

PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF SELECTED UTTERANCES IN SOYINKA'S ALAPATA APATA, OSOFISAN'S ARINGINDIN AND THE NIGHTWATCHMEN

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Abstract

Language users express their thought mostly with a general assumption that some aspects of meanings that are not expressed in words are deducible from the context. The study examines the role of pragmatics in the conveyance of meaning through contexts and other pragmatic tools. The qualitative and quantitative methods were adopted in the analysis of the purposively selected utterances from Soyinka's Alapata Apata and Osofisan's Aringindin and the Night Watchmen. Thereafter, from each utterance, all the locutionary acts that have the features of the chosen pragmatic tools were categorised under the identified pragmatic tools. And, the data for this study's analysis included five (5) selected utterances each from the given texts, making ten (10) samples in all. It was discovered that, the function of an act performed could be outlined by the social power relation of the participants. Also, Implicature conveyed social-cultural and linguistic functions in the texts, through the adoption of euphemism, irony, understatement, semantic transfer, proverbs and idiomatic expressions. Some of the linguistic elements adapted in applied utterances were introduced by different linguistic patterns such as pidgin, code-mixing/switching as well as borrowing. As a result of the findings, it can be concluded that, if meaning formation is left solely to the scope of semantics, language users would not only have challenges in everyday communication, but will also acquire bad communication skills. Therefore, adhering to and following pragmatic principles, particularly courtesy and cooperative maxims, would promote co-relationships and mutual understanding.

Keywords: Contexts, Pragmatics, Speech acts, Implicature

Introduction

The essence of language in communication is to pass or infer meanings. Hence, meaning is broadly covered by semantics. But the aspect of linguistics, that is implicated specifically with meaning generation in respect to user, uses and (other factors such as the) context is referred to as pragmatics. Rumide (2006, p.3) describes pragmatics as “a linguistic tool that illuminates on meaning” beyond the word level, which are often indirect, and also help explain “the socio-cultural contexts of utterances”. Pragmatics is a shift from strict grammatical interpretations of words

and phrases in utterances to the investigation of what exactly people mean by their utterances. Pragmatics is “the study of language used by real people in the real context” (Shikha, 2013).

Thus, since pragmatics studies language in use, this study examine language use with cultural colourations embedded, identifying frequent or common pattern of language use for special effect in two African drama texts; *Alapata Apata* by Soyinka and Osofisan's *Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen*. The study adopts some pragmatic principles to explain the pragmatic imports of utterances in the given texts.

Statement of the Problem

The field of pragmatics has been well explored by many scholars to analyse and explain different phenomena about language in use with the aid of various genres of arts. Thus, this study aims at contributing to the existing body of knowledge in the academic field of pragmatics.

In the process of information and data gathering for this study, none of the following relevant works consulted have the selected data as its focus. The works include; Fatoye (2011), Oluyinka (2011), Rumide (2006) and Hanafi (2011). All the works shared a common ground which is investigating how meanings were generated from discourse with the help of pragmatic theories and discursive elements. Hence, this study is unique for the fact that it is different from the above mentioned works not only in the adoption of different combination of pragmatic theories, but also in the data analysed.

Pragmatics

Some studies (Bublitz and Norrick (2011), Chilwa and Ofulue, 2010, Fatoye (2011), Hanafi (2011) Oluyinka (2011), and Rumide (2006) have shown that, the establishment of pragmatics as a branch of linguistics stemmed from the need to investigate the speaker/writer intended meaning rather than what is expressed in words, that is, the need to probe the meaning of an utterance beyond the limit of semantics. Pragmatics thus seeks to emphasise how language users communicate in oral conversations or in writing, the context of speech, speakers' intentions, shared knowledge of speech participants etc (Chilwa and Ofulue, 2010).

Because pragmatics is enigmatic in linguistics, lacking a common description which would refer to a single, unified and homogeneous field of study (p.3), Bublitz and Norrick (2011) proposed two perspectives of defining the term - “a narrow” and “a broad” views. To Bublitz and Norrick (2011), the narrow view sees pragmatics “as the systematic investigation of what and how people mean when they use language as a vehicle of action in a particular context and with a particular goal in mind”. Wherein, the broad view is context-dependency of utterance meaning that concerns itself with the “key issues that can be juxtaposed with related issues in other modules of language theory such as grammar and semantics. Those issues include indexicality/deixis (versus anaphora), presuppositions, implicatures (versus entailments) and speech acts (versus types of sentences), to name only the most

conspicuous topics” (Bublitz and Norrick, 2011).

