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SELECTIONAL CONSTRAINTS OF YORUBA VERBS OF FARMING

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Abstract

This paper attempts to contribute to the existing arguments on verb-nominal collocations. Verb-nominal collocations refer to the patterns of collocations of verbs and their internal arguments. This notion has been studied, although not exhaustively in existing literatures. Emerging data from verbs of farming in Yoruba show that some verbs exhibit some idiosyncratic behaviour. A careful study of the verbs employed in farming in Yoruba shows that some verbs may share similar semantic notion, yet exhibit different patterns of collocations with object arguments. Thus, the general opinion that a verb determines the features of the noun it subcategorises for is only an integral part of the grammatical role of the verb in verb-nominal collocations. Advancing these arguments further, this paper seeks to unravel the semantic underpinnings and variations in the collocation patterns of the Yoruba verbs of farming. We explore the object arguments of these verbs and investigate their similarities/differences to give a clearer understanding of the grammatical roles the verb play in complement structures.

Keywords: Semantic underpinnings, Verbs of Farming, verb-nominal collocations

1. Introduction

Yoruba verbs have been studied, although not exhaustively (Bowen 1888, Bamgboṣe 1964; 1966, and Oyelaran 1976, Awobuluyi 1978, Adeyeye and Abiodun 2019, etc.). These studies reveal that the Yoruba verbs exhibits some idiosyncratic characteristics. Over time, linguists have argued that the Yoruba verbs are not inflectional in nature. All through the variations of person, number, mood, and tense, the Yoruba verbal root remains unchanged. (Bowen 1888, Bamgboṣe 1966, and Oyelaran 1976). Research has also shown that the Yoruba verbs can be split (split verbs). When used in an object, the verb can split into two halves. (Awobuluyi 1978:53).

However, emerging data from the Yoruba verbs of farming presents new peculiarities which justify this study. The Yoruba verbs of farming constitute a sub-class of the Yoruba verbs. Some of the Yoruba verbs of farming have generic terms and variants. These verbs follow an organized unusual pattern in their collocations with their object complements. The verbs impose peculiar syntactic and semantic restrictions on the NP(s) that they collocate with. To ascertain the patterns of constraints placed by the Yoruba verbs of farming

on NP complements, we intend to do an analysis of the subcategorical frames of their verbs in Section 3 of this paper. To account for the subcategorical frame of each verb, we shall set up a paradigm of feature matrices for the verbs and NPs they collocate with. Different feature-based theories of meaning consider meaning in terms of feature lists, those properties of meaning which, taken together, express the meaning of a word in some way. These accounts assume not only the existence of the definitions for concepts in terms of core features, but also in another set of relevant features. These features reflect information that is not necessarily part of the definition itself. (Rosch and Mervis, 1975; Smith, et al (1974); Collins and Quillian, 1969; Jackendoff, 1990; Minsky, 1975; Norman and Rumelhart, 1975; Shallice, 1993; Smith and Medin, 1981). As such, description in terms of features i.e. subcategorical features will enable us to provide an adequate account of the inherent grammatical restrictions which each verb imposes on its choice of complement(s)

2. Methodology

The paper adopts both direct and indirect systems of data collection in this research. The informants were sourced from native speakers of Yoruba

within the age range of 30 - 65 years. The older speakers of the language were deliberately engaged because the younger generation may not be able to give in-depth information about verbs of farming given that most of them don't part-take in farming. The farmers were interviewed individually and in groups at pre-arranged locations at times convenient for them. The data collection was done using 1,700 SIL comparative African wordlist (SILCAWL). Unlike other wordlists, the SIL comparative wordlist amongst other advantages gives a plethora of corpus for different spheres of life i.e. agriculture, commerce, travel and transportation, tailoring and weaving, man's physical being (body parts), medicine, etc. Terms for tools, crops and farming processes were collected with their examples in contexts. After

that, the informants were asked to supply any other term not captured on the wordlist. Lastly, two veteran farmers within the ages 60-65 were interviewed to corroborate and verify the data collected.

For the secondary source, published works on farming in Yoruba, e-books on farming practices in Yoruba and the Yoruba dictionary were consulted. The data were observed after collection and the verbs were categorized into eight groups based on shared semantic notions and analyzed following their argument selectional restrictions: verbs of planting, verbs of harvesting, verbs of reproduction, verbs of maturity, verbs of spoilage, verbs of peelage, verbs of clearing and verbs of breaking.

3. Subcategorical Frame of Yoruba Verbs of Planting

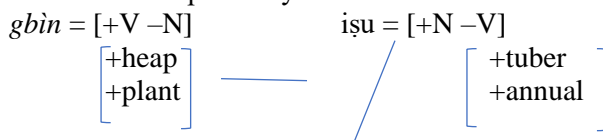
The verbs of planting are verbs that describe the events involved in the process of crop planting. These group of verbs have two kinds of terms, a generic term and its variants. The generic terms encapsulate general ideas or state of a phenomenon. On the other hand, the variant terms describe an integral idea or state of a phenomenon. The generic term for planting in Yoruba is "gbìn" "to plant" as shown in the example below in 1(a)

1a. gbìn = [+V -N]

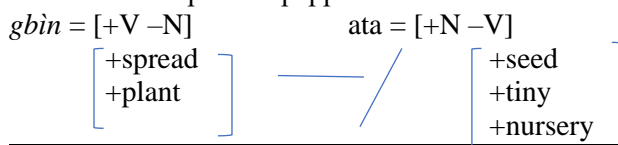
- +deep
- +heap
- +spread
- +plant
- +replant

The subcategorical features of the word *gbìn* above show that it encodes features which describe the different processes of planting. This explains why it collocates freely with different types of crops. Examples in context are considered below.

b. Dàda gbìn iṣu
 Dada plant yam
 "Dada planted yam"



c. Dada gbìn ata
 Dada plant pepper
 "Dada planted pepper"

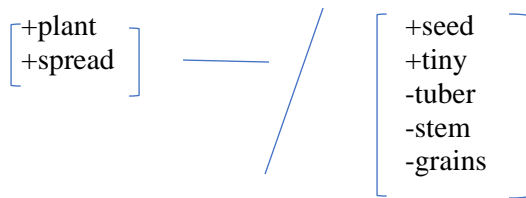


- d. Dada *gbìn* kòkó
 Dada plant cocoa
 “Dada planted cocoa”
gbìn = [+V -N] kòkó = [+N -V]



Following the data above, the feature [+heap] in (1b) captures crops that are planted in a heap. It subcategorises for an object complement with [+tuber] feature and also a covert argument i.e. an instrument used to dig up the heap not represented in open syntax but exists in LF interpretive level of the native speaker (i.e. in the mind). The feature [+spread] in (1c) captures crops that are planted by spreading them on the soil. It subcategorises for an object complement with the [+seed, +tiny] features. The feature [+deep] in (1d) captures crops planted in the soil. It subcategorises for object complement with the [+seed] feature and a covert argument used for the process of digging, the feature [+replant] in (1a) captures crops that are usually transplanted e.g. pepper and tomatoes. These inherent features of the generic verb explain why it collocates freely with the object complements. However, the verb *gbìn* has two variants; *fón* and *lọ* which contradict the collocation pattern exhibited by the generic verb. To buttress this claim, let us consider the subcategorial frame of each variant below,

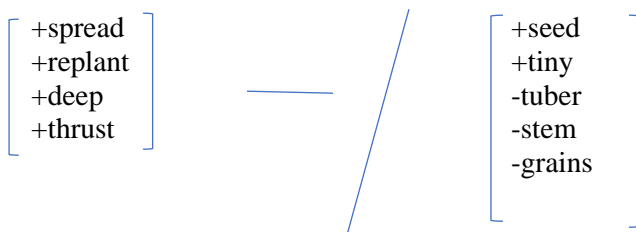
- 2a. *fón* = [+V -N] NP = [+N -V]



The feature [+spread] restricts the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops planted by spreading their seeds on the soil e.g. tomatoes, pepper. See example below

- b. Òjọ lọ *fón* ata
 Ojo go spread pepper
 “Ojo went to plant pepper in the nursery”
 c. *Dàdà *fón* *isù*
 Dada spread yam
 “Dada planted yam”

- 3a. *Lọ* = [+V -N] NP = [+N -V]



The feature [+replant] of the verb *lọ* restricts the kinds of crops it selects to crops that go through two processes of planting i.e. spreading and replanting e.g. pepper, tomatoes, cocoa, etc. see example below

- b. Òjó lọ ló ata
 Ojo go replant pepper
 “Ojo went to transplant pepper”
- c. *Dàda ló iṣu
 Dada replant yam
 “Dada planted yam”

Given the analysis of the verbs of planting above, only the generic verb “gbìn” collocates freely with all crops while its variants are restrictive in collocations. Collocating then freely will result in ungrammatical constructions as shown in examples 2c and 3c above. The sentences in 2c and 3c above are ungrammatical because the object NP “yam” is not licensed by the subcategorical features of the verbs “fón, ló”. Aside from the fact that the subcategorical features of these verbs as shown above are at variance with the subcategorical feature of the object NP, the verb in (2c) selects only overt arguments as opposed to the [+tuber] feature requirement explained earlier. Although, the verb in (3c) selects both overt and covert arguments. In the LF of the native speaker, it is assumed that the instrument here (covert argument) is used for digging the soil into a deep not a heap.

3.1 Subcategorical Frame of Yoruba Verbs of harvesting.

The verbs of harvesting are verbs that describe the different processes involved in harvesting a crop. These group of verbs also have a generic form and variants forms. The generic term for harvesting in Yoruba is ‘kórè’. Let us consider its subcategorical frame in 4a below.

$$4 \quad kórè = [+V -N] \left[\begin{array}{l} +dig \\ +pluck \\ +cut \\ +pick \\ +tear \end{array} \right]$$

The subcategorical features of the word *kórè* above show that it encodes features which describe the different processes of harvesting. This explains why it collocates freely with different types of crops. Examples in context are considered below.

- 5a. Dàda kórè òpòlópò iṣu
 Dada harvest many yam
 “Dada harvested many tubers of yam”

$$Kórè = [+V -N] \quad iṣu = [+N -V] \\ \left[\begin{array}{l} +dig \end{array} \right] \quad / \quad \left[\begin{array}{l} +tubers \end{array} \right]$$

- b. Dàda kórè òpòlópò ọsàn
 Dada harvest many orange
 “Dada harvested many oranges”

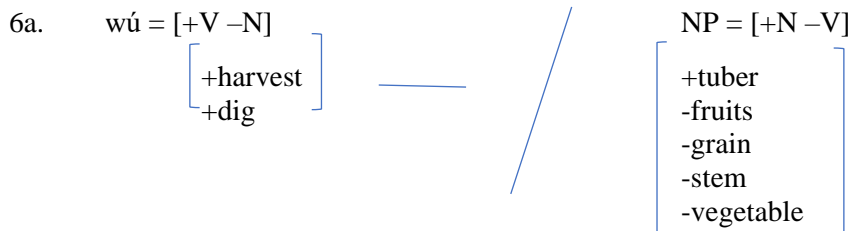
$$Kórè = [+V -N] \quad ọsàn = [+N -V] \\ \left[\begin{array}{l} +pluck \end{array} \right] \quad / \quad \left[\begin{array}{l} +fruits \end{array} \right]$$

- c. Bòsè n kórè ata
 Bose PROG.harvest pepper
 “Bose is harvesting pepper”
 $Kórè = [+V -N]$ — / $ata = [+N -V]$
 $\left[\begin{array}{l} +pluck \end{array} \right]$ — / $\left[\begin{array}{l} +vegetable \\ +seed \end{array} \right]$
- d. Bòsè n kórè èfó-gbúre
 Bose PROG.harvest water-leaf
 “Bose is harvesting vegetables”
 $Kórè = [+V -N]$ kórè èfó-gbúre = $[+N -V]$
 $\left[\begin{array}{l} +cut \end{array} \right]$ — / $\left[\begin{array}{l} +vegetable \end{array} \right]$
- e. Olú n kórè àwọn ògèdè tí ó ti gbó
 Olu PROG.harvest PL. plantain REL 3SG. ASP. mature
 “Olu is harvesting plantains”
 $Kórè = [+V -N]$ ògèdè = $[+N -V]$
 $\left[\begin{array}{l} +cut \end{array} \right]$ — / $\left[\begin{array}{l} +fruits \\ +stem \end{array} \right]$
- f. Olú n kórè eyìn
 Olu PROG.harvest palmfruit
 “Olu is harvesting palmfruit”
 $Kórè = [+V -N]$ eyìn = $[+N -V]$
 $\left[\begin{array}{l} +cut \end{array} \right]$ — / $\left[\begin{array}{l} +fruits \\ +thorns \end{array} \right]$
- g. Olú n kórè àwọn ọsàn tí ó wò
 Olu PROG.harvest PL. orange REL. 3SG. fall
 “Olu is harvesting oranges that fell from the tree”
 $kórè = [+V -N]$ ọsàn = $[+N -V]$
 $\left[\begin{array}{l} +pick \end{array} \right]$ — / $\left[\begin{array}{l} +fruits \end{array} \right]$
- h. Olú n Kórè agbadó.
 Olu PROG.tear corn.
 “Olu is harvesting corn.”
 $kórè = [+V -N]$ agbadó = $[+N -V]$
 $\left[\begin{array}{l} +tear \end{array} \right]$ — / $\left[\begin{array}{l} +fruits \\ +seeds \\ +stem \end{array} \right]$

The contexts of usage of the verb *kórè* show that the verb collates freely with all crop types because it encodes features which describe the different processes of harvesting. In (5a) The feature [+dig] specifies that the harvesting of the relevant crop involves the process of digging. Hence, it subcategorises for an overt Object NP with the [+tuber] feature and a covert argument with the [+instrument] feature. In (5b and c) the feature [+pluck] describes the action of plucking. It also encodes the meaning that the crop to be harvested are not

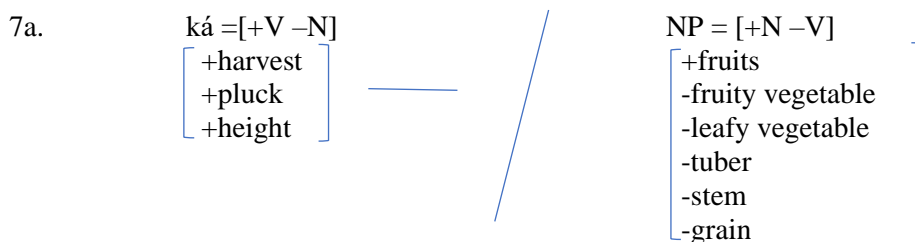
yet severed from their relevant trees or plants. It subcategorizes for Object NP with the [+fruit or +vegetable, +seed] feature. In (5d, e and f) the feature [+cut] describes the action of severing the crop from the relevant tree or plant by cutting with instrument. It subcategorises for an object NP with the [+fruit or +vegetable] feature and a covert argument with the [+instrument] feature. (5g) The feature [+pick] captures the fact that the crops are already severed from their plants and the crops are rather small. It subcategorises for object NP with the [+fruit, -instrument] features. In (5h) The feature [+tear] describes the action of tearing the crop from its stem. It subcategorises for object complement with the [+stem, -instrument] features.

The verb *kórè* has eight variants; *wú*, *ká*, *já*, *şá*, *kọ*, *ya* and *şa*. to establish their collocation patterns, let us consider the subcategorial frame of each variant below.



The feature [+dig] of the verb *wú* restricts the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops harvested by digging them out of soil with an instrument e.g. yam, cassava, potatoes, cocoa yam, etc. see example below

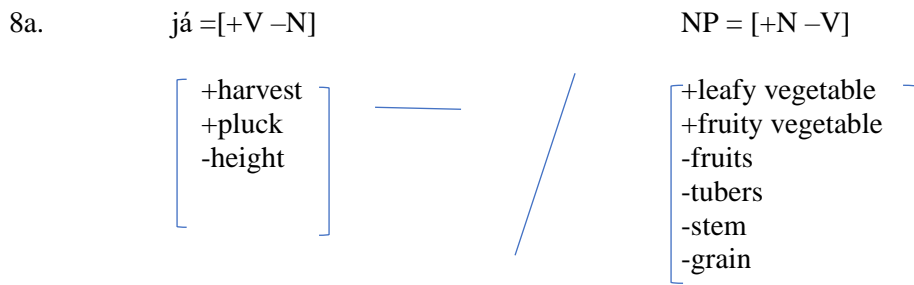
- b. Dàda *wú* òpòlópò ísu
 Dada uproot many yam
 “Dada harvested many tubers of yam”
- c. Ade ma n *wú* ege ta
 Ade usually uproot cassava sell
 “Ade harvests cassava and sells it”
- d. O lo *wú* odunkun loko
 He went potatoe farm
 “He went to harvest potatoe in the farm”
- e. Ojo *wú* koko oba
 Ojo uproot cocoayam king
 “Ojo harvested the king’s cocoayam”
- f. *Ojo *wú* osan oba
 Ojo uproot osan king
 “Ojo harvested the king’s orange”



The feature [+pluck], [+height] of the verb *ká* restricts the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops that are plucked from height usually above arm’s reach with an instrument or climbing in order to reach them e.g.

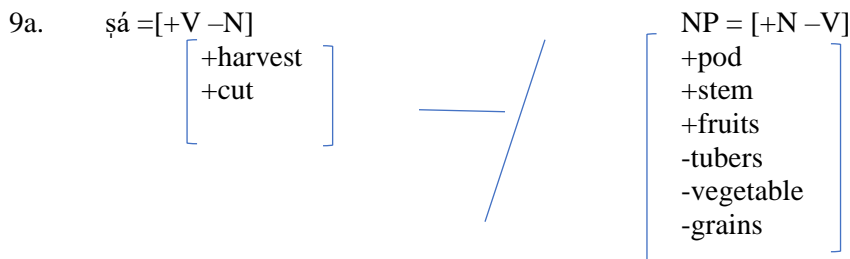
mangos, oranges, etc

- b. Dàda *ká* òpòlópò ọsàn
 Dada pluck many orange
 “Dada harvest many oranges”
- c. Bòsẹ̀ *ń* *ká* móngoro
 Bose PROG.pluck mango
 “Bose is harvesting mango”
- d. Ojo *ká* ọsàn lo gba mi
 Ojo pluck orange in compound my
 “Ojo harvested orange in my compound”
- e. *Ojo *ká* ege lo gba mi
 Ojo pluck cassava in compound my
 Ojo harvested cassava in my compound



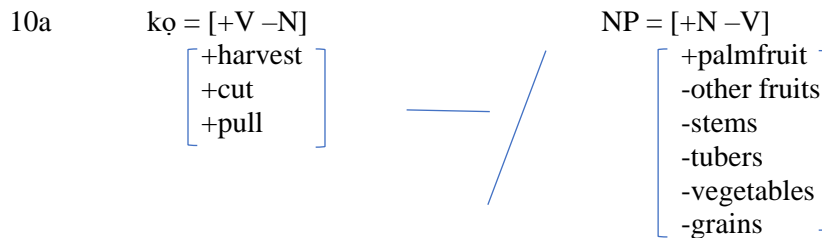
The features [+pluck], [-height] of the verb *já* restrict the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops that are plucked from height usually at arm’s reach and does not require an instrument or the process of climbing in order to reach them e.g. vegetables

- b. Bòsẹ̀ *ń* *já* ẹ̀fọ̀-gbúre
 Bose PROG.pluck water-leaf
 “Bose is harvesting vegetable.”
- c. Dolapo ma n *já* efo ta
 Dolapo usually pluck
 “Dolapo harvest vegetable to sell it”
- d. *Bobo *já* isu
 Bobo pluck yam
 “Bobo harvested yam”



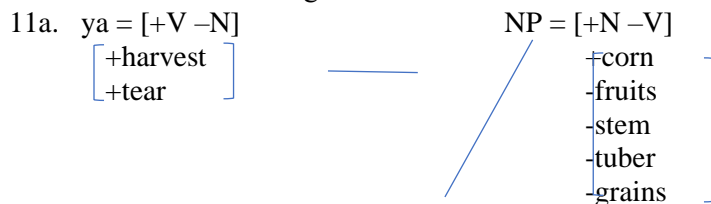
The subcategorical feature [+cut] of the verb *ṣá* restrict the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops harvested by cutting the produce with an instrument e.g. cocoa, pawpaw, plantain, banana, sugarcane, etc. see example below

- b. Olu *ń* *ṣá* àwọn ògèdè tí ó ti gbó
 Olu PROG.cut PL. plantain REL. 3SG. ASP. mature
 “Olu is harvesting plantains.”
- c. Ade n *ṣá* ireke lo ko
 Ade PROG cut sugarcane in farm
 “Ade is harvesting sugarcane in the farm”
- d. Ta lo *ṣá* ògèdè mi
 who cut banana my
 “who harvested my banana”
- e. *Ta lo *ṣá* osan mi
 who cut orange my
 “who harvested my orange”

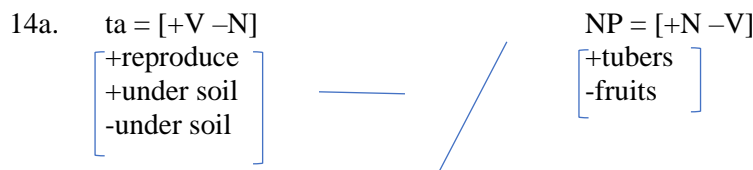


The verb *kφ* also means to harvest by cutting with an instrument coupled with the feature [+pull] these features restrict the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops harvested by cutting followed by intermittently pulling the fruit from its stem until it is finally severed. An example of such a crop is the palm fruit. Hence, collocating this verb freely will result in ungrammatical construction. See examples in context below

- b. Olú *ń* *kφ* eyìn
 Olu PROG. cut palmfruit
 “Olu is harvesting palmfruit.”
- c. *Olú *ń* *kφ* ege
 Olu PROG. cut cassava
 “Olu is harvesting cassava.”
- d. *Olú *ń* *kφ* efo
 Olu PROG. cut vegetable
 “Olu is harvesting vegetable.”
- e. *Olú *ń* *kφ* isu
 Olu PROG. cut isu
 “Olu is harvesting isu.”



- b. Tòmátì` bàbá ti so òpòlópó Tòmátì
 Tomatoes baba ASP. reproduced many tomatoes
 “Baba’s tomatoes plant has reproduced many tomoatoes”
- c. *Tòmátì` oko bàbá ti ta òpòlópó tòmátì`
 Tomatoes farm baba ASP. reproduced tomatoes
 “Baba’s tomatoes plantation has reproduced tomatoes”.
- d. Ìbépe oko bàbá ti so èso
 Pawpaw farm baba AST. reproduce fruit
 “Baba’s pawpaw plantation has reproduced fruits”.
- e. *Ìbépe oko bàbá ti ta èso
 Tomato farm baba AST. reproduce fruit
 “Baba’s pawpaw plantation has reproduced fruits”



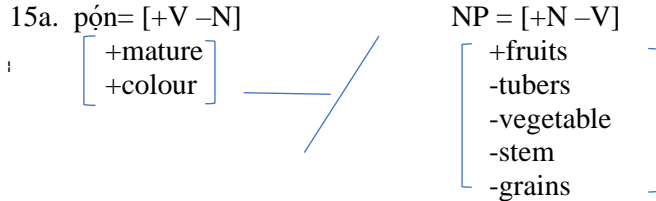
The feature [+below soil] of the verb *ta* restricts the kinds of produce it collocates with to produce that grows under the soil e.g. tubers. See its examples in usage below.

- b. iṣu oko mi ta dáadáá ni ódún yìí
 Yam farm 1SG.POSS. shoot very-well at year this
 “The yam in my farm reproduced very well this year”
- c. *ègégé oko mi kò so dáadáá ni ódún yìí
 Cassava farm 1SG.POSS. NEG Shoot very-well at year this
 “The cassava in my farm did not reproduce well this year”.

The analysis in example (13b) show that the verb *so* collocates with fruits and fruity vegetables while example (14b) shows that the verb *ta* collocates with tubers. Aside from surface illumination presented in the analysis above, these verbs of reproduction cannot also be used interchangeably because they provoke different intuitive thoughts at the LF interpretive level of the native speaker. It is assumed that the verb *so* is associated with crops which may or may not subcategorise for an underlying argument i.e. an instrument for harvest. It does not require an instrument where the reproduced crop is within arm’s reach as seen in example (13b) and where it is out of arm’s reach as seen in example (13d) it would require climbing or an instrument e.g. a long wooden stick. On the other hand, it is assumed that the verb *ta* is associated with crops which subcategorises for an object complement coupled with a covert argument for harvest (instrument) which in this case is usually a machette or a hoe. All of these explain why examples (13c, d and 14c) result in ungrammatical and unacceptable constructions in the language.

3.4 Subcategorical Frame of Yoruba Verbs of Maturity

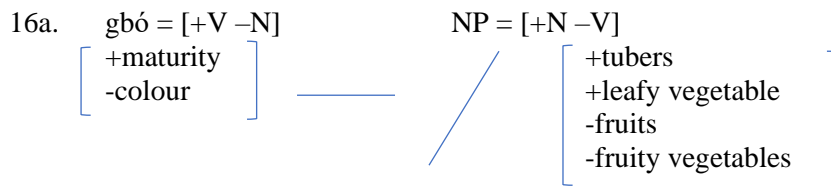
Maturity here is in reference to when the crop has reached its harvest stage. In this regard, two forms of verbs are usually employed; *pón* ‘ripe’ and *gbó* ‘mature’. The first verb *pón* collocates with a crop that changes its colour to indicate maturity, often times from dark green to light green, yellow or red. Below is its subcategorical frame for a clearer illumination of its features.



The feature [+colour] of the verb *pón* restricts the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops that change colour to indicate maturity e.g. orange, pawpaw, tomatoes, pepper, etc. See its usage in examples below.

- b. *osàn tí ó wà lógbà wa tí pón*
 orange REL. 3SG. in compound our ASP. ripe
 “The oranges on the tree in our compound have ripen”
- c. *máa din ògèdè yèn, kò ti pón*
 don’t fry plantain that, NEG ASP ripe
 “don’t fry that plantain, it is unripe”.
- d. *ra ope-oyibo mejì tí ó pón*
 Buy pineapple two REL 3SG ripe
 “Buy two ripe pawpaws”
- e. *Bunmi fi tomati tí oo pón se obe*
 Bunmi use tomatoes REL NEG ripe cook soup
 “Bunmi used unripe tomatoes to cook soup”
- f. *Ata-rodo yèn tí n pón*
 pepper that ASP PROG ripe
 “That pepper is getting ripe”

The second verb *gbó* collocates with crops that do not change colour to indicate maturity. Its subcategorical frame is shown below for a clearer illustration of its features.



The subcategorical feature [-colour] of the verb *gbó* restricts the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops that do not change colour to indicate maturity e.g. tubers and leafy vegetable. See its usage in examples below.

- b. *işu baba tí gbó*
 Yam Baba ASP. mature
 “Baba’s yam has matured”
- c. *Efo tí mo gbin tí gbó*
 Efo that I plant ASP mature
 “The vegetable that I planted has matured”

The analysis of the verbs of maturity above shows that the verb *pón* collocates with fruits and fruity vegetables because they change colour to indicate maturity while the verb *gbó* collocates with tubers, stems, leafy vegetable and grains because they do not change colour to indicate maturity. Hence, the native speakers

intuitively associate these verbs to their respective kinds object compliments

3.5 Subcategorial frame of Yoruba Verbs of Spoilage

Here, the word spoilage is used to refer to when crops weaken and eventually perish. The verbs of spoilage in Yoruba contain a generic term, *bàjé* and four variant forms; *rè*, *lù*, *rà*, *kó*, and *pón*. let us consider their subcategorial frames below.

- 17a. $bàjé = [+V -N]$
 $\left[\begin{array}{l} \pm weak \\ \pm hard \\ +decay \end{array} \right]$

Subcategorial frame of the verb *bàjé* shows that it collocates freely with all crop types because it encodes all the different features noticeable when a crop spoils. The subcategorial feature [+Weak] captures crops that become weak when they get spoilt. The feature [+Decay] captures crops that decays when they get spoilt. The feature [+Hard] captures crops that becomes hard when they get spoilt. Examples (17b-f) below show the kinds of crops the verb *bàjé* selects.

- b. *àwọn ọsàn orí igi yen ti bàjé*
 PL orange head tree that. ASP. spoil
 “The oranges on that tree have spoilt”
- c. *ọsàn yí ti bàjé lapa kan*
 Orange this has spoil side one
 “This orange has spoilt from one side”
- d. *ìṣu ti o wà nínú ebè yen ti bàjé*
 Yam REL. 3SG. exist inside heap that. ASP. spoil
 “The yam in that heap has spoilt”
- e. *ilá tí mo rà ti bàjé*
 Okro REL. 1SG buy ASP. spoil
 “The Okro that I bought has spoilt”
- f. *ẹfọ orí igi yen ti bàjé*
 Vegetable head tree that ASP. spoil
 “The vegetable on that stem has spoilt”

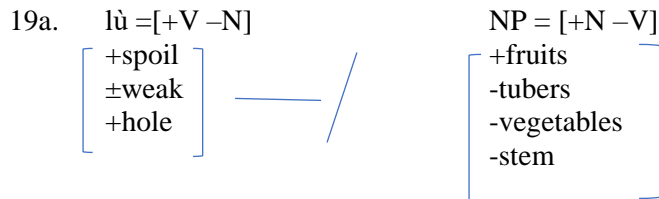
Examples (17b-f) reveal that the verb *bàjé* collocates freely with all crops because it encodes all the features of spoilage. However, let us consider the collocation patterns of its variants

- 18a. $rè = [+V -N]$ NP = [+N -V]
 $\left[\begin{array}{l} +spoil \\ +weak \end{array} \right]$ $\left[\begin{array}{l} +fruits \\ -tuber \\ -stem \\ +vegetable \end{array} \right]$

The feature [+weak] of the verb *rè* above restricts the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops that become weak when they spoil e.g. orange, pawpaw, mango, vegetables, etc. See example below.

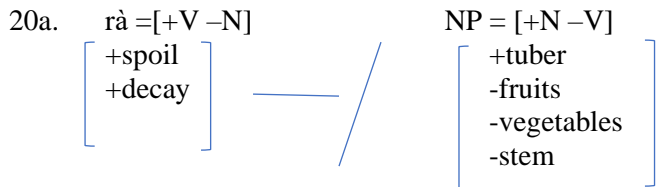
- b. *àwọn ọsàn orí igi yen ti rè*
 (pl.) orange on tree that has weak
 “The oranges on that tree have spoilt”

- c. Olu ya mangoro to rẹ̀ si egbe kan
 Olu separate mango weak at one side
 “Olu separated the spoilt mangoes”
- d. ma ra efọ̀ to rẹ̀ wa le
 NEG buy vegetable REL weak come home
 “Don’t buy spoilt vegetable and come home”
- e. ibẹ̀pẹ̀ ti mo tọ̀ ju ti rẹ̀
 Pawpaw REL I keep ASP weak
 “The pawpaw that I kept has spoilt”



The features [\pm weak] and [+hole] of the verb *lù* restricts the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops that become weak at one side with a hole when it spoils e.g. orange, mango, etc. See example below for its usage in context.

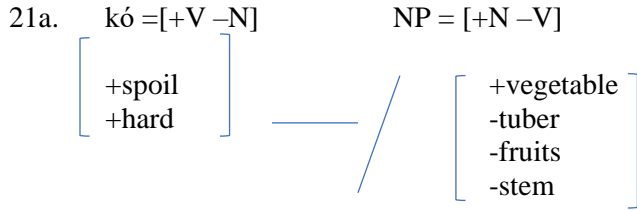
- b. ọ̀sàn yí ti lù
 orange this ASP. puncture
 “This orange has spoilt at its side”
- c. ope-oyinbo ti mo to ju ti lù
 pineapple REL I keep ASP puncture
 “The pineapple that I kept has spoilt”



The feature [+decay] of the verb *rà* restricts the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops that decay when they get spoilt. e.g. tubers. See example in context below.

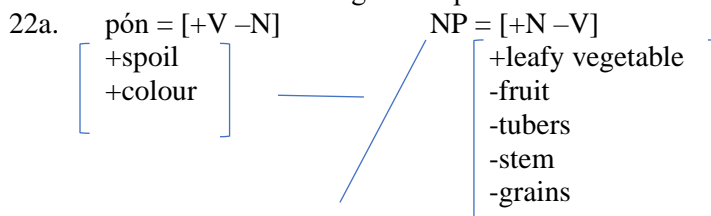
- b. iṣu tí ó wà nínú ebè yẹn ti rà
 yam REL. 3SG exist inside heap that. ASP. decay
 “The yam in that heap has spoilt”
- d. Olu ta ege e to tin rà lopo
 Olu sell cassava his REL ASP decay cheap
 “Olu sold his cassava that is getting spoilt cheap”

The verb *kó* in example (21a) means ‘to become strong’. It collocates with crop that becomes hard when it spoils. See its subcategorical frame below.



The feature [+hard] of the verb *kó* restricts the kind of crop it collocates with to crop that hardens when it spoils e.g. okro. See example in context below

b. ilá ti mó rà ti kó
 okro REL. I buy ASP. hard
 “The Okro that I bought has spoilt”



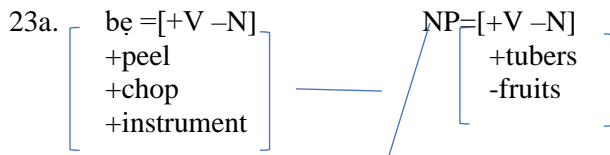
The feature [+colour] of the verb *pón* restricts the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops that change colour when they spoil e.g. leafy vegetable. See example in context below.

b. ẹfọ orí igi yẹn ti pón
 Vegetable head tree that. ASP. hard
 “The vegetable on that stem has spoilt”.

The subcategorial frames of the verbs of spoilage above reveal that the generic verb *bàjé* collocates with all crops because it encodes all the features of spoilage. However, the subcategorial frames illustrated in examples 18a, 19a, 20a, 21a and 22a reveal that its variants are restrictive in collocating with crops because they encode specific features of spoilage.

3.6 Subcategorial frame of Yoruba Verbs of Peelage

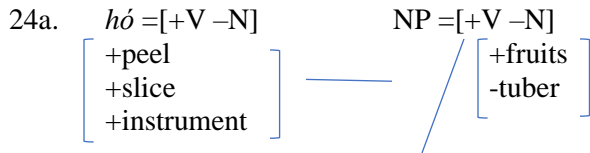
There is no generic term for the verbs of peeling because no single verbal encodes all the features of peeling. In this regard three different verbs are usually employed. They are *bẹ*, *hó*, and *bó*. These verbs cannot be used interchangeably. The Yoruba language distinguishes how the process of peeling is done by employing different verbal terms. The verb *bẹ* collocates with crops that are peeled by chopping off their back. Therefore, the verb subcategorises for a covert argument with the [+instrument] feature. The verb *hó* collocates with crops that are peeled by slicing off their back. Similarly, this verb subcategorises for a covert argument with the [+instrument] feature. While the verb *bó*, collocates with crops that are peeled without a covert instrument. See their subcategorial frames below for more illustration.



The feature [+chop] of the verb *bẹ* restricts the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops peeled by chopping off their back by repeated blow of a sharp instrument e.g. yam, cassava, etc. See its usage in the example

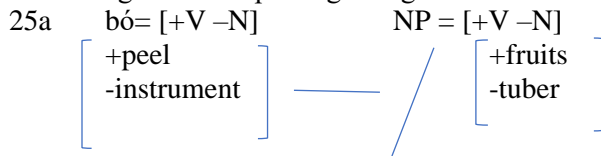
below.

- b. iyá-àgba n̄ bẹ̄ isu
 grandma PROG.peel yam
 “Grandma is peeling yam”
 c. *iyá-àgba n̄ hō isu
 grandma PROG.peel yam
 “Grandma is peeling yam”



The feature [+slice] of the verb *hó* restricts the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops peeled by slicing off their back with a sharp instrument e.g. orange. See its usage in the example below.

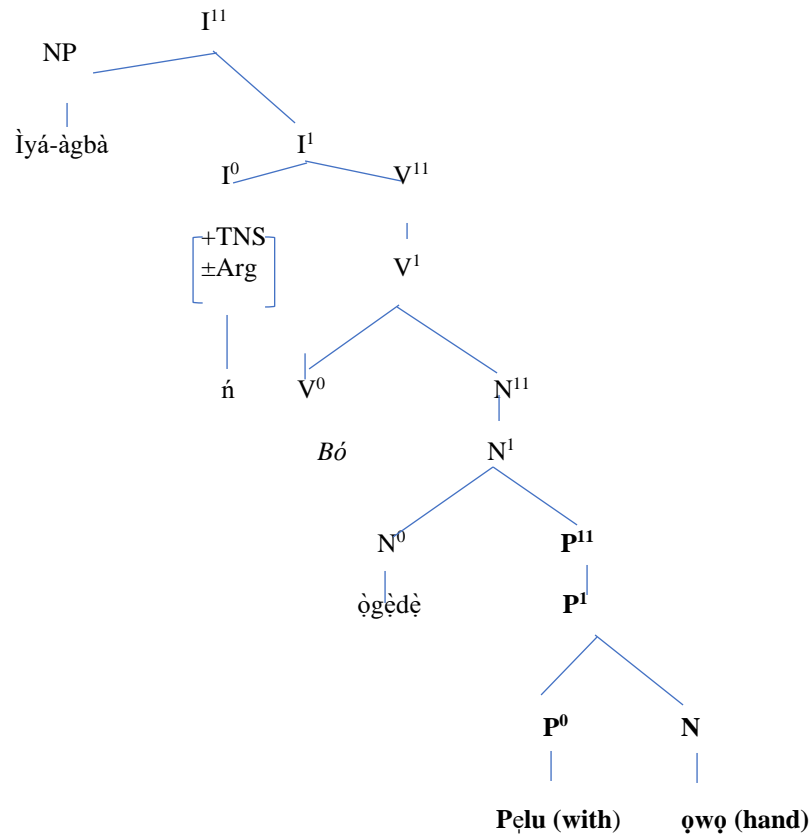
- b. Ìyá-àgbà n̄ hó ọ̀sàn
 Grandma PROG.peel orange
 “grandma is peeling orange”.
 c. *Ìyá-àgbà n̄ bē ọ̀sàn
 Grandma PROG.peel orange
 “grandma is peeling orange”.



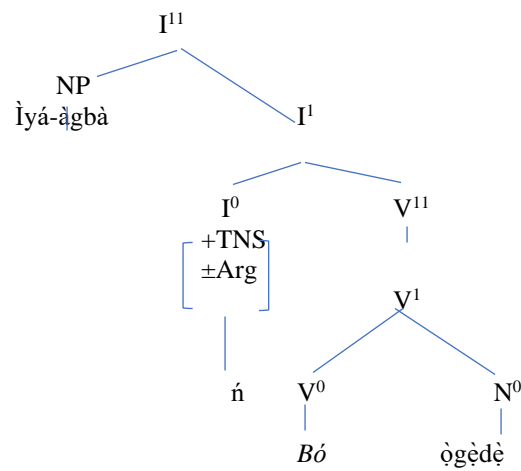
The feature [-instrument] of the verb *bó* restricts the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops that can be peeled without an instrument. However, the act is carried out with the hand alone. Hence, the verb *bó* subcategorises for NP complement with the [+fruit] feature and a covert or underlying argument “hand” absent from open syntax but assumed and understood by the native speakers. examples of such crops are e.g. tangerine, banana, plantain, etc. we will now buttress our argument with the aid of a D-structure and S-structure using the example below.

- c. Ìyá-àgbà n bó ògèdè.
 grandma PROG.peel ogede.
 “grandma is peeling banana.

D-structure



S-structure

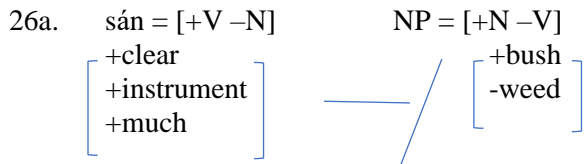


The difference between the D-structure and the S-structure is the prepositional phrase structure capturing the underlying argument not represented on the S-structure. This is so because the economy of derivation condition compels the grammar of all languages to perform the most economical one. Thus, since native speakers' knowledge of these verbs implies an awareness of the existence of these underlying NP objects, it therefore becomes economical not to represent it in open syntax.

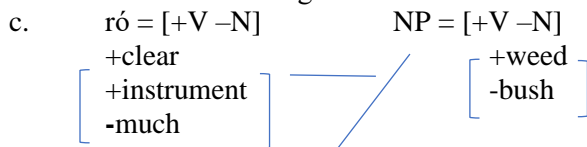
The analysis of the verbs of peeling above shows that the verbs *bẹ*, *hó* and *bó* share the feature [+peel] but the verb *bó* does not require an instrument as such collocates with objects arguments that do not require instrument but still underlying picks up a covert argument for peeling as shown in example 25c above. the verbs *bẹ* and *bó* share the features [+peel, +instrument] but the differences in their event acts' features; [±chop, ±slice] account for the variations exhibited in collocating them with object NPs. This explains why examples 23c and 24c are ungrammatical and unacceptable in the language. The object NP "yam" agrees with feature [+chop] while the object NP "orange agrees with the feature [+slice].

3.7 Subcategorical frame of Yoruba Verbs of Clearing

By verbs of clearing, we mean verbs employed in Yoruba when removing weeds on the farm land. There is no generic verb in this regard. However, two verbs are employed. They are *sán* and *ró*. They both mean "to clear" but encode different semantic underpinnings. Yoruba distinguishes between the sizes of weeds to be cleared by employing these terms. Let us consider their subcategorical frames with examples to buttress our argument.



b. Àlání ñ *sán* oko.
 Alani PROG.clear bush.
 "Alani is clearing bush".

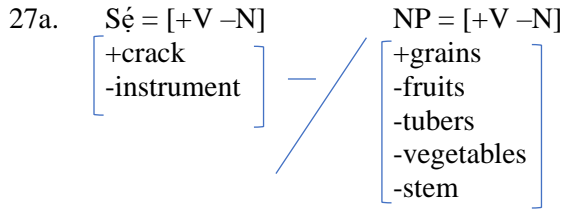


d. Àlání ñ *ró* oko.
 Alani PROG.clear weed.
 "Alani is clearing weed".

In the analysis of the verbs of clearing above, the subcategorical frames of the verb *sán* and *ró* reveal that they share the features [+clear and +instrument]. However, the subcategorical feature [+much] of the verbs *sán* in (26a) above restricts its collocation to unwanted plant cut with a particular kind of instrument 'machette', not represented in open syntax but intuitively understood by naïve speaker as shown in example (26b) while the feature [-much] of the verb *ró* restricts its collocation to weeds cut with a particular kind of instrument 'hoe' again not represented in open syntax but intuitively understood by naïve speaker as shown in example 26d.

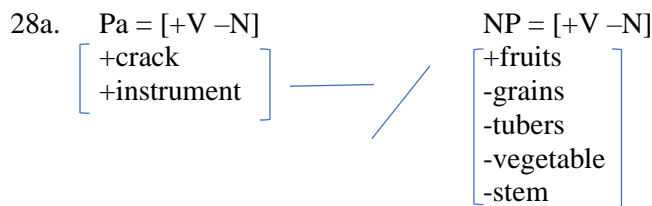
3.8 Subcategorical Frame of Yoruba Verbs of Cracking

By verbs of cracking we mean verbs that denote breaking off the back of a crop in order to get it content. Yoruba distinguishes how this cracking is done by employing two terms; *sé* and *pa*. Let us consider their subcategorical frame with examples below for clearer illustration.



b. Wunmi fẹ sẹ egusi
 Wunmi want crack melon
 “Wunmi wants to crack melon”.

c. *Wunmi fẹ sẹ ekuro
 Wunmi want crack melon
 “Wunmi wants to crack melon”.



b. Wunmi fẹ pa ekuro
 Wunmi want crack palm kernel
 “Wunmi wants to crack palm kernel”.

c. *Wunmi fẹ pa egusi
 Wunmi want crack palm kernel
 “Wunmi wants to crack palm kernel”.

In the analysis of the verbs of cracking above, the subcategorical frames of the verb *sẹ* and *pa* reveal that they share the features [+crack]. However, the feature [-instrument] of the verb *sẹ* restricts the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops that require no instrument to crack their backs because their backs are usually soft. Hence, it will be ungrammatical to collocate crop which violate this feature with it, as shown in example (27c) above. However, the feature [+instrument] of the verb *pa* restricts the kinds of crops it collocates with to crops that require an instrument to break their backs because their backs are usually very hard. Collocating it with crops which contradicts this feature will result in ungrammatical and unacceptable construction in the language as shown in example (28c) above.

4.0 Conclusion

The discussion so far has exposed the idiosyncratic selectional properties of the verbs under investigation. These verbs have two distinct patterns of collocations with their NP objects. First, the verb determines the presence of the NP objects. The direct objects are overt but the covert objects are not represented in open syntax since the native speaker knowledge of these verbs implies an awareness of the existence of these underlying NP objects. The generic terms collocate freely with all crops. Secondly, the verb delimits the presence of an Np object. The variant terms are

restrictive in their collocation with crops. The analysis above shows that the variations in collocation patterns are largely feature driven. Another point to emphasis here is that the generic verbs determines the presence of an NP object while the variant verbs not only determines but also delimits the presence of an NP object. Following from these, it suffices to say that Chomsky’s selectional restriction rule can be expanded into two areas: macro-selectional restrictions and micro-selectional restrictions. The macro-selectional restriction rules determine the presence of the object complement while the

micro-selectional restrictions rules not only determines but also further delimits the object complement form. Over and above all, the issues handled in this paper points to the richness of the

Yoruba verbal system that is yet to be fully explored.

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LITERATURE, MODERN TECHNOLOGIES AND CRIMES PREVENTION IN GEORGE ORWELL'S *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR*

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Abstract

This study examines the deployment of modern security technologies in crimes prevention and control as portrayed in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It adopts the Sigmund Freudian Psychoanalytic theoretical framework which focuses on the levels of consciousness and the structure of personality of the characters in societies. The primary text is subjected to literary analysis with secondary materials gathered through the internet and was further utilized to substantiate issues in the discussion. The paper finds that the protagonist and other characters are conscious of the installation of modern technologies in strategic places but the instinctual drives to satisfy their emotional desires plays significance role in their lives. The protagonist, Winston and Julia attempt to violate the Party's sanction on sexual relationship as a measure to suppress birth control and rebellion in the nation. The Party deploys the use of telescreens and microphones apart from Thought Police and the use of children as spies to regulate thoughts, perceptions and behavioural patterns of individuals and groups against the totalitarian dictatorship of Big Brother. The study concludes that modern technologies can be deployed to prevent crimes and criminality in societies but they become abused if employed to suppress and exploit the citizens whose inalienable rights are being infringed upon by despotic leadership.

Keywords: Crimes, modern technologies, security, freedom, prevention

Introduction

Crimes and criminality have also been a subject of discourse to researchers, world leaders, security experts, opinion leaders and literary scholars, to mention a few, for several decades now. There are obviously numerous conferences, fora, workshops and symposia held in the past on trends of crime, prevention and control measures to strategize how to effectively combat criminality and break down of law and order in contemporary society. Past studies focus on crime detection using text recognition and face recognition (Shivam, *et al*, 2018), fighting crime and insecurity in Nigeria through an intelligent approach (Umar, *et al*, 2021), use of ICT tools in tackling insecurity and terrorism problem in Nigeria (Oludare, *et al*, 2015) and insecurity and

socio-economic development in Nigeria (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014), to mention a few. Despite of the above efforts made by scholars, crime rates have been steadily and increasingly growing at geometric progression without commensurate combating strategies employed by government and stakeholders. There is therefore the need to adequately deploy effective modern technologies in control and prevention of crimes and criminality in this 21st Century with a view to promoting peace and economic development in Third World countries. The application of science and technologies to crimes prevention and control will definitely reduce the rate of kidnappings, armed robberies, sea piracies, sexual harassments, oil thefts, vandalism of public properties and so on, to the barest minimum particularly in Nigeria.

Literary works on crimes and insecurity in society abound because literature reflects the experiences of writers. However, there appears to be insignificant researches carried out previously by literary scholars on the application of science and modern technologies in crime prevention and control as portrayed in literary productions. This study therefore examines literature, modern technologies and crimes prevention in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The researchers explore the novel by focusing on the nature of crimes, punishments, preventive and control measures adopted by the Oceanian government in the narrative. The study adopts the Sigmund Freudian Psychoanalytic theoretical framework which focuses on the levels of consciousness and the structure of personality of the characters in a technological advanced society. The primary text is subjected to qualitative analysis and the secondary materials gathered through the internet were utilized to substantiate issues in the discussion.

Literature and Society

Literature plays significant roles in the social transformation of society because through it, the indigenous knowledge of the people, cultural beliefs and practices, among other elements of oral traditions are transmitted to successive generations. Literature also provides insight to human experiential issues in various fields of discipline such as medicine and surgery, psychology, engineering, environmental management, phytotherapy, psychotherapy, basic medical sciences and health sciences, to mention a few. Though literary productions abound in the foregoing areas of specialty, the aspect of modern technologies and crimes prevention in fiction has not received significant attention.

Abrams (2005:152-153) defines literature as any other writings (including philosophy) history and even scientific works addressed to a general audience) that are especially distinguished in form, expression and emotional power." Literature serves as both the reflection and refraction of every human society from primordial to the present. As a reflection of society, it shows various socio-economic, cultural, religious and political experiences of a particular group of people or individuals. In terms of refraction,

literature reveals the negative aspects of society that are detrimental to the peace and progressive wheel. For instance, social vices such as kidnappings, killings, prostitution, sexual promiscuity, sharp corrupt practices in offices, to mention a few, are exposed and strongly condemned through literary productions. Every genre of literature has captured diverse forms of social vices which scholars have equally interrogated in their critical writings. This study will focus basically on the genre of prose fiction, particularly the science fiction.

