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A Discourse Study of Language used by Bus Drivers and Conductors in Anambra Metropolis

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Abstract

With the high rate of activities on the road, the study of language used by stakeholders of road transportation becomes of paramount interest. The study is set to ascertain the peculiar nature and choice of language use among bus drivers and conductors in Anambra metropolis. The study, therefore, explores the use of terms used by bus drivers and conductors within Anambra metropolis. This is with the view of using sociolinguistic measures to provide explanations regarding the use of such language. Data for the study were collected through unobtrusive observation method and unstructured interview. The observation and recording were done for a period of eight months. Such a long period was used to enable the researcher gather most if not all the words/expressions used by bus drivers and conductors in the different locations that served the sample. The work is guided by Halliday's Systemic Functional Theory which emphasizes the use of language in context. Data for the study were analyzed using a descriptive approach. The findings reveal that bus drivers and conductors in Anambra metropolis use words or

concepts that are not only unique to them but also contributes to their free flow of expression and communication among them as a social group. It further reveals that their nature or choice of language in no small measure adds to enriching the lexicon of the languages used. Finally, the aesthetic function of the language usage cannot also be overlooked. Hence, the research concludes that the words used by the bus drivers and conductors in Anambra metropolis is unique. It clearly indicates that one belongs to a certain profession or association. Since the study serves as a veritable foundation for further interesting research, the study recommends that other researchers may take a pragmatic study of the same or similar topic.

Keywords: Language, sociolinguistics, slang, Pidgin, code mixing

Introduction

Everyone uses language to communicate. Language is one of the most important tools of human expression and it functions in diverse ways. It is a means of expression and communication. It represents the identity of the users of the language itself. However, no one uses language the same way. Language varies from one social group to another social group, from one situation to another and from one place to another. By implication, the speakers are different from members of other groups. As occasion demands, people constantly change language on their audiences, styles, register, situation, dialects, and among others.

Language has been defined by different scholars and linguists. One of the definitions as supplied by Holmes (2013) avers thus: “language varies according to its uses as well as its users, according to where it is used and to whom, as well as according to who is using it” .According to Holmes, the use of language depends on the users, including where it is used and on whom it is used. Similarly, Black and Trager in Emma-Okorie (2014) defines language as a system of arbitrary vocal symbol by means of which a social group operates. This implies that language is speech based as

used by a group of people. Again, Liberman underscores his own definition of language as a communication system that is capable of transmitting new information (Emma-Okorie 2014). This implies that language is a means of communication through which new information or ideas can be relayed. As has been earlier pointed out, language varies from one social group to another, from one situation to another and from one place to another. These variations show that every speaker does not speak the same way all the time. In essence, language from the researcher's point of view, is a means of vocal communication according to individuals or groups. It is a means of communicating their thoughts and feelings to one another using words that are peculiar to them or their culture.

Review of Related Literature

Roles of Language

In different situations and discourses, language performs different functions. These functions range from persuade, request, order, praise and so on. However, citing Halliday, Umera-Okeke (2011) puts forward seven functions of language as given below:

1. Instrumental function: when language is used to manipulate the environment, to cause certain events to happen.
2. Regulatory function: when language controls events. The regulations may encounter approval or disapproval of the listener.
3. Representational function: when language is used to make statements, convey facts and knowledge, explain or report.
4. Interactive function: when language serves to ensure social maintenance. This implies knowledge of slang, jargon, jokes, folklore, cultural mores, politeness, and formality expectation in social change.
5. Personal function: when language expresses feelings, emotions, and personality.
6. Heuristic function: when language is used to acquire knowledge and to learn.
7. Imaginative function: when language is used to create tales, write a novel, poetry, tongue twisters, and so on.

Other functions of language include: directive function, expressive function, informative function, aesthetic function, creative function among others.

Brief History of Anambra and Language Use in Anambra State

Anambra is among the five states located in the South eastern part of Nigeria. It harbors over 5 million residents in the state as given by 2020 census report. It has Awka as the state capital. Onitsha, one of the largest urban areas and an important centre of commerce in Nigeria is also located in Anambra. Nnewi which is literary known as Japan of Africa is also located in Anambra. Residents of Anambra state are primarily Igbo with the Igbo language serving as a lingua franca within the state.

The literacy rate is comparatively high compared to other states. It is not an overstatement to say that Anambra is a centre of excellence as there are several institutions of learning of which Nnamdi Azikiwe University is one out of many. The linguistic situation in Nigeria is such that more than one language is spoken in many states of the federation. In addition, code switching and code mixing are common in the speech of Nigeria bilingual and multilingual. Consequently, every person in Anambra enjoys this linguistics variation.

