

Examination of the Structure of Interactions between the Police and Suspects in Anambra State: a Conversation Analysis

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ABSTRACT

It is a general understanding that most of the problems which individuals and communities face today stem from communication gaps, communication breakdown or a total lack of it. Psychological linguistics, context and sociolinguistics variables may interplay to influence what people say or hear in a communication event such as conversation. More so, every communication event is driven by language. In other words, the essence of language is communication; hence, an understanding of language is important, especially as particular varieties of language are associated with particular social groups. Language is used to control behavior. The police use language to bring out a form of behavior through issuing of commands. Such utterances are intended to bring about certain forms of behavior so as to ascertain facts and information from suspects. Thus, this study examined the structure of interactions between the police and suspects in Anambra in order to explore the conversation strategies used by the Nigeria police in the process of interacting with suspects bearing in mind the integral role of the Police which include the maintenance of peace and order, enforcing the laws of the nation as well as other predominant roles. Using Conversational analysis, the study discussed the structure of interactions between the police and suspects in Anambra State and also examined the constructional components of turns in the interaction, as well as the turn-taking features in the interactions.

Keywords: Language, Police, Suspect, Conversation Analysis, Structure, Interaction

INTRODUCTION

Communication in any form it occurs does not take place in a vacuum and it is often influenced, modulated and shaped by a number of factors. [1] notes that the context of situation or the total environment, both linguistic and non-linguistic plays a crucial role in creating meaning in any conversation. All human beings engage in conversational interaction and human society depends on conversation in order to function. It is important to note that interaction can only be possible with the use of language. Conversation is a spontaneous exchange of talk between two or more people. Conversation in this study is seen as an oral communication event between two or more people. [2] elaborates on context of any speech situation by delineating three major categories: field, tenor and mode. Field refers to the field of discourse; what kind of social action is actually happening, what the participants are

engaged in. Tenor refers to the tenor of discourse, who the participants are, the role they are adopting at any point, and what their social relationships are to each other. Mode refers to the mode of discourse, the kind of role the language is playing, its function in the particular context, the channel used (spoken or written) and also the rhetorical mode; what is achieved by the text in terms of such categories as persuasive, expository, didactic and the like.

Implicated in the above categorization is the fact that the way in which language is used by different disciplines and professions differs and this calls attention to the emerging area of English for Specific Purposes and or register studies. Register is a term used to describe variations in language according to use. For instance, there is legal language, medical language, religious language etc. These variations point to

Udoh

jargon or technical terms of various disciplines. The concern of this paper is the analysis of the structure of conversation between the police and suspects in Anambra State. The language of the police force will be critically examined by looking at their interactions/conversations with suspects during interrogation. The police perform integral roles in the society as they help to maintain peace and order, enforce the laws of the nation, perform other predominant roles such as settlement of disputes, fighting of crimes and other numerous roles. One of the ways through which these functions are carried out is through the use of language.

Language is a complex entity in the human society which distinguishes man as homo-sapiens. Linguistic geographers have identified more than 700 languages across the world. These languages in their distinctive speech communities display variations that are circumscribed by history, or marked by geographical locations, social status as well as the occupational engagements of the language users. Language is a means of communicating thoughts and social control. It is a means of individual self-expression which makes it possible for individuals to live in a society. Language according to [3] is the core of the communication process and the pivot around which man's social, political, economic and environmental endeavors revolve.

The Nigerian Police uses language within the norms and ethics of the discipline as every other occupational group does in the performance of their duties but the trajectories in this field may pose slight variations in how they use language. Hence, [4] opines that law and language are interwoven and inseparable. Police investigations, court cases and their managements take place through the use of language. The language used by the Nigeria Police in carrying out their activities will be analyzed using the theory of conversation analysis.

