

CONTEXTUAL IMPLICATIONS AND THE DYNAMICS OF CULTURE IN KUNLE AFOLAYAN'S *OCTOBER 1*

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Abstract

The role of context in interaction transcends the traditional notion of the physical or immediate situation of the interaction and the epistemic or linguistic variables to include, in recent research approaches, contexts that are actively created during interaction which might have no direct bearing to existing knowledge brought into the talk situation. A contributory factor to this is the fact that meaning is both socially constructed and constrained, as well as context dependent. Consequently, studies have gravitated towards the import of the entire gestalt of contexts' contribution to meaning construction and comprehension. This article thus examines the implications of context and the consequence of culture in the movie *October 1*. Kecskes (2008) Dynamic Model of Meaning (DMM) and Clark's (1996) aspects of common ground are adopted as the conceptual basis as they account for the construction and generation of meaning both at the levels of private contexts and the actual or situational context. The study reveals that context in the movie is not only a function of the prior knowledge brought into the interactions, but is very much reliant on the emergent contexts which are created in the actual situational contexts. This consequently creates a distinction between the context of the movie (which is founded on the world knowledge held prior to the interactions in the movie) and context in the movie (which is actively created in the course of the movie). An analysis of the movie also shows that culture is an integral part of the communicative attempt in the movie. The kernel of the findings is that the lexical choices, shared knowledge and common ground which are exploited in highlighting the contextual implications in the movie are, ultimately, founded on the cultural orientation of the movie, which largely drives the events and consequences of same in the movie. The paper concluded that a consideration of context and the dynamics of culture serves as a lens through which script writers' and cineastes' attempts at creatively engaging language as a tool for conveying the socio-linguistic cum cultural intricacies in human interaction can be viewed.

Keywords

Contextual implications, dynamic model of meaning, situational context, common ground

Introduction

The role of context in the communicative endeavour has, over the years, been explicated and examined from different perspectives. Some take the traditional approach of the actual physical location or situation as the context (i.e. Crystal 1987) while some others view it as a combination of the physical world, social world and mental world (Lawal, 1997; Adegbija 1989, Verschueren, 1999). Other writers, i.e. Karttunen (1991) and Saeed (2006) have described context to be a set of logical forms that explain the set of background assumptions or background

knowledge itself, thus tilting, in part to the first order perception of context to refer to the action situational environment. More recent submissions, for example Mey (2001) and Kecskes (2007, 2014) have however advanced the conceptualisation of context to be over and beyond the actual physical situation/event. They argue that context is a dynamic and fluid concept which has the potential of being created even as the conversation progresses. The consideration of context in this paper is premised upon the more recent conceptualisation of context as being actively created even during conversation. This is

with a view to understanding how context is so dynamically created in the movie *October 1* and the import of culture in this process.

Culture is an abstract unwritten constitution that guides the way people live. It is what distinguishes one group of people from others. Although culture could be viewed as the modus operandi of an association, it is viewed from a broader perspective in this paper. Here, it is conceptualised as the way of life of a people of common descent and their mode of eating and drinking, dressing, greeting, speaking, and interacting among many others. Interestingly, it gains life in these practices. Central to every culture are language, rituals, food, beliefs, traditions, and history. Language is a vital cultural piece (Snell-Hornby, 1988) as it does not only instantiate culture but also is the means through which traditions and customs of a society are learnt and transmitted across generations. This is particularly evident in oral traditions. Mey (1985, p. 328) notes that it impels the evolution of culture with reference to the “changing social relations.” Culture thus evolves as language does. Equally, the former influences and shapes the latter. One of the earliest scholars who studied the nexus between culture and language, Malinowski (1923) explains that “language is essentially rooted in the culture, tribal life and customs of the people, and cannot be explained without constant reference to the broader contexts of verbal utterance” (as cited in Asemota, 2015, p. 18). Each of the trio (culture, language, and society) is better understood in the context of the others. Evidence of this relationship is found in works of art: movies, for example.

