

Pragmatic Inferences in Verbal Aggression: A Study of Nigeria's 2020 #ENDSARS Protests

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Abstract

Protest is a special communicative event employed by language users to express disagreement. Protest which is synonymous to demonstration is a global phenomenon. Therefore, the #EndSARS protest is not out of place. Language resourcefulness was put to play during the #EndSARS protest. This objective of this study is to discuss the pragmatic inklings/force employed by the protesters in expressing their resentment and frustrations with the aim to unearthing the negotiation of intended meaning of the various inscriptions on the posters carried by the protesters. Using pragmatic principles of implicature and presupposition, the study reveals that the language of the protesters was characterise by different classes of presuppositions. The frequently used presuppositions was Existential, Factive and Structural presuppositions feature in twelve, six and five placards respectively. The frequent use of these classes of presuppositions function as a persuasive technique and it made the message real and convincing. The study concludes that because of the common shared historical knowledge deployed using varied classes of presuppositions, the audience was able to fill in the gaps, disambiguate the messages that seem imprecise and unclear.

Keywords: Protest, Implicatures, Presuppositions, Placard, EndSARS.

Introduction

Language is an expression of self and a reflection of the users' situation. The distinctiveness of human language allows communicators to display ingenuity through construction of unique phrases, clauses and sentences. Language resourcefulness was put to play during the EndSARS protest. Protest is a result of

anger or displeasure, dissatisfaction over a situation or event. It is expected that the language of protesters would be characterised with vocabulary of irritation, disapproval, resentment and frustration. The protestors choose their words in such a way that not only the Nigerian Government but also the world at large would, under the settings of their linguistic expressions of resentment, recognize their communicative intentions; and thus “produce some effect in [the target audience] by means of the recognition of this intention” (Grice, 1989: 220).

Each communicative context has peculiar linguistic and pragmatic features which distinguishes it from another setting. Protest is a unique communicative situation in which group of persons that are aggrieved come together to express their common grievances and objections to perceive injustice and ill-treatment. According to Ocheje & Agbara (2021), ‘protests are social movements [which aim at] drawing global attention at variance [as well as] to reject the authority of the unjust norms of the dominant’ (180). Thus, the #EndSARS protest was staged to express grievances against perceived police brutality on the youth and Nigerian citizenry as well as against corrupt practices among government personnel. The protest was an expression of displeasure against the way government handle these issues.

#EndSARS movement was launched in late 2017 by some Nigerian human rights defenders and activists with the purpose of drawing the public and government attention to human rights violations committed by SARS (Special Anti-robbery Squad), a unit of the Nigerian police created in 1992, and whose functions was to fight criminalities such as robbery and kidnapping. The movement took a wider coverage in October 2020, as hundreds of Nigerians youth took to the street in peaceful protests; calling for good governance and an end to police brutality. The #EndSARS protest which began on the 8th of October 2020, was as a result of police brutality and extrajudicial killings of many youth which became rampant occurrences between May and October 2020. During the demonstration, series of inscriptions were displayed using diverse linguistic codes; many protesters encoded their feelings using all kinds of terminologies. The creativity employed and the contextual usage

of some of the expressions tickle the need to analyse the pragmatic clues in the various expressions.

Protest is a special kind of communicative action expressing displeasure or disagreement. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, it is an 'act of objecting or a gesture of disapproval ... a usually organized public demonstration of disapproval'. As a collective act of salvaging perceived human rights desecration, the group leveraged on shared resentment towards the 'powered class' and the desire to animate a new ideas for the common good of members of the group and the general public. The message is usually meant for two groups of audience: primary and secondary targets. The primary target is the person(s) in authority that can resolve the conflict at hand. The secondary target, on the other hand, is the public whom the protesters appeal for support and sympathy, and probably influence some of them to be part of the demonstration. The originators of the message (protesters) usually present or convey their grievances (information) as if the primary target audience is within the communicative context. Language of protest often features words and phrases of criticism targeted at the 'ruling classes'. The language is usually an abridged and compressed (relying on the principle of informativeness) account of issues which are of great concern to the protesters. Often times, this triggers inferences.

