts and speech acts. Even so, they are different. Our

knowledge of indirect speech acts shows that a speaker means beyond the conventionally expected function of his utterance in terms of grammatical rules. It is this extra, actual function as encoded by the speaker and, more often than not decodable by the hearer in the given situation that makes a speech act indirect. Thomas' (1995) example of a notice displayed in the changing rooms at the swimming pool at the University of Warwick is apt: *'Would users please refrain from spitting'*. This 'interrogative' is the indirect speech act of the intended directive – don't spit!

Pragmatic acts similarly exhibit this feature of 'indirectness', where, what is meant is only implicit in the act that is performed. Unlike the indirect speech acts though, pragmatic acts employ what Mey calls 'hints' or 'prompts'. We have the following dining table situation as an illustration:

Pass the salt (direct request)

Can you pass the salt? (indirect request)

Compared with 'hints' and 'prompts' Such as:

I would like some salt

I wouldn't mind some salt

Isn't this soup rather bland?

The like of these latter examples under 'hints' and 'prompts' can be seen as efforts to have somebody pass the salt across, whereas none of the utterances could be said to constitute a request in the sense that the indirect speech act would. Mey calls them 'pre-requests', which somehow achieve the desired result more often than not, even without having to be blown-up into full request status: the salt is passed on accordingly. Although that when speech acts are uttered in contexts they become pragmatic acts, pragmatic acts need not be speech acts. As evident in the examples above, in pragmatic acting, it is not possible to identify a particular predetermined use of any canonical speech act.

2.7 Pragmatic Concepts

Three pragmatic concepts are germane to this study. They are: Presupposition, Implicature and Politeness. These will now be discussed in turn.

2.7.1 Presupposition

Speakers often make implicit assumptions about the real world, and the sense of an utterance may depend on those assumptions. Such assumptions which are often at the background of conversations constitute sources from where meaning is recoverable in specific context of communication. That explains why it is possible to know more than a speaker offers explicitly in many situations of conversation. Thus, Fromkin et al. (2005) observe:

presuppositions are so much a part of natural discourse that they become second nature and we do not think of them any more than we are directly aware of the many other rules and maxims that govern language and its use in context ... If we have to spell out every presupposition specifically, conversation would be very tedious indeed ... presuppositions are indispensable to making discourse efficient.

The philosophical sense of the term presupposition is found in semantic discussion which refers to a condition which must be satisfied if a particular state of affairs is to be obtained in language use (Crystal, 1991).

However, presupposition is more generally thought of as a pragmatic concept, inferences that are based on the linguistic structure of the sentence in communication (Levinson, 1983: 167). These pragmatic inferences are based essentially on certain contextual assumptions such as shared linguistic and other socio-cultural knowledge vis-à-vis the participants' willingness to cooperate in conversation process. Levinson suggests that the "technical sense of presupposition is restricted to certain pragmatic inferences or assumptions that seem at least to be built into linguistic expressions and which can be isolated using specific linguistic tests".

Concerning pragmatic presupposition, Stalnaker submits:

P pragmatically presupposes *Q* iff whenever the utterance of *P* is conversationally acceptable, the speaker of *P* assumes *Q* and believes his audience to assume *Q* as well.

This view of presupposition allows us to say what all cases of presupposition have in common, while also allowing that the sources of presupposition could be varied. The overarching characterization is framed in terms of constraints that are imposed by an utterance on the contexts in which it may appropriately be uttered.

Horn (1992) opines that pragmatic presupposition is significantly different from semantic presupposition in the sense that a semantic presupposition is a truth-conditional relation obtaining between two propositions, but the pragmatic notion of presupposition is entirely non truth- conditional. Beaver and Zeevat (2004) however, make a distinction between semantic and pragmatic presupposition in the following way: semantic presuppositions are conditions on the meaningfulness of a sentence or utterance: conditions on the expression of a proposition, in a dynamic theory. In the same vein, Stalnaker opines that semantic and pragmatic notions of presupposition provide two alternative accounts of the same linguistic phenomenon (Schwarz, 1977).

Simons (2006) holds that semantic presuppositions are characterised as constraints on the actual context, while pragmatic presuppositions are beliefs about the context that must be attributed to a speaker, adding that it is standard to assume that semantic presuppositions of sentences become pragmatic presuppositions of speakers, as speakers should believe that contexts satisfy the conditions required to allow their utterances to be meaningful. Horn (1992: 263) corroborates this view thus:

Like the allied relation of conventional implicature, it is based on the role of COMMON GROUND assumed to hold between speaker and hearer in a discourse context: in (pragmatically) presupposing that P, a speaker is disposed to act as if the truth of P- would be non-controversially accepted by speaker and hearer as part of their shared model of the context, while an assertion is a proposal to increment the context by adding the asserted proposition to it.

In interactions, speakers or writers usually design their messages on the assumption that the hearer or reader already has a degree of the knowledge of what is being communicated. What the writer assumes the reader already knows about the subject is known as ‘presupposition’ (Chiluwa, 2005). Inference is actually based on presupposition because whether inference is right or wrong, the reader is acting upon relevant information about the subject. Presuppositions are subtle ways of deriving the author’s or speaker’s meaning and speakers on their own deliberately allow certain

meanings to be decoded by way of intelligent presupposition (Heim, 1983, 1992; Kempson, 1975). Thus, like in most interactions, presuppositions are vital pragmatic resources in interpreting beggars' discourse.

2.7.2 Implicature

The concept of implicature could be traced to a series of influential scholarly works of the philosopher, H.P Grice (1957, 1961, 1968, 1969). The term refers to something meant, implied, or suggested, as different from what is literally said. Davis (1998) states that implicatures could be part of sentence meaning or dependent on conversational context, and can be conventional or unconventional. Grice argues that the meaning of a word in general is a derivative function of what speakers mean by that word in individual instances of uttering it. That is, the universal "type" meaning, or set of such meanings, for a given word is an abstraction from the "token" meanings that speakers mean by the word in specific instances of use (Hancher, 1996). Grice holds that what a word "means" derives from what speakers mean by uttering it; and that "what a particular speaker or writer means by a sign on a particular occasion ... may well diverge from the standard meaning of the sign" (Grice, 1957:381).

Mey (2001:45) clarifies the conception of conversational implicature further:

A conversational implicature is, therefore, something which is implied in conversation, that is, something which is left implicit in actual language use. The reason that pragmatics is interested in this phenomenon is that we seem to be dealing here with a regularity that cannot be captured in a simple syntactic or semantic 'rule', but has to be accounted for in other ways.

Quite similarly, Bilmes (1986:27) submits:

In everyday talk, we often convey propositions that are not explicit in our utterances but are merely implied by them. Sometimes we are able to draw such inferences by referring what has been explicitly said to some conversational principle. In certain of these cases, we are dealing with conversational implicature.

Levinson (1983) associates implicature with sincerity of speaker's intention. He argues that that in co-operative circumstances, when a speaker says something he implicates that he believes it. For instance, when one asks a question one implicates that he sincerely desires an answer and, similarly, when one promises to do X, he implicates

that one sincerely intends to do X. This, to us, is rather over-estimating the potentials of conversational implicature. We feel that just as what is said and what is implied may fall apart in terms of linguistic correlation or description, so it is possible, and very often in alms begging that beggars' sincerity are largely indeterminable. Levinson, (1983: 97-8) describes the importance of this concept in pragmatics as resting on a number of sources. The initial source stands as a paradigmatic example of the nature and power of pragmatic explanations of linguistic phenomena. The second is that it gives some explicit explanation of how it is possible to mean more than what is actually said, and a third, it seems likely to make substantial simplification in both the structure and the content of semantic description. He concludes that the concept of implicature offers some significant functional explanations of linguistic facts.

2.7.3 Politeness: Definition, Scope and Models

There are several submissions on the meaning, scope and different approaches in politeness study. These are appraised for the purpose of this study.

2.7.3.1 The Concept of Politeness

From an etymological perspective, the term "polite" is derived from the Latin word: "politus", which means 'to smoothen'. Thus, the traditional meaning often associated with the term "polite" evokes the idea of "smoothed", "polished", and subsequently it translated into: "refined", "cultivated", "well bred" "cultured", "gentle" and the likes (Sifianou, 1992:81), when used with reference to people. With reference to manners, "polite" may be seen in the same sense as "cautious", "urbane", etc.

Politeness in this sense is commonly thought of as behaving in a way that is socially correct and shows awareness of, and regard for other people's feelings; being careful about one's speech/conversational behaviour in order not to offend someone or at least, avoid giving the appearance of rudeness (*Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2003, Macmillan English Dictionary, 2002*). This definition corresponds to what Locher and Watts (2005) classify as "first order politeness" (politeness 1), and as distinguished from "second order politeness" (politeness 2) "as a technical term which covers face-saving/constituting behaviour irrespective of whether this would be so classified by the non-initiated" (Terkourafi, 2005).

2.7.3.2 Scope of Politeness

The concept of politeness has enjoyed keen attention and contributions from several linguists over the years. In the literature, a number of models of politeness have been recognised, including those of Lakoff, Leech, Brown and Levinson, Fraser and Nolan, Ide, Gu, Blum Kulka, Arndt and Janney and Watts and Locher. However, all the submissions in politeness theorising can be broadly classified into two eras, namely: the traditional view and the post-modern view. Some examples of politeness models which belong to the traditional school are: Leech's Politeness Principle, (PP) and Brown and Levinson's Face-work, while in the post-modern school we have Locher and Watts' Relational work and Terkourafi's Frame-based" View. We shall discuss these models in turn, and attempt to explain their points of convergence and divergence, vis-à-vis their relevance to the present study.

2.7.3.3 Models of Politeness

Politeness models could be classified into two eras, namely: the traditional and the post-modern. Under each of these eras are the different views of politeness in interaction. A critique of these views is presented here for appropriation in this study.

2.7.3.3.1 The Traditional view of Politeness

Under the Traditional view, politeness is explained in terms of principles and maxims. These are seen as conversational rules which govern speakers' conversational behaviours during interactions. One of such maxims for example is Tact. When obeyed, speakers make the effort to "minimize the expression of beliefs which imply cost to other" and "maximize the expression of belief which imply benefit to other" Leech (1980 and 1983a). Leech sees the notion of "tact" as pivotal to accounting for speakers' preference for indirectness in conveying what they mean.

Under the traditional view, politeness models largely draw upon the Gricean Co-operative Principle (CP). The CP is a model credited to the philosopher, H.P. Grice (1975). The assumption held in the CP relates to the necessity of cooperation between/among speakers during conversation. This view underscores the fact that success of a conversation in most social contexts entails the need for participants to feel a sense of belonging and regard in the ongoing social activity, i.e. the

participants need to feel that they are contributing something to the conversational process and are getting something from it in return. To ensure this, a number of conventionalised principles such as Turn-taking have to apply. Thus, among rational participants, efforts are often made at directing conversations towards a common goal by adhering to these principles. In Grice's (1975) view, there are four maxims that aim at ensuring participant's efficient management of conversational interactions. These are the maxim of quantity which states: "Make your contributions as informative as required; do not make your contribution more informative than required", the maxim of quality - "Do not say what you believe to be false; do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence", the maxim of relation - "make your contribution relevant", and the maxim of manner - "be perspicuous". Arguably, success of a conversation depends not just on what speakers say but, on the whole approach to the interaction including the degree of cooperation between interactants in allowing themselves to be guided by these maxims.

The CP has a number of limitations. For instance, it is only assumed that in a conversation, speakers will follow these criteria. However, this is not always so, as speakers sometimes break these rules. It is also possible for speakers not to realise this breakdown in conversation and to continue to converse at cross-purposes. These and the essential role of the notion of politeness to the success of conversations is what background the introduction of the Leechian Politeness Principle (PP).

We shall discuss two influential models in the traditional era of politeness research, namely: Politeness Principle (PP) and Face work. This will enable us explore the dominant arguments which underlie the concept of politeness amongst scholars of the traditional view.

2.7.3.3.1.1 Politeness Principle (PP)

Politeness Principle (PP) is a model developed by Leech (1980), and It could be said that the Leechian PP derives from the foundation provided by the Gricean CP. Leech (ibid) views the PP as rescuing the Gricean CP in the sense of making up for obvious weakness of the CP.

The central tenet of the PP states:

- 'Minimize (all things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs'
- 'Maximize (all things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs'

To this end, Leech proposes a number of maxims which can be seen as standing in the same relationship to the PP as Grice's maxims are to the CP. The main maxims are: Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement Sympathy and Pollyanna principle, to which an assortment of several 'sub-maxims' may be added.

2.7.3.3.1.1.1 Tact Maxim

The tact maxim states:

- ‘Minimize the expression of beliefs which imply cost to other’
- ‘Maximize the expression of beliefs which imply benefit to other’.

(Thomas, 1995)

Speakers are considered tactful when they use certain minimizers to reduce the implied cost of their utterance to their listeners as in the following examples: ‘wait for me *a second*’, when, actually the waiting is expected to last more, or ‘*Just* dash down my alms’, when, in reality it will take so much to make the journey down the supposed alms. Obviously, these utterances imply cost to the hearer in terms of time and effort in both examples, but the effects on the hearer have been considerably mitigated by the minimizers: ‘a second’ and ‘just’ respectively.

Another way that speakers try to achieve the objectives of this maxim is to mitigate the effect of say, a request, by offering optionality such as the inclusion of the expression: "if you don't mind". Thomas (ibid) observes: "allowing options (or giving the appearance of allowing options) is absolutely central to Western notions of politeness".

2.7.3.3.1.1.2 Generosity Maxim

This maxim runs thus:

- ‘Minimize the expression of benefit to self’
- ‘Maximize the expression of cost to self’.

The generosity maxim is commonly observed in offers. If a speaker’s speech or behaviour implies sharing his financial/material advantage, time or other conveniences with other, or even sometimes relinquishes any of these to the benefit of other, such could be said to be generous in the Leechian notion of the generosity maxim. Examples may include offers such as in the invitation: “could you be my guest this weekend?” apparently this implies some cost to the speaker and benefit to the addressee, or in the assurance: “I can wait while you take your time”, where this is an advantage to the one being waited for.

2.7.3.3.1.3 Approbation Maxim

The Approbation maxim says:

- ‘Minimize the expression of beliefs which express dispraise of other’.
- ‘Maximize the expression of beliefs which express approval of other’.

The basic idea here is the need to be less critical of other. If and whenever possible, a speaker avoids the use of expressions which signal dispraise or disapproval of other even when such are true to say. In this way, speakers who want to be seen as polite may prefer to say to someone for example: “your meals are quite delicious” or “your kids are so well behaved”, rather than say: “I don’t enjoy your meals” or “your kids are not well brought up” respectively.

2.7.3.3.1.4 Modesty Maxim

The Modesty Maxim runs thus:

- ‘Minimize the expression of praise of self’;
- ‘Maximize the expression of dispraise of self’.

It is this maxim that explains the idea behind the utterance: “it is the Lord’s doing” as a response to another’s compliment about one’s well deserved praise, rather than simply acknowledging that one deserves it. This implies that a “modest” speaker would prefer to hide-away his abilities and honours, which should ordinarily attract praise to him/her, by some deliberate use of language that would de-emphasise any such praise or honour.

2.7.3.3.1.5 Agreement Maxim

The Agreement maxim states:

- ‘Minimize the expression of disagreement between self and other’
- ‘Maximize the expression of agreement between self and other’.

Here, and as true of all the other maxims, speakers are quite sensitive to the existing relationship with their hearers and of the nature of the interaction, such that they are more inclined to showing agreement rather than disagreement with their hearers, even when they hold different views on a point of conversation. The caution here is not to conclude that this maxim aims at ruling out disagreement between speakers, but rather, speakers supply responses with carefully thought-out modifications. This kind of answering has the potential of leaving a questioner for instance, with the impression that his/her view is respected even when not supported or upheld. The maxim is, thus, seen as

a strategy employed to ensure harmony in conversations. This phenomenon accounts for why speakers can sometimes say yes, even on things they actually do not agree, as in the following dialogue between a couple:

Wife: We need to change the furniture now
Husband: Yes! But let's talk about it later
Wife: Ok!

Note in this exchange, Husband's two part answer and its pragmatic implication for Wife's indirect (suggestive) request. The first part; "yes!" modifies the second; "let's talk about it later" as being an agreement with wife's suggestion. Although Husband's consent on the need for change of the furniture was yet uncertain, the basic agreement in the "yes!" implies a polite regard for wife.

2.7.3.3.1.1.6 Sympathy Maxim

This maxim opines:

'Minimize antipathy between self and other'
'Maximize sympathy between self and other'

The assumption here is that expression of sympathy for another's misfortune as well as giving congratulations at any appropriate occasion such as when another achieves certain goals or meets with some fortune is a common social expectation that enhances harmonious interactions. In Leech's (1983:138) observation, "this explains why congratulations and condolences are courteous speech acts even though condolences express beliefs which are negative with regard to the hearer". Among the common ways people express sympathy in Nigeria include the use of overt terms: 'sorry' and 'congratulations'. However, there are several less direct ways – verbal and non verbal, by which speakers show sympathy for others. These include the use of interjections, such as "Wow! What a feat", in trying to identify with another in the event of some achievements, and "Oh! too bad", on occasions for commiseration. The use of certain remarks as 'good', 'beautiful', 'interesting', 'sad', and the use of facial expressions and silence are among the several ways people show sympathy to others.

2.7.3.3.1.1.7 The Pollyanna Principle

This maxim is fashioned after the eponymous heroine of Porter's novel, a highly sentimental child who always looked on the positive side of life. The Pollyanna principle suggests that speakers, as much as possible, reduce the harsh effect of what they have to say by employing minimizers such as: "a bit" as in the expression: "you are a bit late", when indeed the lateness is apparently too much. Similarly, the remark: "it is well", even upon knowledge of a seriously threatening or absolutely discomforting situation, is quite commonly used in Nigeria to maintain cordial interactions. Other ways of applying the Pollyanna principle, according to Thomas (1995), include relexicalization. This simply refers to the replacement of an unpleasant term with a supposedly less unpleasant one. For example, people sometimes prefer to say concerning a dead person as one who "passes on", is "sleeping", etc., rather than died.

