



A Speech Act Analysis of Selected Wall-Cartoons

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Abstract

Cartoons are drawings that are message-laden, whether or not they are comic. Thematic concerns in cartoons (economic recession, corruption, poverty, oppression, moral decadence, bad leadership, etc.) are conveyed via varied contextual structures including political, domestic and religious domains. Across genres, cartoons are veritable means of communication deployed by creative artists. This study is a speech act analysis of cartoons gathered from a school wall. A speech act analysis of the use of verbal and non-verbal communication (as in semiotics) investigates the pragmatic underpinnings for explaining “what gets said”, “how it is said” and “why it is said”. Two theoretical frameworks underpin this study: Bach and Harnish’s (1979) Speech Act Theory as well as Acheoah’s (2015) Pragma-crafting Theory. While the latter provides the study speech act taxonomy, the former facilitates the identification and explanation of the pragmatic nuances in verbal and non-verbal communication evident in the data. Conclusively, the study observes that: cartoons rely on both verbal and non-verbal communication; the messages in cartoons are conveyed via contextualization; the use of speech acts in cartoons is a reflection of the artist’s (henceforth “cartoonist”) pragmatics-driven communicative intentions; and cartoon messages are interpreted by exploring cartoonist-audience shared knowledge.

Keywords: speech act, semiotics, wall-cartoon, Bach and Harnish Speech’s Speech Act Theory, Pragma-crafting Theory, semiotics.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is an instrument of communication among human beings. Such communication is possible through non-verbal means as in the use of cartoons. Classical theorists of pragmatics contend that the minimum unit of communication is not the physical properties of language (words and linguistic stretches). Rather, it is the discrete actions (speech acts) performed with those expressions. Studies abound on speech act analysis of cartoons. However, we do not know of any study that subjects wall-cartoons to a speech act analysis. This study is therefore significant. There are different sources of cartoons: newspapers, magazines, books, walls, handbills, vehicles, etc. Cartoons are so informative, comic and fascinating that they will suffice for a speech act analysis of how verbal and non-verbal communication operate to produce comprehensive meanings of a text. Language philosophers unanimously agree that illocutionary acts can be performed via non-performative formula (non-verbal means). An investigation of speech acts in cartoons presupposes the use of cross-field insights in the language discipline. Thus, insights from pragmatics, sociolinguistics and semiotics give this study direction.

2. Speech Act

The actions that are contextually performed with language are known as speech acts. These include: giving orders, advising, acknowledging, condemning, apologizing, persuading, informing, etc¹. Alston, cited in David A. Brenders (1982) submits that “The correct unit of analysis for meaning is not at the level of words since, referring or denoting is something one does in the course of performing a larger action-unit, such as making a request, admission, or prediction.” Austin (1962) establishes three broad speech act classifications: locutionary act (performing an act OF saying

something); illocutionary act (performing an act IN saying something); and perlocutionary act (performing an act BY saying something). Giving more opinions on the concept of speech act, Searle, cited in Brenders (ibid.) opines that “in the performance of an illocutionary act the speaker intends to produce a certain effect by means of getting the hearer to recognize his intention to produce that effect, and furthermore, if he is using words literally, he intends this recognition to be achieved ...” Austin (ibid.) notes that speech acts can be performed by using a non-performative formula. Perspectives on speech act facilitate the analysis of language use across genres. This view corroborates Pratt (1977) who avers that “speech act theory provides a way of talking about utterances not only in terms of their surface grammatical properties but also in terms of the context in which they are made, the intentions, attitudes, and expectations of the participants, the relationships existing between participants ... rules and conventions that are understood to be in play when an utterance is made and received.” Classical pragmatic theories evolve speech act categorization².

3. Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of symbols, signs and icons that are used in textual communication. Terrence Hawkes (1977) notes that social phenomena can be expressed via signification. He contends that “... every speech act includes the transmission of messages through the languages of gesture, posture, clothing, hairstyle, perfume, accent, social context, etc. over and above, under and beneath, even at cross purposes with what words actually say. Semiotics is studied through semiosis, which is the process of making and using signs (cf. Alabi 1995). Textual analysis investigates different texts in terms of their signification, giving the fact that reading involves invoking the different senses: sense of touch, sense of sight, sense of smell, etc.). Although the data of this study presents limited semiotic components, semiotics is relevant to this study.

4. Theoretical Frameworks

This study hinges on two theoretical frameworks: Bach and Harnish’s (ibid.) Speech Act Theory and Acheoah’s (ibid.) Pragma-crafting Theory.