Movies, like other works of art, mirror the society. Code(s) employed by actors and other relevant non-linguistic acts in movies have socio-cultural implications. They can relate to the audience, the setting of the movie and the way of life of the society in which it is set. The choice of *October 1* for this study is not farfetched; it is a movie set in a traditional Yoruba socio-cultural milieu. The richness of the cultural nuances that pervade language use in the movie also makes it a ready choice in a linguistic analysis. The application of Kecskes’ (2008) dynamic model of meaning (hereafter DMM) to the analysis of the

linguistic purposes in the movie therefore promises to be a rewarding experience. A few studies have also been carried out on the movie but essentially from the literary theatrical/performance or colonial influence perspectives. Examples include Onikoyi (2016) and Sesan, (2017) and Ezepue & Nwafor (2023). This study takes a linguistic approach by adapting the DMM, blending it with aspects of Clark’s (1996) Common Ground (CG) which accounts for communal and personal CG and provides a basis for explaining the engagement of language and culture in the movie.

About Kunle Afolayan’s *October 1*

October 1 is set at the threshold of Nigerian independence. Inspector Danladi Waziri is summoned by the District Officer Robert Winterbottom and saddled with the task of unraveling the mystery behind the murder of two women in Akote Town in Ibadan, before Independence Day. The inspector and his assistant, Sergeant Sunday Afonja, reach a lot of dead ends. As the murder plague rises and five people turn up dead, it dawns on them that they are dealing with a hardened serial killer. During the events that follow, other innocent lives are lost. A British-bound Corporal Omolodun is killed when faced with the killer. A Hausa traveler (a suspect) who finds himself in the middle of the quagmire is wrongly targeted. The murderer gives himself away, however, when unlikely clues point to an unsuspected person: Prince Aderopo, Oba Akote’s only son. In an attempt to rape and kill his last victim, Miss Bisi Tawa (a schoolteacher and former classmate), the killer leaves tracks that reveal his potential hideout. In the process of attempting to escape and trying to kill Koya (a farmer and childhood friend), he is finally shot by the inspector as he refuses to surrender (Onikoyi, 2016).

Context: Perspectives and Scope

Context is generally used to refer to the place where a communicative event occurs (Crystal, 1987, p. 48). To understand the full meaning of an utterance without reference to its context of use is therefore almost impossible. This is because words and texts make complete sense only when situated in an appropriate context. Lyons (1977) describes context as:

a theoretical construct in the postulation of which the linguist abstracts from the actual situation and establishes as contextual all the factors which, by virtue of their influence upon the participants in the language event, systematically determine the form and the appropriateness of the meaning of the utterance. (p. 527)

This definition of context explains that the participants in the speech event subject the utterances to the provisions of the place and situation surrounding them to be able to arrive at their appropriate meaning.

Context has also been described as the study of invisible meaning and how much more is understood than what is said (Yule, 1985). This necessitates a dependence on shared assumptions beyond the linguistic codes and properties. The interplay of the physical world, socio-cultural world, and mental psychological world in relation to a linguistic aspect make up context (Verschuere, 1999; Adegbija, 1999).

The physical context is the location or the physical background where the speech event takes place. The socio-cultural context borders on the beliefs, value system, and religion and how this affects the communication process. The psychological context is concerned with the state of mind of the participants in the speech event while the linguistic context is concerned with the lexical choices of the discourse participants.

Saeed (2009) presents knowledge as context and identifies two types: linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge. He further identifies three types of non-linguistic knowledge as context: knowledge as context, discourse as context and background knowledge as context (Saeed, 2009, p.181). Knowledge as context relates to calculations or guesses about what hearers know about referents in the real world while discourse as context deals with the interpretation of sentence fragments in particular conversational contexts that give them meaning. Background knowledge as context on the other hand concerns how knowledge held prior to the speech event can help in the understanding of the utterances in the present speech event. In a similar submission, Karttunen (1991) gives context to be a set of

logical forms that explain the set of background assumptions, which include whatever is taken to be shared knowledge or information between the speaker and his intended audience (p. 406). Saeed's and Karttunen's definitions agree that context involves an assumed shared ground; a common ground shared by the participants in the speech event.