2.7.3.3.2 Face Work

Face work, which is also termed Face management is classified by Thomas (1995), following Fraser (1990) under pragmatic approaches to politeness study. This model of politeness is credited to Brown and Levinson (1978 and reviewed in 1987). The focus of Brown and Levinson (ibid) in their investigation of politeness phenomena is on what interactants do with regard to the "face", both theirs and their co-interactants', in conversations. Hence, the concept of "face", a term which was proposed by Goffman (1967), is central to Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness. Face in Goffman's (1967:5) definition is:

The positive social value a person effectively claims for himself, the line other assumes he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes - albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself.

There are two dimensions to the concept of Face as identified by Brown and Levinson (1987). These are: "positive" and "negative" dimensions. A person's positive face is registered through his/her desire to be "liked", "approved of", "respected" and "appreciated" by a co-interactant in a conversational engagement. A person's negative face, on the other hand, is indicated by his or

her desire not to be “... impeded or put upon; to have the freedom to act as s/he desires” (Thomas, 1995).

In similar terms, Stalla (1999) considers Face as a matter of “identity and respect”. She argues that Face relates to a keen sense of favourable feelings about self worth and what people want others to think about them. This extends to the degree that speakers are willing to consider the other person’s identity in a wider range of communication situations. Accordingly, Stalla (ibid) explains that face work is communication behaviour, and that it refers to “the process, by which verbal and non-verbal messages are exploited to maintain our own face or other people’s faces”. “Face”, therefore, becomes the central concept around which Brown and Levinson (1987) develop their idea of face-threatening acts.

2.7.3.3.2.1 Face-threatening Acts (FTAs)

Face-threatening acts (FTAs) are the illocutionary acts, which, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), are liable to damage or threaten another person’s “face”. An illocutionary act is capable of damaging the hearer’s “positive face”. This can result when, for instance, the hearer is insulted, or has something that s/he holds dear disapproved of. It may also damage the hearer’s negative face if the hearer’s freedom to act is impinged upon. In the same vein, an illocutionary act may damage the speaker’s own positive face or negative face. The speaker’s positive face could be damaged when, for example with reference to most beggars of the “fine” category in Nigeria, s/he has to admit to being a beggar. Similarly, a beggar’s benefactor could have his negative face damaged if, for example, he is coaxed into making an offer of alms.

There is a number of strategies often employed to reduce the possibility of damage to either the hearer’s or the speaker’s face. Thomas (1995) opines that each of the strategies is adopted “... on the basis of the speaker's assessment of the size of the face threatening acts” (FTAs). The size of the FTA is estimated by the speaker, based on the three social variables of; the perceived power difference between the speaker and the hearer, the perceived social distance between them, and the rating of imposition. This rating of imposition, according to Vilki (2004), refers to the cultural ranking of the illocutionary act which is often considered to be the degree to which the FTA is perceived to be threatening, within a specific culture. The

combination of these social variables determines the size of the FTA, which in turn influences the strategy adopted.

Brown and Levinson (1987) provide a list of five strategies for performing face threat. The performance of the acts, as they explain, is subject to the speaker's decision as to whether to perform the act or not. Given that the speaker desires to perform the act, the first four acts are to be performed, while the fifth is adopted as a super strategy, should the speaker decide not to perform any act, that is, say nothing. We shall examine each of the strategies in turn.

2.7.3.3.2.1.1 FTA without Redress (bald-on-record)

The performance of this act could be motivated by different circumstances. On the one hand, a speaker may be impelled by the degree of power and social distance that exist between him/her and his/her listener, i.e. s/he may be more "powerful" and maintains considerable distance with his/her listener, to speak to such a listener with a degree of unrestrained directness, such as in giving orders or warnings, without any consideration for his/her (listener's) "face". On the other hand, a speaker may not possess more powers than his/her listener. S/he may actually be "less in power", and, irrespective of the factor of social distance, addresses his/her listener without redress. This could result when the speaker is constrained by some circumstances such as in an emergency, or when time is fast running out on him/her on an important appointment, such as an examination or a flight schedule. This is because, under such circumstances, the speaker will more likely focus on the propositional content of his/her utterance, rather than the interpersonal aspect. Hence, no attempt may be made to mitigate the face threat, the rating of the imposition notwithstanding.

2.7.3.3.2.1.2 FTA with Redress (Positive Politeness)

Under this strategy, a speaker consciously orients him/her self towards the hearer's positive face by employing positive politeness strategies, which appeal to hearer's desire to be liked and approved of. Thomas (1995) observes that a number of Brown and Levinson's Positive Politeness Strategies are closely related to Leech's Politeness Principles, such as the "seek agreement" "avoid disagreement", "be optimistic", and "give sympathy". Thus, by employing these strategies during conversations, a speaker gives the appearance of minding and showing regard for the face need of his/her listener.

2.7.3.3.2.1.3 FTA with Redress (Negative Politeness)

Negative politeness is guided by the speaker's appeal to the hearer's desire not to be impeded or put upon, and to be granted the freedom to act as s/he chooses. According to Thomas (ibid), "negative politeness manifests itself in the use of conventional politeness markers, deference markers, minimizing imposition, etc".

2.7.3.3.2.1.4 FTA using Off-Record Politeness

A speaker performs an FTA using off-record politeness when s/he tries to be vague or ambiguous in representing his facts. Thomas (1995) recommends Brown and Levinson's fifteen strategies for performing off-record politeness, some of which are "give hints" and "use metaphors".

2.7.3.3.2.1.5 Do not perform FTA

This simply refers to the non-performance of an FTA. Some situations may present a speaker with a degree of face-threat that such a speaker may choose not to say it, and genuinely lets the matter rest or use this "saying nothing" (silence) as a strategy to achieve the same effect as would have been achieved by a speech act. According to Tanaka (1993), this strategy of silence could be classified into two viz: "opting out choice; OOC – genuine" and "opting out choice; OOC – strategic", both of which correspond to the explanations above, respectively. Thomas (1995) identifies a third situation. This refers to a situation in which there is a high expectation for something to be said but nothing is said. This, in Thomas (ibid) terms amounts to a "massive FTA", such as in an instance of failure to express sympathy to someone over some serious misfortune for which an expression of empathy is expected.

The principal feature of these models in the traditional era of politeness exploration can be classified broadly into two, namely: their Gricean outlook and their speech act inclination. The traditional politeness models are developed upon the foundations of Grice's co-operative principle, hence they are maxim based. According to Terkourafi (2005), "Their Gricean focus is seen in their definition of politeness as a greater or lesser degree of departure from the co-operative principle". These models portray politeness as part of speaker meaning, rather than hearer. Their speech act orientation is betrayed by their method of analysis which proceeds on an act-by-act approach, as a matter of utterance by utterance consideration. It is also observed that these models advocate a view of politeness as a technical term, or what Locher and Watts (2005) describe as "politeness as a

theoretical concept in a top-down model (which refers) to forms of social behaviour” (politeness 2).

2.7.3.4 The Concept of “Face” and Universality: a Cross Cultural View of Politeness

The concept of “face” and that of “universality” in Brown and Levinson’s politeness submissions are different research concerns. While the former (face) relates to a conception of politeness as zeroing in on “face” for which Brown and Levinson (1987) propose five strategies (FTAs/FT mitigations) for exploring the possibilities in social interactions, the latter (universals) is a study that is aimed at establishing the principle for constructing polite speech.

Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that at the basis of the apparent diversity of polite behaviour in different societies are some general pan-human principles of social interaction for which the model of politeness for analysing the quality of social relations in any society of the world is crucial.

Brown and Levinson describe and account for some remarkable parallelisms in the linguistic construction of utterances with which people express themselves in different languages and cultures. The basic motivation for these parallels is identified as politeness, which Brown and Levinson broadly define to include both polite friendliness and polite formality. A universal model is thus fashioned out, which outlines the abstract principles underlying polite usages. This is based on the detailed study of three unrelated languages and cultures: Tamil of South India, the Tzeltal spoken by Mayan Indians in Chiapas, Mexico, and the English of the USA and England, with supplementary examples from other cultures.

The point here is that, in linguistic pragmatics, it is believed that there are phenomena which are characteristically the same across culture, in terms of feature and/or social meanings/relevance to the society. These are termed Universals, as opposed to other phenomena which are culture-sensitive and culture-bound; whether by their features or by their social meanings/relevance to the society or both. However, the connection between these concepts (“face” and “universals” is perceivable from the arguments of Brown and Levinson (1987: 62-63) viz:

while the content of face will differ in different cultures, ... we are assuming that the mutual knowledge of members' public self-image or face, and the social necessity to orient oneself to it in social interaction, are universal.

Thus, Brown and Levinson's "Politeness Universals" is an attempt at establishing a politeness model with the capability for supporting politeness study universally.

The criticism against this assumption though is summed up in the argument of Locher's and Watts' (2005) Relational work, and extended in Terkourafi's (2005) Frame-based model; both of which belong in the post-modernists' view of politeness research. Among other observations, they see politeness as something not to be predicted by any standard, but as discursive and negotiable in actual social engagements.

2.7.4 The Post-modern View of Politeness

The post-modern period comprise the relational work and the frame-based views of politeness. These are examined in turns.

2.7.4.1 Relational Work

Relational work is one of the most recent contributions to politeness research. Locher and Watts (2005) define Relational work as referring to "the work individuals invest in negotiating relationship with others". This definition simply restates the obvious; the interdependency among humans in their struggle to attain to life goals and aspirations as social individuals in social practice.

In their critique of Brown and Levinson's politeness, Locher and Watts (ibid) argue that rather than deal with politeness, Brown and Levinson's theory only focuses on the mitigation of face threat. Thus, they posit that politeness can not just be equated with FTA mitigation. For them, politeness is a discursive concept, and not what should be predicted by analysts. They further submit that relational work covers the entire range of verbal behaviour, from "direct, impolite, rude or aggressive, interaction through to polite interaction encompassing both appropriate and inappropriate forms of social behaviours" (Locher and Watts, ibid). Thus, Relational work is a broad frame under which Politeness is located, while Face work is found within Politeness. Relational work is a concept which embraces the doing of much more than being polite, whenever we relate with people. This view is illustrated below:

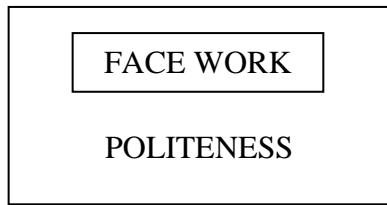


Fig 3: A view of politeness
(Traditionalists' Conception)

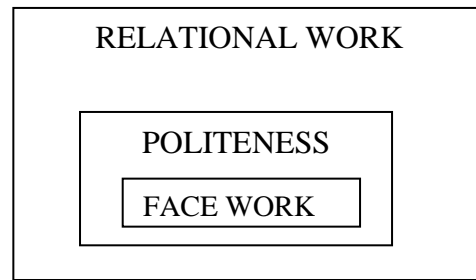


Fig.4: Relational work
(Post-modernists' Idea of Politeness)

There are three major concepts around which the arguments of the relational work approach are explained. These are: “politic”, “polite” and “impolite” (Watts, 1992). These concepts describe the verbal acts in human conversational interaction.

When the verbal act is politic, it is said to be marked; meaning that impoliteness within a given context is accepted, based on the shared background between the speaker and the hearer. It is, thus, taken as an appropriate cue. The following casual conversation is constructed to illustrate the context in which a verbal act may be politic, that is, generate an accepted impoliteness on the basis of the shared assumption between the speaker and the hearer:

Y: You goat, come here!

Z: Here I am. What is the business?

Ordinarily, Z being referred to by Y as a goat, would be considered as a serious face threat; apparent impoliteness. What would be seen as having motivated Z's acceptance of this obvious impoliteness from Y may be the shared background between Y and Z, in what Bourdieu (1990) describes as “habitus” in his Theory of Practice. By “habitus”, Bourdieu means “the set of predispositions to act in certain ways, which generates cognitive and bodily practices in the individual”. The shared background implies that both the speaker and the hearer have become a consistent part of the predispositions of each to act in certain ways. A verbal act is said to be polite, that is, unmarked because it is expected; being a part of the frame of expectations in the existing context of an interaction. For example, apologies rendered to another over an admitted wrong doing is only to be expected as normal in natural conversation between rational individuals. However, a verbal

act would be considered impolite when it is neither expected nor accepted within a given context of an interaction. Accordingly, Locher and Watts, (2005) observe:

Social behaviour, which is appropriate to the social context of the interactional situation only warrants potential evaluation by the participants as polite or impolite if it is perceived to be salient or marked behaviour. The appropriateness of any verbal act is largely determined, by the frame or the habitus of the participants within which face is attributed to each participant by the others in accordance with the lines taken in the interaction.

2.7.4.2 Frame-based View

The frame-based view is associated with Terkourafi (2005). Terkourafi posits that this view is “an alternative, or rather, a complement to both the traditional and the post-modern views”. She observes that “face-constituting” and “rationality” are the two ‘pillars’ at the basis of the frame-based view, and argues that these are responsible for gearing behaviour toward the generation and re-enactment of norms (habits) of polite behaviour. Terkourafi asserts:

Politeness is a matter not of rational calculation, but of habit and frames (which aim to capture polite “habits”). ...When the addressee recognizes and ratifies the speaker’s behaviour, both as to its intention, and as to its face-constituting potential, as manifest by his/her uptake, this behaviour enters their common stock of collective experiences. It can then serve as the model for future interactions and through repeated ratification it takes on a life of its own.... This is how norms of polite behaviour are born.

In this argument, the frame-based view seeks a departure from the methods and approaches of previous models in the two eras of politeness research. It posits that, rather than the theory-driven focus of earlier models, the frame-based view adopts a data-driven orientation. Terkourafi (2005:246-247) explains that the frame-based is data-driven in two important ways, which are that:

it is grounded in the analysis of a large corpus of data ... [and that] it acknowledges norms to the extent that these can be empirically observed ... analyzed quantitatively, seeking to establish regularities of co-occurrence between linguistic expressions and their extra-linguistic context of use.

Despite this attempt at claiming an identity of a recognizable model; different and separate from both the traditional and the post-modern views, we argue that the frame-based view is rather subsumed under the post-modernists' school, which may be seen in close reading as a modification of the assumptions of the relational work theory, the validity of which is contestable.

Two important points stand out in the submissions of the post-modern scholars. First, there is the distinction drawn between what Watts et al. (1992) term first-order politeness (politeness1) and second-order politeness (politeness2), which constitute two perspectives to the definition of politeness. According to Terkourafi (2005: 240):

this distinguishes people's everyday definitions of, and meta-linguistic judgments about, politeness ... (roughly, how politeness is defined in dictionaries; politeness1) from politeness as a technical term ... (roughly, how politeness is talked about in pragmatics textbooks; politeness 2).

The second point is the incorporation of social-theoretical insights, particularly, Bourdieu's notion of habitus. Both points, thus, characterise the post-modernists' contributions to politeness study. As a consequence of the above, post-modernists reject the maxim-based, Gricean framework and speech act theory orientation of the traditionalists, which emphasise, in Terkourafi's (ibid) terms, "informativity over rapport management", and "the speaker's intentions over and above what is recovered by the addressee".

2.7.5 A Critique across Politeness Models

Apparently, submissions in politeness studies so far display features of convergence and divergence of opinions at different levels; between the "traditionalists" and the "post-modernists", on the one hand and on the other, between the different models within the post-modern era of politeness

investigations. Accordingly, we attempt a summarised representation of the submissions thus:

Traditional view	Post-modern view	
Maxim-based	Relational Work	Frame-based view
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed upon the foundations of Grice's Co-operative principle • Upholds politeness 2 (second order politeness) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upholds the concept of politeness 1 (first order politeness) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains the view of politeness 1 • Data-driven (Empirical)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech act based • Emphasis is on the speaker and individual utterances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives consideration to hearer's judgment of what is to be taken as polite or otherwise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derives its observations from socio-historical considerations which include ideas of identity network belonging, and a pattern of marked behaviour which obtains at the level of society.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers politeness as a particularised implicature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pays attention to larger stretches of discourse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognises both particularised and generalised implications of politeness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocates the idea of politeness 2 (second order politeness) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriates social-theoretical insights i.e. Bourdieuan habitus (norm) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitus (Norms)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers politeness as a particularized implicature 	

Table 2: Summary of the Review of Politeness Approaches

Regardless of some differences that may be noted in these approaches as highlighted above, the degree of interrelatedness that is observable in their overall claims is striking. We are, therefore, persuaded to conclude that the views in all three columns on the table are rather mutually complementary. This is because each of them offers useful insights on the intriguingly complex nature of the phenomenon of politeness at different levels of granularity, such as at the level of speaker/individual utterances, at the level of hearer/longer stretches of discourse and at the level of society – societal frame of expectation (habitus/norms). The schemas below portray our harmonised view of politeness as a reflection of the submissions in the literature.

