



Strengths and Weaknesses of the Pragma-crafting Theory

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Abstract: The focus of pragmatic theories from classical to contemporary times includes speech acts, contexts, shared knowledge and meaning (implicatures and presuppositions). As a reaction to the state of the literature of pragmatics, the Pragma-crafting theory attempts to elucidate novel concepts and issues in human communication across genres. The theory is both an improvement and an extension of Mey (2001). Any framework for the pragmatic analysis of discourse should be the product of interdisciplinary research. This paper examines the strengths and weaknesses of the Pragma-crafting Theory. Indeed, pragmatics, semantics, semiotics and sociolinguistics interact to underscore the interpretation of language via linguistic and extra-linguistic “agencies” of communication. This study briefly examines some classical and contemporary pragmatic theories with a view to locating the ways in which the Pragma-crafting Theory adds new insights to existing body of knowledge in the literature. The study finds that the theory establishes new categories of predating notions, and evolves thought-provoking perspectives in cross-cultural pragmatics.

Keywords: Pragma-crafting Theory, pragmatics, semantics, semiotics, sociolinguistics, Mey

INTRODUCTION

Pragmatics remains the study of contextual nuances which determine the use and interpretation of discourse. So long as “communicative competence” is the core of pragmatics, a theoretical framework that underscores acts performed in discourse, is not only necessary, but also non-negotiable. Such acts transcend speech acts; Austin (1962) posits that the total speech act in the total speech situation is the only actual phenomenon which in the last resort is worthy of scholarly investigation. A speech act study is essentially immersed in pragmatics. The major concerns of pragmatics include: speech acts (when we speak, we perform various actions with our words); presuppositions (in communicative events, things which participants take for granted are said to be presuppositions about the context); intentions (these are participants’ communicative goals); implicatures (implied issues in an utterance); contexts (the relevant aspects of the physical or social setting of an utterance or discourse); inferences (making logical conclusions from available contextual data); non-verbal communication (gestures, dressing and movements). In investigating the merits and demerits of the Pragma-crafting Theory, this study draws insights from pragmatics, semantics, semiotics, discourse analysis and sociolinguistics.

PREDATING THEORIES IN PRAGMATICS

This section examines some classical and contemporary theories in pragmatics to establish the extent and locate the areas in which the Pragma-crafting theory adds to the literature:

2.1. Austin (1962)

A major strength of Austin’s theory is that it generated widespread interest in “doing things with words. Austin (1962) makes a distinction between ‘performatives’ and ‘constatives’. Constatives are statements that have the

property of being either true or false, whereas performatives are utterances which count as actions. Austin posits “that performatives can either be felicitous or infelicitous, and should be performed under certain felicitous conditions; certain words have to be uttered in certain circumstances, all participants of the discourse must exercise such procedures correctly and completely, the particular persons and circumstances in a given situation must be appropriate for the particular procedure, and their thoughts and feelings should be germane to the situations. He classifies speech acts into 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).

2.2. Searle (1969)

Searle’s seminal book, *Speech Acts: An essay in the Philosophy of Language* which was developed in subsequent works, was a speech act proposal. Searle (ibid.) explains that the act of communication is rule-governed. He classifies rules into regulative and constitutive rules. Regulative rules regulate antecedently or independently, existing forms of behaviours. They operate as imperatives and constitute the basis for appraising behaviours.

2.3. Saddock (1974)

Saddock (1974:12) contends that “explicit performatives make it clear that illocutionary forces cannot be ruled out of Speech Act Theories.” He proposes the Abstract Performative Analysis which states that in the deep structure semantic representations of certain sentences, the subject refers to the speaker of the sentence, the indirect object refers to the addressee and the illocutionary force is that part of the meaning of a sentence which corresponds to the highest clause in its semantic representation. He posits that sentential ambiguity is informed by illocutionary force, and that a single sentence can be a conjunction of two or more clauses, each with its illocutionary force.

2.4. Grice (1975)

Grice (1975) proposes the Cooperative Principle guided by maxims: Maxim of Quality (This controls the amount of information that is just enough and sufficient); Maxim of Quantity (This does not permit false utterances); Maxim of Relevance (The utterance must be relevant to the topic under discussion); and Maxim of Manner (This relates to how a speaker makes his contribution). The theory emphasizes adjacency pairs (turn-taking) in discourse. Grice evolves the notions of Conventional and Conversational implicatures. Conventional Implicatures are lexeme-dependent while Conversational Implicatures are generated when the Cooperative Principles of conversation are violated.

