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A PRAGMATIC INTERPRETATION OF CORRUPTION- INFESTED NIGERIAN SOCIETY IN IKE CHUKWUEMEKA'S *OUR CHILDREN ARE COMING*

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Abstract

The study x-rays the Nigerian society by looking at the confessional statements of the different characters in Ike Chukwuemeka's *Our Children Are Coming!* The novelist critically examined Nigerian society, especially through the prism of the political and the elite members of the society who are either leaders today or would-be leaders of tomorrow. The objectives of the study are to highlight the rot in the society perpetrated through corruption and moral decadence by the elite members of the society. This study aims to address societal ills by analyzing monologues and dialogues conversations in the novel in order to make the Nigerian society a better place for living. The methodology for this study involved extracting the monologues or self-confessional statements of the characters as well as the open confessions of the adults who appeared before: The Presidential Commission on Juvenile below Twenty-one Years and the young characters who appeared before: The National Commission on Parents Over Twenty-one Years. These statements were extracted and numbered appropriately for ease of analyses of their Implicature for good governance and corruption-free society. The theoretical framework of analysis is Grice's (1975) Conventional and Conversational Implicature of the statements. The findings revealed the extent of the rot in Nigerian society and the consequences on good governance and national development in Nigeria. The study has also shown that high level intellectualism does not guaranty high moral probity and corruption-free individuals. The study recommends the need for a national reorientation and rebirth for the elite youths and adults in the Nigerian society.

Keywords: pragmatics, corruption, governance, Implicature, leadership

Introduction

Ike Chukwuemeka's *Our Children Are Coming* is a fascinating novel which x-rays the Nigerian society through a fictitious narration in book length by presenting characters and actions with some degree of realism. It is an extended work of narrative fiction usually written in prose and published as a book in 1990. According to Prah, A. (2019), a novel is a narrative work of prose fiction that tells a story about specific human experiences over a considerable length or word count.

Ike Chukwuemeka's *Our Children Are Coming* mirrors the Nigerian society, especially the elite

class represented by the political and administrative office holders and their children represented by the juveniles below twenty-one years old or the educated young adults in the society. The novel is an advocacy against corruption and moral decadence being perpetrated by these sets of people mentioned above. The implications of the actions of these set of people in leadership positions today and the young adults who will take over leadership positions tomorrow, often referred to as "leaders of tomorrow" are highlighted in the novel. The rots of corruption and moral decadence so exposed in the novel showed that "The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born."

Every facet of the society is guilty in one way or the other of the menace of corruption which is defined in various ways by different scholars. Gatung et al (2013) see corruption as “the use of public office for the purpose of personal gain” similarly, Hira et al (2016) see corruption as “...any breach of trust, malfeasance of intended duty, or failure to deliver in both practice and spirit for any agreement when the purpose is the gain of just one of the parties.” Also, the United Nation Convention on corruption says that corruption represents a threat “...to the stability and security of societies, undermining the institution of democracy, ethical values and justice and jeopardizing sustainable development and the rule of law.” This study is therefore motivated by the desire to expose these ills in the society by exploring pragmatics meaning to the statements resulting from the dialogues between the chairmen of the two commissions of inquiry and the witnesses who testify before them (that is, The Presidential Commission of Inquiry on Juveniles under Twenty-one Years and The Commission of Inquiry on Parents Over Twenty-one Years) as well as the press conference made by the President and 1st National Vice President of National Association of Students (NAS).

The study employed a pragmatic meaning because Yule (1996) sees Pragmatics as the study of “speaker’s meaning”. He further defines Pragmatics as the study of “invisible meaning or how we recognize what is meant even when it is not actually said or written”. This means that meanings are derived from utterances or statements through shared assumptions between the speaker and the hearer. Leech (1983) sees Pragmatics as “the study of how utterances have meaning in situation”. This implies that the speaker has the best way to accomplish his/her conversational aim through his/her use of language. In other words, Leech presents a complementarist view of pragmatics within an overall programme of studying language as a communication system. This means, studying the use of language as distinct from, but complementary to, the language itself seen as a formal system (Leech 1983:6).

Statement of the Research Problem

Researches are by nature, designed to solve

problems or help to reduce a raging incidence to its barest minimum. The Nigerian society is bedeviled with issues of corruption and moral decadence in almost all the facet of its life making one to wonder whether there is any array of hope in curbing the phenomenon. These problems have become so notorious in the Nigerian society such that the hopes of their eradication have become gloomy by each passing day. A lot of people have lost hope of curbing corruptive tendencies and moral decadence among the elite members of the society. There is a general apathy and disillusionment to campaigns against these dry-headed monsters called “corruption and moral decadence” in the society which have become so endemic either as a result of lack of political will to fight them or because of the general believe that everybody is involved. This study therefore, is aimed at bridging that gap by utilizing the rich resources of anti-corruption and moral decadence in Ike Chukwuemeka’s *Our Children Are Coming* which have not been fully explored in campaigning against corruption-infested Nigerian society. The paper is a clarion call to draw the minds of the society back to the common enemies plaguing our society through exploring a pragmatic interpretation of the statements in the dialogic conversations in the novel thereby showcasing the bad effects of corruption and moral decadence in Nigerian society. It is hoped that the leaders of today and those of tomorrow will x-ray themselves by this study and shone corruption in all its ramifications for the good of the society.

Objectives of the Study

This study is aimed at highlighting corruption and moral decadence in the Nigerian society as satirized in the novel through the following objectives:

1. Highlight the corruptive activities perpetrated by the adult elites in the society, especially those occupying political and administrative leadership position in Ike Chukwuemeka’s *Our Children Are Coming!*
2. Highlight the moral decadence perpetrated by the young elite members of the society also known as the juveniles below twenty-one years who are expected to be “leaders of tomorrow” as portrayed in Ike

Chukwuemeka's *Our Children Are Coming!*

3. Interpret the Implicature of the utterances/statements against the adults and the juveniles in the Nigerian society as portrayed in Ike Chukwuemeka's *Our Children Are Coming!*

Significance of the Study

This research is very significant in the sense that it is tailored towards solving some of the major problems in the society by highlighting corruption as a cankerworm eating deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society and the moral rectitude among the youths. There is a nexus between corruption and bad governance and a corruption-free society and good governance. This study therefore is showcasing the bad effects of corruptive activities of both the young and the adult elite members of the Nigerian society with the aim of drawing consciousness to these bad activities for possible eradication or reduction for the survival of the society. There is a general lukewarm attitude to reading novels by a large percentage of the Nigerian society, despite the rich resources and messages inherent in novels. Some persons read novels just for pleasure and entertainment without thinking deeply about the didactic lessons to be learnt from them. This study therefore becomes very significant in that it exposes corruption perpetrated by "the leaders of today" and the moral decadence among "the leaders of tomorrow". This study presents Ike Chukwuemeka's *Our Children Are Coming* as a lens through which the elites – political and administrative leaders or office holders could see themselves and reflect on their activities as either good or bad for the society. The study therefore is a campaign against corruption and moral decadence in the society and hopes to draw peoples' consciousness to these ills plaguing the Nigerian society, so that conscious efforts or measures can be taken to correcting or ameliorating the problems, which will in turn, help entrench a better society full of development for the good of all, instead of the good of an individual and his/her immediate family.

Literature Review

This paper reviewed linguistics studies on corruption with the view to show that linguists are concerned with the problems of corruption and

moral decadence in the society. While some linguists advocate for waging war against corruption, others simply highlight the language of corruption without advocating for any action(s) against it.

Adegoju, A. (2003). Conducted a study entitled, "Corruption of Language and Nigeria's Debased Value System." He analyses what he calls "...language (ab)use evident in the Lexico-semantic constructions that are tactically deployed to configure and ...to conceal Nigeria's debased system." The study acknowledges the fact that the depravity of Nigeria's social order is alarming and unhealthy for national development and thinks that the linguistic options that Nigerians use to code all kinds of unacceptable behaviours are as threatening to the cause of national development as the practices themselves. The study proposes that "...any crusade that is geared towards sanitizing the Nigerian society should not be directed only at the manifestations of the country's perverse world-view but also at the linguistic expressions that serve as their 'life support' system." Adegoju's study is similar to the current study in many respects. The studies advocate for a crusade to sanitize the Nigerian society in order to achieve the desired national development; the studies also believe that corruption in every facet of the Nigerian society is alarming and disturbing, therefore, conscious efforts must be made to address them. The only point of divergence is that the earlier study did not say anything about moral decadence amongst the Nigerian youths.

Oboko, C. (2023). Conducted a study on "Contextualizing Language as a Tool of Value Degeneration: A Sociolinguistics Study of Language of Corruption in Nigeria." The study adopted a qualitative research design and a random sampling technique in selecting a total of one hundred respondents across the five south-eastern States (Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Ebonyi and Abia) in Nigeria. The paper anchored its analyses on the conceptual framework of Sapir-Whorfian Hypothesis which posits that our world-view is shaped by our languages. The analyses were done using interpretive textual analysis model to analyse the data collected from eight notable online newspapers such as The Vanguard, The Punch, The Guardian, This Day, The Premium,

The Sahara Reporters, Naira Land and others published between 2015 and 2021. The findings reveal that the use of words, phrases and expressions which are reflected in coinages, code-mixing, reduplication, metonymy, metaphor, slang, borrowing, pidginisation, lexical reversal and creative usages mask corruption and these have far-reaching effects on national development. The paper recommends that the fight against corruption should pay attention to linguistic embellishments that act as lifeline for the negative practice to trend. The two studies have common ground on fighting corruption in the society for national development to thrive. However, the studies differ in their methodologies and approaches to the menace. While the reviewed study sees the use of language embellishment as an act that promotes corruption, the current study views corruption from both actions and language use of the adult members of the society in Ike Chukwuemeka's *Our Children Are Coming!* The current study also views moral decadence by the youths who are supposedly the "leaders of tomorrow" as a worrisome development which must be tackled today for the survival of tomorrow.

Bodomo., A. (2021). Examined "The Language and Literature of Corruption in West Africa." The researcher looked at some theoretical approaches to corruption and discussed in details "The Rational Choice Theory and Cognitive Science" explanation on corruption based on notions from Psychology, Political Psychology and Behavioural Economics. The study submits that the approach adopted does not involve waging war on corruption but to highlight the expressions used in Transactional Linguistic Cues on Corruption (TLCC) to promote corruption among some languages in West Africa. Some selected expressions are exemplified below:

West African English: "put weight on top"

Yoruba: "se owo kunduru si mi" translated as "hand something to me discreetly".

Ibo: "megharia ahu" translated as "shake/adjust body"

Akan: "ye biribi or hu yen kakra" translated as "do something or see us small"

Dagaare: "tung kore n ba" translated as "dip into your pocket"

Swahili: "toa ki ku kidogo" translated as "remove something small"

Hausa: "kasa yay i karfi, sheik a yi wani abu" translated as "the land is hard, you have to do something"

The study suggests that linguists and literary scholars can contribute to anti-corruption campaigns by identifying potential cases of corruption through the analysis of texts and using the methods to train anti-corruption staff. The current study is in agreement with the earlier study because we are using a literary text to analyse corruption in Nigerian society and using the text as a campaign or advocacy to reducing corruption in Nigerian society in order to pave way for national development.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the theoretical framework of Grice's (1975) concepts of conventional and conversational Implicature. The term Implicature is generally used by Grice (ibid) to account for what a speaker can imply, suggest, or mean, as distinct from what the speaker literally says. According to Grice (1975, p 44, in Awobi 2009, p 56), there are two types of Implicature:

A) The Conventional Implicature, which arguably refers to plenty of linguistic and semantic aspects of language. It consists of a sort of specific literal meanings, which slightly differ from the conversational implicature. It is determined by the conventional meaning of the words used. For example, "He is an Igboman, he is therefore industrious." The speaker does not directly assert that one property, "being industrious" follows from another property "being an Igboman", but the form of expression used conventionally implicates that such relation does hold (Awobi 2009, p 56).

B) The Conversational Implicature: this is derived from a general principle of conversation plus a number of maxims which speakers will normally obey if they do not want to be seen to flout, violate or infringe in conversation. The Conversational Implicature propounded by Grice (1975), suggests that we often convey information beyond that which we

say and that the additional meaning is inferred and predictable. The conversational maxims outlined by Grice are maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner. Although, this study is not exploring these maxims in details, the maxim of quality which has to do with telling a lie is mentioned where applicable in determining the type of Implicature employed to arrive at the finding of the study. The principles of conventional and conversational Implicatures are the pragmatic tenets of the linguistic study of Ike Chukwuemeka's *Our Children Are Coming!*

The Methodology of the Study

This study is a qualitative research in which the data for analyses are obtained from Ike Chukwuemeka's *Our Children Are Coming!* The method or procedure for data collection is done by identifying the speaker, the communicative

situation or context, the direct and indirect utterances which were assigned serial number and the interpretation of the utterances derived through conventional and conversational interpretations. The Implicature of the utterances/statements is discussed in the findings. The data presentation and analyses were done in line with the objectives of the study starting from the corruption and moral rectitude of the adult elites who are occupying various political and administrative positions as leaders, as testified by the youths to the National Commission of Inquiry on Adult above Twenty-one Years. And the moral decadence exhibited by the young persons as testified to the National Commission of Inquiry on Juveniles under Twenty-one Years by their parents. The Implicature of the utterances was done through the conventional and conversational Implicature model of Grice (1975) which were applied to the bulk statements of the testifiers to derive the interpretations.

Data Presentation and Analysis

S. N	Speaker	Communicative Context	Summary of statements of the speaker on activities of the accused.	Interpretation
1	Witness : 001	Testifying to the National Commission on Parents Over Twenty-one Years p.203	Witness 001 is a female who alleges that her father, a Nigerian Professor, impregnated her mother (a white American) out of wedlock but became furious that she (the daughter) became pregnant for her boyfriend out of wedlock. She stressed that her father was responsible for the circumstances that led to the pregnancy owing to his rigid stands on discipline. The father had instructed that she must not stay outside beyond 7.30 p.m. however, on that fateful day, she came home by 8.14 p.m, just by 44 minutes late and the father refused to open the gate for her to enter the house. This made her go over to sleep with the boyfriend in a guesthouse and they had sex for the first time which resulted in the pregnancy. Witness 001 henceforth Wt:001 testified that the father of her boyfriend (BF) is of the same ethnic group and a professional colleague with her father and they are both professors serving in two different universities in the United Kingdom but are sworn enemies due to a long animosity between the two professors over the fight they had over an English nursing sister. Wt: 001 also testified that her father treated the mother in a	The attitude of 001's father portrays high handedness, immorality, bitterness against fellow professional colleagues, lies, deceits and selfishness. Some professors on our campuses are so proud to admit failure, fallibility and are so rigid by handing out heartless punishment to others.

			dishonourable manner “my illustrious father had had financial problems during his undergraduate days in the US. My mother, who was also an undergraduate in the same university, gave up her own studies to take a job and finance his education. Things went well. Daddy achieved his MD, and I was born the year after. Then mummy went back to the university, to complete her studies. One day, unknown to mummy, daddy ran away to England, taking me along...” she claimed that the father exploited the mother and ditched her. The father used a friend to call her mother and lied that they (father and Daughter) are dead in an accident and the friend cut the call in order to conceal further detailed information she might want to get.	
2	Witness 002	Testifying to the National Commission on Parents Over Twenty-one Years	This is a male witness who said so many things about his father. His father is a charming and person admired by people especially, by the opposite sex. He was awarded two honorary PhDs and a knighthood in the Catholic church for exemplary life as a Christian leader. However, he does not eat his wife’s food nor sleep on the same bed with her. He is a rigid moralist and disciplinarian. But, he took a girl in form 5 about the age mate of his daughter on a trip for eight days. The principal of the college suspended the girl for absenteeism. But, the principal was harassed by the police to squash the suspension order and recall the girl back to school with immediate effect because she had gone to serve as a protocol officer in the entourage to Wt: 002’s father who went on an official tour of three European countries. At each trip of tour, a new beautiful university student willing to place her resources at the disposal of Wt: 002’s father is hired. The recurrent budget of his office took care of the expenses involved, including the generous payoff at the end of the tour. The father is also a ritual killer who commits heinous crimes of murder, sex maniac and stealing in order to achieve his greatness in life.	The father of witness 002 is a replica of wastefulness of government resources on menial and pecuniary things at the expense of good governance by top politicians and beaurocrates. The father is a ritualist, a reminiscent of present day politician and high office holders who commit heinous crimes in order to achieve greatness. Hence, the Nigerian society is plagued with incessant cases of kidnapping, banditry, terrorism and ritual killings attributable to highly placed elite members of the Nigerian society.
3	Witness 005	Testifying to the National Commission on Parents	She is a tall girl, another England or diaspora brought- up who is ready to testify to save other young people from going through the hell she went through in the hands of her parents. Her parents are by national standards at least, well to do, and they always provide generously for her needs. She was	The attitudes by these parents showed excessive parental influence and dictatorship. Most parents do not

		Over Twenty-one Years	<p>nicknamed “Aje butter” or pampered child.” while in Queen’s College because she never run out of spending money. She wanted to read law but her parents were furious about that choice of course which they believe is the science of telling lies with straight face and a stiff neck. Instead of law, they preferred that she reads medicine, which is the science of healing people. She obeyed her parents’ choice and she was taken to England to prepare for medicine. However, she was recalled back to Nigeria to study Biochemistry at the premier university by direct entry mode. The parents lied to her that she was recalled to Nigeria because they could no longer afford to pay for her school fees in the UK due to the exchange rate of the naira to foreign currencies. The real motive behind her recall was the fear that their daughter will get hooked up or married to foreign nationals against their own preference for a Nigerian man. The mother became so desperate and started scheming to get the daughter hooked-up with Bolaji for a marital relationship. The two teenagers were not really into themselves but had to play along by faking the relationship with each other. After graduation, she was offered PhD Scholarship in Biochemistry and she was very happy to toe the academic career line, but her parents thought otherwise/differently by asking “which Ekiti man would propose marriage to a Doctor of Philosophy in Biochemistry? Her husband must not only be a Nigerian, but must be an Ekiti man.” Through the conspiracy of her parents, the PhD Scholarship was withdrawn. She was offered an admission to read medicine at the premier university which she declined. She wanted to proceed for National Youth Service Scheme (NYSC) that again was blocked by her parents. She took to cigarette, alcohol and weed leading to her depression.</p>	<p>allow their children to have a say about their future regarding choice of career and relationships. Most times over protection does not bring out the best in children.</p>
4	Witness 006	Testifying to the National Commission on Parents Over Twenty-one Years	<p>This is a male testifier who deemed it fit to acknowledge the contributions of his father to his development into becoming a proper Nigerian. He said “my father has drummed it regularly into our heads that you cannot get to the top of this country unless you learn how to cheat or steal even in broad daylight without being caught. It is for this reason that he resisted all attempts by my mother to send me and my younger brother to England for our education. My mother made enough money from her frequent official overseas trips to maintain the</p>	<p>This is a typical case of academic fraud prevalent in our universities by way plagiarism. Some persons have risen to the position of professor through nepotism and quota system instead of by rigorous academic</p>

		<p>two of us in England, but my father argued that it was wicked to send children overseas to grow up as gentlemen, only to bring them back to this country later to struggle for survival alongside seasoned rogues and ruffians.” The father buttressed his point by stating his progress at the university. That he had moved at snail’s pace until he learnt to cheat like others. For example, he had wasted years at Oxford University killing himself for a D.Phil. degree and ending up with the glorified bachelor’s degree called the B.Litt., before someone whispered to him how to become a doctor without tears. He dusted off his rejected thesis, and rushed it off to a renowned university in Eastern Europe, which had rescued many academics before him. In no time, he became a doctor. Taking his cue from another veteran scholar, he hacked out ten articles from the same thesis, and published them in carefully selected learned journals. The father and his colleagues also invented ingenious methods for getting almost anything they wrote published by setting up an African or west African or Third World or Nigerian journal in their own discipline, and appoint themselves or their trusted collaborators to the editorial board. Another method was to organize seminars at least once a year, and you invite yourself to deliver a paper or two. They also publish anthologies of other people’s work. If all the above failed, they publish the works of their brilliant students as their own, in far-away journals where the students were unlikely to see them. Another thing the father and his colleagues did was to set up a learned society, and appoint themselves its founding fellows, with gold medals and scarlet ceremonial robes. Having done this, they laid down impossible conditions for selection to ordinary membership, conditions which none of them could have met, to enhance the status of their fellowship. By combining all these methods, his father started moving faster than a shooting star from senior lecturer, reader to professor. Head of department, Dean of Faculty, Senate Representative on the University Council, and so on.</p> <p>About himself, witness 006 said “my parents wanted me to enroll at the university staff school at the age of four. The headmistress said no, because</p>	<p>standards. The effects of these practices are seen in the fallen standards of undergraduates’ academic performance. Merit and meritocracy have been jettisoned for political patronage, god-fatherism, nepotism, tribalism and religious affiliation.</p>
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			<p>the minimum age for enrolment was five. My father thanked her and went away. Two days later, he handed her an affidavit declaring my age was five years and three months. The headmistress who was at my christening, opened her eyes wide, and shut them. She had no option but to enroll me.” He went on “six years later, it was time for me to seek admission to a secondary school. My parents wanted me in a Federal Government College, so my father swore another affidavit, dropping my Nigerian name (which gave away my state of origin) and giving as my state of origin the state known for its inability to take up its admission quota every year for want of eligible candidates. His strategy worked, and I gained admission without difficulty.” Witness 006 continued by saying that because he was deficient in mathematics, his parents had mapped plans to buy leaked mathematics question paper in his school certificate year. An examination officer was hired to pull out the poorly written one to be replaced with the one written at home with the help of a seasoned mathematician. The plan was aborted because the examination officer was caught and the candidate’s papers were cancelled and barred from entering the council’s examination for two years. He was devastated to the point of contemplating a suicide, but the father assured him not to worry at all. He changed strategy by reverting to the name he had changed six years earlier, making it impossible for the examination council to apprehend him when he entered for the private candidates’ examination six months later. They perfected every plan for him and he came out with excellent results which gave him admission to study in his father’s department in the university a year later. Studying in the department where his father is the HOD meant that the degree was already in his pocket even before he signed the matriculation register, because no lecturer would dare to fail the son of the HOD. “When it came to my one-year compulsory youth service programme, my mother took over. She had paid for me to go for the summer holiday in the U.S., by the time I returned, the compulsory orientation programme had been held. Through her good offices, I did not have to bother with it: the records showed that I completed the programme with flying colours. She too used her influence to ensure</p>	
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			that I was posted to my father's department for the service year, whereas my classmates were flung as far afield as Sokoto and Epe.	
5	Chief Ayodele Olabisi	Testifying to the Presidential Commission on Juveniles under Twenty-one Years	Chief Ayodele Olabisi came to testify against his only son, Ayo junior whom he flew to study in the United Kingdom, but failed woefully due to excessive life style of drinking alcohol and womanizing. He ended up impregnating an Israeli woman and this led to his leaving the United Kingdom. His academic performance was nothing to write home about as a result of his unseriousness with his studies. On his return to Nigeria, he had an accident with a car he took for cruise without the consent of the owner. Chief Olabisi had to bribe the police and the insurance company to pay for the damaged car. Eventually an admission was secured for him in one of American universities. As a reckless and spoilt child who has no respect for his father, he was caught with a wife of a serving Nigerian governor in the United States. The father had to spend huge financial resource to bail him out of the problem.	Ayo junior represents the life of most typical children from well to do homes. The excessive pampering of Ayo junior led him into all kinds of misbehaviours thereby making him to lose focus in life. Most children who are over-pampered by very rich and influential parents never make it in life
6	The very Reverend Jeremiah Chukwuka Obi	Testifying to the Presidential Commission on Juveniles under Twenty-one Years	Archdeacon Obi testified against his daughter, Apolonia, who was brought up with good morals but became something else in the university. She sleeps with lecturers (Profs) in exchange for grades. She sells her body to top government functionaries for material gains. She travels abroad regularly with the highest bidder of her body instead of facing her studies in the university. She bought a brand new air-conditioned Peugeot 504 saloon car for her father and lied that she made the money from the sale of jewelries she bought from the UK which she resold in Nigeria at very high rate. In actual sense, she made her money from prostitution. She is full of telling lies and manipulating her parents to believe her. By the time the parents realized the claim of being sponsored abroad for seminars was a lie, it became very shameful for them to bear.	Apolonia represents very rotten girls on Nigerian university campuses who indulge in prostitution and using the proceeds to fend for their parents and siblings. They flirt around with top government officials who steal government money at their possession and squander lavishly on university girls. Such girls do not read their books only to approach lecturers for sorting with money and sex.
7	Professor Hassan Aliyu	Testifying to the Presidential Commission on	Prof. Hassan Aliyu testified against his son Murtalla who prefers to study in the United Kingdom against his father's wish. The father is a Vice Chancellor of Tundu-wada University who does not believe in sending his children abroad to	This shows that moral decadence has no tribe or religious inclination as it cuts across all segments

		Juveniles under Twenty-one Years	study because of alienation from their culture. Murtalla deliberately refuses to do well in his studies by failing his O'level paper because he prefers studying abroad or wanted to be sent abroad. He devised a means by secretly selling off his father's brand new car and he used the money to travel overseas. This is stealing by concealment. Prof Aliyu, during cross examination also reveal the high standard of requirements for admission into Nigerian universities compared to universities abroad. Also, there are large number of candidates seeking for admission in Nigeria but cannot be absolved due to limited carrying capacities in Nigerian Universities.	of the country. The Implicature here is that, this scenario pushes parents and candidates to do anything possible, even by corruptive means to pass JAMB at all cost. Bribery and corruption become institutionalized and the emergence of miracle centres spring up everywhere leading to falsification of JAMB results. This also leads to admission racketeering and selling to the highest bidders against highly qualified candidates who have nobody to buy for them.
8	Comrade Yekini Falase. President of the National Association of Student (NAS).	During a press conference to set up the National Commission of Inquiry Over Twenty-one Years.	“After all the lip-service paid to the International Year of the Child declared by the United Nations, look at what the adults are doing to the youth. They say every child should go to school at the age of six. The children obey, but in place of school buildings, they find trees. Or hastily constructed structures (allegedly costing millions of naira) aimed at turning the children's toes into incubators for jiggers! Nevertheless, they turn out in their tens or hundreds of thousands, carting their desks and chairs like snails, only to find teachers do not exist in sufficient number. And, even worse, that the few available cannot be paid their monthly salaries because they are said to be too many. There is money to pay everybody else in the country. Money to cushion life for the so-called rulers. Yet, no money to pay teachers. At the end of six years, the children are pushed out, unable to even to tell time, or to handle hoe.” “At secondary school, the children who successfully scale the admissions hurdle continue	Comrade Falase's statements highlight the rot in our educational system from primary to the university level. Corruption is so entrenched in the society such that there is money to maintain the greed of the political class, but there are no funds to pay teachers and provide sufficient learning facilities from primary to the university level, thereby leading to sub-standard

			<p>to suffer. Most schools lack the basic equipment and qualified staff for the various subjects introduced under the very much heralded 6 – 3 – 3 – 4 national policy on education turning the whole thing into an exercise in self-delusion. The recent trend is to abolish boarding schools, even where the facilities already exist, and parcel every child off to his own ‘neighbourhood school’, where he sees only his fellow villagers. Nobody thinks how boarding schools aid the important task of welding the diverse ethnic and religious groups of the country together. The speed at which the universities, the armed forces, private companies, foreign government, et cetera are establishing their own ‘private’ or ‘international’ secondary schools is glaring evidence of a lack of public confidence in our educational system.”</p> <p>“The days when universities were meticulously planned prior to their establishment are long over. Nowadays, universities are established by radio. Students arrive ahead of their Professors, books and laboratories. And degrees are awarded before university senates agree on their educational objectives. The shortage of qualified staff and facilities is even more acute at this level. The older universities are bursting at the seams, groaning under grossly inadequate facilities and funds. Yet each year, as if under evil spell, they increase their student population and add new faculties and departments. All this, of course, rubs off on us, their guineapigs, making us recipients of sub-standard education.”</p>	<p>educational system. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is fighting this menace thereby asking for better funding of the universities. This is always met by brick wall and deaf ears of the political elites who through corruption amass wealth and send their children to study in the U.S and UK. This has led to several incessant strikes by ASUU.</p>
9	Comrade Abubakar Bello, the 1 st national vice president of NAS p.274	Press release on the state of the nation	<p>Comrade Bello’s press release began with the state of the nation, which he described as stinking with corruption and every form of immorality. Bribery. Lobbying: the euphemism for the colossal payments in cash or kind made to legislators by state governors and other interested parties to make them vote against their conscience. Deliberate inflation of government contracts. Smuggling, through private jetties and jets, through heavily guarded government ports, boarders and airports. So lucrative that many boys’ secondary schools had closed down for lack of students, as it was only a stupid boy who would remain at school when all he needed was one successful trip to Taiwan and he would cruise around in his own well chilled Peugeot 505SR!</p> <p>Indiscriminate sexual relations, indulged by men</p>	<p>This is the extent the civilian leadership or political elites have thrown the country into as a result of corruption. The rots as you can see are so enormous cutting across every strata of the society.</p>

			and women, Muslim and Christians, archbishops and agnostics, young and old, single and married, sedately wigged judges and rumbustious robbers. Indiscipline in every facet of our national life. With men of the ‘disciplined forces’ in the lead. Cheating. Fraud. Cheques and bank drafts have ceased to be accepted as legal tender even by the issuing banks because of excessive fraud, turning the country backwards to the era of trade by barter!	
10	Comrade Abubakar Bello, the 1 st national vice president of NAS. P.279	At a press conference to debunk some allegation against NAS	Comrade Bello debunking any suggestion that the students were deliberately out to cause public disenchantment with the government, to prepare the grounds for a military coup, he said the days were long past when African masses looked to the armed forces for salvation. Soldiers had proved conclusively that they were no better, man for man, than the other members of the adult society. The fact that they had guns had sharpened their greed and avarice, turning many Brigadiers or Generals into multi-millionaires.	This is an indictment on the military regime in the country. The military society and their leadership are as corrupt as the civilian society and their leadership. The military regimes are not better in curbing corruption either.

Discussion of Findings

This study applied conventional Implicature to arrive at its finding that witness 001’s father, a professor and a medical scientist is corrupt and morally bankrupt by the attitudes that he exhibits- pettiness, inhumane and heartless character, irresponsible behaviour, deceitfulness, telling lies, selfish and inability to admit failure, fallibility and setting standards that he cannot fulfill p.209.

Another finding from the statements of witness 002 shows that the father is outwardly pure but inwardly rotten by his character. He is morally bankrupt as well by carrying girls about his daughter’s age mate on official tour of three European countries. He is also a ritual killer, a reminiscent of today’s political and administrative office holders who will stop at nothing to maintain their position. He is also a sex maniac and corrupt by squandering government resources lavishly through padded appropriation to his office. We arrived at this interpretation through the conventional Implicature of the statements/utterances of witness 002 p.214.

On serial no.3, the parents of witness 005 were full of manipulative tendencies and lies. The told their daughter that they were withdrawing her from England because of the exchange rate of the naira

to foreign currencies and so they cannot afford her school fees and maintenance in the UK. But, in reality, they were just scheming to prevent her from being married to foreign nationals because they prefer an Ekiti man to be her husband. This interpretation is done by a combination of both conventional and conversational Implicature p.227.

On serial no.4, witness 006 through his statement conventionally implicate that some academics, notably that some Professors got to the rung of their ladder by fraudulence means of plagiarism. The father and his colleagues got rapid promotion in rank and university positions through dubious manipulation of the system. Today, our universities are full of unqualified academic staff who got in through nepotism, political patronage and quota system. we arrived at these interpretations through the conventional and conversation Implicature of witness 006’s statements p.243.

On serial no.5, this is an adult testifying against the moral rectitude of his son (Ayo junior). The father, Chief Ayodele Olabisi was doing everything possible to make Ayo a responsible person, being his only male child. But, Ayo is frustrating his father’s efforts

through drinking, unseriousness with his studies and womanizing. To get Ayo out of troubles, Chief Olabisi indulges in bribery and lies and other corruptive activities. This interpretation is arrived at through his own confessional statement to the Presidential Commission of Inquiry on Juveniles under Twenty-one Years. Both conventional and conversational implicatures are involved in this finding p.26..

Serial no.6, are statements by The Very Reverend Jeremiah Chukwukadibia Obi who prefers to be called Archdeacon Obi. He narrated how his daughter had sent a message that she could not come home for Christmas because of a very important school assignment. Barely a week later, she breezed in, loaded with breathtaking presents for her parents, brothers and sisters: gold trinkets, eye-catching George materials, head ties etc. when she was asked about how she got the money for the gifts she brought to the house, she lied that a friend introduced her to a raffle draw and she won. At another time, she claimed to have been selected to attend a summer school in America and she used the allowances to buy a brand Peugeot 505SR fully air-conditioned saloon car for her parents. Through the father's statements we are able to apply conventional and conversational Implicature to interpret that she was sleeping around with professors for grade because she wasn't in school studying her books, but traveling with top government functionaries to UK and America, selling her body for which she receives handsome gifts and rewards p. 35.

Serial no. 7, are the statements of Prof Hassan Aliyu who testified how his son, Murtalla became unserious with his studies deliberately because he wanted to be sent abroad against the father's wish. Murtalla stole and sold his father's brand new car and left the country. Through the conventional Implicature of Prof Hassan's statements, we are able to establish the moral rectitude of this young man who would stop at nothing to accomplish their selfish and inordinate ambition in life. This is the kind of leaders of tomorrow that would

steal and embezzle government finances and channel same into personal enrichment p.56. Serial no. 8, are statements of the president of NAS. His statements implicate the rot in the educational system from primary to the university level. The effects of corruption on the educational system: substandard classroom building, lack of regular payment of teachers' salaries, lack of laboratories and other learning facilities at the university level and so many other neglects in the educational sector. These interpretations are arrived at through the conventional implicature of the words used by Comrade Falase p. 180 – 186. Serial no.9 and 10, are statements of Comrade Abubakar Bello, the 1st national vice president of NAS. In serial 9, he lambasted the political leadership accusing them of outward and open corruption in all the facets of the society. The old and the young, the religious institutions, the market men and women, the leaders and the led, are all involved in the stinking corruption and different forms of immorality p. 274. In serial 10, he cast his aspersion on the military segment of the Nigerian society whom he alleges are also very corrupt. Many brigadiers and generals have become billionaires through the barrel of the guns. They stage coups in the name of curbing corruption and moral rectitude in the society but at end of the day, they become even worse because they have guns and nobody can challenge them. These findings are arrived at through the conventional and conversational statements of Comrade Abubakar Bello p. 279.

Conclusion and recommendations

The study concludes that corruption and moral decadence are not limited to young or adult but cut across all shades and ages in the Nigerian society. The study also believes that corruption is synonymous with bad governance in Nigerian society. We also conclude that high level intelligibility does not exonerate anybody from bad attitude, behaviour, crime and corruption. In other words professors are involved in bribery and corruption as well as keeping malice and hatred against each other.

The study also concludes that parents who are supposed to lead their children morally are

themselves bankrupt in moral values. For examples, parents are bribing to get their children out of jail; bribing for their children to pass national exams; and bribing for admission to the university; corruptly buying position for their children in juicy ministries and parastatals such as NNPC, FIRS, CAC, CBN et cetera are all forms of moral decadence in the society.

Recommendation

A reorientation and national rebirth is

recommended for the Nigerian society.

Parents should allow their children to have a say in decisions that concern their future in terms of career choice and marriage.

Parents should not over-pamper their children but inculcate discipline and hard work into them for their future survival.

Parents should lead as example by shunning corruption and having moral integrity.

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TEXTUAL METAFUNCTION AND THEMATIC STRUCTURE IN COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION OF SCAM EMAILS

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Abstract

This study analysed the thematic structure of scam email clauses using Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar framework. The primary objective was to determine the most common thematic structure in scam emails and investigate whether these structures are unique to this type of email. Six categories of Nigerian scam emails were selected for analysis, sourced from personal email spam folders and a consumer-fraud awareness database. A total of 252 clauses from these emails were examined. The results indicated that simple thematic structures were more prevalent than multiple or clausal thematic structures across the Nigerian scam email clauses analysed. Additionally, the study concluded that the thematic structure of a scam email is not determined by its type.

Keywords: Textual Metafunction, Computer-Mediated-Communication, Scam Email

Introduction

This research is concerned with applying Halliday's (1985, 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, 2014) Systemic Functional Grammar to examine the thematic structure in scam email clauses. By their nature, scam emails are regarded as forms of persuasive discourse because their authors use a range of persuasion techniques to influence individuals to respond. Scam emails are persuasive discourses because they are speech events that influence someone through language, to manipulate their thoughts or even control their actions.

Email, on the other hand, is a form of Computer-Mediated Communication (henceforth, CMC), which is communication that takes place between human beings through the instrumentality of computers and email is a text-based CMC in which participants interact by means of the written word, for instance, by typing a message on the keyboard of one computer which is read by others on their computer screens, either immediately (synchronous CMC) or at a later point in time (asynchronous CMC). Herring (1996) maintains

that a couple of decades ago, this activity was largely unknown outside of a few elite government and academic research institutions and that today, text-based CMC is engaged in regularly by millions of people around the world, an increasing proportion of whom now gain access to the global network - known as the Internet - through commercial providers rather than through institutional mainframes. This constantly developing form of communication has naturally attracted the interest of scholars around the world (cf. Collot and Belmore 1996; Leusky, 2004; Khossainov and Kushmerick, 2005; Lambart *et al*, 2006; Carvalho, 2011) the respective submissions of whom had predicted that the new medium would eventually become as widespread and significant as the telephone.

Collot and Belmore (1996) contend that electronic language is characterised by a set of situational constraints which set it apart from other varieties of English. Messages delivered electronically are neither 'spoken' nor 'written' in the conventional sense of these words. There is an easy interaction of participants and alternation of topics typical of

some varieties of spoken English. However, they cannot be strictly labelled as spoken messages since the participants neither see nor hear each other; nor can they be considered strictly written since many of them are composed directly online. Spitzer (1986) observes that participants in CMC must use language as though they were having a face-to-face-conversation, yet their message must be written.

Systemic Functional Grammar (henceforth SFG), as a “sociologically oriented Neo-Firthian grammar” (Wiredu and Oyelele 1998, p. 15), which is a later version of the Systemic Grammar, examines meaning in language use as an explicit process rather than a concealed mentalist one. It is a theory that aims to match forms to function and meaning to context through its introduction of components of meaning that lay the foundation for a functional interpretation of grammar - representational, interpersonal and textual. These three structures are lumped into one another in one linguistic expression (Downing and Locke, 2006). Systemic Functional Grammar recognises the place of the social situation in language learning and use by focusing not only on the learning and use of sounds and words, but also on the understanding of the structures (grammar) and functions (meaning) in language.

Halliday’s (1985, 1994, 2004, 2014) reformulation of the theory involves the consideration of the data to be used for an applicable linguistic explanation and this data has to be sourced from either the spoken or written expression of language. The material so derived is known as text and can be examined for linguistic explanation on three levels – substance, form and situation. The level at which the physical aspects of the language are displayed is known as the substance. In speech, for instance, the substance of language is the raw sounds produced (phonic) while the written text has the visual symbols (graphic). The organisation of the phonic or graphic substance into patterns that convey meaning is known as the form. The relation of patterned activity to the non-linguistic features of the situation in which the form is being used is the situation or context.

Theme: Theory, Models and Applications

Halliday (1994, 2004 and 2014) recognises two main features that synchronise to form the ‘textual’

element of the English grammar – structural and cohesive. In the structural feature, ‘thematic’ (which focuses on Theme and Rheme) and information (which focuses on Given and New) are given by him as part of the resources that indispensably give ‘texture’ to any piece of discourse. In the cohesive feature, aspects such as reference, ellipses and substitution, conjunction and lexical cohesion are given as choices within the clauses in a text (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). The main concern of the present study is the structural part with specific attention to the thematic feature, the component of which is Theme and Rheme. Theme is a property of the textual metafunction of language. It oversees the organisation of information within the clause and, by extension, in the larger text. This function provides discretionary theme choices within the clauses. Garcia (2012) expounds that there is not a universal consensus on the definition of and considerations surrounding the concept of theme, nor have linguists come to share a common point of view on its identification. This is because, theme is functionally rather than positionally defined, Halliday (1994).

Halliday (1967) views the English clause as the domain of three basic syntactic options: Transitivity, Mood and Theme. He gives a cautious use of the term Theme stating that it has both general and specific usages, particularly in the distribution of information in the clause as a message adding that the Theme system has three distinct features namely: information, thematisation and identification. Halliday (2004, P. 211) maintains that discourses contain a linear progression of message frames known as the information units, which are realised by tonality. In other words, it is an order of tone groups the location of which boundaries is specified to within significant limits by the information structure.

Hawes (2010) contends that Thematisation is the organising of a clause into two parts: the theme, or leftmost part, which typically places the various elements in the context as ‘given’ information, and the rheme, or rightmost part, which characteristically contains comment, or ‘new’ information. A speaker or writer must make proper use of theme to present information, discerning in the approved manner, what is given or new for

choices about how particular hearer or reader gets the information so that they are neither bored nor confused.

Green, Christopher, and Lam (2000) analyse texts containing marked Themes as well as how the effects of the markedness on information structure are determined. Their study finds that inappropriate occupation of Theme position by the items under consideration here have a deleterious effect on information structure and that this, in turn, has negative effects on both local and global text coherence. One of the weaknesses of the study is that it tests theme markedness in the English sentences of non-native speakers, whose theme structure choice might have been influenced by their L1 thereby giving outcomes that are not in line with the English theme structure rules, which could affect the markedness on information structure. The study also fails to identify how thematic progression, rather than just theme structure can affect information flow in the clause formations of the subjects.

Muhammed (2007, p. 17) opines that each of these information units is “the point of origin” for the choice of information focus by which one element is selected as focal and the information focus echoes the speaker’s choice of information prominence. She also submits that choices in the information system are realised by phonological features of intonation, those of thematisation by the sequence of elements in the clause while those of identification by certain specific patterns of clause structure. All the same she does not totally agree with Halliday on these submissions. For instance, she does not see reason in Halliday’s ‘rejection’ of the concepts of “Given” and “New” where he claims that the context should always determine the sense in which the term is used. She therefore suggests that each of the units be contextualised into its proper section of the system network, and that a general name be given to encompass all the units in order to make clearer which concept is being referred to. She further observes:

... a problem [in] making the information a part of the theme system” arguing that “Halliday’s presentation of the information unit is based on spoken English [and that] tonality, as a property of speech, should not be mapped on the clause, which

is property of grammar [and if] the theme system concerns the division of clause into theme and rheme, the focus can fall on any of the two parts of the clause [if this is the case] then what is the relevance of making the information unit as part of the theme system?

Consequently, she suggests further that there should be two distinct units of theme and information by recognising information unit as a separate unit of tonality, and that the relationship between theme structure and information should be “coincidental” so that the thematic structure and identification units emerged “since they are essentially the same processes”. Again, Muhammed (2007, p. 17) identifies “a problem that arises with [Halliday’s] recognition of ‘identification’ as one of the three distinct features of the theme and rheme” questioning its being called “special” by him since it has the same function with the thematic structure.

Connected to information is thematisation which is mainly a system of ordering of clause constituents. The ordering is, as already established, in two fragments, Theme and Rheme. Theme is assigned initial position in clause and all that follows is the rheme. Processes are interpreted as a formation of components of three types: the process itself, the participants in that process and any circumstantial factors such as time, manner and/or cause. The Theme is constituted by one and only one of these experiential components. In other words, the Theme of a clause ends with the first constituent that is participant, circumstance or process, which is referred to as the topical Theme (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014). Muhammed (2007) affirms that the speaker/writer has within certain limits the options of selecting any element in the clause as thematic. In the selection, one of the options is ‘unmarkedness’ and unmarked element in a clause is determined by the mood of the clause. In other words, the choice on whether or not a particular topical theme is marked or unmarked depends on the clausal mood, that is, whether the clause is a declarative, interrogative, or imperative. The significant point to note is that unmarked themes are different for different clausal moods. The unmarked theme is not always the subject, not for all clauses in general, except for

declaratives, and particular kinds of interrogatives and imperatives.

Mellos (2011) demonstrates that Theme-Rheme choices characterise coherence in writing by analyzing the Theme/Rheme patterns in eight undergraduate English-as-Second-Language essays, four of which are evaluated as being high in coherence and four of which are low in coherence. The study finds that the more coherent essays employ dense and complex nominal groups in ideational Themes, a wide variety of textual Themes, and different forms of thematic progression to establish connections between different parts of the text and comment on abstract ideas relevant to the topic. In contrast, the less coherent writing frequently overused unmarked Themes of simple nominal groups or pronouns and Theme reiteration in a way that made the text difficult to follow and appear to lack development. Also, Wei (2013) investigates how intermediate English learners use Themes differently from advanced English learners in their English speeches. The corpus consists of comparable spoken data of intermediate English learners, advanced English learners, and English native speakers. Halliday's (2000) model of thematic organization is used to analyze the gathered data for Theme types and Theme markedness. The results of the study reveal that as the length of time learning English increased, the learners become better at making Theme choices: they display closer performance to native speakers in Theme choices in terms of the frequency of topical Themes, textual Themes, interpersonal Themes, and Theme markedness.

Mellos (2011) and Wei's (2013) studies have been able to relatively examine both thematic structure and thematic progression in their subjects' writings respectively, but the major gap for the present study is that they have not examined thematic structures and thematic progression in persuasive writings of their respective subjects.

Ayoola and Babatunde (2018), applying textual metafunction aspect of the SFL, examine the thematic structure of the language of political parties in Nigeria to determine the influence of the arrangement of words in political advertisements on the target audience through the system of theme. The adverts are broken down into clauses

for thematic analysis and attention is focused on the favourite way each political party organises their message and how thematic structures help to project their ideologies. Findings of the study reveal that majority of the themes used are unmarked, which makes the messages simple for readers to digest. Findings also show that different themes produce different propositions, and the themes equally realise different contexts for the proposition in the clause and different attitude in the reader. One flaw of Ayoola and Babatunde's investigation in relation to the present study is that they examine the metafunctions in a persuasive discourse from an ideological viewpoint rather than from purely functional one. For instance, they study only shows how thematic structures help political parties in organising their messages in order to project their ideologies instead of indicating how these thematic choices and structures influence the respondents' views on the political parties.

Babalola (2018) analyses the thematic structure in written Nigerian Pidgin English. He analyses 40 articles drawn from "Naija Pidgin Blog" and the findings indicate that the rate of recurrence of marked theme is similar to that of unmarked theme. It is also revealed that the frequency of multiple theme is considerably higher than the simple theme. Further revelations from the data is that a simple theme with a simple nominal group structure is more used than a simple theme with a complex structure. The conclusion of the study is that writers of Nigerian Pidgin English employ diverse thematic structures to foreground textual logicity and coherence and that there is disparity in thematic structure between Nigerian Pidgin English and Standard English. One of the strengths of this research is that it compares the theme structure of standard and non-standard English language which gives insight as to whether or not two 'dialects' can actually have variation in their thematisation. However, the study focused on the written form of the language rather than both the written and the spoken, which makes the conclusions somewhat defective.

Analytical Procedure

In this research, thematic structure, an aspect of the textual metafunction, is examined in the clauses of scam emails. The criterion set for selecting which

clause of the email for analysis is the position it appears in the email (at least 2 clauses in the beginning, middle and end respectively). All the clauses are analysed using Halliday and Mathiessen’s (2014) Theme-Rheme framework in the examination of their thematic structures while Paltridge’s (2012) idea on thematic progression is used to describe their thematic progression patterns.

The procedure applied in the analysis of the scam emails is by first identifying the clause boundaries, which are sequential orderings and ranges of possible groups or phrases that are used for setting theme and rheme structure by using boundary marker. In each of the scam email clauses, analysis and description are given of the thematic aspect (simple or multiple theme) as well as the relationship between the clauses in each of the emails in order to establish thematic progression or pattern in them and how that shapes information flow in these emails.

In analysing the Thematic structures of the scam emails, Halliday and Mathiessen’s (2014) theme idea in which three kinds of Themes – ideational, textual or interpersonal are given, is applied. The data is presented and analysed in a tabular form by first indicating the theme-rheme boundary in each of the 252 clauses. This helps in clearly identifying the theme-rheme boundary of each of the clauses which is boldly marked out by a heading in the table. After the boundary is determined, the range of the theme in each clause is identified. A separate column is created each on the table for the simple and multiple themes so that in the end, the study can establish which theme range (simple or multiple) manifests in scam emails clauses. The theme structure is also indicated by placing each theme structure under its corresponding heading in the table, that is, as “textual”, “ideational” or “topical theme”. This also helps in clearly establishing the predominant theme structure in scam email clauses. Immediately below each table, an interpretation of the data is given.

A sample of the analysis is given below using data for one of the scam email types:

Thematic Structure of Inheritance Scam Email

Data	THEME			RHEME
	Textual Theme	Interpersonal Theme	Topical theme	
1	Following the death of my husband late General Sani Abacha, the former Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria		I	have been thrown into a state of utter confusion
2			Security agents in Nigeria	have subjected my children and me to physical and psychological torture
3			My children	are still under detention as well as arraigned before a federal high court in Nigeria
4	As a widow that is so traumatized		I	have lost hope and confidence in anybody within the country
5	And		the government	has not relented in its efforts to completely prosecute my family
6	So		I	Need someone to confide in
7			This	is why I contacted you
8			I	am prince Kufour Otumfou, the eldest son of king Otumfuo Opoku

				Ware II
9			My father's wealth	includes gold and diamond
10	Before the death of my father King Otumfuo Opoku II		I	was authorized and officially known as the next successor
11	As a result of polygamous family		there	has been a dead luck [sic] over the issue
12			This ugly situation	made me to move the gold and diamond to a safe place
13	If you are interested to buy[sic]			will send you the address of the contact person
14			I	am William Madu, the only son of late Peter Madu
15			He	was a contractor of Federal Government of Nigeria
16	Before he gives [sic]up in the hospital		he	told my mother and I that he deposited USD 9.5 million
17			He	did not let them know that the content is[sic] money
18	Since after my father's death		my uncles	bringing[sic] troubling[sic] my mother with their useless tradition
19	As a result of this problem		my mother	fell to an illness
20			We	have nothing to do than to look for a way to claim the money from the security company
21			I	got your numbers from Chamber's [sic] of commerce
22			I	hope that this proposal will not be an inconvenience or embarrassment to you
23			I	Must not hesitate to confide in you this simple and sincere business
24			My late father	operated his cocoa business in Abidjan Cote D'voire under partnership
25	Unfortunately		His business associates	Poisoned him in order to claim his wealth in a cocktail party held in his honour as the Director of the company
26	When he was poisoned		he	Was rushed to the hospital
27	In the hospital		he	secretly disclosed to me the cause of his sickness
28	Also		he	deposited the sum of USD 22 million with an international bank in Abidjan
29			I	am Kevin Emmanuel, a civil

				servant
30			I	know this proposal will come to you as a surprise
31			We	Have not met before physically or through correspondence
32			I	have no doubt in your ability to handle this proposal involving huge sum of money
33		My father	Alhaji Clifford Emmanuel	was the royal head of my community, Eleme, an oil rich town in Nigeria
34			He	made some money which he left for me as the heir to inherit
35	Due to poor banking system in Nigeria and political instability		he	Deposited this money in vaults with an open beneficiary
36			It	is my pleasure to write to you
37	Being the first son of my father		I	am 27 years of age
38			My father	was a limited liability company of cocoa and gold owner in Johannesburg
39	A week after he came back from Abidjan		he	Was attacked and killed with my mother by unknown assassins.
40	As if he knew he was going to die		he	Disclosed to me that he deposited USD 28 million in a security company in Abidjan
41			He	Singlehanded me the key of the box
42			I	Hope we can discuss modalities of this transaction

(Source: Study data, 2020)

Discussion and Results

The present study investigated the thematic structure and progression of 252 clauses drawn from six scam email categories to establish whether scam email type determines the type of thematic structure they have as well as to discover how thematic progression in such scam email clauses assists in maintaining information flow. In the data on all the categories of scam email analysed, it was observed that there was some degree of appropriate occupation of theme position in scam email clauses, a result that matches Green, Christopher, and Lam's (2000) findings in their analysis of texts containing marked Themes as well as how the effects of the markedness on information structure are determined. The present study, just like theirs, observed that inappropriate

occupation of Theme position by the items under consideration might have a damaging effect on information structure and that this, in turn, has negative effects on text coherence. For instance, in the Inheritance/Dead Relative scam email, it was observed that the authors thematised the aspects they expected would arouse pity in the target reader in all the clauses as in the following examples from Table 1: (themes are italicized, topical themes are written in bold for clarity):

Clause 1: *Following the death of my husband late General Sani, the former Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I* have been thrown into a state of utter confusion.

Clause 4: *As a Widow that is traumatized, I* have lost hope and confidence in anybody within the country.

Clause 10: *Before the death of my father King*
I was authorized and known as the next successor.

Clause 18: *Since after my father's death, my uncles* bringing [sic] troubling [sic] my mother.

Clause 23: *When he was poisoned, he* was rushed to the hospital.

In each of the examples above, the authors had the choice of discarding the textual themes and thematise the topical themes (so that each of the clauses would have started respectively with *I, my uncles, he*) but that would have affected the information structure. Also, if the clauses had been passivised by the authors, information structure could have been affected, thereby rendering the text 'ineffective' in achieving the authors' goal of persuading the reader. Therefore the authors' observed choices of thematic structures might have assisted in persuading the target reader.

In the present study, majority of the themes used are simple, which makes the messages simple for readers to digest. 159 (representing 63.2%) of the 252 clauses were observed to have had simple thematic structures 70 (representing 27.7 %) were multiple themes, while 23 (representing 9.1% had clausal theme structures. This predominance of simple themes was also found in the study of Ayoola and Babatunde (2018) who applied the textual metafunction aspect of the SFL to examine the thematic structure of the language of political parties in Nigeria, to determine the influence of the arrangement of words in political advertisements on the target audience through the system of theme. Their findings revealed that majority of the themes used were unmarked, which makes the messages simple for readers to digest, an outcome that corresponds to that of the present study.

It was also observed that the Thematic choices in the clauses help in providing more coherence in the texts, achieved through features such as the use of deictic (as in the frequent use of personal and demonstrative pronouns/adjectives in the clauses regardless of the scam email type) as well as anaphoric and cataphoric elements (such as the use of pronouns to make reference to persons, things and events already mentioned in the preceding clause). In other words, the present study, observed that coherence in the texts was as a result

of the employment of mostly ideational themes as well as a wide variety of textual themes. This is like the findings of Mellos (2011) which demonstrate that Theme-Rheme choices characterise coherence in writing by analysing the Theme/Rheme patterns in undergraduate English-as-Second-Language essays. However, while Mellos observed a high number of dense and complex nominal groups as theme in his data, the present study observed only a handful of such cases. This can be explained by the fact that the authors of scam emails chose simple thematic structures that are mostly composed of personal pronouns.

It is also observed in the data that simple themes, composed of simple nominal group structures, were used more than those with simple themes containing complex nominal group structures. For example, 54.7% of the clauses in Table 1; 52.3% in Table 2; 69.1% in Table 3; 73.8% in Table 4, 59.5% in Table 5 as well as 69.2% in Table 6 were all found to be simple themes with simple nominal group structures such as personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns and determiner-noun combinations indeed, there are 159 simple thematic structures; 70 multiple thematic structures and 23 clausal thematic structures in the 252 clauses examined. This corresponds to the findings of Babalola (2018) on his analyses of the thematic structure in written Nigerian Pidgin English. He analyses 40 articles drawn from "Naija Pidgin Blog" and the findings indicate that simple thematic structures with simple nominal group structures are more used than simple themes with complex structures.