4.1 Bach and Harnish Speech Act Theory

Bach and Harnish’s (ibid.) approach to speech act is based on intention and inference. They contend that for speakers to perform illocutionary acts, it is intended that their listeners have the understanding of the acts (mutual contextual beliefs). They contend that conversation (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 strongly posit that speaker-hearer mutual contextual beliefs (MCBs) facilitate the inferential process. To infer what 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 (S) is within or outside the bounds of literalness, and if S is speaking in a non-literal dimension, H should not only acknowledge it, but should also be able to understand what such speech by S means. Apart from MCBs, Bach and Harnish (ibid.) 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 (LP) refers to the moral belief that members of a Linguistic Community (LC) share on the particular language (L). 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 the expression or utterance. An act of communication is successful as soon as the hearer recognizes the speaker’s illocutionary intention.

Bach and Harnish (ibid.) recognize two broad categories of illocutionary acts: communicative and non-communicative. While the former requires the recognition of S’s R-intention, the latter does not. There are four main categories of communicative illocutionary acts: Constatives, Directives, Commissive and Acknowledgements. These four main categories correspond roughly to Austin’s Expositives, Exercitives, Commissive, and Behabitives respectively and closely to Searle’s Representatives (Assertives), Directives, Commissive and Expressives, differing mainly in their characterizations. There are two classes of non-communicative illocutionary acts: Effectives and Verdictives, corresponding roughly to Searle’s (1969) Declarations. A detailed account of the categories established by them 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, Retractive, Assentives, Dissentives, Disputatives, Responsives, Suggestives and Suppositives.

Assertives are characterized by S’s expression of belief that the hearer (H) also believes that P. Examples of verbs denoting Assertives are: affirm, allege, assert, aver, avow, declare, and deny.

Informatives are speech acts in which S expresses “the belief that P” and also “the intention that H form the belief that P”. Examples are advised, announce, appraise, disclose, inform, insist, notify, point out, report, reveal, tell, and testify.

In Descriptives, the speaker declares that “a particular quality is possessed by a person, place or thing”; the speaker expresses “the belief that O is F” and “the intention that H believes that O is F”. Examples are appraised, asses, call, categorize, characterize, classify, date, describe, diagnose, evaluate, etc.

Directives express the speaker’s attitude toward a future action by the hearer and the speaker’s intention or desire that the hearer considers his utterance as reason to act. Six subcategories of illocutionary acts are listed under this category: Requestives, Questions, Requirements, Prohibitives, Permissives, Advisories.

Questions are “special cases of requests; the hearer is requested to provide the speaker with certain information. A speech act is considered a question if S expresses “the desire that H tell S whether or not P” and “intention that H tell S whether or not P because of S’s desire”. Examples are: ask, interrogate, query, questions, quiz, etc.

Advisories express the belief that “there is (sufficient) reason for H to A (act)” and “the intention that H takes S’s belief as (sufficient) reason for him to A”. Examples are: advise, caution, counsel, propose, recommend, suggest, urge, warn, etc.

Commissives involve “the undertaking of an obligation or proposal to undertake an obligation”. Two main types of this category are distinguished: Promises and Offers. S promises H to A if S expresses “the belief that his utterance obligates him to A”, “the intention to A”, and “the intention that H believes that S’s utterance obligates S to A and that S intends to A”. See the theory for more insights on speech act categories and the verbs that denote them.

4.2 The Pragma-crafting Theory

The Pragma-crafting Theory presents language use as a pragmatic process of crafting; selecting, organizing and deploying elements of communication from speaker-hearer ends. In the theory, “P-crafting” is a super-ordinate pragmatic act which produces linguistic and extra-linguistic elements of communication. At different stages of a communicative event, there is a candidate for meaning (inference). P-crafting features include: Geoimplicature (GI), Linguistic Implicature (LI), Behavioural Implicature (BI), Contextual Presupposition (CP), Pragmadediant (PD), Object Referred (OR) and Operative Language (OL). See Acheoah (ibid.) for the diagram that captures concepts in the theory, which include:

- i. **Setting:** This is the physical context of the communicative event in both immediate and remote (referential) sense.
- ii. **Theme:** This is the message conveyed in/by Text.
- iii. **Sociolinguistic Variable:** It is any meaning conveyed by extra-linguistic variable such as age, cultural background, social status, race, gender, relationships, etc. (of participants).
- iv. **Psychological Act:** Any Emotion expressed through linguistic or extra-linguistic act is referred to as “psychological act”.
- v. **Inference:** Inference-making has to do with making logical deductions from available linguistic and extra-linguistic components of Text.
- vi. **Indexical:** It is a grammatical category that has the potential to establish the relationship between language and context.
- vii. **Shared Contextual Knowledge:** This refers to any piece of information available to participants of the on-going discourse, for the purpose of effective communication.
- viii. **Emergent Context:** It is any emergent situation in an on-going communicative event. It redirects the performance and interpretation of subsequent linguistic, extra-linguistic and psychological acts. An emergent context becomes Shared Knowledge of Emergent Context when it translates into common knowledge of the participants of discourse.
- ix. **Geoimplicature:** Coined from “geographical” and “implicature”, the term “Geoimplicature” refers to verbal and non-verbal practices that are restricted to race and geographical (physical) boundary; they are not universal human behaviour.
- x. **Linguistic Implicature:** It is any meaning implied through language.
- xi. **Behavioural Implicature:** It is any meaning conveyed by extra-linguistic and psychological acts.
- xii. **Contextual Presupposition:** This is a product of shared contextual knowledge.
- xiii. **Background Assumptions:** In an on-going communication, participants deduce meanings from verbal and non-verbal data. Such meanings are referred to as Background Assumptions (BAs).
- xiv. **Pragmadediants:** They are deviant expressions used by participants of discourse, as illocutionary strategies.

- xv. **Interactive Participant:** This is an interlocutory participant who performs linguistic, extra-linguistic and psychological acts, as communicative contributions that do not only impinge on the interpretive process, but also determine or generate sequel (perlocutionary act).
- xvi. **Non-interactive Participant:** A non-interactive participant does not participate in an on-going communicative event, but is intentionally or accidentally present in the physical context.

5. Methodology

In this study, the selection of data is based on content; some of the wall-cartoons provide richer insights on the communicative dimensions of verbal and non-verbal elements of communication. Instead of presenting pictures, the study gives clear description of each of the cartoons. Space constraints prevent the use of appendix to convey the data. The analysis is integrative (drawing insights from related literature), and deploys the Content Analysis Method (who says what, to whom and why?).

6. Presentation and Analysis of Data

CARTOON (A)	DESCRIPTION
	The physical context of the cartoon is a home. The participants are: husband, wife and their two children. The wife holds empty plate of rice, a tumbler of water and toothpick. The husband sits at the dining table, while his wife walks towards him. The two children sit near their father. Their mother carries an empty non-transparent plate towards her husband. The plate is large and covered. The husband says, “Mama Bornboy, do you want me to go late to my office? Where the food na? Smiling, his wife replies, “Sorry dear. You will enjoy the eba. It is Delta garri.”

Analysis

Linguistic Acts:

Locutionary Act: Mama Bornboy, do you want me to go late to my office? Where the food na?

Illocutionary Acts: asking, requesting, agitating

Locutionary Act: Sorry dear. You will enjoy the eba. It is Delta garri.

Illocutionary Acts: mocking, informing, ascribing

Pragma-crafting Features:

The encoder of “Mama Bornboy, do you want me to go late to my office?” requests his meal and agitates over the delay. It is obvious that the communication occurs in the morning; people eat breakfast before going to their places of work (Shared Macro Knowledge). The Interactive Participants Have Shared Contextual Knowledge (SCK) about the usual time for the breakfast. The secondary illocutionary act of the husband’s utterance is question, while the primary illocutionary act is agitation (agitating). The expression “Bornboy” implies that the couple has a son (conventional implicature). The husband’s utterance is status-indicative as it indicates head-subordinate relationship. If the wife utters it, she will be viewed as a “bossy” wife (as a metaphorical Margaret Thatcher).