In a simplified form, Horn (2001, p.212) cited by Ayodabo (2015, p.25) sees pragmatics as the way in which language is used to express what somebody really means in a particular context, especially when the actual words used may appear to mean something different. For example: a graffiti that reads “We need human urine here” in Nigerian context, a cultured and typical Nigerian would take that as a directive act, directly urging people not to urinate around that area where such graffiti could be found. Because, it is a shared knowledge among typical Nigerians that human urine can be used to harm the host with the aid of some terrestrial power. Interestingly, Ayodabo (2015, p.25) perceived pragmatics as a study of the general cognitive principles, involved in retrieval of information from an uttered sequence of words.

Theoretical Frameworks

The understanding of the meaning of concepts used in a study determines largely on the success of the study. To Fairclough, (2003) “any analysis of texts which aims to be significant in social scientific terms has to connect with theoretical questions about discourse”. Based on these two assumptions, it is important to represent succinctly the meaning of some concepts on the one hand, and the theories (Searle J. R (1969, 1979) and Grice H. P (1975) Speech Act Theory) that underpin the current study, on the other hand. Equally, the study examines the role of pragmatics in the conveyance of meaning through Auer's (1992 and 1995) concept of context (physical, linguistic, and socio-cultural contexts), considered relevant to this study in identifying linguistic structures in the play which, beyond deixis, must be interpreted with reference to context in order to realise discursive meanings properly.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study examines the role of pragmatics in the conveyance of meaning through contexts and other pragmatic tools in *Alapata Apata* and *Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen*.

In specific terms, this study aims to:

1. explore how Speech Acts theory aids meaning generation in *Alapata Apata* and *Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen*.
2. account for how contexts affect language use in *Alapata Apata* and *Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen*.
3. investigate the role of Implicature in expressing social cultural practices and innate behaviour of the participants in *Alapata Apata* and *Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen*.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. How does Speech Acts aid meaning generation in *Alapata Apata* and *Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen*?
2. In what way does context affect language use in *Alapata Apata* and *Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen*?
3. How does Implicature convey the socio-cultural practices in *Alapata Apata* and *Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen*?

Scope of the Study

This study focused on three (3) pragmatic tools which are speech act theory, context (physical, linguistic and socio-cultural), and implicature, while, the selected data *Alapata Apata* and *Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen* have four scenes, two scenes each with several utterances. Ten utterances, five from each text, are purposively selected for the analysis. The selection of the utterances cut across all the scenes in both texts. The pragmatic imports which are crucial to this study in the tests informed the selection of the utterances.

Methodology and Procedure

The study is a mixed research where both quantitative and qualitative analyses were employed. The selected utterances are those with some pragmatic features found relevant to the study. In the process of the analysis, the utterances were first identified. Thereafter, from each utterance, all the locutionary acts that have the features of the chosen pragmatic tools were categorised under the identified pragmatic tools. And, the data for this study's analysis include five (5) selected utterances each from the given texts, making ten (10) samples in all.

Data Analysis

A pragmatic analysis of the selected utterances in Soyinka's *Alapata Apata* and *Aringindin and the Night Watchmen* by Osofisan are presented below. The analysis investigated how pragmatic elements identified in the selected data can be applied to interpret the pragmatic imports of utterances.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Datum One

Speech Acts

Locution	Illocution	Perlocution
MAMA TOKUNBO: Yeah, yeah -pah! What is - They have killed me again! I am ruined, ruined!	Expressive act. Lamenting the emotional ordeal of "MAMA TOKUNBO"	Ultimately, the utterance will implore the sympathy of individuals available at such speech event

Contexts

The Physical Context of the utterance above is a market square (robbery scene), where almost everyone in the town converged to sympathise with some of the shop owners who are also lamenting about their losses. At a corner, there lies the dead body of the market night guard. *Mama Tokunbo*, the owner of one of the robbed shops is seen lamenting bitterly about her losses.