However, while Babalola (2018) observed that the rate of recurrence of multiple thematic structures was similar to that of simple thematic structures, the present study observes that the frequency of simple thematic structures is considerably higher than multiple and clausal thematic structures. This may be accounted for as signifying that scam email clauses require simple thematic structures such that good logic and coherence can be maintained in the texts to achieve persuasion effect, which, in layman's term, means influencing or manipulating the reader to act in a way that the authors expect them to. Perhaps, the authors understand that using multiple thematic structures may be a distraction

to the reader. This could be true since in all the scam email categories analysed, simple thematic structures were observed to be persistently and preponderantly used.

Conclusion

This paper has been able to provide explanation on the information structure in scam emails. The implication is that it has enabled readers to be familiar with the way thematic structures can assist in easily comprehending the text as well as be aware of the way different thematic choices are realised in different texts. This familiarity can

guide them, through the logical path constructed by the research work, to appreciate how thematic structure enhances connectivity between ideas in texts as well as be aware that the kind of meaning realised by thematic options may differ in accordance with the purpose of the authors.

The conclusion of this study, based on the data analysed, therefore, is that scam emails contain simple, multiple, and clausal thematic structures with the simple thematic structures as the most featured. There is also no relationship between scam email type and its thematic structure

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EXPLORING HISTORICAL FICTION, IDENTITY, AND MEMORY IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S *MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN* (1981)

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Abstract

This paper explores the intersection of identity, history, and memory in Salman Rushdie's 1981 novel *Midnight's Children*. The paper explores how Rushdie created a central character that uses the complementary roles of history and memory to forge an identity that is at once personal and communal. In order to achieve this objective, the paper uses postmodern historiography as its theoretical framework to examine how Rushdie fuses the history of Indian independence with that of the central character, Saleem Sinai through the deployment of an ingenious narrative technique of parallelism. In this regard, we see how memory is used to narrate the stories of the life of Saleem in tandem with that of the emergence of an independent Indian nation. The two histories are simultaneously narrated based on fragmented recollections from memory. Consequently, it becomes difficult to separate the personal from the public, and fact from fiction in the narrative. In the end, the identity of Saleem Sinai is fused with that of the postcolonial Indian nation.

Keywords: Salman Rushdie, history, identity, memory, postmodern historiography

Introduction

The historian will tell you what happened. The novelist will tell you what it felt like (E.L. Doctorow, qtd in "Talk to the Practitioner", *The Writer Magazine*, April 2023, An Interview with Kathleen Aleala, Pp 15-17).

Identity, history, and memory are important concepts in postcolonial literature. Most often, these concepts find expression in postcolonial fiction coming out of Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean where authors "respond to questions raised by...critical discourses about colonialism, imperialism, race... and Eurocentrism" (Uściński 40). Fiction writers from these once colonised regions employ their craft to explore and explain the travails of a people that are still recovering from the damages inflicted on them by colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism. Sometimes these writers are profoundly nostalgic about the past, especially the history and memory of their nations before and after colonisation by European powers. In effect, they become nostalgic

by trying to re-live that past in their fictional and non-fictional writings. More often than not, they re-live this in/glorious past by fictionalising the fractious histories of their nations. Most often, in the course of doing this, they intermingle their personal history with that of the nation thereby blurring the *thin* line between fact and fiction. On another level, memory and history provide a ready-made tool for the postcolonial writers to both remember and re-inscribe the past in their literary discourse. As Edward W. Said, argues in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (1983), "History [...] issues from the mind, and what is mind but historical memory [...] capable of infinite articulation, modulation, [and] change" (115-116). It is noteworthy that most often the memory from which this chiasmic history is sourced is fragile, weak, selective, protean, as well as subjective. One of the postcolonial writers that try to demonstrate the fusion of personal and national histories to create an identity for the self through the medium of fiction is the Indian-born writer, Salman Rushdie.

A Brief bio-data of Salman Rushdie

Salman Rushdie was born on 19 June, 1947 in Bombay, India. He attended schools in both India and England. He graduated from King's College, Cambridge University with MA (hons) History in 1968 (Reynolds and Noakes 191). His first novel *Grimus* was published in 1975. *Midnight's Children*, published in 1981, thrust him forward to literary fame by winning the 1981 Booker Prize. Salman Rushdie is a prolific and controversial writer who has courted the wrath of the global Muslim community by satirising Islam in his in/famous novel, *The Satanic Verses*. Other of his fictional work includes *Shame* (1983), *Luka and the Fire of Life* (2010), *Two Years Eight Months and Twenty Eight Nights* (2015), and *The Golden House* (2017), *Victory City: A Novel* (2023), and *Knife: Meditations After an Attempted Murder* (2024). His memoir, *Joseph Anton: A Memoir* was published in 2012.

Postmodern Historiography as Theoretical Framework

This paper will use postmodern historiography as its theoretical framework because it allows researchers leeway to challenge traditional (read—'professional') historical narratives by questioning the objectivity and sanctity of such accounts as well as exploring alternative ways of representing the past. It also favours the blurring of the line between fact and fiction in narratives thereby providing the means of deconstructing the rigid genre compartmentalisation in the arts and humanities.

Postmodern historiography is an intellectual movement deeply rooted in postmodern principles. In this paper, postmodernism refers to methods for examining social, political, economic, and historical phenomena. The corollary is that history, historical structures and knowledge occupy a very important place in postmodern thought. Postmodernism among other things reject genre distinctions (say between 'fiction' and 'non-fiction' as in 'literature' and 'history') thereby favouring parody, bricolage, pastiche, irony, and playfulness in arts and literature. It instead celebrates ambiguity, discontinuity, and fragmentation in narrative structures like the novel and historiography (a lá Hayden White). In addition, it thoroughly rejects universalism by

interrogating and rejecting master narratives. It rather favours 'mini-narratives' that are always contingent, provisional, temporary and situational, thereby empowering marginalised voices in discourses of power like History and Literature (Klages 169). In short, postmodernism disputed the truth claims of order, stability, progress and universality that form the bedrock of modernism. Postmodern historiography on the other hand is an approach to studying and writing history that emerged in the latter half of the 20th century as part of the larger postmodern intellectual movement. It represents a major shift from traditional historiography and interrogates many of its assumptions. For example, it questions traditional historiography's belief in Grand Narratives or 'Master-narratives'. In this regard, it thoroughly rejects overarching, universal and totalising explanations of historical processes. It therefore questions the idea that history follows a single, comprehensible path of progress or development. It equally stressed that all accounts of history are inherently subjective, influenced by the historian's own biases, cultural context, and ideological perspectives akin to fictional narratives.

More importantly, postmodern historiography advocates for including diverse voices and perspectives particularly those that have been marginalised or ignored in traditional accounts such as those of the various subaltern groups in especially multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and multi-religious societies. In short, postmodern historiography favours and encourages the deconstruction of historical narrative with the aim of uncovering its hidden assumptions, power structures, and prejudices. Moreover, postmodern historiography encourages relativism by suggesting that there is no single, objective historical truth, but rather multiple valid interpretations. It therefore believes that historical facts can be found in works of literature presented in form of fiction, and that history will be better comprehended by examining it as a narrative structure. Even more, postmodern historiography often views historical writing as a form of literary activity (on this see Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, 1973).

Consequently, postmodern historiography affords

fiction writers the liberty to blur the lines between history and fiction thereby challenging official narratives by tweaking historical facts to deconstruct accepted version of a particular historical narrative. It also encourages giving voices to micro-histories. This is the way in which Salman Rushdie tries to challenge, question, deconstruct, and undermine the 'official' history of India from the beginning of British colonialism to its eventual decline in 1947 in *Midnight's Children*, (1981).

Key voices associated with postmodern historiography include Hayden White (*Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, 1973) who explored the narrative structures in historical writing, Michel Foucault (*The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, 1970) who examined the relationship between knowledge and power, and Jean-Francois Lyotard (*The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, 1979) who critiqued Grand Narratives.

History in *Midnight's Children*

Jerome De Groot (2016) postulates that, "Historical novels participate in a semi-serious game of authenticity and research" by using "tropes of realism" to weave fictional narratives (14). He goes on to suggest that "The historical novel" most often "demonstrate the sublimity of history" in that "it subverts the legitimacy of mainstream ways of thinking about the past" (19). In short, history has more often than not provided a huge corpus of data that novelists may use as source to fictionally write about their experiences. This is the manner in which Salman Rushdie freely draws from actual historical events to stitch his narrative by creating characters that ingeniously problematise "the history-fiction divide" (Lipski and Maciulewicz 3) in his 1981 novel, *Midnight's Children*, a magnum opus that spans 647 pages.

To say that public and private history features prominently in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is an obvious understatement. History in the form of recalling and retelling of the past dominates the tapestry of the text. For instance, in the opening page of the text Saleem Sinai, the protagonist of the novel begins his story with this historical tone:

I was born in the city of Bombay
[...].Once upon –a time. No, that won't

do,there's no getting away from the date: I was born in Doctor Narlikar's NursingHome on August 15th 1947[...].On the stroke of Midnight, as a matter of fact. Clock-hands joined palms in respectful greeting as I came [...] at the precise instant of India's arrival at independence, I tumbled forth into the world.
(*Midnight Children*3)

This passage illustrates the merging of memory, identity, and history. In short, two strands of history can be discerned as we are told about the birth of the protagonist which is organically linked with that of India's independence. Interestingly, the two histories here exist in a condition of mutual reinforcement. Furthermore, the coincidence of Saleem's birth at the precise moment of the 'birth' of the new Indian nation makes him to, "becomes heavily embroiled in Fate—at the best of times a dangerous sort of involvement" (*Midnight Children*3). Rushdie has echoed similar sentiment in an interview he granted Jonathan Noakes on 8th July, 2002 in London. Commenting on the relationship between the birth of Saleem and that of the Indian nation in *Midnight's Children* Rushdie says:

That's why I describe him as being 'handcuffed to the history' and why I thought that in some way he is double twinned. On the one hand he had this alter ego with whom he was exchanged at birth—and that's a kind of twinning—and another thing is the country itself is like a twin in that they are growing up together, and it became necessary to tell their story in that very closely connected way. (15)

It therefore follows that the life of citizen Saleem becomes enmeshed with the history of the Indian nation. Consequently, its travails become his and vice versa. Thus, Saleem Sinai rides on the crest of the history of India as it emerged from colonialism as both an acute observer as well as an involved insider. For instance, he informs us about important historical events like the 'Hartal' strike of April 6th, 1949, and also the 'Rowlatt Act' strike of April 13th, 1949. These are strikes, organised by the Indian nationalists led by Mahatma Gandhi,

“To mourn in peace, the continuing presence of the British [in India]” (*Midnight’s Children* 37). It is noteworthy that both strikes were true historical events that had taken place in the life of the Indian nation. This interweaving of fiction and history is one of the striking things about *Midnight’s Children*. This is the sense in which Uma Parameswaran sees Saleem’s narrative as a kind of “fission-fusion” (5) process of national and personal history. An instance of this “fission-fusion” process can be seen in the postmodernist way Saleem’s narration of his life and the history that surrounds it move from one time frame to another, back and forth, as if his mind is caught in a web of confusion and uncertainties. We see this in how the trajectory of his narrative oscillates, in many places, from a narrow perspective of personal event to a larger national historical event in one fell swoop. For example, moving from this plane of narrative contraction and expansion like a “perplexing world full of the ‘storm tossed’ confusion of conflicting ideas” (Sardar 118), he narrates a story that spans a period of sixty-three years (*Midnight’s Children* 17) to his barely literate lover, Padma by situating specific historical events in specific time frames, citing exact dates. An example of this can be seen where he narrates how the death of his grandparents in 1918 coincides with the end of the First World War:

In 1918, Doctor Aziz’s father [...] died in his sleep; and at once his mother, [...] who now saw her husband’s death as a merciful release for her from a life filled with responsibilities, took to her own deathbed and followed her man before the end of his own forty-day mourning period. By the time the Indian regiments returned at the end of the war, Doctor Aziz was an orphan, and a free man [...]. (*Midnight’s Children* 30)

Elsewhere in the text, we are cynically told that on the fateful night Saleem and the Indian nation are born they are accompanied by other dreadful siblings. Saleem lamentably narrates that “the offspring of Independence were not all human” as they include, “Violence, corruption, poverty, generals, chaos, greed and pepperpots [...] (405)”. And with this, the stage is set for the confusion and crises that eventually erupted in both India and

Pakistan immediately after independence in 1947. It is my contention that the narrative in this monumental text is principally a *bildungsroman* of its central character, Saleem Sinai as well as that of his *twin at birth*, the Indian nation.

The original son of the Englishman William Methwold, Saleem is switched at birth by nurse “Miss Mary Pereira”, (157) and exchanged with an Asian baby at “Doctor Narlikar’s Nursing Home on August 15th, 1947” (*Midnight’s Children* 3). Saleem has, in a meditative rumination, declares that, “Methwold’s hair, parted in the middle, has a lot to do with my beginnings. It was one of those hairlines along which history and sexuality moved” (125). Through this part of his life, “the backdrop of colonial history” (Sardar 119) is foregrounded. Methwold, a member of the British Imperial elites in India represents the colonisers that came to conquer and pillage India which, in this case is symbolised by his Indian wife. Selling off his estate (which symbolises the Indian nation) to Saleem’s assumed ‘parents’ immediately after independence, Methwold leaves a legacy in the lives of both the estate as well as its inhabitants. Before he signs over the title deeds of the estate, Methwold in a fit of colonial-power-hangover insists on the insertion of a caveat that left intact the colonial ritual of the daily “cocktail hour” (*Midnight’s Children* 126) started by him. This incident is a symbolic representation of the neo-colonial status of India. This caveat symbolically reinforces the suspicion that India might have achieved political independence but the mark of inherited colonial culture will remain entrenched in the day to day running of the neo colonial state. As a postcolonial novel, *Midnight’s Children* is fully engaged in a “dialogue with history” (Dash 199) and memory. History is indeed very important to a postcolonial writer like Rushdie. Moreover, a familiar trope and a resonant symbol of postcolonial writings in general and literature in particular is the copious use of historical intertexts. But the history presented in this novel is, following the postmodern style, fragmented and non-linear. Its depiction is also not chronological. Michael Dash (1995) captures it more eloquently when he posits that:

One feature of Third world Writers which distinguishes them as a

distinct literary fraternity is the fundamental dialogue with history in which they are involved[...].They adhered to the view of history as fateful coincidence and tragic accident, and saw their function as artist in terms of their attitude to the past, that is either in terms of a committed protest against the past which would give birth to a new humanism, or were so overwhelmed by the 'fact' or privation or dispossession that they withdrew to a position of cynicism with regard to their peoples. (199)

There is no doubt that history in *Midnight's Children* is treated as "fateful coincidence and tragic accident" as the narrative reveals one disaster after another in the world of the text. There is an abundance of tears and blood in the structure of this narrative. As Joseph D'Costa, a character in the novel observes, the 1947 independence "is for the rich only; the poor are being made to kill each other like flies. In Punjab, in Bengal. Riots riots, poor against poor" (139). We are equally shown the brazen display of brutality by the British Imperial agents in the 'Rowlatt Act' riot in Amritsar in 1919. Several Indians have lost their lives in this riot as a result of gun-fire from the British troops. In a detailed presentation of what transpires, Saleem graphically reports:

Aziz penetrates the heart of the crowd, as Brigadier R.E. Dyer arrives at the entrance to the alleyway, followed by fifty crack troops. He is the Martial Law Commander of Amritsar—an important man, after all [...].

In the midst of the confusion that follows as a result of a clash reminiscent of the proverbial David and Goliath story:

Brigadier Dyer's fifty men put down their machine guns and go away. They have fired a total of one thousand six hundred and fifty rounds into the unarmed crowd. Of these, one thousand five hundred and sixteen have found their mark, killing some person. (*Midnight's Children* 41-42)

In the above quoted passage we can see a succinct display of historical facts as death figures (1,516 people), names of specific people (Brigadier Dyer) and locations (Amritsar) as well as statistical record of ammunitions fired (1,650 rounds) are meticulously documented. In addition, the number of casualties is also enumerated. This is a good example of the incorporation of historical data in literary texts that is the hallmark of historical novels. It is also an example of what Ivan Joblanka (cited in LaCapra 110) has called the "Traumatising reliving of the past" that is mostly found in historical narratives.

Similarly, we see a repeat of this style of historical narration in the story of the partition of India into the two nations of India and Pakistan in 1947, exactly "seventy days to go to the transfer of power" (120). Here too we can observe the merging of personal history with that of the nation:

On June 4th, my ill-matched parents left for Bombay by frontier mail [...]. On the same day, Earl Mountbatten of Burma held a press conference at which he announced the partition of India, and hung his countdown calendar on the wall [...]. (*Midnight's Children* 120).

As mentioned earlier, we can observe here how personal history (the "ill-matched parents leaving for Bombay") is closely tied to public history (the partition). This narrative pattern is widely observed throughout the text. There is hardly any national event that happens without an associated counterpart in the private domains of one of the characters. For example, even 'elections' and 'development' plans that are in the domain of public sphere eventually come to assume relevance in the life of some of the characters. A good illustration here is where the Indian public history transmutes into the life history of Saleem Sinai. In other words, the life of Saleem Sinai allegorically becomes an extension as well as a reflection of the history of the Indian nation. In this respect, Saleem lamentably declares:

Let me sum up: at a crucial point in the history of our child-nation, at a time when five year plans were being drawn up and elections were

approaching and language marchers were fighting over Bombay, a nine-year-old boy named Saleem Sinai acquired a miraculous gift. Despite many vital uses to which his abilities could have been put by his impoverished, under-developed country, he chose to conceal his talents, frittering them away on inconsequential voyeurism and petty cheating. (237-238)

From the above cited lines, it can be argued that the stories we tell can hardly be separated from the life we live and as Indira Karamcheti (1986) has noted, “We are the stories told about us” (82) as well as by us. This can be seen in *Midnight's Children*, where Saleem gradually reveals a personal identity through his national narrative. As a “midnight child”, his birth represents the independence of not only India but Pakistan as well. He is an embodiment of both nations by virtue of the circumstances of his birth. It is important to clarify that before the partition, Saleem was a bonafide Indian citizen, however as a consequence of the partition, he “was flung across the Partition-created frontier into Pakistan” as a result of border adjustments (*Midnight's Children* 393). Even so, he essentially as a consequence of birth becomes a “vehicle of Indian nationality because of this miraculous conjunction of biological and political nativity” (Kane 95). Born at the threshold of the splitting of India, “Saleem will be in himself the ‘conflict’ that all good stories require” (Winner 157). His birth and family background has positioned him as an illustration of “the national body as fragmented or ill” (Kane 95). This fragmentation and eventual catastrophe can be observed in the riots, violence, and killings that trail the partition of the new nation.

As mentioned previously, the tapestry of *Midnight's Children* is riddled with this kind of monstrous comparison between the life of an individual with that of an entire nation. Seen in another perspective, it can be argued that Saleem represents India itself. Consequently, as the narrative progresses, it can be observed that his experiences, triumphs and struggles mirror those

of the Indian nation. The nation transmutes not only as his alter ego but his “twin-in-birth” joined to him “at the hip so that what happened to either of” them “happened to” them “both” (*Midnight's Children* 538). Even more, the other “one thousand and one children born in the first hour of India’s independence” on “August 15th, 1947” (*Midnight's Children* 271) that symbolises the diversity of the new Indian nation “were also the children of *the time*; fathered [...] by history” (italics original, *Midnight's Children* 159). This is the nation that Saleem playfully describes as “[...] the new myth—a collective fiction in which everything was possible, a fable rivalled only by the two other mighty fantasies: money and God” (*Midnight's Children* 150). From what has been seen so far, we can argue that the re-writing of history is the *raison d’être* well as the leitmotif that guides the narrative in *Midnight's Children*. Hence, it is fairly easy to observe that history is the thread that stitched together events and characters in this monumental narrative of identity and memory. However, the history narrated in this text is a heap of confusion; a mixture of fact and fiction; a mirror reflection of the events that engulfs the Indian nation soon after independence.

Memory in *Midnight's Children*

It can be argued that Rushdie’s view of history is that of act of telling that for most part depends on memory irrespective of the veracity of that memory; after all every historiography is subjective (written/told from a certain perspective) in addition to being a selection and a mixture of fact and fiction.

Acknowledging the fragility of memory in the historical reconstruction of the past, Saleem asserted that the story he tells in the text is not beyond questioning because at several plot-points in the story he “[...] fell victim to the temptation of every autobiographer, to the illusion that since the past exists only in *one's memories* and the words which strive vainly to encapsulate them, *it is possible to create past events by simply saying they occurred*” (added emphasis, *Midnight's Children* 619). This statement therefore foregrounds the *wilful falsification* of historical data that litters this novel.

On this view, it is important to remember that there are instances in the text where dates or events are

deliberately falsified in order to demonstrate the fragility of memory in historical narratives. One important observation is that Saleem has insisted that the ‘truth-value’ of his narrative is not sacrosanct because it is simply his own ‘truth’, no more, no less. Consequently, in the fragments recalled and presented from his fragile memory, Saleem repeatedly commits historical inconsistencies that he freely acknowledges. Thus, as his story progresses, we realise that there are instances where he *deliberately* confuses important dates and events. For instance, at one juncture of the story, he refuses to get the date of the death of an important figure in Indian history like Mahatma Gandhi correctly:

Re-reading my work, I have discovered an error in chronology. The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi occurs, in these pages, on the wrong date. But I cannot say, now, what the actual sequence of events might have been; in my India, Gandhi will continue to die at the wrong time. (*Midnight's Children* 230)

The above passage is a testimony to Saleem’s obtruse distortion of historical facts. Although he acknowledges such mistakes, he none the less insists on keeping his version of this ‘history’ by refusing to comply with the so called ‘historical’ facts. By acting in this manner, Saleem is insisting in a postmodern historiographical sense, that *his* version of *this* history is as good as any other documented version. Thus, within the context of this narrative, his own version of truth means more to him than what had actually been imputed to have happened. Elsewhere in the text, he defends his story’s accuracy in spite of its glaring inconsistencies to Padma by explaining that:

Memory’s truth, because memory has its own special kind. It selects, eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies, and vilifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality, its heterogeneous but usually coherent version of events; and no sane human being ever trusts someone else’s version more than his own. (*Midnight's Children* 292)

The narrative in *Midnight's Children* is a

chiasmatic entanglement between Saleem’s life, the nation and fragments of the past. Indeed, Winner (1997) has aptly noted that, “Saleem’s story and his selfhood are one, and both are his own at the same time that they are his partitioned country’s” (156).

Identity

It is noteworthy that Saleem embodies both India and Pakistan and as such he tries to reconcile the values of the two nations albeit with very little success. One thing that is clear from the narrative in *Midnight's Children* is that the identity Saleem Sinai creates for himself is political in nature. This identity is symptomatic of the problems of people living in societies emerging from colonialism. It is my contention that this strategy of identity construction is a deliberate survival mechanism for Saleem in the chaotic social environment he finds himself. Indeed, Saleem occupies a liminal space between India and Pakistan. While he pledges his loyalty to India, the partition unfortunately pushes him across the frontier into Pakistan. It is this situation that eventually creates an uncertain identity for him. In short, Saleem embodies a dual identity as an Indian- Kashmiri, and Pakistani. For, while he is Pakistani through the fiat of border creation, he nonetheless ‘acts and displays’ through his body language and rhetoric, a desire to be a citizen of India. He cleverly bifurcates his allegiance to the two nascent nations by ‘staging’ in the true Butlerian sense, a dual identity whenever needed.

The behaviour of Saleem is in agreement with the observation of Bayart 1996 (cited in Bouché and Alou 126) who acknowledged the artificiality of identity by describing it as “a cultural, political or ideological construct.” In the same manner, some scholars such as Stuart Hall and Judith Butler have viewed identity as a fictional construct—a performance that can be staged as the situation demands.

In short, it can be argued that Saleem’s identity is symbolic because it is manifested in representations, knowledge, memories and projects concerning the self in the social world of his existence. Consequently, it is constructed in and by the various discourses and interpretations that intersect at different levels in the world of the text. This kind of identity is palpably ambiguous

as well as complex. The complexity of Saleem's identity stems from its hyphenated nature. In this respect, he problematically becomes a locus of various identities that sometimes intersect, comingle, separate, coalesce, and contradict one another. Thus, he is variously (re)presented in the narrative as Indian, Pakistani, and Kashmiri. These are the identities made available for Saleem to choose from depending on the circumstances he finds himself in. He thus periodically experiences a sort of post-imperial identity crisis in the narrative.

This taking-up of preferred identity by a person depending on situation has been described by Bronwyn and Rom Harré (1990; cited in Stephanie Taylor 2010) as "positioning". They explain positioning as the identities conferred and taken up by people in different situations (14). In fact, this is the sense in which Michael Bamberg (2010) defines identity as a label "attributed to the attempt to differentiate and integrate a sense of self along different social and personal dimensions" (4). Echoing a similar sentiment, Jenkins (2004) understands identity as a process of "'being' or becoming" (5).

In the same vein, Brubaker and Cooper (2008; cited in Jenkins 10) have equally noted how identity is a product of discourse about the "fragmented quality of the contemporary experience of an unstable 'self' [...] contingently 'activated' in differing contexts." In this light we, then, come to see identity as a social location where individuals are defined and in turn define themselves as subjects by way of discourse. We see this at play in *Midnight's Children*. The manner in which his identity is bifurcated is duly reflected in the partition of the nation soon after independence, into India and Pakistan instead of having one united, indivisible nation. In addition, unity was to become a mirage for India itself as language marchers struggle to have the country further balkanised along linguistic lines. There is no doubt that these partitions will eventually result into the creation of new disharmonious cultural identities. In the same way, history in this text is a mosaic of real and fictional events, and the reader is faced with the task of unravelling this pastiche. In fact, the meaning of history for Rushdie is

captured in the words of his protagonist Saleem Sinai as "the continuing struggle of oneself-against-the crowd" (*Midnight's Children* 392).

By contrast, Saleem's son, Aadam Sinai did not experience the same level of identity crisis in the narrative because he is unmistakably an Indian citizen by virtue of his birth. Aadam is born in Old Delhi, India during the time of the leadership of Indira Gandhi as the Prime Minister. However, he too, like his father is born at the "precise instant of India's arrival at the Emergency" and "he was mysteriously handcuffed to history, his destinies indissolubly chained to those of his country" (586). It thus seems there is no respite for the Sinais because of their entanglement with their nations' histories.

Conclusion

The story in *Midnight's Children* is tailored to reflect the postcolonial project of writing history from below. This process empowers the subalterns to tell their history in their voice. It is a gradual approach to a revisionist historiography. In describing this process of historical narration, Saleem elegantly and aptly quips that, "What had been (at the beginning) no bigger than a full stop had expanded into a comma, a word, a sentence, a paragraph, a chapter; now it was bursting into more complex developments, becoming, one might say, a book"(133). Indeed, as a demonstration of this process of historical narration, we have seen how the story of the birth of Saleem Sinai is ingeniously connected with political events in both India and Pakistan. In this way we also witnessed the almost seamless merging of personal and public history in *Midnight's Children*.

It is pertinent to note that most often people search for, and reveal their identities in stories and tales. In other words, the search for identity at the level of the individual is always articulated in narratives. Consequently, identity formation is constructed through the various discourses that intersect to define the individual. Hence identity formation becomes a product of discourses that are constructed in language through the use of memory. Salman Rushdie has indeed elegantly demonstrated this in *Midnight's Children*.

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L'EFFICACITÉ DU COURS ÉLÉMENTAIRE DE FRANÇAIS ENSEIGNÉ AUX ÉTUDIANTS EN SCIENCES : UNE ÉVALUATION COMPARATIVE DE TROIS UNIVERSITÉS AU SUD-EST DU NIGERIA

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Résumé

Cette recherche s'appuie sur l'enseignement de la langue française dans les universités nigérianes. Elle se concentre sur le cours de français élémentaire suivi par les étudiants en sciences. L'objectif de cette recherche est d'évaluer l'efficacité des méthodes utilisées pour enseigner ce cours aux étudiants en sciences. L'étude vise à découvrir les problèmes associés à l'enseignement et à l'apprentissage du français élémentaire par les étudiants en sciences dans trois institutions : l'Université du Nigeria Nsukka, Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu Alike Ikwo et Micheal Okpara University of Agriculture. Umudike. L'étude adopte la méthode quantitative. Trois hypothèses sont faites. La population d'échantillon se consiste de trois départements dans les universités sélectionnées : Géologie, Chimie et Nutrition. Comme outil de travail, on utilise des questionnaires semi-structurés et des entretiens. Les questionnaires ont été distribués à 200 étudiants. Des entretiens structurés ont été menés avec des professeurs de français dans les universités sélectionnées. Les données recueillies ont été analysées à l'aide de la méthode de fréquence et d'une approche démographique, et présentées sous forme de tableaux avec des pourcentages calculés. Cette recherche s'appuie sur la théorie de la découverte de Bruner. Les résultats révèlent que les méthodes utilisées pour l'enseignement du français élémentaire dans les établissements sélectionnés se sont avérées inefficaces pour permettre aux apprenants de communiquer en langue française. Ce problème résulte de quatre facteurs principaux : un effectif trop élevé d'étudiants par classe, un temps d'enseignement insuffisant, le manque d'intérêt des étudiants, et l'insuffisance de ressources pédagogiques.

Mots clés : français élémentaire ; étudiants en sciences ; méthodes ; langue ; enseignement

Introduction

On ne peut rien réaliser sans se servir de la langue. La langue peut être décrite comme un moyen par lequel les connaissances sont impactées et les relations entretenues (Asake 206). De son côté, Evelyn Mbah (306) définit la langue comme un véhicule qui transmet la pensée. La langue est un moyen par lequel un peuple communique les affaires concernant le commerce, la recherche scientifique, l'interaction politique, etc., On l'utilise pour échanger des informations et des idées, élabore des plans, des propositions et des politiques de développement durable. Les

définitions d'Asake et Mbah relient la langue au système de pensée. Cela signifie que pour utiliser avec succès une langue, il faut apprendre à penser dans cette langue. L'enseignement d'une langue est donc le développement de la capacité de penser dans une nouvelle langue.

Le français est actuellement considéré comme la deuxième langue officielle du Nigeria. Ce phénomène est né après un décret pris en 1993 par l'ancien chef d'État militaire nigérian, le général Sani Abacha. Le décret a inscrit la langue française dans le programme de l'unité d'études générales (General Studies - GS) de nombreuses universités

nigériennes. Après avoir suivi le cours de français GS, les étudiants nigériens devraient avoir la capacité de penser en français ?

Mbanefo décrit la politique d'Abacha comme étant déroutante. En effet, la communication officielle et administrative au Nigeria se fait encore uniquement en anglais. Ilupeju soutient la position de Mbanefo en affirmant que le français n'est pas la langue officielle des Nigériens, selon lui ; « Le français n'est pas la langue officielle du Nigeria ... si la politique linguistique prévoit le français en tant que deuxième langue officielle, il n'existe pas de textes administratifs pour renforcer son enseignement et sa pratique au sein de la population ».

A cause du décret d'Abacha, les étudiants des facultés des sciences, des sciences sociales et des sciences humaines de plusieurs écoles sont obligés de suivre un cours en français. La durée du cours, l'unité de coefficient et le mode d'enseignement varient d'une école à l'autre. Auparavant, avant et après la guerre civile nigérienne, les étudiants en sciences humaines, des départements tels que l'anglais, la linguistique, l'histoire et les sciences politiques devaient suivre un cours de français (qui était obligatoire dans la plupart des cas). Lors de l'adoption du décret de 1993, des étudiants d'autres disciplines telles que les sciences commencent à offrir ce cours.

L'objectif de cette recherche est d'examiner l'efficacité des méthodes d'enseignement appliquées aux cours de français de Général Studies (GS) dans les universités nigériennes. L'étude évalue également le statut bilingue des étudiants nigériens, en mettant particulièrement l'accent sur le cours de français élémentaire destiné aux étudiants à vocation scientifique. Cette recherche vise à identifier l'efficacité des méthodes employées dans l'enseignement du français élémentaire en GS, ainsi que les problèmes associés à l'enseignement et à l'apprentissage de cette langue par les apprenants dans les établissements sélectionnés, et par extension dans d'autres universités nigériennes.

Les institutions sélectionnées pour cette recherche sont toutes des universités fédérales situées dans le sud-est du Nigeria qui proposent le cours élémentaire de français aux étudiants en sciences : Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu Alike

Ikwo (AEFUNAI), University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) et Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike (MOUAU). Deux universités fédérales de la région, Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO) et Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka (UNIZIK), ont été exclues de cette recherche, car elles ne proposent pas de cours de français pour les étudiants en sciences. L'étude adopte une approche quantitative et repose sur trois hypothèses. Deux cents questionnaires semi-structurés ont été distribués à des étudiants de trois départements – Géologie, Chimie, et Nutrition – dans les universités sélectionnées. Des entretiens structurés ont également été menés avec des professeurs de français élémentaire dans ces établissements. Les données recueillies ont été analysées en utilisant les fréquences et une méthode démographique, puis présentées sous forme de tableaux avec des pourcentages.

L'analyse s'appuie sur la théorie de la découverte pédagogique de Jerome Bruner (Discovery Learning Theory). Les résultats indiquent que les méthodes actuellement appliquées à l'enseignement du français élémentaire en tant que cours de GS dans les universités sélectionnées se sont révélées inefficaces pour permettre aux apprenants de communiquer en français.

Nos résultats montrent que les méthodes appliquées à l'enseignement du français élémentaire comme cours de G. S dans les établissements sélectionnés ont été inefficaces pour donner les apprenants la capacité de communiquer en langue française. Les problèmes découverts sont causés par plusieurs facteurs tels que ; grand nombre d'étudiants dans une classe, temps insuffisant pour le cours, manque d'intérêt de la part de l'étudiant et le manque des outils pédagogiques.

Questions de recherche

Ce travail voudrait répondre à trois questions :

1. Quels sont les problèmes associés à l'enseignement du français comme cours de GS au Nigeria ?
2. Quelle est la capacité linguistique attendue des élèves ayant suivi le cours élémentaire de français ? »
3. La capacité est-elle atteinte une fois que les étudiants ont suivi le cours

Justification de l'étude

Comme on a déjà mentionné, le français a été institué comme deuxième langue officielle au Nigeria par son ancien chef d'État militaire Sani Abacha. Suite à ce décret, le Village nigérian de langue française a été créé à Badagry ; ainsi que trois Centres d'Enseignement et de Documentation du Français (Centre for French Teaching & Documentation - CFTD) créés à Jos, Ibadan et Enugu. Ces centres devaient entreprendre la production de manuels scolaires, assurer une immersion linguistique et former des professeurs de langues.

Cinq ans après le décret d'Abacha, en 1998, la politique d'enseignement du français a été inscrite dans la politique nationale nigériane sur l'éducation (National Policy of Education - NPE) :

Le gouvernement apprécie l'importance de la langue comme moyen de promouvoir l'interaction sociale et la cohésion ; et en préservant la culture pour une interaction fluide avec nos voisins, il est souhaitable que chaque Nigérian parle français. En conséquence, le français sera la deuxième langue officielle du Nigéria et il sera obligatoire dans les écoles (NPE 09).

Cependant, plusieurs années après l'adoption de cette politique, elle n'est toujours pas atteinte. Par conséquent, cette étude souhaite étudier les facteurs influençant son retard.

De nombreux chercheurs nigériens ont fait des recherches approfondies sur les problèmes de l'enseignement du français, mais peu ont adopté le niveau universitaire comme base de leur recherche. En préparation de l'exercice d'accréditation 2016 qui sera effectué par la NUC (Commission des universités nigérianes) au Département des langues étrangères et des études littéraires (Foreign Languages and Literary Studies - FLLS); UNN, il a été remarqué qu'un tiers des thèses de premier cycle dans ledit département était basé sur l'enseignement des langues. Néanmoins, il s'agissait surtout d'étudiants qui étudiaient le français comme discipline principale et l'enseignement du français au niveau secondaire. Au contraire, la présente étude porte sur des étudiants d'une autre discipline

: les sciences. De plus, la recherche porte uniquement sur le français élémentaire et compare trois établissements d'enseignement supérieur.

Hypothèses

I. Les étudiants en sciences n'ont aucune valeur pour le français, ils proposent le cours par contrainte.

II. Les méthodes employées pour enseigner le français élémentaire aux étudiants en sciences sont inefficaces.

III. Les étudiants ne peuvent pas parler français après avoir offert le cours de français élémentaire.

Cadre théorique

Une théorie peut être décrite comme un système composé d'hypothèses, de notions et d'idées sur un sujet spécifique, le sujet dans ce cas est l'enseignement des langues. Dans le domaine de pédagogie, il existe plusieurs théories. Cette recherche adopte la théorie de J. Bruner – *Discovery theory of pedagogy*. Pour réaliser ses illustrations, Bruner s'est basé sur l'enseignement de la langue anglaise. Remarquant que nous travaillons sur l'enseignement et l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère, nous jugeons cette théorie la mieux pour notre recherche.

Plusieurs chercheurs ont exploré la théorie de la découverte. Par exemple, Mutia et Erlinda qui ont également travaillé sur l'enseignement de la langue anglaise. Il est nécessaire de noter que Mutia et Erlinda ont présenté l'anglais comme une langue étrangère au peuple indonésien. De plus, l'apprentissage de la langue française par des étudiants nigériens est une véritable découverte car la langue est totalement étrangère.

Bien que Jerome Bruner soit souvent crédité d'avoir été à l'origine de l'apprentissage par la découverte, on peut trouver de nombreuses similitudes entre son travail et celui de John Dewey. Il convient également de noter que les travaux de Dewey précèdent ceux de Bruner. Le mouvement d'apprentissage par la découverte qui s'est apparu aux années 1960 suggère que les gens devraient "apprendre en pratiquant". L'apprentissage par la découverte exige que l'étudiant ne reçoive pas une réponse exacte, mais on lui donne le matériel nécessaire pour trouver lui-même la réponse.

En ce qui concerne l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de la langue française, l'approche

de Bruner propose simplement que l'élève apprenne le français en parlant cette langue. Notant que l'idée derrière l'apprentissage du français par les étudiants en sciences est de leur permettre d'utiliser la langue si et quand le besoin s'en fait sentir.

Outil de travail

Cette recherche adopte deux outils/instruments : des questionnaires et des entretiens. Les entretiens ont été structurés. On a engagé un professeur de chacune des trois institutions. Constatant que les chercheurs sont affiliés à l'une des institutions sélectionnées (UNN), la recherche a engagé un enseignant qui n'est pas associé à l'étude. Le choix des personnes à interroger a été fait à l'aide de la méthode d'échantillonnage sélectif. Cette méthode - comme le terme "sélectif" l'implique - signifie que la sélection doit être faite sur la base d'un critère. Dans ce cas, la personne à interroger doit être sélectionnée si elle participe à l'enseignement du cours élémentaire de français. Pour faciliter le traitement des données, les entretiens ont été enregistrés. Les questions de l'entretien sont :

- 1 Quel est le titre de cours de français GS dans votre école ?

Exemplaire de questionnaire

1. School/University UNN () MOUAU () AEFUNAI ()
2. Department: Home Science [] Nutrition & Dietetics [], Industrial Chemistry [], Geology []
3. At what level/year are you to offer Elementary French? 100 () 200 () 300 () 400 []
4. How many hours in a week do you do French in your school? 1 hour [] 2 hours [], 3 hours [], 4 hours (), 5 hours []
5. How many academic sessions is it require todo French in your school? (A) 1 [] (B) 2 [] (C) 3 []
6. How many units does French carry in your curriculum?(A) 1 [] (B) 2 [] (C) 3 []
7. Is French compulsory in your school, YES [] NO [] If NO, why did you choose French? (A) It is easier than other alternatives []. (B) I like the French language []. (C) I could already speak French [] (D) Other reasons: _____
8. .Class size (A) 1 -25[].(B) 26-50 []. (C) 51-100[].(D) 100 and above[].
9. How fluent could you speak French after taking French elective courses in your department? A) Very pooly[] (B) Poorly [], (C) fluently [], (D) Very fluently []

Le résultat des entretiens

En ce qui concerne les réponses aux entretiens, cette étude choisit de garder anonyme l'identité des enseignants.

Les responses de l'UNN ont été :

- I. Quel est le titre de cours du français GS dans votre école ? *FRE 101 et FRE 102 – Elementary French*
- II. Quel département est chargé de son enseignement et son examen ? *Il est enseigné et organisé par le Département des langues étrangères et des études littéraires (Flls).*
- III. Quel est le niveau de langue attendu de l'étudiant à la fin de ce cours ? *A1*

- IV. Ce niveau est-il atteint ? Non
- V. Si NON est votre réponse à la question IV, alors pourquoi pas? La plupart des élèves ne s'intéressent pas au français, ils le font parce qu'ils le doivent. De plus, *la méthode d'enseignement est principalement théorique. Dans la plupart des cas, les élèves ne voient pas la nécessité d'apprendre le français.*
- VI. Quels sont les manuels recommandés ? *Introductory French for Higher Education*
- VII. Quelle la langue est employée en classe ? Anglais
- VIII. Est-ce que vous utilisez des appareils électroniques ou techniques dans l'enseignement ? Si OUI, lesquelles ? *On n'emploie pas les outils électronique.*

Quant à AEFUNAI, les réponses ont été :

- I Quel est le titre de cours de français GS dans votre école ? *GSP 201 – Vasic Communication in French*
- II Quel département est chargé de son enseignement et des examens ? *Les professeurs du Département de langues et de linguistique – Department of Languages & Linguistics- l'enseigne mais le cours est organisé par l'Unité d'études générales (General Studies Unit)*
- III Quel est le niveau de langue attendu de l'étudiant à la fin de ce cours ? Français A1
- IV Ce niveau est-il atteint ? *Non*
- V Si NON est votre réponse à la question IV, alors pourquoi pas ? *Les étudiants a très peu de contacts; quelques heures par semaine. De plus, la plupart d'entre eux ne s'intéresse pas à la langue. Nous devons enseigner des classes ayant des étudiants nombreux en utilisant des installations médiocres.*
- VI Quels sont les manuels recommandés ? *Basic Communication in French.*
- VII Quelle est la langue employée en classe ? *Français et anglais*
- VIII Est-ce que vous utilisez des appareils électroniques ou techniques dans l'enseignement ? Si OUI, Lesquelles ? *Pas exactement, nous avons des micros*

Le résultat de l'interview de MOUAU était :

- I Quel est le titre de cours du français GS dans votre école ? *GSP 114 et 124 – Elementary French*
- II Quelle département est chargé de son enseignement et des examens ? *Il est enseigné et organisé par 'unité d'études générales du MOUAU – School of General Studies.*
- III Quel est le niveau de langue attendu de l'étudiant à la fin de ce cours ? A1
- IV Ce niveau est-il atteint ? *Non*
- V Si NON est votre réponse à la question IV, alors pourquoi pas ? *Le manque d'intérêt de la part des étudiants. La plupart des étudiants n'ont aucune connaissance préalable du français. On a beaucoup d'étudiants dans une classe et il n'y a pas de micro ou d'autre outils électroniques. En outre, la plupart des étudiants considèrent le français comme un cours difficile. Langue.*
- VI Quels sont les manuels recommandés ? *French at a glance*
- VII On se sert de quelle langue en classe ? *L'anglais*
- VIII Est-ce que vous utilisez des appareils électroniques ? Si OUI, lesquels ? *On n'a aucun*

Analyse et comparaison du résultats de trois entretiens

- Les métiers : À l'UNN, le cours de français élémentaire est offert par des étudiants provenant de treize départements ; ces disciplines sont issues de quatre facultés : lettres, sciences sociales, agriculture et sciences physiques. AEFUNAI divise le cours de français en deux cours ayant des titres différents mais le même contenu. FRE 101 et 102 (français élémentaire) sont destinés aux étudiants en sciences humaines tandis que GSP 201 et 202 (Basic Communication in French) est fait par tous.
- Organisation de l'enseignement : Tous les cours de français à AEFUNAI sont dispensés par des enseignants du Département de Langues et Linguistique. A UNN, des professeurs du département FLLS enseignent le cours. C'est seulement à MOUAU que le cours est enseigné par les professeurs de GS. La raison pour ce fait pourrait être à cause du fait que MOUAU n'a pas de département

linguistique. UNN laisse l'organisation du GS français au Département des langues étrangères et des études littéraires ; l'École d'études générales n'a rien à y voir.

- Population d'étudiants qui fait le cours : À AEFUNAI et MOUAU, le cours de français élémentaire est fait par tous les étudiants de l'université alors que UNN limite ce cours aux étudiants de neuf départements.
- Titre du cours : UNN et MOUAU adoptent le même titre de cours tandis que AEFUNAI adopte un autre.

Les entretiens ont également révélé trois similitudes dans les trois établissements : les questions III, IV et V avaient presque les mêmes réponses : Français A1 (pour la question III), Non (pour la question IV). Les problèmes soulevés à la question V étaient également similaires :

- Un grand nombre d'étudiants dans une classe
- Le manque des outils pédagogiques
- Les étudiants ne s'intéressent pas à ce cours. La question du « manque d'intérêt » s'est produite dans les trois établissements, ce qui montre qu'il s'agit d'un facteur majeur.

Il est à noter que les trois universités ont produit leurs propres livres pour ce cours.

En ce qui concerne nos questions de recherche, les entretiens ont trouvé des réponses à la deuxième: « Quelle est la capacité linguistique attendue des élèves ayant suivi le cours élémentaire de français ? » Français A1. Quant à la question « La capacité est-elle atteinte une fois que les étudiants ont suivi le cours ? » ; la réponse est *non*.

Selon les résultats des entretiens, nos deux premières hypothèses se sont confirmées à l'affirmative : (i) Les étudiants en sciences n'ont aucune valeur pour le français, ils font ce cours par contrainte (ii) les méthodes employées dans l'enseignement du français élémentaire aux étudiants en sciences sont inefficaces.

Les données récoltées par les questionnaires

Les questionnaires ont été analysés de manière démographique en utilisant la méthode de fréquence. Les résultats étaient :

Tableau 1 : Répartition des étudiants dans les Universités

UNIVERSITÉS	FRÉQUENCE	Pourcentage (%)
MOUAU	50	25%
UNN	50	25%
AEFUNAI	100	50%
TOTAL	200	100

Le tableau 1 a montré que AEFUNAI a 50% de l'échantillon de l'étude tandis que MOUAU et UNN ont 25% chacun. Cela est dû au nombre d'étudiants qui se sont intéressés à l'étude dans les universités différentes.

TABLEAU 2 : Répartition des étudiants dans les départements différents

DEPARTMENTS	UNN	MOUAU	AEFUNAI
Geology	10	0	28
Nutrition	40	0	0
Chimique	16	34	72

Selon le TABLEAU 2, la répartition des étudiants pour cette recherche était UNN 66 qui est (33%), MOUAU 34 constituant 17% et AEFUNAI 100 (50%).

Les questionnaires ont également révélé les différents niveaux auxquels les étudiants font le cours de français élémentaire dans les trois établissements. AEFUNAI, les étudiants font ce cours quand ils sont en première année. Le cas d'AEFUNAI est pour tout étudiant. Les données montrent que les étudiants de MOUAU font ce cours dans leurs troisièmes années. A UNN, les étudiants de Chimie font FRE 101/102 en troisième année, ceux de Géologie et Nutrition quand ils sont dans le premier niveau et ceux combinant Géologie et Physique en deuxième année.

Tableau 3 : Nombre d'heures par semaine qu'on fait le français dans les universités sélectionnées

UNIVERSITIES	HRS	FREQUENCY	%
AEFUNUAI	3HRS	100	50%
UNN	2HRS	50	100%
MOUAU	2HRS	50	25%
TOTAL		200	100

Le tableau 3 montre le nombre d'heures hebdomadaires qu'on fait le français dans les universités sélectionnées.

Tableau 4 : Nombre de sessions académiques qu'on fait le français dans ces universités

UNIVERSITIES	Nombre de sessions	FREQUENCE	%
AEFUNUAI	2	100	50%
UNN	1	50	25%
MOUAU	1	50	25%
TOTAL		200	100

Selon Tableau 4, AEFUNUAI fait le français en deux sessions tandis que UNN et MOUAU font le français en une seule session respectivement.

Tableau 5 : fréquence et pourcentage de représentation des unités attribuées au français dans ces universités

UNIVERSITIES	NOMBRE D'UNITE	FREQUENCE	%
AEFUNUAI	2	100	50%
UNN	2	50	25%
MOUAU	2	50	25%
TOTAL		200	100

A travers le Tableau 5, on verrait l'unité de coefficient attribuées AEFUNUAI, l'UNN et le MOUAU ont respectivement attribué 2 unités au français.

Tableau 6 : Nombre d'étudiants dans une classe

UNIVERSITIES	Nombre d'étudiants
AEFUNUAI	Plus de 100
UNN	26-50
MOUAU	Plus de 100

A travers Tableau 6, on voit le nombre d'étudiants composant une classe du français élémentaire. AEFUNUAI et MOUAU ont le plus grand avec des classes se composant de 100 étudiants et plus tandis que l'UNN a 26 à 50 étudiants dans la classe

Tableau 7 : Fréquence et notes en pourcentage concernant la valeur que les étudiants ont pour le français

UNIVERSITIES	Oui (%)	Non (%)	Total
AEFUNUAI	4(4%)	96(96%)	100
UNN	9(18%)	41(82%)	50
MOUAU	11(28%)	39(72%)	50

A AEFUNUAI, seulement 4% des étudiants ont dit oui qu'ils ont de la valeur pour le cours de français alors que 9% sont de l'UNN et 11% des étudiants de MOUAU valorise la langue. D'autre part, les étudiants qui ont indiqué qu'ils ont aucune valeur aux cours de français se répartissent ainsi : 96 % des étudiants de AEFUNUAI tandis que 41 % sont de UNN et 39 % de MOUAU. Les données montrent qu'un grand pourcentage d'étudiants dans les universités n'ont aucune valeur pour le cours de français élémentaire mais l'ont offert sur la base de la contrainte ; confirmant notre première hypothèse.

En ce qui concerne la troisième question de recherche ; *Est-ce que les étudiants parlent français après avoir pris le cours de français élémentaire ?*, nous constatons :

Tableau 8 : Présentation des fréquences des étudiants qui parlent la langue française ayant fait ce cours

course

UNIVERSITIES	Non (%)	Oui (%)	Total
AEFUNUAI	91(91%)	9(9%)	100
UNN	42(84%)	8(16%)	50
MOUAU	46(92%)	4(8%)	50

Le tableau 8 montre les pourcentages de réponses des élèves sur le fait de parler français après avoir fait le cours de français. À AEFUNUAI, 91 % des étudiants ont dit non qu'ils ne parlaient pas français après avoir pris le cours, tandis que 42 % de l'UNN et 46 % du MOUAU ont dit non. D'autre part, 9% des étudiants d'AEFUNUAI ont dit oui qu'ils peuvent parler français après avoir fait ce cours tandis que 8% de UNN et 4% de MOUAU ont dit qu'ils peuvent parler français après avoir pris ce cours. Le plus grand pourcentage d'étudiants ont déclaré ne pas pouvoir parler français après avoir offert le cours de français élémentaire dans leurs universités. Ceci en accord avec nos troisièmes hypothèses.

Résumé des résultats des questionnaires

- Aucune école n'a enseigné le français élémentaire pour plus de deux sessions académiques
- Dans chaque université, la langue est enseignée de 2 à 3 heures par semaine, seize semaines en un semestre et quatre semestres en deux sessions ; nous avons au plus 192 heures. C'est nettement insuffisant si l'on considère qu'il faut tenir compte des pauses de mi-semestre et des vacances. Ceci est présenté dans les TABLEAUX 3, 4 et 5.
- Le TABLEAU 6 montre que le grand nombre d'étudiants dans une classe est un facteur imminent dans l'enseignement du français élémentaire.
- Selon nos données, la plupart des étudiants ne peuvent pas parler français après avoir offert le cours de français élémentaire dans leurs universités.

Recommandations

A la fin, les chercheurs font ces recommandations pour l'enseignement de la langue française comme cours de GS dans les universités nigérianes :

- Il faut que le nombre d'étudiants dans une classe soit appropriée telle que recommandée par la politique de National Universities Commission. Ceci peut être réalisé en engageant plus d'enseignants, par conséquent, les classes peuvent être divisées en petits groupes.
- Provision de bons équipements pédagogiques tels que les projecteurs et les outils audiovisuels.
- Application des méthodes d'enseignement et d'apprentissage qui renforce l'intérêt et la concentration des élèves.
- Temps suffisant pour enseigner le cours pour une perception efficace.

Conclusion

Le but de cette recherche était d'étudier l'efficacité des méthodes employées dans l'enseignement du cours élémentaire de français dans les universités nigérianes. Sur la base des résultats, nous avons tiré quelques conclusions. Notre étude comportait trois questions de recherche. La première question était ; *Quels sont les problèmes associés à l'enseignement du français élémentaire comme cours de G. S dans les universités nigérianes ?* Auprès de nos données, les problèmes découverts sont : grand nombre d'étudiants dans une classe, temps insuffisant pour le cours, manque d'intérêt de la part de l'étudiant et le manque des outils pédagogiques.

La deuxième question de recherche est : *Quelle est la capacité linguistique attendue des étudiants ayant fait le cours élémentaire de français ?* Dans les trois universités, la réponse était A1 selon le cadre commun de référence linguistique de l'Union européenne. En troisième lieu, l'étude a voulu vérifier si cette capacité était atteinte après que les étudiants aient fait ce cours. Les trois institutions ont répondu à la négative à cette question. Les raisons pour lesquelles la capacité visée n'est pas atteinte constituaient notre troisième question de recherche. Selon nos données, plusieurs facteurs en étaient responsables. En premier lieu, les méthodes conventionnelles appliquées à l'enseignement du français élémentaire en tant que cours GS dans les trois

universités nigérianes sélectionnées ont été inefficaces pour donner les étudiants la capacité de parler la langue française.

L'étude trouve que dans les trois établissements, la plupart des étudiants ne s'intéressent pas au français, ils le font parce que c'est obligatoire. De plus, les méthodes d'enseignement sont majoritairement théoriques. Un autre facteur notable est le fait que les étudiants ont très peu de contacts ; quelques heures par semaine. De plus, la technologie moderne est rarement utilisée pour enseigner. Les données ont révélé que les trois hypothèses sont à l'affirmative.

L'implication pédagogique du résultat est que l'apprentissage par la découverte pourrait convenir mieux dans l'enseignement de la langue française que la méthode conventionnelle. Par conséquent, l'étude a fourni des preuves empiriques sur la nécessité d'adopter la pratique dans l'enseignement de cette langue puisque la découverte permet aux étudiants d'apprendre par eux-mêmes le compte tenu du matériel. En ce qui concerne la langue française, l'apprentissage par la découverte signifie simplement que les méthodes d'enseignement doivent inculquer des exercices pratiques d'expression orale.