In considering the issue of context, Johansson and Suomela-Salmi (2011) equate context with situation, and drawing from the works of other scholars, present three types, namely communicative situation, utterance situation and discursive situation. Communicative situation refers to the extra-linguistic situation where communication takes place (physical context). Utterance situation has to do with the situation in which language is actualised by an individual act of usage characterised by indexicals and illocutionary markers while discursive situation refers to inter-discursive knowledge and to established ways of thinking and speaking. It thus serves as a check for what can be said and how it can be said. Johansson and Suomela-Salmi's position on context being situation might, however, be problematic as context is not always situation. This is because there can be prior context (individual background and beliefs) and current situational experience (situated cognition which can be expanded or enriched in the process of conversation). This has been dubbed "apriori" and actual situational contexts by Kecskes (2014). This new position by Kecskes thus attempts to negate the traditional claim that no sentence is complete without context by showing that there can be *actual situation context independent sentences* (even though they are not independent of prior contexts).

Mey (2001) explains context as a concept which facilitates interaction:

Context is a dynamic, not a static concept: it is to be understood as the continually changing surroundings, in the widest sense, that enable the participants in the communication process to interact, and in which the linguistic expressions of their interaction become intelligible. (p. 39)

Here, Mey ties the intelligibility of utterances to a given context and explains that context is dynamic and constantly changing as a result of several factors. This perception of dynamism of context seems to take into cognisance of the actual situational context rather than just the *a priori* context.

The above perspectives on context show that it is a central issue in the inferential process of meaning negotiation as the uses of language employed in movies rely on and also actively create the situation in which they are realised. The exploitation of certain shared (believed or assumed) information provided by the context as well as that which is made common in the actual situation experience indexes facets of the socio-cultural sphere. Therefore, the consideration of context is expedient in decoding the implicit in movies as utterances and physical acts such as gestures and facial expressions may be independently inadequate for realising meaning. Since context and linguistic interactions engage symbiotically, the situation (including social context, knowledge of societal doxas, knowledge of the connotation of certain expressions, and cultural knowledge) actively created in a movie and other variables serve as a requisite factor in understanding and interpreting both linguistic and non-linguistic acts performed by the characters.

The Dynamic Model of Meaning and Common Ground

Context in the linguistic sense is usually taken to refer to the factors that inform and, ultimately, affect the interpretation of expressions. This broad description can include linguistic, physical, social, cultural and other variables that are taken to constitute the epistemic or physical situation of any interaction. This perception of context has, however, been further explored to cater for the possibilities of emerging context, created right in the process of particular talk endeavours, or as Clark (1996) puts it, in the course of the joint action. Such dynamic property of context and its propensity for meaning has informed Kecskes' (2008) submission:

Meaning formally expressed in the *linguistic interactional context* is created on the spot, and is the result of the interaction and mutual influence of the

private contexts represented in the language of the interlocutors and the actual situational context interpreted by the interlocutors. (p. 385)

This explains the emergent nature of the emergent context as put forward by Kecskes. The Dynamic Model of Meaning (DMM) considers the communicative process as a structured whole, but which might be viewed from different perspectives. The holistic approach of DMM does not neglect the existent internal and external approaches to the study of context. Rather, it is a blend of both approaches for a comprehensive understanding of the construction of meaning in interaction. Consequently, DMM accounts for the influence of linguistic expressions on context, as well as the import of context on the choice of lexemes in any given speech situation.

The DMM states the need for a broad understanding of context which takes into account world knowledge, both prior and present, given that both encoded private context and actual situational context participate in meaning construction (Kecskes, 2008). The implication of this is that prior/existing contexts serve as the basis for actual situational contexts. Kecskes further makes a distinction in the DMM. Two facets of the meaning value of a word exist: Coresense and Consense. Coresense is a denotational, relatively stable and objective feature which is abstracted from prior contextual occurrences of a word and has the ability to reflect changes in the speech community. Consense on the other hand is actual, situated, referential and connotational which changes, based on actual situational contexts (Kecskes, 2008).

Although the DMM is essentially a model which accounts for lexical items' representation of the world in context, it is considered apt for this analysis as it captures culture specificities in its approach. Aspects of Clark's (1996) shared bases for CG – Communal and Personal CG are adopted. Both are indexed by joint attention, shared experiential knowledge and shared cultural knowledge and they provide an explanation into the workings of how the social, cultural, economic, political and economic experiences held by a group of people account for their

language use. These perspectives of Common Ground also explain the social consequences of information management in interaction.