Lombardo (2015:7) observes that "Science fiction, as narratives of the future, naturally resonates with the dynamic conscious flow of the human mind, giving our lives meaning, drama, and a sense of direction toward the future." The scholar further that, "Science fiction personally draws us into a rich vicarious experience of the future through its vivid and memorable characters. We live the story through the characters. All told, through science fiction narrative, we live and feel the future at a deep and intimate level" (7). Menadue and Cheer (2017:2) assert that "Science fiction questions the role, relevance, costs, and benefits of current and future technologies, and presents ideas that can influence public opinion." For instance, the CCTVs which are being deployed for security in various institutions today are among the inventions of science fiction in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which predicts a constant watching and monitoring moves of citizens by a mysterious Big Brother. The novel was published in 1949 presenting a futuristic world that is characterized with modern technologies. Though the installation of CCTV cameras in public places is a violation of human rights to private life, their contributions towards crimes prevention and control cannot be overemphasized. The discourse on science fiction indicates that this form of writing requires imaginative and artistic skills to produce literary works that projects into the future and makes imaginations reality and concrete. Irele (1981:2) argues that "the imaginative writing stands both as a direct representation of the concrete facts of our collective experience and as a reconstruction, in the form of image, of the states of consciousness induced by that experience." This study examines

crimes and preventive mechanisms in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It is specifically designed to explore the novel as science fiction, interrogate crimes and criminality in society and presents the modern security technologies and equipment deployed in crime prevention and control in the novel.

Conceptual Clarification of Security

Research has revealed diverse methods of combating insecurity in society and they involve the utilization of traditional and modern technologies. Abutudu (2003:104) notes that "the traditional concept of security is generally structured around the state - the defense and preservation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Threats to the security of the state are therefore seen as essentially emanating from hostile external environment." The challenge of insecurity especially from external aggressors has been an age-long issue which must be prioritized by government and various community leaders. Adelugbo, *et al* (2007:77) find that in primordial period, "many peoples or communities resorted to using either alliances or the natural forces of nature for self-preservation. Thus many tribes employed indigenous security strategies." Research has also shown that conflicts that are caused by marginalization, deprivation, suppression and exploitation of individuals or groups could degenerate into insecurity. Muhammed (2017:35) argues that "conflict and violence are cross-cutting edge issues that cut across political, social, economic and environmental drivers that are both natural and man-made." The deployment of traditional security measure appears effective in the past. Adelugbo, *et al*, (2007:80) note that "in the African life worlds, people employed certain futuristic or spiritual extrapolation as means of attaining security. Hence, there was a strong tendency towards consulting oracles, soothsayers, diviners, etc." Although these metaphysical measures could be effective for combating insecurity challenges in society, majority of Africans particularly the political leaders would not subscribe to their adoption because of their religious faith and doctrines.

Having explored the subject of traditional security in society, our focus shifts to insecurity in modern societies. The concept of national security

in the opinion of Peterside (2018:854) refers to "the freedom from actual and potential threats to national life that may arise as a result of human actions, or from disaster such as flood, earthquake, famine, drought disease and other natural calamitous events resulting in death, human suffering and material damage" The perception of the scholar about national security is tailored towards absence of natural occurrences that have devastating effects on human beings in society. It contrasts with the prevalent militancy, terrorist acts and other social vices. Bala (2020:2) observes that "an effective national security architecture is one in which the state security institutions work in cooperation and collaboration under a political direction for effective security service delivery." The scholar argues further that "A nation's security architecture comprises the totality of its constitutional and legal frameworks and institutions that form and provide safety and security services for its citizens and the defence of its territorial integrity"(1). Although the acquisition of modern security gadgets and training of security personnel is capital intensive, peace and national security should be prioritized by any government. National security architectures include management, decision-making and oversight structures and institutions, as well as national policies, strategies and plans (Barkrania and Haider, 2016).

The subject of insecurity in both traditional and national settings has also been investigated by scholars in the past decades. Okorie (2022:249) notes that "traditional security revolves around national security, which is seen as the state of military preparedness to defend a country against external threats. It refers to a realist construct of security in which the referent object of security is the state. Under the traditional security approach, security was seen as protection from invasion; executed during proxy conflicts using technical and military capacities." The scholar argues further that "security is now conceptualized from the human-centric perspective. The modern or human security dimension focuses on improving the existential conditions of a nation by mitigating and/or preventing threats to safety, survival and wellbeing of the citizens as well as ensuring the corporate

existence of the state (Okorie, 2022:250). On the functionality of the government across the world with respect to security challenges, Ekeh, *et al* (2021:397) notes that “the primary responsibility of any government in power is to secure lives and properties. A well secured environment inspires greater minds to achieve greater things that guarantees (sic) growth and development of the nation to secure an environment is to protect it from attack which affects the physical.

Literature Review

George Orwell’s *1984* was published in 1949 has received tremendous scholarly attention in the world over. However, no significant research has been carried out in the aspect of literature and the deployment of the new technologies in crime prevention. This is the gap in literature which the current study intends to fill. Digin (2014) investigates new media culture and George Orwell’s *1984* and argues that some plot elements of the novel are thoroughly reflected within contemporary western societies. The scholar presents the consequences of new media technologies and interrogates how government agencies deploys new media technologies as a surveillance tool. Tyner (2004) examines the theoretical implications of space, resistance and discipline as manifest in George Orwell’s *1984*. The scholar draws on the theoretical insights of Michel Foucault to explore how the spatial and temporal control of everyday activities serves as discipline space within a totalitarian society. Hassan, *et al* (2022) investigate the concept of Big Brother as portrayed by George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, drawing on historical and psychological theoretical approaches. The researchers explore the idea of Big Brother in different views such as philosophical, political, psychological and literary dimensions. The study focuses on the historical or evolution of the concept of Big Brother and shed some light on the psychological influence of Big Brother on the character of Winston in the novel.

Rook (2015) explores surveillance, regulation and selfhood in George Orwell’s *1984* and Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*, paying attention to the role of vision as a means of maintaining control, and analyzing the potential ways in which characters might retain their

humanity and also determine the concept of inalienable rights within individuals. Zuraikat and Al-Nawasreh (2021) investigate the strategies of Evil Genius for manipulating people’s principles, thoughts, orientations, and ideologies in favour of promoting the logic of the Party of Evil Genius portrayed in George Orwell’s *1984*. The study reveals the strategies deployed by the Party in the novel which include delusional propaganda, memory resetting, and doublethink which are meant to convince the citizens of the significance of Big Brother for their peace and prosperity. The researchers note that the Party’s approach towards characters especially Winston affects his mental and emotional state and so he views his own rationale as inimical. Yet another study which illuminates the current research is that of Goldstein (2000) which explores George Orwell as a (Neo)conservative with a focus on *1984*. The study presents the defense of public values and insightful depiction of totalitarian system. Hole (2007) examines the dystopian nightmare of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which is characterized with totalitarian dictatorship and its power discourse. The scholar presents a society with telescreens and the omniscient surveillance, and their effects on the individuals. Winston struggles for freedom to attain autonomy since citizens are shaped by the Party. The foregoing studies illuminate the current research which intends to explore the interface between literature and the new technologies in crime prevention in society.

Theoretical Framework

The psychoanalytic theoretical approach is adopted to in this study. Every individual in society has certain needs and the natural tendencies to achieve such desires without recourse to the consequences on themselves and the public in general. The adoption of this literary theory becomes relevant since it would help to activate the mental consciousness of reader’s particularly criminal minded citizens about the punishments for crimes and the modern security measures being deployed by government and other stakeholders in the security industry. In this literary theory, we examine the Freudian topographical structure of the human mind; the conscious, preconscious and the unconscious. The Carl Jung’s concept of Subconscious” shall also be

discussed in relation to the objectives of this study. Yet another aspect of the Freudian theory to be explored is the personality theory which is the psychic apparatus of individuals in society. These are the id, the ego and the superego.

Researchers have found out that crimes are attributed to certain biological theories which shall be examined in consonance with the foregoing psychic apparatuses. However, the application of modern security equipment and mechanisms to crime prevention and control will to a large extent minimize crime rates in contemporary societies. The consciousness of readers is awakened and the excessive instinctual drives, aspirations, and desires repressed into the human storehouse shall continue to be inhibited with the application of modern security technologies as portrayed in the literary text chosen for this study. Ezeora, et al (2023:105) acknowledge Aleyomi and Nwagwu (2020) who establish that “we use security to mean the ability of state security mechanisms, which involve state and non-state actors, to prevent and/or manage anxiety, uncertainty and harm that has the capacity to distort serenity and development.” The adoption of this theoretical framework becomes significant because the levels of consciousness of the characters in the novel is examined. Kumari (2016:34) affirms that “the psychoanalytic approach helps us to understand the psychological development of a character and the author’s personality. Therefore, psychoanalysis deals with motives which are hidden or disguised.” The theory foreground this study, focusing on underlying motivations that are responsible for the reactions and behaviours of the citizens of Oceania as portrayed by George Orwell in the chosen novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Criminal Acts in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a science fiction and also a dystopian subgenre of literature that exposes the resultant effects of dystopia. The concept of dystopian refers to a type of fictional work that is characterized with constant surveillance, suppression and total violation of citizen’s supposed inalienable rights by the totalitarian political party under the watch of Big Brother. The Party outlaws privacy and

individuality which is dangerous and counterproductive to the people of Oceania. In order to keep the people under security surveillance, the Party installs telescreens (televisions and cameras) and microphones in every apartment and building with a view to monitoring the citizens of Oceania like the prisoners of the Panopticon.

Orwell identifies two major categories of criminals in the novel: the political prisoners and the common criminals. According to him, “the party prisoners were always silent and terrified, but the ordinary criminals seemed to care nothing for anybody. They yelled insults at the guards, fought back fiercely when their belongings were impounded, wrote obscene words on the floor, ate smuggled food which they produced from mysterious hiding-places in their clothes, and even shouted down the telescreen when it tried to restore order”(232). The narrator reveals the nature of “the forced-labour camps to which most of the prisoners expected to be sent” (232). He further asserts that:

there was bribery, favouritism and racketeering of every kind, there was homosexuality and prostitution, there was even illicit alcohol distilled from potatoes. The positions of trust were given only to the common criminals, especially the gangsters and the murderers, who formed a sort of aristocracy. All the dirty jobs were done by the politicals” (233).

Orwell through the narrative further reveals that, “there was a constant come-and go-of prisoners of every description: drug-peddlers, thieves, bandits, black-marketers, drunks and among others. Some of the drunks were so violent that the other prisoners had to combine to suppress them” (233). The novelist captures a society that is marred with various criminal acts that must be controlled and so the deployment of security architectures cannot be overemphasized. The dystopian novel therefore foreshadows the future world of science and technological advancement required for the crime prevention in 1984.

Security Technologies and Crime Prevention

George Orwell’s novel presents a technology-driven society under a totalitarian dictatorship where the fundamental rights of the citizens are

extremely violated through security architectures that are effectively deployed to control and regulate both private and group of people. The constant regulation and suppression of people is designed to subject the citizens to an unwavering loyalty and obedience to the dictatorial government even though their policies and political ideologies are repressive and obnoxious. The novelist portrays the deployment of modern technological devices such as telescreens, microphones and other instruments for crime control and prevention in the narrative.

Use of Telescreens

The telescreens are electronic devices that double as television and cameras strategically mounted on walls of rooms and buildings for security surveillance. They are used to keep people under control as they are constantly watched by both the citizens and the security agencies constituted by the Party. In the novel, Orwell presents a society that is controlled centrally with telescreens. In modern societies, the telescreens are the Close Circuit Television (CCTV) Cameras that are installed in private and public places for security of lives and properties. Shatimah and Modu (2016:358) acknowledge McCahill and Norris (2003) who observe that Close Circuit Television (CCTV) “plays a significant role in protecting the public and assisting the police in the investigation of crime. The UK is one of the most watched countries in the world.” According to the narrator:

inside the flat a fruity voice was reading out a list of figures which had something to do with the production of pig iron. The voice came from an oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall. Winston turned a switch and the voice sank somewhat, though the words were still distinguishable. The instrument (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely” (6).

The writer reports the totalitarian function of the telescreen in crime prevention in society; “The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, would be picked up by it; moreover, so long as he

remained within the field of vision which the mental plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard”(5). Apart from the television installed for constant security in homes, sounding recording devices are also made available. Instrumentalist phoneticians are expected to subject these recording to thorough investigation in order to ascertain the speakers and the content of such recordings in relation to peace and security of the society. The Party established a security agencies which handle cases that might lead to disloyalty and revolt against Big Brother.

Security gadgets are purposely installed in strategic areas where movements, facial expressions and other non-verbal means of communication could be observed by security agents. The omniscient narrator reveals, thus:

There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or no what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to (6-7).

The modern technologies help government to monitor, capture and digitally document thoughts, perceptions, emotions and behavioural patterns of individuals and groups who are oppositional to anti-citizen formulated policies and dictatorial excesses. The writer portrays a society that is completely controlled, hence; “you had to live- did live, from habit that became instinct- in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and except in darkness, every movement scrutinized”(7). Another revealing fact about the telescreen is that it can capture and disclose the identity of an individual. This is reported thus; “Winston kept his back turned to the telescreen. It was safer; though, as he well knew, even a back can be revealed”(7). In the narrative, Winston attempts to avoid the telescreen by all means but according to the authorial voice; “To keep your face expressionless was not difficult, and even your breathing could be controlled, with an effort: but you could not control the beating of your heart, and the telescreen was quite delicate enough to pick it up.” The Party has absolute

power over its citizenry and carefully religiously monitors the thoughts, feelings and actions, using telescreens and microphones to record sounds of people. The installation of telescreens has created horrible experiences to citizens especially the protagonist, Winston Smith and his lover, Julia.

In the novel, the narrator also reported that “the telescreen was dimmed to a low murmur; the richness of the dark-blue carpet gave one the impression of treading on velvet”(172). The characters are trying to avoid the telescreen in the room. Sometimes in a large hall, there could be up to “four telescreens, one in each wall”(231). The consciousness of the security apparatuses triggers phobic anxiety disorder in the minds of the characters since such new technologies serve as symbols of slavery, oppression and totalitarian dictatorial regime. The telescreen surveillance keeps the Oceanians under control and assimilation of propaganda, brain washing and daily chants about the Party with the watchword: **BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU**

Use of Microphones

The novel also presents the use of microphones as modern technological devices deployed for crimes control and prevention in society. Winston falls in love with a girl but they find it difficult to share their feelings together. According to the narrator:

The girl was so evidently experienced that he was less frightened than he would normally have been. Presumably she could be trusted to find a safe place. In general you could not assume that you were much safer in the country than in London. There were no telescreens, of course, but there was always the danger of concealed microphones by which your voice might be picked up and recognized; besides, it was not easy to make a journey by yourself without attributing attention”(121).

The mass surveillance of the people prevents crimes, social unrest, and birth control to ensure national security. These dreams are actualized using the Thought Police, spies, telescreens and microphones and so violating the rights of citizens. Ugbeigili (2019:29) observes that “When leaders

desire to remain in power or get into power by all means, they use their ill-gotten wealth to lure the unemployed and embittered citizens to attack their opponents through violent ways” In a society that is constantly and strictly monitored by technological devices such as the case in this novel, it is suspicious and dangerous to be in isolation.

In the narrative, Winston, for instance, recounted his personal experience in the past where he discovered that his wife, Katherine was a spy to the Thought Police. According to the protagonist, he was showing her “different colours” while:

standing a little behind her, and he put his hand on her waist to steady her. At this moment it suddenly occurred to him how completely alone they were. There was not a human creature anywhere, not a leaf stirring, not even a bird awakes. In a place like this the danger that there would be a hidden microphone was very small, and even if there was a microphone it would only pick up sounds.

It was the hottest, sleepest hour of the afternoon. The sun blazed down upon them, the sweat tickled his face. And the thought struck him...”(139). The novelist describes Big Brother as an omniscient totalitarian dictator who is supported by the Party’s Thought Police. This security agency monitors, detects and punish rebellious citizens. Virtually every aspect of social life, individual privacy and morals are placed under strict surveillance. Orwell presents a party in government which advocates for “sexual puritanism” and according to the narrator, “It was not merely that the sex instinct created a world of its own which was outside the Party’s control which therefore had to be destroyed if possible. What was more important was the sexual privation induced hysteria, which was desirable because it could be transformed into war-fever and leader-worship”(137). In the narrative, modern technologies are also used for population and birth control. Besides, criminals are subjected to psychological and physical tortures by the regulatory agency, the Thought Police in the Ministry of Love (Miniluv) especially those who

develop hatred towards the Party and Big Brother. In order to achieve their goal, the Party controls sex. Orwell reports that:

The sex impulse was dangerous to the Party, and the Party had turned it to account. They had played a similar trick with the instinct of parenthood. The family could not actually be abolished, and, indeed, people were encouraged to be fond of their children in almost the old-fashioned way”(137).

The Party’s installation of new technologies in homes is among other reasons to repress the instinctual drives for sexual orientation and sexual intercourse. Shahwan (2017:1) notes “the mind is responsible for both conscious and unconscious decisions based on drives and forces. Unconscious desires motivate people to act accordingly.” The presence of the cameras at strategic locations therefore activates phobic-anxieties in the minds of parents whose sexual obligation is denied.

Children as Spies

Another security measure created by the government to constantly monitor family members particularly the parents is the use of children as spies to Thought Police. This role assigned children depicts the modern responsibility of the police informants who provide information to the security agencies in modern societies. In the narrative, the omniscient narrator reports that the children “were systematically turned against their parents and taught to spy on them and report their deviations”(137-138). The narrator also observes that, “The family had become in effect an extension of the Thought Police. It was a device by means of which everyone could be surrounded night and day by informers who knew him intimately”(138). The role of children in policing is tantamount to that of civilian informants who provide security information to the police. The recruitment of children into the security agency has further activated the emotional conflict of the characters within each family unit.

Rebellion and Thought Police

In the novel, the omniscient narrator reports that the control of thoughts, feelings and actions of citizens covers everyone including the Party members. This decision is absolutely meant

to prevent physical rebellion against the government. According to the narrator:

A Party member lives from birth to death under the eye of the Thought Police. Even when he is alone he can never be sure that he is alone. Wherever he may be, asleep or awake, working or resting, in his bath or in bed, he can be inspected without warning and without knowing that he is being inspected (216).

The novelist has clearly described Oceania as a police state where the citizens have no privacy throughout their lives. With the aid of the new technologies, character’s thoughts, behavioural patterns and actions are carefully analyzed to prevent crimes. “Nothing that he does is indifferent. His friendships, his relaxations, his behaviour towards his wife and children, the expression of his face when he is alone, the words he mutters in sleep, even the characteristic movements of his body, are all jealously scrutinized” (216). The foregoing therefore reveals that the people of Oceania are closely monitored by analyzing the underlying motivations towards their thoughts and behaviours even during their moments of relaxations.

The novelist discloses the expectations of every member of the Party in the totalitarian government. According to the omniscient narrator: “A Party member is expected to have no private emotions and no respites from enthusiasm. He is supposed to live in a continuous frenzy of hatred of foreign enemies and internal traitors, triumph over victories, and self-abasement before the power and wisdom of the Party”(217). Yet another scientific method for constant surveillance in society is the invention of print technology. According to the omniscient narrator the invention “made it easier to manipulate public opinion, and the film and the radio carried the process further. With the development of television, and the technical advancement which made it possible to receive and transmit simultaneously on the same instrument, private life came to an end”(211). The new technologies deployed by the Party in Oceania are infringements on the rights of people. Every citizen must love Big Brother and the Party’s draconian laws should not be violated.

Misuse of New Technologies

The government of Oceania misuses the new technologies by suppressing the citizens' fundamental rights and also creating emotional tension in their minds. The misapplication of the security architectures could endanger lives and properties and snowball into rebellion. It depicts the totalitarian world of Big Brother which counteracts individuality and freedom. It is the world thought-crime and telescreens are used as security measures for total surveillance and crime prevention. Contemporary societies can be monitored, using security apparatuses. In essence, they can be installed in private and public places for political, religious and socio-economic purposes. The utilization of the new technologies should not be abused and the information or data stored in them should not be doctored. This is where the cybersecurity experts come to the fore.

Cybersecurity is used synonymously with digital security, computer security and information technology security. These terms refer to the field of security that focuses on protection of computer systems or security technologies and networks from external attacks by security attackers. Orwell's science fiction thus captures the use of modern day television, security cameras and microphones (for sound recordings) as surveillance architectures predicted since 1949. This study does not promote the negative utilization of modern security technologies for political oppression and manipulation of citizens as in Oceania but basically to check or control criminal activities in contemporary society. In the narrative, Winston Smith tries to store certain vital

information in his diary which could serve as a backup. Although this practice is perceived criminal under the Party's totalitarian dictatorial policies, the protagonist secretly carries out this act habitually in the course of his duty.

Conclusion

George Orwell has demonstrated through his novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that literature involves imaginative power of the human mind to create or forecast ideas, worldviews, perceptions and experiences which are either influenced by personal observations or through introspection. The modern technology-driven world is therefore the outcome of prediction of Orwell's *1984* which was published in 1949.

The study shows that literary productions particularly the subgenre of science fiction captures issues of invention, modern technologies, human experiences, ideologies and political systems, to mention a few. The invention of the new technologies depicts that literature deals with imaginative and critical thinking about ideas or phenomena that can manifest in future. The mass production and deployment of modern technological devices in societies today is therefore the outcome of Orwell's forecast. However, the novel presents a totalitarian dictatorial leadership that employs modern security architectures in suppression, regulation and violation of citizens' fundamental human rights. In the narrative, the Party under the leadership of Big Brother achieves the implementation of their obnoxious laws through the Thought Police and the recruitment of Children as Spies to the security agency.

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EXPLOITATION DE L'ENFANT DANS LA SOCIÉTÉ AFRICAINE À TRAVERS *L'ÉTONNANTE ENFANCE D'INOTAN* DE BIAKOLO ET *ALLAH N'EST PAS OBLIGÉ DE KOUROUMA*

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Résumé

La vie communale est au centre de la société africaine et la famille reste le facteur le plus important avec l'enfant qui fait l'un des sujets bien traité parmi les écrivains africains. La peinture des couleurs positives très souvent, reflète le rôle et l'importance de l'enfant, le garçon et la fille au sein de la famille et la société en générale. Mais il y a des exceptions de point de vue comme nous voyons chez Ahmadou Kourouma dans son roman *Allah n'est pas obligé* et chez Anthony Biakolo dans *L'Étonnante enfance d'Inotan*. Ces écrivains se disputent le rôle accordé à l'enfant dans certaines sociétés en Afrique en montrant dans une manière détaillée les diverses circonstances de l'enfant surtout l'exploitation de l'enfant au sein de la société dans une manière diverse en Afrique. Cette exploitation se manifeste sous forme du travail forcé, l'enfant soldat, la prostitution enfantine et le mariage précoce. Pour réaliser ce travail nous nous servons de la méthode sociologique de Goldman pour analyser les faits dans les romans mentionnés ci-dessus en appuyant parmi d'autres, les causes et effets qui constituent le défi de la société. Le but c'est de rouvrir, à travers les œuvres pour rendre les gens sensibles aux conséquences mauvaises de l'exploitation de l'enfant.

Mots clés : exploitation, enfant, société africaine, culture, famille.

Abstract

Communal life is at the centre of African society and the family remains one of the most important factors along with the children which is of course one of the well treated subjects among African writers. The exposition of the positive aspects of the family often reflects the role and importance of the child; the boy and the girl child within the family and society in general. But there are exceptions to this point of view as we observe in Ahmadou Kourouma's novel *Allah n'est pas obligé* and in Biakolo's *L'Étonnante Enfance d'Inotan*. These writers argue over the role assigned to the child in certain societies in Africa by showing in a detailed manner the various circumstances of the child, especially the exploitation of the child within the society in diverse ways in Africa. This exploitation manifests itself in the form of forced labour, neglect, child abuse, child soldiers, child prostitution and early marriage. To carry out this work we employ the sociological method of Goldman to analyze the facts in the novels mentioned above, supporting among others, the causes and effects that constitute the challenge of society. The goal is to awaken through such works, the consciousness of the masses and to draw the attention of the people to the malevolent consequences of child exploitation.

Key words: exploitation, child, African society, family, culture.

Introduction

La situation de l'enfant est bien débattue presque dans toutes les disciplines académiques ; anthropologie, sociologie, politique, philosophie, didactique, littérature. Dans le domaine de la littérature africaine par exemple, la disposition en couleur positive du rôle et de l'importance de

l'enfant ; le garçon et la fille, est bien articulé au sein de la famille et la société en générale. Nous allons consacrer sur l'enfant en Afrique comme présenté par Ezambe (2010 :27) qu'il serait prudent de parler des enfants en Afrique, vu la pluralité des contextes, cependant on ne saurait nier l'existence de traits généraux à cause des

différences interindividuelles. » Cependant, il y a des situations bien établies basées sur l'exploitation de l'enfant en Afrique que les gens ne savent pas que c'est un acte de l'exploitation. C'est pour cette raison qu'il faut bien comprendre ce que c'est l'exploitation avant tout. Si l'on commence par essayer de donner une définition du mot exploitation, c'est parce qu'il y a tant de définitions et nous avons besoin d'une définition la plus appropriée pour bien démarrer dans le sujet. La plupart des définitions tend à indiquer que l'exploitation s'agit de l'action de faire valoir une chose et tirer profit du travail d'autres hommes. Mais la définition donnée par Le Petit Larousse Illustré (2017 :411) explique bien le mot exploitation comme « l'action de tirer profit abusif de quelqu'un ou de quelque chose. » Dans ce cas, on se réfère à l'enfant. Le terme 'enfant' est étroitement lié à la famille qui se présente comme l'unité la plus petite dans la société. La famille se voit comme le noyau de la société dès l'origine. La famille est un ensemble des parents et l'un des rôles des parents dans la famille est d'enfanter. C'est bien aussi la responsabilité des membres de la famille de nourrir et former l'enfant.

Par conséquent, les membres de la famille doivent gagner leur vie pour soigner les petits. Cependant, la situation socio-économique et politique, détermine quelquefois, l'état de travail, des affaires et même le chômage. Dans l'état où il y a le manque de travail ou il y a l'instabilité politique dans le pays ou la région, cela peut attirer non seulement la pauvreté mais aussi la faim et la haine. Tout cela engendre l'abus y compris la cruauté chez certains gens, même chez des parents envers les enfants. L'objectif le plus ardent de ce travail c'est d'établir des raisons pour lesquelles on exploite l'enfant dans la société aussi pour étudier la réaction de membres de la société là où l'occurrence de l'exploitation se passe. Aussi pour faire comprendre aux parents en particulier et la société en générale que l'enfant est plus ou moins leurs collaborateurs, leur relève, leur avenir et non pas 'des achats humains' comme le dit Aminata Sow Fall (1979 :11). On cherche ce que pour provoquer un contrôle perpétuel de l'exploitation de l'enfant.

La problématique de ce travail porte étroitement sur le défi de la société africaine, les

problèmes et les conséquences que pose l'exploitation de l'enfant comme présenté dans des œuvres littéraires. Nous allons nous référer à beaucoup d'œuvres littéraires avec l'emphase sur *Allah n'est pas obligé* d'Ahmadou Kourouma et *L'Étonnante enfance d'Inotan* d'Anthony Biakolo.

La méthodologie du travail

On considère le défi de la société africaine dans des perspectives différentes de l'exploitation de l'enfant en utilisant l'approche sociologique de Goldman qui insiste que la forme romanesque nous paraisse la transposition sur le plan littéraire de la vie quotidien (1964 :36). Cette approche nous aide à bien comprendre les œuvres de base de notre travail. Elle nous guide aussi à étudier les romans et à bien dévoiler ses sous-thèmes ; le travail forcé, l'abus de l'enfant, le battement, etc. cela nous permet de savoir le point de vue des auteurs sur le problème que nous avons identifié.

Revue des autres chercheurs sur l'exploitation de l'enfant dans la société.

Nous allons jeter un coup d'œil sur le sujet, comment on exploite et maltraite l'enfant à travers certains écrivains. Cette question de l'exploitation ou l'abus de l'enfant en Afrique est bien capturé même pendant la période coloniale comme nous voyons dans le livre d'Eza Boto, *Ville Cruelle* (1955), où il examine la situation de l'exploitation sous les formes économiques, sociales et religieuses. Il expose la méchanceté envers l'enfant et son exploitation à travers le personnage de Banda. Ferdinand Oyono est plus détaillé dans cette exploitation de l'enfant dans son roman *Une vie de boy* (1956) où il expose la condition du protagoniste, un boy qui est au service du Gilbert, un Révérend père. En tout, Oyono s'attaque à l'oppression et exploitation des enfants pour réaliser les bénéfices économiques pour leurs pays. Mongo Beti cependant, à travers son roman *Perpétue* (1974), aborde la question d'une jeune fille, Perpétue dont la mère l'arrache à l'école, elle est vendue par sa mère à un homme au nom du mariage. L'homme la bat, la néglige, la sévit, la torture et la prostitue à son supérieur blanc pour gagner des promotions dans sa carrière administrative. Cette situation de Perpétue n'est pas assez loin de celle présentée par Claude Couderc dans *Les enfants de la violence* (1999) où il condamne l'oppression et de mauvais

traitements commis sur le dos de l'enfant. C'est encore pire dans *Chaque Chose en Son Temps* (2001) de Lynn Mbuko, qui met à jour l'histoire d'une jeune fille de treize ans qui est victime d'ignorance. Maryse Condé aborde aussi le thème de l'abus de l'enfant dans *Rêve Amers* (2001). Mary Lee Martin-Koné dans son livre *Pain Sucré* (2002) fait un tableau de mauvais traitement à un enfant. Il s'agit du travail forcé d'un enfant, de l'exploitation économique, du battement et de la négligence d'Amon le protagoniste. Antonella Invernizzi (2003) explique comment 'le travail des enfants est devenu un sujet de grande actualité.' Beaussonie, Guillaume (2018 :2) insiste que 'l'époque ne soit plus à la normalisation de la morale.' Au fait, on dirait que des enfants risquent d'être victimes de la violence dans des situations différentes comme celle de la scène, disons culturel ou de la guerre.

Le résumé de *L'Etonnante enfance d'Inotan*.

L'Etonnante enfance d'Inotan est un roman plutôt biographique de l'enfance d'Inotan à Orherhe, un village urhobo et à Warri une ville au sud du Nigéria, pendant la période coloniale. La naissance d'Inotan est mystérieuse. D'abord, sa mère, Anijula, est en couches pour deux jours avant l'intervention d'Obo, un docteur traditionnel, grâce au conseil du village. Ensuite, il n'a pas voulu crier comme les autres enfants à leur naissance, ce qui a abouti à une mesure plutôt radicale prise contre lui avant qu'il ne crie. Sa naissance apporte aussi de bonnes choses. Elle brise la chaîne de la stérilité d'Onakama leur voisine qui n'a pas accouché plus de cinq ans après son mariage. Elle résout aussi la dispute entre l'Obo et son père, Werdan. Les deux se disputaient auparavant à cause de la différence dans leurs religions, ils sont arrivés à se comprendre et à changer d'avis sur la religion de l'un et de l'autre.

Malgré le fait que la famille de Werdan et celle d'Inikpo ne participent pas à la fête ancestrale à cause de leur religion (le christianisme), elles peuvent accueillir des visiteurs qui viennent de tous les coins du clan. Anijula veut aller au marché de Kokori, malgré la fête, elle laisse le petit Inotan et Enireka sa sœur d'environ quatre ans au soin d'Onakama. Enireka va suivre la danse *d'Udjetor* avec Inotan sur le dos. Mais elle s'y endorme. Quand elle se réveille Inotan n'est plus trouvable.

Il y a une recherche communale qui ne dure pas longtemps parce que sa mère l'a trouvé en route de Kokori avec une femme étrange et elle l'amène. Elle raconte à Onakama et aux autres l'histoire de ce qui s'est passé.

Avant ses premiers pas *Inotan* échappe à l'amputation de son orteil à l'hôpital général de Warri, grâce à Mume, le docteur traditionnel. D'ailleurs, une voiture l'aurait écrasé si le policier Tetega n'était pas là au moment où il marchait au milieu de la rue Erejuwa. Le retour de son père de l'hôpital où il visite Tetega, le malade, marque le commencement de l'hostilité entre les Itsekiri et, les Urhobo qui viennent de commencer leur bataille pendant la fête ancestrale *d'Agbassa*, Le dernier jour de la fête, Inotan s'égare encore. Mais cette fois-ci, sa disparition sauve la vie des Itsekiri et par la suite celle des guerriers Urhobo aussi.

Manifestation de l'exploitation de l'enfant à travers *L'Etonnante enfance d'Inotan*.

Ici, nous allons aborder l'exploitation de l'enfant en guise de la culture africaine. L'enfant dans la famille n'a pas de choix que de suivre ce que l'aîné veut qu'il fasse très souvent. Prenons par exemple le travail dans la cuisine, on dirait que c'est l'affaire de la femme. C'est elle qui prépare les repas et prend charge de tout ce qui concerne la cuisine. Elle ne fait pas le travail tout seul, les enfants dans la maison l'aident à faire certains ménages dans la maison et même dans la cuisine. Pour les jeunes filles dans la maison, c'est comme une sorte d'éducation informelle, parce qu'elle va tenter presque tout ce que sa mère fait dans la cuisine. Mais le cas d'Enireka dans *L'Etonnante enfance d'Inotan* pour passer comme une exploitation en tenant compte de son âge (environs quatre ans) parce qu'elle s'occupe déjà de travaux qui la dépassent. Cela se voit quand les visiteurs viennent des villages voisins pour assister à la fête dans le village d'Orherhe. Anijula, avant de partir au marché, a laissé ses deux enfants (Inotan et Enireka) à la surveillance de son voisin, Onakama. Les visiteurs étaient si surpris de voir la tâche que la petite Enireka s'occupait.

Le matin, Onakama prépara l'ukodo, ragoût d'ignames et de condiments noirs, avec la viande d'un bouc bien à point et appétissant...en mettant la table pour les trois hommes, elle

ordonna a Enireka : «Apporte l'udo au milieu de la cuisine pour nous tous !»
- Mais elle est trop petite pour ce travail, intervient une des deux jeunes femmes. Quel âge a-t-elle ?
-Trois ans et demi, répondit Onakama, mais elle est plus grande et plus sage que les autres fillettes de son âge.
- Elle l'est peut-être, dit l'autre jeune. Mais l'udo est plein d'ukodo ; la fillette peut le laisser tomber, et ainsi, il n'y aura pas de petit déjeuner pour nous sept. Je vais mettre l'udo au milieu de la cuisine. (42-43)

Les visiteurs même savent que cette tâche n'est pas pour un enfant de tel âge. Cela est une exploitation parce qu'Onakama le fait pour avoir de bénéfice de ne pas travailler et l'enfant n'a pas de droit de se plaindre. Heureusement, l'un des visiteurs qui connaît toujours que le travail est trop pour le petit Enireka dit en conclusion que : « Elle est précocée, dit la première jeune femme. Mais puisque nous sommes là, point n'est besoin de lui donner à faire des choses si délicates. » (43). Cela montre que la décision de l'exploitation varie d'une personne à l'autre. Pour cette dame, le visiteur, on n'a pas besoin de cette petite pour faire des ménages pour elles, mais pour Onakpoma, c'est normal, c'est une sorte d'éducation informelle pour la petite fille sans savoir qu'elle participe dans l'acte de l'exploitation.

C'est la responsabilité d'Onakame de garder les petits enfants pendant l'absence de leur maman, un acte normal en Afrique où on prend charge des enfants de ses voisins et membres de la famille s'ils ne sont pas là. Dans ce cas, Onakama a aussi, ses propres activités à faire, elle n'a pas de choix que de laisser les deux enfants tout seul dans la maison.

Après le départ des jumeaux avec leurs épouses et leurs enfants, Inikpo partit en brousse chercher du vin de palme. Onakama mit l'enfant sur le dos d'Enireka et s'en alla elle aussi chercher du manioc dans sa ferme près de la forêt d'Imako... seule avec Inotan sur le dos, la petite Enireka ferma la porte à clé.
P.45

Les enfants, comme ils aiment bouger, la petite Enireka n'est pas restée sur place, elle décide de se promener vers le lieu de la fête pour voir danser *l'egor* et les masques. Il y a beaucoup de visiteurs donc la foule est presque partout. Il porte toujours son frère Inotan au dos jusqu'à quand il veut déranger.

Inotan se mit à agiter. Pour l'empêcher de pleurer, Enireka l'enleva de son dos, s'assit et le berça sur ses genoux. Malgré le bruit des incantations, Inotan s'endormit. Enireka continue pendant quelques minutes à participer à *l'egor*. Mais, avant la distribution de la nourriture offerte à Osolo et aux ancêtres, la fillette s'endormit également. Elle ne se rendit pas compte qu'Inotan avait glissé de ses genoux. Les deux enfants dormirent jusqu'à la fin de *l'egor*. PP. 46-47

La petite fille se réveille pour découvrir que son petit frère n'est plus sur ses genoux. Il est disparu. Le problème le plus ardu pour Onakama est d'expliquer comment elle a abandonné les deux petits enfants pour aller dans sa ferme. Est-ce que nous pouvons considérer cet acte comme de la négligence chez elle ? Il y avait une tentation de voler le petit Inotan par une fille inconnue mais grâce à l'intervention de membres du village, on l'a sauvé. Quelquefois on pourrait attribuer une situation comme la négligence. Prenons la situation quand Anijula a laissé le petit Inotan au soin d'Enireka dans la ville de Warri près de la rue ou il y a des voitures en route. Le petit Inotan a échappé à un accident grâce au sergent de police. Le petit Inotan est amené chez la police où sa mère va le chercher.

Jeune femme, vous voyez l'énormité de votre négligence. Vous ne vous souciez pas de la sécurité de vos enfants. Votre insouciance a causé cet accident qui aurait pu être fatal à votre enfant. Grâce à l'héroïsme du caporal Tetega, votre enfant est sain et sauf. Mais le brave Tetega se trouve maintenant à l'hôpital. Même si cet accident ne s'était pas produit, vos enfants se seraient exposés aux autres

dangers de la route. Pp.140-141

On dirait que, dans une tentative de partager sa responsabilité avec la petite Enireka, elle a perdu son fils dans l'accident qui n'a pas lieu. Cette tâche énorme pour Enireka se voit clairement comme un acte d'exploitation mais au nom de l'éducation culturelle.

Le résumé d'*Allah n'est pas obligé*.

Allah n'est pas obligé est un roman qui présente l'Afrique contemporaine. L'idée maîtresse est une situation en Afrique de l'ouest où il y a des guerres tribales. Le roman est divisé en six parties. Chaque partie est présentée par Birahima, le protagoniste qui raconte ses expériences personnelles en Côte d'Ivoire, au Libéria où il y a une guerre civile ainsi qu'au Sierra Leone.

Le protagoniste Birahima commence à raconter son histoire en parlant de sa mère et la mort de son père. Suite à la tradition mandingue, sa mère a été héritée par Bala, un homme fétiche, grâce à la volonté de sa mère. Malgré l'opposition des gens que Bala n'est pas croyant, la mère de Birahima le trouve parmi les autres oncles de Birahima comme le plus gentil. Donc, Birahima a grandi chez Bala. A la mort de sa mère il est confié, selon la coutume malinké, à une tante qui doit l'occuper. La tante vit au Libéria et Birahima est obligé d'y aller la retrouver, un rêve qui ne se réalise pas car la tante est morte avant qu'il ne la retrouve.

La recherche de sa tante avec l'aide de Yacouba, les amène dans une région où il y a la guerre. Ils n'ont pas de choix que de participer à la guerre. Là, il travaille avec les quatre bandits : Doe, Taylor, Johnson, El Hadji Koroma. Il expose bien les atrocités non seulement au Libéria mais aussi en Sierra Leone où le trouble est entre le démocrate Kabbah, et des bandits Foday Sankoh et Jonny Koroma. Enfin, il trouve sa tante qui vient de mourir. Il rentre chez lui avec son cousin qui est maintenant médecin et c'est lui qui demande à Birahima de raconter son histoire.

Manifestation de l'exploitation de l'enfant à travers *Allah n'est pas obligé*.

L'exploitation de l'enfant est un fléau mondial mais dans certains pays où il y a des guerres, c'est une autre chose parce que l'on remarque la présence des enfants soldats qui sont enrôlés de force. Cette situation est pareille dans le roman de

Chimamanda Adichie, *Half of a yellow sun*, qui met en perspective la guerre civile au Nigeria. Les jeunes gens dans l'Est du pays sont enrôlés par force. Cela devait être le cas des enfants décrivaient dans *Allah n'est pas obligé* qui participent dans la guerre. Ils sont obligés de faire tout pour survivre d'abord et puis détrôner leurs ennemis et cela compromet non seulement leur développement social, mais aussi physique et mental. Le protagoniste dans *Allah n'est pas obligé* décrit la scène de sa première rencontre avec eux :

Nous avons vu apparaître un enfant-soldat. Un small-soldier, ce n'était pas plus haut que le stick d'un officier... Il s'est arrêté et puis ça a sifflé et reniflé fort. Et de partout ont débouché des enfant-soldats, tous habillés pareil que le premier, tous faisant le faro avec le kalach... Des tenues de parachutiste trop larges, trop longues pour eux, des tenues parachutistes qui leur descendent jusqu'aux genoux, des tenues de parachutistes dans lesquelles ça flotte. Le plus marrant c'est que parmi ces enfants-soldats, il y a des filles, oui des vraies filles qui ont le kalach, qui font le faro avec le kalach. Elles ne sont pas nombreuses. P.54

Comme un enfant-soldat, ils servent dans des capacités différentes comme d'espions, de messager et des porteurs, etc. c'est dommage que ces enfants soient privés d'éducation et d'une vie familiale. Ils n'ont qu'une seule mission – de combattre contre les ennemis. Birahima et Yacouba sont devenus victimes parce que les enfants soldats auraient pu les tuer mais le seul choix de survivre dans cette circonstance c'est de faire autrement par demander d'être membre du groupe. Voici comment Birahima est intégré dans des affaires de guerre tribale comme un enfant soldat. Ce choix de Birahima est par l'accident qui est différent du cas de Kik, l'un des enfants soldats. C'est le choix du dernier après avoir perdu tous les membres de sa famille, Kik n'est plus d'espoir dans la vie et le seul choix est de rejoindre le groupe des enfants soldats pour venger. Voici l'explication qu'il donne à propos de sa situation périlleuse.

Et quand on n'a pas plus personne sur terre, ni père ni mère ni frère ni sœur,

et qu'on est petit, un petit mignon dans un pays foutu et barbare où tout le monde s'égorge, que fait-on ? Bien sûr on devient un enfant-soldat, un small-soldier, un child-soldier pour manger et pour égorger aussi à son tour ; il n'y a qu' ça qui reste. PP 96-97.

La description de cette situation violence dédaigneuse que Kik décrit en haut de comment il est devenu un enfant soldat montre le niveau de violence pendant une situation pareille. Le détour par l'auteur de présenter une réalité de violence est devenu une peine pour la littérature presque partout. On voit présenter les différents niveaux d'analyse de la violence dans l'Afrique au domaine de la littéraire africaine depuis plusieurs années, Ngoie (2014 :8).

On remarque un autre niveau de l'enfant dans *Allah n'est pas obligé*. Cette fois-ci, il s'agit de l'exploitation de l'enfant au niveau sexuel qui est bien répandue partout dans le monde surtout des petites filles. L'incident du viol est devenu l'ordre du jour dans la société africaine plus particulièrement celle de la jeune fille. Bien que la société le condamne, le problème s'augmente. Il y a plusieurs stratégies pour attirer l'attention de ces victimes. Le cas de Sarah dans *Allah n'est pas obligé* est malheureuse. Orpheline de mère qui a été abandonnée par son père. Elle était d'abord chez sa tante ou elle a beaucoup maltraité. L'un de ces jours après avoir perdu toutes les marchandises aux voyous, elle a peur de rentrer chez sa tante, elle mendie et passe la nuit dehors. Elle rencontre un monsieur qui paraît gentil. Il lui offre des bonbons et d'autres friandises à Sarah. Ceci est le piège parce que l'un de ces jours il a fini par l'exploiter sexuellement.

Sarah le suivit de bonne foi vers les halles, loin de toute habitation. La, il déclara à Sarah qu'il allait lui faire l'amour doux sans lui faire du mal. Sarah eut peur, se mit à courir. Le monsieur plus rapide et plus fort attrapa Sarah, la renversa, la maîtrisa au sol et la viola. Il alla si fort que Sarah fut laissée comme morte. P.92

Ceci marque un grand changement dans la vie de Sarah. Elle était d'abord dans un orphelinat avant

d'aller prostituer avec quatre de ses camarades et finalement comme le soldat-enfant. Cet état de l'exploitation sexuelle se voit aussi chez de petits garçons comme le cas de petit Birahima par Rita Baclay la femme de Jonny Baclay, le colonel qui commandait le régiment le plus aguerri.

Et après le repas, me demandait tout le temps de me déshabiller. Et j'obéissais. Elle me caressait le *bangala*, doucement et doucement. Je bandais comme un âne et sans cesse je murmurais :

« Si le colonel Baclay nous voyait, il ne serait pas content »

- Ne crains rien, il n'est pas là », murmurait-elle. Elle faisait plein de baisers à mon *bangala* et à la fin l'avalait comme un serpent avale un rat. Elle faisait de mon *bangala* un petit cure-dent. P.110

Le viol sans doute est une sorte d'exploitation. Le cas du viol conjugal n'échappe pas l'attention de Fatou Keïta dans son roman *Rebelle* (1998) où elle condamne ce mauvais acte déshumanisant qui cause tant de problèmes à l'égard de la femme africaine. Calixte Beyala dans *T'Appelleras Tanga* (1988), Nathalie Scheighoffer dans *J'avais Douze Ans* (1990), Christine Alexander dans *La Petite Fille du Silence* (1994), Hellmut Karle dans *Inavouable Mensonge* (1994) pour n'en citer que ces exemples ont employé leurs plumes pour dénoncer les méfaits de l'exploitation sexuelle de l'enfant dans la société africaine. On ne doute pas le fait que le viol laisse des cicatrices chez la femme africaine et c'est condamné partout presque dans toutes les sociétés. Pour Coudy Kane (2021 :69), elle explique la situation docile de la femme traditionnelle africaine dans ses mots, 'bien que la femme se rende compte de son infériorisation dans la société, elle opte pour le silence et la soumission.' Mais par toujours quelque fois le résultat devient plus catastrophique comme Magdelaine-Andrianjafitrimo (2020) note dans ses études.

Dans un marché littéraire qui laisse les littératures francophones dans ses marges, comme la montre entre autres Pascale Casanova dans *La République mondiale des Lettres*, et qui a stéréotypé les « femmes du

tiers monde » qui y sont mises en scène, le meurtre est une éruption violente. (89)

En considérons la citation ci-dessus, nous pouvons résumer que la situation de de la femme africaine quelque fois la met dans un état de grand danger et l'apporte une douleur ainsi que la réaction inexplicable. C'est la raison pour laquelle certains écrivains et critiques condamnent les attitudes de la société patriarcale qui met la femme africaine dans un état d'assujettissement.

Causes et effet de l'exploitation`

L'exploitation comme d'autres choses dans le monde, n'existe pas dans le vide. Il y a toujours des causes. Partout dans le continent, il existe toujours certains enfants qui sont exploités, condamnés à la rue par les circonstances où ils se trouvent. On voit partout certains qui vendent pour aider financièrement leur famille pour survivre. Il y a le cas de l'abandon parental comme cause de l'exploitation de l'enfant. Négliger l'enfant c'est de le rendre vulnérable avant tout à l'exploitation de toutes sortes parce que cela expose l'enfant à un risque d'abus. Antonella Invernizzi (2003) explique que « l'image d'un enfant victime de son travail fonctionne comme un véritable paradigme de recherche et d'intervention. L'enfant travailleur est vu comme un « enfant à risque » ou un « enfant en situation particulièrement difficile » (p.460). Tonukari et Olayiwola (2023) dans leur critique de la représentation de la femme et de l'enfant dans *Pays mêlé* de Maryse Condé n'hésitent pas de mettre à jour le problème aux Antilles.

D'une manière éloignée, Pays mêlé de Maryse Condé fait la peinture des enfants qui sont déçus de leur enfance à cause la négligence familiale, les enfants qui sont exposés à la chosification et à l'exploitation comme des femmes qui luttent sans soutien, malgré leur âge et leur invisibilité, contre les grandes problématiques du monde antillais. (89-90)

Il faut aussi tenir compte que les parents qui abandonnent leurs enfants n'ont rien à léguer à eux. Il existe une différence entre le comportement de l'enfant et l'adulte. L'action et les traits particuliers de l'enfant qui ne le permet de prendre

de bon choix le place en position de vulnérabilité. Mais pour l'adulte, on remarque qu'il y a des raisons pour leurs actions et les enfants très souvent ont l'habitude d'imiter les adultes. Kaboré et Nabaloum-Bakyono (2014 :30) essayent d'établir ce rapport entre eux.