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ENUMERATING AND EXEMPLIFYING AS CRITICAL STYLISTIC DEVICES IN KAINÉ AGARY'S *YELLOW-YELLOW*

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Abstract

Writers express themselves differently. However, they all reflect aspects of human lives and address societal issues. Critical Stylistics is that branch of study that enables the investigation of a text to assess how social problems are expressed through language. This study is based on Enumeration and Exemplification as Critical Stylistic Devices in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. It, therefore, approaches the text *Yellow-Yellow* from a critical Stylistic perspective. With the main objectives of identifying the critical stylistic tools used by Kain Agary in the selected excerpts in *Yellow-Yellow* and identifying the effects of the identified tool on the text and its meaning, Jeffries' (2010) theory of Critical Stylistics was adopted to help complete the study. The study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. The data for analysis was purposively selected to suit the purpose of the study. The study revealed that Kaine Agary in *Yellow-Yellow* adopted the enumeration tool in his writing style. This is in response to the first objective. On the discourse meanings from the enumerations, Agary presents from a critical perspective issues that affect humanity and the society humans live in, particularly the oil-rich communities, such as corruption and its resultant consequences; how some illustrious sons help the outer world to destroy their ancestry; how some women change their skin colors with the use of creams to meet up with some standards, the destruction of sources of livelihood, vulnerability of the women of these communities and its effect as well as the obstruction of activities by hoodlums.

Keywords: Critical Stylistics, Enumerating, Exemplifying, *Yellow-Yellow*

Introduction

Individuals express themselves differently. These differences constitute what is known as style. Stylistics is a branch of applied linguistics, which studies and interprets texts of all kinds and/or spoken languages with respect to their linguistic and tonal style, and style is the particular variety of language used by different individuals and/or in different situations or settings (Betti 2021:1). This definition emphasizes that the concern of Stylistics is the variations in language forms of people. It also draws out the point that stylistics also investigates variations that exist as a result of context or setting. This implies that different authors present different texts according to their individualistic differences. These different styles are used to create special social meanings studied under a branch of Stylistics known as Critical stylistics (Aluya & Uduma, 2024).

Olaluwoye (2015:88) defines Critical

Stylistics as a stylistic method used for linguistic analysis that is concerned with how social meanings are expressed through language. The branch of linguistics deals chiefly with how humans use language to express significant meanings shared by many at a time. As observed, the origin of 'Critical Stylistics' could be traced to Jeffries in 2007 through the exploration of text features which are discourses on the female body in society and considering whether thoughts of feminism have successfully been incorporated into these hegemonic discourses. It investigates how many thoughts are expressed in a text and is shared in some cases by many texts.

The primary focus of Critical Stylistics is to bring together the main general functions performed by a text in representing reality, considering the level of existence at which texts organize human experiences of the world we live in (Olaluwoye 2015:88). This implies that it

concentrates more on how language functions to capture reality and its existence as expressed in texts by different writers. Olaluwoye (2015:88) states further that Critical Stylistics is a bridge that connects CDA and Stylistics through its use of the Critical Linguistics approach to text analysis. Critical Stylistics provides comprehensive and systematic set of analytical tools among which are: (a) Naming and Describing, (b) Representing Actions/Events/States, (c) Equating and Contrasting, (d) Exemplifying and Enumerating, (e) Prioritizing, (f) Implying and Assuming, (g) Negating, (h) Hypothesizing, (i) the Speech and Thoughts of other Participants, and (j) Representing Time, Space and Society. The various texts available are the materials through which writers exercise the features that are analysed by Critical Stylistics. One of such which is the focus of the study is *Yellow-Yellow*.

Okorafor et al. (2024) state that *Yellow-Yellow* is a text by Kaine Agary which examines the struggles of the Niger-Delta people with the environment critically. The novel as they state examines the politics behind the exploratory efforts by oil companies in the area. The role of the government is also portrayed as well as the adverse effects that accompany it. The novel according to Aluya & Ocheme (2024) raises concerns which include underdevelopment, carelessness, pollution, kidnapping, gas flaring, vandalism, destruction of farmlands and micro/macro-organisms, and prostitution. The novel also discusses the environment of the oil rich communities and the effects of the activities of oil companies in their lands. *Yellow-Yellow* is a text by Kaine Agary which projects the plight of the people of the oil-rich communities. One of the Critical Stylistics features used by the text is enumeration and exemplification.

Olaluwoye (2015) states that Enumerating and exemplifying are critical stylistic tools that involve classification of things and their examples which involves making a long list of the members of a group. As he states, sometimes, these functions create categories and categorise members. The structural techniques which set up exemplification are many and varied, but often include explicit reference to the fact that they are examples. Sometimes, enumerating involves the

use of verbs such as include or adverb introductions like such as. For some cases, where the items in the list are clausal.

Rawian et al. (2024:92) state that Exemplifying and enumerating serve as a rhetorical tool which embeds a wide range of meanings achieved by listing to indicate category members without aiming for understanding them. These examples that are listed according to them present a unique worldview in the text, defying easy classification. This study therefore is focused on achieving the following objectives:

1. Identifying the critical stylistic tools used by Kaine Agary in *Yellow-Yellow*.
2. Identifying the effects of the identified tool on the text and its meaning.

The following questions will therefore be answered in the study:

1. What are the Critical Stylistics tools that are visible in the excerpts selected in *Yellow-Yellow*?
2. What is the meaning that the identified tools have on the discourse?

Achieving the objectives and answering the questions will make the study very relevant and enable a better understanding of the text and the excerpts selected and analysed using Enumeration and Exemplification.

Reconceptualizing Related Studies

This section reviews existing literature relevant to the present study, drawing distinctions between previous scholarly focuses and the unique perspective of this research.

Ogunfolabi (2019) in an article titled *Biracialism and trauma in Kaine Agary's Yellow-Yellow* evaluates the nexus that exists between the discourse of racial purity and the adverse traumatic effects it has in women which is central in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. Trauma and biracialism are identified by Ogunfolabi as biracial subjects. The study concludes by arguing that there is a connection between racial purity and its traumatic effects on the biracial woman. This article with its focus on the connection between biracialism and its traumatic effects differs from the present study. This is because the present study rather focuses on the use of Stylistics tools by Kaine Agary.

Ojiafor (2020) in Re-evaluating the Image of the Niger Deltas in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* evaluates the actions of the Niger Delta indigenes in their quest to attain existential fulfilment. Adopting the analytical research design, the study looks critically at the social issues that affect the Niger Delta communities as presented by the novel. The study reveals that the Niger Deltans contribute to the underdevelopment of their communities in addition to the activities of the oil communities. While the reviewed article considers some factors that are responsible for the underdevelopment of the oil producing areas with priority given to the causes, the present study rather differs from it as it focuses on how the author employs the enumeration and exemplification in the work to capture the plight of the oil rich communities.

Simon (2010) in an article The Niger Delta and the Women's Predicament: A Study of Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, evaluates the sociological conditions of the woman and the Niger Delta environment. Without a clearly outlined framework, the article draws readers' attention to the social irregularities that prevail. Also considered is the female predicament and the dichotomy between the rural and urban areas. This study differs from the present study in that, the present study focuses rather on enumerating and Exemplifying as stylistics tools used in the novel.

Adeyemo & Shittu (2006) in the damaged woman in the Damaged Environment: An Ecofeminist Critique of Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* analyses the nexus between violence on women and degradation of the environment as captured in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. Adopting Vandana Shiva's critique of patriarchal capitalism, the study argues that ecology is a feminist issue. It reveals that females are directly affected by destruction of the environment. The study concludes by emphasizing the urgent need for humans to shift from power-based relationships in order to achieve an egalitarian society and a healthy environment. The reviewed article focuses on how the language of texts in connection with violence against women and the environment is exhibited by Kaine Agary in *Yellow-Yellow*. Consequently, it differs from the present study because the focus of the present is on

the use of enumeration and exemplification as portrayed by Kaine Agary.

In an attempt to assess the use of foregrounding by Kaine Agary in *Yellow-Yellow*, Okorafor et al. (2024) undertook a study titled Foregrounding Oil Exploration and Exploitation on the Ecology: An Ecolinguistic Study of Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* in which they examine the deployment of ecolinguistic theory to highlight the problems encountered by oil-rich communities which result from the activities of companies that drill oil in the Niger Delta region. Using Stibbe's framework of framing and evaluation, six extracts from the text were purposively sampled and analysed. The article revealed that Agary's novel foregrounds issues like prostitution, discrimination, environmental degradation, kidnapping, destruction of Micro/macro-organisms on the ecology, and oil theft/bunkering. The article reviewed focuses on how Agary foregrounds key societal issues enumerated above. Consequently, it relates to the present study in its approach to the text. Where they differ is, while the reviewed article uses Ecolinguistics theory, the present study uses the approach of critical stylistics and the use of enumeration and exemplification in *Yellow-Yellow*.

Okwuokei (2019) in a dissertation assesses the effect of psychological damage of the degraded Environment on the selected Characters in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* and Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*. The study asserts hopelessness, helplessness, fear, guilt and anger transcends to trauma in some characters. The study revealed that grief, nostalgia and aggression are traumatic Manifestations. The study concludes that problems actually serve as a test of true personality and affect the society in general. This reviewed article differs from the present study. While the reviewed article concentrates on the effects of the problems on the society and even characters, the present study looks at how enumeration and exemplification appear in the text as a Stylistic device used to create a special meaning.

Francis (2019) in an article titled Ecocritical Analysis of Kaine Angary's *Yellow-Yellow* assesses the problems that women and other people face as projected by the novel. The

article mentions that the problems highlighted result from societal and social irregularities. The article enumerates some of them as joblessness, poverty, lack of social amenities, and environmental degradation in the Niger-Delta. The study also examines how exploration of oil eludes the people who are supposed to benefit greatly from the exploration of oil in the region. The reviewed article focuses on the plight of women in the oil rich communities. As a result, it differs from the present study because the present study rather concentrates on how enumeration and exemplification are used in the text as special stylistic devices.

Akung & Iloeje (2011) in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow: A Study in Ecocriticism* examine the relationship between ecology and literature, with its focus on Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. With the use of Ecocriticism theory, the novel explores the socio-cultural effects of oil exploration and exploitation on the ecology. With a focus also on the social issues that affect women, the society or environment and the oil rich communities specifically, the study reveals that environmental pollution leads to pollution of morals. It reveals also that women in this novel have been sexually polluted pointing out that the body of the woman in the novel symbolizes nature which man has polluted. As a study that is uniquely designed, the reviewed article approached the text and established a connection between a woman's body and the environment connecting the devastation done to both of them. As a result, it differs from the present study. This is because the present study concentrates on the use of stylistic devices of enumerating and exemplifying.

Ogene & Okolo (2023) title their article Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow: An Eco-feminist Bildungsroman Novel* evaluates the genre that the novel could be classified under and focuses on the origin of the novel group. Bildungsroman is identified as the genre which the novel belongs to. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory was used to complete the analysis and results indicate that the novel under survey is an eco-feminist Bildungsroman –which implies a novel that pursues feminist drive on the one hand, and an advocacy conservation on the other hand

projecting the need for environmental protection on the other. The study revealed that African Bildungsroman, like most other African novels sometimes are used as advocacy tools for social, political, economic and ecological change. Hence, Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* is a tool for creating the needed awareness, agitation and protesting. The reviewed article critically examines the text *Yellow-Yellow* and traces its genre and its source. It also examines the connection between the environment and the human body. Therefore, the study is very interesting and vital in the understanding of the situation in the Niger-Delta as Agary presents it. It however differs from the present study. The present study focuses rather on the use of critical stylistics tools by Kaine Agary in the novel.

This section of the review pays attention to the studies done on Critical Stylistics and the enumerating and exemplifying tools of analysis. Thomas (2023) in an article titled A Critical Stylistic Study of Wole Soyinka's Reenactment of Actions in Interventions I, IV and VIII explores Soyinka's re-enactment of actions in Interventions I, IV and VIII with attention paid to the critical stylistic use of language to depict leadership ills. Jeffries' critical stylistics theory represents the framework with specific attention given to the tool of representing actions/events/states. The study explores also the action of the leaders and the led in the Nigerian society. It revealed that the Nigerian leaders disregard their responsibilities which has led to the condition the nation currently finds itself in. The study revealed further that leaders in Nigeria are only concerned with following the steps of their predecessors rather than identifying ways through which the nation could be emancipated from its despondent state. The reviewed article focuses on the use of stylistic tools to depict social ills of leaders in the society. The present study instead focuses on the use of enumerating and exemplifying Stylistic tools in Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. Though they differ in their focus, they relate in the framework within which they are carried out.

Omotunde (2023) titles an article A Critical Stylistic Study of Peter Obi's Campaign Speech Delivered at Chatham House and in it conducts a critical stylistic analysis of the

presidential campaign speech delivered by Peter Obi in the United Kingdom on January 26, 2023. With the aim of investigating some meanings and ideologies presented by Peter Obi to his listeners through his selection of words, three tools propounded by Jeffries (2010) namely naming and describing, prioritising and equating and contrasting are used as the framework for the study. Findings from the study reveal that different texts could have one ideology behind them that serve as the foundation for all the interpretations.

Hussein & Hussein (2021) title their work *Speaking Loudly: Critical Stylistic Analysis of Selected Soliloquies in Hamlet* and in it analyses two soliloquies made by Hamlet using only three textual-conceptual functions of the model: Representing Actions/ Events/ States; Exemplifying and Enumerating; and Hypothesizing. The Critical Stylistics model of Jeffries (2010) was used to framework the study. With the use of qualitative tools for the analysis, the study revealed that Shakespeare's language is ideologically loaded and contains discrepancies in the frequency and function of these tools.

Hussein & Hussein (2021) are of the opinion that Exemplifying and Enumerating are Critical Stylistics tools. Exemplifying according to them means "giving a number of specific categories as examples rather than listing all the category members." Enumerating on the other hand is "giving a full list or listing all the items of a certain category." Hussein & Hussein (2021) state that Jeffries (2010: 66) uses these concepts while giving examples of something and/or mentioning certain things. This review is useful to the present study as it provides the framework that is relevant in completing the present study.

Olaluwoye (2015) is of the opinion that Enumerating and exemplifying are critical stylistic tools that classify things and their examples which involves making a long list of the members of a group. As he states, sometimes, these functions create categories and categorise members. The structural techniques which set up exemplification are many and varied, but often include explicit reference to the fact that they are examples. Sometimes, enumerating involves the use of verbs such as include or adverb introductions like such as. For some cases, where the items in the list are

clausal (Ogunsiji & Aluya, 2022).

Ahmed (2022:6794) opines that Critical Stylistics is an approach to language that combines input from stylistics and critical discourse analysis. Jeffries (2010) states that critical stylistics is a method used to identify thoughts in any text, which in some cases may not be agreed with but cuts across all forms of texts in existence. This branch of linguistics studies considers how language is used by humans to express social meanings through language. It investigates how many thoughts are expressed in a text and is shared in some cases by many texts (Aluya et al., 2019).

The reviewed literature underscores the thematic richness of *Yellow-Yellow* and the applicability of critical stylistics to uncover textual meanings. As observed, none of the studies discusses how enumeration is used with exemplification to indicate special stylistic effects. Consequently, this study uniquely investigates the interplay of enumeration and exemplification as stylistic devices in Agary's work, contributing a new dimension to the analysis of the novel.

Methodology

The study is qualitative in nature and depends both on primary and secondary sources. The articles reviewed and consulted constitute the secondary data while the excerpts analysed from *Yellow-Yellow* form the primary data. 7 excerpts were extracted from *Yellow-Yellow* by Kaine Agary and subjected to analysis using the critical stylistics theory. The focus was on the enumerating and exemplifying tools. To analyse the data, each excerpt was presented and analysed using the theory. A discussion of the data follows using the framework to enable the conclusion.

Theoretical Framework

This study approaches the *text Yellow-Yellow* from the perspective of critical stylistics theory propounded by Jeffries (2010). According to Jeffries (2010), CS is that model of stylistic analysis which combines three broad areas of language studies namely Critical linguistics, Functional linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis as it examines texts to uncover hidden Ideologies and meanings.

Critical Stylistics offers a set of analytical tools that are useful for the analysis of textual ideas. The tools include the following: (a) Naming

and describing (b) representing actions, states, and events (c) equating and contrasting (d) exemplifying and listing (e) prioritising (f) implying and assuming (g) Negating (h) speculating (i) presenting the speech and thought of other participants and (j) Representing time, space, and society (Jeffries, 2009; Aluya & Ochulor, 2024, p.9). This study, however, concentrates on the use of exemplifying and enumerating for its analysis.

Olaluwoye (2015) states that Enumerating and exemplifying are critical stylistic tools that involves classification of things and their examples which involves making a long list of the members of a group. Aluya & Ochulor (2024:16) state that exemplifying and enumerating are very similar and could be difficult to differentiate. While exemplifying is introduced by textual markers like for example, for instance, to exemplify etc., enumerating lists all members of a category. The choice of enumeration and exemplification is made in agreement with the focus of the study and is useful to reveal how such is used to create special stylistic effects.

Analysis and Discussion

Enumerating and exemplifying are two terms that are close to each other and are both used in stylistics as tools for describing things in the society. Rawian et al (2024:92) state that Exemplifying and enumerating serve as a rhetorical tool which embeds a wide range of meanings achieved by listing to indicate category members without aiming for understanding them. The extracts from the text can be analysed as follows using enumeration and exemplification:

Excerpt 1...Coupled with mismanagement, the country experienced untold corruption, Hunger, hardship and unimaginable poverty amidst plenty of wealth which has remained persistent till date. (p. 11)

Excerpt one speaks of the challenges faced by oil rich communities. A list of the problems is made and the list is preceded by the cause of the problems. As observed, the critical Stylistic tool of enumerating is employed by Kaine Agary here. As Aluya & Ochulor (2024:16) posit, enumerating lists members of a category and is not introduced

by textual markers. Though there is a list of problems namely untold corruption, Hunger, hardship and unimaginable poverty, they are not introduced by any verbs or other categories of textual markers. The list enumerated refer to the consequences of corruption as mentioned in the preceding group of words. Agary therefore with the aid of the Critical Stylistics tool of enumerating draws the attention of the readers of Yellow-Yellow to the challenges encountered daily in these oil producing communities.

Excerpt 2: In the bloated language of bureaucratic deference He is now “His Excellency Joseph Koomson, Minister Plerupitentiory, Member of the Presidential Commission, Hero of Socialist Labor. He now lives in one brasher residential estates that previously accommodated the envied colonizer. (p. 17)

Except two addresses the honour that is enjoyed by some members of these oil rich communities who have helped the oil companies to destroy their ancestry. This point is affirmed by Ojiafor (2020) who states that Niger Deltans contribute to the underdevelopment of their communities in addition to the activities of the oil communities. A list of the titles held by one of such is made. Using the enumeration tool by Jeffries (2010) and introduced by the words he is now, the titles of the man are enumerated as His Excellency Joseph Koomson, Minister Plerupitentiory, Member of the Presidential Commission, Hero of Socialist Labor. Agary uses this tool here to indicate how sons of the soil collaborate with the government and the oil companies to help destroy their communities while they enjoy fame and honour from the oil companies. This tool helps readers to see some of the titles given to people and indeed how big the titles are. It however implies that the titles and their holders do not work in the favour of the communities they are from but rather work against its progress.

Excerpt 3: Their faces, hands, legs, and Feet were yellow, though some parts Had big smudges of black (p 35).

Excerpt three describes the complexion of some persons (women) who use body enhancement creams in order to gain attraction and describes

their appearance. Here, an enumeration of the parts of the body that are affected by the skin enlightening cream is mentioned in the order: faces, hands, legs, and Feet. By this enumeration, Agary aims to communicate the effect of skin enlightening cream and aims at warning people to desist from it. This is indicated by the concluding part of the excerpt which contradicts the introductory part as it says “though some parts Had big smudges of black.” Without using any text markers to introduce the list, Agary simply makes a list of parts of the body. This is in line with Rawian et al's (2024:92) position that Exemplifying and enumerating serve as rhetorical tools for listing to indicate category members without aiming for understanding them. Agary therefore does not explain further to enhance understanding but makes an enumeration to enable deduction of context-based meanings.

Excerpt 4: Flooding and farming, the occupations that had sustained my mother, her mother, and her mother's Mother no longer provided gain (p. 39).

The fourth excerpt makes a list of members of a category. Rawian et al (2024:92) states that Exemplifying and enumerating serve as rhetorical tools for listing to indicate category members without aiming for understanding them. Consequently, “my mother, her mother, and her mother's Mother” are categorized as farmers and people who are sustained solely by farming. In the excerpt, Agary projects how oil exploration activities have destroyed many sources of livelihood. By the list enumerated above, Agary implies that the aged people in the communities are experiencing what could be summed up as hell because of the destruction of their sources of livelihood leaving them without anything to help them meet up with the many needs they have.

Excerpt 5: Our crop of yellows was full of variety, coloured by Filipinos, the Chinese, the British, and the Americans who worked in the Oil sector (p. 74).

The fifth excerpt suggests the origin of the light-skinned girls in oil communities where foreign nationals live. An enumeration of the origins of the various possible fathers of the Yellow children in

these oil communities is listed. As posited by Olaluwoye (2015:88), Critical Stylistics brings together the main general functions performed by a text in representing reality, considering the level of existence at which texts organize human experiences of the world we live in. Consequently, Agary has through enumeration made a representation of reality by projecting that the crop of light skinned children in these communities are children whose fathers are Filipinos, the Chinese, the British, and the Americans. This implies the vulnerability of women in oil rich communities as the fathers of the children abandon them, leaving without a notice.

Excerpt 6: There were more and more of my kind, “African profits”, “born troways”, ashawo picking, father unknown (p. 171)

Excerpt six projects the discrimination that children of the list in excerpt 5 pass through in the oil rich communities. The excerpt enumerates the discriminatory words that are used on such children such as “African profits”, “born troways”, ashawo picking, and father unknown. Olaluwoye (2015:88) states that Critical Stylistics is a stylistic method used for linguistic analysis that is concerned with how social meanings are expressed through language. As a result, Agary expresses some social meanings which majorly are discriminatory as observed by the words. Agary, through the enumeration tool here reemphasizes the point in excerpt four which implies that foreign nationals abandon women they have affairs with, even when the women are pregnant hence, the names listed above which suggest that a child is not known with a father.

Excerpt 7: They stole, blackmailed, and vandalized for the progress..... (p. 154)

Excerpt seven enumerates the activities of hoodlums or notorious natives of the oil communities. The activities which categorize them as negative. Rawian et al (2024:92) state that Exemplifying and enumerating serve as rhetorical tools for listing to indicate category members without aiming for understanding them. This implies that by enumerating that they stole, blackmailed, and vandalized, they have been categorized as hoodlums or bandits. This also implies that oil exploration is not a peaceful

venture always as oil workers face challenges poised by bandits (Edem & Aluya, 2023). Agary therefore projects the fact that bandits always disrupt the peace of oil rich communities and that of oil workers.

Conclusion

This study has examined Select excerpts from Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. The study concentrated on the use of enumeration and exemplification as critical stylistic tools for analysis. In the study, Agary uses majorly the enumeration tool in his style of writing and neglects the exemplification tool. Through the use of the enumeration tool, Agary presents from a critical perspective issues that affect humanity and the society humans live in. An enumeration of the bane corruption is done in excerpt one and its

resultant consequences. Agary also enumerates how some illustrious sons help the outer world to destroy their ancestry, how some women change their skin colours with the use of creams to meet up with some standards, the destruction of sources of livelihood, vulnerability of the women of these communities and its effect as well as the obstruction of activities by hoodlums. Consequently, Critical Stylistics is useful in helping to reflect the issues inherent in the society and assessing them. Societal realities therefore is captured by different authors using different styles and Critical Stylistics enables a great deal of understanding of the texts hence, the need for an understanding of Critical Stylistics and its analytical tools.

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EQUATING AND CONTRASTING AS CRITICAL STYLISTIC DEVICES IN HELON HABILO'S *OIL ON WATER*

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Abstract

Equating and contrasting are critical stylistic tools for an author to portray various world perspectives. This paper examines equating and contrasting as critical stylistic devices in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*. Using Lesley Jefferies's (2009) Critical Stylistic Model and a qualitative textual design, the study examines extracts from the novel to demonstrate how equating and contrasting have been used to project the theme of environmental pollution in Niger. The study analyzes and brings to the fore how both devices have been used to simultaneously portray the psychological anxieties of characters and the polluted environment while contrasting the experiences of social groups and their perspectives in the story. Through these devices, Helon Habila offers a variety of narratives that explicate the socio-political and environmental challenges of the Niger Delta area of Nigeria.

Keywords: Contrasting, degradation, environment, equating, Helon Habila

Introduction

Habila's novel, *Oil on Water*, has the thematic preoccupation of the devastating effects of environmental pollution in the Niger Delta, the neglect of the people by the authorities concerned as a result of corruption in Nigeria, and the resultant social unrest in the region. He portrays the people's plights and how literature and the media create public awareness of issues threatening man and society, aimed at proffering solutions (Abiani-menang, 2017; Edem & Aluya, 2019). The Niger Delta region has been plagued by myriads of socio-political challenges that were precipitated by the politics of black gold and environmental degradation occasioned by the exploration of petrochemical products. Environmental activists and eco-critics have lent their voices through arts and other media against the degradation of the environment (Amuller, 2014; Aluya & Uduma, 2024). To convey their perspectives and ideological beliefs in literature, writers of literary works deploy various language options. Adebayo (2019) asserts that creative writers struggle to devise language patterns to convey their vision.

Also, Jeffries (2010) asserts that Critical Stylistics is used to assemble a text's main general

function in representing realities (p.14). She adds that it includes numerous tools that are thought to be more than anything else in CDA. The model uses these various techniques to demonstrate the relationship between language, power, and ideology (Evans & Schuller, 2015; Edem & Aluya, 2023). These tools include naming and describing, representing actions/events/states, equating, exemplifying and enumerating, prioritising, implying and assuming, negating, hypothesising, and presenting others' speech and thought. This study targets the equating mentioned here, which encompasses contrasting, which Helon Habila incorporates to construct meaning in the text (Aluya & Ochulor, 2024).

Furthermore, the use of Equating and Contrasting by Helon Habila aids the presentation of thoughts with a coherent language pattern. According to Adagboyin and Aluya (2017), "A text is coherent when its pieces are connected and meaningful to the reader. Cohesion happens when the interpretation of one item is dependent on another". (pg4). With the use of equating and contrasting, Habila patterns are narratives balancing contrasting linguistic features, which highlights ideas and gives the reader a mental picture of the situation in the Niger Delta. The title

of the novel itself is a contrast that explicates, on the one hand, the relationship between the inhabitants of the Niger Delta and the federal government and, on the other, the oil industries and citizens of the region. While the novel *Oil on Water* can be regarded as successful, given the expressed views of the author regarding the ecological challenges faced by the Niger Delta inhabitants, the novel also reveals his use of equating and contrasting as a stylistic device to expose the horrid state of affairs in the Niger Delta region (Albert et al., 2018). Equating and contrasting are two critical stylistic devices used in meaning construction to create subtle differences and coated connotations in language. In Helon Habila's novel, *Oil on Water*, the use of these devices to explicate the thematic preoccupation of the novel and ease the reader's understanding of the socio-political and environmental challenges highlighted in the novel (Ogunsiji & Aluya, 2022). This study seeks to explore the author's application of equating and contrasting as devices to expose the severity of the conditions in the region as well as examines and explicates how Helon Habila deploys "Equating and Contrasting" as critical stylistics devices to construct meaning in *Oil on Water*.

Statement of the Problem

The success of the struggle of the people of the Niger Delta against decades of exploitation and the degradation of its environment through oil spillage and military attacks that have pushed many to become refugees in their land is largely dependent on the ability to expose the atrocities committed by the federal government and the oil industries to the larger world (Amuller, 2014; Abiani-meaning, 2017). Consequently, while applying the right language and communication tools is critical in coaching or capturing events in this endeavour, the meaning constructed can make or mar the entire effort of the agitations. Aluya & Ocheme (2024) explore the relationship between language and its environment, with particular emphasis on the role of language in ecological deterioration and the social evil accompanying it. This paper seeks to explicate the use of equating and contrasting as a viable critical stylistic device used by Helon Habila in the construction of meaning in his novel *Oil on Water*,

which dwells on the struggle of the Niger Delta people to reclaim their homeland and their right to a life of dignity.

Literature Review

Stylistics is the study of the language of literature, which employs various tools for linguistic analysis. It focuses on analysing language in literary texts to explicate how meaning is constructed. According to Leech & Short (2007), Stylistics bridges the gap between linguistic form and literary meaning, creating varying shapes of understanding of a text. In this context, equating and contrasting are basic tools for highlighting similarities and differences, which helps the readers to draw their opinions and appreciation. Ogunsiji & Aluya (2022) observe that the practice has become the concern of critical stylistics where social and other life traditions are to be reflected in texts and how to uncover the textual content through linguistic techniques exploited by a text producer. Adagbonyin & Aluya (2017) posit that a text projects a set of ideas, beliefs, and opinions, which are considered to be merely forming a group of ideational patterns from which the text is organised. The text is organised if such content issues are presented in a patterned format. In *Oil on Water*, Habila presents his thoughts in a structured format using equating and contrasting as devices to draw responses from the reader by influencing his thoughts and actions. Previous studies on Helon Habila's *Oil and Water* have been focused on the devastation of the landscape, the themes of environmental degradation, political corruption, exploitation, and human cost of oil exploration with little regard to the stylistic techniques used by Helon Habila employed to construct these themes in his novel (Edem & Aluya, 2023). However, this study seeks to cover that gap by examining how equating and contrasting are deployed to shape the development of the account while enhancing the reader's understanding of the sequences and events in the story.

Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on Critical Stylistics as a theory that embraces linguistic analysis with critical theory to explain how writers in their texts construct meaning within a given socio-cultural context. Jeffries (2010) argues that stylistic

analysis should not only describe the linguistic features of a text but also examine how the features contribute to the text's ideological positioning. With regards to Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*, equating and contrasting will be used to analyze the means through which the author navigates issues of identity, environmental degradation, power, corruption, exploitation, oppression, injustice and resistance (Aluya & Ochulor, 2024).

Methodology

The methodology for this study is qualitative and interpretive, which analyzes data collected from both primary and secondary sources. The methodology enables an efficient analysis of the text, especially with regard to human experiences within a social context. It is also imperative and effective in analyzing data from previous eco-critical researchers.

Equating and Contrasting as Critical Stylistics Devices

As earlier mentioned, equating and contrasting are used in literature to analyze and understand complex ideas and concepts embedded in a text. Bloom (1998) corroborates this assertion when he states that equating is a powerful tool for the revealing of hidden connections and meanings in text. Aluya & Ochulor (2024) also agreed that equating allows readers to identify patterns and relationships between seemingly disparate elements. While contrasting highlights the tensions and contradiction within and between texts, revealing nuanced insights, (Barthes, 1977). According to Kristeva, (1980) by contrasting, authors can subvert expectations, and create complex, thought provoking narratives. Equating and contrasting are therefore very important tools for critical stylistics analysis to convey the author's vision in a work of art.

Equating as a Critical Stylistic Device in Habila's *Oil on Water*

The stylistic device, equating, deals with similarities between different elements. In Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*, the contaminated waters of the Niger Delta are often equated with the moral decay of those who exploit the region's resources. This represents the equating of the physical environment with the characters' emotional states and draws a parallel between the devastated, polluted, decaying ecosystem and the

psychological unrest experienced by the protagonists. This equating emphasizes the interconnectivity between the external environment and the cognitive and emotional condition of the region's inhabitants, insinuating that the degradation of one lead to the debilitation of the other. Furthermore, Habila emphasizes the common experience of suffering at all strata of society and circles within the region, highlighting the universal impact of the oil exploration conflict. Equating as used here fosters a sense of solidarity among the oppressed, villagers, militants and journalists, with a foregrounding effect on the reach or widespread nature of the crises. Perhaps even the soldiers are not left out as their lives and wellbeing are not guaranteed as they are also in danger from the impact of war and environmental pollution.

Contrasting as a Critical Stylistic Device In Habila's *Oil on Water*

Contrasting focuses on the difference between the elements, often to emphasise conflict or tension. Habila utilises contrast to highlight the significant gap between the living conditions of the oil company employees or executives and the surrounding host communities. The opulent lifestyles of the oil workers are contrasted with the abject poverty and squalor of the villagers, accentuating the circumstantial social and economic disparities inflicted and perpetuated by the oil industries. Similarly, Habila contrasts the celebrated and much-touted image of Nigeria as a wealthy modern nation with the stark reality of its environment and human exploitation. In this situation, its citizens are compelled to live in dehumanizing conditions. This contrast is an interrogation of the propaganda by the government and oil companies to keep the rest of the world blindfolded about the deplorable human conditions in the Niger Delta. It exposes the inherent injustices and decay that the propaganda seeks to cover.

Also, different characters' perspectives are contrasted within the novel. As a strategy, Habila contrasts the perspective of the Major, whose professional perspective and decorum change after the attack on his daughter, as captured in this excerpt.

"They say he became like this after his daughter

was raped". (Chpt 4. E Version). Additionally, it contrasts the change in perspective of Salomon, the driver who originally kidnapped Isabel, Floode's wife, but later changed his perspective and orchestrated her escape, pitching his tent on the side of the law as explained in the text (Chpt 18. E Version). Furthermore, Habila contrasts the perspective of the journalists who, on arrival, approached their tasks with detachment and professionalism. However, their experience in the Niger Delta gradually erodes this pattern, forcing them to confront the harsh realities experienced by the villagers. This contrast between professionalism and personal involvement aptly captures and interrogates the ethical responsibilities of those who document the harsh experiences of citizens of the Niger Delta. Equating and contrasting in Habilas *Oil and Water* shows how effective the tools are in meaning construction. First, it gives an insight into the multi-layered understanding of the things in the novel. The equating of human experience with the environment shows the inextricable links between ecological and social schemes, pointing to the inevitability that the destruction of one lead to the destruction of the other. Similarly, contrasting the injustices and progressive propaganda employed

by the government and the oil companies serves to interrogate the purported development often used as a veil to cover the underlying exploitation in the region. Through the use of equating and contrasting, Habila not only highlights the physical and emotional terrain of the Niger Delta but explores the ethical and political issues that characterise the exploitation of natural resources. This catalysis, unveils, and enhances the reader's understanding of the connection between the personal and political, the local and the global, and helps him fully grasp the experiences, challenges and complicated nature of issues in the terrain.

Conclusion

The use of equating and contrasting in the construction of meaning in Helon Habilas's *Oil on Water* attests to the potency of the devices as critical tools of stylistics. Their impact in drawing parallels between environment and human experiences and calling attention to the contrast between social groups and their perspectives simultaneously questions the exploitation and corruption bedevilling the Niger Delta. It engages the reader and causes him to contemplate the challenges and issues in the region. The uses of the devices thus serve as an effective tool for constructing meaning in the novel.

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PRIORITISING AS A CRITICAL STYLISTIC TOOL IN HELON HABILA'S *OIL ON WATER*

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Abstract

This research looks at the use of prioritisation as a critical stylistic tool in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*. The research aims to analyse how specific elements within the text are prioritised by Habila to strengthen the ideological dimensions of his narrative, heighten emotional impact, and strengthen topical ideas. The research is qualitative in nature, using Lesley Jefferies (2010) Critical Stylistics Models but focussing only on prioritisation. Ten (10) extracts were selected from the text to demonstrate how this critical stylistic tool has been put into use in the text. The findings show that Habila's stylistic choices strongly influence the narrative structure and thematic concerns, offering a nuanced understanding of character development and plot dynamics. The study further reveals that prioritisation in *Oil on Water* sets out to foreground key events and character experiences, create urgency, and examine the differences between expected and actual outcomes. The data analysis shows that Habila employs prioritisation to emphasise notable narrative moments. This technique by Habila also focusses on the emotional and physical states of characters. The study contributes to the broader field of literary criticism by demonstrating how prioritisation functions as a key stylistic tool in contemporary African fiction.

Keywords: Critical stylistics, prioritisation, *Oil on Water*, Helon Habila

Introduction

Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* has garnered significant scholarly attention for its exploration of environmental degradation, political corruption, and the human cost of oil exploitation in the Niger Delta. Researchers have extensively analysed the novel's themes of displacement, ecological devastation, and the socio-political turmoil that shapes the lives of its characters. Contributions to the literature have focused on the novel's portrayal of conflict, the environment, and its critique of postcolonial governance. Scholars such as Awe (2018) and Okoye (2020, p. 57) have explored Habila's narrative techniques and ideological underpinnings.

Others have done linguistic study like Edokpayi (2019, p.287) and Miller (2017, p. 413), while Adénonmi and Koutchadé (2021, p. 370) did a pragmatic perspective study of the text. Scholars have undertaken myriads of research on the text. However, research focusing on prioritisation as a critical stylistic tool for shaping the novel's ideology appears to be very scanty. While existing

research focusses on the importance of Habila's stylistic choices, the role that prioritisation plays in emphasising key narrative situations, reader interpretation, and forging thematic issues has been largely overlooked. This is what this paper seeks to fill by portraying how Habila employs prioritisation to frame ideologies and influence narratives in *Oil on Water*.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the significant scholarly attention *Oil on Water* by Helon Habila has received, particularly for its treatment of environmental degradation, human rights abuses, and political corruption in the Niger Delta, there remains a gap in understanding how prioritisation as a specific stylistic device contributes to the construction of these themes. Previous research has explored the novel's thematic content, with scholars like Egya (2016) examining the representation of ecological issues and Amoko (2018) analysing its postcolonial narrative techniques.

Moreover, researchers such as Nwagbara (2017) and Ouma (2015) have investigated the

portrayal of violence and its effects on the Niger Delta populace. However, much of this scholarship has focused on thematic and sociopolitical aspects, with limited attention to the intricacies of Habila's narrative techniques.

While scholars like Eze (2019) and Okuyade (2014) have analysed the broader use of literary devices in African eco-fiction, few studies have specifically examined the role of prioritisation in guiding narrative focus and shaping the reader's ideological engagement. This gap in knowing how prioritisation in *Oil on Water* explicates critical moments, shapes character perception, and touches themes such as environmental devastation and political neglect.

This study tackles the desire for a deeper look at how Habila uses prioritisation to highlight crucial events, character experiences, and themes in *Oil on Water*. While previous research has touched on the novel's broader use of stylistic elements, there has been little in-depth investigation of how prioritisation relates, particularly to the establishment of narrative focus and ideological framing. This omission jeopardises a thorough understanding of Habila's stylistic method and its impact on the novel's thematic and ideological aspects.

By filling this gap, the study hopes to give a detailed analysis of prioritisation in Habila's work, examining how this strategy influences the reader's involvement with the story and increases the text's ideological and emotional relevance. This research will help to enhance understanding of Habila's text and the significance of critical stylistics in contemporary African fiction.

Literature Review

Many researchers and scholars have written many meaningful contributions on *Oil on Water* (2010) by Helon Habila since it was published, from themes to narrative techniques to style. Scholars have explored how the literary text explicates environmental challenges, socio-economic issues, and political corruption in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This review tracks the publications from the evolution of the text, particularly focusing on prioritisation.

Early studies on *Oil on Water* initially were concerned with thematic discussion. Egeya (2016, pp. 1-12) provided one of the foundational

explorations of how Habila reflects ecological degradation and the human costs of oil exploitation. Egeya emphasised the novel's depiction of environmental damage, showing how Habila creates an urgent narrative surrounding the struggle of marginalised communities against large oil corporations.

Similarly, Amoko (2018, pp. 55–70) examined the postcolonial dynamics in the novel, analysing the portrayal of Western interests and global oil corporations' exploitation of Nigerian resources. Amoko also discussed how the narrative structure reflects the fractured and disjointed realities experienced by the novel's characters. These early studies were valuable in laying the foundation for understanding the socio-political landscape of the Niger Delta as depicted in Habila's work, but they primarily focused on content rather than narrative style.

Subsequently, scholars started to look at social issues in the text. Nwagbara (2017, pp. 307–321) examined how the text projected systemic violence and corruption in Nigeria and how these forces influenced the lives of the Niger Delta communities and their inhabitants. According to Nwagbara, violence was not only a reflection of external oppression but was also an outcome of internal political struggles.

Ouma (2015, pp. 160–172), like Nwagbara (2017, pp. 307–321), focused on the socio-political criticism in *Oil on Water*; however, her focus was on how Habila creates sophisticated characters who traverse the difficult environment. Ouma argued that *Oil on Water* portrays the complex nature of victimhood and conspiracy in a corrupt society, showing how individuals are either contributing towards the systems or resisting the systems of exploitation.

More recent studies began to shift toward examining the novel's stylistic choices. Okuyade (2014, pp. 113–130) focused on Habila's narrative technique, noting how his fragmented storytelling reflects the chaotic socio-political environment. Okuyade argued that Habila's disjointed narrative structure mirrors the unpredictability of life in the Niger Delta, where the lines between survival and death, loyalty and betrayal, were blur.

Eze (2019, pp. 54-63) expanded on this by exploring the narrative and linguistic devices

Habila uses to represent power dynamics. Eze examined the role of language in constructing power and agency in the novel, discussing how characters' speech, dialogue, and narrative focus reflect broader socio-political tensions. Eze's work was important in shifting the focus from broader thematic readings to specific stylistic tools used by Habila to craft his narrative.

In the most recent contributions, scholars have applied critical stylistic approaches to *Oil on Water*. Awe (2018, pp. 89-104) for example examined the politics of language and power in the novel, showing how Habila uses specific languages to frame ideology. Awe emphasised how language is not only the means of telling stories but the tool for power and resistance. By examining the connection between language and power, Awe ushered several conversations on the intricate stylistic devices used by Habila to drive his themes.

Okoye (2020, pp. 55-72) improved on this by looking at how critical stylistic tools like naming and describing, negating, equating and contrast, over-lexicalisation, and prioritisation shape the narrative. Okoye argued that Habila's use of prioritisation—focusing on specific moments, characters, or events—guides the reader's perception and reinforces the novel's ideological concerns about exploitation and power dynamics.

Despite these contributions, a notable gap persists in scholarship regarding the detailed analysis of prioritisation as a critical stylistic tool in *Oil on Water*. While earlier studies explored thematic and socio-political aspects, more recent works have examined broader stylistic approaches without thoroughly investigating how prioritisation shapes the reader's experience and the novel's ideological framing.

Scholars like Miller (2017, pp. 412-428) and Awe (2018, pp. 89-104) have provided critical stylistic analyses, but the role of prioritisation specifically remains under-explored. This gap is significant because prioritisation plays a vital role in how key events and themes are emphasised, guiding the reader's interpretation and focussing attention on critical aspects of the narrative.

The present study aims to fill this gap by focusing specifically on prioritisation as a critical

stylistic tool in *Oil on Water*, exploring how Habila uses this technique to construct meaning, guide reader engagement, and emphasize thematic and ideological concerns. By doing so, the research will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of Habila's stylistic choices and how they shape the novel's narrative focus and socio-political critique.

Theoretical Framework

Lesley Jeffries (2010) established Critical Stylistics, which provides a paradigm for evaluating how ideological connotations are inscribed in language choices in literary texts. It expands on the findings of systemic functional linguistics and critical discourse analysis by investigating how specific linguistic and textual elements impact readers' perceptions and lead them to specific ideological conclusions. Among the several instruments of critical stylistics, such as naming, modality, negation, and lexical choices, prioritisation stands out as a particularly effective technique for directing readers' attention to crucial issues within a story (Aluya, 2024).

Critical stylistics, as propounded by Lesley Jeffries (2010), provides a framework for comprehending how ideologies are embedded in words within a literary text. It makes use of insights from systemic functional linguistics and critical discourse analysis by looking at how certain linguistic elements and textual characteristics shape readers' perceptions and ideological acumen. From the several tools of critical stylistics—such as naming, modality, negation, and lexical choices—prioritisation stands out as a strong device for directing readers' focus on key issues within a narrative (Aluya & Ocheme, 2024).

Prioritisation refers to the deliberate foregrounding of certain themes, issues, or narratives over others within a text. It is achieved through various narrative techniques, including repetition, lexical choices, narrative structure, and descriptive emphasis (Aluya & Ocholor, 2024). In Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* (2010), prioritisation is used to place the Niger Delta's environmental degradation at the centre of the narrative. This focus, in turn, relegates individual human stories to a secondary position, emphasising the overwhelming consequences of oil extraction over

personal or political struggles. Through the critical stylistic tool of prioritisation, Habila not only constructs the environmental crisis as the novel's dominant theme but also embeds a critique of global capitalism and neo-colonialism.

Methodology

This research uses a qualitative, interpretive design that is based on close textual analysis, focussing mainly on the stylistic tool of prioritisation in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*. Using critical stylistics as the broader theoretical framework, this study will look at how Habila's stylistic choices determine narrative structure and thematic concerns and how they contribute to the overall ideological position of the novel (Aluya & Uduma, 2024). The analysis will concentrate on identifying patterns of prioritisation through the novel's language, its structure, and its descriptive choices.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this section, ten (10) selected extracts from *Oil on Water* will be analysed with the critical stylistic tool of prioritisation. These extracts have been carefully selected to show how Habila foregrounds key narrative themes. These extracts exploit information using a frontal process by which clausal elements have been placed at the beginning of the sentence and subordination, making the extracts less susceptible to question. Now, let us examine how the following extracts illustrate these.

[1] 'Although we couldn't see any guards in our immediate vicinity, I knew they were there, shadowy, watching, waiting.' (p. 142)

Extract [1] contains one subordinate clause and one main clause. The writer employs prioritisation by exploiting the information structure in this text. A close study of the extract shows the displacement of the main clause. In other words, the subordinate clause has taken the main clause's place. This is in a view to draw readers' attention to focus on the sense of surveillance and the looming, invisible presence of guards, even though they are not physically visible to the characters or the reader. The prioritisation of this unseen threat over the immediate environment or other concerns is achieved through several words such as "shadowy," "watching," and "waiting," which

emphasise the hidden and ominous presence of the guards. These words, which evoke a sense of constant, though invisible, monitoring, are given prominence in the sentence, directing the reader's focus to the invisible but pervasive danger (Ogunsiji & Aluya, 2022). The guards are presented not through direct action but through their implied presence, which is prioritised over any tangible visual details in the scene. Despite not seeing the guards ("we couldn't see any guards"), the narrative prioritises the sense that they are still there, watching. This shifts the focus from what is physically present in the immediate vicinity to what is implicitly present. By emphasising on the unseen, Habila makes the invisible guards the dominant concern, overshadowing the characters' immediate surroundings or emotions. The use of "I knew they were there" suggests an internal certainty and prioritises the psychological experience of surveillance over the literal, physical absence of the guards. The phrase "I knew they were there" signals a high degree of certainty, which reinforces the prioritisation of the guards' presence despite their physical invisibility. This modality shapes the reader's perception of the situation emphasising the inevitability of the surveillance, making it the focal point of the passage.

[2] 'Although he was not confined in any way, he soon realized that he was as much a hostage in the forest as Isabel, and he grew scared.' (p. 155)

In extract [2], the writer focuses on the character's mind, it highlights the mental switch from freedom to being a hostage. The subordinate clause "Although he was not confined in any way" presents the notion of physical freedom, but it is quickly subordinated to the realisation that the character is "as much a hostage" as Isabel. This deliberate contrast switches the attention from the external, physical condition to the internal realisation of hostage. This emphasises how psychological confinement is more significant than the character's physical state. The key moment in the passage is the realisation that "he was as much a hostage in the forest as Isabel." This realisation is prioritised, as it marks a turning point in the character's understanding of his situation. The sentence structure leads the reader from

physical freedom to the mental shift toward fear. The growing fear (“and he grew scared”) is then foregrounded, becoming the primary emotional experience, making it clear that the character’s psychological response to his circumstances overshadows the absence of physical restraint (Aluya, 2016). The writer’s use of “soon realized” shows a strong conviction in the character’s growing awareness of his captivity. This conviction of this realisation is prioritised over the earlier, misleading sense of freedom. This buttresses the imaginary weight of being a hostage, prioritising the internal conflict over any potential external freedom.

[3] ‘Although the Doctor had prepared me for this, and although I had been with Zaq most of last week and seen him ailing and declining daily, I still felt totally disoriented by the news of his death.’ (160)

Extract [3] is a complex sentence, consisting of two subordinate clauses and one main clause. By using prioritisation, Habila succeeds in highlighting the emotional impact of Zaq’s death on Rufus, the narrator. Showing Rufus’ inner confusion and perplexity over the doctor’s initial warnings of his death. The opening clauses (“Although the Doctor had prepared me for this” and “although I had been with Zaq most of last week and seen him ailing and declining daily”) emphasize the logical, rational preparation for Zaq’s death. However, these statements are immediately subordinated to the emotional reaction that follows. “I still felt totally disoriented by the news of his death.” the focus is on how devastated the news of Zaq’s death impacts Rufus. This shows that Habila prioritizes the effect of the news on his emotion over the doctor’s warning, showing that despite the knowledge of his impending death, Rufus does not have the emotional shock absorbers to bear it. The phrase “I still felt totally disoriented” is given narrative prominence, placing the reader’s attention on the character’s emotional and psychological state (Aluya & Ocholor, 2024). The repetition of the word “although” in the opening clauses builds up the expectation that the narrator would be prepared for Zaq’s death, but the emotional disorientation disrupts this expectation. This perplexity and

confusion has been prioritised over the doctor’s earlier prognosis showing that the heart matter often outweighs head knowledge. By stating that Rufus was disoriented, Habila accentuate the intensity of the emotional response. This disorientation is depicted as the dominant experience in the passage, even though the narrator had anticipated Zaq’s death. The shock of the news takes precedence over the long decline and medical prognosis, focusing the reader on the overpowering emotional toll of loss.

[4] ‘because the country was so corrupt, only a few had access to that wealth.’ (80)

[5] ‘because the government doesn’t care, they also don’t care.’ (80)

[6] ‘because they had children and women they’d be forced to stop often.’ (132)

Extracts [4], [5] and [6] are very similar in their structure. They start with the subordinate conjunction because. The writer exploits the information structure in these extracts, these extracts show that the main clauses have been displaced when thoroughly examined. By doing this, the writer gives prominence to the message encoded through the subordinate clause. In extract [4], Habila uses prioritisation to emphasise the systemic corruption in Nigeria, foregrounding its role in creating extreme inequality. The narrative prioritises the problem of corruption over the resulting unequal distribution of wealth. This structural decision subordinates the unequal distribution of wealth to the larger problem of systemic corruption. While the unequal access to wealth is significant, Habila’s prioritisation ensures that the reader perceives it as an effect rather than the primary issue. The wealth inequality is therefore secondary, and the corruption is placed at the centre of the narrative’s critique.

In the fifth [5] extract, Habila uses prioritisation to emphasise the cause-and-effect relationship between government neglect and the people’s corresponding lack of concern. The narrative structure foregrounds the government’s apathy as the root of societal indifference. This construction subordinates the people’s lack of concern to the government’s apathy, making the

reader understand that the government's failure to care precedes and shapes the behaviour of the citizens. The people's indifference is secondary, presented as a response rather than a primary issue.

In this extract [6], Habila employs the use of prioritisation to emphasise the impact of having children and women as the reason for the frequent stops, thereby highlighting the influence of the weaker individuals on the militants' decisions to travel or not to travel. The phrase "because they had children and women" has been placed at the beginning of the sentence, placing prominence on children and women as the primary factor influencing the circumstances of their movement. By prioritising women and children, Habila makes the reader understand value of children and women as the main reason for the frequent stops and not the other factors.

[7] 'After all, he had once been one of them.' (69)

In extract [7] "After all, he had once been one of them," the author uses prioritisation to show Zaq's relationship with the Lagos reporters in the room with Zaq who was shaking profusely and how this affinity influences the reader's understanding of his current situation. The phrase "he had once been one of them" is placed at the end of the sentence, creating a sense of emphasis and revelation. This arrangement of the sentence prioritises the Zaq's previous association with the Lagos reporters, highlighting its significance to the current context. The structure of the sentence however, implies that the Zaq's current status is secondary to his past connection with them. Habila uses prioritisation to emphasize the protagonist's previous affiliation with a group, highlighting its importance in understanding his current situation. This focus on past identity influences the reader's interpretation of the protagonist's present behaviour and underscores the significance of historical connections in shaping current realities.

[8] 'This morning two Reuters reporters, after reading my story, had come to the newsroom to chat with me.' (67)

Extract [8] shows how Habila made use of prioritisation to foreground the significance of the Rufus' report and how it gained recognition by other media people. The clause "after reading my

story" is subordinated within the sentence, while the action of the Reuters reporters arriving at the newsroom is emphasised. This prioritisation places emphasis on the recognition of the protagonist's efforts by an international media organization, subtly highlighting the global relevance of the local crisis. The focus on the reporters' visit prioritises their acknowledgment of the narrator's reporting, suggesting that the narrator's voice has gained a level of significance beyond the local environment. This reflects the thematic concern of Oil on Water—the intersection of local struggles with global attention, thus emphasising the protagonist's role in bringing awareness to the underrepresented issues of the Niger Delta. The prioritisation draws the reader's attention away from the act of writing and onto the broader consequences of the protagonist's work, underscoring the role of journalism in shedding light on the socio-political crises depicted in the novel.

[9] 'that greedy, focused exertion, he kicked off the blanket and released a long, blissful sigh.'
(76)

Habila in extract [9] uses prioritisation to highlight the narrator's sigh of relief as the central moment in the extract. The description "that greedy, focused exertion" is positioned at the beginning of the sentence, providing context for the sigh. While the exertion is important for understanding the background of the sigh, it is subordinated to the emotional impact of the sigh itself. The adjectives "greedy" and "focussed" describe the exertion in a way that emphasises its intensity and concentration. However, these descriptors are used to set up the emotional payoff, which is the "blissful sigh." By prioritising the sigh, Habila makes it clear that the emotional and physical release is the ultimate outcome of the exertion, giving it greater narrative weight.

[10] 'After a year in a UK prison he was deported back to Nigeria, where he was set free after serving only a month in jail. And after his jail term, he disappeared from Lagos' (84)

Extract [10] is compound-complex sentence. Here Helon Habila makes use of prioritisation to highlight the sequence of significant events and

their impact. The clause, “he disappeared from Lagos,” is intentionally placed at the end of the extract, prioritising it as the most important outcome and the significant narrative event. And by making deportation and brief jail term background details, Habila makes sure that the reader’s attention is on the disappearance- the impactful aspect of the narrative. The mention of serving only a month in jail after a year in a UK prison contrasts with the expected duration of incarceration, highlighting the brevity of the imprisonment in Nigeria. This contrast sets up the context for the disappearance, making it seem even more abrupt and significant by comparison.

Conclusion

Helon Habila’s use of prioritisation in *Oil on Water* serves as a critical stylistic tool that shapes narrative focus, emotional impact, and reader

interpretation. By strategically emphasising certain events, emotions, and actions, Habila directs the reader’s attention to key elements that define the narrative’s progression and thematic depth. The findings indicate that prioritisation is employed to foreground pivotal moments and emotional states, creating a powerful and focused storytelling technique. The method helps convey urgency, highlight significant character experiences, and underscore the dramatic elements of the narrative. The analysis of prioritisation in Habila’s work reveals its importance in constructing ideological and emotional landscapes within the novel. The approach enhances the reader’s engagement with the narrative by making certain elements stand out as crucial to understanding the characters’ experiences and the unfolding drama.

