

# Deception in Police-Suspect Interaction in Ibadan, Nigeria

by

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## Abstract

This paper examines forms of deception in police-suspect interaction. It describes how deception expresses power relations in such interaction. Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory is used to engage how inferential communication achieves effects in the interaction. Data for this study were collected at the State Criminal Investigation Department in Iyaganku, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Findings of the study reveal that police officers manipulated suspects during interrogation sessions. The study concludes that police-suspect interaction involves a great deal of psychological manipulation.

**Key words:** deception, relevance, power, police-suspect interaction, Nigeria

## Introduction

Interrogating police officers, henceforth IPOs, adopt a number of strategies in their bid to achieve success in the course of their enquiries. One of the onerous tasks of the police is the task of investigating criminal intent. In the Nigerian context, a department known as Criminal Investigation Department is saddled with the task of probing criminal activities. Such investigations are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Nigerian Constitution. There is no doubt that crime investigation places a great of demand on the psyche (Dastjerdi, 2008; Edwards, 2013). This behoves IPOs to resort to psychological tactics in achieving confession. Achieving confessional statements is the overall goal of IPOs. However, suspects flagrantly work at cross purposes with the goal of IPOs; suspects do not voluntarily confess during the course of interrogation. IPOs resort to deception instead of physical torture in their attempt to obtain confessional statements from suspects. Deception is a means through which IPOs conceal certain information, ideas, intents and emotions so as to get suspects confess during interrogation.

Forensic linguistics has recently attracted the attention of language researchers. One of the concerns of their research is investigating the language of police interrogation (Gordon, 2012; Heffer, 2010). Police officers' use of language during interrogation is worthy of being investigated as different motivations, ideologies of IPOs are unraveled through a close study of the language of enquiry (Farinde, 2008; Ahiale, 2013; Ayodele, 2013; Makandi, 2008; Haworth, 2012). In Nigeria for example, IPOs resort to deception to feign a number of issues before suspects. Such use of deception is aimed at ensuring the success of the enquiry. Ekundare (2014) observes that IPOs take into cognizance the age, religion, social status, marital status and degree of suspects' crime during investigation. He notes that these factors come to bear during investigation. On the same issue, Nicola (2012) observes that the physical setting of the interrogation room and the conduct of IPOs are prominent factors that affect the interrogation process. Akinrinlola (2016) notes that deception is needful in handling the complexities and hurdles experienced by IPOs during crime investigation. Deception is a conscious process of veiling facts and cleverly luring suspects to confess to crime Leo (2009). It is observed that deception manifests greatly in police-suspect interaction. IPOs go extra mile in achieving confession in their interaction with suspects. They sometimes appeal to suspects' ignorance, intellect and circumstances surrounding suspects' crimes (Akinrinlola and Ajayi, 2016). Deception manifests at the interrogation stage of the entire enquiry. Suspects' cognition is manipulated to achieve certain institutional goals during interrogation sessions. Both IPOs and suspects are communicators in such interaction and the need for them to maximize relevance in the course of interrogation is geared by the need to manipulate the mental state of others. The interactants (IPOs and suspects), routinely work towards what generates positive cognitive effects in the interaction. It is important to assert that the study is predicated on inferential communication and this underscores the fact that background knowledge and context of the interaction give clue to meaning.

Studies on police discourse have examined discourse acts and legal requirements in police interrogation. Some of these studies include those of (Leo, 2009; Reid, 2007; Magid, 2007; Heydon, 2005; Makandi, 2008; Haworth, 2012; Farinde, 1997, 2008; Terebo, 2012; Sadiq, 2012; Ayodele, 1988). These studies have not engaged the psychological peculiarities in police-suspect interaction. Besides, the studies do not describe how police officers manifest power over suspects. This study intends to describe deception as a strategy used by IPOs in eliciting confessional statements from suspects and describe how power relations are negotiated in such interaction. Apart from revealing the discursive functions of deception in its context of use, the study will contribute to existing body of knowledge in forensic discourse.

This paper investigates the various forms of deception employed by IPOs in getting suspects confessed. It also examines the motivations behind the use of the forms of deception in the course of interrogation. Attention is also drawn to how deception expresses power relations between IPOs and suspects. The use of deception by IPOs is geared towards achieving certain institutional goals.

This paper, therefore, establishes that deception is employed to carry out a number of discursive roles in the course of police interrogation. A good understanding of the use of deception and its function will reveal the various motivations of IPOs and suspects during crime investigation. It will also reveal the manipulative tactics of the IPOs and how these express unequal power relations between IPOs and suspects. The study will also contribute significantly to existing research in forensic linguistics.

## **Studies on Deception and Police Discourse**

Deception constitutes one of the viable means of eliciting confessional statements from suspects. It involves a great deal of psychological manipulations in a bid to win suspects. Suspects, on the other hand, are conscious of IPOs use of deception during interrogation sessions. The law does not always establish the use of deception during police interview. In the Nigerian context, the law does not guarantee the police to arrest without presentation of warrant of arrest. Having presented the warrant of arrest, IPOs have legitimate rights to probe suspects' cases. Existing studies have not researched the import of deception in police-suspect interaction. The only significant point raised about the concept of deception is that it is used to get things done with minimal input. Nicola (2012) identifies the stages involved in deception as that which includes; investigating, interrogating and testimonial. According to him, deception has to do with tricking criminals during investigation in order to gather enough information to arrest a suspect. The concept of deception has been multifariously conceived by scholars. Leo (2009) notes that deception is allowable within the ambits of the law. He goes further to assert that its enforcement is limitless. He observes that some believe deception is used to elicit coercive response from suspects, thereby generating false confession. He proposes some rules that should guide investigation which include: comfortability, clear communication, including non-verbal, ensuring there is physical barrier, full body of suspect. He classifies non-verbal as that which include: manipulators, full body positions, fleeing interview, covering the mouth, and state of the mind. He concludes that deception is psychologically inclined and it is useful tool during investigation. In the same vein, Reid (2007) harps on the place of attitude during investigation. He opines that attitude informs the use of deception. He observes that the way a suspect responds to the use of deception depends to a large extent on his attitude. He sees this as a response to stimulus. This is because of the underlying knowledge and awareness that they are innocent or guilty. He submits that behavioural symptoms are not the products of telling the truth or lying but an expression of underlying attitude. (Magid 2007) is of the opinion that deception features prominently in investigative practices. He observes that all successful interrogations manifest deception and hence the need to place value on the strategy.