2.5. Bach and Harnish (1979)

The pragmatic theory of Bach and Harnish (1979) is inference and intention-based. They argue that for speakers to perform illocutionary acts, their hearers must understand what such acts mean; whether the acts are within or without the bounds of literalness. They also opine that mutual contextual beliefs between S (Speaker) and H (Hearer) as well as their world knowledge facilitated the inferential process. Their terminology, “Speech Act Schemata”, explains different illocutionary strategies in terms of literal or non-literal utterances in discourse.

2.6. Adebija (1982)

Adebija (1982) contends that his theory fills the gaps in previous pragmatic theories, being a balanced and unified approach to pragmatics. Basic perspectives in the theory are the “Master Speech Act” and the “Pragmasociolinguistic” concepts. The ‘Master Speech Act’ which is a super-ordinate layer for interpreting utterance meaning, captures the totality of variables for the interpretation of utterances. At this secondary level of utterance interpretation, the synchronic and diachronic contexts of utterances are examined. The ‘Pragmasociolinguistic’ concept encapsulates the pragmatic, social and linguistic aspects of context which underpin utterances in discourse.

2.7. Mey (2001)

Acheoah (2015) cites that Mey's Pragmatic Act theory is an attempt to remedy the pitfalls in Austin's Speech Act theory of (1962). Mey's theory consists of a super-ordinate term, Pragmeme, which anchors 'activity' and 'textual' components of discourse. The activity part shows the roles of the participants of discourse (interactants) while the textual part concerns the various contextual variables that interplay in discourse situations. Mey contends that his theory concentrates on the environmental constraints which determine what can be said, what is being said and what cannot be said in communicative events. The 'ipra' or 'pract' initiates a pragmatic act to realize a 'pragmeme'. Each 'pract' is simultaneously an 'allopract', that is, a specific production of a definite 'pragmeme'. The knowledge which interactants have on a communicative event as well as the effects of such an event on them in that particular context constitutes a 'pract'.

Mey (ibid.) explains that during communication, interactants produce speech acts, conversational acts, physical acts, psychological acts and prosodic acts which are all articulated in varied contexts: INF (inference); REF (reference); VCE (Voice); SSK (Shared Situation Knowledge); MPH (Metaphor); and M (Metapragmatic Joker). The metapragmatic joker refers to certain metapragmatic activities. Indexical expressions which are context-sensitive (repeating indexical expressions in discourse does not determine what they mean, as their meanings depend on who utters them and the situations that inform their production) and so necessitates adequate mastery of the context of an utterance is a good example of metapragmatic activity. Explaining the metapragmatic activity, Mey (ibid.) cites that the repetitive structure 'What I do I do' is implicit (the meaning has to be worked out); the indexicality (indexical context) will produce the meaning through textual analysis that shows the users, receivers and contexts of communicative elements. Invariably therefore, the metapragmatic indexicality explains how pragmatic acts generate discourse.

ACHEOAH (2015)

To underscore the systematic, comprehensible and dynamic nature of human communication, Acheoah (2015) evolves the the Pragma-crafting Theory. Contending that effective communication is essentially a 'pragmatic' process of 'crafting' (skillful selection and arrangement of verbal and non-verbal elements of communication) from smaller structures to larger ones towards achieving illocutionary goals, Acheoah presents a scholarly overview of hitherto neglected issues in the literature of pragmatics. "Every Pragma-crafting (P-crafting) involves illocrafting, uptake and sequel. Therefore, 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 inference. At every such stage, the interactive and non-interactive participants explore P-crafting features (inference features): indexicals (INDXL); shared macro-knowledge (SMK); shared contextual knowledge (SCK); shared knowledge of emergent context (SKEC) geoimplicature (GI); linguistic implicature (LI); contextual presupposition (CP); behavioural implicature (BI), pragmadeviant (PD), object referred (OR) and operative language (OL) to ascertain messages and sequels (ibid. p.21-32)." Notions in the theory include:

(i) P-crafting: This is a super-ordinate notion which has dual components: Event and Text; these two components unfold as discrete multiple categories in the explanation of how communication is interpreted from speaker-hearer or writer-reader ends.

(ii) Event: It concerns participants of discourse who are either interactive or non-interactive. The interactive participants perform any or all of these acts to the discourse: linguistic, extra-linguistic and psychological acts. On the other hand, the non-interactive participants are those who are present in the setting, but do not perform any act in the discourse.

