

BARGAINING IN BOBO-DIOULASSO CLOTHING STORES: STRUCTURE, RULES, AND PERSUASION STRATEGIES¹

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Abstract

This study examines bargaining in the clothing stores of Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, West Africa. With different models for predicting generic structures, 30 bargaining exchanges involving male and female adult interactants are analyzed. As components of the global structure of bargaining, the study identifies four functionally different sections – establishing communion, item selection, price negotiation, and leave-taking – which are performed in order. An in-depth analysis of the price negotiation section shows that bargaining is mainly composed of 'price talk,' 'product talk,' 'person talk,' and 'time/weather talk.' Although this section is dominated by 'price talk,' the production and interpretation of all kinds of talks align with a small set of illocutionary forces: (1) soliciting, (2) making, and (3) evaluating an offer. This functional structure of bargaining not only shows its formulaic and rule-governed nature but also demonstrates the degree to which linguistic and socio-cultural elements work conjointly in its production and interpretation.

Key words: Bargaining; Jula; Bobo-Dioulasso; Burkina Faso

Nin baara nin be teremekecogo segesege finifeeresow kono Bobo Julaso, Burukina Faso jamana na, farafinna tilēben fan na. Nin kecogo nunu kola, baro bisaba, min patagalibe teremekecogo ma segesegeli kera ceww ni musow be min na. Baara nin ye bolofara naani sugandi ka ke teremeli sigicogo bakuruba ye: baro siginin, feerefen sugandili, songo teremeli, ani kodonogonna, u be tugu nogon ko nin cogoya nin na. Segesegeli kerenkerennin kera songo teremeli bolofara kan, min b'a yira k'a fo kumanogonyaw be boli kosobe songow le kan, feerefenw, mogow ani wagati cogoyaw. Halini nin bolofara nin kumanogonya fanba bee be boli songow le kan, kuma suguyaw ni nefoli tow bee be ke ka tugu nogon na, minw lapini ye ka kumakenogon ka hakilina dow falen : (1) ka fen do deeli, (2) ka fen do laben (3) ani ka feen dinin do jatemin. Songo teremeli kecogo nin yoro nin na, b'a yira tije lo ko feen labennin lo, sariyaw be nin na, nga a b'a yira fana hake min na, kaan kumadenw ni sigida kofaamucogow be nogon soro kuma foli n'a nefoliw ra.

1. Introduction

Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso's second-largest city with some 537,728 inhabitants (INSD¹ 2006), has long been a site of attraction because of its history as a trade center, its economic-capital-city status, and its rich cultural heritage. Located in the south-western part of the country (see *Figure 1*), the city enjoys a robust hierarchical commercial framework, composed of its palatial central market and its 20 or so secondary retail markets (AFD² 2011). The central market is the largest and offers a variety of products including plastic buckets, gas lamps, moped tires, shoes, and decoration objects in leather, bronze, and gold. Vendors selling similar items are grouped in different sections of the market: those selling fruits and vegetables occupy the inner stalls of the market; the fresh meat and fish sections occupy large stalls, and their overwhelming odor makes them stand out from the other sections; tailors occupy the section next to the excellent African cotton print cloth section; and shoe vendor stalls occupy one of the main entrances. The market spills over the surrounding streets in a chaos of mopeds, wandering merchants, transportation carts for goods, tricycles, personal cars, and taxis, all of which contribute to making it a lively counterpoint to Bobo-Dioulasso's otherwise calm streets.

¹ National Institute of Statistics and Demography (INSD) is the official statistics services in Burkina Faso in charge of conducting the national census and collecting other demographic data.

² The French Development Agency (AFD) is a public financial institution that implements policy defined by the French government.

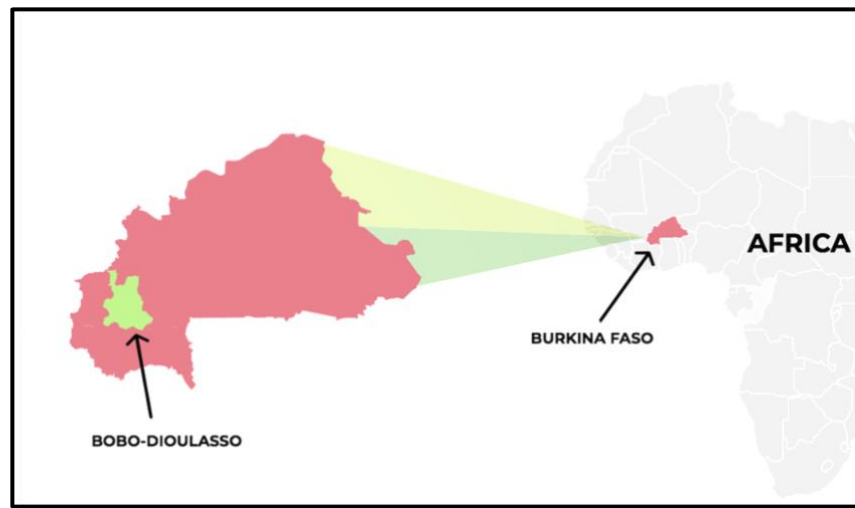


Figure 1. Map of Africa, Burkina Faso, Bobo-Dioulasso

The city's marketplaces could be intimidating for those not accustomed to their settings, practices, and atmospheres. Retail encounters at the central market, the secondary retail markets, and the streets' sales units are often characterized by price negotiation of consumer goods or bargaining, which the city's inhabitants naturally engage in daily. For outsiders, however, bargaining can be a daunting exercise due to their lack of understanding of local norms. While some view it as a complete waste of time, others equate it to an opportunity to rip off foreign visitors.

Numerous questions arise when considering the practice of bargaining: Which types of consumer goods are subject to bargaining? Which types of stores allow for bargaining? How should customers conduct themselves in the marketplace? Which bargaining topics align with local norms? How can customers effectively navigate interpersonal relationships during the bargaining process? How do customers accurately convey and interpret bargaining lines? The absence of a comprehensive scientific understanding of bargaining in Bobo-Dioulasso prompts an empirical study to address these inquiries.

2. Literature review

2.1 Generic Structure

To provide a scientific description of the bargaining artifact, this study uses a genre approach. In the field of linguistics, several models have been developed to predict the generic structures of communicative events within a particular context. These models aim to identify the patterns and structures underlying these events. Some of the commonly used models include the Speech Act Theory (Austin 1950 and Searle 1960), the Interactional Sociolinguistics Model (Goffman 1960), the Discourse Completion Task (Blum-Kulka 1989), the Generic Structure Potential (Halliday & Hassan 1989), and the Flowchart Theory (Ventola 1987). In this study, the researcher utilized three of these models – Speech Act Theory, GSP, and the Flowchart Theory – to study the generic structure of bargaining speech events in the context of Bobo-Dioulasso.

According to the Speech Act Theory, the meaning of an utterance goes beyond its literal or grammatical meaning and is dependent on the speaker's intention and the context in which it is spoken. The theory classifies an utterance into three categories: locutionary act (the actual words spoken), illocutionary act (the intended meaning of the utterance), and perlocutionary act (the effect of the utterance on the listener). Since bargaining speech events are characterized by the use of language beyond its literal meaning and involve meaning negotiation among interactants,

the Speech Act Theory is particularly useful in interpreting the literal and veiled meanings of bargaining lines, as well as their interpretation.

Halliday's (1961) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is another approach that greatly contributed to genre studies in linguistics. This approach defines language by focusing on the way situational context shapes its uses. Drawing on the SFL approach, Hassan in a collaborative work with Halliday proposes the Generic Structure Potential (GSP) theory (Halliday & Hasan 1989), which has two purposes: predictive and classificatory. For predictability, the GSP maintains that components of contextual configuration such as field (content or topic), tenor (types of interpersonal relationships), and mode (type of communication channel) can all be used as variables to make predictions about text structure as well as the ordering of elements within that structure. On the classificatory side, the GSP aimed at describing "the total range of textual structures available within a genre" (Hasan 1984, p.79). To attain such a goal, the description must not only specify the obligatory and optional elements of the genre but must specify the ordering, including the potential for recursion, of elements of the genre. Once such a description is achieved, the genre itself comes to be defined by its obligatory or invariable elements; the optional or variable elements serve to explain variations within the genre. One of the strengths of this theory, Ren (2010) argues, is its potential to provide "a successful explanation for the phenomenon that countless texts whose forms may differ significantly are perceived by native speakers of that language to have close association with one another" (p.233). Hasan's generic theoretical construct enables us to identify (1) elements of the structure whose presence is compulsory, (2) elements whose presence is optional, and (3) the ordering of the elements vis-à-vis each other including the potential for iteration.

