



Request as a Speech Act: A Study of the Features of the Spoken Nigeria English

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Abstract. This study examines Request expressions as speech acts in Spoken Nigerian English. Subjects for this study were drawn from the University of Port Harcourt. Data for this study were collected from two different speech interactions, namely: face-to-face conversations (FTFC), telephone conversations (TC). The researcher made use of a mini-tape recorder and note-taking method for data collection. Here, Corpus of conversations were selected using purposive sampling method and surreptitiously recorded at strategic points. This enabled the researcher to collect the Corpus in its original form. The Corpus for this study was collected at different points where the students meet: lecture halls, hostels, canteens, relaxation centres among others. From the data collected through a purposive sampling method, request expressions were isolated and used for the analysis. The framework for the analysis of this study is provided by the speech Act theory. Frequency of the distribution between the male and female subjects, were calculated using the mean statistical method and subsequently represented in bar charts. This study found out that beyond the main function of request, it also performs an array of other functions. Data have also revealed that the multilingual situation in Nigeria has affected the choices of language use, resulting in features such as code-mixing, slangs, Nigerian English-based pidgin, among others. This study has specifically shown that apart from the usual function of request, it also performs an array of other functions. Therefore, this study concludes that with regard to the selected speech act, the co-existence of English with other indigenous languages has given rise to linguistic patterns and forms, identifying Nigerian English as a distinct variety of the world Englishes.

Keywords: Request Expressions, Speech Acts, Nigerian English, Gender Difference.

1. Introduction

In every language and tribe, there are specific rules for interpreting messages communicated verbally or non-verbally. A speech community could be seen as a group of people who share a common language, dialect and communicates with same. Wardhaugh (2006) observed that “conversation involves much more than using language to make propositions” (p. 280). The author upheld that there exists an establishment of relationship with others when there are some forms of co-operation amongst members of the speech community for greater relationships through communication. In years past and in recent times, several studies have been carried out in the area of conversational routines. These include: Aijmer (1996), Liu (2004), Utin, (2017) and others. These writers were concerned with varieties of English Language such as the national varieties of English like British English, American English, New Zealand English, Indian English, Nigerian English among others.

However, in a situation where two or more languages come in contact, there is a tendency for cultural and linguistic interference. This is the case in Nigerian English with reference to conversational routines of requesting. In this routine, there are transfers of some socio-cultural habits and traits expressed by Nigerian speakers of English. Issues like, kneeling down, bowing, praying for the person and many more are employed as way of requesting in Nigerian English. In addition, there are also the issues of introducing the Nigerian-English-based pidgin, use of slang, code-mixing/switching by Nigerian speakers of English to make requests.

Abdullahi-Idiagbon (2007) quoted in Utin, 2017 observes that:

In Nigeria, code-mixing is now a common phenomenon both in Urban and Rural settings. It is more common in Urban areas due to the complexity, heterogeneity and density of the areas. Indeed, we are at the threshold of a language shift where the ability to speak an indigenous language continuously, for a minute, is a difficult test to pass for the Nigerian elites (p.2).

For instance, expressions such as, “*Abeg, carry that chair for me*”, “Can you give me your pen”, “I want to stop here, please, drop me”, “*Biko nyem your pen?*” are either code-switched or code-mixed to express request. Requesting about one’s state of being could be shown in the following examples, “*How far now?*”, “*How you dey?*,” “*How una dey?*” and many other varieties. In the course of this study, many more varieties were discovered.

Conversation serves as a life wire in every speech community. This is because without people communicating or interacting with one another, the world itself would be a lonely place. Conversation helps us to establish relationships with friends, spouses, colleagues and many other people in our speech communities. It has been observed that the speech habits of any community cannot be fully ascertained without examining the linguistic routines of that language (Hymes, 1962, in Utin, 2017). The source also observes that the analysis of routine includes, “Identification of idiomatic units, not only greeting formulas and the like, but also the conversational significance for an individual, group or whole culture” (Utin, p.3). It has been observed that in our everyday interaction, a great deal of communicative activity is experienced, consisting of enacting routines that make use of prefabricated linguistic units in a well-known and generally acceptable manner.