Les enfants et les adolescents en particulier adorent imiter les autres qui ont, à ces périodes de la vie, beaucoup plus d'influence sur leurs pairs que parfois les parents eux-mêmes. De façon informelle, les adolescents africains (à l'instar des autres adolescents dans le monde) apprennent les uns des autres, s'influencent mutuellement. P.164

Cela montre une grande différence entre l'adulte et l'enfant. Parmi d'autres, on remarque l'incapacité physique et mentale comme un grand défi de l'enfant, ce qui favorise son exploitation. On peut évidemment ajouter que, même avec le temps, l'effet de l'exploitation ne changera pas beaucoup surtout avec la présence d'instabilité en Afrique ou il y a des guerres, crises sociopolitiques ou économiques dans certaines régions qui sont responsables pour le problème de base de l'exploitation. Tout ceci peut changer de manière significative les rôles et les responsabilités des membres de la famille.

Conclusion

L'analyse de notre sujet nous fait comprendre comment les adultes tendent à tirer profit de l'enfant qui se trouve dans une situation déplorable et affligeante. Alors qu'il faut traiter l'enfant avec l'amour filial. Cela ne veut pas dire qu'il ne faut pas corriger l'enfant, en effet, c'est normal de pénaliser ou punir l'enfant avec l'intention de la corriger. L'exploitation se voit dans des angles différents et la tradition africaine tend à donner une autre interprétation dans ce traitement envers l'enfant au nom de la culture. Cependant beaucoup de gens y compris des écrivains condamnent et se révoltent contre l'exploitation de l'enfant, son oppression et même son abus. On n'a pas de choix que saluer tels efforts pour faire disparaître l'exploitation de l'enfant surtout dans le continent de l'Afrique. Malheureusement, il faut être réaliste et reconnaître que ce phénomène est profondément

enraciné dans la société humaine. Par conséquent, il serait naïf de penser que la solution sera simple. Déjà, il y a des lois qui offrent une protection aux enfants mais malgré la loi, la situation de l'exploitation continue. Il faut une forte nécessité pour tout le monde de se lever contre les travaux forcés, la prostitution infantine, la prévention à

l'accès à l'éducation et l'aspect de la culture qui favorise l'exploitation de l'enfant. Pour le bien-être des enfants, la participation des membres de la famille est indispensable. L'enseignement obligatoire doit être en place afin de les familiariser avec leurs droits.

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MAKING SENSE OF CARTOONS ON SELECTED #ENDSARS PROTEST IN NIGERIA: A PRAGMATIC ACT APPROACH

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Abstract

Pragmatic act approach to linguistic analysis of a text involves exploring the contextual nuances of the text and how they determine the communicative value(s) of such a text. Scholarly works on #EndSARS protest are mostly economic, social and political. Hence, this study is a linguistic contribution to literature on the protest. A total of six randomly selected cartoons from the Guardian, Daily Trust and The Punch newspapers of 2020 are presented and analysed based on the activity and inferences parts of Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Act theory. Findings of the study predominantly reveal overt and covert expressive acts of ridiculing and berating political leadership of the country under former President Muhammadu Buhari, whom many Nigerians hitherto considered as a messiah, for poor governance. Findings of the study also indicate directive acts of appealing or requesting federal government to disband Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of Nigerian Police Force. Based on its findings, this study concludes that President Muhammadu Buhari's government performed far below expectations of Nigerians, especially the youth, and this was one of the main causes of the protest. The study equally concludes that peaceful protests are powerful weapons for bringing about good governance.

Keywords: pragmatics, linguistic analysis, EndSARS, political leadership

Introduction

Nigerian youths took to the streets of Lagos and other parts of the country in three consecutive weeks in October, 2020, demanding the scrapping of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of the Nigerian Police Force, which was created in 1992 to tackle violent crimes like armed robbery and kidnaping, among others (*The Punch*, October, 2020), because squad members of the Force were involved in extrajudicial killings, intimidation and human right abuses (Shola 2021). In addition, the protesting youths also demanded: bringing to book the police officers found guilty of brutality, compensation for the victims of police brutality, psychological evaluation of the disbanded men of the Force and improvement of the welfare of the Force.

The first and main request of the protesting youths was quickly granted as the federal government announced the disbandment of SARS. The federal government asked for more time to meet other demands of the protesters. However, the immediate replacement of SARS

with Special Weapon-Handling and Tactic Team (SWATT) is in the opinion of this study 'giving out something with the right hand and taking it back with the left one.' According to Dami (2021), #EndSARS, which started as a twitter campaign in 2017, was a microcosmic manifestation of deeply rooted dissatisfaction of Nigerians with social, economic and political situation of the country. The #EndSARS movement had no single leader. Hence government could not clamp down on the protest (Egbunike 2021), which lingered on until it turned violent. The violence led to the attack on innocent citizens as well as looting, vandalisation and destruction of public and private property in the country.

Cartoons are one of the channels or codes through which news item writers satirize or make a caricature of policies, programmes and actions of government, especially when government is anti-masses. In other words, cartoons are explored by man to express his concerns, present his experiences or to be communicatively accomplished without using a word. This is

because, given advancement in information and communication technology, verbal language (spoken or written) alone is inadequate a means of communication today. Hence, people resort to using visual images such as cartoons to communicate their concerns, feelings and opinions.

Pragmatics

As a distinct branch of linguistics, pragmatics began with posthumous publication of John Austin's (1962) *How to Do Things with Words*; a collection of J. L. Austin's lecture notes at Harvard University (Saeed, 1981, p. 222), and developed by the likes of Searle and Grice, among others. Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics with focus on context-influenced interpretation of any instance of communication, be it verbal or non-verbal. In other words, the pre-occupation of pragmatics is interpretation of language in use. Akmajian, Demer, Farmer and Hanish (1990, p. 308) opine that the concerns of pragmatics are a language user's intentions, purposes, beliefs, and desires for using language in a particular way. Mey (2001, p. 207) submits that pragmatics studies language as it is used by a people for their own purposes and within their own limitations and affordances. Mey further states that pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by conditions of society (p. 6). Ayodabo (1997) cites Lawal (1995) to have posited that "pragmatics comes to be as a result of the limitations of structural semantics to capture satisfactorily the sociological and other nonlinguistic dimensions of ... communication."

Text and Context

A text can be any instance of spoken, written or sign communication. That is, in linguistics, a text is not only what is written. It is rather a functional linguistic term concerned with whatever channel or code that interlocutors who are physically present at the scene of communication or separated by distance explore to communicate with each other (Halliday and Mathiessen 2004, p. 3). Context, on the other hand, is the aggregate of all the factors that determine meaning in social interactions. It is the core of pragmatics. Different scholars have made diverse submissions on context. According to Lawal, (2003, p. 55), Context could be linguistic or

nonlinguistic. As the name suggests, linguistic context is language-based while non-linguistic context is determined by the participants in a communication event and their shared socio-cultural, psychological and situational knowledge of the communication event.

Halliday (1978, p. 33) views context in terms of what he calls field, tenor and mode. Field is concerned with the setting of a speech event, the subject matter and the activities of the participants in such an event. Tenor is the kind of relationship that exists between the interlocutors in terms of age, status or social distance. It could be leader-follower or employer-employee relationship. By mode, Halliday means the medium of a speech act. It could be spoken, written or sign. All these point to the centrality of context in determining meaning in any channel or code of communication.

Cartoon

Cartoons are pictorial representations of political and social issues or events as well as parties or characters involved in such events in an animated and condensed form. According to Test (1991), a cartoon is a humorous depiction of events by exploiting the ability of irony and satire to unravel, ridicule or attack an individual, a system or government in a playful, witty and artful manner. Cartoons project points of view of the cartoonist and enlighten readers on public issues while exposing wrong practices (Akande 2012). Similarly, Medubi (2003) submits that cartooning involves conceptualisation in metaphors of observed realities resulting in outputs that have to be unpacked by the reader through inference and logic. Proper interpretation of a cartoon is guided by one's broad knowledge of current affairs which the cartoon is intending to report as well as the ability to draw conclusions or analogies (El-Rafaie 2009). These views point to the fact that cartoons are powerful weapons for influencing public opinion on the state of an affair or an issue of national interest.

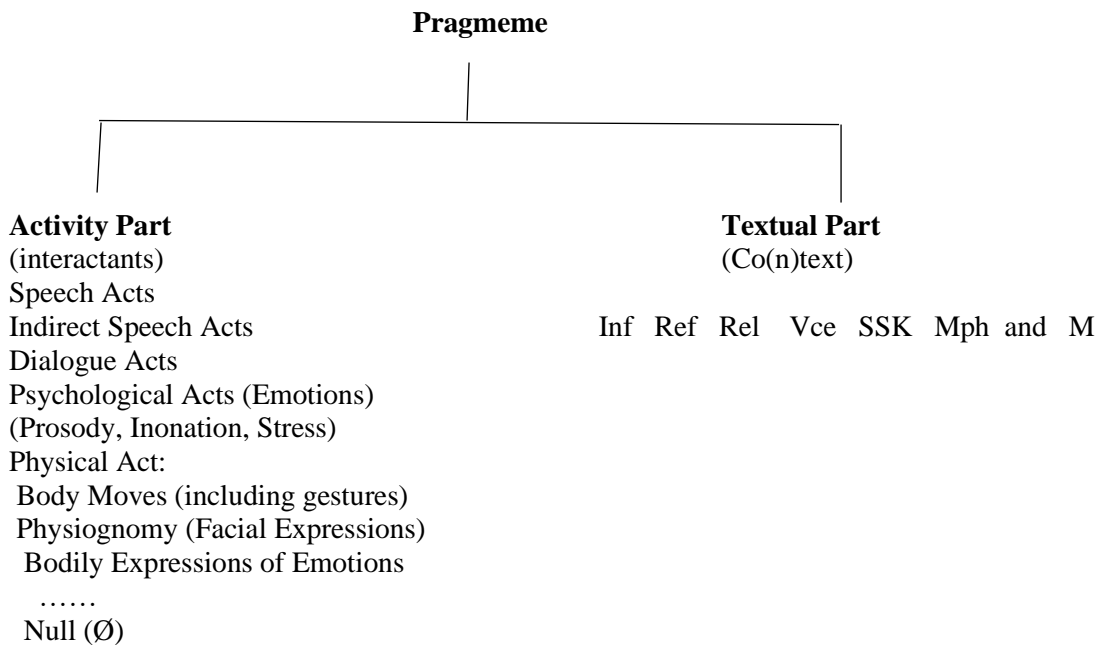
Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study is based on the activity and inference parts of Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Act theory (henceforth PAT). As the name suggests, the activity part of the theory principally concerns any form of communicative (physical, psychological, sign) actions by participants in a

conversation and therefore comprises speech acts (direct and indirect), dialogue acts, psychological acts, and physical acts which are only explored for the analysis of conversational or interactional texts, including cartoons. Inference, on the other hand, deals with the deductions that can be made from a text in relation to all the contextual nuances of the text. It is a subpart of textual aspect of Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Act theory. It can be deployed to analyse both conversational and non-conversational texts. Hence, these parts of PAT are

found suitable for appropriate interpretation of the sampled cartoons in this study.

Mey's PAT prioritises socio-cultural or societal factors (i.e. situation, environment, activity or extra-linguistic cues) in meaning construction and comprehension (p. 221) as it maintains that our acting is determined by what the scene of communication can afford and by what we can afford on the scene. Below is the schema of the theory, which Mey terms *pragmeme* (p. 222):



In the activity part of the schema is the list of various choices that the language users have at their disposal. They can choose one or more of the options or decide to be silent to communicate. The silence option is represented in the schema by a null sign (Ø). The textual part of the schema

comprises Inference (Inf), Reference (Ref), Relevance (Rel), Voice or Point of View (Vce), Shared Situation Knowledge (SSK), Metaphor (Mph) and Metapragmatic Joker (M), which are influenced by co-text and context of communication.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Cartoon 1



Analysis

Interactants: A Politician and an EndSARS Protester

Direct Pragmatic Act: A representative act of reporting, captured as ‘A Tale of Two Looters’

Indirect Pragmatic Act: An expressive act of satirizing corruption in Nigerian, particularly the greed of a typical Nigerian politician

Dialogue Act: The image participants in this cartoon are exchanging words in a fight or quarrel over public resources or property for selfish reasons.

Psychological Act: Each of the image participants in this cartoon is angry with the other for stealing public property.

Physical Act: The looter politician is attempting to catch or arrest his fellow looter and EndSARS protester by holding his trousers by the waist while the EndSARS protester and raises up his fist to give the politician a blow in order to escape.

Inference: Almost every Nigerian is a (potential) corrupt man or woman waiting for an opportunity to loot and impoverish others.

Cartoon 2



Interactants: A victim of police brutality on admission in a hospital and his politician visitors alongside his dog labeled as SARS

Direct Pragmatic Act: While this cartoon is on one hand an expressive act of complaining and a directive act of requesting by the victim of police brutality, it is on the other hand an expressive act of turning down the request by his visiting politician.

Indirect Pragmatic Act: Expressive act of ridiculing Nigerian political leaders for their insensitivity to the plight of the common man

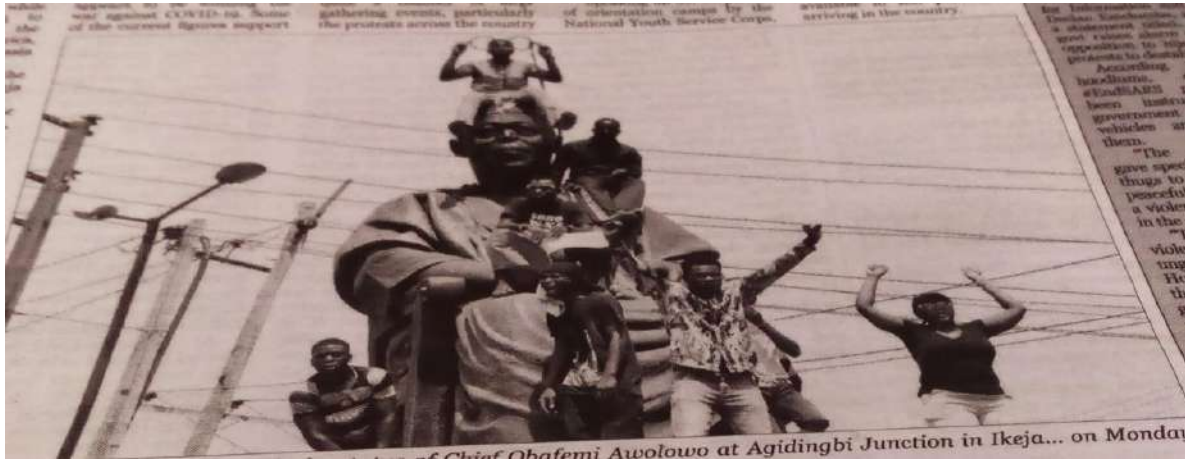
Dialogue Act: The victim of police brutality is complaining and requesting government to ban SARS, as evident in the exclamation mark (“!”) while the politician turns down the request, as evident in his response “Well, I can’t kill my beautiful dog [SARS] for you. I will come back to say sorry if it happens again!”

Psychological Act: The victim of police brutality and the politician who came to sympathise with him disagree on SARS and are therefore not happy with each other.

Physical Act: The patient puts his left hand on his forehead while taking a drip whereas his visitor prostrates.

Inference: To the government, despite the reported brutality by SARS, disbanding it will do more harm than good.

Cartoon 3



Interactants: EndSARS protesters and the statue of Chief Obafemi Awolo

Direct Pragmatic Act: Expressive act of celebrating good leadership

Indirect Pragmatic Act: Expressive of acts of decrying good old days of the leadership of Chief Awolowo, lamenting his demise and condemning leadership of modern-day Nigerian politicians.

Dialogue Act: The protesters are not only communicating among themselves but are addressing the personified statue of Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

Psychological Act: There is a mixed feeling of joy for the live of Chief Awolowo and anger over the activities of SARS operatives and by extension, the behaviour of the present-day Nigerian leaders.

Physical Act: The protester have climbed the statue and dancing on it in admiration of Chief Awolowo and condemnation of SARS.

Inference: Good legacies of a leader live long after his or her death.

Cartoon 4



Interactants: An EndSARS Protester and his Grand Pa

Direct Pragmatic Act: Directive act of questioning and representative act of responding

Indirect Pragmatic Act: Expressive act of ridiculing corrupt Nigerian politicians

Dialogue Act: The grand Pa asks: "Who taught you how to loot on this mega scale, son?"

Grandson responds: "Our politicians, grand pa."

Psychological Act: The grand Pa is surprised at his grandson's looting behaviour.

Physical Act: The grandson is dragging his looted food items on ground because they are too much for him to carry.

Inference: Nigerian youth who are said to be leaders of tomorrow are also corrupt.

Cartoon 5



Interactants: President Muhammadu Buhari, two bottles and a funnel

Direct Pragmatic Act: And this is how you #EndSARS!

Indirect Pragmatic Act: A representative act of teasingly informing Nigerians, particularly the EndSARS protesters that SARS is not disbanded as they might think.

Dialogue Act: In this cartoon, President Muhammadu Buhari is soliloquising.

Psychological Act: Federal government is happy to have particularly deceived Nigerian youths into believing that SARS is disbanded.

Physical Act: President Muhammadu Buhari is in this cartoon laughing at ENDSARS protesters as he demonstrates what his government simply did by disbanding SARS and introducing SWATT, by turning old *kunu* (pap) from one bottle to another to imply sameness of SARS and SWATT in terms of their mandates.

Inference: The aim of ENDSARS protests was defeated.

Cartoon 6



Interactants: A politician and a member of his political constituency

Direct Pragmatic Act: Directive act of appealing to politicians to be concerned about the plight of the members of their constituency rather than focusing on how to win next elections.

Indirect Pragmatic Act: Expressive act of satirising and vilifying Nigerian politicians

Dialogue Act: The electorate is telling the politician in this cartoon to fix insecurity, unemployment, bad roads and poverty in the land rather than gearing up for 2023 elections.

Psychological Act: The image participants in this cartoon are not happy with each other.

Physical Act: While the politician in this cartoon is dragging the electorate towards a signboard showing the next (2023) election timetable announced by INEC, the electorate is dragging the politician towards the signboard carrying inscriptions like unemployment, insecurity, bad roads and poverty which are the challenges that Nigerian political leaders need to address urgently.

Inference: A typical corrupt Nigerian politician's calculation is always how to win the next election at all cost.

Findings of the Study

The findings of this study reveal that indirect pragmatic acts performed in animations on #EndSARS protests are expressive acts of criticising, defaming, berating and satirising Nigerian politicians for bad governance of the country and condemning the youth for hiding under EndSARS protest to loot government food reserves, as evident in virtually all the sampled cartoons examined. However, the direct pragmatic acts found in the cartoons are representative acts of informing and reporting, as evident in all of the cartoons examined except cartoon 4, which is

overtly a pragmatic act of questioning.

Conclusion

Preponderance of implicit pragmatic acts of criticising, ridiculing and berating politicians in this study is an indication that Nigerians, especially the youth are not only fed up with the political leadership of Nigeria but are also helplessly hopeless in the country. Based on the directive acts of requesting government to bring an end to police brutality in this study, the author also concludes that Nigerians were disappointed in SARS and by extension, the Federal Government of Nigeria under President Muhammadu Buhari.

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**ETUDE CRITIQUE DES BARRIERES COMMUNICATIONNELLES ENTRE PARENT-ENFANT
DANS LA SOCIETE AFRICAINE : UN REGARD SUR *L'HIBISCUS POURPRE* D'ADICHIE ET
OGADINMA D'OLISAKWE**

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Résumé

Cette étude est une analyse critique des causes et des conséquences des barrières communicationnelles entre parent-enfant dans la société africaine contemporaine. En se basant sur les deux œuvres romanesques postcoloniales ; *L'Hibiscus Pourpre* de Chimamanda Adichie et *Ogadinma* d'Ukamaka Olisakwe, cette communication examine les complexités de la communication intergénérationnelle au sein des familles africaines. L'objectif de l'étude est d'examiner d'une part, l'existence de barrières communicationnelles dans la relation parent-enfant en Afrique. D'un autre part, les facteurs qui militent contre la relation communicationnelle entre parent-enfant africain seront dévoilés ainsi que les conséquences qui s'en proviennent. Pour ce faire, la théorie sociocritique est adoptée pour examiner les cas qui incitent les barrières communicationnelles dans les romans. L'étude révèle que les cas identifiés sont liés à des facteurs : socio-économiques, socioculturelles et sociopolitiques. Les cas de barrières communicationnelles comprennent l'extrémisme religieux, la violence domestique, la famille monoparentale, le fossé intergénérationnel et des attentes culturelles, le manque de liberté d'expression et l'instabilité politique. A travers ces constats, il est évident que ces barrières aboutissent au ressentiment, aux malentendus, aux violences et aux tensions au sein de la famille. Vu que les romans fournissent des cas précis sur les barrières de communication, il faut une réévaluation et une réorientation de la sévérité des valeurs traditionnelles qui ne favorisent pas la communication ouverte dans les familles africaines.

Mots-clés : Barrières communicationnelles, parent-enfant, familles, africaines, *Hibiscus pourpre*, *Ogadinma*

Abstract

This study is a critical analysis of causes and consequences of communication barriers between parent-child relationships in contemporary African society. Focusing on two post-colonial novels; *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Adichie and *Ogadinma* by Ukamaka Olisakwe, the complexities of intergenerational communication within African families shall be examined. The objective of this study is to justify, on one hand, the existence of communication barriers between parent-child relationships in African. On the other hand, to reveal the factors that militate against effective communication between African parent-child relationships as well as their consequences. To achieve these objectives, socio-critic theory is adopted to examine cases of communication barriers as they are presented in the novels. The study reveals that the cases identified are linked to socio economic, socio cultural and socio-political issues. The cases of communication barriers include religious extremism, domestic violence, single parenting, intergenerational and cultural ties and lack of freedom of expression. From the observations, it is evident that these communication barriers led to resentment, misunderstanding, violence and tension among family members. Though the novels provide valuable insights into these communication barriers, there is a need for reevaluation and reorientation of strict traditional values that militate against effective communication in African families.

Keywords : Communication, barriers, parent-child, Africa, families, *Purple Hibiscus*, *Ogadinma*

Introduction

Ces dernières années, les diverses disciplines s'intéressent souvent à la recherche sur la relation entre parent-enfant. La plupart des enquêtes s'orientent davantage sur les relations historiques et adaptives entre parent-enfant dans les familles africaines. La perspective évolutionnaire des valeurs culturelles africaines exige une structuration de la responsabilité familiale assignée à chaque membre de la famille. Ces normes déterminent le développement socio-affectif qui existe entre parents-enfants dans la famille. La tendance de déstabiliser les normes sociales, les membres de la famille débâclent parfois la paix et l'unité qui existent dans la famille. Le malentendu ou désunion au sein des foyers africains émerge de la barrière de la communication. La communication au sein d'une famille est censée se dérouler de manière à ce que les parents et leurs enfants puissent s'entendre. De nombreuses familles africaines sont aujourd'hui confrontées à des obstacles à la communication familiale qui proviennent de la manière, de la voie ou du processus de transmettre des informations parmi les membres de la famille. Ces obstacles peuvent avoir des impacts négatifs sur la santé mentale et le bien-être des parents et des enfants, ainsi que nuire à la cohésion et à l'unité de la famille. Dans la même ligne d'idée, la barrière communicationnelle entre les parents et leurs enfants se peut entravée par des nombreux obstacles. Dans sa communication, Nwankwo (2003) affirme que les obstacles de communication efficace sont liés aux multiples facteurs tels que les disparités culturelles, les différences entre les générations et l'influence des relations de pouvoir. De sa part, Johnson (3) note que « {...} de même manière, la communication entre les parents et leurs enfants peut être entravée par diverses barrières, notamment des différences de langage, d'âge, de valeurs, d'expérience et de perception. » D'autres études révèlent que la barrière de communication est liée étroitement aux conflits de défendre les valeurs culturelles des africains face à la mondialisation. Cette situation a davantage influencé la relation parente dans la famille. D'après Dupont (www.processus-de-mondialisation-ppno42.pdf)

La famille aujourd'hui est touchée de

plein fouet par le processus de mondialisation qui intensifie sous l'implosion de libéralisation du commerce, la remise en cause de l'Etat ainsi que la démocratisation de l'espace médiatique. Tous ces éléments se conjuguent pour bouleverser et parfois confondre les repères traditionnels.

Dans la même ligne d'idée, Marèma (5) décrit la mondialisation ainsi : « Elle est aussi marquée par le passage, au plan culturel, d'une acculturation libre ou imposée à une acculturation planifiée. » De sa part, Kafka (10-15) souligne que toutes les tentatives du fils pour revendiquer sa liberté auprès de ses parents se confrontent souvent par la colère et le rejet de ses parents. Par conséquent, l'enfant subit des traumatismes émotionnels et psychologiques. En plus, il est évident que la barrière de communication entre parent-enfant aboutit au conflit socio-affectif dans la famille. D'après Kafka (op.cit), explore comment la barrière de communication entre parent-enfant peut aboutir à une domination de décisions des parents au sein de la famille. Dès que les enfants tentent à se libérer de l'autorité absolue de leurs parents, il y a souvent la tendance du conflit.

En se basant sur le concept notionnel du terme « barrière communicationnelle » Rani a fourni la définition concrète de la communication. D'après Rani (74-75) ; « La communication signifie partager du sens. Sans partage, il n'y a pas de communication ». Dans la même ligne d'idée, Shaikh et al (64) délimitent le terme « communication » qui vient du mot latin « communis » qui signifie « commun ». La notion du terme désigne l'art de partager d'idées communes. Ce qui désigne le processus ou moyen d'échange des informations entre les individus tout en utilisant une forme de langue. De sa part, Cazeneuve (11) affirme qu'en tant qu'être humain, nous communiquons avec les autres soit pour transmettre des informations, soit pour exercer une certaine forme d'influence sur eux. Quel que soit l'intention de communication, il est nécessaire de tenir compte des attitudes et des comportements à avoir pour aider à communiquer de façon efficace même dans le moment difficile. En ce qui concerne la relation familiale, la communication

efficace exige fondement la capacité de communiquer et partager son émotion et besoin aux autres membres de la famille. Pour communiquer efficacement en famille, la maîtrise de l'environnement de communication et les barrières qui empêchent les messages d'être envoyés et reçus avec succès. Lorsque nous communiquons, nous réussissons à faire préciser notre point de vue à la personne dont nous parlons. Lorsque nous parlons, nous avons tendance à ériger des barrières qui entravent notre capacité à communiquer.

La barrière communicationnelle en tant que telle se réfère à tout obstacle qui peut entraver la communication efficace entre deux ou plusieurs parties. La communication humaine ne peut être effacée mais peut être entravée, c'est-à-dire par la présence d'une barrière. La barrière de communication entre les parents africains et leurs enfants découle de divers facteurs, notamment l'acculturation, les barrières linguistiques, les écarts générationnels et les raisons économiques, religieuses ou psychologiques. Ces facteurs peuvent rendre difficile une communication efficace entre les parents et leurs enfants, entraînant des malentendus, des conflits et des relations tendues. Etant donné que les enquêtes nous ont fourni le fait qu'il y a l'existence de la barrière de communication en Afrique, on s'est efforcé de mener cette étude pour examiner les causes et les solutions à la barrière de communication entre les parents africains et leurs enfants tout en utilisant les romans *L'Hibiscus Pourpre* de Chimamanda Adichie et *Ogadinma* d'Ukamaka Olisakwe.

Objectif de l'étude

Précisément, l'étude vise à : réaliser les objectifs suivants :

- Examiner à travers les romans les facteurs qui contribuent à une communication tendue entre les parents africains et leurs enfants chez les africains. Ainsi, propose des solutions valables pour combler les problèmes dans la société africaine.
- Dévoiler les facteurs qui militent contre la relation communicationnelle entre parents-enfants africains.

Résumé de *L'Hibiscus Pourpre*

Hibiscus Pourpre est une œuvre romanesque qui

raconte de l'histoire d'une jeune fille, Kambili et son frère, Jaja. Kambili, une jeune fille de 15 ans. Leur père, Eugene, était un homme d'affaires riche mais aussi ardent du catholicisme qui a voulu inculquer à tout prix, le moral religieux et discipline à ses enfants. En raison son pratique dogmatique du culte religieux d'Eugene, le père de Kambili a fini par infliger le désaccord non seulement envers sa famille nucléaire mais aussi aux autres membres de sa famille. Cette croyance incite Eugene à devenir plus autoritaire, ce qui entrave encore plus sa capacité de communiquer efficacement avec sa propre famille. Par conséquent, l'enfance de ces deux enfants était brumeuse et remplie d'amertume. En vue de ce genre de traitement d'Eugene, Ifeoma, la tante de Kambili et Jaja a voulu que les deux viennent chez elle à Nsukka pour un congé. C'était là où ils ont trouvé une ambiance très accueillante à la différence de la leur. Cette ambiance amicale provoque un esprit de révolution quand ils reviennent chez eux. Cette quête d'autonomie se heurte contre les attentes de leur père, chose qui marqua le commencement de rébellion contre les tendances tyranniques d'un père dogmatique. En fin de compte, Eugene fut tué pas sa propre femme, Beatrice qui n'arriva plus à tolérer les caprices du mari acariâtre. La femme fut incarcérée avec son fils Jaja, car celui-ci s'était présenté comme responsable du patricide, or c'était sa mère qui avait commis ce crime atroce. Même avec le relâchement de la mère de la prison, le foyer resta sans vivacité.

Résumé d'*Ogadinma*

Le roman *Ogadinma* présente une histoire d'une jeune fille, Ogadinma qui habitait à Kano avec son père divorcé. Ayant des rêves d'aller à l'Université, elle voit que ses aspirations sont ruinées au moment que la chance d'avoir une admission universitaire lui a échappée. Désespérée d'avoir une garantie d'un meilleur avenir, elle s'est tombée au piège manipulateur de Barrister Chima, un avocat qui a promis de l'aider à obtenir l'admission en échange de faveurs sexuelles. Sa relation se traduit par une grossesse non désirée, un scandale qui a brisé son monde. Déshonorée et rejetée par sa communauté, elle s'est efforcée d'aller s'installer à Lagos avec son oncle, Ugonna et sa femme, Tantie Ngozi. Confrontée à la

désapprobation de la société et au jugement sévère de son père, elle se sent piégée et seule. Dans une tentative de sauver la réputation d'Ogadinma et de restaurer l'honneur de sa famille, Tantie Ngozi arrange un mariage pour sa nièce, Tobe, un homme riche et apparemment respectable. Cependant, le bonheur conjugal d'Ogadinma est de courte durée car Tobe révèle sa vraie nature-un mari contrôlant et abusif qui la soumet à des tourments physiques et émotionnels. Etant incapable de supporter plus longtemps les abus de son mari, Tobe, Ogadinma fait une évasion audacieuse, quittant son mariage tout en cherchant refuge dans les villes de Lagos. Elle trouve finalement réconfort et soutien au sein d'un groupe de femmes partageant des expériences pareilles de dureté et de résilience. En s'immergeant dans l'énergie vibrante de Lagos, Ogadinma découvre sa propre force intérieure et sa détermination. Elle se lance dans un voyage de découverte de soi, poursuivant sa passion pour l'art du maquillage. Cela marque une raison d'être et un accomplissement en dehors des limites des attentes sociétales traditionnelles. L'éducation occidentale d'Ogadinma et son acculturation de valeurs occidentales contribuent à un sentiment croissant d'aliénation de son père, qui adhère aux croyances traditionnelles igbo.

Cadre théorique

Pour mener à bien l'analyse, on se sert de la théorie sociocritique de Claude Duchet proposé en 1971. C'est une approche critique qui explore l'interaction complexe des influences sociales, culturelles et politiques dans les textes littéraires. La théorie sociocritique est particulièrement utile pour critiquer des méfaits confrontés par les membres de la société aux thèmes de l'identité, des relations de pouvoir et des actes de résistance. Dans cette ligne d'idée, Abba (2023 :16) a fourni explicitement les principes de bases de cette approche sociocritique « La sociocritique est par excellence, la science apte à mettre en relief, dans toutes leurs profondeurs, l'enracinement et l'ancrage social dans l'œuvre littéraire. Cette optique d'appréhender le texte littéraire met au jour la manière dont elle s'inscrit la société dans le texte et donne le moyen de conceptualiser la socialité du texte. » A la lumière de l'approche sociocritique, on va ressortir la barrière communicationnelle telle qu'elle se manifeste

dans les œuvres littéraires qui miroitent la société africaine contemporaine. Dans l'analyse, nous nous plongerons dans les façons complexes dont ces romans dépeignent les divers facteurs qui contribuent à la barrière de communication. Pour ce faire, on se sert de l'approche sociocritique qui va guider une analyse exhaustive des complexités qui entourent les barrières de communication dans le contexte des familles africaines. En se basant sur l'approche sociocritique, on va examiner les causes et les conséquences de la barrière communicationnelle entre parent-enfant à travers les deux œuvres romanesques. Pour bien éclaircir la particularité du roman en question, les symboles abrégés *l'HP* désignera *l'Hibiscus Pourpre* et *Ogd* désignera le roman *Ogadinma*.

Les causes et les conséquences des barrières de communication dans *l'Hibiscus Pourpre* d'Adichie et *Ogadinma* d'Olisakwe

A travers les deux romans, il est évident que l'extrémisme religieux et l'abus de l'autorité parentale constituent les facteurs socioculturels qui freinent la communication efficace entre parent-enfant au sein de la famille africaine. Par exemple, dans *HP*, le protagoniste, Kambili, a du mal à communiquer avec son père, Eugene, un catholique riche et sévère à cause de son style parental autoritaire avec lequel il dirige sa maison avec une main de fer. Dans le roman, lorsque Kambili tente de parler à son père de ses sentiments pour son amie, il la renvoie et lui dit qu'elle est trop jeune pour comprendre l'amour. Cela donne à Kambili l'impression qu'elle n'a absolument rien à discuter avec son propre père, et elle a fini par mettre ses émotions en bouteille. L'extrémisme de la part du père Eugene a beaucoup contrevenu la liberté d'expression de ses enfants qui sont souvent silencieusement en conflit avec la pratique orthodoxe de leur père. Pour révolter contre l'extrémisme et la nature abusive de leur père ainsi que l'attente sociale qui exige la soumission à l'autorité de ses parents, Kambili et son frère Jaja désobéissent à leur père qui les punit instantanément. Pareillement, dans *Ogd*, le protagoniste, Ogadinma à son tour, a quitté son père qui était sévère en défendant les attentes sociales auprès d'elle. Le père d'Ogadinma, Osita, croit qu'il a l'autorité absolue de prendre des décisions pour sa fille, sans la consulter. Ogadinma

avait peur de s'exprimer librement ou de défier l'autorité de son père. Pour se libérer de l'extrémisme et la sévérité de son père, elle se sent aliénée de son père. Dans les deux romans, il est évident que la révolte contre la domination de l'autorité parentale envers leurs enfants a abouti au ressentiment et à la violence dans la famille. Ce ressentiment a duré longtemps et nuire aux relations entre parent-enfant dans les deux familles. Par conséquent, les protagonistes, Kambili et Ogadinma ont été psychologiquement séparées de leurs pères, ce qui a un impact négatif sur leurs vies. Dans la même ligne d'idée, il est évident que notre cadre théorique a bien miroité les situations nuisibles qui constituent des problèmes sociaux au sein de la famille africaine. Pareillement, dans *l'HP* de Chimamanda Adichie, on a constaté également un cas frappant où l'extrémisme milite contre la relation familiale entre parents et leurs enfants au sein de la famille. Par exemple, Eugene ayant un fervent catholique qui manque d'empathie envers les autres et les considérait comme les infidèles. Dès le debut du roman, cette situation freine largement la relation familiale entre Eugene et son propre père. Surtout son père qui était un païen et un adorateur traditionnel dévoué. Eugene est allé jusqu'à interdire à ses enfants d'avoir des relations parentés avec leur grand-père en affirmant qu'ils ne devaient pas s'associer avec les païens. Cela a beaucoup freiné la relation parent-enfant entre Eugene et son père dans le roman.

Un autre facteur qui retient notre attention c'est le cas de violence domestique dans les deux romans. La violence entre parents et leurs enfants est l'un de problèmes qui ont amène des conséquences nuisibles dans la vie des protagonistes. Par exemple, dans *Ogd*, le père d'Ogadinma la bat avec une ceinture, lui donne des coups de pied et lui tire les cheveux. Il l'appelle aussi par ses noms et menace de la tuer. « I will give you twenty-four strokes. If you shift and I miss your buttocks, that is a minus, and I will have to start all over again./Je te donnerai vingt quatre coups de canne. Si tu fais aucun mouvement et je manquerai tes fesse, le coup deviendrai une soustraction du coup de moins, et je recommencerais à nouveau. »

« A hoarse cry that tore through the night, ringing throughout the compound. Neighbours jerked

awake. Worried voices rose. Her father was undaunted. The cane landed again with the same force, carrying the same zipping sound. Ogadinma jumped off the bed, screaming. He shoved her back on the bed, yelling threats. Her skin broke. Neighbours pounded on their door, shouted from their windows, asked if he wanted to kill her. Oo mu mu lu ya, she is my child. If she dies, I will bury her body. »/ « Un cri rauque sonna et brisa le silence de nuit dans la cour. Les voisins s'étaient réveillés. Les voix inquiétantes continuaient à s'aiguiser. Son père demeurait indifférent. Il continuait de lui frapper avec les coups de cannes qui sonnèrent avec le même rythme de sa force énergétique. Ogadinma sauta du lit en criant. Elle bouscula son dos contre le lit en criant au secours de menace. Sa peau a été brisée. Les voisins en frappant la porte, criant par les fenêtres et en lui demandant s'il veut la tuer. Oo mu mu lu ya, elle est ma fille. S'elle meurt, je l'enterrai. » (part 1, 2, pg 36)

Pareillement, dans *l'HP*, Eugene, le père de Kambili était physiquement et émotionnellement violent envers ses enfants. Par exemple, quand Eugene était fâché contre Kambili d'avoir mangé dix minutes avant la messe, un acte qui profane le jeûne de l'eucharistie. Kambili raconte ainsi : « Il débâcle lentement sa ceinture (...) Elle atterrit d'abord sur Jaja, en travers de son épaule. Je posai le bol juste au moment où la ceinture atterrit sur mon dos {...} Parfois, je regardais les nomades Fulani, leur djellabas blanches battant au vent contre leurs jambes, qui claquaient de la langue en ressemblant leurs vaches (...) Papa était comme un nomade Fulanien qu'il n'eût pas leur corps grand et élancé-quant il envoyait sa ceinture contre Mama, Jaja et moi en marmonnant que le diable ne gagnerait pas. Nous ne recoquillions pas de plus de deux pas de la ceinture en cuir que fendait l'air. » (*HP* 144-145) Cependant, Ogadinma dans *Ogd* et Kambili dans *HP* finissent par trouver des moyens de se libérer de cette situation intolérable. Par conséquent, Ogadinma s'est efforcée de quitter sa chambre pour s'installer chez son oncle à Lagos où elle finit par se marier avec un homme qui l'abus. De sa part, Kambili et son frère acceptent sans hésitation d'aller passer le congé chez sa tante afin de quitter la vie insupportable chez eux, Ifeoma. Kambili

raconte la réponse de son frère, Jaja quand leur père leur a posé la question : «As-tu envie d'aller à Nsukka ? lui demandai-je en atteignant le palier. » Jaja répond instantanément « Oui, répondit-il, et ses yeux me disaient qu'il savait que j'en avais moi aussi. Je ne parvenais pas à trouver les mots dans notre langage des yeux pour lui dire combien ma gorge se serrait à la pensée de cinq jours sans la voix de Papa, sans le bruit de ses pas dans l'escalier. » (*HP* 152-153). Dans les deux cas, leur désir de quitter leurs maisons est un acte symbolique de libération de soi. Cela justifie que les protagonistes ont besoin de leur indépendance et leur droit de vivre leur propre vie au-delà de leurs familles. Dans les deux romans, il est évident que les barrières communicationnelles entre les parents et les enfants conduisent à la colère, car les enfants se sentent frustrés et incompris. Ogadinma d'*Ogd* et Kambili de *HP* sont tous deux en colère contre les injustices qu'elles ont subies auprès de leurs pères. Il est évident qu'en fin de compte, les deux personnages apprennent à canaliser leur colère de manière plus destructive. Par exemple, dans *Ogd*, l'héroïne Ogadinma se pose à des difficultés dans l'école qu'elle avait peur d'en parler à son père pour la raison qu'elle avait peur d'être punie. Par conséquent, elle a beaucoup souffert au point qu'elle a eu de mauvaises notes à l'école. En plus, Ogadinma avait peur d'être punie par son père, surtout pour lui avoir désobéi ou pour avoir pris des décisions qu'il n'approuve pas. De même façon, Ogadinma avait peur d'être jugée par son père, en particulier pour ses valeurs occidentales et son désir de poursuivre une carrière. Les enfants ont peur de leurs parents, surtout de leur père, et ils vivent souvent dans la peur de la violence domestique. Ce qui rend difficile pour eux d'exprimer leurs émotions et leurs souffrances. Ogadinma d'*Ogd* et Kambili de *HP* vivent dans la peur depuis si longtemps qu'ils ont peur de tout ce qui pourrait perturber leur fragile sentiment de sécurité. Cela rend difficile pour eux de parler de leur vie et rêves. En plus, dans *Ogd*, l'auteur présente un autre cas où Ogadinma a été violée par un avocat qui faisait semblant de l'aider à avoir une admission à l'Université. Face au traumatisme de peur du jugement et de la punition qu'elle souffre, Ogadinma avait honte du comportement violent, et

elle n'en veut même pas parler avec son père à cause des antécédents de violence physique envers elle. Comme elle ne lui fait pas confiance à partager ses expériences, ses pensées et ses sentiments avec lui. Cela l'amène à ressentir du ressentiment et de la colère envers son père. Elle a l'impression que son père ne la comprend pas, ce qui l'amène à agir de manière nuisible contre elle-même et les autres. Dans la même ligne d'idée, on a constaté que la famille monoparentale est l'un des facteurs qui freine la communication parent-enfant chez les africaines. Prenant un cas précis dans l'*Ogd*. Elle a été élevée uniquement par son père car sa mère a quitté son père depuis son enfance. Une situation qui a totalement freinée la communication entre Ogadinma et son père à tel point où son père s'est méfié de la relation intime qu'elle avait eu avec l'avocat. Une fille qui avait été élevée uniquement par son père manque le soin parental de sa mère. Il est évident que l'ignorance et la négligence parentale chez son père favorise l'échec d'Ogadinma à tel point qu'elle était enceinte et l'a avortée avec succès à l'insu de son père. « You went and got pregnant, and then killed the child. Under my roof?/ Tu étais enceinte, puis, tua le bébé. Sous mon toit ? »

Il y avait également un cas où elle s'est enfuie deux fois chez son mari mais la communication faible entre Ogadinma et son père ne lui permet pas de comprendre la gravité de l'angoisse de sa propre fille qui souffre auprès son mari. Lui, il ne prend pas des mesures significatives pour protéger Ogadinma contre la violence domestique prolongée qu'elle avait subie dans son mariage. « You didn't go to your father,' Aunty Okwy said. "When Tobe beat me up the first time, Papa took me back to him.' Aunty Okwy scoffed. 'I would be surprised if he didn't. Your father, Osita, is a terrible and wicked man.' « N'estu pas allée voir ton père ?, » Dit Tantie Okwy. « Lorsque Tobe me bâtit la première fois, Papa m'a renvoyé chez lui » Tantie Okwy s'est moquée. « Je serais étonnée s'il ne réagit pas. Ton père, Osita, est un home terrible et méchant. » (*Ogd* 231) A travers les deux romans, les auteurs ont miroité la situation frappante de la violence domestique au sein de la famille africaine. En se basant sur le cadre sociocritique, il nous revient de signaler ici qu'Adichie et Olisakwe nous font voir clairement

un autre cas de la barrière communicationnelle parent-enfant dans la société africaine.

En tournant vers les deux romans, nous avons constaté qu'un facteur qui milite contre la barrière de communication dans la famille africaine se lie étroitement à la complexité de la communication intergénérationnelle. Le Nigéria, comme de nombreux autres pays africains, a subi une histoire de colonialisme qui a eu un impact durable sur sa société. Il y a tendance de la domination des valeurs socioculturelles occidentales sur celles des africaines. La mondialisation se voit comme étant un facteur qui se sert souvent un fossé culturel qui influence le comportement des jeunes africaines. Ce facteur entrave davantage une communication efficace entre parent-enfant dans la famille africaine. Ayant vécu les expériences de vie dans une époque différente que celle de leurs enfants, cela freine la communication efficace au point qu'ils ne comprennent les idéologies de leurs enfants. Les parents d'aujourd'hui se peuvent avoir du mal à comprendre ou à accepter les perspectives et les expériences liées à la modernité. Face à la modernité, ces normes africaines se confrontent souvent par un conflit des valeurs plus libérales et individualistes adoptées par la nouvelle génération de leurs enfants. A travers les deux romans, nous avons constaté le cas où les parents des protagonistes veulent défendre de ces valeurs par les parents et les efforts des enfants de se libérer de l'idéologie traditionnelle. Dans le roman *HP*, la vision du monde des parents de Kambili, Eugene et Beatrice Achike, est totalement différente que celle de leurs enfants qui sont enracinés de la génération différente. Eugene est conservatif au point qu'il retient sévèrement aux valeurs orthodoxes et normes socioculturelles africaines tandis que leurs enfants, Kambili et Jaja, sont plus occidentalisés. Puisque qu'ils ne partagent pas la même vision du monde que leur père, ils ne s'entendent pas. Les deux générations ont souvent mal interprété les paroles et les actions de l'autre. La différence intergénérationnelle a été également déstabilisée la communication efficace entre les parents de Kambili et leurs enfants. Par exemple, dans *HP*, Kambili et son frère, Jaja ont vécu avec l'impression qu'ils ne peuvent pas parler à leur père de leurs problèmes, ce qui l'amène à embouteiller

ses émotions. L'incapacité de à communiquer librement avec leur père les a amenés à la vie solitude. Cela peut entraîner des sentiments de solitude, d'anxiété et de dépression. L'anxiété est un autre problème de santé mentale courant qui peut affecter les enfants. Les enfants qui éprouvent de l'anxiété peuvent se sentir inquiets, agités et irritables. Cette anxiété se manifeste par des symptômes physiques tels que transpiration, tremblements et nausées. Cela affecte également leur état mental, leur donnant l'impression de devenir fou. Lorsque les enfants n'ont pas l'impression de pouvoir exposer leurs problèmes à leurs parents, ils sont plus susceptibles de se tourner vers d'autres sources de soutien, comme leurs amis ou la nouvelle technologie. Dans *HP*, les barrières communicationnelles entre parent-enfant conduisent au ressentiment, car la nouvelle génération a l'impression de ne pas être s'entendre. Ce ressentiment a duré longtemps et nuire aux relations entre père Eugene et ses enfants. En se basant sur le cadre sociocritique, il nous revient de dire qu'à travers les deux romans qu'Adichie et Olisakwe nous font voir clairement les cas de la barrière communicationnelle parent-enfant au sein de la famille africaine.

Nous avons constaté également un cas de la barrière communicationnelle qui se lie à l'instabilité politique et économique. A l'époque, l'instabilité politique et économique au Nigeria a rend le père d'Ogadinma curieux et incertitude. Cela le rend encore plus autoritaire et moins enclin à écouter Ogadinma. Pareillement, dans l'*HP* le cas de l'instabilité politique se présente pendant une période de troubles politiques et économique au Nigeria, l'auteur dépeint une société marquée par des troubles politiques et un régime autoritaire. Le climat politique oppressif affecte la liberté d'expression et crée une atmosphère de peur, de stress et de silence entre père Eugene et sa famille. On y trouve une limite de la communication ouverte et honnête entre les parents et les enfants, car les individus sont prudents quant à l'expression de leurs véritables pensées et émotions.

Conclusion

En guise de conclusion, il est évident que

cette étude a pu révéler des cas précis pour justifier les objectifs de notre recherche. Dans les deux romans *Hibiscus Pourpre* et *Ogadinma*, on a pu réaliser les objectifs de l'étude. En se basant sur les objectifs prévus dans cette étude, nous avons pu mettre en évidence l'existence de la réalité de barrière communicationnelle au sein de la famille africaine. Dans l'analyse, l'étude révèle les cas précis qui éclaircissent les causes et les conséquences de cet obstacle social tel qu'ils se présentent dans les deux romans. Pour qu'il y ait une symétrie analytique, on s'est servi de l'approche sociocritique qui nous a fourni de base théorique incontournable pour analyser la barrière de communication entre les parents africains et leurs enfants dans la société africaine. L'approche aide à identifier et catégoriser les forces sociales, culturelles et politiques qui contribuent à cet obstacle. A travers ces constats, il est évident que les deux romans dépeignent le comportement autoritaire et abusif de pères des deux protagonistes ainsi que la capacité des leurs

enfants de se révolter contre l'autorité de leurs parents. Dans ce cas, les enfants ainsi que les parents respectent les inclinations différentes de l'autrui. Dans ce cas, il faut que la volonté mutuelle soit la priorité primordiale qui transcende au-delà de la volonté individuelle dans la relation parent-enfant dans la famille. Ainsi, la volonté mutuelle sera respectée avec une grande mesure d'affection émotionnelle. Malgré les conséquences négatives, on propose des stratégies pour surmonter les barrières de communication entre les parents africains et leurs enfants. On suggère qu'une fois qu'il existe une ambiance détendue où les enfants se sentent à l'aise de parler librement à leurs parents, il y a tendance de briser le danger qui se manifeste au cas de malentendus et de tensions au sein de la famille. A travers ces constats, on lance appel à la réévaluation et réorientation de la sévérité des valeurs traditionnelles qui ne favorisent pas la communication ouverte dans les familles africaines.