Although Hasan's theory helps identify the invariable and variable elements of a genre, the actual ordering and the recursive nature of the elements can be much more complicated than suggested by the GSP. Indeed, the static nature of her theory makes it unsuited to capture the potential of some elements to influence the production or suppression of others. A more dynamic model that offsets the limitations of Hasan's theory is Ventola's (1987) Flowchart Theory. This theory arranges the synoptic elements of genres using a flowchart where choices can be conditioned by the decisions made during the enactment of the genre. In other words, what is currently being done depends on the decisions just made earlier. The Flowchart Theory suppresses the distinction between obligatory and optional elements. However, it complements the GSP model by consistently reflecting the principle of collaborative meaning-making processes and by offering a satisfactory explanation for failure in social interaction. This study uses all three approaches to unveil the structure of bargaining in Bobo-Dioulasso.

2.2 On Bargaining in Other Contexts

Considering that predictability is an essential characteristic of generic structures, previous research studies – such as Mehrotra (1986), Ayoola (2009), Debouche (2004), Sosseh (1987), and Orr (2007) – have recognized certain consistent patterns in bargaining speech events. Mehrotra (1986) argues that the use of certain rhetorical devices such as repetition, allows for a certain degree of predictability, especially in the beginning phases of the exchanges. He specifies that the seller's predominant use of "No" is usually countered with the buyer's use of "Yes." Ayoola (2009) observes that the opening interrogative "How much is this?" is usually met with a terse imperative "Pay Seven" for example (p.390). Sosseh (1987) notes that bargaining speech events in the open-air markets of Dakar are composed of three separate units fulfilling different functions: (1) greeting or summoning and requesting the item, (2) the price negotiation and exchange money for the item, and (3) leave-taking. Focusing on substantive acts and using a socio-cultural approach, Orr (2007) demonstrates that "the wide range of verbal and non-verbal forms that co-occur in the service encounter genre are consistently and predictably produced and interpreted within a transaction frame as having a small set of illocutionary forces" (p.77). Debouche (2006) distinguishes an opening and a body to bargaining exchanges. In the opening section, she explains, the utterances tend to be more elaborate. In the body, however, there is a

tendency for the use of more reduced forms, often characterized by the omission of verbs or articles (p.73-76). Mehrotra (1986) explains the deletion of certain grammatical features and the often-ungrammatical structures as the result of the time factor on trade talk (p.26-30). In all these studies and regardless of the context, the predictability and rigidity of bargaining exchanges have been extensively nurtured.

Some of these studies have also looked at discourse strategies employed by interactants to achieve their communicative goals. Mehrotra (1986) mentioned argumentation techniques, such as using "If Clauses" to impose a kind of self-punitive measure on the speaker, saying things under oath, giving exaggerated praise to one's items, using question-word sentences without implying a question, refuting the other's point of view, interrupting the other, and forming incomplete sentences. He also referenced code-switching as an interpersonal accommodation strategy between members of different ethnolinguistic backgrounds. Ayoola (2009) cited humor, dysphemism, euphemism, pleas, abuses, swearing, cajoling, flattery, and flirting as discourse strategies that shape the bargaining speech event (p.390-396). Sosseh (1987) mentions face-threatening acts, positive and negative politeness, and Irvine's (1974) strategies of self-lowering and self-elevating as examples of strategies often employed in the Dakar context (p.46-47). Ngole (1988) also alluded to some discourse strategies employed by women fish sellers and their clients while bargaining. He noted that sweet talk, rudeness, coarse language, code-switching, proverbs, songs, narratives, soliloquies, social commentaries, and the use of fictive kinship terms are all bargaining strategies.

The literature on bargaining exchanges in Burkina Faso, and more specifically in Bobo-Dioulasso, remains rather scarce. The present study endeavors to bridge this knowledge gap by drawing on the previously reviewed sources on bargaining in other contexts to furnish an exhaustive linguistic and cultural delineation of this speech event within the unique context of Bobo-Dioulasso clothing stores. It is imperative to emphasize the singularity of Bobo-Dioulasso, considering its historical background as a medieval trade route and commercial center, its urbanization trajectory characterized by the gradual adoption of Mandé³ social structures, its intricate linguistic landscape with Jula and French as its lingua francas, as well as its syncretic practices encompassing the mixing of seemingly incongruous religious beliefs.

The linguistic and cultural underpinnings of the city are anticipated to exert an influence on the bargaining artifact. Another critical point of departure is that while previous studies have centered on bargaining exchanges in various markets, such as open-air and fish markets, the current study's scope is exclusively confined to clothing stores. By focusing on a cultural context in which the Jula language is extensively employed, occasionally featuring instances of code-switching in French, this research not only enriches the literature on the Jula language but also expands upon communication strategies within this language.

Furthermore, this investigation offers a more refined perspective on language usage by examining a cultural artifact that may be unfamiliar to individuals outside the Bobo-Dioulasso community. In doing so, it not only enriches broader discourses on the interplay among language, culture, and intercultural communication but also contributes to potential universals of the bargaining speech event.

3. Research questions

To provide a scientific description of the bargaining artifact in the context of Bobo-Dioulasso, the following questions are examined: (i) What is the structure of bargaining exchanges? (ii) What are the strategies commonly employed during bargaining exchanges? (iii) How do cultural and linguistic factors intertwine in the production and interpretation of bargaining lines?

³ A collection of West African groups speaking Mandé languages, such as Malinké, Bambara, and Jula.

4. Data collection procedure

To address the above research questions, eight hours of trade talk were recorded in three clothing stores at Bobo-Dioulasso Central Market. The exchanges involved 14 male and 21 female adult interactants. The gender distribution of the participants was the result of randomness and the fact that marketplaces in the region are generally frequented more by women than men. All participants were fluent speakers of either Jula or French.

During data collection, the researcher implemented additional measures to ensure that the data were as naturalistic as possible. Permission was sought from vendors to record the bargaining exchanges, and a sign was placed at the entrance of each store, informing participants that their interactions would be recorded. The sign also stated that those not willing to be recorded could simply request not to be included.

While observing the exchanges, the researcher took notes on participants' perceived age, gender, social status, and non-verbal communication that occurred during the bargaining process. Social status was estimated by noting the type of means of transportation – car, foot, bicycle, or moped – used by participants to arrive at the store. Generally, in Bobo-Dioulasso, means of transportation serve as an accurate indicator of an individual's social status.

4.1 Transcription

From the eight hours of recording, 30 bargaining exchanges were selected and transcribed using a conversation transcription model for a deeper analysis. A bargaining exchange was operationally defined by the interaction, including verbal and non-verbal communication that takes place from the moment a customer arrives with the intention to buy an item to the moment he or she leaves.

4.2 Writing system

Due to the multilingual nature of Bobo-Dioulasso's speech community and the occasional instances of code-switching between Jula and French, no singular writing system was deemed adequate for transcribing the exchanges. For this reason, the Jula writing system, which is based on the Burkina Faso National Alphabet as codified in the decree 79/055/PRES/ESRS of February 2nd, 1979, was used to transcribe the parts of the exchanges that were in Jula. The Jula alphabet comprises 27 letters [a b c d e f g h i j k l m n p o r s t u v w y z]. Since the Jula writing system is not consistent, additional conventions were adopted in the transcription process. The sections that were in French were transcribed using the French writing system. The notation of pauses, hesitations, inaudible utterances, turn-taking, and implicit and explicit question markers, were included to transcribe the spoken data into written data faithfully.