In a socio-cultural context like Nigeria and with the diverse linguistic backgrounds, language use experiences a lot of influences. Some of these influences hinder the free flow of conversation. Jaszczolt (2002) observes “if the maxims are breached or ostentatiously flouted, the hearer infers that the speakers must have meant something else, that is, the speaker must have had some special reason for not observing the maxims” (p. 212). In breaching or flouting the maxims of conversation, the speaker causes the hearer to either understand or misinterpret what was intended. In addition, let’s examine this of conversation:

1. A) Give me your pen, I want to write
 B) Did you give me any pen; can’t you just be polite?

- A) Okay! Please give me your pen.
- B) You may have it.

In this conversation, ‘A’ gave a command to ‘B’ instead of making a request. B demanded a more polite approach to requesting. On that note, ‘A’ reluctantly presented what sounded like a request by using “please” just to get what he wanted.

Requesting expressions are basically used to get people to do things. For this reason, this research examines the spoken forms of requesting in Nigerian English.

Specifically, the researcher observed that some Nigerian speakers of English do not take into consideration the maxims of conversation. In requesting, some Nigerian speakers of English either violate or flout the maxims of conversation, code-mix or use slang as highlighted in the background to the study. The researcher observed that some requesting expressions are not polite in terms of choice of words. They do not also take into consideration issues of appropriateness and politeness of such expressions. Example:

Conversation 2

- A) I want to use your umbrella
- B) Take naa, I will soon go home.
- C) Thanks, I’ll be back soon.

In conversation 2, the speaker introduces the Nigerian English-based pidgin “take naa” to respond to the request made. Also, the expression “I want to use your umbrella”, lacks element of politeness.

As a corollary, it is needful to know what conversational routine really is. Should the maxims of conversation be observed? Does gender have any influence on the use of conversational routine of requesting in Nigerian English? Does educational background influence the use of these speech acts by Nigerian speakers of English?

2. Research Methodology

The data for this study was collected through a face-to-face (FTFC) conversation and telephone conversations (TC). Varieties of conversations were selected through a purposive sampling method and surreptitiously collected using a mini tape recorder. A total of three hundred and ninety-seven (397) request expressions were isolated from the corpus of conversations collected. Subjects for this study were taken from the University of Port Harcourt. The choice of this school was as a result of being a federal University. The results were calculated using the mean and bar charts.

3. Theoretical Framework

Speech Act Theory is associated with a British Language Philosopher, known as J.L. Austin (1911-1960). Speech Act is an act performed by a speaker the moment he/she makes an utterance. As one of the working theories in pragmatics, Speech Act takes into consideration functions of utterance such as thanking, apologising, requesting, complimenting, commanding, promising, among others. Jaszczolt (2002) observed that:

The unit of linguistic communication is a speech act, not a sentence or utterance. This is an act that depends on the intentions of the speaker and the hearer. Speech acts are little like physical acts (hitting a ball) and a little mental acts (imagining hitting a ball) (sic) they are used to perform various functions, such as these, to convey information, to ask for information, to give orders, to make requests, to make threats, to give warnings, to make bets, to give advice, to make a promise, to complain, to thank (p.294-295).

It therefore follows that speech acts either assert a fact or do ‘something’, bring about some change in the world. As a result, Austin’s terms for these two categories are performatives and constatives utterances. While performatives refer to the act of doing, constatives refer to statements and assertions. Further categorisation of the performative result in explicit or implicit or primary speech acts. Explicit performatives contain verbs such as promise, warn, thank, reject, congratulate and apologise. In this regard, examples such as the under listed exist:

I thank you for all that you have done

I promise that I will see you tomorrow

Moreover, implicit meaning refers to the linguistic context in which a particular expression occurs. For instance, the situation in which the utterance is produced can cause the hearer to understand what is being said. In conversation, where the interlocutors are physically present and interacting the speaker needs not bother himself with providing much detail. This results from the fact that quite a lot of information is implicitly conveyed. In the course of their interaction, information could be rendered through the non-verbal cues such as nodding of the head, facial expressions, hand movements (gesticulations) and so on. In addition, the shared previous knowledge or common cultural backgrounds between the interlocutors also play an important role in understanding implicit meanings. At this level, certain aspects of meaning are taken for granted because the interlocutors share similar background knowledge of the subject-matter. Furthermore, the linguistic context in which a particular expression occurs also helps in

understanding the implicit meaning. This sort of meaning is understood from the surrounding linguistic environment in which the utterance is made. Aijmer (1996) observed that conversational routines are phrases which, as a result of recurrence have become specialised or ‘entrenched’ for discourse function which predominates over or replaces the literal referential meaning (p.11). Conversational routines of thanking, complimenting, requesting and apologising recur in social interactions at all levels of conversation and communication. As a result, the framework for the analysis of conversations is mainly provided by the Speech Acts theory.

4. Literature on Nigerian English

In Nigeria, English performs a variety of functions ranging from formal to informal. It is used by preachers, medical personnel, pressmen, lawyers, advertisers, military men, students among others. The many years of English co-existence with the indigenous languages has led to the observation by Udofot (2007) that:

The many years of co-existence of English with Nigerian languages and its use for expressing Nigerian experiences and situations has resulted in English developing linguistic patterns that have identified it as a distinct variety of world Englishes (p.7).

The above observation indicates that in relation to all language contact situations, the varieties of English spoken in the new area have been found to be different from the one spoken in England. For example, there are varieties like: Indian English, New Zealand English, Singaporean English, Ghanaian English, Nigerian English, etc., all resulting from English coming in contact with these languages. In all these Englishes, it is worthwhile to note that they are adequate for the communicative purposes of the speech community and also meet the sociolinguistic needs of their new environment.

In a multilingual situation like Nigeria, request expressions have been influenced by the indigenous languages, resulting in code-mixing, code-switching, pidginisation and so on, to suit the Nigerian situation. It therefore indicates that there is a Nigerian English which is different from other varieties of Englishes due to its presence in the new environment. Interestingly, many scholars in the field of English in Nigeria have acknowledged that the sort of English spoken and written in Nigeria has adapted to the Nigerian environment. Such scholars include Jowitt (2000), Udofot (2007) and Utin (2016, 2024). Furthermore, Ogu (1992) observed that “the varieties of English spoken by educated Nigerians, no matter

what their language is, have enough features in common to mark off a general type which may be called Nigerian English” (p.88). The growth, development and spread of the English language in Nigeria, through wide usage, have resulted in what is known as Nigerian English. The fact remains that there is a variety of English known as Nigerian English, because it sets apart a speaker from other speakers even at the international level.

5. Conversational Routines of Requesting

Many studies on request have their emphasis on direct and indirect request and the derivation of indirect speech acts from direct speech acts. It should be observed that there are linguistic forms such as ‘will you’, ‘can you’, which can be seen as fixed patterns or ‘routines’ and can be analysed with respect to grammatical and semantic structure, function, style and situation. Moreover, it is glaring that most of the time we know what people mean because of what they say. Stubbs for instance wrote:

Any discourse analysis must integrate an account of what is said into an account of what is done: first, because otherwise we have no realisation rules or recognition criteria for underlying categories, second, because speakers themselves are condemned to stand by what they say, not by what they mean or intend. (1983: p.177f).

This suggests that speakers should be mindful of the choices of utterance they make as they could be misunderstood. Most writers in indirect speech acts have remarked on the role of politeness. Searle (1975), for instance, wrote:

In the field of indirect illocutionary acts, the area of directives is the most useful to study because ordinary conversational requirements of politeness normally make it awkward to issue flat imperative statements (e.g. Leave the room) or explicit performative (e.g. I order you to leave the room), and we therefore seek to find indirect means to our illocutionary ends (e.g. I wonder if you would mind leaving the room). In directives, politeness is the chief motivation for indirectness (p. 64).

In addition, the author highlighted the different conditions for requesting (Searle 1975: p.71) (where S = Speaker, H = Hearer, A = the future action)

Preparatory condition: H is able to perform A.

Sincerity condition: S wants H to do A

Propositional Condition: S predicates as future act A of H.