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BEYOND THE MAXIMS: EXPLORING VIOLATIONS OF GRICE'S COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE IN JOE BIDEN'S INAUGURAL SPEECH

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Abstract

This paper analyzed Joe Biden's inaugural speech with a focus on its deviation from Grice's Cooperative Principle which provides a framework for understanding successful communication through the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner, without considering the implicatures arising from such deviation/violation. It used a descriptive research design and adopted Grice's cooperative principle as theoretical framework. A purposive sampling technique was used to identify forty-five (45) extracts from Joe Biden's inaugural speech. The data used were sourced through a secondary means from the internet and were analyzed using the cooperative maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner respectively. It was found that all the cooperative maxims (quantity, quality, relation and manner) were violated in Biden's inaugural speech, which showed how he strategically deviated from them to achieve his communicative goals. The paper concluded that when the maxims are adhered to, speakers can enhance communication by offering relevant and necessary information, ensuring accuracy and truthfulness, establishing clear connections between ideas and employing clear and concise language.

Keywords: maxims, quantity, quality, relation, manner

1. Introduction

Language serves as a pivotal instrument, among other sources, for politicians to craft messages that influence public perception and rally support for their policies, and to construct and reconstruct social relations, social identities and ideologies (Fairclough, 2000, Aluya & Edem, 2023). Through persuasive language, they aim to influence public opinion, mobilize voters and secure backing for their agendas. They employ rhetorical devices, such as emotional appeals, logical arguments and vivid imagery to captivate audience and make their messages compelling and memorable (Edem & Aluya, 2019). Therefore, to successfully communicate, human beings (interlocutors) are required as duty bound to obey certain mode or norms of interaction. Grice's maxims are fundamental principles in pragmatics that guide effective communication and cooperative conversation. These Cooperative Principles are crucial for effective communication as they enable speakers and listeners to understand each other's intentions and meaning. By following these principles, individuals can engage in cooperative conversations, exchange information efficiently in a straightforward manner to

avoid misunderstandings. And when the interlocutors strictly adhere to the principles, they can establish a common ground of understanding for effective communication (Aluya & Kofoworola, 2020). They provide a framework for understanding conversational implicature, the implied meaning conveyed beyond the literal interpretation of words. Suffice to say that the role of Grice's maxims in conversation or discourse cannot be overemphasized.

However, Grice's principles can be influenced by cultural variations in communication styles. Different cultures may have different expectations regarding directness, indirectness and information sharing. The contextual factors can influence their adaptation and modification based on the specific context of communication, such as informal conversations, political discourses, professional settings or sensitive topics. Furthermore, strict adherence to the principles may not always eliminate ambiguity or vagueness in communication as language itself can be inherently ambiguous.

The application of these principles' cuts across many areas of linguistics and other spheres of human endeavour. In Pragmatics, the Grice's Cooperative

Principles form the foundation of pragmatic theories, which study the use of language in context, including speech acts, implicature and the cooperative nature of communication. Also, the principles are applied in language teaching methodologies to enhance students' communicative competence and pragmatic awareness (Yule, 2014). Their usefulness extends to conflict resolution and negotiation settings by promoting effective communication, active listening and mutual understanding in a dialogue situation (Fisher, Ury & Patton, 2011, Aluya, 2023).

2. Aim and objectives of the study

The general aim of this paper is to analyze Joe Biden's Inaugural Speech based on Grice's cooperative principle.

The specific objectives are:

- i. To identify specific extracts from Biden's Inaugural Speech that violate cooperative maxims.
- ii. To analyze identified extracts from Biden's Inaugural Speech that violate cooperative maxims

3. Scope of the Study

This study is focused on the identification and analysis of Grice's maxims of conversation being violated in Biden's Inaugural Speech, without considering the implicatures that may arise from those violations.

4. Theoretical Framework

In order to achieve effective and successful communication in any speech event, it is essential for all participants to observe specific conversational or communicative rules. Recognizing this, H.P. Grice developed the Cooperative Principles (CP) as a guiding way which people derive meaning from language (Betti, 2021). The principles are also referred to as Gricean conversational maxims, and they can be categorized into four key components—quantity, quality, relation and manner under which other sub-maxims exist (Grandy & Warner, 2017). This study adopted Grice's cooperative principle, where participants strive to be informative, truthful,

relevant and clear in their communication (Grice, 1975). He identified four maxims that he believed should be followed in conversation as follows:

- a. Maxim of Quantity: Make your contribution as informative as required, but not more informative than necessary.
- b. Maxim of Quality: Do not say what you believe to be false or lack adequate evidence for.
- c. Maxim of Relation: Be relevant to the ongoing conversation and stick to the topic.
- d. Maxim of Manner: Be clear, avoid ambiguity or obscurity, and be brief and orderly in your expression.

According to him, these maxims guide conversation and help to facilitate effective communication. And by extension, he also recognized that these maxims can be violated or flouted intentionally to convey additional meaning or to create implicatures. However, this study focuses on the identification and analysis of maxims being violated in Biden's Inaugural Speech, without considering the implicatures that may arise from those violations.

6. Methodology

The study utilized a qualitative descriptive research design. Forty-five (45) extracts were purposively selected from Joe Biden's Inaugural Speech as data for this study. The data were sourced through secondary means from the internet with a view to providing identification and analysis devoid of any manipulation of what is being gathered. The content was basically identified and analyzed in line with the four Gricean cooperative maxims of quantity, quality, manner and relation to see where they have been violated. Therefore, this study is primarily aimed at providing a rich account of the phenomenon under study, without necessarily aiming at hypothesis testing.

7. Identification and Analysis of data

Grice's maxims are principles of communication that govern effective conversation and are based on the idea of cooperative communication. These maxims include the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. Find below the analysis of Joe Biden's inaugural speech in light of these maxims:

7.1. Violation of cooperative maxim of quantity (content length and depth)

Extracts that violate the cooperative maxim of quantity:

Extract 1: *"We've learned again that democracy is precious, democracy is fragile and, at this hour my friends, democracy has prevailed."*

The speaker asserts that democracy is precious and fragile, and that it has prevailed. However, he does not provide specific examples or evidence to support this claim. While he acknowledges the recent challenges to democracy, the lack of specific information regarding the ways in which democracy has prevailed violates the cooperative maxim of quantity.

Extract 2: *"As we look ahead in our uniquely American way, restless, bold, optimistic, and set our sights on a nation we know we can be and must be, I thank my predecessors of both parties for their presence here. I thank them from the bottom of my heart."*

The speaker expresses gratitude towards their predecessors for their presence at the event. However, he does not provide specific details or examples of the contributions or actions of these predecessors. The lack of specific information regarding the reasons for thanking them violates the cooperative maxim of quantity.

Extract 3: *"But the American story depends not on any one of us, not on some of us, but on all of us. On we the people who seek a more perfect union. This is a great nation; we are good people."*

The speaker emphasizes that the American story depends on all of the people seeking a more perfect union. While he asserts that this is a great nation and the people are good, he does not provide specific evidence or examples to support these claims. The lack of specific information regarding the qualities or achievements of the nation and its people violates the cooperative maxim of quantity.

Extract 4: *"We'll press forward with speed and urgency for we have much to do in this winter of peril and significant possibility. Much to do, much to heal, much to restore, much to build and much to gain."*

The speaker states that there is much to do in this time of peril and possibility, including healing, restoring, building, and gaining. However, he does not provide specific details or examples of the tasks or actions required to address these challenges. The lack of specific information regarding the specific goals or plans violates the cooperative maxim of quantity.

Extract 5: *"Millions of jobs have been lost. Hundreds of thousands of businesses closed. A cry for racial justice, some 400 years in the making, moves us. The dream of justice for all will be deferred no longer. A cry for survival comes from the planet itself, a cry that can't be any more desperate or any more clear now. The rise of political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism, that we must confront and we will defeat."*

While the speaker acknowledges the loss of jobs, closure of businesses and the need for racial justice and addressing climate change, he provides limited specific details or evidence to support these claims. The lack of concrete examples or statistics regarding the number of jobs lost, businesses closed or the specific actions taken to confront political extremism and white supremacy violates the cooperative maxim of quantity.

Extract 6: *"To overcome these challenges, to restore the soul and secure the future of America, requires so much more than words. It requires the most elusive of all things in a democracy - unity."*

The speaker emphasizes the need for unity to address the challenges faced by America, but he does not provide specific details on what those challenges are or how unity can be achieved. He uses vague language such as "challenges" and "restore the soul" without specifying the issues or providing concrete steps to address them. This lack of specific information violates the cooperative maxim of quantity.

Extract 7: *"With unity we can do great things, important things. We can right wrongs, we can put people to work in good jobs, we can teach our children in safe schools. We can overcome the deadly virus, we can rebuild work, we can rebuild the middle class and make work secure, we can secure racial justice and we can make America once again the leading force for good in the world."*

While the speaker expresses the potential accomplishments through unity, he provides a list of goals without offering specific strategies or plans to achieve them. The lack of specific details regarding how these goals will be accomplished violates the cooperative maxim of quantity, as it does not provide sufficient information to fully convey the intended meaning.

Extract 8: *"I know speaking of unity can sound to some like a foolish fantasy these days. I know the forces that divide us are deep and they are real. But I also know they are not new. Our history has been a constant struggle between the American ideal, that we are all created equal, and the harsh ugly reality that racism, nativism and fear have torn us apart. The battle is perennial and victory is never secure."*

While acknowledging the challenges to achieving unity, the speaker does not provide specific examples or evidence to support their claim that racism, nativism, and fear have torn the nation apart. The lack of specific details or evidence violates the cooperative maxim of quantity, as it does not provide sufficient information to fully convey the intended meaning.

Extract 9: *night staring at the ceiling thinking: 'Can I keep my healthcare? Can I pay my mortgage?' Thinking about their families, about what comes next. I promise you, I get it. But the answer's not to turn inward. To retreat into competing factions. Distrusting those who don't look like you, or worship the way you do, who don't get their news from the same source as you do."*

The speaker acknowledges the concerns and fears of fellow Americans about their jobs, healthcare, and mortgages. However, he does not provide specific evidence, examples or statistics to support these claims. While he claims to understand these concerns, the lack of concrete information violates the cooperative maxim of quantity, as it does not provide sufficient details to fully convey the intended meaning.

Extract 10: *"Folks, it's a time of testing. We face an attack on our democracy, and on truth, a raging virus, a stinging inequity, systemic racism, a climate in crisis, America's role in the world. Any one of these would be enough to challenge us in profound ways. But the fact is we face them all at once, presenting this nation with one of the greatest responsibilities we've had. Now we're going to be tested. Are we going to step up?"*

The speaker lists several challenges faced by the nation, including an attack on democracy, a raging virus, inequity, systemic racism, and a climate crisis. He emphasizes the magnitude of these challenges but does not provide specific details or evidence to support their claims. The lack of specific information regarding the nature and extent of these challenges violates the cooperative maxim of quantity.

Extract 11: *"It's time for boldness for there is so much to do. And this is certain, I promise you. We will be judged, you and I, by how we resolve these cascading crises of our era. We will rise to the occasion. Will we master this rare and difficult hour? Will we meet our obligations and pass along a new and better world to our children? I believe we must and I'm sure you do as well. I believe we will, and when we do, we'll write the next great chapter in the history of the United States of America. The American story."*

The speaker expresses the need for boldness and the belief that the nation will rise to the occasion to resolve the current crises. However, he does not provide specific details or evidence to support their claim. The lack of specific information regarding the strategies, plans, or actions required to overcome these challenges violates the cooperative maxim of quantity.

7.2. Violation of cooperative maxim of quality (truth)

Extracts that violate the cooperative maxim of quality:

Extract 12: *"A cry for racial justice, some 400 years in the making, moves us. The dream of justice for all will be deferred no longer."*

The speaker refers to a cry for racial justice that has been 400 years in the making, but he does not provide specific evidence or examples to support this claim. The lack of specific information regarding the historical context or specific instances of racial injustice violates the cooperative maxim of quality.

Extract 13: *"A cry for survival comes from the planet itself, a cry that can't be any more desperate or any more clear now."*

The speaker mentions a cry for survival coming from the planet itself, but he does not provide specific evidence or examples to support this claim. The lack of specific information regarding the urgency or evidence of the planet's cry for survival violates the cooperative maxim of quality.

Extract 14: *"The rise of political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism, that we must confront and we will defeat."*

The speaker asserts the rise of political extremism, white supremacy and domestic terrorism, but he does not provide specific evidence or examples to support this claim. The lack of specific information

regarding the extent or evidence of these phenomena violates the cooperative maxim of quality.

Extract 15: *"I know speaking of unity can sound to some like a foolish fantasy these days."*

The speaker states that speaking of unity can sound like a foolish fantasy, but he does not provide specific evidence or examples to support this claim. The lack of specific information regarding the reasons or evidence for unity being perceived as a foolish fantasy violates the cooperative maxim of quality.

Extract 16: *"Our history has been a constant struggle between the American ideal, that we are all created equal, and the harsh ugly reality that racism, nativism, and fear have torn us apart."*

The speaker describes the struggle between the American ideal of equality and the reality of racism, nativism, and fear, but he does not provide specific evidence or examples to support this claim. The lack of specific information regarding the historical context or specific instances of these struggles violates the cooperative maxim of quality.

Extract 17: *"If we do that, I guarantee we will not fail. We have never, ever, ever, ever failed in America when we've acted together."*

The speaker guarantees that failure will not occur if the people act together, but he does not provide specific evidence or examples to support this claim. The lack of specific information regarding the historical track record or evidence of success when acting together violates the cooperative maxim of quality.

Extract 18: *"Politics doesn't have to be a raging fire destroying everything in its path. Every disagreement doesn't have to be a cause for total war."*

The speaker suggests that politics does not have to be destructive or lead to total war, but he does not provide specific evidence or examples to support this claim. The lack of specific information regarding the reasons or evidence for politics not being destructive violates the cooperative maxim of quality.

Extract 19: *"To all those who did not support us, let me say this. Hear us out as we move forward. Take a measure of me and my heart. If you still disagree, so be it. That's democracy. That's America. The right to dissent peacefully."*

The speaker emphasizes the right to dissent peacefully and acknowledges that disagreement is part of democracy, but he does not provide specific evidence or examples to support this claim. The lack of specific information regarding the reasons or evidence for peaceful dissent and the acceptance of disagreement violates the cooperative maxim of quality.

Extract 20: *"Recent weeks and months have taught us a painful lesson. There is truth and there are lies. Lies told for power and for profit."*

The speaker states that there is truth and there are lies, but he does not provide specific evidence or examples to support this claim. The lack of specific information regarding the nature or evidence of truth and lies violates the cooperative maxim of quality.

Extract 21: *"Look, I understand that many of my fellow Americans view the future with fear and trepidation. I understand they worry about their jobs. I understand like their dad they lay in bed at night staring at the ceiling thinking: 'Can I keep my healthcare? Can I pay my mortgage?' Thinking about their families, about what comes next. I promise you, I get it. But the answer's not to turn inward. To retreat into competing factions. Distrusting those who don't look like you, or worship the way you do, who don't get their news from the same source as you do."*

The speaker acknowledges the fears and concerns of fellow Americans but does not provide specific evidence or examples to support their understanding. The lack of specific information regarding the reasons or evidence for these fears and concerns violates the cooperative maxim of quality.

Extract 22: *"We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural versus urban, conservative versus liberal. We can do this if we open our souls instead of hardening our hearts, if we show a little tolerance and humility, and if we're willing to stand in the other person's shoes, as my mom would say. Just for a moment, stand in their shoes."*

The speaker calls for an end to the uncivil war that divides different groups, but does not provide specific evidence or examples of this war. The lack of specific information regarding the nature or evidence of this war violates the cooperative maxim of quality.

Extract 23: *"My fellow Americans, in the work ahead of us we're going to need each other. We need all our strength to persevere through this dark winter. We're entering what may be the darkest and deadliest period of the virus. We must set aside politics and finally face this pandemic as one nation, one nation. And I promise this, as the Bible says, 'Weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning'. We will get through this together. Together."*

The speaker urges unity and cooperation in facing the challenges of the pandemic, but does not provide specific evidence or examples of the need for setting aside politics. The lack of specific information regarding the reasons or evidence for the necessity of unity violates the cooperative maxim of quality.

Extract 24: *"Look folks, all my colleagues I serve with in the House and the Senate up here, we all understand the world is watching. Watching all of us today. So here's my message to those beyond our borders. America has been tested and we've come out stronger for it. We will repair our alliances, and engage with the world once again. Not to meet yesterday's challenges but today's and tomorrow's challenges. And we'll lead not merely by the example of our power but the power of our example."*

The speaker asserts that America has been tested and has come out stronger, but does not provide specific evidence or examples to support this claim. The lack of specific information regarding the nature or evidence of America's strength after being tested violates the cooperative maxim of quality.

Extract 25: *"Folks, it's a time of testing. We face an attack on our democracy, and on truth, a raging virus, a stinging inequity, systemic racism, a climate in crisis, America's role in the world. Any one of these would be enough to challenge us in profound ways. But the fact is we face them all at once, presenting this nation with one of the greatest responsibilities we've had. Now we're going to be tested. Are we going to step up?"*

The speaker identifies multiple challenges faced by the nation, but does not provide specific evidence or examples to support the severity or existence of these challenges. The lack of specific information regarding the reasons or evidence for the challenges faced violates the cooperative maxim of quality.

Extract 26: *"It's time for boldness for there is so much to do. And this is certain, I promise you. We will be judged, you and I, by how we resolve these cascading crises of our era. We will rise to the occasion. Will we master this rare and difficult hour? Will we meet our obligations and pass along a new and better world to our children? I believe we must and I'm sure you do as well. I believe we will, and when we do, we'll write the next great chapter in the history of the United States of America. The American story."*

The speaker expresses a belief in rising to the occasion and passing along a better world to future generations, but does not provide specific evidence or examples of how these goals will be achieved. The lack of specific information regarding the strategies or evidence for resolving the crises violates the cooperative maxim of quality.

Extract 27: *"And together we will write an American story of hope, not fear. Of unity not division, of light not darkness. A story of decency and dignity, love and healing, greatness and goodness. May this be the story that guides us. The story that inspires us. And the story that tells ages yet to come that we answered the call of history, we met the moment. Democracy and hope, truth and justice, did not die on our watch but thrive."*

The speaker emphasizes the importance of a story of hope, unity, and democracy, but does not provide specific evidence or examples of how these ideals will be realized or maintained. The lack of specific information regarding the strategies or evidence for achieving these goals violates the cooperative maxim of quality.

7.3. Violation of cooperative maxim of relation (relevance)

Extracts that violate the cooperative maxim of relation:

Extract 28: *"And I know the resilience of our Constitution and the strength, the strength of our nation, as does President Carter, who I spoke with last night who cannot be with us today, but who we salute for his lifetime of service."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of relation because it introduces President Carter without establishing a clear relevance or connection to the overall message of the speech. While it acknowledges President Carter's absence and salutes his lifetime of service, it does not provide specific information about how his resilience, the strength of the nation, or their conversation relates to the broader themes discussed in

the speech.

Extract 29: *"But we still have far to go."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of relation because it is a general statement about the progress yet to be achieved without providing specific information about what areas or challenges the speaker is referring to. It lacks the necessary context to establish a clear connection to the preceding statements about the American story and the need for a more perfect union.

Extract 30: *"We'll press forward with speed and urgency for we have much to do in this winter of peril and significant possibility. Much to do, much to heal, much to restore, much to build and much to gain."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of relation because it uses vague and general language to describe the tasks and goals ahead without providing specific information about what needs to be done, how it relates to the winter of peril and significant possibility, or how it aligns with the overall message of the speech. The lack of clarity weakens the connection between this statement and the preceding paragraphs.

Extract 31: *"Few people in our nation's history have been more challenged or found a time more challenging or difficult than the time we're in now. A once in a century virus that silently stalks the country has taken as many lives in one year as in all of World War Two."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of relation because it introduces the challenges faced by the nation, specifically the once-in-a-century virus, without providing specific information about how it connects to the broader themes of the speech. While it emphasizes the severity of the situation, it lacks the necessary context to establish a clear link to the preceding statements about democracy, unity, and the American story.

Extract 32: *"A cry for racial justice, some 400 years in the making, moves us. The dream of justice for all will be deferred no longer."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of relation because it introduces the topic of racial justice without providing specific information about how it connects to the broader themes of the speech. While it acknowledges the historical struggle for racial justice, it does not establish a clear link to the challenges mentioned earlier in the speech, such as job loss, business closures, political extremism, and the cry for survival from the planet.

Extract 33: *"We can right wrongs, we can put people to work in good jobs, we can teach our children in safe schools. We can overcome the deadly virus, we can rebuild work, we can rebuild the middle class and make work secure, we can secure racial justice and we can make America once again the leading force for good in the world."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of relation because it lists various goals and aspirations without providing specific information about how they will be achieved or how they relate to the overall message of unity and overcoming challenges. It lacks the necessary context to establish a clear connection between the mentioned goals and the preceding paragraphs discussing unity and the path forward for America.

Extract 34: *"We can see each other not as adversaries but as neighbors. We can treat each other with dignity and respect. We can join forces, stop the shouting and lower the temperature."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of relation because it introduces the idea of treating each other with dignity and respect without providing specific information about the context or relevance to the challenges mentioned earlier in the speech. While it emphasizes the importance of unity and respectful interactions, it does not establish a clear connection to the preceding paragraphs discussing the need to overcome division and confront various challenges.

Extract 35: *"Here we stand just days after a riotous mob thought they could use violence to silence the will of the people, to stop the work of our democracy, to drive us from this sacred ground. It did not happen, it will never happen, not today, not tomorrow, not ever. Not ever."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of relation because it introduces the topic of the riotous mob without providing specific information about how it connects to the broader themes of the speech. While it highlights the resilience of democracy and the determination to protect the will of the people, it does not establish a clear link to the preceding statements about unity, overcoming challenges, and the path forward

for America.

Extract 36: *"It's time for boldness for there is so much to do. And this is certain, I promise you. We will be judged, you and I, by how we resolve these cascading crises of our era. We will rise to the occasion. Will we master this rare and difficult hour? Will we meet our obligations and pass along a new and better world to our children? I believe we must and I'm sure you do as well. I believe we will, and when we do, we'll write the next great chapter in the history of the United States of America. The American story."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of relation because it introduces the idea of resolving crises and passing along a better world without providing specific information about how it connects to the preceding paragraphs discussing the challenges faced by the nation and the need for unity. While it emphasizes the importance of rising to the occasion, it does not establish a clear connection to the preceding statements about perseverance, responsibilities, and the American story.

7.4. Violation of cooperative maxim of manner (clarity)

Extracts that violate the cooperative maxim of manner:

Extract 37: *"As we look ahead in our uniquely American way, restless, bold, optimistic, and set our sights on a nation we know we can be and must be, I thank my predecessors of both parties for their presence here. I thank them from the bottom of my heart. And I know the resilience of our Constitution and the strength, the strength of our nation, as does President Carter, who I spoke with last night who cannot be with us today, but who we salute for his lifetime of service."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of manner by using vague and general language that lacks specificity. The phrases "uniquely American way," "restless, bold, optimistic," and "nation we know we can be and must be" are abstract and open to interpretation. The lack of clear and concrete information hinders the audience's understanding of the speaker's intended meaning and purpose.

Extract 38: *"We'll press forward with speed and urgency for we have much to do in this winter of peril and significant possibility. Much to do, much to heal, much to restore, much to build and much to gain. Few people in our nation's history have been more challenged or found a time more challenging or difficult than the time we're in now. A once in a century virus that silently stalks the country has taken as many lives in one year as in all of World War Two."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of manner by using repetitive and superlative language without providing specific details or evidence to support the claims made. Phrases such as "much to do," "more challenged," "time more challenging or difficult," and "once in a century virus" lack precision and clarity. Without specific information or evidence, the statements can be perceived as exaggerated or lacking in factual basis, thus hindering effective communication.

Extract 39: *"A cry for racial justice, some 400 years in the making, moves us. The dream of justice for all will be deferred no longer. A cry for survival comes from the planet itself, a cry that can't be any more desperate or any more clear now. The rise of political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism, that we must confront and we will defeat."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of manner by using emotionally charged language without providing specific examples or evidence to support the claims made. Phrases such as "a cry for racial justice," "the dream of justice for all," and "a cry for survival" are powerful but lack concrete details or specific actions that will be taken to address these issues. The lack of specificity hinders the audience's understanding of the speaker's intended plans or strategies for tackling these challenges.

Extract 40: *"Politics doesn't have to be a raging fire destroying everything in its path. Every disagreement doesn't have to be a cause for total war and we must reject the culture in which facts themselves are manipulated and even manufactured."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of manner by using exaggerated language and making generalizations without providing specific examples or evidence. Phrases such as "a raging fire destroying everything in its path," "total war," and "the culture in which facts themselves are manipulated and even manufactured" are hyperbolic and lack specific instances or evidence to support the claims made. The lack of concrete examples undermines the persuasiveness and credibility of the argument.

Extract 41: *"Recent weeks and months have taught us a painful lesson. There is truth and there are lies. Lies told for power and for profit. And each of us has a duty and a responsibility as citizens as Americans and especially as leaders. Leaders who are pledged to honour our Constitution to protect our nation. To defend the truth and defeat the lies."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of manner by using broad and vague language without providing specific examples or evidence to support the claims made. Phrases such as "there is truth and there are lies," "lies told for power and for profit," and "defend the truth and defeat the lies" lack specificity and clarity. Without concrete examples or evidence, it is difficult for the audience to fully grasp the extent of the issue or understand the specific actions that will be taken to address it.

Extract 42: *"Look, I understand that many of my fellow Americans view the future with fear and trepidation. I understand they worry about their jobs. I understand like their dad they lay in bed at night staring at the ceiling thinking: 'Can I keep my healthcare? Can I pay my mortgage?' Thinking about their families, about what comes next. I promise you, I get it."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of manner by using repetitive and colloquial language without providing specific examples or evidence to support the claims made. The repetition of "I understand" and the use of phrases like "lay in bed at night staring at the ceiling thinking" and "I promise you, I get it" create an empathetic tone, but the lack of concrete examples or evidence detracts from the clarity and persuasiveness of the statement.

Extract 43: *"We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural versus urban, conservative versus liberal. We can do this if we open our souls instead of hardening our hearts, if we show a little tolerance and humility, and if we're willing to stand in the other person's shoes, as my mom would say. Just for a moment, stand in their shoes."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of manner by using generalized language and appeals to emotion without providing specific examples or evidence to support the claims made. The use of phrases like "uncivil war" and "open our souls instead of hardening our hearts" creates a sense of urgency and moral imperative, but without specific instances or evidence, the argument lacks clarity and fails to provide a clear path forward for resolving the issues mentioned.

Extract 44: *"Look folks, all my colleagues I serve with in the House and the Senate up here, we all understand the world is watching. Watching all of us today. So here's my message to those beyond our borders. America has been tested and we've come out stronger for it. We will repair our alliances, and engage with the world once again. Not to meet yesterday's challenges but today's and tomorrow's challenges. And we'll lead not merely by the example of our power but the power of our example."*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of manner by using vague and generalized language without providing specific examples or evidence to support the claims made. Phrases like "America has been tested and we've come out stronger for it," "repair our alliances," and "lead not merely by the example of our power but the power of our example" lack specificity and fail to provide concrete actions or strategies for achieving the stated goals. The lack of clarity undermines the persuasiveness of the argument.

Extract 45: *"Folks, it's a time of testing. We face an attack on our democracy, and on truth, a raging virus, a stinging inequity, systemic racism, a climate in crisis, America's role in the world. Any one of these would be enough to challenge us in profound ways. But the fact is we face them all at once, presenting this nation with one of the greatest responsibilities we've had. Now we're going to be tested. Are we going to step up?"*

This extract violates the cooperative maxim of manner by using dramatic and exaggerated language without providing specific examples or evidence to support the claims made. Phrases like "an attack on our democracy," "a raging virus," "a stinging inequity," and "one of the greatest responsibilities we've had" create a sense of urgency and severity, but without concrete examples or evidence, the argument lacks specificity and fails to provide a clear plan of action.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, President Biden's inaugural speech provides valuable insights into the cooperative maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner. While some extracts violated these maxims by lacking

specificity, providing generalized statements and using exaggerated language, overall, the speech emphasized the importance of unity, empathy and collective action. By adhering to these maxims, speakers can enhance communication by offering relevant and necessary information, ensuring accuracy and truthfulness, establishing clear connections between ideas and employing clear and concise language. And by upholding these principles, leaders can provide understanding, inspire trust and mobilize individuals towards a shared vision and common goals.

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LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY: LEARNING FRENCH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Learning a foreign language can sometimes be unbearably challenging. Over the years, research has revealed that some of these challenges are as a result of poor human and infrastructural resources as well as teaching aids and methods. However, this study focuses on linguistic ideologies related to learning French as a foreign language in Nigeria. The study investigates how preconceived ideas about French language affect student's ability to effectively learn the language. The study adopts the sociolinguistics approach. It analyses responses from French language learners and trainers in different French language training centres across three (3) States: Delta, Edo and Bayelsa. The sample comprises 20 training centres and the respondents include both learners and trainers. The instrument for data collection is the questionnaire. The study adopts the simple percentage analysis. The results from the analysis reveal that some preconceived ideologies or notions about the French language have negative impact on the student's ability to learn French as a foreign language in Nigeria. Arising from the findings, the study proposes some recommendations that can minimize this negative influence.

Key words: Foreign language, ideology, language ideology, French language, language centre.

Introduction

Learning a foreign language can be a challenging but rewarding experience. When it comes to learning French, there are often preconceived notions and language ideologies that can impact a student's ability to effectively learn the language. These ideologies can stem from cultural stereotypes, historical events, or even personal biases. Language ideology refers to the belief systems surrounding languages and their usage within a specific social context. In Nigeria, a country known for its linguistic diversity, the learning of foreign languages such as French has become increasingly popular. In the context of Nigeria, where English is the official language, learning a foreign language such as French can be influenced by various language ideologies.

According to Kroskrity (2000), language ideology refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and values that people hold about languages and their speakers. In Nigeria, there is a prevailing ideology that places high value on proficiency in the English language due to its colonial history and global importance. However, the increasing globalization

and the need for intercultural communication have led to a growing interest in learning other foreign languages, particularly French.

According to Meristo (2022), one common language ideology surrounding French could be the idea that it is a difficult language to learn. This belief may stem from the complexities of French grammar, the use of gendered nouns, or the pronunciation of certain sounds that may be unfamiliar to English speakers. However, it is important to approach learning French with an open mind and a positive attitude, as these language ideologies can hinder progress and motivation.

Another language ideology related to learning French is the notion that French is a romantic language, often associated with love and sophistication (Robert, Marion & Ursula, 2002). While French does have a reputation for its rich literary and cultural history, it is important to remember that language learning is a complex process that requires dedication and practice. Romanticizing the language may lead to unrealistic expectations and frustration when faced

with the challenges of learning a new language.

Additionally, there may be language ideologies related to the perceived superiority of French speakers or the idea that speaking French is a mark of intelligence or sophistication. These beliefs can create feelings of inadequacy or intimidation for learners, especially if they do not fit the stereotype of a typical French speaker. It is important to remember that language is a tool for communication and cultural exchange, and that proficiency in a language does not determine one's worth or intelligence (Ukeje, 2016). This article explores the language ideology surrounding the learning of French as a foreign language in Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

One of the main challenges faced by individuals learning French in Nigeria is the prevailing language ideology that favours English as the dominant language. English is the official language in Nigeria, and it is widely used in government, education, and business. As a result, many Nigerians view English as the language of prestige and power, while other languages, including French, are often marginalized and seen as less important. Prior to their French language training, learners often hear certain misconceptions or notions about the French language. Most of these preconceived ideas or notions could be responsible for learner's inability to effectively learn the language. This language ideology probably could create barriers for individuals who are trying to learn French in Nigeria. It could lead to feelings of inadequacy and inferiority when using French, as well as lack of motivation to continue learning the language. Additionally, the lack of support for French language learning in Nigeria, both in terms of resources and opportunities, could further reinforce this negative language ideology. To better understand how language ideologies impact the learning of French in Nigeria, it is important to examine the beliefs and perceptions that learners hold about the language.

Objective of the study

This study seeks to:

- I. identify some preconceived ideas about the French language in Nigeria;

- II. investigate how preconceived ideas about French language affect student's ability to effectively learn the language in Nigeria;
- III. proffer solution to the barrier caused by French language ideology.

Research questions

- I. what are the preconceived ideas about learning French language in Nigeria?
- II. in what ways does preconceived ideas about French language affect student's ability to effectively learn the language in Nigeria?
- III. what measures can be taken to correct these preconceived ideas?

French as a Foreign Language in Nigeria: Strategies and Benefits

Learning a foreign language can be a challenging yet rewarding experience. One of the most popular languages to learn is French, known for its rich cultural history and widespread use in global communication. French is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, with over 220 million speakers globally. In Nigeria, French is recognized as an official language alongside English and multiple indigenous languages. The importance of learning French in Nigeria can be attributed to several factors, such as economic opportunities, cultural exchange, and diplomatic relations with French-speaking countries.

According to Omoye (2017), Nigeria's economy is closely linked to that of French-speaking countries in West Africa, such as Benin, Togo, and Cameroon. By learning French, Nigerians can tap into job opportunities in these neighboring countries and enhance their prospects in sectors such as trade, tourism, and international relations. French is a language of culture and arts, with France known for its rich literary tradition, fashion, cuisine, and cinema. By learning French, Nigerians can engage with French culture and heritage, fostering greater cultural exchange and understanding between the two countries (Omoye, 2017). Oluranti (2012) opines that Nigeria maintains diplomatic relations with several French-speaking countries and is a member of international organizations such as the International Organization of La Francophonie. Proficiency in French can facilitate

communication and cooperation with these countries, enhancing Nigeria's diplomatic standing on the global stage. Despite the benefits of learning French in Nigeria, there are challenges and perceptions surrounding the language. Some Nigerians view French as a colonial language and prioritize the promotion of indigenous languages over foreign ones. Additionally, limited access to quality French language education and resources can hinder the effective learning of the language.

As for Ajiboye (1993), one of the key strategies for learning French is immersion. This involves surrounding oneself with the language as much as possible, whether by conversing with native speakers, watching French films and TV shows, or reading French literature. Immersion helps to improve listening and speaking skills, as well as cultural understanding. Another important strategy is consistent practice. Like any skill, learning a language requires regular practice to maintain and improve proficiency. This can be achieved through daily vocabulary drills, grammar exercises, and speaking practice with language partners or tutors.

The benefits of learning French are vast. Beyond the ability to communicate with over 220 million French speakers worldwide, mastering the language opens doors to opportunities in business, travel, and academia (Ariole, 2010). French is also one of the official languages of major international organizations such as the United Nations and the European Union, making it a valuable asset for global careers. According to Adigwe (2019), it is important for an anglophone to have a perfect mastery of the French language given the opportunities it unlocks. The French language holds a special significance in Nigeria as it is one of the official languages of the African Union and is widely spoken across West Africa. The language is also associated with cultural prestige and sophistication, making it an attractive choice for individuals seeking to enhance their global competitiveness and cultural understanding.

The Concept of Language Ideology

The concept of language ideology is a crucial aspect of linguistic studies, as it helps us understand the social, cultural, and political factors that shape language use and attitudes in society. According to Kroskrity (2000), language ideology

refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and values that people hold about language, including ideas about what constitutes "proper" or "correct" language, as well as perceptions of different language varieties and speakers.

One key aspect of language ideology is the notion of linguistic prestige, which refers to the social status or value assigned to certain languages or language varieties. For example, in many societies, standard or dominant languages are often seen as more prestigious than dialects or minority languages. This has implications for language policy and planning, as well as for individuals' perceptions of their own linguistic abilities and identities.

Another important component of language ideology is the idea of linguistic purity, which involves beliefs about the "purity" or "correctness" of a particular language or dialect. These beliefs can lead to language discrimination and prejudice against speakers of non-standard or minority languages, perpetuating social inequalities and reinforcing power dynamics.

Bucholtz & Hall (2005) believe that language ideology also influences language use in various domains, such as education, media, and politics. For example, language ideologies can shape the curriculum and teaching practices in schools, influencing which languages are taught and how they are taught. In the media, language ideologies can influence the representation of different language varieties and speakers, perpetuating stereotypes and reinforcing dominant language norms.

Effects of Foreign Language Ideology

Foreign language ideology refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and values that individuals or societies hold towards languages that are different from their native language. These ideologies often shape how foreign languages are valued, learned, and used in various contexts. In this article, we will explore the effects of foreign language ideology on individuals and societies. Holliday (1999) reveals that one of the primary effects of foreign language ideology is the perception of linguistic hierarchies. In many societies, certain languages are viewed as prestigious or superior to others, leading to the

marginalization of minority languages. This can result in language loss, as speakers of minority languages may be discouraged from using their native language in favor of the dominant language. For example, in many countries around the world, English is often seen as a more valuable language to learn compared to local indigenous languages, leading to a decline in the use of these minority languages (Dwyer, 2010).

Another effect of foreign language ideology is the reinforcement of cultural stereotypes and prejudices. When individuals or societies hold negative beliefs about a particular language or culture, it can lead to discrimination and social exclusion. This can have detrimental effects on individuals' self-esteem and identity, as well as perpetuate harmful stereotypes. For instance, the portrayal of certain languages as "inferior" or "less intelligent" can contribute to the stigmatization of individuals who speak those languages (Hill, 2002). Foreign language ideology can also impact social mobility and access to opportunities. In many cases, individuals who speak multiple languages are viewed more favorably in the job market and have greater access to educational and economic opportunities. However, individuals who speak languages that are not considered socially prestigious may face barriers to social mobility and economic advancement. This can create inequalities in society based on language proficiency and perpetuate linguistic discrimination (Holliday, 1999).

French Language Training Centres in Nigeria

In recent years, there has been a growing demand for French language training in Nigeria. As a result, various language training centers have emerged across the country to cater to this increasing need. These centers offer a variety of courses tailored to different proficiency levels, from beginners to advanced learners.

One prominent French language training center in Nigeria is the Alliance Française. With branches in major cities such as Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt, the Alliance Française offers a wide range of courses for individuals of all ages. According to a report by the French Embassy in Nigeria (2019), the Alliance Française in Nigeria has seen a significant increase in enrollment over

the past decade, reflecting the growing interest in learning the French language. Another popular option for French language training in Nigeria is the French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA). Located in Ibadan, the IFRA offers French language courses in addition to research programs and cultural events. The institute's language training programs are designed to help students develop their language skills in a dynamic and interactive environment.

In addition to these established institutions, there are also smaller language training centers and private tutors offering French language courses in Nigeria (Ariole, 2010). These options cater to individuals who prefer more personalized instruction or have specific learning goals that may not be met by traditional language training programmes. Overall, the availability of French language training centers in Nigeria reflects the country's increasing recognition of the importance of multilingualism in today's globalized world. By providing individuals with the opportunity to learn French, these centers are not only helping to bridge cultural and linguistic barriers but also opening up new opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Methodology

Over the years, preconceived ideas about the French language have played a significant role in shaping learners' perceptions and attitudes towards learning French. To gain a deeper understanding of the impact of these preconceived ideas, a questionnaire was designed and administered to 100 respondents including learners and trainers from twenty (20) French language training centres in three (3) States: Delta, Edo and Bayelsa.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technics

The population of the study comprises the French language centres in Delta State, Edo State and Bayelsa State. Through a random sampling technique, this study sampled twenty (20) French language training centres, both public and private alike, from three (3) different States notably Delta, Edo and Bayelsa. In general, the following is the sample breakdown: seven (7) language centres from Delta State, eight (8) from Edo State and finally five (5) centres from Bayelsa State.

Collection and analysis

Data was collected through a virtual questionnaire from one hundred (100) respondents. The learners sampled in this study cut across the beginner, the

intermediate and the advanced levels. The data collected was analysed using a simple percentage. The data is presented in tabular form followed by a brief analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

I. Research question one: preconceived ideas about learning French language in Nigeria

Table 1: what is your initial impression of the French language?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
French is a very difficult language	39	39%
The French are racist	05	5%
French language is more difficult than English	36	36%
French language has too many grammatical rules	20	20%
TOTAL	100	100%

In table 1, a good number of respondents (39%) believe that French language is a very difficult language. Few (5%) are not enthusiastic about the language because for them, the French are racist. Most (36%) of the respondents believe that the French language is more difficult than the English language while 20% are of the opinion that French language has too many grammatical rules.

Table 2: Prior to your training, did you think French grammar is more complex than English grammar?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	77	60%
No	23	20%
TOTAL	100	100%

Table 2 reveals that majority (77%) agree that prior to their training, they were informed that the French grammar is more complex than the English grammar while only 22% do not agree that the French grammar is more complex than the English grammar.

Table 3: what was your idea about French pronunciations prior to your study?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
romantic	10	10%
difficult	75	75%
normal	15	15%
TOTAL	100	100%

In table 3 above, 10% of the respondents reveal that pronouncing French words is quite romantic while majority 75% consider French pronunciations difficult. Few of the respondents (15%) consider French pronunciations as normal.

Table 4: Do you believe learning French requires a natural talent for languages?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	87	87%
No	13	19%
TOTAL	100	100%

Table 4 shows that most (87%) of the respondents are of the opinion that the French language is best understood or mastered effectively by persons who have talent for languages whereas, only few (13%) are of contrary opinion.

Table 5: Have you heard any stereotypes or misconceptions about French speakers?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	87	87%
No	13	19%
TOTAL	100	100%

In table 5, almost all the respondents that is (87%) have heard one stereotype or the other. While few (13%) respondents have absolutely no misconception about the language.

Table 6: before your training, were you told that learning French language is only useful for travel?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	65	65%
No	35	35%
TOTAL	100	100%

Table 6 reveals that majority (65%) of the learners believed that learning French language is for the sole purpose of traveling whereas, 35% of the respondents had contrary beliefs.

Table 7: What discourages you the most in learning French language?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Inaccessible job opportunities	40	37%
Learning takes place outside the French culture	50	06%
Zero motivation	10	36%
TOTAL	100	100%

Table 7 shows that majority (40%) of the respondents are demotivated by the inaccessibility of job opportunity for French language while, 50% are discouraged because the learning takes place outside the francophone milieu. Furthermore, 10% of respondents agreed that they not motivated to read the language.

Table 8: Have you experienced any challenges or obstacles in learning French?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	50	50%
No	00	00%
Many	42	42%
Just few	8	8%
TOTAL	100	100%

Table 8 above shows that majority (50%) have experienced challenges or obstacle in the course of learning the French language. Most of the respondents (42%) reveal that they have encountered and encountering many challenges in learning French language whereas, only very few (8%) of them reveal that they have or are only faced with just few challenges.

Table 9: prior to your training, did you think that one can only learn the language while living with native French speakers?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	50	50%
No	08	00%
maybe	42	42%
TOTAL	100	100%

In table 9 above, most (50%) of the respondents agree that prior to their training, they believed that only persons living with native French speakers can effectively learn the French language whereas, only 8% responded in the negative while 42% are not quite convinced.

Table 10: How do you think the French language is perceived by others in Nigeria?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Very relevant but very stressful	20	20%
Very challenging and difficult to access jobs	50	50%
Not relevant at all in the Nigerian society	30	30%
TOTAL	100	100%

In table 10, few (20%) of the respondents believe that other Nigerians consider the French language to be very relevant but stressful while half (50%) of the respondents reveal that in Nigeria, majority consider the French language to be very challenging and difficult to have good jobs after learning the language. In the same vein, 30% of the respondent's state that in Nigeria, learning the French language is not relevant at all in the Nigerian society.

Research question 2: ways through which preconceived ideas about French language affect student's ability to effectively learn the language

Table 11: how do you perceive your progress in learning French compared to your initial expectations?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Remarkable	10	10%
Not remarkable due to previously conceived ideas	50	50%
Not great and too late to improve	10	10%
So far, progress is commendable but could have been better without discouraging preconceived ideas.	30	30%
TOTAL	100	100%

In table 11, very few (10%) respondents acknowledged they are making remarkable progress in learning French language while majority 50% reveal that due to previously conceived ideas about the language, they seem not to be making any headway. Furthermore, 10% of the respondents think that it is too late to make improvement as their level of French is low. A good number of respondents agreed that they have made

progress but could have made huge progress without discouraging preconceived notions or ideas about the language.

Table 12: What is your current attitude towards learning French language?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Lukewarm	60	60%
Enthusiastic	20	20%
excited	9	9%
Indifferent	11	11%
TOTAL	100	100%

As shown in table 12, majority of the respondents 60 (60%) responded to have lukewarm attitude towards learning French, while 20 (20%) agreed that are excited about French language and 9 (9%) reveal that they are excited. However, 11 (11) respondents are indifferent towards French language None of the respondent responded positive to this question.

Table 13: How do you perceive the importance of French in Nigerian society?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Knowledge of French language is important in the nigerian society	64	64%
Knowledge of French language	36	36%
TOTAL	100	100%

As shown in table 13 above, majority (64%) consider the French language important. Whereas, minority (36%) do not think the French language is important to them.

Table 14: How do you view the cultural significance of the French language?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Very relevant	28	28%
Relevant	11	11%
Not so relevant	31	31%
Not relevant at all	30	30%
TOTAL	100	100%

In table 14, 31% of the respondents are of the opinion that French language has high cultural significance in the society while few (11%) of them believe that it is relevant. Majority (31%) of the respondents consider the French language not so relevant whereas a good number (30%) of the respondents believe it is not relevant at all.

Table 15: Do you believe that speaking French can enhance your career opportunities?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	57	57%
No	43	43%
TOTAL	100	100%

Table 15 reveals that, although most of the respondents agree that the knowledge of French language can unlock job opportunities for them, some respondents (43%) do not share the same conviction.

Table 15: how useful were the ideas you received about French language before your training?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Very useful	27	27%
Not useful at all	73	73%
TOTAL	100	100%

Table 15 shows that 27% of the respondents agreed that the ideas received about French language prior to their training was helpful to them whereas majority reveal that the preconceived ideas they had prior to their training was not useful at all, on the contrary, it hindered motivation.

Research question 3: what are the measures to be taken to correct these preconceived ideas?

Table 16: what can be done to boost learners’ motivation and reduce misconceptions about the French language in Nigeria?

Response Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Publicize French language job opportunities	10	10%
Trainers are to adopt measures to boost the self-confidence of learners	50	50%
Resource persons should be invited, especially native speakers, to encourage the learning of French	40	40%
TOTAL	100	100%

From the table above, 10% feel that if French jobs are publicized, negative notions or ideas about the language will reduce drastically whereas, majority (50%) believe that trainers need to adopt measures that will help boost the self-confidence of learners and this will help encourage learners irrespective of their previously conceived notion about the language. Finally, 40% of the respondents suggest that there is need to collaborate with resource persons especially native speakers, to encourage the learning of French.

Summary of Findings

The questions focused explore various aspects of preconceived ideas about the French language, such as stereotypes, misconceptions, and attitudes towards French language learning. The responses from both students and teachers provide valuable insights into the ways in which these preconceived ideas shape students' learning experiences attitudes towards the learning of French language. The following are the findings from the analysis:

- i. that many French language learners have preconceived ideas or notions about the language.
- ii. most French language learners have lost enthusiasm and motivation as a result of preconceived ideas about learning the French language
- iii. some negative preconceived ideas that hinder the learning of the French language include the complex language structure, difficulty in mastering the language, pronunciation and the inaccessibility of French jobs;

- iv. that addressing these stereotypes and promoting a positive image of the French culture requires that trainers adopt certain measures to boost self-confidence in order to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment for students and help promote open-minded approach towards learning French;
- v. that resource persons should be invited, especially native speakers, to address learners from time to time, to encourage the learning of French language.

Recommendations

One key recommendation is to promote a positive attitude towards French language learning through the adoption of certain measures to boost the self-confidence among learners in order to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment for students and help promote open-minded approach towards learning French; Additionally, it is essential to provide opportunities for learners to engage with French native speakers from time to time in and outside the classroom. This could include immersion

programmes, cultural exchanges, or language clubs that allow learners to practice and improve their language skills in real-life settings.

Conclusion

The language ideology surrounding the learning of French as a foreign language in Nigeria is multifaceted. While the language offers numerous benefits in terms of economic opportunities, cultural exchange, and diplomatic relations, challenges exist in perceptions and access to quality education. Moving forward, a balanced approach that values both indigenous languages and foreign languages like French is essential for Nigeria to fully harness the potential of linguistic diversity.

By understanding the complex interplay of beliefs, attitudes, and values surrounding language, we can work towards creating more inclusive and equitable language practices and policies. By challenging these ideologies and approaching language learning with an open mind and a positive attitude, students can overcome barriers and achieve their language learning goals. French is a beautiful and diverse language that offers a window into the rich cultural heritage of France and other Francophone countries. Embrace the challenges, celebrate the successes, and remember that language learning is a journey worth embarking on. So why not embark on the exciting journey of learning French today?