Extra-linguistic Acts:

The text presents husband-wife relationship, in which both the husband and the wife are culturally and religiously expected to perform their family responsibilities (Shared Macro Knowledge). The husband is conscious of his position as head of the family (sociolinguistic variable), and the consciousness inform his choice of words; he speaks authoritatively (Behavioural Implicature) even though he is guilty of not making provisions for family needs. In Cartoon (A), non-verbal communication functions as a face-threatening act (FTA). There are Contextual Objects (COs): plate, tumbler and toothpick. The pattern of presenting the Contextual Objects is comic. After a good African meal, toothpick can be useful. It is mockery to present toothpick to a person that was not given any meal. The wife’s attitude is simply to show her intense anger. Although the encoder of “Sorry dear, you will enjoy the eba. It is Delta garri” informs the addressee about the quality of the garri (informative and ascriptive speech acts operating as secondary illocutionary acts), the utterance serves the purpose of mocking the addressee (primary illocutionary act). The cartoon reminds the audience of what they are already familiar with: (homes without peace, where husband and wife fight each other). As a demonstration of pragma-semiotic inference-making, the audience of cartoons relates the linguistic and paralinguistic elements in cartoons with environmental nuances, to understand the topic relevance or worlds-spoken-of, when cartoons are used to convey

messages. See Sperber and Wilson (1986) as well as Allan (1986) for tips on “topic relevance” and “world-spoken-of respectively.

Psychological Acts:

The atmosphere of the communication is tense; the husband does not want to go late to work, he must take his breakfast, yet it is not ready. In such a situation, a person may have different things to worry about: the Attendance Register at the office; the long traffic on the roads, etc. By agitating (speech act), the husband expresses his psychological state. Scholars of pragmatics hold the view that the psychological setting of a communicative event is crucial for a meaningful analysis of the event. Ironically, the husband is not conscious of the unresolved issue. By taking an empty plate rather than a plate of food to the husband, the wife reacts against her husband’s attitude. While the husband attacks his wife with the use of verbal communication, the wife deploys both verbal and non-verbal communication in attacking her husband. The attack dimension of her verbal communication only operates at the primary illocutionary act layer of meaning. What is obvious in the use of verbal and non-verbal elements of communication in cartoons (as in Cartoon (A)), is that pictures “commune”. According to Zeinab Zendana Shafii (2015), “the level of individual understanding is highly dependent on the mental picture from any object or particular thing to serve as a visible visual sample ...” Commenting further on the significance of non-verbal accompaniments in texts, Zenab Zendana Shafii (ibid.) reports Voight who submits that “literature itself is an art form. Carefully chosen words point visuals upon a page for the theatre of the mind. This has often inspired other more visually oriented artists to create tangible objects based on these mental images. Not only can this create a more fully realized piece of art, it also allows these artists to produce content based on other interpretations ...”

CARTOON (B)	DESCRIPTION
	The physical setting is a classroom. The participants are: a lecturer (a Professor) and his students. The lecturer holds a big dictionary. He arrives in class before the students. He has a bald head, and his beard touches the dictionary in his hand. He wears eye glasses, long sleeves with tie. The eye-glasses are loosely worn. There is a small towel on his shoulder. There are pens on his lips: blue, black and red pens. After waiting for some time in front of the class without seeing any student, he says, “Yet FG does not appreciate us. Nonentities in the luxury Villa! The poor are mighty in patience.”

Analysis

Linguistic Acts:

Locutionary Acts: Yet FG does not appreciate us. Nonentities in the luxury Villa! The poor are mighty in patience.

Illocutionary Acts: condemning, ascribing, asserting

Pragma-crafting Features

The encoder of the utterance condemns FG (Federal Government) for being unappreciative. By asserting that the Object Referred (FG) has a certain attribute, the encoder ascribes quality to FG, thus performing an ascriptive speech act. The expression Villa is suggestive of Aso Rock Presidential Villa in Abuja, Nigeria. Cartoon (B) presents teacher-student relationship. The fact that the lecturer is in class before his students implies that he is very diligent in his work (Behavioural Implicature).

Psychological Act:

The encoder’s psychological state is underpinned by the corruption and extravagance of the political class. The cartoon evolves during the prolonged industrial action of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). The encoder of “Yet FG does not appreciate us” is angry because of the prolonged ASUU strike which constitutes the psychological background of the cartoon.

Extra-linguistic Acts:

The Contextual Objects (dictionary, eye-glasses and pens) are message-driven. Though comic because of the manner in which they are used by the Professor, they have illocutionary-act potentials. In the Pragma-crafting Theory, Contextual Objects are components of Semiotic Particulars which are essentially non-verbal means of communication. As used in Cartoon (B) (Behavioral Implicature), the Contextual Objects portray the Professor as a chronic academic who cares less about other things in life. The cartoon is deployed as a non-verbal act with the illocutionary force of “mocking”. The

mindset of Nigerians about first-generation Professors in the country, informs the cartoonist's choice of non-verbal elements of communication. In using verbal components of cartoons to convey message, the cartoonist invariably performs actions. This is because each expression fits into one speech act category or the other, as the analysis of cartoons (A)-(C) indicates.

