

LEXICAL CHOICES AND PRAGMATIC ACTS IN *COMMERCIAL MOTORISTS' DISCOURSE IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA*

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DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.21646.33605

Abstract

This paper examined the pragmatic roles that lexical choices play in understanding the communication between commercial motorists -taxi/bus drivers/conductors- and commuters in Lagos State, Nigeria. Using Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Act Theory, the study identified, categorised, and analysed commercial motorists' lexical choices and language use at various bus stops and motor parks in Lagos. One hundred and eight (108) lexical items were collected from recorded conversations between motorists and commuters. These lexical items were categorised into the following categoriality practs: Pre-boarding, Boarding, On-board, and Disembarking. *Fifty-four (54) lexical items were randomly selected and transposed into writing for analysis.* Adopting mixed methods of *qualitative and quantitative data analysis, the sampled data were coded according to the number of practal functions identified in each categoriality pract, to follow the thread of a particular pract. Seventeen (17) practal functions, one from each categoriality practs, were randomly selected and analysed.* On-board categoriality pract had eight (8) practal functions, which happened to be the highest, followed by Pre-boarding with five (5), Boarding with three (3), and Disembarking with one (1) practal function. *Seven of the identified practal functions appeared under more than one categoriality practs, making the types of practal functions found in the study, ten. They are; informing, instructing, requesting, inquiring, urging, warning, appealing, felicitating, demanding, and complaining.* The study revealed that the lexical choices, coinages, and linguistic extensions (shaperly, agbero, how far, one-chance) used by commercial motorists and passengers in Lagos are informed by the mixture of the indigenous language (Yoruba), Popular Nigerian English, and Pidgin English. The paper concludes that the pragmatic engagement of these choices displays the tact commercial motorists and passengers use in achieving effective communication among themselves.

Keywords: *Lexical Choices, Pragmatic Act, Practs, Practal Functions Motorists' discourse*

Introduction

Language has been identified as an indispensable medium of communication through which humans conduct effective exchange of information, ideas and emotions which is greatly determined by the linguistic choices they make. These choices are also constrained by the interactants and the context within which language is used, making language an interactional activity that transpires in real-life settings between people (Ayeni, 2020). This paper examines the interaction between commercial motorists and commuters in the context of bus stops and motor parks in Lagos whether boarding or in-boarding transportation. Lagos was formerly Nigeria's capital and one of the most densely populated commercial cities in Nigeria, hence, the demand for commercial vehicle service in Lagos will undoubtedly be on the high side. *Linguistic studies of public transportation or commercial vehicle discourses in Nigeria have concentrated on semiotics, sociolinguistics and language navigation such as: Mazzoli (1995), Mgbemena (2013), Jolayemi and*

Olayemi (2017). Some other studies on public transportation (Ogunbodede, 2008; Olorunfemi & Adeniran 2018; Salau, 2015) ranged from the improvements of the public transportation system to the expectations of commuters' satisfaction with the public transport system. On the other hand, studies on lexical choices centred on stylistics literary (Ankah, Kwasi and Namekye, 2017; Yeibo, 2011) and, stylistics linguistic studies (Adedeji, 2017). As these studies investigated public transportation/commercial vehicle discourses and stylistic studies, studies on lexical items and the use of language by commercial motorists have been partially omitted or wrapped around many other concerns. This study therefore acknowledges this gap, thus, the motivation for investigating lexical choices and pragmatic acts in commercial motorists' discourse. The analysis will not only explore lexical choice but will also examine lexical coinages and their usage. The study will also account for the frequencies of the practical functions found in the various categoriality practices in the discourse. Therefore, the study will identify and account for the lexical choices used in the discourse of commercial motorists and the pragmatic acts these lexical choices perform in their respective contextual communicative domain. Given the second language context where this discourse is situated, the study will reveal the peculiar effects the L1 or mother tongue have on the English language as used by commercial motorists. It will also, examine how the English language co-exists with the local language to facilitate communication in commercial motorists' discourse in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Clarification of Terms

Lexical Choice

Lexis refers to the word, phrase or speech of a language. It originated from the Greek language and became prominent in linguistics studies since the 15th century, initially in scholarly and philosophical contexts. Its adoption and adaptation into various fields demonstrate the dynamic nature of language where words can migrate across languages and disciplines, acquiring new meanings and connotations. Alo (1995) defined lexis as, “the level of linguistic analysis and description concerned with how the vocabulary of a language is organized” (p.18). Lexis as a linguistic phenomenon, covers a wide range of linguistic areas; general knowledge of words and special loan words inclusive. The point here is that the rationale for studying the nature of a lexeme is to decode the meaning of the lexeme (i.e., lexis as semantic markers or signifiers). Determining the meanings of an utterance is not an easy task, especially when the utterance is a mixture of specific local registers. This is because the intention of the speaker is largely conjectured, and may not be accurately located. Locating the speaker's meaning is largely assumed in uttered sentences, as speakers may mean one thing while the hearer may misinterpret what the speaker means. So, it is the hearer's task to determine what exactly the speaker means. The intended meaning of the speaker depends largely on the context in which language is used; that is, who is speaking? To whom are they speaking? What circumstances led to the utterance/speech? And so on. Silverstein (2004), working within the frame of lexical performance as a function of shared knowledge about the world, asserts that any time one uses a word or an expression, it indexes specific values within such knowledge schemata. Each such schemata of conceptual information is now made relevant to discursive interaction. For him, selecting appropriate lexical items, and understanding them depend on shared cultural knowledge between interactants. Silverstein (2004) further argues that language is not just a matter of individual expression but it is deeply embedded in social and cultural practices, hence:

Stereotypic meaning –cultural concepts- attached to words and expressions exist in a complex space between authorizing and authorized discursive engagements of the people in a population, and such stereotypes are not uniformly distributed

across the population. (p.632).