This study regards the protesters' expressions (verbal aggression) as pseudo-conversation. It is a long uninterrupted utterance in the sense that the protesters are actually addressing their target audience as if listening and may respond immediately or soonest. Moreover, the message is a long continual expression of resentment. This research data are treated as 'one-sided' or pseudo conversation. As pseudo conversation, it lacks the usual conversational structures such as turn-taking and adjacency pairs. The expressions of disapproval and grievances against SARS brutality and killings were encoded in such a way that so much were said with few linguistic codes. Therefore, how was the audience able to unravel the message of the protesters? Using pragmatic theory, presuppositions and implicature principles, the study investigates how the audience was able to extricate the intents of the protesters.

Pragmatics

As a branch of linguistics, pragmatics lays emphasis on the context and users of language. A user's choice of words or groups of words is influenced by the speaker's intentions, context and shared knowledge. The major concern of pragmatics, according to Akhimien (2012) is:

the study of language as a goal-directed verbal process. This requires an understanding of the message being communicated, the speech event, the speech act being performed, the participants involved, their intentions, a knowledge of their worldview, and the impacts of these on their interactions (53).

Language users have goals and objectives which are intended to be achieved through their linguistic choice(s). Hence, pragmatic theory has been applied to the analysis of diverse communicative or discourse texts as a tool which lay bare the goals and essence of the language usage.

Geoffrey Leech (1983) describes pragmatics as the study of meaning in relation to speech situations or the context. Consequently, different meanings can be inferred from the way language is used in distinct communicative situation. Language is regarded as an act that depicts action. According to Austin, 'to speak is tantamount to acting'. However, Adegbija (1999) views Pragmatics as:

The study of language use in particular communication context or situations. This would take cognisance of the message being communicated or the speech act being performed, the participants involved, their intention, knowledge of the world and the impact these would have on their interaction, what they have taken for granted as part of the context (or the presupposition) and the deduction they make on the basis of what is said or left unsaid;

the impacts of the non-verbal aspects of interaction on meaning (22).

Therefore, pragmatic analysis involves the explication of series of elements - message, participants, shared knowledge of the world, non- verbal expressions - surrounding the language use in order to arrive at the intended meaning of the language user.

According to Ndimele (1998), pragmatics is concerned with different ways of language use such as understanding, and appropriateness of expression due to context. Lycan, in buttressing the idea of context, points that the knowledge of syntax, phonology and semantics has become clear that there are specific phenomena that can only naturally be described by recourse to contextual concepts and the single word we hear in the study and practice of pragmatics is the word “context” meaning context of utterance. Pragmatics is specifically the functioning of language in context. This makes a significant contrast with semantics and syntax which generally aspire to be context less. While syntax accounts for grammaticality in a string of words, that is whether a sentence is grammatically well formed, semantics focuses on sentence meaning that is the meaning of sentence type in abstraction from any particular use to which the sentence might be put. In other words, it deals with the contextual meaning of sentence types while the field of pragmatics addresses the social uses of linguistic expressions in context.

Context in Pragmatics

Context plays a very vital role in the study of pragmatics. This is because the meaning of a word cannot be divorced from the context of the utterance. According to Akmajian *et al* (2010), the ‘context’ of an utterance is an expandable notion. Context covers a wide range, which includes the socio-cultural, and psychologically world of the participants in the discourse. In as much as ‘context is a vital aspect in identifying implied meaning in pragmatic theory’ (Agbara 2018, p.25), only those aspects of non-linguistic context that are significant in the construction and interpretation of the discourse are essential in pragmatic studies.

Pragmatics analysis identifies the ways that context affects meaning. The two primary forms of context important to pragmatics are 'linguistic context' (the context of language) and 'situational context' (the context of situation). Linguistic context is the discourse that precedes the phrase or sentence to be interpreted whereas the situational context includes knowledge of world; including the speaker, the hearer, third parties and their beliefs. For instance, "Ramesh is thirsty" both the words 'Ramesh' and 'thirsty' have certain linguistic meaning (or surface meaning) and it is in the state of being something. When these words combine, they give semiotic meaning or linguistic meaning or surface meaning. Pragmatics studies more than the surface meaning that is, it studies the real or intended meaning.

Situational context refers to every non-linguistic factor that affects the meaning of a phrase. An example of situational context can be seen in the phrase "It's cold in here," which can either be a simple statement of fact or a request to turn up the heat, depending on, among other things, whether or not it is believed to be in the listener's power to affect the temperature. It depends on the intention and expectation from the speaker to the hearer. Therefore, the situation demands a particular kind of sentence and this speech situation has three things: place, purpose and people. Here situation is the realization of the context. J.R. Firth, English linguist, is noted for drawing attention to the context-dependent nature of meaning with his notion of "context of situation." He believed that whatever anyone said must be understood in the context of the situation.

