

LANGUAGE OF CIVIC EXPLOITATION: IMPLICATION OF COMMUNICATION IN ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

It is undeniably true that telecommunication companies have become highly influential and powerful actors in the communication and interaction system as individuals and organizational growth become more dependent on private technology products, services and infrastructures to actualize their set goals and activities even as we approach the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century. ICT has replaced all traditional functions of communication that is why we have the likes of mobile banking, internet banking, USSD transaction, social medias, and other electronic gadgets useful for information processing. The profits they make can dwarf the economy of many countries across the globe and with the advance in technology, poor network users are helpless and have no choice than to use these products and services. The rate of deduction is not dependent on whether the people are convinced of the ingenuity of this deal. If one should access these services one must pay, sometimes, heavily. It is of concern to the researcher to study how language which is intended for communication purposes is also used as a tool for exploitation of users of these telecom services. Currently, there has been proactive measures initiated by national and international bodies to stem the spread of information and communication technology (ICT) related threats and vulnerabilities, the exploitation of which increasingly have bearing on personal, national and international security matters. However, little has been done in areas of individuals and organizations exploitation. This paper uses Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's semantic (linguistics) politeness theory to examine the language of informative texts. The role of language assigned in the print media and the instructional text is 'presentation'. How have these telecom companies presented information to users? The theory of linguistic politeness considers face of communication whether negative or positive. In this paper, we shall be considering positive politeness theory as it is useful for our analysis. Positive politeness is when the speaker tries to empathize with the person being addressed (environment) as though they really do consider them in the said situation when originally the aim is to use language to manipulate their cognitive to accepting being exploited. Such pronominal as "we" "us" "our" etc, are usually employed. We shall be using a few selected informative texts for analysis with aim to establish that if greater transparency in this regard is effectively introduced, trust could be built and users, governments and other affected parties could be convinced of the value of the initiatives while telecom companies identify existing and emerging loopholes in current policies and practices.

Keywords: Language, Civic Exploitation, ICT, Telecom Companies, Semantic Politeness Theory, Organization, Leadership Development.

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INTRODUCTION

The approach of technology from the perspective of language functions may be difficult and a long time engaging task for a researcher if we take into consideration that analyzing telecommunication with linguistic tools is quite a recent investigation line. The knowledge of a language is not only a linguistic factor. It is also a way of conveying knowledge about the culture, the tradition, the history and the humour of a country. When an agency wants to be trusted by customers or clients, it needs to build a strong relationship. Customers want to trust the brand they are using and as this level of trust are particular to different cultures then cultural understanding is a must. One way of approaching these new research topics was by analyzing the language of communication with reference to Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's semantic (linguistics) politeness theory.

Politeness is constructed through discourse, and it concentrates on the ways in which the concept is used in interaction by the members of the observed group. The theory builds on the sociological concept of face (as in 'save face' or 'lose face') to discuss politeness as a response to mitigate or avoid face-threatening acts such as requests or insults. Politeness theory accounts for politeness in terms of the "redressing of affronts to a person's sociological 'face' by face-threatening acts" (Brown & Stephen, 1987). Generally, politeness is subsumed by the more wide-ranging concept of "rapport management, or, in other words, the control of (dis) harmony between people in discourse (Camino, 2018). According to this theory the interlocutors use particular strategies in order to achieve successful communication. These strategies enable to create maximally comfortable environment for communication (Alekseyenko, 2016). Politeness theory leads back to the term of 'face' introduced by the sociologist Ervin Goffman. Face in the context of politeness describes the wish of every member of a community to guard his or her face from possible damage through social interferences (Goffman, 1967).

Face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Face here is the public self-image which plays a major role in every culture and shapes the character of speakers and how others perceive them. Politeness is a set of maxims (e.g., 'give options') motivating linguistic choices, or as paying linguistic attention to an individual's wish to be liked and to do as one please (Holmes, 2006). The two types of politeness are positive and negative politeness. Positive strategies are often performed to emphasize friendliness and to avoid offense while the negative politeness strategies aim to avoid offense through deference. The social features such as 'profession, religion, gender, and ethnicity' are to be considered when we refer to face. In a conversation, "the hearer directly reacts to the speaker's face, thereby, hallmarking it (Yabuuch, 2006).

A threat to a person's face is termed a 'Face-threatening Act (FTA)' by Brown and Levinson. Depending on the speaker's and the hearer's reaction, a FTA can influence a communication in two different ways: Either a mitigating statement or compensation is uttered, or the communication may break down (Seiwald, 2011). FTAs are sometimes inevitable in social interactions depending on the type and rules of a conversation, whereby certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten face, namely, those that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker (Brown & Levinson, 1987). These acts damage the face of the hearer or the speaker by acting inversely to the face wants of the other. However, as Leech points out, some illocutions (e.g. orders) are inherently impolite, and others (e.g. offers) are inherently polite (Brown & Levinson, 1983).

