

A Pragmatic Study of Insult and Bullying as Markers of Aggression in Parental Family Conflict

Patricia Nneka Ogbuehi, PhD
Department of English,
Admiralty University of Nigeria, Asaba, Delta State
patoneka@yahoo.com 08060396696

Abstract

This paper attempts to apply pragmatics theory with specific insight from Grice's Maxims of Cooperative Principle and Conversational Implicature and Bach and Harnish theory of pragmatics in the analysis of verbal indicators of aggressiveness in parental conflict, with specific reference to insult and bullying. The data for this study were drawn from four families of Nigerian home videos and Mount Zion films. With the use of descriptive survey research design, the researcher employed a mixed method of data analysis that combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods in the analyses of the data. The findings reveal that most of the linguistic items that are markers of aggression, which are insults, manifested in the form of derogatory statements and abuse of personality which were employed to damage one's self-image. While bullying manifested in the form of harsh words, threats, commands, reassurance of personality and which were used to enforce authority, dominance and intimidation. The findings equally reveal that most of the words were uttered in anger and are indicators of aggressive behaviours, both from the husbands and the wives. The study concludes that since family conflict is traceable to aggressive behaviours and wrong use of words uttered in anger by the parents, for peace to reign in the home, parents are advised to show understanding, learn to control their anger and refrain from uttering provocative words.

Key Words: Aggression, bullying, conflict, family, insult

Introduction

Conflict is an inevitable aspect of human relationship. Every close relationship, either between parents and children, between parents or adults that are not married is bound to experience some form of conflict. All families, regardless of the love and understanding between them sometimes experience some kind of conflict. However, because of the level of emotional attachment, close and regular interaction that exist between family members, sometimes the conflict becomes very intense. Coupled with the fact that external interferences are often resisted, the conflict sometimes can become a prolonged tangled and painful conflict. This could as well degenerate and lead to detachment from the couples concerned, which could in an extreme case, lead to domestic violence or even divorce.

Cummings (1994) defines family conflict as an expression of negative affect between parents. It can as well be said to be disagreement, argument and struggle between husband and wife, between parents and children and between siblings. Olympio (2005) in his submission defines family

conflicts as any conflict that occurs within a family between husbands and wives, parents and children, between siblings, or with extended families.

Family conflict can manifest in diverse forms such as argument, disagreement of one of the spouse's life style, financial management of the family, handling of in-laws' pressure, children's welfare, etc. In whatever form or shape it takes, it is usually transmitted through verbal or non-verbal communication. Communication, therefore, is a vital tool in family conflict. In the course of an argument between a husband and wife, insult and provocative utterances can trigger a serious conflict that can lead to violence. Aggressive commands or assertions of authority from either of the couple concerned could cause resistance, which could degenerate into aggressive behaviours. However, the focus of this paper is mainly on the pragmatic analysis of linguistic behaviour that act as insult and bullying in family conflicts between parents or a couple which would henceforth be referred to as parental conflict.

When parental family conflict degenerates into a fight, either verbal or non-verbal, it allows hurt feelings, anger and resentments, which can lead to both physical and emotional stress, both for the couple involved and their children, who are usually at the receiving end. The verbal fight could take the form of abusive words or insult such as *stupid, devil, Satan, a drunk, your head is not correct, empty head, fool, your mother did not give you home training, your people are useless, I regret marrying you*, etc. Bullying could be in the form of the use of commanding tone and assertiveness from either the wife or the husband, which could trigger resentment from the other partner.

