

Code-switching as a marked socio-pragmatic discourse strategy in Nigerian police interrogation

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Abstract. *Police-suspect interrogation is a strategically adversarial engagement that involves tactical deployment of a variety of discourse strategies. This situation becomes more complex in a multilingual context like Nigeria where the interlocutors have the opportunity of expressing their communicative intents in a multiplicity of codes. This paper focuses on the pragmatic ways code-switching (CS) is deployed by interrogators and suspects as a socio-pragmatic discourse strategy to achieve their institutional and personal goals. We will see that CS is used persuasively, as interrogators and suspects negotiate from positions of power and inferiority, drawing on socio-cultural norms and expectations. 30 audio-recorded interrogations at the Òyó and Oñdó state commands of the Nigeria Police form the primary data. All the interrogations were conducted primarily in Nigerian English and the subjects were 18 years or above. Critical Discourse Analysis and Communication Accommodation Theory are adopted for analysis and discussion. Findings show that code-switching is employed with different effects for different participants: for interrogators to warn, threaten, and perform verbally aggressive acts that attack suspects' self-worth; for suspects to plead for mercy and to blame-shift; and for both to boost credibility and authority, and to highlight socio-cultural shared knowledge. Swearing and cursing also take place within CS with suspects using self- and other-cursing to indicate sincerity and to try to persuade interrogators to believe their claims and with interrogators swearing to express their commitment and determination to follow through with a course of action. CS is, therefore, seen as a marked and strategic communicative alignment that is motivated by institutional and personal goals and used for persuasive purposes.*

Keywords: *Persuasion, Code-Switching, Discourse Strategy, Swearing, Cursing, Institutional Discourse, Police Interrogation.*

Resumo. *O interrogatório policial é um encontro estrategicamente contraditório que envolve o uso tático de uma variedade de estratégias discursivas. Essa interação torna-se mais complexa num contexto multilíngue como a Nigéria, onde os interlocutores têm a oportunidade de expressar as suas intenções comunicativas*

numa multiplicidade de códigos. Este artigo enfoca as formas pragmáticas de alternância de códigos linguísticos utilizadas por policiais e suspeitos como uma estratégia discursiva sociopragmática para atingir seus objetivos institucionais e individuais. Veremos que a alternância de códigos é usado de forma persuasiva, pois policiais e suspeitos negociam a partir de posições de poder e inferioridade, valendo-se de normas e expectativas socioculturais. Trinta interrogatórios gravados em áudio nos comandos estaduais de Òyó e Ondó da Polícia da Nigéria constituem os dados primários. Todos os interrogatórios foram conduzidos principalmente em inglês nigeriano e os participantes tinham 18 anos ou mais. Adotamos a Análise Crítica do Discurso e a Teoria da Acomodação da Comunicação para análise e discussão. Os resultados mostram que a alternância de códigos linguísticos é empregada por diferentes participantes e por razões diversas: por policiais para avisarem, ameaçarem e realizarem atos verbalmente agressivos que atacam a auto-estima dos suspeitos; por suspeitos para implorarem por misericórdia e transferirem responsabilidade; por ambos para aumentar a credibilidade e autoridade, e para destacar o conhecimento sociocultural compartilhado. Xingamentos e insultos também ocorrem dentro das alternâncias de códigos; enquanto os suspeitos usam xingamentos para indicar sinceridade e tentar persuadir os policiais a acreditar em suas alegações, os policiais fazem uso de insultos para expressar seu compromisso e determinação em seguir um curso de ação. A alternância de códigos é, portanto, vista como um alinhamento comunicativo marcado e estratégico, motivado por objetivos institucionais e individuais, e utilizada para fins persuasivos.

Palavras-chave: Persuasão, Alternância De Códigos Linguísticos, Estratégias Discursivas, Insultos, Xingamentos, Discurso Institucional, Interrogatório Policial.

Introduction

Interviewing people suspected of crime is a skilled activity that is entrusted to our fellow citizens who become police officers. According to the United Nations' Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials (OHCHR 1996 2023), police must 'at all times fulfil the duty imposed upon them by law, by serving the community and by protecting all persons against illegal acts'. This gives them the dual responsibility of protecting the rights of suspects, while investigating allegations of crime on behalf of those affected. While it goes without saying that communication is at the heart of this complex 'activity type' (Levinson 1992), it is surprising that police officers receive little training in the strategic use of language, with many also not educated beyond secondary school in Nigeria and other parts of the world (though from 2020, police officers in England and Wales have had to be educated to degree level – see Mahruf *et al.* (2020)). To date, many police officers have relied on on-the-job learning or 'experience-based knowledge' (Gundhus 2012). Section 4 of the Police Act (1967) in Nigeria, modified in 1979, describes police work as 'military duties', bringing connotations of martial confrontation. These are, arguably, not qualities conducive to interviewing, a skill that requires patience, listening, and pacing.

Over the history of policing, the culture of mentorship has fostered less favourable behaviours and sub-cultures that have compromised justice, evidenced in some high-profile cases in which abuses of power were used to extract confessions. Unreliable and wrongful convictions, such as in the case of Derek Bentley in the UK (Coulthard *et al.* 2017) and those brought to light by the Innocence Project in the USA (innocenceproject.org), have

undermined public confidence in police interrogation techniques and, in many countries such as Nigeria, the police are feared by the public rather than trusted. While new recruits to policing, the world over, swear an oath similar to this: to ‘cause the peace to be preserved and prevent all offences against people and property’ (Police Reform Act 2002, UK, s. 83), there are all too often reports of brutal coercion, violence, and violations of basic human rights (Amnesty International 1999, 2012). Given the tensions between responsibility and abuse of power evident in the foregoing, it is, therefore, worth noting the more recent turn towards research-informed training that aims to harness ‘the use of language analysis in improving the delivery of justice’ (Grant and MacLeod 2020: 166). This move towards greater professionalisation in all areas of police investigation, including improving interviewing practices, audio-recording, and degree-level education and training, has been influenced by journalists and linguists who have exposed bad practice and through legislation that has brought regulation and codification of best practice (e.g. in the UK The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, UK; The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, UK). The most significant step forward, perhaps, has been the move to audio-record police interviews, though this is by no means worldwide.

While there has been a wealth of research on police interrogation in the UK, USA, Europe, and Australia (Gaines 2020; Haworth 2018; Heydon 2005; Johnson 2020; MacLeod 2020; Stokoe *et al.* 2020; Houwen 2020; Charldorp 2020), driven by the move from contemporaneous notetaking records to more widespread audio- and audio-visual-recording, there are many parts of the world where records are still made by notetaking and where access to these documents is restricted. Nigeria is one of these places. In these settings, negotiating access to interrogation data is difficult but nonetheless important. This study of Nigerian police interrogations represents one such endeavour which resulted in permission to make audio-recordings of interviews for research purposes.

Code-switching (CS) is ‘the selection by bilinguals or multilinguals of forms from an embedded variety (or varieties) in utterances of a matrix variety during the same conversation’ (Myers-Scotton 1993: 3). The matrix language, in this case Nigerian English (NE), is the main language of communication and embedded varieties are other languages or codes (Myers-Scotton 1993). CS is a sociolinguistic phenomenon, which means that it always indexes ‘[nuanced] social relationships by exploiting the socio-psychological associations of the languages employed’ (Myers-Scotton 1993: 1). It is an inevitable consequence of the language contact situation in the contemporary Nigerian linguistic landscape where over 500 local languages (Blench 2020: xxi) are in contact (Lewis 2009; Amuzu and Singler 2014). There are three major indigenous languages: Yorùbá in the Southwest, Ibo in the Southeast, and Hausa in the North and these languages coexist alongside the exoglossic official language, NE, and Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE), an English-lexifier pidgin spoken as a lingua franca across the multi-ethnic country (Ihemere 2006; Akerstrom 2010). CS is, therefore, complex in Nigeria, where speakers have the opportunity of expressing their communicative intents in a multiplicity of codes.