In order to categorize these different FTAs, a distinction has to be made between acts which threaten the positive face and those which threaten the negative face of either hearer or speaker. In one sense, all politeness can be viewed as deviation from maximally efficient

communication; as violations (in some sense) of Grice's (1975) conversational maxims. To perform an act other than in the most clear and efficient manner possible is to implicate some degree of politeness on the part of the speaker. To request another to open a window by saying 'It is warm in here' is to perform the request politely because one did not use the most efficient means possible for performing this act (i.e., 'Open the window').

Politeness allows people to perform many inter-personally sensitive actions in a nonthreatening or less threatening manner (Lyons et al., 2007). Common ground, information perceived to be shared among communicators, is important not only for gauging what information is likely to be already known versus new, but also to carry a message of interpersonal relationships. Brown and Levinson (1987) argued that "claiming common ground in communication is a major strategy of positive politeness, which is a series of conversational moves that recognize the partner's needs and wants in a way that shows they represent a commonality, such as a commonality of knowledge, attitudes, interests, goals, and in-group membership (Pizziconi, 2006).

Let us consider this situation 'Shut up!' is rude, even ruder than 'Keep quiet!' In the polite version, 'Do you think you would mind keeping quiet: this is, after all, a library, and other people are trying to concentrate,' everything in italics is extra. It is there to soften the demand, giving an impersonal reason for the request, and avoiding trouble. Conventional grammar takes little account of such strategies, even though we are all masters of both making and understanding the signs that point to what is going on beneath the surface (Spark, 1957).

On the other hand, in Roman Jakobson's Communication Model, every act of verbal communication is composed of six fundamental factors, as in the following logic scheme: the addresser (sender) sends a message to an addressee; to be effective, this message needs a context of enunciation (a referent) that the addressee can identify, and that has to be verbal or that could be verbalized; a code, partially or entirely common to both addresser and addressee (to the one that codifies the message and to the one that later de-codifies it); and, finally, a contact (Jakobson, 1960). There is a physical channel and a psychological connection between addresser and addressee, which enable both to initiate and stay in communication.

Further, a certain positioning of a speaker towards one of these six factors leads to a certain dominant or relevant function of a speech act. In Jakobson's speech art, the poetics focuses on the sign, on the message, while the metalingual is centered on the code. A text is sent to the addressee; the message uses a code; has a context (or referent, meaning politely crafted) terms, the information that is conveyed subject individuals and even organizations to the message. The focus of this paper is to consider the appearance and distribution of this speech norm and the boundaries of its variability within the context of different cultures.

Implication of Telecommunication on Organizational Leadership Development

Telecommunication technology comes with lots of juicy benefits; there are underlying problems and challenges that need to be sufficiently addressed. Before adopting a telecommunication system, a business should look into its advantages and compare it with its drawbacks. Getting everything right will allow the business to take advantage of the benefits of these communication systems while preparing adequately to face the challenges. Telecommunication requires a business and organizations to be smart when adopting a specific telecommunication technology. In recent years, many high-profile exploits have been used to commit massive data breaches, exploitation, and malware attacks. In 2016, for example, Yahoo announced a hack that had occurred years earlier had caused the data of one billion users to be leaked.

The attackers gained access to users' email accounts because of the passwords and use same medium to scam the masses as it is becoming common lately. Security exploits come in all shapes and sizes, but some techniques are used more often than others. Computer exploits can be categorized in several different ways, depending on how the exploits work and what type of attacks they are able to accomplish. The most familiar type of exploit is the zero-day exploit, which takes advantage of zero-day vulnerability. Zero-day vulnerability occurs when a piece of software usually an application or an operating system contains a critical security vulnerability of which the vendor is unaware.

The vulnerability only becomes known when a hacker is detected exploiting the vulnerability, hence, the term zero-day exploit. Once such an exploit occurs, systems running the software are left vulnerable to an attack until the vendor releases a patch to correct the vulnerability and the patch is applied to the software. Computer exploits can be characterized by the expected result of the attack, such as denial of service, excessive extortion of subscription or charges, remote code execution, privilege escalation, malware delivery or other malicious goals.

Leveraging the fear of computer viruses, scammers have found a new way to commit Internet fraud. Rogue security software is malicious software that mislead users to believe there is a computer virus installed on their computer or that their security measures are not up to date. Then they offer to install or update users' security settings. They will either ask you to download their program to remove the alleged viruses, or to pay for a tool. Both cases lead to actual malware being installed on your computer. Metaphorically, a 'Trojan horse' refers to tricking someone into inviting an attacker into a securely protected area. Telecom companies apply same on users when they introduce what they tagged 'awuf'. Those who subscribe tend to pay even extra for the service assumed to be free.