In psychology, the term aggression has been defined as a harmful social interaction intended to inflict damage or other harm upon another individual, which can occur either reactively or without provocation (Debono & Muraven, 2014). It can be in the form of hitting or pushing, intimidating or verbally berating another person. Aggression, in humans can be triggered by frustration or a feeling of disrespect, anger, assertion of dominance, intimidation or threatening of another individual. Human aggression has been classified into direct and indirect aggression. Direct aggression is characterized by physical or verbal behaviour intended to cause harm to someone while indirect aggression is seen as a behaviour intended to harm the social relations of an individual (De Almeida, Cabral & Narvaes, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

Some factors are put into consideration in trying to analyse utterances between the producer and receiver who is expected to interpret the message as intended by the speaker. One of the major factors to be considered in trying to figure out the intended meaning of the speaker's utterance is the context of usage, which has to do with where, when, to whom and under what circumstance the utterance is produced. Pragmatics, in most cases is more interested in interpreting the hidden meaning of an utterance. Speaking on this, Bach and Harnish (1979) opine that the hearer's inference is based on what the speaker says and also on the Mutual Contextual Beliefs (MCBs). They equally recognise other types of beliefs that hearers may rely on to make inferences shared by an entire linguistic community. These include Linguistic Presumption (LP) and Communicative Presumption (CP). Emeike and Iyio (2017: 24) refer to LP as the moral belief shared by members of a community in the language in question, while Odeunmi (2006) submits that LP enables a

speaker to take for granted that the hearer will be able to understand the intended message. He further states that pragmatics, among others, believe that communication always involve speakers' intentions, and that communication is successful when hearers associate such intentions with speakers (Odebunmi, 2015). Communicative Presumption holds the belief that every speaker makes utterance with a recognisable illocutionary intent which the hearer is expected to infer on the bases of shared contextual information.

Bach and Harnish equally present a detailed taxonomy of illocutionary act where each type of illocutionary act is individuated by the type of attitude expressed. For instance, Informatives are denoted by the following verbs: advise, announce, apprise, disclose, inform, insist, notify, point out, etc. while in Descriptive, the speaker declares that a particular quality is possessed by a person, place or thing. Examples are appraise, asses, call, categorise, characterise, classify, date, describe, diagnose, evaluate and so forth.

In order to account for how utterances are interpreted, the pragmatic elements such as communicative presumption (CP), conversational implicature (CI), mutual contextual beliefs (MCBs) would be applied in the analysis. For instance, to determine if an illocutionary act is an insult, it may be necessary to put into consideration the intention of the speaker based on the general belief or presumption, the semantic interpretation of utterances, the context of usage and its implication. This is necessary because what A may interpret as an insult may not be considered as an insult by B. The context of usage also helps to give interpretation to utterances.

Speech Act Theory

One of the major theories of pragmatics that can be used to identify the performance of an utterance is the Speech Acts theory. In communication, Speech Acts theory is often used by scholars to explain how speakers use language to achieve their intended goals or actions and how hearers or recipients of an utterance decode the intended meaning from what is said. Speech Acts theory was postulated by Austin (1962) when he claims that engaging in speech act means performing some acts, i.e., the utterances people make or the things they say are equivalent to actions. This is to say that speech acts are actions which are performed through utterances. Language can be used to perform the following acts such as command, request, apology, order, promise, assert, warn, insult, criticise, etc. Austin (1962) identifies three parts of utterances which are locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. According to him, a locutionary act is the actual performance of an utterance and its ostensible meaning. He further explains that an illocutionary act is the pragmatic illocutionary force of the utterance. It reveals the speaker's intention of what the act is to accomplish. The third one is perlocutionary act. It is the actual effect of the utterance, such as persuading, convincing, scaring, enlightening, insulting and inspiring. Speaking on this, Odebunmi (2006) asserts that perlocution may be unpredictable. It could be intended or unintended. Culpepper and Haugh (2014) posit that expressions such as 'please' and 'kindly' are often used to express attitude, especially, in performing the act of request.

The Cooperative Principle and Conversational Implicature

Another pragmatics theory that could be relevant for this study is Grice Maxims of Cooperative Principle and Conversational Implicature. This theory was developed in the mid-70s by Grice (1975). He formulated the Cooperative Principle as a 'rough general principle' that participants bring into play in an interactional enterprise (Grice, 1989:309). According to him, utterances have meaning and are related to each other on the basis of inherent rules and that a speaker, by

participating in a conversation agrees to this implicit rule, which he refers to as maxims. The four maxims that he developed are: Quality: speaker tells the truth provable by adequate evidence; Quantity: speaker provides enough information as required; Relation: the speaker's utterance is relevant to the topic of discussion; Manner: there is clarity of expression, which is to avoid ambiguity and obscurity.

