

A relevance theoretic analysis of “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” as discourse initiating tags in Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal crusades

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Abstract

Unlike the existing linguistic studies of the religious texts that focus on examining the language of prayer, liturgy, oral and electronic media sermons, adverts, Quranic and Biblical Verses, and songs, this work is employed to carry out a pragmatic study of the use of “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” in Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal open-air crusades. Participant observation and cell phone were used for data gathering, while Sperber and Wilson’s (1995) Relevance Theory served as theoretical framework in exploring meaning construction, negotiation and comprehension in the inferential communication. The findings revealed that deducing the encoder’s intention in the ostensive communication requires the use of saturation, inference, o-tension, free pragmatic enrichment, reference assignment and disambiguation. The paper concludes that, for the audience to interpret the encoder’s intention and relevance of the tags in the text of the Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal open-air crusades, there should be the use of the participants’ shared encyclopedic world knowledge.

Keywords: Ostension, relevance, religious tags, inferential communication.

Introduction

Employing tags to preach is an innovative idea in Nigerian Christian religious discourse and communication. The preaching tag or emblem is commonly used by Nigerian Pentecostal Churches not only to showcase their biblical tenets and their church doctrines but also to propagate Christ’s gospel. When the Nigerian Pentecostal preachers engage in their preaching, they covertly and overtly use pragmatic mode of communication in their use of the preaching tags: “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy”. These tags are contextually (i.e. pragmatically) used by Southwestern Nigerian preachers in their open-air crusades. Pragmatics studies the context-dependent aspects of utterance meaning (Mey, 2001, p.6). Its goal is to explain how linguistic meaning interacts with contextual assumption during utterance comprehension. The tags: “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy”, when they are worn by Southwestern Nigerian preachers, are often used as the media of ostensive-inferential communication. That is, they are used as tools to attract people’s attention and also to initiate interactions with non-members who the preacher intends to ‘win’ her or his faith. These religious tags are emblems used as ostensive stimuli and discourse initiating cues by Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal preachers in their open-air crusades.

Ostension is an attention grabbing strategy or tool used to make the audience infer the encoder’s intention in a communication. Posters, stickers or tags are often used as stimuli in drawing people’s attention to a message ‘likely to be relevant (Grundy2008, p.144). It ‘is an essential aspect of enrichment in inferential communication as stated in Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995). Ostensive stimulus, according to Unger (2001, p.19), refers to “a behaviour which can only be explained on the assumption that the communicators wanted to give evidence of their intention to convey meaning”. In ostensive communication, ostensive stimuli are often utilised to give evidence of the speaker’s intention to arrive at a certain conclusion (Xu and Zhou, 2013). Also, in ostensive-inferential communication, the communicator can use either verbal or non-verbal cues to show her or his intentions: (i) to inform and (ii) to communicate (Grundy 2008, p.146). Posters, stickers, tags, and emblems can be

used as ostension (Grundy 2008, p.147). For instance, the preaching tags: “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” are common ostensive stimuli (OS) used by some Southwestern Nigerian preachers to engage in street-to-street evangelism. These ostensive stimuli are commonly used by Deeper Christian Life Ministry (DCLM), Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministry(MFM), Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) and some other Pentecostal churches in Southwestern part of Nigeria in the exordium (i.e. beginning) of the discourse of their open-air crusades.

Different scholars that have examined the language of religious discourse have used the stylistic, discourse, sociolinguistic, stylo-semantic and pragmatic approaches. Crystal and Davy (1969) investigate the characteristic features of religious texts. According to Samarin(1976), a religious speech community is a socially defined group with its peculiar linguistic features. He explains further that religious texts often has specific settings, channel, activity, message and subject-matter. Participants' power and role relations often affect religious discourse. (Samarin, 1976). Adeyanju (1987) does a stylistic analysis of Sermon on the Mount, while Odeunmi (2007) examines the stylistics in the religious media advertisements in Nigeria. Babatunde (2007) examines the speech acts the Nigerian Christian evangelical religious speeches, while Taiwo (2006) studies the response elicitation in English-medium Christian pulpit discourse. Oha (1997) studies the rhetoric of the Nigerian Christian home videos, while Hacket (1998) examines the charismatic and Pentecostal approximations. Oladosu (1997) studies the Quranic *Verse on the Throne*, while Inya (2012) the generic structure potentials (GSP) in the Christian apologetics. Nazzal (2005) studies the pragmatic functions in the Quranic verse '*In Sha Allah*', while Aremu (2013b) examines the pragmatic presuppositions in the tracts of Deeper Christian Life Ministry.