Heydon (2005) notes that through the tri-partite interview framework (opening, gathering information and closing), police officers are able to take control during the opening and closing structures because there are pieces of information which ought to be provided on record by the police officer in order to establish legitimacy of the suspect's confession.

To ensure that police officers adhere to institutional legislative requirements, opening and closing sections of the interviewed are used to inform suspects of their rights and obligations. Heydon holds that there are asymmetries of power relations in such interaction because the role the police officer takes is that of an animator and information provider while the suspect takes the role of a respondent. That is, in each interview, the police officer, on behalf of the institution, asks the suspect questions, the turns are initiated by the police officer. In return, the suspect formulates their responses (Heydon 2005:95). Heydon argues further that sometimes suspects initiate new topics by providing 'multi-component answers'. This allows the suspect to provide additional information that has not been initially requested by the interviewing officer when in reality a direct response is required.

Examining the patterns of communication by the police, Makandi (2008) submits that communication is an important factor in policing. He notes that communication with the public is crucial in law enforcement. He opines that while in the environment, effective communication aids police officers in understanding and supporting visions and goals of an agency or between several enforcement agencies. Makandi's work tilts towards sociology of police communication. Little attention is given to the linguistic peculiarities of unequal power relations in police-suspect interaction.

Haworth (2012) carries out a study of police interview using an integrated approach. He draws on conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis and pragmatics. His study focuses on balance of power and control. He studies recorded data of police interview with suspects. He finds out that in particular, the institutional states of participants, the discursive roles assigned to them by the context, and their relative knowledge, are significant factors affecting the dynamics of the discourse. He shows that power and control are constantly under negotiation, and are open to challenge and resistance. His analysis further shows that dominance is not necessary advantageous to participants to the specific goals and purpose of the police interview context. However, Haworth's study does not focus the dialogic patterns of interaction in police-suspect interaction.

From the linguistic point of view, Farinde (1997) examines police-accused interrogation. He studies various motivation and orientations of participants towards each other and towards the subject of interrogation. He uses data collected from three Police Stations in Ondo town. His findings show that police officers perform a number of communicative acts in the course of interrogation. His work is essential to explaining how police interrogation works. However, there is need to examine the ideological basis for the discourse and the implicit roles of language as an instrument in creating discourse in police-suspect interaction.

From the perspective of the role of interpreters in police-suspect interaction, Terebo (2012) opines that investigating police officers' proposed educational background do not show significant relationship with their interpreted works.

She submits also that interpreters can narrate and describe conversation in all major time frames and can handle the interpretation situation not just with simple questions like the speaker at the intermediate level, but have shown to be at advance level. Her work exposes the dilemma of detainees and makes a case for reform of the police interrogation procedure. However, little is done to examine conversational practices during interrogation.

Farinde's (2008) work on forensic discourse also provides a Nigerian prospective to forensic linguistics. His work examines recorded cases of questioning in the courtroom. He adopts speech act theory as the theoretical anchor for the study and his findings reveal that apart from questions and statements, there are some expressions that lawyers still use to precede the bit that witnesses are expected to respond to and such expressions are still being used by the lawyers to maintain rigid control of the courtroom proceedings. He also observes that some untrained officers usually give caution and in the process of giving caution, there are a great deal of inconsistencies in both the delivery and presentation. However, Farinde's work does not investigate the techniques of getting suspects to confess to guilt.

Sadiq (2012) examines the language of police interrogation in the Kano metropolis. He studies the structure, organisation and communicative strategies in police interrogation. He studies recorded data of police interview in three Police Stations in Kano. His findings reveal that the prototypical patterns of discourse acts as police criminal investigations are the question/answer sequences, which are indeed common to most institutional discourses. His study also reveals that questioning forms are used to control the flow of discourse. He identifies the symmetrical relationship that exists between police officers and suspects as an important factor that aids the success of police investigation. He opines that police/accused discourse is highly organised with predictable structures. However, the study does not account for the manipulative tactics of police officers and suspects during interrogation. This study intends to fill this vacuum.

While commenting on some lexical peculiarities of the language of the police in Nigeria, Ayodele (1988) observes that lexical terms, such as 'paper' and 'particulars' feature predominantly in police communication. He posits that the pragmatic context of utterance must be involved in assigning meaning to these lexical items. Ayodele's observation gives suggestion for discourse analysis and pragmatic studies of police communication in Nigeria. Such studies become necessary because associating some lexical items to police communication is not enough in describing police communication. The reason is that lexical items or sentences are not the only linguistic units that give meaning on discourse; the context of use, which enhances meaning in language, can exert meaning on linguistic structures. Ahialey (2013) examines elicitation and responses in courtroom interactions in Ghana. Her findings reveal that series of discourse acts are performed in courtroom interactions. The study does not embrace the discursive tactics of the social actors in the courtroom. The studies above have conceptualized police discourse from different viewpoints. However, there is paucity of work on the manipulative negotiation tactics involved in police interrogation. This study engages a description of deception with a view to examining, with linguistic theory, how power relations are negotiated in the interaction.