Shared experiential knowledge, an indication of CG, pertains to experiences that the discourse participants know and remember as shared. At the cultural level, Common Ground may be indexed by signs of ethnic identity and the common cultural background that such signs may entail e.g. native dialect signalled by accent (Enfield, 2008, p. 224). He asserts that this will lead to other assumptions of Common Ground. Three levels where Common Ground can be indicated include: personal level, cultural level and socio-political level. Common Ground at the personal level is expressed through any shared and remembered joint activity. At the cultural level, common ground is articulated via native dialect, accent, particularised expressions, established referents, etc. The socio-cultural level involves common ground of current and past events in the community which enjoyed or are enjoying national attention.

The DMM and CG intricate vistas of language, culture and context make them most suitable for investigating contextual implications and dynamics of culture in *October 1*. A blend of the two offers two broad interrelated perspectives for this linguistic endeavour: language as representation of shared social, cultural, experiential and world knowledge and how these forms of knowledge account for language uses and meaning.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- i. to investigate the instantiations of cultural diversity in *October 1*;
- ii. to examine how contextual beliefs index common ground in the movie;
- iii. to explore the contextual undertones in meaning comprehension; and
- iv. to analyse how lexical items relate to the changing socio-cultural situation.

Previous Studies

Context and culture are at the heart of language use. The interrelatedness of the trio serves as the backdrop for meaning comprehension in communicative situations. Language users do not act independently of the

social-cultural context in which they are situated; their utterances are thus best understood in the varying context of their use (Mey, 2001). This remarkable linguistic phenomenon has spurred many researchers both early (cf. Malinowski, 1923; Sapir, 1921, 1970) and contemporary researchers to investigating the synergy between language, context and culture.

Sunokpera (2018), in “Studying Language in Context: Exploring SFL Advances in Theorising and Applicability,” examines context from a broad socio-cultural perspective. The study contextualises the literal meaning of expressions from Batonu, a language spoken in the north-central part of Nigeria, showing the place of culture in this process. It also demonstrates that context is relative to culture. This conclusion is similar to Chmielewski’s (1993) submission that meanings are distinguished within every culture.

Naming, as a linguistic act tied to cultural context is explored in Mbarachi and Igwenyi’s (2018). The duo adopt a linguistic-anthropological approach, Anthroponomastics, to analyse selected names in Chinua Achebe’s *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Things Fall Apart* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Purple Hibiscus*. They posit that “meaning of names is contextual and derives from a society’s cultural and sociolinguistic reservoir” (p. 29).

Abdullahi-Idiagbon (2019) focuses on the contrastive analysis of culture in relation to meaning in Yoruba and English languages with the aim of proffering an eclectic approach to language teaching and learning. The study considers cultural context and meaning of greetings, names, speech acts, kinship terms, and rhetorical expressions in the analysis. Hence, the understanding of cultural context is a requisite for understanding a target language (ibid). Also in the analysis of the meaning of Nollywood movies’ subtitles, Sobola (2019) takes a lexical approach to the analysis of meaning. The study is an examination of the meaning potential of lexical items employed in metaphors. She argues that these lexical items communicate the culture and worldview of people who use them. Applying Vyvyan Evan’s theory of Lexical Concept and Cognitive Model (LCCM) to the subtitles, she

concludes that the meaning of open-class lexical items (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) in metaphors can be derived from their use since these words represent cognitive models (for instance, worldviews and socio-cultural and experiential knowledge). This perspective of meaning and context is comparable to a fragment of Kecskes' (2008) perspective.

Most previous studies on *October 1* have been from the literary and theatrical perspectives (cf. Ifatimeyin, 2016; Onikoyi, 2016; Azeez, 2017; Ola-Koyi, 2019). There are others that employ a blend of semiotic and theatrical approaches. For example, Oyeyebi (2017) in "A Semiotic Analysis of a Movie: October 1," considers theatrical techniques such as signs, lighting, and props, camera movements, and setting as being relevant to the process of meaning creation. Bature-Uzor (2018) also examines how the mise en scène of the movie has historical correlations and contributes to the understanding of the movie. However, this study is concerned with the pragmatics of culture in the

movie. It adopts a hybrid of Kecskes' (2008) DMM and aspects of Common Ground to examining contextual implications and cultural dynamics in *October 1*.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology. It is suitable to account for the cultural, contextual and historical underpinnings of language use in Kunle Afolayan's *October 1* which forms the primary data of this study. Its rich socio-cultural and historical implications make it appropriate for this linguistic enterprise. The movie, which was produced in 2014, was downloaded from and watched on Youtube. Since this study takes a grand approach, it is considered inadequate to consider only a part of the movie in the analysis. Therefore, contextual implications and cultural dynamics, as instantiated throughout the movie, were observed and broadly categorised and exemplified with instances from the movie, within the adopted framework, for the purpose of the analysis.,