Scanty works exist on the cognitive linguistic analysis of the Christian religious preaching tags. As a result of this, the study is focused at filling the existing lacuna or gap in meaning exploration in Christian religious discourse by examining the relevance in ostensive stimuli employed in the preaching tags “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” used by Southwestern Nigerian preachers in their open-air crusades.

Linguistic studies of the religious texts

Crystal (1965) pioneers the linguistic study of religious discourse .This is followed by Crystal and Davy (1969), Donovan (1976), Samarin (1976), Hacket (1998), Nazzal (2005), Holt (2006) , Sztajer (2011), Afful and Tekpetey (2011), and so on. In Nigeria, Oha (1997), Mar (1998), Ikupa (2002), Oladosu (1997), Babatunde (2007), Odeunmi (2007), Taiwo (2006, 2007), Olagunju (2007), Inya (2012), Aremu (2013a, 2013b), Dada and Omoregbe (2014) and so on, have used different linguistic tools to study religious discourse. According to Crystal (1965), meaning explication in religious language is a herculean task. Taiwo (2006) examines the response elicitation in English-medium Christian pulpit Discourse (ECPD) in Southwestern Nigeria. It is suggested that, ECPD is always in form of conversational answers, gap fillings, response to prayers, repeated statements, and corrected statements (Taiwo, 2006, p.8). Taiwo (2007) examines the tenor in electronic media Christian discourse in Nigeria by employing the data drawn from Christian messages on radio and television. His findings revealed that Christian preachers on the radio and television stations often have assumptions or presuppositions that their audience will easily decode and interpret their intentions as a result of the common or shared backgrounds which exist between them and their target listeners.

Odeunmi (2007) explores the stylistics of religious electronic media advertisements in Nigeria, while Ikupa (2002) studies the strategies of discourse in some written texts published in some Nigerian newspapers. Ikupa(2002) identifies the use of testimonies, gradation, parallelism, rhetorical questions and repetitions, as features that characterise the religious texts in Nigerian newspapers. Nazzal (2005) studies the pragmatic functions in the recitation of Quranic verses by Muslims in their oral genre, while Inya (2012) examines the generic structure potential (GSP) of Christian apologetics. Aremu (2013a) studies Nigerianisms in the English language usage by selected Pentecostal preachers in Southwestern Nigeria while Adeyanju (2008) does a stylo-semantic analysis of Pastor Adeboye's New Year compliments.

It can be observed that the existing linguistic study of religious texts have been focused on the analysis of the genres of liturgy, electronic sermons, prayers, Christian songs and biblical and Quranic verses. Very few works exist on the linguistic study of the Christian religious preaching tags. As a result, this paper has been used to extend the terrain of research in pragmatics and in the linguistic analysis of religious texts.

Statement of the problem

Interpreting the meaning of religious texts, most especially the preaching tags, emblems, and posters, requires not just the employment of code theory but also that of inferential model (Sperber and Wilson, 1995). This basic linguistic knowledge often eludes most people that interpret the locutions and relevance in the preaching tags of Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal churches like “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy”. However, the audience often easily interpret the relevance and meaning in those preaching tags when the users of such tags accompany their use of those ostensive stimuli with verbal expressions, non-verbal actions and demonstrations. On the other hand, the audience will not be able to interpret the meaning in such ostensive stimuli without (i) sharing the cognitive or encyclopedic real world knowledge with the encoder of those preaching tags. This paper therefore focuses on the explanation of the pragmatic usage of the preaching tags “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” used by some Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal preachers in open-air crusades.

Besides the study in speech acts of evangelical sermons (Babatunde 2007), stylistics of religious advertisement (Odebunmi, 2007), GSP of Christian apologetics (Inya, 2012) and presuppositions in Christian tracts (Aremu, 2013b), scanty work exists on the analysis of relevance in “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” as ostensive stimuli in the Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal crusades. This is the gap in pragmatic study which this research intends to fill.