## **Theoretical Framework: Relevance Theory**

In an attempt to situate the place of intention in communication, Sperber and Wilson (1995) propounded theory of relevance. Relevance theory emanates from attempts to expound Grice's work on human communication. Grice posits that an essential feature of human communication, whether verbal or written is the recognition of speakers' intentions (Grice 1989). In the course of projecting this claim, Grice makes a case for the place of inference in human communication. In other words, he advocates the need for inferential model of communication, which is an alternative to the classical model. With respect to the classical model, a communicator encodes his message into a signal which is decoded by the hearer with the use of an identical model of the code. Meaning is achieved in the inferential model through the use of evidence of intentions provided by a speaker during communicative encounter. The idea behind this is that meaning is dependent on evidence provided. An utterance is seen as a linguistically coded piece of evidence such that verbal comprehension is predicated on decoding. However, the linguistic meaning recovered by decoding is just one of the inputs to a non-demonstrative inference process which tends to generate interpretation of the speaker's meaning.

The concern of inferential pragmatics is to describe how the hearer infers the speaker's meaning with reference to evidence provided. Relevance theory is predicated upon the fact that utterances generate expectations which guide the hearer towards the speaker's meaning. Grice explains these expectations in term of Cooperative Principles and maxims of quality (truthfulness), quantity (informativeness), relation (relevance), manner (clarity) which communicators are expected to observe (Grice 1961, 1989). The central concern of relevance theory is that expectation of relevance raised by an utterance, are enough and predictable towards achieving the speaker's meaning. The aim is to explain the cognitive interpretation of what relevance amounts to and how they aid comprehension.

Relevance is a property of thoughts, memories and conclusions of inference. It is not peculiar to utterances and observable phenomena. It is assumed that any external stimulus or internal representation that provides an input to cognitive process may be relevant to an individual. Utterances raise expectations of relevance because the search for relevance is a basic feature of human cognition which speakers may exploit. In relevance theory, an input (a sight, a sound or an utterance) is considered relevant to an individual when it connects with background information he has available to yield conclusions that matters to him e.g by answering a question, he has in mind, improving his knowledge on a topic, settling a doubt and so on Sperber and Wilson (1985,1990,1996). An input is relevant to an individual when its processing yields a positive cognitive effects. A positive cognitive effect be could be described as a worthwhile representation of the world which an individual has (Sperber and Wilson 1995). The greater the positive cognitive effort achieved, by processing an input, the greater its relevance will be.

The greater the positive cognitive effort required, the less relevant the input will be. Communicators are geared by informative and communicative intentions. The informative intention is the intention to inform an audience of something while communicative intention is the intention to inform the audience about one's informative intention. Ostensive communication is achieved when there is a response to an ostensive stimulus. An essential characteristic of the human cognition to maximize relevance makes it possible to predict or manipulate the mental state of others.

This paper adopts the inferential communication model, an aspect of relevance theory to account for various motivations between police officers and suspects during interrogation sessions. Police-suspect interaction is a sensitive aspect of police duties. As such, there are bound to be interplay and struggles between the social actors in the communicative encounter. Since most suspects are unwilling to voluntarily confess to crime, the Nigeria police resort to deception as a means of getting confessional statements from suspects. The task of getting suspects confess to crime is a herculean one. This behoves police officers to adopt deception as a strategy of achieving their goals in such interaction. Relevance theory becomes an appropriate theoretical anchor in describing the cognitive interpretation of the motivations of police officers and suspects.

## **Method**

Data for this study were collected by the researcher at the State Criminal Investigation Department, Iyagankun, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria between 14th May, 2013 to 3rd March, 2014. It is a department of the Force that is saddled with crime investigation. The researcher requested a letter of introduction from the Head of Department of English, University of Ibadan. Upon approval by the State Commissioner of Police, the researcher was given a letter of introduction to the State Criminal Investigation Department. Sixty five sessions of interrogation were randomly tape recorded. Interrogation on cases such as burglary and stealing kidnapping, murder, rape, felony, arson, robbery, deformation of character and forgery were tape recorded for analysis. However, fourty cases were purposively selected because of their related use of deception. Data collected were transcribed into text and for conversations in Yoruba, efforts were made to translate them into the English language. Ethical considerations were also observed. The qualitative method of analysis was adopted. Emphasis was on the use of Jacob Wilson and Sperber's relevance theory to explicate the various strategies used by IPOs in manipulating the cognition of suspects towards the subjects of interrogation. The results were subjected to pragmatic analysis.

## Forms of Deception in the Interaction

The entire interaction revolves around exploiting the cognitive state of suspects by IPOs. IPOs manipulated suspects to achieve certain institutional goals in the interaction. These manipulative tactics of IPOs are described in terms of their inferential meaning and communicative intentions. IPOs used deception to get confessional statement from suspects as revealed in the data. Police officers often told lies to convict the suspects. The goal of an interrogation or criminal interview is to obtain factual information about the facts of a case. This constitutes the stimulus or the purpose of the entire interaction. Police officers manifested deception during the interrogation sessions through distortion of the seriousness of the crimes, engaging in victim blame or suggesting to a murder suspect that, for example, the victim is still alive. Threats and promises were used as opportunities for deception, telling a suspect that confessing would result in less jail term, or fabrication claims of evidence, like appealing to suspects' conscience. Testimonial deceptions were undertaken for a number of reasons including cases where the motivation was to conceal criminal behaviour on the part of the investigator. It was observed that police officers told lies during interrogation as a weapon for social control. Deception, as revealed in the data took the following forms:

### Posing lenience

Although lenience cannot be offered as it would invalidate confession in police interrogation. In the course of the interrogation, investigating police officers appeared to be lenient with suspects. The aim of this perceived lenience was to get useful information from suspects, which would aid his conviction. The case of stealing below establishes this claim:

#### Excerpt 1

1. P: *Ìgbà wo lo lọ sí ọdọ̀ ọrẹ́ rẹ́ ?*  
When did you visit your friend?
2. S: *̀ọs`ẹ́ tó kojá.*  
Last week.
3. P: *A gbọ́ pé ìwọ lo gbé owó náà.*  
We heard you stole the money.
4. S: *Rára sir.*  
No sir.
5. P: *S'e o mò pé àbúrò lo jẹ́ sími.*  
You know you are a younger than I am.

6. S: *Bẹ̀'`eni sir ẹ̀ ràn mí lọ'wọ́'.*  
Yes sir, please help me.
7. P: *(o sunmo odaran naa) Jòkó sórí àga yìí.*
8. S: *E sé `ogá.*  
Thank you sir.
9. P: *(o n woju odaran naa) màá fún ẹ̀ ní àyè dí ẹ̀ kí o fì ronú dáadáa nípa `or`o yìí.*  
*(looking at the suspect straight in the eye) I will give you some time to think over the case.*
10. S: *`ogá ẹ̀ j`ofo' mi o le gbé adúru owó yen.*  
Sir, please I could not have stolen such a huge sum.
11. P: *(O fun odaran naa ni igbale) J`ofo' bámi gbá il`ẹ̀ yìí.*  
*(gives a bunch of broom to the suspect) please sweep this place for me.*
12. S: *Mo ti gbọ́' sir.*  
I have heard sir.
13. P: *Èniyàn ni gbogbo wa. Ojú lón rójú sàánú. Sàà fun mi ní èsì àwon ibéèrè tí mo m bi ẹ́'.*  
We are all humans. We are bound to be kind to one another. Just answer my questions.
14. S: *`ogá màá dáhùn, olo'run á ràn yín lọ'wọ́'.*  
Sir, I will answer. God will help you.

The suspect was arrested for stealing the sum of five hundred thousand naira from a friend's house. In his interaction with the suspect, the IPO pretended that he had been reliably informed that he (the suspect) stole the money. The suspect had not been established as a legitimate rogue. He was only arrested on the grounds that he was the last person that visited when the said amount was stolen. The IPO deliberately made the declarative statement: 'we heard you stole the money' in line 3. This statement was made by the IPO because of the natural tendency of the IPO to seek relevance. What is considered relevant to the IPO is any information that would give him (the IPO) a clue to the issue on ground. This demands the IPO to vigorously pursue relevance. Considering the context of the statement, the IPO deliberately committed the suspect by saying he and his colleagues heard that the suspect stole the money. The IPO made the statement to appeal to the psyche of the suspect to confess to the crime.

Viewing from inferential perspective, the IPO wanted to maximize relevance by manipulating the suspect to confess. This was meant to authenticate the fact that the suspect was a legitimate thief. While the suspect resorted to denial, the IPO decided to be lenient to prepare friendly relation with the suspect. This he did by telling the suspect that he (the suspect) was his younger one. This was another means of maximizing relevance. The IPO offered evidence (his lenience) to the suspect in order to seek the suspect's cooperation. He said this to allay the fears of the suspect and the IPO felt by uttering such words, the suspect could feel at home to divulge his involvement in the crime. The IPO's lenience continued when he offered the suspect an opportunity to sit. This was also an evidence to show that the IPO cared for the suspect.

Although offering a seat for the suspect could be described as an expression of compassion, but the intention of the IPO was to lure the suspect to confess. It was a means of processing the mental cognition of the suspect to give in to the psychological pressure mounted unconsciously by the IPO. The IPO's decision to give the suspect some time to think over his involvement in the crime was also a demonstration of lenience on his part. Also, the utterance of the IPO about the fact that humans are bound to be kind to one another was a device employed by the IPO to develop a sense of intimacy towards the suspect. The tactics employed by the IPO in the context of the interaction perform the function of cleverly seeking information from the suspect. In other words, the IPO used deception to seek relevant information.

### **Sharing Suspect's Status**

Deception is also manifested in the form of IPOs sharing status with suspects. This was done so that the person being interrogated would believe that the IPO had his interest at heart. Below is an example from the data:

#### **Excerpt 2**

1. P: (*moves closer to the suspect*) Face me man.
2. S: Yes sir.
3. P: Are you a trained business man?
4. S: I am under training sir!
5. P: Are you sure?
6. S: Yes sir, but I have mastered the art of trading.
7. P: Why did you trick your master?
8. S: I did not do that sir!
9. P: You know you are a family man like me.
10. S: Yes sir.
11. P: We attend the same church too.
12. S: I don't know sir.
13. P: You see you are a Deacon and I am one too.
14. S: Silence.
15. P: You equally resemble James, my younger brother.
16. S: I don't know James, sir.
17. P: Please tell me the whole truth so that we conclude in time.
18. S: I...I..