Motorists' Terrain Discourse in Lagos

Popular Nigerian English (PNE) and/or Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) are mainly used in commercial motorists' communication in Lagos State, Nigeria. The style of communication among commercial motorists could be generally classified as informal. In most communities in Nigeria, especially Lagos, the Standard English (SE) is combined with the indigenous language which in this context is the unofficial language of the people. In Lagos, the Yoruba language is mostly used. The NPE is also used sometimes, mostly by the not-too-educated and non-Yoruba commercial motorists and commuters. Mostly, in the interactions between commercial motorists and commuters, the NPE is preferred. This is to ensure that the interactants understand themselves. It is also because the NPE is a language of shared cultural knowledge between commercial motorists' and commuters (Silverstein, 2004). Where a passenger cannot speak either the, NPE, PNE, or SE, the indigenous language (Yoruba) is used. If the conductor cannot speak the indigenous language -which is in very rare cases-, other commuters in the vehicle will help.

The main goal of commercial motorists; discourse is to strike transactional and interactional functions of a language. Transactional function captures the business of talking at motor parks or bus stops, while the interactional deals with interpersonal features. In serving the transactional functions, -the major business transacted at the motor parks/bus stops between commercial motorists-, the PNE, or the indigenous language (Yoruba), -which must be intelligible to both interactants-, is used at motor parks/bus stops to establish casual, cordial or professional relationships. Commercial motorists exchange pleasantries, ask after one another's family, and sometimes crack jokes at the park to kill time and boredom, especially when waiting for their turns to drive commuters to their various destinations. The same exchange of pleasantries is done with commuters in some cases. If the commuters are elderly, and understand and speak Yoruba, they are greeted and ushered into the vehicle in Yoruba; or NPE. Above all, commercial motorists and commuters' communication is situated in a socio-cultural and situational context, where the situation determines lexical choices or preferred language of communication.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Acts Theory which situates speech acts in discourses. Mey's main criticism against the Speech Act Theory is that for speech acts to be effective, they should be situated: "they both rely on and actively create the situation in which they are realized." In sum, "there are no speech acts, but only situated speech acts, or instantiated pragmatic acts" (Mey, 2001, p. 218). As a consequence, the emphasis is not on conditions and rules for an individual speech act, but on characterizing a general situational prototype (what Mey calls a pragmeme) that can be executed in the situation. In other words, a pragmatic act involves adapting oneself to a context, as well as adapting the context to oneself (Odebunmi, 2006). Hence, the theory of pragmatic acts is central to the present study. At the centre of the pragmatic acts is the language that was engaged in performing the acts. For pragmatic acts, the individual's perspective and context are both important. There is a need to determine the language the individual needs to perform an act, and the language needed "to create the conditions [for them] to perform a pragmatic act" (Mey, 2001, p. 214). From the individual's perspective, language adaptability may be invoked to generate meaning (Mey, 2001, p. 214–215; Verschueren, 1999, p. 147). Furthermore, according to Mey (2001), if the focus of pragmatic acts is in the environment

in which both speaker and hearer find their affordances, such that the entire situation is brought to bear on what can be said in such situations, as well as what is actually said; the central concept in the theory of pragmatic acts is the pragmeme. A pragmeme is a generalized pragmatic act which deals with ideas in an utterance and not the exact words uttered. A pragmeme can be instantiated through individual pragmatic acts, which Mey (2001) calls "practs". Practs are the concrete occurrences of a pragmeme, to which there may be several practal functions. The appeal to the context serves to determine the specific meaning accruing to the situated use of a literal speech act (Geis, 1995). Thus, "access to a pragmeme, one is not only exposed to language but a bit of culture" (Allan, Capone & Kecskes, 2016, p. xviii). Practs also are constrained by contextual and cultural variables (Vasilescu, 2018). This projects Capone's (2005, p.1355) definition of the pragmeme as "a situated speech act in which the rules of language and of society combine in determining meaning" or briefly put, "speech act in context" (Capone, 2018, p. 91). Therefore, a pragmeme has to be contextualized in the social praxis of a culture (Capone, 2016), this is why "the norms for the interpretation of pragmeme come from the society perspective of language" (Capone, 2005, p. 1358). Hence, Mey's (2001) pragmatic act theory will help to categorise the data into practs and practal functions for easy analysis.

Methodology

One hundred and eight (108) recorded lexical items were collected from five (5) popular motor parks/bus stops -Oshodi Bus Stop, Yaba Bus Stop, Obalende Bus Stop, Berger Motor Park, and Ojuelegba Motor Park- in Lagos, between March and May 2023. Fifty-four (54) lexical items were randomly selected and transposed into writing for easy analysis. Using the qualitative and quantitative methods, the data was coded as Text 1 – Text 4, going by the identified categoriality practs. The texts were further sub-numbered as Text 1a, Text 1b, and Text 1c, for instance, to follow the thread of a particular categoriality pract, according to the number of practal functions identified in each categoriality pract. One (1) randomly selected data from each identified practal function was analysed, making a total of seventeen (17) practal functions analysed. Jacob Mey's Pragmatics Act Theory helped in categorising the data into practs and practal functions; which, in turn, helped by unearthing the contextual meanings of the utterances found in the data.