Significance of the study

The study is significant because it helps expand the research on the cognitive linguistics and pragmatics of religious discourse. This study equally extends the research on semantics, stylistics and discourse analysis. The study is also relevant in improving in research on code and inferential models in meaning exploration. Code model propounded by Shannon and Weaver (1962) is a semiotic approach to communication which involves the processes of encoding and decoding the meaning in an utterance with mechanical decoding.

This work also attempts to fill the existing gap in meaning constructions and interpretations, especially in religious contexts. Since a lot of linguistic studies of religious texts have been focused on the genres of the oral and electronic sermons, songs, messages, tracts, biblical and Quranic verses, home videos, and oral testimonies with scanty existing literatures on the genre of the preaching tags, this current study is significant because it attempts to fill the existing lacuna in the contextual explorations of the religious discourse. The study is also significant in explaining the relevance of the tags ‘Tell Me’ and ‘Unspeakable Joy’ in the meaning construction, negotiation and comprehension in the context of the Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal open-air crusades.

Besides, for the audience to infer the intention of a speaker there must be cooperation between the interlocutors. This is termed “cooperative principles” (Grice, 1975). However, relevance, according to Sperber and Wilson (1995), states that the code and inferential models are to be used in communicative interactions. It has been observed, by this researcher, that relevance theory of Sperber and Wilson (1995) has not been used to analyse the Christian preaching tags. Therefore, this study is significant because, it has been used to fill the existing gap in research in the pragmatic principles of relevance (Sperber and Wilson, 1995).

Theoretical perspective

The theoretical base of the study are Sperber and Wilson’s (1995) relevance theory and Cruse’s (2000) and Kokinov’s (1995) concept of dynamic context. Relevance theory (RT) is a pragmatic concept which holds the view that “communication process involves not only encoding, transfer and decoding of messages but also inference and context” (Grundy, 2008, p.147). RT propounded by Sperber and Wilson (1995), aims to describe and explain how humans understand the world and how they understand each other. It is also a cognitive approach to human communication. RT is based on the fact that human cognition is often geared towards the audience’s search for relevance in information they process in conversation. Sperber and Wilson (1995) state that comprehending an utterance involves the identification of (i) what the speaker intends to say, (ii) what the speaker intends to imply, (iii) the speaker’s intended attitude to what was said and implied, and (iv) the intended context.

The principle of relevance states that to ensure a successful communication, the speaker or writer needs the addressee’s attention. The utterance must be made relevant enough to worth the addressee’s attention. The utterance must equally achieve a lot of contextual effects as much as possible for a little processing effort in order to make the communication successful. Also, communicative

principle of relevance equally states that “every act of ostensive communication (e.g an utterance, or a semiotic use of a preaching tag) “communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance” (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p. 183). That is, the communication must be explicit enough for the audience to easily interpret. Ostension, on the hand, is a concept in relevance theory which implies the “overt nature of the speaker’s communicative intensions in an act of communication”. RT recommends the combination of the code model with the inferential model in interpreting the meaning of utterances.

Relevance Theory (RT) also states that, the audience starts the interpretation of an utterance (or a statement) with the identification of its logical form. The logical form is then enriched with contextual information to generate an explicature. RT is a reductionist theoretical approach since it (i) reduces all pragmatic principles into a single “principle of relevance”, and also (ii) reduces all different species of meaning into two: explicature and implicature (Sperber and Wilson, 1995).

Sperber and Wilson (1995, p.182) state that “pragmatic inferences contribute not only what is implied, but also what is explicitly communicated”. Explicature therefore implies “explicit assumption communicated by an utterance”. Pragmatic processes involved in deriving explicature include: bridging, disambiguation, saturation, gap filling, reference assignment, free enrichment, etc. (Cartons, 2000). According to Odebunmi (2007b, p.16), RT philologists coined the notion of explicature to complement the Gricean concept of implicature. Implicature has been defined by Gricean and neo-Gricean theorists as “an additional conveyed meaning”. (Yule 1996, p.35). The neo-Gricean theorists came up with different types of implicature thus: generalised/conversational implicature, scalar implicature, particularised implicature (Yule 1996, p.41). This classification of implicature has been tinkered by relevance theorists. According to Haugh (2002, p. 19), conversational, implicature, short-circuited implicature, generalised implicature, metonymy/metaphor often contribute to explicature of utterances.