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**PARENTALITE AFRICAINE DANS LES ROMANS SELECTIONNES D'ALAIN
MABANCKOU, DE FATOU DIOME ET DE RAMONU SANUSI**

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Résumé

Le terme « parentalité africaine dans les romans sélectionnés d'Alain Mabanckou, de Fatou Diome et de Ramonu Sanusi », consiste le guide auquel nous avons appris la valeur et l'importance de nos parents. Ce travail nous rejoint ensemble avec la société dans laquelle nous appartenons pour exprimer en une seule voix que la réussite ou l'échec d'un enfant est due à l'effort ou à la négligence de ses parents. C'est dire leur inhabilité de conduire leurs enfants vers la réussite. Nous avons identifié les dimensions sur lesquelles l'incapacité parentale compromet la vie sociale en Afrique. Cette recherche met tout d'abord en lumière les impacts de la parentalité sur la société africaine. Ensuite, elle aborde les conséquences de l'échec parental, qui constituent les objectifs principaux de notre communication. Cette étude adopte une approche psychanalytique pour analyser les réflexions des individus affectés par l'incapacité parentale, ainsi que les comportements associés dans le cadre romanesque exploré. Elle met en lumière l'importance pour les parents de reconnaître l'impact de leurs choix éducatifs sur le développement de leurs enfants. En ce sens, elle les encourage à adopter des pratiques parentales adaptées pour promouvoir la réussite des enfants africains, tout en contribuant à une société plus équilibrée. Cette étude est pratiquement un devoir humanitaire. Elle présente son importance en rassurant que tous les parents africains s'attachent au devoir parental afin d'éviter cette nuance sociale qu'elle soulève comme la problématique étant les effets de la délinquance juvénile tels que : la déscolarisation, l'agression, le banditisme, l'immigration, la prostitution, le vol, l'abus de la drogue et ainsi de suite pour une bonne société.

Mots clés : incapacité, parentalité, psychanalytique, romans, sélectionnés

Introduction

La société africaine est aujourd'hui remplie de l'immoralité, de la violence et de la désobéissance parmi tant d'autres maux sociaux. Confirmant la violence, nous l'évoquons à travers l'opinion dans laquelle Obi et Nanakaan montrent ses différents actes : « pour ce faire, il devient pickpocket, voleur à mains armées, ravisseur et assassin » (135). Ce constat tel le font aussi Nanakaan et Akase : « De ce fait, la production littéraire de cette génération se reconnaît par : la dénonciation des injustices, des inégalités, de la démagogie, de la tyrannie, du gaspillage et de bien d'autres fléaux » (137) à travers le comportement odieux des Africains

nous amène dans cette critique à trouver la voie que parvienne ce malheur social.

Faisant cette étude, nous avons retenu que ce malaise en étude, c'est dire l'échec parental est due à la défaillance dans la parentalité. La procréation, l'orphelinage et la pauvreté parmi tant d'autres fléaux dans la parentalité constituent les facteurs d'incapacité parentale étant un déni social qui nuit la société africaine. Alors, cette situation en Afrique nous permet, dans cette critique, de présenter notre problématique à travers la question de la mauvaise parentalité, qui constitue un facteur incitant à examiner l'étude de Kanumuangi Bukola Olayinka et Ajayi Samson Abiola. Notre

question de recherche suscite une réflexion sur l'opinion exprimée par ces deux critiques, qui interrogent : « si les parents exercent encore leurs obligations parentales envers leurs enfants? » (66). En établissant une relation complète entre l'étude des critiques choisies et la nôtre, nous proposons que ce travail s'articule autour de la question suivante : l'incapacité parentale constitue-t-elle un déni social en Afrique ? La réflexion de nos érudits, ainsi que la nôtre, nous guide à proposer des objectifs permettant d'étudier la parentalité, les facteurs influençant l'incapacité parentale, ainsi que la situation des enfants vivant dans ces foyers. Cela vise à offrir des solutions à ce problème, qui constitue le cœur de ce travail.

Dans cet article, Olayinka et Abiola dévoilent que les enfants empêchés de la bonne parentalité défont de la potentialité. Cette anomalie transfère ces enfants aux troubles sociaux en Afrique tels les inscrivent Olayinka et Abiola à partir de cette connaissance de Lamboy Guillemont : « l'échec dans la responsabilité parentale peut rendre l'enfant incompetent de bon caractère dont la conséquence dans société peut être la délinquance juvénile et le désordre des adultes » (69). L'intelligence de cet article nous instruit que l'échec d'un enfant provient de la faiblesse de ses parents.

Dans notre étude rétrospective sur la critique de Olayinka et Abiola dans « L'influence des modes de parentalité sur les comportements des enfants à l'âge avancé dans la société africaine : une revue psychologique du roman *African Psycho* d'Alain Mabanckou », nous observons que ces auteurs étudient l'échec parental étant le corpus dans lequel ils présentent la défaillance associée à ce fléau à travers *African Psycho* sans éveiller les facteurs responsables de cette dénégation affectant l'enfant africain telle nous croyons la retracer à travers *Bleu-Blanc-Rouge*, *Celles qui attendent* et *Un nègre a violé une blonde à Dallas*. Cette connaissance montre que cette présente recherche est mise au point pour éclairer certains aspects de l'étude de Olayinka et Abiola pour s'enrichir dans ce domaine de critique. Disons que ce travail met à l'honneur la parentalité et offre une connaissance sur les facteurs qui influencent le malaise dans la

parentalité en Afrique. En faisant cette analyse, l'étude révèle qu'en Afrique, certains parents sont incapables de soutenir leurs enfants comme il se doit, en assumant pleinement les besoins de ceux-ci. Cet échec conduit certains enfants africains à mener une vie misérable, depuis l'adolescence jusqu'à la vieillesse. En Afrique, ce système engendre des souffrances liées à des enjeux tels que la déscolarisation, le chômage, la mendicité, l'infériorité, l'exploitation, la soumission, l'immigration, la traite humaine, la solitude, la discrimination, l'apatridie, le banditisme et l'agression. Par conséquent, cette étude cherche à explorer comment cette condition affecte l'humanité.

La parentalité se définit comme l'ensemble des rôles et responsabilités exercés par les parents au sein du cadre familial. En Afrique, ce mode parental peut être transmis de manière positive ou négative, comme l'indiquent Mabanckou, Diome et Sanusi. Cette dynamique retient notre attention sur le style parental en Afrique. Alors, l'incapacité parentale désigne la défaillance dans l'exercice de la parentalité, autrement dit, les lacunes dans les responsabilités parentales. C'est pourquoi, dans cette analyse, nous avons choisi d'examiner en premier lieu la parentalité. Notre ouvrage présente la parentalité comme l'ensemble des traits et des comportements qu'un parent doit assumer. D'après Olayinka et Abiola, la parentalité est un domaine d'étude essentiel pour comprendre le développement des enfants, comme ils l'expriment dans cette citation : « Une grande charge incombe aux parents pour guider, contrôler, et inculquer la morale et la vertu à leurs enfants » (67). Ces auteurs considèrent les parents comme un guide : « Une société bien construite commence par des foyers solides, ce qui signifie qu'un foyer honorable doit avoir un bon dirigeant (parent) pour établir l'ordre dans la maison » (67).

Quant à la méthodologie de cette étude, nous adoptons l'approche psychanalytique étant une analyse textuelle portée sur les réalités psychologiques. D'après cette déclaration, cet article souligne la psychanalytique comme une analyse textuelle qui cherche à définir le

comportement étant une expression de sentiment tel l'expriment les personnages du texte.

Cadre théorique

Nanakaan et Akase éclairent que : « la présence des parents dans la vie d'un enfant est primordiale pour son développement physique et psychologique normal » (148). Nous notons à ce propos que l'enfant dont ces parents font le trépas ou abdiquent leurs devoirs parentaux est conféré dans une vie misérable remplie de souci. De ce constat, l'étude souligne la connaissance dans laquelle Olayinka et Abiola présentent la mauvaise parentalité en Afrique. En écrivant : « celles-ci montrent que la mauvaise parentalité rend les enfants troublés psychologiquement » (75). Trouvant nécessaire les pensées de nos critiques, nous comptons explorer l'approche psychanalytique pour examiner les attitudes des personnes représentées dans nos textes en relation avec celles dans la société réelle. Suite à ce choix, cette étude démontre que les facteurs applicables à l'incapacité parentale sont des charges psychologiques. Certes, l'usage de cette approche permet dans cette recherche d'examiner les traits cognitifs et affectifs comme l'explorent les enfants impliqués dans ce trauma dégradant une bonne parentalité dans les romans sélectionnés d'Alain Mabanckou, de Fatou Diome et de Ramonu Sanusi

Parentalité africaine à travers *Celles qui attendent* de Fatou Diome

Dans *Celles qui attendent*, notre écrivaine examine le mode de la parentalité africaine dans deux dimensions à savoir une bonne parentalité et une mauvaise parentalité. Cette dernière fait référent à une horde de notre problématique, noté l'incapacité parentale. Diome nous présente à travers son œuvre en étude que la licence, la pauvreté, la vieillesse, la maladie et le mariage forcé sont des facteurs qui influencent la mauvaise parentalité en Afrique. Cette nuance en étude est inscrite à partir des personnages tels que : Koromâk, Wagane, Bougna, Daba, Arame, Issa et Lamine.

Olayinka et Abiola montrent à travers l'opinion de Maigne que la parentalité est : « ensemble des réaménagements psychiques et affectifs qui permettent de répondre aux besoins de leurs enfants » (67). Cette réaction s'associe à

l'opinion de Diome dans l'extrait dans lequel Bougna soutient que le succès d'un enfant est une obligation parentale telle la considère notre personnage dans sa commentaire : « Je comprends ta crainte mais quel avenir vois-tu pour nos enfants ici ? » (70). Par ailleurs, nous mettons l'hommage à la parentalité considérant l'opinion dans laquelle Olayinka et Abiola montrent qu'une société bien formée est un résultat d'une bonne parentalité telle qu'ils l'inscrivent dans cet extrait : « le comportement ou la personnalité des gens est une réflexion de leur parentalité. Donc une société bien construite et saine est le résultat de bonnes parentalités qui se manifestent à partir du comportement des gens » (66). La culture de nos critiques nous permet de noter la signification parentale dans l'extrait où notre narratrice souligne l'importance d'une mère explorant le devoir parental. Ce modèle nous amène à exploiter la réflexion dans laquelle la première femme de Wagane trouve que le succès d'un enfant s'aboutit à l'effort des parents tel qu'elle l'informe en éveillant sa joie dans cette expression : « La réussite d'un fils, c'est à cela qu'on reconnaît une bonne mère » (58). Nous associons cette pensée de Diome avec l'opinion de Lamboy et Guillemont comme l'évoquent Olayinka et Abiola : « l'échec dans la responsabilité parentale peut rendre l'enfant incompetent de bon caractère dont la conséquence dans la société peut être la délinquance juvénile et le désordre des adultes » (69) pour montrer que la défaillance dans la parentalité construit une mauvaise société.

D'après cette étude, nous apprenons qu'au-delà de la formation parentale, il y a une autre dimension à retenir, telle la surmonte Diome que la parentalité a un critère de sacrifice comme l'enseigne Bougna lorsqu'elle avertit Arame dans cette expression dans laquelle elle recommande l'effort d'un parent. « Si vraiment nous voulons aider nos fils, nous y arriverons » (70). L'étude nous instruit à travers cette rhétorique de Bougna « Qu'avons-nous de plus précieux que nos fils » (72) qu'elle répond à ce titre « Pour l'instant, nous devons mettre le paquet pour garantir l'avenir de nos fils, le nôtre en dépend » (72) en montrant que chaque enfant

a sa valeur unique vis-à-vis de ses parents. L'opinion de Bougna concernant la parentalité nous fait comprendre qu'en Afrique, certains parents avoir des maries à leurs fils comme l'informe cette femme dans son conseil à son amie Arame. « Tu peut-être remarqué que beaucoup de parents dans notre cas marient leurs fils avant leur départ ? Et, comme tu le sais, mon fils vient de se marier » (91).

Dans cette analyse, nous trouvons que Olayinka et Abiola dépeignent l'apprentissage parental dans l'extrait dans lequel ils réintègrent que : « cette responsabilité bien exercée ressort que l'enfant aura un comportement sain » (67) tel nous le retrace à travers l'attitude de la première femme de Wagane. Faisant ceci, nous notons que la coépouse de Bougna aussi affirme que la réussite des enfants consiste du soutien parental et de l'apprentissage informel tels nous les régrenons dans *Celles qui attendent* à travers l'opinion de cette femme lorsqu'elle sensibilise ses jeunes enfants. « Les enfants dépêchez-vous, ne vous mettez pas en retard ! Si vous voulez réussir comme votre grand frère, vous devez être ponctuels et apprendre sérieusement » (58). Cette forme d'apprentissage comme l'évoque notre écrivaine est une instruction informelle à laquelle elle tente à sensibiliser la société africaine.

Par ailleurs, l'étude inscrit l'importance de la bénédiction des parents en Afrique à travers le vœu comme nous l'observons dans l'extrait, où Arame se lamente du départ de Lamine en montrant l'importance du vœu d'une mère tel qu'elle l'enregistre dans cette ligne : « Partir, pour un si long voyage, sans les vœux de sa mère » (150). Ceci informe que la bénédiction de nos parents est très importante dans notre vie, car leur prière engendre notre réussite et enrichit la personnalité de l'enfant, sa famille et sa société en générale. Il faut noter que ces biens faits des parents pour faire réussir leurs enfants permettent de distinguer certains comportements nocifs comme nous croyons l'étudier à travers la faiblesse des parents dans *Celles qui attendent*.

L'étude éclaire l'incapacité parentale, c'est dire la faiblesse des parents de garnir leurs progénitures en mettant en lumière la condition de Koromâk où nous décrivons l'agression et la

haine. Ce comportement désastreux de cet homme affaibli par la maladie et la vieillesse comme l'exploite Diome « Oui, maman, c'est sans doute à cause de sa maladie [...] Mais pourquoi le défends-tu ? S'est-il jamais montré gentil envers toi ? Euh ! Eh bien, non ! Il t'a toujours détesté, tout comme ton frère d'ailleurs » (128) conduit ses deux fils au combat de la réussite. Faisant ceci, ces fils sont obligés de se débrouiller pour le goût savoureux de la réussite, alors, ils se jettent dans l'atlantique pour la pêche artisanale où le frère de Lamine trouve sa mort précoce comme le pointe la romancière : « son aîné, qui était pêcheur, avait péri trentenaire dans une tempête » (15). Cet événement malheureux de la part de ce moribond est cohérent dans le monde africain où les almageri trouvent les morts accidentés au cours de la mendicité et le hack, c'est dire la vente au bord des grandes rues. Cette perte de nos mineurs, souhaitant leurs succès constitue une dégradation pour cette société du cas de notre étude. Cette mort précoce telle la présente l'écrivaine octroie des effets portant la mauvaise parentalité. Dans cette situation, certains morts abandonnent leurs descendance à ses parentés comme l'inscrit Diome dans cette assertion : « lui laissant une nombreuse descendance sur ces bras » (15). Cette recherche pointe également la faiblesse des parents concernant la vieillesse et la maladie comme une condition conduisant leurs enfants à la souffrance imprévue parce qu'ils sont en mesure de travailler pour nourrir la famille. De ce cas, nous soutenons par ailleurs l'opinion de cette écrivaine concernant l'incapacité parentale dans l'extrait de Bougna lorsqu'elle conseille son amie Arame de faire voyager leurs fils Lamine et Issa. « Et puis, n'oublie pas que ton mari est vieux et malade » (71). La condition affaiblie de Koromâk nous informe que ce type est à présent dépend de Lamine pour vivre. C'est pourquoi il persuade ce gamin dans cette misère, noté l'immigration clandestine. Cette cruauté des parents qui s'intéressent que des gains des enfants est accédée dans la réaction de Koromâk où Diome joint Mabanckou et Sanusi dans cette expression : « Si ton fils ne va pas travailler comme ses pairs, de quoi allons-nous vivre ? De

la mendicité ! Hein ? Il est temps qu'il soit un homme ! Va l'inscrire pour cette prochaine pirogue » (120). Cet envieux manquant son devoir parental trouve le voyage de Lamine en Europe comme un moyen de sa réussite. Davantage, l'étude distingue la pauvreté comme un facteur de la mauvaise parentalité dans l'extrait auquel Bougna présente son plan de l'immigration étant son espoir qu'elle croie se faire lancer son fils Issa et Lamine d'Arame sans considérer les implications de ce voyage. Ainsi notre auteure : « Bougna, sachant que son amie n'était toujours pas prête à la suivre dans son plan, abattit ses meilleures cartes : la pauvreté contre laquelle elle se battait tous les jours, les orphelins de son fils aîné à nourrir, son mari grabataire qui ne lui était plus d'aucun secours » (70). Dans ce cas, cette femme courageuse dépeint la faiblesse de Koromâk, un homme incapable de soutenir ses grands fils après la mort de leur père ayant été son fils aîné.

L'avis de Diome nous convoque à reconnaître que le déclin des parents dans le cadre de fournir le besoin familial pousse leurs enfants dans l'immigration clandestine tel l'écrit la romancière en mettant le point sur Lamine et Issa comme nous pouvons le lire dans cet extrait : « Cet homme, bien qu'il eût perdu tous ses moyens, ne cédait rien de ses privilèges » (33). Cette assertion explique que la condition de Koromâk étant la négligence parentale met en cause le voyage de Lamine malgré les provisions en place par sa mère Arame constitue le malaise dans la parentalité en Afrique. Retenons que le lot familial comme l'insère l'œuvre était trop pour cette femme. Par cette conséquence, nous recevons l'attention de thème de l'oppression des femmes de la part d'Arame.

Ce comportement est tiré de la part de Wagane, lorsque ce monsieur préfère son association avec la famille de sa première femme tel l'introduit Diome dans cet extrait : « Le mari s'était, au fur et à mesure, désintéressé d'elle pour retourner vers la valeur sûre : la première, dont les cinq fils, déjà grands, allaient lui garantir le pain de ses vieux jours » (51). Suite à cette information, nous considérons Wagane comme l'un des pères négligeant leurs responsabilités parentales, mais désirés être riches à travers leurs

enfants. L'enjeu de l'incapacité parentale est captivé par ailleurs dans le roman de Diome à partir des personnages tels que : Lamine dans son éducation et Arame, Bougna, Coumba et Daba dans le mariage forcé ou arrangé. C'est à la négligence parentale que Lamine était détenu parmi les déscolarisés de l'île niodiorienne. Pour élaborer cette situation, notre recherche enseigne que Lamine allait continuer ses études si ses parents l'avaient supporté dans l'établissement privé comme l'acclame Diome.

Malheureusement, après plusieurs échecs au bac, il fut exclu de l'école publique. Ses parents n'ayant pas les moyens de lui payer l'école privée ou une autre formation, il avait passé des années à la capitale à courir les petits boulots sans lendemain. Fatigué et traumatisé par cette expérience, Lamine était revenu au bercail, comme reviennent ceux ne savent plus quelle direction donner à leur vie (76).

Dans cette communication, nous notons que la déscolarisation traduite en analphabétisme telle l'inscrit Diome à travers Lamine est dû à la condition misérable de ses parents, car ils ont échoué de l'envoyer dans un autre établissement où il peut tenter sa chance. Alors, dû à la déscolarisation montre que ces types sont obligés de faire tout pour n'avoir pas échappé aucune opportunité en tenant compte la culture d'Ahmadou Kourou dans cette expression de Birahima : « Les déscolarisés sont des besogneux prêts à tout et à tout faire » (91). C'est à cette fois que Lamine a quitté l'île pour l'Espagne sans informer Arame comme l'introduit sa mère dans cette plainte dans ses mille questions : « Comment ? Lamine, mon fils ? Comment a-t-il osé me faire ça ? Comment ? » (146). Il faut noter que cet échec oblige cette personne de prendre la voie de l'atlantique comme une culture dans l'île niodiorienne tel le confirme Diome dans son roman en étude : « Ne voyant aucun chemin susceptible de les mener vers un avenir rassurant, les garçons se jettent dans l'Atlantique, se ruent vers l'Europe, comme un chasseur perdu se jette dans les buissons, en quête d'une nouvelle piste » (218). L'extrait noté capture la relation entre l'incapacité parentale et l'influence de

l'immigration en se tenant compte la vie de Lamine dans l'ouvrage de Diome.

Nous estimons à travers ce papier que le mariage forcé ou arrangé constitue l'un des facteurs qui influencent l'incapacité parentale, car l'étude montre que les pratiquants de cet acte sont incapables de soutenir les besoins de leurs filles. C'est pourquoi ils les conduisent dans cette condition précaire dite un mariage précoce. Notre écrivaine souligne cet acte de la part du vieux Wagane et sa vile Bougna tel qu'il se manifeste dans cet extrait de notre narratrice. « Dans le marasme du Sud, quel parent refuserait la main de sa fille à un marin embauché par une compagnie européenne » (56).

Dans *Celles qui attendent*, Diome suscite la pensée concernant la transition des enfants dont leurs parents sont incapables de leurs supports. Alors, nous nous servons de cette œuvre pour exposer l'impact de cette transition dans la vie des personnages de notre écrivaine telle qu'elle l'inscrit dans cette histoire concernant la suspension de Wagane et sa vie paysanne : « En partant, le couple avait laissé ses quatre aînés pour suivre leur scolarité en ville. Pour des raisons financières, ils furent répartis par paire, chacune hébergée chez son oncle » (54-55). Malgré cette condition, Wagane détient un statut décisif croyant de l'état envieux des parents dans l'île où il célèbre son mariage avec Bougna. De ce fait, les parents-envieux se font marier leurs filles afin qu'elles rejoignent leur mari en ville et acquièrent la richesse pour eux. Cette attitude envieuse fait croire les parents des épouses que c'est le seul moyen qu'ils peuvent égayer leurs filles à cause de leur condition appauvrie. Ceci amène cette étude à informer que les méfaits de l'incapacité parentale ou l'orphelinage s'alignent avec la pauvreté telle qu'insère l'auteure de *Celles qui attendent*.

Parentalité africaine à travers *Un nègre a violé une blonde à Dallas* de Ramonu Sanusi

Le texte de Sanusi qui constitue l'un de corpus dans cette étude nous fait comprendre qu'en Afrique, il y a une mauvaise parentalité, car au cours de l'engagement, cet auteur exprime son amertume concernant la parentalité africaine en suggérant que le choix de l'oncle Ali Baba

d'envoyer Ajanaku à Lagos symbolise l'acte de la méchanceté. Cette décision est prise en faveur de ces enfants biologiques comme l'explique Ajanaku : « Mon oncle avait cinq garçons dont trois étaient de mon âge. Les deux autres étaient plus âgés. Ceux-là ne méritaient pas ce traitement odieux. Ils étaient son sans pur. Ses princes héritier. C'est moi qui devais porter le calvaire comme Jésus Christ » (17). Dans ce recueil, Ajanaku souligne l'amour parental dont Ali Baba avait pour les fruits de son entrave, c'est-à-dire ses propres enfants et la discrimination consanguine de la part de son neveu dans son ménage après la mort précoce de ses parents. De ce fait, certains parents envoient leurs enfants vers les rues des grandes villes africaines. Cette culture est un modèle auquel ces parents profitent pour s'enrichir en eux telle éclaire notre narratrice : « tout ce qui comptait pour lui était de devenir riche à travers moi, ne mesurant même pas la gravité et les dangers auxquels il m'exposait » (19). Ce traitement illicite tel l'explore Ali Baba élucide l'acte d'exploitation de sa part comme le font la plupart des gardians en Afrique. Sanusi dénonce le système du fosterage étant une mauvaise pratique dans la parentalité africaine tel l'explique Ajanaku à travers son expérience dans notre extrait recueilli. « C'était à partir de ce jour-là que j'ai compris qu'il ne faut jamais laisser son enfant à l'abri d'une autre personne » (19-20). Suite à cette connaissance, l'étude enseigne que la plupart des enfants dans cette situation sont souvent des orphelins ou ceux ayant les parents pauvres comme le cas d'Ajanaku.

Ajanaku nous montre à travers l'extrait de Sanusi qu'il était orphelin de père et de mère comme il le présente à ce propos à travers cette lamentation. « Ce n'était pas aussi la faute de mes parents, car les ai perdus très jeune. Très jeune, j'étais devenu orphelin de père et de mère » (13). Obi et Aziakonou dans *La thématique dans le roman de Pauline de Calixthe Beyala* (2023) explique que : « l'orphelin désigne une personne d'une mère et d'un père disparu ou l'un entre les deux parents » (161). Nous retenons dans la lamentation de notre narrateur que la mauvaise parentalité s'initie d'une part de la perte des parents et d'autre part

de la méchanceté de ses alliés comme l'inscrit Ajanaku : « Mon oncle Ali Baba était sans doute fatigué de moi » (13). C'est à cette réalité qu'Ali Baba renvoie le petit orphelin de sa concession en lui conduisant dans les intempéries de la vie sans aucune formation pour soutenir sa vie. « Va te débrouiller à Lagos » (15). Ce comportement de désagrément conduit les enfants malheureux dans un univers de désenchantement. C'est dire la misère, étant leur objectif principal de se jeter dans l'exode rural et l'immigration où ils reçoivent l'attention à la criminalité comme l'explique notre personnage à cette idée : « là, on nous apprend à faire le pickpocket. Là, on nous apprend à fumer le chanvre indien. Là, on a appris à violer les femmes. Là, on a appris à manier la kalachnikov » (28-29). Cet acte odieux nuit la personnalité, la famille et la société entière comme le désignent Saave Nanakaan et Ijah Gideon Akase. « Il devient un souci non seulement pour sa famille mais aussi pour la société en générale » (148). La défaillance dans la parentalité en Afrique, connue dans cette étude, l'ensemble des malaises qu'un parent pourrait causer à son enfant. Dans cette étude, nous examinons la mauvaise parentalité à travers le concept de la procréation qui fait que ces pratiquants n'arrivent pas à encadrer la totalité des besoins de ces enfants. Pour parvenir cette difficulté, certains de nos parents transfèrent leurs enfants à leurs parentés comme l'informe notre narrateur « Mais le Nègre de l'Afrique noire qui est pauvre comme une souris d'église, pond des enfants comme des rats sauvages [...] Plus tard, j'ai compris que c'est la raison pour laquelle les Nègres de l'Afrique noire abandonnent leurs enfants avec leurs frères, leurs sœurs, leurs grandes mères et tout ça là » (21). Ce transfert comme l'informe Ajanaku a une relation complète avec la réalité sociale en Afrique, notamment au Nigéria où il éclaire les idées concernant la pratique de la bonne et de l'almageri dans ce pays. Il faut apprendre que les enfants dans cette condition sont des exploités. De ce fait, certains fuient leur fosters pour devenir les enfants de rue où ils reçoivent leur autonomie de devenir des bandits sans penser au danger qu'ils embrassent dans ce procès. Cette décision une entreprise qui qualifie le système

auquel les enfants de rue arrivent à soutenir leurs besoins. Cette réalité sociale incite Nanakaan et Akase à travers pour écrire que : « Le seul espoir aux enfants de vivre et de subvenir à leurs besoins vitaux est de joindre à un groupe armé » (144). Cette connaissance s'associe à l'opinion de Birahima dans Allah n'est pas obligé où cet orphelin montre que sa vie dépend des belligérants au Libéria et en Sierra Léone comme nous pouvons le lire ici : « là-bas il y avait des salaires. Et ça tombait juste et bien comme les mangues au mois d'avril » (84). C'est à ce titre que l'étude présente les enfants dans cet encadrement comme des badauds et cet abandon comme l'explique notre narrateur garantie la voie à ces enfants à la criminalité comme l'instruit notre victime dans cette assertion :

Voilà pourquoi leurs enfants deviennent de rue. Voilà pourquoi leurs enfants deviennent des bandits. Voilà pourquoi leurs enfants deviennent des enfants-soldats. Voilà pourquoi leurs enfants font la guerre au Libéria, en Sierra Léon, en Côte d'Ivoire, partout. Voilà pourquoi les enfants fument le cannabis. Voilà pourquoi leurs enfants portent des kalachnikovs sur leurs épaules. Et voilà pourquoi leurs enfants deviennent des drogués et tuent les hommes, les femmes, les vieux et les jeunes sans pitié dans les guerres partout en Afrique noire comme le charbon (23).

Parentalité africaine à travers *Bleu-Blanc-Rouge* d'Alain Mabanckou

Dans *Bleu-Blanc-Rouge*, Mabanckou éclaire la parentalité en appuyant sur les devoirs parentaux auxquels il illustre la protection des enfants par l'art culinaire et spirituel parmi tant d'autres bonheurs que les parents illuminent le succès des enfants afin de présenter sa défaillance à travers la pauvreté. Faisant ce devoir, nous trouvons que la tâche parentale se relie à la prière étant la bénédiction qu'un parent pourrait toujours avoir pour son enfant comme l'accède Mabanckou dans ce commentaire où Massala-Massala met le point sur comment son l'a protégé contre les dangers dans cet extrait : Il fouilla dans les poches de son boubou et sorti une feuille de palmier sèche et une motte de terre enveloppée dans un bout de papier [...] Il me tint la tête et psalmodia des paroles, les yeux fermés.

Il me dit ensuite de m'étendre en long par terre, les yeux clos. Je m'exécutai. Il m'enjamba trois fois de suite et demanda de me relever (114).

Cet extrait de Massala-Massala souligne l'aspect de la prière comme nous l'abordons à travers la spiritualité telle l'éveille le père de notre narrateur.

Cette recherche nous apprend que les parents sont en mesure de prévenir leurs enfants contre les dangers publics. D'autre part, Mabanckou rend claire que cette pratique oblige les parents de prévenir leurs fils contre la mort précoce comme l'instruit le père de Moki quand il ordonne le parisien :

Fais attention à ce que tu donnes aux vieux. Ces gens n'attendent qu'un faux pas pour agir dans les ténèbres. Rappelle-toi l'histoire du fils de Kombo mort parce qu'il n'avait pas offert une torche à son vieil oncle. Certes, c'est un cadeau ridicule aux yeux de certains, mais cette torche lui aurait servi pour la chasse et pour repousser les mauvais esprits quand les ombres de la nuit nous envoient les diables des villages voisins (59-60).

L'auteur nous fait comprendre que la formation informelle est aussi importante dans la parentalité, car ce style permet les parents de faire assimiler la présente génération des normes de la société à travers l'histoire. Ce faisant d'un bon parent, guide le père de notre narrateur dans son conseil d'avertir ses enfants contre l'envie comme l'estime Massala-Massala lorsqu'il nous parle du bien de son père. « Discret et bon père de famille, il nous éduquait, ma sœur et moi, dans l'esprit de nous contenter du peu qu'on avait au lieu d'aller voir ce qu'il y avait dans l'assiette de nos voisins » (93). Comprenons que les parents souhaitent toujours le bonheur de leurs enfants. Cette lutte comme l'éveillent les personnages-parents dans l'œuvre de Mabanckou, pourrait être trahie quand on est frappé par le malheur tel nous l'incérons à travers la pauvreté.

Examinant cette situation, l'étude évoque une complicité dans l'éducation du père de Moki due à la longue distance qui sépare l'école et sa localité telle la désigne notre narrateur. « En son temps il n'y avait qu'une seule école primaire dans tout le sud du pays. Elle était à cinquante-deux kilomètres de Louboulou,

son village natal. On y allait à pied » (47). Malgré cette distance inaccessible entre l'école du vieux et Louboulou, ses parents y apportaient des nourritures comme les autres parents que leurs gamins y aussi étaient comme l'indique Massala-Massala dans son raconter : « Les pères et les mères apportaient de la nourriture à leurs enfants » (47). Concernant cette œuvre humanitaire à travers les romans choisis, est dans cette Afrique moderne fait que chaque parent envoie ses enfants à l'école. Cet acte de crédibilité étant la raison pour Olayinka et Abiola de nous faire savoir que la parentalité est un outil permettant les enfants de se développer telle qu'ils l'écrivent dans cette scène : « Donc ceci nous amène à considérer la responsabilité parentale comme un grand outil dans le développement psychologique d'un enfant » (69).

Retenons que les grands parents de Moki faisaient ce don sacrificiel jusqu'au point où ils ont tourné une nouvelle page à cause de leur condition appauvrie. De ce fait, les grands parents de Moki étaient à ce point incapables de soutenir l'éducation de son père. C'est dire mettre fin à l'éducation formelle de leur fils à cause du moyen financier comme le suscite ce recueil à partir de la déscolarisation : « Hélas, au bout de quelques années, éreintés par des sacrifices financiers et alimentaires considérables, ils capitulaient, demandaient à l'enfant d'intégrer le champ dare-dare, de travailler avec eux. Le père de Moki interrompit ses études de la sorte. Il prit la houe et la machette, et se mit au service de ses parents » (47). Ce fait jette ce jeune homme dans l'exode rural ou l'immigration vers le Pointe-Noire où il cherche ses pâturages comme l'inscrit à ce propos :

Il aurait pu être instituteur si ses parents l'avaient soutenu une année de plus [...] Il fit par la suite comme les jeunes de son temps, il suivit le courant de l'exode rural et se retrouva dans ce quartier dont la ville la plus proche, Pointe-Noire, était à une cinquantaine de kilomètres. Il y résidait depuis une quarantaine d'années avec ses quatre enfants et son épouse » (47).

Cet acte comme l'explore notre personnage mène la présente génération vers

l'occident. Par ailleurs, l'étude dépeint l'échec parental étant la condition de la pauvreté à travers le père du narrateur de *Bleu-Blanc-Rouge* dans l'extrait où ce déscolarisé présente ainsi sa plainte dans laquelle il évoque son rêve.

Je n'oublierai pas une pompe à eau. De même l'électricité. Nous vivons avec des lampes tempête et des bougies. Nous ne faisons pas nos devoirs parce que, le soir, nous n'avons pas de lumière, pas d'argent pour acheter une bougie ou une litre de pétrole pour la lampe. Nous avons abandonné nos études ma sœur au collège, moi dès la première année du lycée. Ma sœur voulait devenir sage-femme. Moi, j'aurais voulu faire des études de droit. Être un juge ou un avocat. Pour cela, il fallait obtenir le bac, aller à l'université à Brazzaville, à plus de cinq cent kilomètres de chez nous (107).

D'après les désignations, nous notons dans cette recherche, le contraire du rêve de ces personnages auxquels nous découvrons l'échec de leurs parents à l'égard de l'éducation de leurs enfants. Cette connaissance consiste de ce que nous étudions comme l'incapacité parentale.

Conclusion

Dans la parentalité africaine, les idées sont réparties telles qu'elles se présentent dans les œuvres de notre étude. Dans *Celles qui attendent*, Diome présente sa réflexion concernant la parentalité africaine en se limitant à la condition appauvrie des parents et leur faiblesse traduite à la vieillesse et à la maladie. Ce fait conduit ces enfants dont leurs parents sont incapables de combler leurs besoins au mariage forcé, à l'immigration clandestine et à la mort étant les résultats de la déscolarisation tels qu'ils affectent la vie sociale de Lamine et d'autres personnages du roman. Considérant le manque de formation des enfants épinglés dans cette condition animant le problème de notre analyse, Diome joint Mabanckou et Sanusi pour montrer que le chômage désassocie nos déscolarisés de la vie professionnelle. Cette vie caricaturée dont les victimes mènent, leurs permettent de se lancer à la criminalité telle qu'elle se sent chez Ramonu Sanusi dans *Un nègre a voilé une blonde à Dallas* à travers l'orphelin Ajanaku. Quant à

Mabanckou, cet auteur examine la défaillance dans la parentalité africaine à travers la pauvreté rendant les enfants dans cet encadrement à la déscolarisation. Cette dégradation conduit les savoureux et les désireux vers l'exode rural ou l'immigration tels qu'ils se manifestent de la part de Moki et son père, Massala-Massala et préfet dans *Bleu-Blanc-Rouge*. Suite à cette connaissance, nous montrons que les réactions des personnages mis en scène par nos auteurs conte la parentalité africaine, nous aident à réfléchir sur la distinction entre une bonne et une mauvaise parentalité en reliant nos idées avec les faits sociaux en Afrique, notamment le Nigéria.

Dans cette étude, nous avons appris comme l'intelligence de cette critique que la réussite d'un enfant est due à l'effort de ses parents et son échec est en rapport avec la négligence des parents. C'est dire inhabilité de conduire leurs enfants vers la réussite. Nous avons indiqué les dimensions auxquelles l'incapacité parentale ruine la vie sociale en Afrique. Cette analyse explore l'approche psychanalytique pour évoquer la réflexion des personnes affectées par cette attitude reconnue comme l'incapacité parentale et ses pratiquants dans notre cadre romanesque. Suite à cette connaissance nous informons nos parents de tenir compte cette nuance sociale en mettant en garde le plan auquel ils peuvent construire une parentalité adéquate pour la réussite des enfants africains pour une meilleure société avenir. Suivant le processus des auteurs choisis dans cette recherche, nous avons essayé de dénoncer la pratique de procréation dans la société noire. Compte tenu de cette filière, nous avons tenté d'informer les parents africains d'éveiller une bonne parentalité et de s'égarer de la croyance de leur incapacité en émulant les pratiquants de la parentalité quelle que soit la situation. Le décès est inévitable, mais c'est le temps de revoir les choses dans l'ordre de la civilisation occidentale, car nous vivons à présent dans une période de la progression de la médecine. Avec cette pratique moderne dans le domaine médical, l'on pourrait exhiber une vie durable à laquelle l'essor de l'orphelinage est prévenu.

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MARKERS IN TIV NEGATION SYNTAX

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Abstract

The syntax of negation in Tiv, a noteworthy Benue-Congo language spoken in Nigeria, presents an interesting paradigmatic structure, characterized by notable complexities and asymmetries. Leveraging Chomsky's influential Principles and Parameters approach, this study examines the language's negation system, employing descriptive and qualitative methods to elicit and analyze the data. The findings reveal a significant interplay of pre-verbal and post-verbal negation, as Tiv's negative markers "ei", "de", and "ga" exhibit a thoughtful pattern of negation, differing from conventional expectations and highlighting the language's distinctive characteristics. This configuration is marked by the deliberate use of "ei" and "de" in imperative negation in sentence-initial positions, while "ga" effectively negates declarative statements in sentence-final positions, demonstrating a clear relationship between syntax and semantics. Ultimately, Tiv's deviation from the linguistic norm underscores its unique approach to negation, where sentence type and communicative intent guide the placement of negative markers, revealing the language's complex and effective negation system.

Keywords: Tiv, negative particle, imperative

Introduction

Language is the cornerstone of human communication, and in our daily lives, we rely on it to convey meaningful expressions (Aboh 2015). Within the realm of linguistic expression, negation plays a vital role, enabling speakers to articulate denial, contradiction, or refusal with remarkable precision (Jaszczolt 2016). In the Tiv language, negation is a fundamental concept that facilitates the subtle, yet sophisticated expression of opposition, disagreement, or rejection.

This complex linguistic mechanism allows Tiv speakers to convey the polar contrary of a particular notion, effectively expressing the opposite or negation of a statement within remarkable accuracy (Crain 2019). By employing negation, speakers can articulate disagreement, dissent, or refusal, thereby adding depth, complexity and nuance to their communicative interactions (Korta & Perry 2019).

The negation mechanism in Tiv is a

remarkable example of linguistic sophistication, permitting speakers to convey a range of negative meanings with precision and accuracy, and subtlety (Horn 2020). This capacity for nuanced expression is a hallmark of human language, and the Tiv language is no exception, offering a fascinating glimpse into the complexities of human communication.

According to Crystal (2006:303), negation is a grammatical and semantic process that typically expresses the contradiction of some or all of a sentence's meaning. The manifestation of negation varies significantly across languages, and its realization can be quite intricate. In the English language, common methods of negation include the use of negative words such as 'not', 'no', and 'never'. However, the specific strategies employed differ substantially across languages.

Negation can be applied to various sentence constituents, including verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, allowing for the

expression of negation at different levels. This ranges from negating a single word or phrase to negating an entire sentence or proposition. Languages exhibit diverse ways of marking sentential negation, with some utilizing a single exponent and others employing a double exponent. Notably, the Tiv language exhibits both strategies, marking negation as a single exponent and as a double exponent.

As a universal category in languages, the surface manifestations of negation forms in syntax provide a foundation for analysis in numerous research studies. This current study aims to investigate the markers in Tiv negation syntax, contributing to our understanding of this complex phenomenon. The Tiv language is classified within the Southern Bantoid branch of the Benue-Congo family, which is part of the Niger-Congo family (Blench, 2011). Abraham (1940, p. 6) provides valuable insights into the language's characteristics.

The Tiv language, boasting an impressive four million speakers in Benue State, Nigeria alone (Tser, 2013), showcases a remarkable array of linguistic features that underscore its unique identity. As a distinguished member of the Bantu language family (Blench, 2011), Tiv exhibits a complex and intriguing grammatical profile, replete with nuanced characteristics.

Syntactically, Tiv boasts of paradigmatic head-Initial parameter setting yielding a canonical Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order that facilitates lucid and efficacious communication (Hawkin 2014) Its opulent tense system, replete with an intricate array of temporal distinctions coupled with a tonal system that plays a vital role in conveying subtle, nuanced and semantic distinctions further underscores the language's remarkable expressiveness and communicative versatility (Sandler & Lillo- Martin 2006)

Morphologically, Tiv exhibits a fascinating fusional typology (Sanusi & Oyowole 2019), marked by an array of inflectional operations that involve both prefixation and suffixation, thereby showcasing language's remarkable morphological dexterity and adaptability. These intricate processes which are instrumental in tense marking and plural formation attest to the language's impressive, flexibility,

productivity and systemic harmony (Arnoff & Fudeman 2011) underscoring its unique typological profile.

Despite the existence of scholarly endeavors exploring Tiv grammar, research on negation in the language remains a relatively uncharted territory. Ishima's (2019) seminal work on negation in Tiv stands as a pioneering contribution to this area of study. This research seeks to build upon this foundation, investigating the diverse negative markers employed in Tiv to convey polar contrariness. By examining the positional variations of these markers within sentence structures, this study aims to elucidate whether negation markers operate within the subject or verb domain, thereby shedding light on the intricacies of Tiv's negation system.

Literature on the syntax of Negation

The syntax of negation is a fascinating realm of linguistic inquiry, delving into the intricate mechanisms governing sentence grammar. Eminent linguists, including Harris (1957), Chomsky (1957), Carnie (2006), and Radford (1997), converge on the notion that syntax encompasses the systematic study of word combinations, yielding phrases and sentences that underpin human communication.

As humans possess an innate generative capacity, enabling them to craft novel sentences, it becomes evident that language operates on a dynamic, rule-governed basis, rather than relying on arbitrary or stored combinations. Müller (2020:4) suggests that frequent or idiomatic expressions may be stored as complex units, but this does not apply to typical language sentences.

Van Valin (2001:2) astutely defines syntax as the deliberate arrangement of words within sentences, clauses, and phrases, underscoring the intricate relationships between constituent parts. This is exemplified by English word order, where the subject-verb-object sequence yields distinct meanings, diverging from alternative configurations.

The human capacity for generating novel, previously unuttered expressions underscores the presence of underlying structural patterns. Syntax seeks to elucidate these patterns, examining the relationships between words within sentences and uncovering the fundamental principles governing

language construction.

Ultimately, the grammar of a language dictates the construction of expressions, defining possible word category positions and enabling the creation of diverse expressions from a finite set of grammatical principles. This study aims to investigate the analysis of syntactic positions, particularly negative phrases, within the realm of Tiv syntax.

Negation is a fundamental syntactic process that enables the transformation of affirmative sentences into their negative counterparts. This intricate mechanism introduces a negator, thereby creating a dichotomy between two seemingly similar sentences. Ishima (2019) astutely observes that the Tiv language employs two primary strategies for negation marking: predicate negation, which negates the entire sentence, and constituent negation, which targets a specific sentence constituent.

De Swart (2010) aptly asserts that negation is a universal linguistic category, albeit with diverse modes of expression across languages. Each language possesses a standard negation marker, accompanied by unique forms of negation that distinguish it from other languages.

Mabondo (2012) provides a profound definition of negation, characterizing it as a multifaceted linguistic, cognitive, and intellectual phenomenon. Negation is an ubiquitous and richly diverse aspect of human communication, fundamental to all human thought. Mabondo posits that negative utterances are an essential feature of every human communication system, distinguishing it from animal communication systems.

Furthermore, Mabondo (2012) highlights the significance of negation in reporting the process or result of making a negative statement. This can be achieved through grammatical particles, such as 'not,' or lexical means, such as 'failed.' Alnawaisheh (2015) emphasizes the indispensable role of negation in human language, underscoring its status as a basic element of the human mind.

Methodology

This study employs a rigorous survey research design, leveraging qualitative data to elucidate the intricacies of negation in Tiv. The

investigation utilizes the interview method for data elicitation, tapping into the linguistic expertise of five competent native speakers of Tiv. The informants, comprising three males and two females, possess formal linguistics training in Tiv, ensuring a rich source of data.

The data collection process involved administering a structured questionnaire through targeted conversational settings and in-depth interviews. The researchers meticulously recorded, transcribed, and translated the informants' utterances, capturing the nuances of Tiv negation. Supplemental data were sourced from Ichian Bibilo, 'the Tiv Bible,' specifically Exodus Chapter 20, which provided valuable insights into polar contrariness.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the researcher employed intuitive perception as a competent native speaker of Tiv. A subset of the recorded utterances, exhibiting conversational structures that showcased negation, was isolated and subjected to rigorous formal analysis, grounded in the theoretical principles of Principles and Parameters (P&P).

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the Principles and Parameters (P&P) theory of Universal Grammar (UG), as articulated by Chomsky (1981). This theoretical framework posits that Universal Grammar encompasses a set of shared grammatical principles across languages, alongside parameters that differentiate one language from another.

The P&P theory seeks to distill the universal essence of human language, identifying the underlying principles that govern linguistic structures. Simultaneously, it accommodates the unique characteristics of individual languages through parametric variation, thereby providing a nuanced understanding of linguistic diversity.

This theoretical framework is particularly suited for analyzing negation in Tiv grammar, as it enables the identification of universal attributes that Tiv shares with other languages, while also elucidating language-specific characteristics that distinguish Tiv from other linguistic systems.

Tiv exhibits a fascinating negation paradigm, featuring single-word negation in post-verbal position, as well as split negation in

imperatives, where the two particles occupy both preverbal and post-verbal positions.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The work has identified negative Words and Types of Negation in Tiv. Tiv boasts a concise repertoire of negative words, meticulously identified below:

- Ga: 'not' (a versatile negator employed in sentential negation)
- Ei: 'no' (an interjectional negator expressing disagreement or rejection)
- De (kera)...ga: 'do not ... not' (a complex double negation construction)

In Tiv declarative sentences, negation is elegantly achieved through the post-verbal addition of ga 'not', as exemplified in:

1. Terseer ka nomsor ga (Terseer be man not) 'Terseer is not a man'
The multifaceted nature of ei 'no' is showcased in its capacity to serve as an independent negator, expressing disagreement or rejection, as in:
2. Ei, m soo u zaan ga (No I want to go not) 'No, I do not want to go'
This usage aligns with Biber et al.'s (1999) observations on the independent use of negative interjections.
Furthermore, the inseparable double negation construction de (kera)...ga 'do not ... not' is exemplified in:
3. De kera ve ga (Do.2 not come not) 'Do not come again'
The syntactic integrity of this construction is underscored by the ungrammaticality resulting from the deletion of either particle.

Tiv negation can be broadly categorized into two types:

1. Sentential negation: Negation applies to the entire sentence, as in Terseer ka nomsor ga.
2. Constituent negation: Negation targets a specific constituent within the sentence, as in Ei, m soo u zaan ga. These distinctions underscore the complexity and nuance of Tiv's negation system.

This study presents a rich qualitative dataset, intricately woven together with a meticulous analysis. The negative particle in Tiv assumes a fascinating position within the VP domain, specifically following the object complement of the verb, as exemplified below:

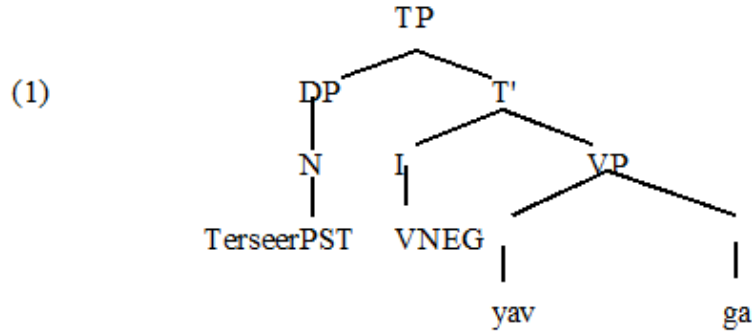
- (4a). Terseer kanomsor (Affirmative Construction)
(Terseer be man)
'Terseer is a man'
- (4b). Terseer kanomsor ga (Negative Construction)
(Terseer be man Neg.)
'Terseer is not a man'

Negation in Tiv triggers a paradigmatic shift in the truth value of propositions, as astutely observed by Ishima (2019). The affirmative proposition in 4a undergoes a truth-value reversal, yielding the negative proposition in 4b, wherein the negative particle ga 'not' ingeniously negates the proposition.

Tiv's negation paradigm exhibits remarkable versatility, with multiple strategies for applying negation beyond merely placing the negative marker within the VP domain. For instance, in the context of intransitive verbs, negation is adroitly positioned after the verb, as illustrated below:

- (5). Terseer yav ga
(Terseer sleep.PST Neg.)
'Terseer did not sleep'

The accompanying syntactic tree diagram masterfully illustrates the distribution of negation in Tiv, as exemplified in (5) above, providing a nuanced visual representation of the language's intricate negation system.



In the syntactic tree (1), the negative word is ingeniously adjoined to the post-verbal position, immediately following the intransitive verb, thereby exemplifying Tiv's unique negation paradigm.

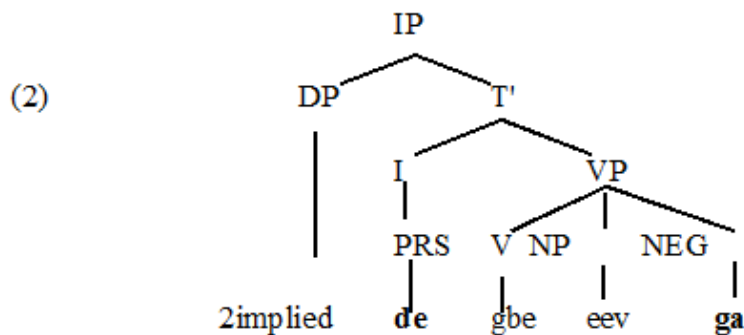
Tiv's negation system also exhibits a fascinating phenomenon, wherein the negative markers *de* and *ga* undergo a syntactic split, yielding a complex and intriguing construction. This remarkable process is illustrated through an extract from the Tiv Bible, 'ichiagh Bibilo', which showcases the integral role of negation in Tiv's linguistic and cultural heritage, even in religious discourse.

The following examples demonstrate this captivating phenomenon:

6. De lu a mba Aondo mba ge nev ga, saa mo.
 (2SG implied (link unavailable) with gods other Neg., except me)
 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me'

7. De gbe eev ga
 (2SG implied Neg.make imageNeg.)
 'Thou shalt not make an image'

These examples masterfully illustrate Tiv's innovative approach to negation, where the interplay between syntax and semantics yields a rich and expressive linguistic system.



In the intricate tree diagram (2), the negative word undergoes a fascinating split, yielding two particles that occupy distinct syntactic positions: one preceding the verb and the other situated in the post-verbal position.

The following examples, derived from the Tiv Bible, showcase the language's complex negation paradigm:

8. De teren itii TER Aondo wou dang ga
 (2SG implied Neg.mention.Prog name of Lord God your for granted Neg.)
 'Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.'

9. Deker ma tom ave ga.
(2SG implied Neg.hold any work hand Neg.)
'Thou shalt not do any work.'
10. De wou or ga
(2SG implied Neg.killNeg.)
'Thou shalt not kill'
11. De eren idya ga
(2SG implied Neg.doProg.adultery Neg.)
'Thou shalt not commit adultery'
12. De iin ga
(2SG implied Neg.steal Neg.)
'Thou shalt not steal'
13. De we or u wan ndor a we aieiyol ga
(2SG implied Neg.put person of neighbor with you lie body Neg.)
'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.'
14. De tem ya u or u wan ndor a we ga
(2SG implied Neg.covert house of person of neighbouring with you Neg.)
'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house'

This dataset, extracted from the Tiv Bible, exemplifies the language's distinctive negation pattern, characterized by the split negative particle de...ga.

The imperative sentences in examples 8-13 demonstrate the language's complex negation system, which conveys prohibitive information to Christians.

A meticulous examination of these data reveals that the negative particle de...ga is an integral unit, whose deletion results in ungrammatical sentences, as illustrated in examples in the various examples stated above.

Conclusion

Negation plays a vital role in Tiv's grammatical framework, contributing to syntax, meaning derivation, and truth-value manipulation. Tiv's unique split negation paradigm, exemplified by the de...ga particle, sets it apart from other languages, underscoring the complexity and richness of human language.

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LA COOPERATION FRANCO-NIGERIANE : VERS LA CREATION D'UNE ALLIANCE STRATEGIQUE EN AFRIQUE

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Résumé

La coopération franco-nigériane s'inscrit dans un contexte marqué par des relations historiques et stratégiques importantes, établies depuis l'indépendance du Nigeria en 1960. Cette collaboration repose sur des échanges économiques, culturels et politiques, renforcés par le rôle croissant du Nigeria comme puissance régionale en Afrique de l'Ouest et la position historique de la France sur le continent. Toutefois, cette relation est complexifiée par des tensions, notamment dues à des perceptions d'ingérence française et aux défis internes auxquels font face les deux pays. Le problème central de l'étude réside dans l'identification des obstacles à une coopération équilibrée et durable entre la France et le Nigeria, dans un cadre où les attentes des deux parties divergent parfois. L'étude vise à proposer des stratégies pour renforcer cette alliance en mettant l'accent sur la sécurité, le commerce, l'éducation et le développement durable. La méthodologie adoptée repose sur une analyse documentaire approfondie, complétée par des études de cas illustrant les projets bilatéraux réussis et les points de friction. Les données sont analysées pour dégager des recommandations concrètes. Les résultats montrent des avancées significatives, comme une coopération accrue dans la lutte contre le terrorisme et le piratage maritime, ainsi qu'un accroissement des investissements bilatéraux. Cependant, des efforts restent nécessaires pour surmonter les obstacles géopolitiques et renforcer la confiance mutuelle.

Mots-clés: Coopération bilatérale, Développement stratégique, françafrique, Relations internationales, Sécurité régionale

Introduction

La coopération entre la France et le Nigeria revêt une importance stratégique considérable, tant au niveau bilatéral qu'international. Depuis l'indépendance du Nigeria en 1960, les relations entre les deux pays ont été marquées par des échanges profonds dans des domaines variés tels que l'économie, la culture et la sécurité. Cependant, ces relations ont également été le théâtre de tensions, notamment en raison de l'héritage colonial, des dynamiques géopolitiques complexes et des défis de développement propres à l'Afrique de l'Ouest. À une époque où la France cherche à réaffirmer son influence en Afrique, et où le Nigeria aspire de jouer un rôle de leadership continental, la question de la création d'une alliance stratégique apparaît cruciale. La relation entre la France et le Nigeria a récemment connu un renforcement notable,

marqué par des échanges diplomatiques de haut niveau et une coopération accrue dans divers domaines.