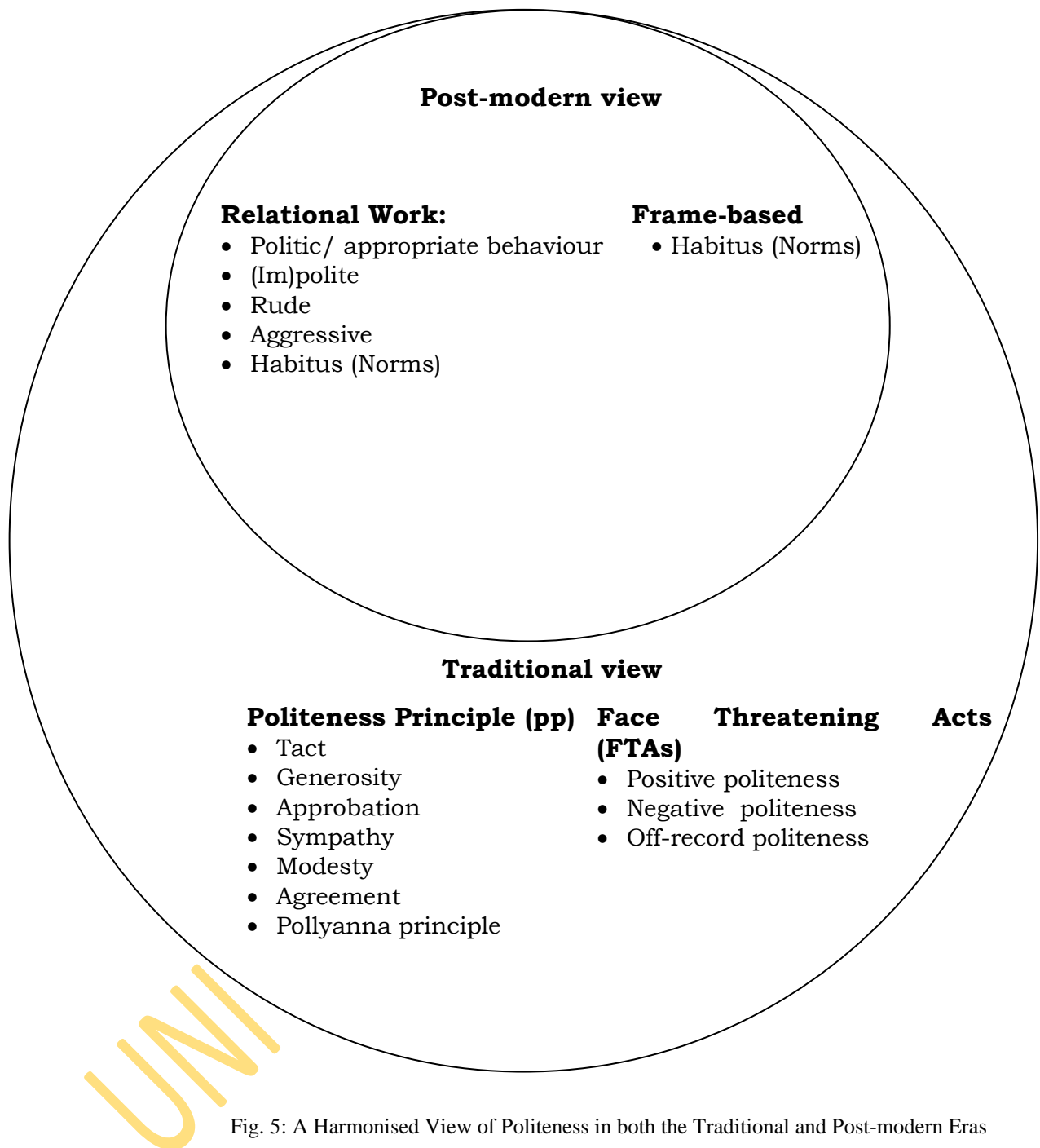


Fig. 5: A Harmonised View of Politeness in both the Traditional and Post-modern Eras

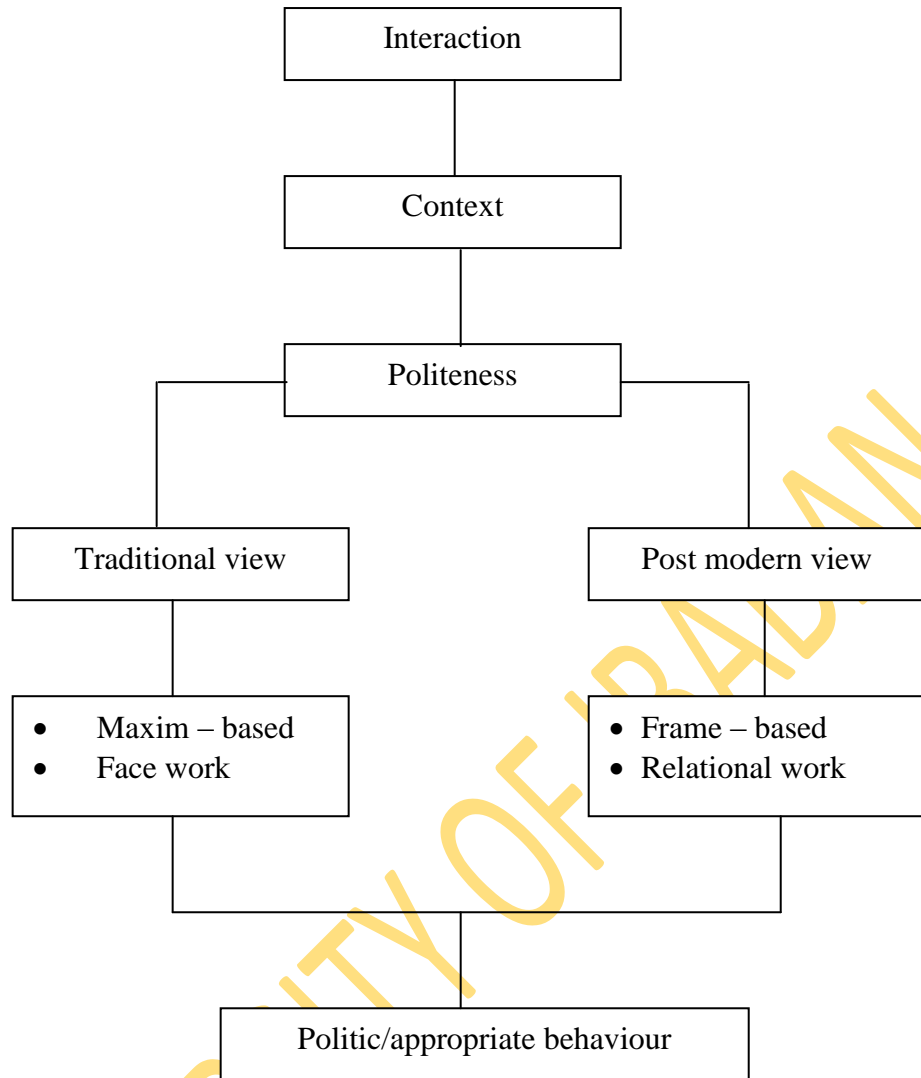


Fig. 6: A Proposed Functional Politeness Model

Interaction unfolds and stretches out as a linguistic situation (context) from which politeness is thought to evolve. Politeness branches out to reflect the two eras in research, namely: the traditional and the post-modern views. Each of these orientations is enriched by popularised frameworks i.e. the maxim based and the face work models for the traditionalists, and the frame-based and the relational work approaches for the post modernists. All the submissions from both periods converge on the notion of politic/appropriate behaviour which is the very essence of politeness as a crucial requisite in social practice.

2.7.6 Evidence of Pragmatic Force in Interaction

Pragmatic force could be explained as the resulting effect of language use on participants as well as the linguistic situation. A number of factors give evidence of this force in any typical interaction. Thomas (1995) identifies four of these factors, namely: the perlocutionary effect of an utterance on the hearer, explicit commentary by the speaker, explicit commentary by someone other than the speaker, and co-text (subsequent discourse). These are explained in turn:

- i **Perlocutionary Effect:** The first and most obvious source of a pragmatic use of language in interaction may be noticed as a matter of the perlocutionary effect an utterance has on the hearer. To illustrate, if 'A', on visit to 'B' says "am thirsty", following which 'B' offers 'A' a glass of water and 'A' accepts the offer with a sigh of relief, then there is a good reason to conclude that 'B' interpreted 'A's utterance as a plea, request or order for water or the like to quench his/her thirst.
- ii **Explicit commentary by speaker:** This source of evidence may be found in the discourse itself. Thomas (1995) opines that this could take the form of metapragmatic or metadiscoursal comments made by the speaker. It could also be a kind of speech repair strategy by which the speaker intends to reposition the discourse, such as in a case where a speaker makes explicit reference to his/her power, rights, obligations, or tries to restate a point of view that he thinks a hearer misunderstands.
- iii **Explicit commentary by others:** These include the unprompted metalinguistic or metapragmatic comments made by others. Such comments may be some acknowledgement, objection, observation, etc.
- iv **Co-text (subsequent discourse):** On this Thomas (1995) asserts: "other, less explicit, sorts of repair which reveal the intended pragmatic force of a pragmatically ambiguous utterance take the form of increasing directness". For instance, if a speaker were to utter a series of utterances in succession, the meaning relationship that the utterances might exhibit could be a window to interpreting the pragmatic intention of the speaker. To illustrate: 'X' says to 'Y': 'are you ok with the volume of the TV set?' and added 'I can't hear it well' and added again 'would you mind a little more volume?' and then reaches for the TV remote control piece, at this

point we have some evidence to reach the conclusion that the first utterance was intended to ask 'Y's permission to increase the TV volume.

2.7.7 The Interface between Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics

Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics as sub-disciplines of linguistics are basically pre-occupied with the effect or influence of context on language use. Both disciplines are linked by their interest in the systematic linguistic correlates of social and contextual variables (Thomas, 1995). Within this common ground though, it is observed that while the sociolinguist is trying to systematically explain how contextual features impact on language use in a given interaction or speech event, the pragmaticist is interested in the individual speaker's efforts to manipulate language with the intention to change the linguistic situation he/she finds him/herself in, with specific aim in mind. Sociolinguistics sees context as "given" i.e. the totality of the linguistic situation that interactants happen to be in at a time, without any input ('new') from the participants themselves in the events that follow. Pragmatics considers context as the linguistic situation that backgrounds participants' use of language, ('given') plus the participants' individual contributions ('new') towards reshaping what they met as the situation.

Thus, while both the sociolinguist and the pragmaticist share the sentiment that context is indispensable in language use and interactional meaning explication, it appears to us that the thought of context as conceived in pragmatics is an extension of, or a build-up on the assumptions held in sociolinguistics. This view may be schematically expressed thus:

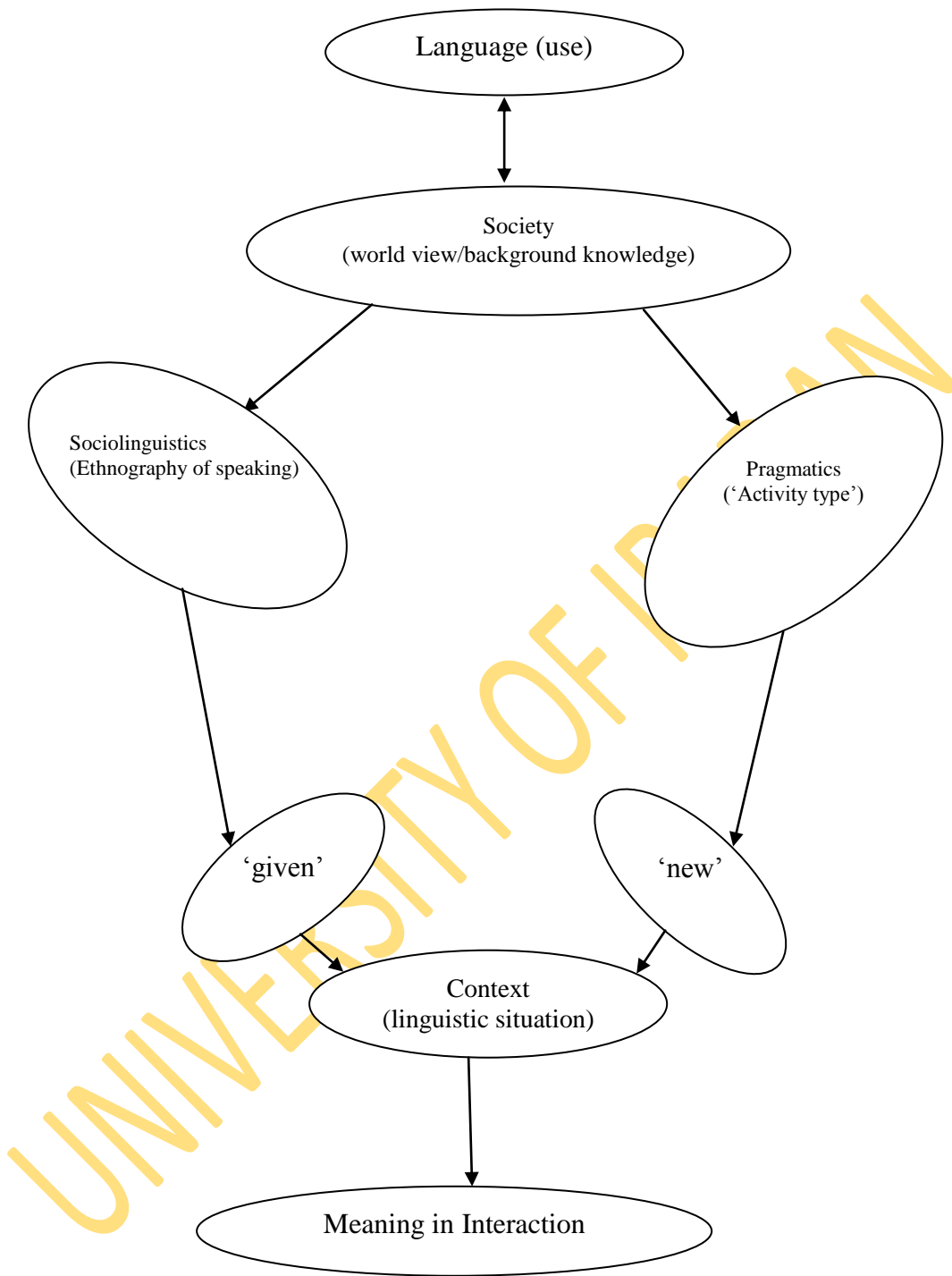


Fig. 7: A Socio-pragmatic View of Context

The schema above indicates that knowledge of the world is central to all other contributing factors toward meaning explication in social interactions, hence its strategic central location on the schema. Moreover, language use and knowledge of the world are mutually dependent as indicated by the two headed link arrow between language and society. Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics are sub-disciplines of linguistics that derive from knowledge of the world and offer views on language use. In this relationship, context becomes the melting pot for the assumptions of both disciplines. Sociolinguistics provides the background ('given') for Pragmatics to expand upon by supplying the participants' input ('new') to the 'given'. The result of this symbiotic relationship between Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics is the evolution of a more pragmatic context-oriented framework for exploring meaning in social interaction.

2.7.8 Review of Studies on Alms Begging in Nigeria

As we noted earlier in chapter one, the published works on the phenomenon of alms begging in Nigeria are contributions from two main sources. These are Journalism and scholarship. The journalistic publications on the subject include media news reports, editorials and public opinion commentaries. We shall look at these first and complement them with the few available scholarly studies.

In an article entitled: "Child Beggars on the rise", Abubakar (2009) reports on the steady increase in the membership of alms beggars in Kano. He argues that although child begging is not unique to Kano state, the practice has assumed a larger scale there than anywhere else in Nigeria. He claims that the number of beggars in the State has nearly doubled to a total of two million in the last five years. Abubakar describes the condition and mode of operation of these beggars as having plastic bowls in hand and in filthy, tattered cloths, often chanting religious texts, moving from door to door, or hanging around traffic lights or cluster outside expensive private schools asking for food and money. Abubakar concludes by quoting a Kano resident:

The presence of these children (beggars) is a social time bomb which, if not diffused will certainly consume everyone when it explodes, because these children know nothing about parental care, love and affection and therefore see everybody as an enemy and responsible for their deprivation.

Micah (2009) reports on why begging persists in Rivers State, particularly in its capital city, Port-Harcourt. Micah says that the state commissioner for social welfare and

Rehabilitation Honourable Joe Philip Oporoma attributed the menace of alms begging in the state to lack of rehabilitation centres in other neighbouring states. The commissioner is also reported to have deeply regretted the situation as he observed “what happens is that when they (beggars) are taken off the alms to a rehabilitation centre ... two or three days later they are back on the alms. As far as the alms beggars are concerned, it is something that has been institutionalised by certain individuals in the state in order to maximise their profits in terms of local business”.

Ammani (2009) examines alms begging from the perspective of its social (negative) implications for individuals and the Nigeria society. In an article on the title: “Alms Begging: Exposing the Bankruptcy of Blatant Paying of Lip Service”, Ammani (2009) argues:

Alms begging constitutes the class of beggars: those who take begging as the principal means of earning a living. (The) increase in the number of alms beggars exposed the bankruptcy of the blatant paying of lip service by various governments in the name of curbing the menace of alms begging in our major towns and cities.

He added that some Nigerians give alms to alms beggars out of piety, real or counterfeit, which he considers as a significant motivation for the observed exponential growth in the begging industry. He opines that most of the alms that supposed sympathisers/benefactors give to beggars in this way are so given with one ulterior motive or another, which is usually evil inclined with grave consequence. Ammani submits that the menace of alms begging is a potential threat to the very fabrics of the Nigerian society.

Under the heading “Ramadan-Beggars Besiege Kano (Nigeria)”, Kingsley reports on the tremendous increase of beggars in Kano as a factor of the Ramadan celebrations. In his opinion, the influx of people into the begging adventure is traceable to the Ramadan feeding programme that was introduced by the government for indigent faithful, several years ago, which is seen as a fulfilment of an important annual Islamic obligation, Zakkat, that expects every qualified Muslim to give a certain part of his/her wealth to the needy.

Odueme (2010) reviews the state of alms begging in Lagos and says that begging is a typical means of livelihood and that those who practice the trade are employing various tricks to sustain themselves in their chosen way of life. She also observes the

resilience of the beggars in terms of their determination at resisting the efforts of the state government to remove them from the almshouses. Odueme observes further:

Many have been found to feign sicknesses such as blindness, among others. Some even go to the extent of inflicting injuries on their wards and siblings just to attract sympathy and prick the consciousness of people to give money to them. Thus, the act of begging in the state is on the rise despite attempts by the state government to curb the practice. The government's effort requires adequate security cover for effective realisation of the dream to clear Lagos of beggars.

There are also a couple of scholarly studies that have been carried out on the activities of alms begging in Nigeria. Bamisaiye (1974) takes a look at the social organisation of migrant Hausa beggars from the North of Nigeria and their activities as beggars in Ibadan the capital of Oyo state in the southwest. Bamisaiye classifies the beggars on the basis of type of handicap. The study observes that Beggars have a recognised role in Hausa communities as evidenced by the turbans of the chiefs of the beggars' association, by the chiefs of the Hausa quarters. The author also correlates the pattern of the Hausa beggars with the characteristic features of their social organisation as a people and as a religious (Islamic) group. Bamisaiye argues that whereas the Hausa do not stigmatise begging as an occupation, the Yoruba of Southern Nigeria do. She further discusses the influence of structural conditions and climate of values within which contact between beggars and the Yoruba takes place. She also highlights the implications for social policy.