Essential condition: counts as an attempt by S to get H to do A.

In the same vein, Ervin – Tripp’s (1976) study of the social implications of indirect request and order in American English concludes that speaker to calculate issues of social power and politeness in farming speech acts.

Indirect request expresses pragmatic or functional ambiguity. Requests are categorised under the directive speech acts. Directives are mainly concerned with getting people to do things. The speech acts which express directive force vary in strength. For example, we could attempt to get people to stand up by requesting, suggesting or inviting them to do so, we could also do same by either ordering or commanding them to do. Orders and commands are speech acts which are generally expressed in imperative form.

Requests should be polite in their choice of language. Holmes (2008), observed that polite attempts to get people to do something tend to use interrogatives or declaratives, as the following examples illustrate:

Sit down	Imperative
You sit down	You imperative
Could you down?	Interrogative with modal verb
Sit down, will you?	Interrogative with tag
Won’t you sit down?	Interrogative with negative modal
I want you to sit down.	Declarative
I’ll like you to sit down	Declarative
You ‘ll be more comfortable sitting down	Declarative

The author further asserted that in general the interrogatives and declaratives are more polite than the imperatives. In addition, the author noted that a great deal depends on intonation, tone of voice and context. The source also observed that a gentle ‘sit down’ may be far more polite than a thundered ‘I want you all sitting down now’. In requesting, the degree of politeness varies depending on the setting and on the role the speaker has at the moment. As a result, the extent of politeness expected in requesting could vary depending on the context and the level of familiarity existing between the interlocutors, social class and status.

6. Data Presentation

Table 1: Request Functions/Features of Expressions in Nigerian English

S/N	Request Features in Nigerian English	Types of Expressions	Frequency	Male	Female
1.	Permission question	a) Please may I ...	3	1	2
		b) Can I (we) ...	7	3	4
		c) Let me ...	2	1	1
2.	Anticipating gratitude	a) I'll be grateful if you ...	6	4	2
		b) I'll be glad if ...	5	3	2
3.	Instruction	a) Come to the church, it'll be rewarding	3	1	2
		b) Hug me! I love you!	2	2	0
4.	Hearer's ability to do something	a) Can you ...	7	3	4
		b) Can we ...	5	2	3
		Will you ...	3	2	1
5.	Asking Wh- Question	Why don't you ...	10	3	7
		What about ...	5	1	4
		Why not ...	6	2	4
		Where have you been ...	4	2	2
6.	Appropriateness of the desired action	You need to ...	6	1	5
		You should ...	4	3	1
		I think we ...	2	1	1
		I (you) should (need to) ...	3	2	1
7.	Availability of the desired object	Is ... in the room, (class, office ...)	15	6	9
		Do you still have airtime in your phone	10	3	7
		Is that the ...	5	2	3
8.	Willingness or objection to doing something	Would you mind (like) ...	3	1	2
		Do you mind if ...	7	3	4
		Aren't you going (coming) to ...	2	1	1
		Will you ...	6	1	5
		Wouldn't you ...	3	1	2
9.	Suggestion	I think ... is better	5	2	3
		I hope you wouldn't mind if ...	3	1	2
		What if you do ...	6	3	3
10.	Expressing a wish	I wish you could ...	2	1	1
		I would like you to ...	3	1	2
		I wish I could ...	2	2	0
11.	Requesting as a plea	Please, may I ...	15	7	8
		Could you please ...	6	3	3
		Please send me ...	4	1	3
12.	Negation as a request strategy	Don't you have ...	6	3	3
		Haven't you ...	3	1	2
		Can't we ...	2	2	0
13.	As a question	How may I help you?	1	1	0
		Are we meeting today?	3	1	2

