

Interaction Strategies of Hagglng in the ‘Pawn Stars’ and ‘The Pickers’ TV Shows

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the Interaction strategies of hagglng in the ‘Pawn Stars’ and ‘The Pickers’ TV shows. This paper is a qualitative study of socio-pragmatics in hagglng interaction strategies in the 'Pawn Stars' and 'The Pickers' TV shows. The participants are involved in the interaction of hagglng both in the TV shows. The instruments used for data collection in this qualitative study of socio-pragmatics are video cameras, television, and computer. The data were collected using the video camera to record the TV shows. Then the recorded TV shows in the video camera were transferred to the computer to be transcribed and analyzed. From the data analysis, it is found that buyers and customers often employ similar hagglng strategies in some respects and distinctly different tactics in many other respects. Such strategies include humor, power, pleas, and honorific tags. Therefore, it is expected that there will be other research concerning this topic that involves much more comprehensive data, or there will be other research concerning a similar topic but in a different setting or participants.

Keywords: Hagglng, Interaction, Strategies, TV Shows

INTRODUCTION

Hagglng is an important aspect of the social activity of buying and selling in which vendors and their prospective customers engage in different socio-pragmatic acts in negotiating and making compromises, using a language or different languages. As mentioned by Crystal, cited in (Fesharaki, Fetanat, & Shooshtari, 2020), Socio-pragmatics concerns “language use which derives from the social situation .”Buying and selling conversation occurs only in specific

contexts (mainly shops and markets), deals with the main topic (the action of selling and buying a product), and is carried out by speakers assigned two precise roles: 'shopkeeper' and 'customer.' Sellers and buyers tend to behave in ways that have the potential to achieve their goals while interacting. On the part of the seller, the goal is to ultimately maximize profit while the buyer strives to obtain the goods at the lowest cost. Haggling exchange frequently entails complex negotiation, compromise, and subterfuge, sometimes degenerating into verbal abuse and name-calling (Smart Oruh et al., 2020).

From the early plea-Haggling studies of Maynard (1984, 1989) in (Flynn & Freiberg, 2018) to the publication of (Juhila & Pösö, 2018) text on *The Discourse of Negotiation*, linguists and conversational analysts have been interested in the process of haggling. Drawing from a range of perspectives, research in this area typically treats haggling as one of many unique contexts for examining differences in language use. In the same line, Smart Oruh et al. (2020) identifies discourse strategies of haggling in the Nigerian context as dysphemism and euphemism, cajoling, flattery, and flirting. The interactional strategies of haggling in other multilingual contexts, such as in Iran, have also been carried out where code-mixing, honorific, face, and politeness strategies, among others, are used (Ou & Gu, 2020).

Haggling occurs in everyday life of the Nigerian people and strongly impacts their linguistic climate. Generally, haggling is an important aspect of the social activity of buying and selling in which vendors and their prospective customers engage in different socio-pragmatic acts in negotiating and making compromises, using a language or different languages. Smart Oruh et al. (2020) stated that haggling is usually done because there is something that both parties cannot accept. Therefore, haggling is necessary so both parties can accept a good decision. This article aims to describe and interpret the Interaction strategies of haggling employed by the interactants in the 'Pawn Stars' and 'The Pickers' TV shows. It is seen from the view of sociopragmatics based on the theory of how to interpret the meaning of utterances by Wittgenstein (1958) and Levinson (1992), cited in (Archer, Jagodziński, & Jagodziński, 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Haggling or buying and selling interaction is a sub-genre of service encounters (Smart Oruh, 2020). Service encounter is a term that refers to the combination of verbal and nonverbal transactions that take place between a seller, on the one hand, and a buyer, on the other hand (see, for instance, Ikegwonu & Ndibe, (2022); Redcay & Schilbach, (2019)). The above definitions can be further elucidated by (Luo & Chen, 2020) description of 'genre' as a 'staged, goal-oriented and purposeful social activity that speakers engage in as members of a culture'.

Stage, in this sense, refers to each necessary step or process participants undergo to achieve their goals in a conversation. In contrast, goal refers to the ultimate point of closure or culmination of the discourse.

A haggling exchange is initiated when a seller pronounces an unusually high price for a product that a customer expresses an interest in or intends to purchase in a market setting. The customer responds by either slashing the price to a ridiculously low extreme or stating what s/he considers to be the true worth of the good on offer. The seller reacts by coming down lower, and the exchange continues until they reach the sale closure after both parties have arrived at a mutually agreeable price. Sale price is often influenced by a number of issues, including the type of goods (whether they are perishable).

