

## STRATEGIC SPEECH ACTS IN TRANSACTIONAL DISCOURSES

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### Abstract

This article is on market discourse and thus, it explicates a cross section of persuasive trader-customer speech acts in the sales transaction, a genre of discourse in which pragmatic speech acts stand out clearly. Given that the transacting partners opt to use Kiswahili exclusively in the course of their transaction, it can be argued that indeed Kiswahili seems to occupy a central place in the socio-economic life of the business community. In this respect, this researcher examines the transactional encounter in Kiswahili between the trader and the customer as mutual beneficiaries of the transactional exchange. The central concern underpinning this article is cooperation. The two discussants deliberately maintain and sustain the flow of the discourse by using specific speech acts in Kiswahili to the extent that either party could go to any length to ensure that the discourse does not break down. In case there is a possibility of the discourse breaking down, then the two parties work out the repair strategy including using various speech acts pertaining to politeness, greeting, promising, warning, informing and cooperating. At the same time, they blame and complain about each other in a collaborative way. They therefore transact business by talking in such a way as to display their concern and involvement in the personal life of the co-interlocutor. In an attempt to persuade the trader to sell the goods at a low price, the customer uses expressions that invoke his inability to pay as much. In this case, he uses various speech acts that arouse the concern, sympathy and generosity that duty requires people to show to each other. Trader-customer Kiswahili discourse has a distinct speech act sequence that sustains the flow of the sales transaction that uses a complex transactional speech act in form of greetings, questions and declarations. This article therefore examines the market discourse by explicating a cross section of persuasive speech acts, which the two transacting partners use in the course of their interaction.

**Keywords:** Discourse; Speech Acts; Transactions; Buying and Selling; Bargaining

### Introduction

This article explicates the speech acts in trader-customer interactions in an attempt to show their role in the transactional encounter. I argue in this article that there is always a relationship between the discourse utterances and the market context in which such utterances describe things and situations as they are. There are those speech acts that express situational or contextual state whereby a statement, for instance, expresses a particular state. A promise may express an interactant's intention to do something and a request may likewise express one's desire to do

something. There is, thus, a recognition that speech acts, specifically illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, characterize the market discourse situation which is largely goal or intention oriented. I will, as such, be interested in analyzing speech acts within the paradigm of contextual aspects of the market setting. I explicate such speech acts while paying attention to those that stand out and dominate the market discourse. In this case, I shall discuss the realization of the various speech acts and how the interactants manage to control and negotiate the meanings of what they say in this real life market encounter.

### Analyzing Strategic Speech Acts in the Market Discourse

A speech act may be regarded as language use in context in which individual speech utterances are regarded as purposeful acts performed by a given speaker. In this sense, such speech acts are not haphazard but rather deliberate acts of a speaker in respect of known, seen or perceived addressee (Austin, 1962; Billig 1999). Given that speech acts are performative in nature, such performance is known to involve dual acts. On the one hand, a speech act can be seen to consist of a locutionary act—the act of producing a recognizable grammatically interpretable utterance in a given language. On the other hand, as Blackmore (1992) and Brown (1995) explain, every speech act involves an illocutionary act—that is an attempt to accomplish some communicative goal or purpose. Such acts as promising, warning, greeting, reminding, informing and commanding among others, are illocutionary acts (Atkinson, 1979; 1984). The relevance of illocutionary acts in speech analysis is predicated on the understanding that, they specify what language or aspect of language is being used for in a given context. Such use is a mode of spontaneity. Producing an utterance is by all means engaging in rule governed behavior (Searle, 1969; Arrazola, 1998; Baba, 1999).

When people talk as they do in market transactional encounters, they engage in three distinct acts either simultaneously, collectively or severally. These acts include utterance acts, propositional acts and illocutionary acts. Utterance acts involve the production of sounds, words and sentences whereas propositional acts are concerned with acts of referring and predicating. On their part, illocutionary acts deal with spelling out the speaker’s purpose in any given utterance such as promising, threatening and asking. Overall, and this is within the stipulation of Searle who explains that, every illocutionary act has a ‘locution’- words, sentences; a proposition and an illocutionary force- the way a speaker wants an utterance to be understood. I note that every illocutionary act is marked by some illocutionary force usually predicated on some devices as word order, stress, tone contour, punctuation, and mood of the dominant verbs well as the deployment of performative verbs.

At this point, I give an account of the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts in relation to the market discourse. Perlocutionary and illocutionary acts are largely dependent on the context for their interpretation. Perlocutions, and to a large extent, illocutions are hardly ever explicitly marked in any

discourse in their actual utterance, though there are some perlocutionary verbs which may be used in reporting a Perlocution (Tannen, 1981; Garcia, 2000). An interactant normally does not announce what effect he intends to produce in the addressee or co-interactant. Largely, Perlocutions and Illocutions, though intended, may have unintended effects. This may happen when discourse interactants produce turns which may break down communication between them. As a result, there arises a need for repair strategies and mechanisms.

We explain illocutionary acts according to their transactional contributions to the transactional exchange. Generally speaking, in the illocutionary line of business, there are several things that the interactants can do with propositions: they can tell each other how things are; (Assertives), they try to get each other to do certain things, (Directives); they commit themselves to doing things,(Commissives); they express their feelings and attitudes, (Expressives); and they bring about changes in their interactional world so that their discourse of bargain, by virtue of their speaking turns, are able to reach the mutual goal of the transactional exchange.

### Transactional Speech Acts in the Market Discourse

In this section, I will examine various transactional speech acts as they are produced in the market discourse. In this case, a speech act may be illustrated thus: interactants want their opinions to be recognized if not adopted, their assertions to be agreed with, their requests to be enacted, questions answered, pieces of advice taken, warnings heeded, commands complied with, thanks appreciated and apologies accepted. Against the foregoing discussion, I now wish to explicate various speech acts that feature in the market transactions. In the following example, we encounter a communication breakdown between the trader and the customer, in which case, there is an apparent need for a repair strategy. I shall refer to the following turns in this regard:

- T: **Si ninakwambia ishirini.** (*haven't I told you that you pay twenty shillings?*)
- C: **Ishirini ni nyingi** (*twenty shillings is too much*)
- T: **Si nyingi, unajua tunashinda kuanzia asu buhi hadi saa kumi na mbili.** (*it isn't much you know, we languish in the sun from morning to evening*)
- C: **Si usimame. Ukisimama ndio utatuuzia vi zuri.** (*Then can't you stand? If you stand, you will be at ease*).

In this excerpt, the trader seems unwilling to accommodate and get along with the customer who is not agreeable to the suggested price. Thus, the trader says: **T: Si nyingi, unajua tutashindana kuanzia asubuhi hadi saa kumi na mbili.** (*This is not much. You know, we might not agree even if we bargain till evening*). In this excerpt, a conversational breakdown is evident, and as such, the interactants are motivated to adopt repair strategies that could sustain the transactional exchange till the transactional goal is achieved. I realize that the trader has chosen to explain to the customer that indeed the offer is pleasant, and that is why he says, “**Si nyingi.**” He could as well have indicated that the price is good enough and that the customer could choose to take it or to leave it.