Data Presentation

The four (4) Categoriality Practs -Pre-boarding, Boarding, Onboard, and Disembarking- and ten (10) Practal Functions observed in this study are presented in Table I below.

Table 1: A Summary of Practs and Practal Functions Found in the Study

Practal Functions	Pre-Boarding Freq.	Boarding Freq.	On-Board Freq.	Disemk. Freq.	Total	Perc. %
Informing	12	3	13	-	28	51%
Requesting	4	2	4	1	11	20%
Urging	2	1	2	-	5	9%
Instructing	-	-	2	-	2	4%
Inquiring	1	-	1	-	2	4%
Warning	1	-	1	-	2	4%
Demanding	-	-	1	-	1	2%
Complaining	-	-	1	-	1	2%
Appealing	-	-	1	-	1	2%
Felicitating	-	-	1	-	1	2%
TOTAL					54	100%

Table 1 above presents the four categoriality practs found in the study as well as the distribution of the ten practal functions across the four identified practs. From the table, informing practal function has the highest occurrence of 50% mainly found in on-Board and Pre-Boarding practs respectively. The table also shows that Requesting and Urging are next with 20% and 9% occurrences while Inquiring and Warning followed with 4% occurrence and Demanding, Complaining, Appealing and Felicitating had the least at 2% occurrence. It is important to note that only one instance of practal function (Requesting) was observed in the Disembarking pract in the study. This may be due to the fact that during embarking commuters are more concerned in alighting and going about their business rather than engage in any form of discourse beyond bidding farewell if they so wish.

Table 2: Breakdown of Practal Functions for Pre-boarding

Practal Function	Freq.	Percentag %
Informing	12	60%
Requesting	4	20%
Urging	2	10%
Inquiring	1	5%
Warning	1	5%
Total	20	100[^]

Above is a breakdown of the practal functions of pre-boarding practal function with informing as the highest frequently used.

Table 3: Breakdown of Practal Functions for Boarding

Practal Function	Freq.	Percentag %
Informing	3	50%
Requesting	2	30%
Urging	1	20%
Total	6	100[^]

Table 3 above is the breakdown of Boarding categoriality pract Informing again accounted for the most frequently used practal function followed by requesting and urging.

Table 4: Breakdown of On-board Practal Functions.

P r a c t a l F u n c t i o n	F r e q .	P e r c e n t a %
I n f o r m i n g	1 3	4 8 . 2 %
R e q u e s t i n g	7	2 5 . 9 %
I n s t r u c t i n g	2	7 . 4 %
W a r n i n g	1	3 . 7 %
D e m a n d i n g	1	3 . 7 %
C o m p l a i n i n g	1	3 . 7 %
A p p e a l i n g	1	3 . 7 %
F e l i c i t a t i n g	1	3 . 7 %
T o t a l	2 7	1 0 0 ^

On-board categoriality pract came up with the highest number of practal functions in the study with a frequency of eight (8) practal function. Among the eight (8) practal functions in the study, informing emerged the most frequently used with a frequency of thirteen (13).

Table 5: Samples of Lexical Choices Used in Performing Pragmatic Functions

UTTERANCE	LEXICAL CHOICE	PRACT	PRACTAL FUNCTION
Test1c: Chairman, how far?	<i>Chairman, how far</i>	Pre-boarding	Inquiry
Text 1d: Enter the garage, enter the garage come see the bus you go join	<i>garage</i>	Pre-boarding	Urging
Test 2d: Madam I beg dress well, this chair na four people e dey carry.	<i>dress well</i>	Boarding	Urging
Test 2b: Wole pelu change e o, emi oni change o! Enter with your change o, I no have change o!	<i>change o</i>	Boarding	Warning
Text 3a: <i>Oga, carry go the road clear.</i>	<i>Oga, carry go, the road clear.</i>	On-Board	Informing
Text 3h: Officer I <i>twalay!</i>	<i>I twalay!</i>	On-Board	Felicitating
Text 1f: Oga no pass there o, <i>area boys</i> go attack you.	<i>area boy</i>	Disembarking	Warning
Text 4: Can I have my <i>balance</i> , please?	<i>balance</i>	Disembarking	Demanding

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings in this study is taken separately according to the four categoriality practs identified in the study. This is so because the lexical items found in the study may bear the same practal function but perform different pragmatic acts.

Pre-boarding

Pre-boarding is one of the categoriality practs found in the interactions of the Lagos commercial motorists/commuters at the motor parks and bus stops. In pre-boarding, commuters are heard asking questions about the route buses would follow and, conductors are also heard advertising the routes/destinations of the various buses. Pre-boarding examines the discourse of commuters' inquiries of where a particular commercial vehicle is going or the route it would take to its destination. Bus drivers discuss with one another about happenings at the park, happenings on their various routes as they journeyed to or from a destination, or personal issues -depending on how close they are-, while waiting for their turns when commuters would board their vehicles. Likewise, bus conductors, their colleagues, and commuters are also seen having discussions and conversations. Pre-boarding in this study is characterised by informing, requesting, urging, inquiring, and warning, as seen in Table 2 above. It is further laced with utterances of linguistic borrowing and semantic shifts.