Parallèlement, la France fait face à une diminution de son influence traditionnelle dans certaines de ses anciennes colonies africaines, ce qui souligne l'importance d'une collaboration renforcée avec des nations comme le Nigeria. En novembre 2024, le président nigérian Bola Ahmed Tinubu a effectué une visite d'État en France, la première d'un chef d'État nigérian depuis 24 ans. Cette visite avait pour objectif principal de renforcer les liens économiques et diplomatiques entre les deux pays. Selon l'Élysée, « cette visite d'État, la première d'un Président nigérian en France depuis l'an 2000, était l'occasion d'approfondir la relation, déjà très dynamique, entre la France et le Nigeria, dans tous les domaines, qu'il s'agisse de la transition

énergétique, de la défense, de la culture, de l'éducation ou de l'innovation » (Présidence de la République française, 2024). Parallèlement, la France a observé une réduction de son influence dans certaines de ses anciennes colonies africaines. En novembre 2024, le Tchad a mis fin à son accord de coopération en matière de défense avec la France, entraînant le retrait potentiel de 1 000 soldats français stationnés dans le pays. Cette décision s'inscrit dans une tendance régionale où des pays comme le Mali, le Niger et le Burkina Faso ont également expulsé les troupes européennes, exprimant un désir de réaffirmer leur souveraineté et de diversifier leurs partenariats stratégiques. Cette alliance pourrait permettre de relever des défis communs tels que la lutte contre le terrorisme, le développement durable et la stabilisation régionale (Obi, 2019).

La problématique principale de cette étude réside dans la difficulté d'établir une coopération équilibrée, dans un contexte où les intérêts et les attentes des deux pays diffèrent parfois profondément. Le cadre théorique de cette analyse repose sur des concepts de coopération internationale et d'interdépendance asymétrique (Keohane et Nye, 1977), qui permettent de comprendre les dynamiques de pouvoir et de dépendance entre des nations avec des positions géopolitiques et économiques inégales. Par ailleurs, l'approche du régionalisme africain (Adedeji, 2002) fournit une perspective essentielle sur l'intégration régionale et la place du Nigeria dans ce processus. Les résultats montrent que, bien que des progrès significatifs aient été réalisés, notamment dans la coopération en matière de sécurité, des défis demeurent dans la gestion des perceptions mutuelles et l'adaptation des politiques économiques bilatérales (Dupuy, 2021). En novembre 2024, le Nigeria et la France ont signé des accords visant à améliorer le développement des infrastructures et la sécurité alimentaire. Ces accords incluent un plan d'investissement de 300 millions d'euros destiné à soutenir des secteurs clés tels que la santé, les transports, l'agriculture, les énergies renouvelables et le développement du capital humain au Nigeria (Reuters, 2024). De plus, les banques nigérianes Zenith Bank et United Bank for Africa (UBA) ont étendu leurs opérations en France, avec l'ouverture

de succursales à Paris, renforçant ainsi les liens financiers entre les deux pays (Reuters, 2024). Pourtant, la coopération en matière de sécurité entre la France et le Nigeria s'est également intensifiée. Les deux pays ont signé des accords stratégiques englobant divers secteurs, y compris la coopération en matière de défense (Senego, 2024). Ces initiatives visent à répondre conjointement aux défis sécuritaires régionaux et à promouvoir la stabilité. Cette étude a pour objectif de proposer des solutions pour surmonter ces obstacles et construire une véritable alliance stratégique entre la France et le Nigeria, bénéfique pour les deux nations et pour la stabilité de l'Afrique de l'Ouest.

Cadre théorique

La coopération entre la France et le Nigeria s'inscrit dans un contexte géopolitique complexe, marqué par des enjeux économiques, sécuritaires et culturels. Ce cadre théorique explore les fondements de cette coopération, en se basant sur des théories des relations internationales et des approches stratégiques (Ayeni & Moruwawon, 2024, Ayeni & Okon, 2023).

Le réalisme

Le réalisme qui met l'accent sur l'intérêt national et le pouvoir, est essentiel pour comprendre les motivations derrière la coopération franco-nigériane. Selon Morgenthau (1948), les États agissent principalement pour maximiser leur pouvoir. Il s'agit plus précisément pour un Etat de renforcer son système de sécurité en augmentant ses capacités internes, en se dotant d'un potentiel économique élevé et en formant des alliances avec les autres Etats ayant des intérêts similaires (Ayeni et Ebong, 2020). La France, en tant que puissance historique en Afrique, cherche à maintenir son influence, tandis que le Nigeria, en tant que pays émergent, vise à renforcer sa position régionale.

Le libéralisme

Parmi les grands auteurs libéraux sont Joseph Nye et Robert Keohane (1977) qui insistent sur la notion de « soft power » et la notion de l'« Interdépendance complexe ». Selon eux, la puissance douce (soft power), est la capacité d'un acteur politique comme un Etat, une firme multinationale, une organisation non-gouvernementale ou une institution internationale

(ONU ou la Banque mondiale), d'influencer, "indirectement" le comportement d'un autre acteur, de ses propres intérêts, à travers des moyens non coercitif (qui peut être structurel, culturel ou idéologique). Lorsque les activités de ces acteurs politiques transcendent les frontières de leurs Etats d'origine, une société transnationale est formée (Ayeni et Ebong, 2020) Le libéralisme met en avant l'importance de la coopération internationale et des institutions pour structurer les relations bilatérales (Keohane & Nye, 1977). Dans le cadre de l'Agence Française de Développement (AFD) et de la coopération économique franco-nigériane, ce paradigme permet d'expliquer les dynamiques commerciales et d'investissement.

Théorie du régime international et lutte contre le terrorisme

La coopération sécuritaire franco-nigériane peut être analysée à travers la théorie des régimes internationaux (Krasner, 1983), qui met en avant le rôle des normes et des institutions dans la gestion des questions globales. Lutte contre Boko Haram et interventions militaires sont des aspects clés de cette alliance stratégique.

Le contexte historique de la coopération franco-nigériane

Le contexte historique de la coopération franco-nigériane est profondément marqué par l'héritage colonial, les relations diplomatiques et les échanges économiques qui se sont développés après l'indépendance du Nigeria en 1960. Avant cette indépendance, le Nigeria, alors une colonie britannique, entretenait peu de liens directs avec la France, qui était plus impliquée dans ses anciennes colonies d'Afrique francophone. Cependant, à partir des années 1960, avec la décolonisation et l'affirmation de la France en Afrique, les relations entre la France et le Nigeria ont commencé à se structurer autour de plusieurs axes : la coopération politique, l'aide au développement et les échanges commerciaux (Rocca, 2018).

Pendant la guerre froide, le Nigeria, en raison de sa taille et de sa position stratégique en Afrique de l'Ouest, est devenu un partenaire important pour la France, notamment dans le cadre de la politique de "françafrique" (Caron, 2016). Cette politique, qui visait à maintenir des relations étroites entre la France et ses anciennes colonies, a été critiquée pour son caractère néo-colonial.

Toutefois, elle a permis de maintenir une coopération stable entre les deux pays dans des domaines tels que la sécurité, l'éducation et l'économie. Au fil des décennies, la relation franco-nigériane a évolué pour prendre en compte les nouveaux enjeux géopolitiques, notamment la montée en puissance du Nigeria en tant que leader économique et politique en Afrique, et les préoccupations communes concernant la lutte contre le terrorisme et la piraterie maritime (Adebajo, 2013). Les crises régionales, comme la guerre civile au Libéria et la montée de Boko Haram, ont renforcé l'importance de la coopération sécuritaire entre les deux nations.

La guerre civile libérienne a engendré des flux massifs de réfugiés et une prolifération d'armes légères, déstabilisant la région (Adebajo, 2002). Face à cette situation, le Nigeria a pris l'initiative de mener des opérations militaires à travers la CEDEAO et sa force d'intervention, l'ECOMOG. Selon Adekeye Adebajo (2002), « le Nigeria a largement financé et dirigé les opérations de maintien de la paix au Libéria, cherchant à stabiliser la région et à éviter l'effondrement de l'État libérien » (p. 87). La France, bien qu'ayant des intérêts plus directs en Afrique francophone, a collaboré avec le Nigeria dans le cadre de la stabilisation de l'Afrique de l'Ouest. En raison de ses liens historiques avec la Côte d'Ivoire et d'autres pays voisins du Libéria, elle a joué un rôle de soutien diplomatique et logistique à travers des initiatives bilatérales et multilatérales (Bach, 2004).

L'insurrection de Boko Haram, qui a commencé en 2009, a rapidement pris une dimension régionale, affectant non seulement le Nigeria, mais aussi le Cameroun, le Tchad et le Niger. La France, ayant une présence militaire au Sahel avec l'opération Barkhane, a renforcé sa coopération avec le Nigeria pour contrer la menace jihadiste. Selon Thurston (2018), "la menace de Boko Haram a conduit la France à accroître son soutien aux États riverains du lac Tchad, notamment en matière de renseignement et de formation militaire". Lors du sommet de Paris en 2014, organisé par la France, un cadre de coopération régionale a été mis en place pour mieux coordonner la lutte contre Boko Haram. Comme le souligne Charbonneau (2021), "la

France a joué un rôle clé dans la facilitation des alliances sécuritaires en Afrique de l'Ouest, en encourageant le partage du renseignement et la coordination des opérations militaires". Cette coopération s'est traduite par des formations militaires, un appui en équipements et une collaboration en matière de renseignement entre les forces française et nigériane. Alors que le Nigeria a émergé comme un acteur clé dans la stabilisation de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, la France a utilisé son influence et ses ressources militaires pour soutenir les efforts régionaux contre l'insécurité. Cette coopération, bien qu'essentielle, demeure sujette à des défis, notamment en raison des dynamiques géopolitiques et des intérêts divergents des acteurs impliqués. En ce sens, la France, bien que souvent perçue comme une ancienne puissance coloniale, a su adapter ses partenariats stratégiques pour inclure des pays comme le Nigeria dans le cadre de ses priorités en Afrique de l'Ouest (Oliviero, 2020). Les relations franco-nigérianes, si elles ont souvent été façonnées par des intérêts politiques et économiques, ont aussi été influencées par des divergences, notamment en matière de gestion des ressources naturelles et de soutien à des régimes politiques (Foucher, 2019). Malgré ces défis, la coopération continue de se renforcer, en particulier dans les domaines de la lutte contre le terrorisme et de la coopération militaire.

Les fondements de la relation franco-nigériane

Les fondements de la relation franco-nigériane remontent à une période marquée par l'histoire coloniale, bien que le Nigeria n'ait jamais été une colonie française. Toutefois, la France a joué un rôle indirect dans la configuration des relations africaines durant l'ère coloniale, notamment par ses interactions avec le Royaume-Uni, colonisateur du Nigeria, et en raison de sa propre influence en Afrique francophone (Mamdani, 1996). Le cadre de la colonisation, bien que plus éloigné en termes d'influence directe, a favorisé des connexions indirectes, notamment par la politique de la France en Afrique et sa volonté de maintenir une certaine stabilité dans la région ouest-africaine. Lorsque le Nigeria a obtenu son indépendance en 1960, ses relations avec la France n'étaient pas aussi établies que celles avec la Grande-Bretagne, ancienne puissance coloniale.

Cependant, dès cette période, la France a cherché à développer des relations avec le Nigeria, un des plus grands pays d'Afrique, particulièrement en raison de son poids économique et stratégique sur le continent (Burgess, 2013). Cette période post-indépendance a vu l'émergence de la France dans une politique plus active en Afrique subsaharienne, cherchant à construire des relations avec les États qui, bien que non colonisés par elle, étaient importants pour la stabilité de l'Afrique de l'Ouest.

En revanche, le Nigeria, dirigé par des élites indépendantes issues de la période coloniale britannique, a progressivement cherché à renforcer sa souveraineté et à diversifier ses relations internationales. La France, consciente de l'importance stratégique du Nigeria, a donc cherché à entretenir des liens politiques et économiques avec ce nouveau voisin de l'Afrique anglophone, tout en cherchant à maintenir son influence sur ses anciennes colonies à travers des structures comme la Francophonie et des partenariats économiques (Odhiambo, 2015). Ce cadre d'interdépendance a contribué à établir les bases d'une coopération reposant sur des objectifs de développement et de stabilité régionale. Les années suivant l'indépendance ont également été marquées par des évolutions dans les politiques africaines de la France, notamment par la mise en place de la "Françafrique", une politique qui visait à maintenir des relations privilégiées avec les pays africains, y compris le Nigeria. Toutefois, ce modèle de coopération a souvent été critiqué pour son caractère néo-colonial et ses implications sur les relations bilatérales (Adebajo, 2007). Ainsi, bien que les relations franco-nigérianes ne soient pas issues d'une colonisation directe, elles ont été influencées par les logiques coloniales, tant au niveau des relations interétatiques que des dynamiques de pouvoir. Voilà les bases des relations actuelles, marquées par des défis et des tentatives de renégociation des termes de la coopération.

Les piliers de la coopération actuelle

La coopération économique et commerciale constitue l'un des piliers fondamentaux des relations franco-nigérianes contemporaines. Depuis les années 1960, les échanges économiques entre la France et le

Nigeria ont connu un développement constant, bien que les relations aient été marquées par une certaine asymétrie. En tant que première économie d'Afrique subsaharienne, le Nigeria représente un marché stratégique pour la France, tandis que la France, avec ses multinationales et son expertise technique, offre un partenaire important pour les secteurs clés de l'économie nigériane, tels que l'énergie, les infrastructures, et les télécommunications (Foucher, 2019). L'un des aspects majeurs de cette coopération économique réside dans le secteur énergétique, particulièrement le pétrole et le gaz naturel, domaines où la France, par le biais de compagnies comme Total, est l'un des plus grands investisseurs étrangers au Nigeria. Ce secteur a favorisé des liens étroits entre les deux nations, avec des partenariats soutenant les efforts de développement de l'industrie pétrolière et gazière nigériane tout en répondant aux besoins d'approvisionnement énergétique de la France (Vidal, 2021). Le Nigeria, quant à lui, bénéficie de l'expertise française en matière de gestion des ressources naturelles, ainsi que des technologies pour l'exploration et la production de pétrole et de gaz en eaux profondes. En outre, les échanges commerciaux bilatéraux ont connu une croissance constante, bien que la France ait parfois été confrontée à une concurrence accrue de pays comme la Chine. Selon le rapport du Ministère français des Affaires étrangères (2020), les exportations françaises vers le Nigeria se sont diversifiées ces dernières années, incluant des biens de consommation, des machines, des équipements industriels et des produits agricoles. Cette diversification témoigne de la volonté de la France de s'implanter davantage sur le marché nigérian en dehors des secteurs traditionnels de l'énergie et de la défense.

Cependant, malgré ces avancées, des défis subsistent, notamment en ce qui concerne les conditions de travail, la corruption et la stabilité économique. Les entreprises françaises opérant au Nigeria doivent naviguer dans un environnement complexe, marqué par des fluctuations économiques et des risques politiques (Michaud, 2018). De plus, la dépendance du Nigeria à l'exportation de pétrole reste un facteur de vulnérabilité pour son économie, ce qui impacte

indirectement les investissements étrangers, y compris ceux de la France.

Les initiatives récentes visant à renforcer la coopération commerciale et à encourager les investissements dans des secteurs tels que les technologies de l'information et la production alimentaire indiquent une volonté des deux pays d'élargir leur partenariat économique au-delà des secteurs traditionnels. Par exemple, la France a soutenu des projets agricoles innovants au Nigeria, dans le cadre de la transition vers une économie moins dépendante des hydrocarbures (Dupuy, 2020). Ainsi, la coopération économique et commerciale franco-nigériane repose sur des bases solides mais doit continuellement évoluer pour faire face aux nouveaux défis économiques, géopolitiques et environnementaux. La diversification des secteurs et des investissements reste essentielle pour renforcer cette relation dans les années à venir.

Les enjeux stratégiques pour la France et le Nigeria

Les enjeux stratégiques liés à la sécurité régionale et à la lutte contre le terrorisme sont au cœur de la coopération franco-nigériane. Le Nigeria, en tant que puissance économique majeure de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, joue un rôle central dans la stabilité régionale, particulièrement face à la montée des menaces sécuritaires liées à des groupes terroristes tels que Boko Haram et l'État islamique en Afrique de l'Ouest (ISWAP). Pour la France, dont la présence militaire en Afrique de l'Ouest est significative, notamment à travers l'opération Barkhane, la coopération avec le Nigeria est essentielle dans la lutte contre ces groupes terroristes, qui ont des répercussions sur la sécurité internationale, notamment dans les zones frontalières du Sahel et du Nigeria (Foucher, 2019).

Depuis le début des années 2000, la France et le Nigeria ont intensifié leur collaboration en matière de sécurité, en particulier pour lutter contre le terrorisme. Cette coopération repose sur des partenariats bilatéraux dans les domaines du renseignement, de la formation des forces de sécurité nigérianes et de la fourniture d'équipements militaires. Le Nigeria, confronté à des attaques répétées de Boko Haram, a sollicité l'aide de la France pour renforcer ses capacités de

défense et améliorer la coordination régionale, notamment au sein de la Force multinationale mixte (MNJTF) qui regroupe des forces militaires de pays voisins comme le Cameroun, le Tchad et le Niger (Louw, 2020).

Les enjeux de sécurité régionale pour la France sont également liés à la stabilité du Nigeria, qui représente un acteur clé pour la gestion des crises au sein de la Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEDEAO). En tant que membre influent de cette organisation, le Nigeria joue un rôle crucial dans les efforts de maintien de la paix et de médiation dans des conflits régionaux, notamment au Mali, en Côte d'Ivoire et au Libéria. La France, en tant que membre permanent du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU et puissance ayant des intérêts stratégiques en Afrique de l'Ouest, soutient activement les initiatives de sécurité menées par la CEDEAO, souvent en collaboration avec le Nigéria (Dupuy, 2020).

Par ailleurs, la montée en puissance de groupes terroristes transnationaux a conduit à une évolution des stratégies de lutte contre le terrorisme, impliquant non seulement la coopération bilatérale entre la France et le Nigeria, mais aussi la nécessité d'une approche multilatérale. La France, par l'intermédiaire de son engagement au sein de l'Union européenne et de l'ONU, encourage le Nigeria à participer à des actions collectives contre le terrorisme, telles que les opérations de maintien de la paix et les sanctions contre les groupes terroristes. Le financement et l'approvisionnement en matériel militaire restent un aspect majeur de cette coopération (Rocca, 2021). Cependant, la lutte contre le terrorisme demeure complexe, avec des défis supplémentaires, notamment la gestion de la radicalisation au sein des populations locales et la difficulté de maintenir une sécurité durable dans les régions frontalières (Adebajo, 2017). Bien que les résultats soient significatifs, avec des victoires militaires contre des groupes comme Boko Haram, la réinsertion des zones libérées et la lutte contre l'impunité demeurent des défis majeurs pour la coopération franco-nigériane.

Les perspectives d'une alliance stratégique en Afrique

Les perspectives d'une alliance stratégique

renforcée entre la France et le Nigeria en Afrique posent à la fois des opportunités et des défis considérables. Cette alliance pourrait permettre une coopération accrue dans des domaines essentiels tels que la sécurité régionale, le développement économique, la gestion des ressources naturelles, et la lutte contre le terrorisme. Toutefois, plusieurs défis doivent être surmontés pour que cette coopération devienne véritablement stratégique et durable. Un des principaux défis réside dans les divergences de priorités et d'approches entre les deux pays. Le Nigeria, en tant que leader régional et grande puissance économique, poursuit avant tout la consolidation de sa souveraineté et l'affirmation de son indépendance vis-à-vis des anciennes puissances coloniales. Ainsi, bien que la France cherche à renforcer son influence en Afrique de l'Ouest, le Nigeria pourrait percevoir cette coopération sous l'angle de la préservation de ses intérêts nationaux (Adebajo, 2017). Ce défi de la perception est particulièrement sensible en ce qui concerne les politiques de sécurité, où le Nigeria, fort de ses propres capacités militaires, pourrait être réticent à accepter une ingérence ou une influence trop grande de la France, malgré les liens stratégiques dans la lutte contre le terrorisme (Foucher, 2019).

En outre, la question de la stabilité politique et de la gouvernance au Nigeria représente un autre défi majeur. La corruption, les tensions politiques internes et l'instabilité dans certaines régions du pays peuvent entraver la mise en œuvre effective des projets de coopération (Michaud, 2018). La France, qui s'est souvent impliquée dans le soutien au développement institutionnel en Afrique, devra naviguer prudemment pour éviter toute association avec des régimes perçus comme autoritaires ou corrompus. D'un autre côté, les initiatives économiques, telles que les investissements dans les infrastructures, les nouvelles technologies, et les secteurs de l'agriculture et des énergies renouvelables, représentent un terrain fertile pour une coopération renforcée. Cependant, la France devra faire face à la concurrence d'autres puissances internationales, notamment la Chine, qui a étendu sa présence en Afrique, y compris au Nigeria, en offrant des financements à des conditions parfois plus

avantageuses pour les pays africains (Vidal, 2021). Cela pourrait représenter un défi pour la France qui devra non seulement accroître ses investissements mais aussi proposer des partenariats plus équitables pour renforcer son attrait.

La coopération en matière de sécurité régionale, bien que prometteuse, soulève des enjeux liés à la coordination des stratégies et à la gestion des conflits interétatiques. Le Nigeria est un acteur clé dans la gestion des crises en Afrique de l'Ouest, mais il doit parfois faire face à des obstacles internes, comme la montée de la radicalisation ou les tensions ethniques et religieuses. De plus, la France devra aligner ses objectifs sécuritaires avec les priorités du Nigeria tout en respectant la dynamique régionale (Dupuy, 2020). La création d'une alliance stratégique durable nécessitera donc une gestion fine des relations diplomatiques, militaires et économiques. Bien que des perspectives intéressantes existent pour une coopération renforcée entre la France et le Nigeria, la réalisation d'une véritable alliance stratégique en Afrique nécessitera de surmonter des défis liés aux divergences politiques, à la stabilité interne du Nigeria, à la concurrence internationale, et à la gestion des enjeux sécuritaires régionaux. Pour réussir, cette coopération devra reposer sur des bases solides de respect mutuel, de confiance et d'intérêt commun.

Conclusion

La coopération franco-nigériane présente des perspectives prometteuses pour la construction d'une alliance stratégique en Afrique, mais elle est aussi confrontée à des défis complexes. L'histoire commune, marquée par des relations économiques et diplomatiques évolutives, a forgé des liens solides, bien que ces relations aient été influencées par des dynamiques de pouvoir et des logiques géopolitiques. Le Nigeria, en tant que puissance économique et politique majeure en Afrique subsaharienne, constitue un partenaire clé pour la France dans la quête de stabilité régionale, de sécurité et de développement. Toutefois, ces relations sont marquées par des enjeux multiples, notamment les divergences dans les approches sécuritaires et les tensions internes au Nigeria qui impactent la coopération bilatérale. Les piliers de cette coopération, en particulier dans les domaines

de la sécurité, de la lutte contre le terrorisme, de l'économie, et du développement des infrastructures, offrent un potentiel de renforcement des relations entre les deux nations. La France, à travers son engagement en Afrique de l'Ouest, a un intérêt stratégique à maintenir de bonnes relations avec le Nigeria, tout en étant consciente de la concurrence accrue de puissances émergentes comme la Chine. Cette dynamique a poussé la France à adapter ses approches économiques et diplomatiques afin de mieux répondre aux défis actuels, notamment en matière d'investissements et de partenariats durables.

Cependant, la réussite de cette alliance stratégique repose sur la capacité des deux pays à surmonter plusieurs obstacles. Parmi ces obstacles, on retrouve la gestion des divergences politiques, les défis liés à la stabilité interne du Nigeria, la complexité des relations multilatérales dans la région, et les impératifs de transparence et de respect des principes de bonne gouvernance. La coopération franco-nigériane ne peut se limiter à une relation unilatérale fondée sur des intérêts politiques ou économiques, mais doit reposer sur une véritable compréhension mutuelle des priorités respectives, ainsi que sur une volonté commune de faire face aux défis globaux. Les perspectives d'une coopération renforcée ne peuvent être envisagées qu'à travers un cadre dynamique et évolutif, prenant en compte non seulement les enjeux sécuritaires et économiques, mais aussi les questions sociales et culturelles qui influent sur les dynamiques internes de chaque pays. La création d'une véritable alliance stratégique nécessitera des efforts continus en matière de diplomatie, de gestion des ressources naturelles, et d'engagement multilatéral pour répondre aux besoins de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, région où les enjeux géopolitiques sont de plus en plus complexes.

Les perspectives d'une alliance stratégique franco-nigériane dépendent de la capacité des deux pays à surmonter des défis internes et externes. Cela inclut la gestion des divergences politiques, la gestion des tensions régionales et la nécessité de renforcer les institutions démocratiques et la bonne gouvernance au Nigeria. L'efficacité de cette alliance stratégique ne pourra se concrétiser qu'à

travers un engagement continu et une volonté commune de répondre aux défis de développement et de sécurité en Afrique de l'Ouest. Bien que des défis notables subsistent, la coopération franco-nigériane offre des opportunités substantielles pour renforcer les relations bilatérales et jouer un

rôle clé dans l'avenir de l'Afrique. Une telle alliance pourrait avoir des implications significatives pour la stabilité régionale et la compétitivité économique des deux nations sur la scène mondiale.

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RETHINKING AFRICAN INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND ITS RELEVANCE IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE STUDIES OF EWONDO FOLKTALES

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Abstract

Folktales are sometimes seen as irrelevant in the context of contemporary development. Despite the general consensus on the artistic merits of traditional stories and the role played by tradition in the linguistic and cultural continuity of indigenous people, they are hardly used to improve man's socio-cultural environment. The main objective of this paper is to show that development of the rural area is impossible if it is not premised on their own historic-cultural conditions. In fact, the improvement of our traditional societies can never progress socially on the basis of unrestrictedly borrowed cultures. This work lays its foundations on the hypothesis that, traditional and popular culture can play a significant role in resolving local problems related to poverty, moral standards and education. To achieve the set objectives, the study used empirical method which required a collection of oral tales narrated in some ethnic groups in Ewondo tribe. Through direct questioning, we posed open-ended questions to our informants. The work concluded that the cultural heritage can be used for the economic growth and development in the rural area.

Keywords: folklores, culture, development, knowledge, indigenous knowledge, economic growth

Introduction

In developed and developing countries all over the world, farmers, indigenous and local communities have traditional knowledge, expertise, skills and practices related to their culture. Since its creation in 1945, Food and Agriculture organization has recognized the significant contribution and the relevance of local knowledge in rural development. Traditional practices reliance on ethical standards has been abandoned, with disastrous results for the environment. The remaining keepers of ancestor and traditional knowledge, including the ethics and ethos that helped nature preserve its goodness for life on earth, are tribal and indigenous peoples. However, the central focus of this work is to show that over the past century, there has been an extraordinary loss of indigenous and traditional knowledge since the coming and the interference of the modern culture in the African tradition. This work would bring out the nature of African

indigenous societies and raise some limitations.

Statement of the problem

Indigenous knowledge explores the unique and share knowledge of a population, people, or community. It is based on communal understanding and is rooted and conditioned by the culture of a locality in question. The development of indigenous knowledge is a byproduct of effort to master the environment and has been a matter of survival to the community. This means that, indigenous knowledge is a local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or a society; it contrasts with the international knowledge system which is generated through the global network of universities and research institutes. As such, this research poses the problem of the relevance of the indigenous knowledge found in folktale in the development of rural communities in the Ewondo's tribe.

Objectives

This work has two objectives:

1. Identify and analyze the knowledge found in the Ewondo folktales and show how this knowledge overcome challenges in improving rural people condition.
2. Establish the limitations encountered in preserving and transferring indigenous knowledge in the modern society.

Research questions

This study is guided by two questions.

1. Which knowledge are found in the ewondo's tales and how it can help in the improvement of rural people?
2. What are the indigenous knowledge strategies developed in the tales to overcome limitations in preserving and transferring indigenous knowledge?

Conceptual review

Knowledge

Knowledge is a product of education; it is a set of information, facts, ideas, skills, expertise, and awareness or familiarity acquired by a person through education or experience for the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject (Oxford English Dictionary: 2017). Knowledge will also refer to socially accepted understanding of a subject, which offers an individual or a group the ability to use it to attain a specific goal. It is the "result of empirical inquiry that solves the problem at hand" (Rohmann, 1999: 102).

Lemke (1994: 15) notes that the term, "knowledge is often used to refer to a body of facts and principles accumulated by mankind in the course of time." As mankind is dispersed across the earth, what is knowledge to a particular group might be insignificant to another in a different setting. Environmental factors, language, and biological and cultural dispositions influence what every group classifies and values as knowledge. However, knowledge is a complex body of several socially constructed ideas, validated by the dominant intellectual persuasion at each point in time (Lemke, 1994: 1). The implication is that knowledge is "always biased because it is produced from a social perspective of the analyst, thus reflecting his or her inclination towards certain interests, values, groups, parties, classes, nations," among others (Jackson and Sorensen,

2003: 248). In view of the above, one can say that, knowledge is not and cannot be neutral either morally or politically or ideologically, since all knowledge reflects the interests of the observer.

Indigenous knowledge

Indigenous knowledge on his part as a concept is diverse. Greiner (1998: 1) asserts that indigenous knowledge is "the unique, traditional, local knowledge existing within and developed around specific conditions of women and men indigenous to a particular geographic area." Warren defines indigenous knowledge as "the local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society; it contrasts with the international knowledge system which is generated through the global network of universities and research institutes" (Warren ,1995: xv). Kiggundu (2007: 42) defines the term indigenous knowledge as local knowledge that exists as a result of interactions with the environment by members of a community within a geographical area. One can say that Indigenous knowledge covers all fields of human endeavor including, but not limited to, agriculture, environment, pharmacology, health, trade and economic or political systems.

Traditional knowledge and the nature of African Indigenous societies

Traditionally, Africans believe in the existence of the supernatural. At the physical demise of an individual, the soul starts to exist in the ancestral world, watching over the activities of the living. For that reason, African Indigenous societies are traditionally applied in harmony with the natural and spiritual world. Research has shown that around the world, the indigenous have a connection with the local land and wildlife which are both symbolic (that are knowledge systems based on spiritual ritual, religious practices) and experimental. Indigenous healers, for instance, have intimate botanical knowledge of the environment including plants and their healing properties. Indigenous farmers are thoroughly acquainted with the vegetation, soil, and climatic conditions of a place. Indigenous hunters have extensive knowledge of the habitat including the "location and timing of a host of biological events unknown to scientists. They know the life cycle of certain animals including the kinds of foods they eat, methods of searching for food, their pregnancy

and gestation period, natural habitat and average life-span” (Knudston and Suzuki, 1992).

In addition, the wisdom and skills maintained by the keepers of the indigenous knowledge as applied in the traditional practices of farmers, hunters, gatherers, master fishermen, artisans are based on a dynamic and sophisticated understanding of their local surrounding. For that, change in the use of this knowledge is not random, but rather predicated upon conscious efforts by people to define their problems and seek solutions through local experiments and innovation, including evaluating and learning from appropriate technologies elsewhere. By the way, one should have in mind that African traditional knowledge systems may not necessarily be better suited to making long- term predictions of change, but indigenous knowledge may have some advantages in recognizing the onset of change and finding ingenious ways to accommodate and mitigate them at early stages, within the community decision making structure. Despite the fact that these traditional or cultural practices are ingeniously designed to address local ecological limitation by maintaining a sustainable utilization and protection of commonly shared natural resources, it also has some weaknesses that we are going to raise up and some limitations we come across in transferring indigenous knowledge.

Development

According to Lansana (2011), the term development is generally understood etymologically to mean “expansion by a process of growth” or growth and differentiation of some entity along lines natural to its kind. In others words, expansion here can be seen as a process of transformation which can be viewed in moving from states of being less developed to ones of being more developed. Moreover, the idea of development is generally seen as central to any discussion of the economic, cultural, and political aspects. Nations of the West are seen as “developed “and members of the “First World”, while those of Africa, Latin America, and some of Asia are seen as “developing “belonging to the “Third World”. In fact, Africa failed to understand that the neglect of the traditional knowledge in development strategies is directly linked to their down fall.

Zounméou (2007) puts emphasis on this when he says that “development strategies which ignore the importance of the human behavior are, to a certain extent, alienating and self-destructive. In regard Zounmenou’s approach to development, it can be said that any African community that operates on a rigorous application or a code of conduct that emphasizes African moral values is likely to develop tremendously in various ways. Nevertheless, to have a good development planning technique and succeed in the development strategies, one should first of all know the nature of African indigenous societies.

This work is based on folklore, particularly on folktales of the Ewondo community that is the reason why Alan (2007) emphasizes that for every ethnic group, folklore is the identity; for a country it is the root of the nation’s cultural tradition or national civilization. As one can see, it is clear that folklore covers vast areas of learning, but we want to limit ourselves to oral tales.

Limitations encountered in preserving and transferring Indigenous knowledge

The user of traditional knowledge faces potential difficulties when he has to put in place the two paradigms (that is indigenous and state) in the development activities. Irrespective of “scientific objectivity”, there are significant differences of perception, values and languages between those who are interested in documentation and applying it and those who possess traditional knowledge. Another aspect that makes it difficult is that, as the practitioners, guardians and educators of such knowledge, the death of key elders, particularly women, and the resulting “extinction” of their collective wisdom, presents a serious constraint to the long-term survival of indigenous knowledge.

This is partly due to the fact that much of African traditional knowledge exist in oral form, is learned from elders through shared practice, trial and error experimentation. It is also part of the complex unfolding of events stemming from the severe cultural disruption faced by native Africans during the colonial period. During this period, African tribal practices involving the use of traditional knowledge systems (indigenous medicine) which were largely ignored, undervalued or replaced by the colonial practices.

Despite the inherent incompatibility between indigenous or traditional knowledge systems and that of the state or scientific knowledge system, an important challenge is to find innovative mechanisms that serve to integrate both systems for mutual benefit.

Theoretical framework

The attempt to analyze oral art has engaged scholars from many disciplines. Each scholar attempts to use some form theory that has been proved in his area of study to analyze the Orature. In our study, we are going to make use of functionalism.

Functionalism

The functional approach was given a closer attention in the 1950 and 1960 by Talcott Parsons. Functionalist stresses that the social world can be studied in the same way as the physical world. Functionalists see the social as objectively real and their emphasis on the “organic unity” of society system exist. Kent McClelland explains: a functionalist may argue, for instance, that every society will have a religion, because religious institutions have certain functions which contribute to the survival of the social system as a whole, just like body’s survival (<http://web.grinnell.edu/courses>).

Okpewho defines functionalism as a theory which examines the peculiar network of needs in any society and the way in which the network ensures the contentment and the survival of the social system (1983:21). Approaching a literary text from the perspective of functionalism is admitting that the text, like other social institutions is created to serve a social function. The scholars who approach an oral genre from a functional perspective are often guided by the following view: the study of literary culture often involves the meticulous exploration of the direction of human movement and the way that movement influences the growth of culture and oral literature (www.sdu.dk/-media).

In the light of functionalist, each Ewondo tale is expected to perform a social function. The tale “The quarrel between the part of the body” is

crafted to discourage rancorous disunity, and promotes social cohesion and the kind of relationship that is comparable with the part of the body.

Methodology

This section presents the type of research adopted for this research work, the choice of the corpus and the method of data collection.

Research design

The study is based on a corpus, which consists of tale analysis. The study is qualitative, that is to say it is based on the analysis of oral performances. The nature of the study calls for dual approach: the functionalist and the African indigenous knowledge approaches, the latter approach is a way of thinking that uses knowledge system developed by communities to guide interactions with the environment and make decisions. This knowledge is based on cultural world views and experiences, and can be used to address a range of issues, including climate change, disaster risk reduction and agricultural innovation.

Data collection procedure

Data is collected through collection oral tale narrated in some ethnic groups in the Beti land in Cameroon. Beside the collection of tales, one of our major objectives in the field was to expose the various performance contexts in order to add verve and vitality to the work.

We also adopted the observation method. In this way, we formed part of the audience and observed all the performances during the storytelling sessions. This method gave us the opportunities to witness various aspects of the performance, especially gesture and other paralinguistic features.

Through direct questioning, we posed open-ended question to our informants. The responses which came out from men, women and children were tape –recorded and sometimes jotted in exercise books. We noticed that asking questions and getting answers is a task harder than it seems. Some responses were ambiguous and did not make them easy to get the required information.

DATA PRESENTATION

“The quarrel between the parts of the body”

The parts of the body lived happily. They loved one another and shared everything in common.

But as time went on, they began to disagree among themselves. The legs complained: “We work a lot. We are the ones who carry the whole body to the farm, to the stream and to the market. We also protect all of you from danger by running away with you”.

The arms were very angry: “What are you saying? “Asked the arms. “You say you carry us along? But when you take us to the farm, we are the ones who weed the farm. We till the soil. We do the harvesting. We carry food to the house. We cook for you and you think we do nothing?”

When the eyes saw this, they said: “you legs and arm! you better shut up! If we did not exist to show you the direction of all the places you visit, how would you find your way? We show you the direction to the farm, streams and markets. Even when you harvest, we show you what to harvest. That is why you cannot harvest the unripe foods. And you want to look down at us?”

The head laughed saying, “Look here. You better stop being foolish. Your legs, arms, and eyes, mouth, and nose, shut up. Do you know that I am the one who directs all your activities? I am the one who ask your legs to run from danger. In the same way, I ask the arms to work for us, I also ask the eyes to see and the mouth to eat. The anus too complained, “I will block myself. I will see how you can eat without passing out faeces”. After a long argument, the head said, “please, let’s try to settle our problems. We have all seen that we are all important to one another. Brothers and sisters, let’s unite and work together, for unity is one.

“The Overzealous Farmer Boy”

In those days of old, the people had farms very far away from home. The farms were located in the forest lands because the soils were fertile. Although the yields were good, there was a lot of work to be done on this farm. From the planting to the harvesting season, there was little time set aside for the rest as people were constantly needed on the farms. They had to work very hard to keep watch over the field else birds of prey and wild animals would destroy the crops. Men and women did the farming but the boys and girls kept watch over the fields. The boys and girls set out early and returned sometimes in the evening. Where there were huts for sleeping on the farms, some slept there. In large field requiring many boys on the farm they oftenest out in the morning in group and returned in like manner except in situations some people expressed the wish to stay away.

“The tortoise and the rabbit”

Once upon a time, there was a great famine in the village of Nkoala’a where the tortoise and his friend the Rabbit lived. As a result of the famine, the animals became thinner and thinner every day since they did not have enough to eat. So, one day, Rabbit initiated a plan to get a lot of food. He dug a hole which linked his house to the market place and through this hole he was able to get the foodstuffs of the market women which they always kept at the market store at night. The Tortoise was surprised that his friend the Rabbit was growing robust while the other animals were still getting thinner as the day progressed. So he decided to embark on a fact –finding mission in Rabbit’s house. On getting there, he was astonished to see the large quantity of food in his friend’s house.

DATA ANALYSIS

The following case studies provide insight into some of the lesson learned based on a better understanding of indigenous organizational structure, soil management and wisdom through beti folktales.

Folktales and educational development

“the Tortoise and the Rabbit”

Once upon a time, there was a great famine in the village of Nkoala’a where the tortoise and his friend the Rabbit lived. As a result of the famine, the animals became thinner and thinner every day since they did not have enough to eat. So, one day, Rabbit initiated a plan to get a lot of food. He dug a hole which linked his house to the market place and through this hole he was able to get the foodstuffs of the market women which

they always kept at the market store at night. The Tortoise was surprised that his friend the Rabbit was growing robust while the other animals were still getting thinner as the day progressed. So he decided to embark on a fact –finding mission in Rabbit’s house. On getting there, he was astonished to see the large quantity of food in his friend’s house.

This folktale is didactic to both the young and the old alike. It is an act of constant reminder that those who plan evil for some other people have evil waiting for them at their door steps as is manifested by the fate of tortoise who wanted to pay good act of generosity with evil intentions. Through this tale, we understand that education helps individuals within a society to understand their lived reality. The individuals must learn from experiencing real life in order to develop freely and be able to contribute to the development of a society. The structure of this tale, which is seen in terms of succession of experiences and enterprises having a maximum of likeness for the learner with a view to giving that development, must be helpful in meeting and controlling life situations.

-Folktales and the development of moral values

An educational system constitutes a good medium for the development of social values. In the traditional society, folktales are considered as a unique educational medium deeply rooted in African philosophical thought. In other words, an important function of folktale has been to educate as the older generation imparts knowledge to younger members of the family (Gale, 1996: Xiii).

Let us examine this tale: **“The quarrel between the parts of the body”**

The parts of the body lived happily. They loved one another and shared everything in common.

But as time went on, they began to disagree among themselves. The legs complained: “We work a lot. We are the ones who carry the whole body to the farm, to the stream and to the market. We also protect all of you from danger by running away with you”.

The arms were very angry: “What are you saying? “Asked the arms. “You say you carry us along? But when you take us to the farm, we are the ones who weed the farm. We till the soil. We do the harvesting. We carry food to the house. We cook for you and you think we do nothing?”

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This tale expresses communal living in Africa as fundamental. It teaches us that a community that is constructed on constant arguments, disagreements and rancor lacks the strength of unity and a sense of focus that should characterize a communal people. In fact, we can see that communalism as a product of African philosophical thoughts is projected in the tale in which separated parts of the human body are personalized and presented as indispensable to the entire human anatomy. That is, while attributing the decline of moral African values to exotic cultures, (Masquelier, 1999) says: “Mawri legends and tales are replete with explicit allusions to how human greed and selfishness have progressively

destroyed the fruitful symbiosis that existed between people and the spirits. The past is always constructed as an idyllic world where no one was wanting because the spirits took care of everyone’s need so long as people trusted them and care for them.” The folktale provides therefore a guide for our children to choose between positive and negative, rational and irrational in order to arrive at an appropriate synthesis that can foster the moral.

If we examine the tale title: “The stubborn girl”, the lady is been swallowed by the black river due to her disobedience. In fact, she refuses to follow the rules and regulations given to her by her father who advised her to not give herself to

any boy before marriage. The tale dramatizes the possible repercussions of misconduct and moral depravity manifested in the disrespect of parents.

Most African folklores also transcend the entertainment realm, hold deep and stimulate philosophical truths. These stories were undoubtedly both recreational and educative, cutting across disciplines, including: philosophy, literature, law, psychology, music, drama, arts, and sociology. One can say that some stories and legends are didactics in content, emphasizing the correct and the acceptable moral conduct of the society.

Folktales and economic development: Division of labour

The indigenous in Africa viewed labour very much the same way as land, a communal enterprise where responsibilities and profits are shared accordingly. Labour was extracted from within the extended family, and the larger the extended family then, the greater the productivity. Unlike the Western concept of productivity where labour has been “thingified” or depersonalized, and therefore can be mindlessly expropriated, the African indigenous system of thought places a lot of respect on labour and considers investment in human capital as a worthwhile venture. For example, in my village, (Nkoala’a in the South region of Cameroon), on occasions when labour demands were beyond the ability of the extended family to supply, cooperatives were organized within the village to assist. This was usually the case when the need arose for heavy farm work or for special projects such as building a house. The work groups involved “pooling together members of the same age group, kinsmen, or all male or female members of a village.

Among the Beti’s, a man can invite his relatives, his friends or the members of his club, depending on the size of the task, to form a working bee (*ikwean*). He provides food and drink for the group at the end of the day’s work, but this is not considered payment; others participate because they earn the right to call upon their host for help under similar circumstances. No strict accounting is made of an individual’s participation; but if someone calls for working bees without taking part when others called them, it is noticed and others will fail to respond to his

invitation.

Farmers could also agree to labour exchange by taking turns to work together on one man’s farm until all the farms of all the group members are cultivated. This brings about rapid development in the village.

In beti rural area, agriculture is the main occupation of nearly every body, and the source of livelihood. Here, there is a strong division of farming labor by sex and the type of crops. The men’s farm, which is known as cash crops: cocoa, coffee; while the women’s farm, is what the family consumes, hence the appellation, subsistence farming. Children are closely integrated into the household production systems. As reflected in oral tales, men, women and children has separates roles to play at various stages of the cultivation throughout the year.

Let us take the example of this tale: “**The Overzealous Farmer Boy**”

In those days of old, the people had farms very far away from home. The farms were located in the forest lands because the soils were fertile. Although the yields were good, there was a lot of work to be done on this farm. From the planting to the harvesting season, there was little time set aside for the rest as people were constantly needed on the farms. They had to work very hard to keep watch over the field else birds of prey and wild animals would destroy the crops Men and women did the farming but the boys and girls kept watch over the fields. The boys and girls set out early and returned sometimes in the evening. Where there were huts for sleeping on the farms, some slept there. In large field requiring many boys on the farm they oftenest out in the morning in group and returned in like manner except in situations some people expressed the wish to stay away.

The tales encourage hard work, perseverance, cooperation, industriousness. African philosophy of development must be, seen and found from within. When the inner self is satisfied, that is, by the exteriorization of self-development in its contact and interaction with others, the other selves benefit.

Many tales are narrated to transmit such values. The expectation is that any community that is sufficiently rooted in such norms possesses

greater potentials for economic development. Alan Pence and Jessica Schaffer in “Knowledge and Early Childhood Development in Africa” (2009) arguing in favor of the economic potential found in oral tales said:” Several arguments have favored the use of indigenous knowledge in development practices, ranging from the philosophical and ethnical to the utilitarian and pragmatic. Indigenous knowledge with its roots in reciprocal and redistributive cultures, is perceived as providing the basis for an alternative to the dominant economic and moral system of the West.” In other words, well cultured and rigorously disciplined people possess a greater capacity for economic growth than a community of rancor and anarchy. This story shows us that a

genuine economic progress requires absolute hard work. And beside hard work, a moral commitment and cultural norms also boost economic development.

Conclusion:

The work highlights the traditional knowledge inherent in oral tales and contends that the tales can be of great economic advantage to a people. The lacunae that exists within the moral, cultural, social and economic life in Africa can, to a considerable extent, be filled by sound and practical knowledge of their oral tales. Indigenous knowledge is the knowledge that many Africans are acquainted with, but it is not incorporated in teaching curricula and research agenda across the continent.

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A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF SPEECH ACTS IN 2023 NIGERIAN PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN SPEECHES OF TINUBU AND OBI

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Abstract

This study investigated the speech acts in the 2023 Nigerian presidential campaign speeches of two frontline presidential aspirants: Bola Ahmed Tinubu of All Progressive Congress (APC) and Peter Obi of Labour Party (LP) and how they have used language as a tool in their bid to canvass for support. This study adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to analyse both underlying themes and narratives constructed in the speech acts as well as determine the frequency of the various speech acts deployed in the campaign speeches. The data for this study were sourced from the recorded videos and documented campaign speeches by TVC, Channels Television and AIT on YouTube. The study adopted the random sampling technique to select four (4) campaign speeches, two by each candidate. The theoretical frameworks adopted for this study are the Speech Acts Theory particularly J. L. Austin (1962) and Searle's (1969) speech acts taxonomies. Based on the findings of the study, the dominant speech acts deployed in the campaign speeches of Tinubu and Obi are the Commissives with (30.7%) consisting promising, pledging, committing, guaranteeing and assuring. The second dominant acts are the representatives, covering (30%) of the total speech acts, mostly asserting, reporting, informing, revealing, stating, claiming, accusing, blaming, criticising. The rest of the distribution include Expressive (20.7%), including thanking, condoling, blessing, well-wishing and apologising; and Directives (16%) Speech Acts, comprising, directing, pleading, requesting, advising, questioning. The result indicated that the least employed speech acts are the declaratives, consisting of only (2.5%) of the entire speech acts. The study concludes that political campaign speeches are rich in speech acts, serving as strategic tools for candidates to garner public support, and politicians prioritise two key objectives - communicating their vision and building trust and hope.

Keywords: *Pragmatics, Speech Acts, Politics, Campaign and Campaign Speeches*

Introduction

Leadership at all levels in human society is achieved through the instrumentality of language. In a democratic setting where power is attained through elections, human employ the use of language as a tool to solicit for votes by convincing the voters that they have their interest at heart. Through a strategic selection of linguistic items and utterances, political elites control the actions of others, and whoever controls peoples' actions also controls their minds. To support this,

Wardhaugh (1987, p. 285) asserts that "Utterances have some functional value," that our utterances are actions, they do certain things". This buttresses the fact that language is not used only to pass information, but to perform some action and this function of language permeate the political space.

Language is a veritable instrument of thought and an indispensable channel of communication, especially in the field of politics, and a resource in the hands of politicians. This is because all political and politicians' activities,

ranging from campaign, manifestoes, rally, election, inauguration to governance are all carried out through the avenue created by language. As electioneering circles unfold, politicians take to various platforms to communicate with the electorates through political campaign speeches. Speech making is a vital part of the politicians' role in announcing policies and persuading people to agree with such policies. In a more elaborate sense, Ardita and Elbasan (2017) assert that political speech can be seen as a means of establishing and maintaining social relationships, expressing feelings, and selling ideas, policies, and political projects in any society. The language of politicians is characterised by their ability to manipulate linguistic resources in order to sell their political ideologies and manifestoes to the electorates.

Election is periodic process where leaders are elected to hold public offices through a free, fair, and credible voting process which allows people vote to choose their leaders, and this is a major feature of a democracy. Language is a crucial tool in politics, as it allows politicians to announce policies and persuade people to agree with them. Language has become a tool for politicians seeking power as they manipulate it in ways that appeal to the public to identify with them. Certainly, politicians use words and sentences in an emotive manner; it is part of their aim to create a feeling of solidarity, to arouse emotions such as fear, hate or joy (Wilson, 1990). Therefore, politicians do not use language in vain, their use of language is action and goal-oriented. Politicians use language to manipulate linguistic resources to sell their ideologies and manifestoes, achieving success through elegant and persuasive rhetoric. Political discourse is evolving and constituting a significant area of linguistic study that has captured the interest of researchers. In the 2023 General Elections, Nigeria faced challenges due to the influence of religion and ethnic identity. Politicians use emotive language to create solidarity and arouse emotions like fear, hate, or joy. This study investigates the speeches of three leading political presidential aspirants, Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the All Progressive Congress (APC) and Peter Obi of the Labour Party (LP), to uncover the pragmatic contents in their speeches.

This pragmatic analysis aims to understand how politicians use language to sway public support in their favor and increase the selling power of their candidacy.

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the study of those context-dependent aspects of meaning which are systematically abstracted away from in the construction of content or logical form (Horn & Ward, 2006). Many practitioners of Pragmatics view it differently (Allot, 2010). This is to say that pragmatics as a distinct field of linguistic enquiry is approached and defined from diverse perspectives. Leech (1980) defines pragmatics as the study of how utterances have meaning in situation. According to Levinson (1983), pragmatics as the study of the relations between language and context, which to him, are basic to an account of language understanding. In the words of Levinson, pragmatics provides spaces to account for hints, implicit purposes, assumptions, social attitudes and so on which are effectively communicated by the use of language. Explaining further, Levinson says that understanding an utterance has to do with connecting what is said to what is mutually assumed or what has been said before. Yule (1983) posits that pragmatics is a field of study that focuses on four areas: meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener; contextual meaning, where meaning is influenced by context; how more is communicated than said; expression of relative distance, where the choice between said and unsaid is determined by distance; and the relationship between linguistic forms and users. This this light, pragmatics is concerned with understanding how people make sense of each other linguistically, as well as the meaning people assign to their utterances. It also explores how context influences what is said, as well as how speakers organise their words in relation to who they are talking to, where, when, and under what circumstances. In expounding the pursuit of pragmatics, Adegbija (1999), cited in Adeyanju, (2009), submits that for a pragmatic analysis to be considered satisfactory, the study of the language must incorporate the context, message, interlocutors, presuppositions and implicature. These and many other constitute the domains of pragmatic enquiry. Buttressing the

indispensability of these components, Bossan (2017), succinctly affirms that in any pragmatic study, the focal point of the definitions is context, but also the message being communicated, the participants involved, their intentions and knowledge of the world are taken into consideration. From the foregoing submissions by different scholars about the field of pragmatic study, it can be said in summary that pragmatics is the study of language and meaning in connection to its users within certain contexts.

Political Discourse and Language, Campaign Speeches

In common parlance, politics refers to what politicians do, particularly when it comes to state affairs. The word “politics” comes from the Greek word polis, which means city or state (Joseph, 2006, p. 2). According to Chilton (2004, p. 1), politics is “a struggle for power, between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who resist it”. The global competition for leadership positions, including in Nigeria, often involves negotiation and persuasion through political campaigns and speeches, making communication central to politics. The term political discourse can refer in a number of ways to a range of different types of talk or text (Wilson, 2015). In the views of Van Dijk (1997) and Fairclough (2012), any kind of discourse that is a political production, be it a speech, debate, political interview, policy document etc. is regarded as political discourse. It also seen as any talk whose subject matter is politics and or which is politically motivated. Political discourse hence may take the form of speeches, debates, interviews, campaign advertisements, etc. Van Dijk (1997) highlights that context significantly influences political discourse, encompassing political actors, institutions, events, and gatherings, including political campaigns, parliamentary sittings, press conferences, and interviews. Language is a potent manipulative instrument in the hands of political leaders. Because politics is essentially about striving to control power, language is used to achieve that control, making language a powerful political weapon. Its purpose is to inform, educate, motivate, convince, entertain, and influence citizens. Language is also used to prepare,

accompany, govern, guide, explain, justify, evaluate, critique, and influence politics (Osisanwo, 2009, 2010).

Political campaigns are organised efforts by a political party or candidate to attract voters' support in elections (Ginger, 2009), influence decision-making processes within specific groups (Ezegwu et al., 2017), and coordinate activities over time to achieve a specific objective (Chile 2011). This objective is perhaps well captured in the definition of political campaign by Aduradola and Ojukwu (2013, p.106) cited in Etika, et al. (2018, p. 8-9) thus:

the mobilization of forces either by an organization or individual to influence others in order to effect an identified and desired political change. It shows people and particularly, political candidates' ability to sensitize the political community in relation to making the community see them as potentials and better representatives of the people.

Political campaigns aim to enhance decision-making within a group by presenting candidates' messages to electorates. They also serve as marketing actions during elections, influencing public opinion through speeches. These speeches showcase candidates' accomplishments, ideas, and personal appeal, persuading listeners to vote.

Empirical Studies

Various studies have been undertaken in some interrelated fields of linguistics including pragmatics which is the anchor field of this study as well as stylistics and discourse analysis. Also, the speeches reviewed comprise both those of Nigerian politicians and those of their foreign counterparts. Such studies include Ibrahim and Olorin (2020) who studied language as a propaganda tool in Nigerian electioneering. They found that language, both spoken and written, has different effects on listeners. Political campaign speeches in Nigeria often contain rhetoric, exaggeration, rhetorical questions, and abusive utterances.

A study by Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere (2012) analysed President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's victory and inaugural speeches, focusing on speech acts and pragmatic functions. The study analyzed 20 sentences and 40 speech

acts, using Austin and Searle's Speech Act theory. The results showed assertive, directive, expressive, verdictive, commissive, and declarative speech acts, aiding in understanding and interpreting the speeches.

Rakaj's (2022) study focuses on Barack Obama's speeches during the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections. Data was collected from campaign speeches and quantitatively analysed using Searle's taxonomy. The study found that Obama's most common speech goals were to reassure, confirm, and reaffirm. The performative verb "promise" was used in seven examples, and the construction "be going to + infinitive" and the modal word "will" were used instead. The study differs from previous research, shifting to Nigeria and focusing on the 2023 presidential campaign.

