

Gricean Pragmatics and the English Language in Nigeria

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Received : 11.05.2021
Accepted : 03.06.2021
Published : 30.06.2021

Abstract

This paper is an aphoristic assessment of certain day-to-day, common and uncommon-place expressions in different domains in the Nigerian linguistic world. It is also a study of some cogent but differentiable pragmatic principles which may serve as the panacea for the inadequacies in Gricean pragmatics. A revision of the Gricean Cooperative Principle to foreground the strength of the theory and the observation of its weaknesses informed the mitigation of the wimpiness in it, with more entrenching approaches such as pragmatic presupposition, conversational implicature and common ground. The framework for the analysis of the twelve selected Nigerian English expressions is mainly Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle. The samples were randomly selected from the social media chats and other informal settings. The concluding remark urges the user of the Grice's principle to possibly triangulate the theory with other context-dependent theories such as the Mutual Contextual Beliefs (MCB) or the Common Ground (CG) to mitigate the unidirectional approach of Grice's theory to meaning interpretation. Without a Common Ground shared by Nigerians in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural contexture and relative affinity, accurate meaning interpretation and understanding of the English Language spoken and written by Nigerians may have been continuously unrealizable. Meaning interpretation amongst Nigerians is thus made possible because they share similar grounds of political history, culture and religion, among other ties.

Keywords Gricean pragmatics, English language, cooperative principle, conversational implicature, pragmatic presupposition, common ground

1. Introduction

Generally, meaning has been said to be "intractable in nature (Odebunmi, 2006, p.4)". The truth in support of this position is that meaning is primarily and ultimately social, and different people come into explicating it with diverse orientations. Inputs into the pool of meaning have come from philosophy, psychology, neurology, semiotics and linguistics. In the case of philosophers, they seek to know "how anything means something and what sort of relation must hold between X and Y for it to be the case that X means Y (Cruse 2000, p.11)". This thinking is not in a disparate sense from the reasoning of H.P. Grice and others who have contributed to natural and non-natural meaning in scholarship. To help draw a line between the incidental

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transfer of information, and communication proper, we have sought to appeal to an important idea of the philosopher, Grice (1957). Distinguishing between what he calls 'natural meaning' (as in palp water is palp), and non-natural meaning or meaning-*nn* (equivalent to the notion of intentional communication), Grice gives the following characterization of meaning-*nn*:

- (1) S meant-*nn* z by uttering U if and only if:
 (i) S intended U to cause some effect z in recipient H
 (ii) S intended (i) to be achieved simply by H recognizing that intention (i)

Here, S stands for speaker (in the case of spoken communication; for sender or communicator in other cases); H for hearer, or more accurately, the intended recipient; "uttering U" for utterance of a linguistic token, i.e., a sentence part, sentence or string of sentences or sentence parts (or the production of non-linguistic communicative acts); and z for (roughly) some belief or volition invoked in H. In the words of Levinson (1995, p.16), "such a definition is likely to be opaque at first reading, but what it essentially states, is that communication consists of the 'sender' intending to cause the 'receiver' to think or do something, just by getting the 'receiver' to recognize that the 'sender' is trying to cause that thought or action".

The distinction between meaning and use has found many applications in philosophy, linguistics and artificial intelligence. Both the analytic/synthetic distinction, which relies on a conception of truth by virtue of meaning, and the idea of a conversational implicature requires for their full philosophical development a theory of meaning starting with his 1957 paper "Meaning" and elaborated in later papers (see Grice 1968, 1969, 1982). The basic idea was to distinguish two notions of meaning: what a sentence means in general apart from any use of it, and what a specific speaker means by using the sentence on a particular occasion. Grice sees the latter notion as entirely a matter of what the speaker intends. Grice's idea was to show that the abstract notion of sentence meaning was to be understood in terms of what specific speakers intend on specific occasions.