This kind of participants is typical of certain discourse settings. Even when they perform linguistic, extra-linguistic or psychological acts, such acts are not connected to the discourse in progress, so they are labeled

'non-interactive participants'. Acheoah (2015) exemplifies the notion by saying Billy, Gerald and Jane may begin a conversation from school and sustain it until they get to Hardy's shop, only to meet Hardy and his customer bargaining over the price of certain commodities. In this situation, all acts performed are only meaningful in terms of how they affect an on-going discourse. In another vein, the students in a classroom lecture are fragmented: some are discussing issues unrelated to the lecture; some are making linguistic, extra-linguistic and psychological contributions related to the lecture and others are just physically present in the setting. However, in certain discourse situations, an interactive participant may perform linguistic, extra-linguistic or psychological acts as an indirect communicative strategy targeted at a non-interactive participant towards achieving certain goal(s). Indeed, non-interactive participants affect communicative events. For example, the sociolinguistic particulars (age, status, ethnic background) of the non-interactive participants determine how and what Billy, Gerald and Jane say in Hardy's shop.

Acheoah (2014) uses the label, H2, to refer to participants who are present in discourse, but are not speakers' interlocutors.

(iii) Text: Components of Text are Setting, Theme and P-crafting Features. The trio constitutes the communicative features in Text. However, the dynamics of communication are captured by P-crafting Features which have discrete theoretical notions demonstrated by the interactive participants in three different frames: linguistic acts, extra-linguistic acts and psychological acts.

(iv) Interactive participant: This is an interlocutory participant. He makes linguistic, extra-linguistic and psychological contributions that do not only impinge on the interpretive process in discourse, but also determine or generate sequel. An interactive participant demonstrates pragmatic awareness in the encoding and decoding of utterances.

(v) Non-interactive participant: A participant is categorized as non-interactive when he does not function in an on-going communicative event, although he is intentionally or accidentally present in the physical context.

(vi) Setting: This is the physical context of the communicative event (Text) in both remote and immediate sense.

(vii) Theme: This category is the message conveyed in/by Text. Text may convey one or more themes that can only be identified when communicative acts (acts performed by interactive participants) interact with communicative features (P-crafting Features).

(viii) P-crafting Features: These elements are instrumental to understanding the interlocutory roles of the interactive participants. The elements include: inference (INFR), indexicals (INDXL), shared macro-knowledge (SMK), shared contextual knowledge (SCK), shared knowledge of emergent context (SKEC), geoimplicatures (G), linguistic implicature (LI), behavioural implicature (BI), contextual presupposition (CP), pragmavariant (PD), object referred (OR) and operative language (OL). INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE:

Inference has to do with making logical deductions from available linguistic and extra-linguistic data. Indexicals are grammatical categories that have the potential to establish the relationship between language and context. Shared contextual knowledge (SCK) is the available pieces of information which only participants of the present discourse have for the communication to thrive. When discourse has an emergent context, perlocutionary effects may not occur (effects intended by speakers), despite the appropriateness of participants and circumstances. Any situation that suddenly emerges in an on-going discourse is emergent. An emergent context becomes shared knowledge of emergent context (SKEC) when it becomes common knowledge to the participants of discourse. It is vital in terms of its potential to determine illocutionary forces and relocate sequel. An emergent context is a candidate for inferences. The term 'Geoimplicature' is coined from 'geographical' and 'implicature' to refer to practices that have geographical restriction in terms of people, and not just in terms of physical

boundaries (cf. Acheoah, 2011). Such practices are not universal, and they are both verbal and non-verbal. Linguistic implicatures (LI) are meanings implied through language while behavioural implicature (BI) are meanings implied through extra-linguistic and psychological acts. Contextual presuppositions (CP) are products of shared contextual knowledge (SCK); in a specific (micro-context) discourse, participants deduce meanings from verbal and non-verbal data limited to the participants themselves. The meanings deduced are treated as background assumptions (BAs) which direct interlocutory roles. DCs (decoders) imply that ENCs (encoders) know that certain VEs (verbal elements) and NVEs (Non-verbal elements) are deduced as OR (object referred) in OL (Operative Language).

(ix) Linguistic Acts: There are five components in this category:

1. Speech acts (direct, indirect and pragmadediant);

Pragmadediants are deviant forms of expressions which participants use as part of illocutionary strategy or creative indulgence.

Acheoah (2011) coins the term 'pragmadediant' (PD) from 'pragmatics' and 'deviant'. It is not a duplication of the notion of indirect speech act as it is any expression used as a literal but deviant communicative strategy; in the conversational exchange below, Sam deviates from the conventional use of the verb 'stole' since he owns the book:

Sam: I stole my book from the teacher's bag.

Mary: But it's yours.

There is always a pragmatic justification for pragmadediating; Sam's book was no longer his, because his teacher who seized it did not promise to return it.

Object referred (OR) is the referent of an utterance. This referent is either in the remote world or immediate context of speech. One of the strengths of "meaning as object" (an approach to the study of meaning in semantics) is that words have or pick referents (objects) in the world.

Every discourse in natural communication is conveyed through a particular language, whether indigenous or alien to the participants. This is what is labeled operative language (OL).