As we will establish later in this discussion, discourse interactants in the market setting do not really intend to produce the perlocutionary effect of frightening or embarrassing their co-interactants. But in the course of the interaction, the interactants may find themselves in a situation where they are unable to amicably get along with each other. As such, there arises a need to repair the transactional exchange purposely for the sake of achieving the mutual goal of the interaction. In many respects, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts are largely oriented towards socio-psychological relations between discourse participants and, in this case, they are basically interpersonal in nature.

Speech acts are therefore meant to change the state of the world in such a manner that the discourse interactants change their opinion, and standpoints if only to demonstrate that they are flexible. I therefore assert that a speech act is performed when the speaker makes an utterance to a hearer in a specific context. The illocutionary force of a turn is essentially what the interactants do with each other, for instance, state of requesting something, thanking someone, making a promise and declaring an umpiring decision. In this sense, every speech act conveys at least one illocutionary force.

I state here that traders and customers are always looking forward to a fruitful and rewarding experience in the market. If this were not the case, then they would not be motivated to be at the market place in the first place. Cameron (1995) and Freemantle (1998), for instance, explain the concept of talk as an enterprise, in the sense that the act of smiling may signal one’s deliberate intention to make the person s/he is interacting with, feel happy. The implicit model is the way people behave in personal relationships. Here, the parties have an equal investment. Interactants act

like friends, smiling continually for hours at a stretch. The whole idea is that the trader and the customer employ a tonal voice that gives them an opportunity to interact in a rewarding transactional and most fulfilling transactional intercourse. This point is recognized quite explicitly by Freemantle (1998) who argues among other things that if one is given a range of comparable and competitive products to choose from, a customer will choose the company s/he likes. They will choose the people they like. When a customer’s emotional attachment to a brand is reinforced by an emotional attachment to the people who sell, then there is a possibility that this will add emotional value to a transactional encounter. We argue that there may arise a situation where a party (trader or customer) may just come across as cold, yet as the discourse progresses, the two parties turn out to be warm, caring and loving human beings. Either party responds appropriately by underlining their words with the tone of the emotional approval. It is in this respect that I will focus on the question of what the trader and the customer actually do when they use particular linguistic forms and structures. In the following short excerpt, the trader and the customer use their linguistic knowledge, factual knowledge, general background knowledge and the cooperative maxim to facilitate their mutual understanding.

**T: Sasa tufanye jumla, itabidi sasa nikiweka jumla ninaweka badala ya kuweka sixty nitaweka fifty.** (*Let us agree at wholesale price, you can pay fifty instead of sixty shillings*).

**C: Ulikuwa umesema forty.** (*You had implied, forty*).

In this excerpt, the trader makes use of a calm tone. She says, “**ulikuwa umesema forty**”. (*You had suggested that I would pay forty shillings*). In this turn, the trader is introducing a judgmental statement that is based on an earlier utterance. From this case, we assert that the customer is producing this turn in the context of the bargain event. The trader indicated earlier in the discourse that she would be comfortable with the forty shillings offer. We interpret this utterance in light of the intention of the customer. At this point, we argue that the trader may not have indicated at any given time that she was willing to buy at a certain price, yet she knows what would be at stake if she dismisses this claim outright. She, instead, engages the customer in a protracted conversation as evidenced in this excerpt:

**T: Wacha tuweke forty five** (*Then let us agree at forty five shillings*).

- C: **Fanya forty forty.** (*Let us agree at forty each*).
- T: **Wacha tuweke forty five.** (*No, forty five shillings would be ok*)
- C: **Wacha mimi nisiumie pahali kwa sababu sitaondoka bila kununua** (*Then, let me buy at a reasonable price as I won't go away before buying*)
- C: **Kwa nini unamfanya hivyo?** (*Why that now?*)
- T: **Unajua mimi ni muuzaji na wewe ni mnunuzi. Sasa huwa tuna.....** (*You know you are a buyer and I, a seller...*)
- C: **Fanya hii forty halafu hii unifanyie...ulinambia forty?** (*Let me pay forty shillings for this and then this... did you say forty?*)

In the cited excerpt above, the customer seeks indulgence from the trader. She says: **fanya hii forty halafu hii unifanyie ... uliniambia forty?** (*Let me pay forty shillings for this one, but for this, can I pay... did you say I pay forty shillings?*). We gather from this excerpt, that the trader has not indicated that she would be comfortable with forty shillings in exchange for the cloth. This turn should, therefore, not be understood to be an interrogative question that necessarily requires an answer. Ideally, the answer to this question would have been expected to be either yes or no. This is not a question but a statement whose intention is to implore the trader to rethink her price which, according to the customer, is on the higher side. The customer, therefore, employs an ironic tone that has the effect of persuading the trader to sell her cloth at a reasonable price. From this utterance it appears that the customer is attempting to be manipulative in favour of a desired outcome. The manipulative speech act that is implied here points to the mutual goal of buying and selling. The conversation between the interactants is sustained as evidenced by the progression of the transactional exchange which is characterized by well-placed turns.

We discuss the tonal features of the following turns:

- T: **Wacha tuweke forty five**( *then, let us agree at forty five shillings*)
- C: **Fanya forty forty.**(*let us agree at forty shillings for each*)
- T: **Wacha tuweke forty five**(*No, let us agree at forty five*)
- C: **Wacha mimi nisiumie pahali kwa sababu sitaondoka bila kununua**(*let me not be disadvantaged yet. I won't leave this place before buying*)
- C: **Kwa nini unamfanya hivyo?** (*why are you doing*

*that ?*)

- T: **Unajua mimi ni muuzaji na wewe ni mnunuzi. Sasa huwa tuna...**(*you know I am a seller and you are a buyer, so we need to ...*)
- C: **Fanya hii forty halafu hii unifanyie...ulinambia forty?**(*just agree at forty for each for this one, could I pay forty shillings as well*)
- T: **Nilikuambia ni sixty haiwezi kuwa forty kwa sababu za forty ni hizi ndogo.** (*I told you that this goes for sixty shillings as these small ones may go for forty*)
- C: **Wacha na mimi niseme ndio nione vile tutafanya si ndio? Hatuwezi ongea unaweka huko mwisho halafu unasema tu pound pound** (*Let me also give my suggestion so that we can see what to do. Isn't it? We cannot continue with the bargain if you rush to the last price by just mentioning that it will go for twenty shillings.*)
- T: **Hata ukienda pale mbele, huwezi kupata vinyasa**( *even if you went elsewhere, you would not find any short trousers*).
- C: **Kweli (really?).**

In respect of the two turns cited above, we realize that the customer is not in any manner, asking a question. She seems to doubt an earlier claim that was made by the trader who seems to be making a contestable suggestion, when he says: **hata ukienda pale mbele huwezi kupata vinyasa** (*even if you searched elsewhere, you would not find any short trousers*). The trader does not substantiate her claim, with illustrative pieces of evidence. The trader is determined to sustain her earlier claim and in this case, she manages to sustain the transactional exchange. We base our interpretation on the fact that the two are conscious of their actions and contributions to the transactional exchange. Their actions are therefore largely based on vague anticipations in the context of their intents which are in opposition to one another.