Informing

Based on table 2 above, informing is a dominant practal function as it accounted for the most frequent (60%) practal function of pre-boarding categoriality pract. This may be so because information is needed at the motor parks and bus stops; even drivers inform one another of happenings on their way and in the park, just as seen in the extract below. In Text 1a for instance, a bus driver, while waiting for his turn for commuters to board his vehicle, had an encounter with one of the casual workers (*agbero*) at the motor park. After the uproar, sitting with a colleague in their usual mannerism made the following statement to a colleague:

Text 1a: The behaviour of *agberos* in this park is getting out of hand.

In the above statement, the speaker, a bus driver at the park, is informing the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) Chairman of his experience with one of the *agberos*, in the park which has led to his conclusion that the excesses of the *agberos* in that park is getting out of hand. *Agbero* in the above extract is a pragmatic act that expresses the pragmeme of thugs or hoodlums. This can also be substantiated by several other concrete pragmatic acts from the Yoruba language where it was borrowed, depending on the context of usage. In transportation, which is our concern, an *agbero* could be a conductor or tout. A person who assists passengers in boarding vehicles, collects fares, and helps the driver navigate through traffic. In a broader sense, an *agbero* could mean a hustler or a troublemaker. According to Mey (2001), if pragmatic acts are context-derived and context-constrained, the context within which the lexicon *agbero* was used suggests the same as above. It could also be deduced that the speaker in his speech is stating the identifiable excesses of the so-called *agberos* at the park. Making use of a sentence like; *The behaviours of* and *is getting out of hand* is a pointer to informing, showing that the speaker is giving the listener a piece of information.

The lexicon *agbero* is a borrowed word from the Yoruba language coinage. It was coined from the noun phrase *Ah-geh-roh*. The speaker's choice of the lexicon can be understood or interpreted in line with Silverstein's (2004) argument which states that wherever a word or

an expression is used in an utterance, it indicates specific values within the knowledge of the schemata. In addition, the lexicon *agbero*, drawn from the immediate society, is used and accepted by the users to determine the meaning of the lexicon. This buttresses the claim of Allan, Kecskes and Capone (2016) that a pragmeme is a situated speech act where the rules of language and that of society combine to determine the intended meaning as a socially recognised object, sensitive to social expectations about the situation in which interpretation is embedded.

Requesting

Requesting's 20% frequency under the pre-boarding categoriality pract may not be far from the fact that in pre-boarding, bus conductors, as well as commuters, make various requests such as, the destination of the bus, the route it will follow, denominations of currencies held by commuters, and so on, to have a trouble-free ride. A good example of requesting is seen in Text 1b where a commuter is putting a request across to a bus driver, hence:

Text 1b: Could you please *carry me* to Mile 2?

The speaker here is literarily requesting the bus driver to take him to a destination he intends to go to; Mile 2. In most cases, linguistic elements like; *could* and *please* are often used for requests. This is so because requests come with some degree of politeness. According to Collins English Dictionary (2016), the meanings of the word *carry* are: i. to hold or move something from one place to another, ii. to support or bear the weight of something, to bear or endure a feeling or emotion, iii. to have a thought or idea that persists, to convey or transmit information, idea or message, iv. to spread or propagate something, v. to continue or sustain an activity, process or situation, vi. to maintain or uphold a standard, tradition or responsibility, vii. to transfer a value or quantity from one place to another, viii. behave in a certain manner. With the above list of the meanings of *carry*, it is evident that there is to some degree, a semantic extension of its meaning as used in the above extract. The meaning of *carry* in the above extract is extended to relate to an animate object too (human beings), instead of only inanimate and abstract objects. This can be attributed to a direct translation of the word *carry-gbe-* from the Yoruba language, which is used for both animate and inanimate objects. Nevertheless, the semantic content of most SE words used in PNE are either shifted or extended beyond their denotations in the Nigerian sociolinguistic context, yet their meanings are still properly conveyed just as is seen in the lexicon *carry* as used in the extract above.

Inquiring

Mostly, inquiring as used by Lagos commercial motorists at motor parks and bus stops does not appear as a request for information or a wish/desire to know something; it is usually used as felicitation. This is seen in Test 1c where a commercial bus driver, in a bid to exchange pleasantries with a colleague, had to say:

Test 1c: *Chairman how far?*

In Standard English, *how far* functions as a noun phrase so, it does not make complete sense nor pass for a complete interrogative construct as it appears to be. However, *how far* in Nigerian Pidgin English is a common greeting or inquiry that can have different meanings depending on the context of its usage. A few possible interpretations of it are: i. how are you doing? ii. What's up? iii. How's business? iv. How's life treating you? So, in

this context, *how far* is a pragmatic act with either of the above-stated pragmemes.

Again, for the speaker to have used the above utterance, there must have been an established shared situation knowledge (SSK) by the interactants (Mey, 2001). This also takes us back to Allan, Kecskes and Capone's (2016) definition of pragmeme which states that it is a situated speech act where the rules of language and that of the immediate society where language is used, come together to determine the meaning of an utterance. This definition suggests that the sociolinguistic context where an utterance is made has to be put into consideration during meaning-making. If this is put into consideration, then the utterance above is meaningful. *Chairman, how far*, performs diverse speech acts but in this context, inquiry is identified. This is because commercial motorists use *how far* to inquire about the well-being of one another. This is justified by the fact that when the utterance (*Chairman how far?*) is said to someone at the motor park, the response is usually *fine, thank you, or I dey!!*, as the case may be, or if the addressee feels otherwise, he would respond in the negative. It is also necessary to know that the person addressed in the extract as *Chairman* is not a chairman in the real sense of it. The lexicon *Chairman* is a general sociolinguistic expression used by the motor park community to make an addressee feel important, highly placed and respected; hence, situating the meaning of the lexicon *Chairman* in the contextual usage.