Similarly, Igbinovia (1991) examines alms begging from the point of view of a social scientist and criminologist. He describes the phenomenon of alms begging and provides a typology that indicates the complexity of the activity as a social problem. The author identifies a variety of sources that he considers to have tremendous influence and motivation for the growth and spread of alms begging in Nigeria and among Nigerians. Igbinovia concludes with specific suggestions as possible solutions to the problem.

Ebigbo (2003) observes that in Northern Nigeria where the Moslem religion is predominantly practiced and begging is allowed, young boys and girls lead handicapped adults about on the alms to beg. They receive a pittance for their services. Besides this, because many parents believe that good parenting means that children should be brought up strictly and with religious training they send mostly male, but also some female

children, to Koranic teachers; Mallams who are considered to be versed in the teachings of the Koran. Many of these teachers are not educated in the western sense. Having, entrusted as it were, their children to these religious teachers, some parents, hardly visit or inquire about them subsequently. This full control of the children by the Mallams is a basic temptation to start the children off on alms begging. Consequently, they are sent onto the alms to beg and to forage for food from any and everywhere possible. The Mallams often move from city to city and when they die, or if the beggars whom the children help, die, the children reportedly become delinquent alms dwellers.

In a study on the subject: “Etiological Attributions of Alms-Begging among People with Special Needs: Differential Perceptions of Persons with Special Needs in Oyo State, Nigeria”, Olawale and Adeniyi (2008) refer to what people consider as the causal agents of begging behaviour among people with special needs, which include the society, religious persuasions, the government and beggars themselves. With the aid of a thirty item structured questionnaire, the study examined ninety-six persons with various special needs (health conditions) from three randomly selected special institutions: Rehabilitation Centre for the Disabled, Moniya, Ibadan; Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo and; Oyo State Centre for Blind Persons, Ogbomosho. It submits that people with special needs agreed that the society, the government and the beggars themselves are causal agents of alms-begging in Nigeria. The authors, therefore, suggest some measures to address the problem in the Nigerian society.

Ogunkani and Fawole (2009) examine the incidence and socio-economic dimensions of begging in Nigerian cities, with Ogbomosho in the southwest as a case study. In a three point finding, the study submits viz:

The daily variation of incidence of begging is relatively higher on Monday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday while it is lower on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The high incidence on Friday and Sunday has religious undertone and may not be unconnected with Jumat and Sunday services on Friday and Sunday respectively. The high incidence of begging on Saturday suggests the influx of part time beggars from and outside Ogbomosho while that of Monday is, perhaps, connected with professionalism of begging in Ogbomosho as Monday is taken serious as working day by virtually every individual. ... Begging is more of male than female. This has a negative implication for the city's economy as men are culturally placed as family benefactors. ... large population of beggars in Ogbomosho belong to low income group ... majority of beggars in Ogbomosho are of Hausa origin. This supports

the general belief that majority of beggars in Nigerian cities are northerners.

Olaosun (2009) focuses on the language of alms begging in select cities of Southwestern Nigeria. The study which sees a beggar's language as a language of distress, describes it further as an amalgam of several implicit but perceptible discourse practices which the beggar skilfully uses to negotiate and secure a favourable condition for obtaining alms from prospective benefactors. The study observes:

there is defence for beggar's utterances and ..., beyond the fundamental act of demanding charity, Nigerian beggars, driven by the exegeses of their wider society, insinuate such discourse conventions as vindication, justification, and argument that serve in putting audiences in an amenable mental frame and activate them to give.

2.7.9 Summary of the Chapter

The aim in this chapter has been to provide a broad-based theoretical platform for the analysis of our data that is set to follow. We have attempted this by providing critical review of a number of concepts, principles and models in pragmatic theorising. We have considered the different opinions of linguists on the notion of context, and harmonised their submissions as our derived view, which is in effect, the meeting point between Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics. We argued that Speech Acts, which is a foundation theory in linguistics, along with the concepts of presupposition, implicature and politeness have all melted into the more radical pragmatic acts theory, which we consider to be more suitable for a holistic pragma-linguistic analysis of the type we are doing here. The chapter concludes with a review of related literature on alms begging in Nigeria. This review has attempted to establish a crucial gap in the existing knowledge on the phenomenon of alms begging as a socio-linguistic activity in Nigeria, by tracing the available literature on the practice from 1974 to 2010 from both journalistic and scholarly sources. We observe that the media news reports, editorials and public opinions from social and political commentators only identify alms begging as a social problem that needs urgent attention from governments, for which they offer various suggestions including the need to introduce social welfare programmes and policies that are intended to address the problem and forestall impending consequences for the Nigerian society. None of these articles offers empirical investigation into the complex and intriguing nature of the language of alms begging as it is in the Nigerian context, despite that

language is the very instrument that makes begging possible. Even the scholarly studies that are available to us have not met this need. Granted, some of the studies appear quite insightful in terms of the volume of information they have contributed. They have classified beggars along various lines of considerations and discussed a number of factors at the basis of the development and its spread as well as suggest some points of solution to the social problem. However, their approach has been largely influenced by the orientation of medical and social sciences. Most of the studies adopted psychological, sociological and anthropological approaches and techniques, rather than linguistic which we consider as the most objective and reliable approach to account for the ‘delivery van’ of alms begging, namely: language. From our review, the only substantive linguistic study on alms begging in Nigeria also betrays a number of weaknesses. Apart from its narrow scope which is limited to beggars of the “not fine” class, its methodology – the theoretical framework / procedure for the application of the model to the scanty data, appears to us as grossly inadequate to provide a comprehensive understanding of what may be described as the language of alms begging in Nigeria.

Having noted these lapses as identified above, the present study attempts to stand as a make-up. It hopes to achieve this by its expanded scope which embraces both the “not fine” and the “fine” classes of beggars, with special interest on the latter, and a broader theoretical framework that can cater for the complex, multi-dimensional outlook of beggars’ verbal, non-verbal / extralinguistic behaviours in the Nigerian context.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we present the research design and discuss the analytical procedure. These include: validation of research instrument, method of data collection, data sampling technique and description of sample, suitability of analytical model to the data and procedure for analysis.

3.2 Research Design

Labovitz and Hagedon (1959) describe research design as “the logical manner in which individuals and other units are compared and analysed as the basis for making interpretation from data”. This implies that a research design should show a systematic layout of the researcher’s well thought-out plan for executing his/her task. It will include the logical sequence in which different factors ranging from the method for data collection as well as the instrumentality, through to the analytical procedure. The design is also expected to show justification for the choices that are made instead of their alternatives, and how these are expected to work together as a composite arrangement toward the realisation of the research objectives.

This is a descriptive research. A descriptive research is a study whose data base is solely and characteristically descriptive. Having identified a problem, we gather a corpus of factual information within the scope of the study. Discursively and interpretively, we make inferences concerning the correlates of contextual / pragmatic features and the outcomes of beggars’ speeches / interactions with their supposed benefactors in Nigeria.

3.3 Research Instrument and Method of Data Collection for the Study

The approach for collection of data for this study is observation. Soyele (2009) opines: “observation is a primary source research design. It involves deliberate and calculated visits to the survey field to observe and collect data close to natural and usually to the ignorance of the subject”. The observation method which requires us to spend long hours in the field to capture beggars’ speech/other communicative behaviours affords us a first hand; unaffected set of alms begging data. The collection was done by means of literal note-taking and a multi-functional electronic device. While several episodes of considerably short verbalised and simple forms of non-verbalised

conversations were easily recorded by note-taking, longer episodes of verbalised and more complex forms of non verbalised / extra-linguistic forms were electronically (audio-visual) recorded. Labov's (1966) use of battery-operated tape recorders to obtain large volume of well recorded natural speech data in places such as Departmental stores, train, buses, zoos, etc. in sociolinguistic researches validates the effectiveness and reliability of this instrument for gathering data in similar studies such as this. Hence, we consider Samsung L210 ultra-slim (audio-visual) digital camera as a suitable electronic device, especially because its micro size, simple mode of operation, and high capacity sensor of 10.2 pixels guarantee a comfortable level of discreetness and high quality playbacks. Speeches and other communicative behaviours of 100 purposively selected beggars were collected from 4 types of locations (public institutions, venues of social events, vehicle stations, and on the streets) in all the 20 local government areas of Lagos state in order to have a balanced representation of various types of begging behaviours.

3.4 Choice, Justification of Theory / Analytical Framework for the Study and Application Procedure

This study adopts pragmatics as its theory. The choice is guided by our consideration of the principles and procedures of pragmatics as the most suitable theoretical support for exploring meaning and meaning negotiation strategies in naturally occurring speech events.

In a goal-driven, situation motivated speech interaction as in alms begging discourse in Nigeria, there is the need to expect linguistic meaning to have far more significance than what semantics - a theory of meaning which focuses on the sense derivable from individual words and their combination as structures can explain. Pragmatics offers ample linguistic resources for seeing beyond people's utterances (phrases and sentences) as well as their speech behaviours as meaning in themselves, but rather, as meaning that are negotiated and extended from the context of use - the situation. In this way, pragmatics, more than any other linguistic theory, in our belief, is capable of interpreting and relating the patterns of alms beggars' use of language to their various socio-cultural and ideological connotations, as the Nigerian experience.

A critical review of Speech Acts in the light of recent pragmatic evaluation of meaning in interactions has left us to assume that this foundation theory in Pragmatics has been more or less subsumed under the generally more versatile pragmatic acts theory, which features 'action' and incorporates the notion of 'common scene'. Levinson

(1983) observes: “there are some compelling reasons to think that speech act theory may slowly be superseded by much more complex, multi-faceted pragmatic approaches to the functions that utterances perform”. At least, the submission of Pragmatic Acts has considerably shifted emphasis from individual speech acts which hitherto were seen as the principal means of realising verbal control of the environment and people’s adaptation to it. Of course, in real-world interactions, the success of people’s performances does not exclusively reside in the power inherent either in the speaker or his/her words or speech acts. Ultimately, this power resides in the society, but is “mediated and negotiated” through the use of pragmatic acts (Mey *ibid*).

Following the findings of recent researches in pragmatic theorising, it is difficult to sustain the view that speech act exists in its own right as an adequate pragmatic theory with which function in language in use entirely reside. Rather, we subscribe to Mey’s persuasive conclusion that there are only ‘situated speech acts’ or ‘instantiated pragmatic acts’. Thus, this study adopts Pragmatic Acts theory as its analytical framework.

A close reading of our data suggests that the nature of alms begging in Nigeria is best accounted for, from the merger of context and pragmatic strategies. Interestingly, the assumptions of both concepts are inseparable aspects of Pragmatic Acts which is the theory we have adopted for this study. Furthermore, the data specific functional model that we have fashioned out of the theory illustrates the internal harmony that exists between contextual features and pragmatic principles and strategies as both converge on the pragmeme, which delineates into a multiplicity of linguistic acts that correspond to the character of our data. For a descriptive / interpretive study, this model is especially suitable because it has the facility for explaining both the verbalised and the non-verbalised / extra-linguistic behaviours of alms beggars.

This model is a network (interrelated/interdependent) of pragmatic assumptions, which argument climaxes on the concept of pragmatic acting. Thus, our theoretical anchor as the framework for this study is Mey’s Pragmatic Acts theory. The argument here is that the pragmatics of alms begging in Nigeria is composed from a bottom – up approach viz: pragmeme, which is a combination of several practs/allopracts, moves up as features of context such as forms of speech and existing social situational knowledge that participants share, and participants’ contributions to shaping and reshaping this ‘given’ context through the use of pragmatic principles and strategies such as politeness, during interaction. The resulting enhanced / transformed linguistic situation (context) translates into what could be described as pragmatic acting. On the reverse order (top –

down approach) the pragmatics of alms begging in Nigeria decomposes as: pragmatic acting, down to the linguistic situation which comprises contextual features and pragmatic principles / strategies, and further down to the concept of pragmeme which is a composition of practs / allopracts as different kinds of linguistic acts i.e. verbal and non-verbal / extra-linguistic. This conception is schematically represented below:

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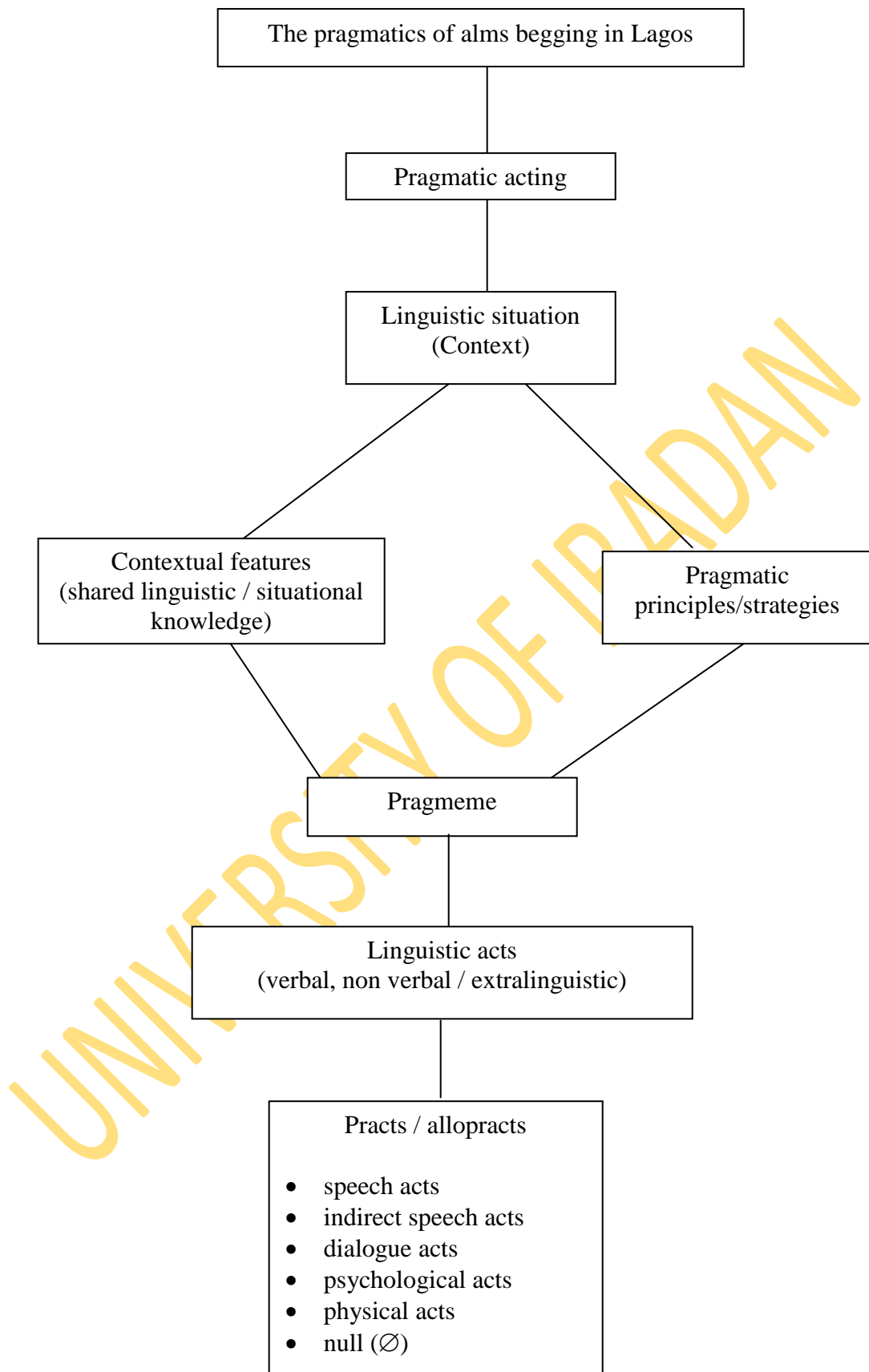


Fig. 8: A Functional Model of Pragmatic Act Theory

The figure above (fig. 8: a functional model of pragmatic act theory) is a modified version of Mey's (2001) notion of *pragmeme*. It is the theoretical framework for this study. Guided by it, therefore, we have the layout of the study as a two part analysis. The first will identify and describe the contextual features of the data and interpretively discuss the role of context in alms begging in Lagos. The second will similarly identify and describe the pragmatic acts and strategies that characterise beggars' use of language, and other linguistic behaviours in begging. The concluding chapter will summarise the findings of the study, consider the implications (linguistic and social), and draw a conclusion.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an examination of our data. It systematically classifies and discusses in detail, the various acts and strategies which characterise beggars' pragmatic use of language. The analysis begins with a discussion of the context of alms begging in Lagos state.

4.2. The “common scene” in Begging

There is a robust context for begging in Lagos state. In it, a large amount of shared linguistic and social assumptions and presuppositions between beggars and their expected benefactors constitute a suitable interaction platform for beggars to seek alms and manage the challenges of alms begging at various locations. One observable quality of beggars (contrary to common assumptions) is some level of education (formal or informal) even among the lowest rated class among them. This guarantees an average beggar the minimum knowledge of use of English and Nigerian pidgin for basic interactions. Only very few among them are, or at least admit to being non-Nigerians, which implies that as Nigerians, most beggars and their potential givers share the linguistic resources of one or more indigenous languages, particularly Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa, together with the skills and tricks of their use. These languages are widespread and socially functional for daily communication and interactions in the state. Although our data is essentially in English, particularly Nigerian English, the following words in it exemplify the many other languages that beggars use in this field of practice: *Ejoo o!*, *Oga*, *Alhaji*, *Gworo*, *Rankadede*, *Olorogun*, *Oseemo*, *Biko*, and *Dey*. *Ejoo o!* and *Oga* are Yoruba words. However, *Oga* is now very often used and considered as an item of the Nigerian pidgin. *Alhaji* is Arabic. It is usually associated with Islam as a religious title, but more generally as a form of address for a professed Muslim. *Gworo* and *rankadede* belong to the Hausa vocabulary, *Olorogun* and *Oseemo* are *Urhobo*, *biko* is an Igbo word while *dey* is an expression in the Nigerian pidgin. Most of the beggars are observed to speak (their level of proficiency is not determined) several of these languages.