The above interaction was a case of obtaining property by false pretense/cheating. The suspect had served his master for about eight years. By implication, the suspect had mastered the intricacies of the business transaction. The suspect supplied one Mr. X some books worth three hundred and fifty thousand naira (#350,000) without his master's consent. The suspect, at the point of supply, presented the necessary certificates and particulars that confirmed him as a bonafide distributor. The suspect was eventually arrested and interrogated at the State Police Criminal Investigation Department, Iyaganku, Ibadan. In the interaction, the IPO posed a question to confirm whether he was a trained business man or not. Since the suspect did not respond in affirmative terms, the IPO had to devise other strategies to convict the suspect. The strategy the IPO used here was to share the same status with the suspect being interrogated. First, the IPO established the fact the suspect was a family man just like the IPO. This follows that the suspect should exhibit some sense of dignity and uprightness.

The suspect's affirmative response propelled the IPO to challenge him (the suspect) again that they attended the same church. The IPO was quick to establish a friendly ground with the suspect. The suspect feigned ignorance as the IPO claimed. To buttress his point, the IPO confirmed that the suspect was a Deacon in the church he (the IPO) attends. The IPO used this strategy to hang the suspect in the balance. The IPO's informative intention was to convict the suspect while the communicative goal was just to inform the suspect that he (the IPO) attends the same church with him. He (the IPO) was of the opinions that coming in through the angle of faith could help pin down the suspect and he would eventually confess. This was a means of twisting the suspect and engineering his mental state to succumb to the IPO's manipulative skills. Knowing the consequences of the crime committed, and the undesirability of the suspect to confess to such crime, the IPO introduced another interactive gimmick: 'you resemble James, my brother'. The IPO affirmed that the suspect bore a resemblance of his brother, perhaps they were blood relations. All these were strategies to deceive the suspect so that the mystery behind the shady deal could be revealed.

### **Blaming Suspects**

Another manifestation of deception, as revealed in the data, was blaming suspect for crimes committed. In the interaction, IPOs skillfully implanted this idea in the minds of suspects to persuade them to confess. A case of rape below helps to establish this claim:

#### **Excerpt 3**

1. P: Is (BB) your sister?
2. S: Not at all sir!
3. P: How did you know her?
4. S: We live in the same area.

5. P: How did you meet her on that day?
6. S: She was selling fruits on the street...
7. P: Girl, you caused it all! You are to be blamed. Perhaps you wore a mini skirt that exposed your laps.
8. P: It means you have been doing it before, and you aroused this man's sexual desire. That was why he did it. If I were him, I would do same.
9. S: Yes sir! I did not even force her.
10. Victim: (*furious with the suspect*) Sir, I was hawking and he called me to his place. When I got there, he bought one hundred naira worth of banana. Then he touched my hand. I noticed two handkerchiefs in his hand. That was all I could remember. I just noticed blood stain on my private part.
11. S: Yeah!!!
12. P: Keep quiet, young man.
13. S: Oga, It is a lie! Let me explain...
14. P: Just relax.

The suspect, a 38 year old man, was arrested for raping a twelve years old girl. The IPO and the suspect knew the legal implication of the offence committed and as such, both parties had to devise means of achieving their interactive goals. The background information seemed to guide the interactants in their contributions. The IPO wanted confession so as to ensure the success of this task. This behoves him to seek relevance in his contributions. The suspect, on the other hand, wanted release from the long arm of the law. Instead of quoting from the Nigerian Criminal Code of Conduct to incriminate the suspect for his role in the crime, the IPO devised another strategy. He cast aspersion on the victim of the rape. He accused the girl of being the brain behind the rape saga. This was a strategy to make the suspect feel at home in order to respond positively to questions asked by the IPO. It was a means of influencing the suspect's cognition toward the facts of the case. According to the IPO, the girl wore a promiscuous dress that exposed the sensitive part of her body. The IPO cleverly justified the suspect's actions by saying he (the IPO) could do same. Here, the IPO cleverly used deception through blaming of victim of crime. Blaming victims for crime was an evidence for the suspect that the IPO wanted his (suspect's) release from custody. Blaming the suspect was a strategy to convict the suspect. This can be seen in lines 7 and 8 above. The goal of this strategy was to temporarily exonerate the suspect so that he (the suspect) would see that the IPO had taken side with him. This, the IPO thought, would induce confession from the suspect.

### **Encouraging Confession**

Another strategy used by investigating police officers was the act of encouraging suspects to confess to guilt. In the entire interaction, IPOs routinely advised suspects to make a clean breast of their roles in crime with the hope that they would be exonerated, but this may not be true in the legal context if the suspects confess. Below is an example from the data:

#### Excerpt 4

1. P: You actually sold the land.
2. S: No sir!
3. P: When did you sell it to Mr. (XB)?
4. S: August last year.
5. P: Now that the land has been occupied by another person, what do you intend to do?
6. S: Mr. (XB) did not understand me. I told him my relatives planned it. They don't know I have got a court injunction, and I have the particulars of the land.
7. P: Sir, the present occupant said you sold it for them.
8. S: Sir, please...listen to me...
9. P: There is no point dragging this issue. Just tell the truth!
10. S: (*Moves closer to the IPO*) Sir, I am a true Muslim...
11. P: See, nobody can maltreat or detain you here. I am in charge of your case. Just tell me the truth and the whole issue will be resolved now.
12. S: I don't know how to convince you again!
13. P: I may even ask you to give him another plot of land instead of repaying his money.
14. S: Okay sir!
15. P: But, tell me the truth so that we can close your file.
16. S: I have...
17. P: Just tell me. I promise to assist you.
18. S: I will be glad sir!