Apart from the major indigenous language; Igbo, Anambra indigenes or the people of Anambra are bilinguals and multilingual as the case may be. In other words, Anambra people speak two to three languages respectively. Other non-indigenous languages are used in radio broadcasts. These languages include English and Pidgin. Interestingly, English is used in radio broadcasts because it is the nation's language of education as well as official language. Pidgin, though not an official language is sometimes used in media in order to accommodate non-educated people and non-indigenes in the state. Emphatically, Authority 91.9 FM Nnewi broadcast 12.30 pm news in Nigerian Pidgin every day.

However, Igbo and English languages are predominantly used in the media, education as well as religion.

Language Choice

The issue of language choice arises in a multilingual setting. People of Anambra and precisely bus drivers and conductors are not left out. They are faced with the choice of language as they undergo their daily activities on the road. This is an attribute of sociolinguistics within multilingual contexts. This is espoused in the words of Adegbija as affirmed by Taiwo (2004):

The concept of language choice is typically and frequently applied in sociolinguistics literature in multilingual contexts. Multilingual individuals do evaluate communicative situations thereby choosing amongst available codes on the account of intelligibility, semantic needs, sociolinguistics norm and other factors.

Sociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to society. Holms (2013) comments that sociolinguistics study the relationship between language and society. She further adds that they are interested in explaining the reason why we speak differently in different social contexts, identifying the social functions of language and the way it is used to convey social meaning. Sociolinguistics examines the interaction between the use of language and the social organization of language behaviour ,language attitudes and overt behaviour towards language users. The attitude of the society to each of the language as pointed out by the above scholars determines the functions assigned to them. More importantly, they describe sociolinguistics as “a general pattern of language use within a monolingual and multilingual speech community (Akindele and Adegbite,1999).

Premised on the above, it becomes an undeniable fact that an average Anambra man is literate in either Igbo or English, Igbo or Pidgin. Conversely, bus drivers and conductors use mainly Igbo in

their daily conversations and interactions. This is in line with what Fergusson identifies as one of the factors that are crucial determinants of language choice in multilingual context. According to him, the social group to which one belongs has a remarkable impact on language use. Again, the topic one is discussing as well as the situation in which one finds oneself while the communication is occurring contribute greatly to one's choice of language use. (Taiwo 2014). Taiwo also cites Milroy who first asserts that occupational affiliations and family ties can have a remarkable impact on the individual language choice at the micro-level. By implication, one's occupation as well as one's level in the society highly determines one's choice of language use.

In line with the above substantiated facts, most bus drivers and conductors in Anambra metropolis are not fully educated. A good number of them do not complete secondary school let alone having university education. Thus, their choice of language is mainly Igbo and little English with mainly one word or phrasal constructions as we shall see later from the date. Nevertheless, they sometimes make use of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) in their conversations.

Theoretical Framework

This paper anchors on Halliday's systematic functional theory. Systemic functional theory is an approach to language which was originally initiated by Firth but later developed by Halliday. One of the primary concerns in the study of language is context and (it) is more crucial than language structure. The term systematic according to Motanya as quoted in Ikechukwu and Ojiakor (2021) refers to the view of languages as a network of systems or interrelated sets of points for making meaning. On the other hand, the term, functional shows that the approach is concerned with the contextualized practical uses to which language is put as opposed to former grammar. Motanya further states that the model reviewed is contest

oriented and depends on the functional use of language. Hence, the issue of correctness or well-formedness does not come into play. This approach is beneficial here because it expounds on the importance of language in social context.

Methodology

The researcher employed the method of unobtrusive observation to elicit information from the respondents. The data obtained from the unobtrusive observation method was subsequently transcribed and analyzed. The researcher observed and recorded the interaction of bus drivers and conductors/loaders (ocho passengers) for a period of eight months, from November, 2022-June, 2023. The researcher used such a long period to enable her gather most if not all the terms used by drivers and conductors in Anambra metropolis. . However, the informants were not aware of the tape recordings and observation. This facilitated the reliability of the data. The drivers and conductors/ loaders were observed at various significant locations: parks, bus stops, traffic check points, stop and pick points/stands. Some of these significant locations include : Down Fly Over, Onitsha ,Upper Iweka Junction, Onitsha, Nkpor Park, Nkpor Junction, Ihiala Army Check Point, Mmiri Ele Police Check Point, Nnewi, UniZik Temporal Site, Awka, Eke Awka axis, Ekwulobia Park, Nnobi/Nkpor Road loading point, Old Owerri Road/Nkwo Road, Nnewi, Army Check Point, Nnewi. A combination of unobtrusive observation and discreet tape recording of 90 communicative interactions involving bus drivers and conductors constituted the methodology for the investigation. Since the study is qualitative, description, and interpretation approaches were adopted. The result reveal that the language of bus drivers and conductors in Anambra metropolis is creative as well as group oriented. It is a manifestation of the nation's socio- linguistic imperatives.It adds to the aesthetics of the languages involved.