Linguistic Context: The use of exclamatory language such as "yeah-pah!", "They have killed me again!" and "ruined!" in the above utterances signals a supposed atmosphere of shock and soberness.

Socio - Cultural Context: The utterance reflects the reaction of an average Nigerian, especially in an instance of adversity, where speakers covert momentary misfortune to permanent damnation and as such, rain curse on the cause, the offender or themselves.

Implicature: ...*They have killed me again!* The speaker flouted the maxims of quality and manner, stating something that is not only true but also in an obscure manner. A dead person doesn't speak and if she had died once, she can't die again. The utterances thereby explain the participants' culture of death, where the term "death" connotes a state of damnation not necessarily the absence of life.

Datum Two

Speech Acts

Locution	Illocution	Perlocution
BAALE: But...didn't anyone hear them at all?	Directive. Asking for information from the other interlocutor.	A response from MOSUDI.
MOSUDI: It was the rain last night! Gave them a good cover.	Assertive. Explaining why "anyone" could not "hear them at all".	

Contexts

The Physical Context features *Baale* (royal father) and *Mosudi* (a citizen) in a town's market square. Most of the shop owners are presented to be robbed with sympathisers and shop owners, who are also lamenting their losses.

Socio-Cultural Context: The social stratum of the participants is that of ruler-subject, *Baale* seemingly an equivalent of a King in some societies; and *Mosudi*, a member of the community. "*Baale*" and "*Mosudi*" provided extra-textual information of an average Yoruba society. Also, presents a society where Muslims (*Mosudi*, a Yoruba dialectical transfer form of the Arabic name "Mas'ud") could be found. Equally, the first utterance reflects the belief and political system (monarchy) of the society. His directive act marks autocracy over others, while Masudi's assertive act (marked with the exclamatory mark) indicates his state of confusion. Masudi's first act flouts the cultural convention of low pitch speech protocol in the presence of a ruler, except in such cases of loss.

Implicature: MOSUDI: *It was rain last night! Gave them a good cover "Mosudi"* observed all the maxims but of relevance. This implies that nobody heard the robbers, while they were carrying out their nefarious act.

Datum Three

Speech Acts

Locution	Illocution	Perlocution
<p>OLUODE: Well then, Bose, go and call Asiriabo, or rather, no, let Usman go instead!</p> <p>This is not the moment for the <i>Okin</i> who picks her feet gingerly on the ground!</p> <p>We need haste!</p>	<p>Directives (Acts 1 -3) and Assertives (Acts 4 & 5).</p> <p>The directives commanded the addressee to carry out an errand, while the assertives state known facts about the "Bose" and the situation.</p>	<p>A response from BOSE.</p>
<p>BOSE: Let me go. I'll be fast, I promise!</p>	<p>Directive, Assertive and Commissive (the 3 acts occur in that order).</p>	<p>A response from GBADEGESIN.</p>
<p>GBADEGESIN: Alright go together, you and Usman.</p>	<p>Directive. Commanding the addressee to carry out an action.</p>	<p>The addressees leave the scene.</p>

Contexts

The Physical Context the participants include *Oluode*, *Bose* and *Gbadegesin*; who are conversing about how to inform other shop owners.

Socio-Cultural Context: The social status of the participants is that of ruler-subject relationship. This informed the frequency of directive (basically commands) by "*Oluode*" and "*Gbadegesin*". The proverbial expression by "*Oluode*" helps narrow the speech event to a typical Yoruba society, where some of the features of adults' speeches are the use of proverbs and riddles almost in every discourse of thematic values.

Linguistic Context: The use of the words like "*Okin*", "gingerly", etc., suggests that "*Bose*" is an elegant individual and someone that (walk or does) things gracefully. The use of "*Okin*" also insinuates a multilingual society; in this case, Nigeria; where the possibility of Yoruba (*Okin*) comes in contact with the English words, thus, code-mixing ensues.

Implicature: "... *this is not the moment for the Okin who picks her feet gingerly on the ground!*" The use of this proverb flouted the maxim of quantity and relevance. This is intentionally adopted to indirectly state the sluggish nature of "*Bose*".