4.3 Coding

4.3.1 Turn-Taking

The use of the conversation transcription model facilitated capturing the dynamic and collaborative meaning-making nature of bargaining, hence displaying turn-taking. Coding turn-taking was crucial because it displays the surface structure of the exchanges and the linguistic elements encoded in each turn; it also captures conversation overlaps and repairs.

4.3.2 Types of Talks

The second type of organizational structure that the researcher deemed worth coding is what Orr (2007) labeled types of talks. Though she identified price talk and product talk as dominating the exchanges, these categories were extended to include person talk and time/weather talk. The data coded this way enables us to note the ordering, including the potential of recursion, of the types of talks in the exchanges.

Price Talk (PC) "revolves around the topic of price: asking the price of merchandise, naming the price, complaining about the price, and justifying the price" (Orr 2007: 7).

Product Talk (PX) consists of any shift of topic to the merchandise itself.

Person Talk (PS) consists of a shift of topic to the participants themselves.

Time/Weather Talk (TW) consists of a shift of topic to a time of the day or to weather conditions.

4.3.3 Turn's Illocutionary Forces

The illocutionary force, or the speaker's intended meaning of every turn, was also coded. Expounding on the set of illocutionary forces proposed in Orr (2007), the following participants' intentions, which are consistently and predictably produced and interpreted within the transaction frame, were identified: soliciting, making, and evaluating an offer. The following codes were used:

Directives: Soliciting an Offer	(S)
Commissives: Making an Offer	(O)
Expressives: Evaluating an Offer	(E)

This coding scheme allows easier identification of discourse strategies such as the use of patronizing terms of address, repetition, swearing, saying things under oath, giving exaggerated praise, etc.

5. The global structure of bargaining

Based on the operationalization of a bargaining exchange, the codification allowed the researcher to identify the following functionally different components: (1) establishing communion, (2) item selection, (3) price negotiation, and (4) leave-taking. These components correspond to the shift in the communicative intent of interactants while bargaining, as illustrated in extract (1).

(1)

Establishing Communion

1	Vendor	I ka keɛ (w)a patron?	how are you boss?
2	Customer	ɔnhɔn...	yeah, I'm...
3	Vendor	Soməgɔw?	how's your family
4	Customer	ow be(y)i	they are good
5	Vendor	aw dansɛ	welcome
6	Customer	hɛɛɛ dɔrɔn	good

Item Selection

7	Vendor	Aw tun bi juma lo fɛ?	what do you desire?
8	Customer	ayi! n tun bi bazɛn lo fɛ	well, I want bazin
9	Vendor	I tun bi bazɛn lo fɛ?	you want bazin (?)
10	Customer	ɔnhɔn	yeah
11	Vendor	bazɛn janaman kɔni be an fɛ //	I've got really good bazin //
12	Vendor	aw bi couleur juma lo fɛ?	what color do you desire?
13	Customer	couleur orange kapi	the orange one suits me
14	Vendor	couleur orange (w) a(?)	the orange one (?)
15	Customer	ɔnhɔn	umhum
16	Vendor	okay nin yi couleur orange lo ye	okay here is one that's orange

Price Negotiation

17	Customer	ɔnhɔn nin yi joli?	okay how much is this?
18	Vendor	bon an bi nin di wa fila ni cɛmɛ saba (11 500)	well, we will give this for 11,500
19	Customer	barka	reduce
20	Vendor	cinq mètre lo	it's five meters
21	Customer	barka	reduce
22	Vendor	bon okay n bina cɛmɛ (500) bɔ a ra	okay, I'll remove 500
23	Customer	a to wa kelen ni cɛmɛ fila (6 000)	leave it for 6,000
24	Vendor	ale ma se patron/	that's not enough boss/
25	Vendor	nin karikari yi wa kelen ni cɛmɛ segi (9 000)	my final price on this one is 9,000
26	Customer	sabari	please
27	Vendor	a ma se	it's not enough
28	Customer	n bina biduru (250) fara a kan	I'll add 250 to it
29	Vendor	okay na ni wa kelen ni cɛmɛ wɔrɔ (8 000) ye	okay take it for 8,000
30	Customer	bon wa kelen ni cɛmɛ nani (7 000)	okay 7,000
31	Vendor	bon problème te(y)i Wari di	okay no problem bring the money
32	Customer	a don manan na (<i>hands in the money</i>)	put it in a plastic bag (<i>hands in the money</i>)

 Leave-Taking

33	Customer	Alla ka lɔgɔ diya	may Allah help you sell a lot
34	Vendor	Amina	Amin

5.1 Establishing communion

In the 30 bargaining exchanges that were analyzed, "establishing communion" was revealed to be an obligatory element. This component of bargaining is realized in two ways: greeting or summoning.

5.1.1 Greeting

Greeting is the most common form of establishing communion. It occurred in 21 of the 30 exchanges. Summoning, the other form of establishing communion, occurred only in three of the 30 exchanges. In the remaining six exchanges where neither greeting nor summoning occurred, it happened that the customer had visited the store earlier. By examining the bargaining greeting exchanges, it is evident that greeting is not used to fetch information from the other party but to acknowledge their presence. In Extract 2, this observation is evidenced by interactants talking past each other, with questions not being answered or being met with other questions. For example, on line 3, the customer asks, "...how is your family?" The vendor, instead of answering the question, replicates with another question "how is your family?" A similar observation can be made in lines 8 and 9 where the vendor's "how is business?" is met with the customer's "how are your children?" These two examples underscore the formulaic nature of greeting and demonstrate that it is a ritual performed to acknowledge the presence of the other party, and not a verbal exchange truly meant to seek information.

(2)

1	Customer	an ni sɔgɔma	good morning
2	Vendor	a baah! hɛɛɛ sira wa?	good morning, how are you?
3	Customer	hɛɛɛ somɔgɔw?	fine, how is your family?
4	Vendor	somɔgɔw?	how is your family?
5	Customer	hɛɛɛ dɔrɔn	they are fine
6	Vendor	kenɛya beyi?	how are you?
7	Customer	ouais ɕa va	yeah, I am fine
8	Vendor	kow be di?	how is business?
9	Customer	denbaya?	how are your children?
10	Vendor	ouais ɕa va	yeah, they're good

5.1.2 Summoning

Summoning occurred in only three exchanges to draw customers' attention to the vendor's merchandise items. Extracts 3 and 4 are examples of summoning from the data.

(3)

1	Vendor	ma chérie vient je vais te faire le prix	my dear approach and I'll give a good deal
2	Customer	(customer approaches) an bi nin le fɛ	(customer approaches) this is what we want
3	Customer	on veut voir pantalon la	can we look at these pants?

(4)

1	Vendor	wɛ a(w) bi juma fɛ? (shouting indiscriminately)	which one do you want? (shouting indiscriminately)
2	Vendor	a(w) yi na gwerɛ ka a file	approach and check it out
3	Customer	hɛɛrɛ sira wa?	How are you?
4	Customer	ɔnhɔn a(w) bi juma fɛ? (showing merchandise to customer)	umhum which one do you want? (showing merchandise to customer)

In general, vendors' summon tends not to be directed to specific customers. They become more targeted as vendors pick on customers' non-verbal cues such as walking hesitantly, looking confused, making prolonged eye contact, and looking back after walking past a store. These non-verbal cues, which are interpreted as customers' interest in a merchandise item, don't escape vendors' vigilant gaze. Also, summons tend to be characterized by vendors' use of endearing terms of address such as *ma chérie* in line 1 of Extract 3 or the Jula second person plural pronoun *a(w)* to emphasize respect in line 2 of Extract 4. These language choices make vendors' summon pleasant, inviting, and friendly. The data further reveal that greeting and summoning are in complementary distribution, i.e., where summoning occurs, greeting is no longer obligatory. In lines 3 and 4 of extract 4, for instance, the customer's "how are you?" is met with the vendor's "umhum, which one do you want?"