Enrichment captures the whole essence of RT (Blackemore 1992, Osunbade 2009). Enrichment is the primary aim of RT. It states that human cognitive system should tend to pick out information which connects to existing assumptions in such a way as to improve the individual’s overall representation of the word by making it richer, better-evidence, and more likely to be true (Unger 2001). Bridging, on the other hand, involves “enriching the logical form of an utterance with assumptions which are not directly mentioned in the preceding utterance; but constructed on the basis of the hearer’s background knowledge and shared beliefs between participants”(Grundy,2008, p.147).

Relevance Theory recognises the dynamic view of context. According to the cognitive or dynamic view of context, context should not be constructed in advance, but may be constructed in the process of an utterance. This dynamic context was propounded by Kokinov (1995), Cruce (2000, p.314), and Mey (2001, p.41). Context is the mutual contextual ground on which participants operate and negotiate meaning. According to Culler (1998, p.8), “context is not produced, what belongs to context is determined by interpretive strategies”. Context is best conceived as a set of assumptions that hearer uses in interpreting a particular utterance (Cruce, 2000, p.315). According to Sperber and Wilson (1995), content is not fixed, but selected, constructed and needs to be supplemented and extended.

Disambiguation is a notable process of contextual enrichment used to generate explicature. It is a process informed by the necessity of ensuring clarity of expression as a result of the semantic multiplicity or indeterminacy of lexical units (Grundy, 2008, p.134). Semantic multiplicity or indeterminacy of lexical units characterises the Christian religious texts (most especially Christian preaching tags, tracts, etc.). Hence, interpreting the intention in “preaching tags” requires the use of contextual enrichment like disambiguation, reference assignment, bridging, etc. (Aremu, 2013). RT and dynamic approach to context were used as the theoretical base since they are useful pragmatic tools in exploring meaning and relevance in the Christian religious discourse of “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” used as preaching tags by some Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal preachers.

Research methods

The preaching tags “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” and their Yoruba translations: “So fun mi” and “Ayo ti ko L’egbe” were used as data for the study. The scope of the study covered three Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal churches: Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministry (MFM), Deeper Christian Life Ministry (DCLM) and Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG). This study was used to examine how these preaching tags are used as ostensive stimuli in ostensive inferential communication of some Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal preachers (e.g. RCCG and DCLM & MFM). We examined the relevance in the use of these preaching tags in order to bring out the intention and message of the

preachers. We equally tried to examine the importance of context in determining the relevance in the texts of the tags: “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” in order to disambiguate the significations in these ostensive stimuli. The data for the study were surreptitiously recorded by the researcher who attended the open-air crusades (i.e. out-door preaching) of MFM, DCLM and RCCG. The use of the preaching tags ‘Tell Me’ and ‘Unspeakable Joy’ as ostensive stimuli in the context of the Christian open-air crusades and the participants’ communicative interactions in the discourse were recorded and analysed through Sperber and Wilson’s (1995) Relevance Theory. Participants in the discourse of the open-air sermons or crusades recorded were: a Christian preacher versus Muslim audience, a Church usher and evangelist versus an adherent to African tradition worship.

A cell-phone was used to undertake the audio and video recording of how the tags ‘Tell Me’ and ‘Unspeakable Joy’ could initiate inferential communication in the Christian open-air sermons or crusades. The data were downloaded and analysed by using Sperber and Wilson’s Relevance Theory (RT) as theoretical framework. RT was used in bringing out how meaning was constructed, initiated, negotiated and inferred by participants through the use of the tags (‘Tell Me’ and ‘Unspeakable Joy’) in the discourse of the Christian open-air crusades. RT was used to examine the intention of the encoder in the discourse. The researcher sought the approval of the senior pastors of each of the Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal churches where data were surreptitiously recorded for ethical clearance, though he is a participant in those crusades .