Conversational Analysis (CA) which is the theoretical base of this study was inspired by Harold Garfinkels ethno-methodology

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and Erving Goffman's conception of the interaction order. Developed in the late 1960's and early 1970's, Conversational analysis is an approach to the analysis of spoken discourse that looks at the way people manage their everyday conversational interactions. Spoken discourse in the form of conversation is probably the most common type of interaction among people in their daily lives. Conversational analysis seeks to describe conversation in a way that builds upon the way it is taken up by the people who are participating in it. It does this by paying attention to the way each utterance displays an interpretation of the previous utterance and by paying particular attention to hitches, misunderstandings and repairs. Conversational analysis according to [5] is the study of recorded naturally occurring talk in interaction. Its aim is to discover how participants understand and respond to one another in their talk with a central focus on how sequences of action are generated. CA studies what an utterance does in relation to the preceding one(s) and what implications an utterance poses for the next ones. [6] contend that CA adopts the next - turn proof procedure as the most basic tool in its procedures. In conversation, participants alternate in speaking, they interactionally and locally manage the conversation. Participants take turns in interaction; they interact on a moment-by-moment and turn-by-turn basis. This is to say that the next turn provides evidence of the party's orientation to the prior turn, there and then. This methodic procedure is CA's gateway to the participants' own understanding as they are revealed during actual interaction, thereby providing materials for analytic explication.

The Police Force in Nigeria

The police play important roles in the Nigerian society without which the sustenance of order, legality, development and democracy may be difficult. Their primary role is policing, which has to do with security in compliance with existing laws and conformity with the precepts of social order. The Nigeria Police Force is a

Udoh

centralized and federally administered institution. It is headed by an Inspector General appointed by and accountable to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria vests the overall operational control of the force in the hands of the President. This is further codified in the Police Act which states that: "The President shall be charged with operational control of the Force" and that "the Inspector-General shall be charged with the command of the force subject to the directive of the President."

All over the world, the base line objective of the police is the maintenance of law and order. The central objective entails such duties as prevention, control and combating of criminality; maintenance of public order and peace; rendering assistance and services to members of the community who require them and upholding the rule of law [7]; [8]. In Nigeria, section 4 of the Police Act and Decree No 23 of 1979 state the functions of the police. However, the following are the general duties of the police as provided for in the various laws of the federation and the Nigerian Constitution.

- (i) The prevention and detection of crimes
- (ii) The apprehension of offenders
- (iii) The preservation of law and order
- (iv) The protection of lives and properties
- (v) The due enforcement of laws and regulations with which they are directly charged
- (vi) The preservation of the liberty of subject
- (vii) The control and regulations of traffic
- (viii) The performance of such military duties within and outside Nigeria as may be required of them by or under the authority of the Police Act or any other act (The Nigerian Police force Training Manual, 1976).

Criminal investigation is a means of the prevention and detection of crime in the country. It becomes very important, therefore, that the law enforcement personnel should know where to seek

information, the type of information to look for, and how to assess and preserve such information. When a crime is committed, the investigation of such crime hinges on information procured from the accused person for the success of the inquiry. In order to obtain relevant information in respect of a crime, the Investigating Police Officer (I. P. O.), who is the crime investigator, will have to interrogate the suspect(s) /witnesses. The interrogation is done skillfully through questioning in order to collect facts and information that will lead to among other things:

1. Identify the guilty person or perpetrator,
2. Locate him / her
3. Provide evidence of the accused person's guilt [9].

Statement of the Problem

Institutional discourse has received a great deal of attention from researchers over a long period of time; however much of what has been written were analyzed using different analytical theories. A discourse analyst, [10] conducted a discourse analysis of police/accused interaction using Coulthard and Sinclair's theory of discourse analysis. He analyzed the structural organization of interaction underlying the structure of institutional interaction. [11] has also analyzed students/teacher interaction, using Coulthard and Sinclair's theory of discourse and Jane Austin's Speech Act Theory. However, official interactions between the police and their suspects have not actually been studied by discourse analysts, using Conversation Analysis model. Therefore the problem of this study is to investigate the extent to which the police /suspect interaction can be analyzed using conversation theory and also to discover their various structural elements in terms of turns, turn-taking components, its organization and also the issue of sequence expansion.

Objectives of the Study

Specifically the study will:

- i. Establish the structure of interactions between the police and suspects in Anambra State.

Udoh

- ii. Reveal the constructional components of turns in the interaction.
- iii. Describe the turn-taking features in the interactions.