Data Analysis

The table below shows the data, their interpretations, meanings and usage in contexts. The data are grouped according to common headings.

1. Slang

Slang refers to the use of words between or among people who belong to the same social group. It has to do with the use of informal language that is used mainly in spoken rather than in written expression (Ebim, Amaku, and Adebola 2021). Slang is a kind of word formation. This stance is espoused by Yule in Wiyaka and Prastikawat (2021) in these words:” Slang also has a process of forming words such as coinage, blending, borrowing, compounding, derivation and many more”.

However, according to Spears (2000), he clearly states that there is no standard test that will decide what slang is and what is not. Nevertheless, he asserts that expressions that are identified as slang are often some type of entertaining word play ,and they are almost always an alternative way of saying something. Similarly, slang can equally be referred to as a language consisting of words and phrases that are regarded as informal and are more commonly used in speech than in writing. They are typically restricted to a group of people or context. Slang is not always used by profession and class. The reason is because slangy words are regarded as non-standard. This simply implies that slang is avoided in formal writing. However, it is a mark of creativity and shared meaning in language. Some examples of slangy expressions, their interpretations as well as the various contexts of use by drivers and conductors within Anambra metropolis are given below:

S/N	Word/Slang Expression	Interpretation	Context Used
1.	Isi Zik (Zik's head)	N1000	Used mostly by drivers and conductors as money given to National Union Road Transport Workers (NURTW) or force people.
2.	Aka ise (five hand)	N500	Used mostly by drivers and conductors as money given to NURTW or force people.
3.	Aka ino (four hand)	N400	Used mostly by drivers and conductors as money given to NURTW or force people.
4.	Aka nabo (two hand)	N200	Used mostly by drivers and conductors as money given to NURTW or force people.
5.	Roja	Bribe for police	From drivers and conductors to their colleagues as they talk about the police.
6.	Onye owa	Drivers who apply high speed.	Compliments from conductors and Commuters who like high speed .
7.	Kupuru m taa	Excuse me today/consider me today.	From drivers/conductors to NURTW(National Union of Road Transport Workers) staff or Agbero asking them to allow them go without paying for the day.
8.	Bia Wee	Come Wey	From conductors drivers / fellow colleagues of the same age as a form of greeting.
9.	Onye nkem	My person	Drivers to "Agbero NURTW pleading for reduction of charges.
10.	Aroba m	My friend	Used by both conductors/drivers of, the same age.
11.	Donye aru/ tinye aka.	Speed up	From conductors to driver at the sight of "Agbero" that they want to dodge.
12.	Nwanyi oma	Good woman	From both drivers and conductors when appealing to adult woman passengers to enter their bus.
13.	Umu oma	Good children	To young girls persuading them to enter bus.
14.	Mpa /onye mpa	Father (a senior driver/ Agbero with authority).	Used by young drivers and conductors as a form of compliments.

15.	Isu ofia	To make ways, to pay one's way for easy access on the road. This is often used by drivers that carry foreign goods such as second hand clothes, bags, shoes, and so on.	From conductors and drivers when discussing their activities on the road especially before police; the way they bribe them for easy asses on the road especially when carrying illegal goods.
16.	Akpuruka	An old poorly maintained car .	From conductors to commuters telling them how bad the bus they want to enter is and persuading them to enter their buses.
17.	Mgbachapu	Act of picking commuters along the road and not waiting to load in the park.	From conductors and drivers to commuters requesting them to enter their buses as they don't waste time loading.
1,8.	Owa	Buses that are in good shape.	From conductors or drivers to their colleagues .
19.	Zukwaanu ike	Go and rest.	From conductors and drivers to NURITW staff or Agbero while charging them high fees.
20.	O mmaja koo gini?	Is that a threat or what?	From drivers and conductors to their colleagues or Agbero when in serious conflict or argument.
21.	Gbara ogwu gi nuo	Take your medicine (behave yourself).	From conductors to fellow conductors in a friendly conversation.
22.	Ima ukwa	Washing off the slimy part of bread fruit (being sluggish on the road).	From drivers to fellow drivers who are dull with the steering particularly on traffic.
23.	Ndi Obiakpo	Obiakpo people (wicked people).	Name for strict Agbero people by drivers and conductors.
24.	Elke nwe obia	Python, the owner of forest (long vehicles/trailer trucks.	From conductors to drivers asking them to be more careful at the sight of long vehicles or trailers.
25.	Nwa/onye buru ebu.	A grown child (someone who has got much money).	From drivers to their colleagues or (conductors to drivers in a friendly conversation.
26.	Ibu iko nwanne	You carry strength my brother (a driver with a full loaded booth and outside roof).	From drivers and conductors to their colleagues as a compliment for carrying full loaded booth.
27.	Kee wee?	Where is the way?(casual greeting of how are you?).	From drivers as well as conductors to their colleagues when greeting .
28.	Onye nkommko/ochonganogo	Trouble maker.	From conductors to the drivers telling them about the actions of another driver.
29.	Nwanne tuo down/uo down nwanne.	My dear come down (to alight at a destination).	From conductors to male commuters of their age mate.
30.	Gwui ka Igwilo.	Stay like Igwilo (being at a particular spot without making much attempt to leave or move).	From drivers in their bid to overtake their colleagues who seem to be sluggish with steering.