Beggars also manifest awareness of social norms such as beliefs and practices in the forms of religious values, holidays/celebrations as shown in their references to these in the following:

happy Sunday!
happy sala!
where is my happy new year?

Thus, the common scene of begging in Lagos State is illustrated in the figure below:

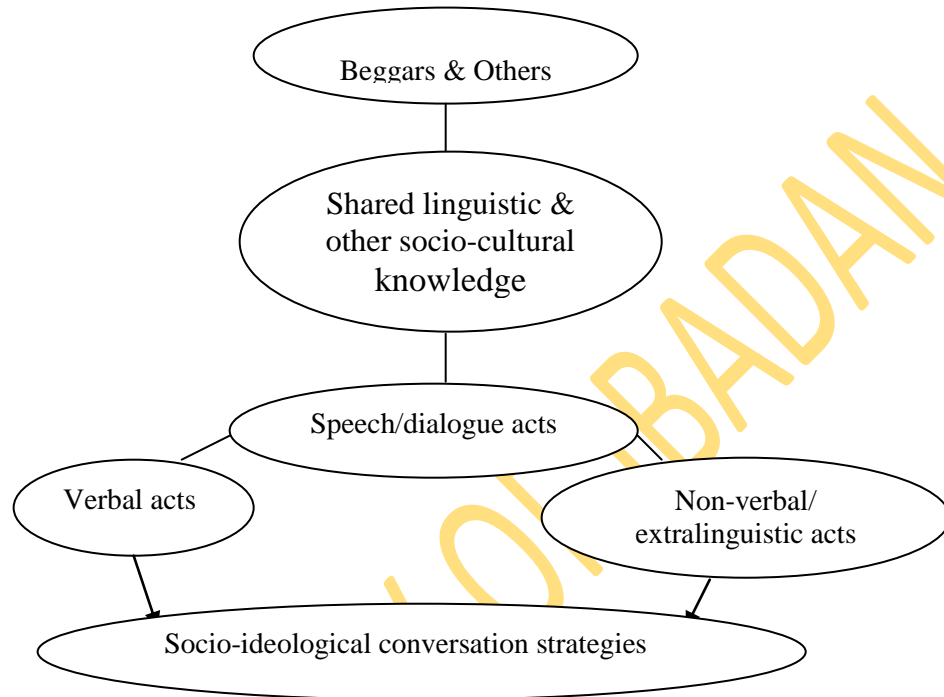


Figure 9: The Context of Begging in Lagos State

4.3 Categories of Pragmatic Acts of Beggars

The features of our data amount to various pragmatic acts which are classifiable into two categories according to their functions. The categories of acts are what we describe as discourse conditioning acts (DCAs) and purpose execution acts (PEAs). These constitute the complementary levels at which we discuss and interpret the data.

4.3.1 Discourse Conditioning Acts of Beggars

Discourse conditioning acts include all attempts of beggars to have successful interactions with others while begging for alms. These involve both verbal and non-verbal/extralinguistic acts. As we find in this study, there are three categories of acts by which beggars attempt to condition discourse in the engagement field of begging.

These are indirect speech acts, psychological acts and physical acts. The realisation of the multiple objectives of the conditioning acts comes through various concrete pragmatic strategies including arguing, at the verbal level, and; mood variation and body moves at the non-verbal/extra-linguistic level, all of which relate to indirectness. Thus, indirectness is a dominant feature in begging. The following are among the many different strategies that beggars deploy to condition begging:

4.3.1.1 Arguing

Generally, discourse is about argument i.e. presentation and defense of reason. Beggars' discourse is an argument of a kind. Often, beggars are observed to engage others in much mental exercise in reasoning with others, arguing their way to success in most cases. In such instances of arguing, beggars attempt to co-opt others. Beggars argue to establish their place in the society or even advocate public recognition as legitimate members of the society with equal rights to social needs, interests and privileges like every other person, rather than as helpless beggars or sub-citizens. Beggars' argument takes several concrete involving strategies such as attention seeking, affinity negotiation, claiming, denying, protesting defending, intimidating and threatening. These are illustrated from the data:

4.3.1.1.1 Attention Seeking

Attention of others is the "passport" beggars need to start off their argument. Beggars could easily be overlooked, even unnoticed by others in the context of the ever busy Lagos life. All the attention seeking devices and conversation initiating strategies of beggars come under what we describe as sounding. By sounding, beggars sample the views of others before committing themselves to the course of begging. Common forms of soundings in our data include popping; uttering sudden bursting sounds, and talking almost voicelessly, such as in hinting or whispering, as in the following examples:

Gosh!
Ye!
Ah!
Hey!
Si-si-si! Si-si-si!

Basically, beggars use pops to express the degree of discomfort they feel at the time, for which they "need" or are calling for urgent attention. Pops can be directed at more than one person at a time. For instance, it may be directed at a group of passers-by or at

passengers on board. Beggars prefer whispers on a one-on-one basis. They use it to deepen their frustration in the hearts of hearers. More often, both pops and whispers are used in association with a number of non-verbal acts for effect.

4.3.1.1.2 Affinity Negotiating

Conversation / interaction involving friends and acquaintances is often easier and perhaps expectedly more productive than with strangers, which is why the issue of prior personal relationship between beggars and others is an important factor in begging. Beggars attempt to strike affinity with others through code-mixing, referencing and religionism.

Many people are more positively disposed to being addressed in their language. This situation impresses on beggars the need to adapt accordingly. Hence, when a beggar finds indications for the language inclination of a potential benefactor, he/she switches or mixes codes, at least in a few introductory remarks such as in the following:

Olorogun! Ose emo remember your children O! (Urhobo/English)
Eka ro Daddy (Yoruba/English)
Ejoo sir (Yoruba/English)
Igwe! na you biko (Igbo/Nigerian pidgin)
Alhaji! rankadede (Arabic/Hausa)

In each of the instances above, beggars draw on the “charm” of language bias i.e. the positive attitude or leaning of their benefactors towards their various indigenous languages, with good results.

Moreover, beggars attempt to identify with their listeners referring to them in kinship terms such as brother, sister, uncle, daddy, mummy, auntie and other endearing terms such as friend, comrade, etc. By the use of these terms in addressing their listeners, beggars appeal to the psychological state of their potential benefactors not to see them as some distant persons, detached or disconnected from the common world of humanity, but to be considered and treated as intimately and cordially as their biological relatives.

The strategy of affinity is further reinforced by beggars’ pragmatic deployment of the personal possessive pronoun. They use this grammatical element as a modifier to each of the selected terms such as: *your boy, your pikin (child), my children, my friend and my guy*, which are found in most episodes across our data.

Another way beggars try to negotiate affinity with others is by what we would term here as “religionism”. This concept describes a liberal kind of belief and profession of faith in God. Nigeria is apparently a highly religious society. Particularly so is Lagos

state, where there are all kinds of religious groups and outfits of various descriptions in every nook and cranny of the city. In Lagos state, people further betray this spirit of religionism by wearing their religious inclinations on the face as it were; flaunting it, by their dress code, such as in the use of veils, “Ijab”, caps, head ties, collars, rosaries, customized T-shirts, the cross, and, the non use of certain dress items such as jewellery or some styles of clothing. Some even go about with religious literature such as tracts, pamphlets, magazines, and books, including the Quran and the Bible. They hang or paste stickers with associated religious inscriptions on their cars, hand bags and other personal belongings. Beggars appeal to the sensibility of others by observing and respecting the religious tone and biases of those they approach and align with them through the use of songs, recitations and prayers to imply brotherhood with these potential benefactors. The following examples are drawn from our data for illustration:

...Oh God help me!

... brothers, sisters in the Lord help me

... God says ask and you Shall be given

... let those whom God want to you to bless the needy give

...everyone shall reap what he sows

...let he that has mercy show me a little of it and God will show you mercy in a surpassing way.

...so please whoever God has touched his conscience please assist me and God will surely bless you...

I thank God for many of you students...

God will also remember you... God loves a cheerful giver.

... I have been praying to God, if Godly people like you can help me... the devil is a liar

A dominant feature in the above excerpts is the allusion to God. Beggars frequently make reference to God to imply believe in a divine personage. However, a more striking observation of pragmatic interest in the excerpts is that in virtually all the instances, beggars are careful to maintain neutrality with regards to religious differences.

For example “personal names” of God such as Allah, Jehovah, Yahweh, Jesus, Ogun or the likes that could indicate the particular religious camp of the beggar are generally avoided. Rather, by mentioning God, in the common noun form; a title that “all” gods share despite the supposed diversity in their powers and purposes, both beggars and the begged hide out in, and feel comfortable in the assumption that God is one and universal. Of course, oneness of God is not a sustainable argument in Nigeria, going by the religious climate in the country, particularly in Lagos state, with its multiplicity of religious beliefs and values, many of which are direct opposite of the other(s), among religious groups. Sometimes, this consciousness among members/subscribers of the various religious groups get down to riotous debates, even violent reactions as some insist on their peculiarities. On many religious matters, people jealously watch their borders and maintain the boundaries in favour of their beliefs. This situation notwithstanding, beggars succeed in getting others to suspend their (dis)beliefs and focus on them rather than on the details and technicalities of religious ideologies.

The excerpts further show that beggars mind the choice of themes they present to others in their begging adventure. The three begging motivated religious themes in the excerpts are: mercy, giving and recompense. All three themes enjoy universal appeal because of their nature and social value, which most people, irrespective of religious affiliation believe in and advocate. Hence, beggars strongly impel others to show mercy to them as “fellow” believers in a merciful God as in this example:

Let he that has mercy show me a little of it.

The theme of mercy is a fitting, heart moving exhortation for potential givers. More explicitly, beggars ask others to give them alms as a matter of religious obligation. They imply that others’ spiritual fulfilment is inextricably linked with merciful giving, irrespective of any differences in the personality of the god or the mode of worship. Beggars’ advocate “one God one people”:

*people of God help me !
brothers and sisters help me!
...believers assist me!*

Just as the theme of mercy is meant to prepare the heart of the begged and favourably dispose them to alms giving, beggars also add the pragmatic force of the theme of divine recompense. Beggars may have imagined that since they are not asking for loans to be repaid with or without interest in due course, the people need to be assured of some possible rewards in charitable giving. Hence the following expressions of assurance:

*Everyone shall reap what he sows...
God loves a cheerful giver...
God will also remember you...
God will surely bless you...*

4.3.1.1.3 Claiming

Excerpts from our data show that beggars claim right of begging and justify such claim as in the examples below:

... I am a welder since I lost my job two years ago I have been on the streets...

... I am a retiree I am not doing anything again. No money to chop [feed]...

... I am a student my father is late, my mother, I don't know where my mother is. Nobody...

As above, beggars claim various identities such as a welder, a retiree and a student; none as a beggar. This claim of identity is extended as personal status report which sounds like complaints, but functions more or less as justification for taking to the streets, begging. The argument here is that: if one has trained and qualified as a welder, and gainfully employed as such, he or she is to be commended as a responsible and resourceful member of the society. But to hold on permanently to such enviable status is not entirely dependent on the individual. Hence, the eventual loss of such an opportunity with its economic implications for the victim justifies the decision to find alternative means of survival such as to take to the streets, with some measure of moral dignity.

This interpretation suffices for the second example above, of a beggar who claims the retiree identity. Hence, the beggar lays his argument on the common knowledge of the much decried situation with the Nigerian civil servants who at retirement are not significantly better than dismissed workers. His claim as a retiree is understood by us as a strategy to evoke pity from others who would have to mentally process the information and work out what it means to be a retiree, based on the social reality in the Nigerian civil service. This view is supported by the beggars' successive claims:

*I am not doing anything again
no money to chop.*

Yes, if one is not doing anything; not working, how else would he/she get money to "chop" or eat if he/she would not beg? This is the critical point of the beggars' argument.

The third example of claiming in the argument of beggars as identified above involves a beggar who claims that he is a student. The fact is that most students in Nigeria are at varying degrees dependants. Many depend on parents and family members as sponsors. When the beggar claims the student identity, he means that he is a dependant and by implication a member of the society who deserves support from others. He further defines “Others” in this context as excluding his parents and family members to advance reason for his taking to begging as the only option:

*My father is late
My mother, eem em my mother,
I don't know where my mother is
Nobody.*

The beggar claims that he has lost his father in death, but he left his listener to conclude from the many possible misfortunes that could cause his mother's unavailability to him the son. This claim got to the superlative degree when the beggar added a one word conclusive sentence: nobody! That is; he has nobody to look-up to. Thus, for this student-beggar, begging is the most convenient alternative for survival and he should be accommodated within this choice.

4.3.1.1.4 Denying

Denial is a notable factor in beggars' argument. Ordinarily, denial is would be expected in when the one denying has been wrongly accused or his/her motives are misrepresented. In our data, beggars are often pro-active in their use of the denying strategy. They seem to feel the pulse of others and read meanings into their faces accordingly, or simply guess at their minds construction. Of course, experienced beggars have a number of ways to check the disposition of those they approach. When beggars find such dispositions as unfavourable for their current objective they troubleshoot for possible solution, to forestall a breakdown in communication or prevent the interaction from turning sour. Pragmatic denial is one of the common and effective devices beggars rely on for responding to less-than-beggar-friendly discourse situation. The following are examples of pragmatic denying in our data:

*...I am not a beggar but God directed me
to come out to people like you instead of
dying in silence...*

*... I am not a beggar I have not been doing
this it is condition that caused it...*

... I myself I don't use to beg...

*...I am not a beggar
...we are just requesting aid for the girls'
guild in our church*

*...It is not my intention neither is it my
making for doing this...*

*... nothing is too small
anything is appreciated*

In the examples above, beggars explicitly deny being beggar. In very clear expressions, they declare. "I am not a beggar". Beyond this simple denial, they go on to argue that their practice of alms seeking from others is only an imposed necessity on their will:

*"...God directed me to come out to people
like you instead of dying in silence ...*

it is condition that caused it...

*we are just requesting aids for the girls guild
in our church ...*

These follow-up pieces of arguments sound like justification for embarking on alms seeking. At a more advanced level of argument, beggars' denial betrays a degree of awareness of the uncomplimentary public impression that others generally reserve for beggars. For instance, in the excerpts above, beggars argue further:

...I have not been doing this...

I don't use to beg...

*...It is not my intention
neither is it my making for doing this...*

...nothing is too small anything is appreciated

implying that they know and are concerned about how others view them. In these excerpts, beggars deny any blame for their predicament. They argue that their having to beg is not to be interpreted as a matter of choice, perhaps borne out of their lazy or some other forms of fraudulent attitudes. Beggars further attempt to dispel "erroneous" conclusions from the minds of others. These include ideas that promote apathy rather than sympathy for alms seeking, such as the rude, choosy attitude of some beggars. Reiterating the erstwhile belief that beggars have no choice, which view has been

invalidated by many recent experiences in which beggars allegedly name “their price” before potential benefactors, these beggars persuasively add: “nothing is too small”. Notice too that this pragmatic denial-assurance is reinforced by doubling it through a recast: “anything is appreciated”.

It is not within the scope of the present study to evaluate beggars’ argument in terms of validity. Rather, our interest and focus is to uncover the pragmatic deployment of language, and in this case, the strategy of arguing, as a means of beggars’ attempt to gain mental and psychological control over others in the engagement field of begging. To this end, excerpts in our data show that beggars are conscious of their personal dignity and the impression that their often criticized begging activities give others. Hence, beggars initiate and coordinate witty arguments through which they make claims and deny claims as part of efforts to reposition themselves in the mind of others, so as to gain more tolerance, sympathy and alms from potential benefactors.

4.3.1.1.5 Complaining

Complaining is another common feature in the argument of beggars. Beggars’ often complain about their conditions. They complain about people such as close relatives, landlords, superiors in the office, and the devil, and how the issues they complain about affect their (beggars’) physical and psychological conditions. Some of the begging texts exemplify this act thus:

Oga no dey ever drop!

They keep asking me go and do this test and that test. It’s only test, test, they tell you to do. They don’t mind whether you have money or not...”

4.3.1.1.6 Protesting

As part of holistic, well formed and pragmatically managed arguments, beggars’ denial extends as protestation. Some begging situations challenge beggars to go beyond mere denial of “wrong” claims/assumptions of others about them, to protesting. There are a number of protest utterances and expressions in our data for illustration:

*...Oga no dey ever drop...
I am not a mad man as you think...
To beg is better than to steal...
I am only begging...
is it a crime to beg?*

Beggars protest against neglect. The first utterance: “Oga no dey ever drop” is one example. This Nigeria pidgin expression meaning an individual adult male and superior in social status to the beggar is in the habit of overlooking the beggar and his need for alms. In the same spirit of firm objection, beggars refuse to be seen as less than anyone else or treated with less regard than are given to other members of the society. “I am not a mad man” in this context is not intended by the beggar to merely serve a piece of corrective information, instead, he protests the other’s apparent “wrong” view of him, as the second part of the utterance: “as you think” confirms. Beggars’ protests also take the form of self justification by comparison: “to beg is better than to steal...”. Beggars protest the disdainful attitudes of others towards them as if begging is, or as bad as stealing. This comparison is probably intended to help others to redirect their hate, at least away from beggars.

A striking observation from beggars’ protestation is that rather than be on the defensive, beggars attempt to swap roles with others by implying some return accusation to their listeners. Beggars feel that many of their supposed benefactors are insensitive, stingy or even wicked. Beggars assume the role of judges in their own case and push down every unfavourable view of them by others, with some pragmatic measure of vehemence. The objective of beggars’ arguing is to remain in business. Hence, protest, which is a crucial feature of their argument, does not often degenerate to physical combat with others. Beggars know where and when to stop, and to continue at another convenient time perhaps with other people who may be more disposed to giving them alms.

4.3.1.17 Questioning

The following excerpts from our data show how beggars use questions to indirectly request alms from others.

