Original Research Article

Face Acts in Nigerian Pidgin: A Pragmatic Analysis of WhatsApp Chats

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Abstract

This paper is a pragmatic analysis of face acts in Nigerian Pidgin (NP). Nigerian Pidgin (NP) is often relegated because of its informal status. Nevertheless, its communicative potentials in conversations is impressive, and makes it worthy of scholarly attention. Data for this study are generated from selected WhatsApp chats (henceforth "conversations"). An integrative analysis is done to reveal the face acts performed in the entire conversations, the motivations of such face acts and the functions of the speech act categories that realize the face acts. Two theoretical frameworks anchor this study: Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987) Face Management Act View and Bach and Harnish's (1979) Speech Act Theory. The study concludes that: Nigerian Pidgin (NP) is a potent language for communicating face acts that are performed by discourse participants due to its socio-cultural relevance; face acts in the entire text are communicated via different communicative strategies (informing, apologizing, requesting, asking, rejecting, ascribing, etc.

Keywords: pragmatics, Nigerian Pidgin, WhatsApp, face act, Face Management Act View, Bach and Harnish Speech Act Theory

1. INTRODUCTION

A pragmatic analysis of communication explores insights from the literature in the elucidation of language use from speaker-hearer ends. From a pragmatic perspective, language is able to convey face acts because of its speech act potential – the latent potential to translate itself to actions or count as actions. Nigerian Pidgin (NP) is viewed as an informal language. It is therefore not surprising that it is commonly used in WhatsApp conversations. WhatsApp is an online communication platform where calls can be made, and messages sent. There are other ways that the platform can be used in this technological era. Given the fact that the language is spoken across social class by a vast majority of Nigerians, this study is significant. Like any other language, Nigerian Pidgin (NP) can communicate discrete psychological states: worry, anger, happiness, disgust, indifference, fear, admiration and frustration. These psychological states are conveyed as varied face acts; the literature of face act concerns the use of language to convey speaker-hearer emotions in terms of face-threatening or face-saving acts. In this study, Nigerian Pidgin (NP) is brought to the fore because we do not know of any research that investigates face acts in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) conversations. In addition, this study is informed by the belief that WhatsApp conversations provide rich data for investigating the communicative potential of the language.

2. Literature Review

In this section of the paper, we examine: Nigerian Pidgin (NP), face act and pragmatics.

2.1 Nigerian Pidgin

In terms of its origin in Nigeria, Nigerian Pidgin (NP) is linked to the advent of the Europeans and their trade mission. There are different regional Pidgins in the country. Okafor Amaka Yvonne (2022, p. 1) submits that "the word

pidgin was first reported in English in 1807, when English was accepted as Canton's (Guangzho''s) industry and commerce language. Business English was commonly written as Pidgin English at the time, a spelling that reflected the local sound. The need for communication in order for English and Cantonese to trade effectively led to the formation of Chinese Pidgin English. As commerce grew, it became clear that translators were in short supply among local Cantonese businessmen and their European counterparts. Many local traders put what little English they had from their brief interactions with others who spoke English more fluently to good use. This brought about various varieties of Standard English in Canton. As it relates to Nigeria, the trade contact between the British and the local people led to the advent of Nigerian Pidgin in the seventeenth century." In multilingual Nigeria, where English is an Official Language, Nigerian Pidgin (NP) is regarded as a language for casual communication. Okafor Amaka Yvonne (ibid., p. 2) notes that "… Nigerian Pidgin has lately been labeled as an urbanization process, and it now widely used for communication in urban areas by the literate and illiterate, as well as individuals of many ethnic groups … pidgin is also sometimes thought of as a simplified version of a standard language. In Nigeria, for example, English functions as a lingua franca, and many speakers of other Nigerian languages, particularly illiterates, have found it difficult to accept this alien language. As a result, they utilize Nigerian Pidgin to find a soft landing while communicating with individuals from all ethnicities and ways of life." The language continues to gain momentum in the country. Okafor Amaka Yvonne (ibid., p. 1) reports that "… because Nigerian Pidgin is growing popularity in the country, it is suggested that several linguistic issues be investigated in order to make it a more functional and acceptable language for everybody." Commenting on the formal properties (linguistic corpora) of Nigerian Pidgin (NP), Okafor Amaka Yvonne (ibid., p. 2) submits that "Nigerian Pidgin is a hybrid of indigenous languages such as Igbo, Yoruba and Edo, as well as English. Unlike other full-fledged languages, pidgin constructs can be organized or unstructured. This simply implies that pidgin utterances are not governed by any rigorous restrictions." Although Nigerian Pidgin (NP) is largely spoken by Nigerians, there are divergent perspectives about its status. Mafemi (1971) and other scholars acknowledge the ambivalence of the status of Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) in the country. For example, Mafemi (1971) cited in Akinmade T. Akande and Oladipo Salami (2010) asserts that "within Nigerian society, NPE seems to have an ambivalent status as some members have embraced and associated themselves with one language only by using it for interactions when the need arises … NPE has remained one of the languages with vitality in the society despite its unofficial recognition."

