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## **THE JOURNAL**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Adichie's <i>Americanah</i> : Remembering Home, Negotiating Identity <b>Charles Cliff Feghabo</b>	<b>1</b>
Intertextuality in Political Discourse: A Study of President Muhammadu Buhari's 2015 Inaugural Speech <b>Stephen Magor Allah</b>	<b>9</b>
Exclusion Sociale dans <i>La Greve Des Battu</i> d' Aminata Sow Fall: Une Lecture Sociocritique <b>Nwoko, Chidiebere ThankGod &amp; Ali, Onwuamaeze</b>	<b>18</b>
Exploring the Signification of visible face makeup among Nigerian Women <b>Patience Obiageri Solomon-Etefia &amp; John Odo Onu</b>	<b>26</b>
Media Sensation and Injustice on Domestic Violence and Incest in Motshabi Tyelele's <i>Shwele Bwawo!</i> ( <i>A Grave Injustice!</i> ) <b>Lydia J. Adamu, John H. Thliza &amp; Titus V. Blamah</b>	<b>36</b>
Sociocultural Considerations and the Challenges of Literary Translation: The Case of <i>L'Aventure Ambiguë</i> Into <i>The Ambiguous Adventure</i> <b>Saliha Ladan</b>	<b>45</b>
Rhetorical Tropes of Nationhood in Nigeria's Presidential Campaign Speeches <b><sup>1</sup>Yunana Ahmed, <sup>2</sup>Monday Agbonica Bello Eje &amp; <sup>3</sup>Charles Z. Sabe</b>	<b>52</b>
"Plandemic" and "Hunger Virus": A Morpho-pragmatic Study of Coronavirus Related Neologisms <b>God'sgift Ogban Uwen &amp; Stephen Magor Allah</b>	<b>63</b>

## Adichie's *Americanah*: Remembering Home, Negotiating Identity

Charles Cliff Feghabo

Department of English/Literary Studies  
Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

### Abstract

The remembrance of the homeland is fundamental to the negotiation of a transnational migrant's cultural identity in the mélange of multiculturalism/transnationalism fostered by globalization. Available studies on Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah* dwell on race, gender and transcultural identity to the exclusion of memory and cultural identity relationship that is highlighted in the text. This essay draws from the Postcolonial theory – a theory that interrogates and reinterprets the cultural intercourse between the colonizing powers and the erstwhile colonies. Culture and power relationship is eloquent in Adichie's text, consequently necessitating and validating the employment of the theory. This essay examines in the text the place of memory of the homeland in the negotiation of cultural identity in the diaspora. *Americanah* reveals some Nigerian diasporic characters in the United States of America and the United Kingdom. All but one of the diasporic characters suffer a mental disconnect from the homeland. Consequently, they easily sacrifice their cultural identity for a transnational identity. In contrast, the main character, Ifemelu, exhibits cultural fidelity through her mental interactions with the homeland and this catalyzes the negotiation of her cultural identity. Obvious through the actions of all the diasporic characters examined is that one's cultural identity fidelity or otherwise is a function of one's mental interface with or disconnection from the homeland.

**Keywords:** memory, diaspora, identity, cultural, transnational

### Introduction

Globalization, an economic and cultural as well as technological unification of the world, has engendered greater movements of people, goods and services from different parts of the globe, particularly from the erstwhile colonized countries to colonial empires. The movements have both economic and cultural implications for the sources and destinations of the migrations. The movements of people on the one hand and goods and services on the other hand have both been contrastively lopsided. For humans, the migration is more from the global south – “Third World” countries – to the global north made up of the United States of America, Canada, Western Europe and recently China. Conversely, for goods and services, the slant is greatly towards the south from the north, validating the position of Immanuel Wallerstein, who, way back in the 1970s, had identified an economic inequality in the economic relations of nations (qtd in Strikwerda 334).

The unevenness in the increased migrations of goods, services and humans in

recent times has continued to catalyze contestations over the concept of “globalization” by scholars of on both sides of the divide, especially in such fields of study as the sciences, Cultural Studies, and Social Sciences. The disputations, which are hinged mainly on the gains and losses of globalization, bifurcates – economic and cultural. The focus in this essay, however, is the cultural import of the concept. Below are the positions of some of the contenders in the debate.

For the position of beneficiary-nations instantiated in the opinion of Yin Wang's (83), an Asian scholar, who looks at globalization from the prism of science and technology, it enhances human relationships across the globe and promotes cultural identity, particularly cultural uniqueness. The cultural distinctiveness as espoused by Wang is as old as the existence of humans, therefore predates the trending globalization and invalidates his position on its promotion of cultural uniqueness. His position is further voided by the cultural imperialism discernible in the wake of the inundating movement of goods to the global south, with its

consequence on the lifestyles and the cultures of the receiving nations.

Cultural imperialism fuels mistrust of the concept “of globalization” in scholars from the global south, especially when viewed against the origin of the concept and its universalizing intent. Jan Nederveen Pieterse is one of such scholars who is cynical of the concept. Tracing its provenance to the west, he argues that globalization is a reconfiguration of westernization. This suspicion is louder in Gareth Griffith who also traces the ancient roots of the concept to the never-dying imperialism of the West. He argues:

Globalization did not simply erupt spontaneously around the world, but has a history embedded in the history of imperialism, in the structure of the world system, and in the origins of a global economy within the ideology of imperial rhetoric ... That global culture is a continuation of a dynamic of influence, control, dissemination and hegemony that operates according to an already initiated structure of power that emerged in the sixteenth century in the great confluence of imperialism, capitalism and modernity explain why the forces of globalization are still, in some senses, centered in the West (in terms of power and institutional organization), despite their global dissemination (99).

Griffith’s conclusion on the foundation and nature of globalization is a re-echoing of Wallerstein’s voice. Wallerstein has also traced the taproot of the concept that originated in the West to the sixteen century:

The years 1945-90 cannot be appropriately be appreciated without understanding that they are merely the latest period in the long history of the modern world system, a historical social system that originated in the sixteenth century. (qtd in Strikwerda 338)

Positions such as those held by the above scholars are representative distrust of scholars from the global South who understand globalization as not only economic and technological imperialism but

also cultural imperialism from the West. Ania Loomba expresses concern over the implication of the Western-inaugurated globalization for the cultural identity of postcolonial societies when she construes the concept “as the producer of a new and ‘liberating’ hybridity or multiculturalism, terms that now circulate to ratify the mishmash of cultures generated by the near unipolar domination of the western, particularly the United States, media machine?” (qtd in Paul Jay 48)

The apprehension over newer cultural hybridity or multiculturalism as expressed by Loomba is quintessential of postcolonial scholars among whose polyphonic voices Loomba’s is one. The exodus, especially in the twenty-first century of people from the periphery to the metropolitan center with cultural pluralism in its wake menaces the cultural distinctiveness, especially that of migrants from the global South to the global North. The peril on cultural peculiarity crystalizes in the cultural hybridity exhibited by the diasporic from the Third World. Tanure Ojaide identifies this mishmash in the writings of African migrants to the West when he says:

Many African writers in the West (European metropolitan centers, Canada, and the United States) are caught in the bind of “multiple homelands,” their new immigrant home in the West and their abandoned African homes. African writers have become part of the worldwide phenomena of migration and globalization with its attendant physical, socio-cultural, psychic and other forms of dislocation which permeate their individual writings. Migration, globalization, and other forms of dislocation...have their bearing on the cultural identity, aesthetics, content, and form of literary production of Africans abroad (31).

In such diasporic works as Chris Abani’s *Grace Land*, Ojaide identifies in the actions of the characters the conflation of cultural habits alien to African culture, but indigenous to the foreign land. Such unfamiliar cultural practices as identified by Ojaide are obvious manifestations of the “Third Space of enunciation” – in *betweenness* or cultural

hybridity – detected by Homi Bhabha (37).

Amidst of hybridity enabled by transnational migration, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's major character, Ifemelu, in *Americanah*, the text of consideration in this essay, negotiates her distinctive cultural identity as a Nigerian. Drawing from the postcolonial theory that evaluates the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized, vis-à-vis the implications of the intercourse for the cultural identity of the erstwhile colonized becomes imperative in the analysis of Adichie's text in this essay.

Since its publication, Adichie's *Americanah* has elicited scholarly critical responses, all woven around the migrant identity. Exploring the text, Patrycja Koziel (96) associates the deployment of several Igbo expressions by the author as a major narrative strategy as a stamp of her distinctive cultural identity in a diasporic milieu.

Olaocha Nwadiuto Nwabara (2017) in his thesis titled, *New Routes to the African Diaspora(s): Locating 'Naija' Identities in Transnational Cultural Productions* examines cultural projections in literary and media productions as captured in Adichie's *Americanah*. He interprets the cultural identity negotiation by Nigerians as a form of resistance to the racially-influenced yoking together of Blacks in America and the UK diaspora.

Chineye Amonyeze's (2017) interpretation of the text is not different from Nwabara's as he also sees Ifemelu's bicultural identity as a radical response to racial discrimination. This position is not at variant with Paola Bica (2020) who sees the African diaspora in Adichie's text as being compelled by the racialized foreign environment to wear false foreign identities to gain acceptance. Hammed Oluwadara Adejare's (2018) analysis of Adichie's text, albeit from the prism of *Afropolitan* concept evolved by Taye Selasi, is no departure from the race theme as he sees the struggles of African migrants in Europe and America as catalyzed by the need to define themselves beyond the umbrella definition of the racialized term Black that is associated with slavery.

On his part, Macmillan Feldner (2019)

sees the major character, Ifemelu as experiencing some developmental stages that start in Nigeria, then continues unto her relocation to the United States, where she moves into her third stage – assimilation. Her last stage is her eventual return to Nigeria, her home country. Hannah Watson (2021) in her analysis of the text, sees America robbing off Ifemelu, particularly the foreign accent she had picked and her hair transformation. Although, she later retrieves her Nigerian identity, at her eventual return to Nigeria, a part of her misses America.

While, cultural identity alongside racism is loudly examined by scholars, the place of memory of or her mental interaction with the homeland that underpins the negotiation of the cultural identity and eventual return to the homeland, particularly of the main character – Ifemelu – has often escaped the critical lenses of scholars. It is against this background that this essay with a focus on the remembrance of – the mental interaction with – the homeland as a means of negotiating cultural identity in the diasporic space establishes its relevance.

It is worthy of note that most of the younger generation of Nigerian writers of international renown are diasporic. Most of them, if not all, are victims of globalization and its economic and cultural consequences. They were dislocated from their traditional homeland as a result of the conomic-political imbroglio. Some of these writers include Helon Habila, Biyi Bamdele, Chimamanda Adichie, and Sefi Atta.

These writers in their diaporic space have become transcultural, but struggle to retain their cultural identity and contact with their home country by having the settings, characters and events in their narratives woven around their homeland, Nigeria. The deliberate acts of these writers smack of an attempt at providing a psychological cushion for themselves in the face of alienation in their new environment, and a feeling of severance from the homeland.

Besides the homeland settings that is resonant in the African diasporic texts, there is still evident in the texts the recall of the homeland – this also provides a psychological bond between these writers and the homeland. The recall is also obvious in Adichie's *Americanah*. The text is suggestive of her efforts at sustaining a grip on her

cultural identity in the face of an expectedly overwhelming alien milieu. This is validated by the loud parallel between Adichie and the main character in her novel, *Ifemelu*, a diasporic character who struggles to adjust to the new environment. In the text, *Ifemelu*'s acculturative struggles are punctuated by recalls of the homeland. The recall is a very significant means of retaining her cultural identity as a Nigerian – an Igbo in particular. The remembrance of the home also influences her paralleling Nigeria – from which she is severed to acquire a university degree – and America. The mental interactions with the values of the homeland influence some of her actions – as well as her assessment of other people's – especially non-African with whom she interacts. Her mental interactions or recall of the homeland peaked with her homeward pull that culminates in her eventual relocation to Nigeria. *Ifemelu*'s actions prompted by her mental interface with the homeland and the attitudes of other Nigerian diasporic characters in the text shall be examined in this essay.

First, the problem of frequent industrial actions embarked upon by lecturers in universities across the post-colonial Nigerian state because of months of unpaid salaries propels *Ifemelu* to relocate from Nigeria to the United States of America for her university education. These frequent industrial actions are catalyzed by economic mismanagement on the part of military/political leaders – a major characteristic of most postcolonial African countries – which triggers transnational migration.

In *Americanah* it is not only *Ifemelu*, but other youthful characters at different times who relocate to the metropolitan centers of America and Europe. The other characters include her Nigerian secondary school and university friends and her older female cousin that include Ginika, Obinze, Emeneke, Nicholas, and Aunt Uju – her female medical doctor cousin. While *Ifemelu*, Ginika and Uju migrate to the United States, the other characters move to the United Kingdom – where they are exposed to the insipid experiences of racism, alienation and cultural identity crisis. These experiences and the responses of the characters in their different environments, which shall be examined in course of this essay, showcase

the diaspora's attempt at negotiating his or her cultural identity in an alien environment. In this engagement, Adichie does admit through her characters the impossibility of the unsullied cultural identity of the diasporic. This admission is consistent with Homi Bhabha's position on cultural contact when he identifies in the colonial subject *in-betweenness* or cultural hybridity that he refers to as "the Third place of enunciation" (37). It is within such a space that Adichie, through the main character, *Ifemelu*, negotiates her cultural identity in the diaspora through recalls of the homeland.

The remembrance of home, which runs through the gamut of the text, is visible from her arrival at the home of her elder cousin, Aunt Uju in America. *Ifemelu* is surprised at two things she notices: Aunt Uju's roughly braided hair in a supposed "land flowing with milk and honey" and the deliberate mispronunciation of her name "*you-joo*" instead of "*oo-joo*" (125). *Ifemelu*'s consternation at her cousin's rough hair and her acceptance of her mispronounced name are consequences of her mental contrast of Aunt Uju's sophisticated Nigerian past and her American present. While her amazement can be waved off as the expected naiveté of one who is yet to come to terms with the realities of life in a foreign land, but her sustained discomfort with her cousin's mispronunciation of her name even after *Ifemelu*'s Nigerian cultural identity should have been eroded by time suggests her resolve to cling on to her identity. Her displeasure with the cousin evinces her as one whose recall of or mental interaction with the homeland is intact. On the contrary, based on her memory of home, she adjudges her cousin, Aunt Uju's action as a cultural compromise. In her recall of or mental interaction with the homeland, *Ifemelu* interprets "*yoo-joo*" as a meaningless string of letters, having no place in Igbo nomenclatures. Unfortunately, Aunt Uju accepts this meaningless string of letters as her name without any objection as she simply tells a shocked *Ifemelu* "It's what they call me." (126)

Uju's acquiescence in the despoiled form of her name is an admission of her inferiorization and the sacrifice of Nigerian, particularly Igbo cultural identity on the altar of transcultural identity. Her acceptance of her inferiority is further



underscored by her attitude towards her Igbo language, a major aspect of her cultural identity. Ifemelu notices with her discontentment that while English is the regular language of communication between Aunt Uju and her son Dike, Igbo is reduced to an occasional language of reprimand – when the former is angry with her son. These acts of Aunt Uju that smack of cultural compromise are consistent with Ranjana Tripathi's interpretation of the mind of migrants, vis-à-vis the discarding of the cultural values and identities. Tripathi explains that cultural boundaries become unreal to the migrants as they “keep positioning something of the cultural ethos of that particular country (*the host country*) on themselves.” (165) The italicized words are mine.

Such privileging of the cultural values of the foreign land over those of the motherland is often associated with migrants who adopt transcultural identities, hence feeling no sense of loss over their cultural identity as is illustrated in Aunt Uju's attitude. Displeasure over cultural devaluation, however, can be felt by one whose memory of the homeland is evergreen as is the case with Ifemelu. Obvious in these two characters, therefore, are the conflicting attitudes of two sets of people from a common cultural background, exposed to the same diasporic challenges, but respond differently.

On the one hand, there are transcultural immigrants with compromised cultural identity – illustrated in the text through such people as Aunt Uju, Emeneke, Ginika, Nicholas and his wife Ijugo. On the other hand, there are those who against all odds negotiate their cultural identities – Ifemelu represents this latter group. The paralleling of the two sets of people in the text is not inadvertent on the part of the writer as overly evident in the narrator's satirical comments about those in the first groups. This group serves as a foil to accentuate Ifemelu's cultural attachment and consequential struggles to affirm her identity.

The inherent duality of the diasporic characters – the cultural compromisers and the culture loyalists – therefore necessitates the examination of the text with a focus on the contrast in the disposition of the characters to the culture of the homeland and that of the alien milieu. Their actions and attitudes shall be viewed within the

prism of the memory of the homeland or the blurred memory.

Unlike Ifemelu, the transcultural migrants in the mold of Uju are not influenced by the memory of the homeland as there is no evidence of their recall of the homeland. No wonder their easy identity capitulation to a supposedly superior culture without a feeling of loss. Aunt Uju and Ifemelu's contention over the latter speaking Igbo to Dike, the son of the former, reveals a disconnect or connection with the homeland. Aunt Uju manifests her cultural estrangement when she expresses fears that her son's competence in his mother's language will jeopardize his Americanness. She, therefore, takes serious exception to Ifemelu's speaking to her son in Igbo, arguing, “Two languages will confuse him.” (131) On the contrary, Ifemelu's rejoinder to her cousin's statement reveals her attachment to her culture as she recalls their shared past at their homeland, Nigeria, “What are you talking about, Aunt Uju? We spoke two languages growing up.” (131) Uju's reply to Ifemelu's statement does not only unveils the roots of her apprehension but also underscores her cultural compromise as she says, “This is America. America is different.” (131) In her thinking, therefore, Igbo language or the memory of its culture is too cumbersome to be hauled into the diasporic space in America.

It is not, therefore, surprising that this belief carves in her a new sense of taste and fashion that evince cultural concession. Her compromised sense of taste is revealed where she goes to pick some items from a grocery store. The narrative voice unveils, “Aunt Uju never bought what she needed; she bought what was on sale and made herself need it.” (130) She seems to have buried her past, even her sense of dressing with the homeland as Ifemelu's recall of Aunt Uju's Nigerian past reveals the latter's new capitulated looks: “the old Aunt Uju would never have worn her hair in such scruffy braids. She would never have tolerated the ingrown hair that grew like raisins on her chin or worn trousers that gathered bulkily between her legs” (131). Ifemelu aptly concludes about her cousin, “America had subdued her” (131). These forms of sense of self-surrender as exhibited by Aunt Uju, especially in dressing sense and acquiescence in the mispronounced name are

however not spoken of about Ifemelu. This overtly suggests that Adichie has deliberately juxtaposed the two characters to underscore the affirmation of her cultural identity through Ifemelu.

This point is further validated in the text through other Nigerian characters with transnational or hybridized identities. Ginika, the first of Ifemelu's American diasporic classmates with whom she re-establishes physical contact, displays the death or absence of her memory of the homeland. When she moves over to share an apartment with Ginika, Ifemelu discovers that the erstwhile pretty Ginika, who had been a belle back in Nigeria, has become shadowy of her Nigerian past. To the consternation of Ifemelu, however, her friend is unperturbed about her lost African beauty or shriveled cultural identity. She is rather happy about wearing a transcultural identity as she admires Ifemelu slim looks and tells her that she is delectable to American men. Obviously that Ginika's sense of aesthetics is American-influenced and not Igbo culture-induced. This is because, for her, like Aunty Uju, the homeland with its cultural aesthetics is not worthy of recall as she melts into the culture of the host country, becoming a transcultural migrant.

Emenike, a diasporic Nigerian in the UK is not different either. He marries a far older British lawyer, lives in a British home and travels on a British passport, in exchange for his cultural identity. Trading off one's identity for a transcultural identity can only be possible where the migrant disconnects mentally from his or her roots. Consequently, the actions and interactions of such an individual will be shaped by the cultural values of the host country. No wonder that he delightfully enters into a conjugal bond with a much, much older woman – an act that is at variance with his Igbo cultural values and is, therefore, indicative of his mental disconnect from the homeland. Albeit, he does once express nostalgia for the homeland in his discussion with his Nigerian schoolmate and friend, Obinze; the nostalgia is expressed with blandness. This is evident in his laughing off his statement, "It's been so long but I just haven't had to travel back home. Besides, Georgina would not survive a visit to Nigeria" (305). His English wife would

not survive a visit to Nigeria because, in the sarcastic words of the narrative voice, the homeland is a "jungle and himself the interpreter of the jungle." (305)

His interpretation of the homeland as a jungle is not far from Nicholas' and his wife, Ijugo's in the UK as they idolize the British education, ensuring that their children are proficient in British English at the expense of their Nigerian language. This demonstrates their disengagement from or loss of memory of the homeland, which is not surprising because he has become so engrafted into the British culture that he loses memory of even his youthful outrageousness back in the homeland. A man who can forget such a past is capable of losing the memory of his cultural identity. Obinze, his cousin and friend, is not surprised at Nicholas' memory loss. He is however surprised at the friend's "loss of even the smallest memory of it (*his youthful outrageousness*)" (276).

Ifemelu's friends' and her cousin, Aunty Uju's easy capitulation to transcultural identities suggests that the blurred memory of the homeland is causal to their transnational identity and this parallels Ifemelu's sensitivity to her cultural identity.

#### **Ifemelu's cultural identity in the Diaspora**

Ifemelu actions and engagements in the foreign land are distinct, especially at the early period of her arrival in America. Although she later becomes transiently transcultural, her earlier actions and engagements are goaded by the memory of her cultural distinctiveness that enables her to negotiate her humanity as a black person amidst racial discrimination in the foreign land. The recall of her homeland influences her to attempt deconstructing the myth about the near-heaven beauty of America and reconstructing her cultural pride through her paralleling of the foreign land with the homeland. With some taint of cultural pride, she compares her Nigerian university's hostels to the rented hostel in the US that she shares with other female nationals of different countries. Vis-à-vis the sanitary conditions, unlike her Nigerian hostel mates, her new flatmates leave empty cans of drinks here and there in the sitting room. Her cultural identity evokes in her further memory of her Nigerian university hostel, which

although had maggots in the toilets, were, however, free from the invasion of rats that seem to be legitimate co-tenants in her rented hostel abroad.

Besides, Ifemelu's negotiation of her cultural identity seems to be honed by coveting racial prejudice in her new environment as she grows from mere recall and comparison of the homeland to the foreign land and then to the protection of the cultural identity. For instance, when Laura, a white supremacist in a racial slur describes Ifemelu and other African migrants as being among the privileged few among millions wallowing in poverty, she takes exception to the word "privileged," contending "I have never been called privileged in my life" (197). By her reply, she is telling Laura that in her country, Nigeria, she had enjoyed every privilege as others as there was no segregation based on color. No wonder, she says she was not black until she came to the US.

#### **Ifemelu's transiently identity Disconnect and Reawakening**

Although Ifemelu had displayed some sense of cultural pride in her encounter with Laura, a covertly racist white American, she later suffers transient cultural disconnect. This happens because she lets off her guard, allowing America to seep into her as she apes and perfects the American accent to gain acceptance. Nwabara interprets this act as a weapon she employs to protect herself in the racially discriminatory environment (127). From the affected accent intended to protect herself, she degenerates further in her identity compromise, to the point of trying to have her African hair transformed in a salon to whites'.

But during the process of her transition from African to American, she gets her scalp burnt. The hair salon is symbolic of the place of her cultural death and rebirth. Her cultural identity dies for alien looks when her hair is relaxed. The death of her cultural identity is underlined by her feeling towards the burnt hair; to her, the burnt scalp is "like something organic dying which should not have died." Consequently, it 'made her feel a sense of loss' (237). The demise of her African cultural essence is amplified by Ifemelu's seeing a new "mirror image he did not recognize ..." (237) because it contrasts with her African identity. As a result of

the transformation "the verve was gone" (237) in her, so "she left the salon almost mournfully" (237).

It is worthy of note that Ifemelu in her transient memory-disconnect had seen her natural African hair with its kinky looks as symbolic of 'primitivism' in the country of whites; hence she had gone to the transformation to gain acceptance into the 'civilized' culture of the metropolitan center. Adichie, in the novel, however, presents the natural African hair as connotative of the African cultural identity or essence that Ifemelu ignorantly destroys and later mourns. After mourning the loss of her natural hair, she however resurrects culturally anew to redefine herself as outside the culture of the imperial center. She affirms her cultural identity by choosing to have her natural hair braided and becoming inexorably determined to return to her own country, Nigeria to pick up a job offer, despite dissuasive comments from other Nigerians in the diaspora. Otoburu Okpiliya James and Steve Ushie Omagu (193) interpret Ifemelu's self-reinvention and return to Nigeria as Adichie's way of empowering Nigerian emigrants to work hard, eschewing criminal acts that have stereotyped the country.