Urging

At most bus stops/motor parks in Lagos, bus conductors are usually seen urging commuters to board their buses in a bid to take off fast. A good example of this illustration is seen in Text 1d where a bus conductor is urging a potential passenger to walk into the motor park and board his bus instead of boarding one outside the park.

Text 1d: *Enter the garage, enter the garage come see the bus you go join*

The above speaker, a bus conductor, is not only preventing the on-coming commuters from taking a roadside vehicle but also urging them to take their vehicle which is parked inside the motor park otherwise known as *garage*. The repetition of, *enter the garage* depicts urging in NPE which cannot be disassociated from the resultant effect of the domestication, nativization, and acculturation of the English language in Nigeria (Jowitt, 2000). This is further buttressed by Odebunmi (2006) who holds that the socio-cultural differences that exist between the English people and Nigerians allow new lexical items to develop. Most Nigerian words; especially in the south-western (*kia-kia, were-were*,) are repeated for emphasis, hence, *enter the garage, enter the garage*. Furthermore, to a certain degree, there is a semantic shift in the use of the word *garage* in the utterance above. The Standard English meaning of the word *garage* has been altered as the intended meaning of the speaker is a *motor park* where commercial vehicles are parked, waiting for commuters, and not an outbuilding or part of a building for housing automobiles (*garage*). This usage in Lagos State motor parks has yielded a semantic change as a different intention for the word (*garage*) is shared in that community and has become established in its usage.

Warning

Warning is one of the least frequently used practical functions under pre-boarding. Warning in this study occurred as two commuters were waiting for a bus to board, one made a move to join a moving vehicle that seemed suspicious while the other tried warning him. The

interlocutors here are two commuters by the bus stop. An example of warning as a practical function under pre-boarding categoriality pract is seen in text 1e.

Text 1e: Don't board that cab, it is a *one-chance*

A warning is a statement, signal, or alert that informs someone of a potential/imminent danger, risk, or problem. *Don't board that cab* in the above text is an obvious warning. The lexicon *don't* is a negation and a warning pointer, while *don't board that cab* is an outright, obvious warning. To further buttress this, the speaker did not only warn the intended passenger but went on to say the reason why he should not board the cab -*it is a one chance*. The term *one chance* originated in Lagos State in the 1990s when an unsuspecting commuter boarded a bus along the road whose conductor was shouting, *one chance, one chance*, meaning, *there was just a vacant seat left in the vehicle*. On the way, the vehicle occupants robbed him of his belongings and threw him out of the moving vehicle (nairaland.com). *One chance* is a pragmatic act that expresses the pragmeme *danger, impersonator with criminal intent, criminal-minded occupants*, and so on. So, in the utterance above, the speaker is *warning* the commuter that the occupants in the vehicle he was trying to board looked suspicious of having criminal intent.

Boarding

Boarding is another categoriality pract found in the lexical choices of Lagos commercial motorists and commuters. In organised boarding, commuters are seen in a long queue boarding a bus one after the other while the conductors of the buses are seen standing by the side of their buses, giving the boarding commuters necessary information and making some requests from the commuters. On some occasions, when boarding is unorganised, that is, when there are more commuters than the available buses, boarding becomes chaotic, as commuters would have to struggle their way into the buses. In other cases, buses and some commuters wait for other commuters to join the bus to make a *full load*. Boarding in this study is characterised by three practical functions namely; informing, requesting, and urging, as presented in Table 3 above. Boarding categoriality pract is marked by lexicons of linguistic borrowing, linguistic coinages, and semantic shifts.

Informing

Informing, the most frequently used practical function in the Pre-Boarding categoriality pract is coincidentally the most frequently used practical function of Boarding categoriality pract. This may not be disassociated with the fact that commuters, as well as drivers and conductors/request information from one another as they get on the bus or embark on the journey to various destinations. A clear case of informing under this categoriality pract is seen in Text 2a.

Text 2a: The driver won't move the bus until he gets *full-load*.

In the above extract, a commuter was informing a seatmate -another commuter- who was prompting the driver to start moving that the vehicle would not move until it is filled up. *Full-load* is a hyphenated compounding of an adjective (full) and a noun (load), which could be similar to compounding like blackboard and cupboard -solid compounding. But in *full-load*, the referent to as *load* in this context are human beings who are to be conveyed from one point to another, and not load as in weight or quantity of goods. *Full-load* in this context is a linguistic transfer from the Popular Nigerian English (PNE) usage. Hence, a linguistic semantic extension of the meaning from goods (*load*) to human beings.

Requesting

As found in this study under Boarding categoriality pract, *Requesting* is mostly used by bus conductors and commuters. Requesting in Lagos State motor parks/bus stops is the act of asking for something (by a commuter to a bus conductor/conductor or vice versa). The below extract from Text 2b is an example of requesting under the boarding categoriality pract.