2.2 Face Act

"Face" refers to "the public image that an individual desires as a member of a human society". Some of the factors that generate face acts include: the message to be communicated, the psychological underpinning of a communicative event, speaker-hearer shared knowledge, status difference between interlocutors and socio-cultural nuances. In every culture, polite behaviour towards other human beings in society is crucial. This explains the potency of the Politeness Principle in the analysis of face acts. Face acts performed in any communicative event are about discourse behaviour of participants, and the inferences that are worked out from such behaviour.

2.3 Pragmatics

Different definitions abound in the literature as far as the definition of pragmatics is concerned. Interestingly, the various definitions of the term are similar in the sense that they mention "language", "users of language", "context" and "meaning". The *Encyclopedia Americana* (1994) defines pragmatics as "the subfield of the study of language that investigates the techniques by which language is processed for communication purposes." Levinson (1983, p. 37) notes that "pragmatic principles of language usage can be shown systematically to 'read into' utterances more than they conventionally or literally mean. This hope makes it clear that one of the reasons for the development of pragmatics (or interest in pragmatics) is the possibility that pragmatics can effect a radical simplification of semantics. Another reason for growing interest is growing realization that there is a very substantial gap between current linguistic theories of language and accounts of linguistic theories of language and accounts of linguistic communication." For Mey (2001), pragmatics is "the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of the society." See Adegbija (1999) for the definition of pragmatics.

3. Theoretical Framework
The two theoretical frameworks used in this study are examined below:

3.1 Brown and Levinson's 1978; 1987) Face Management Act View
The Face Management Act View (theory) is an improvement on predating theories. "Face" is individuals' desired public image – an image they try to keep and protect for social integration and relevance. Bossan Rita (2017, pp. 61-65), reports Brown and Levinson whose perspectives on face acts are instructive:

> … they identify two types of face: positive face and negative face: Positive face is observed by the individual need to be appreciated and respected by others as well as to maintain positive self-image. To put it another way, positive face has to do with a person's wish to be thought of; the desire to be understood by others, and the desire to be treated as a friend and confidant. Negative face on the other hand involves the freedom of action and the freedom

from imposition. That is to say, it has to do with our wish not to be imposed on by others and to be allowed to go about our business unimpeded and with our rights to free and self-determined action intact. Hence in dealing with each other, our utterances may be oriented to the positive or to the negative face of those we interact with.

In corollary to that, they identify two types of face act: face threatening act (FTA henceforth) and face saving act (FSA henceforth). FTA occurs when one participant says something that represents a threat to another person's self-image. FSA on the other hand is the opposite of FTA. It ensues whenever one of the participants in a discourse says something that lessens the possible threat to another's face. There are three superordinate and one opting out strategies of performing an FTA:

a. Performing FTA without redress:

Do the act bald-on-record. This is observed in speaking directly or very directly, in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible without any attempt whatsoever to mitigate the illocutionary force inherent in an act, regardless of the rating of the imposition. By implication, the act will be in full conformity with the Gricean maxims: quantity, quality, manner, and relation. For example, an utterance like Leave the house does not say more or less than is required (quantity), is maximally efficient in so far as it is non-spurious (quality), it is relevant (relation) and it avoids ambiguity and obscurity (manner). It is also significant that in performing such an act, a speaker shows little concern for the hearer's face. This is because the speaker in this context will highly likely to focus on the propositional content of the message; thereby provide no effort to reduce the impact of the FTAs, and are likely to shock the addressee, embarrass them, or make them feel uncomfortable. Examples of this strategy abound where the power differential or role relation is asymmetrical, e.g. military setting, law court, and so on. It is also observed in a discourse where the speaker holds high relative power and fears no threat to his own face from the addressee.

b. Performing FTA with redress: this is when the act is performed with no threat to the addressee's face intended. This can be done in two ways: performing FTA with redress using positive politeness strategy and performing FTA with redress using negative politeness strategy. Performing FTA with redress using positive politeness strategy (which appeals to the addressee's desire to be liked and approved of). It is frequently employed in groups of friends, or where people in the given social situation know each other fairly well. They usually attempt to minimize the distance between interlocutors by expressing friendliness and solid interest in the hearer's need to be respected, in other words, to minimize the FTA. For example, You look nice today. What an elegant suit you are putting … Other manifestations include where a speaker avoids disagreement, is optimistic, extends praise, gives sympathy, hedges opinion, etc.

In other respects, performing an FTA with redress using negative politeness is obvious when a speaker aims to orient him/herself towards a hearer's negative face – which appeals to the hearer's desire not to be impeded or put upon, to be left free to act as he or she chooses. Generally, negative politeness manifests in the use of conventional politeness markers, deference markers, minimizing imposition, being indirect etc. However, Simpson (1989) modifying Brown and Levinson … identifies seven major strategies of using negative politeness:

I. Hedge e.g. I'm sorry but I must ask you to leave my office.
II. Indicate permission e.g. The situation in the country is harsh. I will understand if you could not lend me N5, 000.
III. Minimize imposition, e.g. I need a little favour from you.
IV. Indicate deference, e.g. I am ashamed but to have to ask you this favour.
V. Apologize e.g. I don't mean to bother you.
VI. Impersonalize, e.g. We regret to inform you.
VII. Acknowledge the debt, e.g. I would be eternally grateful if.
(Simpson, 174-176)

c. Performing FTA using off record politeness: this is observed when ambiguous or vague, sarcastic or jocular. In this case, the utterance bears an implicature that evades clarity and thus can be immediately dismissed because, theoretically, the speaker doesn't commit him/herself to a specific intent …

Do not perform FTA: do not perform the act at all. This has to do with "saying nothing" i.e. "opting out" … all a speaker has to do is resist or renounce his/her wish to make an utterance that risks being face-threatening … This is especially observed in situations when a speaker decides to say nothing and genuinely wishes to let the matter drop.

3.2 Bach and Harnish's (1979) Speech Act Theory

Bach and Harnish (ibid.) is based on intention and inference. They contend that for speakers to perform illocutionary acts, it is intended that listeners have the understanding of the acts (mutual contextual beliefs). It is their claim that the act of conversation or interactional talk involves an inferential process. Their terminology, "Speech Act Schemata (SAS)" refers to an inevitable part of the inferential process in a communicative event. They contend that speaker-hearer mutual contextual beliefs (MCBs) facilitate the inferential process. To infer what a speaker (s) is saying,

the hearer (h) depends also on the Presumption of Literalness (PL). The hearer should know when the linguistic communication of the speaker is within or out of the bounds of literalness, and if the speaker is speaking in a non-literal language, the hearer should not only acknowledge it, but should also be able to understand what such speech by the speaker means; that is, the hearer should have a mastery of the speech acts in the speaker's non-literal language. The non-literal language involves the use of indirect speech acts. Apart from MCBs, Bach and Harnish recognize other types of beliefs shared by an entire linguistic community – which the hearer relies on for inference-making:

    I.   Linguistic Presumption (LP); and
    II.   Communicative Presumption (CP).

Linguistic Presumption refers to the moral beliefs that members of a Linguistic Community (LC) share on the particular language (L) in question. Therefore, any expression (e) uttered by a member to any member of the community, is taken by the speaker for granted. The speaker presupposes that the hearer understands what is uttered. An act of communication is successful if the hearer recognizes the speaker's illocutionary intention.