Firth argued that their meaning derived just as much from the particular situation in which they occurred as from the string of sounds uttered. In his article "The Technique of semantics" (1935), he proposes to use the term 'semantics' to describes his whole approach to language, which is to link all levels of linguistic analysis with their contexts and situations. For example, a sentence—Do you have pen?—could constitute an offer of a pen, a request for a pen or simply a request for information.

The contribution of context to the meaning of an utterance is very essential. Context is dynamic because it is not just a one-world state of affairs; rather it is a sequence of affairs. Mey (1993)

upholds this notion when he says that a dynamic context is an environment that is in steady development, prompted by the continuous interaction of the people engaged in language use. When utterances are made, we can ask what the implications are depending on the context in which they are made.

The utterance “It is raining” could mean any of the following:

- (a) The weather will be cold.
- (b) The rainy season is here with us.
- (c) Please, bring in our clothes.
- (d) Our evangelical outreach will be cancelled.

The four meanings above will arise in different contexts. For proper understanding of the term context, there are four types of context discussed here.

Physical Context

We can consider this type of context in terms of the place the conversation is taking place, what objects are present, what actions are happening and so on. For instance, if a person sees the word “bank” on the wall of a building in a town or city, he will easily interpret it to mean “a financial house” because the physical location will influence his interpretation. Physical context encompasses what is physically present around the speakers/hearers at the time of communication. What objects are visible, where the communication is taking place, or what is going on around.

Epistemic Context

This refers to the knowledge which the interlocutors have about the world. It is the background knowledge shared by them. For instance, it will be out of context for an illiterate and a professor to engage in a conversation that involves an academic research.

Linguistic Context

This is also known as co-text. According to Yule (1996) the co-text of a word is the set of other words used in the same phrase or

sentence. He went on to say that the surrounding co-text has a strong effect on what we think the word means. For instance, the word 'bank' is a homonym, but if it is used in a sentence together with the words like 'steep' or 'overgrown', there will be no difficulty in interpreting it to mean "the bank of a river".

Social Context

Linguists have generally described pragmatics as the appropriate use of language in social situation or contexts. It is also referred to as functional organization of language in social environment. Social context involves hearers, speakers and the text or utterance. The social context of an utterance is the environment in which the meanings of utterances are being exchanged. The very essence of meaning is realized in a particular context of interpretation because contextual knowledge allows the hearers to understand that the intended meaning differs from the literal meaning.

Stressing the importance of context, Geertz, in his study of the linguistic etiquette among the Japanese, states that language cannot be used without indicating the social relationship between the speaker and the hearer. The modern use of the term pragmatics derives from Morris who outlined the science of semiotics as the science of signs. His outline distinguishes three branches of enquiry which include syntax, semantics and pragmatics. In this enquiry, pragmatics is the study of signs to interpreters. According to Katz, grammar as an aspect of language study deals with theories about the structure of sentence types whereas, pragmatics theories do nothing to explicate the structure linguistic constructions or grammatical properties and relations. They explicate the reasoning of speakers and hearers in working out the correlation in the context of a sentence taken with a proposition. In this respect, a pragmatic theory is part of performance.

In the opinion of Katz (1980), pragmatics covers both context- dependent aspects of language structure and the principle of language usage that has little to do with linguistic structure. Furthermore, Pragmatics is concerned with the meaning of utterances which cannot be accounted for by straight forward reference to truth- conditions of the sentence uttered.

Pragmatics, therefore, accounts for what people use language to do and the linguistic features employed in doing it. In a written text, the syntactic features and the punctuation marks used to control the writing are linguistic contextualization cues. In a spoken text, on the other hand, the spoken utterances and the modulation of the voice serve also as the contextualization cues. The interpretation of the linguistic features or the formal system of language employed in the doing gives the formal semantic formation but the involvement of people and the interpretation of what they use these formal features of language in a given environment or context to do accounts for the pragmatic force. On context-dependent utterances, Ndimele (1998) avers that, pragmatic considerations could influence language user's choice of sounds, grammatical construction or even vocabulary from the resources of our language. Giving an example in French language, he notes that there are two forms of 2-second person singular pronouns: "vous and tu". Whereas "vous" is used in a formal situation, "tu" has an additional meaning of intimacy and, therefore, used in an informal situation. The interpretation given to these forms is context-dependent. Choices made between alternative expressions in terms of formality considerations may be entirely pragmatic and, therefore, have nothing to do with grammaticality of the expressions concerned. In other words, a sentence (depending on the situation) may be rejected not necessarily because it violates any grammatical requirement but because it violates certain pragmatic rules about usage. To Ndimele (1998), the implication of the above is that pragmatic error may not necessarily mean a grammatical error as such errors go beyond grammar to semantic, phonological. Sentences that are grammatically correct could be pragmatically odd depending on the context in which they are used. Levinson (1983) shares the view that context is not dependent on syntactic phenomenon and if left unchecked can generate unacceptable sentences.