We can easily determine the point at which the trader formed and thereby entertained a strategic intent to mislead the customer by insisting that she alone is in possession of what may never be found anywhere. She explains that the type of cloth that the customer is looking for is quite rare in the market place. The meaning of this utterance does not reside in the words that are uttered alone. It also resides in the situation in which such utterances are produced. In this case, knowing how to interpret the meaning of this utterance requires knowledge of the words and utterances as well as the knowledge of the market

context. In this case, the two parties are aware of the fact that they are in the market where each party must try as much as possible to get a fair deal, besides keeping the conversation going. We argue therefore that the two parties are aware of the expectations about what the co-interactant could normally say in such transactional encounters. The negotiation of a speech act in this context depends largely on the common experience and knowledge of the discourse. In this case, there are certain felicity conditions which utterers must meet. In this case, we realize this is a market place, *and so we know who must say and do what in what circumstances*. As such, the bargaining partners are fully aware of the dictates of the market context and this is clearly shown in the manner in which they engage each other in the bargaining encounter. In this turn, the trader says :(**Hata ukienda pale mbele, huwezi kupata vinyasa**)(*Even if you go elsewhere, you will not find any short trousers*).

We understand that language can be used to perform various social functions and actions. In the above example, the trader exploits a calm tone that is meant to keep the conversation going. By saying that the “**Vinyasa**” (*Short-trousers*) are a scarce commodity in the market, the trader implies that she alone has the ‘**Vinyasa**’ and that the customer has no reason to look elsewhere. This interpretation arises from the fact that context plays a major role in the interpretation and recovery of meaning. In other words, we discern the role of context in explaining these and subsequent utterances. In this case, the cited utterance should be understood in light of the market discourse where bargaining is the central and common ground on which the interactants stand. We argue that neither the trader nor the customer has the monopoly in this discourse. In this sense, power and/ or status relations do not seem to be occupying a central place in the market discourse, as the parties always engage each other in the mutual process of bargaining. We claim that status and power hierarchy do not necessarily make any difference and do not feature as the basis for the interaction between the trader and the customer. The bargaining activity goes on and on. In the following turns, the trader and the customer employ various strategies that sustain the transactional encounter.

T: **Hata ukienda pale mbele huwezi pata vinyasa.**(*Even if you go to the other side, you won't find short trousers*).

C: **Kweli?** (*really?*)

T: **Vinyasa ndivyo vinavyokuwa the first-t h i n g kuenda na vikiisha tuna- lock.**

(*short trousers are in great demand and when they are out of stock, we forget about them*)

C: **Haya wacha niseme, twenty five niache nise...**(*I suggest that I pay twenty shillings*)

T: **Sema tu!** (*Just say*)

C: **Niseme tu!**(*can I suggest!*)

T: **Unajua kusema sio kubaya. Na hizi zingine zilikuwa wapi? Zilikuwa pamoja?** (*you know, making a suggestion isn't a wrong thing to do. Where were these one?*)

**T-shirts zilikuwa zote pamoja.**(*all the T-shirts go for same amount*)

C: **Ohoo!** (*Ohoo!*)

T: **Zote jumla T-shirts.**(*all the T-shirts go for the same amount*)

C: **Na hii stain itatoka?**(*will this stain come off?*)

T: **Itatoka** (*It will*)

The last turn in the cited excerpt is largely typical of a pre-packaged utterance that features prominently in the discourse of this type. In this turn, the customer produces an inquisitive utterance whose sense value is to elicit some information about the quality of the cloth. He asks: **Na hii stain itatoka?** (*Will this stain come off?*). The trader responds: **Itatoka** (*It will*). This utterance is characteristic of the trader-customer Kiswahili discourse where either party can ascertain, give evidence, or even re-assure each other about the worth of the goods at hand. As shown in this turn, the trader does not look far in this respect but his evidence is simply attributed to remote authority. He seems to be implying that indeed he knows that the stain will come off. We know that the business interactants are not in possession of direct knowledge about the worth and the durability of the articles of trade. The trader, nevertheless, employs a reassuring tone, as she does not want the customer to cast doubt on the cloth's worth. The trader lacks practical and persuasive evidence. She hopes that they will nevertheless, generate an understanding and agreement. As the transaction progresses, the two business interactants engage in a serious bargain as each party tries as much as possible to get a fair deal from the interaction. As such, the market discourse is a matrix of utterances and actions that are bound together by a web of understandings and reactions from either party. In this case, requests and assertions propel the transaction to greater heights of mutual understanding. The example that we have just cited reveals such acts as challenges and defenses. We will examine the following turns so as to make the foregoing discussion clearer.

- C: **Na hii stain itatoka?**(*can this stain easily fade away?*)  
 T: **Itatoka.**( *it will* )  
 C: *Forty, fifty, twenty five.*  
 T: **Sasa wewe ni customer wa kuelewa si ndio?**  
 (*you are understanding customer, isn't it?*)  
 C: **Eehe!** (yes)  
 T: **Sasa unaona nikifanya hivyo kwa hivi vinyasa ndio nitaumia pahali. Wacha mimi nikupe bei yangu sawa?** ( *if I sell at that price, then I will not get any profit from this transaction, let me suggest my price*)  
 C: **Sema.** (*O.k. suggest*)  
 T: **Enye tutae.....hiyo nilikuwa nimekuambia.**  
 (*the one I suggested earlier* )  
 C: **Andika hiyo basi yangu. Ulisema ngapi Mami?**( *that's my price. How much did you suggest mom?*)  
 T: *Seventy five.*  
 C: *Forty, thirty, twenty five*  
 T: **Haya asante.**( *o.k thank you* )  
 C: *Mmmmh*  
 T: **Ulisema forty, thirty, twenty five.**  
 C: **Na wewe sema sasa yako.**(*just suggest yours (price)*)  
 T: **Sasa mimi nikikwambia. Hii sasa.**(*if I do, then this.....*)  
 C: **Hiyo ngoja, hizo ni mbili hakuna shida.**(*just a moment, those are two, no problem*)  
 T: **Sasa hizi sasa nilikuwa nimekwambia sixty si ndio? Sasa nikuwekee...**( *for this, just pay sixty, o.k?*)  
 C: **Nimesema forty five.** ( *I suggested forty five shillings*)  
 T: **Forty five si ndio? Halafu hizi nikuwekee forty forty halafu hizi nikuwekee thirty five.** (*Forty five shillings is o.k pay for ty for these and thirty five for these others*)  
 C: **Wewe andika hapo, andika, andika laini yako.**(*just mark the prices*)