		Is that the ...	6	4	2
		Who do you want to speak with?	6	3	3
		Do you want to ...	4	2	2
		How can I help you?	5	2	3
		What do you have...?	7	2	5
14	Nigerian English-based Pidgin	<i>Abeg</i> , give me that ...	6	4	2
		<i>Where you dey...?</i>	5	4	1
		<i>You don buy...</i>	4	3	1
		<i>You get ...</i>	4	4	0
		<i>You fit arrange</i>	4	4	0
		<i>You fit dash me...</i>	4	4	0
		<i>I dey hungry you get ...</i>	5	3	2
		<i>Abeg can you wait for ...</i>	3	1	2
		<i>Abeg come over to ...</i>	5	2	3
		<i>Wetin dey happen</i>	3	3	0
		<i>Yawa don gas?</i>	2	2	0
		<i>How far now?</i>	16	12	4
		<i>How you dey o?</i>	3	2	1
15	Nigerian English	Please Sir/Ma sign...	20	10	10
		I want ..., please	9	4	5
		Can I speak with ...	4	1	3
		Can you hold on please...	5	1	4
16	As an invitation	Come to the ...	3	3	0
		I hope you would not mind coming to ...	5	4	1
		Come over to ...	6	3	3
		Please come over to ...	3	3	0
17	Code-mixing/ switching	<i>Biko give me ...</i>	3	1	2
		<i>Give me your ... mbok</i>	11	10	1
	Total		355	185	170

Table 2: Codes for Request Functions/Features in Nigerian English

S/N	Request Features in Nigerian English	Codes
1.	Permission question	PQ
2.	Gratitude	AG
3.	Instruction	INS
4.	Hearer's ability to do something	HAS
5.	Asking Wh – question	AWA
6.	Appropriateness of the desired action	ADA

6.1 Results of Request Functions/Features in Nigerian English

From the results of request functions features (RFF) in Nigerian English, it has shown that Requesting as a plea had the highest mean point of 10.5, followed by Availability of the desired object with a mean point of 10. Nigerian English had a mean point of 9.5 while Nigerian English-based Pidgin had a mean point of 9.2. In addition, Code-mixing/switching and Asking Wh Question had a mean point of 7, and this was closely followed by Hearer's ability to do something with a mean point of 6.0, anticipating gratitude with a mean point of 5.5. Requesting as a suggestion had a mean point of 4.66, while requesting as a question had a mean of 4.5. The result also showed that request as an

invitation had a mean point of 4.25 and willingness or objection to doing something had a mean point of 4.2, while permission question had a mean point of 4. Appropriacy of the desired object and Negation as a request strategy both had mean points of 3.75 and 3.66 respectively. Finally, for request as an instruction and expressing a wish as request function, there were mean points of 2.5 and 2.33 respectively.