Since its emergence through contact between English and Nigerian local languages in the 16th century with the advent of European traders and missionaries, NPE has been creolised, as many Nigerians speak it as their first language and it serves as the *de facto* lingua franca. The notion of ‘Nigerian English has always therefore been described along the (post) creole continuum of basilect, mesolect, and acrolect depicting the polylectal situation in Nigeria’ (Bamiro 1991: 7). The acrolect is the highest variety, which is internationally intelligible,

the mesolect is the intermediate nationally accepted variety, while the basilect is the variety used by the largely illiterate masses. NE has undergone a great deal of decreolization which has been accentuated by its use in the media, literary works, entertainment and government institutions. From the perspective of Schneider's dynamic model (Schneider 2007), Ugorji (2015) opines that NE possesses features of Schneider's endonormative stabilisation stage. At the endonormative stage, 'a localised version of the (foreign) language which has become socially acceptable' Kirkpatrick (2007: 189) is identifiable. NE fits into this description.

Language alternation manifests in virtually all daily communication, including police interrogation. When CS is employed by the interrogator, it is not usually motivated by the need to solve their own communication fluency problem, as is more usual in other encounters, but is a strategic choice that psychologically indexes the suspect's vernacular code or a shared informal code, in order to persuade them to respond cooperatively. Since police interrogation is an adversarial institutional activity, it achieves its goals by exploiting all of the syntactic and pragmatic resources of language and CS is one such resource. For interrogators, moving between varieties could be seen as an acknowledgement of the suspect's 'full linguistic repertoire' (García and Wei 2014: 74) in a polylectal Nigerian context. But, when it is used by interrogators, it is a persuasive or coercive resource that can signal volition. In Example 1 the interrogating police officer (IPO) switches to NPE in order to make his invitation for the murder suspect to produce a free narrative about the alleged crime more familiar. (The NPE is shown in bold font with a word-for-word English gloss and then idiomatic English in italics, over three lines.)

Example 1 Murder 01

15. IPO: In Ofosu, okay. **Wetin happen?**
You hear this man say you kill im mama? Wetin happen?
You hear this man say you kill his mother? What happen?
You heard this man say you killed his mother? What happened?
16. Susp: On the 18th of this month, which is Monday, when I get to
farm in = the = after I finish my work, I go to farm because it was that
woman that normally pluck my Cocoa = before (...)

In (1), code-switching is not motivated by the need to borrow a lexeme (wetin) that is missing from the matrix language (cultural borrowing) but is a 'core borrowed lexeme' that is employed 'even though the recipient language already has lexemes of its own to encode the concept ... in question' (Myers-Scotton 1993: 5). This CS moment uses the mutually familiar NPE to pragmatically signal the IPO's expectation that a free narrative will result from the open *wh*-question and also to signal that the suspect could use NPE to tell his narrative. While the suspect's response shows uptake of that expectation, as he begins his narrative, he does not choose to use NPE, marking his understanding of the official rather than familiar register of the interrogation and downplaying the role of NPE, whilst taking the cue from the IPO's use of it. Both the IPO and suspect acknowledge English as the matrix language of interrogation but the IPO weaves NPE into his turn for pragmatic ends in a way that benefits the already powerful interrogator, rather than benefitting the suspect. The voice of the interrogator achieves its rhetorical effect by manipulating the suspect into a position of compliance by adopting synthetic rapport.

While in (1), the CS is not reciprocated in the suspect's subsequent turn, this is not always the case, though it is the dominant phenomenon, as we will see in section three. In (2) the intrasentential CS to Yorùbá in the IPO's turn is taken up by a different murder suspect and both continue completely in Yorùbá for six more turns.

Example 2 Murder 02

66. IPO: As at the time *té ẹ gbé bàbá kúrò nílẹ̀ níbití wọn şubú sí, kín
 lerí lára wọn?*
 As at the time that you carry baba from ground where he fall to, what
 did you see on them?
 *As at the time that you lifted the old man from the ground where he
 fell, what did you find/see on him?*
67. Susp: **Kò sí nńkan kan tí a rí.**
 There is nothing that we see.
 We did not find/see anything.

The CS in (2) selects a common ethnic variety in what Osisanwo and Adegbosin (2020) describe as a solidarity strategy. At the same time, it is not an unmotivated choice by the interrogator. In this case the deceased old man was a distant relation of the woman's husband; the husband's family and the deceased were involved in a court dispute over a parcel of land. While the question in turn 66 acknowledges that the women and others 'lifted the old man from the ground' and took him to hospital, a helping action, the interrogator seeks to establish the extent of the woman's involvement in the alleged crime, since the old man has injuries that were not indicative of a simple fall.

In our illustrative examples (1 and 2) CS is motivated by institutional goals to elicit evidential detail in a strategic and persuasive way. In Malaysia's similarly multi-ethnic and multilingual country, David (2003) found that CS in the courtroom also had strategic and coercive functions. It is these functions that we are interested in: as a persuasive institutional resource which invites, offers, or directs the lay interlocutor to talk, but also as a resource used by suspects. We explore who initiates the CS (interrogator or suspect) and what the pragmatic effects are in a collection of 30 Nigerian police interrogations.

The context for research

The public image of the Nigerian police is so worrisome that, in 2017, the Nigerian Senate had to pass a bill to change the name of the Nigerian Police Force to Nigeria Police, as it was claimed that 'if the word "force" is removed, [their] slogan "Police is your friend" will resonate better with the public, as friends don't need force, like military, in relating to fellow friends' (*Vanguard Newspaper*, 26/07/2017). In the three main indigenous languages –Yorùbá, Ibo, and Hausa – nicknames are used for the police which further reflect this negative perception; in Yorùbá they are called *ólópàá* and in Hausa *yan sanda*, which mean the one who wields the stick, staff, or baton, characterising the police solely by their use of force, while the Ibo use *eke*, which means the python that swallows people, a vivid metaphor for voracious extortion and corruption.

Abuse is so entrenched in police interrogation that interrogation rooms are nicknamed 'torture rooms' (Amnesty International, 2014) and officers in charge (O/C) are called 'O/C torture' (Maja-Pearce 2014). The most recent expression of condemnation of the Nigeria

Police's extra-judicial activities, which gained tremendous traction on social media and attracted international attention, was the phenomenal #EndSARS protest in October 2020. The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), is a police tactical unit notorious for its inhuman treatment of suspects (Uwazuruike 2020: 4), its torture methods being exposed in a BBC News documentary (BBC 2020) and news reports (e.g. Orjinmo 2020). The protests and demonstrations that 'rocked the country for two weeks' were 'dubbed Nigeria's "Arab Spring"' and 'led to the government agreeing to disband SARS and set up judicial panels of inquiry to investigate the widespread allegations of abuse by officers' (Jones 2021). It is against this background that we adopt 'interrogation' as the appropriate word to describe this activity rather than other terms like 'interview' or 'investigative interview' which are appropriate in other jurisdictions like the UK, Australia, etc.

The audio-recorded interrogations that were collected for this study were recorded in the Yorùbá-speaking Southwest, one of six geo-political zones. With a population of nearly 32 million, based on the last census (Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette 2009), this region represents nearly a quarter of the population of Nigeria at that time.

Arising out of this multilingual context for police interrogation within a society that lacks trust in the police, we ask the following research questions:

- 1) What does CS reveal about discourse power in Nigerian police interrogation discourse?
- 2) What pragmatic functions do CS perform in Nigerian police interrogation when used by interrogators and suspects; and
- 3) What are the sociolinguistic implications of using CS in police interrogation?