In this turn, the interactants seem to be getting closer to an amicable bargain. The trader precisely says: *Forty five shillings will be ok. Isn't it? You will pay forty shillings for this one. We seem to be agreeable, and for this one, you can pay thirty-five shillings. I will have given you a good bargain. This deal is more attractive than the one you get from the white lady. Were you not here on Saturday?* We realize that both parties produce largely ritualized phrases which are, evidently, formulaic. Such phrases are:

- Forty five, si ndiyo?** (*Forty five, isn't it?*)  
**Tunawachana na kitu kidogo** (*we seem to be agreeable*)  
**Enyewe sijakufinya** (*I will have given you a good bargain*)  
**Hata yule mama mweupe anawafanyia hivyo, si ulikuja Saturday?** (*That deal is even more attractive than the one you get from the white lady*)

All these utterances point to one apparent feature in this discourse: persistence. The trader is simply inconsistent with the true state of affairs. The trader should not be seen to be lying but is strategically transacting with his interlocutor by constructing meaning in this social sphere. This line of argument is in line with Hill (1992:60) who says that:

To interpret events, to establish facts, to convey opinion and to constitute interpretations as knowledge... all these are activities that involve socially situated participants. Interactants normally use all and only the information offered during the interaction and are expected to draw upon not only what is said but also how it is said, or the non-verbal and paralinguistic behaviour.

As would be expected, trader-customer discourse interactants are not necessarily interested in the truth. In this regard, we encounter the following phrases: *I will have given you a good bargain, and; this deal is more attractive than the one you get from the white lady's.* The trader is being dictated and motivated by the prevailing circumstances in the market environment. The truth is that the trader would not wish to sell at a loss. On the other hand, the customer has to be satisfied that she is getting a fair bargain from the transactional encounter. It is in this light that we should discern the market transaction. In a bargain event such as this, the discourse interactants are not keen as to establishing and ascertaining that the truth is being told. It is in this respect that we should understand the following turns.

- T: **Forty five, si ndio? Halafu hii nikufanyie forty. Tunawachana na kitu kidogo sana na hii nikufanyie thirty five. Enyewe sijakufinya enye hata mimi mwenyewe naona yaani hata yule mama mweupe najua anawafanyia hivyo si ulikuja Saturday.**(*forty fiver is OK for this just pay forty . The difference will be minimal and this will be an acceptable deal*).

The trader's claim may and will always be expected to be biased and can only be interpreted and filtered in the context of trying to justify the price.

We can be sure that the two discourse interactants are bargaining mutually. Each has time for the other in trying to reach an agreeable price. The trader and the customer apparently have no time for fact finding regarding the authenticity and validity of their utterances and resulting claims. We, therefore, interpret the market discourse as typical practice in the business of give-and-take of everyday life in the market discourse.

We note that trader-customer discourse interactants have fairly equal chances of contributing verbally to the discourse conversation. In most cases, they choose to answer or contribute with short responses and at times with long speech acts, even when the construct seems to be appropriate for a short and immediate response. The conversation between the trader and the customer goes on and on with each party trying to outdo the other. As the discourse comes to a close, the trader seems to be suggesting that the bargain activity will close as soon as the customer pays a little more. Elsewhere in this discourse, the customer retorts: **What are you still talking about?** We need to understand that the customer is not asking a question that should be answered. He is thinking aloud by employing a tone that could easily annoy the co-interactant.

It seems that the customer is registering a complaint and as such, he would expect the trader to save time by not protracting the discourse. If we take this line of interpretation, then the utterance: **What are you still talking about?**-will imply that the customer is trying to act strategically. In this market context, the customer's action may be taken to reflect a strategy that is meant to achieve a desired outcome: to buy the cloth at a cheap price. The conversation between the two interactants goes on as neither party is willing to give up. Each tries to contribute to the sustenance of the transactional exchange so that the two parties are able to support their earlier claims. As they transacting partners engage each other in the market place, they try to be peasant to each other as much as possible yet, the necessary feelings, thoughts, and intentions must be present in the two parties. The utterance: **What are you still talking about?** could be deemed relevant and appropriate in the sense that the two parties are expected to share a set of assumptions about their bargain event. A transaction such as this is a cooperative venture in the Gricean sense. In this case, ambiguity, inexplicitness as well as the incoherence may impede the understanding of the turns that are produced in this discourse. The following turns largely indicate that the conversation

is drawing closer to its closure:

- T: **Forty five, si ndio? Halafu hii nikufanyie forty. Tunawachana na kitu kidogosana na hii nikufanyie thirty five.**  
**Enye sijakufinya enye hata m i m i mwenyewe naona yaani hata yule mama mweupe najua anawafanyia hivyo si ulikuja Saturday.** (*forty fiver is OK for this just pay forty. The difference will be minimal*) and *this will be an acceptable deal*).
- C: **Friday ndio sikuwa.** (*I wasn't here on Friday*)
- T: **Yeye huwa anafungua huko mimi nafungua hapa.** (*he opens the other side and I here*)
- C: **Eehe!**
- T: **Lakini Friday ninakuwa huko. Na hasa Friday ninakuwa(nga) na jacket sana.** (*I will be there on Friday. I will be having so many jackets*)
- C: **Za watoto?(for children?)**
- T: **Jacket na sweater za watoto zikiwa mpya. Sasa....** (*new jackets and sweaters for children*)
- C: **Eehe!**
- T: **Saa hii nafungua (nga) Thursday hapa halafu nakuja Saturday. Tuseme hapa tumewachana na shilingi tano, hapa tumewachana na shilingi kumi.** (*we are about to strike a deal*)
- C: *What are you still talking about?*
- T: **Ukiweka twenty five...(anakatizwa)** (*if you give me twenty five shillings*)
- C: **Wewe fanya hivi, chukua hii thirty, sitaki sasa kuongea zaidi ya hapo. Chukua thirty.** (*just accept this thirty shillings I don't wish to pay anything more*)
- T: **Hiyo nyingine iwe thirty five si ndio?halafu hizi forty....** (*for the other pay thirty five shillings isn't it then forty for these*)
- C: **Hesabu basi ni ngapi.** (*get the total*)
- T: **Si ni hivo** (*that is it*)
- C: **(.)**
- T: **Si ni hivo vile umenipa** (*the much you've paid is enough*)
- C: **Hii itakuwa thirty. Sio....** (*this will go for thirty so...*)
- T: **Haki Mami, si wewe hata..** (*No Mum please...*)
- C: **Fanya thirty, fanya thirty.** (*then let's agree at thirty shillings*)
- T: **Wacha tufanye thirty five, niongeze hiyo tano** (*then let's agree at thirty five shillings I will add the five shillings*)