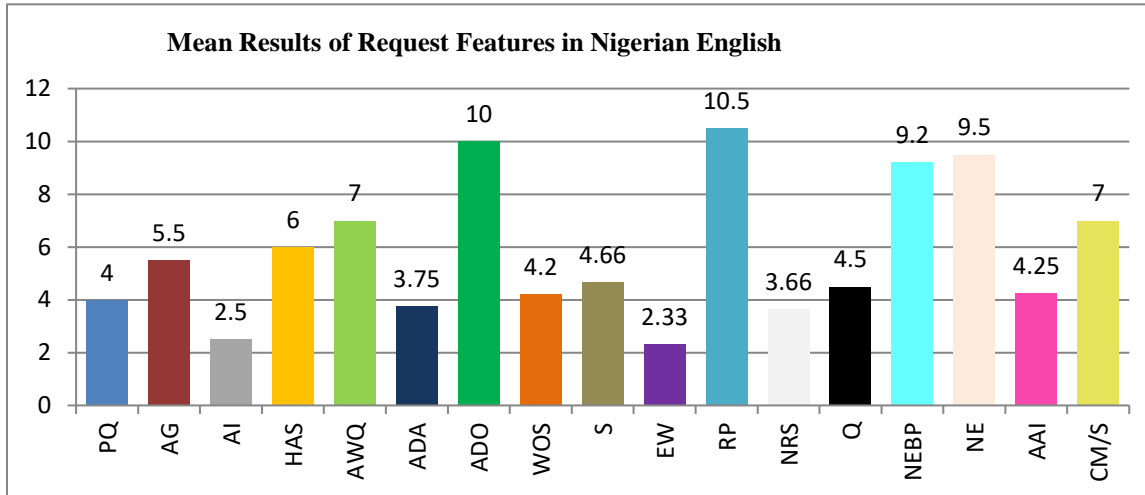


Figure1: Mean Results of Request Features in Nigerian English

Table 3: Gender Differences in the Use of Requesting Expressions

S/N	Request Features	Male	Female
1	Permission question	1.6	2.3
2.	Anticipating gratitude	3.5	2.3
3.	As an instruction	1.5	1
4.	Hearer’s ability to do something	2.5	3.5
5.	Asking Wh – question	2	5
6.	Appropriacy of the desired action	3.5	1
7.	Availability of the desired object	3.6	6.3
8.	Willingness or objection to doing something	1.4	2.8
9.	As a suggestion	2	2.6
10.	Expressing a wish	1.3	1
11.	Requesting as a plea	5	5.5
12.	Negation as a request strategy	2.2	1.6
13.	As a question	2.1	2.4
14.	Nigerian English-based Pidgin	10.0	3.5
15.	Nigerian English	4	5.5
16.	As an invitation	3.25	1
17.	Code-mixing/switching	1	6

6.2 Result of Gender Differences in Requesting Expressions in Nigerian English

The total mean points of the gender differences in the use of requesting expressions show that the female subjects had 2.94 while the male subject had a mean point of 2.79. The table also shows that expressions pointing toward availability of the desired object had a mean of 6.3 by the female subjects and 3.6 for the male subjects. For the use of Nigerian English, the male had 4 points while the female had 5.5 points. In requesting for the availability of the desired object, the male had a mean point of 3.6 while the female had 6.3. With regards to requesting as a plea, the female subjects had higher mean points of 5.5 while the male subjects had 5. Furthermore, asking Wh – Question as

a request strategy shows that the male had a mean point of 2 and the female have 5 points while request as an invitation shows that the male subjects had a mean point of 3.25 and the female subjects had 1. The results for Negation as a request strategy indicates that the males had 2.2 mean points and the females had 1.6. Also, using Nigerian English-based Pidgin expression as a request strategy recorded the highest mean points of 10.0 by the males and 3.5 points by the females. For appropriacy of the desired action, the male subjects had a mean score of 3.5 while the female counterpart recorded a mean score of 1. Furthermore, for permission question and request as an instruction, the male subjects mean points were 1.6 and 1.5 while the female mean points were 2.3 and 1 respectively. The result also shows that for making request as a question

and as a suggestion the females had mean points of 2.1 and 2, while the male subjects had 2.4 and 2.6 respectively.

7. Discussion of Findings

The above analyses have shown the different functions, types of expressions that feature in the Nigerian English requests. To start with, this study has revealed that features such as Code-mixing/switching, Nigerian English-based Pidgin and slang are characteristics of languages in contact, a clinical example of English in Nigeria. The analysis has shown indicated that the speech acts of requesting and complimenting are context dependent; this is because from the data presented in Table 1 for requesting, there are variations in the types of expressions despite the fact that there are some shared similarities in the functions. For example, if we consider the expressions on code-mixing/switching in requesting, the expressions show that this speech act is context dependent, corroborating Akindele (1990) assertion that speech acts are context dependent and that failure to express such at the appropriate time and context leads to ill-feeling. This is sequel to the fact that the expressions used for this speech act are different but some are peculiar to the specific acts. For instance, request expressions in Nigerian English-based Pidgin are peculiar to the context in which they are used the same heading or features, 'Abeg! give me that thing', is a command in the form of a request. 'Abeg', does not change the tone to give it the status of a request. However, from our data, such was seen as a request expression. Basically, the social function of request consists in getting the hearer to do something for the speaker (Searle 1969, p.66) which makes them beneficial to the later and costly to the former. Consequently, it can be seen as Face Threatening Acts (FTA) since it is costly to the addressee. The finding in this study does corroborate this assertion as request sometimes does not necessarily involve the hearer directly, that is, the hearer would not be the one outrightly performing the said action. For example, there were items like 'Could you please tell (inform) ... to come over to ...'. In this instance, the hearer is merely carrying out an instruction to the one who will then undertake the action of the request. In this case, the hearer serves as a channel and not really the doer of the action and as such may not threaten the face of the hearer as he or she in the action to be taken.