1.1. *Conversational Implicature*

Conversational implicatures are things that a hearer can roughly work out from the way something was said rather than what was said. People process conversational implicatures all of the time and are mostly, unaware of doing so. For example, if someone asks, "Could you close the door?" the hearer does not usually answer "Yes", instead they perform the non-linguistic act of closing the door. In this case, although the speaker used a form of words that is conversationally a question, the hearer can infer that the speaker is making a request.

Grice's theory of Conversational Implicatures proposes that participants in a communicative exchange are guided by a principle that determines the way in which language is used with maximum efficiency and effect to achieve rational communication. He called it the Cooperative Principle (2008). Grice (2013) writes an addendum to his earlier statements on implicatures by updating this knowledge with Material and Behavioural Implicatures having

benefitted greatly from pieces of advice, feedbacks and encouragements from Nichola Allot, Noel Burton-Roberts, Robyn Carston, Mikhail Kissine, Agustin Vicente and Deirdre Milson and a partial support from the Spanish government, research project.

In the recent contribution to implicature, Grice mentions ‘particularized conversational implicatures’. According to him, “in some cases, it is possible to reconstruct the inference from the explicit content of the utterance to the implicature without employing a premise to the effect that the speaker expressed that content (by means of an utterance)”. Grice calls these ‘material implicatures’. Those whose reconstruction relies on a premise about the speaker’s verbal behaviour, by contrast, I call ‘behavioural implicatures’. After showing that the division is theoretically significant, I ask whether current pragmatic theory is able to accommodate it. I conclude that, while (neo)-Gricean pragmatics cannot do so straightforwardly, the distinction is already implicit in Relevance theory.

Grice (1975) comes up with four set of rules or rather maxims in an attempt to further streamline his standpoint. These maxims, he claims, should form the guideline for an effective communication.

- i. Maxim of Quality: Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say what you lack adequate evidence.
- ii. Maxim of Quantity: Make your contribution as informative as is required; do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
- iii. Maxim of Relevance: Be relevant. Make your contribution in relation to the topical discourse.
- iv. Maxim of Manner: Be perspicuous; do not be ambiguous; avoid obscurity of expression.

These maxims according to Grice (1975) should be the prototype guideline in every human communication. In many of the Nigerian English expressions which we have exemplified in the data analysis’ section, we may find that many interlocutors can fail to adhere to the maxims in a variety of ways, some mundane, some inadvertent (cf. Lindblom 2016, p.153). According to Leech (1980), the Gricean maxims are not as strongly regulative as grammatical rules and are therefore broken quite often. Therefore, these maxims can be broken into:

- a. Flouting the Rules: A speaker blatantly fails to observe the maxim at the level of what is said, with the deliberate intention of generating an implied meaning. An example of an irrelevant response is given below:
Chioma: Emeka, will you still marry me?
Emeka: Is the Pope a Catholic?
- b. Violating the Rule: A speaker utters misleading utterances
Mrs. Abah: Amaka did you take some apples and oranges in the refrigerator?
Amaka: Mummy, I ...took some fruits.

The speaker has violated the rules of quantity, relevance and manner. She subtly gave more than required information.

- c. Opting Out: A speaker opts out of a maxim when he or she is unwilling to cooperate.
Chukwu: What's your take on President Buhari's attitude towards insecurity in the South West?
Daura: Well, I'll rather not comment on the insecurity situation all over Nigeria.
- d. By Infringing: Though not deliberate, it is a speaker's failure to observe a maxim.

According to Bossan (2017:68), "sometimes it may be due to impairment or incompetence in the language in other respects, typical cases of implicature as regards the maxim of Quantity is often observed in *tautology*. The maxim of Quality is not adhered to in cases where irony, metaphor, sarcasm, etc., are being used."

