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- a) General Linguistics- Psycholinguistics, Historical Linguistics, Computational Linguistics;
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- f) Oral Literature, Cultural Studies and the New Media
- g) Postcolonial Literature, Migration and Globalization
- h) Medical Literature (representation of illnesses, diseases and therapeutics in literary texts)

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- j) Gender Discourse (with a focus on contemporary theories)
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**The volume of an article:** A chapter contribution should be between 3000 and 5000 words processed in MS Word format. All portions of the manuscript must be typed double-spaced, and all pages numbered starting from the title page.

**Quotations:** Quotations of more than three lines should be displayed and indented. Check that the page numbers of the source have been provided.

A list of non-standard abbreviations should be added. Generally, non-standard abbreviations should be used only when the full term is exceptionally long and often used. Each abbreviation should be spelt out and introduced in parentheses the first time it is used in the text.

Texts in Nigerian and other tonal languages should be tone-marked, and musical examples should be camera-ready. Except when absolutely necessary, photographs and heavy graphic works should be avoided.

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**Managing Editor**

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## **An Exploration of Resistance and the Plight of Indian Indentured Labourers in Reuben Lachmansingh's *A Dip at the Sangam***

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### **Abstract**

*This study debunks the Eurocentric portrayal of the workings of indentured labour. By focusing on three major Caribbean Islands: Trinidad, Guiana, and Surinam, the study foregrounds the migration process of indentured labourers and how they were able to adapt to/and resist colonial influences. The study adopts the qualitative method of research; hence it examines through a contextual reading, interpretation and analysis of the text under study. In the same breath, it references critical essays and other non-literary resources that discuss the Indo-Caribbean indentured labourer system. The theory of Migration is used to (re)present a perspective that reiterates Everett Lee's modification of Ravenstein's migration theory of push and pull factors. The study shows that though Indentureship played an important role in Indian civilization, the whole system, it is based on deception and a play of superior power over an underdeveloped society. In addition, it shows the gloomy side of Indentureship in for example: how men and women are auctioned like animals to the highest bidder; the nostalgic experiences of Indians in a foreign land; deceitful and forceful kidnap to Indentureship and the resistance to the forceful acculturation on the plantations. Therefore, the study concludes that the journey of indentureship is purely based on dominance and suppression of the Indian race, and though it offered the Indians in the presumed new world the space to create their own identities and rise above the caste system that had existed in India, the entire system is a brutal/disguised form of slavery, which the Indians resisted rather than accepted the policy as portrayed by Eurocentrists.*

**Keywords: Migration, Plights/Resistance, Indentured Labour, Suppression and Oppression**

### **Introduction**

Migration has its root in the history of mankind and it is believed to be as old as man. People moved from one place to another to discover new places, resources, and self-identities/realization in a presumed 'new world'. The idea of migration can be linked with the journey motif in

literature which in a clearer sense accentuates the depletion of resources and the need for people to fulfil their needs. In the same breath, there is also the possibility that the people might have been forcefully driven from their initial habitat due to climate change or inter-tribal war. Yet, the curiosity to unravel the mysteries of alien lands could have also pushed pre-historic humans to take the longest journeys of life (Gugliotta, 2008). So, it becomes difficult to unravel the mystery of migration across the continents of pre-historic humans and their escape from inhospitable conditions during their epic voyages.

The theory of migration becomes the centre piece of this study. Ernest George Ravenstein, a prominent theorist from the past, conceptualized migration systems. He also established the Foundation for Consecutive Research on Migration in both the academic literature and policy formulation. In the 1880s, he established the theory of migration by writing about the rules and principles of migration. His laws of migration can be categorized into three headings: reasons for migration, characteristics of migrants, and the distance they travel.

In 1966, Everett Lee modified Ravenstein's migration theory by emphasizing the positive and negative factors of any given place. He believes that, positive factors attract people while negative factors drive them away. In this regard, migration is seen as the net result of push and pull factors. Lee categorizes and explains these factors into four major groups. The first relates to the areas of origin, which state that people leave their country of origin/birth due to social, economic, or environmental issues. The second concerns the areas of destination which attract people to its opportunities. The third group discusses the intervening factors which include obstacles in the way of migration like long distances, ethnic barriers, transportation, etc., which hinder the migration process. The fourth group are personal factors like education, sex, age, and race which can either retard or facilitate migration. His migration framework is generally called the 'push-pull' theory (Passaris, 1989, p. 530).

In the context of the above, this paper analyses the Caribbean indentureship system using a content-based analysis that pays attention to the qualitative technique of the humanities. Taking into account the purpose of the research, a detailed examination, interpretation, and attentive reading of the selected text is sufficient to investigate the intended occurrences. Thus, *A Dip at the Sangam* by Reuben Lachmansingh serves as the primary source. Other notable secondary

sources include web sources and other sources that support the findings, as well as critical works, biographical, historical, and other literary material(s) like articles, journals, and books.

Pointedly, this paper examines the Indian labourer's migration to the Caribbean islands in the 18th - 20th centuries. Through history, the data of when, why, and how the process of international labour migration began is gathered. There is a common perception and portrayal in the colonial records of Indians as home-loving people who do not want to leave their birthplace. Kingsley Davis (1931), in *The Population of India and Pakistan*, points out that the population of India is immovable or static due to its caste system, the predominance of agriculture, lack of education, and other factors linked to marriage and culture. Many other writers also argue that Indians, particularly Hindus, were bound to their boundaries because of religious constrictions which forbid their followers from crossing the Kala Pani of an Indian ocean. When compared to Western countries, people of Indian origin are found to be more homesick. In 1896, British ethnographer and civil servant William Crooke presented his views regarding the unwillingness of Indian people to migrate when he states, "The fact is that the Hindu has little migratory instinct, and all his prejudices tend to keep him at home..." (William, p. 326).

The above submissions by Crooke and many other similar narratives depict Indians as stick-to-home kind of people. They focus only on the narrower views and aspects of the Indians and exaggerate to the highest point. In one of the surveys on Indian labour migrants, it was established that "Indians have never been a stay-at-home people" (Mookherji, 1962, p. 05). From ancient times, Indian traders travelled to places like Southeast Asia and East Africa. These traders used to take local labourers with them. Because of these travels, the existence of Indians in different states like; Southeast Asian and East African countries towards the late 18th century was known.

In the same bid, migration became a major subject of study in the 19th and 20th centuries. During these periods, many authoritative books were written by migration scholars on the characteristics and patterns of internal as well as international migration. The most well-known among them are K.C. Zachariah's, *An Historical Study of Internal Migration in the Indian Subcontinent, 1901-1931* (1964), Kingsley Davis' *The Population of India and Pakistan* (1951) and P.B. Desai's, *A Survey of Research in Demography* (1975). Modern historians like Thapar (2005) believe that there has always been a constant regulation of migration in ancient India. She

opines that the option of migration was always there for distressed people. Through migration, they would often change their miserable situation. She writes, “given the availability of cultivable land, peasant migration appears to have been the more common form of alleviating the pressures of heavy taxation” (p. 58). This opinion of Thapar is shared by many, including Jaimal Rai and Abhay Kant Chaudhary.

It could be rightly conjectured that a detailed explanation for indentureship and, the plight/miseries of migrants is that which is provided for by David Hare and Longueville Clarke before an Enquiry Commission of 1838. In the Enquiry Commission, Clarke narrates an incident where he got intelligent information on the plight of migrants on how they were being imprisoned in a house. On reaching the said house, he forced the guards to open the door and to his amazement, the crowd in the house, were choked to almost the number of a hundred and above persons, rushed and reached out to him “... They flung themselves at Mr. Hare’s feet and mine, crying out ‘Dohae’ [woe]” (qtd in Mishra, 2022, p. 244).

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

As a statement, the experiences of indentured labourers in the early 1830s through the 1920s have been widely documented by colonial writers over time, yet their writings have remained skewed and underrepresented of the reality of indentured labourers in the Caribbean. As a result, the offspring of these labourers started penning narratives, plays, essays, and poems pertaining to their ancestors' experiences in the arts. These literary works have been compared to past colonial writings and have presented a wide range of perspectives on the recruitment procedures as well as the persecution and suppression that colonialists faced on their estates. Since a writer cannot fully separate themselves from the impact of cultural norms and beliefs, literature remains a product of society.

This research further highlights and portrays the migration/immigration of indentured Indian Labourers to the Caribbeans between 1834-1920, their experiences as well as resistance to the system of Colonial Rule. Pivotaly, the paper investigates the India’s civilization and the migration process, before, during and even after the colonial masters. Its further examines the miseries/plights of indentured labourers in *A Dip at the Sangam* and shows the Indo-Caribbeans forms of resistance, survival, suppression and oppression in the West Indies.

## **The Experiences of Indentured Labourers**

As a means of concealment of the Indians fate in the presumed new world, the language that captured the unwilling nature of migrants to board the Kalan Pani ship is quite interesting and Eurocentric. It reports the incidence as ‘really unwilling people’ were not detained in the depots as ‘others in the depot awaiting shipment would be *infected* by this dissatisfaction’. The unwillingness of migrants is as a result of the fear of taking the long journey across the sea which is based on their experiences and that of others at the depot. In another report, a proposal was made to increase depots in the eastern part of United Provinces to have an influx number of migrants, but this was rejected because there is a calculation that the number of deserters would increase. The homes of the emigrants were near the United Province and if the migrants were anywhere close, they would get the true state of indentureship like; confinement, punishments, moved/transferred at will, and the subdue, it will increase the fear of the migrants excessively which will lead to desertion.

It would have been expected that the dehumanization of ‘coolies’ would have ended when they reached the plantation colonies, but they were further paraded before the planters so that the latter could pick the ‘coolies’ they liked. This servitude reminds one of the experiences of slavery because the experiences of the coolies are not farfetched with African slavery before its abolition and the sprout of indentured labour. Jane Swinton, who made the journey on the *Salsette* with her husband, Captain Swinton, notes that:

They made the best appearance they could when the planters came to select them (It looks very like slavery). They were put into boats in sixes and sevens like cattle, and sent to their different destinations (Swinton, et al., 1859, p. 8).