- C: **Tutakutana na wewe kwingineko na uta furahia.** (*we shall meet elsewhere and you will be excited*).
- At this point, the trader and the customer are collaboratively deciding the price of the commodity. In this turn, the trader says: **Tutakutana na wewe kwingineko na utafurahia.** (*we shall meet elsewhere and you will be excited*). It should be noted that the customer is satisfied with this transactional encounter, in the sense that she has had a fair deal. We shall refer to the following turns so as to develop this clearer.
- T: **Mimi nimekufanyia tu bei nzuri, T-shirts huwa tuna fanya forty na mimi nime kufanyia na thirty five. Fanya tu hivyo, ukifurahi na mimi nitabaki nikilia.** (*my offer is so good we normally sell T-Shirts for forty you don't have to be happy as I cry*)
- C: (.)
- T: **Sasa si unaona. Wacha tu niweke thirty five mama si ndio?** (*please mom let me pay thirty five*)
- C: **Weka tu thirty haki.** (*thirty five shillings will do please*)
- T: **Hebu tupigie na wewe thirty five tuone. Hatujawekahii. Hakuna fourseventyive Mami.** (*Let us agree... you need to pay four hundred and seventy five, mom*)
- C: **Kumi na tano basi tufungie zote pamoja.** (*fifteen shillings more means, I take the rest of the clothes*)
- T: **Nini hii sasa.** (*what is this now*)
- C: **Pamoja na hii.....halafu anacheka. Eehe! Fanya tu.** (*along with this. Ok*)
- T: **Halafu hii discount sasa.** (*This will be my discount then*)
- C: **Eehe!** (*really*)
- T: **Hii ni discount ndio (anakatizwa)** (*indeed*)
- C: **Si ndio hakuna shida. Na karatasi sina ya kubebea.** (*It's OK and I need a paper bag*)
- T: **Utanunua kwanza?** (*Could you buy first*)
- C: **Wako wapi wa kuuza?** (*who sells them here?*)
- T: **Nitakuwekea za mtu.** (*I could give you this one*)
- C: **Na hizi?** (*And this?*)
- T: **Utazipata.** (*You will have them as well*)
- C: **Ukifunga less utaniwekea.** (*incase I forget to collect all of them ,please keep(any) them for me*)
- T: **Ni sawa lakini sidhani nimefunga less. Nafikiria nimefunga zote pamoja.** (*I think I have given you all those that you bought*)
- C: **Nani ana karatasi?** (*who has the paper bag*)
- T: **Joyce si unipee karatasi moja hapo!** (*Joyce, can't you give me a paper bag*)
- T: **Ziko wapi pesa?** (*where is the money*)
- T: **Lete tu, pesa baadaye.** (*let me have it first I will pay(you) later*)
- C: **Huwa unafungua masweater?** (*do you sell sweaters*)
- T: **Eehe! Friday hapo hivo utanipata kona ka bisa, hapo kona ya nini....utanipata.** (*come on Friday .. you will find them*)
- C: **Hapo kwa kibanda cha chai?** (*near the tea hotel*)
- T: **Eehe!**
- C: **Unaona hi karatasi itatoshea?** (*will it fit in this paper bag?*)
- T: **Haya karibu!** (*Ok welcome*)
- C: **Haya nimeshukuru pia.** (*ok I am also thankful*)
- T: **Sasa uniangalie hapo Thursday.** (*now look for me here on Thursday*)
- C: **Haya, sawa. Kalamu hii ni yako.** (*Ok this is your pen*)

As evidenced in the cited turns, this event has been a fruitful conversational undertaking. The customer asks the trader to ensure that he packs all the clothes that she has bought. We, therefore, claim that the customer is being assertive and therefore adopts a re-assuring tone. To some extent, the customer is producing a speech act of compliment and gratitude. This utterance may be interpreted thus: the two discourse interactants are just about to close their conversation. This turn seems to be pointing to the illocutionary speech act of closing the conversation. The customer says: **Haya nimeshukuru pia** (*Ok. I am also grateful*). The trader responds: **Sasa uniangalie hapo Thursday** (*now, shall you see me on Thursday*). We indicated earlier in this article that interactants always strive to strengthen their social relationship (Tannen, 1986; 2006). Through such interactions, their interpersonal goals and relationships are negotiated. As a result, a sense of social order is created. In the cited excerpt, the customer produces an illocutionary act of gratitude, to which the trader responds appropriately: (*Now shall you see me on Thursday*). We interpret the two turns cited above as pointing to the illocutionary act of friendliness. This is due to the fact that the two interactants have established a relationship that is

largely futuristic in the sense that the two are looking forward to meeting in the near -future for the purpose of engaging in a mutual encounter such as the one they have just had. The trader adopts the speech act of compromise. She says: “**Sasa tufanye jumla, ninaweka badala ya kuweka fifty nitaweka forty**” (*I will sell this at wholesale price, instead of paying fifty shillings, you can pay forty*). In producing this speech act, the trader knows that she cannot be rigid in so far as pricing of the articles of trade is concerned. She knows that if she does not compromise on the price, then, the customer may as well go elsewhere to her disadvantage. The trader and the customer engage each other in a bargain, where each tries to outdo the other. The recurring expressions are: “**wacha tuweke forty-five**, (*let us agree at forty five shillings*), and “**ulikuwa umesema forty**”, (*you had indicated that forty shillings would do?*).

The first five turns seem to imply that the trader is willing to bargain and as it will turn out, she will sell her product. The customer, on her part, seems to be a serious buyer as she produces the following turn which may be taken to be a speech act indicating seriousness and a sense of commitment to the bargaining process. In this turn, the customer says: “**wacha mimi nisiumie mahali kwa sababu siondoki bila kununua**” (*“I would not want to suffer (loss) as I will not go away before I buy”*).

The dictates of the speech act framework enables us to interpret the cited turn as a promise in the sense that the customer is optimistic that she could, somewhat, buy the T-shirt. This seems to be an appropriate interpretation to this turn due to two reasons. One, Since this is a market situation, we assume that the trader would not have had to spend time and energy traveling all the way to the market place if she was not inherently motivated to buy. Two, the fact that the two are already in the process of bargaining means that both parties are mutually committed to the fulfillment of the transactional goal, while nursing the thought of a future encounter that may benefit them as transacting partners. In one of the turns, the trader says: **hata ukienda pale mbele, huwezi kupata vinyasa**. (*Even if you proceed to other places, you will not find any short trousers*).