CARTOON (C)	DESCRIPTION
	The physical setting is a church. The participants are: a pastor and his congregation. The pastor is on the pulpit. It is offering time. The pastor closes his eyes and requests the congregation to give offerings to God. The pastor wears boxing gloves and holds a <i>koboko</i> (a traditional whip). He says, "Give God a dangerous offering. Happy new month! Nothing is too much, but something can be too small."

Textual Analysis

Linguistic Acts:

Locutionary Act: Give God a dangerous offering! Happy new month! Nothing is too much, but something can be too small.

Illocutionary Acts: Requesting, ascribing, greeting, informing, persuading

Pragma-crafting Features

The encoder takes advantage of the practice of wishing people happy new month when a new month begins. It is an emergent practice in contemporary Nigeria, where "Happy New Year" wishes was the popular remark in a New Year season.

Psychological Acts:

The encoder is aware of the mental state of the addressees. He takes advantage of the congregation's desire for miracles in terms of financial breakthrough. Requesting any congregation to give offerings to God, does not necessarily mean taking advantage of the congregation. However, in Cartoon (C), the utterance skillfully conveys a "mission-driven request". To process the topic relevance of the utterance, the congregation does not only invoke shared knowledge of giving-related biblical passages, but also invoke the deviant use of the adjective "dangerous" to qualify "offering". In the Pragma-crafting Theory, this communicative strategy is referred to as "Pragmadeviant" (PD); the encoder deviates from linguistic convention by violating the rule of collocation (company that words keep). Meaning(s) intended by a cartoonist is equivalent to speaker-meaning. The cartoonist, like any speaker in a communicative event, can explore the denotative meaning of an expression for the purpose of deploying speaker-meaning. This presupposes skillful manipulation of the verbal and non-verbal elements in a particular cartoon. For example, in Cartoon (C), the utterance "the poor are mighty in patience" is in tandem with the Professor's non-verbal act of being in class before the students and waiting until they arrived. James R. Hurford, Brendan Heasley and Michael B. Smith (2007) submit that "SPEAKER MEANING is what a speaker means (i.e. what he intends to convey) when he uses a piece of language. SENTENCE MEANING (or WORD MEANING) is what a sentence (or word) means, i.e. what it counts as the equivalent of in the language concerned.

Extra-linguistic Acts:

In churches, offering bags (Contextual Objects) are visible whenever it is offering time. Like preparatory conditions for the performance of speech acts, when ushers hold offering bags, the congregation begin to bring out offerings, Scholars of pragmatics do not only agree that there are preparatory conditions for the performance of speech acts, but also align with Austin (ibid.), that speech acts can be performed with a non-performative formula.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

This study reveals that in cartoons, the use of verbal and non-verbal elements of communication is focused on the cartoonist's communicative intentions. However, the cartoonist relies on cartoonist-audience shared knowledge to make each cartoon "easy to mean" from audience's end. Non-verbal communication is so potent in cartoons that more research on its use in different categories of cartoons will be very rewarding. Cartoonists use cartoons to express their psychological states on the phenomena that are addressed through the genre. Although cartoons are conveyed with verbal and non-verbal language, the non-verbal means of communication are much more fascinating, being a major communicative instrument of the cartoonist. The ability of the audience to interpret a cartoon is partly dependent on level of cognition. This is why a good cartoonist tries to "strike a balance" in the use of elements of communication. 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) individuals.”

In Cartoons (A) - (C), the setting, participants and Contextual Objects (COs) align with the audience’s Shared Macro-Knowledge and Shared Contextual Knowledge. Non-verbal elements do not add super-imposed meanings to cartoons.

In wall-cartoons, contents are contextualized for effective communication. In doing this, the cartoonist intentionally uses speech acts to deliver message. Cartoons are used to: entertain the audience, foster artistic expression of message, spur imagination and reveal the communicative dimensions of speech acts. Context determines the use and interpretation of language. The decoders of cartoons are aware of the contextual affordances of the cartoons. In the interpretation of cartoons, meanings are processed from discrete contexts. Adebija (1999) submits that “... we may identify at least four types of contexts as impinging on utterance interpretation: the physical, the socio-cultural, the linguistic and the psychological ...”³ A speech act analyst cannot be exact in quantifying and categorizing speech acts in larger discourses, because the classification of speech acts, as acknowledged in the literature, is intractable; speech acts are versatile. For example, to suggest to *h* is to advise *h* in a particular context.

