

Analyzing the Discourse of Seller - Buyer Interaction in the Mosuli Social Context

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(received in 8\10\2020, accepted in 10\11\2020)

Abstract

The study represents one of the social life interactions in which language is considered the major means that maintains the interaction. Seller-buyer interaction involves effective strategies used by Mosuli speakers. The present study aims at identifying the distinctive strategies and maneuvers adopted by sellers and buyers using different speech acts like offering, requesting, refusing, etc. It also investigate the influence of socio-linguistic variables and their effect on sequential organization, the types and more frequent acts, style and the most frequent acts and to see whether they are similar in different situations.

To achieve these aims, the interaction of typical Mosuli seller and buyer have been analyzed. In this study, seller-buyer interaction is seen as an instance of language use. The study also aims to show how the seller and the buyer use different strategies like initiation, development and termination. In this study, Sinclair-Coulthard's model (1975) is adopted.

The current study is based on a set of hypotheses among which : understanding the effect of status, age on the linguistic formulas used by

Mosuli sellers and buyers, and describes the way they perform interaction. It is found that there is no authority over the addressee but the two or more participants voluntarily discuss differences and attempt to reach at joint point with high dependence on an agreement that has advantages for all parties, and the seller buyer relationship is governed by politeness which is reflected in the acts used and modes of address.

Key Words: The Concept of Interaction, Bargaining, Conflicts

تحليل الخطاب لحديث البائع والمشتري في سياق الكلام الاجتماعي الموصل

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المستخلص

تعد الدراسة احد التفاعلات الاجتماعية في الحياة حيث تعتبر اللغة هي الوسيلة الرئيسة التي تحافظ على استمرار التفاعل. حديث البائع والمشتري يتضمن استراتيجيات مؤثرة تستخدم بوساطة المتكلمين الموصليين. تهدف الدراسة الى تحديد الاستراتيجيات البارزة و مناوراتها التي يستخدمها البائعين و المشترين مستخدمين افعال الكلام المختلفة مثل العرض، الطلب والرفض الخ. تبحث الدراسة ايضا المتغيرات الاجتماعية وتأثيرها على التنظيم المتسلسل للألفاظ وانواعها واكثرها تكرارا في حديث البائع والمشتري ولرؤية ما هي الخيارات اللفظية والاسلوب وكذلك لرؤية فيما اذا كانت متشابهة في مختلف مواقع الحوار.

لتحقيق تلك الاهداف، تم تحليل خطاب لبائع ومشتري في مدينة الموصل. هذه الدراسة تبين ان التداخل الخطابى للبائع والمشتري هو مثال لاستخدام اللغة. تهدف الدراسة ايضا الى

وصف كيفية استخدام استراتيجيات متعددة من قبل كل من البائع والمشتري مثل بدء الخطاب (Initiation) وتطوره (Maintainance) و انهائه (Termination) . لذا تعتمد هذه الدراسة في تحليل حديث البائع والمشتري ، على نموذج هو امتداد لنموذج Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) حيث يتحقق هدف هذا البحث في وصف كيفية التنوع اللغوي الاجتماعي وأثره في اختيار الكلام والاسلوب.

الدراسة اسست على مجموعة من الفرضيات من بينها: فهم تأثير المنزلة الاجتماعية و العمر على الصيغ اللغوية المستخدمة بواسطة البائعين و المشترين و توصف الطريقة التي يتم بها التفاعل. فقد تبين بأنه لا يوجد سلطة للمشتري على البائع لأي سبب كان ولكن المتحادثين سواء كانوا اثنين او اكثر يناقشون الخلافات طوعيا ويحاولون الوصول الى نقطة ربط مع الاعتماد الكلي على الاتفاق الذي يلبي الفوائد لكلا الطرفين. وأن العلاقة بين البائع والمشتري محكومة بالتأدب حيث ينعكس ذلك في افعال الكلام المستخدمة و انواع الالفاظ الاخرى المستخدمة للمناداة.