Ige (2023) studied Bola Tinubu's political speech, "Emi lokan, Yoruba lokan," from Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, borrowing insight from van Dijk's (2006) socio-cognitive model. Analysing the ideologies expressed in his speech, it revealed that his speech contained elements of supremacist, collectivist, welfarist, and ethnocentric ideologies, influenced by discursive moves.

Azubuikwe and Ngwuoke (2024) examined the pragmatic acts of locution, illocution and perlocution in Mr. Peter Obi's speech at Chatham house United Kingdom during the build up to February 25, 2023 general election in Nigeria. The speech act theories of J.L. Austin (1962) and Searly (1969) were adopted to show the deployment of illocutionary acts. The findings of the study revealed that Mr. Peter Obi used more of assertive illocutionary speech act in his speech covering a frequency of 20 and (42%) to affirm, report, and announce the parlous state of affairs in Nigeria. This is closely followed by commissive and expressive illocutionary speech acts which recorded the frequency of 9 (32%) each.

These existing studies were confined to presidential campaign rallies and speeches with temporal settings prior to 2023 general election. This work focused on pragmatic analysis of the 2023 Nigeria's presidential campaign speeches especially from the standpoint of Speech Act Theory.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks adopted for this study are the Speech Acts Theory particularly J. L. Austin (1962) and Searle's (1969) speech acts taxonomies. The theories considered here were developed primarily in relation to spoken interactions, and since interlocutors, specifically politicians do things with their words, hence the suitability of the theories in analysing campaign speeches.

Austin's Model of Analysis

Speech Act is one of the domains of pragmatic enquiry. According to Yule (1996), speech acts are those action performed via utterances, and, in English, are commonly given more specific labels such as apology, complaint, compliment, invitation, promise, and request. This is to say that utterances contain both information and action and anytime an utterance does something, it is referred as speech acts. Griffiths (2006, p.148) states that: "speech act is the basic unit of linguistic interaction" In the same vein, Osisanwo (2003, p.55) opines that "an utterance is a speech act", which implies that in any utterance a person makes, an act is performed. This supports the view of Cutting (2002, p.13) which maintains that speech acts are the action performed in saying something and these acts performed includes stating a fact, an opinion, confirming or denying something, issuing an order, apologising, etc. Erlinda (2019), adds that speech act is the usage of language to accomplish something. Griffiths, Osisanwo, and Cutting all emphasise that every utterance, every piece of spoken language, constitutes a speech act. This highlights the inherent performative nature of language – it is not just about conveying information but also about *doing* something. By implication, utterances have performative power as every utterance, whether spoken or written, has the potential to produce effects in the world. In this case, political speech is not a speech alone but a series of speech acts, and by implication, Tinubu and Obi, two political aspirants in the 2023 presidential race, are actors in words. As the foremost proponent of speech act theory, Austin (1962) postulates that engaging in speech act means performing the complementary acts of locution, illocution, and perlocution.

Locutionary Speech Act

A locutionary act is an expression used with a determinate sense or reference. In other words, a locutionary act refers to the actual words uttered or the basic act of speaking, which itself consist of three related sub-acts - a phonic act a phatic act a rhetoric act.

Illocutionary Speech Acts

An illocutionary act is an act performed through an expression. It can also be said to be the intention of the speaker. Illocutionary acts include commanding, informing, warning, threatening, deterring, promising, directing, appreciating, congratulating etc. Austin postulates five categories of illocutionary acts which are:

- i. Exercitives: These are acts that connote order, request, or advice with the use of verbs like command, order, plead, beg etc.
- ii. Verdictives: These are acts of making judgement or decisions with the use of verbs such as quit, hold, calculate, analyse etc.
- iii. Commissive: These are used to make promises, pledge, contract etc.
- iv. Expositives: These are acts that expand views, make illustrations and give responses with verbs such as affirm, deny, illustrate, answer, describe etc.
- v. Behavitives: These are acts that express the mental state of speaker with verbs such as apologise, thanks, commiserate, congratulate etc.

Perlocutionary Speech Acts

The perlocutionary act is the act of bringing about certain effects by means of the utterance. This means that when an utterance is uttered, it has certain effects on the hearer, it makes the hearer to behave in a certain way. For example, an utterance may make the hearer laugh, cry, leave a place, become dejected, become hopeful stand or sit.

Searle's Model of Speech Act

Searle's (1969) model of speech acts, a modified version of Austin's, is one of the several different taxonomies of speech acts. Searle gave some principles as informing the foundations for a better classification of speech act. He proposes that speech acts fall into five types which include commissive acts, declarative acts, directive acts, expressive acts and representative acts

- Representatives include assertions and statements and involve an attempt to describe the world. The speaker is committed to the truth of proposition e.g. affirm, believe, deny, conclude, report.
- Directives are orders, requests and the likes. The speakers try to get the hearer to do something, e.g. ask, challenge, command, insist, request.
- Commissive are acts which commit the speaker to some future course of action. The speaker is committed to varying degrees, to a certain course of action, e.g. guarantee, pledge, promise, swear, vow.
- Expressive speech acts are those that express emotion and reveal the speaker's attitude about a state of affairs such as congratulating, condoling, thanking, welcoming, praising, blaming, apologising, or expressing pleasure. They have a strongly interpersonal function.
- Declarations correspond closely to most of Austin's original examples of performatives utterances that change the world rather than describing it. Declarations include sacking a worker, performing a marriage, and sentencing a criminal. The speaker alerts the external status or condition of an object or situation solely by making the utterance e.g. I resign, I baptised, you're fired, war is hereby declared.

Methodology

This study adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative approaches focus on the underlying themes and narratives constructed in the speech acts in the campaign speeches. The qualitative approach helps to measure and determine the frequency of the various speech acts deployed in the campaign speeches. The data for this study were sourced from the recorded videos and documented campaign speeches by TVC News, Channel Television and AIT on YouTube. Since the 2023 presidential bid had three frontrunners from three frontline political parties including Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the All Progressive Congress (APC), Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Peter Obi of the Labour Party

(LP). The study employed the random sampling technique to select three (3) campaign speeches, one from each candidate, to specifically examine the speech acts contained in the speakers' utterances as they canvass for political power. Each campaign speech was taken at least from a different geographical zone.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The researcher, having transcribed the speeches, grouped the data based on the Speech Acts category of locutions, subcategory of illocutions and perlocutions. The result was presented graphically using pie chart, showing the frequency of the illocutions.

Datum 1: Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Campaign Speech at APC Presidential Rally in Cross River State held in Katsina on Jan 31, 2023. (Source: YouTube covered by TVC News)

Speech acts Analysis

Illocutionary Acts:

Behavitives/Expressives:

- "Let me first of all thank you immensely". (thanking)
- "God bless" (wishing, blessing)
- "Thank you. Since morning, you have been waiting to see and to hear what we have to say today." (thanking)
- I pray that God will give you showers of blessing, bless your family, protect you, give you prosperity, give you joy, keep you in good health, defeat your enemy. You will defeat your enemy (praying, blessing)
- God Almighty Allah will give you happiness and peace, your children will grow better, they will be greater than all of us (praying, wishing)
- "You are great, great in our hearts..." (admiring, praising)
- "Safe journey back home." (well-wishing)

Expositives/Representatives

- "we are promise keepers" (asserting)
- "Lagos is changed beautifully" (claiming, stating)
- "lies of their sixteen years" (exposing, criticising)
- "They cannot even provide electricity" (exposing, criticising, dissuading)
- "They cannot even provide electricity to roast corn..." (asserting, criticising)
- "They never understood what money laundry is all about..." (exposing, condemning,)
- "They are familiar, they've understood what inflation is all about..." (claiming, blaming)
- "They said privatisation, privatisation for Atiku pocket" (stating, accusing, condemning)

Commissives:

- "I'm going to cure your headache" (promising, guaranteeing)
- "you will get job" (promising, assuring)
- "Money will come in, you will enjoy it. You will be happy." (promising, assuring)
- "We will create jobs here" (promising, pledging)
- "Here comes prosperity, here comes job, you will get job..." (promising, proclaiming)
- "Each state will become a wonder of tourism..." (promising, guaranteeing)

Exercitives/Directives

- "Don't let them lie to you..." (instructing, urging, warning)
- "I say follow me..." (commanding, directing) "Don't mind them, the lies of their sixteen years..." (attacking, instructing, warning, advising)
- "Are you going to vote for me?" (questioning, indirectly requesting)

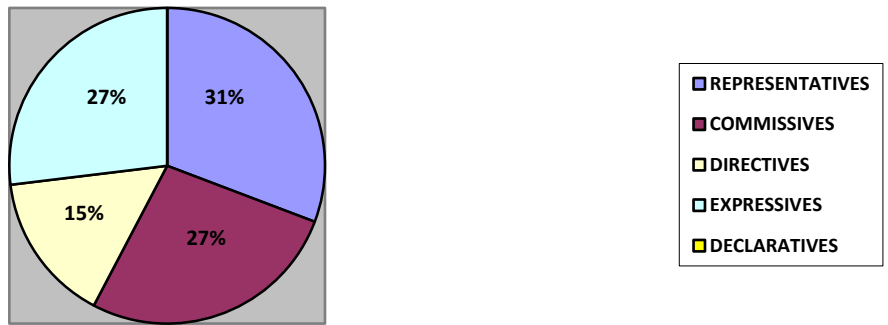


Fig. 1: Speech Acts in Tinubu Campaign Speech in Cross River

Datum 1 above indicates that Tinubu campaign speech in Cross River was heavily laden with several illocutionary acts. Fig. 1 reveals that the most prevalent illocutionary acts in the given speeches are representatives, accounting for approximately 8(31%) of the total. This suggests that the speaker was primarily focused on conveying information, making statements, and expressing beliefs. The categories of **expressives** and **commissives** follow closely behind, each occurred about 7 times representing 27% of the utterances. These categories reflect the speaker's emotional expressions, commitments, and promises. Finally, **directives** constitute the smallest percentage (15%), indicating a lesser emphasis on commands, requests, or suggestions. In Tinubu's campaign speech, he employs various representative acts including informing, asserting, and criticism in order to highlight his past achievements as the former governor of Lagos State, while also accusing and criticising the opposition for corruption, incompetence, and broken promises. He used illocutions to expose the failings of the past PDP administration, aiming to dissuade the audience from supporting their candidate. Commissives acts of promising, assuring, guaranteeing, pledging, and committing to economic prosperity and development, personal assurances of support and care, and thus guaranteeing and assuring a better future. These acts were used to promise economic prosperity, job creation, and overall well-being, constructing

an image of a competent leader committed to the welfare of the people. He also used directive speech acts, such as instructing listeners not to let the opposition deceive them and urging them to vote for the APC candidate, to encourage audience compliance and mobilise support for the candidate. Tinubu used expressive illocutions like praising, wishing, blessing, thanking, well-wishing, and expressing pleasure to connect with his audience. He used acts of thanking, well-wishing, blessing, and praising to create an atmosphere of benevolence and care. These strategies are often used by politicians to stay in favour with their audience.

Implied Perlocutionary Effects

Tinubu employed speech acts as strategies in order to persuade and galvanise support. For instance, the speaker utilised appeals to emotion (pathos) and promises of prosperity with the aim of evoking hope and optimism among the listeners. The frequent use of inclusive language and self-deprecating humour were meant to establish the credibility as well as bond between the speaker and the electorates. The explicit declaration of candidacy and call to vote aim at securing political support. Ultimately, the speech creates a sense of unity, purpose, and enthusiasm among the electorates, inspiring them to believe in the speaker's vision for Nigeria and to work towards its realisation. The apologies and expressions of gratitude engender forgiveness and goodwill respectively.

Datum 2: A Campaign Speech by Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu at APC Presidential Rally in Katsina State held in Katsina on Feb 6, 2023

(Source: TVC News).

Speech Acts Analysis

Illocutions

Behavitives/Expressives

- “We condole with Mr. President and the people of Katsina.” (commiserating)
- “We share the joy, we participate in the mourning, we share the sorrow, the pain that you do go through...” (empathising)
- “We are saying no, no, no, to PDP...” (condemning & rejecting)
- “God bless you, (blessing)
- “thank you” (thanking)
- “Is a progressive party that the sixteen of those Poverty Development Party” (inquiring, criticising, warning)

Commissives

- “They will pay their price...” (promising, assuring)
- “We will deal with them...” (promising & committing, assuring)
- “We will continue to pursue crime...” (promising, committing, assuring)
- “We will promise the children... will be catered for...” (pledging & guaranteeing)

Expositives/Representatives

- “There is nothing, nothing happens without the wish of Allah...” (asserting & affirming)
- “They have committed heinous crime...” (stating, revealing)
- “We are the people who want peace and progress...” (asserting, informing)
- “This is your government...” (stating, proposing, asserting)
- “We are saying no, no, no, to PDP, no to the evil, to the killers no...” (condemning and disapproving)
- “Only yesterday, governor and all of us, discuss whether we should continue with the rally today or cancel” (reporting, informing)
- “This is a progressive party...” (asserting, revealing)

Verdictives/ Declaratives

- “They will not win...” (judging)
- “The wicked shall perish...” (declaring, judging,)

Exercitives/Directives

- “We should take it as a crime without passion...” (urging, obligating)
- “Ignore the killers.” (urging, instructing)

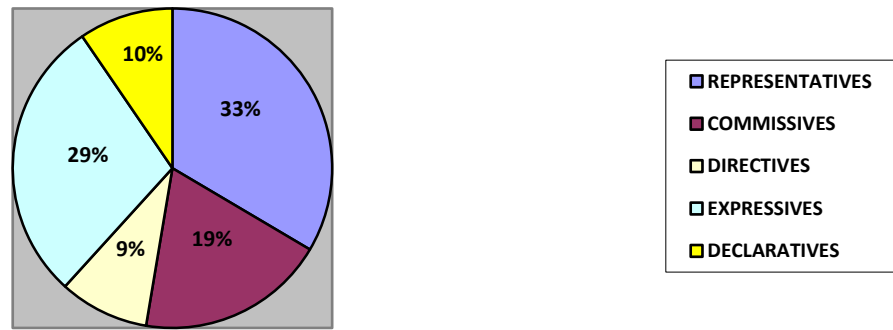


Figure 2: Speech Acts of Tinubu Campaign Speech in Katsina

In datum 2 above, the speaker deployed various speech acts. The Expressive Speech acts set the tone of the speech. Based on the figure 1, the representatives 7(33%), are the most common type of illocution, suggesting a focus on stating facts, asserting, and informing. The expressives 6(29%). and commissives 4(19%), are relatively frequent, indicating a balance between expressing emotions and making commitments while the declaratives 2 (10%) and directives 2(9%) are less prevalent, suggesting a more limited use of judgments and directives. This distribution of illocutions reflect the context and purpose of the discourse. As part of a political speech, the emphasis on informing and asserting is expected, as speakers often aim to convey their stance and persuade their audience. The behaviorive/expressive acts cover commiserating and empathising with the people of Katsina over the tragic experience of terrorist attack prior to the rally. Expressives are used to connect with the audience emotionally because they have a strong interpersonal function. Evident in the text are act of thanking and blessing.

The text predominantly employs representative/expositive such as stating, informing, asserting, serving to convey information, express viewpoints and assertions. Tinubu employs assertive statements to convey his party's stance on issues such as crime and governance. Furthermore, Tinubu employs the act stating and evaluating for the purpose of projecting

party as favourably against the opposition. The text also bears commissive speech acts, characterised by pledging, promising, guaranteeing, committing and assuring. Tinubu frequently utilises these speech acts to reassure the audience and convey a sense of determination. The text employs directive speech acts strategically to influence the audience and shape their response to the tragic events, urging them to remain steadfast and resolute. The speaker utilises act of implicit directives in form suggesting, pleading, urging and advising. The speech closes with a blessing, another expressive act, serving to invoke divine favour upon the audience and to reinforce the speaker's faith-based perspective on the tragedy.

Implied Perlocutionary Effects

The illocutionary speech acts in the text was meant to evoke a range of emotional and behavioural responses from the audience. By condemning the perpetrators and promising retribution, the speaker intends to inspire confidence and trust in the government's ability to address the issue. The speaker also aimed consoling, reassuring, and encouraging the audience within the context of responding to a tragic event. The speech is also intended to spur unity and defiance against the perpetrators, and ultimately maintain public morale, deterring future attacks, and reinforcing Tinubu image as a capable and compassionate leader.

Datum 3: A Campaign Speech by Peter Obi, Labour Party Presidential Candidate Labour Party at the Presidential Campaign rally in Lagos Held in Tafawa Balewa Stadium Lagos on February 11, 2022. Source: YouTube (Aired by Channels Television).

Illocutionary Acts

Representatives/Expositives:

- “We have allowed people to come, tell us one thing and when they go into office they do another thing.” (stating.)
- “We have allowed people to come, tell us one thing and when they go into office they do another thing.” (stating)
- “This Lagos will remain the centre of our finest, centre of our excellence, centre of our achievement and everything.” (stating)
- “Nigeria have all the factor endowment to be a great country.” (informing)
- “The enemies are no more formidable.” (informing)
- “You voted for PDP, the broom, you voted for the PDP, the umbrella I mean, and put into poverty.” (stating, accusing, blaming)
- “Nobody will still our oil again.” (asserting, accusing)

Directives/Exercitives

- “Please listen and tape it” (instructing)
- “Go and vote for... go and vote for...Mama, Papa, Pikin.” (directing)
- “Please go out on the 25th, look for LP, vote there, stay there, until they count the vote.” (directing)
- “We are begging you the youths, support what we are doing”. (pleading)
- “Hold unto the possible, hold unto a possible Nigeria”. (instructing, advising)
- “Hold unto a secured Nigeria” (instructing, advising)
- “Hold unto Nigeria that is productive”, (instructing, advising)

Commissives

- “We will secure and unite Nigeria.” (promising, committing)
- “We will ensure that when we start, after some years, no Nigerian will say I’m from the West, East North but will be proud to say he’s a Nigerian.” (promising, committing)
- “We will work hard to pull people out of poverty.” (promising, committing)
- “We will ensure that our youths are employed.” (promising, committing)
- “We will remove this country from consumption to production.” (promising, committing)
- “We will ensure that there is rule of law and order.” (promising, committing)
- “We will support the youths to start SMSEs, the companies.” (promising, committing)
- “We will apologise to all those who are victims of police brutality.” (promising, committing)
- “We will ensure that we love each other.” (promising, committing)
- “We will reproduce an enabling environment, the favourable environment that will spur investment in our oil and Gas.” (promising, committing)

Expressives/Behavitives

- “Thank you, thank you” (thanking)
- “God bless you.” (invoking blessing)
- “We will apologise to all those who are victims of police brutality”. (apologising)



Figure 3: Speech Acts in Obi's Campaign Speech in Lagos

Datum 3 above contains several illocutionary acts. Based on result in fig. 3, the commissives are the most prevalent illocutionary act in the given utterances, accounting for 44% of the total. This suggests a strong focus on promises, commitments, and pledges. This emphasis on commissives aligns with the political context, where candidates often make promises to gain public support. Representatives and directives each constitute 23% of the utterances. Representatives provide information or assertions, while directives are requests or commands. The relatively equal distribution of these two categories indicates a balanced approach to informing the audience and seeking their participation. Expressives are the least frequent, making up 10% of the utterances. These acts express emotions or perform social acts, such as thanking or apologising. While less prominent, they contribute to the overall tone and interpersonal dynamics of the speech.

Representative speech acts form the core of the text, as the speaker predominantly makes assertions and claims. Obi used representative speech acts to outline the country's challenges, such as insecurity, poverty, unemployment, and economic instability. He also employed these acts extensively to present his party's proposed solutions, including plans for security, economic growth, job creation, and agricultural development. It was based on those representatives, which expose the challenges assailing the nation, that the speaker strung his promises. The text is permeated with commitments to address Nigeria's challenges, and thus, the speaker explicitly promises to secure and unite the nation, pull people out of poverty, create jobs,

revamp the agricultural sector, ensure the operation of rule of law and combat corruption etc. These commissive speech acts woo the heart and loyalty of the audience. The deployment of directive speech acts are evident in the text, as Peter Obi issues commands, requests, and advice to the audience. These directive speech acts mobilise the audience, encouraging them to support the speaker's political agenda. They also induce a sense involvement, motivating the audience to actively participate in the political process. The discourse is initiated with expressions of gratitude, thanking the audience for their presence and attention. The speaker also invoked divine blessing at the conclusion of the speech, expressing hope and reliance on divine powers for success.

Implied Perlocutionary Effects

The implied perlocutionary effects of the speech acts in the text are intended to conjure a range of responses from the audience. The speaker employed rhetorical devices like repetition, slogans (Mama, Papa, Pikin), and promises of a better future to generate excitement and enthusiasm among the audience. Principally, the speaker hoped to stir hope and optimism about Nigeria's future. By vividly portraying the current state of the nation, as faced with series of crises, Obi aimed to evoke a feeling of dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the existing government. The promise of a secure, united, and prosperous Nigeria is meant to elicit feelings of aspiration and excitement among the listeners. Ultimately, the perlocutionary goal was to sway the audience to vote for the speaker's party, believing that it represents the best chance for positive change and a brighter future for Nigeria

Datum 4: Campaign Speech by Peter Obi, Labour Party Presidential Candidate at the Labour Party Presidential Rally in Adamawa State Held in Numan Adamawa State on January 31, 2023. Source: (YouTube Aired by Channels Television)

Speech Acts Analysis

Illocutions:

Commissives

- “I assure you,... my commitment is total, our program is to secure and unite Nigeria.” (promising, assuring, committing)
- “We will ensure that we provide security for this country.” - A promise to provide security. (promising, assuring, committing)
- “We will ensure that we have appropriate number or security personnel, equip them, protect them, no longer are we going to allow our police men and women to die without the country caring about them.” (promising, assuring, committing)
- “We will ensure that whoever we sent to the front will be properly equipped, properly supported, properly insured, and nothing will happen to them but if it happens, their family will know they are not alone.” (promising, assuring, committing)
- “We try and unite the country, we ensure the country is united, we cannot no longer stay the way we are today.” (promising, assuring, committing)
- “We want to build a country where no Nigerian will ever say I am from the East, West, North or South. We are Nigerians.” (promising, assuring, committing)
- “We want to build a country where we will move Nigeria today from consumption to production.” (promising, assuring, committing).
- “We will make sure we unite people, all this fight between the various people, whether it is herders and farmers will cease, our farmers must go back and produce and be the right in their farms.” (promising, assuring, committing).

Representatives:

- “What you country has done for the past twenty years is to manufacture poverty, manufacture insecurity, they ensured your people are unemployed, to make our youths suffer, least is unemployment.” (questioning, asserting, informing)
- “The enemy is no more formidable, we will deal with it.” (asserting, informing)
- “This year’s election must not be based on tribe or ethnicity.” (asserting, informing, advising)
- “Have you ever seen people buying bread cheaper because they are from the north? Nobody buys food cheaper because of where he comes from.” – (questioning, asserting, informing.)
- “If anybody tells you about their religion, tell him show me any Church where I can buy food cheaper, where I can get employed, since there is none, it is time to tell.. them,”
- “What I’m telling you is all those things have ceased.” (asserting, informing)
- “We want to build a country where we will move Nigeria today from consumption to production.” (informing, promising)
- “We want people who are competent.” (stating, asserting)

Expressives

- “Let me start by thanking people of Adamawa.” (thanking)
- “I thank you for what you’ve been able to do.” (thanking)
- “Thank you for what you’ve able to do, for those warm reception,” (thanking)
- “Thank you for being here,” - (thanking)

Directives

- “Hold us responsible.” (directing, charging)
- “Tell him I’m hungry. Tell him we are poor.” – (directing, advising, inciting)

- “Tell him it is turn of Nigerians to take back their country. Tell him it’s your turn.” (directing, advising, inciting)
- “Is there where a Christian is buying bread cheaper? Is there anywhere a Muslim buys bread cheaper?” (questioning, challenging, persuading)

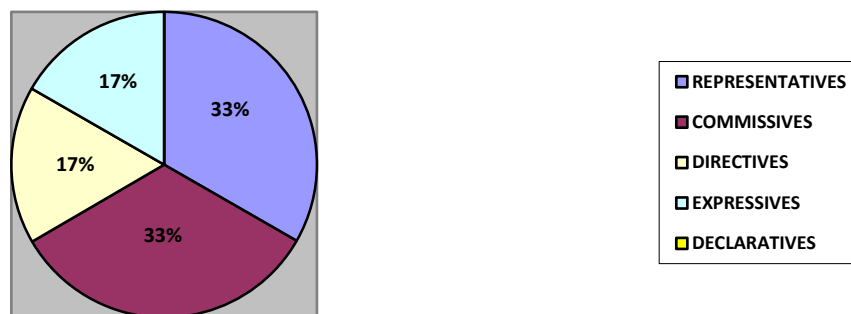


Figure 4: Speech Acts in Obi's Campaign Speech in Adamawa

Datum 4 contains various illocutions including commissives and representatives being the most frequent illocutions in the speech, each accounting for approximately 8(33%) of the total illocutions. This suggests that the speaker is primarily focused on making promises, commitments, and informing the audience about the state of the nation. Expressives and directives are less prevalent, each constituting approximately 4(17%) of the total. This indicates that while the speaker does express gratitude and make requests, these actions are less prominent compared to the emphasis on promises and information. Generally, Obi's discourse is characterised by a strong emphasis on commitment and informative statements. This could suggest a campaign strategy aimed at gaining trust and confidence from the audience through promises and assertions. This indicates a campaign strategy aimed at reassuring the audience and providing a clear vision for the future. The minimal use of expressives and directives suggests a less emotional and less commanding tone, possibly reflecting a desire to connect with the audience on a more level playing field.

In the campaign discourse, Obi used representative speech acts to describe the nation's current state, such as poverty, insecurity, and unemployment. He communicated his party's plans and policies as factual commitments, positioning the speaker and his party as credible.

Obi also used the act of criticising to berate the incumbent government, asserting its failure in security and economy. He questioned the electorate's support for APC ineffective leadership. Communications were woven around the challenges encapsulated in the representatives. Obi committed to promises of securing the nation, uniting diverse groups, and addressing economic challenges. He pledged to improve security, foster national unity, transition the economy from consumption to production, and address the farmer-herder conflict. Directives were also used, instructing and urging the audience to hold politicians accountable. He also employed questioning to redirect the audience's perception and influence decisions against long-held religious or ethnic-based politics. Expressive speech acts, particularly thanking, were used to establish rapport and goodwill with the audience. The speaker's use of these speech acts effectively communicated the nation's challenges and aimed to inspire change.

Implied Perlocutionary Effects

The speech acts in the speech were intended to persuade the audience of the Labour Party's competence, integrity, and commitment to addressing pressing national issues. The employment of commissives, representatives, expressives, and directives was meant to prompt trust, arouse hope, and spur support. The frequent use of promises and assurances was to help stir the

feeling of optimism and reassurance, positioning the candidate as a viable alternative to the incumbent. Obi’s use of accusatory statements against the previous government was intended to provoke resentment and discontent, thereby

motivating the audience to embrace change. Ultimately, the speech aims to convince listeners to vote for the Labour Party, believing that it represents the best chance for a secure, united, and prosperous Nigeria.

General Discussion of Findings

The 2023 Nigeria presidential election campaign speeches are laden with several speech acts. These speech acts serve as campaign strategies deployed by the players in the race for the purpose of winning the support of the masses and electorate during the polls. Politicians do not merely deliver campaign messages but performs certain acts that bear their effects on the audience. The summary of Speech Acts as employed in the selected speeches is presented thus:

Candidates	Representatives	Commissives	Directives	Expressives	Declarative
Tinubu	32%	23%	12%	28%	5%
Obi	28%	38.5%	20%	13.5%	0%
Total	60%	61.5%	32%	41.5%	5%
Average	30%	30.7%	16%	20.7%	2.5 %

Source: Author, 2024.

Based on the findings of the study, as shown in the table above, the dominant speech acts deployed in the campaign speeches of Tinubu and Obi are the Commissive with (30.7%), consisting promising, pledging, committing, guaranteeing and assuring. The second dominant acts are the representatives, covering (30%) of the total speech acts, mostly asserting, reporting, informing, revealing, stating, claiming, accusing, blaming, criticising. The rest of the distribution include Expressive (20.7%), including thanking, condoling, blessing, well-wishing and apologising and Directives (16%) Speech Acts, comprising, directing, pleading, requesting, advising, questioning. The result indicated that the least employed speech acts are the declaratives, consisting of only (2.5%) of the entire speech acts. This shows that electioneering campaign provides the platform for politicians’ market themselves in order to win support. To achieve this, they employ representatives which pave way for them to express their core beliefs, values and principles; clearly articulate their political agenda, policies, and their stance of specific issues; reveal and inform audience of their expertise and credibility through their achievements. The commissive acts afford the politicians to pledge and make promises on what they will do if elected, thereby helping to convey a sense of direction as they politicians outline their

goals and vision.

The Tinubu predominantly employed representative/expositive such as stating, informing, asserting, serving to convey information, express viewpoints and assertions. His campaign speeches highlight the importance of political speeches in persuading the audience through factual claims, accusations, and critiques of opponents. The lower frequency of directives suggests a more subtle approach, relying on persuasive arguments and emotional appeals to encourage voting. Tinubu’s campaign speeches demonstrate the multifaceted nature of political discourse, employing informative, persuasive, and emotional strategies to achieve their objectives. The distribution of illocutionary acts reveals how speakers strategically use language to achieve their goals, such as persuading voters, building trust, or offering support during crises.

The most frequent illocutionary acts across contained in Obi’s speeches were the commissives, accounting for a significant portion. This suggests a strong emphasis on promises, commitments, and pledges. The high frequency of commissive acts (promises, commitments) strongly suggests a campaign strategy heavily reliant on appealing to the audience’s hopes and aspirations. This aligns with the expected nature of political discourse, where candidates strive to gain

public support by outlining their plans and promises. Obi aimed to garner support by outlining a vision for the future and pledging to address the nation's challenges. The significant presence of representative acts (assertions, claims) indicates an emphasis on informing the audience about the current state of the nation and presenting his party's proposed solutions. This approach was intended to convince voters of the validity and effectiveness of his policies. The relatively equal distribution of representatives and directives suggests a balanced approach to engaging the audience. While providing information, Obi also sought to actively involve them through requests, commands, and calls to action. The lower frequency of expressive acts (gratitude, apologies) suggests a campaign tone that was less focused on emotional appeals. The findings align with the expected characteristics of political discourse where politicians often rely on promises and commitments to gain support and win elections.

The study reveals various similarities in the way these politicians employ speech acts as campaign strategies. In both Tinubu and Obi's campaign speeches, there are several speech acts that this study identified, including stating, asserting, informing, (assertives), promising, assuring, guaranteeing (commissives), directing, urging, appealing, advising, instructing (directives) and thanking, praising, condoling, apologising (expressives). While some of these acts are explicit, others are implicit. One striking correlation in the political campaign discourses of the two players in the 2023 presidential bid is the use of expositive/representative speech acts for the purpose of discrediting opponents. The findings indicated that structural composition of the commissive acts involves the use of modal word "will", the performative verb "promise" and

"want" as in: we want to ...". There are few instances of the use of be going to + infinitive in both Tinubu and Obi's campaign promises. The two political aspirants employed promises to instill hope in the audience, reassure them of their commitment. Most times, these politicians use the act of promising as bait to lure the masses into believing in the credibility of their candidacy.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that political campaign speeches are a complex tapestry woven with a rich array of speech acts. Across both Tinubu and Obi's speeches, making promises (commissives) and representing their views were the most prominent speech acts. This aligns with the expected nature of campaign speeches, where candidates aim to convince voters through promises and the presentation of their political stances. Both Tinubu and Obi strategically deployed these acts – informing, persuading, promising, and seeking audience engagement – to navigate the competitive landscape of the 2023 Nigerian presidential election. While exhibiting commonalities, their individual styles and priorities were evident in the frequency and specific wording of their speech acts. The findings underscore the importance illocutionary acts in revealing underlying speaker's intentions, audience's expectations, and the dynamic interplay between speakers and their audiences in the political arena. While seemingly aimed at informing and inspiring, campaign speeches often subtly (and not-so-subtly) employ persuasive and manipulative tactics. This research highlights the multifaceted and nuanced nature of political communication, urging a deeper understanding of the strategic use of language in shaping public opinion and influencing electoral outcomes.

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SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF PRESUPPOSITION AND ENTAILMENT AS TRUTH-CONDITIONAL SENSE RELATIONS IN TIV LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Truth conditional sense relations in language are expressed through presupposition and entailment. The basic idea behind presupposition in semantics is that the falsity of the presuppose sentence causes the presupposing sentence not to have truth-value (T or F.). Furthermore, both a sentence and its denial have the same semantic presupposition. One sentence 'S' is said to entail another sentence 'S' when the truth of the first guarantees the truth of the second and the falsity of the sentence guarantees the falsity of the other. Researches conducted on sense relations in Tiv focus on lexical sense relations neglecting truth-conditional sense relations: presupposition and entailment. The paper sets to analyse presupposition and entailment as truth conditional sense relations in Tiv. The basic objectives are: (1) to analyse presupposition as a truth-conditional sense relation in Tiv, and (2) to examine what certain statements or utterances entail. Data for the study were sourced from the speakers of Tiv in different gatherings. This was done through observation of the speakers' speeches without them being aware that they were being observed. Notes were taken on statements or utterances found to be significant to this research. Some sentences were picked from texts written in Tiv. The paper found out that both presupposition and entailment are evident in Tiv language. In the Tiv language, both presupposition and entailment express the truth conditional value of sentences. The analysis proves that truth-conditional theory is suitable in analysing presupposition and entailment in the Tiv language. The paper concludes that the knowledge of presupposition and entailment is necessary in mastering and using the Tiv language, interpreting and understanding utterances used by the speakers and writers in the Tiv language.

Key words: sense relation, presupposition, entailment, truth-condition.

Introduction

Languages have shared linguistic features. One among the shared linguistic features is sense relations. The Tiv language of the Bantu language family also exhibits sense relations. In sense relations, there is emphasis on the study of how individual words or lexical items in a given language are either similar or different. Though, sense relations to many scholars is limited to lexical items in a language it goes beyond lexical items and covers the relationship and differences that hold between clauses and sentences. Having this in mind sense relations covers structural

ambiguity, presupposition and entailment.

Sense relations in Tiv is very essential because its knowledge empowers the speakers of the language (Tiv) to have proficiency in its use. The vital nature of sense relations in Tiv has made some researchers to study it. Akase (2019) studied "lexical semantic relations in Tiv." In the research, Akase examined synonyms, antonyms, homonyms and hyponymy as sense relations in Tiv. This study neglects structural aspects of sense relations focusing only on lexical relations. Taminu; Amande; and Salisu (2007) researched on 'lexical and structural ambiguity in Tiv discourse'. The

study though considered structural ambiguity, it neglects presupposition and entailment. The gaps identified in the previous studies motivate the present study. The present study therefore is a “Semantic analysis of presupposition and entailment as truth-conditional sense relations in Tiv language”. Specifically, the study seeks to analyse presupposition and entailment in Tiv and the objectives of the paper are:

- i. To analyse presupposition as a sense relation in Tiv
- ii. Examine what certain statements or utterances in Tiv entail.

The significance of the paper is that it provides information on presupposition and entailment in Tiv. The paper attempts to fill the existing knowledge gap on the two sense relations in Tiv language. The paper therefore adds to the existing literature on Tiv language.

The Tiv Language and Structure

The word Tiv has three varying meanings. Udu (2009:9) Posits that “first, it refers to the ancestral father of Tiv race of central Nigeria. Second, it refers to the ethnic group which is a descendant of Tiv. Lastly, it refers to the language spoken by the race” From genetic perspectives, as Udu (2009) Posits, “Tiv is a splinter of Bantu. It belongs to the Niger- Congo language family and can be further classified as Benue – Congo language. Tiv language is typologically tagged to the Tivoid group based on lexico – statistical testing (meek, 1930; Greenberg, 1963; Williamson, 1971; Blench, 2016); meanwhile the sociological profile and dialectal situation of the Tiv patterned after the genealogy of the Tiv ancestral father, Tiv (yina, 2007). Tiv had two sons namely *Ipusu* and *Ichongo*. The two also had children namely: *Ipusu* had *Shitire*, *Kpar* and *Kum*, while *Ichongo* had *Ihar*, *Gondo*, *Nongo*, *Ikura* and *Tongo*. These names from the genealogy correspond to the social divisions among the Tiv and to very large extent its dialectal classification as well.

Though there are social divisions, the native speakers of Tiv speak one common language Tiv with some variations but mutually intelligible to all- a monolithic situation. Some of the dialectal variations of the Tiv language are *Jeicira*, *Jembah*, *Iharev* *Masev*, *Kwande*, *Ukum*, and

Shitile dialectal variations. It is averred by Armstrong (1983); Hoffmann (1980) and Malherbe in the year 1931 (Shoja, 2010) that Tiv orthography is represented by six short and six long vowel and sixty consonants, making a total of seventy-two phonemes or sound segment in Tiv. The phonology of Tiv language is characterized by tone conventions, consonant clusters and palatalization. Prefixes, suffixes, reduplication among others characterize the morphology of Tiv language while syntax of Tiv language is characterized by a subject verb – object order with features such as verbs serialization, clause chaining, focus marking, among orders. As for the vocabulary, Tiv is richly built with its unique words as well as loanwords or borrowed words from English, Hausa Jakum, possessing features such as compounding, derivations, and idiomatic expression. Tone system, semantic fields, sense relation, lexical semantics, idiomatic expression, pragmatic structure, discourse structure and many other concepts form the semantics of Tiv language.

The present research, therefore, looks at presupposition and entailment as sense relation in Tiv as one of the areas in Tiv semantic structure.

Methodology

This paper adopts a descriptive design. The researcher sourced for data from the native speakers of Tiv languages in fourteen different local Government secretariats and their social gatherings in Benue State. The data were sourced through the observation of the speakers’ speeches without the speakers being aware that they were being observed between February and August, 2022. This was deliberate so as to take notice of utterances that speakers make that are significant to the topic of the research. Notes were taken on such statements and utterances found to be relevant to the research. Some of the utterances and sentences that have the truth-conditional sense relations were picked from text written in Tiv language by Akase, T. (2011) on ‘Semantics.’ The truth-conditional sense relations expressed through presupposition and entailment were analysed using the Truth-Conditional (verificational) Theory.

Review of Related Literature

The concept of sense relations: sense relations has to do with how the meanings of

individual words are either similar or different (Akase, 2011). Pushpinder and Jindah (2005) aver that sense is a complex system of relationships that holds between the linguistic items themselves. Furthermore, Pushpinder & Jindal (2005:45), opine that “sense is concerned with the intra-linguistic relation i.e. opposition, inclusion and presupposition.” From the explanations given, it is clear that sense relations comprise antonyms, synonyms, polysemy, homonym, reversives and conversives, entailment, presupposition among others.

Presupposition and entailment as sense relations go beyond the sense relation between lexical items in a language to sentence relations focusing on the meaning relationships between sentences. The present study focuses on presupposition and entailment hence the need to explain the concepts.

The concept of presupposition

This is a concept used in semantics to refer to assumptions implicitly made by speakers and listeners which are necessary for the correct interpretation of utterances (Finch, 2000). Ndimele (1999:85) sees presupposition as “what the speaker assumes that his listener already knows. It is a shared presumption of background knowledge between the speaker and the listener.” Presupposition is one among sentence relations to express the truth condition of statements (truth value). Presupposition could be positive or negative. For example, both the positive statement (a) and the negative sentence (b) presupposes sentence (c) as seen below:

- 1a. The present king of France is bald
 - b. The present king of France is not bald
 - c. There is a present king of France
 - 2a. John realizes that his car has been stolen
 - b. John does not realize that his car has been stolen
 - c. John’s car has been stolen
- (Ackmajian, 2015:242)

Leech (1981) grouped presupposition into semantic and pragmatic presupposition. While semantic presupposition considers the logical relations between sentences without considering how the sentences were generated but with a focus on the meaning from the perspective of truth relations, pragmatic presupposition considers the

background assumption about the speaker or hearer. That is the speaker takes some truth about the context for granted believing it is part of the background of the conversation. Having the above explanation in mind examples three (3) explains semantic presupposition while four (4) explains pragmatic presupposition:

- 3a. Our semiotics teacher is Dr. Ishima
This sentence semantically presupposes the following:
 - b. There is a course called semiotics
 - c. There is a teacher for that courseIn the above sentence, the truth relation is semantically based without bothering on the individuality of the speaker and the listener.
- 4a. The University guides stopped the meeting

Two meanings are pragmatically presupposed in the above sentence thus:

- a. A meeting was ongoing in the university
- b. The university authority sensed something wrong with the meeting.

In the above two pragmatic presuppositions, the meanings are semantically inferred.

The concept of entailment

This is a logical relationship that exists between two sentences such that the truth of second sentence necessarily follows the truth of the first sentence (Finch, 2000). This definition indicates that entailment is an aspect of logic like presupposition but in entailment, it is a part of the sentence which has some relationship in a way that the truth of the second sentence is derived from the initial sentence. The implication is that it is not possible for the truth of the sentence to be denied as far as the first sentence is true. In an alternative manner, in entailment, a sentence ‘S’ entails another sentence ‘S’ when the truth of the first guarantees the truth of the second, and the falsity of the second guarantees the falsity of the first for example:

- 4a. “The cloth is green” entails “the cloth has colour”.
- b. “Stephen Ajim is a bachelor” entails “Stephen is unmarried”.

- c. 'The lady is short' entails "The lady is not tall".
- d. 'Peter's wife is pregnant' entails "Peter has a wife."

Presupposition and entailment as explained above are spoken or written expressions which precisely clarify the truth and falsity of an assertion or statement. The similarity between the two is that they are all statements of logical relationships which each statement is depended on the other.

Empirical Studies

Scholars have researched on sense relations in various ways. Umeodinka and Ilechukwu (2015) researched on "presupposition and entailment: Towards the semantic analysis of the dialogue before the crucifixion of Christ." The study seeks to pick some knowledge of the meanings embedded through presupposition and entailment in the dialogue. Truth conditional theory of meaning was applied. The study found out that not only that truth is part of logic but also that the tools of logic can help us represent sentence meanings in summarised truth tables. The study shows that ignorance and disregard for the truth-value condition of some Old Testament biblical prophecies by the Jews, Pharisees and other Christ's accusers had presupposed and entailed some consequences that have changed the course of history of mankind. The study relates with the present as it concerned presupposition and entailment but differs in the sense that it was linked with a historical event in the bible and the English version rather than the Tiv bible was used.

Akase (2019), researched on "lexical-semantic relations in Tiv". The study examines semantic relations like synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and homonymy. The study relate to the present for it considered the Tiv language. However, it failed to account for entailment and presupposition hence the need for the present study.

Mbapuun (2016) researched on 'lexical semantic relations in Tiv language'. Just like Akase's study, Mbapuun focused attention on lexical relations neglecting sentential sense relations embedded in presupposition and entailment. The present study seeks to fill the gap.

Similarly, Taminu; Amende & Salisu

(2007) researched on "lexical and structural ambiguity in Tiv discourse" which is an aspect of sense relations. The study however neglects presupposition and entailment in Tiv. The present study, beside the works cited earlier, seeks to analyze presupposition as a sense relation in Tiv and to examine what certain statements or utterances in Tiv entail; thereby adding to the existing data on semantics in Tiv.

Theoretical Framework

Presupposition and entailment in semantics are aimed at the truth condition of sentences. The paper is anchored on the 'Truth-Conditional Theory or Verification Theory of meaning'. According to Wikipedia, the Truth-Conditional Theory of meaning was developed by Donald Davidson in 'Truth and Meaning' (1967). The theory tries to explicate the meaning of a given proposition stating when the sentence is true. The theory assumes that when one makes any assertions, the meanings of the assertions are the same as their truth conditions. In other words, the theory recognized the fact that as long as we know the meaning of a given sentence, it is an assurance that we can tell the conditions under which such a sentence should be true or false (Umeodinka & Ilechukwu, 2015). According to Saeed (2003:89) "Truth here is taken to mean a correspondence with fact, or, in other words correct description of states of affairs in the world". For example, the sentence:

5. Stephen taught at the National Institute for Nigerian Languages Aba. If it is found that Stephen once taught there, it is true, if not, it is false. The possibility of a statement to be true or false is what is termed the truth value of a sentence. This theory is suitable in accounting for the truth or falsity that is embedded in presupposition and entailment in the Tiv language. The truth-conditional sense relations expressed through presupposition and entailment were analyzed using the truth-conditional (verification) theory.

Presupposition and entailment as Truth-Conditional (verificational) sense relations in Tiv language

In the Tiv language, truth-condition is expressed through the two sentential sense relations of presupposition and entailment as seen below:

Presupposition as a truth-conditional sense relation in the Tiv language

Truth-conditional value of sentences in the Tiv language can be expressed through presuppositions as seen in the examples below:

S/No	Sentence	Presuppositions
1	Gomna u Benue State ka Samuel Ortom (Governor of Benue State is Samuel Ortom)	(a) State ngu u i yilan er Benue yô (There is a state called Benue). (b) State la ngu a Gomna (the state has a Governor) (c) Ortom ka Gomna (Ortom is a Governor)
2	Polofesô James Ayatse ka Tor-Tiv (Professor James Ayatse is the King of Tiv Nation)	(a) Tar ngu ka yel er Tiv (there is a nation called Tiv) (b) Tar la ngu a tor (the nation has a king) (c) Tor la ka Polofesô (the king is a professor)
3	Polofesô Ihom Cletus ka ityough ki Gbar-kwaghhenen u ijô man ahir-a-ijô sha yunivaseti I Benue State (Professor Ihom Cletus is the Head of Department, Languages and Linguistics, Benue State University)	(a) Gbar-kwaghhenen ngu er ijô man ahira ijôô (there is a Department of languages and Linguistics) (b) Gbar-kwaghhenen la ngu a orhemen (The Department has HOD) (c) Orhemen la ka professor (The HOD is a professor)
4	Tica wase u psycholinguistics ka Dr. Ugechi (our psycholinguistics lecturer is Dr. Ugechi).	(a) Kwagh-henen ngu u I yel er psycholinguistics yô (there is a course called psycholinguistics). (b) Kwagh-henen la ngu a ortesen (there is a lecturer for that course). (c) Ortesen la ka Dôkutô (the lecturer is a Dr.)
5	Or u nan lu ashe ase ka Stephen Ajim (our representative is Stephen Ajim)	(a) Or ngu u nan lu ashe a ior yô (There is someone representing a people). (b) Or shon u a lu ashe a ior la ngu a iti (the representative has name)
6	Mbakuran makeranta va yange mzough la (the school security stopped the meeting).	(a) Mzough lu zan hemen hen makeranta (the meeting was ongoing in the school). (b) Hemen u makeranta kav kwaghbo ke mzough la (the school authority sensed something wrong in the meeting).
7	Gômenti va ngohol inya la (Government has taken over the land)	(a) Ayôôsu lu sha inya la (there was crises on the land). (b) Gômenti fa er ayôôsu la a va na ityav mbi nôngon (Government knew that the crisis would result to war)
8	Koti pav ivar la (the court divorced the marriage)	(a) Mzough lu ke ivese la ga (there was no mutual understanding in the marriage). (b) Ior mba ve lu ken ivese la ve za hen koti (The couple went to court)

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From the above demonstration, it is clear that truth-conditions in Tiv are expressed through presupposition while sentences 1 – 4 presupposes three different things each, sentence 5 – 8 has two presuppositions each. A critical examination of sentence, one (1) to five (5) show semantic presupposition where consideration is on the logical relations between the sentences generated without considering how the sentences were generated but with a focus on the meanings from the perspective of the truth-relations, sentence six (6) to eight (8) show pragmatic presupposition. Here the background about the speaker or hearer is considered. In those sentences the truth about the sentences are inferred.

Table 2: Table of positive and negative presupposition in Tiv

S/N	Positive sentences	Negative sentences	Presupposition
1	Tor-Agbande ngu uma (Tor-agbande is alive)	Tor-agbande kpe Tor-agbande is dead	Tor ngu mba yel er Tor-agbande (there is a king known as Tor-agbande)
2	Yashi kav er I wua un kwase yô (Yashi realizes that his wife has been killed)	Yashi kav er I wua un kwase ga (Yashi does not realize that his wife has been killed)	I wua Yashi kwase (Yashi's wife has been killed)
3	Ikpurtakeda fa er un gbe ikyaren yô (ikpurtakeda knows that he failed examination)	Ikpurtakeda fa er un gbe ikyaren ga (ikpurtakeda does not know that he failed examination).	Ikpurtakeda gba ikyaren (ikpurtakeda failed examination)
4	Tyôwua fa er ityô na i a wua un yô (Tyôwua knows that his kinsmen will kill him)	Tyôwua fa er ityô na i a wua un ga (Tyowua does not know that his kinsmen will kill him)	Ityô i Tyôwua a wua un (Tyôwua's kinsmen will kill him)
5	Ujôôji mba er ajir sha mimi (Judges do judge rightly)	Ujôôji mba er ajir sha mimi ga (Judges do not judge rightly)	Ujôôji mba er a jir (judges do judge)

Source: Field survey (2022)

From the table above, it could be observed that both the positive and negative sentences have the same presupposition.

Entailment as a truth-conditional sense relation in the Tiv language

Truth-conditional value of sentences in the Tiv language can be expressed through entailment as seen below:

Table 3: Table of entailment in Tiv

S/N	Sentences	Entailment
1	Maria ngu iyav "Maria is pregnant"	Maria yav a or. Maria slept with man "Maria had sex with a man"
2	Imoter ka wan u Iorfa "Imoter is child of Iorfa "Imoter is Iorfa's child"	Iorfa ngu a wan "Iorfa has a child"
3	Ortom ka Gomna u Benue "Ortom is the Governor of Benue"	Ortom ya ishangen i Gomna u Benue "Ortom won Benue State Governorship election"
4	Dagba hingir zegeor "Dagba has become wealthy/rich"	Dagba yange lu can-or "Dagba was poor"
5	Senegal tôô iyôongo i boo u shin nguhar u ityar i Africa ken inyom i 2022 "Senegal has taken the trophy for African Cup of Nations' football 2022"	Senegal ka tar u hemban boo u shin nguhar ken Africa "Senegal is the football champion in Africa".

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From the above presentation, it is clear that the Tiv language exhibits entailment as a truth-conditional relation. In the examples above in each sentence, the truth condition of the sentences guarantees truth condition of its corresponding sentence in the entailment column. If such a sentence is false, it then guarantees the falsity of its corresponding sentence in the entailment column.

Summary and Conclusion

The Tiv language exhibits presupposition and entailment as truth-conditional sense relations. These truth-relations can be analysed using truth-conditional or verificational theory. Presupposition in sentences can be expressed in both the positive and negative versions of a sentence while it cannot be the same in entailment. In entailment we cannot have the negative and positive forms of a sentence entailing the same thing. It should however, be known that both presupposition and entailment are written or spoken statements which precisely clarify the truth or falsity of assertions. Presupposition and entailment are similar because, as statements, each of them shows logical relationships in which each

statement is dependent on the other. The knowledge of presupposition and entailment in Tiv enhances ones proficiency in the mastering and use of the language. It also helps in interpreting and understanding utterances used by speakers and writers in the Tiv language.

Contribution to Knowledge

The paper contributes to knowledge by critically analysing presupposition and entailment as truth-conditional sense relations in Tiv. The study is novel in the sense that the previous studies on sense relations in Tiv such as Akase (2019), Mbapuun (2016) and Taminu, Amende, and Salisu (2007) failed to analyse these two important truth-conditional sense relations in the Tiv language.

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PRACTS IN OLADIMEJI ILERIOLUWA ALOBA'S (MOHBAD) SELECTED DEPRESSIVE SONGS

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Abstract

Studies abound in the literature on how music can signpost depression. However, there is a dearth of research on depressive language in the lyrics of late Oladimeji Ilerioluwa Aloba (Mohbad), a Nigerian popular artiste. Hence, this paper highlights the linguistic markers of depression in selected Mohbad's songs' lyrics. Using Jacob Mey's (2001), Pragmatic Act Theory, the researcher purposively selected five songs from Mohbad's music catalogue with the aim of identifying linguistic choices that index depression, and the Practs (pragmatic functions) of the linguistic strategies. Findings reveal that Mohbad uses referential techniques such as endophoric references, personal pronouns, creative lexicalization (blending) and naming. There are different types of practs in the songs such as doubting, worrying, soliciting and fear. Applying pragmatic principles to musical lyrics helps to gain insights into prevailing issues that artistes may be going through. This invariably means that music provides a platform for accessing the mental state of artistes as explicated in this paper. Songs should not be taken on their face values so that inherent psychological issues can be arrested in good time before they are escalated.

Keywords: Depression, linguistic markers, Mohbad, Practs, Mey (2001) Pragmeme

Introduction

Music is an integral part of life, and it provides various forms of therapy including social, moral, psychological and spiritual benefits. In the context of music, language is used to convey emotions, ideas, and experiences. It is important to note that music performs various functions which can only be understood in context. Moreover, language in music has been shown to have therapeutic benefits, providing a platform to reveal one's emotions and experiences. In pragmatic terms, there are embedded practs within the lyrics of songs. By practs, we mean the functions that utterances perform in line with the context of discourse (Mey, 2001). Sometimes, they teach lessons, narrate personal experiences or address societal issues and emotional struggles. In this paper, we identify and discuss the practs that are embedded in selected depressive songs of Mohbad. By depressive songs, we mean songs that showcase the artiste's mental health status in his songs and those that reflects his traumatic life experiences and struggles. Depression is more than

just feeling sad: it is a complex mental health disorder that can have a noticeable impact on every aspect of a person's life (Crone., et al 2023). It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems, significantly impairing a person's ability to function.

According to WHO (2023), depression is a leading cause of disability worldwide, it can undermine a person's relationships, make working and maintaining health very difficult and in most cases, may lead to suicide. Depression can affect individuals of all ages, genders, and backgrounds. It is characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a loss of interest or pleasure in activities. Understanding the early signs of depression can help individuals get required support in good time.

In an interview with media personality, Chude Jideonwo in January, 2023, Mohbad's best friend — Bella Shmurda, disclosed that Mohbad had suicidal tendencies owing to the fact that he was dealing with depression from the end of his contract with Marlian Music. Sadly, Mohbad

passed away on September 12, 2023, at the age of 27. Hence, in this paper, we explore linguistics markers that signpost the praxis in the identified depressive songs of Mohbad.

Short Biography of Oladimeji Ilerioluwa Aloba (Mohbad)

Oladimeji Ilerioluwa Aloba (Mohbad) is a Nigerian artist born on June 8, 1996, in Lagos, Nigeria. Mohbad's interest in music began during his secondary school days, where he started writing his own lyrics and rhymes. In 2019, Mohbad signed with Marlian Records, a label founded by popular Nigerian artist Afeez Fashola AKA Naira Marley. Under Marlian Records, Mohbad released several successful singles and collaborations, including "Ponmo" and "Koma Jensun". His music gained massive attention on social media platforms and music streaming services, earning him a loyal fan base. Mohbad's time at Marlian Records was marked by creative freedom and experimentation. He explored different sounds and themes in his music, often incorporating elements of Yoruba culture and language. His lyrics often addressed social issues, personal struggles, and street life experiences.