Data Analysis and Discussion

Contextual implications in *October 1* can be broadly divided into four categories: contextual instances of cultural diversity, contextual beliefs as indexes of common ground, contextual undertones in meaning comprehension, and lexical items as signifiers of the changing socio-cultural situation. They are discussed in turn:

Contextual Instances of Cultural Diversity

Contextual instances of cultural diversity relate to how the script writer and cineaste engage actions and events in the movie to showcase the diversity of the Nigerian people. For example, the use of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, the three major indigenous languages in Nigeria in the movie at different stages of the plot suggests an affinity for and identification with the languages. The play is set in Akote, a Yoruba speaking town, thus, it is expected that language of communication in the town is Yoruba. However, the location of the town and its being "a pathway to the north" explains the residence of people from other parts of the country. During the Ifa consultations, the Ifa priest conducts his chants in Yoruba, establishing the cultural cum religious practices in Nigeria and of Nigerians, independent of the Colonialists. Following one of his consultation sessions with the Ifa oracle, he predicts/ prophecies about the killer:

Excerpt 1:

Baba Ifa: Owa ninu'gbekun, ara n nii (He is in captivity)
Ara n ni i (He is uneasy)
O fe tu ara re sile (He wants to release him/ herself)
Ko sim o iyi to le se (He doesn't know what to do)
Officer: Ta ni, baba? (Who is it, baba?)
Inspector Waziri: What does he say?
Officer,: He is talking about the killer
Baba Ifa: Owa ninu igbekun, agara da a, yo si tun pa yan si.
(He is in captivity, he is weary and he will yet kill another person)

The aptness of Baba Ifa's prediction or prophecies concerning the killings and the killer also goes to suggest the efficacy of the African Traditional religion. The scene at the coconut bar is also another instance of conflation of cultures in the movie. Here, some men dressed in Igbo attire and conversing in the Igbo language are seen drinking at the bar while Aderopo – the prince, Miss Tawa and Banji are dressed in English attires but speaking in Yoruba and English. The code-mixing, which is an indication of cultural and Linguistic hybridity instantiates the cultural diversity in the town. The reference to the state of things by Aderopo, in response to his friends explanation on why there were Igbos in their town "diluted, just like Ibadan" bears testament to the diversity in Akote. The Igbos represent an unadulterated aspect of the Nigerian culture while the other group, probably because of western education, represent a hybrid of cultures.

Other than Yoruba – the predominant language in Akote, Igbo and Hausa which are typically represented in the movie, a scene in the movie further portrays the linguistic diversity in the Akote land. The night scene, where a young lady is terrified because of the movements she hears around her in the bush yet without seeing the person causing the movement get her exclaiming and calling out in fear in a dialect of the Yoruba language:

Excerpt 2:

Bisi: Esieyen? Eseyi ven? Ode boyi pedo jade jo esie yen?

(Who is there? Who is there? Whoever it is should come out of hiding)

This multiplicity of languages cum dialects in the same town, as exemplified by the various instances of code switching and code mixing in the character's utterances signal a broader situation of cultural diversity. Contextual and shared beliefs, are aspects of common ground in the play is exemplified in officer Afonja's response to his superior's (Inspector Waziri) order for him to dissect the dead bodies. The excerpt is given below:

Excerpt 3:

Inspector Waziri: Afonja! Dissect!

Officer Afonja: Ehn, the woman, not that e dey fear me. I know them when they were pikin.

Inspector Waziri: Hmm hnm.

Officer Afonja: All the young young women in Akote, they were virgin. Dishonour to lose virginity before their marriage.