Most of the studies in this area have clustered into three types of research: conversational analysis, pragmatics, and speech acts. Pragmatics focuses on the way patterns of verbal and nonverbal behaviors create meanings within organizations. Van der Molen (2018) employed vocal overtones in her analysis of the relationship between haggling as an organizational context and speech patterns in buyer–seller interactions. He found that negotiators accentuated their talk by slowing down their rate of speech and by speaking louder each time they made a concession. Making concessions as a Haggling tactic also surfaced in a host of studies on strategy and tactics, interaction analysis, and haggling phases that broadly fit into this category of pragmatics (Karjalainen, Sarker, & Siponen, 2019). In these studies, language functions primarily as a tool to perform or serve the ends of joint or individual gain.

METHOD

This paper is a qualitative study of sociopragmatics in haggling interaction strategies in the ‘Pawn Stars’ and ‘The Pickers’ TV shows. Pawn Stars is an American reality television series shown on History Channel and produced by Leftfield Pictures. The series is filmed in Las Vegas, Nevada, where it chronicles the daily activities at the World Famous Gold & Silver Pawn Shop. The series depicts the staff’s interactions with customers, who bring in a variety of artifacts to sell or pawn and who are shown haggling over the price and discussing its historical background, with narration provided by either Jack and George (all names are pseudonyms). The focus is also on the interaction between the customers and the buyer. The participants are involved in the interaction of haggling both in ‘Pawn Stars’ and ‘The Pickers’ TV shows. The instruments used for data collection are video cameras, television, and computer. The data were collected using the video camera to record the TV shows. Then the recorded TV shows in the video camera were transferred to the computer to be transcribed and analyzed. The present research

adopts a descriptive study where the researcher describes the evidence in the form of general patterns in the data of participants' use of socio-pragmatic strategies.

FINDINGS

From the data analysis, it is found that buyers and customers often employ similar haggling strategies in some respects and distinctly different tactics in many other respects. Such strategies include humor, power, pleas, and honorific tags.

a. Humor

Humor, according to (Chen & Soo, 2018), 'involves polysemy when both a "serious" and a "non-serious" meaning can be recognized. It often includes teasing, ironic remarks, and dirty jokes capable of causing laughter. There is a general agreement among humor researchers that the most unambiguous indication of humor is that someone present laughs. Based on the data collected, humor is one of the interaction strategies of haggling used in 'The Pickers' TV show. For example:

The buyer wants to buy advertising picturing a woman

1. Buyer : I have gotta ask, is she for sale?
2. Seller : Helen (his wife) probably feels glad to see her go. She calls her my girlfriend.... (all laughing)
3. Buyer : I'm in love with her for 100 dollar bill.
4. Seller : There'll be a blank spot on the wall.
5. Buyer : Looks like you break up with her.....(shaking hands and laughing)
6. Seller : All right

The interaction above shows that both the buyer and the seller employ humor. So the primary purpose of using humor in order for the goods (picture) to be bought or sold quickly is achieved with no problem. No interaction shows humor in the data collection of "Pawn Stars."

b. Power

Liando, Tatipang, Rorimpandey, & Karisi, (2022) and Archer et al. (2021) define that power 'as the ability or capacity to perform or act effectively....to exert control over others. Power is used in this study to refer to the capacity of either party in the interaction to produce an effect on the other. Power is manifested in haggling, viz., conciliatory or aggressive tone of voice, reverence or audacity, and choice of words. Here is an example of the employment of 'power' in the 'Pawn Stars

1. Seller : Maybe 150?
2. Buyer 1: It's missing the key parts. You know man, I'd go at 75 bucks
3. Seller : Man, I think we'll do better than that. I think we'd go at 125
4. Buyer2: I tell you what

5. Seller : Yeah
6. Buyer2: George, give him 100, I ain't go no damn higher.
7. Buyer1: I got tons of Marx toys right now. They are not moving as fast as they were....100 bucks, it's up to you...