5.2 Item selection

Item selection is performed with or without the vendor's assistance. While this component of bargaining could at times be entirely non-verbal, it is for the most part branded with customers' multiple questions met with vendors' answers. In this section of the exchanges, the talk usually revolves around the item's color, quality, and/or size. Customers often rely on vendors' expert opinion and professional advice to guide their choice. Very often, vendors also take advantage of this opportunity to make good publicity of their merchandise.

Since the research data came from two types of clothing stores, a fabric store and a prêt-à-porter store, the researcher observed the use of measurement units different from "conventional" ones. In the fabric store, *mètre*, *taafe*, *dilekiba*, *chemise*, and *pantalon* are interchangeably used as measurement units. *Taafe* is the Jula word for the patterned cloth women tie around their waist and which covers the body from waist to ankle. Among the Boboleses⁴, there is an extensive commercial jargon for designating different types and patterns of *taafe*. As a

⁴ Boboleses are the inhabitants of Bobo-Dioulasso

measurement unit, one *taafe* designates a certain cut, approximately 1.83 x 9.49 meters, of a single or double-sided print of untailored cotton textile. *Dilekiba*, on the other hand, is the Jula name for a style of men and women's outfit which covers the whole body. Used a measurement unit, *Dilekiba* is the amount of cloth necessary to make an adult size clothing of that sort. Likewise, *chemise* and *pantalon*, which are respectively the French words for 'shirt' and 'pants,' are also used as measurement units. One *chemise* represents the amount of cloth necessary to make an adult size shirt. From these examples, it becomes clear how this measurement principle applies to different types of outfits in the fabric store. In the prêt-à-porter store, however, adult sizes were designated using numbers such 32, 34, 36, etc. and children's sizes were labeled in terms of their age. Vendors usually asked customers about the age of their child to determine the appropriate size.

These competing measurement units have their roots in the history and the linguistic situation of Bobo-Dioulasso. Although the city was founded sometime between the twelfth and the fourteenth century by Bobo-speaking farmers (Fourchard 2003), its later urbanization process can be equated to a Mandé-ization or Jula-ization process - a process whereby the city gradually adopted features that are typical of the Mandé social organization. Examples of such features include the distinction between different social castes, the Grin (young men sitting around a teapot, having conversations, and/or playing games), the Janjoba (feast accompanied with live music during wedding and naming ceremonies), different clothing and hairstyle trends, which are all culturally imported from Mali (Werthmann, 2013, p.17). This process explains the rise of Jula, spoken by 59.8% of the population (INSD 2006), as the lingua franca of the city and the use of measurement units such as *taafe* and *dilekiba*. The use of *mètre*, *chemise*, and *pantalon* are directly linked to the status of French as the official language of Burkina Faso. Spoken by more than 40% of Burkinabè (INSD 2006), French has established itself as another lingua franca in the country with its increased use in schools and in administrative and military settings. The existence of these measurement units highlights the position of Bobo-Dioulasso as a community evolving under different social forces: the French system reinforced by formal education and the local commercial system tailored to meet the practical needs of the community.

Not every customer or vendor is proficient at using these various measurement systems. Therefore, the need to accommodate the other party frequently arises. In Extract 5, for example, the vendor asks the customer how many *mètres* of cloth she wants. She replies, stating that she wants three *dilekiba*, and after a short pause, to indicate that three *dilekiba* equate to 17 *mètres*. These kinds of accommodation are frequent when bargaining in Bobo-Dioulasso.

(5)

1	Vendor	donc a(w) be... metri hake joli a(w) b(i) a fe?	so, how many meters do you want?
2	Customer	an bi dilekiba saba (3) fe	we want three dilekiba
3	Vendor	umhum	umhum
4	Customer	ow bi ben metri tan ani wolonfila (17)	that equates seventeen meters
5	Vendor	hahan dilekiba saba(3)(?)	okay three dilekiba (?)

5.3 Price negotiation

Price negotiation is the section of bargaining characterized by the back and forth between the vendor and the customer in their respective endeavors to maximize profit and to minimize

cost. When exactly does price negotiation start? And when exactly does it end? These two questions are fundamental in determining the true boundaries of the price negotiation section. Drawing on the set of illocutionary forces identified and consistently and predictably produced within the transaction frame (Orr 2007), price negotiation has been defined as the moment the first offer solicitation is made to the moment an offer is accepted or permanently rejected. This section of bargaining will be discussed by first examining its linguistic aspect and then its cultural aspect.

5.3.1 Turns' Illocutionary Forces: The Linguistic Aspect

The conversation transcription model and the coding schemes that were adopted for this analysis enabled the researcher to identify turn-taking easily. For the 30 bargaining exchanges, the researcher counted a total of 594 turns in the price negotiation section. This total yields an average of about 20 turns per exchange, or 10 turns per participant during an exchange. Besides identifying the turns, one of the major goals of the analysis was to unveil the illocutionary force(s) of each turn. Although a small set of illocutionary forces were identified during price negotiation – soliciting (S), making (O), and evaluating (E) offers – some of the turns had a double illocutionary force in actuality. As a result, the researcher extended this initial set to include turns with a double intent such as those explicitly making a negative offer evaluation and implicitly soliciting another offer (E/S) and those making a counteroffer and hence working as a negative evaluation of a previous offer (E/O). Positive offer evaluations have been examined separately and labeled as (PE). *Figure 2* illustrates the distribution of these illocutionary forces during price negotiation.

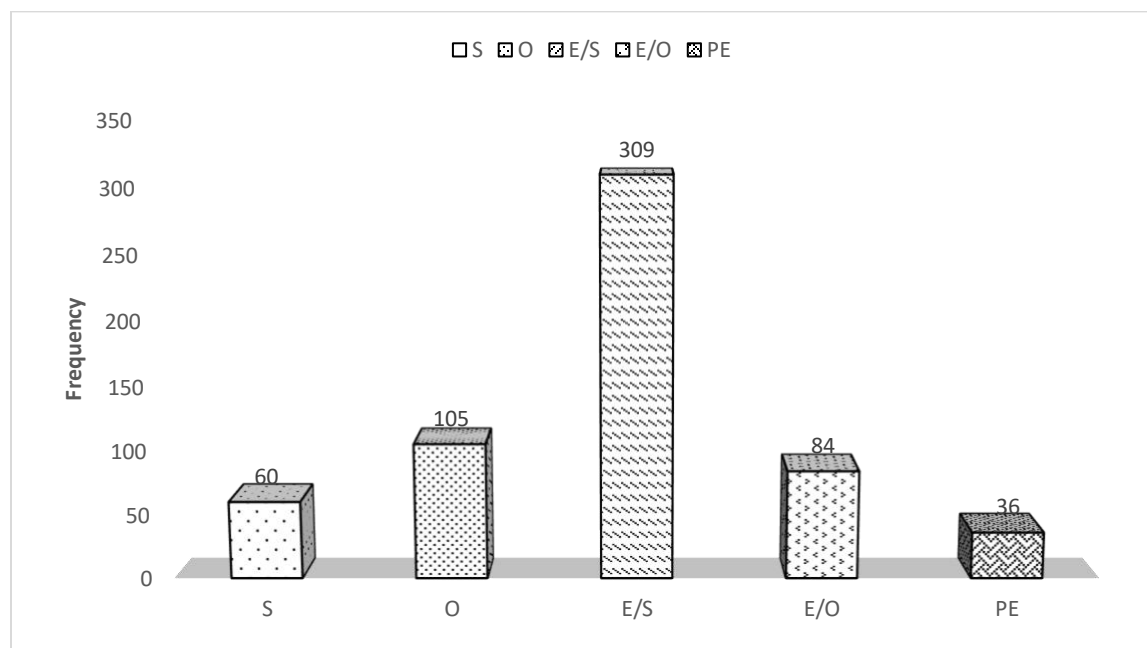


Figure 2. Distribution of turn's illocutionary forces during price negotiation

5.3.1.1 Offer Solicitations (S)

Offer solicitations represent the majority (60 + 309 in Figure 2) of the moves during price negotiation. They could be explicit (S), using linguistic patterns that make them easily

interpretable as such or veiled (E/S), using cultural codes that make them less likely to be interpreted as solicitations.