The above excerpt presents two aspects of culture engaged in the movie. Firstly, is the communal parental ties that exists in the Yoruba sociocultural milieu, where it is one woman that gives birth to a child but it is the entire village that raises the child. It was therefore difficult for Afonja to look at the mutilated dead bodies of the young ladies whom he "knew as children". Secondly, communal common ground is also assessed in Afonja's explanation on why the victims were both virgins: it was a cultural requirement to stay a virgin until after marriage. Such cultural leanings were to accommodate the inspector who was not only a stranger to the town but also from another tribe where such beliefs might not be sacrosanct.

Contextual Beliefs as Indexes of Common Ground

In speech situations, the epistemic context has the propensity to condition the communicative context. This is expressed in the use of taboos, shared knowledge of the African belief system and shared knowledge of religion. Shared knowledge of religion is expressed in Inspector Waziri's interaction with the Canon Kaporagi (the town's Christian religious leader). During their conversation, the inspector mentioned that he believed that the mark left on the chest of the victims is a crucifix. The Canon's response "Ha! A cross. Who would want to commit such a depravity?" speaks to the sacredness attached to religious signs and symbols, a communal basis of common ground in the scene. Biblical allusion to Jesus words on the cross (Luke 23 verse 34) May God have mercy on him for he knows not what he does further exemplifies the common ground of religious beliefs in the movie. Consider the following excerpt:

Canon Kaporagi: Christian or muslim, er inspector?

Inspector Waziri: The latter

Canon Kaporagi: (smiles) But you don't go to the mosque anymore, abi?

Inspector Waziri: Canaon Kaporagi, I am not here to dwell on my faith or the lack of it.
Canon Kaporagi: (Laughs) So, where is your moral compass then? (Laughs lightly)
Inspector Waziri: Canaon Kaporagi, I believe there is good, there is bad, which religious has no bearing whatsoever on.

The Canon's question as regards the Inspector's religious inclination ("Christian or muslim, inspector") is another instantiation of shared communal knowledge, as Nigeria is a religious country and it is expected that everyone has a religious belief – Christian, muslim, or traditional religion.

Afonja's defiance of a direct order by his superior (Inspector Waziri) based on his cultural beliefs is another instantiation of shared cultural knowledge (of the Yoruba belief system in the deities) based on communal common ground. The conversation is presented below:

Inspector Waziri: We need to bring baba Ifa in for questioning. He predicted that there would be more killings. He knows more than he's telling us. Arrest him!
Sergeant Afonja: Ah... *Eewo!* (Abomination)
Inspector Waziri: What?
Sergeant Afonja: Taboo! Baba Ifa? Orunmila, High Priest, Custodian of Ifa Oracle. Arrest him? Bad idea.
Inspector Waziri: I want him brought in for questioning and that is an order!
Sergeant Afonja: O cannot obey order. No policeman in this Akute can arrest baba Ifa. No policeman.
Inspector Waziri: Sergeant Sunday Afonja, you will face severe disciplinary action for disobeying a direct order.
Sergeant Afonja: Better lose job more than to commit taboo... Ah.
Inspector Waziri: Sergeant Sunday Afonja, you are hereby suspended for insubordination.

Sergeant Afonja, a Yoruba man and an indigene of Akute, based on the Yoruba cosmo-religious beliefs that it is a taboo to arrest an Ifa priest as he is regarded as the oracle of *Orunmila*, a deity. The priest is therefore taken to be a demi-god himself. Afonja thus insists that he would rather lose his job than "commit a taboo" by arresting the Ifa priest. In the Yoruba belief system, the priests of the deities are held in high regard as they are believed to be in direct contact with these deities and can wield the powers of these deities. This marked choice is an instantiation of consense as noted by Keszkes (2008) where language use is situated and goes against the norm (i.e. obeying orders in the 'military setting') based on the actual situational context.