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DIVERSE AND DYNAMIC ROLES OF WOMEN IN NARRATIVES OF WARS AND CONFLICTS: CHALLENGING TRADITIONAL DEPICTION SOLELY AS VICTIMS IN DENIS MUKWEGE'S *THE POWER OF WOMEN*

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Abstract

This study critically examines the prevalent depiction of female characters as vulnerable victims and marginalized bystanders in male-dominated war and conflict narratives. The aim is to deconstruct such peripheralized perceptions and highlight women as central figures—active, agential, and resilient war heroines who overcome trauma and victimhood, amplify their voices, and challenge the patriarchal structures that perpetuate gender-based violence. The primary source is drawn from selected text of Denis Mukwege's *The Power of Women*, while secondary sources and reference materials are drawn from journals, library resources, and internet databases. The findings reveal that despite efforts by gender-sensitive writers to portray women as active participants functioning as mothers, caregivers, breadwinners, family heads, and peace activists in militarized narratives, some narratives still perpetuate victimized representations. While this paper aims to contribute to the body of knowledge promoting gender positivity, it recommends that society makes concerted efforts to de-emphasize patriarchal and masculine hegemonic ideologies. By fostering a more inclusive and equitable cultural narrative, writers, who are products of their societies, can portray women from less biased perspectives, recognizing their full spectrum of roles and contributions in conflict situations.

Keywords; Agency, Activism, Resilience, Trauma, Sisterhood Solidarity, Bonding War, Women

Introduction

In traditional narratives, women in war and conflict situations are often portrayed primarily as victims emphasizing their weaknesses, sufferings, and passive roles. However, despite this stereotypic depiction which overlooks the diverse and dynamic roles women play in such settings, a more nuanced examination reveals more inclusive roles, challenging these one-dimensional depictions. According to Vishnu Kotagiri, an unbiased examination of women in war literature “unveils a rich and evolving tapestry of narratives, reflecting the dynamic roles, experiences, and perspectives of women amid the chaos and conflict of war” (Kotagiri 634). He further posits that “Initially marginalized and stereotyped, women's voices in early war literature often portrayed them as passive victims, heroines on the home front, or objects of romanticization” (Kotagiri 634)

This paper, therefore, examines the

transformation of women's roles in war literature over time, from traditional portrayals of docility to more diverse and dynamic representations. It highlights their heroic and spirited efforts to cope regardless of their adverse experiences in times of wars and conflicts. These evolving roles include women as combatants and leaders in various conflicts, activists driving peace movements and promoting nonviolent resistance, caregivers providing vital support as nurses and aid workers, often at great personal risk. Women have also, assumed leadership positions in military and political spheres, making strategic decisions that shape the course of conflicts and societal wellness.

Additionally, women have emerged as survivors of unimaginable trauma, including sexual violence, displacement, and loss of loved ones, yet have demonstrated remarkable resilience and strength. They have played crucial roles as peacemakers, negotiating peace agreements,

mediating conflicts, and building bridges between communities. By exploring these roles, we can better appreciate the complexity and agency of women in such circumstances not merely as passive victims but as courageous, active change agents who are crucial to the stories, capable of resisting and transcending their victimhood, and playing pivotal roles in their own survival and that of their communities.

The exploration aligns with a major objective of this study: challenging the reductive portrayal of women and highlighting their multifaceted contributions through the intricate dynamics of agency, activism, trauma, resilience, sisterhood, solidarity, and bonding. These themes are vividly portrayed in the above novels by Gbowee and Mukwege, set in militarized environments. Furthermore, it explores how the female characters navigate and respond to the challenges of volatile and war-torn settings, which serve as the backdrop for the narratives in question.

To accomplish this, the paper has been divided into three sections, each focusing on a pair of the identified themes as follows: Agency and Activism, Trauma and Resilience, and Sisterhood solidarity and Bonding. These sections critically analyze how the overlap of women's agency and activism re-create the women survivors and propel the plots forward, how they cope with trauma and demonstrate resilience in the face of harsh conditions, and the significance of sisterhood and bonding in their journeys.

Theoretical Framework

As stated earlier in the introduction, the focus this paper is to interrogate the negative depiction of female characters as just passive traumatized and peripheral victims in war and conflict related narratives and seek to position them as heroines both victimized and agential. Additionally, it will also locate and examine traditional patriarchy as triggers of the war/conflict induced gendered sexual abuse, the connectivity between victimhood, trauma, female agency, resilience, and activism. Consequently, an eclectic theoretical framework/ academic approach which draws from dual literary theories of Feminism and Trauma is deployed. This method helps incorporate diverse perspectives and insights into

the analysis for a more holistic understanding of the gendered complexities and multifaceted experiences under study. Furthermore, the varied investigative theoretical method takes into consideration, the convolutions of gendered violence, the binary realities of victimhood/agency, survival/ heroism all rolled into one, and the political environment that enabled the scenario.

Feminist Literary Theory

Feminism as a concept advocate for the equality of all sexes and by extension, all mankind. It preaches equality of all mankind, irrespective of their gender, in all aspects of life, be they social, economic, religious, or political and often seen as a response to/against hegemonic traditions of patriarchy, sexism, marginalization, and subjugation. Starting from its origin in the 18th century, the term feminism has been defined variously by many proponents based on the cultural reality and historical truth. For instance, Burkett and Brunell see it as "the belief in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes", (Brunell & Burkett.1). Lewis argues that feminism is a "complex set of ideologies and theories that, at its core, seeks to achieve equal social, political, and economic rights for women" (Lewis 1).

Feminism as a movement has evolved over time with different strands, including social feminism, liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, Black feminism, Separatist Feminism, Ecofeminism, African and Intersectional feminism, among others. There are also different waves of feminism consisting of the first wave which is concerned with property rights and franchise for women championed by Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792 as contained in her book, *The ideals of Feminism in her book, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). The second wave, spanning the 1960s to 1970s, was kickstarted by the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). It marked a pivotal turning point, as the focus shifted to address a wide range of women's issues, including liberation movements, legal and social equality, reproductive rights, equal pay, and an end to domestic violence. This era also saw a critical recognition that gender-based violence was a deeply ingrained, systemic problem

requiring a collective and concerted response, thereby laying the groundwork for the intersectional feminist movements that followed.

The third wave which is crucial to this paper was announced by Rebecka Walker, the mixed-race daughter of second-wave leader Alice Walker, in 1992. This was on account of failed justice for Anita Hill by the United States Senate Judiciary Committee, regarding her accusation of Clarence Thomas, a supreme Court nominee, of sexual harassment. It particularly focused on intersectionality; a concept made popular by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw's works which demonstrates the relation between systems of oppression based on race, ethnicity, class, religion, and gender. The high point here is the importance of individual agency and choice, which connects to the fact that our multiple identities and our social locations are identified and characterized by a focus on individuality and diversity.

There is also the fourth wave which debuted in 2012 and is still ongoing. Its main focus is on body positivity, use of internet tools to encourage online activism to deconstruct the stereotypical depiction of the female gender, use of social media and technology to further advance their causes, like gender equation on work and remuneration, combating sexual harassment, body shaming, sexist imagery in the media, gender violence and rape culture.

However, specifically employed for this paper as part of the complex theoretical framework are the third wave of feminist literary theory which emphasizes positive female representation in narratives, and the concept of intersectionality which recognizes that individuals experience oppression and privilege differently based on race, class, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, and other factors. Both the third wave and intersectionality align with the core objective of investigating female characters in narratives of conflict and war-related violence as more than just passive victims but also as empowered heroines. The positive representation of women in war narratives as heroines with agency is strongly associated with the third wave of feminism and continues to shape contemporary feminist perspectives. Again, intersectionality "highlights how systems of oppression intersect and create distinct

experiences for individuals with multiple identity categories" (The Editors). Since it acknowledges that individuals experience oppression based on the intersection of their values, it underpins the aim to examine the portrayal of diverse realities of female characters in conflict and war narratives, moving beyond the passive victim trope to depict empowered heroines especially in the text under review.

Literary Trauma Theory

Trauma theory is a concept in literary criticism that examines how literature and other cultural forms represent and engage with the concept of trauma. It focuses on the representation and exploration of trauma within literature and involves the depiction of distressing or traumatic events, experiences, and their aftermath in fictional narratives, poetry, memoirs, and other forms of literary expression. Nasrullah Mambrol asserts that Trauma studies explores the impact of trauma in literature and society by analyzing its psychological, rhetorical, and cultural significance (Nasrullah Mambrol 1). Despite varied definitions, it is important to note that it is rooted in Freud's psychoanalysis studies as expounded in *Studies on Hysteria* (1895) and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), it explores how trauma affects individuals and society as a whole. Trauma theory looks at how trauma is narrated, remembered, and processed in literary texts, and how these representations can help us better understand the impact of trauma on both individual and collective identities. It also explores how literature can bear witness to trauma via narration of the survivors and be a tool for healing and coping with trauma.

The key concepts in trauma theory provide a framework for analyzing how literature engages with the complexities of trauma, memory, and narrative, and how it contributes to our understanding of human experience in the aftermath of trauma. These include the **Survivor Narratives concept** which depicts accounts of traumatic events told from the perspective of survivors, it emphasizes the importance of amplifying survivor voices and explores the ways in which trauma is narrated, remembered, and processed in literature. The next is **The Recovery and Resilience Trauma concept** which

acknowledges the resilience of survivors and explores narratives of recovery, healing, and transformation. It examines how literature portrays the process of coping with trauma, finding meaning in suffering, and reclaiming agency and identity. Other concepts include Fragmentation and Disruption, Witnessing and Testimony, Intergenerational Trauma concept, Cultural Memory and Collective, Ethics and Representation Trauma concepts respectively.

For this paper, it is imperative to incorporate trauma literary theory as one of the two pillars in the varied theoretical framework, focusing more on the Survivor Narrative Concept and the Recovery and Resilience Trauma Concept. The trajectory depicted by the female characters in the text analyzed here follows a progression from being victims of militarized sexual violence, marked by trauma and emotional numbness, to reclaiming their voices and sharing their own narratives. This act of storytelling, akin to psychotherapeutic healing in Freudian terms, not only frees them from the confines of victimhood and shame, but also bears witness to their trauma. G Kelly agrees that the “act of storytelling serves as a way for humans to make meaning out of their life experiences, to construct identity, and to cope with trauma, stress, and uncertainty” (G 1), and Caruth suggests, it can only be fully grasped through verbal expression. This newfound sense of liberation empowers the women to exercise agency and draw strength from adversity, while showcasing resilience.

Furthermore, the Paper is divided into three sub-sections, each focusing on a pair of the identified themes such as: Trauma and Resilience, Agency and Activism, and Sisterhood solidarity and Bonding. These sections critically analyse how the- overlap of women's agency and activism re-create the women-survivors and propel the plots forward; how they cope with trauma and demonstrate resilience in the face of harsh conditions, and the significance of sisterhood and bonding in their journeys.

To contextualize these analyses, it became imperative to provide synopsis of the novel under review. The synopses will further forge the link between the analysis and the stories presented in the book, enhancing the understanding of the

characters' experiences and the themes explored within the text.

Synopsis of Denis Mukwege's *The Power of Women*

Against the backdrop of the prolonged conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which has claimed millions of lives over two decades, Denis Mukwege's *The Power of Women* emerges as a touching narrative advocating for positive masculinity and celebrating women's resilience, strength, and influence. Trained as a medical doctor in Burundi with specialized knowledge in gynecology and obstetrics from France, Mukwege's return to his homeland and the founding of Panzi Hospital in 1999, mark the beginning of his intertwined journey of medical care and advocacy. Mukwege's memoir intricately weaves together his experiences in treating survivors of sexual violence in the DRC with his fervent advocacy for women's rights and justice.

He emphasizes the urgent need for building inclusive, gender-balanced societies that can catalyze systemic changes in male behaviors and attitudes towards women. The book sheds light on the daunting challenges faced by Congolese women, especially those subjected to brutal sexual assaults, while also highlighting their enduring strength and resilience in the face of trauma. The title, *The Power of Women*, encapsulates Mukwege's belief in women's innate and collective strength, their capacity for healing, and their potential to drive positive transformations. Through distressing accounts of working with survivors and witnessing their courage, Mukwege underscores the transformative impact of women's voices and activism in combating violence and advocating for justice.

Apart from being a personal memoir, *The Power of Women* serves as a compelling call to action, urging readers to confront the grim realities of sexual violence in conflict zones and to actively support initiatives for healing, empowerment, and accountability. It stands as a testament to the unwavering spirit of survivors, the vital role of solidarity in seeking justice and dignity and challenges the historical depersonalization of female characters in armed conflict narratives. Dr. Denis Mukwege is the 2018 Nobel Laureate for Peace.

Agency and Activism

Agency encompasses an individual's intentional capacity to act, make decisions, and shape their life circumstances. Diana T. Mayers describes it as "... account of their capacity for individualized choice and action" (Mayers 1). For women and marginalized communities, it signifies the ability to make autonomous choices, exert control over their own bodies, and assert their rights in alignment with their own aspirations, free from oppressive norms. Activism, on the other hand, entails advocating for societal, political, or environmental change. It involves organised endeavours to challenge and reform systems of inequality, discrimination, gender-based violence, and oppression affecting women and marginalized groups. Activism manifests in diverse forms like protests, awareness campaigns, and community organizing efforts.

Consequently, addressing and advancing women's issues requires a focus on agency and activism for several key reasons, particularly in terms of empowerment, social visibility, advocacy for rights, policy and legal reforms, and fostering solidarity. Agency and activism intersect when women challenge the status quo; by asserting their agency, women disrupt existing power dynamics, while activism amplifies this disruption by organizing collective efforts to challenge oppressive norms. This dual approach is essential for driving meaningful change and ensuring that women's voices and experiences are recognized and valued. According to Lee and Logan in their essay, "Women's Agency, Activism and Organization":

agency, activism and organization have been central and constant themes in women's and gender history. Both separately and in combination, they constitute a valuable analytical framework for the study of women's lives... (Lee and Logan 2).

This approach provides a counterbalance to 'victimization' models of women's history by focusing on narratives of resistance and the challenge or subversion of social norms. It allows women to be seen as instrumental agents of the forms of power that were potentially seen to

determine them. Additionally, critics like Swank and Fahs emphasize that "collective resistance offers feminist-identified women a pathway to challenge existing power structures and norms". They also note that "women and their allies often mobilize into massive feminist movements, collectively challenging the structural sources of male privilege". (Swank and Fahs 1).

It is crucial to highlight that within feminist discourse, agency and activism are intricately linked, with agency serving as a foundational element of feminist activism. The pursuit of collective action and social change, which prioritizes centring women's voices, experiences, and perspectives in movements for societal and political transformation, relies on recognizing and empowering individual agency. Activism not only champions the acknowledgment and safeguarding of women's agency but also endeavours to establish environments where women can freely exercise their agency without hindrances or limitations.

Agency and Activism in Mukwege's *The Power of Women*

Despite the elements of agency and activism expressed in the two books by both writers, their accounts are shaped by their distinct gender perspectives and experiences. While Gbowee writes as a woman with firsthand experience of gendered war abuses, Mukwege writes from a medical and positive masculinity points of view. In *The Power of Women*, Denis Mukwege departs from the stereotypical depiction of women in narratives of conflict-related sexual violence by most male writers. Instead of presenting them as peripheral, weak victims, he portrays them as central, resilient, and empowered individuals. Mukwege challenges and redefines these stereotypes, emphasizing the power, courage, and strength of spirit of Congolese women. His portrayal counters the typical depiction of women in war narratives as weak and powerless, instead, he highlights their pivotal roles and remarkable resilience. For instance, it was through the testimonies of fifty-eight victims of sexual violence and slavery that brought to book notorious policemen and militia who were perpetrators. According to the narrative, "they knew the risk of reprisals if they were identified.

But they also knew they were fighting for something bigger than justice for themselves alone” (Mukwege 163-164). These women put their shame aside and fought for justice that would change the status quo.

Unlike most male writers, Mukwege underscores the importance of empowering women to assert their agency and reassures survivors that even though their psychological wounds may never fully heal, they can still recover and thrive with the right care and support. To encourage them, he invites from New York, Eve Ensler whom he calls V in the narrative to address the survivors. V shares her story of sexual abuse, depression, and recovery, inspiring others to overcome adversity and rebuild their lives. By sharing stories of women who have been subjected to sexual violence, rape, and abuse, yet have found the courage to speak out, seek justice, and advocate for change, V motivates others to quicken their own agency and activism. According to her, “her father had sexually abused her for years as a child...she fled and lived on the streets of New York City, taking drugs and suffering even more abuse” (Mukwege 90). She had to take control of her own situation to put a stop to the abuse.

Wamuzila’s story is also that of agency and activism. She is a young teenage girl from the village of Shabunda, who was abducted and held captive by the Mai-Mai militia for over a year and subjected to unimaginable sexual violence and brutality. After her rescue and treatment at Panzi hospital, including four surgeries to repair her damaged fistula, she defied all odds to become a powerful voice among the women victims. Despite her subsequent re-victimization, physical and psychological trauma, she transformed from a broken victim to an empowered agent of change. Knowing what she and other women desired, she boldly speaks out for transformative change when V after the talking therapy, poses the question, “Tell me what I can do for you” (Mukwege 90). She poignantly captures the collective longing of her fellow survivors for a positive change when she said, “Every time we think about seeing soldiers again, we’re scared...find us somewhere we can heal emotionally and prepare ourselves for new lives” (Mukwege 92).

Additionally, her circumstances did not pose a barrier to her bold plea for a shelter which underscores one of the tenets of feminist activism that emphasis environments where women can thrive and fully exert their autonomy, free from obstacles, constraints, and gender-based barriers. Another example of this unalloyed demonstration of agency is the testimony of twelve-year-old Witula whose fearlessness and power of words made a high-ranking army officer faint. The said officer was on an inspection tour at the hospital and could not bear to hear the ordeal of the little girl, “then his knees buckled. He fainted, falling hard on his back” (Mukwege 131).

The case of the sixty-year-old victim/survivor is also one of such cases of brutality. Her voicing of her trauma and expectations in the following lines speaks volumes of her agency and activism.

I don’t need anything, but I want one thing. We deserve respect. We give birth, we bring up children, we work. But we are being humiliated by children... the same age as my grandchildren... but what I want is for the president to come here and apologize in public. (Mukwege 192)

The excerpt above represents the deep-seated trauma and psychological scars of the survivors who despite their ordeal still find their voices to tell their stories and remain resilient.

In addition to his personal efforts in promoting masculine positivity, Mukwege emphasizes the agency, empowerment, and leadership of women, highlighting their roles in driving social and political transformation. To achieve desired results, he seeks international assistance from individuals like V and organizations like UNICEF and the UN, which encouraged their activism and helped transform the pain of these women into power. Mukwege recounts how V “approached the head of UNICEF... UNICEF eventually donated \$1 million” (Mukwege 92). This gesture amplified their voices and brought the issue of sexual brutality against Congolese women to the international stage. Further to the amplification of their voices and experiences he encourages them to speak out and share their experiences,

challenges dominant narratives and stereotypes that pressure women to suffer in silence or face stigmatization and public ridicule.

According to him, keeping quiet creates an environment in which men can continue to abuse with impunity. It serves their interests. For as long as knowledge of a problem is suppressed, the same destructive behavioral patterns are allowed to continue. (Mukwege 138).

From the above excerpts, it is obvious that agency begins with breaking the code of silence against sexual abuse and is the first step towards activism and group therapy. Speaking up educates both men and women to advocate for a more inclusive and equitable society.

As Lee and Logan astutely observe,

Agency highlights the individual action/social structure... whilst activism... help focus on the specific ways in which women have challenged, resisted, overthrown, or gained entrance to social structures and institutions that had tended to ignore, exclude, disadvantage, or penalize them. (Lee and Logan 1).

This perspective is vividly illustrated in Mukwege's narrative through the actions of Congolese women who not only participated in the process of transformation and reformation of traumatized victims of conflict-related sexual violence, but also engaged in the physical building of the City of Joy, a safe place for survivors to heal, receive education, and inspire others. For instance, even though female builders were unheard of in Congo, these women so impressed the contactor that he testified about their zeal and prowess. According to Mukwege, "the women had inspired and pushed them to improve and work harder" (Mukwege 95). Their actions underscore the enduring truth of Lee and Logan's assertion above and highlight the collective strength and activism of these women in the face of adversity and again countering the narrative of minimalization.

Trauma and Resilience

Trauma as has earlier been established in this study, is a distressing experience that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope. It can

result from violence, abuse, loss, or natural disasters. Laderer argues that "Trauma is a complex experience that can have major consequences for someone's well-being. A single traumatic experience or ongoing, repeated incidents of trauma can take a toll on mental health" (Laderer 2). However, literature serves as a powerful medium for acknowledging and grappling with trauma, allowing both personal and collective voices to be heard. It plays a significant role in bearing witness to trauma and provides a space for exploring and expressing the often-unspeakable truths of traumatic experiences. Resilience on the other hand is the ability to bounce back from setbacks, adapt to change, and maintain well-being despite adversity. It also includes the means to respond to life stress, challenges, and additional trauma, possibly develop beyond recovery thus experiencing post traumatic growth. According to research, post traumatic growth is the positive change, in which a person develops greater inner strength as a result of their journey through trauma ("Healing and Resilience")

Trauma and Resilience in *The Power of Women*

In *The Power of Women*, Mukwege focuses on the medical aspects of healing from conflict related sexual violence, including physical and psychological trauma. He also underscores the importance of holistic approaches to healing and supporting survivors in their recovery journey as he explores the intertwined themes of trauma and resilience through the experiences of Congolese women who have endured extreme violence and suffering. Mukwege, a gynaecologist, and an advocate for survivors of sexual violence, provides a compassionate and powerful narrative that highlights the impact of trauma and the incredible resilience of the women he helps. He takes the readers on a detailed journey of the brutal realities faced by women in the Democratic Republic of Congo, particularly those subjected to sexual violence by armed groups. For instance, most of the women had been raped and gang raped by armed men while in their homes, at the fields working or snatched while fetching water or firewood but they refused to cave in.

Survivors like Wamuzila, Jeanne, Alphonsine, and Tatiana represent deep-seated

trauma resistance and intentional choice to move on. Wamuzila, as earlier referenced, survived unimaginable brutality, endured gang rape and sexual slavery in the hands of the militiamen who targeted and abducted women and girls during the DRC conflicts. Her story is so pathetic and a heart-wrenching testament to her strength and agency. She was forcefully taken from her village of Shabunda, subjected to unimaginable violence, pinned down by drunken assailants who raped her repeatedly. We were told how she struggled with her more powerful assailants to no avail, “She trashed her arms at first and squirmed her teenage body with all her force against the weight of the drunken brutes who pinned her down and raped her. Then they led her into the forest” (Mukwege 77). After tying her to a stake like an animal and raped her repeatedly, she was only released after she fell pregnant and was of no more sexual use to them. With the baby’s head stuck in between her legs as she tried to expel it, she summoned the strength as “she stumbled through the undergrowth... until she saw smoke in the distance. She managed to mumble a few words ... before collapsing” ((Mukwege 78). Fortunately, it was at this stage she was brought to Panzi hospital where she underwent corrective surgeries for her damaged fistulas. Despite her ordeal, Wamuzila demonstrated remarkable resilience and a will to live by learning soap-making skills from palm oil, starting a small business, and sharing her story with fellow survivors to offer hope and encouragement.

Jeanne, who according to Mukwege later became one of the most valued staff of the City of Joy, was carried in a basket to Panzi hospital by her rescuers. She was in her late teens when she was captured by the rebels who subjected her to months of abuse and like Wamuzila was released after she became pregnant. When she was brought to the Panzi hospital, “We feared that Jeanne would never recover. She has no family, no children and will face complications as a result of her injuries for the rest of her life” (Mukwege 98). Yet despite the trauma of her ordeal, both at the hands of the rebels and fight for her life at Panzi hospital, Jeanne’s resilience and strength of human spirit kicked in. She not only survived, but also chose to move on and be happy. So now in her

early thirties, she went back to school for her diploma, and dedicated the rest of her life to helping others and being a voice for silent sufferers of abuse.

As for Tatiana, her village of Bukavu having been overrun by forces loyal to the war lord, Laurent Nkunda, she was one of the teens taken as the troops went house to house looting, torturing and assaulting women and girls. Having lost her parents earlier to the conflict, she shared the story of her ordeal with her fiancée, but it backfired as he abandoned her. Despite this, she persevered and secured a place at the university determined to educate herself, but due to the traumatic consequences of her abuse, she became depressed, ended up “battling alcoholism, eating disorders, and suicidal attempts” (Mukwege 99). Notwithstanding all these, Tatiana sought medical and psychological help after ten years, demonstrating remarkable resilience and strength. Mukwege acknowledges that she was made of sterner stuff beyond her physical and psychological challenges,

I could see that beyond the pain lay a woman of extraordinary force... today she has vanquished her demons. She can never forget her past, she still cries sometimes under the shower...but it no longer defines nor paralyses her (Mukwege 99)

The above is a testament of Tatiana’s post traumatic resilience. Additionally, she eventually got married, and helps both the women at the City of Joy and other abused women find their voices as she travels widely to share her experiences and inspire other women with similar experiences. As Mukwege so eloquently puts it, the women’s actions demonstrate “that women are so much more powerful and capable than the positions and roles they are assigned in society” (Mukwege 93).

Again, the brutality and assault on some of these women knew no bounds. Beyond penile as in the case above, object penetration was also used indiscriminately in the assaults as Mukwege describes here,

some had been shot deliberately into their genitals. The rapists would insert their guns into a victim’s vagina and then press the trigger. Others had

sticks, sharp objects, or burning plastic forced inside them. One woman was forced to squat over a barbecue fire, causing her grievous burns. (Mukwege 61)

Coupled with the manner of the above assaults is the fact that most were carried out in the presence of their families and at times their sons were forced to be part of it. This caused an untold traumatic effect on both the direct victims and the secondary-the families. Some of the survivors suffering from dislocation, a reaction to trauma would describe their after- experiences as having the feeling that their spirits are not there, “feeling as if their spirits have left their bodies”

However, despite sharing the heart-wrenching stories of these women who have been raped, tortured, and left with severe physical and psychological scars, Mukwege leads us to believe that their profound trauma was no barrier to the exhibition of their remarkable strength and resilience. The story of Bernadette is an example of deep trauma and self -remaking doggedness. After her reproductive organs were destroyed by gun shots into her vagina by soldiers, abandoned by her husband with no hope of raising a family, she was treated at the Panzi hospital, struggled to get a diploma and later specialized as an anaesthetist. As Mukwege would let us know, “she couldn’t afford to take the bus to college, so she walked for an hour and half each way from her home” (Mukwege 69), showing single mindedness and strong determination. Other instances seen at the Panzi hospital and City of Joy shelter for empowering women demonstrate how survivors can rebuild their lives with proper care and support and impact positively on other victims. According to him, the idea of the City of Joy was

to build on the strength and resilience evident in the women at the hospital. We wanted to do more than help the women come to terms with their traumatic past and face the future with confidence. We wanted them to become agents of change with the power to make a difference (Mukwege 94).

The above excerpt indicates that women already have the strength of spirit and resilience as active

participants in their healing and in the broader struggle for justice. They are not passive recipients of aid but have the ability to be leaders and advocates for change, using their experiences to raise awareness and demand justice.

Furthermore, this depiction accentuates their resilience, capacity for leadership and empowerment despite their severe trauma which is crystalized in the process of building and management of the City of Joy. The narrative captures how the women were physically carrying concrete and engaging in the masonry aspect of the project to the bewilderment and amazement of both the main contractor and the Congolese public who had never seen female builders. The women turned out to be eager learners and excellent committed builders as some of their “male colleagues confessed that the women inspired them and pushed them to improve and work harder” (Mukwege 93.) Again, the charge of running and managing the City of Joy centre was the sole responsibility of these women who have actively turned their victimhood to one of strength and survival. According to the narrative, the security architecture which included manning the gate, the gardening to produce natural organic food, were presided over by Mama Christine who delegates tasks accordingly. For instance, “each newcomer enters through high black gates that are guided by former graduates who have been trained for the task” (Mukwege 95.)

As part of a comprehensive empowerment program, the City of Joy Centre offered a mix of soft skill sets and vocational training courses for each survivor to stabilize their trauma and build their resilience. The initiative also placed a strong emphasis on body- love and female body positivity, helping survivors of sexual violence reclaim their sense of self-worth and body image through gender and female anatomy classes. These classes were designed to educate and empower women, enabling them to embrace their bodies and rebuild their confidence in a supportive environment. For instance, most of the abused women blame their gender as the cause of their problems, “if I were a man, I could have protected myself” (Mukwege 95). They identify their vagina as the origin of their suffering, “it’s because of that that I was raped... their vaginas are the problems

not their attackers” (Mukwege 95)

Again, inspirational stories of women who have transformed their trauma into advocacy shared at the centre were a huge encouragement for resilience and determination to others. For instance, the stories of Wamuzila, Jeanne, Alphonsine, and Tatiana—young girls who survived extreme brutality and sexual slavery and emerged as successful beacons and vocal advocates—illustrate the transformative power of trauma -resilience and agency. Wamuzila who was captured in her village helps alleviate the suffering of others through her advocacy, Jeanne becomes a valued staff member at City of Joy and a voice for silent sufferers of sexual abuse, Alphonsine trained as a nurse and now assists in operating theatres. Tatiana earned a college degree, started a family with several adopted orphaned children, and became an international spokeswoman for other victims, demanding that survivors like her be heard and treated fairly. Her poignant open letter to her attacker published in 2017, "Letter to My Rapist," underlines her defiance, resilience, and total recovery from trauma. As she puts it, "I want you to know that now more than ever, I'm no longer scared of you... you gave me the courage to combat you." (Mukwege 100.) By focusing on these stories which highlight women's strength and their critical roles in driving social and political transformation, Mukwege once again shifts the narrative from one of victimhood to one of strength and survival.

It is noteworthy here that these themes of trauma and resilience in *The Power of Women* align with concepts in literary trauma theory, particularly the concept of testimony and witness. Mukwege's narrative serves as forms of testimony, bearing witness to the unspeakable truths of trauma and providing a voice to those who have suffered in silence. This approach not only aids in individual healing but also empowers other survivors to share their stories and find strength in their shared experiences.

Sisterhood, Solidarity and Bonding

Generally, the notions of Sisterhood, solidarity, and bonding refer to the powerful connections and relationships among women, particularly in the context of feminist movements and struggles for social justice. These concepts

emphasize unity, mutual support, and collective strength among individuals, particularly among women and are vital in fostering strong communities and achieving social and personal renewal, especially in contexts of victim/ survivor, and trauma/resilience. Similarly in literature, these concepts play a significant role in highlighting the power of collective action and emotional support among individuals, particularly women. They underscore how personal and collective struggles can be navigated and overcome through mutual support, shared goals, and unified actions.

The term Sisterhood refers to the emotional and social connections among women based on shared experiences, struggles, and goals. It is about building relationships that transcend individual differences, promote collective inspiration, and embodies the idea of women supporting one another through understanding, empathy, and mutual respect. According to Oyeronke Oyewunmi,

Sisterhood has emerged as the dominant model for feminist intercommunity relations. A term of political solidarity, "sisterhood" speaks women's activism. The meaning it carries for its originators and deployers is one of shared oppression, common victimization, community of interests, solidarity, and collective activism. (Oyewunmi 1)

The key thoughts of Sisterhood include shared experiences, mutual support, and empowerment, while the importance lies in the fact that connecting with other women with similar experiences and realities help victims and survivors find strength and solace.

Solidarity on the other hand, refers to a principle of standing together in support and unity, often in the face of adversity or oppression. Solidarity among women involves recognizing and amplifying each other's voices, experiences, and struggles, and working collectively towards common goals. It is the unity and agreement of feeling and action among individuals with common interests. It involves standing together and advocating for common causes, often in the face of oppression or injustice. Solidarity is crucial in social movements and collective actions aimed

at bringing about change. Jo and Catherine posit that,

Solidarity invoked in a feminist context is often thought to cut across different identity categories — such as race, class, sexuality, or nation — without assuming sameness among women or falling back into gender essentialism. To express solidarity with others is ostensibly to recognize and respect differences without colonizing those differences. (Littler and Rottenberg)

Additionally, Emerge Woman Magazine asserts that it is “the bond between women that transcends race, ethnicity, and cultural differences. It’s a mutual understanding of each other’s experiences and the support that follows as a result”. (Emerge Woman Magazine 2023). The key aspects are unity of purpose, collective action, advocacy, and support.

Bonding is another of the strong connections and safety social network for women especially in times of war and conflicts. It is actually the foundation upon which the duo of sisterhood and solidarity are built and borne out of shared experiences, struggles, or activities creating a sense of community and belonging. Bonding allows survivors to break their isolation, combat feelings of shame, and find common ground. These connections help them rebuild their sense of self and regain agency. Its key aspects include emotional connections, shared activities, trust and loyalty. Together, sisterhood, solidarity, and bonding form a powerful foundation for women's empowerment, social change, and collective action. By supporting and uplifting one another, women can challenge patriarchal structures, overcome obstacles, and create a more just and equitable society.

Sisterhood, Solidarity and Bonding in *The Power of Women*

In *The Power of Women*, Dr. Mukwege emphasizes the importance of women coming together, sharing their experiences, and supporting one another. Through sisterhood solidarity and bonding, survivors find solace and encouragement. It has been established that sexual abuse creates deep psychological wounds and is

processed differently from other types of physical assault and women agree “that sexual violence is an attack on our most private parts. “Not having control over our genitals creates a deep sense of humiliation” (Mukwege 133) "From the above quote, it is evident that women appear to be at their lowest when they are sexually abused. In such situations, being abandoned due to deep-seated patriarchal traditions exacerbates their plight, making social support and succour seem farfetched.

However, in the cases of Victims/survivors as shown in Mukwege’s *The Power of Women*, sisterhood solidarity and bonding fill in the gap and help rebuild their shattered lives. Denis Mukwege highlights them as vital forces in the journey toward healing and empowerment for survivors of sexual violence in conflict zones. His narrative underscores how the sense of community and solidarity among women is instrumental in their recovery and advocacy efforts.

Women survivors look out for one another especially the fresh victims, encouraging them to recreate themselves. For instance, at the Panzi Hospital and the City of Joy, the importance of creating this supportive environment where women can connect with one another, share their experiences, and rebuild their lives together is underscored, “group therapy sessions of between four and five women are encouraged to share their personal stories with each other...” (Mukwege 96). Panzi and City of Joy are more than just places of medical treatment; they are sanctuaries of mutual support and collective healing. The women who come to these centres find solace in the company of others who have endured similar traumas, forging deep bonds that help them regain their strength and sense of self.

Bernadette is one the inspirational women both at the Panzi hospital and the City of Joy. We are told that she spends hours in the surgery, literally talking away the pains of other women. In between her official work hours in the theatre, and physiotherapy sessions, she gives encouragements, sharing her stories and helps others believe in their futures through the power of her example as illustrated in the following excerpts,

It is not the end of life, she tells them, there's another life waiting ...the injuries, the rape, the memories won't go away. You have to accept them. We can't wish them away, however much we'd like to. But with one foot in front of the other, every day, slowly, over time, we can leave them behind (Mukwege 73)

Additionally, sisterhood, solidarity and bonding encourage group therapy. Women who share similar traumatic experiences can provide each other with emotional support, understanding and empathy that others might not be able to offer. This mutual understanding can create a safe space where survivors feel comfortable expressing their feelings and experiences. This is very true in the case of women in *The Power of Women* who realize through the shared experience of V, that they are not alone in their ordeal, neither are they to blame for their circumstances especially against the background of Congolese patriarchal society where the woman is always blamed for being sexually abused. At the City of Joy, the likes of Jeanne and Mama Christine are the champions of this process which makes others come to terms with the fact that they face the same struggle and pain.

The trio of the concepts of sisterhood, solidarity and bonding helps the process of smashing taboos. Sexual violence thrives in silence and to the extent that victims are quiet about their experiences, sexual crimes would continue to thrive. One of the milestones recorded by women in Mukwege's memoir is the ability to feel free to share their stories and hear similar accounts from others. It not only validates their experiences and feelings but frees them from oppressive societal pressure which encouraged them to suffer in silence. The group relationship makes them draw strength and support from one another. This collective support found in

sisterhood and solidarity among abused women creates an environment conducive to healing, making therapeutic interventions more effective and meaningful.

Conclusion

This paper analyzed the diverse and dynamic roles of women in narratives of wars and conflicts, challenging their traditional depiction solely as Victims. It investigated the centered depiction of women in the book under review as the writer markedly deviates from the conventional portrayal of women in narratives of conflict-related sexual violence, as marginalized, powerless, and helpless victims. He instead presents nuanced and empowering representation of women as resilient survivors, active agents, and courageous champions of change, who defy the stereotypes and challenge the patriarchal norms that perpetuate gender-based violence and negative representation.

The title of the memoir, *The Power of Women*, by Denis Mukwege, effectively illustrates the focus of the narrative. It highlights the central themes of the strength, resilience, activism and solidarity of the women, particularly those who have survived trauma and abuse. This title reflects the author's emphasis on the empowerment, courage, and solidarity of women in rebuilding their lives and supporting one another through adversity. Again, the choice of the title, underscores the diverse and dynamic roles of women in fostering hope, healing, and change, which is not only the core focus of the narrative, but also aligns with the aim and title of this paper

Additionally, the themes of trauma and resilience in the text align with concepts in literary trauma theory, particularly the importance of survivor testimony and witness and that of recovery and resilience. Mukwege's narrative serves as a form of testimony, bearing witness to the unspeakable truths of trauma and providing a voice to those who have suffered in silence.

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ERROR ANALYSIS OF IGALAPHONE FRENCH AND ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION OF FRICATIVE SOUNDS

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Abstract

The aim of this research work is to investigate the capacity of learners to orally and visually recognize and pronounce the fricative sounds of French and English correctly. The researchers focus on students of first year who have Igala cultural background to know their accuracy in identifying and pronouncing some fricative words. Qualitative method was employed in this research work. A descriptive study was conducted with 130 participants focusing on students. Certain oral tests and other research tools were utilized to collect data for the study. The researchers involve themselves to collect data by observing the respondents, recording their pronunciation and analyzing the error on their pronunciation based on theories of error analysis. The oral tests are divided into two categories, the first category is on French fricative and it is meant to test the French students while the second test is strictly to test the English learners on English fricative sounds. In the test, learners are to pronounce given fricative sounds while their performance is being noted. Finally, the study reveals several findings. Most learners do not have much problems pronouncing sounds like /f/, /s/, and /ʃ/, but find the sounds /v/, /θ/, /z/, /ʒ/, /θ/, /z/-/ʒ/, and /ʒ/ very difficult. The sounds the learners find easy to identify and pronounce are those found in the learners L1, while those they find difficult are those absent in the orthography of the learners' first language (L1).

Keywords: fricative sounds, pronunciation, sound recognition, French fricative, English fricative.

Introduction

Pronunciation plays a very crucial role in the teaching and learning of second language. It is regarded as a set of habits of sounds production. A variety of researches and studies have been done on pronunciation, its difficulties for foreign learners, its roles in language speaking or competences, influences of first language on the acquisition of second and foreign language, the interaction or difficulties in practicing the sound segments, and so on. (Lan and Khang, 2020; Gilakjani, 2012; Fouz-González, 2017). The habit of producing a sound is acquired by repeating it over and over again and by being corrected when it is pronounced wrongly. Learning to pronounce a second language means building up new

pronunciation habits and overcoming the bias of the first language. (Brannen, 2011) postulates that one predominant characteristic of second language (L2) speech is the presence of foreign accent. A major goal of researchers working in the domain of second language sound systems is to account for accented speech. The factors influencing second language production are many, and they interact in complex ways. One of the ways of detecting errors in foreign language acquisition is through pronunciation.

Errors are 'signals' that indicate an actual learning process taking place and that the learner has not yet mastered or shown a well-structured linguistic competence in the target language. (Richard 2002) refers to it as the use of a word,

speech act or grammatical items in such a way that it seems imperfect and significant of an incomplete learning. It is a systematic deviation which happens when a learner has not learnt something, and consistently gets it wrong. However, the attempts made to put the error into context have always gone hand in hand with either language learning and second-language acquisition processes, (Erdogan, 2005) postulates that error analysis enables teachers to find out the sources of errors and take pedagogical precautions towards them. Fricative sounds vary in numbers according to languages as a result of which errors of different degrees occur among foreign language learners.

Fricative sounds are sounds produced with partial closure of the organs of speech thereby allowing air to escape during pronunciation. (Ladefoged 2001) describe them as sounds produced by a turbulent airstream passing through a narrow constriction at some point along the length of the vocal tract. Unlike vowels, whose source is at the glottis, the source of fricative sounds is where a constriction occurs. Fricatives are articulatorily different from stops in that stops are made by blocking airflow completely in the oral cavity, while fricatives are made by forming a nearly complete obstruction of the vocal tract so that the airflow moves out through the narrow passage in the vocal tract due to "close approximation of two articulators", ((Cheon, 2005). Fricatives represent one of the later developing sound classes and are often produced incorrectly by most second language learners

Statement of the Research problem

Errors in language acquisition occur as a result of several factors. Among these factors are the differences in the elements of languages. The two major causes of error, coined by the error analysis approach, are the Interlingual error which is an error made by the Learner's Linguistic background and Native language interference, and the Intralingual error which is the error committed by the learners when they misuse some target language rules, Igala learners of French and English language commit several errors in the process of pronouncing the fricative sounds of the above-mentioned languages. Reasons for these

errors are the differences in the number of fricative sounds in the Mother Tongue (MT) of the learners and the target languages. Consequences of these errors among these groups of learners are lack of proper comprehension during conversation, giving of wrong and misleading report and instruction. If allowed to continue might lead to confusion. Over the years, a reasonable number of researches or studies on different aspects of Igala and English fricatives have been carried out. However, as far as combining these three languages is concerned, no research work has been done in this area. This is the gap that this study aims to fill.

Empirical frameworks

In a research work conducted by fauzi (2014) to find out the errors in pronouncing the fricative sound /f/ and /v/ of Sudanese students, his result showed that no errors were made on pronouncing /f/ because it is not changed into another sound but they did /v/ mostly because those substitute ones are similar to their l1 sounds. However, in the work of [Hakim Ramdani](#) on étude expérimentale sur la production des fricatives dentales anglaises /θ/ et /ð/ par les étudiants français de l'université de franche-comté, it was discovered that thai learners have much more difficulty in perceiving the labio-dental fricatives (/f/ and /v/). Indeed, this consonant cluster merges the most for thai learners. On the other hand, production errors are of the same order of magnitude than those of the other categories.

Also, Herman (2016) who carried out research to find out the difficulties in pronouncing the English labio-dental sounds of Indonesian students with the focuses on the labio-dental sounds /f/ and /v/. The result showed that most difficult position is the final one in sound /v/. The students were unable to pronounce the /f/ - voiceless and /v/ - voiced because they pronounce the same voice in words (in the indonesian language). thus, the sound /v/ is substituted by /f/ when it is mispronounced.

Furthermore, in a research work done by Hillary Shitambasi Mulama titled 'difficultés liées à la prononciation du français au kenya : le cas des apprenants des écoles secondaires des comtés de nairobi et bungoma' (difficulties related to French pronunciation in kenya: the case of

secondary school learners in Nairobi and Bungoma counties), the result showed that the phonetic categories of errors included the substitution and faulty assimilation of sounds, nasalization difficulties, omission and insertion of sounds, pronunciation of silent letters, the use of sounds foreign to the French phonetic system, the discrepancy of sounds and finally difficulties related to liaison. Majority of errors included those related to the faulty realization of phonemes specific to French, spelling-phony confusion, spelling comparisons within the French lexicon as well as generalization of pronunciation rules. The second for its part included errors of articulation attributable to the similarity of spelling between French words and their similar words in English.

Theoretical framework:

This study is anchored on the linguistic tool of contrastive analysis (CA) as propounded by Fries in 1945 and reported in Unubi (2019). According to Unubi (2019), the chief objective of CA is to examine the differences that subsist between languages as well as the difficulty they pose to L2 learners under teaching and learning situation. Consequent upon this, Fries (1945) as quoted by Lado [1957] which was cited in (Unubi, 2019) declares that the most efficient materials are those based upon scientific description of the language to be learnt, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner. (Gass 2013) cited in (Arjumand 2021) reported that (CA) is concerned with the influence of the native language (NL) in second language acquisition. It is carried out by comparing the first language (L1) of the learners and the target language (TL) to identify potential errors for the primary purpose of sorting out which areas of the TL should be focused on and which areas do not need to be focused on in the context of second language learning. For better understanding, (LI) as referred to in this research work is Igala language while the (FL) are French and English languages. For decades, it has been observed that native language or Mother tongue (MT) has influence on the learning of foreign language. This influence

could be positive or negative. However, (Al-Khresheh 2016), notes that among language teaching professionals as well as linguists, there is broad-spectrum consensus that the first language shapes second language acquisition. It was noted that in learning a FL, the learner tended to bring with him the knowledge of the L1, and suggested that this should be taken into consideration in teaching the L2, (Arjumand 2021). Judging from the foregoing, it has become evident that no better framework fits this study than contrastive analysis (CA). The reasons are: (i) this study juxtapose the Igala fricative sounds and those of French and English to see the extent of differences and similarities between them. Also the study exposes the challenges that the differences in the fricative sounds of the three languages may pose to Igala learners of French and English languages.

Research methodology

This study titled error analysis of Igalaphone French and English pronunciation on fricative sounds resorts to both primary and secondary sources of data. In the secondary source, data was drawn or collected from the archive of existing works in French, English and Igala languages. The fricative sounds of the three languages are represented. The Igala fricative sounds were obtained from the works of linguists on Igala language from the library of Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa while others were retrieved from the internet. These include the works of Omachomu G and Unubi A. The English and French fricatives were also gotten from the e-library of Kogi State College of Education Ankpa and works of French and English researchers. The primary source of data comprises of a total population of two hundred, including teachers and students of French and English from the College of Education in Ankpa, Kogi State. It samples eighty (80) students from English department and fifty (50) students from French department. Two tests were administered on the respondents, this comprises of one each for both French and English learners. The tests were oral and pronunciation in nature.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data to be presented here are from both primary and secondary sources. The primary source involves the fricative sounds of the three languages involved in the study.

Table 1. French , English and Igala fricatives.

French fricatives	Word found	Meaning	English fricatives	Word found	Igala fricatives	Word found	meaning
f	fleur	flower	f	fan	f	efo	To draw or pull
v	vert	green	v	voice	-	-	-
s	sac	bag	s	sun	-	-	-
z	<u>z</u> èbre	zebra	z	zoo	-	-	-
ʃ	chat	cat	ʃ	shore	-	-	-
ʒ	jupe	skirt	ʒ	pleasure	-	-	-
ʁ	rare	rare	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	θ	thorn	-	-	-
-	-	-	ð	then	-	-	-

Sources: Igala fricatives from Unubi (2019). English fricatives from <https://www.mimicmethod.com/about/>

Analysis

From table 1 above, we see that French has seven (7) fricative sounds; English has eight (8) while Igala has only one. English, French and Igala all have the fricative sound /f/. This is the reason why students do not have problem pronouncing the sound. English and French have the sounds /f, v, s, z, ʃ and ʒ/ in common. They are however absent in Igala sound system. The sounds are substituted for other sounds that are present in Igala orthography. The sounds /f/ and /v/ are substituted for the bilabial stop /b/, thus English words like fan and voice are pronounced as pan /pan/ and boice /bois/ respectively. Similarly, the French words fleur (flower) and ‘vert’ (green) have their initial sounds /f/ and /v/ substituted for the bilabial plosive /b/.

The alveolar fricative sounds /s/ and /z/ are another group of sound that that Igala learners find difficult to pronounce as a result of their absence in Igala sound. The palatal sound /ʃ/ is used for the sound /s/ while the palatal affricate /dʒ/ is substituted for the sound /z/. Thus the English words sun and zoo would be pronounced as /ʃɔn/ and /dʒu/ respectively. The /ʁ/ sound is present only in French and absent in both English and Igala. It is a velar fricative sound. Similarly, the dental fricative sounds /θ/ and /ð/ are present only in English and absent in French and Igala sound system. Both English and French learners of Igala background ethnic origin find the sounds difficult to pronounce. They are substituted for the alveolar stop /t/ and /d/ respectively.

Table 2: the students' ability to pronounce the French fricative sounds

Fricative sound	Number correct answers	of percentage	Number of wrong answers	percentage
f	50	100	0	0
v	36	72	14	28
s	36	72	14	28
z	26	52	24	48
ʃ	30	60	20	40
ʒ	10	20	40	80
ʒ	43	86	7	14

Source: field work

Table 3: students' ability to pronounce the English fricative sounds

Fricative sound	Number correct answers	of percentage	Number of wrong answers	percentage
f	80	100	0	0
v	60	75	20	25
s	65	81	15	19
z	55	69	25	31
ʃ	45	56	35	44
ʒ	5	6	75	94
θ	5	6	75	94
/ ð	4	5	76	95

Source: field work

Analyzing the data

Table 2: From table 2 above, it is clear that /f/ sound does not give any problem to our respondents. They all could pronounce the sounds

correctly. However, 35 out of the 50 respondents were able to pronounce the /v/ sound. This represents 72%. The /s/ sound has the same result as the /v/ sound. The /z/ sound however gave more

problems to the learners than the first three sounds. 26 respondents (52%) were able to pronounce it correctly while 24 (48%) of the respondents pronounced it wrongly. 30 respondents (60%) were able to pronounce the /ʃ/ correctly, the rest 20 students got it wrongly pronounced. The /z/ sound gave the students more problem than any other sound. 40 students (80%) got it wrongly pronounced. Finally, the /ʒ/ sound didn't give them much trouble as 43 (86%) respondents were able to pronounce it rightly.