Her homeward pull is further inflamed by her seeing in Facebook the profiles of other diasporic returnees who have invested in such areas as music production, fashion and fast-food franchise. To her, "They were living her life. Nigeria became where she was supposed to be, the only place she could sink her roots in without the constant urge to tug them out and shake off the soil" (17). Her successful return to Nigeria is symbolic of her cultural renaissance as she does sink her feet into her roots, discarding her diasporic garb by communicating in a Nigerian accent, reconnecting with her old schoolmates and friends, and savoring Nigerian roadside snacks.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Multiculturalism/transnationalism are fostered by Globalization, which is a renewed attempt by the West to erase the cultural distinctiveness of the nationals of less developed countries. This challenge to cultural identity is faced directly by transnational migrants from the less developed countries to the West for self-advancement – economically or educationally. The kinesis to the

West comes with blurred cultural boundaries which engenders identity compromise. Adichie's *Americanah* reveals that transnational identity or identity compromise is easily possible for migrants with a mental disconnect from the homeland. The main character in the text, Ifemelu, conversely, exhibits cultural fidelity through her mental interaction with the homeland, which enables her to negotiate her cultural identity. Mirrored in the actions of the diasporic characters

is that one's cultural identity fidelity or otherwise is a function of one's mental interface with or disconnection from the homeland. Adichie seems to be advocating cultural loyalty on the part of transnational migrants through her paralleling of the different types of diasporic characters. Her position is eloquently illustrated in Ifemelu's inexorable determination and eventual return to her homeland on the completion of her education.

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## Intertextuality in Political Discourse: A Study of President Muhammadu Buhari's 2015 Inaugural Speech

Stephen Magor Ellah

Department of English and Literary Studies  
University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4881-0964>

### Abstract

This study examines the intertextual references in President Muhammadu Buhari's 2015 presidential inaugural speech. The speech was purposively selected from the online version of *The Guardian* newspaper because it marked a change of government at the federal level from a ruling political party, People's Democratic Party (PDP) to a hitherto opposition party: All Progressives' Congress (APC). The data was then subjected to a discourse-pragmatic analysis using the theoretic concept of intertextuality. The findings reveal that the President dexterously intermixed political discourse with religious, literary, and historical discourses through manifest intertextuality and interdiscursivity. The study also indicates the President's positivist, liberalist and religious ideological orientation. The study concludes that all texts are constellation of several other texts which are used to index the text producer's ideology.

**Keywords:** President Muhammadu Buhari, political discourse, inaugural speech, interdiscursivity, ideology.

### Introduction

Every human society is characterised by politics. It is against this premise that Ellah (2019, p.48) posits that "the current reality is that politics is pervasive, that is, it permeates all human endeavours". The implication of this is that no human society can be insulated from politics since the activities of politicians affect all citizens. By politics, I mean "the struggle for power and the mechanism for resolving conflict of interest in human societies" (Ellah, 2019, p.48).

Political discourse relates to any talk that is concerned with politics. Put differently, political discourse is any discourse that deals with political engagements and enterprises. It is identified by "its actors or authors, viz., politicians. Indeed, the vast bulk of studies on political discourse is about the text and talk of professional politicians or political institutions, such as president[sic] and prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties, both at the local, national and international levels" (van Dijk, www.discourses.org). Political discourse takes different trajectories: political campaigns, inaugural speeches, Independence Day speeches, interviews, debates, parliamentary debates, among

others.

The present study focuses on inaugural speech, that is, the first public speech delivered by a democratically elected individual on the occasion of their swearing-in which informs the people of their policy direction. In other words, inaugural speech is "a speech delivered at a ceremonial induction of an individual into a new office" (Osisanwo, 2017, p. 298). In delivering inaugural speeches, political leaders do not only "express themselves", but also "perform different actions" (Ellah & Nta, 2020, p.148) such as making promises and stating their intentions and ideologies in the communicative event. In Nigeria, the inauguration of a newly elected president or governor since the return to democratic government in 1999 usually takes place on the 29th May, except in some states (e.g. Anambra, Edo and Ondo) where off season elections are conducted due to court judgments. During this event (inauguration ceremony), the elected individuals reaffirm their campaign promises and make public pronouncements regarding their policy direction.

The fact that "language is a social phenomenon that exhibits a close relationship with

socio-political matters in all human societies” (Ellah, 2014, p. 134), makes its investigation in political discourse inevitable. Hence, the inextricable relationship between language and politics has attracted linguistic investigation of political discourse from different theoretic perspectives. For instance, in Nigeria, studies have been carried on the discourse tactics in military coup speeches in Nigeria (Adegbija, 1995); pragmatic features in political speeches of six prominent Nigerian leaders, namely: Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, (civilian leaders); General Yakubu Gowon, General Olusegun Obasanjo, and General Ibrahim Babangida, (military leaders) (Adeyanju, 2006); stylistic features of political campaigns (Omezuwa & Ezejideaku, 2008); and nomination acceptance speeches of two Nigerian Presidential candidates – Chief Obafemi Awolowo (Presidential candidate of the Unity Party of Nigeria -UPN- in 1979) and Chief Moshood Abiola (Presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party -SDP- in 1993) (Akinwotu, 2013).

In this study, I examine President Muhammadu Buhari’s 2015 inaugural speech from a discourse-pragmatic perspective with special interest in the incorporation and inculcation of other texts in the speech, an area that is yet to be explored by scholars.

### **Studies on inaugural speeches**

The discourse of inaugural speeches has received significant scholarly attention from different theoretic orientations. For example, Adetunji (2009) undertakes a comparative pragmatic investigation of the second inaugural speeches of President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and President George Bush of the US. The study shows that two similar political speeches may not necessarily share the same pragmatic and rhetorical features elements.

Akinseye (2015) studies President Buhari’s 2015 inaugural speech using Halliday’s systemic functional grammar. The study reveals that President Buhari used modulation and modalisation such as will, can, shall, must, would and should to indicate his commitment, willingness, assurance, obligation to the growth

and development of Nigeria.

Sharndama (2015) examines President Buhari’s 2015 inaugural speech using Norman Fairclough’s model of critical discourse analysis. The study reveals that through the speech, the president declared his intentions, expressed his appreciation and ideologies.

Kubát and Čech (2016) embark on a stylometric analysis of US presidents’ inaugural speeches. The study which covers 57 inaugural speeches of all US presidents from George Washington to Barack Obama reveals that the three indices used in the analysis: vocabulary richness (using Moving-Average Type-Token Ratio (MATTR)), secondary thematic concentration (STC), and text activity (*Q*) were independently used without clear general tendency, and that “the style of the speeches is rather influenced by personality of each president” (Kubát & Čech, 2016). The study also indicates that the stylistic features of the individual presidents were “not relevant to the political affiliation”.

Aremu (2017) undertakes a cognitive pragmatic study of inaugural speeches of Nigerian presidents between 1979 and 2015 using a combination of Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) conceptual metaphor theory, Charteris-Black’s (2004) critical metaphor theory and modified model of Mey’s (2001) pragmeme. The study reveals that Nigerian Presidents’ inaugural speeches feature conceptual mappings such as the political leader as a father, builder, manager, servant; election is a battle, a sport, a journey, among others. The study further indicates that the conceptual mappings “are used as pragmatic strategies for appealing, remembering, thanking, warning and promising (p.32).

Osisanwo (2017) studies President Buhari’s 2015 inaugural speech through the lens of Mey’s (2001) pragmatic act theory. The study indicates that the president, through his inaugural speech, performs the pragmatic acts of proposing, promising, stating, acknowledging, thanking, appealing, reminding, instructing, advising, charging, informing, among others.

Akinwotu (2018) examines the inaugural speeches of Governor Olusegun Mimiko of Ondo State from a stylistic perspective. He observes that

the speeches “are characterised by lexical items (adjectives, adverbs, pronouns) which the speaker creatively deploys to promote his political programmes, and to present himself as a committed, sincere and responsible leader” (Akinwotu, 2018, p.1). The study also indicates “a preponderance of declarative sentences and declarative mood which Mimiko engages in promising, assuring and stating to persuade and mobilise listeners” (p.1). The present study differs from the previous ones in the sense that it investigates President Buhari’s first inaugural speech with a view to accounting for the incorporation of different texts in it.

### **Theoretical orientation: Intertextuality**

This study is anchored on the theory of intertextuality. Intertextuality was first introduced in 1966 by Julia Kristeva (Zengin 2016:300) in her explanation of Bakhtin’s work, especially his “Dialogical” principle in which he argues that a text is understood based on its relationship with other texts. In the words of Kristeva (1986:36), a given text is “a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another”. This implies that intertextuality emanates from the heterogeneity and dialogic nature of texts, that is, the interaction of texts or the relationship that a text enters into with other texts. Put differently, intertextuality describes textual interdependence, and a process of knowledge production that is thought to be complete and especially useful to its era or time of production when it echoes another or other texts. The focal argument put forward by proponents of intertextuality finds articulation in the ideological persuasion that knowledge production is a construction of an amalgam of previous ideas.

In the context of this study, a text is conceptualised to mean any meaningful spoken, written, visual or multimodal unit of language. Fairclough (2003:44) identifies two basic relations of texts, namely “internal and external” relations. In Fairclough’s thoughts, internal relation encapsulates semantic, grammatical and lexical relations of texts; while the external relation deals with the outside relations of texts, that is, the social practices, elements of social events and social structures, and what is brought from one text into

another. Central to the concept of intertextuality is the external relationships of texts which cover other people’s voices, allusions and responses to prior texts, shared knowledge, the interaction of different texts and the contextual beliefs. These “contextual beliefs in communication needs are believed to account for the differences (which could be accidental or deliberate) in the communicative activities of interactants of different experiences” (Uwen, 2020: 255) which often show some level of text relation. Fairclough’s (2003) internal and external text relations correlate with Hernandez-Guerra’s (2013:65) citing Plett’s (1991) intratextual and intertextual coherence of texts.

In discussing the basic components of analysing discourse, Foucault (1972:98) avows that “there can be no statement that in one way or another does not reactualize others”. This implies the pervasiveness of intertextuality which has aptly been articulated by Bakhtin (1986) cited in Fairclough (1992:102) thus:

each utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication. All utterances are populated, and indeed constituted, by snatches of others' utterances, more or less explicit complete: 'our speech... is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness and varying degrees of "our-own-ness" varying degrees of awareness and detachment. These words others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, rework, and reaccentuate.

The above quotation presupposes that all texts echo one another directly or indirectly. So, “for any particular text or type of text, there is a set of other texts and a set of voices which are potentially relevant, and potentially incorporated into the text” (Fairclough, 2003:36). Such set of other texts and voices are representatives of others and in a way the social processes, ideologies that influence the production of a text. Such ideologies may be the expression of “a conventionally legitimized social power and discourse rules that consciously regulate that field of discourse” which echoes its text (Uwen & Ukam, 2019: 131). The obvious or subtle echoing of other texts is what is referred to

as intertextuality. Intertextuality, therefore, is the “presence of a text in another text” (Genette, 1983). For Fairclough (1992:104), it “entails an emphasis upon the heterogeneity of texts, and a mode of analysis which highlights the diverse and often contradictory elements and threads which go to make up a text”. Bauman (2008:4) sees intertextuality as the “relational orientation of a text to other texts”, while Hodsdon-Champeon (2010) conceives it to be the different ways in which different “texts refer to other texts”. It is the indexing of one text into another. Olateju and Oyeboode (2014:10) consider intertextuality as “the interface between discourse practice and the text.” This involves processes such as text production, distribution and consumption. In the opinion of Zengin (2016:300), intertextuality is “a poststructuralist, deconstructionist and postmodernist theory that changed the concept of text, recognizing it as an intertext owing to the interrelations between texts and texts’ absorptions of other texts.” Implicated in Zengin’s theorisation of intertextuality is the shared network of links between or among texts.

Arising from the different definitions of intertextuality above, we describe it as the complex nature of the interrelatedness of texts or co-presence of other texts in terms of genre, style, structure, meaning figuration, period and other contextual variables. It is the inculcation, constellation or embodiment of concepts such as reference, allusion, context, presupposition, quotations, paraphrase, among others in the production and interpretation of a text for the purpose of reinforcement and cohesion. In addition to the inculcation of a text into another, intertextuality incorporates the complex relations which texts have “with conventions (genres, discourses, styles, activity types) which are structured together to constitute an order in discourse” (Fairclough 1992: 103).

Highlighting the relevance of intertextuality to a text, Bakhtin (1986:162) states that a text:

lives only by coming into contact with another text (with context). Only at this point of contact between texts does a light flash, illuminating both the posterior and anterior, joining a given

text to a dialogue. We emphasize that this contact is a dialogic contact between texts . . . Behind this contact is a contact of personalities and not of things.

The thrust of the above quote is that no text can be produced or read in isolation, but in relation to other text(s). Also, the “contact of personalities” as enunciated by Bakhtin above underscores the ideological orientations of discourse participants which are brought to bear in the production of other texts. Thus, intertextuality is used in a combination of power relation theory – Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to uncover the hegemonic and ideological inclination of text producers.

There are two main stakeholders in the theorisation of intertextuality: literary semiotics; and discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis. Prominent among scholars from the literary semiotics are Kristeva (1986), Frow (1986), Barthes (1998, 2001) and Allan (2000). They mainly “concern themselves with exploring the complex and heterogeneous nature of literary works by appropriating the concept of intertextuality. Their studies range from the search for influences or antecedents for a particular literary work to the analysis of literary conventions and codes as prerequisites for literary communication” (Oyeleye & Oduola, 2016: 430). Scholars from discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis (e.g. Beaugrande & Dressler 1981, Lemke 1992, Fairclough 1992, 1995) focus on non-literary texts.

This study is based on discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis, since it investigates a non-literary text from a discourse-pragmatic perspective. The adoption of intertextuality as a theoretic base for this study is considered most appropriate because of its ability to provide insights into the heterogeneous nature of political discourse.

### **Methodology**

The data for this study is President Muhammadu Buhari’s 2015 presidential inaugural speech which was purposively selected from the online version of *The Guardian* newspaper. The choice of this inaugural speech was informed by its significance in the political history of Nigeria



since it marked a change of government at the federal level from a ruling political party to a hitherto opposition party. To understand the incorporation of elements from other texts or the intermixing of different genres, and the conduit ideological disposition of the President and his party – All Progressive Congress (APC) in the selected data, the concept of intertextuality was deployed for its analysis.

### **Analysis and discussion**

In this section of the study, aspects of Fairclough's (1992) analytical model are adopted to analyse President Muhammadu Buhari's Inaugural speech of 29th May, 2015 against the backdrop of manifest intertextuality and interdiscursivity as dimensions of intertextuality in building a "framework for discourse analysis" (Fairclough, 1992:105). The inaugural speech was his first public and official speech as a democratically elected President of Nigeria. Therefore, his audience was Nigeria in particular and the world at large. In this analysis, effort is also made to show how the intertextual references in the selected text reflect the ideological positions of President Buhari and his party, the All Progressives Congress (APC).

### **Manifest intertextuality in President Buhari's inaugural speech**

Manifest intertextuality reflects the explicit or obvious presence of other text(s) in another through discourse representation (direct or indirect speech). It is the 'case where specific other texts are overtly drawn upon within a text' (Fairclough 1992:115) through the exploration of discourse cues such as quotation marks (Fairclough 1992:104). Other aspects of manifest intertextuality as identified and discussed by Fairclough (1992:118 - 123) are presupposition (propositions that are taken as given or taken for granted by the text producer), negation (propositions that contest or reject others), metadiscourse (distinction of different text levels within a text by the text producer) and irony (the opposite of what is being said).

President Buhari's speech illustrates patterns of manifest intertextuality based on discourse representation, presupposition, negation and reference. Let us consider each of them in turn.

### **Discourse representation**

Discourse representation is concerned with "speech reportage", that is, direct or indirect speech. In direct discourse representation, an intertextual form is clearly marked by quotation marks; while in indirect discourse representation, a reporting clause is used. Discourse representation is clearly and ambivalently present in President Buhari's Inaugural Speech. An instance of direct discourse representation is seen in the direct quotation from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (Act iv, Scene iii) where Brutus addresses Cassius saying:

There is a tide in the affairs of men which,  
Taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life,  
Is bound in shallows and miseries.

From the above excerpt, the voice of the reporter (Buhari) is explicitly marked from the voice of the reported (Shakespeare) through the indented quotation. The quotation is not arbitrarily deployed; rather, it is used to remind Nigerians of the great opportunity that they (purportedly) have to develop during his administration. It is also used to warn Nigerians of the imminent sufferings and hardships if they fail to use the opportunity. The extract underscores President Buhari's messianist ideology as he sees himself the true leader who has come to deliver Nigeria and Nigerians from sufferings. Also, the President deliberately chose first person pronominal (I, we, our) to, among other things, thank, state his intention and that of his ruling party, the APC. Though, there are no formal means such as quotation marks to portray most of the sentences as direct speech, the use of the above pronominal makes it attributive of direct discourse representation.

In terms of indirect discourse representation, the expression; "A few people have privately voiced fears that on coming back to office I shall go after them" illustrates the use of indirect speech. The reporting clause is introduced by the subordinating conjunction "that" to indicate the voice of the reported, that is, those who had expressed their fear of being victimised somewhere else.

### **Presupposition**

Presupposition relates to the background information or proposition that is common or

shared between the speaker and hearer which the speaker does not need to assert any more. Within the context of manifest intertextuality, “presupposed propositions are a way of incorporating the texts of others” (Fairclough 1992:121). Presupposition could either be manipulative or sincere.

In President Buhari’s Inaugural Speech, presuppositions are cued in intertextually. For example, in “our supporters who believe in us...”, the presupposition that some people do not believe in them is cued in from another nebulous text. Also, the expression, “The judicial system needs reform to cleanse itself from its immediate past” presupposes the alleged corrupt practices in the Nigerian judiciary. This shared knowledge is inculcated into the new text to justify the need for the reformation of the judiciary.

### **Negation**

Negation refers to a proposition that rejects another proposition. Negative statements are “often used for polemical purposes” (Fairclough 1992:121) and intertextually incorporate other texts by disagreeing with or rejecting them. President Buhari’s Inaugural Speech contains instances of negative sentences that incorporate other texts in an intertextual way. For example, the negative expression “There will be no paying off old scores” presupposes the proposition by some people that “there will be paying off old scores”. This presupposed proposition is what has been ambivalently inculcated into the new text in a negative form. The expression “There will be no paying off old scores” is also used to project President Buhari as a pardoner who does not believe in vindictivism.

Another example of negation is “I belong to nobody” which presupposes in some other text that he belonged to some people. Again, the negative sentence “Nigerians will not regret that they have entrusted national responsibility to us” rejects the proposition in some other text that Nigerians will regret voting the APC to power. Also, “Boko Haram is not only the security issue bedeviling our country” presupposes the proposition in some other text(s) that Boko Haram is the only security concern of Nigeria. This presupposition works intertextually to reject the proposition that Boko Haram is the only security

issue in Nigeria.

### **Reference**

Instances of references through definite and indefinite tokens, and phoric references are found in the President’s speech. These references are intertextually utilised to identify specific and non-specific persons, places, entities or things to provide useful contextual clues to the audience. For instance, the President made reference to “God” and the “Holy Book” in order to intextualise religious ideology which explains Nigerians’ passion for or regionalisation of events. The President in his speech also made direct reference to former “President Goodluck Jonathan for his display of statesmanship...” He uses this reference to boast to “the world that despite the perceived tension in the land we can be a united people capable of doing what is right for our nation.” Reference is also made to prominent nationalists and founding fathers such as Sir Herbert Macauley, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, and so on; to connect the past to the present. The President also referred to the past leaders as “spoilt children” who through their actions or inactions have brought “disorder to the house”. Here, “the house” is a metaphor for Nigeria. Domestic and global challenges such as insecurity, corruption, power, terrorism, sea piracy, climate change, diseases, and many more are also intertextualised in the President’s speech. Closely related to this is the reference to countries like “Cameroon, Chad and Niger” in their collaboration with Nigeria to fight Boko Haram.

The use of the pronominals, “his” and “he” in the second paragraph of the speech anaphorically refers to former President Goodluck Jonathan. Also, the pronoun, “their” in the third paragraph of the speech makes an anaphoric reference to “the million of supporters who believed in us...”, where “us” refers to the president and his political party, the APC.

### **Constitutive intertextuality/ interdiscursivity in President Buhari’s inaugural speech**

Constitutive intertextuality / interdiscursivity deals with the general convention of discourses and how different genres are hybridized or mixed in a particular text. It is an instance in which the voice of a particular genre is

also heard in another genre. For instance, the informative and persuasive language of advertising genre also features prominently in the language of politics. Hence, we can say that each of such genres is an intertext of the other. Constitutive intertextuality also accounts for the vocabulary items and turn-taking organisation in conversation. In its broad sense, constitutive intertextuality or interdiscursivity is the blend of different “genres, style, register and discourse” (Fairclough 1992:124).

President Buhari’s Inaugural Speech exhibits features of both explicit and implicit genre-mixing based on Nigeria’s socio-political experiences and his party’s (All Progressives’ Congress) ideologies. Specifically, the president explores Nigerians’ shared knowledge of religion and history to build his speech. For example, the statement “Today marks a triumph for Nigeria and an occasion to celebrate her freedom and cherish her democracy” shows a hybridization of religious and political discourses as it reminds one of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem as recorded in Matthew 21: 1 – 11 of the Bible.

Further exploitation of religious discourse is seen in the text producer’s reverence of God in “I am immensely grateful to God who has preserved us to witness this day and this occasion” and swearing by the “Holy Book” as an effective strategy to enact his religious ideology and to legitimise his mandate and influence Nigerians and the international community at large to believe in his honesty and integrity. His acknowledgement of God is in consonance with the religious belief that human affairs are controlled by God.

The discourse of history is also woven into political discourse to enable the text producer and consumer relate the past to the present in order to make the right decision for the future. For example, the President draws up on history to invoke the common goal of Nigeria’s founding fathers, who were poised to ensuring that Nigeria became a viable and an egalitarian society. Drawing further from history, the President delves into pre-colonial Nigeria to refer to the then great empires and kingdoms and their ancestors. Listening to or reading this speech would certainly remind one of a history class.

The President also intertexts political

discourse with literary discourse in quoting Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* to emphasise the great opportunity that Nigeria now has through his administration to realise her mission of becoming a great nation. The excerpt is as follows:

There is a tide in the affairs of men  
which,  
taken at the flood, leads on to  
fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life,  
Is bound in shallows and miseries.  
(Act iv, Scene iii)

By incorporating this literary text, President Buhari builds his argument on the need for Nigerians not to squander this opportunity which his administration offers. In referring to the above text, President Buhari also engages in ideological work as he sees himself as the messiah that has come to save Nigeria.

By and large, the intertextual elements in the text are also used to enact some ideologies such as positivist, liberalist and religious ideology. For example, positivist ideology is seen in the expression “with the support and cooperation he has given to the transition process...we can be a united people capable of doing what is right for our nation.” Here, the President expresses optimism that Nigeria can succeed in dealing with her affairs. This positivist ideology is further illustrated in his use of negative sentences to reject all forms of unhealthy propositions.

The president’s liberal ideology is aptly captured in the catchy statement ‘I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody’ which implies that he would be fair to every Nigerian, irrespective of who or what they are, their ethnic, religious or political affiliations.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has discussed and characterised intertextuality in discourse. It has explored the pervasive nature of intertextuality, explaining how all texts echo other texts manifestly and constitutively. Through the analysis of President Muhammadu Buhari’s Inaugural Speech of 29th May, 2015, the paper has illustrated how political discourse explores manifest intertextuality (using discourse representation, presupposition, negation and reference) and constitutive intertextuality. The

paper has also demonstrated that intertextuality is used to construct and maintain ideologies in societies. Although, this study has added to the exiting body of knowledge on intertextuality, and political discourse, especially inaugural speeches,

researchers can still apply intertextuality to the analysis of other genres of political discourse to further establish the multiplicity of texts and voices in political discourse.

