

Preface

 <https://doi.org/10.1075/pbns.298.preface>

Pages xiii–xiv of

**Offers and Offer Refusals: A postcolonial pragmatics
perspective on World Englishes**

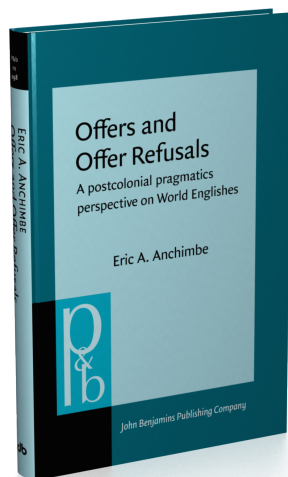
Eric A. Anchimbe

[Pragmatics & Beyond New Series, 298] 2018. xix, 316 pp.

© John Benjamins Publishing Company

This electronic file may not be altered in any way. For any reuse of this material written permission should be obtained from the publishers or through the Copyright Clearance Center (for USA: www.copyright.com).

For further information, please contact rights@benjamins.nl or consult our website at benjamins.com/rights



Preface

This study does two major things: it contributes to theory formation on the emerging pragmatic framework, *postcolonial pragmatics*, and then applies this theory to data collected from two postcolonial societies, Ghana and Cameroon. Because I focus on the functioning of the theory, I have used copious examples to clearly illustrate how postcolonial societies realise various pragmatic phenomena, in this case the offer-refusal communicative act. Through these we see how postcolonial social interaction norms – often hybrid in composition – weigh on speakers' choices in interaction and how these choices are accompanied by particular behavioural patterns. I, therefore, propose that any investigation of interaction in these societies should take into account the complex history of their evolution, contact with other systems during colonialism, and the heritages thereof. By factoring in these elements, we get a more complete picture of the motivations behind the linguistic choices, the illocutionary forces driving them and the intended perlocutionary effects sought after.

The work is among the first to extensively apply the postcolonial pragmatics framework, and it is my fervent wish that more would follow. A few already exist. For instance, Mulo Farenkia (2014a) combines postcolonial pragmatics and variational pragmatics in studying politeness and speech acts in Cameroon French and Canadian French. The recent edited collection by Schubert and Volkmann (2016), *Pragmatic Perspectives on Postcolonial Discourse* also adopts postcolonial pragmatics as one of its major theoretical bases. Mulo Farenkia's (2016) edited volume also partially builds on postcolonial pragmatics. With these studies, postcolonial societies will no longer be investigated using the lenses of Western pragmatics theories and data specimen but with lenses and datasets that take into account their internal structural compositions and speakers' preferences as they are.

I must mention here that I do not define 'the postcolonial' in line with postcolonial theory as developed in literary and cultural studies where it depicts an awareness of, and movement towards, consciously challenging (de)colonisation and the power echelons that it engendered. In order to describe the linguistic strategies in social interaction in postcolonial societies freely without having to factor in the power ramifications of (de)colonialism, alterity, the periphery, race, ambivalence, language hegemony and the many other core concepts of postcolonial theory, I have

used the term ‘postcolonial’ as an era, time-defining concept. This is consistent with its use in the theoretical framework postcolonial pragmatics.

I benefitted from various forms of support in the course of this research. I wish to thank Susanne Mühleisen and Martina Drescher whose intercultural experience with offer refusals in Cameroon served as a starting point for this research. I am also grateful to Gabriele Sommer for input in the initial phase. During my fieldwork stays in Ghana, I made many wonderful friends. My hosts Jemima A. Anderson, Josephine Dzahene-Quarshie and Charles Marfo and their families took great care of me as I found home in the comfort of their families. George Frimpong of the Department of English, Legon, Accra and all the student assistants who helped me with the questionnaires both at the university and in the churches in Legon are heartily commended here. Bismarck Dzahene-Quarshie devoted whole afternoons to taking me from one research location to another and introducing me to respondents from different walks of life. I am really grateful.

In Cameroon, my colleagues Gratien G. Atindogbé (Buea), Valentine N. Ubanako (Yaounde) and Stephen A. Mforteh (Yaounde) facilitated the data collection process and have consistently – rather persistently – encouraged me all these years. To them all, I say, thanks. I extend heartfelt thanks to Anita Fetzer, the series editor, Isja Cohen and Susan Hendriks at John Benjamins for the smooth production process. Comments by two anonymous reviewers helped me sharpen the arguments made in this book. I am grateful to them. I am equally grateful to Uche Oyali for carefully checking the proofs. All remaining shortcomings are mine, of course.

My kids Adaya, Thalia, Ryan and Angelo have been a great source of inspiration and motivation. You are so adorable.