The inviolability of the Ifa priest is again exemplified in the interaction between him, Inspector Waziri and Corporal Omololu. An excerpt of the interaction is given below:

Baba Ifa: (Incantations in Yoruba) Ifa o so fun wa ni pato iru eni ti enina je, sugbon o so pe yo tun pa yan si.
(Ifa did not say for certain who the killer is. He however says that he will still kill more people)
Omololu: He says he does not know the assailant, but Ifa said he will kill some more.
Waziri: Ask him, how do I know he is speaking the truth? How do I know the killings are not some form of human ritual sacrifice of which he is the chief executioner?
(Omololu listens with an uncomfortable look)
Omololu: Oga ni ki n dupe lowo yin o, e de e ku ifowosowopo.
(My boss says to thank you for your cooperation).
Won de ni ki n biyin, bawo la se le mu apaniyan yin ko to pa yan si.
Baba Ifa: Ohun ti Ifa wi nipe pe eni na yo se e toju ge eh. Ni gba ti osu won re be kun, owo o wa te e.
(What Ifa says is that the culprit will do himself in, and when their cup is full, s/he will be apprehended).
Omololu: He said the killer wants to be caught, sir.

In the trio's interaction, which was actually a 'questioning session' but which held at Baba Ifa's house as against the police station, Corporal Omololu defers to Baba Ifa by not giving the correct interpretation of the inciting questions which Inspector Waziri instructed him to ask him. Rather, he asked the Ifa priest what he thought was reasonable to ask without questioning him in an accusatory manner. This is in stark contrast to the situation where Sumonu, the palace guard and the lover of one of the victims, was being questioned. Sumonu was not only arrested and taken to the local police station, but he was also handcuffed while he was being questioned. Furthermore, Omololu interpreted the questions just as Waziri had asked them, without fear nor favour, even though they were direct accusations (i.e. You, a palace guard, afraid? ... You wanted to have your way with her, she was a virgin, she refused, you got angry, you raped her then killed her to cover your tracks just like you did with the other victims). These two situations exemplify the dynamism of context and the workings of consense on the basis of communal common ground (between the Ifa priest and Omolodun).

Contextual Undertones in Meaning Comprehension

Scriptwriters are said to be "cultural interpreters" (Newcomb & Hirsch, 1987, p.458 in Dynel, 2011) articulating "the main lines of the cultural consensus about the reality of nature (Fiske & Hartley, 1978, p. 602). This explains why scriptwriters consider the surrounding realities as it relates to the beliefs held in a particular locale and the communicative import of the language use in each scene of the movie. In the movie *October 1*, social and cultural undertones account for the actual meaning of some linguistic expressions in the movie. For example, when Inspector Waziri visits Sergeant Afonja at home, after their fall out and the latter's suspension from the force, Afonja is obligated, by Yoruba custom to invite him into his home and also ask him to join them in the meal, since he met him and his wife eating. His utterance "we eat, beak bread with us" goes beyond the coresense of the linguistic expression but captures the consense of the expression based on the actual situation which is the visit of a man with no family in a strange land. The following exchange further explains this concept:

Afonja's wife: Aku alejo (A Yoruba expression for greeting)

Baale mi, shey kii se pe aboki to gba se lowo yin ba nkan mi wa? Tori to ba je be, sopona ni yo je kii onje to n je yen ha lorun o
(My husband, I hope that 'our friend' who fired you from your job hasn't come for something else, because if it is so, Sapona (a Yoruba god) will make him choke on the food)

Afonja: (Laughing lightly) Ko da nkan mo
(He's naïve)

Afonja: (to Waziri) Madam say "hope food is nice?"

Waziri: (Smiling) Delicious, delicious.

The interpretation given by Afonja for his wife's utterance is totally different from what she said. While she had, in reality, expressed some displeasure at the visit of her husband's boss, the sociocultural expectation is that she be hospitable to guests to her home, even if they show up unannounced. The variance between her words and her non-verbal actions, i.e. she was smiling while saying the unpleasant things she said about the inspector furthers the contextual undertone in this exchange, showing a leaning towards the cultural practice of the environment, her personal feeling notwithstanding.

The Yoruba socio-cultural knowledge also influences the non-linguistic communication between Afonja and Agbekoya on the latter's farmland. During Afonja's and Waziri's visit to the Agbekoya's farmland, a crime scene, for leads, Afonja howls and Agbekoya reciprocates. The response signifies his presence on the farm and an invitation for the officers. This form of communication is employed because they are on a farmland and its meaning can only be interpreted as such only in when situated in that kind of physical context. The act of howling is situated in the Yoruba traditional knowledge of communication on farms and in the wild. Such contextual undertones represent a coalescence of language, culture and meaning as they are consequential in the ultimate communicative success of the communicative situation.