1. Introduction

Widowson (1995:38) refers to discourse as a communicative activity. Analysis means what the writer might mean by the text and what the text might mean to the reader. To approach the study of language as a discourse is to emphasize its functionality, examining how humans use language to communicate, how addressers construct linguistic messages for addressees and how addressees work on linguistic messages in order to interpret them.

2. Statement of the Problem

This research is conducted to cover the following problems:

- 1.what strategies of interaction are used by Mosuli sellers and buyers?
- 2.what are the linguistic elements that are involved in the production of expressions used in selling buying process?
- 3.what are most frequent acts commonly used by the seller and the buyer?
Are these types of acts reflect the social status, age or gender?

3. The Aims of the Study

The current study aims to :

- 1-investigate and describe the interaction as reflected in seller-buyer discourse .
- 2-show how discourse is initiated, developed and closed .
- 3-show the relation between the strategies used by both seller and buyer and the successful selling buying process in terms of type and frequency of acts.
- 4-shed light on the organization of discourse in seller-buyer interaction as a neat hierarchical structure .

3. Hypotheses:

The study hypothesizes the following:

1. seller-buyer interaction is characterized by much solidarity and politeness.
2. cultural and social constraints, personality, are fundamental attributes of seller- buyer interaction.

3. it is hypothesized that strategies used for an interaction are different from one situation to another.
4. any description of ways of speaking will need to provide data about the linguistic resources available to the speaker, how many different styles he can choose from.
5. we posit that functional (effective) interaction varies according to different types of services.

4. Data Collection and Procedure

The procedure of the study involves a tape-recorded conversation in local shop in the city of Mosul in Iraq. In this conversation, the researcher depended on recordings and observation .The recording of interaction which are in Mosuli Arabic have been translated into English. Personal observation notes have been made. These notes involve information about interactants behavior and non-verbal language which may help to interpret utterances appropriately.

5. Scope of the Study

The present study is limited to a sample of tape-recorded conversation between seller and buyer in the Mosuli social context .The number of the participants in each conversation ranges from two to four. The time ranges from five to ten minutes of oral discourse of seller-buyer interaction .

6. Value of the study :

The study is useful for those who interest in cross cultural studies, for it presents an overview of the relationship between language and culture. It is also important for those who work in bussiness field because the functional and effective sale and purchase transaction depends on the patterns of interaction.

7. The Modal of Analysis

The study adopts Sinclair and Coulthard's model (1975), which is known a Discourse analysis based on six categories "interaction", "transaction", "sequence", "exchange", "move" and "act". Sinclair and Coulthard's model (1975) considers exchange as the basic structure unit of analyzing discourse :The exchange consists of two moves; initiating move and responding move. Move consists of the smallest unit of discourse which is act. However, all the categories of analysis mentioned are grouped together to constitute the highest discourse unit called interaction.

8. Literature Review

8.1 The Concept of Interaction

Social situations are characteristically exhibiting happenings of various kinds: processes, events and more specifically interactions. Interactions are abstractly organized in sequences. Interaction sequences

in social situations have lower organized units, which we call them transactions. Transactions are interaction molecules including a short sequence of action and interaction of some social participants (Van Dijk 1980:166-176). Interactional function involved in expressing social relations and personal attitudes. Sociologists and sociolinguists concern with the use of language to establish and maintain social relations. Conversational analysts concern the use of language to negotiate role-relationships, peer-solidarity, the exchange of turns in conversation, the saving of face of both speaker and hearer. It is clearly that everyday human interaction is interpersonal (interactional) rather than transactional use of language (Brown and Yule, 1983:4).

Interactions appear to be structured, this is usually the result of situational factors. For example, the structure of a doctor-patient interview is affected by such factors as institutional setting and the goals of the participants. The fact that check will precede diagnosis, and diagnosis followed by prescription has little to do with *linguistic* structure. Following Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), we describe the interaction as 'an unordered series of transactions' (Francis and Hunston, quoted in Coulthard 2002:141). According to Mitchel (1957), the "business of language ... is to express thoughts and emotions, to convey information, to influence behavior in others, to act as a tool in co-operative action". Mitchel (1957) divides the method of transaction into many stages. He discusses the features of the language that are typical of each of the stages. There are five stages for the market and shop transaction namely:

I. Salutation: This is the beginning of the proceedings with appropriate salutation by the participants. When it occurs, it involves at least two speakers – a buyer and a seller.