2. Supra-segmental Features (stress, intonation, rhythm, pitch);

Stress is the degree of emphasis with which a syllable is uttered. Intonation is the rising and falling of the voice during speech production. The noticeable pattern of sound produced as a result of stressed and unstressed syllables produces rhythm. Therefore, speakers' intentional violation of the stress patterns of words or stretches can convey varied messages in discourse. During a class lesson, the pupils who have become too tired to continue the lesson may choose repeated pitch rhythm (and this can generate the perlocutionary effect of annoying the teacher) to respond to the teacher when they are asked: "Pupils, do you understand?" Indeed, stress, intonation and rhythm are mostly inseparable. These prosodic features convey messages in communicative events.

3. Phones (Ssss, Shhh, Mmmm, Ehmnn);

The term 'phones' refers to speech features between the phoneme and the word. They are common components in both written and spoken discourse. Small as they are, they express emotions of various kinds besides having speech acts illocutionary potential in context.

4. Exclamations (Wao!, Oh!, Ah!, Abah!, other categories);

Psychological acts are sometimes performed through exclamations. A speaker may utter "Oh!" in a particular context of situation to perform the act of approving whereas the same speaker may utter "Abah!" to agitate in the same context of situation.

5. Music (lyrical).

Participants can sing without using words (lyrics). However, it is when words are used that it can be said that a linguistic act has been performed. Lyrics convey diverse messages in discourse. Sometimes, the context in which a participant of discourse sings, and how it is sung, determines the implicature.

(x) *Extra-linguistic Acts*: Extra-linguistic acts in the Pragma-crafting Theory include:

1. *Sociolinguistic Variables*: These include: age, cultural background, social status/class, gender and relationships).

2. *Music (non-lyrical)*: Non-lyrical music operates as non-verbal communication. It can be rhythmic, but its importance in the Pragma-crafting Theory is its communicative value in discourse. Sounds produced in rhythmic pattern in certain contexts may negate world knowledge, and so become an implicature or an illocutionary strategy.

3. *Drumming*: Where a group of students are writing an examination, drumming generates a Behavioural implicature (BI), which is produced when extra-linguistic acts negate the context of discourse.

Semiotic particulars (weather, time, contextual object (CO), colour, clothing, posture, perfume, location/position, size, body mark and silence);

4. *Laughter*: Laughter is capable of conveying expected emotions of solidarity, peace, approval, admiration, etc.

5. *Body Movement*: Not all body movements are gestures. Like gestures, body movement can reveal psychological states of participants, besides being able to achieve communicative goals.

(xi) *Psychological Acts*: These are the different emotions expressed through linguistic and extra-linguistic acts.

3.1. Strengths of the Pragma-crafting Theory

The pragma-crafting Theory establishes the following critical positions which are further discussed in this paper, towards revealing the strengths and weaknesses of the theory:

- (a) Pragmatic use of language presupposes first-hand knowledge or mastery of the linguistic conventions of the Operative Language (OL);
- (b) Speech act theories have their potency in states-of-affairs;
- (c) There is obvious link between sentence meaning and speaker-meaning in terms of the linguistics and extra-linguistics of language use;
- (d) Linguistic conventions in OL does not totally convey speaker-meaning;
- (e) The inferential process in discourse is not arbitrary, but governed by textual and extra-textual features;
- (f) In any discourse, whatever can be implied can be worked out;
- (g) The literature of pragmatics lacks in conceptual clarification as possible categories of concepts and notions in pragmatics are yet to be evolved and explained;
- (h) There is pragmatic link between implicatures and indirect speech acts;
- (i) Indirect speech acts have not been adequately investigated by pre-dating classical and contemporary pragmatic theorists;
- (j) The messages in linguistic, extra-linguistic and psychological acts are not separable from the intentions of performers;

(k) A wide range of non-verbal elements communicate intended and unintended messages in discourse;

(l) Semiotic and sociolinguistic properties interact with the pragmatic components of texts in conveying meanings and messages in discourse.

The dialogues from Ola Rotimi's *Hopes of the Living Dead* (which are numbered Utterance 1 – 9 for easy reference) illustrate some of the claims in (a) – (l) of 3.1:

Utterance 1 MATRON: With drumming and dancing! Where do you think you are?

Utterance 2 EDITOR: (With malevolent calm). In the hospital. The General Hospital of his Imperial Majesty King George V of England, situated in the land of Port Harcourt in the Colonial Territory of Nigeria, West Africa, the World.

Utterance 3 MATRON: Is that supposed to be plain rudeness, or a display of high intellect in geography?

Utterance 4 CAT: It's neither.

Utterance 5 MATRON: Beg your pardon!

Utterance 6 CAT: You asked a simple question and he gave you a simple answer.