In 2022, Mohbad announced his departure from Marlian Records, citing creative differences, a desire for independence, constant attack he received which was orchestrated by Naira Marley and unpaid royalties as agreed since 2009. He continued to release music as an independent artist. Sadly, Mohbad passed away on September 12, 2023, at the age of 27. His death was met with shock and sadness from the music industry and fans worldwide. His death sparks a social movement with the hashtag '#justiceformohbad', allowing many people to express their anger over the bullying he faced in the music industry after his exit from Marlian Records which surfaced and was posted on blogs, such as Instablog, Gistloverblog, Mazitundeednut and others few hours after his death. Despite his short career, Mohbad left a lasting impact on Nigerian music scene.

Review of literature

Language and mental health are intimately connected, Dennis (2022) explains that language and mental health disorders are closely connected, impacting an individual's daily functioning.

Language is a multidisciplinary phenomenon that can be explored in various ways to understand mental health disorders. Two key approaches can be used to identify mental health issues: psychotherapy and mental diagnosis. Psychotherapy involves verbal interactions between therapists and clients while mental health diagnosis is related to examining language use by individuals in given contexts. Smirnova, et al (2018) use automated text analysis to examine posts from over 6,400 individuals across 63 online forums. They discover that people with depression tend to use more first-person singular pronouns, such as "I" and "me," and fewer third-person pronouns like "they" or "she." This suggests that depressed individuals have a stronger focus on themselves when compared to others. Additionally, the study notes that people with depression also use more negative descriptors in their language, such as words like "lonely" and "miserable." However, it remains unclear whether a self-focused mentality leads to depression, or if depression causes people to become more self-focused. Nonetheless, these linguistic markers could potentially provide insight into an individual's mental health status based on the way they express themselves.

Al-Mosaiwi & Johnstone, (2018) identify several linguistic markers that are associated with individuals with depression. They also find the use of first-person singular pronouns, negative emotion words, and absolutist words in their communication. These linguistic features are believed to reflect the self-focused attention, negativity bias, and absolutist thinking that are characteristic of depressed individuals. The study notes that while these linguistic markers have been well-documented, other domains of cognitive theories of depression have remained relatively unexplored in linguistic studies.

Makinde et al (2024) using Critical Pragmatics analyse selected songs of Ilerioluwa Oladimeji Aloba. The study examines his music using speech acts theory. The study emphasizes the significance of context in understanding language. The findings reveal that the artist uses variety of speech act such as assertions, declarations and expressive utterances which are pointers to the struggles of his journey from

hardship to success. The study did not interrogate depression as we have done in this paper.

Barette et al (2024) investigate the representation of mental health in contemporary music and assert music is a powerful medium for emotional expression and narrative. Through music, artistes have addressed themes of resilience, personal challenges and mental health. The study highlights the need for further analysis of songs that specifically address personal struggles by adopting a grounded approach in Narrative Psychology Theory. Through thematic analysis, the study identifies common themes

relating to personal challenges and the process of overcoming adversities.

The foregoing paragraphs show that there is a gap in linguistic scholarship on language index that signpost depression in music of Nigerian pop artiste. This paper fills this gap.

Theoretical framework

This study deployed Mey (20021) Pragmatic act theory to interrogate the data set for this paper. Mey’s theory has two parts: textual and Contextual part. The context part provides the anchorage for our analysis. The theory is represented below

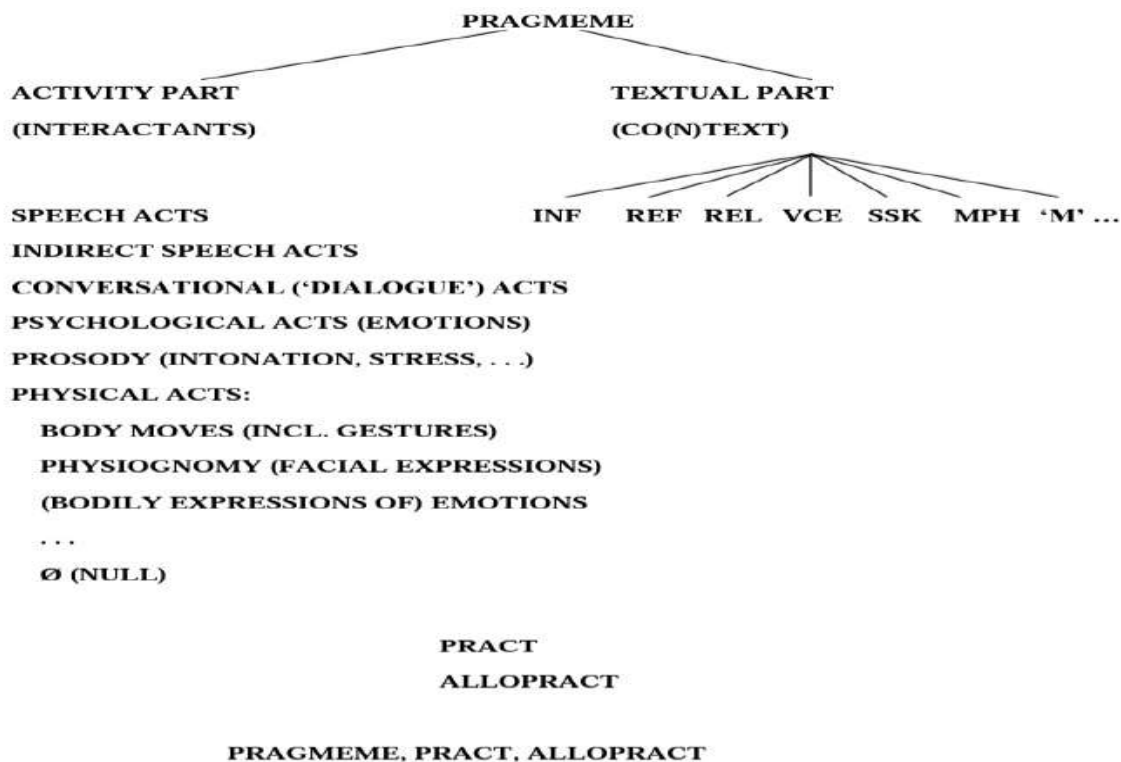


Fig 1: Mey’s Pragmatic Act Theory

The study concentrates on the textual part and explain concepts such as reference (Ref), Shared situational knowledge (SSK) and practs which are deployed in our analysis.

Reference deals with the way speakers assign names to objects in the context of use. In line with Yule (1996:22) “reference is not simply a relationship between a word or phrase and an

object or person in the world. It is a social act, in which the speaker assumes that the word or phrase chosen to identify an object or person will be interpreted as the speaker intended”. Hence, reference assignment may include (but not limited to) the use of personal names, address terms, use of deictic expressions. Hence, reference strategies deal with how speakers assign references to

objects and people as we shall explicate in our analysis section.

Sharedness is a key concept in every human communication. It refers to several shared beliefs of which shared situational knowledge is one. Shared beliefs aid access to the meaning of the reference choices that are used in the discourse. Invariably, a lot of assumptions are taken as given and there is economy in the use of expressions/words that relates to the subject of discourse. Shared situational knowledge requires not only the understanding of the in-text context but context that is outside of the text which are available common ground to listeners by virtue of being in-group members.

According to Mey (2001), pragmatic act is realized through individual actions, termed “practs” or “allopracts”. It is considered a specific realization of pragmemes. The activity part of a pragmeme shows various options available to interlocutors in a text, conversational act, psychological acts, prosody and body language. Context is a major factor in understanding pragmatic acts – physical environment, social setting, cultural norms and temporal factors, it is a dynamic component that interact with communication actions. Pragmatic act considers interactional dynamic between participants such as roles and relationship between participants and power dynamics and the collaborative process of co-constructing meaning. Further, it recognizes the importance of multi-modality in communication – non-verbal elements, such as gestures, facial expressions and body language contribute to conveying meaning and achieving communicational goals.

All three concepts work together for meaning generation in the songs selected for analysis in this paper.

Methodology

This paper is a descriptive work and adopts qualitative research method. The researcher listened and translated the selected songs of Mohbad in a bid to identify and analyse the linguistic markers that index depression in the songs and explain the pragmatic functions of the of the references implored. The researcher purposively selected five songs of Mohbad from different albums. The songs selected are: *Sorry*,

Blessing, *Feel Good*, *Peace* and *Beast and Peace* and these songs were translated to English language and analysed. These songs were downloaded from music platforms such as: Boomplay, Netnaija, and Muzikz Box.

Data Analysis and Discussion of findings

The linguistic choices deployed in the songs reflect several instances of a depressed person. There are several instances where the artistes talked about his past struggles and how he felt at different stages of his life. Emphasis on self with personal pronouns have been identified in songs as an index of depression which are also seen in the songs selected for this paper. A vivid example comes from an extract of the song *Sorry* as seen below:

This kind life e tire me.

The deictic element “this” to signpost personal experience which is narrated after its use in the song shows that the listener must wait for the kind of life that the artiste hopes to explicate. The audience is made to wait for the reference of ‘this’ in the content of the music. As he begins to roll out the kind of life that ‘tire’ him. This is used to introduce the theme of despair early in the song using an endophoric reference. Also, the choice of the Nigerian Pidgin English “tire me” helps the listener to connect to the artiste’s personal life. He deliberately narrates the array of experiences that he went through to show how miserable and tiring he felt during the time of reference. The context of the song justifies the choice of words in the opening lyrics. The beginning of the song indicates the tone of the song. The song chronicles his struggles and the reality of what he faced before he decided to follow his dreams and become a superstar. It is easy to sense that depression could set in through the lyrics, as Mohbad is fed up of the life he is living— a life that does not yield any productive result. This is the context upon which the lyrics is grounded as his depression originates from his being frustrated at the life he lived and the situation around him at that point. His use of first personal pronoun ‘me’ explicitly directs attention to him. He is basically talking about his life. From this line of thought, we move on to discuss the observable practs in his songs:

Practs of Worrying in Selected Songs of Mohbad

Worry is a universal human experience, often showing up as overthinking, anxiety, fear and frustration. Mohbad's songs paint a clearer picture of the emotional battle using vivid imagery and stories to show the weight of worry, his lyrics lay bare his personal struggles and the pressures from the society, unveiling hopelessness while looking for comfort through his music. For instance:

*Wetin be this one like dis,
Been through many things
Many, many gists
But, I still find my peace.*

These lyrics explicates with the mindset of Mohbad as he deliberately uses first person pronoun. While the last lyric boldly states his search and desire for peace, the first three lyrics reference the conversation on depression. Here, we find the pragmatic act of frustration and anxiety. "wetin be this one like this" directly translates "what is it about this now?" meaning that he seeks to question his reality as one that continually frustrates him and makes him afraid, he is not going to achieve much for himself anytime soon which was expressed in the Nigerian Pidgin English to bring listeners of the song to the same wavelength. In the next two lyrics, we see him reminiscing about his past and the "things" which gave him challenges throughout the course of his life. Throughout the song, he talks about his past, especially with his relationship with people he thought were his friends but had become something else. These lyrics is an attempt to find and then hold on to a treasure that is often ignored and underappreciated: peace. From the title, the intention of Mohbad is clear as he is interested in finding peace and being at peace with himself. Peace is a crucial want for Mohbad, especially if the struggles of his upbringing are taken into consideration, and now that he has reached a point in his life where he has all that he needs, and he has relatively seen all that he should see, he decides to relax and advocate peace. The first four lyrics reflect the intention of Mohbad to advocate his peace, despite the struggles he has faced in his life. The implicature here is that he is seeking

answers from all the complexities surrounding him. As he sings:

*"L'at'aye Genesis
I bin dealing with frenemies."*

The above lyric means that ever since he was young or before he became the man he is now, he always had dealt with frenemies. The use of the term "Genesis" showcases how long he has dealt with frenemies. The use of Genesis is apt, as not only is it the first chapter in the Bible, it is a chapter that is particular about the history of the world and the actions of God in creating the world. By referencing that term, Mohbad is referencing his history and all that he had experienced in his past up until that moment. Moreover, *frenemies* is a creative morphological framing. It is a blend of two words - *friend and enemy*. It is a word that shows how a person can have a friendly and a not-so-friendly relationship with a particular person. From the context of the song and this research, this term is applicable as a person can be your friend today and later be your enemy the next day without a warning. It is this reality that makes Mohbad fearful and led him to depression before he had attained fame and success.

Further, the pragmatic act that is indicated in his lyrics is not only that of frustration, but of pain. He is frustrated of the path his life took, which led to his pain that further fueled his being depressed. The lyrics that come after this continue the trend of frustration and hopelessness that are likely to prompt his descent into depression. Extract from the lyrics below is presented below:

*Daddy no get salary
Ten years I no see money
Stepmother no care.
Landlord dey worry
My brothers are hungry.*

These lyrics reflect the situation he faces that could prompt his descent into depression and the motivation for his "hustle". To start, the line "Daddy no get salary" is worrisome enough for anyone who lives with at least a parent. The "context" of salary can imply two things; it is either his father has a job or does not receive his salary on time, or he does not have any job at all. Either way, both situations are dire, as it is the duty of a father to constantly meet the needs of his

family by providing for their needs and making sure they lack nothing. When this is not achieved, there is a possibility of worry and frustration for both the head of the family and the rest of the family, which may lead to depression if the worry is not watched. This idea moves on to the next lines with linguistics choices such as: *Ten years I no see money, Landlord dey worry and My brothers are hungry*. All these are embedded in a lack of money and basic amenities. If he had the means to consistently see money, his brothers would not be hungry as he could provide for them anytime and any day, his landlord would no longer “worry” him, which seems to bother him as he would have the money to pay for the rent. Basically, the context of these lyrics is on the need for money, the lack of it and the frustration that comes from not having it, all of which can lead to depression.

At the textual level of the pragmeme, there is reference to these indices as a contributing factor of depression that affects Mohbad and his journey through life. Moreover, in that line *Stepmother no care*, the context relates to the overlying theme which is the lack of money and the frustration that leads to not having any. He briefly captures the stereotypical image of most stepmothers. This reveals that he and his siblings are living with a stepmother and not their mother. As it appears, the stepmother does not care whether they survive or not. He had no one to take the burden of worry and support him through his struggles. It is usually believed that one major reason people fall into depression is the lack of a support system that would keep them strong and firm, and with the context of these lyrics, Mohbad implies his stepmother would have been that person to have prevented his being depressed. The need and desire to be surrounded by people that would act as a pillar and provide a strong hold are mentioned in subsequent lyrics of the song. Another instance is in the lyrics cited below:

*“Ahn, I am on silent mood, but beast ní mí”
Mo lé cause violence but still, peace ní mí”*

These lyrics portray him as someone who is both capable of peace and violent acts. It also indicates that he should not be underestimated because he can unleash both parts of himself, depending on the situation he finds him. Despite this being the

overall theme, there are elements of depression that are referenced as pragmatic acts in the song lyrics. The pragmatic act of worry is still at play, although his stance is more focused on reality.

Pract of Soliciting Help in Selected Songs of Mohbad

Mohbad captures the complexities of depression through the pract of soliciting, thereby yearning for emotional validation, relief and guidance. Through his lyrics, listeners can establish his desperate need for help and escape from the current situation he finds himself.

The lyrics below is an instance of such soliciting;

*Eshi biri biri ke bo mi o
Iwaju loloko yi wamilo eyin loloko yi
wamilo mio mo ye oo*

These lines reflect the desire for him to have a support system around him. He realizes that his suffering and frustration at life is not something that he can handle alone, which is why he needs to have trustworthy people by his side constantly in order to ease the pain he feels. In the second lyric, he notes that he is directionless and devoid of focus. It is seemingly dangerous for a person to be devoid of focus because such a person may not achieve much of what he/she wants to achieve in life. Moreover, from the description of the lyrics, it is a truth that Mohbad deals with and what prompts him to seek help so that he would not be led astray and not fulfil his dreams. From these lyrics, the pragmatic act of soliciting help is observed as he pleads with people not to leave him alone so that he would remain focused and get away from the clutches of depression, although originally the above lyric is associated with King Sunny Ade in his song titled *Eshi biri biri ebomi* in the context of his, he was not calling for help but was stating the obvious that he knows what is ahead -from the discussion, judging by the context of the two songs, it is a different context but related through the lyrics. In the above excerpt, he explains that he is in a confused state of mind about where life is taking him to. Here, one can derive an implicature that the artiste needs help.

Pract of Doubting in Selected Songs of Mohbad

Another pract that is prominent in the lyrics of his song is doubt that comes from people about his actions. His songs capture paralyzing

grip of doubt which is one of the features of depression. The pragmatic act of doubt is observed as he complains about the perception that people have about him and how he lives his life. A lyrics that explains this is seen below:

Torípé mó wọ ñkán, wọn sọ pé
{Because I am focused, they say I am
on drugs} *mowá on drugs.*

In this lyric, he is worried about peoples' doubt about his ability to be focused without drugs. According to him, he has become vigilant and more careful. To him, he asks if they would have preferred him to be docile and dull so as to please them. It is as a result of this that he says they believe he is on drugs, something he states that he does not indulge in and is not the cause of his vigilance. This doubt is further portrayed through the feelings of his family about his new achievements. He sings in these lyrics:

*"Uh, mummy mi ati daddy mi { My mummy
and dady}*
wán kan lò question mi. { questions me}
*"Wọn ní, "Ìbò l'otí rí vibe yi, { they asked me
where I get this sort of vibe}*
şé ọwọ demon?"
{Are you possessed by demons?}
*Áwọn tọ senior mí, wọn bèrè, { my seniors
ones too are asking questions}*

These lines reinforce the pragmatic act of doubt that is related to the theme of depression in this analysis. He is worried and confused by the doubt people have about being wealthy and becoming famous. From his parents asking him where he gets his "vibes" to those who are older than him inquiring about the source of his wealth, he is bothered by the reality that those around him do not trust and have faith in him and his person. He worries that what is the point of his being rich and those who he hustles for do not believe that he would get rich in a legitimate manner. This reality

seemingly disturbs him, and this is what inspires his lyrics, as well as the title and the focus of the song. The fact that his parents have to ask if his riches come from a malevolent spirit like a demon further fuels his worry that could lead to depression.

Pract of fear and uncertainty

At times, the artiste expresses his fear and uncertainty in his song. Often times, he prays for protection from God and reveals his religious beliefs. For instance, let us consider an extract:

Plenty enemies wey dey follow me.
Maje kan mu mi, even if na die minutes.

The pragmatic act that is prominent here is fear and uncertainty. Despite his "feeling good" he does not let his guard down as he is being fearful for what his enemies are planning for him. He knows that he has enemies who can plan to end his life at any time, which is why in these moods, he makes a supplication to God that he should not let his enemies get a hold of him. Being oblivious of the reality of enemies who surrounds him and choosing to openly talk about it, reflects his state of mind.

Conclusion

Music provides a platform for expression. Lyrics are not written in abstraction; there are always underlying contexts that prompts their compositions, which is why it is important to understand the message a song attempts to pass across, and the pract the language use aims to fulfill. This paper offers a distinct interrogation of a popular artistes' songs as a precursor to his depression even before his death. This paper contributes to a deeper understanding of how artistes express and convey themes of depression through music, which provide insight into the artistic representation of mental health related issues.

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SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICES AND IDENTITY FORMATION IN NIGERIAN LITERATURE: A PSYCHO-SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF ABI DARÉ'S *THE GIRL WITH THE LOUDING VOICE* AND CHIGOZIE OBIOMA'S *THE FISHERMEN*.

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between socio-cultural practices and identity formation in Nigerian literature with focus on two selected Nigerian novels, Abi Daré's *The Girl with the Louding Voice* and Chigozie Obioma *The Fishermen*. Erik Erikson's Psycho-social Development theory was used to examine how cultural settings and norms influence the formation of individual identities, emphasizing the impact of parental guidance, societal expectations, and religious beliefs through a detailed qualitative analysis. The findings reveal that parental neglect fosters resilience but also leads to tragic consequences. Furthermore, the findings highlight the importance of supportive family system. The paper concludes that societal norms and religious beliefs in the challenges and opportunities presented by socio-cultural dynamics greatly help in shaping characters' identities in the texts. Recommendations stemming from this study advocates for creating supportive environments for identity exploration, fostering open communication, integrating diverse literature in education, and advocating for societal change to eliminate harmful cultural conditions.

Keywords: socio-cultural, identity, values, Nigerian literature, parental neglect

Introduction

Society is a complex and organized network of individuals who come together to interact, cooperate and share common norms, values, and institutions. It is a fundamental aspect of human existence, providing the structure within which people live, collaborate, and establish relationships. Societies can vary greatly in size, culture, and structure, but they all play a crucial role in shaping human behavior and beliefs (Moffett, 2024). Identity is a multi-layered concept that encompasses the characteristics, beliefs, and attributes that make an individual or a group of people unique. It is influenced by a variety of factors, including cultural, social, psychological, and personal elements. It encompasses aspects such as gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, values, and personal experiences, all of which contribute to a person's sense of self and belonging in the world (Sabaliauskienė, 2024).

Society and identity are composite concepts that plays fundamental roles in human life. Society refers to the network of social relationships, norms, values, and institutions that individuals are part of, while identity encompasses the various characteristics and traits that define who we are as individuals. The relationship between society and identity is dynamic, as our sense of self is shaped by the societies we belong to, and, in turn, our identities influence how we engage with and contribute to those societies. This interwoven relationship between society and identity is central to understanding human behavior, culture, and the way we perceive ourselves and others (Hogg, 2021). Society and Identity have a complex and intertwined connection. At its heart, society is the framework that controls how people interact with one another and also holds all of the social, political, economic, and cultural institutions together. Identity is not static but rather dynamic, changing over time and

being shaped by societal circumstances (Denik, 2017).

Literature has always been a key tool for reflecting man and the society, both in its oral and written forms. Literature continues to be a reliable tool for the portrayal, understanding, and interpretation of human endeavours such as religion, class conflict, politics, interpersonal relationships, societal conflicts, and identity creation. Literature cannot possibly portray society without mentioning the people.

Literature Review

Culture includes the beliefs, customs, practices, and values that characterise a particular group's way of life, whereas societies are complex systems made up of people, institutions, and common norms (Lillis & Tian, 2010). The classic definition of culture by Lillis & Tian (2010) was "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life." This term emphasises how much culture shapes how people perceive the world and their place in it. People use culture as a framework to interpret their experiences and create their identities. Basically, culture is a broad term that encompasses a society's behaviors, behavioral patterns, institutions, norms, beliefs, conventions, arts, laws, knowledge, and habits. Culture is typically associated with regions or a particular location. To put it another way, culture is the methods of thinking, doing, and possessing things that collectively make up a people's way of life (Kaguhangire-Barifajj, Nkata, & Lwanga, 2021).

The "socio" component alludes to the institutions and social structures that make up a society. Family, education, religion, politics, and economic systems are just a few of these institutions. Individuals interact with and negotiate cultural values and norms within various social systems. When analysing how socio-cultural values affect identity, the interaction between the "socio" and "culture" becomes very important. In reaction to the sociocultural circumstances in which they are positioned, individuals negotiate their identities (Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, Hökkä & Paloniemi, 2014). This negotiating process

entails adjusting to or opposing social institutions as well as embracing and resisting cultural norms.

An individual's identity is fundamentally shaped by socio-cultural values from an early age. The development of one's identity can be significantly influenced by cultural factors during childhood and adolescence, according to Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1959). An individual's sense of self is influenced by the cultural values that are passed down through family, community, and educational systems. Gender roles and expectations are frequently governed by cultural conventions. These expectations may have a significant influence on how people form their gender identities. According to research, how people perceive and express their gender is influenced by cultural views of masculinity and femininity (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). Understanding identity's multifaceted character and its impact on people's lives is crucial for fostering well-being and understanding human development.

Theoretical Framework

Erik Erikson's Psycho-social Development Theory

Since its introduction in 1963, Erik Erikson's psycho-social development model has been a key theory regarding the phases of human development. Erikson identified eight developmental stages, each of which is represented by a general age range. However, due to culture, social change, and distinct stages of growth, there is debate about age ranges. Erikson asserts that there are psycho-social crises in each stage (trust vs. mistrust; autonomy vs. shame and doubt; initiative vs. guilt; industry vs. inferiority; identity vs. role confusion; intimacy vs. isolation; generativity vs. stagnation; integrity vs. despair) and that each stage presents a challenge to the person in terms of completing a psycho-social task. A psycho-social crisis is an innate conflict brought on by sexual and physical development as well as societal changes. These challenges serve as a catalyst for forming a person's personality and affect how they connect with others, navigate the environment, and build self-esteem throughout the course of a lifetime. According to Erikson, going through psycho-social crises and getting through

them can either result in a healthy personality or one that is fractured and damaged.

In this study, emphasis will be laid on 'Identity vs Role Confusion'. It is one of the key stages and fifth stage in Erikson's theory. It typically occurs during adolescence, roughly from ages 12 to 18. In this phase, according to Erikson's theory, people struggle to develop a distinct and cohesive sense of who they are. Answering fundamental concerns about one's identity, values, and place in society is necessary for this (Erikson, 1968). The development of one's total psychosocial self depends on developing a sense of identity. Role confusion results from a weak sense of identity not being developed. Role-conflicted people find it difficult to develop a consistent self-concept and may be unsure about their values, views, and life objectives. According to Erikson (1968), this may cause emotional upheaval, identity crisis, and a lack of direction. The process of forming an identity during adolescence is significantly shaped by socio-cultural values. The context in which teenagers discover and establish their identities is influenced by cultural norms, familial expectations, and society ideals.

Data Analysis

Socio- Cultural Practices and Identity Formation in Abi Daré's *The Girl with the Louding Voice*

Gender and Social Class Stratification

The Girl with the Louding Voice is a painful and triumphant novel about the power of fighting for ambitions and sense of self. It tells the story of a teenage girl growing up in a remote Nigerian community who longs to receive an education so she can find her louding voice and speak up for herself. Despite the seemingly insurmountable challenges in her way, Adunni never loses sight of her aim of escaping the life of poverty and several socio-cultural entanglements into which she was born so that she can create the future she wants for herself and help other girls do the same. Adunni, the protagonist is determined and aspires to become a teacher in the future. She is of the opinion that education will raise her standard and give her a voice just as her mother said to her.

The social class stratification is evident in the novel, as Idowu, Adunni's mother is denied the rights to marry Ade whom she loves because Ade's parents are wealthy and Idowu is from a poor uneducated family of which she ended up marrying Papa (Adunni's father). Therefore, she made up her mind that no matter what it will cost her, her daughter will be educated.

Adunni, God knows I will use my last sweat to be sending you to school because I am wanting you to have chance at life. I am wanting you to speak good English, because in Nigeria, everybody is understanding English and the better your speaking English, the better for you to be getting good job. In this village, if you go to school, no one will be forcing you to marry any man. But if you didn't go to school, they will marry you to any man once you are reaching fifteen years old. Your schooling is your voice, child. It will be speaking for you even if you didn't open your mouth to talk. It will be speaking till the day God is calling you come. That day, I tell myself that even if I am not getting anything in this life, I will go to school. I will finish my primary and secondary and university schooling and become teacher because I don't just want to be having any kind voice . . . I want a louding voice. (pp 23-24).

This dream was however cut short when Idowu (Adunni's mother) died. Adunni's father who had earlier promised to ensure Adunni is educated reneged on his promise to his late wife when he could no longer pay for Adunni's school fee of ₦7,000.

Thirty thousand naira is very plenty moneys. I know Papa cannot find that moneys even if he is searching the whole of the Nigeria because even my school fees moneys of seven thousand, Papa didn't have. It was Mama who was paying for school fees and rent moneys and feeding money and everything money before she was dead. (p. 9)

Despite her deep desire for knowledge, she is forced to abandon school due to her family's financial struggles and societal expectations. Her father, who sees her as a means of financial relief,

arranges her marriage to an older man, Morufu, in exchange for money and material benefits: "*My papa say he is selling me to be the wife of Morufu, the taxi driver, the man with two wives already*" (p. 25). This transactional nature of marriage reflects the devaluation of female autonomy, as young girls like Adunni are treated as commodities rather than individuals with aspirations. The patriarchal system in which Adunni is embedded prioritizes male authority and control, thereby restricting women's access to personal and economic independence.

Furthermore, Adunni's experiences with Morufu's household illustrate how gender oppression intersects with class hierarchy. Within the polygamous setting, the wives compete for their husband's attention, reinforcing the notion that a woman's value is tied to her ability to bear children and serve her husband. Morufu's first wife, Labake, embodies the bitterness and despair that result from being trapped in an oppressive marital system. Her violence toward Adunni is not only an expression of her personal suffering but also a reflection of the internalized oppression that many women in her position endure: "*She lift her hand and give me one slap on my face. 'You be small girl. Small rat. You think you can come and take my husband?'*" (p. 47).

The theme of class stratification is further developed when Adunni escapes Morufu's house and becomes a domestic worker in Big Madam's household. Here, she experiences another form of social oppression, this time shaped by economic disparity. Although Big Madam, a wealthy businesswoman, has broken barriers as a successful female entrepreneur, she perpetuates the exploitation of poorer women by mistreating her domestic workers. Adunni, despite being in a female-led household, finds herself subjected to physical and verbal abuse, which underscores the novel's critique of class divisions within gendered spaces: "*Big Madam say, 'You are useless girl, stupid girl,' and she slap me, one, two, three times on my face*" (p.153). The contrast between Adunni's social status and that of her employer illustrates how economic power does not necessarily translate to feminist solidarity. Instead, class hierarchies often override gender-based

unity, leaving poor women like Adunni vulnerable to multiple forms of oppression.

Subjugation of Women and Domestic / Sexual Oppression

In the text, the author portrays the subjugation of the girl-child and female gender by the male gender; believing that their career and personal ambitions are not necessary and that they are only for marriage and house duties ... *Girls are only good for marriage, cooking food and bedroom work*" (p. 37). Adunni was married off to Morufu at the age of fourteen and Kike, the first daughter of Morufu who is of the same age with Adunni is also married off to Baba Ogun who lost his wife six months ago and *he is finding another one, a young girl like me to make him feel like a young man.* (p. 64).

As Adunni is aspiring to go to school and become a teacher, on the other hand, Kike is a very good tailor who also wishes to learn more but has no support from her father; who already made up his mind to use her bride price to repair his other taxi. Their ambitions and vision got shattered due to the societal and cultural belief of early girl child marriage. "*I wish I am a man... all the mens in our village, they are allowing them learn school and work, but us the girls, they are marrying us from fourteen years of age*" (p.64).

It was easy for Adunni's father to sell Adunni off for marriage because she is a girl child and since Morufu, the old taxi driver who already had two wives and four children promised to pay the community rent of thirty thousand naira being a part payment for her bride price and bring four he-goats, agric fowl, bag of rice, e.t.c. "*The rent money is among your owo-ori*" (p.5.) Similarly, Khadija was married off to Morufu when she was fifteen years all because he wanted a male child "*I marry him when I was fifteen years and I have three children for him, three girls that he didn't want because of they are girls*". *I want two boys children... I will send them to school...* (p. 37). After the forceful child marriages, maltreatment and domestic violence follows "*Even when Mama was not dead, Papa was always shouting her.... He beat her... he give her one slap, swelling her cheek... that womens are not supposed to talk when mens are talking*" (p.22). In Morufu's house too, Khadija immediately gave

Adunni in her first night as a wife, the golden rule of the house which is no one must talk back at their husband for any reason. *"I am the king in this house. Nobody must talk back to me. Not you, not the children, not anybody. When I am speaking, you keep your mouth quiet. Adunni, that means you don't ask question in my front, you hear me?" (p.36)*".

Adunni was sexually oppressed by Big Daddy (Chief Adeoti) the husband of Big Madam. She quickly learns that Big Daddy is a dangerous man. He is constantly drunk and lecherous, and he makes it clear that he is attracted to Adunni. *"Adunni, dunni-licious, He licks his lips, tongues climbing over his moustaches. Beautiful name for a beautiful girl. He touch his chest, show a hand full of plenty hair, thick and curling".(p. 140)*. Infact, Adunni later found out that Big Daddy forcefully slept with Rebecca, their former house help when Abu (their driver) gave her the letter he found under the seat in the car. *"My name is Rebecca... I am pregnant for Big Daddy. Big Daddy forced me to sleep with him at first, then he promised to marry me if I am sleeping with him all the time".. (p. 279)*.

Apart from the men – female subjugation and harassment, the author also depicts women subjugating women. The Wellington Road Wives Association (WRWA) are fond of mocking and ridiculing the maids that works for Big Madam. They (Florence, Kiki, Sade and Caroline) made jest of Adunni because of her inability to pronounce words correctly. She pronounced *"womens"* instead of *"women"*. *"Did she just call us womens? She say, laughing, her eyes filling with water. My days. That is hilarious"* (p.163). When Adunni unconsciously poured the tray of stick-meats on the floor, Big Madam smashed her shoe right inside the middle of Adunni's head. Amongst all the Wellington Road Wives, Ms Tia seems to stand out. After witnessing the way Adunni was maltreated by the other women, she took a step further to move closer to Adunni. Ms. Tia is a modern woman who is not afraid to challenge traditional societal or cultural issues because was once a victim too.

The Struggle for Identity and Finding One's Voice

In the midst of the sexual and domestic harassment in Morufu's house, Adunni's identity and strong determination began to conform. She

began to experience psycho-social crises and internal conflicts – *"Enitan say that Morufu have a house. A real, working car, plenty food to eat, money to be giving Papa and Kayus and even Born-boy. Money for Kayus is a good thing. I can try, like Enitan say, to be happy"* (p. 29).

Adunni's fractured sense of self is in accordance with Erik Erikson's Psycho-social Theory, which states that psycho-social crisis is an innate conflict brought on by sexual and physical development as well as societal changes. These challenges serve as a catalyst for forming a person's personality and affect how they connect with others, navigate the environment, and build self-esteem throughout the course of a lifetime. Fear gripped her hearts, her vision, ambition and long-time goal is scattering and shattering as the society (her father) decides to sell her off in marriage in exchange for money and food items and as she faces sexual and domestic maltreatment. *"My eyes was just watching myself, watching as the picture of schooling that I put on top a table in my heart was falling to the floor, scattering into small, small piece"*. (p. 32).

After a while, on the same day that Kike, their husband's first child is being married off, Khadija ask Adunni to follow her on a visit to the midwife. While on the way, Khadija started to have labour pains. She told Adunni that their stop is Kere village. On getting to Kere village, she told Adunni to go into a house and call out a man Bamidele, apparently, Bamidele is responsible for Khadija's pregnancy. According to Khadija, she decided to seek the help of Bamidele to become pregnant when all effort to have a male child through her husband has failed and having been in love with Bamidele before she was forced to marry her husband, she ran back to him for help so that she can have a male child and be free from constant threat by her husband who made it clear that if she do not give him a male child, she will be returned to her father's house.

Unfortunately, Khadija did not make it back to Ikati alive. She died at the banks of Kere River where Bamidele took her and Adunni with a promise to bring a special soap for a supposed sacrifice that ought to be done on Khadija to prevent Khadija and the baby from dying. After a while, it became apparent that Bamidele deceived

them. Bamidele refused to return and Khadija died right on the spot where Bamidele left her and Adunni. Adunni ran back to Bamidele's house only to be told that he has been away for some days and so Adunni was dumbfounded she had to run back to her father's house to avoid the looming injustice that will come upon her should anybody in the village link her to the dead body of Khadija at Kere river. *"Wake up, Khadija, I beg with all of my soul. Wake up. Wake up. Wake up. But it is of no use, Khadija have dead. And Bamidele have not come back"* (p. 83).

Adunni had to run for her life when she narrated all that happened to her father, and he insisted on reporting to the village chief and Morufu. On her way, she met Ruka who promises to come and dance for her when she has a new baby. The statement Ruka made births out numerous thoughts that depicts a splintered sense of self caused by all the societal and cultural malaise Adunni is facing.

"I am thinking of what Ruka just say, about coming to dance with me when I have a new baby. Will my Papa and Morufu be shocking with anger and surprise when they hear that I am missing? Will they think it is because I kill Khadija that I am running away? Will my Papa be having heart pain because of me? Will they put my Papa inside prison until they find me come? Or will Papa know that I am running away? And if they find me, will they hear what I am saying about Bamidele? wipe my face with the back of my hand and sniff up the catar from my nose. This decisions is too hard, and maybe I am no doing the correct thing" (p. 94).

The above excerpt from the text explicates Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory (Identity vs Role Confusion) which states that role-conflicted people find it difficult to develop a consistent self-concept and may be unsure about their values, views, and life objectives. According to Erikson (1968), this may cause emotional upheaval, identity crisis, and a lack of direction. The process of forming an identity during adolescence is significantly shaped by socio-

cultural values. The context in which teenagers discover and establish their identities is influenced by cultural norms, familial expectations, and society ideals as vividly portrayed in the life of Adunni, the protagonist.

As Adunni ran out of Ikati village, she went in the cover of the night to Agan village where Iya, an old woman and one of the beneficiaries of her mother's good heart lives. The woman had initially promised to help her if she ever needs help. She ran to her for help although she met her in a critical health condition that made her contemplate her decision. Iya decided to help her, she sent for her brother, Mr Kola the Agent who lives in Idanra village. Mr Kola's agency supplies house help to influential people in the city of Lagos. So, it is the very next day after Khadija's demise, Adunni finds her herself on the way to the city of Lagos in Mr Kola's car. In Lagos, Mr Kola took Adunni to Big Madam's house, in Lekki where she is expected to work as a maid. She realises that this is another prison as it became quite clear that the education she so desperately seeks would not be found in Big Madam's house and if she was ever going to make it out of this prison, she needs to do something about her life.

Similarly, Ms Tia's mother had a manual for how her daughter's life would go. Her mother influenced her identity. She made sure Ms Tia doesn't have any friend, every moment was spent studying. She wanted her to be an accountant and Ms Tia herself disliked numbers or calculations. She wanted her to get married at age twenty-two and have children immediately because she wanted to become a grandmother before a certain age. *"My mother had a manual for how my life would go and I rebelled – got stubborn- at every decision she made for me"* (p. 189). Obviously, her mother's attitude affected Ms Tia's identity and sense of self as she made her so unhappy and not wanting to have a child *"I don't think I will be a good mother". I didn't even want to bring children into this world"* (p. 189).

Abi Dare also shows how religious beliefs shapes one's sense of self, when Ms Tia's mother-in-law took her to a Prophet for it is believed that she has been unable to conceive because Ms Tia has one evil spirit that is swallowing the baby. That Ms Tia brought the spirit when she was coming from

abroad and the spirit needs to be sent back. After praying for her, the prophet took her to Mother-In-Jerusalem Tinu, the head of the female birth-makers. “*She is a powerful woman in the baby-making-miracle ministry*” (p. 259). Ms Tia was taken to the river and Mother Tinu whip her with brooms and she began to scream.

“And so, I watch as they whip and whip and whip, as Ms Tia is rolling on the ground and screaming, until her fine smooth skin is having puncture from the sand, and until her while body is becoming the red of the earth”. (p. 263).

After the rituals, Ms Tia’s already stopped screaming and her body is already bleeding blood, her back is full of so much marks. The church women throw the brooms into the river, they shout “*THE EVIL OF CHILDLESSNESS HAS BEEN CHASED OUT. PRAISE BE TO THE LIVING HIM! The other four women, they clap their hands to say, ELI, JAH*” (p. 264).

Ms Tia rebirth Adunni’s initial identity and strong desire to go to school. Kofi, the chef at Big Madam and Big Daddy's house, is one of the few male characters in the text who doesn't abuse or exploit women. He is a Ghanaian immigrant who is using the money he earns working for Big Madam to finish building a house back home, where he has a daughter around Adunni's age. Kofi is a kind and compassionate man who likes Adunni and looks out for her. He tells her about the Ocean Oil Secondary School Scholarship, which he sees as her one chance at freedom “*Abu took me to the Ocean Oil office on our way from the market yesterday, Kofi say, I picked up the application form for you and kept it in my room. Adunni, this is your only chance at freedom*” (p. 156). He also warns her to be careful around Big Daddy, whom he knows to be a dangerous man.

Ms. Tia is kind and respectful to Adunni, even though Adunni is a poor village girl. She sees Adunni’s potential and helps her to develop her skills. Ms. Tia gives Adunni English lessons, and she helps her to prepare for the Ocean Oil Secondary School Scholarship. “*I got you early Christmas present, some of the best books on grammar, she say. This here is called Better English*” (p. 222). Ms. Tia also encourages Adunni

to write about her experiences, and she helps her to find her voice. “*Adunni! You got in!, You won a place in the scheme! I am not wait ONE MORE DAY! I will fight Florence if I have to. I am coming to get you now! Pack your stuff*” p.302.

Ms. Tia is a complex character who is both privileged and marginalized. She is privileged because of her wealth and education, but she is also marginalized because she is a woman. Ms. Tia uses her privilege to help others, and she is a role model for Adunni. When Adunni first meets Ms. Tia, Ms. Tia treats her with kindness and respect, even though the other women at the function belittle and disrespect Adunni. Ms. Tia’s kindness and compassion help Adunni to grow and develop as a person. Ms. Tia shows Adunni that there is another way to live, and she inspires Adunni to fight for her dreams.

Erikson’s Psychosocial Development Theory views that going through psycho-social crises and getting through them can either result in a healthy personality or one that is fractured and damaged. Adunni's sojourn ended well and she later became a healthy personality having overcome all the societal and cultural malady that she grapples with. Her struggle, ambition and perseverance helped her to be awarded the Ocean Oil scholarship, and also to free herself from forced labor, and start working toward her goal of becoming a teacher. “*Adunni! You got in!, You won a place in the scheme! I am not wait ONE MORE DAY! I will fight Florence if I have to. I am coming to get you now! Pack your stuff*” (p.302).

Socio- cultural Practices and Identity Formation in Chigiozie Obioma's *The Fishermen*

Cultural, Societal, Religious and Familial Influences

The tragic tone and nature of the events in *The Fishermen* stem from the mystic pull of the uncanny figure of Abulu at the Omi-Ala river. His prophecy against Ikenna – whether or not it actually has any basis in a preconceived truth – affects not only the latter but also the rest of his brothers. The brothers’ encounter with Abulu forces them to undergo a “metamorphosis” and several forms of identity crises, as Benjamin describes in one of the chapters. This metamorphosis becomes a point of definition for

the relationship of the brothers as well as the conception of their masculinities. The narrator goes to tell us about the history and the grim image of the river Omi-Ala. He says, “*Omi Ala was a dreadful river: long forsaken by its inhabitants of Akure town like a mother abandoned by her children*” (p. 27). However, the narrator says that was not the history of Omi-Ala for he recalls that;

Like many such rivers in Africa, Omi-Ala was once believed to be a god; people worshipped it. They erected shrines in its name, and courted the intercession and guidance of Iyemoja, Osha, mermaids, and other spirits and gods that dwelt in water bodies. This changed when the colonialists came from Europe, and introduced the Bible, which then prized Omi-Ala’s adherents from it, and the people, now largely Christians, began to see it as an evil place. A cradle besmeared (p. 27).

The four brothers; Ben, Ikenna, Boja and Obembe father was abruptly, transferred to work in Yola, a distant town. This distance makes it hard for him to come home daily or often as he would like. Their father is the strict disciplinarian of the family, so with him out of town, Ben and his older brothers, try out new things instead of studying as their father expects them to do. He wants them all to have a good education and had even plots professional careers for them. While their mother is busy taking care of her shop, the home and the two youngest children, they play football and other games in the streets for a while, but soon decide to go fishing in the Omi-Ala River. Despite it being dreadful and superstitious to Akure residents, the boys find it as a place where they can find peace and adventure. However, the residents hold the river with prejudice emanating from its bad image.

The author indicates the source of the bad image is because of dark rumours that people committed all sorts of evils on its banks (p. 28). The river is a symbol of African culture. In the text ‘the river’ is depicted as pure and a place where the residents of Akure performed their rites before the coming of colonialism. After the arrival of colonialism, the river is depicted as forsaken by natives thereby acquiring the dreadful image of “evil”. Once a pure river, it supplied the earliest

settlers with clean drinking water and fish. The river before the invasion of colonialism and him brainwashing the locals was a religious place “Omi-Ala was once believed to be a god; people worshipped it” (p. 27). The river, is not only a source of water and food, but also a religious place.

The image of the river, however, changed when the colonialists invaded Africa and introduced the Bible. Colonialists converted natives’ religious beliefs to Christianity and their perception of their culture changed. They started to see their cultures as evil, superstitious and retrogressive. Because of shrines and rituals performed at the banks of the river, the newly converted Africans abandoned it and the river and the shrine became a detested place. “*This was supported by accounts of corpses, animal carcasses and other ritualistic materials floating on the surface of the river or lying on its bank*” (28). Although, the Christians abandoned the filthy river because of its sin, the boys enjoy adventuring to the river. They find peace while playing in the river and it does not only work as a place for adventure, but also, they fish and sell them for their economic growth. Their interest in the river led them to discover and learn a lot especially of the madman’s prophecy.

Abulu was not in that state of mind from birth, his father went on a Christian pilgrimage to Israel and never returned. It was believed by most people that he was killed by a bomb in Jerusalem, while one of his friends who went on the same pilgrimage said he had made his way to Austria with an Austrian woman and settled there. Abulu and his brother Abana lived with their mother and their elder sister who, by the time she was fifteen, took up whoring business and then travelled to Lagos to practice prostitution in full. The food restaurant owned by their mother couldn’t cater for the needs of both of them; she could not afford to pay their school fees and provide other amenities. This made the two brothers to commence stealing. It was after robbing a rich widow of a briefcase full of money, and running from the mob pursuing them that Abulu got knocked by a fast-moving car. Abana rushed him to the hospital, but, “Abulu’s brain cells, had floated out of their compartments into foreign zones in his head, changing his mental configurations”. He raped his mother; his brother

was vexed and he beats him mercilessly. This made Abulu to run into the streets and there his street madness commences. *“Abulu wandered about naked, dirty, smelling, awash with filth, trailed by a sea of flies, dancing in streets, picking up waste from bins and eating it p. 98”*

It was to the shock of the parents to learn their children’s behaviour. “so, Adaku you sit here and tell me in all truth that my boys- Ikenna, Bojanonimeokpu, Obembe, Benjamin- were the ones she saw at that river; that dangerous river under a curfew, where even adults are known to have disappeared?” (p. 49). Although the father blames his wife for the children’s misbehaviour when he was away. Their mother had to summon her husband from Yola after the boys were reported to have gone fishing in river Omi Ala.

All this tragedy occurs during the absence of Mr. Agwu, the father. The novel opens with Benjamin precisely discussing about this situation: “My brothers and I became fishermen in January of 1996 after our father moved out of Akure, a town in the west of Nigeria, where we had lived together all our lives. His employer, the Central Bank of Nigeria, had transferred him to a branch of the bank in Yola... p. 9” This marks the first mention of the brothers’ becoming fishermen, with Mr. Agwu’s moving away being pointed out in this statement as a cause. His absence plays a role in the boys being able to go to the river Omi-Ala and perform acts as fishermen. When they get into trouble for it, the brothers are punished by Mr. Agwu, who also curiously states: *“Such adventurous spirit is the spirit of men. So, from now onwards, I want you all to channel that spirit into something more fruitful. I want you to be a different kind of fishermen...”* In this manner, Mr. Agwu acts as a hegemonic and authoritative figure of masculinity for the brothers. He re-contextualizes the acts of the brothers as ones carried out by the “spirit of men”, and, moreover, impels the role of being fishermen to them. This being said; however, Mr. Agwu’s expectations are not met by the brothers. Instead of being “a group of fishermen who will be fishers of good dreams”, Obembe and Ben, for example, become another type of fishermen.

Identity Formation: The Psychological Unraveling of the Brothers

Ikenna has to struggle against the seed planted in him by the prophecy of the mad man, Abulu. As Ben narrates: *The fear, after destroying Ikenna’s well-being, health and faith, destroyed his relationships, the closest of which was with us, his brothers. It seemed that he had fought the internal battle for too long, and now wanted to get it over with (122).* The episodic contact with Abulu led Ikenna, Boja, Obembe, Benjamin to an extrovert life, making them become aggressive and harsh. It also changed their worldview by making them see society as a jungle; a place where the strong bully and trample down the weak. Thus, to survive they became nasty and predatory. The narrator discloses: *“Ikenna had just turned fifteen, and to my eyes, he was now a full adult able to grow beards. Yet the thought that he was old came with the strong fear that once he grew into an adult, he would disconnect from us” (p 58).* This statement suggests a change of character in Ikenna which Benjamin the narrator perceives as waywardness, carefree attitude and signs for future dissidence and disconnection from the family.

The prophecy given by Abulu triggered Ikenna’s identity crises *“Ikenna, you will be bound like a bird on the day you shall die.. Ikenna, you will be mute, Ikenna you will be crippled, your tongue will stick out of your mouth like a hungry beast, and will not return back into your mouth, Ikenna, you will swim in a river of red but shall never rise from it again, Ikenna, you shall die like a cock dies” (pp. 89-90).* Ikenna interpreted the prophecy to mean that one of his brothers will murder him *“He saw a vision that one of you will kill me” p. 94.* The fear of the prophecy affected Ikenna’s sense of self as “his mother’s efforts to heal her son, Ikenna, were wasted on him. For the prophecy, like an angered beast, had gone berserk and was destroying his mind with the ferocity of madness, pulling down paintings, breaking walls, emptying cupboards, turning tables until all that he knew, all that was him, all that had become him was left in disarray”. – *“to my brother, Ikenna, the fear of death as prophesied by Abulu had become palpable, a caged world within which he was irretrievably trapped, beyond which nothing else existed” p. 109.* He began to walk to school alone;

waking up early just to avoid walking to school with his brother (Boja), skipping breakfast, lunches and dinner especially when the food is eba or pounded yam that requires him to eat together in the same bowl with his brothers. As a result, “*he began to emaciate with until deep incurvatures were carved between his collarbones and his neck and his cheekbones became visible. Then, in time, the whites of his eye turned pale yellow*” p. 110. Ikenna’s fractured sense of self is in relation to Erik Erikson’s psychosocial development, which states that going through psychosocial crises and getting through them can either result in a healthy personality or one that is fractured and damaged.

Ikenna mother could not hold her emotions and fear seeing Ikenna’s negative change in attitude. She decided to take him to church to be cleansed from the spell Abulu had cast on him but Ikenna refused to follow his mother to the church for the cleansing. In the church, the pastor instructed the members to refute the prophecy in a rapturous session of fierce prayers. Things seems to be worse after the cleansing prayers as Ikenna said to his mother forcefully “*Listen, Mama, I’m a scientist, I no longer believe there’s a God*” p. 117.

The identity catastrophes in the novel refers to the psychological and emotional crises that engage the characters Ikenna, Boja, Benjamin, David in a struggle for self-discovery and specific adjustment with the external world, the society. Apparently, these characters are going through puberty and experiencing therefore adolescent crises as outlined in Erikson (1968) Erik Erikson’s psychosocial development theory, “puberty or adolescent stage may cause emotional upheaval, identity crisis, and a lack of direction”. The process of forming an identity during adolescence is significantly shaped by socio- cultural values. The context in which teenagers discover and establish their identities is influenced by cultural norms, familial expectations, and society ideals. Under normal circumstances, their differences should be oriented towards sexual dreams and self-discovery but this is not the case.

The representation of identity in *The Fishermen* provides a way for the novelist to expose the true personality of characters involved and their ability to endure or not the difficulties confronting them. The climax in the novel is the

confrontation of Agwu’s family with the death of their two children: Ikenna and Boja. *Father and mother are so affected that the narrator describes the latter thus: “vacant eyed, sat in an ematiated body that was packed into a black blouse. She’d become frail and pale”* (p,187).

Abula’s prophecy eventually came to fulfillment when Ikenna and Boja engaged in a serious quarrel which led to Ikenna and Boja’s death. – “*this person lay facing the refrigerator, his wide-opened eyes still and fixed in one place.. His tongue was stuck out of his mouth.. half-buried in his belly was the wooden end of mother’s kitchen knife, its sharp blade deep in his flesh. The floor was drenched in his blood*”p.148. Ikenna’s posture was exactly the same as prophesied by Abula, even Obembe continued to utter with quivering lips the refrain “river of red, river of red, river of red.....”. Obembe flashed back to the prophecy. Boja also had to drown himself in the well at the backyard.

After Ikenna and Boja’s death, Obembe and Ben began to have a fractured sense of self too. Obembe became so determined to kill their enemy (Abulu); of which they later did. They believed that their brothers died “because there was a division between them” but they were more convinced that their “brothers died because of Abulu’s prophecy” (pp 201-202). Obembe began to smoke and began to have a change in attitude, “*he blew the smoke out of the window as I watched in horror at the sight of my brother, only two years older than me, smoking and sobbing like a child*” (p. 203).

Conclusion

This study demonstrates the crucial role of socio- cultural practices in shaping individual identities within Nigerian societies. It emphasizes the need for critical reflection on these values and their potential impact on individuals and groups. The novels collectively illustrate the intricate interplay of parental influence, societal expectations, and cultural/religious factors in shaping individuals' identities. The absence of parental guidance can lead to both resilience and tragedy, while societal norms and spiritual beliefs can either confine or emancipate individuals in their pursuit of self-discovery. The texts prompt reflection on the pivotal role of family support,

cultural acceptance, and personal autonomy in navigating the complexities of identity formation.

Recommendations

This study recommends the following;

- Parents or Guardians should foster a safe, supportive and correctable environment where children can explore their individual identities freely and authentically.
- Parents should try to give their children the best they can afford financially, academically and in other areas of life.
- Children should be well trained morally and not hide under the umbrella of lack or poverty to engage in theft or all sorts of vices and immoral acts.
- Parents should encourage open communication about identity-related questions and concerns their children might have.
- Educators can integrate culturally diverse literature into the children's reading experience to expose them to different perspectives and narratives.
- A social re-engineering is needed to abolish all harmful and negative socio-cultural conditions.

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AN ECOCRITICAL READING OF CHIMEKA GARRICKS' *TOMORROW DIED YESTERDAY*

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Abstract

Studies abound on ecocriticism of various African novels, especially novels with motifs of environmental issues. However, few of these studies have concurrently examined gender inequality and environmental issues in particular literary texts. This study is, therefore, designed to critically examine gender inequality and environmental issues in Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*. The study is specifically an ecocritical reading of the novel. Ecocriticism is adopted as theoretical framework of the study. The interpretive design was employed. Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* was subjected to literary analysis. The study demonstrates how gender inequality and environmental issues are explored by the novelist. The roles of government and people as solution providers in environmental issues are also discussed.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, Gender inequality, Environmental issues, African novel

Introduction

This research work critically examines gender inequality and environmental issues in Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*. The study is specifically an ecocritical reading of the novel. The field of study that has continued to lead the discourse on environmental issues is Ecocriticism. In his study, Jelica Tosic considers ecocriticism as an interdisciplinary study of literature and environment. He notes that ecocriticism is concerned with "the relationships between literature and environment or how man's relationships with his physical environment are reflected in literature." (43). Ecocriticism as a literary theory investigates the link between literary creative works and biological research with the goal of raising awareness about the destruction of the physical environment and its consequences on people's lives. Apart from Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, which this has been selected for the purpose of this study, other popular African ecocritical literary works include Niyi Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth* [1986], Charles Mungoshi's *Waiting for the Rain* [1975], Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* [2006], and Helon Habilla's *Oil on Water* [2010]. These literary works go a long way in attesting to the importance that African writers place on issues of environment, thereby countering every ill representation of Africans as promoters of deforestation, desertification, soil erosion, and

perpetrators of all manners of evil against the environment.