Bach and Harnish (ibid.) recognize several types of strategies in the inferential process:

    a.   Locutionary Strategy: The hearer's inference from the locutionary act or the utterance per se and what the utterance means in L. This is based on the hearer's knowledge of the language, the LP, the CP and MCBs.
    b.   Direct Literal Strategy: The hearer infers from the PL whether or not the speaker really means what is said. This helps the hearer to identify the act.
    c.   Literally-Based Indirect Strategy: The hearer depends on the MCBs, CP, and the utterance to determine whether, under the circumstance there is some action connected with the literal utterance.
    d.   Direct Non-literal Strategy: By relying on MCBs, CP, the utterance and the hearer's knowledge of the literal meaning of the utterance, the hearer infers that the speaker's utterance must be non-literal and indirect since another act is connected with the overt one which the hearer recognizes.
    e.   Non-literally Based Indirect Strategy: The CP, the utterance, and MCBS enable the hearer to infer that the speaker's utterance must be non-literal and indirect since another illocutionary act is connected with it.

Bach and Harnish (ibid.) recognize two broad categories of illocutionary acts: communicative and non-communicative illocutionary acts. While the former requires the recognition of S's R-intention, the latter does not. In their theory, there are four main categories of communicative illocutionary acts: Constatives, Directives, Commissives and Acknowledgements. These four main categories correspond roughly to Austin's Expositives, Exercitives, Commissives, and Behabitives respectively and closely to Searle's Representatives (Assertives), Directives, Commissives and Expressives, differing mainly in their characterizations. There are two classes of non-communicative illocutionary acts: Effectives and Verdictives, corresponding roughly to Searle's Declarations. A detailed account of the categories established by Bach and Harnish (ibid.) are speech acts which express the speaker's belief and intention, or, at least the implication or desire, that the hearer form (or continue to hold) a like belief. Fifteen subcategories of this group are recognized as follows: Assertives, Informatives, Confirmatives, Concessives, Retractives, Assentives, Dissentives, Disputatives, Responsives, Suggestives and Suppositives. Assertives are characterized by "S's expression of belief that the hearer also believes that P" (proposition of a sentence). Examples of Assertives are: affirm, allege, assert, aver, avow, declare and deny. Informatives are speech acts in which the speaker expresses "the belief that P" and "the intention that the hearer forms the belief that P." Examples are: advise, announce, appraise, disclose, inform, insist, notify, point out, report, reveal, tell, and testify. See Bach and Harnish (ibid.) for explanation on other speech act categories.

4. Methodology
The entire conversation (macro structure) is divided into nine utterances (henceforth U.1-U.9). Although there are numerous NP conversations in WhatsApp, the corpora selected for analysis in this study are selected based on two basic parameters: topic relevance and face-act potential. In restricting the study to the limited corpora, we hinge on the Projection Principle (cf. Jolayemi 2000) which states that via the analysis of selected linguistic structure, a researcher can make a conclusive statement about phenomena. The analysis done in this study is integrative; we investigate who says "what", "why" and "how" within the context of face acts. Insights from the literature of pragmatics and face acts give the study theoretical footing and direction. The insights are subsumed into the analysis of U.1-U.9. The illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts performed in each utterance are listed before the integrative analysis.

5. Presentation and Analysis of Data
U.1:

Speaker: I send am to you since yesterday. You no see am?

Illocutionary acts: informing, asking

Perlocutionary acts: awareness (face-saving act)
The encoder expects the item sent to be acknowledged by the receiver (world knowledge). The utterance is a face-threatening act deployed to condemn the attitude of "not acknowledging" the sent item. The use of the expression "since

yesterday" intensifies the condemnation of the interlocutor's attitude; the expression conveys the clear message that the expected acknowledgement is long overdue. In other words, late expression of acknowledgement counts as non-acknowledgement of a gesture. In asking (*You no see am*?), the encoder is actually stating (*I know say you see am/*I know that you saw it). This means that the question is rhetorical – no answer is expected by the encoder.