Datum Four Speech Acts

Locution	Illocution	Perlocution
KUKU: The Police, Baale? The Police! <i>(More laughter)</i>	A directive and an assertive. The directive seeks to confirm what KUKU thought he heard from Baale. While the assertive confirms that he heard him right.	Laughter from other participants and response from Baale
BAALE: That's what I said!	Assertive. Clearing KUKU's doubt.	A response from another participant, LABO
LABO: From Shaki?	Directive. Requesting for more clarification from BAALE.	An FTA from BAALE
BAALE: No, from your mother's cunt! <i>(His anger stops the laughter)</i>	Assertive. Replying LABO's directive	Stopped the dying laughter from other participants.

Contexts

Physical Context: A market square where a robbery has taken place. Wrecked shops can be seen here and there. *Baale, Kuku and Labo* are discussing on how to inform the police.

Socio-Cultural Context: The participants share a vertical social power relation. *Baale* is in the high class and others are in the lower class. It is a society where leaders' utterances are expected to be accepted dogmatically. Otherwise, the person who doubts such leader's order or his statement attracts the latter's intense wrath. This becomes very obvious in the perlocutionary act of *Baale* towards *Kuku's* and *Labo's* acts of expressing doubt over *Baale's* reaction to the situation. There is a shared knowledge between *Labo* and *Kuku*, although *Baale* refuses to recognise it. The laughter that comes after the mention of "police" is a metaphor of mistrust and disrespect for the police.

Implicature: *Kuku* and *Labo* acts implied a negative or fruitless experience about the police in the past. *Baale*, on the other hand, flouted the maxim of manner - this violation makes the utterance an implied one, suggesting that the interlocutor, *Kuku*, is not serious for asking such a silly question.

Datum Five Speech Acts

Locution	Illocution	Perlocution
KUKU: 'Madam --- with all due respect --- Your head is not correct!'	An assertive, abusing the addressee	A response from the hearer.
JOKO: 'Whetin! I don die! Na me you dey curse so!'	Expressive, assertive (act 2 & 3). The first act, expressive, expresses shock and the assertive describes the nature of the shock.	A subsequent response from the addressee.

Context

The Physical Context: the market place, where two participants (*Kuku* and *Joko*) miming a past encounter between a policewoman and a road user.

Linguistic Context: The stringing of words, "Your head is not correct!" is an indication of a pure Nigerian English with a Yoruba dialect colouration or better put; an instance of (Yoruba) language transfer. The Nigeria sociolinguistic situation is further established by the use of pidgin.

Socio-Cultural Context: The use of pidgin in the utterance depicts the educational level of the supposed "Madam". Also, seeking permission before insulting the listener (*Joko*) is an indication of an unequal social power relation between the interlocutors.

Implicature: The first speaker violated the maxim of manner, saying something that is obscure, "your head is not correct", possibly to create an FTA on the hearers' positive face. While the second speaker flouts the maxim of quality, giving more information than necessary, the real information is "Na me you dey curse so!" other acts are just meant to emphasise the amount of injury received from the 1st speaker's utterance.

**Datum Six
Speech Acts**

Locution	Illocution	Perlocution
1st MECH: Why e dey siddon dere? Why on top dat rock?	Directives	An FTA response from the hearer
2nd MECH: How do I know? You worry too much.	Expressive and Assertive	1st MECH: An FTA response from
1st MECH: And you fit sleep while fire dey burn for your roof. Why e go siddon for rock?	Assertive and directive	

Contexts

The Physical Context is a six-path junction where a rock is situated in the early hours of the morning. On top of the rock is Alaba (Alapata) sitting. Both participants' dresses are dirty revealing the nature of their occupation (Motor mechanic).

Linguistic Context: The participants' utterances are characterised by pidgins, thereby portrays the educational background and social statues of the participants.

Social Context: The social relation of the participants is symmetric. Both participants share equal social power, thus marking the reoccurrence of on-record FTAs in their utterances.

Sociolinguistic Context: The utterances above insinuate a society where vocational education is encouraged. Also, portray a society of people who intrude into affairs in an offensive manner, as such, a society where rumours or fake news are spread without proper fact-finding concern.