Table 3: The table three (3) above shows that English language has the highest number of fricative sounds, total of eight. Igala learners of English language have no problem with the pronunciation of the sound /f/. Out of the 80 respondents, all were able to pronounce the sound correctly. That is a 100% performance. This is as a result of the availability of the sound in Igala orthography. The sound /v/ however poses a little challenge to the students as 20 of them representing 25% were not able to pronounce it correctly. The sound was substituted for the bilabial plosive /b/. the alveolar sounds /s/ and /z/ are fricative sounds which Igala learners find very difficult to pronounce. The sound was substituted for the palatal sounds ʃ and ʒ respectively. Out of the 80 students observed, 15 (19%) and 25 (31%) were unable to pronounce the sounds correctly. The respondents also found the sounds /ʃ/ and /z/ difficult. The percentage of wrong pronunciation is high at 44 and 94 respectively. The dental fricatives are the most difficult sounds for the learners and respondents. Only 5 (6%) and 4 (5%) students were able to pronounce the /θ/ and /ð/ sounds correctly respectively. The reason for this high failure rate is not far fetched. The sound is totally absent in Igala sound system. The /θ/ is substituted for the alveolar plosive /t/ while /ð/ is substituted for /d/.

Research Findings

From the data collected, presented and analysed above, the following are the findings of this research:

- I. French has a total of seven fricative sounds; English language has eight while Igala has one.
- II. The three languages in the research work all have the fricative sound /f/.
- III. The velar sound /g/ is common only in French fricative and absent in both English and Igala.
- IV. Likewise, only English language has the dental fricative /θ/ and /ð/.
- V. Igala learners of French and English languages commits more errors in sounds that are absent in Igala orthography. The errors are more in the dental fricative sounds.
- VI. Errors in sounds that are available in Igala orthography are minimal. Example of such sounds which gave students less trouble are /f, v, s/.
- VII. Respondents substituted English and French fricatives for sounds nearest to such in Igala orthography if such sound is absent. Examples are /t/ for /θ/, /d/ for /ð/, /dʒ/ for /z/.

Conclusion

In this work, the researchers have made an attempt on the subject matter. They were able to give comprehensive definition and explanation to the key words, these include pronunciation, error, error analysis and fricative sound. They use the framework of contrastive analysis as a tool to compare the fricative sounds of French, English and Igala languages. From the data collected, presented and analyzed, it is a fact that there are differences and similarities in the fricative sounds of French, English and Igala languages. The differences in the fricative sound are responsible for the errors committed by the learners. The existing differences noticed from the study have posed pronunciation difficulties to the learners of French and English as foreign language who are of Igala ethnic nationality. The learners are therefore advised to work on themselves to enable them to overcome the difficulty.

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TRANSITIONAL SHIFTS IN IDENTITY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SHORT STORIES IN CHIKA UNIGWE'S *BETTER NEVER THAN LATE*

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Abstract

This paper, explores the concept of shifts in identity within the context of Chika Unigwe's *Better Never than Late*. With the recent trend in migration, African writers are burdened with the responsibility of documenting the realities of migrants in diaspora. Previous studies have captured the disillusioned state of migrants. There exist some gaps in this discourse of shifts in identity in the course of migration. The study addresses the evolution of identities, struggle for agency, and negotiation of identities in a multicultural space. Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity is used in analysing the text. The selected narratives from a short story collection, vividly portray the evolution of characters' identities, as they navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by multicultural relationships and the postcolonial world. Hence, the narrative highlights the formation of hybrid identities, the impact of colonialism, and the struggle for agency and autonomy in a foreign land. The findings reveal that identity is not static but is continually influenced by historical, cultural, and personal elements as the characters' experiences in the stories exemplify the dynamic nature of identity, reflecting the interplay of historical, cultural, and individual factors responsible in shifting and shaping migrants' identities in diaspora.

Keywords; Hybridity, Identity, Migration, Multicultural, Transition

Introduction

Identity plays a pivotal role in the study of migration, as it defines an individual's sense of self and belonging. This multifaceted concept encompasses personal beliefs in connection to various social groups, such as religious, ethnic, or racial affiliations. Abrams and Hogg (2010) in *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes*, propose identity as an individual's perception of how they are seen by others, both within their own group and by those outside it. Migration, however, introduces a profound shift in identity, shifting the focus from who an individual is to where they fit and what roles they will undertake in a new

society. Consequently, migrants' identities undergo transformation in response to the dynamic contexts of their new environments, giving rise to new forms of cultural identities. In their host countries, migrants often encounter alienation and isolation as they face the harsh reality of exclusion and rejection, which may starkly contrast their initial perceptions of the receiving country as superior to their country of origin.

This experience of exclusion leaves migrants feeling disconnected from their own history and image. In response, they embark on a psychosocial journey referred to as the acculturation process. Berry (2003), classifies acculturation into four levels: assimilation,

integration, separation, and marginalization. In our discussion, we focus on integration, which entails maintaining one's original culture while actively engaging with the receiving society. This approach can lead to positive adaptation if the host culture embraces cultural diversity through openness and inclusion, a concept known as "sociocultural integration." Sociocultural integration encompasses an individual's ability to navigate daily events and demands in the new land, including language acquisition, forming interpersonal relationships, and participating in various aspects of the new society, such as friendships, businesses, and marriages. Acculturation serves as a bridge between the migrant's culture of origin and the culture of the new society, yet it can also result in emotional turmoil known as "acculturative stress" when migrants struggle to achieve this integration. Acculturative stress often stems from negative integration experiences, including stereotyping, discrimination, and rejection by the host society. These psychological challenges may lead to identity confusion, stress, depression, and culture shock among acculturating migrants. Discrimination and rejection, as described by João (2009), in *Immigrant Associations, Integration, and Identity*, act as significant barriers, manifesting as institutional, structural, societal, or individual challenges. These barriers may involve unequal citizenship rights, structural inequalities in various public spheres, racism, discrimination, and social distance. Cultural differences related to the migrant's culture of origin, religion, racial perceptions, and language can also impede integration. The host society's willingness to embrace these differences and acknowledge the contributions of migrants is crucial for their successful integration, as these barriers can obstruct the process, leading to unexpected depressive feelings and disillusionment with the host country.

Cultural identity is a critical concept for understanding acculturation in the context of migration. Gomzina (2012) in her thesis, *Multi-layered Cultural Identity and the Perception of the Self* argues that identity, whether cultural, social, ethnic or personal, helps people understand who they are. Self-identity is concerned with "how one

sees themselves" (p.6). Culture and self-identity are closely related. As Gomzina (2012) explains, "Culture is one of the major factors influencing a person's perception of their own identity" (p.7). It is, therefore, important to pay close attention to people's culture when studying an individual's identity. Hence, Cultural identity encompasses an individual's characteristics and knowledge, encompassing attitudes, behaviours, history, nationality, gender, language, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation. Religious beliefs, in particular, hold significance in preserving an individual's cultural identity and providing a sense of belonging, even in a foreign land. Losing one's moral and religious values can lead to a sense of "cultural bereavement." In the context of migration, cultural identity is shaped by the cultural norms of the migrant's background and the new environment they become a part of. Interactions between migrants and the host society can lead to assimilation, rejection, integration, or deculturation. Rejection involves the individual or their group distancing themselves from the larger society, while deculturation results in a loss of cultural identity, leading to alienation, acculturative stress, and feelings of failure and low self-esteem.

Theoretical Framework

Post colonialism and its prominent theorists have contributed to a great extent to migration literature by identifying a framework of features and principles either thematically or stylistically for it. The inherent characteristic of this literature, namely its primary focus on the marginal group of every society here the migrant brings it under the shadow of the postcolonial theory. Moslund (2010) justifies the above association through this statement: "post colonialism is, admittedly, an important element of the overall image of the twentieth century as the age of wandering"(p.11).

The two major proponents of postcolonial theory are Edward Said and Homi Bhabha who besides others, have made a lot of contributions to shape the migration literature principles. The most significant characteristic of this study is taken from Bhabha's "hybridity" which emphasizes the fact that the migrant individual is appreciated, in the present world, not by his clinging to his pre-given

ethnic morals and cultural traditions, but by "the power of tradition to be re-described through the conditions of contingency and contradictoriness that attend upon the lives of those who are in the minority" (Bhabha, 1994, p.2). Thus human identity, the ways migrant characters cope with their new life places, the uncertainties and insecurities they suffer from and the communication problems are regarded as the major themes of migration works. Here, the important matter to note is that the happy memories of the lost home land and the nostalgia the migrant characters experience for their past life are of very less emphasis in the migration literature. The characters endlessly struggle to recreate themselves through its encounters with cultural complexities and discriminating experience of being among the minorities. As such, its identity goes beyond the memories of past and reaches a sort of maturity.

Negotiating Identities in Diasporic Spaces in "Transfiguration of Rapu"

The short story "Transfiguration of Rapu" through the lens of postcolonial theory, particularly in relation to the transitional shift in identity, explores the impact of colonialism and imperialism on societies, cultures, and identities. This story provides a nuanced exploration of how characters grapple with their identities in the context of migration and multicultural relationship. In the story, we see this theme through the character of Gwachi, who has a Nigerian identity but has been living in Europe. He is torn between his Nigerian heritage and the Western culture he is immersed in. This creates a sense of identity crisis as he attempts to reconcile these two worlds.

The story also reflects the postcolonial theme of migration and displacement. Gwachi's movement from Nigeria to Europe represents the migration of people from formerly colonized regions to colonizers' countries in search of better opportunities. This migration often results in a sense of displacement and alienation, which is evident in Gwachi's struggles that is captured in the tale of the "Ogwashi man" a cautionary tale about "the covetous nature of human beings" (Unigwe, 2019, p.4), which circulates among the Nigerian community in Turnhout:

The Ogwashi man had been paid a huge amount to marry a certain Ogwashi woman whose husband was already in the country but who could not bring her in because he was legally married to a Belgian woman. The man—very much like Gwachi—missed his "real" wife so much he did not want to wait until he had got his papers and divorced his white wife to bring her in himself. But the Ogwashi man not only took the money, he also took the wife—even going back to Ogwashi to pay her dowry once the husband in Belgium had had his dowry returned. (Unigwe, 2019, p.3)

As suggested in the excerpt, the Nigerian migrant in the tale can be linked in many respects to Gwachi: both initially migrate to Europe without their Nigerian wives, both marry European women to obtain legal papers, both have their Nigerian wives become engaged in a marriage of convenience, and both eventually lose their European wife and their Nigerian wife. Although, some details differ between these two stories for instance, Rapu does not remain in Nigeria, nor is she "stolen away" by her "fake" husband Shylock, the tale of the Ogwashi man could also be seen in a different perspective. In a metafictional perspective, this could mean that, like the story of the Ogwashi man, the short story itself can be read as a cautionary tale, a tale that highlights the risks that one takes when using people and playing on multiple sides. This emphasis on the risks of marrying into Ogwashi Ukwu is a town located in Delta State, southern Nigeria. Citizenship creates an interesting contrast to the usual vision of marriage as an easy backdoor and free-for-all card making it possible for myriads of people to magically become European citizens.

Furthermore, Postcolonial theory often emphasizes the concept of hybrid identities, which emerge as individuals negotiate between their native cultures and the dominant culture of their new environment. In the story, the characters exemplify hybrid identities. Gwachi, for instance, is Nigerian but has adopted European ways of life to some extent, especially in his relationship with Hilde. Rapu, on the other hand, embodies the

complexity of hybrid identity as she straddles two worlds, being a Nigerian living in Europe and involved in a relationship with Gwachi. The story touches upon the legacy of colonialism through the characters' experiences. It is implied that Gwachi left Nigeria due to the harsh economic conditions and sought a better life in Europe, a common theme in postcolonial narratives. The story highlights the ongoing impact of colonialism on the economic and social realities of individuals and nations, as Nigerians like Gwachi seek opportunities in former colonial powers.

The story revolves around the complex marriages between Gwachi, Hilde, and Rapu. These marriages serve as a microcosm for the broader postcolonial experience. Gwachi's marriage to Hilde represents the allure of the West, while his relationship with Rapu reflects his connection to his Nigerian roots. However, Rapu's presence in Belgium is reduced to a commercial purpose as she is contracted into marrying a man named Shylock. Which is not only humiliating but has turned her into a commercial object. Gwachi in the excerpt below complains of the financial stress on him "Twenty thousand euros! And we are from the same village, the man is my kporakpo [villageman]! He loves money too much, when am I going to pay all that off?" "You make it sound like you're paying off a car," Prosperous said, irritated."(Unigwe,2019, p.3) the process in which she is brought to Europe strips her of her humanity as she is forced to leave with a total stranger so as to allow Gwachi her husband continue the process of becoming a Belgian citizen through his paper wife Hilde. This process makes Rapu's situation even more distressing as it drives her into constant uncertainty: "How long still?" Rapu asked every night when he dropped her off at Shylock's. 'Not long now', came the standard reply" (Unigwe, 2019, p.4). Gwachi is a man characterized by indecision, and this inability to commit deeply affects Rapu, for whom a future in Belgium with her husband becomes something more and more intangible, to the point that she regrets following him in Europe: "I don't know. Maybe I should ha... ha... have remained in Nigeria" (Unigwe, 2019, p.9). Due to the way in which Rapu is dehumanized and deprived of agency, it can be argued that her marriage with Gwachi partly fits

the story of an oppressive migrant relationship. On the contrary, Rapu's decision to enter into a polygamous marriage with Gwachi symbolizes her willingness to adapt to his Westernized lifestyle while maintaining her cultural identity. The title, "Transfiguration of Rapu", suggests a significant transformation. Like many characters in the collection, she changes significantly as her story progresses. At first, she is depicted as a relatively flat character, with her shyness and insecurity being her main and only character traits: "She sat down on the edge of the sofa, as if she were ready to flee at the slightest sound" (Unigwe, 2019, p.1). However, Rapu is progressively shown to transform into a more confident, more rounded character, who starts to prioritize her own happiness and whose life does not appear to solely depend on Gwachi anymore. Rapu's decision to leave Gwachi and her subsequent relationship with another man signify her evolving identity and her pursuit of personal happiness.

Her eyes had lost their startled look and acquired a certain calm. When she spoke, she no longer wrung her hands or cracked her knuckles. She settled into Prosperous' sofa as if she owned the place. She asked for music so she could dance. She no longer mentioned Hilde or her pregnancy. "Her eyes are opening," Prosperous said to Agu. She liked this woman. (Unigwe, 2019, p.10)

This transformation reflects the idea that postcolonial subjects are not static; they adapt and change in response to their experiences and the changing world around them. This transitional shift is primarily seen in the character of Rapu as she navigates the complexities of her identity in a multicultural and postcolonial context. Rapu's identity undergoes a transition: At the beginning of the story, Rapu's identity is rooted in her Nigerian heritage. She is introduced as Gwachi's Nigerian wife and is portrayed as a newcomer to Europe. Her identity is strongly connected to her cultural background, including her stutter, which symbolizes her struggle with language and her position as an immigrant. As Rapu settles into her life in Europe, she begins to adapt to the new cultural environment. She learns to communicate more effectively in the European context, although

she still retains elements of her Nigerian identity. This adaptation represents the formation of a hybrid identity, where she incorporates elements of both her native culture and her new surroundings.

However, Rapu's identity experiences conflict when she realizes that Gwachi is not fully committed to her and is also involved with Hilde. This conflict forces Rapu to re-evaluate her identity and her place in Gwachi's life. She undergoes a personal transformation and decides to pursue her own happiness and independence, which includes entering into a relationship with another man. Rapu's decision to shift her identity in the short story can be attributed to several factors and motivations: firstly, Rapu's marriage to Gwachi is portrayed as uncertain, unsatisfying and unfulfilling. Gwachi is emotionally distant and divided between Rapu and Hilde, his German wife. This lack of emotional connection and commitment in her marriage likely makes Rapu feel unloved and undervalued, prompting her to seek happiness elsewhere.

Secondly, Rapu may have felt constrained in her role as a wife, especially in a polygamous marriage. Her decision to shift her identity could be driven by a desire for autonomy and independence. She wants to make her own choices and decisions about her life, rather than being dependent on Gwachi's choices.

Thirdly, Rapu's relationship with another man represents an opportunity for her to fulfill her personal desires and needs, which may have been neglected in her marriage to Gwachi. Her new relationship allows her to experience love and happiness on her own terms. Rapu may have seen her marriage with Gwachi as an unhappy situation due to the emotional distance and uncertainty surrounding it. Her decision to shift her identity and pursue a relationship with another man could be a means of escaping this unhappiness and seeking a more fulfilling life.

By shifting her identity and making decisions that prioritize her own happiness, Rapu reclaims agency over her life. This agency allows her to assert her independence and make choices that reflect her own desires and needs, rather than being subject to the decisions of others.

Finally, the multicultural context of the story may have also influenced Rapu's decision. Being exposed to different cultural norms and values, including ideas about personal autonomy and independence, may have encouraged her to shift her identity and make choices that align more with her personal beliefs.

However, Rapu's decision to shift her identity in the story is also driven by a combination of factors, including an unhappy marriage, a desire for autonomy, the fulfillment of personal desires, the need to escape an unhappy situation, and the influence of the multicultural context. Her actions represent a quest for personal happiness and agency in a complex and challenging environment. The most significant shift in Rapu's identity occurs when she decides to leave Gwachi and make choices for her own future. This decision reflects her autonomy, which may not have been as pronounced at the story's outset. She shifts from being defined solely as Gwachi's wife to becoming an individual who makes choices based on her own desires and needs. Rapu's actions in pursuing her own happiness and making choices for her future demonstrates her reclaiming of her identity. According to Okonofua (2013) in his article, "I Am Blacker Than You: Theorizing Conflict Between African Immigrants and African Americans in the United States" observes that the idea of blackness gives African immigrants living in America the pressure of wanting to change their image and identity. The foregoing shows how she is no longer passive but actively reshapes her life, indicating a shift from a more traditional and submissive role to a more self-determined one.

The transitional shift in identity in the short story "Transfiguration of Rapu" is primarily exemplified through Rapu's journey. Her identity evolves from being defined by her Nigerian heritage and her role as Gwachi's wife to becoming an individual who adapts to her multicultural environment, confronts her own desires, and takes control of her future. This transformation reflects the complexities and nuances of identity in a postcolonial and

multicultural context, where individuals must navigate multiple cultural influences and make choices that shapes their sense of self. The author's use of Language is a crucial aspect of identity in postcolonial literature. Rapu's stutter is symbolic of her struggle with language, which can be seen as a metaphor for her overall experience as a postcolonial subject. Her stutter represents the difficulty of communication in a multicultural context and the power dynamics that exist between colonizers and colonized.

In conclusion, "Transfiguration of Rapu" offers a nuanced exploration of transitional shifts in identity within the context of the postcolonial theory. The characters' complex relationships, cultural clashes, and personal transformations exemplify the challenges and opportunities faced by individuals living in multicultural and postcolonial settings. The story underscores the idea that identity is not fixed but is shaped by historical, cultural, and individual factors, and it invites readers to reflect on the dynamic nature of identity in a postcolonial world.

Migration and its Consequences in "Becoming Prosperous"

"Becoming Prosperous" is a short story that revolves around Prosperous, a Nigerian woman who has relocated to Belgium with her husband, Agu, due to violence and unrest in their home country. The story delves into the challenges they face while adapting to their new life in Belgium and the strains it puts on their relationship. Prosperous reflects on their initial dreams of success in Belgium, which have now been replaced by low-paying jobs and unfulfilled aspirations. She decides to take action by enrolling in Dutch language lessons to improve her job prospects. Throughout the story, there are flashbacks to the violence and chaos they experienced during the riots in Nigeria, which led to the loss of their home and livelihood. The story also highlights the changing dynamics in Prosperous and Agu's relationship, with Agu becoming more domineering and expecting Prosperous to take on traditional domestic roles. There are occasional conflicts, both verbal and physical, reflecting the frustrations and tensions in their

relationship. Despite the challenges, Prosperous holds onto her dreams of a better future. She envisions herself pursuing various courses to acquire new skills and find a fulfilling career. The story ends with Prosperous asserting her determination to take control of her life and pursue her goals, indicating her resilience and willingness to change her circumstances.

The couple, Prosperous and Agu, migrated primarily due to the volatile and dangerous situation in their home country, Nigeria. The story mentions that they experienced riots and violence, which resulted in the loss of their home and Agu's supermarket in Jos the capital of Plateau state. This violence likely stemmed from ethnic or religious conflicts, political instability, or other forms of unrest that have periodically plagued the city of Jos. Consequently, the violence and chaos in Nigeria likely made it unsafe for Prosperous and Agu to continue living there. The loss of their property and the danger to their lives were compelling reasons to seek refuge in a more stable and secure environment. The loss of Agu's supermarket significantly impacted their financial situation. Moving to Belgium, they might have hoped for better economic opportunities and the chance to rebuild their lives. Witnessing violence and losing their property was a traumatic experience for the couple and they saw that migrating to a new country would be a way to distance themselves from those traumatic memories and start anew. But on the contrary, they experience a complex challenge as regards their marriage. In Nigeria, the couple used to stand on a much more equal footing.

In "Becoming Prosperous", the title character is led to reflect on her old life through many flashbacks set in her home country. She contemplates, "It was a different life. She and Agu were equals. Here, surrounded by the odour of their losses, he feels the need to assert himself as a 'man'" (Unigwe, 2019, p.39). Despite Nigeria, and Igbo land in particular, being highly patriarchal both characters are successful in an unrestrained way in their home country; they are both free to pursue their goals

as they please. It is only when the couple migrates to Belgium that Agu becomes self-conscious about tasks such as cleaning or cooking. In Nigeria, “[h]e would not have thought it insulting to be asked to do ‘a woman’s job’” (Unigwe, 2019, p.35). Unigwe herself is familiar with this phenomenon of Nigerian men reverting to patriarchal values after migrating. According to the author, this issue can be linked to class and economic status. Indeed, when leaving Nigeria, Agu and Prosperous have to abandon their middle-to-higher-class lifestyle and replace it with a lower-class one. This becomes a source of conflict, as Agu refuses to take part in household tasks and delegates everything to his wife. On the other hand, having to play the role of housekeeper makes Prosperous resentful towards her husband, for whom she sacrificed her life and career in Nigeria: “The Agu for whom she moved to Belgium, where was he now?” (Unigwe, 2019, p.43). The idea that Agu and Prosperous’ relationship is not initially governed by patriarchal rules is important regarding the present analysis. Indeed, it highlights the fact that inequality and abuse are not inherent to the couple. Instead, it is presented as the result of adversity and concessions.

We are further exposed to the deliberate shift by the protagonist from a traditional marital life to a more modern life as Prosperous is shown to fight back. The first instance of this that comes to mind is her telling Agu to “[f]uck off” (Unigwe, 2019, p.47) at the end of her cathartic introspection. Indeed, “Becoming Prosperous” makes it clear that its protagonist wants to turn her life around, that “she feels an impatience to begin another journey” (Unigwe, 2019, p.45), and her snapping at her husband is a telling sign that this new journey is about to begin. That being said, the end of the short story is not the only instance in which Prosperous is seen to fight back. For example, during their arguments, when Agu hits her, she hits back, and, right after, when he apologizes, she does not: “She never says anything. She never says she is sorry for hitting back. She never absolves him” (Unigwe, 2019, p.44). In addition to this,

Prosperous is also revealed to use contraception against her husband’s wishes:

“Are you on the pill?” he asks. Each time she says no. The only response he wants to hear. The room is not big enough, the space is too limited, for any other answer. This place has not only shrunk her but has made her a convincing liar. In that way she has changed, too. (Unigwe, 2019, p.40)

Prosperous’ subtle acts of resistance, such as refusing to forgive her husband or refusing him the children that he desperately wants “he prayed for children” (Unigwe, 2019, p.53) can be seen as a way for her to regain a certain form of control within the constraints of her marriage. Furthermore, Prosperous mentions that they had high expectations and ambitions when they moved to Belgium. They likely believed that their education and skills could lead to successful careers in a more stable and developed country, which might not have been possible in Nigeria’s uncertain environment. Prosperous and Agu migrated from Nigeria to Belgium primarily to escape the violence, seek safety and security, find economic opportunities, and pursue a better future for themselves, all of which are common reasons for people to leave their home countries in search of a more stable and promising life abroad.

There is however a transitional shift in the identities of Prosperous and Agu as they migrate from Nigeria to Belgium, exposes them to a new cultural environment. They are faced with the challenge of navigating Belgian culture, language, and societal norms. In doing so, they adopt some aspects of Belgian culture while retaining elements of their Nigerian identity. This blending of cultures results in a form of cultural hybridity. Again, Learning Dutch, the predominant language in Belgium, is a crucial step for their integration. As they acquire proficiency in Dutch, it becomes a part of their linguistic identity. However, they continue to speak their native language, reflecting a linguistic hybridity where they negotiate between their mother tongue and the language of their host country.

In a bid to adapt, the couple's economic and social status undergoes a transformation as well. In Nigeria, they had relatively stable careers

and a certain social standing but in Belgium, they are forced to take on low-paying jobs and adapt to a different socio-economic landscape. They are both trapped in menial jobs Prosperous being a cleaner and Agu working night shifts in a bread factory. Right away, they seem to conform to the stereotype that migrants are always uneducated and unskilled workers. Nevertheless, their employment situation also entails that the pair is anything but lazy. Indeed, Prosperous and Agu are both depicted as hard workers and frugal people, who, despite their efforts, seem only to be able to afford the bare minimum for a living:

The thought of either of them suggesting a dinner date was almost laughable. Every penny had to be counted and preserved. Back home in Nigeria, they had gone out a few times a month to a fancy Chinese place. . . . But here, going out was a frivolity they could not afford. (Unigwe, 2019, p. 82)

This shift in their social and economic positions reflects a form of hybridity where they negotiate between their past and present circumstances. The couple now inhabit a hybrid identity as migrants. They straddle two worlds, belonging to both Nigeria and Belgium, yet fully belonging to neither. This sense of in-betweenness is a key aspect of Bhabha's concept of hybridity. They are neither entirely Nigerian nor entirely Belgian, and this liminal identity shapes their experiences and self-perception. Their identity formation is an ongoing process. They may grapple with questions of belonging, integration, and identity, often feeling like outsiders in both countries. This state of perpetual negotiation and adaptation exemplifies the hybridity of their identities.

Interestingly, the story does not explicitly explore whether Prosperous and Agu ultimately find a sense of belonging after negotiating a hybrid identity in Belgium. However, there are indications in the narrative that suggest their journey towards belonging is a complex and ongoing process, as the couple are shown grappling with the challenges of adapting to Belgian culture, language, and societal norms. They have not completely assimilated into their new environment, as evidenced by Agu's reluctance to engage with certain people due to

their differences. This suggests that they may still feel like outsiders to some extent. Language plays a significant role in their sense of belonging. Their inability to speak Dutch, fully affects their integration into the Belgian society. The couple learn that their degrees mean nothing, except if they are able to learn and speak Dutch something to which they react to with absolute disbelief:

At one of the job centres, the young man they saw asked them, Do you speak any Nederlands? Nee? Frans? Nee? They could not hope to get the kind of jobs they were after, working in a bank or teaching, if they spoke neither Dutch nor French. Ideally, he said, they would need both. Some German and some English would be useful too. Whenever she retells the story, Prosperous always ends with the same line: "Haba! All those languages and a teaching degree to be able to teach mathematics to a bunch of kids!" (Unigwe, 2019, p. 32)

Admittedly, the language barrier can be particularly complex in Belgium. Nevertheless, Agu and Prosperous' predicament is also a telling example of how Western countries do "not value foreign degrees as highly as native ones. This gap between the two characters' initial expectations and the reality of their new life in Belgium has devastating effects on their morale as well as their relationship. Their low-paying jobs and limited social network in Belgium also impact their sense of belonging. The narrative suggests that they may not have fully integrated into the Belgian social and economic fabric. We also witnessed Prosperous and Agu's identity struggles, as mentioned in the story, which indicate that they are still negotiating their sense of self in their new environment. Agu's desire for babies and Prosperous' desire to pursue language lessons and a new career path demonstrates their ongoing search for purpose and identity. In other words, while Agu's character is centred on bitterness and fatality, Prosperous refuses to consider herself defeated. Her entire character is based on her rejecting the inevitability of her position, not only regarding her marriage, but

also her professional situation two aspects of her life that are linked with one another. As she washes vegetables in the kitchen, she ponders:

I should have taken language lessons, gone for that teaching degree, refused to settle for this . . . Instead, we let ourselves be defeated by the thought of going back to school, sitting through lessons to learn not one but at least two new languages. Which is perfectly understandable. No. It's not. In fact, why can't I do it now? (Unigwe, 2019, p. 33)

This internal dialogue perfectly highlights how conflicted Prosperous feels since arriving in Belgium. She constantly oscillates between acceptance and discontent, and this hesitation could have been much longer, were it not for hearing of her university friend's success: "If Ifeatu could chase her dreams, why can she not? They were both ambitious as undergraduates" (Unigwe, 2019, p. 46). The contrast that "Becoming Prosperous" establishes between the two women is particularly important in that matter. Indeed, it is stated in the flashback sequences that both were ambitious and had promising careers ahead of them, yet one is running for governor in Nigeria, while the other is cleaning houses in Belgium. This discrepancy not only serves as a trigger to

prompt Prosperous to turn her life around, but it also presents Belgium as a "dream killer", a country that spurns the aspirations of its foreign-born newcomers, no matter how hard or ambitious they work.

In conclusion, the narrative provides a nuanced examination of identity transitions through the lens of postcolonial theory. It delves into the intricate relationships, cultural conflicts, and personal evolutions of its characters, reflecting the challenges and opportunities encountered in multicultural and postcolonial contexts. The story emphasizes that identity is not static but is continually influenced by historical, cultural, and personal elements. It encourages readers to contemplate identity's fluid and evolving nature within a postcolonial framework. "Transfiguration of Rapu" and "Becoming Prosperous" poignantly highlight the complex challenges faced by migrants in the diaspora. Both Prosperous and Agu are on a journey to forge a hybrid identity in Belgium. However, the narratives leave it ambiguous as to whether they have fully achieved a sense of belonging. Their experiences underscore that the process of adaptation and integration is ongoing. They are likely to continue confronting issues of identity, culture, language, and belonging as they navigate their new lives in Belgium.

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**MAN AND THE GEOMETRICAL PROGRESSION OF THE ENCUMBRANCE OF LIFE: A
CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON J.P. CLARK-BEKEDEREMO'S *ONCE AGAIN A CHILD*, R.A.
MASAGBOR'S *SOLEMN CHANTS* AND TONY AFEJUKU'S *A GARDEN OF MOODS***

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Abstract

Humans begin their journey on earth with a cry, an indication of anguish and the inevitability of pains that will bedevil the entire pilgrimage. Like its commencement, the moment of cessation of this life's excruciating task could be likened to the marcabale dance of a lizard's tail when it is slashed off its parent's body. The whole exercise could be best described as the timely visitation of Nigerian herdsmen at regular intervals on a community of harmless and defenseless humans. The thrust of this article, therefore, is to explore the geography of pains, articulating the conspiracy against man and its inevitability. This will be screened through J.P. Clark-Bekederemo's *Once Again a Child*. R.A. Masagbor's *Solemn Chants* and Tony Afejuku's *A Garden of Moods*.

Keywords: Anguish, inevitability, visitation of Nigeria herdsmen, conspiracy, harmless and defenceless.

Introduction

This is where you win the battle,
in the playhouse of the mind (74)
Maxwell Maltz.

Life is a series of steps. Things are
done gradually. Once in a while
there is a giant step, but most of
time we are taking small
seemingly insignificant steps on
the stairway of life (105) Ralph
Ransom

It is indeed a truism to state that life is a journey in crises, an exercise in critical moments meant to be assessed, which though inevitable, remains surmountable when undergone with wisdom. The proportion of humans who navigate the ineluctable storms of life with the desired perspicuity remains very insignificant that one is compelled to ponder on why most human beings never bothered to search their yesterdays in order to understand their today and project their tomorrow. Ignorance can

never be an attribute, hence there is need to begin each day by deliberately asking oneself the things worth learning today that one did not know the previous day.

If life's journey begins with an agonizing cry, and the cessation of same like the macabre dance of a lizard's tail slashed off its parents body, life's battle field, the human mind should be well guided in order that the battle of life would be won with ease. The imperativeness of this position lies on the beauty of Maxwell Maltz and Ralph Ransom's postulations above that the battle of the encumbrance of life is won "in the playhouse of the mind" (74), and that "life is a series of steps. Things are done gradually" (105) respectively.

Maltz and Ransom's explications above as cited by Brain Tracy (2007) form an excellent plank on which to negotiate the discourse on man and the geometrical progression of the encumbrance of life.

Most humans are deluded that they do not

see the reality around them and lack the luster to live a life of integrity. Hence, they do not act in a way that ensures that each of their tomorrows finds them further their today progressively. Rather than allow their dead pasts remain in the tombs of life, they consciously exhume and act such as if their live depend on them.

Clark, Masagbor, and Afejuku in their poetry topic, demonstrate that men do not learn from the errors of their past, the lives of their progenitors, and great men who were able to leave their footprints on the cemented walls of history, as well as those whose ignoble lives were very repulsive.

The question has been why is man unable to come to the knowledge of his real identity, of his sameness with all permeating prudence and authority thereby making it impossible for him to have access to laws higher than the ordinary mind which will enable him to overcome the seeming conspiracy against him, and achieve the right results? Man seems to have been incapacitated from the genesis of his life, hence each step he takes is a progression of pains which makes him worthless. He seems not to bother about this stage, hence he deliberately encourages it. Perhaps we must agree with Abraham Lincoln as cited by Donard J. Trump (2009) when he posits that “I don’t think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday” (47).

The thrust of this paper, therefore, is to demonstrate that man not only expands the geography of his pains, but ensures its regular upward review. The navigation of this discourse will be done through Clarks *Once Again a Child*, Masagbor’s *Solemn Charts* and Afejuku’s *A Garden of Moods*

Textual Analysis.

In our analysing of Clark-Bekederemo’s poems, it is expedient to explain that he sees man’s earthly pilgrimage as a journey in pains. He seems to align with Salman Rushdie’s postulation that man at birth is “tumbled forth into the world” (3).

Rushdie’s major character in the perforated sheet of his book *Midnight Children* in agony states further:

There were gasps. And, outside the window, fireworks and crowds. A few seconds later, my father broke his toe; but his accident was a mere trifle, when set besides what had befallen me in the benighted moment, because thanks to the occult tyrannies of those blandly saluting clocks I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country” (3).

In Clark – Bekederemo’s “My Grandmother Konono”, one sees how man compounds his problems. The narrative persona tells the readers that konono was “twice widow to father and son,/Adomi and Amakashe” (2). Man’s greatest problem is choice. Why will a son get married to his father’s wife at his demise? What unimaginable pleasure does he expect to find in that which must have killed his father? And when the son died, the “twice widow” lived for decades. What a world?

The poet, earlier in the poem explains the pain at birth, a journey one begins in great mental anguish thus:

That was the day she rose full first
Into my view, pulling me as it were,
out of the darkness of my childhood
Against which I must have been
Struggling, I was told, right from
the moment
I was born, crying, as if protesting.
The event, which I now know I had
Good cause like everyman to be
afraid of. (2).

If the narrative persona, like everyman begins life on planet earth like this, and remains conscious of the enormity of the intrigues involved, one would have expected a journey loaded with caution. But rather than this, what one sees is one of multiple

errors where a son will joyfully marries his father's wife at his demise and soon die while the "twice widow" lived for decades.

Konono's grandchild who incidentally is the narrator of this poem tells us that more than fifty years after his mothers explanation, he could still not puzzle the grandmother's corpse out. He further explains how tired and worn out he is:

I told them to leave my grandmother
Alone, asking, Doesn't the body
Tire one? How self and body are
Separate, and one tires of the other
I then could not have known, nor am I
sure
I do today, now I, too, an tired and
worn

"In father in his tribute,:" the reader is confronted with man in agony right from birth and the monumental progression of pains as we see in "My Grandmother Konono". The persona narrates that

... with my mother now
Nursing my sister Tiro and
Owumieta, both dead before I was
six,
And being no longer with my
grandmother,
Taken from me at two in another
place,
I began to have, even when in the
middle
of a game in those crowded
compounds,
Full of laughter and fights,
A feeling of being lost in a fair. (15)

The narrator lost two of the siblings at the age of six and the grandmother at two, and that grief become a permanent appendage in life. The parents, most especially the mother who knows labour pains are grief ridden. It is a sad thing for ones childhood to be buffed with tragic incidents such as the lost of loved ones. Hence, "he began to have... a feeling of being lost," but not found, a feeling he has to live with all through life.

The same idea is Clark – Bekederemo's dominant feature in "When My Father Fell ill, "A

Certain Guest" and "Early Cases of Death". Humans in their senselessness and self-deceit fail to understand that in Nigeria, and "elsewhere, men would have to make their peace with the world which they knew existed beyond the faith" (429) as V.S. Naipaul (1982) puts it in *Among The Believers An Islamic Journey*. They fail to make those they come across in life happier than they meet them. Hence, as Clark-Bekederemo puts it "one person's pain is dead wood to others". (16).

... when My father, who could not take
A sick wife, fell ill himself
His wives felt it down to their children,
And the cry would go up to
His mother, miles away in
Another, land (16)

One is daily grieved when one realises that man who was tumbled forth into this world, and gets inundated in his infancy with pains that gracelessly adore his pilgrimage, compounds it by being polygamous, having not "less than five" (16) wives, deliberately fails to love them equally due to pretense of the politics of polygamy, is abandoned to his mother when ill. The question is, what on earth will make a man gather ant-infested wood in preparation for the winters of life. The narrator talks about thus:

The big strong man of the house,
Seated in his room, steaming
In his sweat, his polo shirt
Stucked to his skin, and every time
The fit of that feaver took
Him by his head to his feet,
From even where I sat, my head,
Swollen with fear, which had
Everyone there cold, the cement floor
Seemed to shake deep down under
me (17)

In *Early Cases of Death*", and "A Certain Guest," the poet gets his readers deluged with the agony of existence. In "Early Cases of Death" the narrator states:

... in my father's house
Of many wives, from time to time,
I heard my mother or a mate,

Crying aloud for help, not
Because of any beating from
My father, fierce before his forties
But for the life of a child,
Like me, lying still on the ground
who she would not let some men...
Crowding around her, bear off
To the bush, as a bundle in a mat (19)

The poet is very explicit about the causes of pains in the house. The poet talks about beatings of the many wives and children by the violent and aggressive father of the house which may have resulted from the quarrels between the many wives, and children, and the trauma of being a polygamist and deaths which may have been caused by any of the above factors among other things .

In “The Reasons Why” the clue to man’s affliction and the geometrical progression of the encumbrances of life seem graphically displayed more than the proceeding poems. He states that the problems are endemic because men have failed to learn from their mistakes and that of their progenators.

My father took tough line
With his first set of children, ...
So they would grow to become
The brothers he did not have.
In a big, divided house
To which he was heir, just as
His father fought him always .
In public, to save him from
The gates, belching fire around (29)

Here, the poet talks about a polygamous home where envy reigns and love does not exist. The poetic persona’s father and grandfather are symbols of polygamy. A critical examination of their lineage will show that the great grandfathers and their forebears were polygamists who had suffered the calamities involved, and would have wished their sons avoid their pitfalls. He explains that the grandfather fought his father always, even in public just to save him from “the gates, belching fire around” (29). The belching of fire, troubles, bewitching of any mate’s sons who may be heir

apparent at the demise of their husband, among other things, the poet likens to the eruption of a volcano and the attendant destruction.

The poet in “A Tale in the land” tries to explicate the degree of division, hatred, deaths and other forms of evil for which a father would have wished the son shuns polygamy and other very costly mistakes made by him and his forebears which he would not allow his sons to make. It reads.

I had a piece of yam hot in my hand,
And already wet, a mouth full of it...
Back to that of my father...
At once into one voice of horror,
Demanding to know where I got and
how I got
The piece of yam, and who gave it to
me,
While my poor mother grappled and
disgorged
It from my hand and month (20)

It will be beautiful to imagine how his mother perhaps with the dexterity of a Boko Haram, holding the throat of the son trying to make him forcefully expel whatever piece of yam that may be found in his mouth. Even the answer that came:

From a wife from the other place,
Then also eating her own piece of yam
As she pledged her act was one of love
(20).

This would be disregarded for only few of such acts are truly acts of love in every polygamy where no woman wants other males children to be better than hers. These doubts and insincerity become very glaring as one critically analyses “Time for prayers”.

My father had a wife when
Another wife lost a child,
That was the time she prayed
Aloud to God to fasten her own
Children, tighter still to her back (36).

Clark-Bederemo is well known for his concern for man’s peace on the earth hence his poems are journeys in pains. Roman N. Egudu (1977) speaks of Clark-Bederemo thus:

Grief, Chaos, insecurity, and irredeemable loss are the hallmarks of the deftly woven fabric that is Clark's poetry. A tragic vision of life pervades his poems. ...Clark remains negative throughout his poetry, but all the same he addresses the whole of humanity as did Dante ... The tragedy of Clark's African man can therefore be viewed as that of any man anywhere else in the world, and the ugliness of the world of his poetry spills through the frontiers of the African world to reflect and link with the universal horror of life (25 - 26).

The poet who begins his *Once Again a Child*, a beautiful explication of how men consciously complicate and endanger their lives and that of their loved ones within the family unit, never mince words in stating that men are impervious to correction. The first line of the first poem in the collection reads "Tell me, before the ferryman's return" (v), an indication of pains. The last poem of the Collection titled "A Second Coming" has the following lines

"Okemeje, Okemeje, hear me...
To you my brother! Awake, awake,
awake,
And come home to your own! All the land
Knew well you were like no other around,
And therefore by plot of men, fearful
Of you, they had to take you out, right at
The outset of the great journey before you.
Now that you have come back as this child
In my arms, let destiny, denied
You then, be at last fulfilled, as you chose
At first, when coming into this world"
(71-72)

The poet here talks about men terminating people's lives due to envy. Men kill whoever they see as a better person, instead of begging the perceived better being to help them improve themselves. Okemeji was killed at the outset of the great journey of life.

Having done an analyses of how Clark-Bekederemo expounds or explicable man and the

geometrical progression of the encumbrances of life, it is necessary to state that Masagbor in *Solemn Chants*, a second test for this analysis, aligns with this people's posit that man creates problems for himself because he is mischievous, impervious to correction, and unwilling to do the needful, hence his life remains an endless drama of pains from generation to generation.

The first line of the poem "The Baton" states: "you refused my batton" (38). The word, 'refused' in Chamber's 21st Century Dictionary means "to declare oneself unwilling to do what one has been asked to or told to do, etc to say 'no'" (1172). The unwillingness to do what one has been told to do is a resultant effect of being stubborn or the task not being in tune with ones posture on the issue at stake. The question is, why will the child refuse the baton? What is the nature of the batton? Is it ideal for the child to refuse? Is the call detrimental? What are the consequences of such refusal? As readers ponder on these questions, the poet further states:

And chose to run your race,
Ere we had got set for it
You turned the table, the order
changed
Leaving all startled and speech
bereft,
What happened son for we'd struck a
cord. (38)

The death of the son in the above poem leaves the reader with a lot of "unsearchable secrets" (38) which need to be fathomed out. Readers need to ponder on how the said cord was breached. Was it a forced agreement? The fact that an agreement was reached and broken, the plank on which it was, not withstanding, shows that there has been a progression of agonies and those involved must have been hurt. Hence, that status quo was not maintained, and never will, with the demise of one of the partners.

In "Many Partings," the poet further tells his readers that grief is man's greatest companion:

I have seen many partings

But none as this, when Kenny
Unannounced, was spirited to
the unknown
I have seen many partings but
None as gory, as when
innocence was mangled.
I have seen many partings
But none so hurting, calling the
eyes to tears
Of compassion, the cry of
injustice
The call of the able disabled
without a fight (37)

The readers finds it disturbing that each successive parting is dealier them the former as it leaves tremendous afflictions than the initial one. The partings become highly disturbing when they are frequent and spiced than their daily meals. Indeed, what a gory scene to see the innocence mangled and the able disabled every minute.

In “Morning Awareness,” and “The York of Pains”, the poet probes further in his attempt to comprehend the misery of life. He laments the death of a son, like he has done in some of the poems analysed already:

I take a peep at the room
It’s hollow and empty
Only the phantom I feel I see,
Son, if truly the dead lives...
I looked into the vista of years...
That proved so lethal, so fatal in later
times
Garry, I’m dazed with disbelief
At the reality that you are gone
Why? What went wrong? (35)

And what went wrong lies in ourselves. Paul S. Buck as cited by Donald J. Trump (2009) states that “if you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday”. (35). Sigmund Freud as cited by George Seldes (1985) Corroborates Buck when he opines that: Life as we find it is too hard for us, it entails too much pain, too many disappointments, impossible tasks. We cannot do without palliative remedies... (144)

This is why men ought to adhere to Buck’s argument and take a detailed study of the yester years, understand their today and put things right in order to maximize the knowledge to create an environment where life is meaningful and death comes when men have aged gracefully and very much willing to go to God. Freud’s argument for palliative measures at least is good for though “the goal of all life is death,” and, casting back,” (144) as Freud magnanimously adds, it is a thing of joy for fruits to be ripe before they fall.

In “The Yoke of pain,” the reader is confronted with:

Oh Lord...
You taught us to see the child
As heavenly gift to love
A gift of loyalty or
Was it a gift to taunt us? ...
Yet Lord you tore him off.
Mindless of the hearts pained with
grief (34)

Masagbor, the poet, who “is married with children, one of whose demise is responsible for the dept of emotion in some of the poems” in the collection, shares the pains of Joy Swift and her husband when her family experienced “The Very Depths of Despaire” (17) as she calls it in her book *When Death Isn’t Fair*, According to her:

Five days later we buried our children by order of age, Steven, 14, Gregory. 12, Tonya, 3, and Stacy 17 months. But the tragedy was not yet over.
Our eldest daughter Stephanie, 17, lay in a hospital bed the night Billy had gunned down her brothers and sisters. Twenty days later her six-week-long battle with cancer ended, and we laid her to rest besides the other four. Within a span of three weeks our family of seven had diminished to just George and me. Enormous grief engulfed the days and weeks that followed (14-15)

Imagine burying five children of the same parents

within a span of three weeks. Imagine the murderer of four of the five children, being “a 14 – year – old boy who had played with our son, Greg. His accomplice, 20 – year – old. Richard, Jr., didn’t even, know the children’s name” (14). Imagine the murderer “Billy Dyer had bragged about his plan to steal guns from our house and that he would kill anyone who got in his way.” (14) Imagine being told later that “the authorities revealed that Billy had a juvenile record in two states and had attempted murder before. He had planned to use the guns to go on a killing spree until he got caught” (14) He bragged and did carry out his ungodly act. And the powers or government that ought to have stopped him allowed the unwanton destruction of lives. Imagine being a victim of this horrendous storm or watching helplessly as it sweeps through a family. This kind of pain must have informed Masagbor’s accusation:

Yet Lord you tore him off
Mindless of the hearts pained
with grief. (34)

Masagbor, angered by the mindless tearing off, of loved ones, tries to probe the heartlessness of the divine “for the yearning for one gone before his time/ leaves a yearning for later fellowship beyond” (39) as posited in “The summon” one of Masagbor’s Songs of Pains. What joy lies in a situation where a life is terminated before mid-day in order to make those left behind to grieve and long for fellowship beyond, either to appease one who tears off heartlessly, or to live a happier life.

Having done with two of the three poets whose collections form the basis of this investigation of the vista of pains, and men’s inability to minimize it because man is impervious to correction, it becomes expedient to explore Afejuku’s position on the matter. Afejuku’s exploration of the theme of the encumbrances of life could be seen from his thematic construct on the death of loved ones, the effects on those left behind and his note of finality that not only does grief lingers, it progresses geometrically.

The first poem in his *Garden of Moods* – “Fear of unrealised Ambition” explicates this feeling. Infact the entire poems in the first section of the collection titled “these elegies’ espouse grief, its lingering effects and multiplications and how it affects the individuals. It is on record that the demise of loved ones, creates installmental deaths in the living. In “Fear the Unrealised Ambition” the poetic persona states:

Come, see him in this thought’s flight
In the river of creation which is life
He sees himself as drowned:
All his dreams and hopes are gone...
Himself not realising the thing of his
life!
To achieve a little thing is the labour of
ages
He takes his exit by licking the
hemlock-
O better not to live at all, if this is life
(3)

From this first poem, the poet articulates what poets form ancient time in all climes inundate their world with trying to figure how best to minimise the monumental increase of pains. A.E. Eruvbetine’s (2009) postulation that “literature captures the human-being-in-action simultaneously absorbs and fabricates reality through experiencing”. The fabricated realities serve as a lamp, illuminating the paths of the People. Brar B.S., and Sukhde Singh (2011) in their article talk about “the relationship between the dead and the living and act as being a communal and socially functional activity” (471) It is also worth mentioning that in Africa, ancestors are seen as the basis for morality. They are mentors and historians of the land. Infact the first mentor of the people. Afejuku ends the above mentioned poem, stating that it is better you do not live than:

To live and carry dreams that mock
You to your unwilling grave (3)

If men’s ancestors are mentors and historians, and the people, the mentee live and make the mistakes

made by the mentor and even more, it then means something is really wrong. Why will a people or community keeps living and dreaming dreams that indeed mock them to an unwilling grave if not their being impervious to corrections.

In “Timi”, the persona talks about the demise of a friend which makes him cry each dawn for fourteen days.

Baba, it is Timi, my friend, he is dead.
Poisoned
He died sixteen nights ago. Temi whose father and mother
Died on the road, not quite three months now leaving him a handsome legacy.