II. Enquiry- as to the object of sale which consists of question and answer pairs.

III. Investigation of the object of sale which may involve at least two people.

IV. Bargaining: This takes place between the buyer and the seller until an agreement is reached.

V. Conclusion: This may involve the final tone of one of the participants or both.(Alo and Soneye 2014:45)

Interaction comprises certain processes. The fundamental question of why buyer/seller would interact at all would be to try and manage their dependence on each other's actions. In this sense, interaction very much resembles coordination: the basic difference is that coordination is directed at certain aims/ objectives (managing), whereas interaction is also related to anything surrounding these aims/ objectives. In other words, coordination is part of interaction, a directed subset of interactions (Valk2005:85).

The seller-buyer interaction process is treated as a transaction which can have multiple effects or consequences. Comparable to the impact of advertising, the buyer-seller interaction is presumed to perform any of the following five functions:

(a) increase awareness of each other's expectations about the product or service. (b) remind each other's past satisfactory transactions and their behavioral outcomes. (c) reinforce each other's behavior related to the

sale of the product or service. (d) precipitate behavioral actions on each other's part by intensifying expectations. (e)persuade each other to change their respective expectations.

A satisfactory interaction between the buyer and the seller will occur if and only if they are compatible, otherwise, the process will be terminated or even if the sale is continued, there will be negative feelings about each other's style or manner of interaction which led to an unsatisfactory transaction. Adjustment is clearly a function of who has the greater power in the buyer-seller relationship. While the buyer has the economic power, the seller often has greater technical expertise to offset buyer's power. As a broader generalization, it is likely that in a buyer's market, the seller is more likely to change in the long run. In the seller's market it is more likely that the buyer will change or adapt. In all, tactics of persuasion, negotiations and bargaining are likely to emerge as consequences of buyer-seller interaction (Sheth1976).

Bargaining means cleverness because interactants in a bargaining exchange try to outwit one another by convincing each other of the reasonableness of the price. The most attractive aspect of bargaining is, however, its social aspect, where all participants engage in price-making, utilizing their social and linguistic skills to build and negotiate their identity, and even lasting relationships. Interactants, before even initiating the bargaining exchange, enter this bartering relationship with a mutual presupposition and expectation of social solidarity. The bargaining enterprise does not constitute a simple, straightforward economic transaction, but, according to Geertz(1979), it represents an act of “exercising the instinct of sociability” (Chakrani2007:45).

Bargaining interactants manipulate salient, shared cultural concepts and strategically organize and analyze each other's locutions, while indexing the different social roles and relationships in which they enter. Interactants in Bargaining exchange also are frequently observed to strategically encode and decode their local belief systems and salient cultural notions in constructing their speech utterances(Ibid).

Bargaining interactions necessitate knowing the ethno-pragmatic mechanics governing the bargaining exchange, which requires not only access to local cultural norms, which regulate interpersonal relationships, but also knowledge of which locutions are intrinsically compatible with the local norms of a proper interactional exchange(Ibid:43).

Formulaicity is not only typical of the bargaining, but according to Fillmore(Kecskos,2000, p. 24-25)"an enormously large amount of natural language is formulaic, automatic and rehearsed, rather than propositional, creative or freely generated". The formulas are constructed as conventional expressions and "socially recognized formulas, in that they embody accepted ways of responding verbally to a variety of situations" (Kecskos, Coulmas cited in Chakrani2007:46).

Bargaining often includes the acts of negotiating, compromising, and manoeuvring which sometimes fall into conflict. In the following, three types of conflict:

I. Conflicts over facts, are based on divergent beliefs about the world. Those conflicts can be dealt with through pure arguing. Whatever the correct position is in each case, it does not depend on the agreement of the parties to the conflict. One would not negotiate over the "truth".