Utterance 7 MATRON: (curtly) No one is seeking your opinion. (Turns again to Editor). In the first place, I was addressing him. (Indicates Nweke). Since when did you become the spokesman for the ... (restrains herself from describing group) or who do you think you are?

Utterance 8 CAT: Another question.

Utterance 9 EDITOR: Leper, madam. I am a leper like the rest ... of them (with a sweep of the arm taking in the entire inmates). Lepers, Lepers all at the mercy of the hospital authorities.

In the above text, the extra-linguistic act of drumming is accompanied by lyrical music which conveys Behavioural Implicature; the act is wrong in the setting, but are informed by the participants' intention as claimed in 3.1 (j). The non-verbal act was potent enough to generate Utterance 1. Thus, indirect acts can be performed via a wide range of non-verbal means of communication. The literature of pragmatics is not adequate in the investigation of indirect acts as claimed in 3.1 (i). The link between implicature and indirect speech act is obvious considering the implicature (Contextual Implicature) generated by drumming in a hospital where treatment of patients is expected to be performed. In conformity with 3.1 (e) inference is calculated via available pragmatic data. The encoder of Utterance 2 engages in 'crafting' to select appropriate linguistic 'structures' and 'structuring' that show the extent of disgust he feels about the status-quo. This pragmatic selection and sequencing of communicative elements generates speaker-based sequel on the decoder who no doubt, is amazed at the sudden insubordination he suffers from his interlocutor. Utterances 1 – 9 convey several pragmatic tools (notions in the Pragma-crafting Theory) because the participants are interactive ones. Non-interactive Participants do not contribute to Communicative Features in Text. Characters in Nigerian drama or novel often use non-verbal means of amplifying verbal elements to register the psychological context in discourse. Utterance 2 is said with an extra-linguistic act (message-driven silence). Therefore, if the central and sub-themes in Nigerian literary works are to be understood, all enacted dimensions of communication employed by the characters therein as chosen by the writers, have to be interpreted accordingly. Indeed, the Pragma-crafting Theory provides an all-encompassing framework of analysis for Nigerian literature. The encoder of Utterance 2 is calm, not because he is afraid or feels guilty that singing and drumming are done in a place meant for patients, but because he is gathering momentum to fight back in words. The encoder of Utterance 1 epitomizes 'colonialism' while the encoder of Utterance 2 epitomizes 'the colonized. Indeed, the colonial world is a two-fold world where the oppressors and the oppressed face one another with little hope of reconciliation. When literary works ponder

on themes of oppression, language takes a violent dimension, and the stance of the oppressed is no longer that of a victim, but that of a resolute, mind, poised to confront oppressors and put an end to oppressive tendencies. The violation of the Gricean Maxims creates implicatures in the text; the turn-taking is questionable due to the psychological context. The linguistic behaviour of the interlocutors is influenced by the tense psychological atmosphere of the communication. Therefore, the term 'Behavioural Implicature' (BI) in the Pragma-crafting Theory is germane if African literature in general is to be understood. This study therefore establishes a break-away position from most neo-Gricean theorists who restrict implicatures to the Gricean categories: conventional and conversational implicatures.

In the text above, the dialogue consists of several speech acts: Assertive, Question, Responsive, Question, Responsive, Reject, Ascriptive and Informative (speech acts in Bach and Harnish's taxonomy). Utterance 1 is a direct speech act, uttered with aggression to show that the decoder is a subordinate. Utterance 2 depicts colonialism and its attendant oppression. The encoder of Utterance 1 is questioning and condemning her interlocutor, who in turns becomes angry. Therefore, the psychological context is predictable; the participants are not at peace with one another over certain issues, and these participants have mutual contextual knowledge about the issues at stake. Indeed, the above text shows that: Nigerian literary works have their thematic concerns tied to the psychological states they express.

The indirect speech act potentials of speech act verbs are evident when such speech acts are used alongside other speech act categories in an utterance. No pragmatic theory can meaningfully and adequately account for language use in Nigerian literature unless it is integrative and multidimensional. The messages in discourse cannot be completely derived from synchronic properties. Indeed, knowledge of extra-linguistic factors facilitates the understanding of messages; knowledge of: Sociolinguistic Variables (age, cultural background, social status/class, gender and relationships); Non-lyrical Music (which operates as non-verbal communication); Drumming; Semiotic Particulars (weather, time, Contextual Objects, colour, clothing, posture, perfume, location/position, size, body mark and silence).