In the interaction above involving a case of conspiracy, the suspect was said to have conspired with his friends to cheat one Mr. (XB). The suspect sold a plot of land to the said (XB). After about two years, Mr. (XB) found some constructions growing on the land. He reported the 'illegal' occupant and it was revealed that the land was sold again by the suspect in question. In the interaction between the police officer and the suspect, the IPO encouraged the suspect to confess to guilt. The suspect was aware of the legal implications of telling the truth to the IPO. In a bid to exonerate himself, he made frantic efforts at maximizing relevance by saying he has the particulars of the land in question. By uttering this statement, the suspect felt the IPO would see the case from another perspective. It was a means of manipulating the cognitive skill of the IPO. On the other hand, the IPO continued by telling the suspect that confession would fetch him freedom from custody. These are evidences provided by the IPO to maximize relevance and provide lesser cognitive effects in processing the utterance he made to the suspect. In this case, the IPO disguised the ultimate consequences of telling the truth from the suspect. The IPO promised the suspect of safety even after confession. The IPO continued in line 11 by saying he was in charge of the suspect's case. This statement points to the fact that the IPO has what it takes to free the suspect provided the suspect cooperates. It also suggests that the IPO has institutional power to grant bail.

As such, the suspect was at the mercy of the IPO. In line 13, the IPO says he may even give the suspect another plot of land. This, the IPO feels, may help to compensate the suspect if he (the suspect) eventually loses the case. All these are instances of psychological manipulation which are aimed at maximizing relevance. He is aware that the suspect would only respond stimulus that would yield the desired outcome, and that was why he harped on the suspect's safety, but he hinged such safety on confession. The IPO used the imperative sentence 'tell me the truth' in lines 11 and 15 to express encouragement. This was a strategy devised by the IPO to incriminate the suspect.

### **Justifying Objection**

This was another elicitation strategy employed by IPOs in the course of the interrogation. At this point in the interrogation, the suspect gave some character-based reasons he/she could not have committed the crime. In a bid to maximize relevance, the interrogator twisted the suspect's responses into an acceptable excuse for why the suspect did what he/she was accused of. The suspect came up with such 'tenable' excuse to save his/her face from being threatened by the police officer. Here is an example from the data:

### **Excerpt 5**

1. P: Do you always give account to your master?
2. S: Yes sir.
3. P: But we took the farm inventory and discovered that about N700,000 was missing.
4. S: That cannot be true sir.
5. P: Ok, do you pay workers' salaries promptly?
6. S: I do except when we observed some crises.
7. P: The money you were given to rehabilitate the road was also not spent judiciously. True or false?
8. S: Sir, that is a long story.
9. P: How did you get the job?
10. S: I got it through my Pastor.
11. P: Which church do you attend?
12. S: RCCG
13. P: What is the meaning of that?
14. S: The Redeem Christian Church of God
15. P: Are you a true Christian?

16. S: Yes sir.
17. P: We learnt you have a Toyota Sienna car and a piece of land.
18. S: Yes sir.
19. P: Where did you get such money to buy the property? You are just 29 years.
20. S: Sir, I am a Christian. I cannot do such. I am a Deacon as well.
21. P: In your church?
22. S: Silence
23. P: Well, I don't expect that from you. So you really didn't want to cheat your master. Did you?
24. S: I didn't sir. Is just that I don't have peace in the job and his wife disturbs me a lot.
25. P: Perhaps your Master is very stingy too. Are you well treated?
26. S: At all sir!
27. P: Does the job give avenue for you to start your own business?
28. S: In fact, sir, it does not.

In the interaction above, the IPO turned various excuses given by the suspect into justification in an attempt to maximize relevance and achieve confessional statements from the suspect. The above was a case of stealing. One young man of 29 was saddled with the task of managing a poultry farm. The young man was a graduate of Agricultural Extension. He managed the farm for a period of two years and his Master was not always on ground to see to the well-being of the business. The business almost crumbled and the wife of the business owner later got to know that the handler of the business had engaged in some financial foul plays which had had adverse effects on the business. The sum of seven hundred thousand was declared missing. On this note, the handler was arrested. In the interaction above, the suspect's responses are guided by the need to avoid being incriminated. This explains why he seeks relevance in the interaction. In a bid to escape the unpalatable consequences of his actions, the suspect decided to come up with reasons to exonerate himself. The IPO was aware of this and he also devised a clever strategy; the strategy was to welcome the excuses of the suspect. Accommodating the suspect's excuses was a means of attaining positive cognitive effects in the interaction. The goal of the enquiry was to let the suspect confess with minimal input. The suspect who was also geared toward maximizing relevance resorted to giving excuses to legitimize his actions. The suspect's excuses were character-based. He told the IPO that he was a Christian and he could not have committed such offence. One could deduce that the suspect wanted to hide under the umbrella of being a Christian. It is assumed that a true Christian should not perpetrate sharp practices. The suspect specifically mentioned the denomination he belongs to as RCCG. Based on this premise, the IPO framed some sentences to incriminate the suspect though this was unknown to the suspect. The IPO's statement: 'so you really did not want to cheat your Master, did you?' was an attempt to convict the suspect and justify his excuses. The IPO went on to assume that perhaps the suspect was unfairly treated by his Master and this, according to the IPO, could prompt one to 'rebel'. The suspect largely resorted to the use of negation in an attempt to justify the stance of the IPO. Instances can be found in lines 20 and 28.