31.	Nye gi oso	Give someone a run (to harass someone or deal with the person).	From Agbero to stubborn conductors or drivers who do not always comply with their payment.
32.	Nne Nkechi	Nkechi's mother	From conductors and drivers to any middle aged mother requesting her to enter their bus.
33.	Emechaa ka anyi luo	Let us work later(let us see later)	Drivers to conductors after the day's activities, a way of parting.
34.	Ibiliachi	Married woman	Used on sluggish drivers by their fellow drivers.
35.	Onweroo	Nothing	Just a slang by both drivers and conductors.
36.	Inno mma	You are sitting well (you are rich).	Drivers and conductors to their colleagues telling them that they are well to do.
37.	Ka anyi welie	Let's take or collect it.	From conductors to commuters asking them to pay money.
38.	Oga	A police officer	A name for any police officer by drivers and conductors.
39.	Odogwu	Great man/hero	From junior drivers and conductors to senior drivers.
40.	Meelu m ifenu	Do something for me (give me some money).	From Agbero to drivers asking them for some money either after loading or after dropping a commuter.
41.	Ibu nnoo ezi.	You are a real pig.	From drivers to co drivers that misbehave on the road.
42.	Welie nwayoo	Take it easy.	From drivers and conductors to careless drivers on the road.
43.	Mbada		From drivers and conductors as compliments over a highly expensive car probably a new car bought by a fellow driver.
44.	Afia igba mmanu.	Goods producing oil (lucrative business).	From drivers that deal with one time very lucrative business.
45.	Ihazi ife	To put together(to repay one's vehicle).	From drivers who are not on duty but away putting their buses together.
46.	Nwanne moo	My brother	Greeting for both drivers and conductors.
47.	Oo	One hundred naira	From both drivers and conductors as they bargain with NURTW officials

48.	Nwoke oma	Good/fine man	A name for an adult man persuading him to enter bus.
49.	Ndi oshi a ano ya/ha ano ya?	Are these thieves around/are they around?	Questions drivers and conductors Usually ask their colleagues as they approach a temporal police checkpoint.
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2. Pidgin

Pidgin evolved as a result of communication need among people of diverse origins. Pidgin usually exists in multilingual setting or environment. Citing Hall, Ikechukwu and Ojiakor (2021:54) confirm that “pidgin is language resulting from sociolinguistic process of language in contact. 'Nigerian Pidgin (NP) is a widely spoken lingua franca in Nigeria that many towns and city dwellers are at least bilingual in it and one indigenous language. Some examples of NP used by bus drivers and conductors within Anambra metropolis include:

1.	De go	Be going.	From conductors and Agbero people to drivers asking them to move.
2.	Takam jeje	Take it easy.	From conductors to drivers asking them to drive slowly.
3.	Sodaa ya	Patch it or manage it.	From drivers and conductors to Agbero people requesting them to manage the little money they pay.
4.	Nwayoly nwayoly	Gently gently	From conductors to drivers asking them to drive slowly and safely.
5.	You de go?	Are you going?	From conductors and drivers asking commuters whether they are going so as to enter their bus.
6.	Come enter	Come and enter.	To commuters from conductors and drivers asking them to enter.
7.	Your money for front		From conductor announcing to commuters occupying front seats to pay their fare.
8.	Your money for back.		From conductor telling commuters at the back seat to pay their fare.
10.	Ndi wayo	Fraudsters	Used as in number nine.