He believes that people follow certain patterns in their conversations and claims that listeners generally assume that a speaker's utterance contains truthful and enough information, which is relevant with clarity of expression. This helps the listener to understand the implication of the speaker's conversations by drawing on an assumption of cooperativeness, contextual information and background knowledge.

However, according to Grice, these maxims can be flouted by speakers when they deviate from the norms of conversation, which he rightly termed Conversational Implicature. Speaking on this, Cruise (2004) claims that violating the maxims can be seen as a sign of a speaker's/writer's hidden meaning and that something is merely implied instead of stated. In the same vein, Ibilate (2020:26) affirms that maxims can be violated, flouted, infringed, suspended or opted out on or a speaker can even be faced by a clash when one has to be sacrificed. In addition to this, Kauffeld (2013) notes that there are some human interactions that are "patently non-cooperative". For instance, interactions that involve the use of a degree of coercion, which precludes cooperation. This means that human interaction that involve bullying are non-cooperative as they involve the use of force to enforce obedience against someone's wish. Furthermore, Leech (1980) argues that another maxim exists. This he calls "the Tact Maxim" which says "Do not cause offence". According to him, it deals with politeness needs and should be added to the list of maxims. This is to say that when a word causes offence, it flouts the maxim. This implies that every word uttered deliberately to attack, assault and disparage someone's personality are cases of flouting of "Tact maxim".

From the above explanations of maxim, it is obvious that this theory would be relevant in the analysis of linguistic elements employed as insult and bullying in a parental family conflict. An utterance can be interpreted to be insulting when there is a deliberate violation of the maxims of quality, relevance and tact. However, the utterances have to be placed in context for it to be correctly interpreted (Yule 1996:47f). Thus, in this present study, one of the criteria to be considered in classifying an utterance as an insult is to characterise the target's social identity or using an epithet to address the target. Secondly, if the prediction about the target is interpreted by the target as demeaning or inappropriate, which could be deduced by his/her reactions, either verbal or non-verbal. Thirdly, if the speaker made the prediction with the intention to hurt or demean the target. Thus, words functioning as attack, assault, contemptuous remark, nasty comments could be regarded as insult.

With regards to bullying, Van Geel et al, (2015: 89) see bullying in the light of peer victimisation, which constitute of physical aggression by peers. Swearer and Doll (2001) view bullying as constituting a multidimensional phenomenon that arises from the complexity between family relationships, peer relationships, school community and the family environment among couples, bullying can take the form of harsh words such as ordering or command, assertiveness, threats, accusations, etc.

Research Methodology

The data for this study is selectively drawn from four families represented in Nollywood and Mount Zion family home videos. We have decided to use fictional data so as to get full details of the nature of conflict among spouses, which is usually kept secret in real life situations. Two are taken from Nollywood home videos and two from Mount Zion films as this is much that can be conveniently accommodated in this type of study. The analysis is equally limited to verbal expressions. Non-verbal expressions are accommodated where they aid in the explanation and perlocutionary effect of the utterances.

Research Design

With the use of descriptive research design, the researcher analyses the data using a mixed method of data analyses that combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative analysis is used to identify the various speech acts performed during parental conflict and to explain the pragmatic functions of the linguistic items identified as insults and bullying as markers of aggression in parental family conflict. While the quantitative analysis is used to identify and quantify the frequency occurrence of the linguistic items identified as insult and bullying in parental family conflict according to the speech acts that realise them. After downloading the data, the YouTube, the researcher watched the video recordings which she transcribed for easy analysis. She studied the data to identify instances of utterances made during verbal conflict between husbands and wives. In the data analysis, utterances from the husbands are tagged H, while the ones from the wives are tagged W.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Qualitative Analysis

Excerpt 1:

H: (The husband entered the house at mid-night) ----- 1

W: (In low tone) Where are you coming from? ----- 2

H: (Husband stammers, mutters incoherent words) amm...----- 3

In the above excerpt 1, the utterance of the wife, “Where are you coming from?” is a directive speech act expressed in a question form. It is a device used by the wife to elicit information about the husband’s whereabouts in an unfriendly manner, thus indicating of the wife’s disapproval of the husband’s behaviour.