Context of the study

The participants in the situational context of use of the tags “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” in the Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal open-air crusades are (i) wearers of the tags who also act either as evangelists and ushers in the open-air crusades,(ii) passers-by who are people of other faiths (muslims, or indigenous African worshippers) .Since religion permeates the life of the Yoruba people in Southwestern Nigeria, they are always ready to listen to the views of others about religion. .Hence, when a passer-by sees a Southwestern Pentecostal member (who has fixed the tags ‘Tell Me’ and ‘Unspeakable Joy’ on her or his body (one at the back and the other at the chest), she or he would then question that person about the implications of the tags. This then initiates preaching and the invitation of the audience to the crusade.

Participants in the context of use of these tags often hinge on the cognitive, religious, situational, socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds to construct, and negotiate meanings and infer the relevance in the use of “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” as ostensive stimuli or discourse initiating tools in Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal crusades. The encoder of these referring expressions often hinges on the social and cognitive backgrounds to make assumptions that her or his intention will be easily inferred by the audience. The social and religious backgrounds of “Unspeakable Joy” revolve around the Christian tenets of “The joy of salvation” as reflected in 1 Peter.1:8, Galatians 5:22, Psalm 128:5 and Luke 18:7 in the Holy Bible. The encoder (a Pentecostal preacher) fixes the tags “Unspeakable Joy” and “Tell Me” on her or his body to attract the attention and reactions of the audience. The contextual backgrounds and cognitive environment make the audience to easily decode and infer the intention of the encoder. For the audience to understand the presumption of optimal relevance in the preaching tags “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy”, the ostensive stimuli would be made to be relevant enough (i.e boldly written) to catch the addressee’s attention. Also, the ostensive stimuli would be accompanied by the encoder’s (user’s) verbal and non-verbal cues.

Findings and discussion

The preaching tags “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” are ostensive stimuli used in ostensive-inferential communications between the Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal preacher and her or his intended audience. The purposes of the preaching tags are to convince the audience to accept the Christian faith and to invite the addressee to attend the crusade or open-air sermon organised by the church of the encoder. The main goal of the tags is to attract the audience’s attention and to find the optimal relevance through the inferring process. A successful communication through these tags also promotes the religious beliefs (biblical and church tenets) of the encoder. The following are examples provided.

Example 1: (A preacher who fixes the preaching tag: “Tell Me” at his back and the preaching tag: “Unspeakable Joy” at his back, stays by the side of the road inviting people to their open-air crusade on a secondary school field she talks to a person).

Preacher: *Welcome my brother (giving him a tract). This is a crusade going on (pointing to the tags)*

Tola: *(Looking at him): What does the tags (touching them) on your body imply? Do you want to “tell me” anything? There is even another one. (Touching the other tag “unspeakable Joy”).*

Preacher: *Thank you my brother. I want to “tell you” something about the “Unspeakable Joy” in living in Christ.*

Tola: *(laughing) that’s funny! Which “Unspeakable” Joy do you intend to “tell me”?*

Preacher: *Let us enter through the gate. You can join us in this ongoing crusade where Jesus will give you the “Unspeakable Joy” like salvation, blessings, deliverance, etc. as it is written in Pet. 1:8, Psalm 128:5 and in the other parts of the Bible.*

Tola (astounded): *Is that what you intent to ‘Tell me’ through these tags?*

Preacher: *Exactly! Let’s enjoy Christ’s “Unspeakable Joy” together.*

Tola: *Thank you, good Pastor. I will attend the programme tomorrow. Thanks (leaving the place).*

From ‘example 1’ above, the tags: “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” were used as discourse initiating tags and ostensive stimuli between the preacher and the addressee (Tola). The addressee (Tola) used coding and inference to understand the relevance in the ostensive-inferential communication which the ostensive stimuli (preaching tags) were used for. The encoder was able to make the ostensive stimuli more relevant by accompanying their use (in the inferential process) with verbal cues.

The findings revealed that ostensive-inferential communication in “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” is characterised by enrichments and explicatures, disambiguation, gap filling, and bridging. These are hereby explained

Reference assignment

The tags “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” are ostensive stimuli used as reference assignments which give the audience the clues that will make them infer the intended meaning of the ostensive-inferential communication within a context. For instance, the referring expression “Unspeakable Joy” is an indefinite token to make reference to the shared backgrounds in the participant’s cognitive and social-cultural environments. Participants (preacher and Tola) have shared Hebrew’s (socio-cultural) and religious belief about the “Unspeakable Joy” in leaven as shown in the Bible. The preaching tag “Unspeakable Joy” used as ostensive stimuli in ostensive-inferential communication is employed with ostensive evidence (gesture of the preacher and verbal cue). The following inferential communication is provided to examine relevance in it.