Text 2b: Wole pelu *change e o*, emi oni *change o!* Enter with your *change*, *I no have change o!*

The utterance above was made by a conductor to his potential passengers, requesting them to board the bus with their *change* handy. The first obvious linguistic approaches used in the extract are code-mixing and code-switching. In the above text, it is obvious that the bus conductor is requesting the commuters boarding the vehicle to board with their *change* - *Wole pelu change e o*. This means the commuters should board the vehicle with the exact fare to their various destinations handy. He did not stop at that, he went further to say the reason for his request - *emi oni change o*- meaning, he does not have smaller denominations of the Nigerian currency to give to them as their balance if they give him a larger currency denomination; hence, *I no have change o!* Text 2b is also one with code-mixing, that is, it has a mixture of the Yoruba code and the PNE code - *wole pelu change e o, emi oni change o*- and code-switching; which is, the switching from the Yoruba code to the Pidgin English code -Enter with your *change*, *I no have change o!* The lexicon *change* as used here refers to the amount of money given back to someone as a balance from a certain high currency denomination given for their bus fare. The use of the word *change* in this context has some connotations of semantic shift in the sense that *change* is used in the place of balance.

Urging

Urging as seen in this study is a way of persuasion that comes normally from a bus conductor to a commuter(s) to do something as seen in Text 2c where a bus conductor is urging a group of commuters to board his bus, hurriedly.

Text 2c: Enter, enter *sharperly!*

In the above text, the repetition of the lexicon *enter* denotes urging as seen in most Nigerian languages. The idea behind this repetition is that saying a word once is not powerful enough to buttress urging, hence the repetition. Repetition of words has already been encountered and addressed above. They are products of emphasis and linguistic transfer. Word stress in Yoruba sentences is marked by the repetition of the word emphasised; this, the conductor transferred to the English language; *enter enter, sharperly! Sharperly* is a slang that originated from the motor parks/bus stops in Nigeria, and it is overtly used by commercial motorists. The coinage comes from the lexicon *sharp*. Before now the slang used to express haste was *sharp sharp*. As time went on, with the dynamic nature of language, it now changed to *shaperly*.

On-board

On-board is the third categoriality pract found in the language use of the Lagos commercial motorists and commuters. Here, passengers are all seated and the vehicle is moving to a specified destination. Commuters are seen discussing with one another, the driver requesting or instructing the conductor to do something, the conductor giving commuters information about the journey, the driver shouting out at another driver on the road, and so on. On-board is characterised by eight practal functions, the highest number of practal

functions in on-board categoriality pract. This may be because on-board, when the actual movement of commuters from one point to another, is characterised by many requests/inquiries to avoid mistakes that might impede a smooth journey to desired destinations. The practal functions found here include; informing, requesting, instructing, warning, demanding, complaining, appealing, and felicitating. This is illustrated in Table 4 above. On-board is further marked by linguistic borrowings, linguistic coinages, and semantic shifts.

Informing

Informing. Being the highest practal function in On-Board categoriality pract should not be a surprise as, the three language users, -commercial drivers, conductors, and commuters- in this study at, one time or the other, need one piece of information or another. In some instances, it is the bus driver who informs his conductor about something or vice versa; in some other instances, it is the conductor who informs the commuters or vice versa, as seen in Text 3a where the bus conductor, after seeing that the road was traffic free, shouted out at the bus driver to divert into the next lane as he moved.

Text 3a: *Oga, carry go the road clear.*

The complete utterance in Text 3a -*Oga, carry go, the road clear*- is a product of the Pidgin English which is translated, thus: Boss, you can move on, *the road is clear*. This translation into SE has brought about an element of ambiguity in *the road is clear*. In SE or PNE, the expression, *the road is clear*, there is no roadblock, there are no checkpoints, there are no Federal Road Safety Officers on the road, there are on police officers on the road, and other stop and check situations common in Nigerian roads generally. Going by the Pidgin English translation, it is obvious that the bus conductor is informing his *Oga* –the bus driver- about the situation on the road. The opening of the utterance above, *Oga. carry go* is a Pidgin slang that originated from Lagos commercial motorist and later spread to most motor packs in the country. The word *Oga* is a borrowed lexicon from the Yoruba language which means *boss* while *carry go* means move on, there are no obstacles, or, the road is free.

Requesting

Requesting is to politely or officially ask for something. Requesting occurs when a bus conductor asks a commuter to do something; the commuter requests something from the conductor or a fellow commuter; the bus driver requests the conductor to carry out a task; or the bus conductor to another bus driver. An example of requesting is seen in Text 3b.

Text 3b: *I beg comot this Molue for road make I pass joor.*

In the above text, a *Danfo* bus conductor is requesting that another bus driver leaves the road for his bus to gain access hence the locution *I beg comot this Molue for road make I pass joor*. This is a Pidgin English/Yoruba construction, meaning, *please remove this Molue from the way so that I can gain access*. *I beg* is a Pidgin English phrase which means *please, or kindly*, while *joor* is a Yoruba word that also means *please*. When the lexicon *please* or *kindly* opens a sentence, it signifies the onset of a request. The Pidgin English lexicon *comot* is a coinage from *come out*, used to mean, 'remove from', 'get away from', or 'get out of'. In the utterance above -which is our concern-, it is used as remove from. *Molue* is a term used in Nigeria to refer to a large rickety bus often in a state of disrepair, used for public transportation. The lexicon *Molue* is derived from the Yoruba language meaning to carry many things or to be loaded. It is also believed that it is a coinage from the English words, *mould it*; perhaps referring to the construction of the vehicle. The *Molue* is a

privately owned commercial bus in Lagos, seating about forty-four commuters in the bus, with a long steel metal or long wood as a seat, to sit as many as four or more commuters. It also has a long vertical rod at the middle section of the roof area of the bus, running from the front of the bus to the back, where other commuters without seats (maybe more than the number with seats) hold on to, standing, while the bus is on motion. All these characterises the name *Molue*.