Realising the attitude of the wife based on the fact that there is a societal disapproval of married people keeping late night (MCBs), the husband mutters incoherent words in response. This is an indication that even though the tone was low, the husband was very much aware that his action was not right and the question was a sign of disapproval.

The fact that the husband stammered in his response indicates that he realises the wife’s intention in asking the question (CP).

From the utterance of the wife, it can be inferred that the wife suspects the husband of infidelity.

The husband in his response flouts the maxim of quantity by his inability to provide enough information as requested by the wife.

Except 2

W: (Shouting) I said, Where are you coming from, James? ----- 4

H: (Silent)----- 5

W: (Shouting and raising hands) If you don't talk, I will just pull down this building. ----- 6

H: Our kids are sleeping. ----- 7

In the above except 2, in line 4, the wife shouted at the husband, "I said, where are you coming from, James?."

The above utterance by the wife consists of three speech acts: assertive, directive and notification. "I said" is an assertive speech act employed by the wife to reaffirm and to insist on her earlier demand of knowing where the husband was coming from. This time, she shouted at the husband in anger, which is a mark of aggression and bullying.

The second utterance "Where are you coming from?" is a directive speech act expressed in the form of question and request, which is a repetition of the question asked in line 2. This time, it was said vehemently in anger and aggressively to assert authority. The addition of the vocative "James" is an illocutionary speech act of notification, expressed in the form of address since it appears at non-utterance initial position Levinson (1983:70). It was used to arrest his attention sarcastically. The perlocutionary effect is to belittle him so as to make him feel guilty for his actions. By addressing the husband by his first name is an indication of disregard for him and a manifestation of anger and aggression due of his purported action as under normal interaction, the wife refers to the husband as 'mine'.

Since the husband could not talk in line 5, in line 6, the wife made the following utterance, "If you don't talk, I will just pull down this building."

The above utterance consists of two speech acts: directive and commissive. The expression "If you don't talk" is a directive act of warning. "I will just pull down this building" is a commissive act of threat. In anger, the wife threatens to pull down the building.

In this second utterance, the wife flouts the maxim of quality by not telling the truth. She could not have possibly pull down the building but rather was exaggerating. It is equally a figurative expression indicating making the house uncomfortable for the husband. By her utterance, she threatens the husband, which is the perlocutionary effect of her utterance.

In line 7, the husband replies with the following utterance, "Our kids are sleeping."

This is an informative speech act notifying the enraged woman of the fact that the children were already asleep. He indirectly implies that her shouting could wake up the children, who are fast asleep.

In his reply, the husband flouts the maxim of relation by giving an answer that does not address the question asked. The essence of this is to cover up and save face as he felt that he was being humiliated by the wife and would not want the children to witness such if they should wake up.

The fact that the husband tries to evade the answer to that question indicates that he realises the intention of the wife to disgrace him before the children. (CP)

Based on the mutual contextual belief, the husband expects the wife to realise the reason for evading the answer to the question, which is the fact that the society frowns at such a wife's behaviour towards the husband. (MCBs)

Excerpt 3

W: You are stupid; you are an idiot. I will make life uncomfortable for you. ----- 8

H: Are you not ashamed of yourself. For the past two months, have you performed your duty as a wife? You cannot apologise to your husband? No respect, no atom of regard, nothing, nothing. -
--- 9

W: I will not apologise. ----- 10

H: (shouting) You are very wicked. ----- 11

Line 8 consists of two speech acts, which are descriptive and commissive illocutionary speech acts. The descriptive speech act is employed by the wife to address the husband as stupid and idiot; these are insults and abuse of character. The essence of insulting the husband, which is the perlocutionary effect, is to degrade and disparage his character. To make him feel inferior and lose self-esteem.