We realize that the market interactants are seductive and persuasive in their use of language. The trader wishes to sustain the transactional exchange with the customer for as long as she has not bought the product. This state of affairs seems to contravene Grice’s maxim of quality which says that interactants should try to make their contribution, truthful. In

other words, they should not say what they believe to be untrue; “we should not say that for which we lack adequate evidence”: In this context, the trader is not sincere and honest in producing the utterance cited turn above, as she has no evidence to support the claim that her customer may not find any short trousers elsewhere. It may turn out that there are many short trousers everywhere, but since she would not wish to lose her customer, she tries as much as it is practically possible, to arrest the attention of her customer. This confirms the fact that open-air market context has a lot to do with competition. This utterance should not necessarily mean that the trader is being uncooperative, but rather should be understood in the sense that the trader is trying to be tactful. The inherent speech act in this utterance is seduction. If she has to sell her commodity, then she has to convince the customer that indeed she has what the customer needs. The customer, casts doubt on the trader’s claim, when she says: **kweli?** Meaning: *is that true?*

The utterance just cited implies that the customer does not necessarily believe the trader’s assertion, yet she participates in sustaining the transactional exchange. There is already a cordial relationship between the two parties. The trader asserts that: “**wewe ni customer wa kuelewa. Si ndio?**” (“*You are an understanding customer, isn’t it?*”). The customer, on the other hand, agrees by saying ‘**Eehe!**’ meaning, ‘*that’s right*’. The speech act that is embedded in these two turns points to cooperation and collaboration. To a large extent, in a discourse such as this, interactants are expected to behave collaboratively. What holds this discourse together is not necessarily the external system that discourse interactants have internalized but a kind of moral obligation that one must collaboratively engage in certain performances in accordance with the natural and societal procedures that are stocked in one’s brain. Both parties are aware of the fact that the market discourse is not about being truthful or otherwise, but about participating in a mutually beneficial encounter.

There are a number of illocutions that point to proposals, suggestions, requests and statements. We have already established that illocutions are performed by uttering the right explicit utterances, with the right intentions and beliefs and under the right circumstances. We also indicate here that illocutions are central to linguistic communication, as the corporate speech acts lend themselves to various actions that largely benefit the interactants. The trader

is proposing or suggesting a particular price which, she hopes, will be acceptable to the customer. She says: **“sasa unaona nikifanya hivo kwa hivi vinyasa ndio nitaumia mahali. Wacha mimi nikupe bei yangu, sawa?”** (“*You see, if I sell at a loss, I will suffer. Let me suggest my price ok?*”). The trader in trying to be cooperative responds: **“sawa”** (*ok*). In the following turns, the discourse interactants do not seem to agree. Consequently, the customer is largely exasperated.

As it turns out, the two parties are able to get along with each other as the bargain activity is largely predictable. At the same time, frontiers of uncertainty are minimized and this makes the transaction pleasant. We therefore claim and subsequently this discourse fragment to mean that the customer wants the trader to be a bit serious about the transaction, so that the bargain does not take too long. The bargain activity continues, nevertheless, but the trader realizes that she has to use a placating tone. She does this in the following turn when she says: **“haki mami, si wewe hata...”** (“*Please mom can't you...*”). In the following turn, the trader realizes that there is need to compromise. He says: **Wacha nifanye thirty five, niongeze hiyo tano** (*let us settle for thirty five, just add five shillings*).

This discourse fragment, therefore, can be taken to be an illocutionary act that points to a state of compromise. In this case, the trader trusts that the customer will interpret the utterance in a contextually appropriate way. She expects the customer to make sense of that utterance in the projected appropriate way as she expects both parties to benefit. The benefits to accrue must be in line with the moral provisions of this transactional exchange. In this case, the trader anticipates to making a profit, while the customer should not pay more than is warranted. In this light, the two parties have the capacity to exploit the appropriate speech acts as a necessary resource for the bargain process. Each party is, therefore, obliged to produce meaningful and appropriate utterances. From this discourse, it is evident that the two parties are about to strike a transactional deal. We seem to witness the compromise phase of the interactional exchange, which points to a future encounter. In the following turn, the customer, probably out of excitement, says: **tutakutana na wewe kwingineko na utafurahia** (*we will meet again elsewhere and you will be happy*).

In this turn, the customer has already established an important and cordial relationship with the trader. This relationship may as well be binding in character. The two parties have had a fruitful transaction and each party is happy. This relationship

has been possible because the interactants have deliberately employed the appropriate speech acts of request and humility. In this case, the interactants are evidently using language as a vehicle for the living of real lives with real interests in a real world. On the outset, conversation analysts have aimed at grasping the organized procedures of talk as they are employed in real worldly contexts between persons in real relationships whose talk has a real consequentiality and accountability.

In line with the foregoing argument, it is apparent that the discourse interactants have cooperatively and collaboratively produced the necessary turns that have largely enabled them to reach certain goals. We therefore assert that trader- customer discourse is not directed to a listening “mass” audience. It just turns out to be a coordinated transactional exchange where each party has equal chances in producing the necessary turns and appropriate speech acts. This is done through the production of illocutionary acts that enable the customer to meaningfully manage the bargain activity.

The following turn of represent the section of the transactional exchange where the interactants have not only established a relationship but have also agreed to meet at a later date. In this turn, the customer says: **Hapo kwa kibanda cha chai?** (*Next to the hotel?*). This turn is an appropriate response to the preceding turn. In these two turns, we realize that the pragmatic aspect of language, intentions, motives, and goals that are inherent in the excerpt are defined and concluded. The two discourse interactants, with differing intentions, interact to produce a certain and expected discourse outcome. The two discourse interactants amicably agree to look forward to another occasion or speech event when they can possibly engage in a similar encounter. In this turn, the trader attests to this: **“Sasa uniangalie hapo Thursday”**, (*So, meet me then on Thursday*). The customer responds: **“haya, sawa...”** (*Ok. Fine*). In a way, this excerpt represents a mutual exchange, whereby speech acts are produced, structured and sequenced in such a manner that enables the discourse participants to interact amicably.

From the turns that we have cited above, it is apparent that trader-customer negotiations are collective undertakings so that the lexical items “we”, (**we** should not hurt each other...) demonstrates that the interactants are actively involved in outdoing each other. This is why this discourse negotiation is evidently a speech event in which the interactants are explicitly oriented to getting clear to each other.

There is local justification in the data for interpreting an utterance such as this as a challenge. The trader seems to be implying that the value of the caps cannot, in any way, be negotiated. We examine other phrases as follows: **Sawa uniumize nami nikuumize** (*It is ok if you injure me and I injure you*) **Wacha tugawe loss** (*Let u share the loss*).

These phrases are pragmatically related in terms of the underlying acts that are performed by these utterances. The collective lexical item “we” points to a speech act of mutuality or solidarity in negotiating their points of view. This arises from the fact that the two discourse partners are speaking from their mutual point of view. This is therefore a typical example of a collectively speech act. In so far as this transaction goes, the two discourse participants are aware of the fact that something of personal or mutual significance is at stake. The two interactants must bargain mutually if they really want to get some form of satisfaction from the transactional encounter. As the transactional encounter progresses, it becomes apparent that the interactants are really interested in bargaining at the mutual level. We encounter the following phrases in the closing section of this excerpt:

T: **Ukivaa hicho, mvua ikinyesha haiwezi kukunyeshea** (*If you wear that cap, you will not be rained on*). This means the trader is interested in the customer’s well-being. As the transaction progresses, we encounter the following excerpt: C: **Sasa mwisho wenu kama nimekasisirika ni pesa ngapi? Kama nimekasirika kabisa** (*What would be your last price if indeed you wanted to make me sale?*). T: ... **Mwisho ni hapo, hapo, Hi hapo hapo, mali ya leo mzee** (*That is the last price That is it. This is a valuable caps offer, old man*).