Methodology

Data

In Nigeria, interrogation of suspects is not statutorily audio-recorded, so there was no database of police interrogations to use for research. Nigeria is divided into 36 states, plus Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, and these states are grouped into 12 zonal police commands, at least at the time these data were collected in 2017 and 2018 (five additional zones were created in May 2020).

Author one collected 30 police interrogations with the permission of the Assistant Inspector General in charge of Zone XI police command, comprising Oyo, Ondo and Osun (in the Southwest). A Sony midget audio recorder using a micro cassette MC-60 was left with designated police officers in each state command. The recorded contents were burnt onto an audio DVD tape. The audio DVD tape files constitute a total of just over 20 hours (20.09.30 hours). A non-participant observation method was adopted, to avoid the 'Hawthorne effect' or 'observer's paradox (Labov 1966, 1972): a situation 'where people modify their behaviour when they know they are being watched or studied' (Oswald *et al.* 2014: 53). Although author one always set up the recording device, only the police interrogators were involved in the interrogation with suspects inside the interrogation room. Due to time constraints, 14 out of the 30 recorded interrogations were fully transcribed, with another 14 partially transcribed, chosen based on the relevance of their content in relation to the focus of analysis and their duration, having listened to all 30. Excerpts from across the 28 fully and partially transcribed interrogations feature in the analysis. The recordings are best considered 'opportunity samples' or 'convenience samples' because of the non-random

sampling method where ‘participants are chosen by the researcher on the basis of who is available at the time’ (Rasinger 2013: 50).

Out of the three state commands – Oyo, Ondo, and Osun – that constitute zone XI police command, two agreed to participate in this study: Oyo and Ondo. These are considered representative of the Southwest. Based on the relative size and population of the two states, author one adopted a proportionate sampling method to determine the number of interrogations to be recorded in each state, recording 21 in Oyo State Police Command and 9 in Ondo State Police Command.

The thirty criminal investigations, collected between September 2017 and January 2018, were sourced from four units of the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Departments: General Investigation, Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), Homicide, and Special Anti-Kidnapping Squad (SAKS). The distribution of cases across states and alleged crimes are shown in Table 1.

Alleged crime	No. from Oyo State	No. from Ondo State	Total
<i>Killing cases</i>			<i>Total: 10</i>
Murder	8	0	8
Manslaughter	0	2	2
<i>Theft cases</i>			<i>Total: 16</i>
Stealing	7	3	10
Fraud	3	1	4
Burglary	1	0	1
Robbery	0	1	1
<i>Rape, Kidnapping, Assault, and Cultism</i>			<i>Total: 4</i>
Rape	1	0	1
Kidnapping	0	1	1
Assault	1	0	1
Cultism	0	1	1
Totals	21	9	30

Table 1. Distribution of cases across states and alleged crimes

Interrogations referred to in this paper are labelled by the alleged crime and a number, such as Murder 01, 02, etc, as in Examples 1 and 2.

Ethical approval was given by the University of Leeds ethics committee (ethics reference PVAR 17-110) and the Nigerian police authorities’ permission was given to record live interrogations. Each of the 30 suspects gave informed and signed consent and they were neither given nor promised any rewards for participation or pressured to participate. They understood that they had the right to withdraw their consent at any time. The suspects were also assured that their decision not to participate in the research would not have any negative effect on their cases. To ensure confidentiality, all names, places, and objects that have the potential for direct or third-party identification are removed and pseudonyms are used instead. Titles, ranks, honorific terms, and gender are retained for pragmatic reasons.

The interrogations were transcribed using Jefferson’s transcription conventions for analyzing naturally occurring interaction (Golato 2017), in order to capture the linguistic,

extra-linguistic, and contextual cues that are discussed. Rich transcription is necessary as 'there are many significant things going on in talk that parties to interaction treat as relevant, and that simple orthographic representation misses' (Hepburn and Bolden 2013: 57). Most of the conventional Jeffersonian symbols are used, including micropauses (.), timed pauses (0.7), overlapping [], quicker >< or slower pace < >, underlining to denote raised volume or emphasis, colons to indicate an elongated sound, capitals for louder or shouted words, and = to indicate latched utterances.

The Leipzig interlinear glossing method (Institute Max Planck 2015) is used to provide a word-for-word gloss and idiomatic translation of code-switched sentential utterances. To make the distinction clearer, the code-switched utterance is in **bold** while the idiomatic English translation is in *italics* (as in 1 and 2). However, if it is just a word that is mixed from another language, the English equivalent is indicated in a bracket after the word, as in: I saw him with that kòkòró (key) yesterday.

Critical approaches

A qualitative, discourse-pragmatic interactional sociolinguistic approach was adopted in the analysis of the data. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is used to identify and discuss manifestations of power and a sociolinguistic approach is used to identify the functions of language alternation and its socio-pragmatic effects. Wodak (2007: 206), making a case for fruitful CDA research, canvasses this kind of methodological pluralism when she states that: 'an integrative pragmatic and discourse-analytic approach has to be complemented with a range of linguistic theoretical concepts as well as theories from neighbouring disciplines'. While CDA is adopted to track the power relations of the social actors, Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) (Dragojevic *et al.* 2016) is deployed to explore the pragma-sociolinguistic implications of CS in the interrogation's social context.

CDA 'is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies how social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context' (Van Dijk 2015: 466). There are many approaches to CDA, including: the socio-cognitive approach (Van Dijk 2018), the discourse-historical approach championed by Wodak and Reisigl and others (Wodak 2011), the multi-modal approach (Ledin and Machin 2018), and the dialectical-relational approach propounded by Fairclough (1992). All of these approaches are important, but the multi-modal approach is impossible without audio-visual recordings, so is not used here. Using Fairclough's version, this research brings together 'close textual and linguistic analysis', 'the macrosociological tradition of analysing social practice in relation to social structures and the interpretivist or microsociological tradition of seeing social practice as something which people actively produce and make sense of on the basis of shared common sense procedures' (Fairclough 1992: 72). Discourse as a social practice is 'constrained and shaped by social structure' (Fairclough 1992: 64), which includes the historical context of colonialism that has contributed to the complexity of Nigeria's relationship with English.

On the other hand, 'CAT [...] is a key theory of communication which uniquely combines intergroup and interpersonal, perceptual and behavioural, and contextual factors' (Giles 2016: 8). It was originally conceived by Giles as a theory to explain adjustments in accent, converging or diverging to minimize or emphasise the social difference between speakers, but has broadened to include all aspects of language use. It is concerned with the link between language, context and identity. The nexus of these three concepts is well captured in a Nigerian police interrogation situation, where English is the official medium of

interaction, but police and suspects make different code choices for strategic ends. CS can be evaluated in our analysis, as 'CAT provides a wide-ranging framework aimed at predicting and explaining many of the adjustments individuals make to create, maintain, or decrease social distance in interaction' (Giles *et al.* 2007: 133). CS to a shared local language (Yorùbá) or lingua franca (NPE) is an important code choice that works to produce persuasive and coercive effects in institutional interaction. In most contexts CS is seen as a strategy to aid communication, to promote positive affiliation, and to converge to the interlocutor's most comfortable language, in order to better accomplish joint goals (Giles 2016). However, in an interrogation, institutional goals are one-sided, whether they are those of the IPO or those of the suspect.

Social concepts of power, dominance, inequality and resistance find expression at the micro level of discourse having to do with discourse-pragmatic, and linguistic concepts like grammar, speech acts, common ground, code-switching, silence, interruption, laughter etc (Van Dijk 2001; Fairclough 1992; Kiguru 2014). Our analysis helps us to study how the macro concept of discourse power is demonstrated and negotiated through a variety of socio-pragmatic linguistic strategies, particularly CS, in the situational context of police interrogation. This is achieved by integrating CDA and CAT.