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## Exclusion Sociale dans *La Greve Des Battu* d'Aminata Sow Fall: Une Lecture Sociocritique

Nwoko, Chidiebere ThankGod & Ali, Onwuamaeze

Department of Foreign Languages and Literary Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

### Résumé

La littérature met en relief certains aspects de la vie sociétale qui méritent une attention adéquate. Nous avons relevé l'aspect de l'exclusion sociale comme étant pertinent car c'est ce que nous vivons au jour le jour. Dans le roman de présente étude, c'est explicitement présenté auprès des personnages des mendiants qui sont traités comme des « sous-hommes », voire fléaux qu'il faut carrément effacer de la société. Cette étude prend donc la problématique de la situation sociale dégradante de l'exclusion menée contre les mendiants comme source d'inspiration. Les derniers sont exclus de la vie municipale faute de la supposition qu'ils n'exercent aucune fonction utile dans la ville. Fall met en lumière les réalités de la société sénégalaise postindépendante, souvent caractérisée par une variété de problèmes sociaux. Basant sur la théorie sociocritique, cette étude condamne l'exclusion sociale en établissant que la dernière ne résout aucun problème, plutôt, le complique. On a pu constater en entier, comme résultats, les fonctions subtiles que les mendiants pourraient exercer dans la société. Donc, nous proposons qu'ils soient plutôt rétablis dans la vie normale digne.

**Mots-clés :** exclusion sociale, mendicité, sociocritique, Aminata Sow Fall, société

### Introduction :

Parmi les rôles significatifs joués par la littérature, nous apprécions le plus le rôle du miroir reflétant la vie sociétale dans un temps spécifique. Donc, comme un miroir qui reflète les événements du vécu sociétal, on arrive à savoir des hauts et des bas qui touchent aux gens dans la société. Par-là, il est suffisant de dire que la littérature ne peut pas se séparer de la société. C'est afin de renforcer ce constat qu'Iwuchukwu signale que : « la littérature et les études littéraires (...) ne cessent d'évoluer avec la société dont elles relèvent... » (296) Les deux vont de pair. Les événements de la société inspirent ce qui est documenté en tant que littérature. Les problèmes sociaux tels que la corruption, la religion, la guerre, la marginalisation, le vol, la violence, l'insécurité, la mendicité, l'exclusion sociale, entre autres, sont les plus récurrents, qui inspirent les productions littéraires africains à l'époque d'après les indépendances. Cette affirmation est soutenue par Chinweze et Utah en disant qu'« il existe tant d'écrivains en Afrique contemporaine qui utilisent leurs écritures pour toucher et influencer la vie quotidienne. La plupart du temps, ils exposent les maux et les vices qui détruisent le continent » (141-142).

Cette étude s'inspire donc d'un de ces

problèmes sociaux étalés ci-dessus, « l'exclusion sociale », comme sujet dans le cadre littéraire. Dans les productions littéraires africaines postcoloniales telles que *La Grève des Battu* d'Aminata Sow Fall, *Xala* de Sembene Ousmane, *Les Soleils des Indépendances* d'Ahmadou Kourouma, entre autres, ce sujet s'avère courant, étant une des réalités qui se présentent à nous dès le départ des hommes blancs. L'exclusion sociale chez Fall dans *la Grève des Battu* est évidente auprès des personnages des mendiants. Il paraît que tous autres dans la société sont contre eux, étant donné leur situation sociale pitoyable, voire dégradante. Les derniers se voient par tous en tant que : « loques », « les ombres d'hommes », voire une plaie qu'il faut cacher dans la société. (*La Grève...9*)

A vrai dire, les activités des mendiants présentées dans le roman sont plus ou moins ignobles dans l'aspect social, sanitaire et économique. L'exclusion sociale administrée aux mendiants mène à la révolte (la grève) de ces soi-disant « loques » et « les déchets humains ». Les questions suivantes se soulèvent donc : si l'on le juge digne de porter une telle maltraitance sociale envers les mendiants, est-ce que cela résout ou complique le problème de la mendicité ? Est-ce que les mendiants exercent des fonctions

quelconques sociales ou religieuses ? C'est donc à nous de porter notre jugement à ces questions ayant fixé à nous-même les objectifs suivants : à retracer l'aspect de l'exclusion sociale dans le roman ; à en constater les conséquences et puis, à suggérer les solutions tentatives aux problèmes des mendiants dans le roman.

### **Vie et œuvres de l'auteure**

Aminata Sow Fall est née le 27 avril 1941 à Saint-Louis, Sénégal. Après ses études au lycée Faidherbe de Saint-Louis, elle obtient son baccalauréat au lycée Van Vollenhoven aujourd'hui connu comme lycée Gueye à Dakar. Ensuite, elle démarre une licence de lettres modernes et un diplôme d'interprétiariat international en France et y fait connaissance de son futur mari. Après son mariage en 1963, elle rentre au Sénégal pour s'engager dans l'enseignement, puis devenir membre de la commission nationale de réforme de l'enseignement du français (1974-1979) et participe à l'élaboration de manuels scolaires. Au cours de son interview menée par Thomas N. Hammond, documentée dans *Présence Francophone* (1981), elle énonce :

« J'écris pour tout le monde. J'écris aussi bien pour les africains que pour les non africains. Je pense que l'on doit faire l'effort de nous faire accepter par les autres. Par exemple, nous aimons les autres littératures, qu'elles soient française, japonaise ou américaine. Si nous arrivons à aimer ces littératures, c'est que nous avons fait un effort de communion de pensée avec ces gens-là... parce que pour moi la littérature fait vivre un peuple. C'est une âme qui vit à travers sa littérature... Donc, en d'autres mots, nous découvrons notre âme aux autres comme les autres nous découvrent la leur. » (192-193)

Par la, ASF se présente comme une romancière ouverte, croyante et fière de sa culture africaine et prête à la communiquer aux autres par le biais de la littérature. On cite donc les suivantes parmi ses œuvres littéraires : *Le Revenant* (1976), *La Grève des Battus* (1979), *L'Appel des Arènes* (1982), *L'Ex-Père de la Nation* (1987), *Le*

*Jujubier de la Patriarche* (1993), *Douceurs du Bercaïl* (1998), *Sur Le Flanc Gauche du Belém* (2002), *Un Grain de Vie et d'Espérance* (2002), *Festin de la Détresse* (2005) et *l'Empire du Mensonge*. (2018)

### **Présentation du roman**

L'histoire du roman se déroule dans une grande Ville qui est apparemment Dakar, la capitale du Sénégal. Les journaux ont fortement proclamé contre ce qu'ils appellent les déchets humains, les loques, les sous-hommes, les diminués physiques, les lépreux, les talibés, les bons-à-rien, voire les mendiants, que l'on trouve partout dans la ville. Ils doivent, selon les instructions dans les journaux, être éliminés. Ils harcèlent les gens lorsqu'ils (les gens) s'arrêtent aux feux de signalisation et lorsqu'ils entrent et sortent des magasins, des bureaux et des banques, et, pire que tout, ils chassent les touristes, dont le pays a besoin de l'argent.

La propreté des rues relève de la responsabilité du département de la santé publique, dont le chef est un responsable politique, Mour Ndiaye. Sow Fall nous en dit long sur Mour Ndiaye. Il avait un patron européen qui l'a maltraité et finalement, après une dernière insulte, il ne pouvait plus prendre et frapper l'homme. Il a été envoyé en prison et, bien sûr, a perdu son emploi. Cependant, il est revenu, principalement, pense-t-il, à cause de Serigne Birama. Ndiaye le trouva dans les rues de la ville, l'air perdu. Il était venu en ville pour obtenir la carte d'identité obligatoire mais étant analphabète et ne sachant pas la ville ne savait pas quoi faire. Ndiaye l'a aidé. Serigne Birama est un marabout, un gourou musulman. Ndiaye est devenu proche de Birama et lui donne beaucoup d'argent et de nourriture. En retour, ses conseils ont aidé et aident toujours la carrière de Ndiaye.

Ndiaye a un assistant très compétent, Kébo Dabo. C'est Dabo qui dirige essentiellement le département, Ndiaye en prend le crédit. Dabo a essayé de se débarrasser des mendiants mais en vain. Avec plus de plaintes à venir, Dabo dispose désormais de ressources supplémentaires. Avec une grande flotte d'hommes et de camions, le plan est de rassembler tous les mendiants - sans exception -

et de les expédier dans un village éloigné à quelque trois cents kilomètres de là, où il y a peu ou pas de moyens de transport pour qu'ils rentrent en ville. Dabo le fait et, très bientôt, il reste très peu de mendiants dans la ville.

Tout le monde est très impressionné par Ndiaye et il reçoit beaucoup de crédit. En effet, le président est sur le point de nommer un vice-président et on dit que Ndiaye est candidat. Il est naturellement très enthousiaste à ce sujet et consulte non seulement Birama, mais d'autres marabouts sur ce qu'il doit faire et suit à la lettre leurs instructions détaillées sur les sacrifices.

Pendant ce temps, il y a des problèmes à la maison. Il a une femme fidèle, loyale et obéissante, Lolli, qui lui a donné huit enfants. Cependant, il a rencontré une très jolie fille de seize ans, Sine, et envisage de l'épouser. Lolli est, bien sûr, furieuse, mais elle est finalement persuadée par sa famille qu'elle n'a d'autre choix que d'accepter. Sow Fall est d'accord avec cela mais, par l'intermédiaire de la fille de Lolli, Raabi, qui critique fortement le comportement de son père, elle fustige Ndiaye.

Bien que nous ayons suivi l'histoire du point de vue des officiels, nous rencontrons également les mendiants. Ils ne sont naturellement pas satisfaits de leur traitement et, sous l'organisation de Salla Niang, ils décident que la seule façon de faire face à la situation est de se mettre en grève. Ce n'est pas une menace vaine, car c'est un principe clé de l'Islam que les musulmans doivent faire des dons de bienfaisance et, s'ils ne le font pas, ils ne prospéreront pas.

Ndiaye travaille maintenant dur pour devenir vice-président et un marabout lui dit qu'il doit sacrifier un taureau, couper la viande et la distribuer aux mendiants aux quatre coins de la ville. Le problème est qu'il n'y a pas de mendiants dans aucun coin de la ville. S'il ne fait pas le sacrifice selon les instructions du marabout, il ne deviendra pas vice-président et, s'il laisse les mendiants rentrer dans la ville, il sera critiqué dans la presse et par son ministre.

### La revue de la littérature

Dans cette partie de notre étude, nous allons considérer la revue des ouvrages scientifiques qui existent déjà dans notre domaine

d'étude. Cela nous permettra à marquer nettement les lacunes existantes à combler et puis énoncer les contributions que notre étude apportera à la connaissance existante. Citant un expert qui s'est bien distingué dans la recherche scientifique :

« the background knowledge acquired in the course of the research enables him or her to make useful connections between literature review and the other parts of the research project, ensuring that the lacunae in the previously concluded research are addressed and any possible gap is filled by the present study (...). On the other hand, if there is no previously published material in the area, you also have to say so, explaining how your proposed research will fill this gap. (Iwuchukwu 436-444)

Inspirés de cette importance signalée ci-dessus, dans les lignes qui suivent, nous allons examiner le sujet de l'exclusion sociale ; les causes et les effets. Selon l'UNICEF cité dans *Tacae*, les personnes vivant en situation de pauvreté sont privées des ressources dont elles ont besoin sur les plans matériels, spirituels et affectifs pour vivre, se développer et s'épanouir, ce qui les empêche de jouir de leurs droits, de donner la pleine mesure de leurs capacités ou de participer à la vie de la société en tant que membres à part entière. (7) Les mendiants dans le roman de Fall, représentent ces gens en situation de pauvreté.

Khan opine que l'exclusion sociale est le résultat d'un ensemble de processus économiques, politiques, institutionnels, culturels, souvent interdépendants et cumulatifs, qui mettent des personnes ou des groupes à part dans la société. (7). Department of International Development (DFID) ajoute que l'exclusion sociale est:

“a process by which certain groups are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, HIV status, migrant status or where they live. Discrimination occurs in public institutions, such as



the legal system or education and health services, as well as social institutions like the household” (4)

La définition ci-dessus fait un étalage des raisons ou principes sur lesquels l'exclusion sociale s'effectue. On peut être exclu pour la race, la maladie, l'orientation sexuelle pour ne citer que cela. Les effets de l'exclusion sociale sont souvent la violence et le conflit. Les derniers sont les résultats de la révolte. Dans notre corpus, on exclut les mendiants car on les croit comme n'exerçant aucune fonction importante dans la société et que leurs activités de la mendicité gênent. Cette étude vise donc à postuler les suivants : les moyens variés dont les gens qui se croient exclus peuvent servir d'une grande importance, surtout quand on se débarrasse de l'idée d'exclusion sociale. C'est comme cela car parmi eux, on pourrait même trouver ceux que l'on peut bien réintégrer à la vie sociale digne.

#### **Inscription de la sociocritique dans le roman**

Avant d'entreprendre cette analyse, il convient de porter des idées discursives vers la notion de la sociocritique, ses visées et valeurs esthétiques dans le domaine littéraire. La sociocritique selon Iwuchukwu est : « l'étude de la sociologie des textes littéraires qui reconnaît la primauté de l'existence d'un rapport de force triadique entre l'écrivain, le texte et le public-lecteur, celui-ci étant le générateur du sens dans la mesure où l'acte de lecture vise pour l'essentiel la compréhension du sens du message véhiculé par le texte. » (300) Par ce constat, on arrive à apprécier le rôle de la connexité que joue la notion dans le cercle de l'écrivain, de sa production littéraire et du public-lecteur. Il suffit de noter que cette force triadique existant dans leur cercle sera foireuse si la production littéraire de l'écrivain ne se lit pas par le public. Cela veut dire que c'est le public-lecteur qui va s'occuper de porter des jugements et des critiques vers la production littéraire.

Afin de porter plus d'éclaircissements vers la sociocritique Duchetienne, citant Bergez et al, Adedeji postule que « la sociocritique vise le texte lui-même comme lieu où se joue et s'effectue une certaine socialité ». (6) La « socialité » du texte s'atteint donc par une lecture interne, immanente, textualiste pour reprendre des mots chargés de mépris par les sociologues : « C'est dans la

spécificité esthétique même, la dimension valeur des textes, que la sociocritique s'efforce de lire cette présence des œuvres au monde qu'elle appelle la socialité. »

En *grosso modo*, la sociocritique s'interroge sur le texte et les pratiques sociales que l'écrivain y représente. Au sens restreint, bien sûr, dans le texte de notre étude, nous allons faire sortir les pratiques sociales qui y sont représentées par l'écrivain. Chaque écrivain écrit depuis un milieu social, culturel, économique et religieux qui lui sert d'une source effective d'inspiration vers sa production littéraire. Parlant du milieu spatiotemporel de Fall, il s'agit des réalités sociales à Dakar, Sénégal au cours de la période postcoloniale qui sont souvent caractérisées par les problèmes sociopolitiques tels que la pauvreté, l'injustice, la bureaucratie, l'hypocrisie, l'égoïsme, la corruption, etc. Fall s'inspire de tous ces faits pour mettre en écriture la condition du Sénégal d'après les indépendances en fustigeant les maux sociaux surtout de l'optique politique.

#### **L'image des mendiants dans la société romanesque**

Dans l'univers social présenté dans le texte, les mendiants occupent la plus basse position sociale. Dès le début du roman, on apprend l'intention de la gouvernance de mettre à fin l'existence des mendiants dans la ville, voire l'exclusion de la vie municipale. On les voit comme « les déchets humains », « les loques », « les ombres d'homme », « une plaie qu'il faut cacher », etc. Ce sont les termes deshumanisants qui signalent l'inutilité des mendiants dans la société. Puisque les mendiants constituent les fléaux et n'exercent aucune fonction sociale, donc il faut les exclure de la société municipale. C'est l'idée qui dirige les activités des rafles organisées par la direction, dont le chef de file, Mour Ndiaye, ne sachant pas que son avenir dépend de ces « loques », voire ces « déchets humains. »

#### **L'exclusion des mendiants de la vie municipale**

C'est cela la préoccupation majeure du roman : la bataille entre les mendiants et la direction de la salubrité publique. Fall, par le biais de ses deux personnages « Keba » et « Sagar », entame l'idée de l'exclusion des mendiants de la vie municipale, mettant en exergue leur condition sociale actuelle. Keba représente la force ultime

contre les activités des mendiants en ville. On se rend compte de son dévouement inébranlable dans l'entreprise des rafles vers les mendiants, hors de la ville. Ce même personnage exprime sa haine vers eux en ces termes : « la ville demande à être nettoyée de ces éléments. » (10) On demande que les mendiants soient exclus de la vie en ville. Ils doivent partir vers les banlieues, les campagnes, où personne ne les verrait souvent. Les mendiants eux-mêmes, ont besoin de nicher au sein de la Ville, étant donné que la dernière représente une assurance de leur subsistance. Dans la ville, il y aura certainement des gens qui voudraient bien leur donner quoi que ce soit, mais dans les campagnes, à qui donc vont-ils demander de l'argent ?

Par contre, Sagar Diouf, sa secrétaire, représente la force qui croit à l'égalité de tous dans la société. D'une façon libérale, elle fait savoir à Keba que les mendiants dans les rues ne sont pas les problèmes de la gouvernance. Keba se donne tant de peine à cause d'une simple histoire des mendiants. En tapant à la machine, elle est fatiguée de voir les circulaires concernant les rafles des mendiants. Elle est étonnée par l'extrémité d'efforts que la direction met justement pour se débarrasser des mendiants. Elle assume qu'il existe une horde de problèmes sociaux qu'il faut traiter d'une façon immédiate, non pas une simple histoire des mendiants. Conseillant à Keba, elle dit : « tu sais, Keba, tu perds ton temps avec les mendiants. Ils sont là depuis nos arrières-arrières-grands-parents. Tu les as trouvés au monde, tu les laisseras. Tu ne peux rien faire contre eux. Quelle idée d'ailleurs de vouloir les chasser ? Que t'ont-ils fait ? (34) D'ailleurs, la société sénégalaise présentée dans le texte est celle musulmane. Elle affirme : « la religion recommande bien que l'on assiste les pauvres ; comment vivraient-ils autrement ? » (35)

Effectivement, l'exclusion des mendiants de la ville a eu un succès retentissant. Les mendiants eux-mêmes se sont décidés de quitter la ville et de ne plus y revenir s'étant sensibilisés en ces termes : « ils commencent à nous rendre l'existence impossible. Parce qu'on est des mendiants, ils croient qu'on n'est pas des hommes faits comme eux. » (45) « - nous ne sommes pas des chiens ! Vous le savez bien, que nous ne

sommes pas des chiens. Il faut qu'eux aussi en soient persuadés. Alors, organisons-nous. » (49) C'est Nguirane Sarr qui se plaint ainsi. Il croit que malgré leur situation de mendicité, ils sont pourtant faits justement comme tous les autres dans la société. Ils sont tous des êtres humains faits comme eux. Donc, il encourage ses camarades-mendiants de s'organiser.

### **Analyse littéraire de l'exclusion sociale dans le roman**

On a décidé de se débarrasser des mendiants de la ville pour des raisons suivantes : comme une stratégie politique, l'assainissement de l'environnement et la cachette de la faiblesse de la gouvernance.

#### **a. L'assainissement de l'environnement :**

C'est dans l'intention du service de la direction pour la salubrité publique, dont le Directeur Mour Ndiaye, d'entreprendre la mission de l'assainissement des voies publiques. Cette entreprise est dirigée vers les mendiants, car ils sont considérés dans le roman comme étant des « déchets humains », « encombrements humains », voire une épine sur la chaire publique. La vue des mendiants, qui sont souvent présentés en guenilles, est désagréable. Leur présence grégaire dans les coins spécifiques de la ville tels que les ronds-points, devant les hôpitaux, les mosquées, les églises, les feux rouges, les supermarchés, entre autres, cause des blocages : « la ville demande à être nettoyée de ces éléments. Keba Daba en est d'autant plus convaincu qu'une fois de plus il a eu mal à avaler sa salive ; il a eu la malchance de se trouver ce vendredi dans le magasin d'un commerçant libanais ; or tout le monde sait que le vendredi d'embouteillages pour les mendiants. » (10)

Afin de réaliser cette mission d'assainissement, l'équipe sanitaire dont le chef de file Keba, s'engage dans les rafles à tous les coins stratégiques où pourraient rester les mendiants :

« - voilà en rouge, les principaux points stratégiques. Cette fois-ci, il faut tenir le coup, ne pas transiger, rafler sans arrêt. Plus de descente hebdomadaire, mais quotidiennes (...) tous les moyens sont mis à notre disposition : effectif, voitures, carburant. Il faut que ces gens-là

dégagent la circulation. » (31)

Par cet extrait ci-dessus, on constate l'énorme effort mis dans cette affaire d'arrêter et chasser les mendiants hors de la ville.

**b. La cachette de la faiblesse de la gouvernance, voire une stratégie politico-économique :**

Chaque régime gouvernemental a ses faiblesses et ses forces. Ce qui caractérise une bonne gouvernance est la compétence et la capacité de travailler là-dessus et améliorer les situations sociales ignobles comme celle de la mendicité présentée dans le roman. C'est le contraire avec le service de la salubrité publique dont le chef, Mour Ndiaye. Le dernier ne considère pas le phénomène de la mendicité depuis sa racine, les causes et effets, afin de déterminer comment résoudre ce fléau social, sans même blesser la dignité des gens en situation de la mendicité. Nous argumentons que la gouvernance aurait établi un système religieux et social bien organisé qui s'occuperait bel et bien de ces mendiants, des gens de cette catégorie, au lieu de les chasser comme les animaux sauvages, et les frapper comme les criminels. Sans doute, la présence des mendiants nuit à la réputation de la ville. Mais leur présence sert aussi d'un rappel aux agences gouvernementales qu'il y a une faiblesse, une faiblesse sociologique qu'il faut travailler et améliorer ; pas une faiblesse qu'il faut couvrir, pour des raisons politiques. Mour Ndiaye veut bien que les mendiants quittent la ville non pas parce que cela résout définitivement le problème, mais parce qu'il veut garder la réputation de la gouvernance :

« Keba, il n'y a pas à comprendre, il faut y mettre les moyens pour que ces gens-là disparaissent. Il y va de la réputation de notre service. Faut-il que l'on nous traite d'inefficaces, d'incapables ? (...) tu te rends compte, continua celui-ci, leur présence nuit au prestige de notre pays ; c'est une plaie que l'on doit cacher, (...) cette année le nombre de touristes a nettement baissé par rapport à l'année dernière, et il est presque certain que ces gens-là y sont pour quelque chose. On ne peut tout de même pas les

laisser nous envahir, menacer l'hygiène publique et l'économie nationale. » (12)

Mour Ndiaye parle du point de vue des effets politico-économiques des activités des mendiants dans la ville. Il constate qu'elles affectent le tourisme et la revenue qui en vient et l'image extérieure de la ville vis-à-vis de la réputation du régime gouvernemental actuel. La présence des mendiants caractérise le taux de la pauvreté existant dans une région donnée. Dans le cas actuel du roman, on ne se donne pas la tâche de retracer la racine de la pauvreté qui pourrait mener à la situation de la mendicité. Plutôt, on s'intéresse uniquement à chasser les pauvres !

Malheureusement, les choses ont commencé à prendre une mauvaise tournure quand Mour Ndiaye apprend que les mendiants dont il se débarrasse, vers qui son agence porte des actes ignobles, voire dégradants, ont le pouvoir de l'aider avec ses ambitions politiques. Son marabout lui affirme : « fais seulement le sacrifice d'un beau bélier tout blanc. Tu l'égorgeras de ta propre main, tu feras sept tas de viande que tu donneras à des mendiants. » (43). Il commence alors à faire des efforts pour rétablir les derniers dans leurs points stratégiques dans les rues, afin de pouvoir réaliser son ambition de la présidence. Cela met en lumière l'hypocrisie, l'individualisme, voire l'égoïsme dans le personnage de Mour Ndiaye. La chasse des mendiants est, après tout, une stratégie politique pour se présenter en tant qu'un directeur travailleur et compétent, en vue de ses ambitions. Non jamais pour des raisons de l'assainissement de la ville.

**Les rôles des mendiants dans le développement de l'intrigue**

La romancière a pu développer l'intrigue de son œuvre romanesque grâce à l'inscription des personnages mendiants, contre qui une autre partie porte des combats. La lutte fréquente contre les mendiants développe l'intrigue romanesque. Dans le texte, on peut identifier deux rôles majeurs que jouent les mendiants : le rôle religieux et le rôle socio-politique.