In the last three decades, there has been a burgeoning number of researchers investigating conversational implicature and Grice's principles. These critics have attacked from two opposing directions. Some critics argue that Grice's maxims are not sufficiently worked out to explain many of the phenomena raised related to implicature. For example, in the sentence, "Joan believes that some of her students will fail, even though the contained sentence is not asserted. In another direction, Wilson and Sperber (1981) and separately, Bardzokas, argue that Grice's principles can be derived from more general principles and should be understood in the context of some version of relevance theory.

1.2. *English Language in Nigeria*

'Two sides of a coin' is a phrase suitable for the description of the terms, English Language in Nigeria and Nigerian English. While the former expresses the status and functionality of the English Language in Nigeria, the latter expresses the corpora and the usages of the language in Nigeria. In the present scheme, my interest is in relating Grice's (1975) theory of meaning in the communicative, interpersonal meaning-making processes to the unscripted conversations among Nigerians. Thus, there is a sense in which the Gricean maxims can adequately explain the written and spoken utterances of Nigerians.

According to Awonusi (2004, p.46), "the historical development of the English Language in Nigeria falls into three main circles:

- (a) The period before the advent of missionary education; 1400-1842,
- (b) The period after the introduction of missionary education to the time of the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates into Nigeria; 1842-1914,
- (c) The period beyond the amalgamation to the introduction of self-rule, during independence, the civilian republic and years of military interregnum; 1914 to 1990 (present day).

These periods accommodated the importation, the transformations and the unending metamorphosis of the English Language in Nigeria today. The trends of new usages and new meanings as well as the trends of new contexts have taken over from the years of purism and rule-governedness although still tenaciously being advocated and propagated by the likes of Ganiyu Bamgbose, a.k.a G.A.B., amongst many others. Thus, Nigerian English expressions are no longer controversial. Eka (2005, p. 53) sums up the issues validating the existence of Nigerian English when he states that: “the questions of “correctness” or “wrongness” have vanished into the annals of history “acceptability”, “intelligibility” and “communicativeness” are the binding forces for all Englishes and for their projected existence as variants of the English language.

The reports of Iwara (2008) in his inaugural lecture titled: *The Linguistic Situation in Nigeria and its Implications for Sustainable Development* capture almost all the vital information (on the history, the politics, the sociology (see Akindele and Adegbite 1999), the growth and the unending pragmatic changes in the new Englishes) needed by upcoming researchers. In Nigeria, at independence in 1960, the burning question that agitated the minds of many people, especially politicians and politically-aware academics and journalists was: What language should newly independent Nigeria adopt as its national language? Newspapers published several comments and essays on the topic at the time, most of them opposed to the continuing use of the colonial language as the official language of the country. In particular, the *West Africa Pilot*, the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Times* all published articles calling for the selection of one indigenous speech form to serve as the national language. After all the nasty debates in the parliament, the *Daily Express* duly warned that “parliament should be more careful about involving itself in the language tangle into which it is now being drawn. English is the accepted official language, the one outward expression of all that unites the various peoples in the country...To seek to replace English with some vernacular at a particular date-line is asking for more than the greatest nationalist of them all can handle”.

Akere (2004, p. 262) adds his voice to the status which the English Language assumes in Nigeria by saying that, “English became the language in which the educated elite of the different ethnic groups could communicate with one another”. He expatiated further that “the gradual movement towards nationhood and the development of an intricate system of political, administrative, and economic organization necessitated a change in the status and a widening of the range of functional roles served by some of the indigenous languages. It became the language of communication across ethnic boundaries in addition to the multifarious functions it was being used to perform in both the public and the private lives of many Nigerians”. Oyeleye (2016, p.20-21) insists that the English language is important for communication dissemination, information sharing, education, socialization, and creativity. Human feelings, thoughts and wishes are expressed through the use of language, and in fact language is used to exercise the authority vested in an individual. English as official language performs these roles for us in a linguistically pluralistic Nigeria”.