Pragmatics is an umbrella name for several theories such as speech act theory, cooperative theory, relevancy theory, politeness theory, etc. These theories are characterised by some shared pragmatic components such as implicature, deixis, presupposition, hedging, etc. which form tools for pragmatic

study and aid in achieving the goals /objectives of pragmatic enquiry.

Theoretical Framework

Implicature

The notion of 'implicature' is coined from the word 'implication', which is derived from 'to imply'. In archaic expression, 'to imply' signifies 'to enwrap' or 'to interweave'. Thus, pragmatic analysis attempts to 'unwrap', or 'separate' something that has been enwrap or intertwined into another something during conversation. The essence of 'separation' of what was enwrapped is to ensure applicable understanding of the speaker meaning.

The concept of implicature is an important pragmatic inference which 'offers some significant functional explanations of linguistic facts [speaker's meaning]' (Levinson, 97). Grice's (1975) theory of conversational implicature aims at explaining how a speaker can mean just what he says, or he can mean something more or something else entirely. Grice used the term 'implicature' to refer to that which is implied but not overtly stated as well as to that which can be inferred from what is coded. According to Bossan, implicature refers to:

- (i) What is not literally said by the text encoder
- (ii) What is inferred from what is coded.
- (iii) What is defeasible [Sic], and
- (iv) What is meant in addition to what is encoded. (Ibibleye, 68)

Pragmatic implicatures are extrapolations established on specific assumptions, background knowledge, the content of what has been said and the context.

According to Grice's illustrations and presentations, cases of implicatures are expressed through the use of figures of speech such as irony, metaphor, understatement, hyperbole, meiosis, litotes and other kinds of figurative expressions. Kent Bach, however, is of the opinion that there are other forms of 'sentences whose standard uses are not strictly determined by their meanings

but are not oblique (implicature-producing) or figurative uses either' (156).

Grice identifies two major classes of implicature, namely conventional implicature and conversational implicature. This is another type of implicature classified as conventional because it is not worked out. It is grasped immediately on the basis of reasoning and it is non-cancelable. It is automatic so to speak. Levinson (1983) explains that conventional implicatures are non-truth-conditional inferences that are not derived from super-ordinate pragmatic principles like the Gricean Maxims, but are simply attached by convention of particular lexical items. This research does not deal with implicature as it relates to Gricean Maxim.

Conventional implicature is also important because a speaker implies something rather than saying it explicitly. Such implicatures qualify strong claims using choice of particular words such as conjunctions, adverb and modal auxiliaries. Examples are 'but', 'and', 'either', 'can', 'could', 'should', 'might', 'ought', 'therefore', 'even', 'yet', 'will', 'although'. Examples are:

- (i) She is a Palestinian; she is therefore, aggressive.
- (ii) I cannot say that Ikenna is an artist but he is intelligent.
- (iii) Jerry is an athlete but I cannot say he is strong.

Conventional implicature is different from conversational implicature because it is detachable and dependable on the particular linguistic items used. For instance, in sentence (iii) above if 'but' is substituted with 'and' the conventional implicature is lost but the same truth conditions is retained. Pragmatic principles and contextual knowledge are not employed in calculating conventional implicature, it is rather done by given conventions.

Conventional implicature refers to those inferences which do not depend on a particular context of language use; the inference remains constant irrespective of the context of usage. Hence, they are 'automatic and non-cancelable ...' (Mey, 50).