Code-switching as a socio-pragmatic persuasion strategy in interrogations

When IPOs and suspects CS they are making a linguistic choice which has socio-pragmatic goals. According to (Myers-Scotton 1998: 19) 'the goal of speakers is to enhance rewards and minimize costs; in two words, the goal is *to optimize*'. Optimising the effect of one's own choices involves negotiation of the 'rights and obligations which you wish to be in force between speaker and addressee for the current exchange' (Myers-Scotton 1998: 21). In this paper we conceptualise optimisation strategies in terms of their persuasive power. Central to persuasion as an argumentative act is the Aristotelian concept of rhetoric with its appeals to reason (logos), emotion (pathos), and credibility (ethos), which are marshalled by speakers to achieve diverse persuasive goals. Aristotle argues that rhetorical expertise in persuasion is displayed as the grounds for conviction (Dow 2015). Three overall strategies were observed in the use of CS as a persuasive strategy: warning/threatening, highlighting of shared socio-cultural knowledge, and swearing and cursing, which are discussed in the next sub-sections. Interrogators deploy persuasive strategies to optimise their discourse goals: collecting evidence for a prosecution, including achieving a confession. While interrogation aims to unearth the truth or otherwise of an allegation, the suspect often resists the 'police version' (Heydon 2005) of events in their own persuasive ways. Persuasion is therefore an important resource for both participants to negotiate their goals. The focus of our analysis is on cases in which CS is not taken-up by the interlocutor (non-reciprocal CS), as that was revealed to be the dominant pattern in our data.

CS to warn, threaten, and perform verbally aggressive acts

As the participant with institutional power, it is not surprising that it is solely police interrogators who use CS to warn, to threaten, or to engage in other verbally aggressive activity. When IPOs switch to their and the suspect's mother tongue to warn, they are indexing the cultural import of their turn that attempts to persuade the suspect to talk in ways that achieve interrogator discourse goals.

Excerpt 1 is from an interrogation with a murder suspect who is alleged to have killed his co-labourer. They lived in the same room, worked on the same rich man's farm, and

are from the same town in a neighbouring state, making them very close. On the day in question, they went to the farm together, but the suspect returned home alone. When asked about his friend's whereabouts, he said his friend had gone to work on another farm to make extra money, after completing his days' allocated work. A few days later their employer and landlord reported the missing person to the police, who found the decomposing body in a bush near where the two had worked. Excerpt 1 begins with an indication that the suspect has been held and detained for some time and possibly already interrogated.

Excerpt 1 Murder 05

5. IPO: I have brought you out again to interrogate you.
And I want you to tell me the truth.
Má ʒe agidí tí kò ní Ìtumò.
Don't do stubbornness that has no meaning
Don't be unreasonably stubborn.
Don't waste your time and don't waste my precious time.
ʒé o gbó?
Do you hear?
Did you hear me?
6. Susp: Yes
7. IPO: Are you ready to tell me the truth?
8. Susp: Ye::s, (0.4) I will tell you the truth.
9. IPO: **Sé o mò wípé'omọ́ tó bá sípá nìyá è gbé?**
Do you know that child that raise hand mother his carry?
Hope you know that it is the child that raises his hands that the mother carries.
It is only when you tell me the truth that I can help you in any way.
Iró kò jásí nìkan kan
Lie does not result to something one
Lies do not amount to anything.
We will still get to know the truth. That is certain.
Ran ara re lówó ká lè ràn é lówó.
Help body your we that can you help
Help yourself so that we can help you.

Bringing the suspect out again for interrogation, suggests that an earlier approach failed to make the suspect cooperate. It is, therefore, not inconsequential that the interaction begins with five instances of sentential CS over three IPO turns. Two are explicit warnings as directives (turns 5 and 9) and the other three are more implicit, with a proverb used in turn 9. Together these create an atmosphere of warning, appealing to the socio-cultural sensibility of the suspect, on the one hand and reducing the social distance on the other. Warning the suspect not to be 'unreasonably stubborn' but also 'help[ing] [him]self' is paradoxical, as the interrogator and suspect have opposite goals and the former has institutional power. Convergence to the shared code is powerful because it makes the warning more accessible and proximal. The combined effect of this strategy is a discourse manipulative act that hinges on discourse power inequality.

In this context, where NE is the 'unmarked code' (Myers-Scotton 1993), the IPO's marked use of Yorùbá obliges the suspect to open up. As Myers-Scotton (2007: 108) says, the CS 'signals that the speaker is trying to negotiate a different rights and obligations balance

as salient'. While Myers-Scotton notes that such switching 'can be positive by narrowing social distance if it is indexical of a relationship of solidarity, given the narrative matrix of association between varieties and social meanings in the community', in this case the solidarity is synthetic and unlikely to be wanted; it is certainly not reciprocated. Nevertheless the move from the 'they-code' to the 'we-code' (Gumperz 1982) strengthens the obligation for the suspect to talk.

The warning is also amplified by the use of a Yorùbá proverb (at the beginning of turn 9). It bears a resemblance to the English proverb, 'Heaven helps those who help themselves', and is used in Yorùbá society to encourage honourable behaviour. This more subtle coercion to confess (which the suspect eventually did) underlines the socio-cultural and socio-pragmatic forces at work, as the powerful state is compared with the nurture of a mother and followed up with a warning not to lie.

Excerpt 2 also uses CS to produce social affiliation while indexing social responsibility. The suspect is alleged to be the lookout for a kidnapping gang. He went to a shop to buy a fishing net around 7:30 pm, allegedly wearing army shorts with an army cap, a form of dress used by kidnapers in the area. Hardly had he entered the shop than a group of kidnapers appeared in a speed boat and ferried away the shop owner and his young son. People present at the scene of the incident arrested the suspect and handed him over to the police.

Excerpt 2 Kidnapping 01

39. IPO: Who else came with you that day from Escravos?
40. Susp: It was only that Isaac (0.2). He is the chairman of that meeting.
41. IPO: So, it was only you and Isaac that came together?
42. Susp: Ye::s, it was only me that came to that place to buy the (fishing) net. Yes.
43. IPO: (.hhh) Wai::t ↓wait, my friend let me tell you something
<Òré mi, o yẹ kó o tí mò báyii pé bi ọ̀rọ̀ yìi se n lẹ, kò sí ibi tí o le fara pamọ̀ sí mò>
Friend mine, it supposed you know now that the way this word is going, there is no place you can hide to again.
My friend, you should know now that going by what is unfolding, there is no hiding place for you anymore.
There is no amount of lies you want to tell. Those that saw you are still saying they saw you well and the shorts are still on you. So just tell us where you put the cap so that we can go and take it from there.

In this excerpt, prior to the CS turn 43, the IPO and the suspect engage in a struggle over facts, signalled in the IPO's use of conversational inference (who else) in turn 39, attempting to make a link between him and the kidnapping gang, and the so-prefaced question (Johnson 2002) in turn 41 that expects confirmation but signals doubt, versus the suspect's use of the word 'only' in turns 40 to 42 and the prolonged, hesitant 'Ye::s'. In a move to seemingly resolve this struggle, the CS in turn 43 first aims to create an atmosphere of social cohesion by calling the suspect 'ore mi' (my friend) after an utterance-initial audible inhalation (.hhh) and prolongation of the word 'wai::t'. The CS sentence is noticeably slower (indicated by < >) building up a sequence of prosodic elements that have semantic-pragmatic significance. While the audible inhalation (.hhh) is indicative of an intending adjustment, the prolongation

of the warning 'wai:t' with a falling pitch signals the shift to the warning tone and the slowness of delivery of the CS adds weight to the marked utterance for clarity and emphasis. Likewise, the emphasis on 'Ore mi' (my friend) in Yorùbá indicates the social proximity of the warning. Even the utterance terminal adverbial 'mọ' (any longer) marks the previous struggle as lies. It is noticeable that after the CS, the interrogator returns to English, signalling that the rhetorical effect that was aimed for is complete, and gives a new directive to tell the truth.