Anytime the ‘coolies’ arrive on the plantation and it is noticed that they do not look attractive enough to potential buyers, they would be set aside a bit longer and fed fattening food to improve their state of being to buyers. The Migrants were auctioned for French colonies while Reverend P. Beaton, who spent several months in Reunion, noted that Captains often sent a boat ahead to the plantations, to relay the news of ‘coolies’ arrival, and that “planters hurr[ied] from the country” to the port, where the auction took place. While describing the process of auctioning, Beaton points out that, “the auctioneer [was] eloquent in pointing out the good qualities of his goods, and the coolie knocked down to the highest bidder”. He also highlights that, there was a

class of spectators who ‘invested’ in coolies, just as they might have invested in other commodities. Aside from the auctioning of migrants, the process of commoditization is reflected in the language that planters used to argue for a reduced price of ‘shipments’ in those cases where ships had suffered high mortality. This often leads to prolonged discussions about whether payments needed to be made for all migrants embarked in Calcutta, or only for those who were successfully landed in the colonies.

The incessant brutality of Indians led to the revolt of 1857 which became the first Indian war/attempt for independence against British colonialism. The Britishers tags this attempts as ‘the Sepoy mutiny’ while the Indians see it as a momentous rebellion against colonialism. The upheaval began at Meerut in May, 1857 and spread across northern and central India. The Indians lost the battle, as their local weapons could not match against the heavy ammunition of the Britishers. Indian leaders were killed, exiled to work as indentured labourers, or put behind bars at the penal colony of Andamans. Naipaul highlights the role of Rani Lakshmibai an Indian who was part of the rebellion in *The Jhansi Legacy* thus: “a real threat to both the company and the Empire” (62). Lakshmibai represents fearlessness and resilience, as it is only natural that when the few elites begin to notice the injustices and the suppression of their people, they have to fight back with all they have, even though some of them know they will die in the process. PK Balachandran writes that Lakshmibai was the combination of Intelligence, courage, and administrative ability. She proclaimed very bravely,

we fight for independence. In the words of Lord Krishna, we will if we are victorious, enjoy the fruits of victory, if defeated and killed on the field of battle, we shall surely earn eternal glory and salvation (Balachandran, 2007)

Lakshmibai lost her life in Gwalior while fighting the British troops at the age of 23 but Hugh Rose, her enemy admitted that she was “remarkable for her beauty, cleverness, and perseverance, she had been the most dangerous of all the rebel leaders. The best and bravest of all” (qtd in Balachandran).

Considering the opposition mentioned above as well as the hardships faced by Indians, Leo Waibel (1941) outlines and emphasizes plantations;

A plantation is not only an agricultural undertaking; it is also an industrial enterprise. It not only produces agricultural products; it also prepares them and makes them fit for transportation ... Plantations are almost always large estates of several hundred to several thousand acres. These large areas require, as do the associated factories, a great number of labourers. The labour problem is thus of paramount importance to the plantations (p. 156)

When the labourers reached the British shores, the workers were quickly assigned to various plantations, scrutinized extensively and scattered. The European argues that, they never separated family members, which was a familiar inclination under slavery. But the writings of descendants of indentured labourers debunk these claims by arguing that families were separated though not on a larger scale. Indians from the same neighbourhood or region are not allowed to be in the same employment locations. In the novel “*A Dip at the Sangam*,” Shankar says:

With our emigration passes ... You remember in Calcutta when an official entered each person’s name, caste, and village on a document? They will use those to separate husband and wife, friends, and people from the same village ... Like they did in India, like they did with slaves the old divide-and-rule policy ... Now we can never speak our dialect and unite against the ruler (p. 65)

The sole aim of breaking or separating families and friends, husbands and wives is to puncture whatever unity that exists between them. The planters ensure that each plantation has different groups and distinct ethnicities rather than one ethnic group. On most plantations, labourers speak various languages and dialects like Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi, Tamil, and Telugu, among others. They are further alienated based on their language, region, or relations to restrain any opposition against the managers. Most of the labourers were illiterate, so they became vulnerable in communicating with the English managers. They are unable to express their complaint to the protector of emigrants.

In addition, Labourers usually start work before sun rise and end work at sunset. Life on the plantations is full of suffering and anguish. Drivers, Sirdars, Overseers, and Managers would endlessly inspect the workers as they work. For being slow, the workers were often beaten in the process. The coolies/Indians get to understand “that it was foolhardy to hope for easy money; they would have to toil hard for every pittance. And they did” (Lal, p. 148). Many of the

labourers hoped they would not do much work to earn a great deal of money as indentured workers. But this is not the case as they arrive at the plantations, they later realise how unjust the management is towards them. They happen to be trapped in the shoes of ex-slaves. The stick that is used to beat and ‘tame’ the slaves is now used on the coolies. Their accommodation is in the “early slave barracks,” which is known and referred to as nigger’s yard (p. 71). The plantation is not as they imagine it to be, for they were promised differently from the reality in place. The labourers sometimes attempt to escape from the hard daily punishments. Also, the coolies become homesick at various plantations. To escape these ordeals, the ignorant labourers out of desperation try to go back to India on foot even though they know they came by sea.

The novel further depicts the suffering/plights of the Indians that are inflicted by other Indians who are known as the Drivers. They have served their years of indentureship and now work in favour of their managers (Europeans). *A Dip at the Sangam* portrays Mathusamy as an Indian driver who frequently beats Shankar “the whipping got so bad that blood soaked through Shankar’s shirt” (p. 77). Mathusamy himself has served as a coolie worker long before Raja and others. He is of the lower caste in India. The indentured scheme afforded him the opportunity to change his status. His migration empowered him and he attained the Drivers position in charge of an estate from a onetime outcast and powerless man of India. Methu as fondly called in the novel rules the high-caste labourers of whom destiny have placed under his control. He exercises his power without remorse or considerations of any kind. That is why Raja who is from the high-caste, a Hindu resists him strongly when Mathusamy tries to whip him. Raja openly rebukes him for beating people mercilessly. Raja reminds him of his position in India by saying: “in India, lower castes like you would have been clearing lands of weeds and rats, not whipping a high-caste man like me” (p. 77). Indentureship becomes an escapist platform to the lower caste people for there are no limitations to their achievements and aspirations like any other Indian at the plantation. The Dalits or Shudras are the most oppressed group in India, they sign up themselves as coolies to become successful in the plantation colonies. It is only in foreign lands that a Dalit will be able to rule the Brahmins. Because of the long caste traditions in India, the lower caste exhumes revenge through brutal beatings of the high-caste Hindus when they find themselves in high positions in the plantations.

Furthermore, after the Indians arrive at the plantation in Lachmansingh’s *A Dip at the Sangam*, one of the African men mocks them thus, “coolie babu! massa goin’ break your back. We

finished with that long time, man” (p. 62). African ex-slaves endure great hardship as a result of the brutal slave trade and they no longer believe in the British government that has oppressed them. Based on these experiences, they rightly know that the Indians will face the same ordeal of mistreatment as they have done at the hands of the Britishers. This predictions or foresight became true when the behaviours of plantation owners did not change with the abolition of slavery for, they continued treating Indian labourers just the way they had treated slaves.

Raja spent one and a half months among the Arawaks after which he returned to the plantation because of his desire to complete his contract and to return home. On his return, the manager and the overseers, decide to punishment him for being absent. The manager declares his sentence thus:

    fifteen lashes on the back with the cat o’ nine tails ... plus a fine of one guilder, to be paid over eight months. Add the six weeks he went missing to his indentureship term (p. 116)

Immediately the above proclamation is made, Raja is fined, punished, and his contract prolonged for no fault of his own. Raja is neither a rebel nor did he escape the plantation willingly. Just that he lost his way, while obeying the orders of his masters and for this, his absence from the estate is tagged as an unlawful act. In an attempt to have a soft landing, Raja employs his African Driver Kwame to speak in his favour. Kwame voices his helplessness by pointing out to Raja how the White man never listens to the Black man. The plantation system is well structured and the existence of the Drivers and the Overseers is in the middle between the managers and the labourers. Driver/Overseers are powerful in the eyes of the labourers but feeble under British management. The punishment of Raja is similar to slavery which is a terrible form of punishment for a coolie:

    they seized Raja, tied his hands behind his back with vine, and took turns dropping lashes over his body. They laughed when he winced and groaned. By the time the whipping ended, he’d already collapsed among the cane stalks, his face buried in the dirt (p. 75)

Again, the gruesome treatment and suffering of coolies by the managers is dreadful and inhuman. Raja’s groaning from severe pains becomes a form of entertainment for the rulers.

They laugh when he moans. This cruelty does not end immediately after the beating. Mathu is also ordered to “rub pickling salt into the wounds, and let the culprit dry out in the sun” (p. 117). This inhuman treatment shows how inconsequential the Indians are, in the sight of the Britishers.

Equally important, Labourers were required to work for about nine hours each day by law with the exclusion of Sundays unlike the West Indian colonies which saw Monday as a holiday. Regulations about timing rules were never followed by the planters. Labourers “worked from daybreak to nightfall, from four in the morning to seven in the night, and far beyond their capacity” (Tinker, 1993, p. 190). The task system is more favourable as it gives independence and self-respect. Drivers do not beat those who work by task nor scrutinize them. Every morning, the task labourers are given a task to complete at their own pace, for they have a better experience than other labourers. Some of them normally complete two tasks a day, due to their diligence and most times they get their tasks completed by the afternoon.

In an attempt/quest to resist colonial rule in India, so many lives were lost. *A Dip at the Sangam* highlights a major resistance that is tied to history in the novel. The revolt of 1857 which comes with the gruesome murder of many Indians is mentioned thus:

In the eyes of the British, I’m a big fish. The last straw for me was when the British sent Mangal Pandey to the gallows back in 1857... after he was hanged by the British for treason, I became a student leader... the sepoy wanted to overthrow the British ... many students supported them... I joined others in a secret training camp-a vacant warehouse ... Sepoy drilled us in loading and firing Enfield rifle-muskets and revolvers until it became second nature, even taught us techniques to extract information (p. 130)

As pointed out above, a detailed account of a story within a story is told by Shankar to Raja about his militant skills and how he and few others resist colonialism. His indentureship is only to conceal his identity as an anti-British rule fighter. He is a university dropout and the reason why he drops out of the university is because he feels he is fighting a just course for India’s freedom which can be said to be in line with colonial resistance to indentureship. His friends were “strap across the mouths of cannons. They, however, had me clean up the bits of brains and body parts after” (p. 131). This also dates back or in league with history where the punishment for anti-British rebels was to tie them up to trees/poles and shoot them to pieces through the

mouth of cannons, meant for killing multiple people at war. Their leader is hanged for treason and Shankar is imprisoned until he escapes the prison and signs up for indentureship (p. 131). This shows that, the Indians do not just fold their arms and allow the Britishers to dwindle their economy and coerce them into slavery. They fought the Britishers and lost the battle because they were fighting a presumed superior power with sophisticated weaponry.