Implicature: “*And you fit sleep while fire dey burn for your roof*” is a pidgin proverb which ironically implies “care-taking”, “consciousness”, etc. The use of this proverb thus goes against the maxim of quality which urges participants to say something that correspond with reality.

**Datum Seven
Speech Acts**

Locution	Illocution	Perlocution
<p>INVESTOR: You’re sure he’ll be open to proposition?</p>	Directive (asking to know about a particular situation)	A response from “Prospector”.
<p>PROSPECTOR: We all need partners. This is going to be a gargantuan operation. After this, we can tell those Delta trouble - makers to go drink their petroleum.</p>	Assertives (two acts) and declarative.	

Contexts

The Physical Context is a six-path junction close to Alaba's house, where a rock is situated having the *Investor* and *Prospector* as participants.

Socio - Cultural Context Both participants share a symmetric social relation. This is made evident by the adjacency pair of their dialogue. Besides, the datum indicates the participants' anxiety to exploit the area which symbolises that Nigeria is a blessed nation.

It is a society where violence and vandalism in the Niger Delta region are endemic; this is as a result of the marginalisation and oppression of the minority and the less privileged by the leaders. Hence, the reaction of the oppressed is seen as (those Delta trouble-makers) trouble-making in the context.

Implicature: “We all need partners” violates the maxim of relevance and manner and it thereby implies that the third party (Alaba) would give room for proposition. Also, Prospector's acts flout the quantity maxims in the effort to buttress the already implied intention.

**Datum Eight
Speech Acts**

Locution	Illocution	Perlocution
<p>PROSPECTOR:</p> <p>He’s our headache. The governor is on our side. He knows how to deal with stubborn goats –no, dogs. Dogs in the manger. That dog thinks he’s well positioned but we’ll flush him out. Pluck him down. Dislodge him. Take him out. Send him packing. Dispossess him. Immobilise him. Emasculate the bastard. Do I make myself clear?</p>	<p>13 acts.</p> <p>Assertives (act 1 - 4), expressive (act 5), commissive (act 6-12) and the last act directive.</p>	<p>An agreeing response from INVESTOR.</p>
<p>INVESTOR:</p> <p>Clear enough.</p>	<p>Declarative</p>	

Contexts

The Physical Context is a corner not so close to Alaba's house or the rock.

Social Context: Both participants share asymmetric relation, that is, equal social status.

Socio-Cultural Context: The discourse portrays a society where people would go to any length to destroy others all because of the amassment of wealth for their selfish benefit.

Implicature: Prospector's utterances violates the maxim of manner and flout the maxim of quantity in the excessive use of utterances to establish his determination to destroy any opposing forces including Alaba standing their (with the support of the governor) way to the exploration of the rock. His use of plural pronominal element “We” implies a collective act of destruction. “He is our headache” implies “he's our problem”. “Dog” implies a useless or worthless person or an intruder and the use of the following lexemes ; “flush”, “pluck”, “dislodge”, “take-out”, “send...packing”, “disposes”, “immobilise” and “emasculate”; demonstrate how destructive the referent of the deixis 'he' (i.e., Alaba) will be made.

**Datum Nine
Speech Acts**

Locution	Illocution	Perlocution
2nd FARMER: Forgive me. At first I thought it was Esu setting up his market place of confusion.	Directive and assertive	Pleading and a subsequent response from 1st FARMER.
1st FARMER: You're not the first to think so. But no, he is no <i>O risa</i> -Esu or anyone else. He's just Alapata.	Assertives (3 acts). Explaining a situation.	

Contexts

The Physical Context: features two participants (*1st Farmer* and *2nd Farmer*) on their way to farm. They stopped to chat about Alaba, whose present location attracts their attention.

Linguistic Context: There is the importation of the Yoruba linguistic elements within the utterances. This exposes readers to the participants' traditional belief system - *At first I thought it was Esu setting up his market place of confusion.*

Socio-Cultural Context: The social power relation of the participants is horizontal. Both are middle class members of the society. However, pointing to the context of the very old Yoruba society, the two participants could be members of the higher class, where farming often represents the core sector for the sustenance and wealth in the society. The introduction of “Orisa-Esu” or “Esu” helps to secure the societal beliefs that recognizes metaphysical powers or the existence of supreme beings. Most Nigerian cultures upheld this belief. Esu (Devil) in the Yoruba cosmological settings is believed to be a vicious supreme being, who can sow evil and confusion.