**Le rôle religieux :**

La ville de Dakar, comme présentée dans le texte, est une ville musulmane. Dans l'Islam, on est conseillé de donner la charité aux pauvres, faire l'aumône, etc. et puis, recevoir leurs prières et les

bénédictions. Les mendiants jouent un rôle très significatif dans la vie religieuse des membres de la société. Par leurs prières, ils font exaucer les vœux des adeptes de la religion musulmane. Selon Nguirane :

« Ils ont besoin de donner la charité parce qu'ils ont besoin de nos prières ; les vœux de longue vie, de prospérité, de pèlerinage, ils aiment les entendre chaque matin pour chasser leurs cauchemars de la veille et pour entretenir l'espoir d'un lendemain meilleur. Vous croyez que les gens donnent par gentillesse ? Non, mais par instinct de conservation. » (49)

En accord avec la citation ci-dessus, Ohaegbu cité par Osarenmwinda signale que : « la mendicité, point d'articulation du récit, est un phénomène social réel, un vécu quotidien dans la société sénégalaise qu'on considère comme la porte d'entrée de l'islam en Afrique occidentale. » (194) C'est en raison de l'importance des mendiants que Mour Ndiaye, lorsqu'il a recours à son marabout concernant ses intentions politiques, le dernier lui conseille : « fais seulement le sacrifice d'un beau bélier tout blanc. Tu l'égorgeras de ta propre main, tu feras sept tas de viande que tu donneras à des mendiants. » (43). Nous voyons par la suite que la réussite de Mour Ndiaye dépend des mendiants. A cause de la maltraitance qu'ils ont reçue, ils décident alors de se déplacer jusqu'à la campagne. Salla explique :

« Restons ici ! Vous entendez, restons ici ! D'ici peu de temps vous verrez que nous sommes utiles comme l'air qu'ils respirent. Quel est le patron qui ne donne pas la charité pour rester éternellement le patron ? Quel est le malade, réel ou imaginaire, qui ne croit pas que ses troubles disparaîtront en même temps que l'aumône sortira de ses mains ? Quel est l'ambitieux qui ne pense pas ouvrir toutes les portes par l'action magique de la charité ? Chacun donne pour une raison ou pour une autre. Même les parents des futurs condamnés se servent de la charité pour fausser le raisonnement du juge. » (78)

La citation ci-dessus résume la fonction religieuse qu'exercent les mendiants dans le roman. Donc, les exclure totalement comme cela de la vie municipale, est comme vivre sans lumière.

#### **Le rôle socio-politique :**

Le rôle socio-politique des mendiants dans le roman réside dans le fait que leur présence porte à la connaissance de la gouvernance qu'il y a toujours des choses à faire ; la pauvreté à combattre, voire des lacunes à combler, Les mendiants se voient dans les lieux spécifiques tels que devant les églises, les mosquées, aux marchés, devant les supermarchés, au feu rouge, etc. n'importe où, où il leur sera possible de rencontrer plus de gens. Donc, ce sera facile de les voir partout. Les touristes étrangers peuvent être déçus par leur présence. Mais ce qui est important c'est que la gouvernance est censée établir un système chargé de les réhabiliter et les réintégrer à la vie normale dans la société ; non pas les chasser, les blesser ou les tuer.

#### **Conclusion :**

De toute évidence, Fall, par le biais de cette œuvre romanesque satirique, porte des critiques sociales vers les systèmes postcoloniaux qui tendent à avoir des faiblesses telles que la corruption, la pauvreté, la bureaucratie, l'hypocrisie, l'égoïsme, l'injustice parmi d'autres. Dans le roman que nous avons étudié à fond, on constate le malaise de l'exclusion sociale portée vers les mendiants. Les derniers représentent les faibles de la société ; les faibles qu'il faut aider et protéger. Mais contrairement, on les exclut de la vie municipale. On les croit comme étant incapables d'exercer des fonctions quoi que ce soit. La romancière nous véhicule le message qui porte sur l'humanisme et l'égalité de tous. Nous sommes tous des êtres humains et par conséquent, malgré nos statuts respectifs dans la société, nous avons besoin l'un de l'autre pour une existence digne. D'ailleurs, le fléau qu'il faut combattre est la pauvreté, parmi d'autres vices sociaux et non pas les gens qui vivent dans la situation de la pauvreté. On a pu constater que malgré la situation dégradante des mendiants, ils exercent quand-même des fonctions religieuses et socio-politiques importantes.

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## Exploring the Signification of visible face makeup among Nigerian Women

Patience Obiageri Solomon-Etefia & John Odo Onu

Department of Linguistic Studies,  
University of Benin, Benin city

### Abstract

This paper examines visible face make-up women wear in Nigeria. The study aims to highlight the signs of women make-up. This study employs a qualitative research methodology, which include oral interview and observation methods for data collection. Ten women and two make-up artist were used as informant in this paper. The data were analysed using semiotics theory. The study also shows that women wear make-up not only to be beautiful, but to join the moving train and for facial correction. There are specific laws and rules in make-up application that define the appearance code with the use of the make-up functional materials. Foundation goes on the face, mascara on the eyes and lipstick on the lips. All of these make-up functional have their various signs and symbols. Foundation symbolizes glue as it binds the different ingredients; concealer signifies weapon and so on. The observed makeovers that women wear in Nigeria are; gothic, nude, engagement/bridal, editorial, party and permanent. Each of them have their significance, for instance, the gothic make up signifies loudness, and nude signifies softness, and so on. The colours are also very significant in makeovers. The blue colour is a symbol of masculinity, red colour a symbol of power and yellow a symbol of hope.

**Key words:** Semiotics, make-up, signification, code, colours

### Introduction

Make-up is the process of applying the product on the face while the complete made-up is called makeover. Face make-up is as old as man, it varies from culture to culture. Make-up is an integral part of most women's life in our society. The drive to decorate the body and face has its inception in prehistoric days when initially men used it to camouflage his form from predatory animals and to induce fear into threatening opponents (Corson 1972) with the passage of time, body painting and tattooing became linked to identity, being used to mark clan membership, as an artefact in ritual celebration and worship, and as a medium to adhere and attract the opposite sex. According to Noth (1990), the role of make-up as a symbolic medium has ancient origins and whilst the meaning and symbols painted on faces may have changed over the centuries, the myth and mystery associated with facial adornment has not changed.

Make-up is not a recent invention. Women and men wore make-up in ancient cultures, such as Egypt. While the use of cosmetics has changed over the years, today in societies the world over, women are the main buyers and users of make-up.

According to one of our respondent, some women cannot imagine facing the day without make-up on their faces. In extreme cases, women won't allow anyone to see them without their faces made up for the day, including their own husbands. Many women who go to functions or parties gain more confidence with make-up. This can range from a light application and lip gloss to a face complete with foundation, powder, blush, eyeliner, eye shadow and several coats of lipstick. The amount of make-up that makes a woman feel confident varies. The aim of this study is to describe the facial makeover worn by Nigerian women from the semiotic point of view while the various objectives are; to point out the significance of colours in face make-up, to classify the various make-up styles, and then discourse the implication of face make-up.

### Previous works on Face make-up

Silverio (2010) investigates the make-up effects on self-perception. The purpose of the study was to determine whether wearing make-up directly affects a woman's personal image as perceived by her. The research was conducted using female students as Old Dominion University. Survey was used to gather data relating

to the research. The findings of the study shows that women do feel more put together when they wear make-up and that wearing make-up did make them feel more sexy and desirable. It was concluded that while make-up can provide a bit of self-confidence, wearing too much can do just the opposite. The study relates to the present study in the sense that it provided empirical evidence on effects of make-up on woman's personal image but differs in the areas of methodology and theoretical framework. The study did not apply any theoretical framework for the analysis of data but the present study is anchored on semiotics theory.

Ogilvie and Ryan (2011) carried out a study on "lipstick" more than a fashion trend. This paper explores and discusses why women purchase and wear lipstick and behaviours associated with its use. A study of 300 female lipstick users were interviewed using a semi structured question naive. The findings of the study indicated that women use lipstick in a significant way to transform and present themselves, using it to reflect their daily fluctuations in moods identity. Behaviours associated with lipstick use are steeped in ritual and cultural customs. Lipstick facilitates life transaction as consumers undergo a period of liminality. Lipstick has a variable role to play in constructing self-identity and providing understanding in how women experience appearance in their daily lives. This study relates to the present study in the sense that it is provided empirical evidence on the use of lipstick by women which form part of the present study but differ in sense. That the present studies discusses lipstick in addition to other visible face make-up of women such as foundation, mascara and face powder.

Buegeler (2015) investigates "Make-up, your: social expectations and perceptions of make-up use". The study explores whether the possible health risk associated with make-up use as factors that women consider in determining whether or not to wear make-up. The findings of study suggests that in childhood and adolescent, make-up use is a type of performance in which young girls mimic the behaviour of maternal figures and female peers. Throughout college, however, make-up use becomes routinized and it's reinforced by cultural

expectations which are maintained by the accessibility of information on the internet that markets cosmetics products. This study relates to the present one in the sense that it provided a useful information on the possible health risk associated with make-up use which is one aspect the present study intends to address but differ in the sense that the present study in addition to the effects of make-up on women will also discuss the role and what this make-up signifies to the users.

Ogilvie (2005), conducted a study on the semiotics of visible face make-up: the masks women wear. The study explores the signs of visible face make-up and examines how women consume appearance in everyday life in contemporary Australia. Using a semiotic framework, it presents a novel new method of interpreting and gaining increased meaning into our everyday consumption phenomenon. The purpose of the study is to gain insights into why women wear make-up. The study utilizes an interpretative approach. The theoretical framework used to underpin this research is semiotics. The findings of the study show that women wear make-up to adhere to strict societal appearance code and from this code they derive benefits such as: power, status, sexual allurements and increased self-esteem. This study is relevant to the present study in the area of theoretical framework and method of data collection but differs in the sense that the present study focuses are; to point out the significance of colours in face make-up, to classify the various make-up styles, and then discourse the implication of face make-up. For more works on make-up see (Aguinaldo, E., and Peissig, J. J., 2019; Doyle, A., 2019 and Almanza, A., and Young, N., 2020). To the best of the researcher knowledge

## 1. Methodology

In order to explore the significant of the signs of women visible make-up, a survey design was used. The study employed qualitative methodology and the study of consumer behaviour and outlines the usefulness of techniques such as phenomenology in understanding everyday humanistic experiences. Adopting this methodology, the study uses a combination of qualitative techniques including observation and

interview. The use of observation and interview techniques were chosen in line with existential phenomenological principles to explore the symbolic nature of the medium and the emotional direction that visible face make-up represents to women. Ten women that wore make-up and two make-up artist were used as informants in this study. The feelings, experiences and behaviours of women who never wore make-up are not reflected in the study. Due to the nature of understanding, the signification of make-up, and in line with existential phenomenological principle, a face-to-face technique of interview was selected as opposed to other method of qualitative data collection. The duration for this data collection was three (3) months. The people interviewed are basically female between the age of eighteen (18) to (60) and the language employed for the interview was English. The least educational qualification among the respondent is a secondary school graduate. The need for this was to understand the symbolism of the sign of make-up from the perceptives of the individual provided data rich in emotions that was tested captured by a personal interview setting. For research ethical, names of respondents were not captured. The researchers did not put religion into consideration during the data collection. The job status of the respondents include; civil servants, business persons and artisans. The collected data were reviewed and analysed using a Semiotics framework.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

Semiotics can be defined as the science of signs and their meaning (Bonissac, 1998, Noth 1990). A sign can be anything that can be taken to represent something. The foundation of modern day semiotics is usually attributed to Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and Peirce (1839-1914) (Noth 1990, Gottdeiner, 1995) who concurrently, but separately and individually developed the philosophies of the sign and its interpretation from two different perspectives. This study employed a Peircean Semiotic framework in the analysis of the signification of visible face make-up of women in Nigeria. It is targeted towards understanding what make-up represents and symbolizes to the individual. It was therefore important to utilize a model that allowed analysis of the respondents'

thoughts, feelings and experiences rather than the more structuralists' communication approach initially used for code identification (Hawkes, 1977). Peirce (1955) proposed three dimensions of semiotic analysis which include icon, index and symbol. The icon is a sign that conveys meaning because of its close resemblance to the object. For example, a painting or picture depicts an actual likeness to the object. Unlike icon, index does not arise the cultural custom but from some existential and casual connection between two entities. For example, a flash of lightening is an index for thunder that follows. An index works on the prior knowledge of the interpretant and the linkage of the two signs to create meaning. Through concept of index, Peirce shows how daily practice or a pragmatic understanding of the material world created meaning through experiences rather than through cultural codes. Symbols are the arbitrary rules that govern meaning. For example, the laws of language that guides sentence construction and understanding are symbolic. A symbol would no longer exist if there is no interpretant to make the signifying connection. It is a vehicle that stands for something else which is understood as an idea in the mind of the interpretant (Gottdeiner, 1995). In relation to make-up, this will include the law of product application. For example, lipstick is only applied to the lips and mascara to the eyelashes as this is where customs expect them to go except on special cases.

## **3. Functional material for Face Make-up**

In the proper facial make-up, some essential cosmetics are functional. This essential cosmetic includes; face primer, the lipstick, foundation, mascara, face powder, eyebrow pencil or eyeliner, concealer, etc. The face primer is a creamy substance rubbed on the face to shield the skin and help the makeover stay in the face all day long. The Lipstick consists of colours generally applied to the lip to make it sensuous and colourful. Lipsticks are intended to add colour and texture to the lips and often come in a wide range of colours as well as finishes such as matte, satin and lustre. Lip stains have a water or gel base and may contain alcohol to help the product stay on leaving a matte look. They temporarily saturate the lips with a dye. Lip glosses are intended to add shine to the lips and may add a tint colour, as well as being scented or



flavoured for a pop of fun. Lip balms are most often used to moisturise, tint and protect the lips.

Lipstick was considered an important artefact by many in the ceremony of preparing the face. Lipstick was often the first and the last artefact to be used by women in their daily grooming rituals. Initially, because of its simplicity in application and the sensual implications associated with it and lastly because women tended to use less make-up in the aging process and lipstick was the last of these to go.

There are numerous lipstick brands such as moisturizing lipstick, used by women with dry lips to keep the lips soft and smooth. Matte lipstick has the effect of flat and not too shining lips for women looking for colourful and nice shade. Cream lipsticks are used mainly by women with small lips. Frosted/pearl lipstick to sparkle and glisten. Its negative effects are that it causes the lips to feel heavy, cracked and dry. We also have long worn lipsticks that is long lasting on the lips until one eats something oily. Wet lips are a brand of lipstick that are not coloured but shiny thick or gummy lipstick/gloss. The Mascara is used to darken, lengthen, thicken, or draw attention to the eyelashes. It is available in various colours. Mascaras have components to help lashes appear longer and thicker. Eyeshadow is a pigmented powder/cream or substance used to accentuate the area traditionally on, above, and under the eyelids. Many colours may be used at once and blended together to create different effect. A set of colours arranged either in a circular or square form may be applied on top of the eyelids to make the eye pronounced and sparkling. It should be noted that three or more eye shadow can be applied at once or mixed to arrive at a desired colour or effect.

The Eye liner as the name suggests this is usually in a pencil form or in a small container applied with a thin stick underneath the eye to create an impression of fake eye lashes or a tattoo liner which gives an inclusion of thicker fringe on the face of the user. Eyeliner is usually in different colours either in form of a pencil or a gel or liquid is used to enhance and elongate the apparent size or depth of the eye. For example, while the eyeliner on waterline and inner corners of the eye makes the eyes look bigger and more awake. Eye brow pencils, creams, waxes, gels and powders are

used to colour, fill in and define the brows. Make-up brushes are used to apply make-up onto the face. There are two types of make-up brushes: synthetic and natural. Synthetic brushes are best for cream products while natural brushes are ideal for powder products. When speaking of eye make-up, it is important to address three elements: eyeliner, eyeshadow and mascara. Each of these products can be used together or alone but their sole purpose is to enhance the eye and make it appear more prominent. Eyeliner is typically a line drawn around the eye in the lash line to accentuate the size and shape of the eye. Eye shadow is used on the lid, in the crease and on the brow bone to add depth and accentuate the eye. Last, mascara is used to tint the eye lashes to make them appear more predominant.

Sherrow (2001:106) says “for thousands of years people have applied various substances to add colour, depth and definition” make-up brush is brush used in applying make-up over the face. Every make-up has its own brush and proper use of this brush for its make-up gives the desired effect. Fan brush is used to clean up fallen product or gently apply powder to the face cheekbones, temples and cupid brows. Angled blush brush makes it easier to apply product perfectly on the cheekbones while beauty blender which is, spongy like is often dipped inside water to blend make-up as smoothly as possible. It also blends out harsh make-up lines and remove excess product. Lip brush is used to achieve a perfect line on the lip especially when one do not have a lip liner handy. The sculpted tip of the brush allows for precise application and lining of the lip, the short form bristle gives flawless overall coverage. Concealer brush is used to put on concealer for smooth and flawless coverage. Foundation is applied evenly on the face before other make-up are applied (except drawing the brow). It covers loopholes and gives the face a lit and some smoothness. Foundation is used to smooth out the face by covering spots, acnes, blemishes or uneven skin tone. They are sold in liquid, cream or powder or more recently in mousse. Foundation provides sheer, matte, dewy or full coverage (Lewis, 2000). Foundation is applied after primer to fill out pores, create a dewy look or create a smoother finish. They usually come in cream formulas to be applied before

foundation as a base. The concealer is also like the foundation. It differs only in thickness and its ability to cover spots, marks and blemishes in the face. It is also applied under the eye to cover blemish and also applied under the eyebrow usually after the eye pencil has been drawn to give the eyebrow an arc shape and to make it pronounced. In some cases, concealers are also applied on top of the eyelid before rubbing eye shadow in order to make it more pronounced, some also apply concealer on top of the lips before rubbing lipstick in order to make the lipstick sharper.

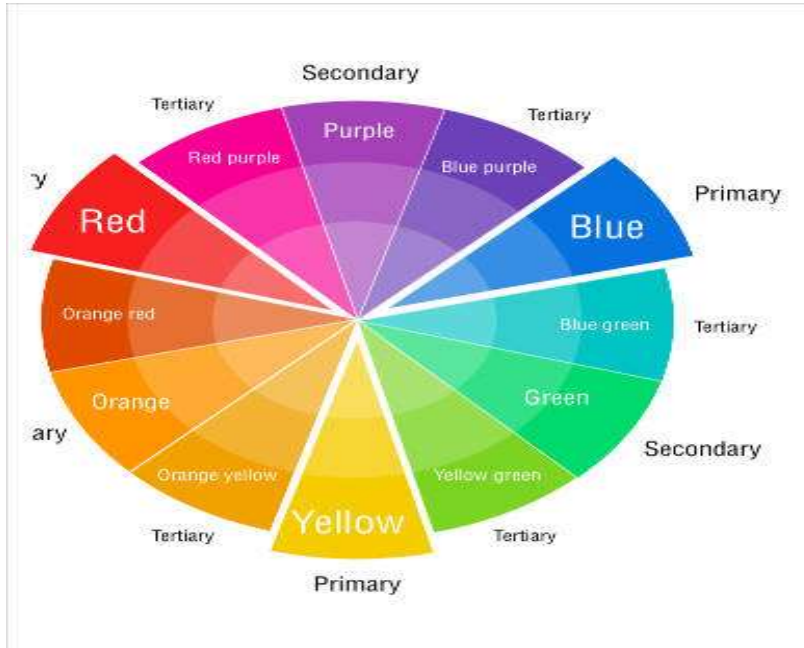
Concealer covers imperfections of the skin. Concealer is often used for any extra coverage needed to cover acne/pimple blemishes, under eye circles and other imperfections. Concealer is often thicker and more solid than foundation and provides longer lasting, more detailed coverage as well as creating a fresh clean base for all the rest of the make-up. The powder is applied on the face after all the make-up has been made to cover the greasy nature of the foundation and concealer. The translucent powder is a quick light dusty of powder sets those controls shines or oil. Face powder sets the foundation and under eye concealer giving it a matte finish while also concealing small flaws or blemishes. It can also be used to bake the foundation, so that it stays on longer. Tinted face powder may be worn alone as a light foundation so that the full face does look as caked up as it could. Face powder is also a key artefact in the grooming practices as clear skin and evenness of complexion was so often considered a necessary ingredient of beauty. Bronzer is a shiny substance usually applied to the cheekbone, the nose and often time at the upper line of the lip, to create a shiny effect.

#### **4. Signifier and signified of Colour Codes in Face make-up**

Colour plays a significant role in face make-up. The kind of colours used in make-up determine how loud or soft a person could look. It could also show if a person is an introvert or an extrovert. For instance, an introvert person may choose softer make-ups than an extrovert. Colours in make-up can also hide a person's feeling no matter how good or bad. As we all know from our early education, there are basically three types of primary colours, which are blue, yellow and red (black and white are not usually counted). All other colours are gotten from the three primary colours.

The Blue colour darken, as a result any colour gotten from its combination also carry its characteristics. Significantly, the blue colour is a symbol of masculinity in make-up, since it often carries its effect upon any colour it gets in contact with. Thus, it gives an older look to persons. Some shades of colour born from the blue family are; violet, purple, plum, oxblood, wine, lilac, blue purple, red purple, etc.

One of the prominent colours used in celebrations is the "red colour" The red colour family are orange, pink, baby pink, etc. The semiotic significance of the red colour is power, in this case the red colour has that domineer quality because it catches attention anywhere it is used. No wonder it is usually used for make-up for brides at their traditional marriages and engagement ceremonies as well as different in different ceremonials. The Yellow colour is another colour that attracts it is usually used in editorial makeovers. Its significance hope in that, it is a colour that tone down hash colours in makeovers. Other colours in this family include; orange, orange yellow, etc. Presented in in figure 1 below is a colour wheel that captures this illustration



**Figure 1: The Colour Wheel**  
**Classification of visible facial Makeover**

Women face makeover come in different styles. These make-up styles are; Gothic, Nude, Party, Editorial, Engagement, Bridal and Permanent make-ups.

Gothic face makeover: This make-up styles depicts “class.” It is seen as make-up for classic or big ladies. The significance of this make-up is that it makes one appear elderly, looking older than her age. This make-up portrays the real African women look in the past before the advent of flashy make-ups. Here the functional colours are usually dark colours to demonstrate the real African woman. As shown in the images 1&2 below the faces are wearing dark colours of make-up such as, black, dark brown, chocolate, etc. The gothic make-up is usually at classic parties like dinner party.



**Image 1: Gothic face makeover**



**Image 2: Gothic face makeover**



**Image 3: Nude makeover**

**Image 4:**

### **Nude makeover**

The Nude makeover as shown in the image 3 above is a make-up style that depicts subtleness and mildness. The significance of this make-up is that the wearer wants to appear younger than her age. Thus, creating the impression that she is naturally beautiful. The basic colours in nude make-up are usually colours with combination of gold, bronze and white lip glosses that often calm the face. Nude is sometimes wearing by bridals at their white weddings and it is also an official make.

Engagement & Party makeover: The sharp colours such as red, oxblood, purple, etc. play major role in this face make-up style. The significance of this look is to catch the attention of the audiences being the celebrant of the occasion. The images 4, 5, below captures the make-up style.

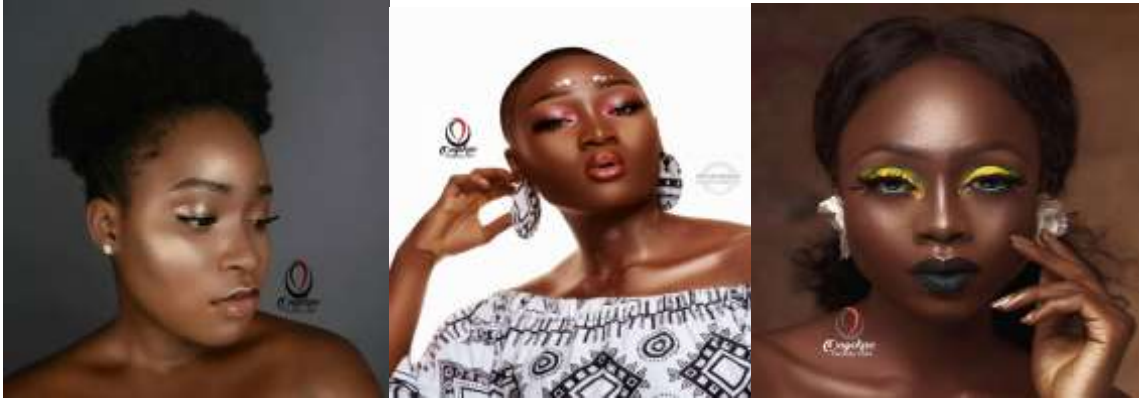


**Image 4: Engagement face makeover**

**Image 5: Party face makeover**

With a close look at the image in 4 and 5 above the lip is pure red with mixture of several colour to tone the eye shadow.