Also, Shankar's real name is "Sagar Singh" (p. 131). Shankar is his indentured name. We get to see Shankar's militant skills when Raja tries to escape with him for treatments at the Arawaks. Unfortunately, the agents that were sent to monitor and arrest Shankar after his years of indentureship suddenly appeared:

Hands up, both of you, the agent-in-charge, the taller of the two, said. You Sagar Singh? He waved the gun at Shankar ... Shankar grabbed the second agent's weapon just as Raja head-butted the leader, knocking him to the ground and causing his weapon to fly through the air ... cocked the hammer of the revolver with his left hand and pulled the trigger... (p. 158)

The deeds of Raja and Shangar demonstrate that Indians are not inferior to British colonists, as they can oppose their control using the same power (arms). The only reason they lost was because they lacked the British army's armament.

Additionally, the Arawaks whom the Britishers consider primitive show a high sense of intelligence and resistance to colonial suppression. Lachmansingh's portrayal of the Arawaks depicts the intelligence of Indians before colonial infiltration. They fought the Britishers when they tried to take their precious stones like, diamonds and gold. Ar'wak a man of the Arawaks, who escapes from indentured labour with the help of Kwame says:

They handed us wooden bowls and forced us to pan the gold for them. One night, we got them drunk on Parakari, Ar'wak broke into a strange giggle, threw the gold back into the river and escaped (p. 105)

*A Dip at the Sangam* highlights the resistance of Raja Singh throughout the novel. The novel portrays a society that is not perfect but that which is capable of making positive and negative choices. In the case of Raja Singh, he is forcefully signed up for indentureship. Due to his powerlessness, he becomes a victim of circumstance. His helplessness is shown throughout the

novel but that does not deter him from resisting the Britishers even at the cost of punishment. Raja's resistance is shown in the following instances: "Mr. Roger, Number 198. My name is Raja, Sir" (p. 64). Raja here refuses to acknowledge the foreign given name. It is a common practice of the colonialist to change the names of their captives. By doing so, the Britishers are exerting their superiority, laying claims of ownership and reducing the Indians to nothing (mere property). The refusal of Raja to identify with the name Roger is a direct resistance/protest to the Britishers. It also shows that, few might have sold their birth rights to the colonialists, like the soldiers that dubiously hand over Raja for silver to be indentured. *A Dip at the Sangam* is saying that there were still others like Raja who have refused to bend to the whips of the colonialist by holding on to their identities. The resistance of the few like Raja might seem almost insignificant, however; it has become one of the reasons why Indian diasporic literary aesthetics is studied today. This is because characters like Raja were able to preserve and pass the cultural values of ancestries to generations.

## **Conclusion**

Since 1834 to 1920, Indian indentured labourers also referred to as contract or coolie workers were employed on sugar plantations in the British, Dutch, and French possessions. This study centres on the unequal representation of Indian opposition against the British colonizers, plantation owners, drivers act, recruiters, agencies, and Sardar's exploitation. Because they were illiterate and from impoverished homes, the labourers were stigmatized. Due to the language barrier on the working plantations, they were unable to take legal action, yet they were able to battle the British during the Revolt of 1857. The Indians were unable to defeat the British in their resistance, but they were nevertheless able to oppose forced cultural and marital fusion by upholding their identities and, to a large degree, marginalized those who chose to elope with Africans or British people. When they crossed the Kala Pani Waters, the majority of Indians brought with them their customs, religion, and knowledge of plants and herbs. Their culture thrived in the Caribbean as a result of these attitudes. The overwhelming difficulty at the plantations causes an unpleasant situation where labourers compromise to survive and complete their years of contract. Their ability to adapt to their environment thanks to their compromise provided them hope for survival. The Indians can start again in the ostensibly new world while maintaining their identity in this rendition.

Due to the broadness of indentured works, this research, as against Eurocentric positions, only focused on a prose fiction that highlights resistance and portrayal of experiences and plights of Indian indentured labourers as they migrate to the presumed new world. This study accepts that there are other works written about indentured labour migration in different plantations like Mauritius, Fiji, and Natal which have not been explored by this research. The research, therefore, concludes that against Eurocentric writings, the Indians continuously resisted the policy of forceful assimilation and a quest for cultural extinction as against marcid acceptance. They were able to maintain their identity and forge a name for themselves by writing to debunk Eurocentric scholars' lopsided portrayals and to also show levels of resistance even when those are not enormous.

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## **The Contexts and Pragmatic Functions of Review Apology in Wole Soyinka's *Alapata Apata* and *Kongi's Harvest***

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### **Abstract**

*Review apology is an apology type resulting from contemplation, re-consideration and self-realisation of a mistake or offence committed. Existing studies on apology largely focus on types and strategies of apology performance in natural discourses with scanty attention paid to apology resources in drama texts. This study is therefore designed to examine the contexts of review apologies in Wole Soyinka's *Alapata Apata* and *Kongi's Harvest* with the purpose of examining their context types and pragmatic functions. Jacob Mey's Pragmatic acts theory is adopted as the framework and the descriptive design is used. Wole Soyinka was purposively selected because of his literary prowess while the texts were selected because of thematic relevance and prominent deployment of apologies in them. Cultural and cognitive contexts are identified within review apology in the data. But while it manifests within cultural context in the two texts, it features within cognitive context in only *Alapata Apata*. It is also discovered that review apology manifests within the contextual features of shared situational knowledge, reference, inference and metaphor and performs pragmatic functions of pleading, regretting and repairing. The study finally submits that review apology has implications for enhancing self-evaluation, engendering fault admittance and encouraging social harmony. It is finally recommended that apology should not just be taught as a pragmatic concept, but as a topic where all its aspects will be covered.*

**Keywords:** Review apology, Wole Soyinka, *Alapata Apata*, *Kongi's Harvest*, pragmatic functions

### **Introduction**

Conflicts unavoidably happen in human society. When they do, one of the efforts made to resolve them is apologising. Apology benefits both the apologiser and the apologisee. As submitted by Engel (2001), it gives the hurt, disappointed and betrayed person a wonderful gift more healing than anything else, and makes them feel that we regret the actions that offended them and we let them see that we respect and care for them. Lazare (2004) believes it reduces the victim's desire for revenge, heals humiliations and facilitates reconciliation, and conversely,

whether accepted or not, apology has the effect of removing sense of guilt from the offender. Friedman (2006) also contends that apologising reduces the need for retaliation from the offended person and keeps the offender at ease that they have been forgiven. Apology is significantly important in every area of human life. For instance, scholars like Braithwaite (2000) and O'Hara (2004) argue that many legal disputes would be averted if the importance of apology is appreciated.

Similarly, Friedman (2006) contends that nations may not be able to deal effectively with each other without a sincere apology and patients are not likely to sue doctors if they are humble enough to apologise for the mistakes they inevitably make when performing their professional duties. Odekunbi (2023) thus submits that the role played by apology is so significant that it can restore trivial issues that destroy homes, break relationships and pull-down organisations. We want to add here that marriages will stand, friendships will last and relationships will be sustained if the value of apology is appreciated.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Studies on apology as one of the commonest means of resolving conflicts and repairing relationships have been considered using natural data from some African and European languages and cultures such as Hebrew, Japanese, German, Akan, Arabic and English with special emphasis on the apology strategies used and their pragmatic functions. But to the best of our knowledge, those situated in literary texts written in English with Yoruba cultural orientation are scanty. And if this is not done it will be difficult to appreciate text representativeness of the cultural resources of apology and perfect understanding of how apologies are realised in Yoruba language and culture may not be known. This is the gap this study is out to fill.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

This aim of the study is to examine the contexts of review apology in Wole Soyinka's *Alapata Apata (AA)* and *Kongi's Harvest (KH)* with the specific objectives of determining their types and discussing their pragmatic functions.

## **Significance of the Study**

This study will benefit those in cultural linguistics because it is situated in Yoruba culture, an effort new in apology studies. It will also afford those in contrastive linguistics to compare apology performance by Yoruba users of English and others who are bilinguals in English and other languages. It will also provoke comparative study of apologies in drama and other genres of literature. Those in pragmatics will also find it highly useful because of its introduction of pragmeme to apology studies. Finally, scholars working on Soyinka's plays will find it indispensable because apology studies on his plays are scarce.

## **Conceptual Explication**

Apology has been defined differently by experts. Ahmed (2017) traces the origin of apology to the Greek word "apologeomai" which means "to justify or defend oneself" or "defence". He then submits that the term apology was first used to mean defence or justification for doing something, but has now shifted to "regret offered by an offender to an offended person for offending them". Believing that apology can be written or spoken, he then concludes that it is "a written or spoken expression of regret, remorse or sorrow" for insulting, failing, injuring or wronging a person. While we do not condemn Ahmed's definition, we want to state here that apology, particularly in the Yoruba society, can be non-verbal. The definition therefore needs modification.

Bergman and Kasper (1993) see it as "a compensatory action to an offence in the doing of which "S" was casually involved and which is costly to "H". It is not debatable that apology is compensatory as claimed by them, but it needs to be stressed that an apologisee may not necessarily be involved in the action that hurt the offended. In other words, an apology can be performed on behalf of an offender. This is the reason Holmes (1995) quickly adds that a person may apologise for someone else's behaviour, when he defines apology as a politeness strategy used by a speaker or an offender to remedy an offence they have committed. In addition to everything said so far, we also want to state here that apology is also performed in the Yoruba society for a mistake one wants to commit. Odekunbi's (2023) definition which captures apology as a verbal or non-verbal act usually performed by an offender or on their behalf to express regret or remorse for an offence committed or to be committed with the goal of enhancing

harmonious relationship between the speaker and the offended will therefore be adopted in this study.