2. Conflicts over values and norms, are based on disagreement regarding the validity of normative propositions. whenever a disagreement over basic values remains, the conflict cannot be resolved by arguing but by pure means of logic.

3. Conflicts of interest, are based on rival wishes and claims. Underlying conflict is the scarcity of particular goods and the different subjective assessments. The pure conflict of interest could be resolved by pure bargaining however, a conflict of interest will rarely be free of normative and factual disagreement, and thus arguing is also needed.

The term *bargaining* means "to negotiate and agree beforehand concerning trade, barter", "to agree to buy or sell". In bargaining, the speaker wants to induce the addressee(s) to give in, to make a concession, or to agree to a compromise, and the addressee likes to achieve the same with the speaker. Bargaining presupposes at least two parties to a conflict and partial reciprocity of their wills. An agreement is achieved solely among the parties (Holzinger2004:196-199).

9. Text Analysis

The interaction consists of three participates. They are Abu-Ahmad with his son Ahmad, and the seller "Abu-Yousif" who is the owner of a meat shop. They have social relation between each other because the buyer "Abu Ahmad" usually buys from Abu-Yuosif .

Abu-Ahmad : Al-salam Alykum

Abu-Yousif : Waalaykum alsalam , welcome Abu- Ahmad

Ahmad : Hello, uncle

Abu-Yousif : Welcome Ahmad, welcome

(A person enters the shop) : What is the price of the meat?

Abu-Yousif : Twelve thousands

The person : That's too much

Abu-Ahmad : We want mutton , take care of us .

Abu-Yousif : Take the knife and, cut as you like, how much do you want?

Abu-Ahmad : Two kilos

Abu- Yousif : What would you like to drink ? Tea or lemon ?

Abu-Ahmad : Tea, please

Abu-Yousif : (he shouted to the tea maker with a loud voice) a cup of tea.

(After a minute)

Abu-Yousif : You want two kilos , I provides you with two kilos and a quarter.

Abu-Ahmad : Ok, ok, I also want a kilo of beef.

Abu-Yousif : A kilo and a quarter costs 27 thousands .

Abu-Ahmad : Does the price of mutton fall?

Abu-yousif : No, they exported it to Baghdad.

(The sound of cars, crowds and of cutting the meat)

Abu-Yousif : Do you know that man ?(pointing to his business partner)

Ahmad : Yes, That is your old partner before. My aunt used to buy from you before , miss Eman .

Abu-yousif : Where is her house ?

Ahmad : In this street .

Abu-Yousif : Yes, I knew her . I think she went out at ISIS time .

Ahmad : Yes, she went out at ISIS time .

Abu-Yousif : Does her mother live at home with her ?

Ahmad : Yes, yes

Abu-Yousif : I was delivering her meat by my motorbike .she used to buy a lot of meat .

Abu-Ahmad : How much is the price of thighbone ?

Abu-yousif : Four and a half . The thighbone is useful for you Abu-Ahmad. Remove the fat out of it, so, a little fat and nerve is delicious.

Ahmad : How much is the Total price ?

Abu-Yousif : 39 thousand.

Abu-Ahmad : Allah saves you.

Abu-Yousif : Allah saves you.

Analysis of the Text

The discourse can be divided d into two topics :

1-The meat

2-Ahmad's aunt

The conversation is opened by Abu-Ahmad, who is the first member to take turn in this interaction. He opened the conversation by saying "Al-Salam Alykum" as an expression of greeting (**greeting**) which reflects the Islamic culture and the speaker's cultural belief. Abu-Yousif responded using "Waalykum Al-Salam" (**reply**) then he said "Welcome Abu-Ahmad" as a teknonym expression because he couldn't address him by using his name. It is rough to address him by his first name. This reflects the specific culture of addressing between people of the same age in Mosuli society (**politeness**). At the same time, Ahmad took his turn and greeted the seller, Abu-Yousif, when he said "Hello, Amo" which means (uncle) though he is not his real uncle and no blood relation exists between them, but Ahmad used this expression (uncle) to show respect (politeness) because Abu-Yousif is older than him. Abu-Yousif at his turn replied by repeating the word "welcome" and he addressed Ahmad by his name (**nomination**). The discourse is interrupted (**interruption**) when a person came and directly asked the seller, Abu-yousif, about the price of the meat (**question**). The seller, Abu-Yousif, replied when he specified the price of the meat (**reply**). The person commented that the price is too much (**comment**).