The second utterance in line 8 is a commissive act with which the wife promises to make life uncomfortable for the husband. This implies that the reaction of the wife is a deliberate act to frustrate, instill fear and possibly control and dominate the husband; this is a form of bullying. One can as well infer that the wife is the troublesome one. This informs the reason why the husband keeps late nights.

By calling the husband stupid and idiot, she flouts the maxim of quality by telling lies about the husband because the husband is definitely not an idiot but human. Since those utterances are offensive, the wife flouts the tact maxim that says "do not be offensive". As a result of this abuse, the husband reacted in line 9.

H: Are you not ashamed of yourself? For the past two months, have you performed your duty as a wife? You cannot apologise to your husband? No respect, no atom of regard, nothing, nothing.

The above utterance consists of five speech acts: Descriptive, Informative, Directive, Requesting and Accusative.

"Are you not ashamed of yourself?" is a descriptive act expressed in the form of a question employed by the husband to make the wife see her behaviour as a shameful act. This is a nasty

remark equally employed by the husband to attack the wife's personality so as to make her realise the inadequacy of her behaviour in order to curtail her excesses.

“For the past two months, have you performed your duty as a wife?” The first part of the utterance is an informative act used by the husband to remind the wife of how long she has failed in her duties and to see if she can retrace her steps. The second part of the utterance is a directive act of questioning. The perlocutionary effect is to ridicule the wife for failing in her duty as a wife and also to retaliate for the abusive behaviour of the wife.

The next utterance “You cannot apologise to your husband?” is a request expressed in question form by the husband by demanding for an apology from the wife. The perlocutionary effect is to make the wife realise her position as a second fiddle and to submit to him as the husband by apologizing to him.

The last utterance, “No respect, no atom of regard, nothing! nothing!” is an accusative act used by the husband to accuse the wife of lack of respect for him. The repetition of “nothing” is an emphatic expression used to heighten the enormity of her action of not having regards for her husband. The perlocutionary effect is the desire for respectful conduct and tendering of apology from the wife. Since all these were said in anger, they are all markers of aggression in the home front, which could not really produce the desired outcome.

Both the accusation of lack of respect and the demand for apology from the husband met a dead end due to the context of situation. Since these were said in anger, instead of the wife apologising, there was resistance when she declared in line 10.

“I will not apologise” this is an assertive act used by the wife to resist the husband's demand for apology.

In the general African marriage, it is believed that since the husband is the head of the home, the wife is expected to treat him with respect and high regard. By raising her voice at the husband, the wife has dishonoured the husband and she is expected to apologise to the husband. It is on this note that the husband demands for an apology from the wife. (MCB)

The utterance of the husband in line 9 flouts the maxim of relation. His utterances are not relevant to the issue at hand but a deviation. It is done by the husband to attract sympathy so that the society will condemn the wife for lack of respect thereby covering up his irresponsible behaviour that caused the problem.

Quantitative Analysis

The researcher identifies linguistic expressions that act as insult and bullying, quantifies the frequency of their occurrence in a tabulated form and finds their percentage. In this analysis, any linguistic utterance, either a word, phrase, clause or sentence aimed at disparaging, humiliating, ridiculing, attacking and discrediting someone's personality is classified as insult. On the other hand, any expression used to forcefully intimidate, control, dominate and assert one's authority would be regarded as an act of bullying.

Table 1: Tabular Analysis of Linguistic Expressions that act as Insult

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Informative Acts/Name calling: Hopeless fool, wicked man, bastard man, wicked man, idiot, stupid man, useless thing.	12	26.1
Informative Acts/ Descriptive: you are very wicked, your sickness is beyond normal, you are a bastard, this is the type of woman I married. You should be ashamed of yourself, you are mentally stressed.	10	21.7
Informative/Accusative: You are firing like a machine gun	1	2.2
Informative/ Evaluate: This is the most stupid thing you have ever said in your entire miserable life.	1	2.2
Directive Acts/Question: Is it that you are stupid or you are lazy? Are you mad? You are not ashamed of yourself? Why am I here listening to this mentally deranged man?	10	21.7
Informative/Abusive: Your generation have gone mad, you filthy son of a bitch.	2	4.4
Evaluative/Descriptive: You are an irresponsible man.	3	6.5
Informative/Announce: I hate you	4	8.7
Declarative/pronouncement: You will suffer, I curse the day I met you, it will not be well with you.	3	6.5
Total	46	100
The baseline is 46 insults. Whatever number of linguistic items that act as insult is placed over the baseline and the percentage is worked out.		

