

Pragmatics of Socio-Linguistic Influence on Neurologist-Patient Interaction in Selected Hospitals in Nigeria

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Abstract : This study examines how social and linguistic variables influenced communication between neurologists and patients in selected university teaching hospitals (UTHs) in southwestern Nigeria. Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Acts, complemented by Emanuel and Emanuel's model of doctor-patient relationship, served as the theoretical framework. Data comprising 22 audio-recorded neurologist-patient interactions were collected from two UTHs in the southwestern region of Nigeria. Data revealed that educational attainment of patients has insignificant influence on the interaction where the linguistic prowess of the patient has been impaired for consultative communication. However, the status influenced the degree of attention paid to patients by neurologists and determines the amount of time 'trying to help patients to communicate'. Patients with lower educational status and who could not communicate in English spent more time narrating their ailment to neurologists. Patients with higher educational status and could communicate in English saves consultation time as they express themselves briefly unlike those who were of little or no education in the clinics. Through this, diagnoses and therapeutic processes took eight to 12 minutes. 20 minutes was the longest duration recorded. Neurologist-patient interaction in the observed hospitals is shaped by neurologists' experience, patients' social variables and language.

Keywords : medical pragmatics, neurologist-patient interaction, nigeria, socio-linguistic influence

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