*Bros! what do you have for me?
Anything for the boys?
Any pure water?
Where is my happy new year?*

Each of the four utterances has the interrogative form. However, none of them was (mis)interpreted by the hearers as utterances that required them to answer by speech as may be expected in a question and answer session, perhaps in an oral interview. As we observe in each of the occasions instead, the illocutionary force on the hearers and the subsequent uptakes (perlocutionary effects) that followed indicate that the hearers

understood the “interrogatives” as imperatives and felt obliged to respond to beggars’ alms seeking gestures accordingly. Thus, many give to beggars in this way.

4.3.1.1.8 Threatening

There are several different ways to threaten people but the aim is almost generally always the same. Often, it is a reaction to a potentially threatening situation or development and an attempt by the affected to signal his/her resistance in the circumstances and possibly return the disturbing anxiety to the suspected source of the threat. Sometimes, beggars resort to the use of threat to ward off formidable apathy and harassment from some members of the society. In Lagos state, beggars threaten others as the following examples from our data illustrate:

...please! don't let me die

...just pray that God does not allow you to be in my condition...

if you don't want to give me let those whom God wants to use to bless the needy give

...everyone shall reap what he sows...

...anybody can beg at anytime no condition is permanent...

...I don't allow people to park here except my people. You know what I mean. You too can be my people.

Arguably, the first utterance: “please don’t let me die” from the examples above is a beggars’ appeal; a passionate plea for assistance to survive. Beyond this general (denotative) meaning though, the utterance pragmatically connotes threat. When the beggar says: “don’t let”, she implies that her addressee reserves the ability and the choice to determine her survival or at least influence the outcome in her life threatening condition. Of course, many Nigerians especially in the highly religious atmosphere of Lagos would go the extra mile at some personal cost to themselves in order to save life. This socio-cultural fact is a shared knowledge between beggars and the begged. Thus, beggars attempt to transfer their anxiety for survival to others by implying that survival of beggars is in the hands of others; committing other’s consciences, to this weighty responsibility. The obvious implication here is that if others “let” beggars die, they would be accountable to man, God or both of them, on the basis of affected conscience

that would aid a self-condemning judgment upon the bearer. This is indeed a serious threat of others by beggars.

A recurring feature in beggars' threat is the allusion to God and the supernatural. As a resistant reaction to those who sometimes attempt to block off potential benefactors from reaching out to beggars with alms, affected beggars express their displeasure and try to return the threat by drawing upon expected intervention by God:

...just pray that God does not allow you to be in my condition

The beggar apparently expects the addressee to process this seeming piece of advice to generate possible meaning implications such as: It is only by God's allowance or grace that I am not a beggar. I can only retain this grace if I extend "grace" to this beggar; otherwise I run the risk of unfavourable review of my condition by God. Of course this is a threat but it is even made fuller and more explicit in the following utterances:

*...anybody can beg at anytime
no condition is permanent
everyone shall reap what he sows..*

Here, the beggar implies that perhaps, as a matter of some supernatural and unforeseeable influences, "anybody", including her addressee could turn a beggar. That "no condition is permanent" could signal a threat to the beggars' addressee, implying that while a beggar's condition could only change for the better, his may change for the worse; as true of the saying: "he that is down needs fear no fall". That "everyone shall reap what he sows" is a bias remark by the beggar, intended to instill on the mind of the listener the consciousness of the guilt of, and the danger in his refusal to give alms to the beggar. Thus, potential benefactors are left with the choice to "sow" rightly (give alms to beggars) and "reap" well (enjoy some fortune). Indeed, by threat, beggars intimidate and coerce others into giving them alms.

4.3.2 Politeness Strategies in Begging

Politeness is a common feature in most interpersonal conversations/interaction. It is one of the several pragmatic strategies beggars appropriate in the context of alms seeking to try to secure successful relations with others, or at least avoid / reduce friction with them. The idea here is that by the very nature of begging as a social practice, observance of politeness rules, i.e. the ability to avoid giving offense, which effort is often motivated by an intuitive sense or consciousness of what is right or socially appropriate and acceptable by others in the engagement situation is seen as part of the

minimum requirement for a beggar to succeed and remain in business. Thus, beggars observably display tact, modesty, agreement, approbation, generosity, sympathy and tenets of the pollyanna principle and other face constituting strategies as enshrined in the maxim-based Leechian model and Brown and Levinson's face inclined view of politeness. These politeness markers function variously for beggars in the context of alms seeking, as illustrated below from the data.

4.3.2.1 Tact

Tact manifests in several functional descriptions as follows:

4.3.2.1.1 Tact as Addressing

Beggars refer to others by various form of titles. All such titles are positive and are intended to show honour to the addressee. Some of them are:

Sir
"Oga"
ma
"Olorogun"
daddy
"Alhaji"
uncle
pastor
sister
brother
Doc (doctor)
friend
auntie

Beggars deploy several kinship terms and status enhancing titles for addressing others. These are most often used as a function of semantic extension. In most cases, beggars do not have personal details of those they approach. Yet, as a matter of pragmatics, they even front these titles to dispel possible apathy from potential givers. Beggars' tact in this way serves as a preparatory ground for the requesting that often follow.

4.3.2.1.2 Tact as Greeting

Beggars also use greetings for a number of functions, all of which are pragmatically meant to indirectly ask for alms. In the data, there are greetings such as:

Good morning sir/ma/auntie/uncle...
Welcome sir...
Safe journey!

Greeting is apparently one common way people make others know how they view them, which is why many feel offended when they are not greeted by those from whom they expect it. Beggars' greetings swell with a volume of pragmatic tact. When beggars greet, they stare at the ones they are greeting until they are noticed. This staring often betrays the implicit expectant attitude of the beggars. The observation is confirmed by the response of the greeted, who in most of the cases would give the beggar alms, rather than to merely return the greetings by speech. In the same vein, beggars always accept the alms, even with expressions of gratitude which further indicates that beggars' greetings serve as bait for obtaining such alms.

4.3.2.1.3 Tact as Minimizer/Down toner

In line with the Leechian politeness maxim which recommends that a speaker 'minimize cost to other' and 'maximise benefit to other', beggars are conscious of the cost implication of their linguistic expression for others while begging. It is easy to identify this strategy in conversational exchanges when speakers use language with a measure of caution, with regards to cost imposition on their hearer. This may be in the forms of certain linguistic expressions that are intended by the speaker to reduce the weight of the cost, which the hearer is inevitably required to bear. Examples of this strategy in the data include:

... *Just a little* assistance
...*little* help...
...*if you can assist me a bit*

As beggars ask or make request of others, they try to show that they are aware of the cost of free giving that they need of others. To this end, beggars tactfully employ minimizers and down toners such as "just a little" "little" and "a bit" as above, to lessen the weight of imposition on others, perhaps as a matter of psychological tuning. This sometimes makes it easier for many to part with some amount of money as alms for beggars.

4.3.2.1.4 Tact as Hesitating

It is easy to identify this strategy in conversational exchanges when speakers use language with a measure of caution, with regards to cost imposition on their hearers. This may be done by using certain linguistic expressions that are intended by the speaker to reduce the weight of the cost, which the hearer is inevitably required to bear. The nature of begging requires that beggars know how to strike a balance between boldness and politeness. While beggars need boldness to approach others, usually without

invitation and make request of them, a measure of politeness is necessary to blunt out the edges of such boldness so that beggars do not appear presumptuous, rude and inadvertently working against their purpose. The thin line between boldness and politeness or what may be described as polite boldness is utilised by beggars through pragmatic hesitation. One example of such in the data is:

em...e....em

This example marker apparently does not denote any semantic substance, but it is highly functional as a pragmatic discourse marker, which beggars deploy to attempt a reconstruction of their image for greater public acceptance.

4.3.2.1.5 Tact as Pleading

Pleading is an intriguing form of tact. Of course, people make request of others without begging or at least without the explicit use of the begging marker. Sometimes, some beggars also do this, with limited success. More often, beggars explicitly beg others; pleading their way through to success with emotion laden words such as:

please!
I beg!
“ejoo”! (please,(yoruba)
“biko” (please,(Igbo)

Thus, earnest entreaty is an essential part of begging.

4.3.2.1.6 Tact as Apologising

The following are recurrent examples of politeness based (tactful) apologising in the data:

sorry sir
sorry o!
ejoo O! (please,(yoruba)
don't be annoyed
I didn't mean to interrupt you...

In many cultures, rendering apology is considered a polite behaviour. When ignored, especially where it is expected, it is often viewed as presumptuous boldness and unacceptable in interpersonal interactions involving socially unequal participants. In our data, we observe that beggars are aware of this social norm and consciously observe its principles. Thus, beggars know when and to whom they need to be apologetic. For instance, when approaching others and seeking their attention, beggars sometimes begin

with: “sorry sir” and “sorry o” and ejoo O![please]. In this context, the strategy functions as both an attention getting device and as apology for any perceived associated inconvenience for the potential giver. However, there are instances where beggars’ use these expressions including “don’t be annoyed” and “I didn’t mean to interrupt you” to simply indicate remorse. Nevertheless, the study notes that beggars’ ultimate aim of using expressions as above amounts to pragmatic deployments of politeness, to tactfully ease the begging encounter. With this kind of tactful indirectness, others see beggars as polite and are better disposed to giving them alms.

4.3.2.1.7 Tact as Giving of Option

To give others options implies the giver’s awareness of the “face” need of others and the freedom for them to decide or act in harmony with their desire. This understanding is what validates beggars’ appeal to people’s face as a pragmatic tact in begging. Thus, rather than ask others to give in specific terms, such as in amount of money, most beggars allow potential benefactor to decide on this. This form of tact is exemplified in the following except:

*anything for the boys
any pure water
can you give me something for food?*

By “any”, “anything” or “something” pre-modifying their request, beggars wish to be viewed by others as modest. This strategy increases beggars’ chances of getting alms.

4.3.2.1.8 Tact as Expression of Gratitude

These are the common forms thanks in begging:

*thank you (sir/ma)
thank you O!
I am grateful*

Expression of gratitude especially for a favour received from another is a widespread cultural value. In Lagos state (as part of the highly religious society of Nigeria) many people consider thanking as a vital requirement for socialising. Beggars in Lagos state seem to be aware of this fact hence they display tact by thanking others. Of course, expression of gratitude for kind gestures from others is natural and human, perhaps universal. However, there is a pragmatic angle to the use of this form of tact. Beggars’ expression of gratitude is not limited to when they get alms from others. Many beggars are observed to say thank you to others especially at the end or toward the end of their

interaction, whether they get alms or not. In which case, even when they are not given anything, their expression of gratitude enhances their chances of getting alms in some future opportunities. Therefore, for virtually all the alms they receive, beggars say a word of thanks. Beyond the usual in terms of thanking, there are times beggars even express thanks as a strategy for initiating their alms seeking interaction such as in the following excerpts:

*I like to thank you
all of you my brothers and sisters
for your support
for not allowing my enemies to rejoice, for...*

Thank you for yesterday...

Both excerpts above are initial remarks of beggars at different begging posts. The first was from a beggar to passengers at a popular inter state vehicle station. The beggar probably imagined that since he comes to the station daily, it would be frowned at if he were to start asking for alm from likely the same set of people at every visit without thanking and acknowledging the passengers previous kind gestures, hence the pragmatic fronting of the thanks.

The second excerpt: “thank you for yesterday” falls in line with a common belief among many south western and south southern communities of Nigeria which is often expressed proverbially thus: “the one who thanks for a favour done him/her is indirectly asking for another”. Hence, without a word that could count as a speech act of requesting, beggars succeed in their alms seeking venture and receive various amount of donations through pragmatic use of thanking and acknowledging potential benefactors.

4.3.2.1.9 Tact as Acknowledging / Praise-singing

Beggars are good at acknowledging others, even Praise singing them. Praise-singing is a way of “blowing other peoples horn” for them; (in)sincerely praising them over some achievements, especially recent ones. Beggars praise others, whether these ones are due for the praise or not. They praise sing others by exclaiming their names, titles, positions of responsibilities and other specific achievements such as academic degrees, valuable properties, etc. The following are examples from the data:

*Eagle line! we hail o!
Igwe! Na you biko
Olorogun! Oseemo!
The ‘Doc’! the ‘Doc’!!*

The excerpts above are drawn from three different contexts as instances of beggars praise singing others. In the first, beggars besiege a just arriving passenger bus in popular transport organisation known as Eagle line. For most private business individuals and organisations especially in the extremely competitive commercial environment of Lagos state, success in business is linked to some form of propaganda, such as how far and loud the name of the outfit goes and sounds respectively. This knowledge is apparently shared between beggars and the people they beg from. As it is in this particular instance, beggars make Eagle line staff, particularly the drivers, feel great, outstanding among the numerous transport companies workers in the state. This is the basis for the giving of alms that readily follows. Thus beggars achieve as much good with the strategy of praise singing as with direct speech act of requesting.

The second and the third examples are similar forms of praise singing. In each of the cases, beggars deduce from the general appearance of potential benefactors such as age range and dress code, and ascribe to them what they consider as befitting titles and/or dignifying remarks. “Igwe” is an Igbo word that means ruler, such as a king, while “na you biko” is a resounding positive remark in Nigerian pidgin, code-mixed with Igbo which expresses social approval of the recipient. This explanation/interpretation suffices for the expressions: “Olorogun! and Oseemo! both of which are highly honouring words in Urhobo language, in Delta State. Olorogun means chief, while Oseemo refers to father, especially over many children or more appropriately, extended household. Similarly, the expression: “The Doc” is an abbreviated form of the Doctor (a Ph.D holder). In this example, the beggar repeatedly exclaims the praise of a Ph.D degree awardee at a convocation ceremony in one of the Universities in Lagos, until he (the beggar) was rewarded. In this particular scene, beggars are observed to be moving from one celebrant to another, pragmatically asking for alms by way of praise singing.

4.3.2.1.10 Tact as Praying for others and Sermonising

The rich religious climate in Lagos state gives beggars a lot of opportunities to access the consciences of their prospective benefactors. Beggars seem to be aware of the much regard people have for God and believe in prayers which is why many beggars employ the strategy of praying for others as a means of alms seeking. In several interactions in the data, there are prayerful expressions such as:

God bless you
May you never lack anything
May the Lord bless you abundant (sic)

Sometimes, prayers extend as sermons. Beggars concentrate on scriptural injunctions that present them to others as divinely approved responsibility which attracts God's favour for alms givers. Many are apparently soothed by these acts of religious generosity and as a result, they freely give beggars alms.

4.3.2.2 Sympathy

Pragmatic sympathy is a politeness strategy that relies on courteous speech (acts) that are intended by a speaker to show identity with other(s) in their conditions – good or bad, happy or sad. Sympathy is expressed in two basic forms: congratulations and condolences. However, there are several less direct ways people express sympathy with others. Some examples of pragmatic use of sympathy are observed in our data viz:

*Safe journey o!
Thank God for your safe arrival
Happy Sunday/Christmas/new year/ Independence Day/Happy Sala ! etc.
Congratulations!*

In each of the expressions above, beggars show awareness of, and sensibility toward the mood of others. As they meet travellers who are about to begin a journey, beggars try to identify with their anxiety over the often unpredictable outcome of travels. It, thus, appears that some travellers get some psychological relief from these positive wishes. At least, no traveller takes offense at being wished a safe journey. Similarly, “thank God for your safe journey” is one way beggars indicate that they want others alive, which enhances the hearers' psychological well-being. Beggars also identify with others on special days and occasions by issuing them compliments and congratulatory remarks such as: *happy Sunday, Christmas, new year, Independence Day, Sala!* and *congratulations!* Granted, it is not only beggars who sympathise with people in these ways and occasions. What is distinct about beggars' use of sympathy and marks it as alms seeking pragmatic strategy of polite behaviour is that, more often than not, beggars are distant if not entirely unconnected to the people with whom they sympathise. In some haphazard manner, beggars dispatch condolences and congratulations even to the wrong persons and/or for the wrong occasions. This is because their choice of who to condole with or congratulate is largely influenced by mere appearance; dressing and other visible features of personality determination and considerable financial standing. When beggars approach their target celebrants who are often too busy to notice them, they insistently wait on these until they get alms.

4.3.2.3 Positivism

In line with the principle of the famous pollyanna, beggars always appear to others as looking on the bright side of life by some form of pleasant wishes for both themselves the beggars and prospective givers. Beggars decline being seen as beggars even though they beg. They sometimes try to show that they are not hopeless; down and out, and they appeal to others' spiritual consciousness through sentiments in the forms of assurances and reassurances, as the following excerpts highlight:

*...begging! God forbid!
hello! Sir/ma... God bless you
... it is well with you
God will surely bless you*

In Lagos state, the Pollyanna principle is efficient in begging for at least one reason: the robust religious atmosphere, which predisposes many to this pragmatic act. Although some are put off by beggars attempt to "seduce" them in this way. They consider such expressions as rather mawkish, contrived, thus resulting in pragmatic failure. Many others evidently feel pleased by this strategy. These individuals have different view or they may have suspended their disbelief and thus allow beggars to escort them into the eponymous pollyanna's "paradise". In this way, the uptake which is often accompanied with alms giving justifies beggars act as an effective pragmatic polite behaviour which is designed as part of the measures to ameliorate the begging situation.

4.3.2.4 Quietism

This concept refers to the belief that it is best to accept things i.e. situations and developments in life, rather than want to change them. Quietness is a dominant feature of Quietism. Quietness could be described from a number of perspectives. With reference to humans though, it ultimately depicts calmness, as a matter of self-control. In conversation, quietness may be motivated by one's desire to be seen as polite, thus, protecting the other's "face" by resolving to speak quite less or better still, say nothing, withholding what could have be said for some time or even permanently.