Instructing

Referring to table 4 above, Instructing is the third most frequently used practical function of the on-board categoriality pract. In this study, Instructing is seen from the bus driver to his conductor when the bus driver instructs his conductor to carry out a task. This is clearly illustrated in Text 3c when an officer of the Lagos State Transport Management Agency, popularly known as LASTMA, apprehended a bus driver for driving on a lane meant only for Lagos State Government buses. The bus driver quickly instructed his conductor to *arrange* for the LASTMA.

Text 3c: Ojo, *arrange* for LASTMA

Text 3c above is a Pidgin English construction with which a bus driver gave his conductor an instruction to *arrange* for LASTMA. *Ojo*, obviously is the name of the bus conductor who the bus driver called and gave an instruction to *arrange* for the LASTMA. The lexicon *arrange* is a slang for southwestern motorists which means to give a certain amount of money as a bribe to someone. The driver now in his utterance - *Ojo, arrange for that LASTMA* - means that Ojo should give some specified amount of money to the LASTMA officer as a bribe so that he would let them go unprosecuted. Normally the amount of money to be given is usually known to all parties. The same lexicon –*arrange*–, portrays a semantic shift as used in the construction above. *Arrange*, which means 'to plan'; 'to prepare for', or 'to put in a particular order' is now used to mean, putting some amount of money together for someone as a bribe.

Warning

Warning in this study was used only once. This cannot be disassociated with the fact that among the locutions of commercial motorists, there is hardly a need for warning, and so, warnings are not frequently used. Consequently, the second warning practical function in this study is seen in text 3d where a bus driver shouts out a warning to another bus driver.

Text 3d: If you hit *my body*, you go pay o!

The above utterance can be translated as, “If you bash my car, you will pay.” In the above utterance, the body of the vehicle is referred to as *my body*. This utterance is typically an utterance of Lagos commercial motorists. They feel that saying, my car/vehicle's body is too lengthy, let alone saying, the body of my vehicle/car. So, in a bid to cut it short, they arrived at *my body*. In Nigerian Pidgin English, when the lexicon *o* ends an utterance, it signifies one of/or two things: warning and/or emphasis. In the above context, the speaker ended the above utterance with *o* as both a warning and an emphasis.

Demanding

Demanding, as captured in Table 4 above, is one of the least frequently used practical functions. Demanding practical function had only one appearance and accounted for 3.7% frequency. This is because demanding as a practical function is tied to the fact that demanding is only used by one of the three interactants in this investigation, the commuter.

To demand means to ask for something authoritatively, in a way that shows that one does not expect to be refused what is being demanded. Mostly, on-board demand comes from commuters who have given a higher than their fare currency denomination to the conductors and are demanding their balance. This demand is made authoritatively because conductors are in the habit of pretending to have forgotten that certain commuters gave them a currency higher than their fares, for their fares to be deducted. It is generally believed that bus conductors intentionally collect the money and keep quiet, hoping that commuters would forget to ask for their balance. If the commuters eventually forget to ask for the balance, the conductors keep it. A good example of this is seen in Text 3e where a commuter is demanding for her *change* from the conductor of the bus she boarded.

Text 3e: Conductor, *give me my change*.

Text 3e above can be classified as a Pidgin English construction -because of the use of the lexicon *change*. The commuter here gave the bus conductor a higher currency denomination for her fare to be deducted from and the bus conductor is pretending not to remember. So, the commuter is authoritatively demanding for her *change*. A bus conductor is responsible for collecting fares from or selling tickets to passengers, assisting passengers, and announcing stops, amongst other duties. In larger towns or cities, a conductor sells tickets on a bus or other public vehicles. It is a common feature in many local bus services, in larger towns and cities to have conductors to help out by overseeing the happenings in the vehicles, including collecting fares from commuters. The lexicon *conductor* has since been adopted and is still in use in Nigerian motor parks and bus stops for someone who follows and helps commercial drivers in their vehicles, mainly, to collect transport fares from commuters.

Complaining

Complaining is an expression of dissatisfaction or annoyance about something or telling someone that something is wrong. Complaining as a practical function in this study is usually seen between a conductor and a bus driver, a conductor and another conductor, a commercial vehicle driver and another, or between commuters in the same commercial vehicle as clearly seen in Text 3f below where a commuter is complaining to another in the same vehicle that their driver is rough.

Text 3f: This *Danfo* driver is rough.

After carefully observing the driving conduct of the *Danfo* bus driver a commuter boarded, he concluded that the driver was rough and decided to share his observation with his seatmate on the bus; hence the utterance in Text 3f -*This Danfo driver is rough*. The lexicon *Danfo* is a popular coinage used for a specific type of 12 – 14-seater bus used in Lagos by commercial motorists. The name *Danfo* is derived from the Yoruba language, which means, *hurry* or *fast*. Other people also interpret it as sitting alone on a seat in the bus. The derivation of this word is from the comparison of the *Danfo* and the *Molue* buses, where in the former, a commuter sits alone in a fast-moving commercial vehicle, with no room for *standing*, and in the latter, a long metallic seat is *moulded* for as many as 4 passengers who sit shoulder to shoulder, with others standing (see text 3b above).

Appealing

Appealing is another practical function that is scarcely used in this type of investigation. Nevertheless, appealing practical function appeared once in the on-board categoricity practical. Appealing is the act of making a special or serious request for something to be done in one's favour. As earlier stated, this practical function is hardly seen to be used between interactants in this kind of study, hence the only one found was used by a driver to a passenger, as seen in Text 3g.