3.2. Weaknesses of the Pragma-crafting Theory

It is logical to expect an emergent, theory to be an improvement on predated ones. However, the Pragma-crafting Theory is not without a few weaknesses. The weaknesses of the Pragma-crafting Theory are discussed in this paper by reacting to the following submissions:

- (a) Shared knowledge of formal properties of language may not account for speaker-meanings;
- (b) Some notions in the Pragma-crafting Theory are intractable;
- (c) There should be a principle that explains the categorization of illocutionary acts as the core of the study of meaning;
- (d) The Pragma-crafting Theory places more emphasis on occasional meaning at the expense of the standard meaning of language in discourse;
- (e) The gap between linguistic forms and the functions they perform, as presented in the Pragma-crafting Theory places more emphasis on the occasional meaning at the expense of the standard meaning of language;
- (f) Linguistic Implicature (LI), Pragmdeviant (PD) and Geoimplicature (GI) bedevil the well established and logical position that word meaning has to do with the contribution of a word to the meaning of a sentence;
- (g) Possible dimensions of 'language use' and 'meaning' in indirect speech acts have not been captured in the Pragma-crafting Theory;
- (h) The Pragma-crafting Theory does not attempt speech act taxonomy;

(i) A concept that explains the gradable nature of inferential processes in discourse is yet to be evolved, investigated and elucidated by the Pragma-crafting Theory. Still using Ola Rotimi's Hopes of the Living Dead, we illustrate some of the claims in (a) - (i) of 3.2:

Utterance 1 HW: We must choose now. The SMO wants people to speak for us. Each one tell one.

Utterance 2 EDITOR: No need, brother. We've already chosen our leaders. You and CC are the first two.

Utterance 3 HW: First two what?

Utterance 4 NWEKE: (Irritably) whose idea was that?

Utterance 5 HANNAH: Mallam proposed it, we all approved...

Utterance 6 EDITOR: It is the wish of the people sir.

EDITOR's knowledge of the conventional meaning of 'choose' is not enough for him to locate HW's usage of the word. Hence, HW who views choosing as a people-involving democratic process, protests. He therefore lampoons the societal vice of 'high-jacking' power without the consent of the people.

Apart from the dominant speech acts (Informative) other speech acts performed in Utterance 1 – Utterance 7 to convey themes include: Dissentive (“No need, brother”) and Reject (“First two what?”). The participants want to be self-reliant. They want from among them, leaders chosen credibly not through bias. The text captures the themes of democracy and fundamental human rights. The encoder of Utterance 3 is upright. His utterance conversationally implies that he does not want sentiments to influence decisions, and does not want to be imposed on the group. The participants have Shared Contextual Knowledge (SCK) of Object Referred (OR) – they have knowledge of their lingering intention to discuss their plight with their oppressors. But Utterance 1 is an Emergent Context (EC), that is, there is a sudden invitation for dialogue with their oppressors. Literary writers are aware of societal happenings, and direct their aesthetic matrix to such everydayness in society. The participants in this discourse eventually know what generates Utterance 1 – Utterance 7 that is, Shared Knowledge of Emergent Context. In human interactions, it is common for various pragmatic variables to ‘commune’. In Utterance 1 – Utterance 7, there is cross-interaction between one variable and another: Linguistic Implicatures (LI), Behavioural Implicatures (BIs), Contextual Implicatures (CIs), Background Assumptions (BAs), etc., are versatile. This accentuates their intractable nature. Pragmatic tools such as speech acts, implicatures, presuppositions and mutual contextual beliefs in the literature of pragmatics, are instrumental to knowing the relationship between the dominant message in a literary work and other messages that amplify it.

DISCUSSION

In this section, the merits and demerits of the Pragma-crafting Theory are discussed as perceived in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 above.

4.1. Merits

Obviously, speakers do not just shift from properties of language onto context-driven (pragmatic) choices. In a bid to ‘pragmadesiate’, S (speaker) puts into consideration the relative mastery of the Operative Language by H (hearer); whether this language is alien or native. Thus, communication is not hindered whether or not participants of discourse violate linguistic ‘constants’. The Pragma-crafting Theory clearly captures the fact that a wide range of discourse features (Shared Macro-knowledge), Shared Contextual Knowledge (SCK), Geoimplicature (GI), etc. impinge on the encoding and decoding of linguistic and extra-linguistic elements of communication. Indeed, the linguistic competence of a speaker in OL determines the degree of skills exhibited by this speaker in the manipulation and exploration of P-crafting Features to convey messages; (a) captures this view.

It is clearly depicted in the Pragma-crafting Theory that utterances are products of the existential experiences of speakers. Often, speech acts, extra-linguistic and psychological acts are informed by societal happenings and directed at the states-of-affairs of speech communities. The Pragma-crafting Theory is illuminating as far as understanding the extent and dimensions of cross-cultural pragmatics is concerned. Apart from depending on linguistic data for decoding meaning, there is always the need to rely also on extra-linguistic elements to arrive at what is meant or spoken of (Object Referred) when the knowledge of linguistic norms (grammar and denotative meanings) fails to unravel meaning. Indeed, (b) remains an interesting, front-burner issue in contemporary pragmatics. A speaker who performs an illocutionary act in a certain linguistic community displays his/her proprietorship over the states-of-affairs at which his acts are directed, and also gives that linguistic community the right to subject him/her to criticism if OR does not exist or operate in the linguistic community.