Research Question

The following research questions will guide the study:

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- i. What is the structure of interactions between the police and suspects in Anambra State?
 - ii. What are the constructional components of turns in Police-Suspect interactions in the study area?
 - iii. What are the features of turns in interaction between the Police and Suspects in Anambra State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Institutional Discourse, Power & Ideology

According to [12], "Institutional discourse can perhaps be best described as a form of interaction in which the relationship between a participant's current institutional role (that is, interviewer, police interrogator, school teacher) and their current discursive role (for example, questioner, answerer or opinion giver) emerges as a local phenomenon which shapes the organization and trajectory of the talk." In other words, an interaction in which we can observe that a person's local role as 'questioner' is affected by their wider role as 'police officer' can safely be labelled as 'institutional discourse'. The law is an overwhelmingly linguistic institution. Laws are coded in language and the concepts that are used to construct the law are accessible only through language. According to [13], the contract which regulates our relationships with partners, employers and providers are mainly language documents... it is therefore, not only the law that permeates our lives, but the language of the law and it does so in ways that are not always problem free. Language is viewed by many as being an integral part of the 'work' of social organizations, "it being the principal means through which lay persons pursue various practical goals and the central medium through which the daily working activities are conducted", [14]. A recurrent theme in studies of institutional discourse has been a focus on how the unequal distribution of power among the participants, typical of such settings, is manifested [15].

The concept of power has proved problematic, with many competing views as to where it is located, what it consists

of and how it is best analysed. According to Thornborrow, power is "a set of resources and actions which are available to speakers and which can be used more or less successfully depending on who the speakers are and what kind of speech situation they are in" (2002:8). Fairclough conceptualizes power 'both in terms of asymmetries between participants in discourse events, and in terms of unequal capacity to control how texts are produced, distributed and consumed...in particular socio-cultural contexts' (1995:2). Wodak draws her definition from [16], [17] [18], interpreting it as discursive control (including) who has access to the various types of discourse, who can and cannot talk to whom, in which situations, and about what. The more powerful the people, the larger their verbal possibilities in discourse become, (1996:66). For current purposes then, power can be seen to operate at the local level (as a synonym for 'interactional control'), and in the broader context of the police institution's social role. It is crucial to keep in mind that power goes beyond a simple process of domination from above. Rather, it can be seen to be jointly produced by participants, since the powerless are led to believe that dominance is legitimate in some way or the other, [19]. Thus, as well as the more traditional conceptualization of 'power by dominance', the notion of 'power by consent', or what [20] terms 'hegemony', is also relevant to this study. Hegemony is a process by which subordinate groups accept the status quo to be universally beneficial, when in fact it benefits only the dominant groups, and a central concern of CDA has been the ways in which discourse constructs these

Udoh

hegemonic values and attitudes as 'natural' and 'commonsensical' [21]. It is through these constructions of legitimacy that the powerful groups are able to maintain their positions.

Ideology has been defined as 'the ways in which a person's beliefs, opinions and value-systems intersect with the broader social and political structures of the society in which they live' [22]. As an important aspect of creating and maintaining unequal power relations, "ideology is a central concern of critical discourse analysts, who take a particular interest in the ways in which language mediates ideology in a variety of social institutions" [23]. Wodak goes on to note that although there are different conceptualizations of ideology among theorists, critical approaches to discourse are united by a common aim to not only describe and explain linguistic phenomena, but also to root out a particular kind of delusion...to create awareness in agents of how they are deceived about their own needs and interests' (2001:10). Power has been used interchangeably with authority. Weber defined authority as the exercise of power within a framework of a legally-binding set of rules/mutual obligations. Power does not reside outside language and it is not socially predetermined prior to the interaction, but is potentially residing within language, forming part of the interaction. Giddens also described the relationship between power and discourse. [24] pointed out that power

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The framework chosen for the analysis of data in this study is Conversation Analysis. A conversation is the everyday exchange of talk between two individuals. "Conversation may be taken to be that familiar predominant kind of talk in which two or more participants freely alternate in speaking, which generally occurs within specific institutional settings like law courts, classrooms and the likes" [26]. Conversation Analysis (CA) has its primary focus on the sequential organization of any interaction. It is the study of talk produced in ordinary human interaction. According to [27], 'the main

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and discourse are related. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it.

[25] drew a distinction between discourse and text by saying that a text is 'a product of text production and discourse refers to the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part (1989:24). He goes on to state that the term discourse can be used to refer to discourse action (e.g. talking or writing) or to a conversation, a type of discourse (e.g. the discourse of police interviews). Fairclough maintains that language is one element of any practice/discourse. Others are physical, sociological and psychological although all of them are interrelated and not discrete, and language may be internalized as a discourse residing within other elements. In line with the focus of this study, the issue of police interrogation is regarded as an institutional discourse.