Price negotiation is initiated by the first offer solicitation which is linguistically realized generally using the Jula or French variant of “How much is it?” Offer solicitations are not always as straightforward as one would think. Only their interpretation by the vendor (perlocutionary force) truly allows confirming that they are indeed offer solicitations. Let's examine Extract 6, which illustrates a subtle offer solicitation.

(6)

1	Customer	nin yi joli ye do?	how much is this?
2	Vendor	na ni wa fila ni ceme fila (11 000)	bring 11,000
3	Customer	mais do ti bo ale ra wa?	but can't you reduce it?
4	Vendor	umhum e bi fe ka a san joli	umhum how much do you want to pay?

In this extract, the question *How much is this?* is answered with the imperative construction *Bring 11,000*, which in turn is negatively evaluated by the customer who asks, *But can't you reduce it?* Since the customer rejected the price, it means that he interpreted it not as a simple statement (assertive), but as an offer (commissive). And if *Bring 11,000* is interpreted as an offer, it presupposes that *How much is this?* must have been interpreted as an offer solicitation. Indeed, asking the price of an item is not just interpreted as a simple inquiry in Bobo-Dioulasso's marketplaces. It is not seen as a question for the sake of knowing the price, but rather as an invitation for the vendor to make an offer, and most customers are aware of this. In the research data, for example, a vendor even yelled at a customer: "IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BUY AN ITEM, DON'T ASK HOW MUCH IT COSTS!"

5.3.1.2 Offers (O)

As *Figure 2* shows, direct offers represent 17, 6% of the moves during price negotiation. Direct offers are generally realized using straightforward linguistic formulas such as the ones illustrated in Table 1. With direct offers, it is customary that the vendor makes a few offers before the customer makes a counteroffer.

Table 1

Linguistic Formula for Direct Offers

Function	Jula/French	English
	1 a ta ceme segi	take it for 4,000
Making an offer	2 nin ye wa duru	this is 25,000
	3 a(w) yi na nin quatre mille sept cent cinquante	come with 4,750
	4 umhum wa fila ni ceme duru	umhum 12,500
	5 okay le complet fait sept mille cinq cent	okay, one outfit is 7,500

5.3.1.3 Negative Evaluations/Solicitations (E/S)

Negative evaluations/solicitations are primarily offer evaluations which also function as implicit offer solicitations. They represent 52% of the total moves of the price negotiation section and are the most dynamic moves, as they come in different shapes. Besides their varied linguistic formulas, negative evaluations/solicitations have other intriguing features worth

highlighting. They are highly branded with exaggerated exclamations, especially when rejecting the first offer. These exclamations underscore how surprised and alarmed the customer is upon hearing the vendor's offer. They are also branded with 'fake' confirmation checks, which consist of repeating the other party's previous offer with a rising intonation for the sake of driving them to reexamine it. In some cases, the confirmation checks are realized with the interrogative "han?" a way of asking the other party to reexamine their offer by inviting them to repeat it. Silence is also used as a way to reject an offer. Swearing using the Arabic-based expression 'Walahi,' which means "I swear to God" is also used often. Although Muslims consider the use of this expression followed by a lie a sin, it is commonly used in negative evaluations/solicitations to augment the credibility of the bargaining line. The use of similar discourse strategies has been noted in Ayoola (2009) – dysphemism, pleas, abuses, swearing, cajoling, flattery, and flirting – and Mehrotra (1986) – saying things under oath, giving exaggerated praise, etc. In the Bobo-Dioulasso context, these strategies mainly appear in negative evaluations/solicitations.

5.3.1.4 Counteroffers/Negative Evaluations (O/E)

Counteroffers are offers that are made after a direct offer has already been made. Because of this sequencing order, counteroffers also function as negative evaluations of direct offers. *Figure 2* shows that counteroffers represent 14.14% of price negotiation. Table 2 presents some of the formulas that are used to make counteroffers.

Table 2

Linguistic Formula for Counteroffers/Negative Evaluations

Function	Jula/French	English
	1 trois mille ti see wa?	can I have it for 3,000?
	2 je veux je veux prendre ça à neuf cent	I want to take it for 900
Making a counteroffer	3 a trois mille cinq cent kapi	3,000 is good
	4 a to wa kelen ni ceme fila	leave it for 6,000
	5 bon, an b(i) ale karikari ke ceme wolonfila	okay, the best possible offer is 3,500
	6 bon ni wa fila jɔŋɔn lo n ti se ka a ta (w)a?	okay, if I have 10,000 can I take it?

Direct offers and counteroffers, which make up offers in general, presented some trends worth underlining. While the first offers are realized using the *imperative verb + price quote* or *the presentative 'this is' + price quote* formula, there is a tendency to drop the imperative verb or the presentative in subsequent offers. When this occurs, we hear interactants going back and forth uttering different price quotes. At times, even the price quotes themselves become abbreviated and we only hear the uttering of numbers such as 3 for 3,000, 7 for 7,000, etc. The tendency to use more reduced forms during price negotiation is not unique to the Bobo-Dioulasso context. Debouche (2004) made a similar observation in her study about bargaining in France's flea markets.

5.3.1.5 Last offer evaluation (O)

When compared to the first offer solicitation, the last offer evaluation is more explicit. It can either be positive or negative. When it is negative, it means that the two bargaining parties

failed to reach an agreement, and when it is positive, there is an agreement between the two parties and sale occurs. Of the 30 exchanges that were analyzed, an agreement was reached in 25 of the exchanges, and in the remaining five, no consensus was reached. When an agreement is reached, vendors are usually the ones to perform the last offer evaluation (22 out of the 25 exchanges). They perform it using a variant of the formulas *wari di* (Jula) or *donne l'argent* (French), which means 'bring the money.' These formulas are usually preceded by signal phrases such as *bon, pas de problème, problem t(e)a ra, okay, baasi te, d'accord, hayiwa*, etc. to underscore agreement. In a few cases (3 out of the 25 exchanges), however, the last offer evaluation was performed by the customer using a variant of the formulas 'I will take it,' 'Put it in a plastic bag for me,' and 'Take your money,' preceded by the same signal phrases.

In the exchanges where a consensus was not reached (5 of out of 30 exchanges), the customer made use of a face-saving strategy such as a complete shift of topic or addressing a third party, as failure of the price negotiation is perceived to be "face-threatening" (Brown & Levinson 1978). Although both the vendor's and the customer's positive faces are threatened when an agreement on price is not reached, it often weighs more on the vendor's when he or she has a "higher ability" to make the negotiation come to a positive resolution (Johnson, Roloff, & Riffée 2004). On the other, not reaching an agreement can be interpreted as the customer's failure to afford the item, which could be seen as an embarrassment for customers with a high social status.

5.3.1.6 Formula of the price negotiation section

The above description and analysis of the turns' illocutionary forces enabled the researcher to establish a formula for the price negotiation section. This generic model of bargaining in Bobo-Dioulasso is consistent with Ventola's (1987) flowchart theory. In the model illustrated in *Figure 3*, sale is conditioned by the nature of the evaluation. A positive offer evaluation triggers sale whereas a negative evaluation could either terminate the negotiation or send it back to either an offer solicitation or a counteroffer. This model easily explains the frequency of the various illocutionary forces during price negotiation.