The discourse was resumed (**resumption**) when Abu-Ahmad continuous his turn (development) and he told the seller Abu-Yousif that he wanted mutton (**request**). The request is made via statement. Then he made other (**polite request**) by using the social statement "take care of

us". The seller Abu-Yousif asked him to take the knife and cut in his hand and by his way (**two successive requests**). The two requests are made by using the verbs "take" and "cut" as a style is adopted by the seller to assert the confidence between them. Then he continued his turn (development) by asking about the quantum (**question**). Abu-Ahmad said, "two kilos" (**reply**). The seller, Abu-Yousif, made an offer of drinking something "tea or lemon" (**digression and offer**) to show hospitality and generosity because Abu-Ahmad is a regular customer. Abu-Ahmad responded (**reply**) by the word "tea". The seller called the teamaker who is out the shop with a loud voice and said "a cup of tea" (**request**).

After a minute, Abu-Yousif resumed his turn (**resumption**) and informed Abu-Ahmad that he provided him with two kilos and a quarter as a special treatment (**informative**). Abu-Ahmad said, "ok" twice (**agreement**) then he requested the seller to provide him with beef. The request is made by using statement (**request**). The seller, Abu-Yousif, told Abu-Ahmad that mutton costs 27 thousands (**informative**). Abu-Ahmad asked him if the price of the mutton fell down or not (**question**). Abu-Yousif responded to him (**reply**). He used the word "no" and a swear expression "by Allah" to emphasize and assure what he said and made the buyer Abu-Yousif believe him then he said, "They exported it to Baghdad" (**justification**). He uttered these words with a falling tone. He used the pronoun "they" as a deictic expression to refer to traders.

The threads of discourse were not clear because the seller was engaged with cutting the meat and there was a noise of cars and crowds. The conversation turned to another new topic (topic shift) about Ahmad's aunt

when the seller, Abu-Yousif, resumed his turn (resumption) and asked Ahmad if he knew this man "pointing to his partner" (**question**). Ahmad replied with "yes" then he completed his answer with affirmative statement saying, " that is your old partner before ISIS time" (**reply**) and he continuous his move by telling him that his aunt was buying from him before ISIS time (**informative**). He addressed his aunt by using (title+ first name). This is a special mode of address that reflects the Arabic culture and has its effect on the Mosuli society. The address modes are different from culture to culture. In English, a way of addressing someone is by using title+ last name, but in Arabic the addressing form is by using title+ first name .

The discourse is developed (development) when the seller, Abu-Yousif, asked Ahmad about the house of his aunt (**question**). Ahmad responded by using affirmative statement (**reply**). Abu-Yousif used the word "yes" to open his move with a high tone because he remembered Ahmad's aunt, and he said that he knew her (**starter**). Then he continued his move when he said that she left Mosul at the ISIS time (**comment**). Ahmad answered by using the word "yes" to make assertion and he added that she left out at ISIS time (**confirmation**). The seller, Abu-Yousif, asked Ahmad whether her mother lives with her or not (**elicitation**) . Ahmad responded (**reply**) using the words 'yes, yes' for (**emphasis**). Abu-Yousif said that he used to deliver to her meat by his motorbike (**informative**).