3. Words Already in Existence but Used in a New Way

S/N	Word/Slang Expression	Interpretation	Context Used
1.	White	N50.00	From drivers and conductors about money they give to Agbero people.
2.	Conjure	To reduce price for commuters because of unfavorable day (bad market).	From drivers to conductors asking them to deduct some money for commuters as a result of scarcity of commuters or passengers on the road.
3.	My guy	My friend	A name for drivers and conductors.
4.	Small boy	Young driver/young conductor	Used by older drivers or conductors to y colleagues.
5.	My boy	Young driver/young conductor	From older drivers or conductors to junior colleagues.
6.	Senior man /senior boy	Older drivers /conductors	Used by young conductors and drivers on older colleagues.
7.	Pilot	Driver	
8.	Senior pilot/boy	An older /experienced driver or conductor.	A name for older/ senior driver.
9.	Tax collector		Name for NURITW (National Union of Road Transport staff .
10.	Mummy	Any married or adult woman.	A call from conductors and drivers to married women to enter their bus.
11.	Officer	A member of force; police, army, road safety.	A name by conductors and drivers to police, soldier, road safety official.
12.	Watch your side		From conductors to drivers at a bend or during over taking to be sure of safety before crossing over.

13.	Staff	A member of the transport union who usually do not pay.	Used by conductors and drivers as they complain about the number of staff they carry as that brings reduction in their profit since they don't pay.
14.	My man	My friend	Greetings /compliments from drivers and conductors to their colleagues.
15.	Green	N20.00	From both conductors and drivers when talking about money they give to police officers on check points.
16.	Daddy	Any gentle looking adult or married man.	From both drivers and conductors when calling such an adult gentle man to enter their bus.
17.	Guy	Name/greeting for young commuters/passengers.	Used by both drivers and conductors to call young or adolescent boys to enter bus.
18	Action man	Soldier	Name for soldiers at checkpoints as drivers and conductors try to call them so as to please them for them to be exempted from giving them money.
19.	Authority	.A respectable figure	

4. Code Mixing

Code mixing is one of the phenomena that is unavoidable in any bilingual/multilingual society. It can be defined as change of one language to another within the same utterance. Code mixing is used as a style of language use among drivers and conductors within Anambra metropolis. Some examples include:

1.	Manu m	My man /my friend	From drivers to Agbero people when trying to be friendly for them to receive favors from them.
2.	Olee way?	Which way?	Greetings from both drivers and conductors to themselves.

3.	Kee way?	Which way?	Greetings/compliments from drivers and conductors to themselves.
4.	O man m ka ibu.	You are my man.	From conductors or drivers to Agbero people when trying to appeal to them for favor.
5.	Anyi ga -enwe na younder.	We shall see later.	From conductors bidding farewell to fellow conductors.
6.	Inwee change nye anyi.	Give us change if you have.	From conductors to commuters to pay their exact money to avoid the problem of change.
7.	Ndi yellow fever	Uniform men in yellow uniform.	From conductors and drivers to their colleagues when talking about this particular uniform men.
8.	Ino mma now.	You are sitting well (you are comfortable).	
9.	Guy bia baalu m motor now.	Come and enter my vehicle.	From both drivers and conductors calling adolescent male passengers to enter their bus.
10.	Gbaa wing gi ofuma guy.	Play your role very well.	From conductors and drivers asking their colleagues to behave well on the road when it comes paying their bills on the road.
9.	Ndi one chance	One chance people(fraudsters)	From conductors to commuters trying to convince them to ignore other conductors and enter their bus.
10.	Bros shiftuo now	Bros please shift now.	Appeal to adult man to adjust for other commuters to be comfortable.
11.	E big	Big or fat man.	A respectable name for fat adult men requesting him to enter bus.
12.	E big nwanne moo.	My big brother.	A respectable way of addressing fat gentle men to enter bus.

Conclusion

The importance of language use cannot be over-emphasized. The paper attempted to present some practical words in forms of slang, Pidgin, new expressions, code mixing as used by bus drivers and conductors in Anambra metropolis as they carry out their daily activities on the road. It has been well established from the data presentation that these various forms of language use contributes greatly to enriching the vocabulary of any given language. It is also critically observed that the English, NP and Igbo languages are highly enriched with the formation of some new words as well as old ones used in a new or different ways. As one of the varieties from sub-culture adopted by a particular people, they become new vocabulary that would be used in everyday life. It greatly adds to the lexicon of the languages involved. In view of this, the researcher therefore, recommends that further research be drawn from other ever exhaustive areas of language use. Similar topic can be replicated using other angles such as pragmatics and critical discourse analysis.

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