## **Context**

Simply put, context is the environment or situation in which a speech event takes place. Crystal (1987) defines it as “where a communicative event takes place”. Adebija (1999) see it as “all the relevant aspects of the physical or social setting of an utterance or discourse”. Because it plays an important role in meaning explication, Odebunmi (2015) sees it as the spine of meaning. He then argues that as it dictates what one can say, it also has a way of pointing out where an interaction takes place. For instance, he argues that an utterance like: “You can lie on the bed for examination” can predictably be made in a consulting room in a hospital by a medical doctor in the day, while “You are sentenced to a three-year imprisonment with hard labour” is expected to be made by a judge in the courtroom in the day. He however argues that, in pragmatics, what is said cannot be constrained strictly to a setting because situation may call for a teacher to preach to their students in the classroom and a lawyer may narrate a story in a court to prove a point. Van Dijk’s (1977) definition that context captures “everything we need to know about to properly understand an event, action or discourse” will therefore be appropriate here. Filani (2021) stressing this therefore argues that to have full understanding of the utterance: “The dog is at the front door” said by a husband to his wife, one needs to understand what the couple mean by the utterance, that is their intention and the contextual assumption shared by them. Based on their shared contextual assumption, the intention of the husband may be to inform the wife to go and feed the dog.

Though Odebunmi (2016) discusses types of context as a macro and micro concept, in this study Fetzer’s (2002, 2004) classification of context into cognitive, linguistic and social contexts is adopted. Cognitive context, according to him, embraces mental representations, propositions, contextual assumptions and factual assumptions. Odebunmi (2016) calls it “the mental host of inferences and reasoning”. Linguistic context is the co-text, which simply means that the meaning of the lexical terms in an utterance is largely determined by the words that come before and after it. This has to do with the other words that function in the environment of the word used, that help in the understanding of an utterance. Social context comprises the participants in a discourse, their physical locations and their verbal and non-verbal actions.

## **Review Apology (RA)**

Review apology is formed from the word “review”, which in the Advanced Learners’ Dictionary has “contemplation (over) or consideration of past events, circumstances or facts” as one of its entries. Review apology is therefore taken, in this study, to mean an apology type resulting from contemplation, re-examination and self-realisation of a mistake or offence committed. That is, the apologisee contemplates over or reconsiders what they have said or done and realise they have committed a mistake or offended a person and feel the need to offer an apology to the offended. While most instances of RA in *AA* occur in the discussions between Alaba the butcher and his visitors, in *KH*, they manifest mostly in the people’s discussions with Oba Danlola.

## **Synopses of the Selected Texts**

*Alapata Apata* dwells on Alaba, a retired butcher who resolves to spend his retirement sitting on the rock in front of his house. His bosom friend, Teacher, intending to celebrate him, decides to erect a board with the inscription of his Alapata Apata, meaning the butcher on the rock. But, because the students he sent to write the inscription have poor knowledge of Yoruba tonal marks, they write Alapata Apata, meaning the ruler of the rock domain, which equates him to a king. This thus sets him against the king of the village and his council of chiefs.

*Kongi’s Harvest* is about Kongi, a military dictator in the imaginary state of Ismland who, intending to make himself an absolute ruler, decides to use his military force to compel Oba Danlola, the king who wields traditional and spiritual power to relinquish the power to him. This he plans to achieve by deceiving him into handing over new yam to him on New Yam Festival Day. He however fails in the scheme because rather than being given a yam he is given the head of one of his enemies, Segi’s father, who is detailed in a plot to kill him.

## **Review of Previous Studies on Apology**

Cohen and Olshtain (1981) examine how Hebrews produce apologies in English. They consider the extent to which the Hebrew learners of English could produce socio-culturally acceptable apologies. It is discovered that it is difficult to measure their competence in a second language. They therefore select only eight situations to find out the linguistic and cultural competence of these Hebrew speakers when producing apologies in English. They then discovered that when

simple offences were involved, the EFL learners apologised as the native speakers of English frequently, such as in coming accidentally into contact with an old woman, shaking her a bit. In all, they discovered that the apology strategies used by the Hebrew users of English as foreign learners were clearly different from those of native speakers of English. Cohen and Olshtain (1981) thus posit that the non-native speakers' non-conformity to the socio-cultural norms of English was caused by their shallow pragmatic competence in the language. They thus submit that Hebrew learners were expected to simply employ the socio-cultural norms and patterns used in Hebrew culture when apologising in English. They (ibid) however observe that though Hebrew and English are clearly different, sometimes Hebrew learners of English are very close to the English norms when apologising in English, particularly if the offence is light. They then assume that it may be because simple apology is required. Unlike their study that analyses natural data collected from Hebrew learners of English, data from drama texts written in English but situated in Yoruba culture are used in this study. Also, rather than examining how apologies are produced by Yoruba characters who speak English, it examines the contexts and functions of review apology, an apology type that is data-driven in our study.

Edmundson (1982) studies the perception of apologies by American native speakers of English. He considers the cues used by 161 American native speakers of English to determine the appropriateness, sincerity and acceptability of apologies in a number of television programmes. Edmundson believes that studying perception of apologies will help in understanding the pragmatic principles involved in the presentation of apologies in English. Though this study is on apologies like the present one, however, rather than using television programmes as done by Edmundson, apologies in selected plays are used. This apart, American native speakers of English are Edmundson's sources of data, but in this study, review apologies of fictional characters in drama texts written in English by a Nigerian Yoruba/English bilingual are analysed to identify their contexts and pragmatic functions.

Garcia (1989) compares how Americans and Venezuelans realise apologies in the English language situations. He adduces differences in the conversational styles as the cause of the misunderstanding and disagreement in "socio-pragmatic failure". He then concludes that cultural background has significant influence on the linguistic choices of apologies used by the speakers. He discovers that the American native speakers' responses are characterised with negative politeness, demonstrated in their excessive use of deference and respect expressions, while their

Venezuelan counterparts used positive strategies demonstrated by expressions of familiarity, cooperation and friendship. Unlike Garcia's study, does not compare how apologies are realised but considers contexts and functions of review apology, a particular type of apology, using data from drama texts of Yoruba cultural orientation, rather than natural apologies situated in foreign languages and culture.

Holmes (1990) examines the deployment of apology strategies by the New Zealand English speakers using a corpus of 183 apologies collected using ethnographic method. Her findings reveal that there was no difference in the instances where a single strategy was used and the ones where a combination of strategies was used. This, as contended by Holmes (ibid), depends on the nature of the situations; there were several categories of apologies in the case of serious offences, while in the case of the lighter offences, there were single categories. Finally, Holmes discovers that nearly all the instances included explicit apology. In another study carried out by Holmes on New Zealand English in 1993, she discovers the manifestation significant differences in the deployment of apologies between men and women; men do not apologise as more as women do in New Zealand English. This, according to her, is because women see apologies as important face-saving strategies while men believe they can do without them. Holmes also submits that New Zealand women give longer responses to apologies than American women do. The present study differs from hers because rather than dealing with the deployment of apology strategies and the situations that inform their usage, it is on contexts and pragmatic functions of review apologies, and dwells on characters grounded in Yoruba culture.

Deutschmann's (2003) study is on British variety of English. He examines the forms and functions of apologies and their social and conversational variation as they appear in the British national corpus consisting of recordings of a variety of more than 1700 speakers in both formal and informal situations and contexts. The two major findings he discovers are: one, the frequency of strategies that indicate speakers trying to minimise their responsibility is four times greater than those that indicate assumption of responsibility, and two, the degree of formality in which an apology is performed is dictated by the choice of strategies. He also notes that audience is a strong factor that influences the way British speakers of English apologise.

Umar (2007) studies how Sudanese Arabic speakers using English realise their apologies when compared with that of the British English native speakers using 100 Sudanese learners of English

and 15 native speakers of British English. He discovers that the Sudanese Arabic speakers learning English use the same strategies as the British native speakers, though with more intensified expressions of apology. But Ahmed (2017) is quick to observe that it will be difficult to defend the great difference between the numbers of Sudanese Arabic speakers learning English used and the British native speakers used. He argues that before generalisation can be made, there will be a need to bridge the gap between the numbers. The present study is on Yoruba users of English, it is not a comparative study and data from drama texts rather than students are used.

Dawaele (2008) writes on the deployment of apology in the Japanese as EFL learners. He compares the apologies produced by EFL learners got through DCT with those produced by the British speakers of English. He concludes that there is a difference in the way Japanese EFL learners and the native speakers of Japanese deploy IFIDs. Japanese EFL learners also interchange “excuse me” and “I’m sorry”. The present study is neither comparative nor on apology deployment by learners but on contexts and pragmatic functions of a type of apology produced by characters in drama texts.

Al-Zumor (2009) studies how Arab learners of English, native speakers of American English and native speakers of British English realise English apology strategies in different contexts in India. He discovers that the Arabians’ pragmatic transfer from Arabic, in the production of apologies, is because of their religious beliefs, ideas or social values. He then submits that Arabian speakers of English usually take on responsibility in their apology, while the native speakers of English are fond of using offers of maintenance or verbal compensation. Ilic (2014), using data collected through discourse completion test questionnaire and role plays from 40 Master’s level English language students (20 males and 20 females) who were native speakers of Bosnian, examines the similarities and differences in the apology strategies used in the DCT and RPs. His findings reveal that direct apology, offer of repair and acknowledgement of responsibility are the three most commonly used apology strategies in the DCT and RPs, direct apology is preferred in the DCT while offer of repair or compensation is preferred in the RPs, combination of several strategies were employed by most of the respondents and female examinees used a combination of at least three strategies for every single situation as against males who used two strategies, meaning that female apologisers are more expressive than males. However, it was limited to only 40 Master’s students who were native speakers of Romania and

it emphasises the combination of strategies used by the male and female respondents. The present study is situated in literary texts of Yoruba culture written in English.

Saleem and Azam (2015), using Focus Group Discussion questionnaire to elicit data from the EFL university students in Pakistan, examine issue relating to the pragmatic aspects of the use of apology strategies in English and the pragmatic transfer. They discover that most of the participants are not influenced by apology strategies from their L1 cultural norms but keep interlocutor's social status in mind when they use apology strategies. The study further reveals that it is the severity of an offence that determines the apology strategies of Urdu-speaking learners of English in university. They make use of intensifiers and indirect apology strategy if the offence is severe, but explicit apology strategy is used when the offence is mild.