## Baiting

Another form of deception used by IPOs during crime investigation was baiting. It was a strategy used to manipulate suspects to confess to guilt. IPOs in some cases promised suspects in the course of interrogation. The contents of such promises were very juicy. IPOs promised suspects to give vital information that could unravel the facts of cases being investigated. These were done with IPOs' pronouncements to assist suspects to escape the required punishment of their crimes. Examples from the data are:

### Excerpt 6

P: You were caught on the 2nd November, 2014 alongside the young man on the floor here.  
S: No sir! I was arrested...  
P: You were arrested where?  
S: At XX.  
S: But am innocent of the allegation.  
P: Allegation? Which allegation? And who alleged you?  
P: You, the police.  
P: We are only asking you asking questions to know whether you committed the offence or not. Tell me the fact of the case and I will release you.  
S: Ok sir.  
P: What were you doing at the scene of the crime? Do you reside there?  
S: No Sir.(*shaking his head in pity*)  
P: Is the man beside you your friend? Just be honest. I will speak with the Station Officer on your behalf.  
S: No sir! I don't know him.  
P: Ok, have you seen him before?  
S: No sir!  
P: You know am the Administration Officer here. I influence the bail of suspects when they tell the truth. Are you ready to tell the truth?  
S: Officer...  
P: You are a chameleon! The story you told in the first interrogation is different from the one you are telling me now.  
S: No sir, I did not take part in the exercise.  
P: Ok, you joined them when they were going for the job? You are a liar!

The case above was a robbery. The suspect, Mr XB, was said to be involved in a robbery case that took place along XX area, Ibadan. He was arrested alongside two others. The suspect was arrested and detained at Sanyo Police Station for four days before the case was transferred to the State CID. The IPO used baiting as a strategy during the investigation of the case. Getting suspects confess to guilt is the ultimate goal of the IPOs and this task is usually pursued in the interaction with suspects. The IPO in question resorted to baiting in order to maximize relevance. It is important to stress that both the IPO and the suspects worked at cross purposes. While the IPO was motivated by the desire to get confessional statements from suspects, the suspect was resolute in making up claims that could exonerate him. Each of the interactants pursues their goals in the interaction bearing in mind some background knowledge. Influencing the mental state of the other constituted their goals. What is considered relevant in this context is whatever enhances the goal of the enquiry. To the suspect, relevance entails whatever contributes to exonerating him from the snare of the IPO. The suspect appeared to be unwilling to confess voluntarily to guilt. Having noticed this stimulus in the suspect, the IPO devised baiting as a means to an end. He appealed to the cognition of the suspect in order to obtain the fact of the case. This involved the IPO making promises with suspect with the use present tense: 'I influence the bail of suspects' as used in excerpt above. The IPO also commented on his social status as that which was capable ensuring the suspect's release. The IPO equally used exophoric reference, when he referred the suspect as a 'chameleon'. The use of the word, 'chameleon' in relation to social context, denotes the fact that the suspect changed his stories at every phase of the interrogation. This is typical of chameleon, an animal, which changes its colour at will. Another instance of baiting is seen below:

### **Excerpt 7**

P: Are you XX's brother?

S: Yes sir!

P: Are you her biological brother?

S: No sir! Her father is my uncle.

P: How often do you visit them?

S: I can't really say sir.

P: But you visit them.

S: Yes.

P: On that fateful day, did you see her parents?

S: No sir.

P: Before the exercise, what did you discuss?

S: I only asked after her well-being.

P: You did not force her?

S: (*crying profusely*) I did not, sir.

P: Ok, she requested sex? Or maybe the way she dressed seduced you.

S: I was not myself sir.

P: Do you know that the case is supposed to be resolved within the family? So why are you reluctant to tell the truth? If you confess now, it is a matter of speaking with her parents to release you. Just make sure you don't do it again.

S: Ok sir!

The above interaction was a case of rape. The suspect was arrested for having carnal knowledge of his cousin. The victim, a girl of eight, was said to have been raped by the suspect who went to visit her parents. On that fateful day, the girl's parents had gone for a social function at Iseyin. The girl and her younger brother of about four years were only at home doing some washing in the toilet. The suspect asked for the parents and knowing that the parents were not around, he sent the younger one to buy something outside and had carnal knowledge of the elder one. The cry of the girl alerted neighbours around. The interaction between the IPO and the suspect above revealed the use of baiting as a strategy by the IPO. This was achieved through the use of present tense and negation. The IPO says: 'the case is supposed to be resolved within the family'. The statement is a device to calm the psyche of the suspect so that he (suspect) could confess to guilt. He also posed a question to the suspect when he said, 'you did not force her? This is a strategy to lure the suspect to answer in the affirmative because there are evidences that establish the suspect's guilt already.

### **Oblique Reference and Deliberate False Statement as Bulldozing Strategy**

Deception also manifested in form of making deliberate reference to unrelated issues during interrogation sessions. During police interrogation sessions at the State CID, attempts were made by the IPOs to discuss topics that might provide insight into a different topic. In a bid to find a clue to a particular subject of interrogation, IPOs defected to subjects that could enhance the strength of interrogation. Police officers also told lies deliberately to persuade suspects to confess to guilt. This was because the case-related phase of the interrogation posed a great deal of demands on the psyche. This is so because suspects, in most cases, do not confess to guilt easily considering the penalties such confessions could attract. An example is given below:

#### **Excerpt 8**

1. P: Mr X, you said you are an engineer.
2. S: No sir. I said I learnt it sometimes ago.
3. P: When was that?

4. S: A long time ago.
5. P: You also help the firm to repair the fan belt.
6. S: Not always.
7. P: You sell fuel too.
8. S: I do, but I was asked to stop last week.
9. P: You also learnt how to repair meter.
10. S: I did not complete the training.
11. P: But that does not mean you cannot handle some aspects of it.
12. S: Well!
13. P: (*moves closer to the suspect*)
14. (*coughs repeatedly*) How do you measure the meter?
15. S: There is a way we do that.
16. P: (*watches the eyeball of the suspect*) How do you measure it?
17. S: (*feels reluctant to answer*) I can only do it if we see the equipment.
18. P: Do you know that one of the workers in the company saw you the day the crime was committed? He even mentioned your name.
19. S: (*shouts*) God is my witness, sir! My senior staff knows me well.
20. We will deal with you.