The impediments to the attainment of life ambitions, and aging gracefully are indeed numerous and within every being. Readers are inundated with how much pains, Timi’s death has caused his friend. Readers got involved in the trauma, sympathizing and empathizing when they know that

Timi’s life was shot by his wife whom he ‘for-better-for-worsed’
Barely one month before his father and mother died.
The hyena tricked his life with dainty porridge for the legacy (6)

There is a deliberate attempt by the poet to demonstrate how much pains people experience when evil befalls them or their loved ones. A man was shot or killed by his wife whom he wedded in a colourful ceremony in the church. What a very high degree of pretended love. It becomes very painful and disturbing when one realises that after killing him with “dainty porridge”, and ensuring the death of his parents, barely a month after, the hyena, she is laid claim to the legacy of the family “daring any of Timi’s siblings to come near” (6). It also agonises to realise that Timi has no faithful siblings” who could sue her for treachery and murder, and that Timi and this hyena wife had:

For a long time played and danced

and swam

In each other’s affection before
They went to the Roman Church
that glued them... (7)

The question is why will a man choose one who will kill him? Why will God even create such a being? There are so many whys’. No reader goes through this fabricated reality without taking a quick look at his back as if there was a security alert. The poem makes readers pale with pains as the burden of trust increases geometrically every day.

Idegwu (2011) talks about man’s hopelessness as his life is bedeviled by the encumbrances of life that multiplies astronomically every second. According to him, Afejuku tries to “depict man as being toast into the world incapacitated by its creator, and circumstances around him, even before the commencement of his earthly mission, and absolutely left without a choice for the choice he is claimed to make on earth are the choices made for him by forces he cannot comprehend which hold him hostage eternally” (79). Though this paper agrees with Idegwu’s explanation, there is need to state that man’s choice which grinds him to a halt is due to his not being prepared to study his yesterday. He deliberately ignores his yesterday, the lessons he should have learnt from the lives of his forebears hence he even makes worst mistakes than those before him. Idegwu’s assertion above helps the reader to appreciate Afejuku’s frame of mind in his A Garden of moods. In “Death”, the last poem in that collection, the readers find a call on death to come immediately without delay:

Death, come for me now.
Come and claim me –
I am yours
Now that I am yet to be known
You’ve taken too may
People dear to lose
Worse more, at the
Pinnacle of their fame
Why the world needs them

More than you (51)

The poet's argument here is that death should come when one is yet to be known or successful. He abhors death calling, refusing, and dragging one when one is thriving. He also frowns at death calling when one has committed so much evil that makes him a hell candidate. In his words, So come, come now, That I'm most prepared (51)

Conclusion

The legacy of our parents and ancestors influences each of us in different ways. Unlike many people my age, I am acutely aware of my family's past. It has for me proven both overwhelming and motivating, burdening and uplifting. I wonder how I would have reached if I had come up against the obstacles that so many of my relatives had struggled to overcome...

Our era as well as our legacies shape us... (x)

Jonah Martin Edelman's (1991) postulation above in his foreword to his mother's book: *The Measure of Our Success, A Letter to My Children and Yours* is very relevant as I sum up this discourse on men and the geometrical progression of pains. If man has allowed his

ancestors' legacies, and the era in which he lives to shape him positivity, he would have suffered lesser pains than his fore bearers.

The three poets, used for this analyses are explicit enough in their explications of man and his dilemma. Man needs to understand and appreciate the fact that in life the consequences of man's actions often come first and the lessons later on or afterwards if man is alive to learn it. This is very much unlike Colleges where students got their lessons from their teachers first before being examined on how well they had truly learned. This is why it is expedient for one to be careful on one choice. No man should repeat the errors of his forebears. This is what the poets in this discourse have tried to educate the readers.

In conclusion, it is necessary to stress that where one is at present is not very important. What matters now is in what direction one intends to move. Let the postulations of these augurs in this study shape mans actions from now in order to absolutely minimize pains. This is because it is only when man is able to make himself that he can make his world. Perhasps man can do himself some good if he takes Abraham Lincoln's postulation to heart. To him "I don't think much of a man who is not wiser than he was yesterday".

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ENCODING EXPERIENCE IN HELON HABILA'S *OIL ON WATER*: A CRITICAL STYLISTIC STUDY

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Abstract

There is a prevalence of corruption, violence, exploitation and ecological devastation in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*. These afore-mentioned vices are portrayed through the use of dialogic, significations, symbolisms and narrations—howbeit—aided by sentential enaction of actions, events and state. Thus, this paper seeks to holistically examine the representations of actions, events and state in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*. To do this, Jeffrey's (2010) critical stylistics model which centres on the investigation of underlying ideologies within a text or an utterance is the foundation upon which the study was premised, with emphasis on the Halliday's Transitivity Model—thus forming its theoretical framework. With this framework, Habila's use of the processes of transitivity to highlight the subject of corruption, violence and exploitation as entrenched in the society. The method of analysis used was the textual analysis. Twelve excerpts were extracted from Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* with focus on his choice of lexical items within a syntactic construction. This aided in the explication of how actions, events and states are represented in the text. From the findings, it was concluded that Habila's lexical choices reflect the four processes of the transitivity model; Material process, verbalisation, mental process and relational process. Through these processes, his ideologies which, primarily, is the indictment of the government and oil companies in the exploitation of the people are not just well represented but have within them the potential to be impressed upon the readers.

Keywords: Critical Stylistics, actions, events, state, transitivity model, ideologies, representation

Introduction

In Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* is a recurrent motif of water which is a medium through which themes of ecological devastation, environmental degradation, corruption, violence and exploitation are explored (Aluya and Ocheme, 2024). This portrayal is primarily aided by the sentential enaction of action through lexical choices. As such, it has prompted curiosities from several researchers across the disciplines, especially language and literature who seek to investigate these significations and portrayals—howbeit—through diverse means and approaches. Ojarikre (2018) for instance, approaches Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* through critical stylistics but with emphasis on systemic functional grammar (SFG). In his study, he examines the usage of nominal group by Habila to explicate the

exploitation of petroleum resources in the Niger Delta. Ojarikre arrives at the conclusion that Habila has successfully named and described the situation in Niger Delta (2018).

Though Chukwulobe (2012) agrees with Ojarikre, he insists that "it is the exploitation of the human members of the environment that gives impetus to the exploitation and destruction of non-humans". There is substance in Chukwulobe's claim as the non-sentient objects in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* are incapable of intentionally causing their own destruction. Besides the rationale that makes Chukwulobe's claim plausible, he hinges this claim on Book Chin's Social Ecology Theory as a way of foregrounding it.

The subjects of discourse under Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* are allow for multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary studies

thus researchers from both language and literature have examined the texts. Nonetheless most of those examinations are greatly focused on the environmental implicatures of the texts. One of such examinations is that of Abianji-Menang (2021) who focuses her study on the negative impacts of oil production on the Niger Delta. As a literary critic, she premises her research on the ecocentric discourses Cheryll et al. This approach is similar to that of Ojukwu (2019) who focuses on the country's dependency on oil and its devastating consequences on the environment. Ojukwu does this from a purely literary perspective by highlighting dialogues and analysing their implications to the subject in discourse.

Contrary to this, Chris et al. (2024) though hints on environmental degradation, centres his study on the investigation of how meaning is negotiated in the text using certain stylistic elements such as repetition, synonym, antonym, hyponym and metonym. While there is a great divergence in approach between Chris et al. (2024) and Ojukwu (2019), Abianji-Menang (2021), there is similarity with that of Ojarikre (2018) as both studies are chiefly premised in stylistics. However, even with the similarity, Chris et al. diverges from Ojarikre as his work approaches Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* via an ecostylistic route and with focus on the Cohesion Theory whereas Ojarikre approaches the same text via critical stylistics and with emphasis on Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). Though there have been substantial studies on Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*, both stylistically and literary, there has been no work on critical stylistic study of representations of actions, events and states using Jeffrey's action tools of analysis while emphasising on Hallidayan's Transitivity Model hence the gap in which this study seeks to fill.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework upon which this study is underpinned is Jeffries' (2010) critical stylistic model with emphasis on the Hallidayan's

transitivity model. Jeffries' critical stylistic model argues that naming is the linguistic process which people, places and things are typically identified in language, including the ways in which such entities can be characterized as well as the ideological consequences of it (Jeffries, 2010). Within the CS model is the position that a writer or speaker has the power to choose the words that suits her/his purpose the most closely and this includes the choice of lexical verbs which will prevent the situation in the way that the author desires and with the intension of influencing the readers (Jeffries, 2010). This choice by the writer aids in the presentation of information as action (what is being done), event (what is happening) and state (what simply is) (Aluya and Ocholor, 2024). Though there are ten tools that could be used to analyse a text as highlighted by Jeffries, this study focuses on the tool of representing actions, events and states. As stated by Jeffries (2010), the Hallidayan's transitivity model is suitable for such analysis as it assigns lexical verbs to a number of different categories according to the kind of process or state they appear to be describing. These categories include; Material action processes, verbalization processes, mental cognition processes and relational processes (Ogunsiji and Aluya, 2022).

The material action, according to Jeffries (2010) is the most "prototypical verb" as it refers to something done or happening physically but also with abstract elements. The material action is split into three categories; Material Action Intentional (MAI) which is an action performed by conscious beings; Material Action Supervention (MAS) which is concerned with unintentional actions performed by conscious beings; Material Action Events (MAE) which is concerned with verbs used alongside inanimate actors where a human agency is downplayed or missing (Aluya, 2018).

The second category is the verbalisation process which is concerned with the description of

any act in which language is made use of. Because this often signals the presence of a human actor, verbalization is mostly associated to material actions (Aluya and Edem, 2018). The third category is the Mental Process (MP) which is concerned with what happens within human beings. This process is split into three types; Mental Cognition (MC) which has to do with thinking, knowing, realizing etc.; Mental Reaction (MR) which has to do with feeling, liking, hating; Mental Perception (MP) which has to do with sensing, hearing, feeling, seeing and tasting. The fourth category is the relational process. This process is concerned with the static or stable relationships between carriers and attributes, rather than dynamic actions or changes. The verbs in use here include *to be* verbs, possessive relation verbs like “have” and circumstantial relation verbs like “be” (Jeffries, 2010). The representation of actions, states and events is possible through sentential enactments and these enactments are imbued with lexical choices primarily focused on verbs referred to as “process” while other constituents of the sentence are referred to as “actors” and “goals”. The CS Model, in combination with Halliday’s transitivity model captures well the representation of actions, states and events in Helon Habila’s *Oil on Water* hence its choice as the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

Method of data collection/analysis

The data of this study are excerpts from Helon Habila’s *Oil on Water*. These excerpts were carefully and deliberately selected with referents to their representation of actions, states and events as well as association with Habila’s lexical choice. The excerpts were also selected in alignment with the major themes of the text which are corruption, environmental devastation, ecological degradation and violence. This was to aid in the examination of how these themes were represented in actions, states and events through lexical choices. The method of data analysis used was the content

analysis. This aided in the explicit examination of the author’s lexical choices, the material actions encoded in them and how it could affect the perceptibility of the readers. Through the lenses of critical stylistics with focus on Halliday’s transitivity model, the manner in which the author’s ideologies were represented in actions, states and events as well as its presumable influence on the readers were holistically taken into view.

Analysis and discussion of findings

In this section, data from Helon Habila’s *Oil on Water* are examined through the lens of critical stylistics with emphasis on transitivity model. The transitivity model is concerned with the lexical choices of an author, with specificity to verbs and how they are central to the message a writer intends to convey. Also, through critical stylistics, the ideologies of Helon Habila as well as the perceptibility of those ideologies by the reader are taken into view. Prominence is given to verbs and verbal phrases since they are the crux of the transitivity model and as such are highlighted in bold. The objective of this analysis is to examine the representation of actions, states and events by Helon Habila. As such, the processes of the transitivity model (material action, verbalization, mental process and relational process) are the focus of this analysis.

Excerpt 1

So why haven’t the militants **bombed** the pipelines here because of the oil?
Because the oil companies **pay** them to not do so.

The verb “bombed” in the above excerpt is categorized under the Material Action Intention (MAI) process as it is directly associated with a conscious actor which is “the militants”. Through an interrogative dialogue, Helon Habila highlights the Material Action of violence and exploitation of natural resources in the Niger Delta. Also, in the response to the question by the first character, the verb “pay” is used in association with a Noun

Phrase that, though seemingly looks unconscious, is however conscious as it is embedded within its underlying structure the conscious people at the hem of affairs in “the company” thus making the sentence a material action intentional (MAI) process.

Excerpt 2

Our pipelines **are vandalised** daily, **losing** millions...and millions for the country as well. The people **don’t understand** what they do themselves.

In the above excerpt, the verbs/verb phrase “are vandalised” and “losing” are material action events (MAE) process because the actors are not overtly stated in the sentence. Though the sentence is made up of the noun phrase (NP) “our pipelines” at the position of the subject, it is not the subject but the object as such the recipient of the action/verb “vandalised” and “losing” cannot be considered the actor. Helon Habila’s approach to this sentence is reflective of the obscurity of the actors that perpetrate the crime of vandalization. These actors are often times invisible and wanted by the government as is evident in the above excerpt. Nonetheless, the verb phrase “don’t understand” is associated with an overt actor and that makes it a material action intentional process (MAI). This speaks to the ignorance of the people in face of exploitation and violence, both from the government and non-state actors.

Excerpt 3

Chief Malabo **was arrested**, his hands **tied** behind his back as if he were a petty criminal, on charges of **supporting** the Militants and **plotting** against the federal government and **threatening** to kidnap oil workers.

In the above excerpt the verbs “was arrested” and “tied” are both material action event process (MAE) as their actor is not overtly stated. Though there is an NP element as the head of the sentence, the sentence in real sense is a passive sentence

which makes the NP element an object/recipient of the verbs and not the actor. This is because the text hinges greatly on narration and most of the expression are reportages. However, in the reportage by the narrator, chief Malabo is the acting on the verbs “supporting”, “plotting” and “threatening” thus making the sentence material action intentional process (MAI).

Excerpt 4

The Helicopter **followed** us, a disinterested bee, **watching** from a distance. I **expected** the gunman to start shooting, but nothing happened. The helicopter **stayed** with us for a few minutes we **progress** slowly toward the distance mangrove clustered on the horizon, then it left. But before our sigh of relief had properly escaped our lips, two speedboats **appeared** from behind.

In the above excerpt, the verbs “followed”, “watching” and “appeared” are used alongside an inanimate actor “the helicopter” and as such classified under the material action event (MAE) process. The use of these verbs with the inanimate actor aids in the beautification of Helon Habila’s language. But besides that, the insect metaphor “bee” in association with “helicopter” and its “disinterest” is a signification of the conversative nature insects, specifically bees and how they tend not to attack until one pokes their hive. The helicopter belonging to the oil company just followed the journalists like a bee, not attacking them but guarding against the potential unraveling of the corruption and exploitation perpetuated by them (the oil company). Nonetheless, the verb “progress” belongs to an intentional actor “we” which in this case are the journalists and their tour guide thus making it a material action intentional (MAI) process.

Excerpt 5

I **knocked** my knee against wood and for a few minutes, my left leg was totally paralysed. I **held** my knee with one hand

and with the other. I **clung** to the side of the boat as the boy tried to bring the engine alive.

The verb “Knocked” in the above excerpt though associated with a conscious being is beyond the control of that conscious being and according to Jeffries (2010), such action is regarded as material action (MAS) supervision. Whereas, the verbs “held” and “clung” are within the conscious being’s control, and in fact, a reactionary action to earlier highlighted MAS and as such is regarded as using the material action intentional (MAI).

Excerpt 6

Somewhere in this godforsaken waters, that’s where he must have picked it up. There’re plenty of bugs flourishing here. And he was in pretty bad shape to begin with. I suspect his liver is gone already.

The verbal phrase “picked it up” is a supervision if the clause in which it appears is taken into cognizance. This is because the subject “he” unintentionally “picked it up”, the it being a disease as reported by the narrator through a previous dialogue. However, it can also be considered verbalization if the clause is taken in its surface structure. However, the narrator chooses to use a clause with a verbal construction that downplays the language. In the literal/surface activity, the actor might have well picked something concrete up that is not overtly stated but with referents to a previous conversation about “diseases”, the deep/metaphorical activity of picking up something abstract “somewhere in” the “godforsaken waters” is revealed. This representation by Helon Habila portrays the negative actions of the government and how it directly and indirectly affects the citizens. However, by using the verbal phrase “picked it up” in relation to the innocent conscious being, Habila showcases that looming tendency for the citizens to be blamed and held responsible for the evil perpetuated by the government and non-state actors. The weight of this exemplification by

Habila is so heavily encoded as it carries within it the unconscious indictment of a victim by their sympathizer for reasons of mental conditioning by the government and non-state actors. The sympathizer does not realize that by using the verb phrase “picked it up”, he is accusing the victim of being responsible for the ordeals the government and non-state actors have burdened them with.

Excerpt 7

Well, I did my duty as their doctor. I **told** them of the dangers that accompany their quenchless flare, but they wouldn’t listen. Jeffries (2010) gives rules on the identification of verbalisation. He asserts that verbalization is any action that uses language. He further asserts that “verbalisation comprises of a “sayer” which is compulsory and a verbiage which is common, but not always present and a target, which is less common” (Jeffries, 2010). In the above excerpt, the verb “told” is classified as verbalisation since it possesses the sayer “I” and the verbiage “them of the dangers that accompany their quenchless flare”. The usage of this verbalisation by Helon Habila signifies the presence of a forewarner in the society who usually sees the potential evil of a government or non-state actors and warns the people of them. But like in most cases, the people either blinded by religion or ethnicity as is the case of Nigeria, do not always listen.

Excerpt 8

And whenever a single ray **found** its way through the million leaves and branches and **fell** on our skin or on the dead leaves below, it **looked** so pure and startling, as it had been refined through a thousand sieves.

The verb “found”, “fell” and “looked” in the above excerpt is associated with an inanimate actor which is the “single ray” thus categorized on the material action event process (MAE). This portrayal represents the “pure and startling” nature of an environment that is not plagued by the woes of industrialization and the exploitation that

accompanies it. By doing this, Habila reimagines a pure and clean environment void of pollution, degradation, violence and corruption. To embolden it, he juxtaposes this pure environment with the “refining” metaphor. This is captured by the expression “refined though thousand sieves”. With this metaphor, Habila showcases how an environment can be as beautiful and startling as gold even without being mined and plundered for such raw materials.

Excerpt 9

I **realized** how very much like theirs my childhood must have been. Barefoot and underfed we may have been but the sea was just outside our door, constantly **bringing** surprises, suggesting a certain possibility to our lives.

The third category of the process as highlighted by Jeffries (2010) is mental process which is split into three categories; The first is Mental Cognition (MC), such as thinking, knowing, realizing, understanding and so on. The second type is Mental Reaction (MR) such as feeling (emotionally), liking, hating and so on. The third subcategory is Mental Perception (MP) which includes sensing, hearing, feeling (literally), seeing, tasting and so on. From the above excerpt, the verb “realized” signifies the mental process of cognition. Here, the actor “I” gets an epiphany of how similar and wretched his childhood was to the people he is witnessing. This epiphany as portrayed by Habila reflects the daunting realisations that comes when one is finally void of ignorance. In this case the actor is finally aware of the corruption by the oil company and with that knowledge looks at the children with retrospective lens. Nonetheless, the verb “bringing” is acted upon by an inanimate actor and thus categorized under the material action event process (MAE).

Excerpt 10

The major **heard** about it and one night he got too of his men and went to the boy’s favourite night club and abducted him

right in front of everyone. They **took** him to the graveyard and shot him in the groin after breaking his four limbs.

The above excerpt makes use of the mental process and belongs to the sub-category of mental perception with specificity to hearing where the verb “heard” is used to describe the action that accompanies the actor. The use of this by Habila is to engage the readers sense of perception and as such auditorily impress upon them his ideologies. Since verbs like this are often associated to a conscious being, they could pass for material action intentional (MAI). Nonetheless, it is pertinent to not that the action they convey are not always external to the being but internal thus making them a mental process as is the case of the verb “heard” in the above excerpt. However, the verb “took” belong to the material action intentional as it pertains to an action external of its performer (the conscious being or beings).

Excerpt 11

My father **is** still in prison, Boma and I still **go** to visit him and each time he **sees** her face, he turns away and his hands shake, recently she has stopped going. My mother comes from the village once every month to see him. Occasionally I go with her and I **watch** them look at each other and sometimes they have a lot to talk about, and sometimes they just stare at each other in silence. The last time I went with her was over a month ago. I sit away from them, but I **can hear** what they are saying; she tells him about her life in the village, the farm, how the harvest this year has been good. He listens, nodding his head, and all the time he stares at her trying to **catch** her eyes but she avoids his eyes as she speaks.

In tandem with Jeffries (2010) the fourth category of process is the relational category, which represents the static or stable relationships between Carriers and Attributes, rather than any

changes or dynamic actions. These verbs include the copula (to be) and other ‘Intensive’ relations (RI), Possessive relations as indicated by verbs like have (RP) and ‘Circumstantial’ relations (RC) which involve verbs of movement and the verb be as well, with the placing or timing of the process being uppermost. In the above excerpt, the verb to be “is” represents the static action between the carrier NP “My father” and attributes “still in prison”. This portrayal is reflective of the continuum of the punishment by the government and the suffering of the poor masses. Here, Habila attempts to influence upon the readers his ideology of the government’s tendency to abuse power and indulge in excesses. Nonetheless, the verb “sees” is associated with mental perception of sight while “hear” is associated with that of hearing. This usage is to enable the readers not just understand these ideologies but sense them as well. However, the verb “catch” is a case of verbalisation as it is a metaphorical representation of locking eyes with a person.

Excerpt 12

I **felt** hope and doubt alternating in my chest. I **felt** a stirring of some hunger inside me, something I had never **felt** before, a conviction almost, that I was meant to be here, on this boat, on this trail. I was like a breeze blowing through the long-forgotten section of my mind. I knew zag could see this staring hope in my eyes; he could give it a name and describe how irresistible was its pull

The verb “felt” as used in the above excerpt is associated with the sub-category of mental perception where the action of feeling is within the actor. This verb is deliberately used and repeated by Habila to represent the internal belief and conviction that members of the society should

have as possessed by the actor in the above excerpt.

Conclusion

Through critical stylistics and with emphasis on the transivity model, the representation of actions, events and states have been examined. While doing this, the ideologies embedded in Helon Habila’s *Oil on Water* has been highlighted. Some of those ideologies include Habila’s views of the government and oil companies as being complicit in the ecological degradation and environmental devastation that is prevalent in the Niger Delta. Consequentially, through the processes of the transivity model, material action intentional (MAI), Material action unintentional Material action supervision, verbalisation, relation process and mental cognition processes have been explored as well as the manner in which Habila uses them. Besides the manner in which he uses them, the intent for their usage has also been revealed. For instance, it has been made pertinent through the study that the assigning of verbs to actors—whether conscious or unconscious has an effect on both the ideology embedded in such expression and the potential perceptibility of such ideologies by the readers. Such perceptibility is fostered by the mental cognition process where verbs that act within the conscious being are used. With this, Habila seeks to make his readers feel, see, touch, hear and smell these degradations and by so doing relate to the actions, states and events represented in *Oil on Water*. Further ways in which these ideologies are emboldened and given life is by the assigning of actions to inanimate actors. By so doing the water, which is a recurrent motif in the text, is given life and made to also feel the weight of its destruction—which, by extension implores empathy from the readers.

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NEGATING AS A CRITICAL STYLISTIC FEATURE IN KAIANE AGARY'S *YELLOW-YELLOW*

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Abstract

This paper examines Kaiane Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* from a linguistic perspective. The objectives include to identify and describe the hypothetical worlds created in the texts, the linguistic features used in creating such nonexistent worlds and the ideologies promoted in the text through the creation of such nonexistent worlds. Drawing on Jefferies's (2010) Critical Stylistic model, this paper utilizes one textual-conceptual function, namely: negating to examine few extracts purposively sampled from the text. Findings show that the various nonexistent worlds identified in the corpus studied include the natives' expectation of the media to herald police brutality of youths in the region, the natives' desire for good education and better life for their children, provision of family needs by the Niger Delta men and the youths' willingness to sacrifice their lives for the emancipation of the region. These non-existent worlds are constructed through negating which is realised syntactically, lexically and morphologically in the text. Through the critical stylistic tool of negating, the ideologies of environmentalism, justice, activism and patriarchy are foregrounded. Unveiling the ideologies residing in the text explains the reasons behind the creation of the non-existent worlds used by the author to improve the story.

Keywords: Critical stylistics, hypothetical worlds, ideology, Kaiane Agary

Introduction

Ideologies are expressed and supported by language, which makes language and ideology intricately intertwined. An ideology is a set of ideas or beliefs that directs a person's or a group's actions and choices (Aluya and Ochulor, 2024). These actions and choices can be expressed through language, which can also influence people's thoughts and perceptions of their environment (Freedon, 2013). For example, various terms or expressions used to convey certain concepts may be linked to particular forms of ideology. Similarly, distinct language and vocabulary may be associated with specific ideas. Language use can reflect and reinforce social, cultural, and personal beliefs (Stewart 1999, Ogunsiyi and Aluya, 2022). Understanding how

language is used to express and reinforce ideas is crucial because it allows us to better understand and communicate with others. Additionally, it is vital to acknowledge that language is not neutral and that how it is used has a significant impact on how people think and act (Fowler and Kress, 1996, Aluya and Edem, 2024).

Language is employed to depict the world in literature (Aluya, 2023). The worlds depicted in literature can be actual or hypothetical. Actual implies depicting the true state of the world in a literary text. Conversely, hypothetical refers to the evocation of a non-existent world in a literary text. Whether actual or hypothetical, writers have ideological basis for creating any form of world in their texts. Certain terms and phrases employed by writers may reflect their thoughts or biases,

influencing how they depict and interpret events in their texts. This seminal paper focuses on the creation of hypothetical worlds in literary texts with a view to describing the ideology promoted through the creation of such worlds. The text under study is Kiane Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*.

Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, published in 2006, depicts the sordid conditions of the people in Niger-Delta, especially the women who are exposed to various exploitations as a result of the ecological problems of the environment. These ecological problems result to social ills in the society (Francis, 2019). The Niger Delta is an agricultural society, with women producing riches in collaboration with nature. The narrative revolves around Zilayefa, the protagonist, and her mother, Bibi. The protagonist describes how her mother, grandmother, and great grandmother supported themselves through fishing and farming. However, they have been subjected to different sorts of violence and had their land confiscated as a result of the oil conflicts that have plagued the oil-producing area for several years (Ojiakor, 2020).

The Niger Delta represents colonial exploitation, whereas Zilayefa, Bibi, and other women represent the victims of both colonial exploitation and patriarchal systems, which are mechanisms of enslavement and oppression. Zilayefa is the offspring of an exploitative patriarch who got Bibi pregnant before abandoning her. Bibi endured the agonising difficulties of her pregnancy before giving birth to Zilayefa and dealing with the burden of raising her as a single mother. Zilayefa on her own is further exploited by Admiral Ken who sexually and emotionally exploited her and thereafter abandoned her (Hani, 2024).

Through the text, Kaine Angary exposes the moral bankruptcy caused by joblessness, poverty, lack of social amenities, and environmental degradation in the Niger-Delta community. The author gives a vivid pictorial view of the

patriarchal and cultural victimizations that the women are subjected to as a result of the horrible conditions in their environment. The women are sexually exploited by both foreign and local men because they need to survive in this hostile region that is suffocating. As earlier mentioned, this seminar paper examines the text's construction of nonexistent worlds using Critical Stylistic Theory. It seeks to explain the ideological motivations behind the writer's creation of such worlds. In order to accomplish these objectives, the paper first outlines the problem or gap in the literature that it aims to fill. The review of earlier research on the text comes next. This is followed immediately by the theoretical framework on which the study is anchored. The data and methods, data analysis and discussion, conclusion, and references come next.

Statement of the Problem

Texts represent the world as it is or the text producers' perception of it (Aluya and Edem, 2017). Many texts, however, construct non-existent versions of the world. Such non-versions can be created for many different ideological reasons. Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* is one of those texts where a non-existent version of the world is created through the manipulation of linguistic devices. Notwithstanding the proliferation of studies on the text from literary perspective (e.g. Simon 2010, Chukwuma 2013, Nwangwu and Iboroma 2018, Ashaolu 2019, Francis 2019 & Hani 2024 etc.) and linguistics perspective (e.g. Koussouhon and Dossounmou 2014, Abioye and Ajiboye 2015, Ibbu 2018, Robert and Umoekah 2019, Aluya and Obande, 2014, Okafor et al., 2024 etc.), the non-existent world created in this text and the ideologies promoted in the text through the creation of such worlds have not been explored. The present seminar paper is set out to address this gap in literature.

Literature Review

Several studies have been conducted on Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* from literary and linguistic perspectives. This section reviews these studies and attempt to identify how they relate to the current one, the perceived gaps in the related studies and what also distinguish this study from

previously conducted ones. The review of related literature will commence with literary studies on Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. In furtherance of the review of related studies, Simon (2010) conducted a study on the female predicament and the dichotomy of rural and urban existence in the Niger Delta region. Using selected extracts from Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, the study sought to expose how the dividend of oil exploration eluded the people who should be beneficiaries of the oil largess. The findings revealed that the exploration of oil in the Niger Delta had grave ecological, socio-political, economic and health implications for the populace and especially women in the text. Also, it showed the complex situation women were trapped in and called for urgent attention. To address the issue of urban migration, the study called for the need to create an enabling environment for the Niger Deltans to live in and the women should be empowered. The study concludes that the wealth of the region could be harnessed and used in developing the region. The reviewed study is relevant to the current study because both employed Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* as data for study and also focused on the subject of environmental degradation and its attendant issues in the Niger Delta region. However, the divergence between both studies is that while the reviewed study explored Agary's text from a literary perspective, the current study examines similar text from a linguistic perspective drawing insights from one of the theoretical tools of Critical stylistics.

In another related study, Chukwuma (2013) focused on the provocations, corollaries, and correlations of the displaced male-image through its absence and presence in Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. Using the Freudian and Jungian theories, the study examined how the various offshoots of this image are posited by the text's major characters. The findings revealed that the manifestation of the varied shades of the male-image is vital for the destiny of the main character

and a few others accounting for their sexual behaviours, consequent torture and the work's tragic form. This study relates to the current study as it also focused on Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. However, both studies differ in respect of the perspectives from which the text is explored as well as the objectives and theoretical frameworks deployed. While the reviewed study employed the Freudian and Jungian theories, the current study utilises Critical Stylistics.

Nwangwu and Iboroma (2018) examined the psychological effects of single parenthood in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* and Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*. The study drew insights from Sigmund Psychoanalysis and Control theories in order to help understand the completed process of growth and development of the characters in relation to their social environment as well as the effect of single parenthood on the emotional and social behaviour of children within the family unit. The study employed secondary data sources in order to elicit information that would assist in filling the overarching gap found in the literature. The findings validated the relevance of psychoanalysis and control theories because it illustrated that human nature, historical and cultural differences affected the emotional and social behaviour of children under single parenthood. This study is relevant to the current one because both examined Agary's text with a view to identifying and describing the effect of oil degradation on the environment. The divergence between the current study and the reviewed one is that both examined Agary's text from different perspectives (that is, linguistic and literary) using divergent theoretical frameworks.

In a related study, Ashaolu (2019) examined Kiane Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* from the standpoint of ecofeminism. The aim of the study was to advance a critical discourse on the variables of the closeness between the joint exploitation and degradation of African women and her

environment. To achieve this objective, the study utilised selected extracts to interrogate how male-biased power over and the logic of domination was characterized by environmental degradation and the persistent oppression of African land seen in her woman and Mother Earth, to the advantage of the West and African patriarchal capitalists – traitors of African progress. The paper concludes by highlighting the complementarity of African woman and nature as well as underpinning a symbiotic relationship between woman and the non-human other. This study relates to the current one because both focused on the issue of the environment using Agary's text as data. While the reviewed study approached the subject of environmental degradation from a literary angle using ecofeminism, the current study approaches the same subject from a linguistic perspective using negation as one of the Critical Stylistic tools.

Furthermore, using Kiane Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* as data and ecocriticism as theoretical framework, Francis (2019) explored the female predicament in the Niger-Delta region. The study sought to examine the differences between the urban and rural communities in this region and how the gains of exploration of oil eluded the people who should have benefited greatly from its exploration in the region. The findings showed that the Niger Delta inhabitants were environmentally exploited, their farmlands, plants, fishes and water polluted and destroyed as a result of oil spillage. Other issues such as sexual exploitation of local women by oil company owners, corruption, high rate of poverty, youth agitation, violence and pipeline vandalization resulting to unnecessary loss of lives were foregrounded in the analysis through ecocriticism. This study is relevant to the current one because both examined the subject of environmental concerns in Agary's *Yellow Yellow*. However, the current study is different from the reviewed one because it explores Agary's text from a linguistic stance point using Critical stylistics while the reviewed one examined similar

text from the literary standpoint using ecocriticism as theoretical framework.

Adeyemo and Shittu's (2021) study focused on the connection between the violation of the woman and the degradation of the environment in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. The study approached the text from the perspective of ecofeminism with a view to describing how the degradation of the Niger Delta environment in Southern Nigeria directly translated to the deterioration of the female folk who depended on it for survival as well as how ideology of patriarchy contributed to the destruction of the environment and emasculation of the female characters. To achieve these objectives, the study drew insights from Vandana Shiva's Critique of patriarchal capitalism. The findings showed the interconnectedness between the woman and the environment and emphasized that the female is a first-hand victim of the degradation of the environment because she depends on the environment for survival. Also, the study argued against the objectification of the woman and the environment and advocated for an egalitarian society where humanity recognizes the interconnection of all life and respects nature. The paper concludes that there is an urgent need for humans to move beyond power-based relationships if we must achieve an egalitarian society and a healthy environment.

Using the postcolonial discourse theory and ecofeminist's principles, Hani (2024) interrogated the different shades of exploitation represented in Kaine Agary's *Yellow Yellow*. The study sought to examine subaltern experience of women in a postcolonial context and the socioeconomic environment that worsened their repression. With the aid of selected extracts from the text, the study showed how the use of evocative telegraphic diction was used to relate various shades of exploitation that have enveloped a former colony of the British Empire. This includes the utilisation of pitiable images of women and the environment.

The study argued that it takes a subaltern woman to tell truly the deep stories of women subaltern in an aggressively exploited subaltern environment. The study concludes that both women and the environment are victims of exploitative colonial, postcolonial and patriarchal structures.

The second aspect of the review captures some linguistic studies that have been conducted on Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. Koussouhon and Dossounmou (2014) studied Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* with focus on the experiential and textual meanings. The goal was to determine how the author encoded her experience via the medium of language on the one hand and how she organized her language to achieve this on the other. Using insights from the lexico-grammar theory drawn from Systemic functional grammar with special emphasis on transitivity and theme, the study analyzed some extracts purposively culled from the novel. The findings indicated that the author employed the material process, topical themes as well as a blend of extradiegetic and hypodiegetic narrative in encoding and organizing her experience. By focusing on the experiential and textual metafunction, the study placed the Nigerian new millennium novelists such as Kaine Agary in a good position to reconstruct the past and the present in proper perspectives in order to project the future of their nation. The study contributes to shaping the readers ability to address the contemporary and topical scourges undermining and hampering the development of their nation. This study is relevant to the current study because both studies approach Agary's text from a linguistic angle. While the reviewed study adopted transitivity theory in analysing Agary's text, the current study utilises negation as one of the Critical Stylistic tools as framework.

Koussouhon and Dossounmou (2015) analyzed Habila's *Yellow Yellow* from the angle of mood and modality in order to identify the types of mood and modality used in the text. The study, which drew insights from Critical Discourse

Analysis (CDA) and womanist theory, examined some selected extracts culled from the texts using the qualitative descriptive method. The findings revealed that the analysis of interpersonal meanings is described against the backdrop of Critical Discourse Analysis and Womanist theory. Also, the analysis indicated that despite the blend of monologic and dialogic organization of the novel, Agary tried to portray the sociological schisms marking up the daily life of young girls in the oil resourced region of Nigeria. The choice of mood and modality discovered in the text indicated some kind of power and hierarchy relations and conflicting ideologies among the characters.

Abioye and Ajiboye (2015) examined Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* from a Stylistic perspective. Using insights from the lexical stylistic approach coupled with a qualitative descriptive method, the study examined selected extracts from the text for how lexical features have been used by the author to convey his message. The study's findings revealed that some of the lexical stylistics features deployed in the text include: loan words, loan blends and loan expressions, semantic extensions, coinages, neologism, Nigerian pidgin and imagery. The lexical choices have been stylistically made to create a synergy between language used in the text and the environment in which they are used. These choices are aesthetics and socio-culturally relevant to the linguistic composition of the text, as the culturally rich expressions are able to provoke vivid images in the reader.

Ibbi's study (2018) focused on discourse markers as central features of Nigerian English and indicators of ownership and identity in general discourses and texts. Also, it examined the importance of discourse markers in indigenous texts and how they provide insight into the existence of discourse markers in conversation. The study adopted Labov's variability theory in examining some extracts from Chika Unigwe's *Night Dancer* and Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*.

Information about the discourse markers were also obtained from secondary sources of written materials and journals. The study concluded that the indigenous discourse found in the texts play important roles in depicting ownership in the texts, and are intelligible to Nigerians users.

Robert and Umoekeh (2019) approached Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* from a linguistic stylistic perspective. The study sought to establish the writer's style as well as interpret the message conveyed in the text. Employing Halliday's Functional Linguistic and Linguistic stylistics as its theoretical basis, the study appraised the major lexical, lexico-semantic, grammatical and graphological features of the text. In doing so, it discovered that the text employed mainly concrete nouns, active and dynamic verbs, first person pronoun "I", coordinate and simple sentences, semicolon and exclamation marks as its peculiar linguistic features. Also, it employed neologism, sexist tropes, parallel clause structures, Nigerianism and pidgin to beatify and contextualized the discourse. The study, therefore, submitted that Agary played a major role in the thematization of the nation's ills and the stylistic development of linguistic and literary themes.

Akabuikwe (2022) investigated first language transfer on English as a second language, factors that cause the transfer and the effect of the transfer. The study derived its theoretical framework from contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) and Chomsky's Universal Grammar Theories. The population of this study comprised a deliberate selection of two literary texts namely: Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Kaine Agary's *Yellow—Yellow*. Data for the study comprised excerpts from the literary texts that depicted transfer from L1 to L2. These excerpts were randomly selected. Textual Analysis was employed to evaluate the data. The result of the analysis indicated that the use of English by Nigerian authors requires some characteristic forms such as transfer and semantic extensions of

certain lexical items at the syntactical level. It equally discovered that sociocultural context factor is a major cause of transfer from L1 to L2. The study concludes that English usage in the Nigeria socio-cultural setting, as demonstrated in the analysis of the syntactic and lexical semantic variations, has been given a distinctive Nigerian coloration so as to enable it effectively reflect the Nigeria situation.

Aluya and Obande (2024) investigated the connection between language and its environment, with a focus on the function language plays in relation to ecological degradation and the social ills that accompany it. Using insights from Arran Stubbe's (2015) ecolinguistics framework, the article examined purposively sampled extracts from Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* to determine how the issue of ecological degradation was framed, the frames used to construct it, the ideological stories presented in the text and how they influenced the way characters think, talk and act. The findings revealed that complex sentence constructions, additives, adversatives, contrasts, pronominal and vocabulary items were among the framing techniques employed to relate the issue of ecological degradation and other societal concerns that accompany it. To underline the gravity of the issue, the writer portrayed it in a negative light. This portrayal was achieved through the coalescing of source and target frames with evaluative and descriptive lexical phrases that convey negative connotations. These linguistic resources highlighted the various ideological stories in the text and how they influenced the issue. In conclusion, the study, thus, exemplified the fact that language is indeed a means through environmental concerns can be addressed.

Okafor et al. (2024) examined how ecolinguistic theory is deployed in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* in highlighting the problems that oil-rich communities face as a result of the activities of oil drilling companies in the Niger Delta region. A purposive sampling of six extracts

from the text was conducted, and Stibbe's framing and evaluation frameworks were utilized to provide insights for the textual analysis. The results showed that Agary employed the ecolinguistic tools of framing and evaluation in foregrounding issues such as prostitution, discrimination, environmental degradation, kidnapping, destruction of micro/macro-organisms on the ecology, and oil theft/bunkering among others. The study concludes that the text constructed these issues and presented them from a negative angle using the tools of framing and evaluation.

The above literature review is evidence that many studies have been conducted on Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* from different perspectives ranging from linguistics and literature using different theoretical insights from these disciplines. A close study of the above studies reveals that Agary's text, which is the focus of this paper, has not been explored in order to identify the non-existent worlds created in the text as well as the ideological reasons for the creation of such worlds. It is on this premise that this seminar paper employs negating as a critical stylistic tool in examining the text in order to reveal the non-existent worlds created in the text as well as describe the ideological reasons for the creation of such worlds.

Theoretical Framework

This work adopts negating, one of the Critical Stylistic tools, as theoretical framework. The stylistic venture of exploring the ways in which social meanings are demonstrated through language is referred to as critical stylistics. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Critical Linguistics have primarily stimulated and shaped this stylistic inclination (Norgaard et al., 2010). It is largely attributed to Lesley Jeffries' research, which builds on CDA research by employing various methods of analysis to depict the connections between language, power, and ideology. Critical stylistics is a method of analyzing texts to reveal the ideological

construction depending on transitivity as well as other textual practices. It seeks to answer the question "what is the text doing?" by using a variety of linguistic tools of analysis to uncover the ideologies that underpin literary and non-literary texts. It also bases its framework on Halliday's theory of grammar (Evans and Schuller, 2015: 132).

Jeffries (2010) identifies some set of tools for critical stylistic analysis. In that way, critical stylistics tries to link CDA, the critique of ideology, and stylistics that is mainly interested in literary texts. In the same manner, critical stylistics brings together the essential functions that a particular text adopts to show reality (Jeffries, 2010). Critical stylistics does not support a political view. It shows that most documents are ideologically written whether the author has intended them to be so or not (Jeffries, 2016, p.160). Jeffries has proposed ten tools as textual-conceptual functions to set her model of critical stylistics. They include the following: (1) "Naming and Describing", (2) "Representing Actions/Events/States", (3) "Equating and Contrasting", (4) "Exemplifying and Enumerating", (5) "Prioritizing", (6) "Assuming and Implying", (7) "Negating", (8) "Hypothesizing", (9) "Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of other Participants" and (10) "Representing Time, Space and Society" (Jeffries, 2010).

The present paper attempts to investigate negating as a critical stylistic tool for unravelling the hypothetical worlds created in the text through linguistic features and the ideology promoted through the linguistic features in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. Of the ten tools of Jeffries' essential model of critical stylistics, negating is used for its ideological significance. A great deal of communication occurs through "constructing and interpreting non-existent versions of the world which are created for many different reasons" (Jeffries, 2010, p. 106). Negating is used in a

general term to deal with the conceptual practice rather than the verb negative form. It helps the speaker produce a hypothetical version of reality or constitutes alternative realities within a particular text. That's to say, where something is not existed in one reality, it means it is existed in the other. As a critical stylistic tool, negating has the power of a persuasive kind which can be negative or positive. Negation can be realized, first, syntactically through the combination of the negative particle added to the verb phrase. Second, lexically through the negative connotation of the certain lexicon. Third, morphologically through affixes. Finally, negation can be constructed through certain pronouns such as 'nobody,' 'no one,' 'nothing,' 'none,' etc., or through the modification of the noun by 'no'. The creation of non-existent worlds in order to improve a story and persuade discourse receivers into fearing, seeking, or believing the evoked reality; it is an implicature arising from disobeying the relational principle. The justification for this Critical stylistic tool for this seminar paper is hinged on its objective to explore the non-existent worlds created in Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* and described the ideological reasons behind the creation of such non-existent worlds.

Data and Methods

This paper adopts a textual research design. Belsey (2013) observes that textual analysis is essential for research that focuses on texts or seeks to understand the imprint of culture in its artefacts. To corroborate this view, Caulfield (2022) avers that one of the aims of textual analysis in literary studies is to establish the author's intended meaning. To achieve this aim, it frequently investigates potentially unintentional links between texts, inquiries about what a text tells about the context in which it was created or attempts to interpret a classic work in a novel and unpredictable way. Therefore, the present study adopts a textual analysis to uncover the non-existent worlds created in literary text and the

ideology promoted through such worlds. The data for the study is Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. A total of ten (10) extracts were selected from the text through the method of purposive sampling. The justification for this method is hinged on the fact that it allows for the selection of extracts that are most relevant to the study's objectives. To conduct the analysis, the paper utilises the textual construction by Jeffries (2014) who explains that textual-conceptual functions generally attempt to capture what a text is doing conceptually in portraying the world (or, in the case of literature, a fictitious world) in a certain way. It, also, describe how the linguistic system's resources are used to construct this conceptual meaning.

Data Analysis and Discussion

This section highlights how negating as a Critical Stylistic tool is used to construct a nonexistent world. Also, it describes the ideology promoted by the author through the creation of such non-existent worlds. The selected data for analysis is discussed below.

Text 1. Mostly they were successful, but sometimes one or two of our boys failed to return from a mission. The word around the village was that the police had caught and kill them, but we would not hear about this on the radio (9-10).

The first text speaks of the Niger Delta youths' protest against the government and oil company workers. Also, it captures the elimination of these youths by law enforcement agents. Negating, as a Critical Stylistic feature, is realised in this text syntactically through the combination of the negative particle "not" added to the verb "hear" and lexically through the negative connotation of certain words such as "failed", "caught" and "kill". The expression "...but we would not hear about this on the radio" denotes the non-existent world in the text created by the author through the speech of the protagonist. Jefferies (2010) notes that negating works on the textual level between semantic and pragmatic meanings. Hence, within the context of this text, the

nonexistent world denotes the natives' expectation of the media to announce the elimination of the youths by the police. This expectation was not met by the media. Agary employs the nonexistent world in this text to foreground the injustice perpetrated against the Niger Delta region thereby promoting the ideology of justice for the region.

Text 2. She believed that she had found her life partner and that this man would take care of her. I don't think my father ever told her that he would marry her; she just assumed that he would (7).

Negating in text two is constructed syntactically through the negative particle "not" added to the verb "think". The nonexistent world is configured in the expressions "...this man would take care of her..." and "...he would marry her...". Here, the writer speaks of the young Bibi who found a man in Port Harcourt, took him as her life partner and believed that he would marry and take care of her without him proposing marriage to her or promising to marry her. Within the context of the text, it can be inferred that the nonexistent world in Bibi's minds refers to the life of marital union which she had hoped for but never happened.

Text 3. The black oil that spilled that day swallowed my mother's crops and unravelled the threads that held together her fantasies for me (10).

Text three discusses the subject of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta region. It depicts how the natives' crops were destroyed by oil spills owing to the activities of the oil company. Negating is constructed through lexical words that have negative connotation such as "spilled", "swallowed" and "unravelling". The non-existent world created in the text is seen in the expression "...her fantasies for me". Within the context of the text, one can deduce that the non-existent world refers to education beyond the secondary level which Bibi had desired for Zilayefa, her daughter. To her, education is the only key that could elevate her daughter and take

her beyond the borders of the village. Unfortunately, Bibi's dream for her daughter's future was aborted owing to the destruction of her farmland by oil spills. Agary employs the nonexistent world in the mind of Bibi to depict how the destruction of farmlands in the Niger Delta region could truncate the dreams of the natives for their children. Through this avenue, the writer promotes the ideology of environmentalism in the region which she wants the reader to accept.

Text 4. Disillusioned, my mother went back to her village to face the shame of being an unwed mother with nothing but dreams about my future. She would make sure that I accomplished what she had not (8).

Text four refers to the return of Bibi back to her village after being pregnant for a man in Port Harcourt who left the city without marrying her contrary to her expectation. Negating in this text is constructed morphologically through the prefixes "dis" and "un" attached to the lexical words "illusioned" and "wed" to form "disillusioned" and "unwed". The expressions "...dreams about my future..." and "...she would make sure..." denote the nonexistent world in the text created in the mind of Bibi for Zilayefa, her daughter. These expectations of Bibi for her daughter never materializes. Agary employs the creation of nonexistent world to portray how one's dreams could be aborted due to disappointment.

Text 5. Every young boy had visions of dying valiantly for the cause, as Ken Saro-Wiwa just had and as Isaac Adaka Baro had done nearly thirty years before him (34).

Text five captures the Niger Delta youths' resolve to fight for the emancipation of the region from all forms of exploitation and oppression. This resolve is precipitated by government's elimination of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni leaders. The critical stylistic feature of negating is constructed in this text lexically through the word "dying" which has a negative connotation. However, the non-existent world in the text is

expressed in the expression "...visions of dying valiantly for the cause...". This nonexistent world is configured through the speech of the protagonist and it refers to the risk which the youths in the region plan to take in order to bring emancipation to the region. This hypothetical world provides Agary the avenue to project the ideology of activism which is prompting the youths to want to embark on such dangerous cause not minding its outcome.

Text 6. They demanded a heathy meal when they were hungry, disregarding the fact that the women had to walk extra kilometers to get firewood or cultivate and harvest the food now fertilized by their sweat and blood (40).

The patriarchal system in the Niger Delta region is presented in text six where Agary depicts men's dominance over the women. The men derelict their duties as heads of family leaving the women to provide for the family. Negating in this text is realised morphologically through the prefix "dis" denoting a negative particle attached to the lexical item "regarding". The hypothetical world created here is seen in the expression "disregarding the fact that the women had to walk extra kilometers to get firewood or cultivate and harvest the food...". This expression describes the efforts made by the women to provide for their families amidst their maltreatment by their husbands. The nonexistent world in this text is constructed by the protagonist represents the Niger Delta women's anticipation for their men to take up their position as men by providing for their families instead of abandoning their responsibilities for the women.