Ahmed (2017) is on Iraqi Arabic and English and discovers that "collectivistic nature of Iraqi culture" determines their choice of apology strategies. His findings reveal that in contrast to the Arabic native speakers, the Iraqi EFL were not aware of pragmatic competence as grammatical competence, and the Iraqi native speakers were fond of using multiple strategies for some offences for which the Iraqi EFL prefer a single or non-apology strategy. Odekunbi (2023) studies the structures of apologies in Soyinka's *Jero's Metamorphosis* and reveals that it has implicit and explicit apology types which have simple and complex linguistic structures.

It is obvious from all the studies above that, apart from Odekunbi (2023) that analyses apology samples from a drama text, the focus of the other ones is on the apology strategies used by participants in natural discourses or interactions. Even then, Odekunbi (2023) studies the apology types and their linguistic features rather than limiting himself to contexts of RA and their pragmatic functions. This is the gap that this study is out to fill. If this is not done, the importance of apology resources in literary works, particularly in drama texts may not be appreciated.

## **Methodology**

Jacob Mey's pragmatic acts theory was adopted. The choice of the theory is informed by the fact that the apology performance involves nearly all the features in pragmeme's activity part such as dialogues, psychological acts, physical acts, prosody and body moves that involve the use of inference, reference, shared situation knowledge and metaphor in the textual part. The

descriptive design was used for the study. Wole Soyinka was purposively chosen because of his literary prowess and international recognition, while *Alapata Apata* and *Kongi's Harvest* were purposively selected because of prominent deployment of apologies in them. *Alapata Apata* has 17 while *Kongi's Harvest* has 8 instances. The data were subjected to pragmatic analysis.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Jacob Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Act Theory (PAT) also known as *pragmeme* is the theoretical framework for this work. The observed deficiency in J.L. Austin's Speech Act Theory brought about *pragmeme*. *Pragmeme* stresses the fact that socio-cultural and society factors play significant role in the construction and interpretation of meaning. It believes communication is a dynamic process in which an interactant is constrained by certain socio-cultural conditions. The society in which a language is used and the rules guiding a language are crucial to the interpretation of meaning. In the language of Akinwotu (2016), what is said and what is meant in a particular situation are dictated by the society, within the rules of the language. Mey (2001) therefore contends that properly understanding of a conversational contribution will be difficult without consideration of its environment of use. Akinwotu (2016) also submits that the rules of language significantly help to systematically arrive at the meaning of anything said in a context. He therefore concludes that the participants in an interaction operate within what their society and language permit. It is the submission of Mey that the theory of pragmatic act explains language use not from inside out but from outside in; its emphasis is on the environment in which the speaker and the hearer find their affordances. The entire situation is therefore hinged on what a society permits to be said and what is actually being said. In other words, an individual is constrained by his/her society. The model below is used by Mey (2001) to explain the theory.

**PRAGMEME**

**ACTIVITY PART**

(INTERACTANTS)

SPEECH ACTS

INDIRECT SPEECH ACTS

CONVERSATIONAL ('DIALOGUE') ACTS

PSYCHOLOGICAL ACTS (EMOTIONS)

PROSODY (INTONATION, STRESS,...)

PHYSICAL ACTS:

BODY MOVES (INCL.GESTURES)

PHYSIOGNOMY (FACIAL EXPRESSIONS)

(BODILY EXPRESSIONS OF) EMOTIONS

...

Ø (NULL)

**TEXTUAL PART**

(CO(N)TEXT)

INF REF REL VCE SSK MPH 'M' . . .

PRACT

ALLOPRACT

PRAGMEME, PRACT, ALLOPRACT

From the model, it can be seen that pragmeme has the activity part and textual part. The activity part is where actions take place and has a list of the options (speech acts, indirect speech acts, conversational acts, psychological acts, etc.) from where a language user can choose, and when no option is chosen, as in a situation of silence, the situation goes back to zero. The textual part is where contextual features such as INF (inference), REF (reference), REL (relevance), VCE (voice), SSK (shared situational knowledge), etc., that interactants engage in contexts. The interaction between the activity part and the textual part leads to a pract or an allopract.

**Data Analysis**

**Contexts and Functions of Review Apology in AA and KH**

Table 1 below gives the summary of our findings on the contexts of review apology.

**Table 1: Showing types of review apology in the selected texts**

S/N	Text	Review apology	Cultural context	Cognitive context
1.	Alapata Apata	17	12	05
2.	Kongi's Harvest	08	08	-
	Total	25	20	05

The table reveals two types of review apology contexts: cultural and cognitive contexts. However, while the two texts have instances of cultural context, it is only AA that has instances of cognitive context. The two types and their functions are explained and exemplified below

### **Cultural context**

In this study, a context is cultural when an apology is used when issues related to the customs and ways of life of a people are being discussed. Review apologies are used in the selected texts when chieftaincy and priest consultation issues are being discussed. In AA for instance, it manifests in the discussion between 1st and 2nd Farmers as demonstrated below.

#### **Excerpt 1**

1st Farmer: (points). Now tell me I'm a liar.

2nd Farmer: I take it all back. I take back everything I said. (AA, 21)

Because the two characters talk informally without indicator of respect in their choice of words, certain inferences can be made. One, it can be inferred that they are friends of the same age. Two, their discussion presupposes that they had had a discussion on where and how they would meet Alaba, the character being talked about, before coming there. Thus, on seeing Alaba on the rock, 1st Farmer working on the shared situational knowledge, points to Alaba and retorts: "Now tell me I'm a liar". 1st Farmer is indirectly, through verbal (pointing) and non-verbal forms of language (Now tell me I'm a liar), making reference to their former discussion and accusing 2nd Farmer. Rather than challenging or arguing with him, 2nd Farmer, also based on shared background knowledge, calmly says: I take it all back. I take back everything I said". The statement is a form of review apology, the character contemplates over and comes to self-realisation that he had made a mistake and he apologises without being told, to the offended person. His statement presupposes that he had challenged 1st Farmer before but now realises his mistake now. Ordinarily, one might be thinking that there is no connection between the contributions of the two characters. But the shared situational knowledge, inference and reference make them understand each other. The context of the apology is cultural because a matter related to a visit to Alaba, a retired local butcher who has turned a rock to his home is being discussed. The 2nd Farmer apology here practises *repairing*. In other words, he uses it to repair the mistake or offence of challenging the 1st Farmer in their earlier discussion.

In KH, Superintendent has forcefully removed the flag that Oba Danlola uses to wrap himself. He therefore, in the excerpt below, accuses Superintendent of parading him to the world naked. This then necessitates Superintendent's apology which practs pleading.

### **Excerpt 2**

Danlola: [Swelling, swelling...]; He paraded me to the world L'ogolonto.

I leave this abuse to judgement of the...

Superintendent: Please --- plead with him. Intercede for me. (KH, 7)

In the excerpt above, Oba Danlola making reference to what Superintendent, Kongi's agent, did to him, is indirectly accusing him of being rude to him, but resolves to commit him to God's judgement. Superintendent, admitting that he has offended Danlola, in apologising, appeals to some other characters in attendance to help plead with Oba Danlola. This is an instance of RA performed within cultural context because it involves a citizen being rude to an oba. In the Yoruba society, the offence is so serious that it can incur the king's curses. This is why the offender does not delay in apologising. Deference is the index of culture here while the apology is used to pract *pleading*.

Also in KH, Sarumi, a lesser oba, examines and realises that Superintendent is disrespectful to Oba Danlola. He, therefore, on his behalf, apologises to him as demonstrated in the excerpt below.

### **Excerpt 3**

Sarumi: Kabiyesi, a father employs only a small stick on his child, he doesn't call in the policemen to take him to gaol. Don't give voice to awesome names on an Oba's tongue; when you feel kinder, they cannot easily be recalled. (KH, 7)

The excerpt above is an instance of proxy review apology performed within a cultural context and the index of culture here is deference. The contextual features here are reference, inference, metaphor and shared situational knowledge. "Father" and "child" refer to Oba and Superintendent respectively. Surumi is appealing to Oba Danlola be soft (employ a small stick) to Superintendent and should not call in the policemen to take him to jail. Calling in policemen metaphorically indicates the employment of a tough punishment on the child (Superintendent).

The metaphor of curses here also reinforces the belief among the Yoruba that a curse from an oba is usually difficult to remove when their anger subsides. The apology here practs *pleading*.

### **Cognitive Context**

Cognitive context is the second context of RA discovered in our data. The word “cognitive” is an adjective form of “cognition” which is connected with the process of knowing, of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought and senses. Cognitive context is therefore a situation when an apology is tendered after a person has come to mental realisation that they have done something bad. This is usually not immediate; it takes place after many conflicts have been resolved. As submitted earlier, this context manifests only in AA. Some instances are discussed below.

In AA, Teacher apologises to Alaba for causing Alaba’s problem with the king and his council of chiefs.

#### **Excerpt 4**

Teacher: It’s all my fault. Me and my big plan...

Alaba: No, it’s like iroko tree. You are warned it is going to fall and you keep looking in front of you. (AA, 169-170)

One of the inferences that can be made here is that Teacher has come to self-realisation that he caused Alaba’s problem with the king and his chiefs. He admits it is his fault; he takes responsibility for the problem and then makes reference to all he did to celebrate him, which set Alaba against the king. Alaba then uses metaphorical analogy of iroko tree to show him that he was warned but he didn’t heed the warning. This apology is used to pract regretting. Teacher, the apologist now regrets what he has done.

Also, when the 2nd Student realises his mistake, rushing in with other students, he apologises to Alaba.

#### **Excerpt 5**

2nd Student: We heard the news. We had mobilized and were on our way to demonstrate against--- you! We thought you were a state agent. Now we know better—forgive us, militant comrade. (AA, 173)

In the excerpt above, 2nd Student makes a reference to what they had done working on the negative report heard about Alaba. But when they understand better, they realise that they had been wrong and therefore he comes with others to apologise to him.

### **Socio-pragmatic Implications for Social Relationship**

Review apology has some socio-pragmatic implication for social relationship. One, it gives room for self-evaluation. It is after this that an offender will consider apologising. Two, it encourages readiness to admit fault. Since RA involves contemplation, reconsideration and self-realisation, an offender will be ready to accept their fault or mistake before the move for apology can be made. Three, it engenders peaceful coexistence/ socio-harmony between or among people.