U.2:
Addressee: Sorry! I no kuku reply you. I suppose do so. You ma no say wahala plenty for man pikin. Man no go die. I see am o! If no be say I no wan be like Oliver Twist, I fo say make you send me more.

Illocutionary acts: apologizing, acknowledging, requesting
Perlocutionary act: acceptance
The encoder of U.2 expresses regret for her attitude[1]. The expression of regret is a face-saving act towards the decoder who is already infuriated. Other face-saving strategies used by the encoder are: self-defense (justification), acknowledging, explanation and joke. To introduce a joke and make the psychological context lax, the encoder alludes. The allusion is based on a literature intra-text character, Oliver Twist, who is widely remembered for what he did in the literary text: "asking for more". This illocutionary strategy amuses the encoder's interlocutor. Participants of discourse invoke realities in the world (speaker-hearer shared knowledge) to convey illocutionary goals. For example, the encoder of "*You ma no say wahala plenty for man pikin. Man no go die*" expects the decoder to process the utterance by relating it to the everyday struggle for survival in the hardship-stricken society in which both of them live. This information is enough to pacify the angry interlocutor (a face-saving act).

U.3:
Speaker: What of the matter. You think say I don forget?
Illocutionary act: asking
Perlocutionary act: anger

The utterance has an antecedent which is speaker-hearer shared knowledge. The encoder of U.3 asks (to accuse) about an issue that her interlocutor is not interested in, and tries to avoid in the present conversation. U.3 is a face-threatening act. The encoder accuses the decoder of trying to wave the subject (sack) aside because her offence resulted in the sack letter received. Indeed, U.3 is a direct speech act (attack) used to threaten the face of the decoder with no regret. To amplify the attack, the encoder violates the Cooperative Principle of Conversation by asking questions one after the other, without giving her interlocutor the opportunity to respond to a first question before another. This is a violation of turn-taking which is a conventional structural feature of a conversation. Invariably, U.3 is an impolite and uncooperative communication behaviour that generates conversational implicature.

Mey (2001) asserts that "acting cooperatively, people try to build up their interlocutors' 'positive faces', while trying to avoid posing threats to their 'negative faces'. This is especially important in linguistic interaction since every engagement in conversation opens up the possibility of 'losing face': I may either be 'drawn out' and say something I didn't really mean to say or didn't have the intention of sharing with my interlocutor (as often happens in 'open-microphone' interviews), or I may be subjected to bullying treatment by someone who doesn't like me, or who wants to exploit me for her or his own profits. When face is being threatened in interaction, both faces, the positive and the negative one, come under attack." Face threatening acts in conversations show that processing an utterance for meaning is the core of human interactions.

U.4:
Addressee: I no like the way you dey take the matter. He fit happen to anybody. I no be culprit sake of say them give me sack letter.

Illocutionary acts: responsive, assertive, ascribing
Perlocutionary act: apology
Responding to U.3, the encoder of U.4 uses a responsive, ascriptive and assertive to condemn the attack (a face-threatening act). On the other hand, the face-saving acts deployed are self-defense and explanation, used for a purpose – to ascribe good human attributes to the encoder. However, the attributes are not covertly stated; the utterance "I no be culprit sake of say them give me sack letter" implies the opposite of "culprit", thus conveying the encoder's message that "she is innocent". The speaker agitates because her public image is so important to her that she desires to protect it. Relegating an interlocutor's social status, counts as face-threatening the interlocutor without redress.

U.5:
Speaker: I like your spirit, Mama Fufu. The only mama fufu for Naija[1]. You see ehm, anoda apo fit open for you. Come meet me for house tomorrow morning. We go go see my guy. He fit helep.

Illocutionary acts: ascribing, informing, promising
Perlocutionary acts: happiness, hopefulness

The encoder of U.5 establishes speaker-hearer bond (face-saving act). In processing the utterance, the decoder sees her friend as "a friend in need"/"a friend indeed". Human beings are usually happy to get comforting words in moments of challenges and distress. The face-saving strategies used in U.5 include: avoiding blame, praise (by using an ascriptive), expression of sympathy and hope. The participants have close relationship.