The above table is a reflection of the linguistic expressions that act as insult in parental domestic conflict. The table shows that the total number of verbal expressions that depict insult are 46 in number. From the analysis, the informative act employed for name calling, which are mostly derogatory names targeted for personality damage, has the highest number.

Table 2: Tabular Analysis of Linguistic items that act as Bullying

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Directive/Question: Are you questioning me in my own house? Have you lost it? I said, where are you coming from?	8	19.5
Directive/order: You go and make food for me fast. Stand there!, You must not leave this house, Go and bring the maid back, Go back to where you are coming from.	12	29.3
Directive/prohibition: Don't walk out on me.	3	7.3
Assertive/insisting: No! My decision is final. You must apologise, I will not apologise, You are married to me and must keep to my orders. Get out of this room.	7	17.1
Directive/request: You cannot apologise to your husband?	1	2.4

Commissive/promise/threat: I will make this life uncomfortable for you. I will deal with you, I will show you, I will give you heat in this house	8	19.5
Inform/warning: You have no right to detect to me when I come back,	2	4.9
Total	41	100
The baseline is 41. Whatever number of linguistic items that act as Bullying is placed over the baseline and the percentage is worked out.		

The above analysis shows that most of the expressions classified as bullying are mostly directive acts and the highest in the number of occurrence is the directive act used as order and command, which is mostly used to coerce the victim into acting against his/her wish so as to showcase authority and dominance.

Discussion

In the analysis of the data for this study, effort is made to identify some verbal linguistic expressions used as insult and bullying in a family conflict among couples and their pragmatic functions. Some of the linguistic expressions identified as insult are: *Hopeless fool, Bastard man, Wicked man, Idiot, Stupid man, Useless thing, etc.*, while those identified as bullying are: *Are you questioning me in my own house? Have you lost it? I said, where are you coming from? My decision is final, you must apologise, I will not apologise, you are married to me and must keep to my orders, Get out of this room, etc.* The utterances were grouped according to the speech acts that realise them. For instance, the informative act used as insult is grouped into name calling, personality description, accusations, personality evaluation, declaratives and announcements. From the qualitative analysis, it is observed that most of these expressions are uttered in anger and with aggression. Many of the utterances are a deliberate attempt to attack, assault, humiliate and destroy the addressee’s self-esteem.

The analysis also shows that most of the linguistic expressions identified as bullying are mostly directive speech acts used as questions, command, order, prohibition, insisting and commissive acts of threat and warning.

The qualitative analysis gives insight into the pragmatic functions of these utterances. They are deliberately employed to forcefully control, dominate, and display power and authority over the addressee so as to gain control. This supports the submission made by Kurz (1989) when he maintains that the patriarchal arrangement of families, ideals of masculinity, and a cultural acceptance of the use of force to gain control over others, all create and also foster a social environment for wife abuse and other forms of family violence.

Conclusion

From the analysis and discussion above, it is obvious that the utterances identified as insults are offensive and contemptuous words employed deliberately to dishonour and damage the partner’s self-esteem. They are nasty remarks made in anger and in rage. They provoke negative reactions and no reasonable actions and decisions are taken under such context. They create hurt and offence

and sometimes could lead to physical abuse. For instance, in our data, when the wife accused the husband of *firing like a machine gun*, the husband, in anger, slapped the wife, claiming that her mouth is poisonous and that she must learn to address her husband respectfully. There is equally an occasion in our data where the wife vows to make life uncomfortable for the husband. This is an indication of the fact that, if words are uttered in a respectful manner, if words are not spoken in anger and aggressively, if there is a deliberate effort to seek to honour and respect each other as couples in the home, offence would be minimized, hurt would be avoided and physical abuse would be eliminated.