### **Recommendations**

Having critically examined the contexts and functions of review apology in Soyinka's selected plays as well as socio-pragmatic implications of apology for human relationships, it is recommended that teaching of apology should be introduced in the primary and secondary school curricula so that the students will be exposed to the importance of apologizing right from the primary school. Two, apology should not just be taught as a pragmatic concept in the department of English in the tertiary institutions, but as a topic where all its aspects will be covered. Religious centres can also organise seminars on apology periodically to expose their members to its gains.

### **Conclusion**

So far, we have been able, in this study, to examine the contexts of review apology in Wole Soyinka's *AA* and *KH* using Mey's pragmatic acts theory. Two types of contexts namely, cultural and cognitive contexts are found. But while the apologies appear in the two contexts in *AA*, they feature in only cultural context in *KH*. It has also been revealed that review apologies manifest within contextual features of shared situational knowledge, inference, reference and metaphor to perform pragmatic functions of pleading, repairing and regretting in the two texts. This study has a number of contributions to the existing knowledge. One, unlike scholars like Cohen and Olshtain (1981), Garcia (1989), Holmes (1990), Deutschmann (2003) Al-Zumor (2009) and Ahmed (2017) who situate their studies in foreign cultures like Hebrew, Venezuelan, English,

Arabic and Japanese, it situates apology studies in Yoruba culture. Two, while data from natural conversations are used in nearly all the studies reviewed, data from characters in drama texts are used in this study. Three, the two context types identified may not be new in pragmatics (Fetzer, 2002 and 2004; Odebunmi, 2015 and Olaniyan, 2019) but they are novel in apology studies. Four, it introduces the theory of pragmatic act (pragmeme) to apology studies. Finally, it is one of the few studies that have ventured into analysing apologies in Soyinka's plays.

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## Generic Structure Potential and (Im)Politeness in Nigerian Online Service Encounters on WhatsApp and Instagram

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### Abstract

*In modern business landscapes, the transition to computer-mediated channels has revolutionized service encounters, encompassing both transactional and interactional functions of language. This study examines the Generic Structure Potential (GSP) and politeness maxims between online vendors and buyers in Nigerian online service encounters. Drawing from Halliday and Hassan's (1989) model of GSP and Leech's framework of politeness, the study analyses 12 conversations from WhatsApp and Instagram platforms. The study identifies four obligatory elements: Uploading and Tagging of Sample Product (UTSP), Confirmation of Product Availability (CPA), Payment Process (PP), and Request for Delivery Details (RDD), and six optional elements: Greeting Initiation (GI), Calculation of Total Price of Product (CTPP), Demand for Discount (DD), Request for Notification of Payment (RNP), Appreciation/Gratitude for Payment (AGP), and Feedback on Product (FAP). The generic structure potential of a typical Nigerian online service encounter is catalogued as [UTSP]^(GI)^(CPA)^(CTPP)^(DD)^(PP)^(RNP)^(RDL)^(AGP)^(FOP). Furthermore, Nigerian online vendors exhibit a greater emphasis on politeness compared to buyers, with tact, generosity, and approbation as the commonly deployed politeness maxims in online service encounters. While WhatsApp and Instagram exhibit distinct features, understanding their patterns empowers businesses in Nigeria with effective communication strategies, potentially enhancing customer satisfaction and transaction outcomes in the digital marketplace.*

**Keywords:** Business discourse, online service encounter, WhatsApp, Instagram, generic structure potential, politeness

### Introduction

The advent of globalization in the 21st century has redefined the landscape of business operations, ushering in a new era facilitated by the internet, Information Communication Technology (ICT), and social media. Social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and

Instagram, boasting approximately 3.8 billion users globally, have become indispensable channels for businesses to harness the market's potential. These platforms offer businesses opportunities to reach potential customers through features such as business pages, advertisements, and messaging components, thereby facilitating online transactions and customer service interactions.

In the business context, social media platforms have empowered customers, enabling them to make online purchases, share information, and engage with companies, fundamentally altering the dynamics of customer service interactions. This ease of information dissemination, liberated from spatial and temporal constraints, fosters productive communication between individuals and online vendors. Moreover, customer service, integral to business operations, encompasses providing assistance to customers throughout the service delivery process, aiming to maintain customer loyalty and satisfaction by promptly addressing their needs and concerns.

Despite numerous global studies focusing on linguistic strategies in customer service interactions (Clark et al., 2013; Wieseke et al., 2012; Félix-Brasdefer, 2015), there is limited research on Nigerian online service encounters. This gap underscores the importance of investigating the dynamics of customer service interactions on social media platforms in Nigeria. Thus, this research aims to examine the generic structure potential and politeness maxims in online service encounters on WhatsApp and Instagram in Nigeria. This highlights the necessity for the current study, which aims to address the following inquiries:

- i. What is the generic structure potential of online service encounters between vendors and buyers on WhatsApp and Instagram platforms in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the politeness maxims observed in these online service encounters?

### **Theoretical Orientation and Previous Studies**

The concept of Generic Structure Potential (GSP) is deeply rooted in Systemic Functional Linguistics, as pioneered by Halliday and Hassan in 1985 and 1996. GSP refers to the range of obligatory and optional elements in a text and their orderliness, providing an analytical framework to identify the textual elements available for developing a genre. According to Hassan (1989), GSP deals with the structural resource of speech in a given genre, implying that every genre has its own unique GSP. However, texts within the same genre may have different optional structures, as indicated by Halliday and Hassan (1985).

Numerous studies have explored GSP in various text genres, providing insights into the structure and linguistic properties of different types of texts. For example, Omoniyi and Akinseye (2020) identified five obligatory elements and four optional elements in selected banking discourses in Nigeria. Henry and Roseberry (1997) found obligatory elements like Introducing the Topic, Narrowing the Focus, and staging the Central Ideas, along with optional elements such as Commitment to Central Idea and Expansion in their studied essays from newspapers and magazines.

Similarly, Olagunju (2015) explored GSP in football match reports, uncovering four obligatory elements and six optional elements. In their paper, Ansary and Babaii (2004) investigated the GSP of English newspaper editorials, identifying obligatory elements like Run-on Headline, Addressing an Issue, Argumentation, and Articulating a Position, along with optional elements such as providing Background Information, Initiation of Argumentation, and Closure of Argumentation.

Other related studies on GSP include Sunday and Fagunleka (2017), who analysed feature articles in Nigerian newspapers, identifying obligatory elements like Headline, Orientation, and Addressing the Issue, and optional elements such as Feature Lead, Proffering a Solution, and Moral Lesson. Olaniyan (2014) examined the GSP and discourse functions of art-based research article abstracts, identifying eight generic structural elements, of which only Statement of Objectives, Methodology, and Findings were obligatory. Finally, Unuabonah (2012) explored the GSP of presentations in quasi-judicial public hearings, identifying four obligatory elements and one optional element.

While these existing studies have contributed significantly to our understanding of GSP theory and its application to various text genres, there is a noticeable gap in the literature concerning the examination of GSP in online service encounters, particularly in the Nigerian context. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the GSP and politeness maxims between online vendors and buyers in Nigerian online service encounters, drawing from Halliday and Hassan's model of GSP and Leech's framework of politeness. By analysing these conversations from WhatsApp and Instagram platforms, this study seeks to provide insights into the structure and linguistic properties of online service encounters, thereby contributing to our understanding of how texts are organized and function in digital communication.

## **Principles of Politeness**

Scholars such as Lackoff (1989), Watts (2003), and Trosberg (1995) have approached politeness from different angles. Lackoff (1989) viewed politeness as a means of avoiding conflict in human relationships, while Watts (2003) considered it a pragmatic mechanism that involves various linguistic structures working together to achieve smooth communication. Trosberg emphasized politeness as a social concept centred on showing consideration to others.

Impoliteness, on the other hand, can be seen as an outgrowth of politeness theory. According to Terkourafi (1999), impoliteness occurs when expressions used do not align with the context of occurrence. Watts argued that a comprehensive understanding of politeness requires an examination of social interactions. Culpeper (2005) explained impoliteness in terms of face-attack, where a speaker deliberately communicates in a way that threatens the hearer's face or social identity. Mills (2005) defined impoliteness as any linguistic behaviour that transgresses community norms, appropriacy, and threatens the hearer's face or social identity. With respect to Leech's (2005) theory of politeness, impoliteness manifests when the maxims of politeness are flouted during a speech event, most especially the agreement, approbation, and modesty maxims which are the conventionalized principles of politeness.

Moreover, other theories, such as Brown and Levinson's model of politeness, are deeply rooted in cultural and social constraints, making them less suitable for analysing online service encounters in a digital-driven environment. Brown and Levinson's model, for instance, focuses heavily on the notion of "face" and the social hierarchies that influence linguistic politeness. While this model is valuable for understanding politeness in face-to-face interactions, it may not adequately capture the dynamics of politeness in digital communication, where social cues and hierarchies are often less pronounced. Similarly, Watts' model of politeness is criticized for its subjective nature and strong connection to cultural norms. Watts' model involves a broader scope of analysis that may extend beyond the specific focus of this study, potentially leading the analysis into areas of pragmatics that are beyond the scope of online service encounters. Moreover, Watts' model may not provide the level of granularity needed to analyse the specific (im)politeness strategies employed in digital communication. In contrast, Leech's (2005) model of politeness offers a more objective and systematic framework for analysing (im)politeness in online service encounters. Leech's focus on the addressee, as well as his emphasis on specific linguistic strategies, makes his model particularly well-suited for analysing the linguistic

dynamics of digital communication. Additionally, Leech's model provides a clear framework for identifying the extent to which vendors and customers practice politeness in online encounters, as well as the obligatory or optional structures that match these polite speech acts. Therefore, Leech's model is the most appropriate theoretical framework for this study, as it provides the necessary tools for analysing the (im)politeness strategies employed in online service encounters on platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram.