The IPO decided to veer into another unrelated aspect of the crime. The suspect in question was alleged to be a party to a case of theft recorded in their company. He was charged for conspiracy and stealing. In a bid to achieve confessional statements from the suspects, the IPO decided to investigate the professional competence of the suspect in handling the petrol meter. The IPO was of the opinion that if the suspect's mastery of meter was established, it would help reveal the fact that he was actually involved in the manipulation of the meter device. The IPO cleverly manipulated the contents to extract information from the suspect. Also, the IPO deliberately lied to the suspect that he was involved in the theft. The suspect in question expressed surprise when he shouted. The linguistic strategy used by the IPO was the use of declarative sentences. Declarative sentences were used by the IPO (in lines 5, 9 and 11 above) to allege the suspect and establish the veracity of his (the suspect) involvement in the crime. The IPO's elicitation strategy performed the function of luring the suspect to confess. This strategy was used when IPOs were confronted with hostile and hardened criminals, and when it was obvious that these suspects might refuse to co-operate, they resorted to deceptive means to obtain their preferred responses. In eliciting confession from the suspects, IPOs deflected from the issues of the case being investigated. They changed the topic of interrogation to some other matters. Suspects did not know that such deflections helped to establish their involvement in crimes.

This is in consonance with Fairclough (2001) who posits that: “if one becomes aware that a particular aspect of common sense is sustaining power inequality at one’s own expense, it ceases to be common sense and may cease to have capacity to sustain power inequalities, that is, to function ideologically (p.71). When the IPO discovered that the suspect who was involved in a case of conspiracy and stealing proved unyielding to the pressure of confession, he decided to devise a more technical means of persuading him to confess. He decided to deflect the portion of the responses of the suspect.

The suspect told the IPO that he learnt a bit of engineering. By inference, the IPO, presupposed the fact that the suspect could handle and operate machines in the filling station. Most of the IPO’s questions were targeted towards the suspect’s mastery of the training. The IPO was convinced that the suspect could admit that he could handle the fuel pump he was indirectly involved in the manipulation of the fuel pump.

### **Deception and Power in the Interaction**

Power manifested a great deal in the interaction between IPOs and suspects. Power in the context of the interaction was expressed in the subtle manipulation of the situation. Power is described in terms of the subtle manipulation of suspects by IPOs. The use of inference to elicit confessional statements from suspects constitutes power in the context of police interrogation. The paper describes power in inferential and communicative terms. Although certain factors grant police officers access to discourse. Some of these factors according to van Dijk (1997) include: their membership of the Nigeria Police Force, possession of police uniform and their knowledge of the law.

Certain social indicators grant access to IPOs in the course of interrogating suspects. Apart from the social indicators earlier given, space constitutes a significant indicator of unequal power relations between IPOs and suspects. Suspects were made to sit chairs place in a lower position to IPOs. From such lower position, they communicate with IPOs. IPOs, on the other hand, sat on raised chairs where they could observe the various reactions of suspects to questions posed. Among other things observed at such vantage position were the emotions of suspects and physical acts which contribute to meaning in the entire interaction. Beside, a signification pointer to power is the person who controls the turn. IPOs hold power in the interaction as they control how turns are distributed in the interaction. They determine the scope of questions and limit suspects responses by virtue of the framing of the questions. IPOs select what suspects say and determine what becomes of the interrogation process.

This paper does not describe the legitimate means of accessing power by IPOs, but it conceives power in terms of the psychological manipulation of suspects by IPOs. It was observed that both the IPO and the suspects worked at cross purposes.

IPOs were consciously desirous of getting suspects confess to guilt while suspects were aimed at manipulating IPOs and finding ways of complicating the subjects of interrogation. Both IPOs and suspects seek relevance in the interaction by playing influencing the cognition of one another. IPOs deceived suspects in the form of bringing themselves to share the same role with suspects. This was done to demystify the severity of suspects' cases. IPOs also displayed lenience with suspects during interrogation so as to get them confess. All these are subtle ways of exercising power in such institutional setting. The various elicitation strategies of the IPOs were aimed at achieving the goal of the interrogation exercise. The IPOs could not have claimed to have succeeded in the interrogation task if suspects did not confess to guilt. Apart from the power granted to IPOs by virtue of their membership of the Nigeria Police Force, power was also made manifest in the tactics used by IPOs in prosecuting the facts of cases. One could then submit that police-suspect interaction involves a great display of power relations.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has investigated the place of deception in police-suspect interaction with particular emphasis to the Nigerian context. Deception is described as a means of achieving the institutional goals of IPOs. It is believed that nothing guarantees success in police interrogation than having suspects confess to crime. This constitutes the stimulus of an average police officer on interrogation. IPOs are desirous of achieving relevance by making inferences from the statements of suspects. In a bid to unravel the psychological manipulative tendencies of IPOs during interrogation sessions, the paper adopted Sperber and Wilson's (1995) relevance theory, an aspect of cognitive linguistics, to describe deception as a form of psychological acts in police-suspect interaction. The various forms of deception noticeable in the data have been highlighted and described. Deception serves quite a number of discursive functions; it is a means of manipulating, tricking, confusing and luring suspects to confess through a subtle means. The paper further establishes that deception is a manifestation of power relations in such institutional interaction. Power is described in terms of the psychological skills of IPOs to get suspects confess to crime with minimal police input. An investigation of deception in police interrogation points to the fact that there exists a relationship between linguistic psychology and police interrogation.

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