Example 2:

Preacher: *(speaking with the preaching tags “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” on his body): Welcome my brother (giving him a tract). There is a crusade going on (pointing to the tag) here.*

Tola: *(Looking at him) What does the tags on your body imply? Do you want to ‘tell me’ anything? There is even another one.*

From the above inferential communication (example 2), it can be inferred that the addressee (Tola) was able to decode and infer the intention and attitude of the encoder of the ostensive stimuli “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” through the use of verbal and non-verbal cues as well as the use of reference assignment. The referring expression “Tell Me” is used to make phoric references in inferential communication of Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal sermons. The phoric reference often reflect as anaphors (reference background) and cataphors (reference forward) in ostensive-inferential communication of Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal sermons. Also, in the referring expression, “there is even another one” is an anaphoric reference assignment which makes the audience to easily infer the encoder’s intention in the ostensive-inferential communication.

Disambiguation

To understand the relevance in the use of “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” as ostensive stimuli in ostensive inferential communication, ambiguous expressions in the ostensive stimuli must be disambiguated (Sperber and Wilson, 1995). Besides, interpreting the relevance or meaning in the inferring expressions “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” out of context will lead to pragmatic failure and incomprehension.

It was discovered through this work that the preaching tags “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” are often aptly contextualised and disambiguated by the encoder of this religious inferential communication. Hence, the preaching tags are often used during the open-air crusade by Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal preachers. Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance (Sperber and Wilson 1995). As a result, to make ostensive communication understandable and unambiguous, it is often made by encoders to be devoid of the lexical or expression ambiguity. Let us examine this interaction in example 3 below:

Example 3: (Two teachers in a Southwestern Nigerian Christian secondary school, of the participants is a pastor while the other is a traditional worshiper. The pastor attaches the tags “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” on his body singing a Christian song in the school compound, during their break time).

***Pastor:** (With tags on his body, singing a Christian song. He stops singing and starts talking).
Mr. Tunde, hope you are enjoying this short break?*

***Mr. Tunde** (Looking at the pastor): ‘Unspeakable Joy’ ‘Tell Me’. What are these meant for?*

Pastor (Explaining the meaning referring expressions of these): Unspeakable Joy. The joy of salvation. The joy in heaven is greater than our sorrow or ordeals in this world.

***Mr. Tunde:** Okay! You are preaching. We also believe in heaven. It is an Eldorado where only people of good character will stay.*

In the above interaction, the pastor has disambiguated the expression “Unspeakable Joy” by disambiguating it to mean “the joy of salvation”, the “joy in heaven”, and “the joy that is greater than our sorrow...in this world”, in “example 2” above. Mr. Tunde’s response at the end of “example 2” shows that the addressee has inferred the following conclusions from the pastor’s use of the inferential stimuli:

- “Tell me” and “Unspeakable Joy” are Christian preaching tags
- The pastor is using the tags to tell him about heaven
- Heaven is a place of “Unspeakable Joy”.

Also, the disambiguation of the referring expressions “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” helps the addressee to understand the relevance and intention in the use of these ostensive stimuli.

Saturation and free pragmatic enrichment

Saturation, according to Carston (2003, p. 49), presupposes “the process whereby the meaning of a sentence is completed and made propositional through the contextual assignment of semantic values to the constituents of the sentence through the contextual provision of ‘unarticulated’ prepositional constituents”. It is often referred to as ‘completion’. Saturation process often occurs when the meaning of the sentence includes a ‘slot’ requiring completion or a ‘free variable’ requiring contextual instantiation. It is a mandatory process (Carston 2000).

On the other hand, saturation is a process of supplying missing elements or missing constituents to an utterance in order to give such utterance a complete meaning. It is also a way of reducing semantic underdeterminacy in utterances. Without this process of decontextualisation (i.e. saturation), meaning in any expression will be ambiguous.