The Editorial Face makeover: This make-up style is special. Ordinarily a women cannot just wear editorial makeover except for a purpose. Looking at the face on image 6 below the woman wore a gloss as eye shadow, which is uncommon for ladies who understand the rule of make-up. But this appearance is very significant, it is for business purpose. Thus, this make-up types present the wearer an icon of the occasion. In our data below, the make-up on the face of the first image appears in nude colours because the emphasis is on the hair of the make-up bearer.



**Image 6: The Editorial Face makeover**

Permanent makeover: This style of make-up last for a very long time. Sometimes till the person dies. An example of this is the tattoo brows, pink lips, arranged nose, etc. This very come among foreign artist, actors and actress. The significance of this make-up style is that it is very convenience for the wearer. No pictorial captures for this class of makeover because is not found among Nigerian women.

#### **Implication of wearing Face make-up.**

Studies have shown that wearing make-up has some positive impacts on women in the work place. It is an undeniable fact that make-up does the magic as it helps create a favourable impression at the first encounter. Although appearance can be deceptive but it is good to create a positive image about oneself by appearing as a complete woman. We only get one chance to make a great first impression. If we feel good about ourselves, we exude self-confidence when a woman is complimented because of the way she appears, it raises her self-esteem. Make-up shows that women care about themselves and people tend to pay attention to them. It's fun to explore make-up skills. Applying make-up is an act and like any act, it is fun to express who women are as they express their creative skills. Putting make-up on face is like painting a canvas and creating a beautiful masterpiece. A woman's paint brushes, eye shadow, concealer and lipstick are colourful palettes always handy at all times. Women spend a lot of money on make-up. The make-up kits are very expensive such as the concealer if your skin needs covering up or may want to explore the various lipsticks or eye shadow colours or have good quality make-up brushes.

Make-up consumes a lot of time. When women are at their make-up table trying to get the right perfect blend, it takes time which is a loss of many hours. Some make-up product may cause an allergic reaction. A study of skin intelligences

found that one in four persons are allergic to substances in skin care. The prevalence of some of the terminal diseases are often associated with chemicals especially in fake make-up products. The way our body reacts to certain things are different, therefore it becomes advisable for women to know the type of make-up that is compatible with their skin. This will mean spending a lot of time experimenting with different products and observing your skin's reaction which may be a hassle. Make-up causes stress; you may be in a constant worry about your appearance due to the obsessive self-culture. Once you get yourself attached to wearing make-up, it becomes an addiction and an obsession, posing stress especially when it becomes a daily ritual, hence the need to strike the balance.

#### **5. Conclusion**

This study reveals that colour play a significant role in women make-up; thus it is the colour that define and put women facial make-up in classes. Thus, the colours can be a symbol of masculinity, Africanism, purity, innocence, etc. It is observed that women wear visible face make-up not only for self-esteem, sexual allurements, as pointed out by some studies, but for corrections on the face as well as to look beautiful. The study also show that the various facial makeover of women signifies boldness, softness, and so on. Hence, a facial makeover presents the wearer as an icon in any occasion she is found.

In conclusion, make-up has power to make

women feel like the real person they want to be, thus making them have confident, agile, charming and always appearing presentable. Globally and naturally, researchers and scientists have proven that particular make-up products are unsafe for human use. Most often, safety concern centres on the presence of toxic ingredients in cosmetics that penetrates the skin and cause illness. These ingredients most often include heavy metals such as lead or cadmium. Most cosmetics products contain trace amount of their ingredients due to their natural abundance in the environment with varying quantity of heavy metals based on brand and products. Hence, they should be caution in the

use of fake make-up products.

Similarly, women wear make-up to enhance their beauty in the society. Women see the face itself as a window from which people may derive all sorts of information about the individual. Women wear face make-up for the mere desire to confirm to a societal code. Women perceive that the face is an intricate communicative tool, and the make-up upon it is a complex sign of one's status, level of conformity and overall standing within the community. We recommend a research on traditional facial make-up among women in Nigeria since make varies from culture to culture also based on religious background.

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**Media Sensation and Injustice on Domestic Violence and Incest in Motshabi Tyelele's *Shwele Bwawo!*  
(A Grave Injustice)!**

**Lydia J. Adamu, John H. Thliza & Titus V. Blamah**  
Department of English  
Adamawa State College of Education, Hong

**Abstract**

Domestic violence and incest have become a recurring event in the lives of many girls and women in the world. Nigeria as a country, is no exception to these injustices met out on especially the feminine gender. The trend has left many in awe as to what the future holds for the affected female. Media reportage is a method that has presented issues and events to the audience thereby instigating the public to react positively or negatively to information. Reportage form has pushed people to react through backlashing such as: anger, protest and violence. The theory of feminism, which advocates for equality of both sexes is used to explicate the negative effect of media reportage on issues of domestic violence and incest. Motshabi Tyelele is a South African playwright who presents the play in this review as she explored her setting to present injustice of the justice system and media reportage. It is the crux of the matter as this paper intends to view Motshabi Tyelele's *Shwele Bawo! (A Grave Injustice!)* in relation to media reportage of injustice on domestic violence and incest. The play advocates for equal treatment of persons irrespective of personality or social status. The play concludes by advocating objective investigative journalism.

**Key Words:** Domestic violence, incest, media, reportage and oppression.

**Word Count:** 206

**Introduction**

Domestic violence and incest have been reported by the media as a crime against women/child in recent times. Journalists and newspapers which make such reportage, never fail to blame and affirm that in most cases, the female specie is responsible for what comes to her. This is a sad twist of things for no female would want to undergo the agony of getting raped or receive battering from whichever quarter. It can be noted that media reportage in many instances, is not objective in writing about such issues. Al-Afifi, M. H. (2018) while writing on 'injustice in mainstream media and social medium' cite Stark, S. D. (1987) in the University of Miami Law Review who opines, that "Media is both a mirror and a lamp, reflecting public opinion, and leading it as well". This is a fact that might not completely be accepted by all scholars but it stands that it is

the hard truth concerning the media. Hockley, L and Fadima N. (2015) are of the view that the contemporary world of information depicts an illusion of knowledge as to what one aspires to know on happenings in the world. They further explain that, it is the same illusion or "fairytale" that recent history was recorded in an objective way.

Media has often used its form to frame conflicting issues of people or stories in good and bad light. Some events and the reportage are characterised as "terrorists" or "mentally ill" by personalities. Language of the media has seldom risen thought-provoking issues or events based on racial classifications, stereotypes, political, ethnological variation, religion and social inclination. Effiong J. (2014) opines that "Journalistic practice without a regulating body to enforce gate-keeping tenets has allowed for abuses in the name of sensationalism". The



varying form of media or mainstream media has framed events and issues which has sometimes caused injustice in certain institutions like the judiciary.

In contemporary times and with the age of mobile telecommunication, many people depend on information from the media. Rodriguez- Lopez, S. (2018) is of the view that many people view it as the only source of information, about events which they have no direct access to. It can be noted that the importance of the media cannot completely be neglected as the media is useful in simplifying information provided by the use of stereotype which is a form of compelling the audience to read or accept presentations. Bearing this at the back of the mind, the media reports for sensation (fabricated facts) and not truth is believed will arouse the emotion of the audience positively or negatively. This is the case with media reportage which often throws bad light on legal cases as will be explicated in *Shwele Bawo!* This paper thus, intends to evaluate the effect of media reportage on domestic violence and incest in Moshabi Tyelele's *Shwele Bawo! (A Grave Injustice!)*. It will also depict how the protagonist rise in relaying her story to stand her ground for truth, equality and justice in equity.

#### **Synopsis of *Shwele Bawo! (A Grave Injustice)***

*Shwele Bawo!* is a play set in South Africa. The play depicts the traumatic experience of a woman who was unjustly sentenced to life imprisonment as a result of insinuations by which the media carried out its reportage. Dikeledi, the protagonist, in spite of the abuse she faced in marriage did not find freedom after her husband's death because of her condemnation to life imprisonment for a crime she did not commit. Culture and tradition did not support the little freedom she craved for but rather nailed her predicament insisting that she respects her husband and tradition no matter the manner she is treated in marriage. She managed to live and endure her husband's battering, abuse, pain, disrespect, immorality and arrogance for twelve years; in which she was married for. The crux of her bitter marriage was the realisation that her husband had raped their daughter, Bontle repeatedly without her knowledge. This prompted her to decide on ending her husband's life who was

protected by the society even though, he was into illegal business, the major source of his wealth.

Solly, Dikeledi's husband, was ruthless in his dealings with people irrespective of sex, age and status. He treated women with little or no respect especially the harem he maintained. He took the lives of those who stand in his way and forced the women who got pregnant for him to abort it. Dikeledi was just a material kept to be used whenever he is attending social functions as his show off 'thing'. He grumbles and fumes from the attention she receives whenever people admire her. The punishment she receives when they are home is battering for being herself and relating with others; whether male or female. Solly brings women to soil his matrimonial bed even in her presence and she dare not complain about his actions. Her great Aunt and other relations told her to maintain her calm and to accept her fate in silence. She should know that Solly is an "axe", which is to be lent and used by anyone, anytime and at will.

The mistake Dikeledi made is in sharing her heart's intention with her friend about the plan to end her husband's life. This singular intent nailed her to the justice system as it was the only evidence used in sentencing her to life imprisonment for the death of her husband. The South African justice system failed to protect her despite the fact that Solly was connected with people of questionable character. The media, which thrived more on gossips (especially for the elite class) had a field day fabricating fact as desired. The justice system refused to carry out proper investigation before passing judgement on her. In making her situation worse and unrepairable, she was denied an appeal by the same judicial system which jailed her.

Dikeledi, is one of many women whose lives is riddled with similar experience. She stands as a lone figure who represents the voiceless women who are denied justice for domestic violence and child abuse; in this case, incest. She therefore, takes solace in Maya Angelou's poem "I Stand" to declare her unrestrained hope to rise above her predicament in life and to fight for justice no matter how long it takes. The poem is also supposed to give her hope for a better future for other women. It is meant to inform the media

that their part in telling her story ended up imprisoning her instead of setting her free. The media compounded her case by condemning her for a crime she did not commit; it rather gave credence to unjustifiable claim while uplifting those with questioning character in the society.

#### **An Overview of Domestic Violence and Incest**

Domestic violence is synonymous to domestic abuse or family violence. The [Lite/en.m.wikipedia.org](http://en.m.wikipedia.org), defines domestic violence as words:

Often used as a synonym for intimate partner violence, which is committed by one of the people in an intimate relationship against the other person, and can take place in heterosexual or same- sex relationships or between former spouses or partners.

The Wikipedia.org goes on to explain that, domestic violence also involves violence committed against children, teenagers, parents or the elderly. This is often manifested in “physical, verbal, emotional, economic, religious, reproductive and sexual abuse”. Different forms are used to perpetrate domestic violence. These can be through subtle or coercive forms of ‘marital rape’ and violent physical abuse like beating, throwing acid, (which often disfigure the victim); choking, using sharp objects (knife, razor, stick, metal) to disfigure the victim, using electric iron to burn any part of the body and female genital mutilation. Domestic violence seldom leads to murder and the forms include: stoning, honour killing, bride burning and dowry death. A purple ribbon is used to promote awareness of domestic violence.

In most cases of domestic violence, women are the overwhelming victims. In some countries, domestic violence is not frowned at but seen to justify or legally permit infidelity (where the woman is suspected). Esquivel- Santovena et al (2016) in their research show that, countries where there is gender inequality experience domestic violence more. Evident is the fact that domestic violence is the underreported crime in the whole world amongst both men and women. Strong, Bryan et al (2017) and Concannon, Diana (2013) further concur with this assertion. Hess, Karen et al (2016) assent that as a result of the

stigma of male victimisation, men who face domestic violence do not report to healthcare providers.

Domestic violence is constantly carried out when the abuser thinks and believe the only justified or outlet is punishment on the abused. This is noted according to Halket, M. M. et al (2013) to produce an “intergenerational cycle of violence” in children who come from family where this is practicable. Many people accept domestic violence as normal family experiences and therefore are silent about it. Besides, in some African setting, patriarchy promotes such violence.

Incest on the other hand, according to Fridell, Lorie A. (1990) is sexual contact between a related adult and a child and is form of familial sexual violence. Some cultures permit this with a form of ritual attached but with the knowledge and consent of family. This could be to obtain goods or financial assistance. The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2015) was the first international treaty that addressed child sexual abuse which occurs in home or family.

Awareness of domestic violence vary from country to country. The WHO (2013) report that this is not only common in child forced marriage, but even in legally contracted marriage in “love”. Abusive relationships have history of cycle of abuse after which, violence will manifest. Reconciliation and calm may bring temporary peace before another is committed. Sometimes victims are trapped in violent situations and find it difficult to leave as a result of emotional ties.

Other reasons for keeping the victim in situations is lack of financial resources, shame, fear of the child (ren) protection. In such kind of situation also, victims experience disabilities, disfiguration, stress, chronic health problems (hypertension, diabetes, and ulcer) mental illness and psychological disorder. Children in such homes suffer psychological problems from an early age. Some of these psychological disorders may affect the person up to adulthood and later part of one’s years.

WHO (2016) add that “controlling behaviours” is a form of abuse. The General Assembly (1993) of the United Nations

Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defined domestic violence as:

Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation.

The above thus indicates that any of the outlined is considered a domestic violence. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2015) states that in the early 1800s the legal systems accept wife-beating as a husband's right over his wife. In the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, English common Law treated domestic violence as a crime against the community instead of on the woman. They viewed it as "a breach of the peace". Wives were given the chance to seek for redress which comes in the form of a "peace bond" from a local "judiciary of peace". The proceedings were normally informal and off record. There is no guidance or proof or degree of violence which is expected to determine a conviction. The typical sentences are forcing the husband to post bond or 'stake pledges from associates who would guarantee such behaviour in the future. The charges typically are minimal fines except in cases of injury or death.

Differences exist in domestic violence. These forms are hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, intimidation, sexual assault, coercion, etc. Womenslaw.org. (2011) explain that these can also be carried out through kidnapping, unlawful imprisonment, coercion, harassment and trespassing. Furthermore, the United States Department of Justice (2007) and Department of Justice, Canada (2001) advanced that physical abuse which involves contact is meant to cause "fear, pain, injury, or other bodily harm".

### **Feminism in Summary**

Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* (1929), and Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949) have tried to define and redefine the roles of women in society,

both the assigned and expected roles. Tonia Umoren (2014) defines feminism as "a worldwide cultural activity poised for the liberation of women from the bottleneck of tradition with a view to improving on their subordinate status in the society" (03). It is not just tradition that bothers the woman, but the society with its milieu and dictates. Patriarchy is a major obstacle to women liberation as humans in our society. It is a weapon that has often been used by the empowered society to pull the woman down no matter her educational attainment or status in life. Feminism therefore brings to the fore the struggle against patriarchy, violence, discrimination, sexual objectification and others as it concerns women. It further highlights the negative experiences of women in patriarchal societies. Patriarchy is the hammer that is used to nail Dikeledi in *Shwele Bawo!* She on her part refused to be burdened by her social milieu but to stand strong in spirit and be humane.

### **The Media and Injustice on Domestic Violence and Incest in *Shwele Bawo!***

The play generally examines a woman's abuse in Motshabi Tyelele's, *Shwele Bawo!*. It looks at the role of tradition in contemporary society and how it perpetuates domestic violence on women and girl-child. This is what the South African play, *Shwele Bawo! (A Grave Injustice)* presents. This is the theme of this paper which has become an epidemic in not just South Africa but the world as a whole. Motshabi Tyelele comments on joburg: arts, culture and heritage' as joburg.org reports, opine that the need for people making change to meet modern trend (lifestyle) has brought untold social vices. It is a lifestyle that some people choose, which has usurped their moral status in life. The play looks at the challenge women face in marriage and how it also plays out on their children (girl-child).

Dikeledi (nee 'tears') Nkabinde plays the single actress in the play. The play as <https://www.joburg.org.za> as Maree states, is "in a sensitive and thought-provoking way, it tackles the challenges that women face when tradition and modernity clash . . . it tells of a down trodden woman who is forced to stay in an abusive marriage because of tradition". Effiong J. (2014: 443), adds to the subject matter of the play which is that, "The play showcases sensationalism in journalism as against

investigative and objective reporting and indexically recommends “truth” as the lens through which reports should be editorialised”.

The play begins with Dikeledi in prison. She had been there for two years, as she was sentenced to life for a crime she did not commit. She narrates her life’s story in retrospect by playing out the different roles of the characters in the plot. Solly Nkabinde, her late husband, was a socialite. For twelve years, she endured his physical abuse and infidelities. She stayed in the marriage as she obeyed the advice by elders enduring all forms of abuse. The knowledge that her husband was also abusing their daughter prompt her to take a decision- the decision to kill her husband while her motherly instinct pushed her to protect her daughter. As the play progresses in flashbacks, many layers of the play was uncovered. One of such is ‘identity crises among men and women; the disintegration of family structures; woman and child abuse; relationships; incest; the power of the media and the inequalities in our injustice system’.

Maree in [joburg.org.za](http://joburg.org.za) explained that, “issues of injustice, domestic violence and how the media report are raised in the play”. Dikeledi while relieving events, replies a journalist who told her that the major reason for such reportage is, “it’s just to sensationalise, nothing serious!” (*Shwele Bawo*, 117). She responds, “For you have the power! Power to make and break stars and families! Like you always say, you give people exposure (*Shwele Bawo*, 117). Effiong J. (2014:445) categorically affirms that, “... journalism now seems bastardised, and the people who were to be defended by the press are now “terrorized” by the press”. The exposure here is subjectively presented to the public instead of objectively.

The play is also about the voiceless woman in South Africa and the world. It lends the voice of Maree who puts it as the “innocent woman in prison”... it looks at the old situation with fresh eyes. The play touches everyone from all angles of life and it changes life too”. Dikeledi stands to represent the fresh eyes which wants to bring change to the existing order. An order which oppress and subjugates the woman. She tells her audience, especially the press:

Well, it’s my democratic right to tell our story, too!

The story of all women who’ve kept Their anger burning slowly on a back burner.

Women with no voice, who Now sit in prison for life Because of a justice system That doesn’t recognize the difference between

A drunk man killing in a barroom brawl

And an abused woman who had no other way! (*Shwele Bawo*, 117).

*Shwele Bawo* reveals how these issues have been ignored and neglected for a long time- it creates a social time bomb enclave in secrets as it threatens to destroy the society. Abuse in whatever form should not be accepted in silence but transformation is needed. Maree points out that; “Any kind of abuse is socially unacceptable and it is up to society to change the situation. People need to do something about it rather than wait for the government to bring about change. Change is within the people”.

Many women have remained in abusive marriage for the sake of preserving their integrity of being respected as married women and for the sake of their children who they fear will definitely be maltreated by another woman who replaces her. Dikeledi admits this line of thought when she says: “A woman is born to suffer. Now I understand those women who always plead with their men to abuse them... Or stay in abusive relationships . . . (*Shwele Bawo!* 119). Dikeledi alludes to the justice system which does not support the woman in the name of keeping the marriage a sacred institution, not to be interfered in and maintained. The African tradition holds marriage institution in high esteem and admonished couples to tolerate the other no matter the condition therein. She relates what the policeman told her when she complained of her husband’s domestic abuse. He tells her:

*Sisi* [sister], this is a family matter, we can’t interfere! Go home!

It’s because of that twisted indoctrination!

[Thinks.] *Monna ke selepe* [A man is an axe]! What does that make me if

he is an axe?

A piece of wood to be chopped and  
burnt?

No, really! (*Shwele Bawo!* 120).

This aptly presents the situation of the African woman who is forced to endure societal ambience and expectations in maintaining the sanitation of her marriage and family. She is burdened with the pains, trials and tribulation of marriage all in a bid to uphold the marriage institution and for her children to grow up as responsible people in the society. Part of her cross is for the children to have a better life even in her pain and sorrow.

When Dikeledi's pain (Solly) died, she felt free and relieved to live a life free from oppression, slavery and battering. She felt her pain was taken away hence, her carriage and attitude to the happenings around her. She thinks to herself: "I was dancing my sorrows away and of course you started spreading your rumours. 'Widow celebrates hubby's death!', 'Could she be the murderer?', 'Beauty who killed!' (*Shwele Bawo!* 122). The media (press) through their sensationalism began painting the picture of a free woman who should be a major suspect in a murder case just because she exhibits a carefree attitude to life after the demise of her oppressor.

Dikeledi blames her family who forced her to imbibe the African culture which was not much practicable in contemporary times. Born and bred in an African setting, she was unfortunate to grow up with her Grandmother after the death of her mother. Her late mother had her out of wedlock with an unknown European thus, giving her complexion an identity complex. She affirms her origin and stated, "... I'm a boesman? I'm a boesman and don't have manners. Well, boesman is tired of living a lie!" (*Shwele Bawo!* 123). Her colour added to her beauty making her attractive to the opposite sex. Even at the age of sixteen, she was attracted to Solly before he married her when she turned nineteen. Thus, she became a socialite from living in the slums. She presents it as: "I moved from a matchbox house with no electricity, to a seven- bedroom palace, with a Jacuzzi, bar, sauna, gym, tennis court, pool ... basically, every luxury you can think of" (*Shwele Bawo!*, 118).

It is depression to note as Effiong J. (2014) encapsulate on democratic society when he writes

that, "Modern as the society is and democratic as the new South Africa claims to be with a constitution, yet tradition is still wielding its whims especially against women in a segregated patriarchal abandon". What is worth noting is that for every costless beauty painlessly received, there is a price to pay. Dikeledi pays the price when she mingled with the wrong group. She owns up to this placement as she says: "But that had its price. It wasn't free love! I was materially wealthy, spiritually under- nourished, and culturally very poor!" (*Shwele Bawo!* 119).

Marriage for Dikeledi was a prison and so, when her husband died, she is temporarily set free from her bondage; only to continue in the prison. But then, a difference lies in her present bondage for she is free from constant pain inflicted upon her by Solly and the sharp biting admonishment of family relations. She puts it thus: "The only difference is I've been deployed from a Tuscan palace to a toilet – size cell, with many others like me (*Shwele Bawo!* 118). The sympathy Dikeledi feels is not just for the likes herself in the society but for the press who fuelled her situation. She tells the press: "You too hurt me! You were the steel that enclosed my cell. But I'm not blaming you! You have no power over what you write about! You, too, are victims (*Shwele Bawo!*, 121). The world of the press is not only to citizens but also to the journalists who carry out their reportage. Dikeledi let them know the hard truth that they are also affected.

A glaring fact about media reportage is distortion of facts for profit purpose and for popularity. The truth is still voiced out to the press by Dikeledi in a hypocritical manner to make her point made. She postulate the hypocrisy of the press on issues and events of domestic violence and incest as she relay the attitude of the press. The death of Solly was a media sensation giving him praises for the reckless life he lived. He was glorified for a worthless cursed life of which the press is aware of but prefer to dwell in hypocrisy for the financial benefit accrue to them and the sensation the reportage will bring to the audience. The media threw caution to the winds but instead choose praise in place of justice.

Bontle, Solly and Dikeledi's first child was repeatedly raped by her father. He committed

many abortions with her, sent her to school abroad and in his continued effort to continue his escapade with her, he provides her with all life's necessity. She contracts HIV (AIDS) from her father and became psychologically affected by what she passed through. Her mother summarise her daughter's situation as:

Some of you know about these things  
Long before Bontle exposed them.  
But since we've become a society that  
worships all that is rotten we always  
choose to live a life of lies and go to  
the dogs! ...  
Sadly, even the dogs are disgusted by  
us,  
A people concerned about lining our  
pockets  
Even at the expense of our children! . .

.  
I'm talking about the poor,  
Innocent and helpless children!  
(*Shwele Bawo!* 135- 136).

Dikeledi was happy to welcome freedom from the pain caused to her and her daughter. Even though she wanted Solly dead, somebody else did the job for her. This means that she was not the only one who had scores to settle with him. The company he keeps and the business he was into are enough ways to have people wanting to end his life maybe as revenge. She had prepared herself to protect her children no matter what it takes; even if it means killing him. She tells the press in a proverb, ". . . The tightness of the shoe is felt by the one wearing it!" (*Shwele Bawo!* 136). She affirms the fact of the one facing problems and knowing how it feels in her home. Her maternal instinct therefore, is on the alert to seek the welfare of her children.

Media reportage did not in anyway, help to salvage Dikeledi's situation; it rather nailed the wood on her coffin. She tells them:

Besides, you broke me  
Long before you even tried to make me.  
I don't want your fame,  
Only want to set the record straight.  
Not only for you! But for myself, my  
children ... yes, my children, and all those  
voiceless women who never had a chance!  
You wrote all the crap you wanted to  
believe.

It's your democratic right! (*Shwele Bawo!*  
117).