Based on the text, in line 6, it can be seen that the 'buyer 2' employs the power to influence and even press the seller to follow his will on the price, perhaps since he thinks that he's the one who's got the money, so he's got the power over the seller.

c. Please

Both vendors and customers sometimes have to plead with the other party during haggling exchanges. Here's the example in the 'Pawn Stars

1. Buyer : I'll give you 350 for them, which would be my top dollar.
2. Seller : (sigh)...I more than that, can you go 7?
3. Buyer : No, I mean 350 is it. That is. This is worth like 4- 5 that was worth like 30 bucks, he said, so we're lookin' at 350, and I'll make like 100-150 bucks
4. Seller : Make it 4 for my gas up here.....come on man...
5. Buyer : (shaking hands) all right, what the hell... I think I'll make a little money
6. Seller : Alright, good

It can be seen that in line 4, the seller employs the pleas. The pragmatic meaning is by using it by the seller. The buyer will show his generosity and buy his goods/stuff.

d. Honorific tags

One haggling strategy is applying honorific tags, such as giving titles to either the customer or the seller. Below is an example from 'The Pickers.'

The buyer wants to buy the bicycle tools

1. Buyer : What do you think of them, boss?
2. Seller : both of them?
3. Buyer : yes, are you making me an offer?
4. Seller : yeah
5. Buyer : 75

It can be seen from the text above that in line 1, the buyer employs the honorific tags 'boss'. The pragmatic message is by addressing the seller using the honorific. The seller feels esteemed and appreciated, thus, is lured into selling it to the buyer. As already stated above, It was found that in this study the most used

strategies in haggling employed by the interactants in the 'Pawn Stars' and 'The Pickers' TV shows are humor, power, pleas, and honorific tags. The interactants used it until a mutually agreeable price was reached.

DISCUSSIONS

Haggling is one of the cultural phenomena which, in practice, occurs in the market in buying and selling activities that are often carried out by buyers and traders (Smart Oruh, 2020). This Haggling activity is usually carried out in traditional markets, where both parties to reach an agreement in the transaction carry out intense communication to reach an agreement. Haggling is a contract procession to achieve the pleasure of both parties in the sale and purchase transaction.

Haggling occurs in everyday life of the Nigerian people and strongly impacts their linguistic climate (Soneye, 2020). Generally, haggling is an important aspect of the social activity of buying and selling in which vendors and their prospective customers engage in different socio-pragmatic acts in negotiating and making compromises, using a language or different languages. Traders and buyers tend to behave in ways that have the potential to achieve their goals while interacting.

Haggling is an activity that cannot be eliminated in buying and selling transactions, especially in traditional markets, where both parties to reach an agreement in the transaction carry out intense communication to reach an agreement. Haggling is a contract procession to achieve the pleasure of both parties in the sale and purchase transaction. Haggling in its activities is part of the negotiation. Negotiation, in this case, is a business interaction between sellers and buyers to achieve a goal or, in other words, is an agreement (equal perception) about the price of goods and goods that are the object of buying and selling in terms of quality and quantity.

On the part of the seller, the goal is to ultimately maximize profit while the buyer strives to obtain the goods at the lowest cost. Soneye (2020) identifies such discourse strategies of haggling in the Nigerian context as dysphemism and euphemism, cajoling, flattery, and flirting. The interactional strategies of haggling in other multilingual contexts, such as in Iran, have also been carried out where code-mixing, honorific, face, and politeness strategies, among others, are used (Soneye, 2020). The socio-pragmatic aspects of haggling in the Nigerian context have not been sufficiently explored hence the need for the present study.

Haggling activity is also included in social interaction between individuals in the market (Ayeni, 2021). Haggling occurs because humans need each other, whereas sellers need customers to buy their wares, and buyers need the goods they sell, so social interaction occurs. However, this Haggling activity is very inverse

when shopping in supermarkets, malls, shopping centers, and more, especially TV shows. In practice, there are several factors behind haggling in TV shows, namely humor, power, pleasurable and horrific tags, with the use and tactics of each depending on the situation at that time.

CONCLUSION

The study has described and analyzed the haggling interaction strategies in the 'Pawn Stars' and 'The Pickers' TV shows. Words and expressions used in the Haggling process are often used beyond their linguistic or referential meaning. They have contextual, pragmatic implicit meaning, which can also be derived from the social, linguistic, and cultural contexts. The strategies employed include humor, power, pleas, and honorific tags. The interactants used it until a mutually agreeable price was reached. The strategies employed include humor, power, pleas, and honorific tags. It is expected that there will be other research concerning this topic that involves much more comprehensive data, or there will be other research concerning a similar topic but in a different setting or with participants.

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