Interrogators also deploy CS to perform threatening and verbally aggressive acts: utterances that are implicitly or explicitly capable of eliciting or causing fear in the suspect and thereby influencing them to confess to a crime. Through switching to the local code, rather than using the matrix language, speakers are seen as 'doing things with words' (Austin 1962) that are intentionally face-attacking (Culpeper 2005: 38). While warning acts are also face-attacking, threatening is a verbally aggressive act that can attack the suspect's sense of self-worth and is implicitly or explicitly capable of causing fear in the suspect. Excerpt 3 sees the use of indirect and direct threats.

Excerpt 3 Stealing 02

201. IPO: What substances were you into before? Tell me the truth!
202. Susp: My lord, to say the truth, before, I was smoking weed.
203. IPO: You smoked weed?
204. Susp: Yes = that was before. And I have stopped it when I have been preached to by some clerics.
205. IPO: Where are you now? Which police station is this that you are?
206. Susp: ((Confused)). This is Adákú.
207. IPO: ADÁKÚ!
208. Susp: Yes
209. IPO: Where in Adákú?
210. Susp: Dòjé
211. IPO: *Ibí tó o wàyí ní wọn ní CID, Adákú. Wọn tí gbé e kúrò ní àgọ Olópáá Àdàbà. Wọn tí gbé e wá síbí yí. O le gba ibi yí dé ogbà ẹwọn, tí o ò bá ẹtán láti jẹ wọ.*
Where you are this they are calling CID Adákú. They have carried you from station police Àdàbà. They have carried you come to here You can follow here this to yard prison if you are not ready confess.
This is CID, Adákú. You have been transferred from Àdàbà Police Station to this place. You can from here go to jail if you are not ready to confess/say the truth
212. Susp: *Olúwa mi, ẹ dári jìn mí*
Lord my, you forgive me.
My lord, forgive me

In excerpt 3, the interrogator's goal is to secure a confession of substance abuse. As in excerpt 2 there is a struggle over the truth with the IPO lacking trust in the suspect's account, which precedes the CS. The question in turn 205 marks a shift in strategy which is followed up by the CS; these are designed to create fear in the suspect and make him tell the truth. Adákú is the location of the Àgídìgbo State Police Headquarters in the larger Dòjé area of Adáńdán city, but it is a feared police institution that no suspect likes being transferred to,

because it is synonymous with torture, punishment and inhuman treatment. Mere mention of the name ‘Adákú’ evokes fear in Adáńdán inhabitants (Ajayi 2015; Human Rights Watch 2005) and the most dreaded division is the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). So, the interaction from turns 205 to 210 negotiates an indirect threat with the CS in turn 211 marking the climax through the direct expression of a threat: going directly to jail. This strategy seems to produce a threatening effect, given the deferential apologetic response: ‘*Olúwa mi, ẹ dári jìn mí*’ [My lord, forgive me]. While ‘forgive me’ implies an admittance of wrongdoing, the utterance also expresses emotional desolation.

Sometimes there are physical threats as well. Excerpt 4 exemplifies one such instance.

Excerpt 4 Murder 04

125. IPO: Fine. When you got in there, did you tell the doctor that you treated her two days before then?
126. Susp: No sir. It is a secret issue and more so, she was not referred there (to the hospital) officially.
127. IPO: ***ÌKÀ ÈÈYÀNNÌ É!***
Wicked person are you
You are a wicked person!
Have you forgotten that you too will die some day?
BÓ O FÉ, BÓ O KÒ, o ó jẹ ìyà ẹsẹ rẹ bí aje ọrọ náà bá sí mó ọ lórí!
Whether you like, whether you don’t, you will eat the punishment of your sin if the faults fall on your head.
Whether you like it or not, your due punishment will be meted out to you if you are found culpable!

The short exchange in excerpt 4 is from an interrogation with an unqualified doctor who is alleged to have taken advantage of a patient who had undergone a series of abortions in his clinic. After befriending and impregnating her, he is alleged to have aborted the pregnancy and the woman died as a result of complications. The interrogator expresses the extent of the criminality involved in the alleged action when he code-switches to perform a verbally aggressive act in turn 127 (You are a wicked person!) in what (Heuback 2009: 15) calls ‘intense language’: language that indicates the extent to which it deviates from neutrality. This judgmental and value-laden language emotionally labels the suspect and attacks his sense of self-worth before (after continuing in English for one sentence) performing a physical threat of ‘due punishment’.

While interrogators use CS for persuasive institutional reasons, using warnings and threats via socio-pragmatic means, suspects and interrogators, relying on shared socio-cultural knowledge deploy CS to persuade or attempt to negotiate, as shown in the next section.

CS to persuasively appeal to shared socio-cultural knowledge and expectations

CS can be used persuasively to appeal through shared mother tongue to the shared socio-cultural signifiers. This strategy is used by both interrogators and suspects, though it is more beneficial for interrogators. IPOs make a persuasive appeal by highlighting the moral laxity and socio-cultural deficit in the suspect’s narrative. The strategy is logically persuasive because it weakens the suspect’s narrative on account of their non-conformity with societal norms and expectations and questions the acceptability of their alleged action or inaction

within the shared cultural value system. Excerpt 5 exemplifies this point. The excerpt is a part of an interrogation of a 22-year-old polytechnic student who is a robbery suspect. Following a misunderstanding with her boyfriend, she started dating another boy and two months into the new relationship, she was tracked and arrested by the police through an expensive mobile phone she took from the new boyfriend's apartment. Upon investigation, the police discover that he is a member of a robbery gang and the said mobile phone was stolen in addition to a large amount of money.

Excerpt 5 Robbery 01

220. IPO: So you ate and had fun? Do you know that it is because of the little money you are getting from him that you have landed yourself in a big problem now?
Ìwé làwọn òbí rẹ ní kó o lọ kà. Ìgbà tó ò lówó lówó, kín ló dé tó ò béèrè owó lówó àwọn òbí rẹ? Ìgbà tí fòonù rẹ bajẹ kín ló dé tó ò sọ fún mummy rẹ tàbí kó o padà lọ silé lọ sọ fún mummy rẹ pé fòonù rẹ bà jé? Šé boyfriend rẹ yìí ló rán ẹ lọ sí ilé iwé ni dé bi wi pé o lọ gbéšè lé fòonù rẹ méjì?
Book your parents said go to read. When do you not money in hand, why do you not ask money in hand of your parents? When phone your spoilt, why you do not tell mummy your or you back go home go tell for mummy your that phone your spoilt? Is boyfriend your this that send you go to school so that you go step on phone his two?
It is school that your parents sent you to. When you lacked money, why didn't you ask for money from your parents? When your phone developed a problem why didn't you inform your mother or go back home to tell her that your phone has a fault? Is the boy in question the one that sent you to school to the extent that you went to confiscate his two phones?
Do you know you are a thief yourself? Answer me before I give you a slap. Do you know you are a thief? You took two expensive phones in your boyfriend's apartment, just to pressurize him to give you money.
221. Susp: ((Sobbing)) Not that I = stole the phones.
222. IPO: It is not that you stole the phones, but you impounded them? You seized them, *àbí?*
223. Susp: On my mind, I thought I seized the phones so that he will come to me and give me the money. But not that I stole them.