Many times, beggars are confronted by situations that leave them with the choice of opting out of the conversation quietly, either genuinely or strategically. The following excerpts are illustrations from out data:

...*hm! na wa o!* (walks away)
 ...*okay! no problem* (walks away)
 ... *well, is alright* (walks away)
 ... *thank you* (walks away)
 ... *sorry o! don't be annoyed* (walks away)
 ... _____ (silence) walks away)

The above are examples of the recurrent quietness deployed by beggars at various instances of begging. These examples show the range of options that are available to beggars within the scope of politeness when they meet with a degree of face-threat such as overt criticism from others. Beggars genuinely choose to opt out by uttering a few concluding remarks, usually offered in low tone that betray a sense of dissatisfaction, yet, politely discontinuing the conversation and walking away without causing offense. At some other times though, even when they do not feel obliged in the circumstances, beggars strategically opt out either to resort to some thought provoking silence or by deploying remarks of “gratitude” and “apology” such as in the following examples respectively:

∅ (silence)
thank you
sorry o! don't be annoyed

As we observed, onlooking others are often attracted by this quality of beggars and as a result, they take the initiative to give beggars alms even before they are directly approached. This is where pragmatics comes in, particularly with “opting out strategic”; beggars not only succeed in hiding away their disaffection with others to allow them to continue in the begging venture, but also actually win the sympathy of others which ultimately wins them alms.

4.3.3 Rhetorical Strategies: Idiomatic Expressions

Idioms are culture mediated highly functional linguistic resources for managing conversations in various contexts of interpersonal social interactions. They are common sociolinguistic phenomenon in everyday communication among Nigerians. Idioms take on extra socio-ideological significance as an essential part of the complex pragmatic strategies which beggars effectively deploy in begging.

In our data, a number of idiomatic expressions have been identified. These are classified according to their distinctive discourse functions, in their specific context of use as follow:

4.3.3.1 Idiomatic Expressions for Well-wishing

The following expressions come under the category of idioms that beggars use for wishing others well:

the fire of child will not burn you o!

the shoes and slippers of sympathizers will not be found gathered at your doorstep

your clothes will not become drenched in rain

your star will not be quenched

All the four expressions above are direct translations of idioms in some indigenous Nigerian languages to English. However, their socio-philosophical value transcends their geo-linguistic scope to capture the multidimensional outlook of the Nigerian culture, which embraces traditions, superstitions and metaphysics. For example, the “fire of child” which in some parts of south southern Nigeria symbolises an intense desire for children bearing is a serious sociological concern for many Nigerian adults of child bearing age, particularly between marriage mates. For several reasons ranging from medical through to biological and physiological, some are not able to impregnate a woman or get impregnated by a man. The resulting anxiety from the situation is often fuelled by the people’s cultural norms which see a child or children as a compulsory feature of the family compositions. Superstition and metaphysics which are aspects of the complex religious inclinations of many Nigerians add to the general attitude and disposition of those in this situation. In the Yoruba worldview where this idiom is also commonly used, the “fire of child” refers to the death of a child that could consume the peace of a parent like a blazing fire. No child is bad enough to die. No reason whatsoever could make the trauma from the experience less distressing for the affected parent or parents. Suffice to say that for the Yoruba, and perhaps the generality of Nigerians, the loss of one’s child in death under any circumstance is unthinkable. Thus, for many Nigerians, there is no better way to receive goodwill from others, than to be wished by them the blessing of child bearing, or that a parent is outlived by a child or children. Hence, at some cost of money and/or other materials, people consult medical/health experts; doctors, nurses, sociologists, psychologists, religious counsellors and witch doctors. Some even get unsolicited offer of advice. For those who strongly desire to have a child or forestall the death of one, one common piece of advice is for them to give some alms to beggars. In Lagos state, this socio-cultural knowledge is shared between

beggars and the begged. Thus, beggars wish that people do not suffer the “burning” (mental/psychological) state of childlessness or child loss is indeed pragmatic. This strategy inspires others to readily give alms.

The second expression on the examples above: “the shoes and slippers of mourners will not be found gathered at your doorstep” has very close meaning to the first. Here, shoes and slippers or all other types of foot wears represent people, their owners who in this context constitute an unusual crowd of visitors as sympathizers with the household which is depicted by “doorstep”. Many unfortunate incidences can bring about crowd of sympathisers to people’s doorsteps. Death tops the list of such events. Death, whether of a child or of a parent is the people’s enemy. Therefore, the wish that one does not experience the death of a loved one or other unfortunate incidences that could attract sympathy/sympathizers soothes people.

Apart from extreme cases such as death, many other social conditions bother people and limit their peace of mind. Included here is what some Nigerians describe as “home trouble”. The idea alludes to somewhat indefinable persistent personal challenges that are considered to be home-caused. Invariably, some more general problems of life, whether these are similarly qualified as off-home troubles or foreign troubles do not pose less challenge to people’s happiness. Based on this knowledge, beggars pragmatically act on others’ psyche by assuring them:

Your clothes will not become drenched in rain

Clothes here symbolise protection against rain-like troubles, whether from the home or from outside the home. If one’s clothes were to be exposed to rain, he/she would be left unprotected against the harsh effect of cold with a taunting feeling of abandonment and dejection as would be the case of someone who is homeless or hit by “home trouble”. Like rain, troubles or problems are inevitable. However, as a matter of goodwill, beggars use this idiom to assure others of divine refuge in the event of trouble.

Star is a gaseous mass in space that generates energy by thermonuclear reactions. When used with reference to humans the metaphor of star engages metaphysics which denotes belief in the connection between the astronomical object and the human life, particularly somebody’s destiny or future. An inherent quality of star is light, which is an impressive brilliance that gives most people pleasure on sighting one. To some, star is an image of fortune or good luck. Against this backdrop, therefore, the expression: “your star will not be quenched” is understood as a very philosophical expression which

beggars use to depict others star-brilliant future and life of good luck that will not be cut short or overridden by misfortunes.

As a matter of social ideology which underpins their pragmatic act of well-wishing, beggars select pertinent social issues such as procreation, survival, happiness and prosperity upon which they express goodwill.

4.3.3.2 Idiomatic Expressions for Direct Solicitation of Alms

Of course, even the idioms for expressing goodwill (well-wishing) as discussed above are meant to result in securing alms from others who eventually feel motivated to do so. In the case of idioms for soliciting alms in some more direct ways though, beggars include performative verbs which pointedly urge others to give. Only what is to be given is what receives pragmatic concealment, hence, idiomatic. Two examples of this are identified in our data:

*Oga wet the ground for us
...give the boys panadol*

The idiomatic weight of these expressions rests heavily on “ground” in the first, and “panadol” in the second. The ground represents the domain of the common Nigerian. It connotes nothingness which could be transformed to a productive land only by some degree of conscientious effort and kind support from others on the one hand, and the condition of the ground, such as between wet and dry on the other hand. While wetness with reference to ground connotes ease of tillage with the result of greener vegetation, dryness symbolises the very opposite. It is difficult to cultivate, and results in low productivity.

In the second example, beggars ask others for panadol. Panadol is an analgesic. So, the metaphor of panadol captures anything including money, which can ameliorate human suffering. Therefore, when beggars ask others to “wet the ground” for them or to give them “panadol”, a number of assumptions are implied, including that the beggar is a common Nigerian who can only survive by some additional support in the form of alms from others. It also suggests that beggars are hardworking people who resiliently try to transform an “arid land” or poor personal conditions to a “wetter”, productive land or more comfortable condition of living. Hence we understand and interpret the expressions: “Oga wet the ground for us” give us panadol” as pragmatic deployment of idioms for seeking alms.

4.3.3.3 Idiomatic Expression for Seeking Empathy

A common feature in most dictionary definitions of empathy is identifying with someone else's feelings or difficulties. Empathy constitutes a significant percentage of the motivation for alms giving. Therefore, as an impetus to alms seeking, beggars make a number of pragmatic attempts to raise the level of empathy that others feel towards them. One of the ways beggars do this is to parcel their emotion filled alms seeking message in empathy arousing idioms. Examples of this are provide below:

*Daddy, ground no level
...we dey look your eyes o!*

Both expressions which are rendered in Nigerian pidgin capture the predicament of many Nigerian youths. For them, the "ground" is not even or rather, the "ground" is irregular, perhaps; sloppy and causing much discomfort. The "ground" of opportunities for self determination and self actualisation as beggars imply is messy, which makes it necessary for them to have someone to look up to for intervention. The eye, more than being an organ of vision with the power of sight (ability to recognise and appreciate things distinctively), is an invaluable aid to linguistic meaning. It links verbal expressions to their pictorial complements for a holistic assessment. The resulting message becomes a nudge for the conscience to act on, in line with the leaning of the eye. Put straight forwardly, the eye is a symbol of passion, affection and sensibility. Thus, "we dey look your eyes o!" or we are looking up to you for a kindly intervention double as beggars' pragmatic deployment of idioms as indirect act of informing others about their needy conditions and asking them to respond accordingly. Both "daddy, ground no level" and "...we dey look your eyes o!" seek to argue the predicament of beggars as a social situation that deserves the consideration of others.

4.3.3.4 Idiomatic Expressions for Showing Disaffection

Disaffection is a natural human tendency. It comes as the result of an individual's evaluation of people's attitudes or other situations and circumstances which he/she find dissatisfactory, even offensive. For beggars, a common cause of disaffection is attitudes of others towards them. These attitudes manifest as negative behavioural tendencies which range between indifference and hateful hostility. Observably, for several personal reasons, some do not tolerate beggars. Yet, on nearly daily basis, beggars meet and approach all kinds of people including those who would do anything to avoid them. This incongruous yet unavoidable relationship between beggars and some people results in

frequent disaffection. Beggars sometimes express their feelings on the situation through idioms. In our data, idioms that illustrate beggars' disaffection are presented here:

...it is condition that bends the crayfish

...when day break, people go forget night

...who no go no know

no worry o! who bellefull go hungry

The condition that bends or put the crayfish in its crooked posture is heat, the circumstance that it is subjected to. In many usages including the except above, heat connotes torture which potentially brings about distortion in form and organisation. Comparably therefore, beggars imply that they are like the crayfish, and like the crayfish, they have been subjected to tortuous heat of adverse social conditions, hence, they beg. This idiom attempts to pragmatically reprimand others who inconsiderately question and undermine the efforts of beggars, either by speech or by action.

Beggars also evoke the imagery of day and night to counsel others. While day is thought of as standing for brightness and activity, night pictures darkness and inactivity. In this understanding, most people prefer day to night for the obvious reason that day offers opportunities for active and fulfilled life while night closes one up (shuts one off) to such opportunities. These are conditions in life. Like day and night, these conditions are subject to change; they are reverses. By means of this idiom beggars alert others of the possible reversal in personal circumstances such as in health conditions and socio-economic status which any one could experience between beggars who are presently in the figurative night of their life and the privileged others who seem to be in and enjoying the "day".

The last example in this category of idioms is quite similar to the preceding one. Apart from the fact that both expressions derive from the south-south socio-stylistic variety of the Nigerian pidgin, they also share meaning in the context of begging. The three components of the idiom could be interpreted thus: "who no go no know", meaning: anyone who has not experienced a situation can not appraise it, "no worry o!" meaning: be warned, and, "who bellefull go hungry", meaning: those who are full could come to want. In summation, beggars here imply that they alone have experienced what it is to be constrained to beg and as a result, any critical remark from others would be subjective, presumptions and unfair. They therefore warn others to beware of the possibility of becoming victims of their own judgments.

4.3.4 Psychological Acts in Begging: Mood Variation

Psychological acts here refer to communicative acts which express the psyche. They give evidence of the state of the mind i.e. a speaker's emotion, and facilitate meaning decoding by listeners. Most people, across age, gender, social status and affiliation (religious, political or geographical) are capable of expressing emotions at varying degrees, under different/changing circumstances. However, psychological acts are sometimes feigned, much the same as in acting out a role in a drama.

In our data, we observe that beggars' mood swings between two extremes of unpleasantness and pleasantness. Mood variation is a more general descriptive term that captures beggars' dramatisation of their feelings, ambitions and attitudes. The strategy of mood variation manifests as sobbing, weeping, sighing, smiling and laughing. While sobbing and weeping betray a beggar's unpleasant state of mind, smiling and laughing indicate pleasantness as the condition of a beggar's mind. Between these extremes is sighing which involves a beggar's release of extended and audible breathe to signal weariness or a relief from same. However, features of beggar's psychological acts or mood variation largely overlap one another, sometimes, one feature includes another or others in the same event, such as sighing, weeping and sobbing or sighing and smiling, depending on the beggar's motivation and pragmatic competence.

A typical example of psychological act in our data is a scene of a weeping woman with two hungry looking infants, perhaps, her children or at least as she (the woman) intends to indicate. The beggar with both children around weeps continuously. She got much attention from passers-by and onlookers, many of who were compelled to give her alms of various amount of money as a result. We reason that these sympathisers, particularly those who gave her alms would have concluded in line with the probable intention of the beggar that she and "her" children are victims of abandonment, perhaps by a supposed bread winner or father of the kids. Indeed, beggars pragmatically deploy psychological acts to impress their frustration on potential givers. These acts are as effective for alms seeking and elicitation as the verbal acts.

4.3.5 Physical Acts in Begging: Body Moves

Beggars' communicative physical acts as begging strategies include all non-verbal acts that involve body moves. These are either capable of expressing meaning independently or serve as complement to the verbalised acts. The acts are classifiable into two, namely; the passive and the active acts.

4.3.5.1 Passive Physical Strategies of Begging

The passive acts consist of posing and gazing. While posing describes the adoption of postures of various pragmatic inclinations such as physical carriage, attitude signature and deception, gazing is a form of facial expression, particularly of a sustained look at people with the intention to get their attention and reactions. Although passive, in terms of their limited kinetic involvement, both posing and gazing are powerful communicative strategies which beggars adopt for probing the consciences of others; coaxing or intimidating them in the begging encounter.

4.3.5.2 Active Physical Strategies of Begging

The active physical acts comprise beckoning, nodding, bowing, waving and dancing. Often, beggars select freely from between the passive and the active strategies to encode their message, depending on their assessment of the situation. For example (as in the data), beggars beckon at people as a way of asking for their attention, nod the head to signal agreement or disagreement with others, bow to others as a form of greetings or customary regards, and wave the hands at others to express pleasantness such as in saying good-bye, welcome, congratulations or thank you. The population density of Lagos state puts daily activities on the high speed lane for its residents. There is a continued scramble for attention as a result, which factor makes getting other's attention a rarity. Hence, beggars invest so much on attention seeking strategies, such as the use of dance. Our data show that beggars adopt some forms of unusual dance patterns; gymnastic, erotic, etc., to slow down movements, both vehicular and pedestrians so as to get the attention of others. Sometimes though, beggars cleverly combine the passive and the active strategies; in this case, the latter being a complementary emphasis on the former for effectiveness. One of such instances in our data is an episode involving a middle aged beggar in one of the bank premises in Lagos. The beggar adopted a posture to suggest that he was ailing and in critical needy condition. He squatted, crouched down like someone suffering from acute stomach distress, perhaps, from severe hunger. He

probably thought that bank customers going in and out of the busy premises would notice him and be moved to give him alms. When the beggar observed that people were unaffected by his posture he added sighing. When this also failed to yield his desired result, he then stretched out hands to beckon at people; calling for their attention. He even resorted to rubbing both palms against each other as a demonstration of passionate appeal for attention. Thus, the beggar skilfully harnessed the resources of the passive and the active communicative physical acts for seeking alms.

What marks these behaviours as pragmatic acts of begging is that they harmonise in form and purpose with several other features that constitute the complex network of pragmatic acting in alms begging. The overall impression that is often encoded in beggars' communicative psychological and physical acts paints in the minds of others an image, laden with frustration and dejection which seems to be saying to the thinking observer: this is an irresistible sight for you. You are my last hope for the next stroke of breath. Give to me and be a saviour, hold it and be a murderer. The observable effectiveness of these acts in the context of begging justifies our conclusion that beggars' psychological and physical acts are indeed pragmatic.

4.4 “Setting-up” and “Co-opting” in Begging

The objectives of beggars' Discourse Conditioning Acts converge on setting others up and co-opting them in the engagement field of begging. Thus, both concepts crystallises the pragmatic value of beggars' purpose in the deployment of DCAs in begging.

The idea of conversational setting-up in begging refers to beggars' general attempts to reorganise and redefine the context of situation, so that he/she (the beggar) could find some advantage over those they engage. The “spell” of setting-up becomes apparently forceful when beggars' requesting springs from the affected context which portends something for which their listeners curiously listen. “Setting-up” is complemented by “co-opting”. Co-opting is very often and effectively used by beggars to break the “ice” in their interaction with others and close the gap between themselves (beggars) and their expected benefactors, or at least reduce such a gap. This gap exists as a result of a number of factors. First, the beggars are in most cases strange to their benefactors. Second, the moral and ethical values and personal principles of beggars differ significantly from those of their expected benefactors. Moreover, beggars are never invited; usually, people do not give beggars appointment. Understandably, these

factors constitute real road blocks to beggars. Thus, co-opting is observed in this data as a well thought out strategy by beggars to skip or penetrate a number of conversation road blocks. Therefore, “setting-up” and “co-opting” are effective contextual strategies in begging.

4.5 Purpose Execution Acts (PEAs) of Beggars

Purpose execution acts refer to the direct acts of beggars which point to the goal of the interaction between beggars and potential benefactors in the most explicit terms. These acts concretise the intentions of beggars, namely; to obtain alms from people. Unlike DCA which rely on delicate pragmatic indirectness, PEA engages directness, essentially direct speech acts. These are acts that are observably direct in terms of the relationship between what a beggar says and what she/he means or intends. Osisanwo (2003:65) describes this as the correlation between the structure and the function of the structure. Where this relationship is grammatically established, the utterance amounts to a direct speech act. There are three of the direct speech act types in the data. These are: directive, expressive and commissive acts. Functionally though, all the three types collapse as one pragmatic act with a single goal which is realised through three specific practs.