The English Language has been described along the levels of linguistics: syntax, phonology, lexico-semantics and pragmatics. Of concern to us in this paper is the Gricean perspective of pragmatics and the exemplary platforms in the Nigerian day-to-day conversations. Egbe (2004, p.304) opines that “there is a wide gap between the effectiveness of communication with Nigerian English as medium, at the grassroots level in rural areas and among the other levels, especially the lower and middle social levels in urban areas. Messages are passed through easily because the people have a common background and more or less identical knowledge of the world (MCB and Common Ground, see Adeoti 2020). There is a close and immediate link between the people, their language and the world around them, and so they describe the world as it is, drawing heavily on nature. This therefore makes room for *pragmatic* creativity in their use of language” A pragmatic summary of Egbe (2004) in his article titled: “Communication at Grassroots Level: A Variety of Language Use in Nigeria” has the following issues as fundamental to the entire identity of Nigerian English.

- Cultural Norms: Age, moral ethics, societal solidarity, family solidarity, avoidance of taboos,
- Concreteness of Language: objects in the world, universal philosophy,
- Effectiveness of Expression: expressiveness, lexical collocation, language security, vocabulary,
- Creativity in Language: Doing things with language, incantations, proverbs, praise songs, story-telling, naming,
- Current Conditions in urban areas: linguistic diversity, the choice of language, inhibitions in communication, socio-economic consequences, pidgin English.

Making a reference to Adetugbo (1979, 1980) and Balogun (1980), Ogu (1992) notes that diachronically, a variety of English (yet to be fully described) has been identified as Nigerian. Kachru (1995) also notes in his foreword to *New English* that the African cannon of the English language (of which Nigerian English is a variety) has been established and recognized and that it is indeed a vital component of World Englishes.

Obviously, there are features at every level of Language that could be marked distinctively as Nigerian (see Ufomata 1990, Jowitt, 1991, Egbe 1996). Rather than belabour the question of whether Nigerian English exists or not, Bangbose, in an article published in the national concord of eleventh of July, 1986 proposed that the concentration should be on the interesting task of specifying, describing and analyzing the forms of the variety (cf. Jibril, 1982). After this publication, a lot has been done on the task of describing the Nigerian English in relation to phonology, syntax, lexis and semantics as mentioned earlier in this section. Notable scholars in these different fields have come out with different data to support their claims that there exists a variety of English that is Nigerian (see Kujore 1985, Ufomata 1990, Jowitt 1991, Banjo 1995). Jowitt claims that there is such an abundance of data that a sizeable team can collect and catalogue. In this paper, some Nigerian English expressions have been sampled for a pragmatic examination from

the theoretical school of H.P. Grice. English Language in Nigeria has continued to transform to forms which pragmatically reflect and mirrors the overall Nigerian society.

2. Method of Data Gathering and Theory

The sampled expressions for this study are phrases, clauses and sentences, about ten in number. The expressions were randomly selected from speakers of the English language in different contexts: domestic, formal, sports, media, classroom, and from research respondents. Grice's theory of pragmatics, called the Cooperative Principle (CP) is employed to capture the representation of selected Nigerian English expressions and show how Nigerians obey or flout the maxims in their unscripted conversations. As there are cultures and different sociolects, so are there meanings which differ from culture to culture and from group to group. Therefore, to mitigate the absolute reliance on Grice's theory in interpreting the Nigerian English expressions, the idea of Common Ground (see Clark 1996/2006) has been of great help as key to a smooth communicative endeavour. Gricean pragmatic theory serves as the tool for the explanation of the sampled expressions for this paper.