In excerpt 5, the IPO expresses a cause-and-effect inference from the suspect's relationship with her new boyfriend by first asking a rhetorical question: 'Do you know that it is because of the little money you are getting from him that you have landed yourself in a big problem now?' The qualification of 'money' with 'little' and 'problem' with 'big' is pragmatically important, as the IPO draws a cost-benefit analysis of the suspect's action (of getting money and collecting expensive phones) and the potential charge of aiding and abetting crime or being an accomplice in a robbery. 'Little' minimizes the suspect's gains while 'big' maximizes the potential punishment for her alleged crime if found culpable. Emphasising and amplifying the moral and socio-cultural inappropriateness of the suspect's action, the IPO switches to Yorùbá. In her Yorùbá utterances and through successive rhetorical questions, the IPO portrays the suspect as an irresponsible, covetous, and wayward woman, also reminding her of the societal expectation of a responsible daughter. The

question tag ‘àbí’ at the end of turn 222, which roughly translates to ‘right’, is an invitation to the suspect to confirm the investigator’s stance expressed in turn 220, though probably should not be considered code-mixing. This is because the use of ‘àbí’ as a discourse particle in similar contexts has been described as a question tag traceable to colloquial NE (Achiri-Tabo and Lando 2020) which results from decreolisation. Nevertheless, the more colloquial tone is similarly persuasive.

The significance of this CS is to foreground the socio-cultural, moral unacceptability and impropriety of the suspect’s action and to thereby logically persuade her that she is in the wrong. This stance is further pursued by the IPO as she reverts to NE with her rhetorical question at the end of the CS: ‘Do you know you are a thief yourself?’ which is followed up by a physical threat in NE. In response to the IPO’s logical appeal in the shared code and the return to the matrix language with a physical threat, the suspect breaks down, but continues her denial.

While excerpt 5 exemplifies interrogator CS to highlight socio-cultural expectations for persuasive ends, excerpts 6 and 7 show CS examples from suspects who attempt to persuade the IPO through indexing shared socio-cultural knowledge. Excerpt 6 is a part of an interrogation in which a man in his sixties is alleged of raping his neighbour’s 14-year-old daughter.

In excerpt 6 the suspect uses CS twice to plead for mercy, in both cases shifting blame, first to the devil (turn 44) and then to a neighbour’s bewitchment of him (turn 60), appealing to the shared socio-cultural knowledge (Mey 2001) of the Yorùbá belief system which recognizes bewitchment, diabolical powers, and spiritual attack, as well as the potency of their negative influences on human affairs. In both cases the IPO rejects the appeal, both in the echo question (turn 45) and by asking ‘What is the meaning of all this you are saying?’ (Turn 61), as well as by reverting to NE, rather than matching the suspect’s chosen code. While the suspect fervently pleads for mercy on account of his old age, engaging in a logical fallacy called *argumentum ad misericordian* (i.e. appeal to pity), a situation in which the audience is asked to accept an argument not because of the strength of the argument but rather because of the speaker’s piteous circumstances, the interrogator rejects his appeals. The reversed polarity question (Koshik 2002: 1855), ‘Were you not caught in the act?’ (turn 41), projects a strong epistemic stance, forcing the suspect to briefly concede, but then describes it as befriending. In blame-shifting to the devil the suspect uses his bilingualism to express the emotional aspects of his appeal drawing on the greater emotional resonance that first language expressions have for speakers (Caldwell-Harris and Ayçiçeği-Dinn 2009: 193). The suspect discursively leverages on widely shared socio-cultural knowledge to position himself as helplessly contending with superior diabolical powers that no human can defeat.

Excerpt 7 is a continuation of excerpt 2, a police interrogation with an alleged kidnapping suspect. The suspect uses CS to achieve a particular pragmatic end with the additional use of honorifics (the pronoun *ẹ* in turn 51) to boost his plea for mercy. The English equivalent of ‘*Ẹ* + *dákun*’ is ‘please sir’. It indexes the suspect’s weak and compromised position and marks the emotional plea for help. (Note that this strategy is also used by the suspect in excerpt 6 in turn 44.)

In Yorùbá, honorific pronouns are plural pronouns but used to refer to one person. For instance, ‘*ẹ*’, ‘*yin*’, and ‘*ẹyin*’ and ‘*wọn*’, ‘*wọn*’, and ‘*àwọn*’ are second and third person plural forms of the English ‘you’ in subject and object positions in Yorùbá which can be used

Excerpt 6 Rape 01

39. IPO: What brought you here?
40. Susp: They said, they said I was having an affair with Tonton.
41. IPO: [They said you were having an affair, or you were having an affair?
Were you not caught in the act?
42. Susp: (0.5) .hhh okay. I am truly befriending her.
43. IPO: What pushed you to doing that?
YOU:R GRAND DAUGHTER'S AGE MATE!
44. Susp: *Iṣé ÈṢÙ ni. Ẹ sá bá mi bè é. Ẹ bá mi bè é. Ẹ dákun.*
Work DEVIL is. You just help me beg her. You help me beg her. You please.
It is the work of the DEVIL. Please, just help me beg her. Help me beg her, please.
Ẹ dákun. Ẹ má jẹ kí n fewú orí lọ ọ sẹwọn. Ẹ má jẹ n sẹwọn pètú ewú orí. Ẹ dákun.
You please. You not let me to grey hair on head to do prison. You not let me do prison with grey hair head. You please
Please, don't let me go to jail with grey hair. Don't let me serve jail term with grey hair, please.
45. IPO: Work of the devil?
[10 intervening turns]
55. IPO:Are you not old enough to be head of a clan at this your age? Don't you know that what you have done was terrible?
56. Susp: It is (.) the handiwork of (.) the wicked ones
57. IPO: What is the meaning of that? What do you mean by it is the handiwork of the wicked ones?
58. Susp: Ah! Ah! Bello, Bello.
59. IPO: [What did Bello do?
60. Susp: *Bello! Mo rọwọ rẹ o. Ibi o bámi dé rẹ é. Ah! Ibi o sìn mí dé nìyí o. Onísèè re jẹ o.*
Bello! I saw hand your o. Where you followed me to here is. Ah! Where you accompanied to here is o. Your errand runner delivered o.
Bello! I can see the repercussion of your bewitchment on me. This is how far you have dealt with me. Ah! This is how far you have dealt with me. I can feel the extent of your diabolical powers.
61. IPO: What is the meaning of all this you are saying?
62. Susp: Myself and Bello = are fighting over a parcel of land in my area and he threatened that he would deal with me diabolically.
63. IPO: He would deal with you!
64. Susp: He threatened he would deal with me diabolically. That very day I have a

Excerpt 7 Kidnapping 01

50. IPO: The person you (and your gang members) kidnapped, where did you plan to take him to?
51. Susp: The soldiers have beaten me enough, they have pestered me to confess but I didn't know anything about the case.
Tí mo bá mọ̀ nùkan kan nípa rẹ̀ n kò ní máa fiyà jera mi tó báyii. Ẹ̀ dákun n kò mọ̀ nùkan kan nípa rẹ̀. Ẹ̀ sàánú mi.
If me know one thing about it, me not be taking suffering punish myself at this. You please I don't know one thing about it. You mercy me.
If I knew anything about it, I would have told you. I would not be punishing myself this much. Please sir, I did not know anything about it. Sir, have mercy on me.
The man (the victim) is even a nice person to me. Sometimes when I come to buy things (wares) from him, he would give me money for taxi.

to denote respect for age, power or status, when referring to one person, and which the addressee is not obliged to reciprocate. They are pronouns of power (Brown and Gilman 1960) rather than solidarity, which can be used persuasively. Lamidi (2008: 239), in his analysis of pronoun choice and grammaticality in Yorùbá-English code-switching, notes that 'such pronouns are used to locate people on the social ladder in terms of usage - master/slave/junior/senior/elder in the society'. In this context, the suspect is much older than the IPO but the former shows deference to the latter's power and status for persuasive purposes.