One can note from the above, the determination of Dikeledi to break the jinx behind patriarchal oppression of the woman. She rises to challenge the statuesque of patriarchy on its infringement on the female's humanity and place in the society. She accepts her fate but vows to live above oppression by not letting her situation break her heart. Journalistic sensationalism does not end with her, but what about a future occurrence? She asks: "Tell me ladies and gentlemen, if we protect the Sollys of this world, what kind of mothers the Bontles are going to be. What kind of fathers are the Lesegos and Kgotos going to be?" (*Shwele Bawo!* (137).

Many women in the past suffered untold hardship in the hands of their husbands but decide to live their marriage to the end. This reminds her of a local mama, Ellen Khuzwaye, who wrote a text titled *Call me Woman*. According to her, this historical text relays the following: "I tell you, these women went through hell. I'm surprised they didn't kill anyone! Hey! Maybe the writing helped cool them down!" (*Shwele Bawo!* 116). Writing and talking really helped to cool them down. This is why Dikeledi is drawing strength from these elders who managed to handle the affairs of their homes and stood strong to the end.

### Conclusion

Domestic violence and incest in whatever form or capacity is unacceptable. Every female irrespective of age and status should not be unduly oppressed. She should be respected and fairly treated with care. The justice system should be enjoyed by all and sundry without bias. No one is above the law and any defaulter must be punished. The media must change from sensation to reporting factual issues and events. Proper investigation must be carried out before conclusion is drawn on issues. Money is not everything. Hypocrisy is the root of evil and thus must be avoided in order to save the voiceless women from constant death or disfiguration in any form. The female specie (women and girl- child) are humans and must be treated thus. They also have a right to legitimate justice system. Sentiments is not a solution to positive living. Change must begin with the judicial system which

constantly condemn the innocent.

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## **Sociocultural Considerations and the Challenges of Literary Translation: The Case of *L'Aventure Ambiguë* Into *The Ambiguous Adventure***

**Saliha Ladan**

Federal College of Education, Zaria

### **Abstract**

*L'Aventure ambiguë* written by Cheikh Hamidou Kane was translated into English titled *The Ambiguous Adventure* by Katherine Woods. This translation reveals the importance of sociocultural tendencies in the translation of literary works. The Senegalese society is the plot of this novel and Kane embedded several sociocultural elements in the source language to convey his message. In this paper, based on Nida's sociolinguistic theory, we analyze the sociocultural considerations and the stakes in the translation of Kane's *The Ambiguous Adventure*. The study shows that sociocultural elements can pose problems to the translator in spite of the undeniable quality of her translation. It is evident that Katherine Woods has to deal with different types of proverbs, idioms and metaphors as used by Kane to show her artistic prowess and knowledge of the vast history of the people.

**Key Words:** Translation, sociocultural, literary, sociolinguistic, theory

### **Résumé**

*L'Aventure ambiguë* écrit par Cheikh Hamidou Kane a été traduit en anglais intitulé *The Ambiguous Adventure* par Katherine Woods. Cette traduction révèle l'importance des tendances socioculturelles dans la traduction des œuvres littéraires. La société sénégalaise sert d'intrigue à ce roman et Kane a intégré plusieurs éléments socioculturels de la langue source pour transmettre son message. Dans cet article basé sur la théorie sociolinguistique de Nida, nous analysons les tendances socioculturelles et ces enjeux de la traduction de *L'Aventure ambiguë* de Kane. L'étude révèle que les éléments socioculturels peuvent poser des problèmes à la traductrice malgré la qualité indéniable de sa traduction. Il est évident que Katherine Woods doit faire face aux enjeux de différents types de proverbes, d'idiomes et de métaphores utilisés par Kane pour montrer ses prouesses artistiques et sa connaissance de la langue et l'histoire du peuple.

**Mots clés :** Traduction, socioculturel, littéraire, sociolinguistique, théorie

### **Introduction**

Every society in the world has its uniqueness pruned basically from culture and leading to harmonized behavioral relationship among the people. Societies cannot be separated from culture and it justifies why Newmark cited by Baker affirms that culture is "a way of life and its manifestations is peculiar to any community that uses a particular language as its means of expression" (304). This shows evidently that apart from culture, language also play an important role in a society. Culture and language are however, stringently connected in such that each language reflect on its own peculiar cultural features. All languages have their specific structures which is determined by the view of the speaker of the language (Baker, 315). Utah and Nwosu opines that 'la langue joue un rôle clé dans la traduction

étant donné que c'est à travers la langue que la traduction s'exprime' (60). This means that languages have a consequential impact on culture and if the culture of the source language (SL) is not same as that of the target language (TL), it would affect the use of word or the manner in which statements are being transmitted. Transmitted messages are not only in oral forms but also in written forms like in literature. In literature, authors write basically to mirror the society via a source language and can be translated from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL). According to Nida, "any idea that can be expressed in one language can also be expressed in another language unless the form itself is an integral part of the message" (339). This indicates that culture, which is an integral part and composite of a society can be translated via language for better

understanding of all since society since and culture are the hallmark for effective existence. The paper examines critically the sociocultural considerations and challenges of literary translation in Woods' English translation of the novel of this study originally written by Cheik Hamidou Kane on the basis of sociolinguistic theory. This is basically to ascertain the adequacy of Woods' translation of sociocultural constituents in the source text considering her foreign background.

### **The sociolinguistic approach**

For sociolinguistics such as Ferdinand de Saussure, Noam Chomsky, Roman Jakobson and Edward Sapir as well as Baylon and Fabre, the understanding of a statement goes beyond the linguistic framework and encompasses social factors (72). Baylon and Fabre posit that "sociolinguist bring his attention to the speaker as a member of a community, as a subject whose language can characterize ethnicity, occupation, standard of living, class membership, etc. (74). This implies that the essential difference between linguistics and sociolinguistics stems from the fact that the first is a science of language, while the second deals with the relations between linguistic and social phenomena. According to Pergnier There are different sociolinguistic approaches to translation (41). In Nida's model, methods and approaches from sociolinguists is considered relevant in translation because sociolinguists offer tools for interpretation and translation which enables scholars to analyse texts as communicative entities. However, for the purpose of this study, we shall adopt Eugene Nida's theory for analysis putting into consideration the use of language in social and cultural context as regarding translation. This shall be done basically through textual analysis.

### **Methodology adopted: Textual analysis**

The paper adopts textual analysis as method for data analysis. Textual analysis is a methodology that involves understanding language, symbols, and/or pictures present in texts to gain information regarding how people make sense of and communicate life and life experiences (Fallery and Rodhain 11). Visual, written, or spoken messages provide cues to ways through which communication may be understood. Often

the messages are understood as influenced by and reflective of larger social structures. For example, messages reflect and/or may challenge historical, cultural, political, ethical contexts for which they exist. Therefore, the analyst must understand the broader social structures that influence the messages present in the text under investigation. The methodology of textual analysis has been used since the 1960s on literary texts by sociolinguist such as Pierre Guiraud, Charles Muller, Etienne Brunet and more recently Jean-Marie Viprey, Véronique Magri-Mourgues Michel Bernard (Fallery and Rodhain 11). These sociolinguists critically analyse literary texts via this method to describe the content, structure and function of the message contained in a text. To achieve their objectives, important considerations were made in the process which include selecting the types of texts to be studied, acquiring appropriate texts, and determining which particular approach to employ in analyzing them (Frey, Botan & Kreps 26). Putting this idea into consideration, this paper considers textual methodology for analysis.

### **Primary and Secondary sources of textual data**

The primary source of textual data for this paper is the literary text *L'Aventure ambiguë* of Cheikh Hamidou Kane and its translated version by Woods. The first reading was done in a detailed way around this novel and its translated version in order to define its thematic content, phrasing structure, background and form as well as the visions of the author. However, the secondary data is gotten from literature works of critics such as Zuzana Rakova's, Oseki-Dépré's Inês, Michaël Oustinoff' etc. The paper adopts some procedures of translation by Vinay and Darbelnet.

### **The challenges of translating cultural elements in *L'Aventure ambiguë***

The translation of socio-cultural elements in literary translation could be difficult for a translator because translation activity doesn't only focus on linguistic elements but also it focuses on cultural elements of a language. In working towards achieving faithfulness in her, Woods considered with much relevance, the culture that describes the source language as well as that of the target language. In the translation of *L'Aventure ambiguë* into *The Ambiguous Adventure*, Katherine Woods has had to deal with socio-

cultural and historical phenomena. Let's see this

example from our texts:

S/N	French	English
1	« ...du flot de chair, de sang et d'histoire... » (175)	“...the stream of flesh, blood and history...”(162)

In Example 1 above, the use of imagery of historical events is observed through some sort of personification. In considering sociocultural heritage through history, the translator made an allegorically portrayal of the message of the source text which is also accepted in the target language. In examining critically her choice of words in her translation, it was noticed that the translator replaces the cliché "... du flot de chair, de sang et d'histoire" which means "of the stream of flesh,

blood and history ..." by its right cultural equivalent in the target language. However, different choice of words could be used when translating same expression "...du flot de chair, de sang et d'histoire ..." is translated into another language in its rightful socio-cultural context by putting into cognizance its right sociocultural context.

Let's examine this excerpt from both texts:

SN	French	English
2	Le matin de l'Occident en Afrique noire fut constellé de sourires, de coups de canon et de verroteries brillantes. Ceux qui n'avaient point d'histoire rencontraient ceux qui portaient le monde sur leurs épaules. Ce fut un matin de gésine. Le monde connu s'enrichissait d'une naissance qui se fit dans la boue et dans le sang. De saisissement, les uns ne combattirent pas. Ils étaient sans passé, donc sans souvenir. Ceux qui débarquaient étaient Blancs et frénétiques. On avait rien connu de semblable. (59-60).	The morning of the Occident in black Africa was spangled over with smiles, with cannon shots, with shining glass beads. Those who had no history were encountering those who carried the world on their shoulders. It was a morning of accouchement: The known world was enriching itself by a birth that took place in mire and blood. From shock, the one side made no resistance. They were a people without a past, therefore without memory. The men who were landing on their shores were white, and mad. Nothing like them had ever been known. (48-49)

Here, Kane systematically presents the Senegalese socio-cultural situation with this brief description through the source language. In this example, Woods also succinctly captures the Senegalese society before and after the intrusion of the whites as portrayed by Kane. In this context, some dictions were used to portray the relationship between Africans and Europeans during the colonial era. Words like: « Ceux qui n'avaient point d'histoire rencontraient ceux qui portaient le monde sur leurs épaules » translated as « Those who had no history were encountering those who carried the world on their shoulders ». In this translation : « portait le monde sur leurs épaules » portray a suppressive or dominating image of colonialisme in Africa. Socioculturally, this

expression by Kane gives the true picture of colonialisme in Africa. This problem of class identified in the Senegalese society today emanated from colonialisme. However, in portrayal of exploitation, Kane depicts the rich socio-cultural heritage of Africa and made it look attractive through the involvement of the antiquity of craft: “Le monde connu s'enrichissait d'une naissance qui se fit dans la boue et dans le sang » « The known world was enriching itself by a birth that took place in mire and blood. Wood used the following equivalent:

- portaient le monde – carry the world
- le monde connu - The known world
- s'enrichissait - enriching itself
- in mire and blood - la boue et dans le sang

In *L'Aventure ambiguë*, Kane's portrays a great talent in his use of metaphorical expressions to show the cultural value of his people as shown in the above exemple. In considering the above choice of words in the sociocultural context, one discovers that Kane used these metaphoric linguistic elements to depict deplorable state of Africa from colonization. Wood on her part, followed Kane closely in her translation to depict same equivalent so as to remain faithful. Woods must have taken cognizance cautions of these metaphorical tendencies in the English version. This is due to the fact that these expressions could

be of great challenge to an inexperienced translator who risks giving a faulty or inadequate translation and misleading the reader in his translation if the culture of the target language is not understood. To succeed in the translation of *L'Aventure ambiguë* from French into English, Woods resorts to the interpretation of metaphorical sense to remain faithful to the original text. Going by the analysis, this reason is perhaps because expressions from the source language is equivalently translated into the target language through metaphoric expressions.

The following examples serve as illustrations as a metaphor-container translation:

SN	Français	English
3	Mais il n'y éprouvait pas cependant cette <b>plénitude du foyer</b> . (49).	But nevertheless, he did not experience that <b>plenitude of the spirit he had felt at the hearth</b> . (39).
4	Le maître <b>se figea</b> , et par la pensée, avec le chef, répéta peut-être pour la millionième fois de sa vie la grande profession de foi. (41).	The teacher <b>settles himself in his place</b> and in thought, repeated with the chief, perhaps for the millionth time, the great profession of faith. (31).

Woods enunciated Kane's stylistic implicit throughout her translation. In the first example (3), "plenitude du foyer" is the metaphor-container. She returns it by "plenitude of the spirit he had felt at the hearth". The idea of the state of mind "spirit" is added to make the meaning clear and to consider what is acceptable in the language and culture of the target text. This process is considered according to Nida as communicative and semantic translation due to the fact that the translation is followed by meaning and sociolinguistic consideration. The extract in the above example demonstrate Nida's model of dealing with "the transformation of metaphor into meaning" (Rodhain & Fallery 23). Here, the metaphor of the source text is transformed into literal meaning in the target text with precision, which shows the good quality of Woods' translation.

example 4, is transformed into literal meaning "The teacher settled himself in his place" by Wood. The petrified image of the master lacks a precision in the source text. Its transformation in literal sense in the target text has given a precision that the master does not settle anywhere but that he settles in the place that has been reserved for him, for example, his seat. This translation is a kind of synthetic modulation where the notion of the source text is about a dilution in the target text that result in the gain. This is because Wood wants to make the translation effective as possible considering their equivalent. Although Wood was careful enough not to waste the semantic meaning of the source text. On the other hand, we noticed that "of his life" is not translated deliberately in the English version because there isn't any semantic value of lost words.

The allegorical image in "Le maître **se figea**" in

Consider further examples:

SN	Français	English
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5	Alentour, <b>le carrelage étendait son miroir brillant</b> où résonnait le claquement des souliers ». (101).	Around me, <b>the stone floor was spread out like a brilliant mirror of sound</b> that echoed the clattering of men's shoes. (89).
6	Ses yeux étaient implorants, <b>sa voix mourante, son petit corps était moitié de fièvre</b> , son cœur battait follement. (14).	His eyes were imploring, <b>his voice was fading away, his little body was burning with fever</b> , his heart was beating wildly. (10).

First, the word "Alentour" in the source text in Example 5 is translated as "Around Me", which we consider to be clearer in the English version. We can also see the anthropomorphic image embedded in the active voice "Le carrelage étendait son miroir brillant" which is rendered by the passive voice as "the stone floor was spread out like a brilliant mirror". Also, in the English version, there is the use of syntactical comparison where the imperfect verb "étendait" meaning "resonated" was translated to "sound."

Another important aspect is the translation of "résonnait le claquement des souliers" into "the clattering of men's shoes. Here, Woods specifies the sexual gender of shoe users in English. This example highlights the nature of syntactic structures in translation. Going by Nida's view, it can thus be said that metaphorical ideas are always respected to produce adequate semantic translation. This process could sometimes be taxing but the translator is perhaps obliged to get an equivalent of the source text to stay faithful to the Author. This act is a justification of Nida's view that says "any idea that can be expressed in one language can also be expressed in another language" (93)

In example 6, some changes were observed in the source text in relation to the target text. In the source text "sa voix mourante, son petit corps était moitié de fièvre" is translated as "his voice was fading away" and "burning with fever. Thus, "mourante" meaning "dying" in English is an adjective and "moitié" meaning "moist" is an attribute. They were translated with "was fading away" and "was burning" in English with imperfect verbs. This shows the technicalities adopted by Woods to overcome the sociocultural challenges of translating *L'Aventure ambiguë* of Cheikh Hamidou Kane into *The Ambiguous Adventure*.

More often, cultural challenges are surmounted through semantics in translation. Woods adopted this procedure to overcome the obstacle of translation cultural clichés. For example, Wood translates *Le comble de l'orgueil*. (27) as *The pacle of pride* (17) Instead of "the height of pride" that one would ordinarily assume it should be. Here, Wood focused on the semantics to produce equal meaning of the message of the source text. However, the use of modulation cannot be neglected since Wood used much of this technics in her translation. For example,

Wood's translation of « Le silence s'était fait parmi les disciples **médusés** (32) » shows her efforts in translating sociocultural clichés. One would have thought that Wood's translation would have been "silence had fallen among the dumfounded disciples" but this was never the case. Here, the translator never used the word "dumfounded" for the translation of the word "**médusé**". Instead, she translated it as "Now there was a silence **among** the disciples". Here, the translator used modulation as a technic to replace dumbfounded with a more suitable expression to reveal his mastery of translation technics. She obviously used modulation to regulate the word of the source text in such a manner that the resulting target text conforms to the natural patterns of the target language. Another example is seen in the translation of

« Mais il n'y éprouvait pas cependant cette **plénitude du foyer** (49) » as "But nevertheless he did not experience that **plenitude of the spirit he had felt at the hearth** (39)".

Here, Wood applied a semantic interpretation in her translation. She focused on meaning rather than being faithful to the source text. One would have thought that the translator

will translate « Mais il n’y éprouvait pas cependant cette plénitude du foyer » as « But he did not yet experience this fullness of home » therefore, “plénitude du foyer” becomes “fullness of home” but she translated it as “plenitude of the spirit he had felt at the hearth”. This shows again that the translator regulates the meaning of the words in the source text to conform to that of the culture of the target text through the technic of modulation.

### Conclusion

Sociocultural issues of literary translation have continued to be a challenge to translators. We discovered that most authors write for their target audiences and in the process, they choose the appropriate language and diction to convey their

messages. Some of these words are cultural clichés that pose a great challenge to translators. In *L’aventure ambiguë*, Kane used idioms, proverbs, metaphors and several cultural clichés that seem to be a great challenge for translators. We discovered that the translator, Katherine Wood used technic such as modulation and adaptation to overcome some of these challenges in her translation of the novel. She obviously succeeded in her translation due to her understanding of the history and culture that are reflected in Kane’s novel through research. Her ability to remain faithful to the source text in her translation reveals her competence as a translator.

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## Rhetorical Tropes of Nationhood in Nigeria's Presidential Campaign Speeches

<sup>1</sup>Yunana Ahmed, <sup>2</sup>Monday Agbonica Bello Eje & <sup>3</sup>Charles Z. Sabe

<sup>1</sup>Department of English, Gombe State University, Gombe

<sup>2</sup>Department of English, Federal University Dutsin-Ma

<sup>3</sup>Department of Arts and Social Sciences, Faculty of Education,  
Gombe State University, Gombe

### Abstract

This paper examines the rhetorical tropes of nationhood in the 2015 presidential campaign speeches of Goodluck Jonathan. Drawing from Wodak et al. (2009) discourse-historical approach, Aristotelian classical rhetoric, and Mignolo (1995) decolonial approach, the paper provides insights into how Goodluck Jonathan uses the affordances of metonymy, metaphor and personification to articulate his version of national consciousness. The findings show that through the metonymic use of personal names such as Mustapha, and Christopher, Ade and Ada, Timi and Bunmi, Nnamdi and Namadi mostly from the three major ethnic groups (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba), and the use of a number of personifications, such as “womb,” “thirsts,” and “destined,” positioning these words with Nigeria, Jonathan attempted to construct unification, unity, sameness and oneness in the midst of crises and diversity. Unfortunately, these ideas of unity follows the colonial government strategy of divide and rule where there is a preference to have a clear-cut division that coincided with three ethnic groups for easy administration. Thus, the depiction of Nigeria as comprising just three ethnic groups through the metonymic use of names has become an incentive for political competition and group formation in national politics.

**Keywords:** nationhood, metonymy, personification, rhetoric, decolonial.

### Introduction

One of the tools in the hands of the dominant class in the fashioning of the common conception of the world is the critical role of language in everyday politics. In politics, language is essential in evoking patterns of meaning that reflect any given ideology. According to Edelman (1985), “[w]hile coercion and intimidation help to check resistance in all political systems, the key tactic must always be the evocation of meanings that legitimate favored courses of action and threaten or reassure people so as to encourage them to be supportive or to remain quiescent” (p. 390). Though the argument can be made that not every use of language is ideological and manipulative, the business of politics is carried out mainly through the use of language. This paper’s understanding of the term politics is largely drawn from Chilton’s (2004) two broad conceptions of politics. First, politics is “the struggle for power, between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it.” Second, it “is cooperation, as the practices and

institutions that a society has for resolving clashes of interest over money, influence, liberty, and the like” (p. 3). Whether as a struggle for power or ability to reach consensus, politics is intrinsically and fundamentally constituted and executed largely through language. This means that politics is both formed and operated through language.

However, even though language is central to politics, language is powerless in itself in the workings of politics. As Weiss and Wodak (2003) posit, “language gains power by the use powerful people make of it” (p. 11). This power behind language, according to Chilton (2004) “can produce the effects of authority, legitimacy, consensus, and so forth that are recognized as being intrinsic to politics” (p. 5). This paper therefore focuses on the role of language in articulating a common conception of nationhood in a complex country such as Nigeria. Specifically, the paper analyzes the different rhetorical troupes Goodluck Jonathan used in his 2015 campaign speeches to articulate his idea of nationhood.

Previous works have looked at the



relationship between language and politics from different approaches, such as from social cognitive (van Dijk, 1997, 2005), critical social (Fairclough, 2015), cognitive linguistics (Chilton, 2004), discourse-historical (Wodak & Meyer, 2016), and argumentation (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012). Among Nigerian scholars, we have Ademilokun & Taiwo 2013, Ajilore, 2014, Adegaju & Oyebode, 2015, Chilwa & Odeunmi, 2016 and Omidiora, Ajiboye & Abioye, 2020. However, these researchers have rarely considered two important things: how the intersection of language and rhetoric can be a productive interdisciplinary enterprise in the analysis of politics, and how to bring the critical language of decolonization into the analysis of politics where the analysis conceives hegemonic discourse in a Nigerian context as neither autonomous, nor flowing from a single dominant power, but constituted by multiple, heteroglossic and complex processes that connect the local and the global. This interdisciplinary approach is problem-oriented, as it recognizes “that no single discipline can satisfactorily address any given problem on its own. As a result disciplines are seen as interdependent, and research projects involve team work with specific divisions of labour and specific integrative principles” (van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 8).

### **Critical Discourse Studies**

The interest in the critical analysis of language began as a consequence of what has been called a linguistic turn in philosophy in the twentieth century, where significant interests were drawn to the study of language and its role in the representation of reality. The most significant thing that took place during that time, however, “was not the linguistic turn itself, rather the beginning of a thoroughgoing rethinking of certain epistemological difficulties which have troubled philosophers since Plato and Aristotle” (Dallmayr, 1984, p. 16). These epistemological problems centered on the challenge of understanding reality unmediated by language. The consensus among scholars across disciplines in the social sciences and humanities is that the relationship between language and the world is not merely referential but is shaped by the discursive representation of the world (van Dijk, 2005).

In linguistics, the current consideration is

no longer whether reality can exist outside the discursive representation of language, but whether the use of language to represent reality is a transparent or neutral medium. The main contention on the neutrality of language in the description of the world is between the formalist and the functionalist approaches in linguistics. The formal approach focuses on the structure of language, emphasizing the formal properties of the language system (generative rules, algorithms) and affirming that these linguistic elements are neutral and can be studied from a scientific point of view (see Chomsky’s 1957 distinction between competence and performance). The functionalists, on the other hand, focus on the communicative properties of language and the way that ideas are organized within it. They emphasize that the communicative function of language is influenced by its social context and that it must be studied from such a view. Drawing from Halliday’s analysis, Fowler, Hodge, Kress, and Trew (1979) stressed that language is not a transparent medium of thought, especially when one considers the fact that language “encodes” and “expresses” social structure, and is moreover an “instrument” of legitimizing that structure (Fowler, Hodge, Kress, & Trew 1979, p. 146). Language, then, can be influenced by the ideological structures within which it operates, and it is possible to uncover it through linguistic analysis. The current interest in using linguistic analysis to reveal the structures of power in discourse started with critical linguists (see Fowler, Hodge, Kress, & Trew 1979). Although systemic functional linguistics paid much attention to the use of language in context, the ideological study of language started with the publication of *Language as Ideology* by Hodge and Kress, 1980.

The role of ideology and power in language has been influenced by earlier philosophical movements, such as the Frankfurt School, The Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham, and scholars such as M.A.K. Halliday and Michel Foucault, among others. These various influences provided a fertile ground for the offshoot of a network of scholars called Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) (Wodak and Meyers, 2016), which is “primarily interested in the way social power abuse, dominance, and

inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (van Dijk, 1993, p. 249). CDS as a network, therefore, aims at understanding how language enacts inequality and advocates for change based on its findings.