In this study, three different domains parade the data: home (domestic), school (education) and church (religious) domains. For this reason, we do not indicate the frequencies of the speech acts, which would have been necessary in a single, larger text. In terms of participant and topic, Cartoons (A)-(C) are also different.

Effective use of cartoons in communication inevitably means making the cartoons sense-evoking. In this regard, the creator of a cartoon is interested in revealing what the audience wants to see, smell, touch or taste from the environment on visualizing the pictures, besides reading the linguistic inputs.

Tables (1), (2) and (3) reveal speech acts and their communicative functions:

Speech Act	Function
Mocking	to condemn the addressee’s attitude;
Informing	to inform the addressee about Object Referred (OR); to condemn the addressee’s attitude
Ascribing	to give negative attributes to the addressee; to condemn the addressee’s attitude
Requesting	to request something from the addressee
Agitating	to condemn the addressee’s attitude
asking	to ask the addressee about something to agitate

Table 1: Speech Acts in Cartoon (A)

Speech Act	Function
Condemning	to condemn the attitude of FG and students
Ascribing	to give negative attributes to FG and students
Asserting	to convey personal opinion about Object Referred (OR)

Table 2: Speech Acts in Cartoon (B)

Speech Act	Function
Requesting	to request something from the addressee
Ascribing	to give attribute to Object Referred (OR)
Greeting	to persuade the addressee
Informing	to inform the addressee about Object Referred (OR); to remind the addressee about Object Referred (OR); to persuade the addressee
Persuading	to persuade the addressee to do something

Table 3: Speech Acts in Cartoon (C)

The use of linguistic elements of communication in cartoons is a demonstration of communicative competence, and a facilitator of the process of decoding cartoonists' message. Wardaugh and Janet M. Fuller (2015, p. 400) submit that "communicative competence is the ability to produce utterances which are socially appropriate in contexts ...". Cartoons are immersed in social structure: people, ties and value systems. The variation in language noticed in Cartoons (A)-(C) is not incidental. It is informed by the variation in the contextual structure of the cartoons. Martin Putz et. Al (2012, pp. 247-249) submit that "in sociolinguistics, the categorization of people, their relationships, and social activities make up what is called 'social structure', i.e. social groups, networks and social situations. The main task of sociolinguistics is to relate variation in language to variation in social structure, whereby an individual's use of language is determined by that individual's recognition – their perception of the social groups and networks around them. Cartoons are products of linguistic, extra-linguistic and psychological underpinnings. A well created cartoon is a demonstration of the creator's mastery of the different underpinnings that generate cartoons.

Notes

1. Searle (1976) proposes that there are just five kinds of actions that one can perform in speaking, by means of the following five types of utterances:

- (i) **Representatives**, which commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition (paradigm cases: asserting, concluding, etc.);
- (ii) **Directives**, which are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something (paradigm cases: requesting, questioning);
- (iii) **Commissives**, which commit the speaker to some future course of action (paradigm cases: promising, threatening, offering);
- (iv) **Expressives**, which express a psychological state (paradigm cases: thanking, apologizing, welcoming, congratulating);
- (v) **Declarations**, which effect immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs and which tend to rely on elaborate extra-linguistic institutions (paradigm cases: excommunicating, declaring war, christening, firing from employment)."

2. In this regard, Austin (ibid.), Searle (1969) and Bach and Harnish (ibid.) are instructive.

3. Adegbija (ibid.) lists germane context-based questions:

Linguistically, one may ask question such as these: did the communicative exchange occur at night, in the morning, twenty years ago, at a church, at a mosque, in a bedroom, in the market, at a cemetery, at a hospital? Socio-culturally, one may ask questions such as these: What are the beliefs, habits, value systems, or cultures of those involved? Are their religious and cultural beliefs at hand? Linguistically, what are the other words appearing in the environment of the word used? What do they mean? What do they imply within the physical and socio-cultural setting? Psychologically, what is the state of mind of those involved in the interaction?

Commenting on "context", Noun, cited in Butari Nahum Upah (2018) posits that features of the physical context of human communication include:

- (i) Participants, e.g. boys, girls, men, traders
- (ii) Ongoing activity, e.g. playing, chatting, debating
- (iii) The place, eg. Church, class, stadium, dining table
- (iv) The time, e.g. time of the day or season

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