The philosopher, H. Paul Grice, on the other hand, introduced conversational implicature. In his lectures and a couple of very influential articles in 1975 and 1978, he proposed an

approach to the speaker's and hearer's cooperative use of inference. According to Mey (1993), there seems to be enough regularity in the inference-forming behaviour of listeners for speakers to exploit this by implying something, rather than stating it. In his proposal, Grice maintains that "since communication is the essence of using language in interaction, without meaningfulness, effective communication cannot take place" (qtd in Levinson 1983).

Hurford, in his own contribution, explains implicature as a concept of utterance meaning as opposed to sentence meaning, but is parallel in many ways to the sense relation (i.e. sentence meaning concept) of entailment. Implicature is related to the method by which speakers work out the indirect illocutions of utterances. The difference between a semantic entailment and a pragmatic implicature is that the speaker cannot deny an entailment of a sentence but a pragmatic implicature can be denied. Pragmatic implicature is worked out by the hearer on the basis of not only the linguistic knowledge but also on assumptions made about the speaker's intention. Hence, it is always easy for a speaker to deny his intended pragmatic implication drawn by the hearer if it is to his own disadvantage. Conversational implicature is therefore context-sensitive. The conversational implicature is further classified into generalized conversational implicature and particularized conversational implicature. This aspect of implicature which is of interest to this study is the possibility of the target audience decoding 'what is not literally written' but can be inferred from what is coded in inscriptions of the banners, drawings and captions of the protesters.

Presupposition

Presupposition is a type of inference which characterises utterances. Language users make implicit assumptions about the world or background belief as it relates to the discourse at hand. These assumptions are made before the commencement of the discourse. From pragmatic perspective, it refers to some shared background information which speakers rely when making a statement. Cap defines presupposition as:

a mechanism whereby the speaker addresses a body of knowledge and experience, involving both linguistic and non-linguistic contexts, which he or she assumes to be common to him-/herself and the hearer (59).

Amodu in 'The Concept of Presupposition' refers to Stalnaker's (1974) explanation of presupposition as 'common ground or mutual knowledge' available to both speaker and listener. Amodu further expatiates that mutual knowledge in some utterances implies:

We know x
Our listener knows x
We know that our listener knows x
Our listeners know that we know x (Ibibleye, 118)

By implication, therefore both speaker and listener refer to historical (past) object or idea or fact in order to deduce the message of the discourse at hand. Presupposition can be regarded as a pragmatic skill utilised by speaker for the purpose of verbal economy and persuasion in order to make sense of the speaker's intent.

Yule (1996) identifies six types of presuppositions based on some words, phrases and structure regarded as linguistic indicators of presuppositions. The different classes are:

- **Existential Presupposition:** this refers to the assumption that the entities named in the utterance exist. The linguistic indicators are definite nouns – names of persons, objects and things - referred to in the utterance.
- **Factive Presupposition:** This implies that the assumed premise is true in order for the entire utterance to be regarded as accurate.
- **Lexical Presupposition:** This refers to the use of some lexical items (such as again, stop) to postulate another concept not stated in the utterance.

- **Structural Presupposition:** refers the use of certain structures, especially WH-questions, which seem to generate unstated information from an utterance.
- **Non-factive Presupposition:** this is the use of some verbs such as pretend, imagine and dream to indicate that the content of the utterance is not true.
- **Counterfactual Presupposition:** this is the use of conditional structure to indicate that supposition of the utterance is not only true but contrary to the fact stated in the utterance.

In some utterances, presuppositions are not anchored on the inclusion of certain lexical items or structure but simply on the shared historical facts known to both the speaker and the listener.

Methodology

The data used for the study were extracted from posters, drawings and captions carried by #EndSARS protesters. These posters, drawings and captions were posted on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp Statuses. For the purpose of this study, the writings on each of the posters, drawings and captions were pulled out and analysed using a multifaceted Pragmatic principles - Grice's Conversational Implicature Principle (1975) and Yule's Presupposition Principle (1996).

For effective coverage and detailed pragmatic analysis of the message of the protesters, random sampling techniques was used due to the massive posters, drawings and captions on #EndSARS. The use of random sampling techniques helped the research to have access to cross-sectional expressions of the protesters. However, each poster, drawing or writing is taken as a unit of discourse. Although, our data are multimedia texts which feature pictures, colourings, cyphers and sketches, the interest of this research is the explication of the meaning encoded in the linguistic (verbal) expressions of the protesters encoded on the placards.

The analysis of the language - the linguistic (verbal) expressions- of the protesters as encoded in various posters were

analysed using pragmatic theory of implicature and presupposition. Implicature helped to identify what is not overtly stated by the protesters while presupposition was used in order to deconstruct the inherent message of the encoders.