Before the advent of CDS, Marxist scholars had spoken in a similar fashion (e.g. Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002; Fuchs, 2014; Kperogi, 2015) that the forms of social life are not given, but rather an outcome of historical and social choices, therefore subject to change. Although CDS is also a critique of the existing social reality, it begins with the analysis of discourse. According to Fairclough (2015), "CDA combines a **critique** of discourse and **explanation** of how it figures within and contributes to the existing social reality, as a basis for **action** to change that existing reality in particular respect” (p. 6, emphasis in the original). This combination of critique and explanation is central to CDS. It not only identifies various features and types of language use that are manipulative and hegemonic, but it further seeks to find answers to why discourse is the way it is, and ascertain its role in shaping the way people think of their society and themselves. The underlying assumption is that without a close and critical analysis of language, language would not readily yield its hegemonic and ideological undertones. CDS practitioners have mostly focused on the elite because it is they who have institutional, political and economic power and who in their exercise of power have created other forms of inequality including class, political, racial, gender and ethnic differentials. While it is true that in order to dominate, the economically and politically dominant class must forge alliances with other classes through the integration of the masses in “a system of absorption and neutralization of their interests in such a way as to prevent them from opposing those of the hegemonic class” (Mouffe 1979, p. 182), most CDS practitioners believe that the reason for the inequality rests primarily on the elite who use different strategies at their disposal, such as the monopoly on the “legitimate” use of violence. Moreover, the alliances usually do not genuinely embrace the interests of the dominated class, but, rather, allow for the dominant class to sustain its

tendencies to dominate. The ideological unity is imposed on the allied groups by the influential roles the dominant group has in articulating the interest of the group's reality through ideological struggle that gets accepted by other classes as “common sense” (Gramsci, 1999).

It follows that CDS analysts focus on the large body of politicians' talk and speeches because of the influential roles these have in shaping the consent of the masses. Oparinde et al. (2020) opines that “one can argue that politicians are presented with a deliberate selection of lexical choices which are coupled with their tactical use of language” (p. 1). But one might argue that Gramsci's idea of hegemony does not refer to a single dominant class but it is an unstable and shifting alliances of different classes, a bloc of social forces. In this sense, focusing only on the elites' discourse excludes “critical challenges that arise from none elites who [tend to] resist the restrictive reproduction of power” (Bergvall and Remlinger 1996, p. 454). As rightly pointed out by Bergvall and Remlinger (1996), what constitutes the elites is a complex question because there are several levels of elitism. Our notion of elites focuses on those members of the ruling class who have been elected to occupy positions in Nigerian politics, such as the president, governors, and the members of the legislative arm.

### **Rhetoric**

By its nature, politics involves making choices between (in most cases) two polar approaches (represented as good and evil), and persuasion is integral to helping people make appropriate decisions. The ability to change people's minds from uncertainty to making a final determination often involves transformations through argument. In this paper rhetoric is explored in a contemporary Nigerian social and political life to assess its benefit as a tool of political theory. According to Martin (2014):

*There are many ways to persuade, no doubt, and threatening violence is one of the most common. But human communities are unique in their use of speech in making persuasion a matter not always or exclusively of brute force, but also of mutual understanding, shared perceptions and*

interpretations. (p. 1)

Thus, rhetorical analysis offers us a key to understanding the nature of how the soft power of the pen (and words) at certain times works more effectively than the blunt power of the sword (and weapon). This phenomenon, therefore, demands that we examine the ways in which people are discursively manipulated.

This paper draws largely from Aristotelian (classical) models, such as the genres of rhetoric (ceremonial, forensic, and deliberative), rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, and logos), stasis, enthymeme, and apologia to indicate the different ways through which rhetoric can help us understand politics. Rhetoric, in this case, is the adaptation of Aristotle's sense as the "ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion" [Aristotle 1356a]. The means of persuasion available to speakers according to Aristotle are speakers' credibility and trustworthiness (ethos, while Aristotle says that ethos consists of good will towards the audience, good sense, and good moral character), their persuasive arguments (logos), and the speaker's appeal to the emotions of the audience (pathos). The classical rhetorical traditions have a significant influence on how rhetoric is conceived in Africa, however, the rhetorical canon has been challenged and elaborated upon and Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian are no longer the last word on rhetoric.

Among the new conversations, this paper is situated within the cultural and comparative rhetorical understanding of rhetoric as an attempt to "understand meaning-making as it is situated in specific cultural communities" (Powell et al, 2014, p. 4). The cultural and comparative rhetorical perspectives bring to bear Nigeria's colonial experience and the various traditions that informed and emanated from this experience. However, we are aware of the potential tension between the classical and cultural/comparative rhetoric as some approaches to cultural rhetoric try to articulate a kind of cultural studies that would cast off the classical tradition as unnecessary or even inappropriate for understanding non-Western rhetorics. This study believes that using both is significant in the analysis. The classical tradition "provides a method for looking at rhetoric as a

human phenomenon, for learning how to use it, and also for a system of criticism, in that the features of speech that Aristotle describes can be used not only to construct a speech, but also to analyze and evaluate other forms of discourse" (Kennedy 2007, p. 20). And the cultural/comparative is significant in bringing attention to the "practices of meaning-making" in a particular culture and "how particular practices— ways of thinking, ways of problem solving, ways of being in the world—are valued (or not) within specific cultural systems and/or communities" (Powell et al, 2014, p. 6).

### **The Rhetoric of Nationhood in Nigeria**

The new African states created out of territories under colonial administration successfully instilled the spirit of the nationalist movement to fight colonialism but failed to do the same in nation-building. Although nation-building is a continuous process that can never be finished within a particular period, the sense of purpose which enveloped the pre-independence nationalists' struggle in Nigeria began to shift to how to solve the problems of deep ethnic rivalries and hostilities in Nigerian politics. This issue featured prominently in the speeches of the people involved in Nigeria's first military coup. Nzeogwu, one of the protagonists of the first military coup said in his coup speech that the enemies of Nigerian state are "those who seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as Ministers and VIPs of waste; the tribalists; the nepotists" (Mazrui and Tidy, 1984 p. 239).

After a series of coups and secession attempts (see Adebani and Obadare, 2010 for full lists of all the military coups and secession attempts since the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914), Nigeria appeared to have headed towards disintegration. Apart from maintaining the inherited federal system and military service, there were different structures put in place in an attempt to keep Nigeria as one united country. For example, a new national anthem and nation pledge were composed after independence to emphasize Nigeria's unity. Phrases such as "one nation bound in freedom, peace, and unity" and "to defend her unity" were emphasized. Moreover, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was established in

1973 after the civil war, a creation aimed at strengthening Nigeria's unity. It requires Nigerian university and polytechnic graduates to be posted to cities in states other than their state of origin (so as to appreciate other ethnic groups) for one-year mandatory national service. Another institution aimed at ensuring a united Nigeria is the Federal Character Commission (FCC), established in 1996 with the responsibility of enforcing "fairness and equity in the distribution of public posts and socio-economic infrastructures among the various federating units of the Federal Republic of Nigeria" ([federalcharacter.gov.ng](http://federalcharacter.gov.ng)). Another very important symbol of unity but hardly discussed is the Nigerian currency notes. According to Morgan (2020), Nigerian "Naira is one of many currency notes that bear huge significance on national and ethnic issues of its people" (p. 1) because they "are relayed from one person to another and are delimited by national boundaries" (Morgan 2020, p.1).

Anderson's (2006) concept of "imagined community," which presupposes imagined connections or shared experience, might be at odd with Nigeria's experience because most Nigerians are yet to perceive themselves as part of the nation. The agitation for the state of Biafra by some Igbo ethnic groups and even in recent times, the agitation for the Yoruba nation is a clear example. Therefore, some people called Nigeria the "mistake of 1914" or "a mere geographical expression" (Adebanwi and Obadare, 2010, p. 381). This is because there is not yet a collective consciousness where the citizen's first allegiance is to the entity Nigeria rather than to ethnic groups, religious affiliates or regional forces. In other words, national cohesion remains elusive. The nationalists' collective consciousness that helped defeat colonialism is yet to end the multiple strata of internal divisions. Although collective identity is a constant and never ending process of negotiation, there is as yet no clear path to a national culture that transcends ethnic, religious, and regional differences. In other words, Nigeria must work towards building a nation where what unites people matters more than what divides, a reflection of unity in diversity. Nigerian leaders have made some attempts at various stages in the country's existence to keep the country united and

forge a national spirit among disparate ethnic nations, where loyalty will be first to the nation-state before and above loyalty to any other group. As recently as January 2017, past Christian heads of state and deputy heads of state were featured together in a music video produced at the behest of the country's current government on the theme of national unity. But because of Nigeria's historical antecedence, the celebrated poet Niyi Osundare insisted that "Nigeria has no unity to negotiate or not to negotiate" (*Guardian*, August 1, 2016) since most ethnic groups are not part of Nigeria by any prior negotiation in the first instance but by colonial accident.

Some groups of people remain part of the union not voluntarily but through the price of their people's blood as in the case of Igbo from the South-Eastern region of Nigeria. In 1967, the Igbo ethnic group, led by Odumegwu Ojukwu, declared the secession of Igbo land from Nigeria to form an independent country called Biafra. The declaration led Nigeria into three years of civil war from 1967 to 1970. Biafra was incorporated back into Nigeria after it was clear that the Nigerian military power had defeated the Biafran army. Chinua Achebe, in his memoir recounting his personal view about the Nigerian civil war, insisted that Biafra was actually a country, not just an agitation, and that since 1966, "[t]here was much discussion of the difficulties of coexisting in a nation with such disparate peoples and religious and cultural backgrounds" (Achebe, 2012, p. 83). The movement for the secession of Igbo land is still ongoing, led today by Nnamdi Kanu. Even though the Nigerian government has incarcerated the leader of the agitation, the fact that there is such a movement casts doubt on Nigeria's unity and reminds us of Achebe's (2012) comment: "If the Berlin Conference sealed [Nigerians'] fate, then the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates inextricably complicated Nigeria's destiny" (p. 2).

From the above review it is clear that the contemporary Nigerian political structures are constellations of many factors such as religion, ethnicity, civil war and etc. These constellations have influenced the forms and contents of Nigeria's political rhetoric. What is interesting in the foregoing discussions is the recognition of the

significance of contextualizing and relaying political ideas in Nigerian context and how such an endeavor in the analysis of political speech would significantly foreground our awareness that the meaning of the speeches politicians make are embroiled and rooted within and among multiple contexts, histories and knowledge systems. More importantly, speeches made by politicians are not merely simple speeches to be analyzed; rather, they are an integral part of our political system, which extends beyond us and cannot be confined to an individual. “[A political speech] is always a part of a larger community, a larger conversation, a network of relations” (Powell et al., 2014, p. 23). It is based on this complex formation of Nigeria’s nationhood that this paper intends to explore the paradox inherent in the articulation of a common conception of nationhood in these political concepts in a postcolonial context by offering a rigorous analysis of our leaders’ political rhetoric, specifically Goodluck Jonathan’s Campaign Speech.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is driven by an interdisciplinary approach that draws from Critical Discourse Studies, Rhetoric and Decolonial. The critical discourse approach draws largely from Wodak et al. (2009) discourse-historical approach. Particularly from their book that discusses the discursive construction of national identity. One of the basic assumptions of the approach is that national identities as a form of social identities are constitutive of discourses. Thus, national identities are produced and reproduced, as well as transformed and dismantled discursively (Wodak 2009 et al.). Using this approach to examine the discursive management of nation-building crisis in Jonathan’s campaign speeches is appropriate, since Jonathan’s framing and the management of nation-building crisis is done majorly through discourse. Moreover, the objective of Wodak’s (2009) approach works well for our data as the approach seeks “to conceptualize and identify the various macro-strategies employed in the construction of national identities and to describe them” (p. 30). The selected macro-strategies analyzed in Goodluck speeches are the rhetorical trope of personification and metonymy. The main focus is on how Goodluck Jonathan makes use of

these figures of speech to construct unification, unity, sameness, and difference.

The analysis also draws from the classical rhetorical especially “details that facilitate communication and persuasion” (Andrus 2013, p. 4976). Specifically, the analysis investigates how the former President of Nigeria Goodluck Jonathan, who as an incumbent seeking reelection, used different rhetorical and linguistic strategies to pursue his political goals. We do this by drawing concepts such as *deliberative rhetoric* and *ethos* to examine the pervasive and mediating role of political speeches in the Nigerian political context. The focus is on those patterns that reveal a speaker’s strategies of persuasion. Rhetoric was broadly examined not only as the art of persuasion but also as a way of understanding the different ways language functions in the establishment of social relationships and social identities in a non-Western context, particularly in Nigeria.

Decolonial theories provide us with tools to analyze and criticize colonial legacies with the aim of understanding the relationship between existing political structures and other elements of colonial and global structures that are related to the Western idea of modernity and promises of economic growth. According to Mignolo (1995) “reflections on colonial experiences are not only corrective exercises in understanding the past but helpful tools in speaking the present” (p. 314). While some political analysts have made references to postcolonial conditions (e.g., Kamalu and Agangan, 2011), the decolonial analysis was not their main concern.

Thus, in this paper, we argue that understanding the mechanism of domination and inequality requires that we engage on two levels of critique simultaneously: (1) the internal critique of hegemonic powers and (2) the critique of colonial powers that are now codified in the globalization discourse. This dual approach is necessary because contemporary Nigerian language of politics not only serves the interest of the ruling class, but can also be seen as a discursive residue of colonialism (Mignolo, 2011). Thus, the forms of social struggles that are above and below the nation-state are places of intervention that might be ignored when the emphasis of the analysis privileges just the nation-state.

## Methodology

This paper analyses two 2015 electoral campaign speeches of Goodluck Jonathan presented at two major campaign events. The first was made on Tuesday November 11, 2014 on his declaration of intent to run for the 2015 presidential elections on the platform of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) at Eagle Square, Abuja. The second speech is Jonathan's Thursday, January 8, 2015 remarks at the start of the PDP 2015 campaign in Lagos. The first speech was made to gain the nomination by his party where the choice was between Jonathan and other PDP bidders and the other was after being nominated where the contest was between him and other parties' candidates. The transcription conventions for the extracts used in this paper are as follows: Jonathan's original speech extracts are italicized, while embedded comments in the data are in plain texts inserted in square brackets, and the words emphasized are bold-faced. The extracts are numbered in ascending order for easier identification.

The choice of Goodluck Jonathan's campaign speeches is predicated on the fact that the first democratically elected president who is from a minority ethnic group, the Ijaw group. This unique achievement deserves particular attention to understanding the nature of his rhetoric, particularly how the idea of nationhood is discursively and rhetorically instantiated. Moreover, it looks at whether such discursive and rhetorical construction has some relationship with the major ethnic groups.

## Analysis

### The Use of Personification

Personification functions to change the metaphorically inanimate into animate. According to Wodak et al. (2009) "a personification is a special form of metaphor as it links two differing conceptual fields, i.e. a concept with the semantic feature [- human] with a concept [+ human]" (p. 44). Personification is one of the important means Jonathan employs to construct discursively nation and national identity. The following excerpts contain some of the examples of personifications of Nigeria he used:

*We must never forget our common bond,  
one people from the womb of*

*one Nigeria. (A 78)*

*In moving forward, I see a Nigeria that  
thirsts for progress with children  
across the nation, eager for knowledge  
and safely in schools! (A 78)*

*My people, Nigeria is destined for  
greatness. (A 109)*

Here we find a number of personifications, which are revealed by words, such as "womb," "thirsts," and "destined." By positioning these words with Nigeria, Nigeria is depicted in a humanized form. This humanization gives life and action to Nigeria and works to serve as a strategy of animation. The metaphor of womb and thirsts, for example, signify that Nigeria is not only "already-born" nation but also has the desire, especially a good desire for a drink rather than desires for mundane things. Moreover, the metaphor of "destiny" means that Nigeria is not purposeless but is destined to achieve a goal in this world. In terms of how these personified words are used to construct nation and national identity, the symbol of the womb, for instance, reflect an idea of Nigeria as a single whole, and as participants in this womb, no Nigerian is separate from one another. This oneness is emphasized through the choices of the phrases "one people" "from the womb of one Nigeria." In this sense, by personifying Nigeria Jonathan tends to force identification of the entity called Nigeria while skillfully ignoring intra-national differences based on ethnicity, religion, and class – considerations that will recall some of Nigeria's real problems. This discourse of sameness frequently occurs in Nigeria's political rhetoric. However, with the glaring inequality and class difference in Nigeria, "who is in" and "who is out" in the discursive reification of one Nigeria? The womb metaphor also signals potentials and loyalty. Like children to their mother, the ultimate loyalty in African cosmography, Nigerians are appealed to be loyal to their mother. As for the womb, it means Nigeria she shall give birth to progress and development if Jonathan's mandate is refreshed.

### Metonymic Use of Personal Names

Another way nation and national identity was constructed was with names as a metonymic representation of the three major ethnic groups (Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba) in Nigeria. According

to Wodak et al., (2009) metonymy comes from the Greek for “name change” and “replaces the name of a referent by the name of an entity which is closely associated with it in either concrete or abstract terms” (p. 43). Jonathan employs metonymy as a discursive strategy primary to create an idea of sameness. Here are some of the metonymies used in Jonathan’s speeches.

*43. I see a Nigeria where the children of Mustapha, and Christopher, Ade and Ada, Timi and Bunmi, Nnamdi and Namadi, do not go hungry! I see a Nigeria where all, no matter their beliefs, live in peace and harmony! (A 102)*

These names metonymically represent Hausa/Muslim (Mustapha, Namadi), Igbo/Christian (Ada, Nnamdi), Yoruba (Ade, Bunmi), and other ethnic groups such as Ijaw (Timi). The rhetorical merit of such metonymic use of names is an attempt to reduce the relevance of ethnic attachments as a means to success, and instead appeal to unity and equality in the distribution of goods and services. For Jonathan from an ethnic minority playing the ethnic card would not help his political agenda; he needed an ethnic coalition more than any other president did. Reducing the salience of ethnicity as coalition factor dominated Jonathan’s first campaign speech presented in October 2010. In the speech, Jonathan emphasized his candidacy’s capacity to represent a moderate or non-ethnic candidate. This excerpt from his 2010 declaration-of-intent speech summarizes that philosophy:

*My story symbolizes my dream for Nigeria. The dream that any Nigerian child from Kaura-Namoda to Duke town; from Potiskum to Nsukka, from Isale-Eko to Gboko will be able to realize his God-given potentials, unhindered by tribe or religion and unrestricted by improvised political inhibitions.*

In all subsequent speeches, Jonathan has used different strategies to deemphasize ethnicity. The metonymic use of personal names and place however, presents an essentialist view of ethnicity where there is an assumption that personal names and places is a marker of either ethnicity or

religion or even both. In trying to increase his support, he inadvertently reminded Nigerians of their disparities. Though it is true to some extent, that there is a relationship between names and ethnic groups or religions in Nigeria, the reality is more nuanced and complicated than discursively constructed as fixed categories. There are different dimensions to ethnic identities that cannot be mutually integrated into just names. For instance, many individuals bear the name of Mustapha and other Arabic names yet they are neither Hausa nor Muslims. Moreover, the names of minority groups reflect more complexity or problems in the metonymic use of names to represent ethnic or religious groups. Many ethnic minorities take up names from Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba who yet still maintain their links with their local traditions even with names from the dominant ethnic groups. This supports Bucholtz & Hall’s (2005) discussion on identity: that identity should be seen not as deriving from “fixed social categories” (p. 586) and suggests that when we approach identity, we should approach it from a “broad and open-ended” (2005, p. 586) perspective. Hence, Jonathan’s representation of ethnic identity with individual names might be misleading and shows how names is used as stereotypes.

Other problems can be associated with the metonymic representation of ethnicity in Nigeria. The problem is that Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba cultural orientations are privileged above the others, and are considered eminently constitutive of Nigeria as a nation, hence, that cultural orientation is subsequently stressed as result of public mediation in politics. The assumption of Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba as a representation of some Nigeria’s ethnic groups is one of the ways colonial experience has been influential in the ways Nigerians come to see and understand themselves. According to Mazrui and Tidy (1984) the idea that Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba represent Nigeria’s ethnic groups follows the colonial government preference to have a clear-cut division that coincided with ethnic groups for easy administration and achieve their strategy of divide and rule. Since then, the depiction of Nigeria as comprising just three ethnic groups has become an incentive for political competition and group formation in national politics.

There is another way metonymy is used to construct nation and national identity. This deals with the metonymies of the type where the name of a place stands for the person(s) living at the place, which also in Jonathan speeches depicts ethnicity. According to Wodak et al., (2009) because of the effectiveness of metonymies of place to forge intragroup sameness, it has been used as a means for referential annexation, assimilation, and inclusion. As indicated earlier, Jonathan's 2010 campaign speech has some good examples of these:

*44. My story symbolizes my dream for Nigeria. The dream that any Nigerian child from **Kaura-namoda** to **Duke town**; from **Potiskum** to **Nsukka**, from **Isale-Eko** to **Gboko** will be able to realize his God-given potentials, unhindered by tribe or religion and unrestricted by improvised political inhibitions.*

Also Jonathan uses "Nigeria" to stand for its people as it is shown below:

*46. Nigeria has undertaken a most transparent and corruption free bidding process, attracting global commendation. (A 11)*

*47. Nigeria is now exporting cement. We are moving forward! We must produce what we consume and consume what we produce. (A 56)*

*48. Nigeria is the first country in the world to develop an e-wallet system to reach farmers with subsidized farm inputs on their mobile phones. (A 39)*

*That blocked Nigerians from even going to Britain at a time and the relationship between Nigeria and Britain... the whole world isolated Nigeria. (A 33)*

The use of "Nigeria" to stand for its people has the tendency of hiding the human agents behind various actions associated to Nigeria. This serves primarily to render the dominant human forces who were responsible for actions or who benefit from government's major policies anonymous. Let us take the statement that "*Nigeria is now exporting cement.*" The company that is engaged in the exportation of cement is called Dangote

Cement, and it belongs to one-man Aliko Dangote. By using Nigeria as the responsible agent, Aliko Dangote remains anonymous even though he is the primary beneficiary in the exportation of cement. The discursive construction of nation and national identity is not peculiar to Jonathan's rhetoric but a dominant feature of Nigeria's political rhetoric. Even with all the rhetoric of nation building, yet there exists no bond, which could bring all Nigerians together irrespective of the differences in ethnicity and religion, cherished by all the different groups. Many decolonial scholars would argue that the idea of a nation in postcolonial states is a false assumption of a nation that is constructed in the language of modernity. According to Mignolo (2009) the rhetoric of modernity preaches salvation and progress but the decisions about the salvation and progress are not constituted by free decisions made by free people but are based on top-down approach. Hence, the idea of a nation follows that logic of modernity where we witness a colonial creation of nations without regard to the complex nature of the people or their consent. Because of this lack of free will decisions on the status of nations, the task of nation building out of multiethnic entities is proving to be difficult. The discursive construction of nation in political discourse might be less for genuine nation-building purpose than for Jonathan and politicians generally to achieve their political goals. That is why the emphasis in Jonathan's speech is on a journey to progress or as he puts it "march of progress as a united and democratic country." This journey to progress emphasizes economic growth measured by statistics while ignoring the social agents.

### Conclusion

One cannot ignore the role of rhetoric in influencing how nationhood is conceived and interpreted. As our politicians construct a system of language and meaning that shape people's interpretation of these political ideas (ethnicities, religion, the national bourgeois, and nation-state and nationalism) and move people to action, the politicians have the opportunity to position themselves as nationalist, transformationist and divinely ordained, unifiers, developers. It can be concluded that politics is a social activity that finds its true expression through the medium of



language. As politicians articulate, rearticulate and dearticulate different political ideas, language becomes more than simply a means of communication, but a political arsenal deploys to convey political intents for power, authority, and legitimacy. However, and importantly, because of the place of Nigeria in the history of the world, the

meaning of political terms such as politics, nation, state and nationalism, among others cannot be taking for granted. The words might exist in Nigeria's political rhetoric, but their manifestation and actual existence in the lived experience of Nigerians is highly contentious and raises some questions.