Furthermore, bullying is generally seen as a social evil observed among students. However, in this study, it is pointed out that children often practice what they see adult do at home. Since this study has made it obvious that there is evidence of bullying among couples in the home and it is most likely that this is what occasions the practice of bullying among children in the school. Since no parent wants his or her child to be a victim of bullying in the school, they should as well refrain from the use of utterances that depict bullying, some of which has been identified in this study, so as to build a healthy home.

Based on the above submission, this paper, therefore, concludes that since aggressiveness in the home is traceable to bullying, wrong use of words and nasty remarks uttered deliberately in anger, which are referred to as insult. For peace to reign in the home, husbands and wives should deliberately refrain from aggressive behaviours, learn to keep quiet while angry, deliberately employ positive words and be cautious in addressing each other so as to build each other's self-esteem.

Suggested Research

Based on the findings of this research, we recommend that further research work should be carried out in other aspects of family conflict such as conflict between step-mothers and step-children so as to identify the linguistic behaviours involved and to proffer solution to minimize such conflict.

References

- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bach, K. & Harnish, R. (1979). *Linguistic communication and speech acts*. Cambridge: Massachusetts. The MIT Press.
- Barbanti, O. (2005). Development and conflict theory. Beyond Intractability. Retrieved January 13, 2010 from <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/development-conflict-theory>
- Cruse, A. (2004). *Meaning in language – An introduction to semantics and pragmatics*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Culpeper, J., & Haugh, M. (2014). *Pragmatics and the English language*. London: Palgrave
- Cummings, E. M. & Davies, P.T. (1994). Maternal depression and child development. *Journal of child psychology & psychiatry*. 35: 73-112.

- Debono, A. & Muraven, M. (2014). Rejection perceptions: Feeling disrespected leads to greater aggression than feeling disliked. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 55: 43-52.
- De Almeida R.M., Cabral J.C., Narvaes R. (2015). Behavioural, hormonal and neurobiological mechanisms of aggressive behaviour in human and nonhuman primates. *Physiology & Behavior*, 143: 121–135.
- Emike, A. J. and Iyio, O. J. (2017). Reflections on Bach and Harnishi’s pragmatic theory. *International Journal of Innovative Studies in Sociology and Humanities (IJSSH)* Volume: 2:2 www.ijssh.org
- Grice, P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In: Cole, P. and Jerry Morgan, (eds). *Syntax and semantics*, Vol: Speech acts, 41-58. New York: Academic Press
- Waribo-Naye, I. (2020). The cooperative principle and implicatures. In Osunbade, N., Faleke, V. O., Butari, N.,U., Ogoanah, F.N. *Theory and practice of pragmatics series*, 1: 1-37. Haytee Press and Publishing
- Jucker, A. H. (2000). Slanders, slurs and insults on the road to Canterbury: Forms of verbal aggression in Chaucer’s *Canterbury tales*. In: Taavitsainen, I., Nevalainen, T., Pahta, P. and Rissanen, M. (eds.). *Placing Middle English in Context*. (Topics in English Linguistics). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Kauffeld, F. J. (2013). The epistemic relevance of social considerations in ordinary day-to-day presumptions. *OSSA Conference Archive*, Paper 87.
- Kurz D.(1989). Social science perspectives on wife abuse: current debates and future directions. *Gender Soc.*:489-505.
- Leech, G. N. (1980). *Explorations in Semantics and Pragmatics*. Benjamins.
- Odebunmi, A. (2006). *Meaning in English: An introduction*. Ogbomosho: Critical Sphere
- Odebunmi, A. (2015). Pragmatics. In I. Kamalu, & I. Tamunobelega (Eds.). *Issues in the Study of Language and Literature* (pp. 196-221). Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd.
- Swearer, S., & Doll, B. (2001). Bullying in schools: An ecological framework. *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, 2(2&3), 7 – 23. doi: 10.1300/J135v02n02_02
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Van Geel M., Goemans A., Vedder PH. (2015). The relation between peer victimization and sleeping problems: A meta-analysis. *Sleep Medicine Reviews*. 27:89–95.