Data Presentation and Analysis

TEXT 1:



Implicature: Demo-crazy is a coinage from of the word 'democracy'. Democracy means government of the people for the people and by the people. However, the protesters coined 'demo-crazy' to signify the bastardization and dereliction of the current system of governance. The inclusion of hyphen implies that the government has separated itself from the people it ought to serve. The result of which is 'demonstration of craze' to show the rage or resentment of the youth. There is so much suppression and maltreatment of the citizen (the youth) perpetuated by the government through the government agencies (Police /SARS).

Presupposition: There is the existence of government agencies called Police and SARS.

Class of Presupposition: Existential presupposition

TEXT 2:



Implicature: Stuffing life out of the young citizens is destroying the talents which would have been used to bring about innovation and development in the society. Dead persons cannot contribute to the development of the nation. Therefore, the Military should stop killing the upcoming generation.

Presupposition: Many talents (youths) have been sent to their early graves. A dead person is not creative.

Classes of Presuppositions: Existential and Factive Presuppositions.

TEXT 3



Implicature: The actions of the masses (Youth) who are more in number than the people in the government is greater and more effective than the action of government. In like manner, the collective action of the people brought the leaders into power; the masses (Youth) can through collective actions remove the government of the day.

Presupposition: The people (Youth) are powerful.
Class of Presupposition: Existential Presupposition.

TEXT 4

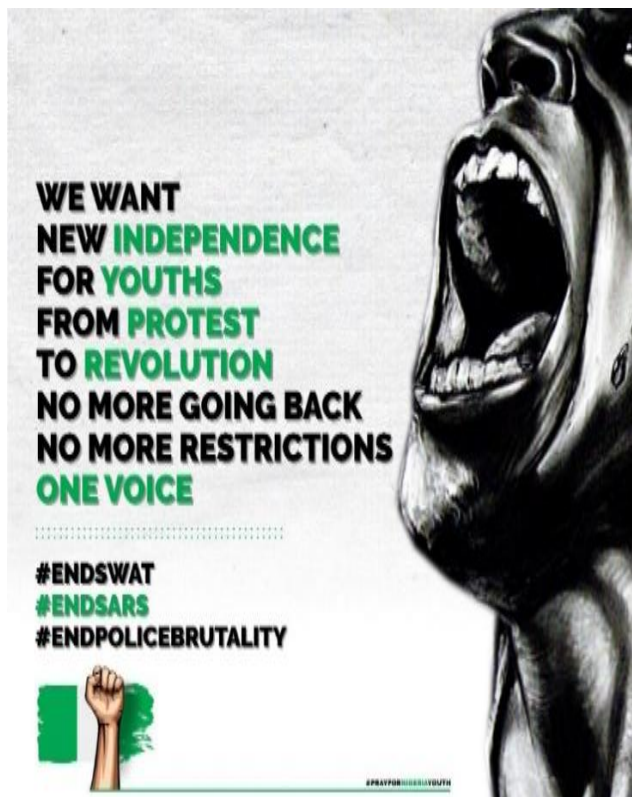


Implicature: After the protest, Nigeria will be better for it. Various forms of corruption such as 'snake swallowing money', 'hiding money in agbada', dehumanising youth in public, etc. perpetuated by government officers will cease.

Presupposition: There are politicians; there exist a special snake, public money, government official and 'agbaga'. The extend and forms of corruption in the nation is unbelievable. It was in the public domain that a snake swallowed money in late 2019. It was also in the news in early 2020 that a government official hid public money in his 'agbada', and a male government official slapped a lady in public.

Classes of Presuppositions: Existential and Factive Presuppositions.

TEXT 5



Implication: The current independence is not favourable to the youth; they are experiencing brutality from some government agents. The youths are demanding for a new independence that will be characterised with lack of criminality, restrictions and brutality from police force. The protesters are speaking with one voice, same demand and calling for positive change.

Presupposition: The Nigeria Police Force has different arms such as SARS, SWAT. The past independence was characterised by restriction and brutality of the youth by government. The youth were constrained in the past.

Classes of Presuppositions: Existential and Structural Presuppositions.

TEXT 6



Implication: The citizens are the ‘kingmakers’; the citizens by their collective acts decide who governs them. As kingmakers, the citizens should be treated with decorum.