Despite the contextual nuances that inform the violation of linguistic 'constants' (normative properties of language) the Pragma-crafting Theory maintains that the normative meanings of words and sentences in OP is not completely unconnected with what such words and sentences mean in speaker-meanings. For example, the sentence, "Ali is 419" (illocrafting) is first understood as a declarative (uptake) by H who has first-hand, normative knowledge of context-driven meaning of '419' in Nigeria, which is, 'a fraudulent person'. The concept, 'Geoimplicature', captures this kind of regional meaning of an expression. It should be noted that (d) collaborates (c) to explain the fact that the inferential process in discourse is rule-governed as posited in (e).

P-crafting Features, particularly the categorized shared knowledge and implicatures, speak volume in the demystification of meaning in human communication. As appropriate, participants of discourse select any of the elements in P-crafting Features (inference tools) to decode speaker-meanings. The categories of implicatures (Geoimplicature, Linguistic Implicature, Contextual Implicature and Behavioural Implicature) facilitate the inferential process. According to Levinson (1983:226), apart from speech acts, implicature and presupposition are among the central phenomena that any general pragmatic theory must account for. In (g) the argument in this paper is clear: more research in pragmatics will evolve new categories of pragmatic notions since no one can exhaust or restrict the dimensions that human interaction can take. One of the criticisms of speech act theories is that they particularly emphasize the categorization of speech acts and the link between Gricean implicatures and indirect speech act; this is an unfortunate situation. The position of this paper is that the efforts of such theorists remain a springboard in the investigation of language use, and should therefore not be subjected to undue, subjective criticisms. However, further research, not undue criticisms, is needed to resolve conceptual crisis typical of the literature of pragmatics; the Pragma-crafting Theory registers giant strides in this regard. For example, it shows that in the processes of encoding and decoding indirect speech acts, the participants are parasitic upon the different categories of implicatures; see (h). It is true that indirect speech act has not been adequately investigated by existing pragmatic theories.

In (j) there are three possible acts in discourse: linguistic, extra-linguistic and psychological acts. The first can be produced directly or indirectly, yet conveys speakers' intentions. However, extra-linguistic acts may not be parallel to participants' intentions, but are usually instrumental to knowing participants' intentions particularly when such participants perform them with psychological acts; a participant may intentionally dress in a particular way to get a particular favour, in which case the extra-linguistic act is parallel to the participants' intention. But occasionally, when a person's dressing is misconstrued the person agitates for being taken as a certain personality which he/she is not.

In cross-cultural pragmatics, the trio: pragmatics, semantics and semiotics interact, and this view is depicted in the Pragma-crafting Theory. Language conveys norms, values and social realities of its users. Indeed, speech acts are intentional actions which are directed at states-of-affairs in the world.

The Pragma-crafting Theory successfully reveals the intentional nature of speaker-based acts (speech acts, extra-linguistic acts and psychological acts). Although illocutionary acts can produce effects that are not speaker-intended, the position of most pragmatic theorists from classical to contemporary time is that intentionally performed acts constitute the core of speech act theories. For example, S may intentionally violate norms of OL to achieve illocutionary goals. When S 'pragmadeviates' he/she explores contextual resources, and so presupposes that H has the relevant P-crafting Features to decode E (Expression) as OR (Object Referred).

This paper does not posit that language should contain expressions which fail to designate objects (e.g. norms of societies) even when their form seems to qualify them for same essence. Pragmatics, semantics and semiotics have "communion" that essentially accentuates the link between the linguistic and extra-linguistic aspects of communication. Andor (2011) cites John R. Searle as saying that Chomsky thought that we had to investigate syntax totally independent of use that we could not appeal to the functions of language in stating the principles of syntax.

4.2. Demerits

In this section, the weaknesses of the Pragma-crafting Theory are discussed according to the submissions in (m) – (u):

First and foremost, it should be stated that not even the categories of implicatures in the Pragma-crafting Theory can 'fish out' speaker-meaning in some instances; P-crafting Features are therefore 'means to ends' not 'ends on their own'; (p) is not fallacy since there are occasions in which a speaker hinges on idiosyncrasies or Pragmadeviants to convey messages. In such occasions, P-crafting Features do not work out the meaning of an utterance; S tells H (whether or not H requests such information/explanation) what E means in OL. In other words, for mere impressionistic reasons, participants of discourse may intentionally be complex, strange or difficult in the performance of linguistic, extra-linguistic and psychological acts. This situation occurs in formal and informal communication with or without the use of indirect speech acts.