U.6
Addressee: Na why I like you be that. You never change. You no go change lai lai.
Illocutionary acts: thanking, ascribing

Perlocutionary acts: relief, happiness, hope
The encoder shows appreciation and praises her interlocutor for her kindness. People expect gratitude for their kindness to others (our world knowledge of societal norms). If kindness shown to a person is not appreciated either with a verbal act (thanking by using words) or non-verbal act of some kind, an implicature is generated (face-threatening act).

U.7
Speaker: Na wetin I hear from your mouth, Opo? I pass that kind yeye thing, and I no go ever do so.
Illocutionary acts: rejecting, ascribing
Perlocutionary act: relief

The encoder ascribes good human qualities to herself. She uses ascriptive (speech act) as a face-threatening act to agitate and protect her self-image. The question in U.7 is rhetorical. It serves the purpose of emphasizing the credibility of encoder's positive public and self-image. Face act theories are immersed in the different mental states (feelings and emotions) of discourse participants. The performance of face acts is about the mental states of discourse participants. Chilton (2005a, pp. 19-52) rightly notes that "cognitive pragmatics is defined as a study of mental states of the interlocutors, their beliefs, desires, goals, and intentions … produced and interpreted by human individuals interacting with one another … If language use (discourse) is, as the tenets of CDA assert, connected to the construction of knowledge about social objects, identities, processes, etc., then that construction can only be taking place in the minds of (interacting) individsuals."

U.8:
Addressee: You no need to tell ma. Na today I no you? Na gbeboro dey do me. Forgive me. Why I even mention am at all? I beg make we drop this matter. What about that help you promise me? We fit see the person tomorrow?
Illocutionary acts: ascribing, apologizing, asking, requesting

Perlocutionary act: happiness
The encoder tries to lessen the face-threatening act. The communicative strategies used in this regard are: self-blame, rhetorical question, praise, hedging and topic-shift. The use of topic-shift generates a conversational implicature; it implies that the participants are of same status (informal relationship). In other words, it is not ideal for the encoder to use that communicative strategy if her interlocutor were to be her superior (boss). The conversations analyzed in this study reveals that equality in status between a speaker and his/her interlocutor as well as the emotion-invoking potential of a message or utterance is the reason for preferring one illocutionary strategy to another, as in the use of an indirect speech act rather than a direct speech act in a given context.

6. Discussion and Conclusion
This study reveals that an utterance in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) performs multiple illocutionary acts as in the use of an English utterance. The literature of pragmatics acknowledges the versatility of speech act verbs. For example, "to persuade" is "to convince" in a particular context of communication. Nigerian Pidgin (NP) conversations in WhatsApp convey politeness and cooperativeness in spite of the non-official status of the language in Nigeria. Like the other communicative strategies in the data analyzed in this study, politeness prevents face-threatening acts. Polite behaviour in communication is part of cooperation expected of discourse participants irrespective of their social relationship, status or kind of genre that the communication belongs to. Commenting on the roles of politeness in communication, Grice (1975) submits that "features distinguishing the Cooperative Principles are as follows:

1. The participants have some common immediate aim;
2. The contributions of the participants should be dovetailed, mutually dependent;
3. There is some sort of undertaking (which may be explicit but which is often tacit) that, other things being equal, the transaction should continue in appropriate style unless both parties are agreeable that it should terminate."