Presupposition: There are many offices in the land - office of the kingmakers, office of the rulers (leaders) and office of the governed (subordinate).

Class of Presuppositions: Existential Presupposition
TEXT 7

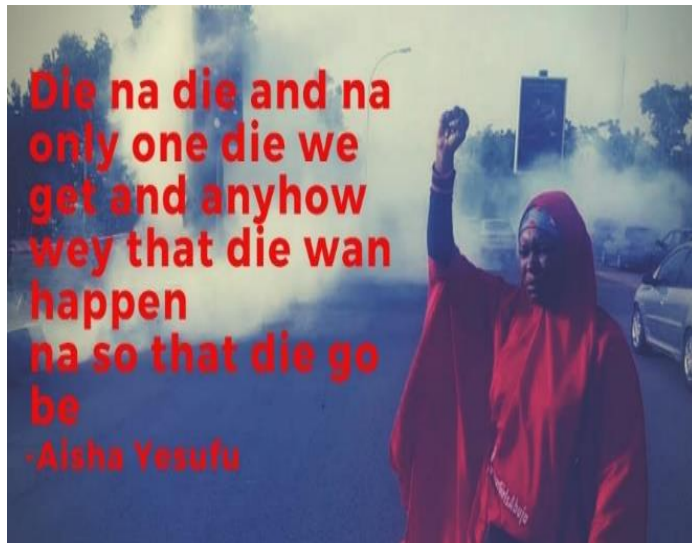


Implicature: The youth should become active citizens; active youth should stand up and join in the demand to put an end to corrupt and immoral authority of the leadership in Nigeria.

Presupposition: There are active and inactive citizens, and there are various acts of bad leadership in Nigeria. Some youth are passive.

Classes of Presuppositions: Existential and Structural Presupposition

TEXT 8



Implicature: Do not be afraid to die; death is necessary for all. Therefore, fight for your right now and always even if the fight may result in your death.

Presupposition: There are different ways people die. The death is certain.

Class of Presuppositions: Factive Presupposition

TEXT 9



Implicature: A corrupt generation (people in governance) does things in secret for fear of being discovered because what is being done is criminal and hence 'off the mic'. The younger generation speaks out loud enough for all to hear. They are not afraid of being seen and heard because most of the acts are not criminal.

Presupposition: The society is made up of two generations – the older one is corrupt and the other is not corrupt. The corrupt generation does not speak out while the younger generation speaks out.

Classes of Presuppositions: Existential and Factive Presuppositions

TEXT 10



Implicature: Youths are humans and useful citizens; they should be allowed to live; they are the future of the nation. They should not be treated like animals.

Presupposition: Many innocent youths have been killed (gunned down) by the military for no just reason.

Classes of Presuppositions: Existential, Lexical and Factive Presuppositions



Implicature: The government and the public should intervene in the maltreatment, abduction and killing of younger generation. The responsibility of the police is to shield the Youth and not to terminate lives.

Presupposition: Some members of Nigeria Police Force are brutal and they have killed and abducted many Nigerian Youth.

Classes of Presuppositions: Existential, Structural and Factive Presuppositions

TEXT 12



Implicature: The youths are important group in any nation; they are the future (leaders of tomorrow) of the nation. SARS should be disbanded so that the youth can be free to display their dynamism. SARS makes lives unbearable for youth; they are dehumanizing the youth.

Presupposition: There is a group of government agent called SARS. The youth are the leaders of tomorrow and they are being killed by SARS. Police are ruthless when dealing with the youth who are the future of the nation.

Classes of Presuppositions: Existential and Structural
Presuppositions

TEXT 13:



Implicature: Youth current way of life is a novel and renewed way; it is not criminality as some older generation and military personnel see it.

Presupposition: Most military personnel consider innovation and creativity as crime.

Class of Presupposition: Structural Presupposition

TEXT 14:



Implicature: The youth are the future of the society. Their lives should not be taken because of their style of living. If the youth are all killed due to their ways of life then the youth will be all dead and the society will have no future. The baton of development and growth of the nation ought to be handed over to living youth. However, the youth are being killed at a very alarming rate

Presupposition: The nation needs the youth for continuity; the future belongs to the youth. However, the speakers (Youth) are not all dead.