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## “Plandemic” and “Hunger Virus”: A Morpho-pragmatic Study of Coronavirus Related Neologisms

God’sgift Ogban Uwen & Stephen Magor Ellah

Department of English and Literary Studies  
University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

<sup>1</sup>ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5472-9110>

<sup>2</sup>ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4881-0964>

### Abstract

This study analyses some neologisms that were created by some Nigerian users of English language as a result of the global coronavirus pandemic. The theoretical framework considered for this study is van Dijk’s Context Models and Lieb’s Process Model of Words Formation. A corpus of one hundred and ninety-five neologisms were selected from social media, electronic media, print media, and participants’ observation, particularly between February and December, 2020. The study identifies six discursive contexts: context of preventive protocols, context of identifying the condition, context of treatment, context of enforcement of restriction order, context of supportive measure, and context of corruption. The findings further reveal that the discursive contexts are indexed by acronyms, simple words, compound words, blended words, clipped words, unusual collocations, and phrasal/clausal creations. The creations were meant to describe the consequential circumstances in the health emergency in the Nigerian sociolinguistic milieu. The linguistic implications include the fact that the resources of English as Second Language (ESL) in Nigeria are rich enough to attend to the communication exigencies of the non-native speakers. The study concludes that the neologisms were devised by the interlocutors for the purposes of public enlightenment, expression of hope and collaboration, and to solicit general compliance with the preventive and treatment protocols in order to flatten the COVID-19 curve.

**Keywords:** Neologisms, Coronavirus, context, morphological process, Nigeria

### Introduction

The ravaging Coronavirus pandemic has exerted pressure not only on the health sector, but also on socio-economic and linguistic life of people across the globe, including Nigeria. For example, the pandemic has had a devastating toll on medical facilities and personnel, hence, claiming the lives of many people. Socio-economically, the pandemic has imposed restrictions on social interactions among people and nations, which has led to economic down turn. From the linguistic dimension, the pandemic has induced need-based neologisms in Nigeria, and other parts of the world. This is particularly because the health emergency required appropriate linguistic creations to communicate the pandemic and the complexities associated with it. These neologisms account for meaning situation during the pandemic. The overall goal of the Coronavirus related neologisms is to enhance the “exchange of

information, experiences, knowledge, emotions, ideas and thoughts” (Ellah, 2017, p.102) about the disease. This explains why Uwen, Basse and Nta (2020, p. 399) assert that the “situation has created the pressure for the stimulation of a changing linguistic behaviour that enhances English”. Neologism is operationalised here as new words and expressions with new meanings or existing ones with meaning shifts and extensions. Such creations are necessitated by sociolinguistic needs of the people, especially the need to discuss new phenomenon and concepts in defined sociolinguistic environments. In this context, “explicational strategies help in the appropriate interpretation of the discourse” (Ellah & Uwen, 2020, p. 115).

The thrust of this study is therefore, to examine the discursive contexts of COVID-19 related discourse, and neologisms as need-based linguistic creations in Nigeria since their use with

the spatial and temporal context of the pandemic appear to have (global and) national intelligibility.

### **Situating this research**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is one of the deadliest pandemics ravaging the world today. Since its discovery in Wuhan Province of China in December, 2019; and its global transmission rate and unprecedented fatalities across over 200 countries (World Health Organization (WHO)), the disease seems to have defied collective scientific collaborations to yield positive result in terms of the discovery and production of reliable and effective vaccine. This situation remains very worrisome. The unpleasant circumstance ignited suggestions that led to the declaration of the pandemic as a global health emergency by WHO, as the world combats it amid daily rising death toll. In Nigeria, for instance, deaths arising from the infection with its attendant multi-sectoral crisis and collateral damage informed the declaration of the pandemic as a common enemy. This situation has further exacerbated fear and anxiety in individuals, health authorities and the governments ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int); [www.warldemetre.info](http://www.warldemetre.info); [www.ecdc.europa.eu](http://www.ecdc.europa.eu); [www.covid19.ncdc.gov.ng](http://www.covid19.ncdc.gov.ng)). Though, the infection figure appears to be decreasingly fluctuating globally, much irreparable damage has already been done.

Basically, COVID-19 has similar trend of transmission from country to country and city to city while the rate and number of cases, deaths and recoveries differ from nation to nation. Although studies have revealed that COVID-19 can be detected in persons with symptoms of fever, cough, sneezing, shortness of breath among others, there is the tendency of asymptomatic transmission and spreads rapidly in large populations irrespective of age, class, colour, gender and level of development (Poudel & Sylva, 2020; Luu, 2020). There is no effective cure of COVID-19 known in the public domain as at the time of this study in 2020. What is in place is the hygiene advisory propagated by the WHO with some local workable response strategies developed by some authorities of different countries: regular hand washing, social and physical distancing, use of hand sanitizers, staying at home and aggressive enlightenment, among

other preventive measures as being safe habits to avoid contracting the virus (Osayomi, 2020; [www.who.int](http://www.who.int); [www.covid19.ncdc.gov.ng](http://www.covid19.ncdc.gov.ng)).

In the midst of this bleak situation is the expansion of linguistic resources arising from the creation of new words and expressions that enable people not only to express themselves, “but to perform different actions in different interactive or communicative contexts” (Ellah & Nta, 2020, p. 148). This study therefore, engages such newly created words and expressions in the Nigerian sociolinguistic milieu.

### **Literature review**

The Coronavirus outbreak has stimulated many researches globally. These studies are however, predominantly scientific and medical in nature with concerted efforts and collaborations to provide clues and therapeutic vaccines to stem the scourge. Some of these studies have attempted to trace the history, and describe the nature of the virus. For example, Fung and Liu (2019) state that Coronaviruses are a group of enveloped viruses with nonsegmented, single-strand and positive-sense RNA genomes which infect vertebrates including human beings causing respiratory diseases. The physiological implication is that the disease affects the normal breathing of human beings, which ultimately leads to death. Also, Poudel and Sylvia (2020), opine that the symptoms of the disease include fever, long infection and breathing difficulty which could result to death if not properly managed.

Tracing its origin, Nadeem (2020) reveals that COVID-19 was initially observed in the Wuhan Province of China in late 2019 from where it spread around the world causing very tough time in the fight to curb its ravaging effects. In another study, Luu (2020) points out that the WHO labelled the virus COVID-19 on February 11, 2020 and declared it as public health emergency of international concern upon the confirmation of the novelty of the virus, the progressive global spread and the nonexistence of therapeutic and preventive vaccine. The first official record and national index case of COVID-19 in Nigeria was, according to Kalu (2020), on February 27, 2020, upon the arrival of an infected Italian in Lagos amid a dilapidated health care system and ill-preparedness to contain the virus. Corroborating

Kalu's claim, Ozili (2020) adds that the structural weakness in Nigeria's infrastructure amid the pandemic will trigger off unavoidable economic crisis. However, other scholars make positive predictions that, with the activation of emergency operation centres for the coordination and an intensified level of preparedness, gathering from experiences in the combat against polio and ebola epidemics, Nigeria would likely overcome Coronavirus (Unah, 2020; Ebenso & Otu, 2020).

From a linguistic perspective, Obe (2020) opines that Coronavirus metonymically stands for a complex set of circumstances that have stirred the use of language resources to describe them. Also, Luu (2020) explains that the outbreak and spread of Coronavirus has affected the semantics of words, stressing that the more such words are repeated in contexts, they become normalised and accepted in the description of related events. In another study, Stewart (2020) rather blames the media for fear-inducing reporting that create panic among the populace. The complex situation, the created words in repeated contexts and the media, in addition to other discourse activities, have necessarily generated need-based linguistic creations in COVID-19 related discourse activated by the pandemic. On this, Uwen and Ushie (forthcoming), emphasise that the creators and consumers of the linguistic creations have common "socio-cognitive attachment and ability to align with the discursive strategy utilized to decrypt the multiplicity of shared sociocultural inferences and contextual affordances which bear the force of meaning signals." The shared experience in the unpleasant situation necessitated the creations with assigned meanings to communicate the scourge.

On the creation of words for certain situations, Uwen and Ekpe (2018) in their study on language and national development citing the security organisations in Nigeria as a case study, affirm that interactants make use of unique expressions in peculiar circumstances. Uwen (2019), in another study on the morphological features in the language of Nigerian paramilitary, opines that such creations are institutional and often follow conventional words formation processes. Particularly, Nigerians are found to often coin and use English with contextual

meanings limited to the interlocutors within the sociolinguistic environment. It is the situated environment that "determines the referential and contextual meaning" (Uwen, 2020, p. 135). On this note, is necessary, therefore, to carry out an analysis of new words such as "plandemic", "hunger virus" and other neologisms in order to describe their contextual usage the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic discourse in the global and Nigerian experience.

### **Theoretical framework**

The global and Nigerian sociolinguistic environments have relevant influence on the neologisms and meanings which define the context of the 2020 COVID-19 discourse. This implies that a theoretic framework that is consonance with the word formation process and contextualisation will be most appropriate to account for the neologisms and their contextual interpretations. This study, therefore, adopts van Dijk's (2008, 2009) context models and Lieb's (2013) theory of process model of words formation. The theories are anchored on the conception that extralinguistic factors and context shape meanings of words generated through morphological processes. van Dijk's context models propose that language users adapt their discourse patterns and utterances meanings to the prevailing social conditions occurring in the immediate linguistic environment. The models emphasise the notion of appropriateness and exercise of strategic control function on the manner of use in terms of appropriate production of conversations during speech events. The activation and reactivation of the models is often deployed in conversational activities involving participants sharing same or similar socio-cultural experience within a definite linguistic environment. Such "communicative activities aimed at transmitting shared experience" (Uwen & Ukam, 2019, p. 125). Lieb's theory of process model of words formation on the other hand, accentuates the rudimentary processes of word formation, and interprets the procedures involved in a unified way. The theory specifies the distinction between what is morphological and syntactic in the formation of words, the interlink and paradigms with insightful details as it applies in English. The theories are relevant to this study because they account for the morphological

processes for words creation and the contextual appropriation of the lexical items and expressions with meanings attachment that are mutually intelligible to interlocutors with a common experience.

### **Methodology**

The data for this study were elicited from primary and secondary sources. Specifically, one hundred and ninety-five neologisms relating to COVID-19 discourse were purposively selected from social media platforms, reading of newspapers and listening to radio and watching television (enabled by the stay-at-home order of the Federal Government), as well as irregular and limited participation on social interaction (arising from the social distancing protocol). The data were collected between February and December, 2020. This period is significant because it witnessed the highest level of the pandemic-induced infection and mortalities, which led to lockdown and international travel ban. The data were then subjected to a morpho-pragmatic analysis.

### **Analysis and findings**

The analysis of this study is structured to illustrate the contextual categorisation of the selected data. A detailed analysis of the identified contexts is then conducted citing the morphological classification of the neologisms that index the different contexts. Some of the neologisms are new creations with new meanings, while others bear meaning extensions that describe the prevailing health situation. In doing this, six discursive contexts were found to dominate the discourse of COVID-19: context of preventive protocols, context of identifying the condition, context of treatment, context of enforcement of restriction order, context of supportive measure, and context of corruption. These contexts are characterised by acronyms, simple words, compound words, blended words, and clipped words. The analysis also reveals the use of uncommon collocations, and phrasal/clausal creations. The words classes that the expressions belong are represented by N (noun), Adj (adjective), V (verb) and Adv (adverb). The contexts and the neologisms that characterise the Coronavirus discourse are presented below.

#### **Context of preventive protocols**

Preventive Protocols (PP) is related to the advice or measures provided on how one could be protected from contracting COVID-19 thereby, preventing the spread of the disease. Some of these measures include hand washing, social distancing, use of nose mask, among others. This context is characterised by compound words (e.g. self-isolation), blending (e.g. hanitizer, infodemic), acronyms (e.g. PPE). Some coined collocations are also created to meet the communication needs of Nigerians within the context of preventive protocols. Let us consider the following interaction between Speaker A and B:

Excerpt 1:

Speaker A: How can one prevent oneself in crowds from contracting this coronavirus?

Speaker B: If one must go out, then one must maintain *social distancing* and other *coronavirus advisory*.

From Excerpt 1 above in which Speaker A seeks advice on the preventive measures against the disease, Speaker B creatively deploys collocations between *social* and *distancing* (safe physical distance between individuals) on one hand, and *coronavirus* and *advisory* (professional advice relating to COVID-19) on the other hand to discursively index some preventive measures against the disease. Speaker B deliberately did not list all the coronavirus advisories such as hand washing, covering of one's mouth with handkerchief while coughing, among others, because of their shared knowledge of the coronavirus advisory.

In another instance, the interactants deploy newly created expressions in the Nigerian sociolinguistic space to expansively index the context of prevention:

Excerpt 2:

Speaker C: The Cross River State Government has commenced the enforcement of *no mask, no movement*. That is to say from today, you cannot move around without wearing the nose mask.

Speaker D: I think that could help as a preventive measure and also to curb the spread. Just that some Nigerians are still believing that *coronavirus is a big man disease*.

Speaker E: *Corona no dey fear face o*, whether you are rich or poor. In fact, *the rich are afraid to*

*go outside, and the poor are afraid to stay at home.*  
**Speaker F:** For sure! *Hunger virus is spreading faster than coronavirus.* It is deadlier and more dangerous. That is why a lot of us *prefer food to electricity.*

From Excerpt 2 above, the use of *no mask, no movement* shows the preventive measure that has been put in place by the Cross River State Government in order to control the spread of the

**Table I: Neologisms relating to preventive protocols**

Word	Word class	Morphological process	Contextual meaning
Self-isolation	N	Compounding	Self-confinement by anyone who has been exposed to the virus especially overseas.
Hanitizer	N	Blending (from hand and sanitizer)	An alcohol-based liquid composition recommended to be used to disinfect the palms and other high contact surfaces.
Infodemic	N	Blending (from information and pandemic)	Relevant information on coronavirus pandemic.
Social distancing	Adj + N	Collocation	Maintaining a safe distance of about two metres between one and the other; particularly persons from different households.
Coronavirus greetings	N + N	Collocation	Exchange of pleasantries other than direct body contacts.
Coronavirus advisory	N+N	Compounding	Professional advice on preventive protocol.
PPE		Acronym	Personal Protective Equipment
Isolation/quarantine	N	Simple/lone word	The confinement of infected persons or persons suspected to have had contact with infected person(s), particularly by health authorities to look out for the symptoms, medical attention and/or control the spread of coronavirus.

### 5.2. Context of identifying the condition

This context describes the COVID-19 state of an individual. It covers the description of the disease and its symptoms. This context is characterised mainly by acronyms (e.g. SARS-CoV),

disease. Also, as a preventive measure, *the rich are afraid to go outside* for fear of contracting the disease, while the poor on the contrary *are afraid to stay at home* so as not to be killed by *hunger virus* (hunger) which according to Speaker F is believed to be deadlier than Coronavirus itself.

The neologisms relating to the context of preventive protocols are summarised in Table I below:

collocations (e.g. Index case) among others which are used identify the symptoms and condition of the disease. The neologisms relating to the context of identifying the condition are summarised in Table II below:

**Table II: Neologisms relating to identifying the condition**

<b>Word</b>	<b>Word class</b>	<b>Morphological process</b>	<b>Contextual meaning</b>
Coronavirus/COVID-19	N	Blend/acronym	A disease initially observed in the Wuhan Province of China spreading across the globe with increasing death toll.
SARS-CoV	N	Acronym	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus
MERS-CoV	N	Acronym	Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus.
Index case	Adj + N	Collocation	The earliest confirmed case (person) with coronavirus (in Nigeria).
Tracking	V	Affixation	A technological follow-up mechanism to get hold of contacts with infected persons.
Coronic look	Adj + N	Collocation	Looking feverish and restless.
Coronic cough	Adj + N	Collocation	Coughing and sneezing simultaneously and consistently.
Escapee	N		A person who forcefully escapes from an isolation (treatment) centre.
Incubation period	N +N	Collocation	The length of time between coronavirus infection and obvious clinical symptoms.
Active cases	Adj + N	Collocation	Patients yet to respond positively to treatment.
Confirmed cases	V + N	Collocation	Number of persons who tested positive for coronavirus.
Imported cases	V + N	Collocation	Infected persons travelling into Nigeria from other countries.
Community transmission	N + N	Collocation	Cases arising from unsafe contacts with unsuspecting infected persons in the community and places with large populations.
Covidiot	N	Blending (from COVID-19 + idiot)	A stupid person who stubbornly ignores preventive protocols and needlessly spread coronavirus to unsuspecting persons.
Corobaba	N	Blending (from Coronavirus + baba)	A codemixed term that describes an elderly person who survives the infection.
Coro, corona	N	Clipping	A disease initially observed in the Wuhan Province of China spreading across the globe with increasing death toll.



HUNVID-19	N	Acronym	Hunger virus disease (coined by Nigerians) whose symptoms are similar to COVID-19.
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### Context of treatment

This context accounts for the care of infected patients. Disease treatment deals with the management and care of patients for their cure of their medical conditions. Disease management “consists of a group of coherent interventions designed to prevent or manage one or more chronic conditions using a systematic, multidisciplinary approach and potentially employing multiple treatment modalities” (Schrijvers, 2009). The data reveals that the discourse of treatment and management of COVID-19 was dominated by compound words (e.g. self-isolation, lockdown), and acronyms (e.g. NRS, PTF). Most of the acronyms in this context were deployed to describe regulatory bodies and committees set up by the federal and states governments. New forms of collocations were also created in the context of treatment and

management of the disease. They are exemplified in Excerpt 3 below:

Excerpt 3:

My dear, life is no longer safe especially in the *risk States*. With the very few *molecular laboratories*, I mean the *testing centres* and ill-equipped *isolation centres*, *selective attention* and the spate of *community transmission*, the only remedy is to remain at home.

Excerpt 3 above shows the lamentation of a citizen who is apparently not satisfied with the treatment and management of the disease. This situation led to the utilisation of collocations such as *molecular laboratories*, *testing centres*, *isolation centres*, *selective attention* to point to the context of treatment and management of coronavirus. The neologisms relating to the context of treatment of COVID-19 are summarised in Table III below:

**Table III: Neologisms relating to treatment**

Word	Word class	Morphological process	Contextual meaning
PTF	N	Acronym	Presidential Task Force on COVID-19
NRS	N	Acronym	National Response Strategy
CRT	N	Acronym	COVID-19 Response Team
CIC	N	Acronym	COVID-19 Information Centre
CACS	N	Acronym	Community Active Case(s) Search
RRMC	N	Acronym	Response Resource Mobilization Committee (in Ekiti State)
SSCC	N	Acronym	State Standing Committee on COVID-19 (in Kaduna State)
CSC	N	Acronym	COVID-19 Squadron Committee (in Kogi State)
CCC	N	Acronym	Coronavirus Containment Committee (in Kano State)
PHEOCC	N	Acronym	Public Health Emergency Operations Centre for COVID-19 (in Borno State)
Emergency evacuation	N + N	Collocation	Airlifting of citizens of other countries from Nigeria to their home countries.
Improvised	Adj + N	Collocation	Non-medical nose mask that is made of

mask			fabric or other materials.
Rapid assessment	Adj + N	Collocation	Regular assessment of the capacity of the treatment centres by authorised medical teams.

### Context of enforcement of restriction order

This context deals with the implementation of the restriction order put in place by relevant authorities in order to prevent the spread of the disease. Restriction order in this context pertains to the limitation or control of people's movements and associations. Such restrictions include inter-states and international travel bans, ban on public gathering of more than

fifty people, ban of eateries, night clubs, among others. This situation led to the creation of predominantly compound words such as new words and phrases such as *lockdown*, *shutdown*, among others which were deployed to restrict the movement of people, and limit socio-economic activities in the country. The neologisms relating to the context of enforcement of restriction order are summarised in Table IV below:

**Table IV: Neologisms relating to enforcement of restriction order**

Word	Word class	Morphological process	Contextual meaning
Lockdown	N	Compounding	The official closure of activities in all sectors and restriction of aerial, vehicular and human movements.
Shutdown	N	Compounding	Stoppage of all human contacts related activities
Stay-at-home	N	Compounding	Restriction of movements by one or more members of a household to their residence.
Corona holiday	Adj + N	Collocation	Sudden long holiday declared by the government as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.
Partial lockdown	Adj + N	Collocation	Selective closure of some sectors and restriction of movement for a selected population depending on the services they render.
Total lockdown	Adj + N	Collocation	Complete closure of all sectors and restriction of movement except for essential workers.

### Context of supportive measures

Supportive measures deal with the emotional and material assistance given to people. The outbreak of coronavirus led to the creation of new words and expressions in the discourse of COVID-19 related help rendered to people. This

assistance came in form of medical advice, donation of medical equipment and facilities, financial assistance, and donation of food items. This context is dominated by collocations as summarised in Table V below:

**Table V: Neologisms relating to supportive measures**

Word/expressions	Word class	Morphological process	Contextual meaning
COVID-19 allowance	N + N	Collocation	Special allowance paid to health workers.
Coronavirus palliatives	N + N	Collocation	Funds and materials donated by the government, corporate bodies and individuals to vulnerable Nigerians.

Covid-19 donations	N + N	Collocation	All donations in cash and kind meant to fight the pandemic.
Stimulus package	Adj+ N	Collocation	Palliatives intended to stimulate citizens' wellbeing and business activities

### Context of corruption

Ellah (2019, p. 114) describes corruption as “any dishonest and fraudulent behaviour by those in power”. He further asserts that “corruption has become endemic among most Nigerian leaders”. Some neologisms are contextually created to index the corrupt tendencies of some government officials who dishonestly and fraudulently appropriated the money and other relief materials that were donated by individuals, organisations, and western countries, to themselves. This can be instantiated with the compound word *COVID-419*. In Nigerian English, *419* means a fraudster. So, the neologism *COVID-419* is used in this context to describe the corrupt government officials who allegedly misappropriated the monies and other relief materials that were meant for COVID-19 patients and other vulnerable citizens.

In another instance, the use of the collocation, *selective attention* is created to highlight the

corrupt tendencies of government officials, especially the medical personnel who pay less or no medical attention to the less privileged patients, while the privileged patients are given full medical attention. Let us consider the following interaction where the context of corruption is highlighted:

#### Excerpt 5:

**Speaker G:** What about that the *COVID-19 relief fund*? The government said it is *war against COVID-19*. So, let's watch how they fight the war.

**Speaker H:** Which fund, bros? Watch out, *the COVID-19 fund will be looted* or even *relooted!*

**Speaker G:** No! They said it is in *special TSA account o*. Akuko. We dey God hand shaa.

In Excerpt 5 above, Speaker H deploys the lexical item *relooted* to pragmatically communicate the corrupt tendencies of most Nigerians who habitually embezzle public funds. The neologisms relating to the context of corruption are summarised in Table VI below:

**Table VI: Neologisms relating to corruption**

Word	Word class	Morphological process	Contextual meaning
COVID-419	N	Compounding	Suspected fraudulent financial activities by COVID-19 officials.
Selective attention	Adj + N	Collocation	The abandonment of the less privileged patients to attend to those of influential backgrounds.
Plandemic	N	Coinage	Falsification of COVID-19 infections and death toll figures by government officials in order to create panic and attract donations.

### Conclusion

In this study, we have shown that six discursive contexts are realisable in the discourse of coronavirus, namely context of preventive protocols, context of identifying the condition, context of treatment, context of enforcement of restriction order, context of supportive measure, and context of corruption. It is also demonstrated

in the study that these contexts are characterised by neologisms which are drawn from acronyms, compound words, blended words, and clipped words, uncommon collocations, and phrasal/clausal creations. The linguistic considerations are prominently items from standard English, Nigerian Pidgin, coinages and borrowing.

The constructions as analysed were collated through investigations into the daily linguistic choices collectively used by the enumerated segments of discourse participants. They included government officials, health authorities and organizations, coalition groups, print, electronic and social media interactants. However, the spread of the respondents is not enough to claim that the study has exhaustively collated the creations used to describe Coronavirus as well as the complex circumstances and linguistic pressure it generated. The similar pattern of its spread and the sociolinguistic peculiarities of the over 200 countries affected by the pandemic had possibly informed the deployment of language resources that are contextually comprehensible in the global space while others are mutually intelligible within nations including Nigeria as illustrated in the research. For instance, while constructions like coronavirus, asymptomatic, index case, common enemy, social distancing,

SARS-CoV and high contact surfaces have global mutual intelligibility, coro, escapee, hunger virus, HUNVID-20, SSCC, PTF, selective attention and COVID-419 are creations with restricted contextual meanings to Nigerian interactants during the period of the pandemic.

The Coronavirus, in addition to being an organism, as the study has established, is used to represent, describe and discuss a sequence of complex circumstances through the appropriation of needs-based constructions. Nigerians used the linguistic resources as demonstrated in the study to aggressively enlighten the public, promote acceptance and compliance with preventive, containment, treatment, recovery and post-infection measures for lives to return to normalcy which is the collective goal for which the constructions were deployed to particularly achieve.

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