Free pragmatic enrichment (FPE) or expansion is equally a process of supplying missing constituents to an utterance. However, FPE involves the process of providing modifications of existing constituents (elements) in an utterance. In the view of Carston (2009), utterances will have meaning with or without the use of enrichment.

In the discourse of Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal sermon, the tags “Tell Me” and “Unspeakable Joy” are often used as the linguistic tools of bringing about the completion (saturation) and expansion (enrichment) in the meanings of the participants’ utterances. The tags are often contextualised to bring

out the relevance and intension in participant's discourse through inference. Let us examine the following text.

Example 4: (A Pentecostal preacher fixes the tags "Tell Me" and "Unspeakable Joy" on her body inviting people to their on-going open-air crusade):

Mary (*Beckoning to a passer-by*): "My sister, come and let me share with you"

Miss Y (*Coming to her, she looks at the tags on Mary's body*): What are these tags meant for? (*touching them*) What do you want to share with me? Okay! You want to 'tell me' about 'unspeakable joy'. That's interesting.

Mary (*responding*): Yes, to share with you about 'unspeakable joy'

Miss Y: You mean "unspeakable joy" in Heaven, and in Christ.

Mary (*Smiling*): Exactly! You can join us here (*pointing to the crusade ground*).

Miss Y: I won't be able to attend today. I will come tomorrow.

In 'Example 4' above, the participants (Mary and Miss Y) have the shared religious background which helps the respondent (Miss Y) to easily infer the relevance in the discourse of "Tell Me" and "Unspeakable Joy" used as preaching tags by Mary. Besides, Miss Y supplied a completion (that is, saturation) to Mary's statement "Come and let me share with you". The word "share" is a kind of reference assignment to Christian tenet of "caring and sharing" as stated in Acts of Apostles chapter 5. Coupled with the use of cataphoric reference by the respondent, the paralinguistic cues made by the encoder (Mary) through the use of the tags "Tell Me" and "Unspeakable Joy" facilitates the audience's interpretation of the encoder's intention through inference.

Also, "Example 5" below explains how the audience often engage in free pragmatic enrichment of the discourse of the preaching tags "Tell Me" and "Unspeakable Joy" in the Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal open-air crusades.

Example 5: (A boy attaching the tags "Tell Me" and "Unspeakable Joy" to his body, buying goods in a western Nigerian supermarket)

Ade (*With the preaching tags on his body, pricing a bag*): How much is this bag?

Seller (*Looking at her customer*): There is a price tag on it. It costs N2,500 only (*Looking at the preaching tags on Ade's body*). What are these used for?

Ade: They are meant to 'tell' you about 'unspeakable joy'.

Seller: You mean unspeakable joy of salvation and unspeakable joy in heaven.

Ade: Yes! Thank you Ma. (*Giving her a tract*). Try to read it Ma.

Seller: Thank you. I will read it.

In 'Example 5', the seller expands the meaning of "Unspeakable Joy" by stating "you mean the 'joy of salvation' and 'unspeakable joy in heaven' as a free pragmatic enrichment to Ade's statement. In 'example 4', the participants have the shared encyclopaedic real world knowledge which allows the audience (Seller) to easily infer and interpret the relevance in the discourse of "Tell Me" and "Unspeakable Joy". Also, the use of the polite expression "Thank you Ma" by the encoder is to convince the listener to accept his faith (i.e. his church tenets) through the reading of the tract given to her. Tract was used by encoder to enrich the inferential communication.

Conclusion

It has been observed in this study that the preaching tags "Tell Me" and "Unspeakable Joy" are ostensive stimuli used in facilitating inferential communication in the discourse of open-air crusades of Southwestern Nigerian Pentecostal churches. The relevance in these religious media of communication can be inferred through disambiguation, contextualisation, saturation, free pragmatic enrichment and reference assignment. In conclusion, relevance in this inferential religious communication cannot be inferred without the existence of the shared encyclopaedic world knowledge between participants in the discourse. Further studies can be used to examine the relevance in other genres of religious discourse such as Islamic and Christian emblems, posters, among others.

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Appendix

Preaching Tag I

TELL ME

Preaching Tag II

**UNSPEAKABLE
JOY**