Although the police interrogation is a highly regulated form of discourse that is structured around legislative requirements, its 'institutionalism' is constructed through the participants' interaction as they negotiate the organizational goals; that is, wide aspects of a police interrogation, especially the beginning and end of the interrogation, are dictated by legislation and police regulations, the way in which each police interview is constructed as belonging to police institutional discourse is negotiated through the interactions.

focus of CA is to describe the orderliness, structure, and sequential patterns of interactions, either in institutional or casual conversations.'. One central concept within Conversation Analysis is speaking in turn. In CA, it takes two interactants to have a turn-taking. However turn taking is more than just defining property of conversation activity. While the talk that participants in any conversation do is quite variably distributed among participants, the relevant orderliness their talk's distribution exhibits is the taking of turns at talk.

Udoh

Turns are made up of units referred to turn constructional units. These units are variety of grammatical units: words, phrase, clauses and sentences. These are referred to as TCU. [28] [29] [30] states that the compositions of these units are highly context dependent. According to RobbinWooffitt, turn constructional components or turn constructional unit is basically the design a turn has as its structure which could be in terms of syntactic structure, prosody or generally the peculiar context the turn are constructed in. On the other hand, in turn allocation, there are two basic ways in which a speaker can have a turn at talk: either the current speaker selects the next speaker or a next speaker may self-select. There are also other components that are important to CA: they are overlapping, adjacency pair, repairs and sequence expansion. Overlapping is an interaction phenomenon which is produced by speakers together. It occurs when a current speaker continues talking beyond the TRP. It occurs when the beginning of a speaker's statement coincides with the ending of another speaker. Overlapping is simply seen as a case of where more than one speaker speaks simultaneously. For some purposes, it can be useful to distinguish two specific simultaneous talk. At places where overlap occurs, transition space seems not to exist.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis
Data was gathered through tape recording, interview and personal observation. The interrogation sessions was closely observed through participant observation. The data gathered was analyzed using Conversational Analysis [31]. The researcher collected data from Anambra State Police command. Three police stations - Awka police station, Nnewi police station, and Onitsha police station, were used for the study. Samples of police/suspect interaction sequences purposively selected from a 15 hours recording done in 7 days visit to the different offices were analyzed. All the interrogation sessions were recorded in English and the subjects are adults of 20 years and above. As a result of the need for anonymity, participants names were

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mentioned anywhere in the sample excerpts. Police officers were identified with the letter P while suspects were identified with the letter S. The transcripts were organized as excerpts while the analysis were grouped into the identifiable features of conversational structures stated in the theoretical framework which includes the organizational sequence of the interactions, turn constructional components and turn-taking components observed in the interactions.

The structure of interaction between the police and suspects in Anambra State

The structure of police - suspect interaction, has three strata and these are opening, middle and closing. The structure of interaction in the police suspect interaction is organized in adjacency pairs. This marks it off as an institutional talk that is characterized by pre - allocation of turns in interactions. The sequences openings and closing are in adjacency pairs except for some closings that end in a closing remark by the client like 'alright'. Suspects answer questions as the police interrogate them. The police control the interaction through asking of questions and comments which the suspects provide the second pair part that the officers initiates. This is illustrated in the excerpt below:

Excerpt: Greetings/ Response

P: How you [dey]?

S: [Fine Sir]

P: Well done (...)

(0.4)

S: Yes Sir

Opening

This is the stage of initiation of interrogation. The opening paves way for the interaction as seen in the excerpt above; the interaction begins with the investigative officer. It involved greetings and responses which are adjacency pairs. Police-suspect interaction is also structured in such a way that power to control the conversation lies with the police officer who initiates the exchange. This can be clearly seen from the excerpt below:

Excerpt:

Udoh

P: What is your name?
 S: My name is ehm...Johnson okeke
 P: Your age?
 S: I am 25 years old
 P: [of which tribe?]
 S: I'm Igbo
 P: Address?
 S: I live at N0 10, Limca Road Onitsha
 P: Can you read or . . . can you read and write?
 (0. 6)

P: I: asked if you can read and write
 S: I can read and write . . . small
 Here the officer controls and initiates interactions. The officer initiates the communicative exchange while the suspect reacts by providing the correct response to the initiator of the exchange. Police-suspect interaction also involves cases of insertion sequence like repairs and interception. This can be seen in the above excerpt. The exchange which is 'your age' depicts hegemony power inherently expressed in that statement. The question is imperative sentence, but semantically complete. The same manner of question was equally repeated where the officer asked: 'of which tribe'

The Middle

In this segment, through questioning, the police officer initiates the suspect into the interaction. This can be seen in the excerpt below:

Excerpt V
 P: What happened between you and her on the 19th of this month?
 S: Around. . . I came back around for 6:30. So I cook, I ate, my children ate. . . (0.7). . .
 P: Continue . . . wetin happen
 S: I was inside my room . . eh . emm . . . I hear my daughter..... she dey . . eheh cry so when I come outside, I see am as she dey cry ...