More so, this paper shall focus on the implication of mobile banking and citizen exploitation. Firstly, what is mobile banking? Mobile banking is simply a service provided by a bank or other financial institution that allows its customers to conduct financial transactions remotely using a mobile device such as a smartphone or tablet, it uses software, usually called an app, provided by the financial institution for the purpose. Mobile banking is usually available on a 24-hour basis. Some financial institutions have restrictions on which accounts may be accessed through mobile banking, as well as a limit on the amount that can be transacted.

Mobile banking is dependent on the availability of an internet or data connection to the mobile device. It is established mainly to reduce the cost of handling transactions by reducing the need for customers to visit a bank branch for non-cash withdrawal and deposit transactions. Sadly, this has become a source through which users of its services are being exploited daily. Mobile banking does not handle transactions involving cash, and a customer needs to visit an ATM or bank branch for cash withdrawals or deposits and certainly users cannot not question any development as this is a built in app. The following are mobile banking services:

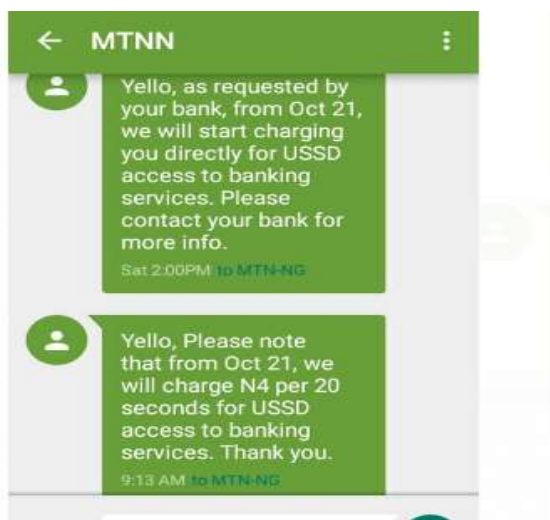
- Mini-statements and checking of account history;
- Alerts on account activity or passing of set thresholds;
- Monitoring of term deposits;
- Access to loan statements;
- Access to card statements;
- Mutual funds / equity statements;
- Insurance policy management; and
- Account Information.

Survey has it that more than that twenty-one percent of mobile phone owners had used mobile banking in the past twelve months. Based on a survey conducted by Forrester, mobile banking will be attractive mainly to the younger, more "tech-savvy" customer segment (Bird, 2000). This category is more of the students and working class who will need access into various channels and information, especially in a modernized environment as ours. This channel becomes more preferred as no one would want to visit the bank to face rigorous banking procedures. But most of the users are interested in performing basic transactions such as querying for account balance and making bill.

A report by the US Federal Reserve in March 2012 found that twenty-one percent of mobile phone owners had used mobile banking in the past twelve months. Based on a survey conducted (Bird, 2000), a third of mobile phone users say that they may consider performing some kind of financial transaction through their mobile phone. But most of the users are interested in performing basic transactions such as querying for account balance and making bill. This section discusses some current trends in threats and vulnerabilities and how they are being exploited, particularly those that have (or may have) a bearing on international and national security.

Mobile banking is a substrate of global economic, social and political life. This in turn attracted the interest of criminal actors seeking to exploit new opportunities, and state actors, particularly the major powers, using ICT capacities and capabilities to gain advantages in competition against each other. Wedged between the two are the private corporations building and profiting from the Internet and other IT markets and where, with few exceptions, business models have tended to reinforce and favour insecurity and push risk downstream to users (Thomas, 2006). The trend of rising prices documented over the decade have continued to evolve. An important increase in the cost of a number of other exploits in social media trended the likes of message app, for example, WhatsApp and iMessage.

Aside other factors, how has this medium cured the financial stress of its users? Sadly, the reverse is the case as telecom companies steal from the masses through likes of mobile banking, USSD transactions, for example, the proposed 4naira deduction, borrowing credit from network providing platforms and its exuberant charges, etc. and how this becomes a problem to students' learning activities. Telecom companies along with financial institutions present these texts to the masses brainwashing them to believe it's for our good. For the purpose of this study, let us briefly consider a few texts received from a well-known telecom company that circulated in Nigeria lately:



From the above, the choice of words carefully employed for this purpose is rather that of exploitation. The content words and pronominal used separate MTN (Mobile Telephone Network) from the intended 'ill action' leaving customers to either blame the financial institution concerned or vice versa. The use of the pronominal 'your' bank transfers the blame to the object (bank) referred, while 'we' denotes sense of shared value and corporation. One would simply say it was not MTN's intention to gain from USSD transaction but 'our bank'. In addition, using the borrow credit platforms merely leave the user trapped in high debt.