Other features of request in Nigerian English include expressing a wish that the hearer should do something as shown in Table 1 item number 10 (a,b,c). These examples are basically those of expressing a wish towards carrying out an action. These expressions

were either used as explicit request strategy while in some cases they were used as request response. For example, 'I would like you to help me with some money to pay my school fees', serves as a request while 'I wish I could help you' is a response towards an indirect request such as the one illustrated above. Also, negation as a request strategy is an indirect way of making a request but the problem associated with this strategy is that it may sometime be seen as a question which could elicit a response without necessarily following up with any action as peculiar to requests. This is typified in Table 1, Item Number 12 (a,b,c) 'Don't you have ...', 'Haven't you...' and 'Can't we ...', 'Don't you have ...', can be seen as indirect requests and as questions. The fact is that is that the hearer may choose to say 'I have' or 'I don't have' without giving a thought to the implied meaning of the expression, while as a request, the expression is expected to be followed by a response or an action. That is 'I have' should be followed by subsequently handing in the requested object, but where this is lacking, it points to an indirect speech act where the speaker communicates with the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutual shared background information together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer.

With regard to the Nigerian English-based Pidgin, there were varieties of request expressions as seen in Table 1 item no. 14 (a – k). The various expressions drawn out from the data fit into some of the different features of request presented in Table 1. For example, 14 (b and j) - 'Where you dey? and 'Wetin dey happen?' are requests in the form of question. Item 14 (f), 'You fit dash me ...', is equally a question which can be translated as 'Can you give me ...' and this falls under the category of seeking the hearer's ability to do something. Another example is Item 14 (g) 'I dey hungry, you get ...'. Here, the speaker states his feelings and makes a request. The above is translated as 'I am hungry, do you have ...'. This points to the category of checking the availability of the desired object. Others include, 'Abeg, give me that ...' and 'Abeg, can you wait for me...' are both translated as 'Please give me that ...' and 'can you wait for me, please' respectively. Despite the inclusion of the word 'please' in these expressions, they still increase the FTA effects because of the use of 'can' to introduce the expression which makes it a direct question instead of a request. The varieties of request expressions seen in this study with specific reference to Nigerian English-based Pidgin, are clear indications of languages in contact in a multilingual environment such as English in Nigeria. Furthermore, slang expressions and Nigerian English usage were also

isolated as exemplified in items No. 15 (a – b) and 16 (a – d) for slang and Nigerian English respectively. ‘How far now?’ is a slang expression meaning ‘How are you? How’s everything? How far have you gone with...etc. From the above interpretations, this slang expression can be used directly as a question and indirectly as a request.

8. Conclusion

The study set out to investigate the Spoken English in Nigeria with its focus on request as a speech act. It concludes that beyond the everyday use of request expressions, they also perform other functions. It was also discovered that gender plays an important role in the choices and uses of request expressions. It also revealed that the choices of the expressions made in conversations and social interactions are affected by the relationship of the interlocutors, context, the shared previous background, sex among other things. This confirms what Adegbija (2004) refers to as domestication:

The term “domestication”, in the context of English in Nigeria, connotes “Home grown”, “made native”, “adapted and tamed” to suit the Nigerian Environment.” We may also apply the terms “acculturation”, “naturisation” or “indigenisation” with the same sense.

Requesting as a speech act performs different functions ranging from asking permission question, instruction, using negation, Nigerian English-based Pidgin and so on. The study has equally shown that in Nigerian English, request responses are sometimes given using questions. Despite the fact that this study did not specifically consider responses to this speech act as a major feature, it noted some of the peculiar ones like using questions to respond to requests. Requests, there were functions/feature such as expressing a wish, appropriacy of the desired action, hearer’s ability to do something, permission question, requesting as a plea, code-mixing/switching. This study has provided answers to some of the research questions and hope to conduct a further study which will include the responses. Finally, this study has revealed that with regard to request expressions, the co-existence of English with other indigenous languages have given rise to linguistic patterns and forms, which are peculiarly Nigerian which identifies it as a distinct variety.

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