Classes of Presuppositions: Existential and Counterfactual Presuppositions

Discussion of Findings

The data reveal that different classes of presuppositions feature in the inscriptions employed by the youth. The protesters are able

to design their messages with appropriate presuppositions such as Existential, Factive, Structural, Lexical and Counterfactual Presuppositions. The use of these presuppositions serve as resilient persuasive technique which assisted the youth to achieve their purpose to draw the world attention to human rights violations committed by SARS against Nigerian youth. It also helped to endear the public, including international community, to give their support to the youth in the call for good governance, an end to police brutality and reformation of Nigeria Police Force.

The most frequently employed presupposition was Existential Presupposition which feature in twelve inscriptions while Factive Presuppositions feature in six inscriptions out of the fourteen placards analysed. Structural Presupposition occur five times while Counterfactual and Lexical Presuppositions appear once respectively. The predominant use of Existential Presuppositions in the information on the posters authenticates that the message of the protesters is not fictitious; it is based on common background knowledge shared with the target audience and hence the huge success of empathy from the public. In like manner, the constant deployment of Factive Presuppositions in the data confirms to the audience that the purpose of the protest is justified based on the presentation of several previous references to issues of misconduct of SARS.

All the presuppositions that feature in the data are uncontroversial presuppositions because they are built upon knowledge which is common and known to majority of the public. The combination of these uncontroversial presuppositions combined with the structural organization of encoded information that produced various implicatures made the message of the protesters convincing. Thus, government had to spur to actions in different parts of the nation in a bid to resolve the demands of the youth.

Below are the extracts from the placards and the class of the presuppositions:

Text No.	Inscriptions from the Placards	Class of Presupposition
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- | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | Demo-crazy, crazy demo, demonstration of craze. When we say #Endsars we mean end the culture of impunity across every part of the Nigerian government. Enough is enough!!! #endpolicebrutality | Existential |
| 2 | I CAN ONLY BE A CREATIVE WHEN I'M ALIVE!!! | Existential and Factive |
| 3 | The power of the people is stronger than the people in power.

The power of the youth is stronger than the youth in power. | Existential |
| 4 | <u>Dear politicians</u>

AFTER THIS ERA!!! No more snake Swallowing money.

No more off your Mic. No more hiding Money in agbada.

No more slapping in a porn shop. any Pim!!!

We go ask for your head we move | Existential and Factive |
| 5 | WE WANT

NEW INDEPENDENCE FOR YOUTHS FROM PROTEST

TO REVOLUTION

NO MORE GOING BACK NO MORE RESTRICTIONS

ONE VOICE

#ENDSWAT #ENDSARS
#ENDPOLICEBRUTALITY | Existential and Structural |

6	The Office of the Citizens the highest office in the land	Existential
7	Active Citizens, it's time to rise up against all forms of bad governance in Nigeria	Existential and Structural
8	Die na die and na only one die we get and anyhow wey that die wan happen na so that die go be	Factive
9	A GENERATION SAY: OFF THE MIC A GENERATION SAYS: SORO SOKE I KNOW WHERE I STAND	Existential and Factual
10	Our lives matter We are HUMANS Not ANIMALS STOP GUNNING us down!	Existential, Lexical and Factual
11	YOUR JOB IS TO PROTECT US NOT KIDNAPP US	Existential, Factual and structural
12	YOU SAID WE ARE THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW AND YOU ARE KILLING US	Existential and structural
13	To be Modern is not A Crime	Structural
14	WE CAN'T BE THE FUTURE OF THE NATION IF WE ARE DEAD!!!	Existential, and Counterfactual

Conclusion

The study examines implicature and presupposition that are SPEAKER-based. The protesters made use of series of reference to past events – thus there is a common shared historical knowledge which aided the primary target to understand what is being communicated though not overtly stated in the expressions of the protester. As a result of this common shared historical knowledge deployed through various presuppositions, the targeted audience were able to fill in the gaps as well as disambiguate messages

which seem imprecise and unclear in order to decode the protestors' messages. Through reference to past events, the protesters were able to say so much in few words.

The protesters employed different classes of presupposition. However the frequently used presuppositions were Existential, Factive and Structural presuppositions feature in twelve, six and five placards respectively. Only one inscription contained Lexical and Counterfactual Presupposition respectively. The frequent use of these classes of presupposition made the message real and convincing. The use of presupposition serve not only as pragmatics indicators which aided the listeners to decode the intention of the protesters but also as persuasive scheme which drew the attention and empathy from the secondary audience both in Nigeria and the global world.

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