From the cited turns, the customer is evidently interested in buying the cap but he is not sure the trader wants to reduce the price further. We need to understand that this is a market context in which the two players must negotiate almost everything. By using the conditional term “if”, the customer seems to doubt the real intentions of his interlocutor. In other words, the customer seems to be asking: are sure you came here to sell? In this instance, the trader implies that he has hit the rock bottom offer and thereby informs his interlocutor that the cap is so valuable that it may not be available the following day. In this light, the trader is warning his interlocutor. He seems to be saying that if he is a serious customer, then he should buy that good at that particular time as it may not be available the following day. This arises from the fact that there are as many potential customers than he (customer)

can imagine. The trader seems to be forgetting that he is just one of the sellers and that there is always a possibility of purchasing the cap from others. The encounter finally closes with the following. Phrases:

- C: **Mitumba imechafuka sana hapa Kongowe... Wasemajebrother** (*Secondhandclothes /articlesare in plenty here at Kongowea ... what would you say brother?*)
- C: **Haiwezekani kwa nini brother? ... Twataka kununua hizi nguo twende tukauze nasi tupate faida eti!** (*Why isn't it possible my brother? We want to buy these clothes so that we can resell them at a profit*)
- T: **Mimi nakuuzia kumi na tano damu** (*I want to sell this hundred and fifty ... as you are my brother*)
- C: **Nipunguzie brother** (*Reduce the price for me brother*)

These turns contain some pragmatic meaning in the sense that the two discourse participants are transacting at the interpersonal level. It is in this light that we should interpret the phrases:

- . **Wasemaje brother** (*what would you say, brother?*)
- . **Kwa nini brother** (*why, brother?*)
- . **Kumi na tano damu** (*fifteen shillings will be an ideal price*)
- . **Kumi na tano damu** (*(fifteen shillings will be an ideal price)*)

Evidence from other excerpts indicates that there is no one-to-one correspondence between what is said and what is meant so that in most interactional encounters, we are at a loss in understanding the speaker’s intentions and sincerity. In this case, we refer to the following turns:

- C: **Mwisho?** (*Last price?*)
- T: **Mwisho ni pesa, hapo ishirini na hapo kumi** (*The last price is money; those go for twenty shillings and these, ten*).

In this transactional exchange, the interactants are transacting as mutually benefiting partners. They are negotiating as equal partners so that their utterances are deemed appropriate and cooperative in light of the assumptions that they bring to the conversation. When the trader says that the ‘**last price is money**’, she seems to imply that there is no need for a protracted bargain. This researcher found out that in most cases, traders and customers were not at pains to participate in a bargain where fruits, vegetable and cereals are the main articles of trade. This is because

such commodities are relatively cheap. In this case, bargaining is not worth the time and energy regarding these items. The trader does not therefore expect the customer to ask for the reduction of the price where the mentioned items are involved. In other words, the trader is indicating that she has already made up her mind that she is not ready for a protracted bargain undertaking. It is this respect that we should understand that language is used to perform many functions such as exchanging information, maintaining social bonds of friendship as well as deciding and carrying out a joint action. The following turns reinforce this line of thought:

- T: **Customer, usilalamike nitakuongezea.** (*Customer do not complain, I will add something*).
- C: **Utaniongeza?** (*Will you add something?*).
- T: **Eeee.** (*Yes*).
- C: **Ukinipatia kwa kilo utaniongeza** (*If I buy one kilogram, you will have to give me a better deal*).
- T: **Nitakuongezea customer.** (*I will give you a better deal, customer*)
- C: **Utaniongeza viazi vingapi?** (*how many sweet potatoes will you add me?*)
- T: **Hata viwili hata vitatu customer.** (*two or three, will do*)
- C: **Ati utaniongeza viazi viwili!** (*That you will add me two potatoes?*)

In this excerpt, the trader tells the customer that if he buys the potatoes, then she will definitely augment the purchase. The customer wants to be assured that indeed the trader will give him more potatoes if he buys from her. We therefore ascertain that in this discourse, the interactants use specific language forms and structures to make promises. In a way, the two interactants are seen to be working towards understanding each other and, as such, they will want to be open, sincere and honest. As evidenced, each party has a right to their opinion and so they apply their pragmatic knowledge in the real discourse situation. They, therefore, do not impose their opinion on their co-interlocutors. This is why we argue that in this discourse ‘not anything goes’ as many things don’t occur and cannot occur because they would violate the unconscious agreement that holds between the transacting partners. This seems to be the case in the rest of the excerpts. We shall pay attention to the following turn: T: **Sasa sisi sio kukosana na ni kuelewana lakini sijakubaliana na wewe** (*Now we shouldn’t disagree. We have to understand each other. I don’t seem to agree with you*). From this

exchange, it is apparent that the two interactants have to interpret their speech acts appropriately. The trader seems to be telling the customer that this is a transactional negotiation and that at some point, they will compromise. She also seems to be implying that it is in their interest to fully cooperate. As the discourse progresses, it becomes apparent that the customer will not buy the onions after all. The following two turns may reinforce this line of argument.

- C: **Haya tupimie kilo tatu. Mama hiyo kilo hujui ni ngapi. Aaah mama una taabu wacha tuangalie kwingineko. Tusamehe lakini tutakuja kesho.** (*o.k, give me three kilos. Mom, you don’t seem to be certain about the price. Oh, no Mom, you may be having a problem. Just leave us alone as we look elsewhere. Forgive us, but we shall come back tomorrow*)
- T: **Sasa mbona mnaniachia mali yote jamani?** (*Now, why will you refuse to buy any of these items from me?*).

The customer takes leave of the transaction by saying “**tusamehe lakini tutakuja kesho,**” which literary translates as “*forgive us, but we shall come back tomorrow*”. This utterance constitutes an act of apologizing (**Tusamehe**=*forgive us*) and promising (**Tutakuja kesho**=*we shall come back tomorrow*). The customer finds it necessary to keep the conversational encounter on its course by using appropriate language forms. She uses the appropriate language to negotiate the relationship between herself and the customer. In a way, the customer would not wish to embarrass the trader in so far as this encounter is concerned. He therefore indicates that there is a possibility of a similar interaction occurring in the near future. We interpret this utterance as an act of saving the face of the interlocutor. This understanding arises from the fact that we build interpretations of a text by using a lot more information than is in the words. We create what the text is about (**Tusamehe**=*forgive us*), based on our expectations of what normally happens in the market situation. The purpose of this text is to achieve interpersonal goals of the transaction so that the two parties would wish to establish that they are relating as fellows human beings who will need each other today and in the future. In this light, we realize that each party has a face that could be maintained and, as such, they will be willing to apologize (**Tusamehe**=*forgive us*). They, therefore defend their faces as well as the face of their co-interactants. It is generally in the best interest of each party to maintain each other’s face.