Implicature: The utterance of the *2nd Farmer* implies ignorance on the topic of discourse, hence, he felt sorry for ever equating Alaba to the vicious Esu. Thus, he violates the maxim of quality and manner (by stating something that is not certain and obscure). While the *1st Farmer* flouts the maxim of quantity by giving more information than necessary.

**Datum Ten
Speech Acts**

Locution	Illocution	Perlocution
CLERIC: <i>A salaam ailekum.</i>	Expressive (greeting)	Calls Alaba attention and also an FTA response from Alaba.
ALABA: <i>Ailekun a salaam. (Under his breath...) And peace too upon my calabash of palm wine - hypocrite!</i>	Expressive and directive.	

Contexts

The Physical Context is still at the same junction as above. Alaba relaxing on top of the rock while the 'Cleric' enters.

Linguistic Context: The transcription “*A salaam aleikum*” and “*Ailekun a salaam*” of Arabic language help secure the notion of a society where languages in contact is apparent (because we have seen participants using Yoruba, English and now Arabic). From the out-set, Alaba was never introduced as a Muslim, so the competence at which the right word was used signifies a language contact.

Socio-Cultural Context: The participants have a distant social relation, that is, the two participants do not share equal social power relation. This is also instigated by the whisper of Alaba, an overt translation that he dare say something of such to the *Cleric's* face. The datum portrays a society that accommodates special treatment of religion leaders; as in the case of a typical Nigeria society, where some people see religion leaders as a mini-god. However, there seems to be indices of hypocrisy which instigated Alaba's accusive utterance against his interlocutor.

Implicature: Alaba violates the maxim of quantity and manner. The norm that follows “*A salaam...*” is the “*Ailekum...*” but Alaba goes on to give more information and thus stating something ridiculous in other to show his distaste of the presence of the *Cleric*.

Discussion

From the tables above 50 acts were identified. Assertive act has the highest frequency, which is 22 at 61%, the directive act 14 times at 25%, expressive act (5 times) at 9%, commissive act (7 times) at 4% and declarative acts appears just twice (at 1%).

Generally, Nigerian society happens to be the context of all the analyzed data. This signifies a nation with cultural diversity, colonial agency, and cultural colouration and among others; this notion is demonstrated with the frequent features found in the observation of the socio-cultural, linguistic and the physical contexts. Such features include: proverb, kinship term, transfer, code-switching and code-mixing etc. Also, the frequency at which participants violate Grice's implicature maxims is high.

Findings

In the course of analysing the ten data extracted from Soyinka's *Alapata Apata* and Osofisan's *Aringindin and the Night Watchman*, it was discovered that context played a very crucial role in generating meanings. It built the environment of utterances, explained the socio-cultural imports of utterances and social distances between participants. It was concluded that, it is contextual concerns that determine and clarify, some of the times, the obscurity and ambiguity of utterances, and how much participants are willing to or not willing to cooperate in a discourse or how much participants are willing to contribute in a discourse, speech errors, infelicity conditions (as applied to the flouted maxims) etc.

Also, it was discovered in the texts, that there were the use of code-mixing, code-switching, borrowing, as well as, semantic transfer, which were purposely contextualised to portray the nature of the settings of the texts, that is Nigeria, and especially southwest Nigeria, where there are between 400 and 600 languages including the exoglossic languages which are English and Arabic, whose influences cannot be overlooked through the subconscious linguistic competence, as it was discovered from the analysis above. Moreover, Nigerians (more specifically, the Yoruba language speakers) have some linguistic features apparent in their language use.

Conclusively, it can therefore be drawn from the findings that if meaning generation is left to the scope of semantics alone, language users would not only meet difficulties in their day-to-day communication, but also develop poor communication skills. Hence, adherence and observation of the pragmatic principles; politeness and cooperative maxims most especially; would foster co-relative existence and mutual understanding among members of a speech community.

Funding

(TETFund/DESS/COE/ILORIN/ARJ)

“TETFund Projects 2020-2022”

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