Through this text, Agary foregrounds the patriarchy ideology which most men in the Niger Delta region leverage on to maltreat their wives.

Conclusion

The very target of this article was to gain an insight into how hypothetical worlds are encoded in Kiane Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, drawing on Lesly Jefferies' Critical Stylistic Model. The objective was to identify and describe these nonexistent worlds and the ideologies promoted in the text through the construction of such worlds. The Critical Stylistic tool deployed in examining the text is negating. The analysis of negation in Kiane Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* demonstrated that as a critical stylistic device, negation is a dutiful linguistic tool. The data analysis revealed that the various nonexistent worlds identified in the corpus studied include the natives' expectation of the media to herald police brutality of youths in the region, the natives' desire for good education and better life for their children, provision of family needs by the Niger Delta men and the youths' willingness to sacrifice their lives for the emancipation of the region. These non-existent worlds were constructed through negating which is realised syntactically, lexically and morphologically in the text. The ideologies of environmentalism, justice, activism and patriarchy were foregrounded in the text using the critical stylistic tool of negating. The paper concludes that unveiling the ideologies residing in the text uncovers the reasons behind the creation of these non-existent worlds used by the author to improve her story.

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A CRITICAL STYLISTIC STUDY OF NAMING IN KIANE AGARY *YELLOW-YELLOW*

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Abstract

This paper, from a Critical Stylistic standpoint, examines Kiane Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* in order to describe how the choice of names of characters, states and events impact on the ideologies projected in the text. To achieve this objective, the study uses a qualitative textual analysis coupled with Lesly Jefferies' (2010) Critical Stylistic Model (with specific reference to naming and describing) in scrutinizing eight (8) extracts purposively extracted from the text. The findings show that naming in the text is configured through noun phrase modification, premodification and nominalization. Conversely, describing in the text is mostly realised through postmodification and appositive nouns. The naming and describing technique serve to package information and uncover the identity of the referent. Through this Critical stylistic tool, ideologies such as socialism and environmentalism are foregrounded in the text. The analysis of the data shows that Critical Stylistic tools such as naming and describing account in no small measure to the meaning of the texts under study and at the same time serve in the linguistic construction of pertinent issues addressed in the text.

Keywords: Characters, Critical Stylistic, identity, names

Introduction

Many studies have been conducted on Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* since its first publication in 2006. Among such studies are Koussouhon and Dossounmou (2014), Abioye and Ajiboye (2015), Koussouhon and Dossounmou (2015), Ibbi (2018), Robert and Umoekeh (2019), Aluya and Obande (2024) and Okafor et al. (2024). Koussouhon and Dossounmou (2014) investigated Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, focusing on both experiential and textual meanings. The purpose was to identify how the author encoded her experience through language, and how she organised her language to do so. The study analysed certain passages from the novel using insights from lexico-grammar theory derived from Systemic functional grammar, with a focus on transitivity and theme. The findings revealed that the author encoded and organised her experience using the material process, topical topics, and a combination of extradiegetic and hypodiegetic narratives.

Abioye and Ajiboye (2015) explored Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* through a stylistic lens. Using insights from the lexical stylistic approach combined with a qualitative descriptive method, the study investigated selected excerpts to see how the author used lexical features to convey his meaning. The findings revealed that some of the lexical stylistics features used in the text include loan words, loan blends and loan phrases, semantic extensions, coinages, neologisms, Nigerian pidgin, and images. The lexical choices were selected in a stylistic manner to establish a synergy between the language used in the text and the context in which it is utilised. The selections made are both aesthetically and socio-culturally pertinent to the text's language composition, as culturally sensitive terms can evoke vivid imagery in the reader.

Koussouhon and Dossounmou (2015) examined Habila's *Yellow-Yellow* from the perspective of mood and modality with the aim to determine the variety of moods and modality used in the text. The study, which drew on Critical

Discourse Analysis and womanist theory, evaluated some selected fragments from the texts using the qualitative descriptive approach. The findings revealed that the examination of interpersonal meanings is described within the context of Critical Discourse examination and Womanist philosophy. Furthermore, the discussion revealed that, despite the novel's monologic and dialogic structure, Agary attempted to depict the sociological schisms that characterise the daily lives of adolescent girls in Nigeria's oil-rich region. The selection of mood and modality found in the text showed some kind. The text's mood and modality choices revealed some form of power and hierarchical relationships, as well as clashing ideologies among the characters.

Ibbi's (2018) study concentrated on discourse markers as key aspects of Nigerian English and indicators of ownership and identity in general discourses and texts. It also looked at the significance of discourse markers in indigenous writings and how they might help us understand the presence of discourse markers in conversations. The study used Labov's variability theory to analyse excerpts from Chika Unigwe's *Night Dancer* and Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. Secondary sources, such as written materials and journals, provided more information regarding the discourse markers. The study revealed that indigenous discourse included in the texts plays an essential function in depicting ownership of the writings and is understandable to Nigerian consumers.

Robert and Umoekah (2019) explored Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* through a linguistic stylistic lens. The study aimed to determine the writer's style as well as assess the message given by the text. The study evaluated the text's primary lexical, lexico-semantic, grammatical, and graphological aspects using Halliday's Functional Linguistics and Linguistic Stylistics as its theoretical foundation. It discovered that the text's distinctive linguistic traits included concrete

nouns, active and dynamic verbs, the first-person pronoun "I", coordinate and simple sentences, semicolon and exclamation marks. In addition, it used neologisms, sexist tropes, parallel clause structures, Nigerianism, and pidgin to elevate and contextualise the discourse. According to the study, Agary played a significant influence in the thematization of the nation's woes.

Aluya and Obande (2024) explored the relationship between language and its environment, with a particular emphasis on the role language plays in regard to ecological deterioration and the social evils that accompany it. Using insights from Arran Stibbe's (2015) ecolinguistics framework, the article examined purposively sampled extracts from Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* to determine how the issue of ecological degradation was framed, the frames used to construct it, the ideological stories presented in the text, and how they influenced the way characters think, talk, and behave. The findings demonstrated that complicated sentence structures, additives, adversatives, contrasts, pronominal and vocabulary items were among the framing tactics used to connect the topic of environmental degradation to other societal concerns. To emphasise the gravity of the situation, the author painted it in a negative light. This representation was created by combining source and target frames with evaluative and descriptive lexical words that have negative implications. These language resources emphasised the numerous ideological storylines in the text and how they affected the situation. Finally, the study demonstrated that language is an effective tool for addressing environmental problems.

Okafor et al. (2024) investigated how ecolinguistic theory is applied in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* to emphasise the issues that oil-rich communities confront as a result of oil drilling corporations' activity in the Niger Delta region. A purposive sampling of six extracts from the text

was carried out, and Stibbe's framing and assessment frameworks were used to provide insights for textual analysis. The findings revealed that Agary used ecolinguistic framing and evaluation tools to highlight concerns such as prostitution, discrimination, environmental degradation, kidnapping, the damage of micro/macro-organisms on the ecology, and oil theft/bunkering, among others. The study concludes that the book manufactured these concerns and presented them from a negative perspective utilizing framing and evaluation strategies.

The current study adds to the previously studied literature by focusing on Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* as its data for study. While the reviewed studies examined Agary's text from a linguistic perspective, drawing insights from transitivity theory (Koussouhon and Dossounmou 2014), Critical Discourse Analysis (Koussouhon and Dossounmou 2014), Lexical stylistics (Abioye and Ajiboye 2015; Robert and Umoekeh 2019), Discourse Analysis (Ishaku 2018), and Ecolinguistics (Aluya & Obande, 2024, Okafor et al. 2024), the present study draws theoretical insight from Critical stylistics and its primary objective is to investigate how naming and describing, as important critical stylistic tools, are used in the text to highlight the writer's ideological positions.

Statement of the Problem

The question of how the choice of names of characters, states and events in Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* impact on the ideologies projected is yet to be examined despite the many studies (e.g. Koussouhon and Dossounmou (2014), Koussouhon and Dossounmou (2015), Abioye and Ajiboye (2015), Ishaku (2018), Robert and Umoekeh (2019), Aluya and Obande (2024) and Okafor et al. (2024) etc., that have been conducted on the text. This study is based on Lesley Jeffries' (2010) Critical Stylistic model, which examines how the writer's choice of names for individuals,

situations, and events influences the ideology projected in the text.

Theoretical Framework

The term "Critical stylistics" was originally used by Jeffries in 2007 and later in 2010 when his book *Critical Stylistics: The Power of English* was released (Aluya and Ocholor, 2024). This theory integrates ideas from several linguistic theories that have already been developed, including Functional Linguistics (FL), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and Critical Linguistics (CL). Critical stylistics is the practice of using language to verify social meanings (Norgaard et al., 2010, Aluya, 2016). It focusses on exposing the underlying ideologies of the texts and demonstrating how language is applied to enforce specific ideologies through literary or non-literary texts without taking the external environment into account (Jeffries, 2014).

Jeffries (2010) asserts that Critical Stylistics is used to "assemble the main general function that a text has in representing realities" (p.14). She adds that it includes numerous tools that are thought to be more thorough than anything else in CDA. The model uses these various techniques to demonstrate the relationship between language, power, and ideology (Evans & Schuller, 2015, Ogunsiji and Aluya, 2022). These tools include naming and describing, representing actions/events/states, equating, exemplifying and enumerating, prioritising, implying and assuming, negating, hypothesizing, and presenting others' speech and thought. Furthermore, Jeffries (2010) claims that 'textual conceptual functions' are utilised to demonstrate the implicit ideologies generated by linguistic choices. This study solely addresses naming and describing among the ten tools because it is necessary to accomplish its objective.

Naming is the process of choosing a noun to represent a specific referent. Particular referents are realised in texts in three ways: through the use of nouns, noun phrases (which further determine

the nature of the referents), and nominalizations. All three methods of naming and describing can have powerful ideological consequences since the information they provide is difficult to discuss or challenge because, by being placed in a nominal framework, it is not affirmed, but rather presupposed. Nouns/noun phrases are used to package ideas because they are the entities used to label things and people in a different way than others (Jefferies, 2014).

Methodology

The qualitative method is used in this term paper to analyze the selected data. The data for this study are ten excerpts purposively selected from Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* published in 2006. The selected excerpts are analysed based on one of the ten analytical tools of Critical Stylistics put forward by Jefferies (2010). The tool selected in the analyzing the text is naming and describing. This tool is briefly explained and relevant excerpts are brought from the text to illustrate it. This is followed by explanation of the excerpts given with reference to the Critical Stylistic tool under which it appears.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The section analyses the selected extracts using the Critical Stylistic tool of naming and describing. Jefferies (2016: 164) observes that names can call and name things in different ways. A name is not limited to the reference of the noun. It also includes the words that accompany the nouns, the co-texts like adjectives, postmodifiers, clauses and the nominalized verbs. Jefferies' insight on what constitute a name will form the basis of the interpretation of names used in the data for this study beginning with the following extracts.

Text 1. The day my mother's farmland was overrun by crude oil was the day her dream for me started to wither (p.10).

The use of nouns for name-calling features in text 1. It is introduced with the noun phrase "The

day my mother's farmland". This noun phrase is configured with the noun head "farmland", preceded by premodifying items such as the definite article "the", noun "day", pronoun "my" and noun "mother". These items lexical items form the co-text according to Jefferies. The premodifying elements perform descriptive function in that they describe the noun head "farmland" by alluding to it. Such allusion points to the owner of the farmland being referred to by the writer. Other lexical items in this text which also contribute to the destruction of farmland include "overrun", "crude oil", "dream" and "wither". These lexical items apart from the ones previously mentioned also serve as a co-text in that they supply extra information to the message conveyed in the text. The text features Agary's discussion of the subject of destruction of farmlands in the Niger Delta region owing to oil spillage. The writer's concern about this issue could be influenced by her ideology of environmentalism. Her vivid depiction of this issue is actualized through the naming and describing technique.

Text 2. Every young boy had visions of dying valiantly for the cause (p.34).

The issue of underdevelopment in the Niger Delta region amidst its abundant natural resources prompted activists like Isaac Adaka Boro, Ken Saro-Wiwa and others to protest against the government. It is this protest that led to their elimination by the government. Following their elimination, youths in the region resolve to continue their legacy by fighting for the emancipation of Niger Delta region from all sorts of exploitation and oppression from the government and oil company workers. The foregoing informs the writer's choice of the noun phrase "Every young boy" in Text 2. Note that this noun phrase begins with the determiner "every". This is followed immediately by the adjective "young" and the noun "boy". The premodifying elements consisting of the determiner and

adjective provide descriptive qualities to the noun head “boy” which is the writer’s subject of focus. Lexical items such as “visions”, “dying”, “valiantly” and “cause” function as co-text in this discourse to contribute to the subject of activism foregrounded by the writer.

Text 3. Some girls from my town did that in order to send money home to their families (p. 35).

The discovery of oil that is supposed to be a blessing to the people is a now a curse because of the untold hardship and various exploitations they are subjected to. They are environmentally exploited and their farmland are polluted as a result of oil spillage. This oil also leads to the destruction of plants and aquatic lives in the region driving the young girls into prostitution so that they can provide for their families. This situation forms the subject of Text 3 where the critical stylistic feature of naming and describing is introduced with the noun phrase “some girls from my town”. Observe that the noun phrase head “girls” is preceded by the determiner “some” which serves to introduce it. Also, the noun head is succeeded by the prepositional phrase “from my town” which qualifies it by adding some bit of information to it. The premodifying and postmodifying items alongside lexical items such as “send”, “money”, “home” and “families” serve as the co-text to vividly capture Agary’s discourse subject. Influenced by the doctrine of socialism, Agary expresses concern over these young girls’ involvement in prostitution while discouraging the act.

Text 4. The so-called youth groups had become well-oiled extortion machines all in the name of the struggle. They stole, blackmailed, and vandalized for the progress and development of the Ijaw nation, the Niger Delta people (p.158).

The issues of underdevelopment in the Niger Delta owing to its constant neglect by the government forced youths in the region to embark on a cause of emancipating the Niger Delta people

from the oppression and exploitation of the government and oil company workers. Unfortunately, the struggle of emancipating the Niger Delta people from the shackles of oppression and exploitation was abused by some of the youths in the region. The abuse of the Niger Delta’s struggle prompts Agary’s choice of the lexical expression “the so-called youth groups” in Text 4 which serve as a noun phrase to introduce the naming and describing technique. The noun phrase consists of the noun head “groups” which is preceded by a definite article “the”, “adjectives “so-called” and “youth”. These lexical items function to premodify the noun head in that they draw attention to writer’s referent in the text. Other lexical items in the text worth commenting on are: “oiled extortion machines”, “struggle”, “stole”, “blackmailed”, “vandalized”, “progress” and “development”. Whereas “struggle”, “progress” and “development” allude to the reason behind the region’s fight for emancipation, “oiled extortion machine”, “blackmailed” and “vandalized” describe the illicit activities of some of the youths in the region. Through naming and describing, the writer not only undermine but derided these so-called youths for hijacking and abusing the Niger Delta’s struggle.

Text 5. The oil companies, with the help of the government forces, flexed their muscles once in a while (p. 138).

Naming and describing in Text 5 is introduced using the expression “The oil company workers with the help of the government”. This is a noun phrase consisting of premodification and postmodification items. The noun head is denoted by “company”. It is preceded by the adjective “oil” and the definite article “the”. However, the postmodification items consist of a prepositional phrase complex (e.g. “with the help” and “of the government forces”). The pre and postmodifying elements function to supply additional information to the noun phrase head. The writer uses the noun phrase structure alongside other lexical items such

as “flexed” and “muscle” function as co-text to describe the injustice against the region perpetrated by government forces. The description in this text aids to foreground the writer’s discourse subject. To further buttress the atrocities committed by the government and its law enforcement agents against the region.

Text 6. These broadcasts drove the boys in my village to violence (pg.9).

Naming and describing in Text 6 is constructed using the noun phrase “the boys in my village in violence”. The noun phrase consists of the noun head “boys” preceded by the definite article “the” functioning to identify it as the referent. However, the noun head is succeeded by the prepositional phrase complex “in my village” and “to violence”. Whereas the noun phrase head exemplifies naming in the text, the prepositional phrase performs descriptive functions in that it provides additional information to the noun head. This information is important because it points attention to the place where the boys are from and their activities in the region. The naming and describing technique serve to describe the violent activities such as stealing, kidnapping for ransom, blackmailing and vandalizing of government facilities in the region.

Text 7. Fishing and farming, the occupation that had sustained my mother, her mother, and her mother’s mother no longer provided gain (p. 39).

Unlike in the previous Texts (1-6) where naming and describing is introduced with noun modification and postmodification, the reverse is the case in Text 7 where it is introduced with appositive nouns or nouns in apposition. The appositive noun is captured in the expression “fishing and farming, the occupation”. An apposition is a noun phrase that follows another phrase and provides additional information about it. It is important to note that the text begins with the noun phrase “fishing and farming” and succeeded by another noun phrase “the

occupation”. Naming as reflected in the first noun phrase refers to the two major sources of livelihood for the Niger Delta people. Conversely, the noun phrase “the occupation” functions to provide additional information to the first noun phrase. Through the information supplied by the second noun phrase, the reader is acquainted with Niger Delta people’s major occupation. Noteworthy is the choice of lexical items such as “sustained”, “her mother”, “her mother’s mother”, and “no longer” and “gain”. The use of “her mother” and “her mother’s mother” suggest that farming and fishing had been a longtime occupation for the Niger Delta people. The lexical item “sustained” equally suggests that farming and fishing had been beneficial to the people of region probably before the discovery and exploration of oil in the region. The lexical items “no longer” and “gain” suggest that these occupations are not beneficial to the people anymore. Agary’s expresses concern over the pathetic situation in which the Niger Delta people have been plunged into owing to the destruction of their farmlands and rivers by oil spillage. This concern is motivated by her ideology of environmentalism.

Text 8. The street commentary on the petrol shortage was extensive (p.110).

Naming and describing in Text 8 is captured in the expression “The street commentary on the petrol shortage”. This noun phrase expression consists of the noun head “commentary” with premodifying and postmodifying elements. It is preceded by the definite article “the” and adjective “street” which form the premodifying elements and succeeded by the preposition phrase “on the petrol shortage” serving as the postmodifying elements. The definite article and adjective modify the noun head by performing descriptive function while the prepositional phrase qualifies it by adding extra information. The additional information added refer to the subject of fuel scarcity which has led

to long queues at petrol stations across the nation causing the masses distress. As a socialist, the writer frowns at this unpleasant situation calling the attention of the government to it.

Conclusion

The analysis has revealed that the Critical Stylistic tool of naming and describing has the ability to probe into different shades of meaning in texts together with their ideological implications depending on the text analyst's ability to select and properly apply the tool to the data under scrutiny. This agrees with the position of Jefferies (2014:

408) that "texts make meaning in fundamentally the same way whether they are poems, novels, newspapers or political manifestoes." For example, by using the critical stylistic tool of naming and describing in excerpts 1 to 8, readers or listeners are made to be immediately aware (through lexical and phrasal selection) of the unfavourable situation in the Niger Delta region and the ideologies that influence the writer's discussion of thematic preoccupations discussed in the text.

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AFRICAN WOMEN'S FINANCIAL INVISIBILITY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF JUSTINE MINSTA'S *AWU'S STORY*

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Abstract

This study examines the issue of the financial emancipation of contemporary African women through the prism of the novel *Histoire d'Awu* by the Gabonese writer Justine Mintsa, written in 2000. Using an intersectional approach, the research explores how social identity, social conditioning, and socioeconomic issues intersect to create and perpetuate gender disparities in African contexts. The analysis focuses on the complex interplay between traditional gender roles and modern aspirations, exemplified by the protagonist *Awu's* struggle for economic empowerment. The study investigates the "breadwinner" vs. "breadloser" dynamic and its impact on women's financial autonomy. By situating the analysis within the UN Sustainable Development Goals framework, the research highlights the global significance of addressing women's financial invisibility in Sub-Saharan Africa. The paper argues that achieving gender equality and women's empowerment requires addressing deeply rooted social norms, economic structures, and cultural expectations. It concludes by emphasizing the need for multifaceted approaches to promote women's financial empowerment, including challenging traditional gender roles, promoting education and entrepreneurship, and addressing systemic barriers through policy reforms and cultural shifts.

Keywords: financial emancipation, financial invisibility, stiwanism, nego-feminsm, cultural feminism, snail-sense feminism, motherism, humanism, patriarchy, gender inequality, Justine Mintsa, African women's writing

1.0 Introduction

Economic marginalization disproportionately affects minority particularly, African women. This issue is more pronounced in underdeveloped regions such as sub-Saharan Africa (as illustrated by the data presented in Figure 2 below). Throughout history and across cultures, women have faced systemic barriers to economic empowerment. Women are disproportionately affected by poverty, a growing trend known as the "feminization of poverty" (Fredrich, 2018). This means that, over time, a larger percentage of those living in poverty are women compared to men. Patriarchal norms, inadequate access to resources, and restrictive gender roles have constrained their financial autonomy. This issue remains pressing in contemporary African societies, where many women still depend economically on male relatives despite progress in educational

attainment.

The International Monetary Fund corroborates this in the Finance & Development report, that in sub-Saharan Africa, only 37% of women have a bank account compared to 48% of men, indicating a significant gender gap in financial inclusion. Similarly, the 2019 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey reported that 61% of women in Nigeria are financially dependent on their husbands (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). In Kenya, the Economic Survey 2021 found that 48% of women depend financially on their spouses or partners (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). In Ghana, it has been revealed that 54% of women are financially dependent on men (Ghana Statistical Service, 2019).

The novel *Awu's Story* by Gabonese writer Justine Mintsa provides a valuable literary lens for

examining the complexities of African women's financial circumstances.

Originally published in French by Gabonese writer Justine Mintsa in 2000 and translated into English in 2018 by Cheryl Toman, *Awu's Story* is centered on the barbaric ritual traditions of widowhood faced by the main protagonist of the novel *Awudabiran*, which still exist in modern African societies. However, several themes also emerged from the novel, from which this study was drawn. Through a feminist and humanist analysis of this text, insights emerge on the cultural expectations, structural obstacles, and determined spirit shaping African women's financial situations. Examining Awu's economic activities and relationships illuminates the tensions between traditional duties and modern aspirations experienced by contemporary African women seeking empowerment. This paper will analyze Justine Mintsa's nuanced portrayal of an African woman's financial status in *Awu's Story*.

1.1 Problem Statement

Despite significant strides in education and economic participation, African women continue to face systemic financial invisibility, a phenomenon deeply rooted in cultural norms, social conditioning, and patriarchal structures. This invisibility persists even as women like Awu in Justine Mintsa's "Awu's Story" demonstrate remarkable resilience, skills, and economic potential. The stark contrast between women's capabilities and their constrained economic roles raises critical questions.

Hence, based on these facts, this study seeks to explore the complex interplay between social identity, cultural norms, and economic systems that contribute to African women's financial invisibility. Through the lens of Justine Mintsa's "Awu's Story," this research aims to examine how African feminist theories such as Motherism, Stiwanism, Snail-sense feminism, and Nego-feminism can provide insights into the strategies women employ to navigate and challenge patriarchal structures. By synthesizing the literature on African women's economic empowerment and analyzing the narrative of *Awu's Story*, this study endeavours to uncover

pathways for reconciling traditional values with the imperative for women's financial autonomy, ultimately contributing to the broader discourse on sustainable development and gender equality in Africa.

1.2 Research Objectives

The study aims to examine African women's financial invisibility through the lens of Justine Mintsa's "Awu's Story," synthesizing literature on African feminist perspectives and economic empowerment strategies.

The research objectives are to:

1. Analyze the portrayal of African women's economic marginalization in "Awu's Story" using African feminist theoretical frameworks.
2. Explore the tension between tradition and modernity concerning African women's financial autonomy as depicted in the novel.
3. Investigate the strategies employed by African women to navigate patriarchal structures and pursue financial independence.
4. Critically assess the relevance of African feminist theories in understanding contemporary challenges to women's economic empowerment in Africa.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions will be used to direct this study:

1. How does "Awu's Story" illustrate the complex interplay between social identity, cultural norms, and economic systems contributing to African women's financial invisibility?
2. In what ways do African feminist theories (such as Motherism, Stiwanism, Snail-sense feminism, and Nego-feminism) provide insights into the economic challenges and coping strategies of women as portrayed in the novel?
3. How does the protagonist's journey in "Awu's Story" reflect the broader tensions between traditional expectations and modern aspirations for African women's financial autonomy?

4. What strategies for negotiating patriarchal structures and achieving economic empowerment are evident in the novel, and how do these align with contemporary African feminist discourse?

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 African Feminism Through Humanist Perspective: An Intersectional Approach to Gender Equality

The intersection of African feminism and humanist perspective offers a rich framework for addressing gender inequality in African contexts. According to Humanists International, a global representative of the humanist movement, humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance that affirms that humans have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their lives. Humanists believe we are responsible for respecting and caring for one another. Thérèse Kuoh-Moukoury also testifies to the humanist traits of the novel's protagonist in her preface:

"In both her private and professional worlds, Awu offers intelligence, sanity, and generosity in opposition to tyranny, cruelty, and corruption. Through her courage and thorough African ingenuity, Awu contributes to the emergence of a new kind of humanism for the twenty-first century" (Mintsa, 2018, p. 9).

The root causes of gender inequality are gender bias and social norms that restrict women's rights and opportunities. (Baoping, 2022, p. 8). African feminism, rooted in the same foundational principles as humanism, provides a unique lens to examine and combat gender disparities across the continent. This approach aims to understand and ameliorate women's multifaceted challenges in African societies while simultaneously recognizing and celebrating their agency, resilience, and contributions. African feminism, distinct from Western feminist paradigms, is intrinsically tied to the humanist tradition, emphasizing all individuals' inherent dignity and worth regardless of gender. This philosophical alignment stems from traditional African value systems prioritizing communal well-being and interconnectedness. Therefore, African feminism

seeks to understand how women navigate complex sociocultural landscapes, negotiate power dynamics in both public and private spheres, confront intersecting forms of oppression, contribute to economic development and social progress, challenge and transform patriarchal structures, and promote inclusive dialogue and coalition-building between genders and across different social groups. It highlights the need for men's involvement in gender equality efforts and seeks to build coalitions that effectively address systemic inequalities.

Bressler (2007) asserts that feminism aims to comprehend the various forms of oppression women face socially, economically, politically and psychologically to mitigate or eradicate these oppressive forces. Moreover, the intersection of African feminism and humanism acknowledges that gender inequality does not exist in isolation. It recognizes the intersectionality of oppression, understanding that gender interacts with other forms of marginalization such as class, ethnicity, religion, and colonial legacies. According to Naomi Nkealah (2006), African feminism strives to create a new liberal, productive, autonomous African woman within Africa's heterogeneous cultures (p. 133). As stated by Catherine Obianuju Acholonu, "Feminism has as its ultimate goal the triumphal emancipation of the woman as a unique, distinct individual with a mind uncluttered by patriarchal beliefs and abusive submission to tradition" (Roina Ochieng, 2018). Therefore, the novel provides a lens into the gender disparities, precarious financial situation, and struggles faced by Sub-Saharan women, especially those in rural areas, such as the novel's protagonist, Awu. Her journey to financial independence is portrayed as challenging. This study aims to shed light on the economic circumstances of African women. It seeks to investigate their diverse experiences and needs, unique challenges, aspirations, and opportunities in various economic contexts. By doing so, we hope to gain insights into developing more effective strategies to support their economic empowerment. This focus is crucial because African women represent a diverse group, encompassing individuals from different cultures,

socioeconomic backgrounds, and regions across the continent. Despite this diversity, they are often underserved in terms of economic opportunities and support. Importantly, this population possesses significant untapped potential, and with proper understanding and targeted support, African women could contribute more substantially to their local and national economies. This is key to achieving gender justice and inclusive development in Africa.

2.2 Theoretical Framework: African Feminist Theories

This study is grounded in African feminist frameworks, specifically drawing on four key theories: Motherism, Stiwanim, Snail-sense feminism, and Nego-feminism. These theories provide a culturally relevant lens to examine African women's financial invisibility and empowerment strategies.

Motherism: Developed by Catherine Obianuju Acholonu (1995), Motherism emphasizes the importance of motherhood, nature, and nurture in African societies. It advocates for a "return to traditional pro-natal womanhood" and promotes cooperation between genders rather than confrontation. This theory is relevant to our analysis of Awu's character, who embodies motherly qualities while navigating economic challenges.

"By marrying Obame Afame, however, she had become the mother of the entire village and one of the pillars of her husband's family" (Mintsa 2018, p.45)

"If Awudabiran hadn't had to help out Nguema Afane's two wives, who often had nothing to eat, and if she hadn't had full responsibility of Ada and her baby, her financial resources would have been sufficient. But given these circumstances, she had to learn how to cut down her expenses" p. 89

Stiwanim: Coined by Omolara Ogundipe-Leslie, Stiwanim (Social Transformation Including Women in Africa) addresses the colonial and neo-colonial structures that position African men at the top of the social hierarchy. This theory is crucial in

examining how Awu challenges traditional roles assigned to women in African society. Stiwanim, while advocating for social change, maintains a nuanced approach to African culture and traditions. This theory recognizes that not all traditional practices are detrimental to women's progress. It proposes a balanced approach that seeks to challenge harmful practices while respecting and maintaining valuable cultural elements, thereby avoiding the pitfalls of wholesale rejection of African cultural heritage. African feminism recognizes the significance of culture ((Stuhlhofer, 2020) and family values (Atanga, 2013). Male support is essential in advancing gender equality by supporting female education and participation (Stuhlhofer, 2020).

"Awu had been provided with a healthy dowry, and for a good reason. She was the only woman in the entire village to hold a degree! She was certified to teach elementary school and she was also a master seamstress How could you not give a proper dowry to such a rare specimen?" (p.45-46).

Snail-sense Feminism: Proposed by Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, this theory advocates for women to work slowly and strategically to overcome patriarchal societies. It emphasizes the importance of women developing survival strategies to overcome impediments. This framework helps analyze Awu's gradual and strategic approach to achieving financial independence.

Nego-feminism: Introduced by Obioma Nnaemeka (2004), Nego-feminism emphasizes negotiation and compromise in dismantling patriarchal structures. This "no ego feminism" suggests that progress can be achieved through strategic maneuvering rather than direct confrontation. This theory is particularly relevant in understanding Awu's interactions with her husband and society at large.

"She did know, however, that if she revealed her entire story, she indeed would have won her case. But the thought of letting people know just how much she contributed to the couple's wealth

prevented her from going further. It was their secret alone.” (p. 120)

These theories collectively provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing the complexities of African women's financial situations as portrayed in "Awu's Story". They offer insights into women's strategies to navigate patriarchal structures, the tensions between tradition and modernity, and the path towards economic empowerment.

3.0 Methodology

This study employs a qualitative literary analysis approach, combining textual analysis with insights from African feminist theories. The primary data source is Cheryl Toman's English translation of Justine Mintsas's novel "Awu's Story". The methodology, which is also a textual-discursive analysis, involves closely reading the text to identify key passages related to women's financial situations, cultural expectations, and the intersection of tradition and modernity. This analysis is supplemented by a review of scholarly literature on African feminism and women's economic empowerment. The study adopts an inductive approach to theme identification, situating the literary analysis within broader academic discourse. This interdisciplinary method bridges literary studies and social sciences, offering a multifaceted perspective on African women's financial invisibility.

4.0 Content Analysis

4.1 Onomatology and Symbolism of *Awu*

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, onomatology is the science or study of the origins and forms of proper names or words, especially when used in a specialized field. In her insightful introduction to Mintsas's novel, Toman offers a deep dive into the cultural and linguistic context that underpins the narrative. By exploring the history and traditions of the Fang ethnic group in Gabon, Toman illuminates the rich tapestry of influences that shape both the author's background and the novel's setting. This cultural context proves crucial in unravelling the "hidden elements" woven throughout the story, particularly in understanding the profound significance of the novel's title. Central to this analysis is exploring

the protagonist's name, Awu, which serves as both the novel's title and a key to its thematic core. In the Fang language, "Awu" translates directly to "death." This seemingly simple translation belies a more complex meaning when considering the character's full name, Awudabiran, which carries the dual significance of "death disturbs" and "death destroys." The author's choice of this name for her protagonist is far from arbitrary; it serves as a linguistic harbinger of the novel's central themes and the character's journey. The pervasive presence of death in the narrative mirrors the ominous connotations of the protagonist's name. The theme of death, embodied in the protagonist's name Awu, manifests in multiple forms throughout the narrative. Literal death appears in the passing of Bella, the first wife of Awu's husband. Symbolic death is represented through Ada, the daughter of Awu's sister-in-law, who experiences a metaphorical "death" when her mother rejects her due to an early pregnancy. A pivotal instance of death occurs with Awu's husband's passing, serving as a major turning point in the story. These instances of death, both literal and metaphorical, reinforce the significance of the protagonist's name and add depth to the novel's exploration of loss, transformation, and resilience in the face of adversity.

In this analysis, the most pivotal death in the narrative is that of Awu's husband. This event is a critical turning point and catalyst for the novel's climax. The significance of this death lies in its consequences for Awu, particularly her subjection to traditional Fang widowhood rituals. It forces her into a cultural practice that, in my view, exemplifies the complex intersection of tradition, gender roles, and personal autonomy within Fang society. This moment in the story provides a rich opportunity to examine how cultural practices impact women's autonomy and financial independence in Africa. Through carefully constructing names, events, and cultural practices, Mintsas crafts a narrative rich in symbolism and deeply rooted in Fang culture. The recurring theme of death echoed in the protagonist's name and the events that befall her, serves as a powerful device to explore the

complexities of cultural identity, gender dynamics, and personal resilience in the face of loss and societal expectations.

Despite her name's dark connotations, the protagonist's charming personality illuminates the lives of those around her. The author may have given her a gloomy name but endowed her with a character full of hope and vitality. This contrast serves to illustrate that women have the power to rewrite their destinies and change their fates. Even with death lurking around her, the protagonist remains determined to nurture life. This is evident in various aspects of her story. Firstly, when her husband loses his job, she steps into the role of breadwinner. Taking on financial responsibility showcases her adaptability and determination to maintain her family's well-being. It also challenges traditional gender roles, highlighting her strength and capability. Secondly, she extends her care beyond her immediate family, providing sustenance to her husband's relatives during times of scarcity. By preventing their starvation, she literally preserves life, embodying the life-giving force that contrasts so sharply with her name's gloomy implications. Furthermore, her nurturing nature is prominently displayed in her support of Ada during childbirth and her subsequent care for the newborn. This direct involvement in bringing new life into the world and ensuring its survival is perhaps the most literal manifestation of her life-affirming character.

Lastly, as a widow, she fights against the constraints imposed by her brother-in-law, asserting her right to independence. This struggle for freedom represents her determination to live life on her terms, refusing to be defined by societal expectations of widowhood. Her character serves as a testament to women's strength and their capacity to shape their own narratives, regardless of the names or roles assigned to them by society. In addition, through this analysis, the author depicted Catherine Obianuju Acholonu's humanist theory, *motherism*, which is a theory under the branch of African feminism. However, it is claimed to be the Afrocentric alternative to feminism as the founder self-identified as an environmental humanist and rejected feminism.

4.2 African Women's Financial Invisibility: Concept of Socio-Interconnectivity

The concept of socio-interconnectivity developed during this study offers a framework for analyzing the complex interplay between social identity, social conditioning, and socioeconomic issues, which is critical to understanding contemporary social dynamics. This paper examines the interconnectedness of these factors, with a particular focus on gender-based disparities. Socio-interconnectivity helps us understand how gender interacts with social expectations to produce varied socioeconomic outcomes. For instance, an African woman may face compounded disadvantages due to the interconnection of gender-based discrimination, cultural expectations, and economic barriers.

4.3 Gender Roles and Economic Participation

Traditional gender roles in many African societies have significantly impacted women's economic participation and financial visibility. These roles often confine women to the domestic sphere, limiting their financial independence and opportunities.

4.3.1 Expectations for Women

The traditional expectations for women, which are primary caregivers for family members, managers of household affairs, and supporters rather than leaders in societal contexts, reflect societal norms that have been increasingly challenged and redefined in recent decades. These expectations have historically cast women primarily as caregivers, household managers, and supporters rather than leaders in broader societal contexts. These expectations often result in women shouldering a disproportionate share of unpaid care work, limiting their ability to pursue personal goals or careers outside the home. Perhaps most concerning is the expectation that women should be supporters rather than leaders in societal contexts. This perspective has historically contributed to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions across various fields, including politics, business, and academia.

4.4 The Cyclical Nature of Gender Disparity: A Systems Approach

This study conceptualized the gender disparity chart in Figure 1, which can be interpreted through the lens of systems thinking. It highlights the cyclical and self-reinforcing nature of gender inequality. It further illuminates and provides a more distinct understanding of the challenges in achieving gender equality. It also offers insights into holistic strategies for promoting women's financial visibility and empowerment in African contexts.

Feedback Loops in Gender Disparity

The interplay between social conditioning, social identity, and socioeconomic issues creates powerful feedback loops that perpetuate gender disparities:

Social Identity

By exploring how social identities are influenced by social conditioning, which affects socioeconomic outcomes, we can gain valuable insights into the perpetuation of systemic inequalities and potential avenues for social change. The privileged/marginalized dichotomy affects economic opportunities, solidifying social identities. This often manifests as a binary distinction between women as a marginalized group and men as a privileged group (Miles, 2024). However, it is crucial to note that this dichotomy oversimplifies the nuanced spectrum of gender identities and experiences. Historically and in many contemporary societies, women face systematic disadvantages rooted in their social identity. These disadvantages are not inherent to their biological sex but are largely the product of socially constructed gender roles and expectations.

Social Conditioning

Social conditioning refers to how individuals internalize societal norms, customs, and traditions. In many societies, this conditioning

is heavily influenced by patriarchal structures and beliefs. Patriarchy, as a system of social organization, privileges male authority and power across various domains of life, including familial, economic, and political spheres (Walby, 1990). Patriarchy is described as a pervasive force that manifests in various ways:

1. Gender role expectations: Prescribed behaviors and attributes associated with masculinity and femininity.
2. Division of labor: Gendered allocation of paid and unpaid work.
3. Power dynamics: Unequal distribution of decision-making authority in public and private spheres.
4. Cultural narratives: Stories, myths, and media representations that reinforce gender stereotypes.

Many African women have been conditioned to accept and perpetuate patriarchal norms, often unknowingly reinforcing systems that limit their own opportunities and rights (Musingafi, 2021). However, the character Awu in Justine Mints'a novel presents a counterpoint to this trend. Awu embodies a more progressive self-perception, recognizing her inherent worth and potential beyond the confines of traditional gender roles in African society:

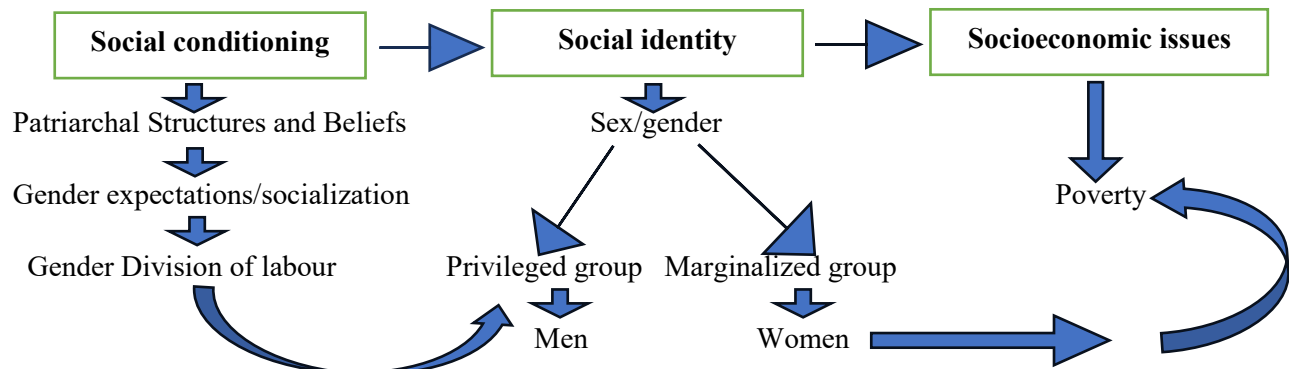
"Her purpose in life was to create stitches, just as the bee's purpose was to produce honey" (Mints'a, p. 44)

Awu's perspective represents a shift in consciousness, demonstrating how individual women can begin to question and resist internalized patriarchal norms. Her character illustrates the potential for African women to reimagine their place in society, even within the context of strong cultural traditions and expectations.

Socioeconomic Issues

The interconnectedness of social identity and conditioning profoundly impacts socioeconomic outcomes, particularly for women. The persistent socioeconomic disparities faced by women globally are a stark reminder of the ongoing struggle for gender equality. These disparities, deeply rooted in systemic inequalities, manifest across various aspects of women's lives, significantly impacting their economic well-being and overall quality of life. These impacts include employment disparities (e.g., wage gaps, occupational segregation), higher poverty rates, especially among vulnerable groups (single mothers and elderly women), educational barriers, and unpaid labour burdens. These socioeconomic issues are not merely consequences of individual choices but are deeply rooted in systemic inequalities perpetuated by social identity constructs and conditioning. The United Nations Gender Snapshot (2022) asserts that globally, over 380 million women and girls are in extreme poverty, living on less than \$1.90 a day. In addition, if current trends continue, in sub-Saharan Africa, more women and girls will live in extreme poverty by 2030.

Figure 1: Socio-Interconnectivity Chart



Source: Author's Concept

4.5 The "Breadwinner" vs. "Breadloser" Dynamic

The novel raises important questions about the role of women when traditional male breadwinners lose their income. This situation challenges entrenched gender norms and highlights the potential for women's economic empowerment. The concept of "breadwinner" and "breadloser" plays a crucial role in understanding African families' economic dynamics and women's challenges in achieving financial visibility. Traditionally, men are expected to be the primary breadwinners in African societies. This expectation is deeply rooted in cultural norms and societal structures. The breadwinner role typically involves being the primary economic provider for the family, making major financial decisions, and maintaining a public presence and leadership role.

The Emergence of the "Breadloser"

The term "breadloser" refers to someone who was previously the primary earner but has lost their source of income. This situation can arise due to various circumstances, such as job loss, economic downturns, or health issues. However, the term doesn't imply failure or incompetence. Instead, it can be viewed as a setback due to unforeseen circumstances. Even after losing their income, male breadwinners often continue to face societal pressure and expectations about their role as the primary provider for their household.

The "breadwinner" vs. "breadloser" dynamic reveals the complex interplay between traditional gender roles and economic realities in African societies. It highlights the need for more flexible and inclusive approaches to family economics, which can contribute to greater financial visibility and empowerment for women.

Impact on Gender Dynamics

When a male breadwinner becomes a "breadloser," it creates a complex situation that challenges traditional gender roles, which can have both negative and positive impacts.

- **Women's Economic Participation:** This situation may

necessitate women taking on more economic responsibilities.

- **Psychological Impact:** Men may face societal pressure and judgment for not fulfilling their expected role, thereby struggling with their identity and self-worth. The resulting psychological distress could manifest in adverse ways, potentially impacting relationships with their family, especially wives. In some cases, these issues may escalate to domestic violence.

“Awu, what did you do here? Your money is for you and your parents, especially now that I can no longer send them anything. What have you done?” But did you realize that by doing this, the whole village will think it's you who is supporting us? That it's you, the head of the house? That it's you, the man of the house? Do you really think that I can tolerate such a thing? ” (Mintsa, pp. 98-99).

Awu's Story compellingly portrays these gender dynamics and economic roles within an African family. The protagonist, Awu, embodies the untapped potential of many African women. The narrative takes a pivotal turn when Obame Afane loses his job, challenging the family's economic stability. This situation brings Awu's economic potential into focus.

4.6 Global Economic Disparities and the Urgency for Women's Financial Inclusion

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlight a critical yet often overlooked aspect of gender equality: the persistent economic disparities faced by women, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. This perspective is essential within the larger context of global sustainable development goals. It emphasizes the urgency of addressing women's financial invisibility not just as a local issue but as a critical component of global economic progress and gender equality.

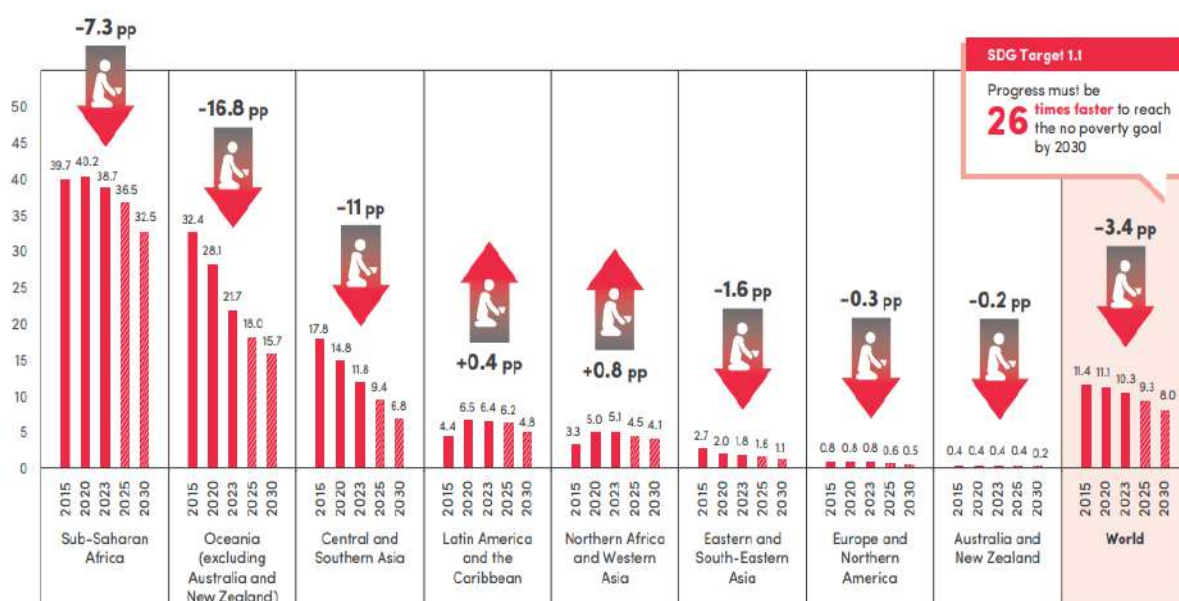
The Scale of the Challenge

Gender gaps in poverty are most pronounced among those aged 25 to 34, with women in this

age group 1.2 times more likely to experience extreme poverty than their male counterparts. Furthermore, the report reveals that older women (aged 60+) face a higher risk of relative poverty compared to men of the same age group, a trend observed across both developed and developing nations (The Gender Snapshot 2023). Recent data from the UN Gender Snapshot 2023 report, as shown in Figure 2, reveals the magnitude of the problem that:

- By 2030, approximately 8% of the global female population (342.4 million women and girls) will live in extreme poverty (living on less than \$2.15 a day), and a staggering 220.9 million women and girls will be in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- In 30% of countries, the extreme poverty rate among women and girls is projected to exceed 11% by 2030.

Figure 2: UN Gender Snapshot 2023 report



Source: UN Women and Pardee Center for International Futures, using the International Futures modelling platform 2023. (Note: pp refers to percentage points).

The Imperative for Financial Inclusion: Beyond Individual Empowerment

These statistics emphasize the urgent need for targeted interventions to promote women's financial inclusion and economic empowerment. The American Association of University Women (AAUW) stresses that financial parity in income and wealth is crucial for achieving gender equality. Importantly, the benefits of women's economic empowerment extend beyond individual women, rather:

1. Families and communities benefit when women achieve financial stability.

2. Workplaces become more diverse and innovative.
3. Breaking down barriers for women creates opportunities across all genders.

This analysis reveals that while progress has been made in women's education and economic participation, significant barriers to financial independence persist. The intersection of social identity, social conditioning, and socioeconomic factors continues to shape women's experiences and opportunities. Awu's journey exemplifies the

challenges African women face in achieving financial visibility and the resourcefulness they employ to overcome these obstacles. The study underscores the importance of addressing gender disparities in economic empowerment as a crucial step towards achieving sustainable development and gender equality in Africa. It highlights the need for policies and interventions that recognize and support women's contributions to the economy, both in formal and informal sectors. Furthermore, it emphasizes the value of culturally sensitive approaches to women's empowerment that work within existing social structures while gradually challenging oppressive norms.

5.0 Conclusion

Justine Mintsu's "Awu's Story" illuminates the complex interplay of factors contributing to African women's financial invisibility. Through an intersectional lens, this analysis reveals how gender, race, class, and culture create unique obstacles to women's economic empowerment. The novel challenges

traditional gender roles and the "breadwinner" paradigm, exposing both the hindrances to women's financial progress and the untapped economic potential of African women. This issue, resonating with UN Sustainable Development Goals, underscores the need for a multifaceted approach to promote women's financial empowerment in Africa.

This study contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable development and gender equality, emphasizing the delicate balance between tradition and progress in African women's pursuit of financial independence. It highlights the urgency of creating opportunities for women like Awu to thrive economically while navigating complex social and cultural landscapes. Addressing African women's financial invisibility emerges not just as a local concern but as a critical component of global economic progress, necessitating continued research, policy interventions, and societal changes to create an equitable future for all.

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