Some utterances clearly communicate

specific speaker intentions. In the market context, the interactants are expected to communicate their intentions in such a manner that will enable them to get a fair deal from the bargain. This seems to be one of the characteristic features of trader-customer Kiswahili discourse. The following two turns are illustrative of this:

C: **Hii ni ya wabunge** (*This is for parliamentarians*)

T: **Sasa hakuna mambo ya wabunge.**

**Wabunge kando. Bunge ya siku hizi ni ya**

**dot.Com**(*Now, parliament has nothing to do with it. Parliament aside. To day's parliament is for the dot. Com generation*)

We rely more on our knowledge of the general background conditions that are necessary for an utterances such as this to have a particular function and meaning. The two interactants are aware of the fact that they are transacting business in a world that is largely dictated by the socio-economic forces. In this way, one would expect a parliamentarian to be economically endowed, so that s/he is able to buy almost anything at any price.

The trader, knowing the real intentions of the customer, decides to employ the tactic aspect of language. He seems to be saying that with or without parliamentarians, goods and services will change hands in this market. Our interpretation of this AP is based on the fact that the meaning of any discourse fragment resides not necessarily in the specific utterances alone but also in the context in which it is used. In this case, knowing how to interpret the meaning of the cited AP above requires knowledge of the world as well as the knowledge of the words and utterances in general. This means, the two parties have a clear understanding of their world. They, therefore, have a pragmatic idea of how their discourse is structured. The haves and the have-nots are part and parcel of the market discourse. Our knowledge about the world includes our expectations about what people would normally say in the market situation. Let us now turn to the following excerpt:

T: **Ulikuwa na ngapi wewe?** (*How much do you have?*)

C: **Wee ona kibeti kimebaki tu kitambulisho.** (*Just look, nothing left, apart from the identity card*)

T: **Hauna hata kidogo?** (*don't you anything more to add?*)

C: **Hakuna, hakuna hata naenda kulala njaa leo.** (*Nothing at all. Infact I will go to bed today on an empty stomach.*)

In the first turn cited above the trader produces

an inquisitive turn. She inquires from the customer as to how much she is willing to pay for the pair of shoes. The customer explains that she has no more money to add and that her wallet contains her national ID card and nothing else. The customer goes on to explain that: **Hakuna, hakuna hata naenda kulala njaa leo** (*Nothing, nothing left. In fact I am going to bed on an empty stomach*).

The customer's utterances may seem to be flouting the Gricean cooperative principle of quality: be truthful. The customer may not necessarily be lying in uttering these words. It is worth mentioning that some speech acts can be identified through fixed forms of utterances which express commonly occurring meanings. In a real market conversation such as this, most turns that are produced are not uttered for the first time. It is obvious that the customer would not wish to buy the pair of shoes at the expense of her supper. In this negotiation, the speaker makes overt reference to her wallet (*which contains nothing but the national ID*). When she realizes that her tact is not effective, she makes reference to the fact that if she spends all the money in her custody, then she and her children will go to bed on an empty stomach. She is speaking from a family/collective point of view. She is therefore performing a collective speech act, in the sense that if she spends the very last coin in her possession, then she will suffer a great deal: she will go back home on foot, let alone going to bed on a hungry stomach. The customer seems to be implying that she cannot need to buy the pair of shoes at the detriment of her family. The foregoing line of argument is illustrated in other excerpts. We shall now refer to the following turns:

C: **Na kama hakuna pesa tutafanyaje?** (*and if there is no more money, what shall we do?*)

T: **Angalia vizuri.** (*just search your pockets properly*)

C: **Hakuna.** (*there is nothing*)

T: **Niongezee ishirini** (*can I add twenty shillings*)

C: **Hata naenda kwa mguu** (*I am even going back home on foot*)

In this excerpt, the customer states her case as to why she is not able to pay more for the dress. When the trader insists that she should consider adding more money for the dress, the customer says: **Hata naenda kwa mguu** (*I will even go back home on foot*). The two interactants are aware of what is at stake. The trader knows that she cannot sell if she does not insist on the worth and value of the dress. The customer on her part explains that her offer has deprived her of the

much needed money that she could use as fare back home. This is why she says: **Hata naenda kwa mguu** (*I will even go back home on foot*).

In this article, we have demonstrated that trader-customer Kiswahili discourse is replete with a variety of illocutionary speech acts which are sequenced in such a way that the bargain activity mutually enhances the market interaction. As we conclude this article, we note that context plays a central role in interpreting the various speech acts in trader-customer Kiswahili discourse. In this case, the manner in which something is said, meant and done is guided by various related constraints ranging from the interactants' intentions to the social context of the transactional event. Context is a central aspect by means of which analyzed speech acts in trader-customer Kiswahili discourse. Generally, our analysis has shown that the transacting partners use various speech acts pertaining to politeness, greeting, promising, warning, informing and the like. At the same time, they blame and complain about each other in a collaborative way. They do business by talking in such a way as to display their concern and involvement in the personal life of their co-interlocutor. Through the various speech acts, the trader explains the suitability of his products to the customer. In trying to persuade the trader to sell the goods at a low price, the customer uses expressions that invoke his inability to pay as much. Thus, he uses speech acts that arouse the concern, sympathy and generosity that duty requires people to show to each other.

### Conclusion

In this article, I have discussed the occurrence and role of various speech acts in the market discourse. I have established that this discourse is replete with illocutionary speech acts that clearly set out the purpose of the transaction. I note that the interactants are in the business of bargaining, and as such, the speech acts which are revealed through their communicative utterances, are meant to perform certain communicative functions. They also enable the discourse participants to focus their utterances so as to achieve their mutual interactional goals. Trader-customer discourse is evidently a collaborative venture that is geared towards satisfying certain mutual goals. From the various excerpts, we found out that each party in this exchange organizes and sequences the appropriate speech acts purposely to persuade the co-interactant to change their perspective and standpoint. We have also established that the pragmatic speech

acts fall into a pattern of questions posed by either party followed by answers from the appropriate quarter. As evidenced, the AP sequence is typical to this discourse and points to politeness. After each reply by the trader/customer, the customer/trader either echoes the answer or poses a new question in order to sustain the transaction.

As the discourse progresses, the trader, through the use of various speech acts, offers more information about his products and thereafter recommends a purchase. The customer on his/her part acknowledges the trader's declaration, questions his/her information and explains why s/he may not buy the particular goods. The transaction is actually a negotiation over the price of the good, and as such, the two discourse participants negotiate every aspect of the transactional situation which, conceivably, motivates a sale. The market discourse is, therefore, thorough and in-depth negotiation of the price of goods in a real transactional encounter. Through the various speech acts, the trader explains the suitability of his products to the customer. In trying to persuade the trader to sell the goods at a low price, the customer uses expressions that invoke his or her inability to pay as much. In this case, s/he uses various speech acts that arouse the concern, sympathy and generosity that duty requires people to show to each other.

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