A Framework for the analysis of the English Language Expressions in Nigeria

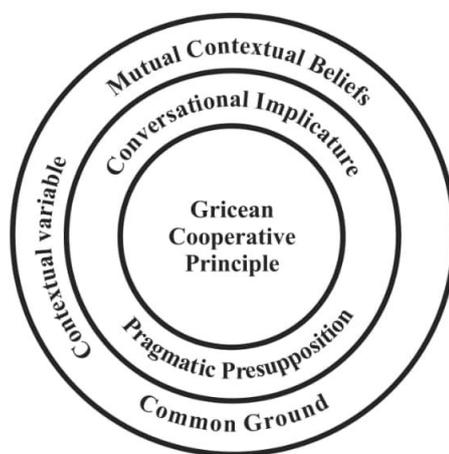


Figure 1. A framework for the Analysis of Nigerian English Expressions in Nigeria

The figure above has three eccentric circles. The inner circle is the wholistic Gricean Cooperative Principle. The outer circle comprises the subsequent contributions of Grice (1982) in his article on conversational implicature and pragmatic presupposition. These strategies are inadequate on their own without a corroborative involvement of contextual variables with mutual and common grounds between the parties involved in the conversational exchange. We must add that these additional strategies in the expanding circle are capable of taking care of texts and activities (Mey, 2001). The framework has been considered in the explanation of Nigerian English common usages sampled for this study.

3. Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents the data and the analysis. The Gricean theory of pragmatics will sufficiently explain the sampled utterances collected for this paper. Grice's cooperative principle is a set of norms that are expected in conversational utterances. It consists of four maxims which we have to follow in order to be cooperative and understood: Maxim of quality, quantity, manner and relations. The analyses below are aimed at finding out if those involved in the conversations from which the utterances emanate actually seek to cooperate with each other to establish agreed meanings, through compliance or non-compliance with the principles.

3.1. Sample 1. "Are you back from work"

This is a hypothetical scenario of an individual returning from his or her place of work. It is quite common to here expressions like "are you coming from work"? This question is often treated as either a rhetorical question or regarded as downright unintelligent. However unintelligent, it may be safe to say such expressions are a common phenomenon in the English vocabulary of Nigeria. To examine this expression with the Gricean cooperative principle, one will have to x-ray the utterance with the CP.

- i. Maxim of Quality: The speaker in this statement flouts the maxim of quality because he lacks adequate evidence of his neighbour's return from work. Although, the neighbour was actually back from office, the statement sounded ridiculous and stupid. There must have been an antecedent of returning very early or late from work which could have informed the speaker's confusion. The actor's response would have sarcastically been: "No I am just going to work", Idiot!
- ii. Maxim of Quantity: There could be a misleading information from the speaker's statement. It also appears to be misrepresentational of the actor. Even in silence, there is communication. The speaker has not actually divulged much information about the personae but has succeeded in misleading the audience. Again, in this Nigerian English expression, the maxim of quantity is flouted.
- iii. Maxim of Relevance: To the actor who is the receiver of the utterance, the speaker's utterance was irrelevant and nonsensical. Rather than welcome the actor, the speaker asked a foolish question which is peculiar of many speakers of Basic Nigerian English.
- iv. Maxim of Manner: The manner in which the sampled question is being asked is perspicuous, ambiguous and obscure. Therefore, the speaker has flouted the maxim of manner. The question he asked the actor is sarcastic and provocative. This Nigerian English expression is common among the not-too-educated Nigerians.

3.2. Sample 2: "I am coming"

- i. Maxim of Quality: There is a falsehood which the speaker or in general terms, speakers of this expression are unaware of. Many

- people, regardless of their social status in the society use this expression on a regular basis in formal and informal contexts. The maxim of quality is therefore flouted in this sample.
- ii. Maxim of Quantity: This statement is usually not informative. Assuming a Chief Executive is expected to respond to a query over a wrong judgement passed by the management of an institution, then the CEO rather than respond to the questions from a Governing Council, excuses himself or herself from the meeting by only saying “I am coming”, there will be some confusion in the house. For instance, a colleague excuses himself from others during a postgraduate viva by simply saying, “I am coming”, whereas he was leaving the venue of the examination. In most homes too, Nigerians use the expression to mean, they “will be right back”. The statement is senseless and rude. That Nigerian English expression therefore flouts the maxim of quantity in several contexts of its usage. It is Nigerian and will make no sense to a native speaker of the English Language.
 - iii. Maxim of Relevance: In this case, the CEO in the illustration above did not react relevantly to the query put forward but rather behaved rudely by walking out of the committee sitting in council. “I am coming” whereas the speaker is leaving, is a direct opposite of the action being taken. The action and the utterance do not correspond and may leave a native speaker of English wondering the contradiction in the utterance since you are not actually coming but leaving. This is a Nigerian English expression which is pragmatically faulty.
 - iv. Maxim of Manner: There is actually no discrete or freestanding relationship between the action usually being performed when the statement, “I am coming” is uttered. There is no precise connection between the statement and the action. Thus, the utterance is obscure.