Leech's model of politeness is an expansion of Grice's maxim of cooperation. In reaction to criticism in this respect, the term 'maxim' which was also used by Grice, was changed to 'constraints'. According to him, these constraints are manifestation of what he calls the super-constraints, that is, the Grand Strategy of Politeness (GSP). Leech (2007) politeness strategy has two major principles: 1) speaker places value on what relates to the addressee 2) speaker places low value on what relates to himself. Statements and responses that are loaded with maxim A are more powerful than statements and responses that are loaded with constraint B. Leech's politeness principle consists of six maxims:

- i. The Tact Maxim: This maxim seeks to 'minimize the expression of beliefs which imply cost to other, also maximize the expression of beliefs which imply benefit to other.' Examples of the tact maxim are "give me a glass of water", "remove the dirt", "would you mind buying me a soda" and so on. Leech argues that there are two levels of politeness in the tact maxim. Commands like "stand up", "get out" are considered impolite while requests that are introduced by "please", "could" or other modal auxiliary are more polite because they give the person being addresses a choice—whether to obey or not. For Leech, this is more powerful than the generosity maxim.
- ii. The Generosity Maxim: This maxim seeks to 'minimize the expression of benefit to self; maximize the expression of cost to self.' Unlike the tact maxim, the maxim of generosity focuses on the speaker, and says that others should be put first instead of the self.
- iii. The Approbation Maxim: This maxim seeks to 'minimize the expression of beliefs which express dispraise of others; maximize the expression of beliefs which express approval of others.'
- iv. The Modesty Maxim: This maxim seeks to 'minimize the expression of praise of self; maximize the expression of dispraise of self.'

- v. The Agreement Maxim: This maxim seeks to ‘minimize the expression of disagreement between self and other; maximize the expression of agreement between self and other.’
- vi. The Sympathy Maxim: This maxim seeks to ‘minimize antipathy between self and other; maximize sympathy between self and other’.

Even though Leech claimed that indirect illocutions are more instrumental in realizing politeness as they give listeners opportunity to make choices, he also conceded that indirectness can lead to impoliteness and may also not lead to it. This proposition is connected to his idea of impolite belief. For Leech, impolite beliefs are competitive goals “which are essentially less aggressive” (Giora, 2003: 86).

Researchers have also shown interest in exploring politeness within political contexts. For example, Odebunmi (2009) investigated politeness in print media political interviews in Nigeria, employing Watts' model. Ndubusi (2011) critically analysed politeness strategies in a novel, focusing on their implications for effective communication and national development. Additionally, Maia (2019) examined the concept of politeness in President Donald Trump's speeches, while Akinseye and Oyeyemi (2023) investigated the occurrences of impoliteness and politeness in the 2020 Edo and Ondo state governorship debates, with a focus on identifying the face-saving and face-threatening acts used by political candidates and moderators.

Meanwhile, the explorations of politeness and impoliteness strategies above have mainly focused on various political communication contexts. However, this study aims to fill a gap in the literature by examining the (im)politeness strategies employed in conversations between vendors and customers on WhatsApp and Instagram. By focusing on these digital interactions, this research offers insights into the unique dynamics of politeness in online business transactions, contributing to a deeper understanding of how politeness principles are applied in the digital marketplace.

## **Methods**

The data involved online conversations between online vendors and buyers on WhatsApp and Instagram. The period from April to December 2021 was selected for data collection as it ensured the availability of screenshots and chats from online vendors and guaranteeing the validity of the data. The data were obtained from online vendors who randomly forwarded their

conversations to the researcher. The texts were anonymized and stripped of sensitive information, such as bank account details.

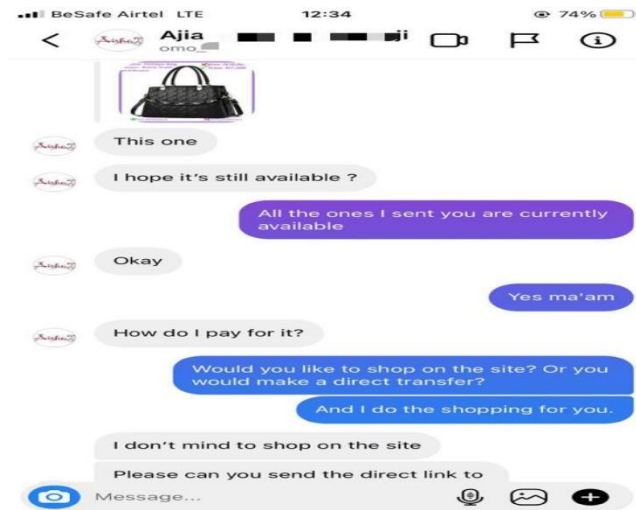
The study population consisted of a total of 100 screenshots and twelve conversations, with six each from Instagram and WhatsApp. The data were collected from the three major regions of Nigeria: Southern, Northern, and Eastern Nigeria. The selection of data was justified as it was purposively collected from individuals running businesses on WhatsApp and Instagram, who provided the data after being informed of the research purpose and verified their Instagram pages and WhatsApp chats. WhatsApp and Instagram were chosen as social media platforms for the study because they are the most widely used platforms in Nigeria and both platforms are business-friendly and contextually compatible with the research objectives. According to a report by Statista, WhatsApp and Instagram are among the top social media platforms in Nigeria in terms of user penetration and engagement (Statista, 2022). WhatsApp allows easy communication between users through texting, phone calls, or video calls, while Instagram provides a shopping-friendly environment where users can view high-quality images and videos of products shared by online vendors.

The data analysis procedure involved a qualitative analysis using the Generic Structure Potential approach and Leech's Politeness theory. These theoretical frameworks were chosen based on their compatibility and prevalence in the data. The analytical framework for online service encounters in Nigeria on WhatsApp and Instagram was developed based on the research objectives. Hassan (1985) gave some symbols with which a text can be written and interpreted in a genetically coded form, some of these symbols of generic structure potential include: ^, [ ], ( ), { } and <>. ^ - This is a caret sign that shows sequence. That is, how elements are arranged in their sequential order. [ ]- The square brackets include restriction of elements. This indicates stability of occurrence, it means that elements enclosed with the square brackets can only occur in a given position. ( ) - This indicates optionality, whenever an element is enclosed with plain brackets it means the element may or may not occur. { } - This symbol indicates recursiveness as a whole; <> - This symbol indicates recursiveness at once

## Analysis and Discussion

### Section 1: Generic Structure Potential in Nigerian online service encounter

#### Obligatory elements in Nigerian online service encounter on WhatsApp and Instagram



#### i. Uploading/ selection of product sample

Figure 1: *Bejaid Wears, Bags and Shoes: Southwest Nigeria*

This feature is an obligatory element in Nigerian online encounter on WhatsApp. It is the most essential element because buyers need to know available products before they can make a selection and then decide whether to make a purchase or not. Based on Figure 1, it is evident that this element occurs after greetings, self-introduction, or stating the purpose of the chat by the vendor. During the uploading or selection of product samples, the buyers either tag or send messages containing the specific product they wish to purchase, while in the chat room with the online vendor. Alternatively, the online vendor may also send samples of available products for the buyer to choose from. In such cases, the buyer simply needs to make a selection, and a conversation regarding the chosen product is initiated.

#### ii. Confirmation of product availability

Confirmation of product availability is a crucial element in Nigerian online service encounters, and it is typically accomplished through the adjacency pair of a question and an answer. Primarily, this element occurs after the customer has tagged or uploaded the specific item they

wish to purchase. Upon receiving the customer's inquiry, the online vendor affirms the availability of the selected product, often accompanied by providing the corresponding price information.

Conversation 1: WhatsApp: CHINESE CLOSET (Unisex Clothes seller)

Customer: hi, do you sell polo? Wholesale  
Online vendor: hi, good morning dear. Yes I do

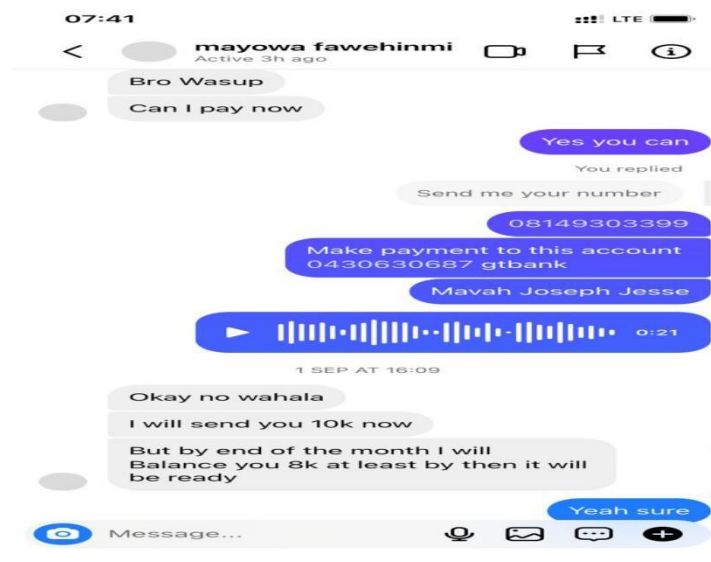
Conversation 2: Instagram: BEES SURPRISES (Decoration and events planning services)

Customer: hello. I want to get find out the cost of getting a money bouquet and money cake ...or better still if there are surprise packages I can review

In the first excerpt, the customer initiates the interaction by inquiring about the availability of polo shirts in wholesale from the online vendor. The interrogative nature of the question suggests that this customer is a first-time buyer. It can be inferred that this obligatory element is typically presented by customers who are contacting the online vendor for the first time. Also in the second sample, obligatory element is used by the client who is unfamiliar with the online vendor and in this particular case, the customer not only seeks information about the desired service's cost but also expresses a desire to review samples or explore alternative surprise packages. In summary, confirmation of a product is a critical element within Nigerian online service encounters as it builds trust and facilitates further interactions.

### iii. Payment process

Figure 3: Instagram EMPEROR SHOES (Shoe maker) Northeast Nigeria



At the core of any successful online service encounter is the seamless integration of sales and customer satisfaction. In order to achieve this, it is imperative for the buyer to complete the payment process, followed by the delivery of goods by the online vendor. Thus, the payment process emerges as an obligatory element within Nigerian online encounters on WhatsApp and Instagram. As exemplified above and upon confirmation of product availability, the buyer assumes the responsibility of initiating the payment, thereby demonstrating their commitment to the purchase. The payment process primarily involves the buyer requesting the bank account details of the online vendor, subsequently effecting payment through transfer using their mobile phone. This process represents a crucial step that ensures the completion of the transaction, allowing for the buyer's financial commitment and the subsequent delivery of goods by the online vendor. This essential element contributes to the overall success of the online service encounter, fostering customer satisfaction and the establishment of a trustworthy relationship between the buyer and the vendor.