The thought of using this platform and the percentage deducted at next recharge for service charge is rather too overwhelming. A careful look at it, one would discover that they are surely doing you more harm than good. In this case, poor network users are helpless and have no choice. The rate of deduction is not dependent on whether the people are convinced of the ingenuity of this deal. The theory of linguistic politeness considers face of communication whether negative or positive. Positive when the speaker tried to empathize with the person being addressed (environment) as though they really do consider them in the said situation whereas they do not. The intention is to use language to manipulate their cognitive to accepting being used. They use such pronominal as "we" "us" "our", etc. (Ello, 2015).

Negative politeness becomes more obvious that the speaker is not concerned with the interest of the users and has taken independent decision that may or may not profit the addressee. Furthermore, a review of one of the trending news in the Punch Newspaper as edited by Ogunfuwa (2019) has it that Telecommunication companies said banks were the biggest beneficiaries of the USSD charges. They also accused bank executives of making unfounded allegations against them regarding the plans to start charging customers N4 for 20 seconds of the Unstructured Supplementary Service Data fee. The operators under the aegis of Association of Licensed Telecommunication Operators of Nigeria noted that the banks were the biggest beneficiaries of the USSD charges. The rate ranges from N10 to N50, as N4.5 per 20 seconds amounts to a minimum of 0.08 per cent and a maximum of 40 per cent of the charges to customers. Rather than using the USSD platform to bank the unbanked, the banks were serving the banked population, optimizing their operations and generating huge revenue with the USSD channel. It will be impossible to connect Automated Teller Machines and Point of Sale terminals across the length and breadth of Nigeria without our members' dedication and support (Ogunfuwa, 2019).

In addition, the cashless policy drive and the instant payment solution of the financial sector would not have been possible without our members' support." It was gathered that the bank CEOs, in letter to ALTON on September 16 had asked operators to commence end-user billing as such aligned with the standard practice for USSD billing. The letter signed by thirteen banks said, customers using non-bank services already pay for the USSD sessions. Consequently, the bank executives had denied having any knowledge of the direct USSD access charge to customers. Providing further clarifications on the matter, Adebayo in a phone conversation said the banks stopped paying the cost for providing the USSD services two months ago and had directed telcos to devise ways to recover their money from subscribers. He said the banks stated that they would no longer pay for the USSD service delivered to their customers, following the issuance of the USSD pricing determination by the Nigerian Communications Commission. It was gathered that some telcos had initiated the end-user billing for the USSD transactions due to the suspension of corporate billing by the banks.

ALTON described the end-user billing, which the banks specifically demanded that its members should implement, as a billing methodology where the banks customer were directly charged the USSD access fees, irrespective of the service charges that the bank might have applied to the customers' bank account. He said, "Why will the banks charge customers

and not share the cost with the operators and you do not expect the operators to charge customers? Banks continue to take the money without giving anything to the operators.” ALTON chairman said the end-user billing as advised by the bank CEOs would amount to double billing to bank customers. “Given that the USSD channel has become an established and most preferred channel for the banks especially for the banked population, we state that asking the customer to pay for the USSD is akin to requesting a customer to pay a bank’s landlord access fees prior to gaining access to banking premises,” Adebayo added as captured in the punch newspaper. The Director of Public Affairs at NCC, Dr. Henry Nkemadu, said consumers already paid service charge to banks for financial transactions carried out through the USSD channels, and should include the cost of use of operators’ critical network resources (Ogunfuwa, 2019). From the above, it is evident that the system is bent on exploiting users in disguise of leveraging their burden. If the system must work the cost of services and the product should not be excessive. Through language we have been able to realize that in as much as this is a welcome development, and individuals and organization are at risk.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper pays particular attention to the semantic evolution of the notion of “contact” in communication. Through language telecom analysts have manipulated the minds of the users towards a desired behavioral attitude which in this case is that of compliance. If a tool is introduced for easy communication and interaction, it appropriate that same tool does not become an avenue to exploit from the users but it should be a blessing in all completeness. This paper narrows its discourse to findings on the financial sector of the society pointing at mobile banking and USSD transaction and highlighting the central and decisive position it has gained in organizing the discourse. We also consider some of the vulnerabilities in ICT which has proven to be a threat to the security of individuals and organizations.

Using the politeness theory to analyze the language of texts to ascertain the current rate at which mobile banking platforms has exploited citizens with the aim to address this issue and bring to the attention of users to the imminent threat telecom poses by exploiting users to dancing to their tone. Often, positive face is used to cajole users. It can seem a difficult task to keep track of all the network security threats that are out there, and the new ones that just keep emerging. Whether the telecom platform is creating a culture of fear out of being online or using their product and placing trust in leaving our information out for all to see and even exploiting us in the same vein, or whether the threats that wait in the dark corners of telecom usage are truly serious and can happen to anyone or organization, the best thing we can all do is to be prepared. The leadership of any organization in as so much goals and targets are set to be achieved should ensure that it is to the benefits of the citizens and not for personal interest.

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