Choice of code is a strategy for 'performing different kinds of local identities which index a range of social meanings and relationships' (Bock 2011: 183) and has context-bound interactional purposes. In everyday life in Yorùbá society, the use of honorifics by an elderly person to address a younger person portrays the elder interlocutor as humble. And this invariably boosts the younger interlocutor's ego and self-esteem. It consequently imposes on the addressee a positive disposition toward such an elderly interlocutor, making this a socio-pragmatic persuasive CS strategy.

While the previous sub-sections have focused more on how police and suspects deploy CS for logical and emotive purposes (logos and pathos) as persuasive strategies, in the final sub-section we discuss appealing on the basis of credibility and sincerity (ethos).

Swearing and cursing in CS utterances to show sincerity

Both IPOs and suspects use swearing and cursing to show their credibility, sincerity or authority though there are fewer uses by IPOs. By swearing we mean speech acts uttered to lend credence or veracity to a claim while using the name of God or a deity to validate their claim. Cursing, on the other hand, involves the speech act of invoking the name of God or other supernatural beings of the Yorùbá traditional belief system to invite adverse consequences or death to oneself or another person, to validate a claim as true.

Swearing as a construct in this study is viewed slightly differently from its prevalent use in most Western cultures as the act of using taboo, stigmatized, profane language with the purpose of expressing the speaker's emotional state (Jay and Janschewitz 2008; Vingerhoets *et al.* 2013; Pavlenko 2008; Dewaele 2004, 2010, 2012). Rather, it is viewed from an African fatalistic perspective as the act of giving additional/special credence 'to what one says or does

as a solemn appeal to God (or to a deity or something held in reverence or high regard) in witness to the truth of the statement or the binding character of a promise or undertaking' (Abdel-Jawad 2000: 217). However, while the communicative functions of swearing are somewhat the same in the Western and African contexts, the structural and propositional components of the concept vary significantly in the two societies. The type of swearing we discuss in this study is what Abdel-Jawad (2000) calls conversational swearing to distinguish it from swearing as a formal oath, such as in court or by assuming a public role.

In this section, we show one example of a suspect using swearing with the goal of authenticating the veracity of their claims and one from an interrogator in assuming and boosting authority. The kidnapping suspect in excerpt 8 seeks to convince the IPO that his claim of not putting on any army cap at the scene of the incident, as alleged, is true.

Excerpt 8 Kidnapping 01

45. IPO: Where is the cap you put on yesterday?
46. Susp: I did not put on anyhow cap. This was the cloth I wore.
Ojú Ọlórún tó gbogbo è. Mo fí Ògún tí mo fí n sísé bíra!
Eye God see everything. I take Ògún that I work with swear.
God sees everything. I swear to Ògún (who is) the god of my profession.

In turn 46 the suspect switches to Yorùbá to invoke Ọlórún (God) as the seer of all things, to express his desperation to establish the veracity of his claim, with CS to the marked language serving an emphatic purpose (Nwagbo 2018: 53), because he has repeatedly denied this allegation in his previous turns. He also swears by Ògún, the god of his profession. God's name is the highest and most venerated authority in Yorùbá culture (Igboin 2019; Bewaji 1998; Idowu 1966; Johnson 1921) and Ògún is the god of iron and is believed to be a temperamental and fierce god whose name must not be invoked or sworn by if the swearer is not very sure of their claim, as Ògún's judgement/punishment is believed to be instantaneous (Bewaji 1998; Idowu 1966). This kind of swearing is what Jay and Janschewitz (2008) call propositional swearing because it is consciously planned and intentional and could even be considered impolite, as it attempts to usurp the power of the IPO. This 'strategic rudeness' (Beebe 1995) shows stronger commitment to the content and boosts the veracity of the utterer's claim. Swearing in this context is therefore 'used for confirmation, affirmation and some sort of moral or legal binding' contract (Abdel-Jawad 2000: 221). Double swearing in this instance creates intensity and emphasis (Nwagbo 2018). When the suspect code-switches to Yorùbá to engage the ethnic identity he shares with the interrogator, the shared sociocultural ethos of this identity validates the claim that God's name must not be invoked in vain and indexes the suspect's commitment to the truth and the interrogator's responsibility to believe him.

Excerpt 9 is an example of one of the instances where an interrogator code-switches to swear. In this particular case, the IPO uses the switch to give valence to the subtle threat in NE in the first part of his utterance in turn 75: 'see, if you like...' and also to give expression to his frustration emanating from the suspect's uncooperative stance.

The interrogator's swearing in this case is a 'commissive act' (as well as a threatening act) expressing his avowed commitment to ensuring that all the suspects are identified and brought to justice. But it is categorised as a swearing act because of the overriding appeal it makes

Excerpt 9 Murder 06

65. IPO: What is the relationship between you and kk?
66. Susp: He's my friend.
67. IPO: Where is kk now?
68. Susp: I don't know.
69. IPO: When did you see him last
70. Susp: Humm e-em-em, last week Tuesday
71. IPO: Tell me what happened on Tuesday at the party.
72. Susp: I was not really at the party because I didn't stay long because I was travelling. But I learnt that some guys came to disrupt the party and fight broke out.
73. IPO: Where are your other friends that attended the party?
74. Susp: I don't know.
75. IPO: See, if you like say the truth. If you like don't say the truth.
Bí Ọlórún tí ń be tí ẹ̀mí rẹ̀ sì wà, mǎǎ ríi dájú pé gbogbo yín ni mo fin jáde léyọ kòòkan tẹ ẹ̀ sì fojú winá òfin.
As God is, and His spirit is, I will see it certainly that you all is I smoke out one by one and face the fire of the law.
As God lives and His spirit lives, I will ensure you are all identified one by one and be brought to justice.

to validating the intended course of action with the name of God. It is worth noting that the IPO's swearing exudes discourse power and control over the suspect. As a representative of the government, he has the official power to follow through with his swearing utterance; otherwise, the utterance becomes 'infelicitous' (Austin 1962). Swearing and 'reactions to swearing are pointedly marked by power and status relationships' and 'swearing... may also be socially advantageous, and therefore likely, as instrumental aggression' (Jay and Janschewitz 2008: 274-275). In this case, the interrogator uses aggression which is boosted by authority to create institutional power.

Related to swearing, cursing is a universal speech act found in all languages and used by speakers of all ages, though there is considerable variation in use or avoidance, as well as hearing or being the recipient of it (Horan 2013). Cursing belongs to taboo language, so it is a risky strategy for boosting authority. In invoking God or other supernatural beings to bring 'misfortune, injury, misery or death' (Sharifi and Ebrahimi 2012: 1911) to oneself or another, it is also used to validate the speaker's claims as true. Cursing oneself and cursing another are emotion-laden speech acts, which are uttered by suspects to convince interrogators of the validity of their claims. Excerpt 10 is from the kidnapping case we have seen in excerpts 2, 7 and 8.