In begging, the directive speech act type delineates beggars’ purpose execution acts. The directive acts employ imperatives to make request of the hearer. Examples of these direct speech acts in the data include:

help me
help your guy
give the boys panadol
support the poor
Assist me
Give me just transport
Pastor bless me
Give me food biko

This pragmatic act is often enriched by the expressive and commissive elements which are allopracts of the same act. Expressive acts express beggars’ psychological state, as in the following examples:

I lost my job two years ago
I am a professional welder
I want to go to Ikeja but I have only N50.00
I am hungry
I am orphan

At various begging encounters, beggars deploy expressives to reveal more about their conditions of need. Rather than hope that people will observe it, beggars tell them, which they probably consider as a vital boost to their requesting. Commissive acts indicate beggars' commitment to some future course of action by promising or even pledging to people as in the excerpts below:

*help me today and you wouldn't see me here again.
... I will be very grateful.
I can't fight with you*

Beggars resort to the direct act strategy for expediency in the context of the street. The street is one of the four types of locations of alms begging. Compared to all other locations, the street offers beggars, the least opportunity in terms of time and range of physical contact with potential benefactors. In this context, people are often in a hurry and have little or no time to start processing meaning in the intricate indirect acts by which beggars more often precondition alms seeking discourse. Hence, all the strategies under the purpose execution acts of beggars are brief, explicit and thus summarise the intention of beggars. This intention is almost always to obtain especially financial and possibly any other necessary material gift from people.

4.6 Summary of the Chapter

Beggars in Lagos state rely on Discourse conditioning acts to set-up and to co-opt potential alms givers, but they employ Purpose execution acts to obtain alms from their targets. While on the streets, beggars were inclined to use more PEAs than DCAs, but in the other types of begging locations (public institutions, venues of social events, and vehicle stations) they use more DCAs than PEAs because of temporal and spatial contextual advantages. Thus, begging in Lagos state is a complex, skilled activity which exhibits a considerable level of beggars' pragmatic competence.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY AND

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a conclusion to the study. It highlights the major features of the findings and discusses the implications of alms begging in Nigeria.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

Conversational element is predominant in beggars' discourse. In every encounter, an average beggar looks for a way to engage others in a conversation, usually, by initiating one with a potential benefactor. When the beggar succeeds in setting up the "let's talk platform" (conversation) then the effort automatically opens up opportunities for the beggar to act out his intentions. This process involves forms of pragmatic acts, together with multiple strategies which the beggar cleverly appropriates suitably to the specific context. Alms begging in Lagos State involves two functionally different but intertwined categories of pragmatic acts, namely; discourse conditioning acts (DCA) and purpose execution acts (PEA), which constitute the strategic levels at which we have described the begging activity. This is schematically illustrated below:

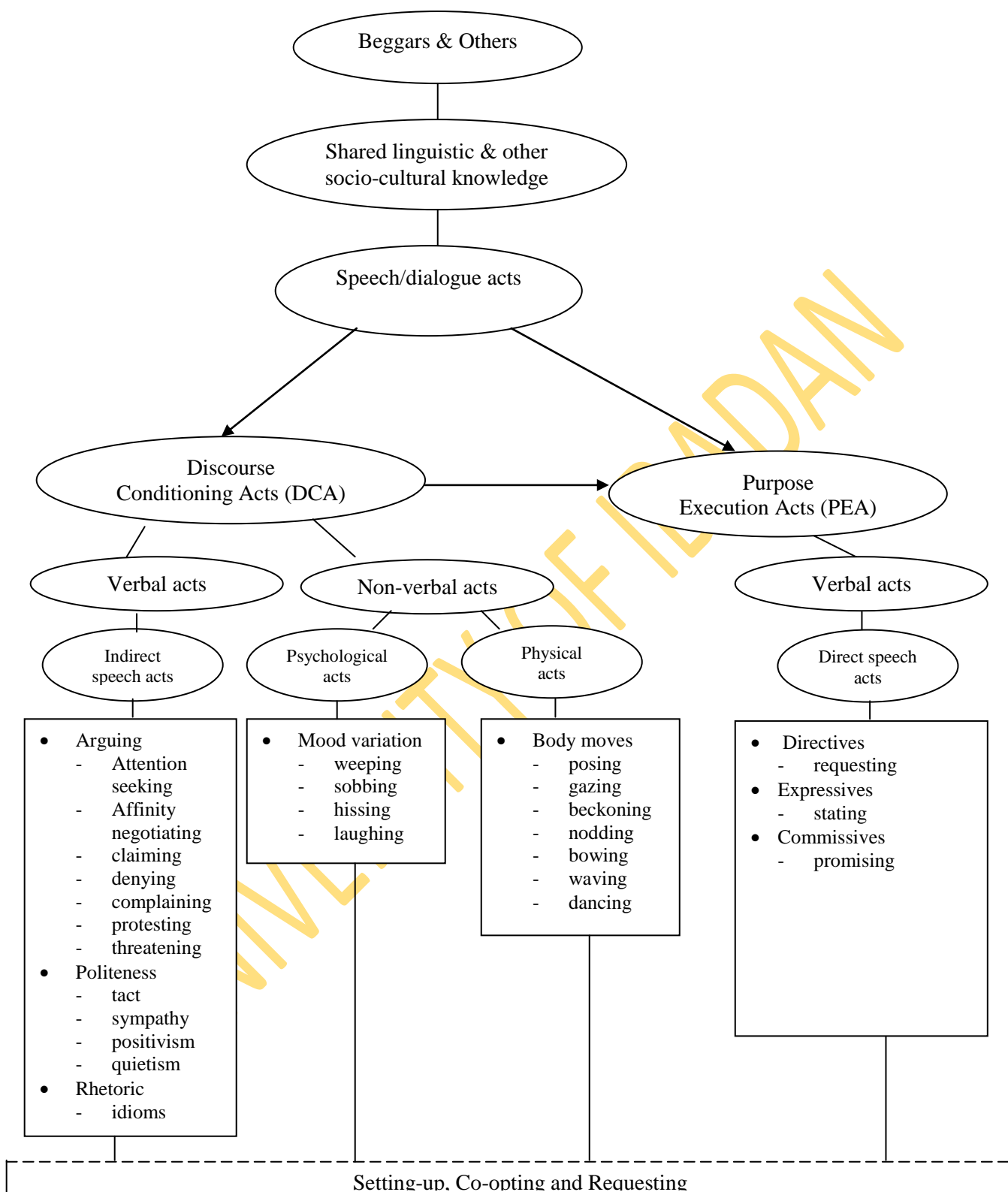


Figure 10: A Pragmatic Outlook of Alms Begging in Lagos State.

Discourse conditioning acts (DCAs) are rooted in indirectness, composed of verbal (indirect speech) and non-verbal (psychological and physical) acts. Beggars' indirect speech acts involve arguing such as in attention seeking, affinity negotiation, claiming, denying, complaining, protesting, questioning and threatening. Others come as politeness markers, which display as tact of various functional descriptions, sympathy, positivism, quietism and; as rhetorical device in the form of idiomatic expressions. Beggars' psychological acts zero in on the strategy of mood variation which manifests as weeping, sobbing, hissing and laughing, while their physical acts basically consist of the strategy of body moves, comprising posing, gazing, beckoning, nodding, bowing, waving and dancing. Both the psychological and the physical acts are extra-linguistic behaviours by which beggars express their situation-driven desperation and reinforce their verbal acts. Beggars use DCA to set-up and co-opt potential benefactors, thereby compelling their solidarity, and constraining them to yield. PEA engages directness, composed essentially of the directive acts with the corresponding strategy of requesting. Beggars deploy direct speech as a more expedient strategy to request alms. Thus, PEA makes beggars' intentions explicit and more easily accessible to other.

5.3 Implications of the Study

The implications of the study could be considered at two levels; its potential contribution to scholarship, particularly in discourse pragmatics, and its social significance for society. Each of these is discussed below:

5.3.1 Linguistic Implication

This study validates the psycho-cultural reality of language use in human interactions. Communication is the basic function of language in social practice. For this function, meaning is central. Meaning in alms begging involves the interplay between psycho-cultural factors such as the state of mind (as far as can be inferred) and context of culture – the totality of the social environment that backgrounds language use as a reflection of the users' world view. The very idea of communication implies some processes of brain state, such as conceptualization, which results from observation and perception – phenomena that seek to explain the workings of the human mind. As Wiredu (1980, 1993) observes, mind is not the brain but an aspect of brain state. Thus, concepts are not to be viewed as some entities in the mind, as in a picture of items in a basket. Rather, concepts “are of the mind; they are the stuff of the mind”.

The idea here is to recognise the human or subjective element in our “objective” construct in language use. We note that individual observers can perceive a thing differently. A thing is whatever it is taken for, depending on who looks at (observes) it, and how s/he does so. The act or process of observation impacts heavily or subtly on the observed, such that in the final analysis what often results could be termed: meaning ‘shift’; meaning ‘peculiarly’ the observer’s. In this belief, McLuhan, cited in Anyanwu (1982: 41) reasons:

There seems to be psychological reason to suppose that perception is not a bare apprehension of pure sense constant, but rather an active process in which we anticipate, interpret and structure in advance what is to be perceived. There are things right in front of our eyes that we fail to see and things we see of which we have only the faintest clue in context, guided by expectation, we even see what is not there at all.

Similarly, the human society as a cultural community is meaning oriented. The environment offers individuals perspectives in meaning in the sense that they build and maintain perceptions that enhance their conceptual awareness, which in turn governs their attitudes and values in accordance with the persuasions and affordances of the organisation of their environment. The degree of permission, encouragement and insistence that they get from this environment guides their view of things and ultimately, the meanings they assign to them. Anyanwu (1982) asserts: “meaning is not in words but in people, the meaning makers”. This view of meaning implies the following syllogism: since meaning is people dependent and people assign meaning on the basis of experiences, the experiences that are themselves dependent on different influential factors such as age, sex, level of personality consciousness, education, social-cultural background, economic privileges, religious conviction etc, then, meaning is subjective; relative upon these factors and obtaining at different levels in the stratification of the society, such as the individual, group, institution, and nation. Thus, the pragmatics of begging is a validation of the fluidity of communicative meaning in social contexts.

5.3.2 Social Implications

There are a number of social problems associated with beggars' activities in Nigeria. Some of these are: breach of public order, threat to personal safety and security, poor personal and societal moral integrity and indictment on religions. Beggars are observed to show very little or no regard for public order. They flagrantly side-step necessary protocols even when they are aware of these. This is because of the desperate intention to impress their 'frustrations' on supposed benefactors. For instance, at vehicle stations where people are anxious to catch a bus and leave for their intended destinations, beggars negotiate their ways around and between passengers and bus conductors, even shoving these aside to gain vantage positions from which to ask potential benefactors for alms, or are receiving same from sympathisers. Similarly, beggars interrupt ongoing class sessions to solicit alms in schools. They hang around class doors and windows, thereby distracting teachers and students, and sometimes, they courageously walk straight into the classes to the embarrassment of all. Worse situations are observed in the hospitals especially the secondary and tertiary health institutions where there are considerable large population of workers, students, patients, care-givers and visitors. In the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) for example, beggars of various categories patrol the hospital lawns, ward corridors and by patients' beds, asking for alms. They resist efforts of security personnel to keep them within allowable limits. Beggars often show no consideration for patients who are ailing in bed and their worried care-giver relatives from whom they ask alms. Alms begging constitute a considerable and avoidable risk to the beggars themselves and unsuspecting others. An example of this problem is the recklessness with which some beggars run on rollers across traffic in busy areas, in pursuit of benefactors in moving vehicles. It is feared that these beggars could get crushed in the process. There is also the problem of personal security. Some beggars, especially the young female folks have been reported to fall victims of rape and other social maltreatment by dubious supposed benefactors. In the same vein, there are reports of beggars who have bound potential benefactors with spell, leading to the latter's insanity, disappearance of vital organs such as the penis (in the case of male victims) and in some cases, disappearance of both the beggar and the victim. An instance of this was reported on FM 93.5 Radio, Ibadan, sometime in 2009. Alms begging also puts a question mark across the moral integrity of both the individual Nigerians, and the society as a whole. As observed from the new dimension to begging, many of the beggars are quite fine, with no apparent reason to justify their taking to begging. Some of

them are school drop-outs, career failures, disarmed criminals and the likes who take advantage of misplaced sympathy of others to unleash untold havoc on members of the public. This social situation is also a serious indictment on religions and their teachings. Many beggars subscribe to certain religious convictions and hide under the cloak of these institutions to promote their selfish and inordinate ambition, even against beliefs and teachings of their faith.

The economic implications of alms begging in Nigeria are many. A fundamental one among these is the gross manpower and man hour losses. Manpower is the human energy needed to work. It is often used to refer to the collective efforts of a group of workers with specific job responsibility. In a related sense, man hour refers to the total length of time a worker or workers are expected to put into a job schedule. Both concepts have direct impact on the national economy. Since many beggars, along with their teeming special 'personal assistants' do not work but depend (justifiably or unjustifiably) on others, there is a gross reduction in the national work force (man power/hour). Since there is a steady influx of people into the begging adventure, there is a corresponding continuous decrease in the expected national work force. This development results in drastic reduction in production, and a corresponding increase in consumption thus creating a superfluous imbalance in the national economy.

Alms begging poses a formidable challenge to government's current efforts at improving on the image of Nigeria, both locally and internally. This effort which is now being expressed through the Rebranding Campaign of the Ministry of Information and Communication may to some extent be undermined by the growing presence of beggars of diverse categories, and their socially debased activities in many Nigeria prominent cities including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, which serves as a window to the world, into Nigeria. Alms begging and beggars present Nigerians to observers as lazy, impoverished, and fraudulent. These problems represent only the common and obvious types. Thus, this study is a pragmatic statement on the phenomenon of begging in Nigeria.

5.4 Conclusion

Alms begging in Lagos state is a context-constrained activity, Thus, begging in the state is a complex, skilled activity which exhibits a considerable level of beggars' pragmatic competence. Therefore, pragmatics is significant in revealing the complexity of beggars' activities in Lagos state`. Further investigation, such as a comparative pragmatic study of alms begging in the Northern and Southern regions of Nigeria is capable of revealing more of beggars' Pragmatic acts.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

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UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

APPENDIX

Sample of the Verbal Data

Let he that has mercy show me a little of it. God will show you mercy in a surpassing way.

The “fire of child” will not burn you o!

Your clothes will not become drenched in rain

The shoe and slippers of mourners will not be gathered at your door step

You will have no need for begging.

I am a welder.

Since I lost my job two years ago I have been on the almss looking for anything, anything to be doing for sustenance. These are my certificates (shows them). There is a notice of vacancy somewhere at Ikeja but I have only N50, I have not even eaten.

Just pray that God does not allow you to be in my condition. I am not a mad man as your think it is condition that bends the crayfish I know one day God will also show me favour in Jesus name.

Ah! This face books so familiar. Good morning. Did you finish from UNILAG or, I can't place it exactly please remind me _____ ok! Anyway, I

thought you are one of our fortunate old boys so
you can assist your comrade with any little change
(smiles) ejoo, biko, we are still one.

Si si si, hello, sir, God bless you (gets eye contact attention with
all)

„ uncle „ „ „

„ Antie „ „ „

„ brother „ „ „

... to beg is better than stealing. Is it a crime to
beg? God says ask and you shall be given. I am
only begging. If you have give me if you don't
want to give me, let those whom God wants to use
to bless the need, give. Everyone shall reap what he
sows.

Eagle line! We hail o!

Edegbe line! Drop for the boys now

I give! na you biko

The 'Doc'! the 'Doc'!

Where is my happy new year?

Please! Brother, help me xxx please uncle! Sister!

Ejoo! God bless you!.

Hey! My guy which one now? help your guy! I beg. I need just transport.

Bros! what do you have for me?

Anything for the boys?

Any pure water?

Give the boys panadol

Alhaji! “gworu”, “gworu”! (Kola)

Thank you for yesterday. May the Lord bless you, may you never lack anything. Thank you thank you.

Oga! wet the ground for us.

Good morning my dear children. I know you are students. I was a student like you when my problem started... I am not a beggar but God directed me to come out to people like you instead of dying in silence. So please who ever God has touched his conscience please assist me and God will surely bless you. Please don't let me die. I thank God for many of you (students) in other schools who have been supporting me since this period. God will also

remember you in Jesus name... thank you, thank
you my children, thank you.

Oga no dey ever drop xxx ehn those wey them
know say man dey here know how I dey do for
them xxx ehen! one hand no dey wash himself
clean do for me I do for you.

Oga! your boys dey here o.

Alhaji! rankadede!

Olorogun! Oseemo! we dey look your eyes o!.

Pastor!

Support the poor, support the needy. Support the
less priviledge ones... I am not a beggar. We are
only requesting aids for the poor God loves a
cheerful giver.

Antie, please, sign for me

Do you want to park sir? I don't allow people to
park here except my people xxx you know you
know what I mean. You too can be my people if
you want, everybody is my people but some
people, they don't want to cooperate, everyday

everyday I help them but nothing xxx thank you sir,
eseo! thank you!.

Mummy please!

Let us pray...

Safe journey o!

Thank God for your safe arrival o!

... If you can help me no matter how little, I will be
very grateful.

...I am not a beggar. I have not been doing this it is
condition that caused this. I have been praying to
God if Godly people like you can help me, you
wouldn't see me here again.

Happy Sunday!

Happy Sala!

Good morning sir/ma/oga/antie/sister.

Daddy!/Mummy!/ Sister!/brother!/ uncle!/ oga!

Welcome sir/ma...

Bye bye sir/ma/...

Safe journey

Ah! ye!

I have lost everything! I have lost everything! My properties, family everything! oh! Where do I start from. I am finished wicked people! wicked people oh! the devil is a liar! oh God help me! Brother, sister, please, help me.

Sorry sir, I don't want to interrupt you...

Sorry o! I just want to ask you for a little assistance...

Ehin! friend don't be annoyed. Can you give me a little thing for food? give me ejoo.

...No worry, who belefull go hungry.

...If night no come, day no go break. But when day
break, people go forget night. hin! na wa o!

Nobody can say I have not begged before.

Anybody can beg at anytime.

I myself I don't use to beg

But it is condition

No condition is permanent.

I am a retiree. I am not doing anything again.

Please give me something to eat. Please!

Antie please! xxx I am a student. My father is late
my mother is not... I don't know my mother.

Nobody.

Heaven help those who help themselves

Help the deaf

Help and God will reward you abundantly

Please kindly assist and no amount is too small or big

Thank you as you contribute to the development of deaf
education.

What shall I say unto my Lord

All I have to say is thank you Lord

What shall I say unto my Lord

All I have to say is thank you Lord

Thank you Lord thank you Lord

All I have to say is thank you Lord

...If night no come, day no go break. But when day

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