Indeed, the relentless effort of the United Nations in respect to gender and environmental issues is a pointer to its significance in such an age and time like this. Out of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators of the United Nations, as of January 2024, seven of them emphasizes on gender equality and environmental issues. They include: Goal 4 –Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; Goal 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; Goal 6 – Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; Goal 13 – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; Goal 14 – Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; Goal 15 – Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss; and Goal 16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. [*International Institute for Sustainable Development*, March 7, 2024 issue]. Hence, by stressing upon matters of gender and environment, the United Nations identifies the delicacy of these issues. It also goes a long way to establish that matters of gender and environment are very crucial in our world today. Thus, it begs

the attention of scholars and researchers.

This research will examine, critically, the issues of gender and environment in Chimeka Garrick's *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, a representative example of African ecocritical novel. Ecocriticism as a literary theory “investigates the link between literary creative works and biological research with the goal of raising awareness about the destruction of the physical environment and its consequences on people's lives,” [Buell Lawrence, 1999]

Summary of the Novel

Chimeka Garrick's *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* is the story of four friends, Doughboy [Doye], Amaibi, Kaniye, and Tubo, who grew up together in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. The Niger-Delta region produces most of Nigerian oil and since early 1990s has experienced a lot of conflict caused by tension between foreign companies and the Niger Delta ethnic minority group who felt they are being exploited. This has led to increased militarization in the area and the kidnapping of foreign oil workers.

The novel starts in 2003 when a routine kidnapping of a foreign oil worker by Doughboy [Doye] goes terribly wrong. This kidnapping leads to a chain of events that reunites the four friends. Kaniye is the lawyer in the group, although he hasn't practised law in years and owns a restaurant. Tubo is the self-centred one who works for Imperial Oil, the oil company at the centre of the story. Doye is the leader of a militant oil group that kidnaps foreign Imperial Oil workers, while Amaibi is the lecturer and activist in the group.

The novel explores one of the major challenges facing Nigeria today. These include oil bunkering, oil militancy, the impact which oil has had on everyday Nigerians living in the Niger Delta regions.

Theoretical Framework: Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is the theoretical framework of this study. Arguably coined by William Rueckert in his essay “Literature and Ecology”, ecocriticism has come to mean “the relationship between literature and physical environment” (Glotfelty 1). Ecocriticism studies literature and the environment from an interdisciplinary perspective, in which all disciplines collaborate to examine the environment and discuss potential

solutions to the current environmental predicament. The release of two major books in the mid-1990s formally launched ecocriticism: *The Ecocriticism Reader*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, and *The Environmental Imagination*, by Lawrence Buell. Ecocriticism is a new kind of critical thinking that rejects the casual attitude toward the natural world that is prevalent in literary studies (Phillips 578).

Also referred to by such terms as "Green Studies," "Ecopoetics," and "Environmental criticism", Ecocriticism is a literary study field that analyses the relationship between people and the natural environment. It is concerned with how environmental concerns, environmental cultural issues, and attitudes toward nature are presented and examined. One of its core purposes is to investigate how people in society behave and respond to nature and ecological issues. Because of the rising societal focus on environmental degradation and greater technology, this kind of critique has received a lot of attention in recent years. As a result, it is a novel approach to studying and interpreting literary works, adding new aspects to the area of literary and theoretical studies.

Nasrullah Mambrol, in an online write-up, observes that Ecocritics always pose questions such as: How is nature depicted in the novel/poem/play? What function does the novel's physical-geographical environment play in its structure? How do our metaphors for the land impact our treatment of it? In other words, what is the connection between didactic or artistic activity and real political, sociocultural, and ethical behavior toward the earth and other nonhuman life forms? In terms of the consequences of science on the land, how is science—in the form of genetic engineering, reproductive technologies, and sexualities—open to critical scrutiny.

Empirical Review

There have been a few studies on Chimeka Garrick's *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*. According to Lomka Kopdiya, environmental issue is the main subject matter of the novel. Kopdiya (25) posits that the storyline and character analysis of the novel demonstrates that when people ruin the physical world, they lose their humanity and destroy themselves. In his words, the novel “affirms the fact that there is little or no hope for

posterity when a natural environment is destroyed (33). Anwuri and Olanrewaju's research investigates eco-activism themes in Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*. It examines the novelist's characters' environmental concerns and how he has positioned them as significant stakeholders or voices in environmental activism (1). The essay draws heavily on eco-criticism to fight against the Niger Delta people's economic emasculation and the environmental devastation caused by oil activity. The writers draw insight from Lawrence Buell's second-wave eco-critical theoretical approach to investigate environmental issues and advocate for victims of environmental dilapidation (Anwuri and Olanrewaju 1).

Cornel Ujowundu (169) opines that Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* satirizes the corruption of the governing elite and its consequences in society. He argues that the author depicted a corrupt society, paving the path for post-independence disillusionment writing. As a result, instances of tyranny, exploitation, corruption, repression, brutality, intimidation, man's inhumanity toward his fellow man, and, most all, class awareness as it impacts the relationship between the affluent and the poor have been the scourge of society. Tarkpegher Terngu's research is an in-depth examination of illicit oil bunkering, pipeline sabotage, vandalism, and abduction, with reference to Garrick's novel. He stresses that poverty, unemployment, land and water pollution, gas flaring, youth restiveness, insufficient compensation, and a lack of basic utilities such as portable water, power, and schools are identified as driving elements in the Niger Delta mayhem (Terngu 110). This study also tries a comprehensive examination of the crisis's implications and how the problem will be addressed. Terngu concludes that the Niger Delta experience is a "paradox" in which the people have everything they need to be prosperous but are not; they are "surrounded by water but have no water to drink, richly endowed with crude oil but experience petrol scarcity" (Terngu 110).

This study argues that environmental issues are so ingrained in this novel that it deserves a closer scrutiny. Another major gap in literary scholarship the study intends to fill is that none of the previous studies on the novel has concurrently

examined gender equality and environmental issues in the novel. Finally, previous studies on the text have been silent on the roles of the government and people as solution providers in the novel.

While discussing Buell's notion of literature's "experiential or referential qualities," Phillips says that ecocriticism should not be concerned with a referential, accurate, or experiential representation of nature. Buell's impression, on the other hand, is based on a reductive picture of "America-as-nature."

Sociopolitical Unrest and Resistance in Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*

Adopting multiple narrative techniques, whereby the story is told from the perspective of four major characters, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, like *Yellow-Yellow* and other Niger Deltan eco-oriented novels, explores issues of "environmental degradation, unethical oil exploration, corruption, military brutality and unprofessionalism, injustice, and cronyism" (Owhorodu 42). The novel was written against the backdrop of the crises caused by tensions between foreign oil companies and the exploited Niger Delta's ethnic minority groups, who grapple with the negative consequences of crude oil exploration in their communities (Owhorodu 42).

Tomorrow Died Yesterday revolves around the awful experiences of Douye, also known as Doughboy, a career crime militant; Kaniye, a lawyer; Tubo, an executive of Amoral oil company; and Amaibi, the lead character, who also happens to be a lecturer and an environmentalist. When a white expatriate named Brian Manning is kidnapped, he (Amaibi) is requested to assist in delivering the ransom sought by Doughboy. Kaniye eventually defends him (Amaibi) in court when he gets into trouble following the death of the kidnapped victim. While Amaibi reunites with his wife, Doughboy dies. Garricks' narrative plunges deep into this tale that revolves around the destinies and intertwined fates of these four men amidst the raging ecological tribulations that prevailed in the Niger Delta.

The four friends relate the tale of oil in their region and its consequences on the locals and the larger Nigerian society against a backdrop of unethical practices, broken institutions, and

injustice. They document the detrimental impacts of oil exploration and exploitation on the Niger Delta's economy, society, and culture. Garricks provides a forum for each character to share their viewpoints. To put it succinctly, the narrative focuses on the socio-economic and political issues prominent in Nigeria's Niger Delta, where it is situated. The devastation caused by improper oil drilling in Asiamia and its surroundings, as well as how corruption encourages it to grow uncontrolled, is vividly described by Garricks.

Bringing the discourse to the plight of Niger Deltans in present-day Nigeria, Ohagwam submits that the Ogoni people in Rivers State have collectively banned oil exploration activities on all their lands and waterways out of fear of additional ecological harm and anguish over having been seriously abused by the British oil giant Shell Petroleum Development Company and her subsidiaries. The region's experience, compared to Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, is the clearest indication yet that successive Nigerian governments have blatantly deprived the Niger Delta of its rights. (Ohagwam 13)

The situation is similar in Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*. The major and remote causes of the traumas experienced in the novel are the discovery of oil in Asiamia community and the coming of Imperial Oil to the region. The company's inability to explore crude oil using internationally approved standards renders the host communities uninhabitable. After a period of these oil activities, the natives notice the fast depletion of flora and fauna such that "the squawking of gulls and egrets on the swampy mangrove banks..." are fast becoming extinct (p. 4).

Oil spills, the discharge of by-products of oil operations such as chemicals or trash –caused by equipment failure, operation accidents, human mistakes, or purposeful damage of infrastructure resulting from criminal activity (Takon, 2014) – are significant consequences of this phenomenon. The Asiamia River, for example, is contaminated by the spill from one of Imperial Oil's pipes. Unfortunately, the corporation hesitates to pay spill victims (fishermen and local neighbours). As a result, the residents of the oil-producing towns are traumatised since the spill causes cultural

relocation, the extinction of their sources of income, and the endangering of their dwelling homes. Doye describes his harrowing experience:

We woke up this morning to see oil, thick and black, floating on top of the brown water of the river. The river became sluggish in its flow as the oil gradually choked its life away. After school, I sat on the banks and watched dead fish, turned on their sides, slowly drift by. The river stank (p. 83).

The deleterious consequences of gas flaring on Asiamia are immense. It contributes significantly to trauma in the oil-producing community since it causes not only loss of livelihood but also death. Many studies have been published on the health effects of gas flaring. According to Piller, Sanders, and Dixon (2007), gas flares and their soot contain hazardous byproducts such as benzene, mercury, and chromium, which reduce people's immunity and make them more prone to disease. The description of the flare stacks in Asiamia paints a picture of their overpowering impact on the residents:

A roaring fire, about ten feet high, marked the tiny uninhabited island where Soboye and twelve other people had gone to steal, or rather, bunker oil. The fire, bright and brilliant, gave enough light for us to see their deep-roasted corpses. Which littered the shore (p. 85)

Garricks' novel stresses that nature should always take precedence because it is at the core of human existence; unfortunately, the reverse is the case, as illustrated by the responses of the major characters to the 1997 incident. Instead of fighting for the environment, every character seems focused on themselves at the expense of the natural habitat. For instance, as a boy, Tubo tells his friends that gas flare-ups are hellfire and that this metaphorically represents the situation in the Niger Delta community in general as well as the status of the environment:

Of course, it's hellfire, Amaibi! Has anyone seen that fire stop burning? Tell me, have you? See the pipe that the fire is coming out from? Well, let me tell you something that you

don't know. The pipe leads straight down to hell. If not for the fire that is coming out of the pipe, you can go down, go deep and you will see the devil himself. (*Tomorrow Died Yesterday* 72).

Ironically, Tubo eventually secures a job at an oil company and does the same thing he criticised as a child, causing havoc for his people. His behaviour might be seen as evidence that most individuals are self-centred and care about their own needs, paying little attention to the bigger harm that continual environmental pollution does to humanity. While Tubo's youth was spent in ignorance, his mature years, like Amaibi's, were spent in selfishness. The image of hellfire, as used by Tubo, reiterates the discomfort, disarray, devastation, and unending agony that accompanied the activities of oil exploiters and the government's insensitivity. The people have been subjected to hell due to the plunder of nature. Perhaps, this explains why Garricks chose to document the people's struggle to survive the horror they are forced to live in.

Referencing Amaibi's maimed leg, Fakemi observes that there is a relationship between Amaibi's experience and the reality of Niger Deltans. Like Amaibi's sensational feelings of completeness even after his leg has been amputated, the people of the Niger Delta have also failed to realise of their incompleteness without the natural world. In essence, an injury to nature is also an injury to man. As such, by protecting the natural environment, man indirectly protects himself. Fakemi puts it like this:

It suggests that just as Amaibi has a "phantom limb", the sensational feeling that his amputated leg is still there, so will the collapsed system in Nigeria be believed to be working, and so will the world at large feel nature is unaffected by their anthropogenic activities. They feel everything is normal and functioning well, but they have forgotten that according to deep ecology, the natural world is an integral part of society, and therefore, if you damage it, you will

cause great damage to humanity.
(Fakemi 12)

To stress further, the preceding excerpt implies that the human body is a system that works best when all its essential components are present – the sociopolitical, economic, and environmental conditions of the Niger Delta might be represented by such a bodily system, along with their bilateral interactions with the environment. It implies that the collapsing system will have a "phantom limb," the illusion that Amaibi's dismembered leg is still there. According to Amaibi's exclamation:

"I can't believe I'm going to lose my leg. No matter how hard I try, my mind can't seem to accept the fact. Perhaps after the surgery, I'll come to terms with it". (p. 15).

The extent of the harm done to nature and its repercussions will not be recognised "until there is a snap out of such phantom limb experience" (Fakemi 12). It also supports the claim that because people have not yet experienced the severe repercussions of their disregard for the environment, they have not yet adopted deep ecology, a somewhat radical viewpoint that challenges the notion that humans are superior to nature.

Gender Inequality in Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*

Confrontations and violence of different sorts emanating from the youths became the order of the day. It became the most practical means of resisting the destruction of their ecosystem and their future survival, as the pursuit of oil and the politics surrounding it continue to pose potential threats to their lives and existence. Many young people in the Niger Delta region have grown dissatisfied, lost faith in the government and its policies and programmes, and instead decided to take control of their destiny in whichever way they saw fit. While some young organisations in the area express their unhappiness and call for change through consultation, debate, and nonviolent protests, other organisations have chosen the route of violence, physical confrontations, kidnapping and militancy, resistance, and the continuous utter ruin of oil pipes and installations. These physical agitations of young people are a direct product of the politics of marginalisation that the region's

people have experienced/

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), which is what they are known as in the Nigerian list of vanguard groups, and the Asiamas Freedom Army, as they are called in Garricks' novel, *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, appear to be the groups that these boys eventually transformed into fully-fledged kidnapers (Ohagwam, 14). In recent times, abduction in the Nigerian Niger Delta area is now a viable and profit-making venture for many young people.

Another aspect of the crisis or social unrest in the area is prostitution. Ohagwam observes that activities related to oil exploration, the influx of foreigners with deplorable character, and the disregard for social institutions like schools and centres for skill development are some of the factors that have contributed to the increase in the act of prostitution among girls and women in the region.

Young girls turn to prostitution as a means of escape, particularly those whose parents cannot cater for their needs. In *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, the story of Belema, an unrepentant harlot, reveals the region's depth of depravity and obscenity. She and the other ladies in Asiamas earn a living off prostitution. They barter their bodies for cash. Before abduction and oil bunkering became the order of the day, they were most patronised by the expatriates and workers from Imperial Oil's Asiamas Base Camp. "But with the arrival of the 'oil boys', like Doye, their fortune increased because an oil boy could squander in one night the equivalent of the company boy's impressive salary" (Olatunji). Garricks successfully demonstrates the magnitude of the Niger Delta's devaluing of feminine virtue and the commodification of femininity.

The Niger Delta women have been hypnotised by oil money. They parade themselves as sex toys that can be bought cheaply. In the whole of the Niger Delta, the desire to have a share of the oil money has paved the way for so many unspeakable atrocities. Bimbos like Belema and Damiete have lost their dignity and sense of value. These beautiful young women gathered at the Zion Hotel in

Ashawo village every night, waiting for their customers. The commonness of debauchery, as depicted in the novel, signifies the deepening depth of moral decadence in the region orchestrated by environmental degradation. (Olatunji)

Roles of the Government and People as Solution Providers

The government and oil firms continued to weaken the region's growth to the point that nothing seemed recoverable anymore and everything seemed lost. Little wonder the likes of Doye (also known as Doughboy) in *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* believe that violence is the only solution in sight. He (Doughboy) thinks they can only address this misery if they apply force to reclaim what has been taken away. What is worth stressing here is Garricks' attempt to illustrate how Nigerians have contributed to the underdevelopment and raging violence in the Niger Delta region.

By indicting Hausa and Yoruba security officers who were with Brian Manning after kidnapping him, Garricks shows how the nonchalance, the scramble for power, and the activities of non-White oil merchants and government agencies have contributed to the harsh realities in the Niger Delta region. The words of Doye reveal how power politics among the tribes that make up Nigeria have intensified the ill-treatment of humans and the environment in the region:

How can you, a Hausa man, be my brother? When your people were stealing our oil money all these years, was I your brother then? My people have the oil, yet it is your people who have all the jobs in the oil companies. Your people refuse to employ my people. They say we are not qualified. Yoruba man, answer me – are my people not qualified? (*Yellow-Yellow* 6-7).

In the excerpt above, Garricks appears to be clinging to the stereotype that non-Niger Deltans, particularly Northerners, have stolen the region's riches. It also illustrates that the environment is

ruined, and lives and delicate social interactions are wrecked. Doye's future, which seemed quite bright, was shattered by the impacts of oil extraction. Although he graduated from the university with good grades in Petroleum Engineering, he could not find employment. As the natural resources hidden in the dirt of the Niger Delta area are explored and abused, so are the people's dreams and potential.

Following the evils of oil firms in Asiamama and the need for compensations, Catechist Akassa and Sir James opine that the problem of the community was more than a mere demand of some ransom from the government and gruesome oil companies. They mention some more pressing problems that further reveal the people's poor socio-economical standard of living in the region. This is very ironic considering the huge revenue that oil companies in the region must generate.

We have (other) problems in Asiamama. There is no electricity, no potable water, and no hospital... Our schools have produced excellent students, especially this year. But many of the students who are the future of Asiamama, cannot afford to go to the university. They are likely to join many other unemployed Asiamama youths who roam around restlessly, causing trouble... Some chiefs, stony faced, refused to look at Catechist Akassa. Others who did had their anger in their eyes... the chiefs were angry because it did not give them any direct monetary benefit (129-130).

Since the government and oil firms have made people jobless and inactive by desecrating the land they rely on for livelihood, they should, perhaps, not be faulted for attempting to keep themselves busy. As a result, the number of militant organisations in the region increased. Doye is one of those young people whose lives may have been more meaningful than becoming militants if there had been social justice and equitable distribution of oil money. Before deciding to inaugurate a terrorist group, he told Kaniye about his struggle while still job hunting.

Let me remind you of my story, Kaniye. And it's a familiar story with

people from the Niger Delta. I graduated from the university in 1990, with my now useless two-one. I applied for a job everywhere, Imperial, Shell, Chevron, name it. I did more than a few aptitude tests. For three years I was unemployed. The last test was at Imperial Oil. I passed it easily. I got called for an interview... Actually, I was the best at the interview. But they gave the job to one Yoruba boy who also had a two-one. The Personnel Manager at the time was the distant relative or something (233-234).

Garricks as Eco-feminists

The rape of Dise and Amaibi's pregnant wife is one of the awful incidents in the Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*. In examining the relationship between humans and the natural environment, Fakemi observes that Dise represents nature, which humanity has ruined - "His face was contorted with a vicious snarl of triumph" (*Tomorrow Died Yesterday* 284), Amaibi agonisingly writes. The troops defeat her weak body in the same way that people have defeated nature due to their insatiable sexual desire for more. "The natural world is Dise, who has been dominated by the soldiers (humankind) to the benefit of their sexual lust (scramble for development). Amaibi becomes radical from that very day. It suggests that when you damage the environment, you inadvertently damage something in human existence" (Fakemi 13).

Owborodu's comment and analogy on the rape of the women are noteworthy:

Apart from the loss of the region's fertility in terms of her natural resources, the stories of Dise and other female characters that military officers sexually molested buttresses the argument that *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* is an allegory of gender and politics. In other words, the political and economic exploitation and despoliation of the region's resources go hand in hand with that of the females in the region. Amaibi's wife, Dise, is raped by soldiers in the

presence of her husband. Besides, one of the soldiers drives a rifle into her vagina. The traumatic effect of this incident becomes unbearable, resulting in the separation of the couple and the decline of Amaibi's sexual virility. This also makes him lose faith in God. Again, the religious space of Asiama is also desecrated because the rape of Dise takes place in a church vestry. Garricks uses Asiama as a microcosm of the Niger Delta to depict its total exploitation and desecration – spiritually, physically, economically, and culturally. (Owhorodu 43)

Garricks wraps off the story on a positive tone despite all the awful events the various characters have had. Amaibi recovering his lost virility and being reunited with his wife, Dise, may be a purposeful attempt to instil a feeling of optimism in the futility represented by these events. Given that humankind's life depends on the ecosystem's survival, there should also be hope for the environment.

Chimeka Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* narrates the horrifying event of 1997 in Asiama, which will eventually go a long way in altering the lives of four key characters, Doye, Kaniye, Tubo, and Amaibi, later in life. For instance, after the troops kill his father, Doye loses his vision of the future, destabilised and shattered. On the other hand, Amaibi loses his wife and manly potency due to the same regrettable and preventable military action. Like Doye and Amaibi, other young people in the area experience a great deal of hardship and emotional struggle, which drives them to join the militants as a last choice. As a result, their tomorrow continues dying yesterday at the hands of government institutions like the military (Fakemi 11).

Conclusion

Overall, by engaging with issues of gender and environment, African novelists have proven themselves as worthy writers of international standards. Their in-depth participation in both crucial topics has extensively countered the allegation made against them, by their European counterparts, as supporters of domestic violence, gender inequality, and environmental degradation.

While, on the one hand, all the novels studied stress the environmental challenges in the Niger Delta area and the extremity of poverty that the people grapple with, they also considered more closely the relationship between environmental degradation and the ill-treatment of women. In other words, by examining cases of oil spillages, fuming, and exploitation of the Niger Delta area by rich oil merchants and foreign firms, coupled with the harm caused to plants and animals in the environment, these African novelists also consider the bitter experiences of African women in the hands of both White and African men closely. The harsh realities of the Niger Delta region and how they are projected in the novels cannot be adequately described by the word "poverty." The people's primary sources of income, farming and fishing, are barely enough to keep them alive due to the unending poisoning of the water bodies and soil erosion by oil spillages. Eventually, their sources of income were taken away from them by the chaos caused by the activities of selfish oil merchants and revolutionary bandits.

Garricks' *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* can also be seen as a scathing criticism of the Nigerian military as pawns to a cruel and corrupt administration and a fictitious depiction of how traditional leaders sell their people, land, and culture for financial advantages. Literature has been utilised as a tool to quell violence and propose solutions to the conflicts in the Niger Delta (Nwahunanya 1). In the novels studied, the authors try to do this by showing how the exploitation of natural resources has hampered socioeconomic development, widened the gap between the rich and the poor, and encouraged the prevalence of social injustice, crimes, and vandalism. The stories depict how the lives of those in the Niger Delta areas are impacted by oil bunkering, oil militancy, and unethical business activities between politicians and oil company personnel.

The stories of the Niger Delta locals striving to make ends meet in the novels represent the larger stories and experiences of the residents of the Niger Delta region, both in the past and present. The stories illustrate the hazardous conditions of having crude oil overrun their farms, harming the crops and deadening the land. This

reoccurring incidence prevented farmers, fishermen, and hunters from engaging in their respective professions. These are mostly the locals' jobs. Youths yearn to escape to the city for a better life since their ecosystem has been eroded and their life prospects have been shattered. The degradation that prevents natives from working and the entry of more foreigners who endlessly exploit the region's natural resources are forms of global capital intrusion and exploitation that have continued to have devastating repercussions for the indigenous populations and their survival. Since Nigeria's colonial era, the Niger Delta region has continually remained at the receiving end of

global capitalist exploitation, the scout for raw oil and other natural resources.

An authorial commentary in *Tomorrow Died Yesterday* perhaps best describe the disillusionment and hopelessness of the Niger Deltans – their failing trust and faith in both the present and future: “There is no future for the children of the Niger Delta. Their tomorrow is already dead. It died yesterday” (p. 162). Despite the height of this disillusionment, however, is the intentionality of Garricks, Habila, and Agary to stress the need for the government and people to join forces together in combating the harsh realities of the locals in the Niger Delta.

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BROKEN HOMES AND CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN CHRISTIE WATSON'S *TINY SUNBIRDS, FAR AWAY* AND SADE ADENIRAN'S *IMAGINE THIS*

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Abstract

The formative years of a child are critical to their overall development, with early experiences, particularly within the family unit, playing a defining role. This study examines the portrayal of broken families and their impact on children in two selected novels: Christie Watson's *Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away* and Sade Adeniran's *Imagine This*. While Watson's novel delves into the effects of infidelity on a Nigerian family, Adeniran's work portrays the challenges faced by a young girl following her family's relocation to Nigeria. Drawing on structural-functionalism as the theoretical framework, this study explores the emotional, psychological, and academic consequences of broken homes on children, as depicted in these texts. A review of related literature highlights gaps in existing studies, particularly concerning the specific effects of broken families on children's development. Through qualitative textual analysis, this study identifies how the authors present these effects and underscores the broader societal implications of family instability. The findings reveal that children from broken homes are more susceptible to emotional and behavioral issues, as well as academic challenges, which ultimately hinder their growth and societal contributions. The study concludes by emphasizing literature's role in reflecting societal issues and fostering awareness of the challenges faced by children in unstable family environments. It advocates for systemic reforms, community support, and individual empathy to mitigate these effects and nurture the potential of every child, ensuring a more equitable and stable future.

Keywords: Broken homes, family instability, child development, structural-functionalism.

Introduction

The earliest years of a child's life are crucial, as they significantly influence the child's future. According to the National Welfare Policy (1989), a child is defined as anyone aged 12 or below, while the new draft decree on children in Nigeria classifies a child as anyone under 18 years (Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Child's Rights Act, 2003*). The foundation of a child's development is laid during these early years, and a weak foundation can lead to an unstable adulthood. Early experiences, particularly in the home environment, play a pivotal role in shaping a child's growth. Similarly, Shonkoff and Fisher (2023) asserts that early experiences play a critical role in shaping child development, particularly in

how the home environment influences long-term cognitive and emotional outcomes. This supports the argument that a weak foundation in early years can lead to instability in adulthood.

The family, especially the nuclear family consisting of a father, mother, and child, is the child's first point of contact with society and serves as a vital institution for growth. However, when one parent is absent, the family becomes incomplete, often referred to as a "broken home." According to Osunloye (2008), a broken home occurs when one of the two people responsible for nurturing and raising a child is absent, leaving the responsibility solely on one parent. This often leads to single parenthood, with children typically residing with their mothers. Apparently, there are

also instances where the mother is absent, leaving the children in the care of their father. Additionally, a court of competent jurisdiction may grant custody to either parent, further shaping the unique circumstances of each broken home. The absence of a parent, whether due to death, divorce, or separation, disrupts a child's upbringing and can have lasting consequences (Annor, F. B., et. al 2024).

Ekpenyong and Lawrence (2016) emphasizes that socialization within the family is essential for the continuity of culture, highlighting that the family is the primary agent of socialization for children. Santrock (2002, cited in Ekpenyong & Lawrence, 2016), notes that structured parenting instills moral, social, physical, and cognitive principles in children. Conversely, children from broken homes often exhibit behavioral issues, stemming from the lack of guidance and training that two parents can provide. Psychologists have also underscored the damaging effects of broken homes, noting that the absence of loving relationships and attachment with both parents can harm a child's emotional and psychological well-being.

Child development encompasses the study of growth, change, and stability from birth through adolescence. Omoruyi (2014) posit that, children develop at different rates, with some progressing rapidly while others experience slower growth. This development is often uneven, characterized by periods of rapid advancement followed by slower progress. Additionally, physical, mental, and emotional growth may not always occur at the same pace, as each aspect of development follows its own trajectory. Despite these variations, all children pass through the same developmental stages in a fixed sequence, highlighting the universality of the developmental process. The family serves as the primary context for a child's early development, providing education and social support. As the smallest unit of society, the family is vital for societal stability. However, when unresolved conflicts arise, families may break apart, resulting in broken homes.

This study explores the portrayal of broken families and fractured relationships in selected literary texts, with a particular focus on two novels: Christie Watson's *Tiny Sunbirds, Far*

Away and Sade Adeniran's *Imagine This*. These texts explore the experiences of children in broken families, both in Nigeria and the diaspora. Watson's novel examines the impact of infidelity on a Nigerian family, while Adediran's work portrays a young girl's struggles after her family's relocation to Nigeria.

Synopsis of Christie Watson's *Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away*

Blessing narrated how her mother caught her father with another woman, which caused their separation, and in turn, a very big change in the family's life. It led to the drastic fall in the status quo of the family. They could not afford the cost of living in their home after the father deserted the family. Timi, Blessing's mother, decided to go back to her parents' village, near Warri, with her two children, Blessing and Timi. Blessing had to adapt to a life she was not used to. There was almost no furniture in the house, she was made to sleep with her mother in a room without windows, fetch water from the river, cook traditional foods, learn her mother's tongue, and a new religion. She could not go to school due to lack of money for tuition fees. Her grandfather's younger wife, Celestine, had squandered the money on Lycra materials. She later resorted to learning traditional midwifery from her grandmother against her mother's wish. Through this, Blessing became exposed to several birthing in the village.

However, her grandma, who believed in female genital mutilation was made to perform one on a child after birth. Though excused from the scene, Blessing knew the cutting was performed by Grandma and was full of questions. Ezekiel who wanted to become a doctor had to leave school due to same reason as Blessing. He joined a group of militants who were fighting against the insecurities the British and American oil companies caused to the Niger Delta region. The unnamed village in Niger Delta in this text is an exploited village and is exposed to various negativities. These militants, known as the Sibeye Boys, believed they were fighting against these and were trying to save their village, but they were also endangering the lives of the villagers. Timi worked as a barmaid at a restaurant, which kept her away from her family. With the little she earned, she could not cater for the needs of her children.

She got a white boyfriend called Dan, who worked with the oil firm. Dan was a good man and tried to bring the family back together, but Ezekiel found it hard to accept Dan as his mother's new lover. He hated him and made it known, to the extent of conniving with his group to kidnap Dan on his wedding day with Timi. After the kidnap, Ezekiel died due to the burn injuries he got from the explosion while trying to break a pipeline. He carried this out with the Sibeye Boys. The story ended when Blessing decided to keep staying in Nigeria, while her mother and Dan relocated to London.

Synopsis of Sade Adeniran's *Imagine This*

Imagine This is a diary account of Omolola Ogunwole who started writing the diary at the age of nine. She referred to the diary as Jupiter. Her story account in Jupiter started when her father decided to send her and her brother to live with his siblings in the village. Adebola was taken to stay with Uncle Joseph in Ekiti, while Omolola was taken to Idogun village by her aunt (Iya Rotimi). Omolola and Adebola spent their early days in London, though at some point, they were taken to stay in a foster home after their mother left with their father. Their father however, decided to relocate to Lagos, Nigeria, because of the fear of losing his children to the civilised life in London.

However, in Lagos, after spending some time with their father, the children were again sent to the village to stay with their relatives. This decision by their father became the rising action in the novel. It appeared to be a traumatic experience for Omolola because Idogun was a village that did not have the fundamental amenities she had been used to. No one understood her and vice versa. Iya Rotimi and her children disliked and treated her badly. She was usually accused of stealing and was severely punished for crimes she did not commit. Omolola later moved to her grandmother's place opposite Iya Rotimi's house after her father found out about the ill treatment she was exposed to by her aunt. However, her stay with Mama was no better. She was not well fed and her desperation to move back to Lagos with her father became constant. She decided to perform poorly in her academic activities so that she can be expelled

from school and this will make her father take her back to Lagos with him.

The novel reached its climax when Omolola returned back home from boarding school to meet her brother's dead body. Adebola stayed in Ekiti with Uncle Joseph before his demise. His death was as a result of lack of proper and medical care to his sickness, he was made to do more work in his sick state. Lola's pain over the death of her brother was visible and she was taken to Lagos by her father. In Lagos, Lola fasted and prayed for the return of her brother, but this only resulted in hallucinations as she began to see and talk with her brother. Not long after Adebola's death, Omolola's father married another woman who had two kids already. As she gradually recovered from her traumatic experience, she got into a fight with the new wife's kid and injured the latter. However, after beating her mercilessly, her father sent her out of his house.

Back in Idogun, she got into a serious trouble in school where she broke Akin's leg with a cutlass, thus she could not sit her final exams. She resolved to just exist and live the day in the village without a purpose until Uncle Jacob, her father's cousin, visited the village and took her back to Lagos to stay with him. She was enrolled in a learning centre in order to sit for her exams. In Uncle Jacob's house, she began to face another situation with his wife who disliked her. Omolola failed her examination and was then sent out of the house because she mistakenly dropped his baby. After leaving Uncle Jacob's house, she moved to her favourite Uncle's home, Uncle Niyi, whose wife also disliked her. However, Iya Soji, Uncle Niyi's wife, moved out of her husband's house and vowed never to return until she left the house. During this period, Uncle Niyi sexually harassed her. Omolola was left with the only option of going back to her father's place. He accepted her and tried to make up for the way he had been treating her. She struggled with her feelings for her father with his new behaviour towards her. However, her father's struggle to set things right between him and his daughter was cut short as he was murdered by unknown gunmen. Omolola resolved to move on from her past and she relocated to London to start a new life.

Related Literature

Different studies have been carried out to investigate various topics discussed in the two texts, *Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away* and *Imagine This*. Sunusi & Egwabor (2022) investigates the environmental degradation in Nigeria's Niger Delta as portrayed by Christie Watson in *Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away*. This shows the oil exploration activities by multinational companies. The study employs ecocriticism to explore the interplay between literature and criticism. It emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to address social and economic challenges in Niger Delta.

Adegbite (2023) reconnoitres the damage and unrest in Niger Delta community caused by the oil exploitation and militancy in the region. The study reveals that environmental damage from oil activities threatens the livelihoods of local communities by alienating them from their ancestral lands and eroding their sources of income. Ikechi, Rohimmi, et. al. (2020) examines the issue of the Niger Delta region from the ecofeminist point of view. The study explores the connection between women and nature, it views them as the victims in the society. Women, like nature are shown as dominated, exploited and abandoned. The narrative aligns with ecofeminism, it demonstrates how oppression of nature mirrors the oppression of woman.

Imagine This on the other have shown various studies, one, Ogunfolabi, (2022) analyses the traumatic and survival experience of the protagonist in the text. The study concludes that the novel challenges linear narratives of trauma and healing, it presents recovery as multifaceted and ongoing process. Another study on *Imagine This* centers on child molestation and abuse. Awogu-Maduagwu, (2018) examines the presentation of child molestation and gender abuse caused by a troubles society as shown in the text. Various works has been done on these two texts, however, explore the effect of broken home on children is also a gap in the existing literature which this study will fill.

Theoretical Framework

This research paper is based on structural-functionalism theory as its theoretical framework. The structural-functionalist theory is one of the dominant theories in anthropology, sociology,

philosophy, psychology and philosophy of psychology. It can also be referred to as functionalism. This theory explains how the relationship among the part of the society is created and how these parts are functional and dysfunctional. It focuses on the negative and beneficial or positive consequences to the individual and society. It sees the society as a complex interconnected system of parts that work together in harmony. The theory has its origins in the work of Emile Durkheim, who was especially interested in how social order is possible or how society remains relatively stable (Crossman, 2020).

Functionalist theory suggest that the different parts of the society are primarily composed of social institutions such as education, family, government, media, economy, and religion, each designed to fill different need (Crossman, 2020; Giddens, 2010). It attempts to explain why society functions the way it does by focusing on relationship between various social institutions that makes up the society. Functionalism explains that an institution only exists because it plays a very important role in the functioning of the society. In analysing this study using functionalist theory, functionalist theory would view the family as one of the most relevant social institutions in the society. Family provides one of the major instruments a growing child needs for positive outcome and lifestyle in a social order. Family teaches certain attributes to children necessary for their adult life.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach using structural-functionalism theory. This research seeks to interpret the emotional, psychological, and political effect of broken home on the children's development in the two selected novels using the functionalism from the perspective of the writers of the texts. A textual analysis will be carried out to bring out these effects and how it affects the children. This is to be achieved by interpreting the novel within the context of the texts.

Discussions and Findings

A Critical Review of the Depiction of Broken Home in *Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away*.

Nindy. R. and Rahmi M. (2019) opines that a broken home or an incomplete family is a condition where the family experiences a split or a gap in the household, whether it starts from bickering of parents, infidelity or even fight which results in the breakup of strings that strung together. Here is an analysis of broken home in *Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away*.

Afful Broni (2005) identifies the type of broken homes as those that occur in form of divorce, separation and desertion. From the assertion above, it is essential to note that divorce, separation, and desertion brings about an incomplete family and a broken home. In the writer's discussion here, desertion is the real cause of broken home as portrayed in the novel, *Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away*.

It was a month after that when Mama had to stop working at the Royal imperial hotel. She said that the owners only employed married women. Since father had left, I did not dare ask her anything at all. (Watson, 2011, p. 7). The cause of the problem of a broken home, as portrayed in the novel, is desertion. Desertion occurs when one partner abruptly leaves a relationship or marriage without fulfilling their parental duties or involving the court or any significant family member. The causes of desertion vary and may include a lack of proper care for the family, adultery, domestic violence, and mistrust. In the novel, two primary causes of desertion emerge: physical abuse and extramarital affairs.

Physical abuse plays a significant role in the breakdown of the marriage. Timi's husband, often described as a loud and aggressive man, frequently assaulted his wife, especially when intoxicated. Watson (2011) illustrates this brutality: "*When father drank, father hit mama so hard he broke her nose, making her less beautiful than his other woman. He cut her skin with a broken bottle giving her a train-track scar across her back. He held her by the throat*" (p. 254). Despite the repeated violence, Timi did not immediately leave her husband but instead endured the pain and suffering inflicted upon her.

However, her endurance was tested further when she discovered his infidelity.

Extramarital affairs further contributed to the collapse of the marriage. Timi became aware of her husband's unfaithfulness when she found him with another woman. She recounts, "*I had seen the woman at the gate. The other woman whom Mama had found father lying on top of*" (Watson, 2011, p. 254). This betrayal intensified her emotional pain, ultimately leading to her breaking point. Additionally, rather than taking responsibility for his actions, Father abandoned his wife and children to be with his mistress, leaving Timi solely responsible for raising the children. His departure was not preceded by any formal agreement to dissolve the marriage, reinforcing the theme of desertion in the novel.

Problems Faced by Children from Broken Home

Watson explored the societal issues both in Nigeria and in London. This issue of broken homes was demonstrated through Blessing, Ezekiel, Father, Timi, and also Dan. In the text, after the father left the family, everything went downhill for the rest of the family. They began to lose their identity in the society. The mother and her two children had to leave their comfortable home in Lagos to Niger Delta to start a new life, which seemed difficult to adapt to. Blessing managed to adapt to the new life, while Ezekiel struggled to fit in. Dan noticed this and tried to relate with him because he (Dan) was also a product of a broken home.

The general problems faced by children from a broken home are emotional and behavioural problems, as well as academic problems. In this paper, some effects of broken homes portrayed in Christie Watson's *Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away* will be outlined.

Emotional and Behavioural Problem

Andersen et al. (2019) proffers that children experiencing family dissolution had a significantly higher risk of low social well-being compared to those from intact families. Notably, the younger the child at the time of dissolution, the greater the risk of diminished social well-being. The effects of broken homes that were portrayed in the characters can be vividly pointed out in the novel. In *Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away*, immediately

after the desertion of Blessing's father, things changed drastically for the two siblings— Blessing and Ezekiel. Their mother was stopped from work because she was no longer married, thus, she found it hard to cater for the needs of her family. All the affections the children received from their mother stopped: breakfast was no longer served and there were no more kisses before leaving the house. Finally, when Mama could not afford to pay the house rent, they had to move to their mother's parents' village near Warri, in Niger Delta. The kids found it hard to adjust to the new life enforced on them in a place where there was no electricity or good water. Blessing, the main character and narrator in the novel had to grow faster than her age, as she was made to fetch water and learn how to cook. Compared to her brother, she was able to adjust to the new life better because she was a girl who found happiness in little things. The only thing was that she never got the affection she wanted from her mother and was always blamed when anything bad happened to Ezekiel. This made her feel responsible for her brother's wellbeing.

Unlike his sister, Ezekiel found it very difficult to adjust to their new life. Ezekiel was an asthmatic, sickly and feeble boy who had nut allergy. This was well managed in Lagos but seemed impossible to manage in the village.

"In Lagos we fried everything in sunflower oil that I borrowed from the hotel" said Mama. 'But the sunflower oil that I borrowed has run out now; there is nothing except groundnut oil here. Ezekiel will be fine having meat or fish boiled instead of fried and cooked in palm oil stew until I get some more. Soon as I find a job, I will be able to get some. Especially if I find something in a hotel. (Watson 2011, p. 25)

This was a conversation between Mama and Grandma. Grandma could not do without using groundnut oil to cook while at the same time, Ezekiel could not eat a food cooked with nut because of his allergy. He could no longer use the sunflower oil to cook because there was no money and his mother was no longer working at the hotel in Lagos where she borrowed oil. He could not eat fish or meat and he was mostly served with palm

oil as his soup alongside any solid food. He became malnourished and sick and longed for normal food.

Also, Ezekiel was seen as an ambitious boy in the novel, but slowly this began to change as he stopped schooling. The village they lived in was full of insecurities caused by a group of boys called the Sibeye Boys. On one of their parade, Ezekiel got shot and was hospitalized for several weeks. He had to spend more days in the hospital because there was no money to pay for the hospital fee. After he finally got out, his behaviour began to change slowly. He became rude at home. He threw his inhaler and his medication away into the river. He felt he was stronger because he did not die after he was shot. He further explained that fireflies are his new medication and he believed his asthma was cured because of his new medication. He also became fascinated with the Sibeye Boys and proceeded to join the group despite much warnings from his grandmother. He made his hatred towards his mother's new boyfriend, Dan known. He never accepted him and even when Dan tried to be friends with him, Ezekiel was always rude. He was furious at his mother for wanting to marry a white man. He went as far as kidnapping Dan on the day of the marriage ceremony with his mother. Ezekiel's negative attitude led to his untimely death while he was trying to break a pipeline with his group of friends.

Academic Problem

Chidiezie-Chineke (2024) reveals that students from broken homes often experience negative effects on their academic performance. Blessing disliked the school in the village because it was nothing like her former school in Lagos. The teachers in this local school beat them for any slight mistake. She was wrongly punished and severely beaten in the new school in the village. She however began to lose interest in school and became curious about her grandmother's business. *'You're suspended. Do not look so shocked, it is temporary. The school fees are late and until they paid you cannot go to school. You'll have to do your home-work here'.* (Watson 2011, p. 73).

Blessing and her brother could not go to school because there was no money to pay for the fees. She became happy at the thought of not going to school and began to follow Grandma to attend

births. Blessing disobeyed her mother by not going to school and instead became a birth attendant just like her grandmother. Ezekiel was portrayed as an ambitious boy in the novel who loved school and was mostly seen with his books. His dream was to become a doctor. *'Mama I cannot miss school', he said. 'Not even a day, I will fall behind. Please Mama, there must be some way of me going. Can I talk to Alhaji?'* (Watson 2011, p. 74).

At first, he attended the school with his sister, but were later suspended because they could not pay the fees. He became very sad and bothered about his grades. Ezekiel eventually returned to school while his sister refused to go back. Unfortunately, he was shot on his way back home and was rushed to the hospital. At the hospital, Ezekiel became friends with the doctors, as he was fascinated with their ways. He became more determined to study hard in school, but was expelled at the end of the term because he missed so many days and performed badly in his result. He did not tell his mother about this news and decided to join the Sibeye group, which led to his untimely death. Timi could not control her two kids anymore. They made their decisions without her consent because she was always away working to cater for the needs of the family.

Critical Review of the Depiction of Broken Home in *Imagine This*

Family is the unit that provides suitable environment conducive for the growth of the children. Desertion is the real cause of broken home as portrayed in the novel *Imagine This*. This can be clearly seen from the excerpt:

Maybe he's not really our father and that is why our mother left. (Adeniran, 2009, p. 11) I'm not sure why, but father gave me the letter she wrote when she left us. She'd left it tacked to my crib. He came home to find her gone and both Adebola and me bawling. (Adeniran 2009, p. 243)

In the writer's discussion here, there are two causes of desertion in the novel: rushed marriage, physical and emotional abuse. *Now you can recollect from the past: you know we were together for only 1 month 12 days when we had a bitter unforgettable fight on the 16th of May 1965. (Adeniran, 2009, p. 244)*

This assertion show that the couple, Mr. and Mrs. Ogunwole, rushed into the marriage without knowing each other well. They did not bother to explore and compare their characters and attitudes before getting married. It was seen from the novel that 1 month and 12 days was not enough for this particular couple, as it was a short time to get to know each other before marriage. It was after getting into the marriage they began to regret the decision they made.

The second cause of desertion was emotional and physical abuse. This could also be referred to as domestic violence. The case of domestic violence arose as a result of home mismanagement, uncontrolled anger, and aggression. From the explanations given above, Mr. and Mrs. Ogunwole rushed into the marriage without really venturing into each other's life and the final outcome was that they could not endure each other's attitude which led to domestic violence.

"You imagine that not knowing each other well enough and instead of trying to understand each other well and make a mutual atmosphere, all you ever did was beat, curse and say all those horrible words to me". (Adeniran 2009, p. 244). The couples found it hard to both live with each other and understand each other well enough. They could not grow the mutual feeling expected of a married couple, hence the lack of tolerance for each other.

The text portrayed Mr. Ogunwole as a non-sense and hot-tempered man, exhibiting this by beating her. There was no love or affection between them. He abused her emotionally, said hurtful words to her, and did not show her the love she deserved. She became withdrawn, ashamed, and lacked self-esteem. He also abused her physically. *"I have experienced enough of your cruelty and I can no longer go on like this. There are many defects in my body as the result of your beating me like an animal daily-these defects I have to repair". (Adeniran 2009, p. 244).* Mrs Ogunwole (Constance) suffered cruel beatings in the hand of her husband, which damaged her body. When Constance could no longer endure the pains she got from the beatings, she decided to end the marriage. To avoid his rage, she dropped a letter before leaving. She could not take her children

along because she was not settled and they suffered from his lack of anger management. Lola testified that she felt like running away anytime he lashed out.

Problems Faced by Children from Broken Home in the Novel

Omolola never knew her mother, she was separated from her mother at eighteen months old, when she left the family in London. However, the children were taken to a foster care home in London before they were moved to Nigeria by their father. In Nigeria, their father decided that he could no longer take care of the children by himself, and so with the notion that “it takes a village to train a child”, he sent his children to stay with his siblings in the village. Adebola was taken to stay with his uncle Joseph in Ado Ekiti, while Omolola was taken to stay with her father’s sister, Iya Rotimi, in Idogun.

Emotional and Behavioural Problems

“Why, why, why? I hate them all, I want to go home. I don’t want to live with my Auntie. I don’t want to live in Idogun. I want everything to go back to the way it was, with daddy, Adebola, and me living at number 4 Edgcombe House. (Adeniran 2009, p. 3)

Lola had no one to rant to so she decided to make her diary her friend. She poured all her mind in her diary named Jupiter. This explained why the story was written in Lola’s point of view. It was clear from the assertion that she was angry and sad at the sudden decision made by her father. It was sad enough that she was moved to Lagos after spending her whole life in London and was subsequently forced to stay with her aunt and other relatives in the village, Idogun. Lola’s mother left her and her brother at a very young age. This meant that she never experienced motherly care in her life. At first, the children were transferred to a foster care home before their father took them back to Lagos, where he finally decided to distribute his children to his relatives for upbringing. Adebola was taken to stay with Uncle Joseph while Omolola was taken to stay with Iya Rotimi; both of them, Mr. Ogunwole’s siblings. The new change really affected Omolola, as the life in the village took its toll on her.

She received harsh treatment from her relatives. Her aunt never treated her like a relative.

She was falsely accused of crimes not committed, became sad, and started bed wetting; an habit she had long stopped before moving to Idogun. Having spent her early life in London where English was mostly spoken, Omolola could not understand the language spoken in Idogun and they also could not comprehend what she was saying. She was maltreated by her aunt and grandmother, was not well fed, was always hungry, and was even referred to as a “*deprived child*” (pg. 20) by Uncle Niyi. She started feeling a growing hatred for her father and she began to think low of herself because of the way she was being badly treated as compared to her other cousins. She felt alone and was constantly bullied in school by her colleagues especially Akin, who beat her up and even gave her a knee injury that later became a very serious injury because it was not well attended to. Omolola could not fight them off due to her malnourished condition. She vowed to return to her father by all means which was why she started going against the school rules in order to get expelled. “*Maybe if I kept my legs open I’d also get expelled and daddy would have to find another school for me to go to in Lagos*”. (Adeniran 2009, p. 54). She felt disobeying the school rules would help her get expelled and moved back to her father, only that these crimes are not valid enough for expulsion.

Omolola lost her brother who also suffered in the hands of their uncle at a very tender age. The death of her brother really devastated her, as they had been very close and always made sure to look after each other. Even when they were far away, they communicated by sending letters to each other. She was taken to Lagos to stay with her father after her brother’s burial in Idogun. In Lagos, she became emotionally disturbed and began to blame herself for everything happening to her. She even went as far as fasting for forty days in order to bring her brother back to life. Her brother’s death affected her psychologically. She became very mad at her father for not taking care of her and her brother. To crown it all, he got another woman pregnant and then proceeded to bring her and her two children into the house. Omolola could not contain her anger and hatred for this new people added into her family. This explained the reason she got into a fight with Ronke; her step sister after she abused her. Out of

anger, Omolola broke a bottle of iced water on Ronke's head and this resulted in a thorough beating from her father. She was rushed to the hospital by Uncle Niyi after he rescued her from the brutal beating. The hatred for her father grew when he sent her out of his house. At that moment, the way she calls him in the novel changed. In the beginning of the novel, she called Mr. Ogunwole 'daddy', however, as different events began to unfold, the name gradually changed from 'daddy' to 'father' and 'ex-father'. Later, she resorted to using pronouns like 'He' and 'Him' when referring to her father. She was then taken to Uncle Niyi's house. She said, *"I'm a football, kicked from player to player, only I don't know who's winning the game or which teams are playing. I'm an unwanted parcel."* (Adeniran 2009, p. 99)

It was obvious she made this statement because she was taken from the foster care home in London to her Aunt's place, and then after the death of her brother, was taken back to her father's place. From her father's place to Uncle Niyi's place and then back to Idogun. She seemed to not have a place to call home. She also referred to herself as an unwanted parcel because she was hated in all these places. At Uncle Niyi's house, she was disliked by his wife and was taken back to Idogun village to stay with her grandmother, who also treated her badly. Back in the village, Omolola went back to her normal routine of striving to survive, being subjected to tedious works that are more than her capability, and also being bullied in school. However, she finally got back at her bully, Akin, but in a very brutal way.

"I'm not sorry I did it. I finally got my own back on Akin, after all the bullying and the beating I got from him, which almost made me lose my leg. He deserves what he got." (Adeniran 2009, p. 117)

Omolola did not feel remorseful after using a machete to slice his leg open. Due to this, she was expelled from school and even after several pleas, the principal did not accept her back. She however resolved to just exist in life, taking everything that came her way without questioning it. She hated her father to the point of not wanting to be anywhere near him, even when he visited the village with his new wife and her kids, whom her father treated better than her. She was not allowed near her new half-brother, Ekundayo because they

saw her as a witch and was reportedly the one who killed her brother Adebola. She was nevertheless not bothered about these accusations.

Eventually, Uncle Jacob, one of her relatives, came to the village from Lagos and took her with him to Lagos where she sat for her external exams. Omolola eventually left Uncle Jacob's house because of his wife's hatred for her and was again taken back to Uncle Niyi's place. Uncle Niyi sexually assaulted her, but there was no way she could tell anyone because he was the one in the family who accepted her and was also her favourite uncle. Most of all, there was no one she could tell about her predicament. She later reconciled with her father, but this was short lived due to his sudden death. Omolola passed through various incidents that could have been prevented if only her father and her mother were together.

Moving on to Adebola, his relocation to his uncle's place in Ekiti affected him. He loved his sister and was always ready to fight for her when need be. Though, the story centred on his sister, the author did not fail to also expose how badly he was treated through the letters he sent to his sister and father. He was left alone to do all the house chores and cook for the whole family without any assistance. He was not treated like a family, but rather like a house help. *"I'm a bag of bones and can even feel my ribs now dad. Please come and get me."* (Adeniran 2009, p. 262)

He became malnourished just like his sister. However, he resolved to taking over the responsibility of his father. *"Lola, we will have to do something about our situation. Maybe running away would be a better option because quite frankly I can't take much more of this."* (Adeniran 2009, p. 73). He made sure he sent his sister letters to know about her wellbeing. He became desperate to run away with his sister to start a new life. This was not achieved because he became very sick and was not taken to the hospital. He even wrote a letter to his father telling him about the deterioration of his health but never got any response.

"Please dad come and get me, I really need to see a doctor, and sometimes I find it difficult to breathe. The other day I had a coughing fit and there was blood in my phlegm". (Adeniran 2009, p. 262)

He pleaded with his father to come get him so he would be taken to the hospital for proper treatment, but got no response. During this sickness, his uncle did not acknowledge his ill health, but was given more work to do. However, his health continued to deteriorate and this led to his untimely death.

Academic Problem

In this novel, the mother left the family, and the father, who could not nurture the children alone, took them to a foster care home before he finally resolved to relocate to Nigeria. In Nigeria, Father sent his children to the village to stay with his relatives because he believed that “*It takes a village to raise a child*”, (pg. 25). Lola could not understand the Yoruba language spoken because she was not familiar with such language, the same language that was used to teach in the school, which made her unable to attend school for some time. However, she got used to the language and started attending school. She was mostly beaten and punished because of her lateness to school, but was later taken to a boarding school. Omolola was also bullied in school because of her small size, which was as a result of not being well-fed. “*Everyone wants to pick a fight with me because I’m the smallest and youngest.*” (Adeniran 2009, p. 52). She was called several names like worm girl, so she felt everyone hated her. She was not well taken care of; she was not given the basic things she needed in school. She became desperate to get back with her father in Lagos, as she felt that if she committed crimes in school, she would be expelled and her father would be forced to take her back with him.

Omolola began to miss classes, but she attended only because she loved the teacher and English language. She hid under the bunk while

her mates went to school. She was eventually expelled when she sliced Akin’s leg with a machete in school. She missed a whole school year before she was allowed to write her final exams which she failed. Omolola’s academic performance would have been excellent if she had been thoroughly nurtured, but it went downhill. It was clear from the novel that she intentionally did not put much effort in her studies just because she wanted to be with her father. However, Omolola’s story ended in a bittersweet way. She later reconciled with her father and travelled back to London after the death of her husband. Adebola (Omolola’s brother) also missed school while he was sick. “*I haven’t been in school since term started so I have a lot to catch up on when I do go back next week*”. (Adeniran 2009, p. 73). He could not recover fast because he was not given time to recuperate, as he was still working despite his poor health. His life was cut short due to the sickness since he was not well attended to.

Conclusion

Broken home is a smaller system of broader societal challenges. Through the narratives of Blessing and Lola the issue of broken home has been extensively explored. This helps individuals to confront the realities faced by children in unstable families. As society grapples with these challenges, literature serves not only as a mirror but also as a light showing the ills in the society and ways it can be stopped, directing one to the path of equitable and successful future.

This article emphasizes the importance of collective responsibility in addressing the effects of broken home and it is advocating for systemic change and individual empathy to nurture the potential of every child.

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