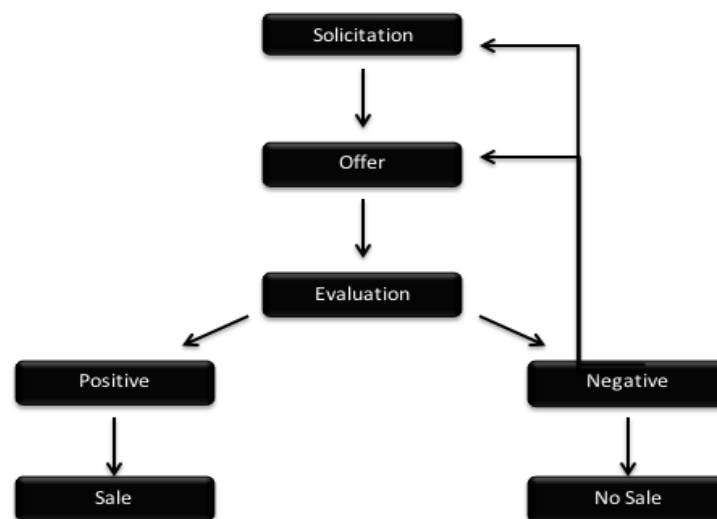


Figure 3. The formula of the illocutionary forces during price negotiation

5.3.2 Types of Talks: The Cultural Aspect

Besides identifying the illocutionary force(s) of the turns, another goal of the analysis was to identify the types of talks that occur during price negotiation. Drawing from Orr (2007), Price Talk (PC), Product Talk (PX), Person Talk (PS), and Time/Weather Talk (TW) were the identified topics that occur during price negotiation; their frequency is illustrated in *Figure 4*.

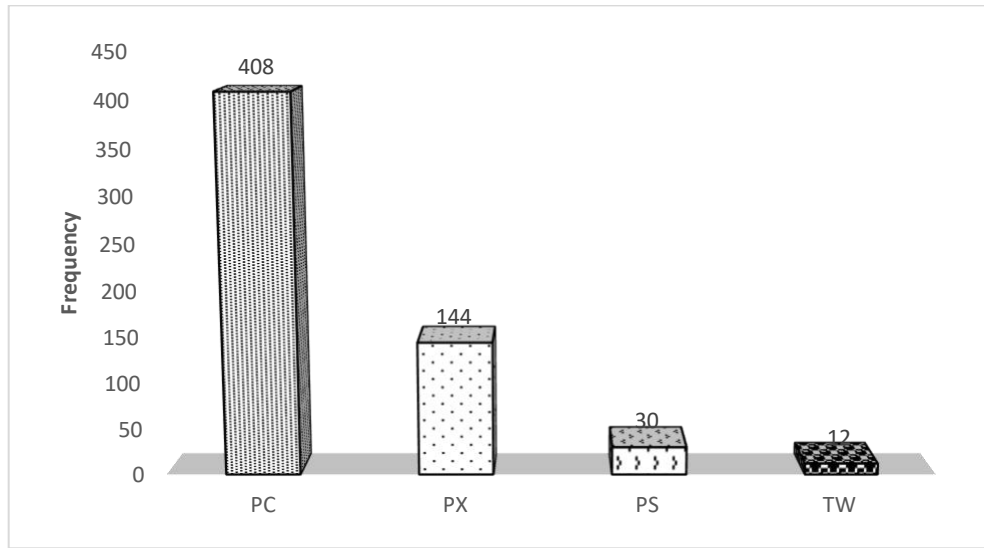


Figure 4. The frequency of types of talk during price negotiation

As illustrated, Price Talk dominates the price negotiation section of bargaining. It occurred in 408 of the total 594 turns, which equates to 68.68% of the turns. Product Talk is the second most frequent type of talk and occurred in 144 turns of the total 594 turns, or 24.24% of the turns. Then follows Person Talk, which occurred in 30 of the total 594 turns, or 5.05% of the turns. The least frequent type of talk is Time/Weather talk, which occurred in 12 of the 594 turns, or 2.01% of the turns. Although these frequencies show that price negotiation is dominated by Price Talk, which comes to no surprise, they also underscore the idea that price negotiation does not just revolve around the price, but also includes talks about the merchandise, the interactants, the time of the day and the weather.

5.3.2.1 Price Talk

When price talk occurs, its production and interpretation are unequivocal. Both the customer and the vendor know what they are being asked and how to properly respond. As Table 3 illustrates, Price Talk has all the illocutionary forces discussed in the previous section.

Table 3

Linguistic Realization of Price Talk for soliciting, making, and evaluating an offer.

Function	Jula/French	English
Soliciting an offer	wɛh i bi joli lo fɛ?	say! how much do you want?
	nin ye joli lo ye do?	how much is this?
	i karikari yi joli lo ye	what is your best offer?

	joli joli lo?	what is the unitary price?
Making an offer	a ta cɛmɛ segi	take it for 4,000
	nin ye wa duru lo	this is 25,000
	a(w) yi na nin quatre mille sept cent cinquante	bring 4,750
	umhum wa fila ni cɛmɛ duru	umhum 12,500
	wa fila le be ne fɛ	I have 10,000
	okay le complet fait sept mille cinq cent	okay, one outfit is 7,500
Rejecting an offer	yehhhh a(w) yi dɔ bɔ a la	yehhhh reduce the price
	faut diminuer yehh c'est trop	You've got to reduce the price it's too much
	YEEHH ale ka ca	YEEHH that is too much
	barka	reduce
	sabari	please
	ɔnhɔn a ti see dɔ fara a kan	umhum that won't do add more to it
	dernier prix lo y(e) ow ye wa?	is that your best possible offer?
	dɔ ti bɔ ale ra wa?	can't you reduce the price?
Making counteroffer	trois mille ti see wa?	can I have it for 3,000?
	je veux je veux prendre ça à neuf cent	I want to take it for 900
	a trois mille cinq cent kaɲi	3,000 is good for it
	a to wa kelen ni cɛmɛ fila	leave it for 6,000
	bon ni wa fila ɲɔgɔn lo, n ti se ka a ta (w)a?	okay, if I have like 10,000, can I take it?
	bon, an b(i) ale karikari kɛ cɛmɛ wolonfila	okay, the best possible offer is 3,500
Accepting an offer	bon a(w) yi na ni wari ye	okay, bring the money
	bon problème te(y)i wari di	okay no problem, bring the money
	bon wa fila mine san	come on, take these 10,000
	bon wari di	okay, bring the money

ahh baasite n bi wa fila (10 000) mine bon, n bina nin ta we	no problem, I will take 10,000 okay, I will take it then
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5.3.2.2 Product Talk

The production and interpretation of Product Talk during price negotiation are also unequivocal. Although Product Talk could be misinterpreted by those unfamiliar with the local norms, Bobo-Dioulasso vendors and customers are accurate in interpreting it. *Figure 5* shows the distribution of the illocutionary forces of Product Talk.

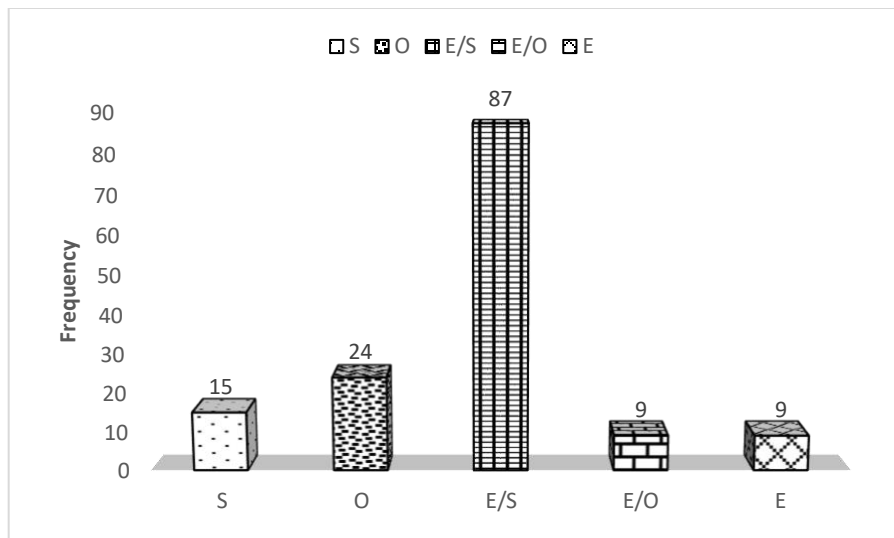


Figure 5. Distribution of the illocutionary forces of Product Talk

When Product Talk occurs as an offer solicitation (10.4 % of its use), it is realized by the customer changing their mind about an item they had selected or making their selection more specific. As an offer (16.6 % of its use), it is used by the vendor to propose another merchandise item to the customer. In a relatively few instances (6.2% of its use), Product Talk was used as a positive offer evaluation/offer when the customer couldn't help but express their admiration of the merchandise item. Vendors generally interpret such a bargaining move as an expression of genuine interest in the item, although it does not give the customer the upper hand.