Abu-Ahmad interrupted them (**interruption**) and returned to the previous topic 'the meat' and asked about the price of the thighbone (**question**). He used the teknonym "Abu-Yousif to show respect

(politeness). Abu-yousif replied (**reply**) and specified the price. Then he continued (development) when he stated that the thighbone is useful (**comment**). He said "it is useful for you, Abu-Ahmad", we notice that he used the pronoun "you" then he said, "Abu-Ahmad" because the pronoun "you" is less polite to address people, so he said "Abu-Ahmad" to show respect (politeness). He directed Abu-Ahmad to remove the fat out of the thighbone (**directive**) and he continued his move by saying, "a little fat and nerve is delicious(**motivation**). The seller Abu-Yousif used this strategy as if he wants to persuade Abu-Ahmad to buy the thighbone. Abu-Ahmad asked the seller, Abu-Yousif, about the price of the meat (**question**). The seller, Abu-Yousif answered (**reply**) by specifying the price. Then Abu-Ahmad gave him the money(nonverbal action) and made invocation statement as a goodbye word (**farewell**) and Abu-Yousif at his turn repeated the same expression "Allah saves you". This reflects the Mosuli culture that has its effect on greeting and farewell expressions. By farewell words, the discourse is terminated.

The whole situation consists in what happens linguistically. Each utterance is an act serving the direct aim of binding seller and customer by the tie of some social sentiment or other. Once more, language appears to us in this function not as an instrument of reflection but as a mode of action. The overall style between the participants is informal, but the style between Abu-Ahmad (the buyer) and Abu-Yousif (the seller) is different from the style between Ahmad and Abu-Yousif (the seller) because of the age factor which governs the style that adopted by both the buyer and seller. In this interaction, we can see that the seller tries to establish social relation with the buyer when he speak about Ahmad's aunt. The seller

also made inducement to persuade the buyer. We also observe the special treatment with Abu-Ahmad in buying selling process because the social relation between them. The table below shows numbers and percentages of speech acts:

Numbers and Percentages of Speech act

Acts	Frequency	Percentage
Reply	10	25.0%
Question	7	17.5%
Request	6	15.0%
Informative	4	10.0%
Comment	3	7.5%
Elicitation	1	2.5%
Farewell	1	2.5%
Nomination	1	2.5%
Offer	1	2.5%
Agreement	1	2.5%
Justification	1	2.5%
Marker	1	2.5%
Directive	1	2.5%
Greeting	1	2.5%
Confirmation	1	2.5%
Total	40	100%

Reply, question, requests and informative are the most frequently acts. Reply constitutes(10) (25.0%) of the total number of acts. Reply

means to give an answer or to reply to a question. The question forms (7) constituting (17.5%), The requests acts also is (6)(15.0%) of the total number of acts. The question means a sentence or phrase that asks for an answer. The request means an act of asking for something. The informative acts make (4)(10.0%) of the total number of acts. The informative means giving useful knowledge or information. The reply, informative, comment, offer, justification, directive are used frequently by the seller to gain the buyer as a regular customer and to secure ongoing selling buying process. The buyer used questions for building an essential impressions of the seller attitudes. Requests also used frequently by the buyer politely using a declarative sentence or interrogative forms to lessen the price.

10. Conclusions

1. Seller buyer interaction is characterized by much solidarity and politeness.
2. cultural and social constraints are fundamental attributes of seller-buyer interaction. Cultural constraints affect the interaction include constraints on age in the Mosul society. Showing respect to the older and keep in politeness with the person of the same age. In all, this reflects the Islamic culture.
3. Market discourse is similar to political discourse in that both use various strategies including positive strategies or negative strategies like: offer, suggestion, promise, accept, disagreement, question, informative, justify, threaten and conclude as ways of resolution the conflict which help in accomplishing the negotiation process.



11. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been put forward:

1. Since the social relationships between the seller and the buyer in a language event are regularly marked by features of language and conduct special treatment, the English language teacher should be aware of these features.
2. Market discourse is a simple sample of language use which encourage the students to use language out the classroom.

12. Suggestions for further study

The following suggestions are given to end the study:

1. It is necessary to conduct studies on the multilingual/multicultural market in some cities of Iraq.
2. Another area of investigation is to investigate online shopping and make a comparative study between online shopping and real shopping.

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