Text 3g: *Oga, abeg, drop make you take Okada come meet us for front, Road Safety go catch me.*

The above location, -*Oga, abeg, drop make you take Okada come meet us for front, Road Safety go catch me*- is a Pidgin English construction which means, *kindly alight from the bus and join us again somewhere in the front after we must have driven past the Road Safety Officers so they don't apprehend me for overloading.* *Abeg* is a Pidgin English word that means *please or kindly*. The *Danfo* bus has two seats at the front which logically should seat not more than two commuters, but this *Danfo* driver had three commuters squeezing in the seat meant for two. On seeing the Federal Road Safety Commission Officers ahead, he pleaded with the third passenger to take an *Okada* and join them at the front, far away from the Federal Road Safety Commission Officers. The lexicon *Oga* is borrowed from the Yoruba language, which means *Boss* (see Text 3a above). Using the word *Oga* to address someone could be an ego-massaging act, depending on the speaker's intention. In Nigeria, *Okada* refers to a popular mode of transportation -motorcycles used for commercial transportation. The term *Okada* originated from the name of a Nigerian businessman, Chief Augustine Okada, from Okada town in Benin, Edo State of Nigeria, who founded the Okada Airline in the 1980s. The Airline coincidentally folded up about the same time these motorcycles started coming into Nigeria. Okada town was where the motorcycle first gained prominence, hence *Okada* became synonymous with the motorcycle.

Felicitating

Felicitating refers to expressing congratulations, praise, or goodwill to someone on a special occasion, achievement, or milestone. It could also mean the exchange of pleasantries. This could be so because interactants here may not have any business felicitating with one another on-board. If they must felicitate, they would either do so at the pre-boarding or the boarding stages. This explains why felicitating in this categoriality pract has a low frequency distribution. The only identified felicitating practal function in this study ensued between a *Danfo* driver and a police officer as the driver was driving past.

Text 3h: *Officer I, twalay!*

The utterance above is a Pidgin English construction with a slang word. In the above scenario, a *Danfo* driver was driving past and saw a police officer. He then decided to extend felicitation by saying, *Officer I, twalay*. The lexicon *twalay* is believed to have originated from the Yoruba language where *tua leyin* means, *how are you doing?* or *how is life treating you?* It is also a casual way of asking about someone's well-being or state of mind which is similar to saying, *how is it going?* or *what's up?* in informal settings. In this context, *twalay* is a friendly and informal greeting often used among friends or in casual social settings. The lexicon *Officer* is a general title given to all uniform personnel -not minding their ranks- by commercial motorists anywhere they find them

Disembarking

Disembarking is the act of leaving or alighting from a commercial vehicle after getting to one's destination. Disembarking in this study is the categoriality pract with the least number of practal functions- just one. This is expected because little or no conversation is done during disembarking, as all discussions during any journey are done at the pre-boarding, boarding, and on-board stages. As such, disembarking in this study is characterised by only Requesting practal function as captured in Table 1 above.

Requesting

Requesting practical function is the only practical function identified in disembarking categoriality pract. As earlier observed, this is solely associated with the fact that the discussants here carry out almost all discussions at the pre-boarding, boarding, and on-board stages of their journey. Requesting is an act of asking for something politely as earlier illustrated in Text 4 below.

Text 4: Can I have my *balance*, please?

The above utterance started and ended with the lexicons; *can* and *please*, respectively. These lexicons are pointers to politeness. In the text above, a commuter on a bus, after getting to his destination and on the verge of alighting from the bus, turned to the bus conductor and requested his balance. The word *balance* in this context is the amount left after the bus fare has been deducted. Presumably, for the speaker to have asked for his balance from the bus conductor, he must have before now, given the bus conductor a currency denomination, higher than the fare to his destination. Again, *Can I have my balance please* is a pragmatic act that expresses the pragmeme, *give me what is authentically mine*. The speaker may have used the above expression just to be polite.

Conclusion

Four categoriality practs -pre-boarding, boarding, on-board, and disembarking- were found in this study, from which seventeen practical functions were identified. Seven of the identified practical functions appeared under more than one categoriality practs, making the types of practical functions found in the study, ten. They are; informing, instructing, requesting, inquiring, urging, warning, appealing, felicitating, demanding, and complaining. The study has shown that each categoriality pract derived its contents from the interactions between commercial motorists and commuters. Also, each lexical choice is aimed at a function, hence, the practical functions. Therefore, the utterances by Lagos motorists and commuters perform pragmatic functions. The utterances identified in the study have a mixed colouration of Popular Nigerian English and Nigerian Pidgin English. These are further garnished with some linguistic borrowings and semantic shifts. However, all categories of utterances and usage are adapted to the pragmatics of local interactions to achieve the meanings intended by the interactants. The linguistic borrowings and the code-mixing/code-switching found in the study are peculiarities that identify the language use of Lagos commercial motorists and their commuters. It is near impossible to separate a people from the culture and sociological patterns they are accustomed to, so too it is to try to isolate a language from interacting with another in the same environment; owing to the social-linguistic ways of the life of users. This study has not only provided access to the intended meanings of words in commercial motorists and commuters' communication, it has also given insights into the degree of the adaptation and nativization of the English language in the environment. Future research can compare the characteristics of the words used by commercial motorists in Lagos with those of other parts of Nigeria.

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