3.3. *Sample 3: FG has settled all the lecturers and 75% of university lecturers have been paid all their salary arrears*

- i. Maxim of Quality: The term “settlement” is common amongst the Nigeria Police Force officers, civil service and other paramilitary communities where people must pay their way through to achieve whatever is their pursuit. In other words, “bribery” is synonymous with ‘settling’ illegal bills to pave way for a Nigerian where he or she found himself or herself stranded, helpless and vulnerable. The speaker in sample 3 and 4 is a white liar who resorts to propaganda in the bid to satisfy his employer, the Federal Government. He does not have the correct data of lecturers who were registered on the Integrated Personal Payroll System (IPPIS) but insisted that all lecturers in the Federal Universities have received their full salaries.
- ii. Maxim of Quantity: The information being given by the minister who uttered the statement above is false and has neither contributed any vital information nor over provided any

information. He has succeeded in creating ill-feelings between the ranks of lecturers across the country.

- iii. Maxim of Relevance: The statement was regarded as irrelevant by the generality of lecturers who knew they had not been paid salaries for months. The union of lecturers was on strike over the failure of the Federal Government to honour the agreement signed with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in the year 2009 and other failed promises from the FG. To complicate the matter the government was trying to force all the university workers into the IPPIS platform for the payment of salaries and allowances.
- iv. Maxim of Manner: Obviously, the utterance is ambiguous. It is confusing to parents and students who did not understand why ASUU was on strike and why the universities remain closed. The statement has become a Nigerian English express which was not properly expressed.

3.4. *Sample 4: Let me come and be going*

- i. Maxim of Quality: Literally, the expression is contradictory. It sounds as if the speaker is confused. The speaker does not know whether to go or come. Although, the original intention of the speaker is to leave the environment where he or she is almost embarrassed. This is a common Nigerian English expression.
- ii. Maxim of Quantity: There is no concrete information in this expression apart from the resolve to vacate the environment where the speech was made.
- iii. Maxim of Relevance: There is no relevance of content of the utterance to whatever is the topic of discourse. It sounds sarcastic and funny. The probable intention of the speaker is usually to create hilarity.
- iv. Maxim of Manner: The statement is actually ambiguous. The word, "going" and "coming" are two antonyms which if used in a sentence may throw the audience off-balance. However, the deliberate use of the duo in a sentence especially among Nigerians is to create humour and to declare ones dumbfoundedness and decision to keep mute. Walking away is better than implicating oneself.

3.5. *Sample 5: She is my younger sister's daughter/niece*

- i. Maxim of Quality: In Nigeria, only the brotherly and the sisterly relationships are popular. Only the very careful and educated ones will spell out relationships as cousins, nephews, nieces, uncles and aunts. A native speaker of the English language will not create a confusion by calling his or her niece a younger sister or sister's daughter. This is typical of Nigerians.
- ii. Maxim of Quantity: quired; do not make your contribution more informative than is required. Nigerians are fond of supplying more information when describing their kinship relationships. A simple word, "nephew" or "niece" will spare a Nigerian the stress of using longer expressions to describe their relationships with other people.