Another noticeable pitfall of the Pragma-crafting Theory is that some notions overlap in the analysis of discourse using the theory. Further research is therefore needed to resolve any conceptual redundancy in the Pragma-crafting Theory. For instance, Geoimplicatures are invariably Contextual Implicatures because in micro-contexts (speech domains or physical contexts) regional elements of 'language use' and 'meaning' obtain. In the Pragma-crafting Theory, Contextual Implicatures are implied meanings in specific contexts of speech by virtue of the status and roles of the participants. However, their interlocutory roles in those specific contexts are influenced or determined by states-of-affairs in their speech community. So, when a teacher tells a pupil in class: "You are 419 on the Register" the physical context (Contextual Implicature) implies that the pupil's number on the class Register is 419. But if the other pupils begin to laugh (see Acheoah 2011 for better understanding of how Emergent Context relocates sequel in discourse), then the regional (meaning in the Nigerian locale) is taken up in the inferential process. It is hoped that subsequent review of the Pragma-crafting Theory will exclude redundant concepts and retain those that are analytically useful to the textual analyst.

It should be stated that if the Pragma-crafting Theory had attempted speech act classification, perhaps "meaning around the clause" would have been investigated therein through a principle such as the Illocutionary Frames Principle (IFP); see Acheoah (2014) for illuminating perspectives on this Principle. The study of illocutionary act is a non-negotiable aspect of the study of meaning. Unfortunately, (o) is more typical of classical pragmatic theories than contemporary ones.

Good knowledge of illocutionary acts is crucial in the investigation of both standard speaker-meaning and occasional speaker-meaning. Its poor treatment in the Pragma-crafting Theory makes the theory place much emphasis on occasional speaker-meaning at the expense of standard speaker-meaning which is the meaning

of a sentence in terms of what obtain as the semantic properties of the language (OL); sentence meaning is essentially the illocutionary act credentials of a sentence. Due to its over emphasis on meaning beyond the sentence, the Pragma-crafting Theory presents an extraneous gap between physical properties of language and their functions in discourse as stated in (t).

More investigation of illocutionary acts as well as direct and indirect speech acts will improve the Pragma-crafting Theory. For example, the theory should underscore the correlation between grammatical properties of utterances and their illocutionary acts. The theory does not attempt categorization of indirect speech acts. This would have been done if the theory had classified speech acts. This paper does not agree totally with Sperber and Wilson (1986:244) who claims that the classification of speech acts is not “part of what is communicated, and so, does not play a necessary role in comprehension.” According to Sperber and Wilson (ibid.) “A speech act classification may be ‘invented’ to theorize about utterances, or developed on the basis of native speakers’ own classification of such utterances; but in neither case does such a classification play a necessary role in communication.” Indeed, this submission reveals one of the weaknesses of the Pragma-crafting Theory. For example, if the theory had critically investigated GI, the classification of speech acts in line with how English language operates in Nigeria would have shown the roles of the language in diverse discourse genres in the Nigerian milieu; this would have proved wrong, Urmson and Warnock’s claim that institutional acts belong to their various institutions (institutions of language) and so do not belong to language.

CONCLUSION

Human communication is dynamic, complex and systematic. This paper explains that dimensions of language use and meaning are not exhaustive. For example, there are hidden dimensions of meaning there (implicit, presupposed and inferred meaning). The Pragma-crafting Theory shows that utterances in discourse are understood when linguistic clues interact with extra-linguistic factors. Decoding meaning in an Operative Language presupposes understanding all categories of linguistic and extra-linguistic forces in a given discourse; Abott (2000) shares this view in his treatment of the problems of pragmatic presuppositions. Effective transaction of messages is not possible unless participants are competent in the normative and extra-linguistic aspects of Text. Knowledge of the language is insufficient for communicative competence. Lack of grammatical competence, inhibits pragmatic use of language, which scholars call ‘linguistic action’. The Pragma-crafting Theory presents the inferential process as a pragmatic involvement in ferreting textual meanings, being that every communicative event engages an OR (Object Referred); the participants have to explore inference tools (P.crafting Features to cope with the dynamics of context phenomena. A critical overview of the Pragma-crafting Theory will show its relationship with theories briefly reviewed in this paper, although space constraint prevents detailed discussion of this; for example, this paper does not mention Searle’s (ibid.) ‘word-to-world direction of fit’ which can be used to explain GI, SMK, SCK and SKEC. It is hoped that further research can improve the Pragma-crafting Theory to advance knowledge in the literature.

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