The negative offer evaluation/solicitation use of Product Talk, which represents most of its use (60.4%), occurs when vendors justify their offer by making a positive comment about their item or by proposing a cheaper item for the customer's offer. From Row 1 through 9 of Table 4, the vendor makes this use of Product Talk to comment on the quality of the item. In a relatively few instances, alternatively, customers use Product Talk in this way to counter the vendor's offer by 'negatively' commenting on the item. As shown in Row 11 of Table 4, the customer assesses the item as "too big," a way to counter the vendor's previous comments about the quality of the item.

Table 4

Linguistic Realization of Product Talk as Negative Offer Evaluation/Offer Solicitation

Jula/French	English
1 i ma a siri cogo ye wa?	don't you see its design? (V)

2	ow bi nin wele ko nigennin	this is what is called nigennin (V)
3	cinq mètre lo	it is five meters (V)
4	bon ça c'est le premier même	okay this is truly the original (V)
5	sinon a modèlè nunuw ti kelen	you should know their designs are different (V)
6	mais ale ni nin qualité ti kelen quoi	but they have different qualities
7	an yere yi nin san da min na a ka ca ni ceme saba ye	even we have bought it much higher than 1500 (V)
8	puis tissi nunuw tissu panamaw lo de	and the fabric is of excellent quality (V)
9	complet fila (2) man dogo?	will two outfits be enough? (V)
10	comme an bi cama fe!	since we want a lot of it! (C)
11	a ka bon de	it's too big (C)

5.3.2.3 Person Talk

While the production and interpretation of Person Talk may be ambiguous to those unfamiliar with local norms, they are unequivocally interpreted by Bobo-Dioulasso natives. Person Talk is for the most part (70% of the time) used as negative offer evaluations. Its use generally involves self-lowering strategies, similar to what Irvine (1974) called "status manipulation" in her description of Wolof greetings. As illustrated in Table 5, bargaining self-lowering strategies include giving exaggerated praises to the other party, downplaying praises directed at oneself, or redirecting one's privileged position to a third party. On Row 1 of Table 5, for example, the vendor refers to the customer as "not a random person." This comment not only elevates the status of the customer and makes him feel good and respected but also lowers the vendor's own status, as he is the one commenting.

Table 5

Linguistic Realization of Person Talk as a Negative Offer Evaluation

	Jula/French	English
1	sinon ni mogo gwansan yere lo an t(e) a di quoi	if you were a random person, I would not consider this offer
2	sani te dandoni lo do be bi dandoni lo yala	business is bad, we are just trying to survive
3	an fana bi dandoni lo yala	we are just trying to make the minimum profit
4	ehh ni patron y(e) a me, an b(e) gwen de	if my boss hears that, I will get fired
5	nne lo ko aw lo yi patron ye	I know you are the boss here
6	an bi ta(g)a wari nin di patron ma cogojuma?	how will I give this money to my boss?
7	bon i na b(e) a ra wa walayi doni yere le bi n kun	you see, I swear I only have a little bit of money
8	client an file ke kana miiri	vendor, look at us, don't be thinking
9	a(w) mogo ba	you the wealthy

The use of Person Talk is often intermeshed with terms of address invoking what Brown and Gilman (1960) have labeled “solidarity and power.” Below are a few terms of address that were uncovered from the data.

Table 6

Terms of Address Uncovered from the Data

	Term of address	Meaning	Function
1	<i>sinamuso</i>	Female rival	Solidarity
2	<i>tonton</i>	Uncle	Power and Solidarity
3	<i>patron</i>	Boss	Power
4	<i>fantan</i>	Poor	Power
5	<i>client</i>	Customer	Solidarity
6	<i>terimuso</i>	Lady friend	Solidarity
7	<i>ma chérie</i>	My dear	Solidarity
8	<i>aja</i>	Arabic for female visitor	Power
9	<i>Mogoba</i>	Big (important) person	Power

All these terms of address have a positive connotation except for *fantan* (poor). While the other terms of address are used by any of the bargaining parties to address the other, *fantan* was used by a customer to refer to herself. Since *fantan* has a negative connotation, its use serves to lower the status of the customer, hence working as a self-lowering strategy.

Terms of address invoking solidarity are equally used as those invoking power. While solidarity terms of address establish a friendlier relationship between the vendor and the customer, power terms of address work as a self-lowering strategy. For example, a vendor who refers to a younger customer as “uncle” or “boss” is clearly trying to make the customer feel ‘important.’ This move not only elevates the customer’s status but also lowers the vendor’s. The use of the term of address *Aja* is noteworthy in that it is customarily used to refer to Muslim women who have accomplished the pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Its male equivalent is *Laji* or *El-Haj*. Curiously, in this case, the vendor uses *Aja* without even knowing whether the female customer has been to the pilgrimage or not. Besides establishing solidarity between the participants, the use of *Aja* in this context also establishes power. In general, Muslim women who have been on the pilgrimage are respected in Burkina Faso because they are viewed as pious and societal role models. The use of term of address *sinamuso* (female rival) seems misplaced because it was used by interactants of opposite sexes. In other words, how can a man be the female rival of a woman? The use of *sinamuso* in the data can only be justified by the joking relationship that exists between the two interactants, therefore enabling the male vendor to portray himself as a female rival of the female customer.

Overall, it is safe to conclude that Person Talk works an appeal to emotions. Aside from the terms of address, references to oneself or the other party tends to occur towards the end of the price negotiation section. Person Talk mostly works as a last-resort strategy, and its use testifies that bargaining is not just a negotiation of the price of the merchandise, but also a negotiation of the social status of the vendor and the customer.

5.3.2.4 Time/Weather Talk

Although time and weather-related talks were only used in only 12 of out the 594 turns, they nonetheless represent intriguing aspects of the exchanges. Of the 12 turns, they were used six times as negative offer evaluations, three times as negative offer evaluations/counteroffers, and three times as positive offer evaluations. Table 7 illustrates instances of time and weather-related talks during price negotiation.

Table 7

Linguistic Realization of Time and Weather Talks

	Jula/French	English
1	Comme damineyɔrɔ lo peut être sini n'bina ta cama	Since it's the start of our collaboration, I'll buy more tomorrow
2	N y(e) i famuya yerε le en tous cas kɔfε peut-être	I understood you, anyways, maybe later
3	Łɔ n ka reculε ka sekɔ ka na fɔlɔ ban	Wait I go and come back
4	Ou bien n bina ta(g)a ka na ke	Maybe I should go till later
5	bon cogobera comme sɔgɔma lo	Anyways, since it is the morning
6	Dugu nin ja nin lo de walahyi	I swear, the country is so arid
7	Mais Diyen n(i) a sababou kama	But, given the world and its numerous possibilities...

Time-related talks tend to focus on the future relationship of the interactants. When they have a positive tone, like in Row 1 of Table 7, they set the base for future business opportunities between the two parties. When they have a negative tone, like in Row 2, 3, 4, and 7, however, they threaten to endanger the future business opportunities between the vendor and the customer. Aware of this potential, customers use Time Talk as a threat to force the vendor to reduce the price. Their fake departure attempts, while functioning as a negative offer evaluation, are threats to the customer/vendor relationship. This use of Time Talk underpins the notion that bargaining is not only about disputing the price of goods to come to an agreement but is ultimately a way to build and maintain good business relationships.