- iii. Maxim of Relevance: Be relevant. Make your contribution in relation to the topical discourse. Most times when Nigerians make a description of their family relationships, it may be irrelevant and out of place. A native speaker of the English language will hit the nail on the head.
- iv. Maxim of Manner: Be perspicuous; do not be ambiguous; avoid obscurity of expression. Most times when Nigerians begin the very long description of kinship relations, their listeners may find it boring. It could be ambiguous and obscure to a native speaker of English who may be confused if the real word is not used.

3.6. *Sample 6: You are blocking my view*

- i. Maxim of Quality: This is a common expression in classrooms and homes. A student who is unable to see the blackboard or whiteboard as the case may be may ask his classmates to leave his front in order for him to view what the teacher or lecturer has written on the board. At homes too, children ask their siblings to leave the front of the television by claiming their co-siblings are “blocking their views”. Hence, the statement is Nigerian and pragmatically faulty since the “view” of the speaker cannot be blocked as a matter of fact.
- ii. Maxim of Quantity: The statement is informative but not presented using the right lexical items. It is a common expression which cannot be criticized outrightly because it makes some sense.
- iii. Maxim of Relevance: The relevance of the statement depends on the occasion or context of usage. It is therefore relevant if it affects another person’s right to participation in an event, learning in a classroom and even in the family.
- iv. Maxim of Manner: The manner in which the speakers spit out the expression will determine the perlocutionary effect it would have on the co-interlocutor. If it is clear, necessary and pleasant, the fellow standing in front of the speaker will admit the blockage and immediately shift or leave the space he or he is occupying and which obstructs the right of view of the other person.

3.7. *Sample 7: Short Knickers*

- i. Maxim of Quality: This is a typical Nigerian phrase used to refer to a dress used to cover the lower part of the abdomen and the private part area. It is actually short and this informed the extension in the meaning from the standard, “knickers” to “short knickers”. There is nothing qualitative about the expression. It is a common Nigerian English expression.
- ii. Maxim of Quantity: The information unveiled in the expression is merely the fact that it is a short wear. The phrase has no information in any excess unless it is used to make a mockery of someone. “She is in a short knicker” instead of simply saying she dressed to fight someone.
- iii. Maxim of Relevance: The relevance of the phrase depends on the purpose, the contexts and the users of the expression.

- iv. Maxim of Manner: The manner of expression will determine if the speaker meant to appreciate or make a caricature of an enemy or someone whose attitude the speaker dislikes.

3.8. *Sample 8: So therefore*

- i. Maxim of Quality: This is an expression common amongst many learners of the English language. In speech and in writing this expression is a mannerism commonly observed in so many essays and speeches of amateur writers and speakers. Quality is violated because of the redundant repetition of the two words. Semantic redundancy is a feature of English as second language learning in Nigeria.
- ii. Maxim of Quantity: The expression is capable of boring the listeners or readers. The redundant expression, "so therefore" is supposed to be a linker. It could be either used in isolation, separately or together. The form which is Nigerian is common with amateur speakers and writers of Nigerian English.
- iii. Maxim of Relevance: Speakers or writers of English in Nigeria usually intend to play relevance ignorantly by repeating themselves in the phrase. Emphasis is the goal of repetition. Uneducated Nigerians use the expression in error.
- iv. Maxim of Manner: The repetition in the bid to emphasize a point as commonly found in amateur writings is meant to avoid obscurity. However, it is peculiar to amateur speakers of Nigerian English.

3.9. *Sample 9: Long trouser*

- i. Maxim of Quality: This is not different from the case of short knicker as discussed earlier above. A trouser is expected to be long. It is redundant, repetitive and unnecessary to use the word, 'long' while mentioning the word, 'trouser'.
- ii. Maxim of Quantity: The repetitive nature of the expression has made it more informative than necessary.
- iii. Maxim of Relevance: This could be used sarcastically too, to make a mockery of someone who has worn a long three-quarter trouser and calls it a knicker. The speaker may say, it is a 'long trouser'.
- iv. Maxim of Manner: A trouser is expected to be long. This expression is common with many uneducated Nigerians and that makes it a Nigerian English expression.