Establishing the fact that the suspect wore the alleged cap has serious implications for linking him to the kidnapping gang. The suspect therefore has the responsibility of explaining himself out of the allegation. To realize this discourse goal, he switches to Yorùbá to curse himself, as a resource to validate his claim and convince the interrogator that his claim is genuine. It is an 'if-then' curse, which increases the burden of sincerity on the part of the suspect and believability on the part of the interrogator, as it is the belief of the Yorùbás that no sane person would invoke such a heavy curse on him/herself for a falsehood. However, in this context it also indexes the power differential between the interrogator and the suspect, as the suspect deploys every interactional strategy (including placing a curse on

Excerpt 10 Kidnapping 01

43. IPO: ... just tell us where you put the cap so that we can go and take it from there.
44. Susp: If I am lying = I don't lie. That my brother, Wazobia knows me. He knows I don't tell lies. He told me that I should come the way I was (dressed) when I went to buy the fishing net. And that was how I went to meet the soldiers. I cannot lie.

Tí mo bá paró, gbogbo nńkan tí mò ń wá láyé kí n má rí i. Àwọn ọmọ mi méfèfà tí mo bí kí n má jèrè wọn.

If I lied, all things I am looking for in life may I not see them. They children my six that I born, may I not profit them.

If I lied, may all good things I desire in life elude me. And may all the six children that I have never prosper in life.

himself) to convince the interrogator that his claims are true. Inability to achieve this holds a potentially negative outcome for the suspect but the interrogator is not under any obligation to curse himself to convince the suspect, making this strategy unique to the suspect.

Excerpt 11 is an instance of cursing another to validate one's claim of innocence. In this case the suspect is suspected of stealing a motorbike. He lives in an eight-room bungalow with fellow low-wage artisans among who are commercial motorbike riders. He has confessed to stealing a woofer speaker from another co-tenant's room but denies stealing the bike. The interrogator sees him as a prime suspect, finding it difficult to believe his narrative. As a result of this, there is pressure to convincingly establish his innocence. This kind of cursing is different from cursing oneself, because it detaches the utterer from the target of the curse.

Excerpt 11 Stealing 02

121. IPO: Why is it that it is when you have problem that you believe in God?
122. Susp: Ah! I believe God now!
123. IPO: Why didn't you believe before now?
124. Susp: I always thought the Muslim Alfas and Christian Pastors I am close to were deceiving me. But as I was in the detention, I was regularly praying five times a day; though without water to do ablution; and also praying in Jesus' name; **Mo tún ń sọ wí pé kò ní dára fẹ̀ ní tó gbé ọkadà yíi, kò ní sun wọn fún un.**

I also was saying that it will not be good for the person that carried okada this, it will not be well with him.

I was also saying it will never be well with whoever stole the Okada; may he/she never prosper in life.

Turn 124 reveals an unusual combination of incongruent speech acts which show his frantic and angry efforts to convince the interrogator of his innocence. He states in English that he prays the Muslim way and the Christian way, though he is a Muslim, as he affirms in other parts of the interrogation. The two religions dominate Nigerian society and their doctrines are sharply polarised by the political elites in Nigeria for political gains (Isaac 2020). It is paradoxical to pray in these two ways, but is clearly a strategy used to boost credibility. Ending the prayer with a curse in the code-switched part of the utterance ('may

he/she never prosper in life') is also incongruous but is part of the suspect's appeal through religious authority to persuade the IPO of his credibility. This committed stance continues later in the interrogation with the suspect using a raised voice to also curse himself. Alia-Klein (2020: 492) describe 'anger as a social bargaining tool' and 'vocal changes' as parts of the variables that interlocutors leverage for the linguistic expression of their state of mind and to bargain better discourse outcomes. Here they are used to boost authority and attempt to persuade the IPO of their sincerity and, therefore, credibility as an innocent party.

Conclusion

CS is a marked activity in Nigerian police interrogation, producing communicative alignments that, on the part of police officers, persuade and coerce in an attempt to transform the suspect's evidence and that, on the part of suspects, try to recruit support from their weak(ened) position. In both cases, then, CS is used to negotiate power, whether that is from an already elevated position of power or from an inferior one. While interrogators use CS to exploit the inequalities that already exist in the asymmetrical discourse situation to try to manipulate the suspect to open up or confess to incriminating actions, suspects recognise these moments as coercive and usually do not reciprocate the CS, downplaying the shared code of their first language, Yorùbá, and aligning themselves with the formal matrix language of the interrogation. Similarly, interrogators usually fail to reciprocate suspects' CS, signalling their rejection of their appeals for mercy or use of shared socio-cultural knowledge to recruit support for their position.

In terms of the pragmatic functions of CS, some resources are used exclusively by police, some by suspects, and some are shared. Police officers use CS to warn and threaten suspects. Using the resource of social affiliation they index social responsibility on the part of suspects, highlighting their position as citizens who have a duty to do the right thing and own up to their transgressions. This is an activity that is unique to the more powerful participant. Threatening and verbally aggressive acts are also limited to interrogators who seem to view their institutional position as giving them the right to use these tactics. As the interrogations are only audio-recordings, it is impossible to tell whether suspects have been subject to the kind of physical abuse that has been reported in the press and which led to the protests described earlier in this paper, but the distress of suspects is evident at times and evidenced in the emotional outbursts and sometimes desperate appeals discussed above. Suspects use CS to plead for mercy and to curse themselves and others as a way of expressing the sincerity and truthfulness of their claims. Speaking from their inferior position, they mobilise CS as a powerful resource to align their code with the interrogator's non-institutional identity, in order to try to gain interactional leverage and to mitigate their actions. However these attempts are mostly unsuccessful in terms of transforming the interrogator's stance. Nevertheless, by their use, suspects succeed in registering their positions in the record. At the same time, since police interrogations are not currently audio-recorded in Nigeria, it is unlikely that these details will make it into the official written record of the interrogation, a circumstance that further points to the need for audio-recording in all jurisdictions, as important defence material is potentially lost.

Both interrogators and suspects use CS to highlight shared socio-cultural knowledge. For interrogators, this performs moral confrontation and signals the moral expectations of citizens and moral inappropriateness of the suspect's actions under the shared socio-cultural system, making this another powerful coercive resource. For suspects, appealing to shared socio-cultural knowledge through the shared non-institutional code of Yorùbá appeals to

and tries to persuade the interrogator that certain actions and circumstances are beyond their control. Both interrogators and suspects also use swearing, invoking God and deities, to express their sincerity. This is an emotional act that draws on deep-seated beliefs and uses CS to emphasise the depth of conviction. In excerpt 8 we saw the suspect invoke Ògún, ‘the god of [his] profession’ to give special credence to his claim that he did not wear a particular type of cap that would mark him out as a kidnapper. His invocation of the ‘all-seeing God’ is a solemn appeal that underlines his authenticity. In excerpt 9, however, the interrogator’s use of CS to swear is delivered alongside a threat to ‘ensure that you are all identified and brought to justice’, making his commitment especially coercive and authoritative.

The sociolinguistic implications of CS as a resource in police interrogations are clear. CS to a shared non-institutional code, such as Yorùbá, is a resource that exploits social hierarchies within and outside the interrogation room. Police officers already have powerful language at their disposal; they are the questioners. But CS is a resource that adds to that repertoire to increase coercion at critical points in interrogation. We have seen that interrogators can switch to Yorùbá and back to English within a turn to mark a particular act, such as warning or morally confronting the suspect. Since this is a code that interrogator and suspect share, communicative alignment is used to make social demands on the suspect to respond. With such powerful resources at their disposal, it is unthinkable that physical aggression is ever justified. It is clear that the power of CS as an interrogator’s resource is one that amplifies their ability to coerce self-incrimination and confession. Returning to the social responsibility of police officers to serve their communities that we mentioned at the start, CS is a resource that needs to be recognised as a particularly manipulative and synthetic social solidarity. The role of English in this situation cannot be overlooked either. Since the interrogation has to take place in NE, this gives CS to Yorùbá a special status that it would not have if the interrogation took place in the shared language of the interrogator and suspect. This exemplifies the complicated role of English as an official language in post-colonial Nigeria.

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