In the performance of FSAs and FSAs, the different communicative strategies used in WhatsApp conversations serve the purpose of developing or terminating the conversation depending on: whose face is threatened, the possibility of alternative ways of saying something, the psychological states of participants, and the social relationship between the interlocutors. These facts are established in the analysis of U.1-U.8. The pragmatics of all these variables is implicature-motivated. The flexibility of implicature makes the performance of FSAs effective in discourse. The analysis done in this

study reveals the features of implicature; in the conversation, the participants make language choices that are pragmatics-driven and implicature-laden[2]. This study shows that the two theories used as frameworks for the analysis of data are able to explain the dynamics and functions of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) in WhatsApp conversations. Language theories are frameworks for investigating the potency of language (Nigerian Pidgin inclusive) in the elucidation of the dynamics of interpersonal interactions. In this study, we examine the motivations and implications of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) in the data, in terms of discrete speech-act-driven performance of face acts. The table below shows illocutionary acts, their percentages and communicative functions in the conversation:

Serial Number	Speech Act	Percentage	Communicative Function
1.	Informing (Informative)	2 (14.3%)	to inform the addressee about x (an infinite proposition); to protect self-image; to explain x; to make the psychological atmosphere lax; to establish speaks-hearer bond.
2.	Rejecting	1 (7.1%)	to reject x; to protect self-image; to ascribe good human qualities to self.
3.	Asking	3 (21%)	to request to know x; to condemn the addressee's action
4.	Ascribing (Asriptive)	3 (21%)	to give good human attributes to self; to protect self-image; to reject x.
5.	Apologizing	1 (14.3%)	to develop the communication; to make the psychological; atmosphere lax.
6.	Acknowledging	1 (14.3%)	to establish speaker-hearer bond; to develop the communication; to make the psychological atmosphere lax.
7.	Requesting (Requestive)	1 (14.3%)	to request to know x; to agitate.
8.	Assenting (Assentive)	1 (14.3%)	to make the psychological atmosphere lax; to develop the communication; to establish speaker-hearer bond; to relieve the addressee.
9.	Promising (Promise)	1 (14.3%)	to promise the addressee x; to establish speaker-hearer bond; to relieve the addressee.

Table 1: Illocutionary Acts in the Conversation

The performance of speech acts in the conversation reflects the discrete face acts performed. The functions of each communicative strategy used by the encoders are essentially the performance of face acts informed by the factors mentioned earlier. For example, "Informatives" (14.3%) are used to: inform the addressee about x (an infinite proposition); protect self-image; explain x; make the psychological atmosphere lax; and establish speaks-hearer bond. "Rejecting" (7.1%) serves the function of: rejecting x; protecting self-image; and ascribing good human attributes to self. "Asking" functions as a way of: requesting to know x; and condemning the addressee's action. When a speaker deploys an ascriptive the speaker is: giving good human attributes to self; protecting self-image; and rejecting x. See Table 1 for the communicative functions of other speech acts performed across U.1-9.

In the performance of face acts in Nigerian Pidgin (NP), utterances are products of speaker-hearer shared knowledge in terms of immediate (text-based) context and remote context (societal phenomena/realities). Informal relationship between discourse participants makes the communication atmosphere lax[3]. In WhatsApp conversations, Nigerian Pidgin (NP) conveys different speech acts, as evident in the analysis. In the language, an utterance can be: Assentive, Dissentive, Assertive, Ascriptive, Informative, Responsive, Descriptive, etc. The Face Management View captures not only the socio-cultural and psychological underpinnings of face threatening acts, but also their communicative potentials in written and spoken texts. This study investigates the potency of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) in conveying face acts. The corpora were subjected to analysis to reveal whether or not face-threatening acts (FTAs) and face-saving acts (FSAs) are performed, the pragmatic motivations for performing them and the implications on the message of a text. The study concludes that the socio-cultural underpinnings of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) equip it for the performance of face acts, and in the process, different pragmatic elements are brought to the fore: speaker-hearer shared knowledge, the psychological setting of the communication and the social relationships of the participants. This study reveals that the participants prevent face threatening acts, yet it occurs, and when this is the case, they attempt building

positive face via discrete communicative strategies which include: explanation, self-defense, avoidance of blame, acknowledgement, praise (commendation), politeness and cooperation.

Notes
1. The expression Mama Fufu in U.5 is gender-suggestive; it implies that the interlocutors are females. For this reason, we use the pronouns "she" and "her" throughout the analyses done in this study.
2. For example, when a speaker threatens the face of his/her interlocutor and receives a direct attack, the speaker cancels the face-threatening act and uses a face-saving act to "appease" the interlocutor.
3. It also makes the language bond-reflecting.

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