In the middle strata, the suspect is expected to narrate what transpired. Here to some extent, the suspect controls the interaction.

The Closing

The closing segment of the interaction is tilted towards bringing the conversation to a conclusive end. Sometimes the

closing segment of the interaction is also in adjacency pairs as well. Thus:

Excerpt:
 P: Can you help in telling us [who raped the girl?
 S: [I don't know Sir]
 P: When did you see Ogonna last (0.2) ((the suspect did not reply immediately))
 P: Is he not your friend
 S: Sir, Ogonnana nah my friend, But no be:: like that
 P: Its alright. We go still detain you here (0.6)
 S: Ok Sir. But Sir I think say I go go today
 P: ↑Not yet
 S: Alright Sir

Police suspect conversations hardly embody pre-closing such as: bye good bye, 'thank you sir' etc. This is because of the nature of such conversation.

Turn constructional components of the interaction

Turns in interaction are constructed through a variety of grammatical units: words, phrases, clauses and sentences. The compositions of these units are highly context dependent. Syntactically, words are arranged in the order of subject - verb - object: (SVO). Syntactic structures entail not just phrases but phrases and clauses and not just clauses but clauses and sentences. Consider the following syntactic structures:

Excerpt:
 P: Before the exercise what did you discuss?
 P: You did not force her?
 S: I did not. Sir I was not myself Sir.

The above structures are simple sentences but the first line contains a prepositional phrase. The following are therefore some of the syntactic structures found in police-suspect interactions:

Simple Sentence

Simple sentences were consistently used in the police - suspect interactions. They constituted greater percentage of the verbal expressions used in the interactions which ranges from affirmative sentences, shortened to 'yes,' ok 'alright' and realized in their full expression; negative sentences shortened to 'no' nothing and their full expressions.

Udoh

This exemplifies the straight forward manner in which investigating officers expect their interlocutors (in this case, the suspect) to respond to statements and questions.

Interrogative Sentence

Interrogative sentences were constantly used to elicit responses. The use of interrogative sentences is a necessary constructional component of police-suspect interactions as the investigating officer searches for answer to problems. There are so many forms of interrogative statements used. This can be seen in the excerpt below:

Excerpt:

P: I'm just going to ask you some questions. Where were you on the 3rd of October, 2017?

S: I was at the restaurant near the stadium

P: Who and who were you with

S: I was by myself, but an old friend from Awka was also having lunch with her girlfriend and we talked about five minutes.

P: And what are their names

S: Goddy and Chioma

P: What did you talk about

S: So many things Sir

Here, the police initiates the interaction while the suspect takes his turn by providing answer to the questions posed by the police. The answers provided by the suspect paves way for the next turn to be taken by the police. There is no single sequence that is devoid of interrogative sentence in the interactions.

Declarative Sentences

Declarative are statements / assertions made by the speaker. It can also be used to deny an assertion. So it makes a statement or denies it. Thus:

P: Where does he live?

S: We live in the same area

Vocative Sentences

The rationale behind the use of vocatives in police - suspect interactions was to evoke the feelings and sympathy of the investigating officer. Some of the vocatives used in this work are: 'Sir', 'you', 'Oga', madam and 'you'.

Excerpt:

S: Oga eh...eh Oga

P: Abeg sit down there

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S: Yes Sir but ehm ...ehm

P: Wetin be your problem, Oga?

S: Sir, may you help me... l:: eh...

P: How you wan make I help you Olodo

Clauses and Phrases

The following clauses and phrases portray the structural complexity of the issues at hand. Below are clauses and phrases used in such interaction.

Excerpt:

S: Since I enter that house, she has never allowed me to rest one day or the other Even though the tense form of the verb in the above expression is incorrect, the statement still contains two clauses. Clausal structure is not quite common in police-suspect interactions especially in conversations investigated. Phrases are also minimally used. Other examples are:

Excerpt:

P: You have already secured admission into prison ; it is direct entry:

P: On the 20th of February when you sent the girl to buy bread and beans, what happened?