3.10. *Sample 10: Corona came from Wuhan-China*

- i. Maxim of Quality: The word, 'came' is the bone of contention in this sample. The Nigerian speaker of English in probably Variety 1 may find it difficult to use the appropriate word, instead of 'came' rather "evolved", "broke out", etc. A variety 1 speaker of the English Language according to Jowitt (1991) citing Banjo (1971/1979) lacks adequate vocabulary and has not mastered skills in pronunciation which will make him or her approximate native speaker-like variety of English.

- ii. Maxim of Quantity: The maxim of quantity is flouted here because the speaker has not given enough information regarding the source of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- iii. Maxim of Relevance: The statement is relevant in the wake of confusions as to who is culpable in the spread of the disease.
- iv. Maxim of Manner: The statement is ambiguous. The audience may not know who caused the outbreak. The rumor surrounding it is that the World Health Organization (WHO) conspired with the Republic of China to create a serious health challenge which is capable of killing millions of people and thereby reducing the population of the world.

3.11. *Sample 11: Let all the herdsmen vacate our forests: Akeredolu*

- i. Maxim of Quality: The word vacation is not backed by the law, neither is the word 'our' a legal statement. The eviction order could not secure uptake and had to be refined while journalists were accused of misconstruing the statement made by the governor of Ondo state.
- ii. Maxim of Quantity: How much was said by the speaker made the statement to be inadequate and so lacks substance. The speaker flouted the maxim of quantity. The speaker ought to have made the statement clearer by explaining what 'forest reserves' connote and the category of occupants who are criminal elements and who should stop their nefarious activities in the Ondo forests.
- iii. Maxim of Relevance: The statement was relevant at the time it was made. The maxim of relevance was not flouted.
- iv. Maxim of Manner: The statement caused some reactions on social media and in the entire nation. The constitution of the country had to be interpreted to see if the governor's order was constitutional or not.

4. Discussion

From sample 1 to 11, a careful evaluation of the discussions on the maxims and the specimen Nigerian English expressions has revealed a number of findings. One of the findings is that the study of Nigerian English, transcends structuralism and formalism as many scholars have done over the years. Rather than examine scripted, daily usages of the English Language from home videos, markets, religious, media and medical discourses, Nigerian English expressions have sufficed to be pragmatically replete with meanings explicable as such.

To appropriately interpret the Nigerian English expressions, we observed that there is a relation between the utterance of a sentence and its context: physical and cultural. Thus, to presuppose a proposition in a pragmatic sense is to take its truth for granted, and to assume that others involved in the context do the same. The meanings of the Nigerian English expressions which can be stumbled on, on a daily basis on newspaper pages in Nigeria and online can only be compliant with the Gricean maxims if the participants in a conversational event share the same set of presuppositions

to avoid misunderstanding and to achieve successful and effective communication in the Nigerian brands of the English Language.

The 'colours' of the English language in Nigeria can be interpretable if participants in discourse recognize that certain maxims have been broken and with the hope that the hearer realizes that he (the speaker) is still conveying some extra information which is in line with the Cooperative Principle such that he (the hearer) can work out that information. These assumptions, Grice (1975) termed Conversational Implicature.

5. Conclusion

Gricean Cooperative Principle is a veritable attempt at exploring the English Language utterances in Nigeria. The study has enabled the researcher to observe that the theory appears impotent for the analysis of the various facets of meaning-exchanges in the numerous discourses available. The user of the Grice's principle may have to triangulate the theory with other context-dependent theories, one of which is the Mutual Contextual Beliefs (MCB) or the Common Ground to mitigate the unidirectional approach of Grice's theory to meaning interpretation. Without a Common Ground shared by Nigerians because of their cultural affinity, accurate meaning decoding would have been a difficult task.

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