Time-related talks also tend to be about particular times of the day. Used as a positive offer evaluation, as in Row 5 of Table 7, it underscores the idea that the customer's offer would not have been accepted had it not been "the morning." Indeed, shopping right after stores open or right before they close is customarily advantageous. Morning sales, and more specifically the first sale, are critical to most vendors. There are superstitions associated with the first sale, as most vendors believe that it establishes their luck for subsequent transactions for the remainder of the day. Ideally, morning sales are cash only, with no credit allowed. They are not made to customers who have a physical or mental disability because that is considered a bad omen by most vendors. Also, since people have just woken up, it is preferable to avoid too many back and forths during morning sales. Due to these factors, the idea of the morning is frequently used as a justification or a rejection of an offer. In the late afternoon, likewise, intense back and forths tend to be avoided since stores are about to close. Likewise, afternoon references are commonly used to justify or reject an offer.

Weather-related talks are for the most part metaphorical. Row 6 of Table 7 illustrates this point. Through comments such as 'the country is arid,' 'it's a bad season,' and 'the harvest wasn't good,' bargaining parties underscore that they cannot afford to pay a certain price for the item or sell it at a certain price. Such uses of weather-related talks are at their core self-lowering strategies. Similar to some of the uses of Person Talk, weather-related talks are usually emotional appeals that invoke self-pity.

5.4 LEAVE-TAKING

The analysis reveals that leave-taking is an obligatory component of the exchanges. In Bobo-Dioulasso generally speaking, leaving-taking is performed through interactants mutually voicing good wishes to each other. Although the same is true for bargaining, the wishes generally center on monetary prosperity instead, as illustrated in Extracts 7 and 8.

(7)

1	Customer	bon ka lɔgɔ diya	okay, may you make more sales
2	Vendor	ami(n) Ami(n)	amen amen

(8)

1	Customer	bon marché	may you make more sales
2	Vendor	bon on fait ça	okay, later

When leave-taking is performed in Jula, the wishes mirror the ritualistic Muslim blessings. When performed in French, however, its religious aspect is mitigated. This observation is not surprising since Islamic sayings have been well integrated into Jula and are essential components of the discourse of Jula speakers. On the other hand, the sayings have not been extensively integrated into French due to standardization and the bureaucracy that controls their use. Extract 9 is an illustration of the imprint of Islam on the Jula bargaining leave-taking.

(9)

1	Customer	Alla ka baraka <xxxxxx>	Allah strengthen <xxxxxx>
2	Vendor	Ami(n) Ami(n) Ami(n)	Amen Amen Amen Amen
3	Customer	Alla ka hɛɛɛɛ <xxxxx>	Allah (gives us) peace
4	Vendor	Ami(n) Ami(n) Ami(n)	Amen Amen Amen Amen
5	Customer	Allah ka wari kow nɔgɔya	Allah relieve us from money problems
6	Vendor	Amina yarabi	Amen May the Lord hear you
7	Customer	Allah ka lɔgɔw diya	Allah help you sell more
8	Vendor	Allah ka a kɛ sɪjɛ wɛɛɛ i bi na	May Allah make you come next time
9	Customer	Ami(n)	Amen
10	Vendor	ni Allah wari ko nɔgɔya	if Allah gives more money
11	Customer	Walasi Wolo <xxxx>	Yeah you're right it's like that <xxxx>
12	Vendor	Inchallah Allah k(a) ow kɛ	inchallah Allah make it happen

The present study also reveals that leave-taking is not free of bargaining moves. Although the vendor and the customer extensively dispute the price of a merchandise, come to an agreement, and the sale occurs, this agreement still does not prevent the vendor from optimizing profit or the customer from minimizing cost during leave-taking. I have ascribed the term 'parting bargaining' to refer to bargaining moves that take place during leave-taking. Parting bargaining tends to occur when the customer realizes that s/he has bought a lot of items or has bought more than s/he initially intended or the vendor realizing that the customer is wealthy enough not to want his or her change back. In the former case, the customer would ask the

vendor for a gift using cultural expressions such as ‘won’t you give me some money for taxi?’ ‘give me some money to buy bread for my children,’ or ‘won’t you give me a gift?’ In the latter case, the vendor would ask the customer for more money using coded expressions such as ‘do you want your change back?’ ‘can I keep your change?’ etc. An example of parting bargaining is illustrated in Extract 10.

(10)

1	Vendor	le total	the total
2	Customer	mais I bina ji sɔngɔn diyan dɛ?	I hope you'll give me money for water
3	Vendor	ji sɔngɔ?	money for water?
4	Customer	hali ni cɛmɛ (500) lo, i bina ji sɔngɔ	even if it is 500, you'll give me ...
5	Vendor	bon cogobɛ ra comme sɔgɔma lo	anyway since it is the morning
6	Vendor	bina bi nani (200) di i ma i bi ji san	I'll give 200 to buy water
7	Customer	a don sachet ra	Put it in a plastic bag (referring to the item)

6. Conclusion

The analysis of the 30 bargaining exchanges revealed the underlying structure of the bargaining genre. Instead of using a language typology approach, a meaning-based approach was employed to analyze the data, recognizing that language in this genre, like in other genres, takes different forms to achieve similar communicative intents. The four units – 1) establishing communion, 2) item selection, 3) price negotiation, and 4) leave-taking – were identified based on how participants’ communicative intents change during service encounters. An in-depth analysis of price negotiation, the section of service exchange characterized by the back and forths between the customer and the vendor, shows that four types of talks – Price Talk, Product Talk, Person Talk, and Time/Weather Talk – are the topics elaborated upon; their production and interpretation align with the set of illocutionary forces – soliciting, making, and evaluating offers – identified by Orr (2007) as those that are consistently and predictably produced and interpreted within the transaction frame. By establishing the connection between types of talk and the fundamental negotiation strategies, the analysis highlighted the intertwined nature of linguistic and cultural knowledge in the production and interpretation of bargaining interactions.

The examination of the bargaining exchanges in the context of Bobo-Dioulasso also reveals that bargaining strategies are used at all stages of the encounter. In establishing communion, the vendor’s summons, although typically not directed to a particular customer, are characterized using endearing terms of address, which ultimately works as a form of self-lowering bargaining move. In item selection, vendors take advantage of customers’ reliance on their expert opinion to make good publicity of their merchandise item, a move aimed at maximizing their profit. In price negotiation, the use of product talk, person talk, and time and weather talk are generally pity-invoking strategies meant to maximize profit on the part of the vendor or minimize cost on the part of the customer. With respect to its structure, negative evaluations/solicitations are the bargaining lines encompassing the most bargaining moves; these moves range from exaggerated exclamations, fake confirmation checks, to swearing. In leave-taking, parting bargaining is yet another attempt to maximize profit or minimize cost via the use of veiled cultural expressions. All these moves, although subtle and seemingly unrelated to price negotiation itself, contribute to making bargaining a quite unique cultural and economic artifact.

This study has demonstrated that bargaining exchanges in Bobo-Dioulasso are not only about disputing the price of an item, but also about establishing good interpersonal relationships

between participants. Indeed, establishing communion prior to engaging in item selection and subsequently in price negotiation is an obligatory component of bargaining. Its obligatory aspect shows that building interpersonal relationships in service encounters is important. During price negotiation, the talk does not only revolve around price, but also around the product itself, the participants involved, and even the time or the weather. The power and solidarity terms of address that are used throughout the exchange are a testimony that a great deal of status negotiation, realized as self-lowering, is present while bargaining. The importance of interpersonal relationship is further evidenced in the bargaining leave-taking, where participants mutually bless each other and direct monetary prosperity wishes to each other.

The study of bargaining within the Bobo-Dioulasso community is significant, as it provides valuable insights into the ongoing changes taking place. With the city's modernization and the introduction of supermarkets where bargaining is not allowed, there is a genuine concern regarding the potential loss of the interpersonal dynamics that characterize bargaining exchanges. With all the bargaining strategies performed as negative evaluations such as topic shift, silence, flirting and cajoling, swearing to augment one's credibility, parting bargaining, merchandise praise, self-lowering terms of address, Person Talk, and Time/Weather Talk, we can only leave to imagination how Bobo-Dioulasso's social fabric will be affected should bargaining disappear.

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