P: I know, you are a hardened criminal

The first line above contains two independent clauses. The police made the statement as a sheer mockery of the suspect and the offence he is alleged to have committed. The second line contains an adverbial clause of time and a main clause. The third line equally contains two clauses: an independent clause and a nominal (noun) clause. However, clauses are not extensively used in the interaction between the two participants.

Turn-talking features of the interactions

This involves the observable features and components of turn - taking in the interactions. They include the turn allocation procedures, the turn cues and TRPS in the interactions.

Turn Allocation Procedures

In turn allocation, interactions are designed for the selection of a next speaker. The procedure for giving and talking turns observed in the interactions includes current speaker selecting next speaker and also self selection

Current speaker selects next speaker:

There are different ways through which a current speaker can select next speaker. This can be through the calling of the next

Udoh

speakers name or by the use of the pronoun 'you'. The current speaker can also select the next speaker through a non-verbal clue.

From the data collected, there are numerous vocative sentences that were used by the two sides of the participants in identifying the addressee. Some of these are illustrated below:

Excerpt:

P: What is your name young man

S: James Sir

P: I hear you

P: We hear say na you rape that small girl

S: No Sir

P: Why you stand up sir

S: I wan stretch my leg

P: Abeg Oga sit down

Through the use of the expression 'young man', the police summoned the next speaker, that is the suspect to take his own turn [32] [33]. This is possible because it was just the two of them interacting. It is almost like calling the man by name. The suspect who is the next speaker took the turn at the next available TRP in the sequence. There were observable cases from the data collected where the police used both calling of names and the use of pronouns. In most cases, only some form of talk can select the next speaker. Questions can, but answers do not.

In a multi-party talk, the use of the pronoun 'you' as an address for the selection of a next speaker creates the problem of knowing who exactly is the next speaker. This is as a result of potential vagueness of the reference. There were cases where more than two speakers adopt the procedure of self-selection, however this gave rise to excessive overlap in the sequences. Most of the interaction sequences involve just two participants at a time, a police officer and a suspect. Whether there is name

calling or not, the next speaker takes the turn at the next available TRP.

Excerpt:

P: You don sign the paper wey I give you Friday

S: Yes Oga, I don sign am

P: All the questions I asked ...

P: You no wan answer any of them wetin be your problem Stephen

S: Oga me I no get... eh... ehm I no get any problem

P: Two of you are wicked. You did not pity that girl at all at all . . P: Wh::o first rape am. You

(1.0) ((none of the suspects talked))

P:↑I say who rape that girl first. Friday, you no dey hear agai::n

The use of the pronoun here brought a problem here. There is a break in the interaction because the two suspects did not really know who the question has been addressed to. This is as a result of the use of the pronoun 'you'. But with the calling of name on excerpt XVI the police selected the next speaker who is 'Friday'.

Self-Selection

Most of the interaction sequences involved just a police and a suspect. Because of this setting, the next speaker takes the turn at the next available TRP without the calling of name or the use of a pronoun. There are cases from the data collected where more than two speakers adopt the procedure of self selection. This gave rise to excessive overlap in the sequences. These are illustrated below.

Excerpt:

P: [Who shoot that [man

S1: [shoot ke]

P: [I bi like say you dey mad]

S1: Ok::na Festus sht am fir[st]

S2: ↑[you are lying . . .] [ehm - mmm

P: [Answer my question?]

S3:↑[Ogaabegna Festus

It was noticed that in a bid to seize the floor for a turn, participants unconsciously raise their voices and also indulge in a lot of overlaps.

CONCLUSION

The aim of every spoken or written piece of work is to inform, educate, enlighten or expose certain things about a topic one is discussing in line with the audience involved. Speeches, words and sentences

are carefully chosen and manipulated by speakers to achieve a specific and desired effect on the listener, irrespective of the medium used. This goes to show that language is at the center of every

Udoh

conversation in the world, police-suspect interaction inclusive. Using conversation analysis, this research has accounted for the structure of the interaction between the police and suspect in Anambra State; however, there are dimensions of the interactions that can be investigated through other approaches. Hence, the

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grammatical analysis of institutional interactions and the use of the English language in Nigeria are recommended for further studies. Also, this study did not extend to visual and non-verbal aspect of the analysis and as such, is equally recommended for any researcher to further explore.

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