Lexical Items as Signifiers of the Changing Socio-Cultural Situation

Language use in the movie indicates the changing social and cultural contexts. Inspector Waziri, for instance, is often called “Danny boy” by Mr. Winterbottom (an English man). In the Nigerian context, such terms of address is meant for a young person and therefore considered disrespectful when used in addressing an adult male. However, it specifies the social setting (colonial structure) of the country at the point in which the movie is set and it also typifies the inspector as a subordinate to his addresser. A coresense meaning of ‘boy’ is activated here as its meaning emerges from the speaker’s use of the word in an given setting - colonial. Towards the end of the movie, when Nigeria has got her independence, Waziri rejects the condescending pet name and demands that Mr. Winterbottom addresses him as “Inspector Danladi Waziri.” This signifies an evolution from the colonial era to the independent one.

In another scene, Mr. Winterbottom’s use of a Yoruba word *wahala* (trouble) in his speech represents his gradual acclimatisation to the Yoruba environment, as a result of his interaction with the locals. The word points to the situation of the utterance – his interlocutors were two Nigerians. In his conversation with fellow Englishmen, he does not use such a lexical item. Similarly, Waziri’s code-mixed utterance, “Future oba [king],” indicates a different situation of conversing, in an unofficial setting, with a Yoruba man, Afonja who expresses admiration of the educated prince, Aderopo. The above instances align with Hermes (1995, p. 6) position that “the principles, norms and conventions of use which underlie spontaneous communication in everyday life ... are exploited and manipulated by dramatists in their constructions of speech types and forms in plays (in movies in this case). The choice of the discussed lexical items thus conscious and marked for their communicative ends.

Discussion of Findings

The study of the movie October 1 further reveals a creative endeavour that it is rich in social and cultural nuances. The filmmaker purposively employs these elements to achieve

the sociocultural cum historical setting of the movie and substantiate the complex plot. The analysis shows that the movie’s portrayal of the Nigerian cultural diversity is instantiated with the use of the three major languages (Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo), the lingua-franca English, and the characters’ manner of dressing. The use of these languages, especially Yoruba, is saturated with idiomatic and folk sayings. The characters’ choice of words and manner of speaking reflect their cultural identity. This aligns with Kecskes’ (2008) belief that lexical items are representation of the world and Snell-Hornby’s (1988) view of language as an important cultural piece. The presence of many languages is thus indexical of the presence of many cultures and a communal common ground.

The cultural beliefs and religious knowledge of the Nigerian people also indexes common ground at the personal and cultural and levels simultaneously. From a broader perspective, the cineaste establishes a common ground with the movie’s audience at the socio-cultural level. This is because the Nigerian audience can relate with the historical perspective of the movie in terms of language use and social cum cultural aesthetics. The common ground does not only serve as the background of the characters’ interpretation of meaning in the dialogues, it affects the audience’s understanding of both linguistic and non-linguistic acts in the movie. The idiomatic expressions and proverbs used refer to the people’s beliefs and worldview. They therefore constitute a part of the communal common ground as they are a part of the people’s culture and “their perception of the world can be understood from the use of the proverbs” (Adeoti, 2018) and idiomatic expressions. Also, some lexical items in the movie have cultural and sociolinguistic insinuations; therefore, they index the changing sociocultural context of conversations. This is in consonance with Mey’s (2001) assertion that context is dynamic. Overall, the consideration of the interworking of language and culture in this study shows that both language and culture shapes our perception of the world. The interplay between language and culture extends beyond just cognitive representations of language (i.e., internal processes), but also to how

people communicate with each other (e.g., external processes) (Altarriba & Basnight-Brown, 2022)

Conclusion

In this study, Kunle Afolayan's *October 1* has been analysed using Kecskes' (2008) DMM and aspects of Common Ground. The application of the hybrid framework has proven to be effective in this endeavour. It was found that the relationship between language and socio-cultural

context is bidirectional. While the context influences and shapes language use, the latter concretises it. The filmmaker exploits this relationship. The paper therefore concludes that a consideration of context and the dynamics of culture serves as a lens through which script writers' and cineastes' attempts at creatively engaging language as a tool for conveying the sociolinguistic cum cultural intricacies in human interaction can be viewed.

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