### **Optional elements in Nigerian online service encounter on WhatsApp and Instagram**

According to the generic structure potential, a generic structure is considered optional if it does not consistently occur in every discourse within the same context. In the context of Nigerian online service encounters on platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp, there are certain optional elements that can be observed:

#### **i. Opening Greetings**

Unlike the social norms observed in physical markets, greetings are found to be an optional element in Nigerian online service encounters on Instagram and WhatsApp. There are instances where the greeting is omitted by online vendors and customers.

Excerpt 1: WhatsApp (Chinese closet)

Customer:	...Do you sell polo? Wholesale
Online vendor:	hi, good morning dear

In the provided WhatsApp excerpt, the customer initiates the discourse by directly stating her desired product. However, the online vendor, in contrast, greets before responding. In the analysed data, the online vendors place more socio-cultural significance on greetings compared

to online buyers. In most cases, online vendors greet before responding to their clients' inquiries, even when their customers fail to demonstrate the social etiquette of greeting.

The optional nature of greetings in Nigerian online service encounters reflects the evolving dynamics of online communication and the influence of technological platforms. While greetings may still hold significance for some online vendors, the customer's focus is often on efficiently communicating their needs and making inquiries without the traditional formalities associated with face-to-face interactions. This highlights the distinctive nature of online service encounters, where convenience and directness play a crucial role.

## **ii. Calculation of total price of product selected**

Within Nigerian online service encounters, particularly on WhatsApp, the calculation of the total price of selected products emerges as an optional element. This element is typically employed when buyers have chosen multiple products and engaged in substantial negotiations with the online vendors. This optional element enhances the flexibility and personalized nature of online transactions, ultimately contributing to customer satisfaction and a successful online service encounter.

Excerpt 2:

Customer:	I just noticed there is a 50k cash in the luxury red theme box What will be the total without the red theme box?
Online vendor:	Yes there is.
Customer:	And the total without the cash?
Online vendor:	226,000

In the provided excerpt, the customer observes a particular item among the selected products and inquiries about the total price of the package without that specific item. The online vendor acknowledges the observation and responds by stating the revised total price after removing the item. This dialogue highlights the optional nature of calculating the total price of selected products within Nigerian online service encounters. It demonstrates that this element is invoked when there is a need to customize the package or revise the pricing based on specific customer preferences or changes in the product selection. Moreover, the use of WhatsApp as a platform

for these interactions is notable, as it provides a convenient and efficient means for both parties to engage in detailed discussions and exchange necessary information. The text-based nature of WhatsApp conversations allows for clear communication and easy reference to previous messages, facilitating the calculation of the total price and accommodating any adjustments requested by the buyer. Therefore, the calculation of the total price of selected products is not a mandatory step in every online transaction. It occurs selectively, primarily when buyers have engaged in significant negotiations or have expressed specific preferences for modifications to the package. This optional element allows for flexibility and personalized pricing arrangements, ensuring that the final price accurately reflects the buyer's requirements.

**iii. Request for notification of payment**

The request for notification of payment is an optional element in Nigerian online service encounters on WhatsApp and Instagram. It is a sub-element of the overall payment process but does not consistently occur in all instances on these platforms. Requesting notification of payment is more likely to be employed when significant amounts are involved, ensuring transparency and accountability in the transaction.

Excerpt 3:

Online vendor:	276,000 is total
Customer:	okay
Online vendor:	when you make payment, let me know

In the provided excerpt, the online vendor requests the buyer to notify him after completing a money transfer. This element is only observed in one of the analysed online service encounters. It can be inferred that this request is typically made when a substantial amount of money is involved in the transaction, ensuring that the vendor is aware of the payment and can proceed accordingly.

**iv. Acknowledging payment**

The act of acknowledging payment, which occurs when the buyer informs the online vendor about the completion of the payment, is not a common practice in Nigerian online service encounters on Instagram and WhatsApp. In other words, it is an optional element. Among the

twelve analysed data samples, only two online vendors acknowledged the payments made by the buyers.

Excerpt 4: Emperor Shoes

Online vendor:                      Okay bro. Received with thanks.

Excerpt 5: Bi-Great Shoes

Buyer:                                      sent  
Online vendor:                      Good morning received it

In Excerpt 4, the vendor explicitly acknowledges the receipt of the wire transfer and expresses appreciation to the buyer. It is also the same in Excerpt 5 but in an elliptical style. The optional nature of acknowledging payment indicates that it is not an obligatory practice within Nigerian online service encounters. While some vendors may choose to acknowledge payments as a means of providing reassurance and maintaining good customer relations, it is not considered a norm. However, the convenience and speed of online transactions may reduce the perceived need for explicit acknowledgment, as the completion of payment is often confirmed through digital records and notifications.

v.            **Request for discount**

A discount is a reduction in the price of a product or service, which encourages buyers to make a purchase by offering them a lower price. In Nigerian online service encounters on WhatsApp and Instagram, the power to grant discounts lies solely with the online vendors. However, the request for discounts is not an obligatory element in these encounters.

Excerpt 15: Mo treats

Online vendor:                      Good morning ma. Ok. 800 per pack ma  
Buyer:                                      Good morning ma. Gimme discount na.

As observed in this study, not all customers engage in bargaining or haggling through language when exploring purchasing opportunities on social media. Therefore, the request for a discount is an optional element in Nigerian online service encounters.

## **vi. Gratitude/appreciation**

Gratitude and appreciation are considered optional elements in Nigerian online service encounters, as they are mainly observed in WhatsApp conversations. Furthermore, they do not serve a common purpose in these encounters, thus not qualifying as obligatory elements.

Excerpt 1: Bejaid Wears

Buyer:	well done, may God continue to bless your business
Online vendor:	Amen ma, thank you so much ma, I'm grateful
Buyer:	I received my bag this. Thank you for your patience. I love it.

In this WhatsApp conversation, the online vendor expresses gratitude in response to the buyer's prayers. The buyer also expresses gratitude after receiving the ordered goods. This demonstrates that expressions of gratitude in Nigerian online service encounters on Instagram and WhatsApp are pseudo-obligatory, as they are contingent upon certain conditions.

## **vii. Feedback on product**

The element of providing feedback on the product is an optional element that occurs occasionally in Nigerian online service encounters on social media platforms. It typically appears towards the end of the conversation. In the analysed data, only one instance of this element was found.

Excerpt: Bejaid Wears

Buyer:	I received my bag this morning. I love it Thank you for your patience
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In the above sample, the buyer expresses her satisfaction with the received product and extends gratitude to the online vendor for their patience. This feedback occurs after the obligatory elements of requesting delivery details or completing the payment process. The feedback quality is evident in the declarative statement "I love it," indicating the buyer's contentment with the delivered product.

## **Section 2: Politeness in Nigerian Online Service Encounter on WhatsApp and Instagram**

### **Observance of tact maxim in Nigerian online service encounter**

Politeness plays a crucial role in Nigerian online service encounters, particularly on platforms like Instagram. One aspect of politeness is the observance of the tact maxim, which suggests minimizing costs and maximizing benefits to others. The tact maxim operates in conjunction with principles of politeness, ensuring that the receiver feels respected and their "face" is protected. The following instances highlight the application of the tact maxim in these encounters:

Text 1: *Bejaid wears*

Online vendor: would you like to shop on the site?

Customer: please can you send the link to me?

In Text 1 above, the online vendor demonstrates politeness by adhering to the tact maxim. The vendor presents her proposition indirectly and similarly, the customer's request also follows the same pattern. These exchanges aim to increase options for both the customer and the vendor. This verbal behaviour aligns with the tact maxim. Through the use of polite language, both parties maximize the benefits to each other in a psychological manner. Here, the observance of the tact maxim facilitates effective communication and maintains a positive interaction between the vendor and the customer. In some other cases, the customer exhibits politeness by employing the term "please" while proposing a price reduction.

### **Observance of generosity maxim in Nigerian online service encounter**

This positive face-saving strategy aims to enhance the listener's positive face. Instances of the generosity maxim can be observed in Nigerian online service encounters on platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp.

Text 4: Avese Clothier: Benue state (North central Nigeria)

Customer: "Please I want to see some outfits.

I don't know if you would help me..."

In Text 4, the implicature indicates that the buyer intends to purchase outfits at a certain cost, she frames her request with an indirect illocution. This proposition reflects the observance of the generosity maxim as the customer maximizes benefits for the seller by giving them the option to accept or reject her request. The observance of the generosity maxim in Nigerian online service encounters showcases the interactional dynamics between customers and vendors. Customers employ tactful requests and indirect illocutionary acts, allowing vendors the flexibility to accept or reject their requests. Understanding the generosity maxim enhances the overall quality of communication and fosters positive relationships between customers and vendors in the Nigerian online marketplace.

### **Observance of sympathy maxim in Nigerian online service encounter as a negative face-saving strategy**

According to Leech (1983), the sympathy maxim occurs when both the speaker and the listener minimize antipathy towards each other, showcasing the value placed on the second party. It serves as a negative face-saving act for both parties involved. Instances of the sympathy maxim can be observed in Nigerian online service encounters.

Text 6: Bi –Great Shoe store: Abuja (North central Nigeria)

Online vendor:	“Sorry, it’s not available in 45. I just confirmed. ‘pele’ How about chose another design
Customer:	Send the ones available in 45. Lemme see

In this excerpt, politeness is achieved through the observance of the sympathy maxim. The online vendor initially informed the buyer that a selected shoe type in size 45 was available, but later discovered that it was not. Consequently, the vendor apologized and suggested an alternative. Politeness is demonstrated through the act of apology, which is even repeated using code-switching to a local language understood by the customer. By offering a suggestion in the form of a question, the online vendor shows sympathy towards the customer, thus engaging in a face-saving act. The intention behind this is to minimize disappointment and keep the possibility of a sale open. The observance of the sympathy maxim in Nigerian online service encounters demonstrates the importance of minimizing antipathy and valuing both parties involved.

Text 9: Avese clothier (North central Nigeria)

Customer: what about this one?

Online vendor: “if I do this one, it may look like low budget”

In text 9, the customer initially showed interest in a particular clothing item but reconsidered due to limited purchasing power. The online vendor demonstrates politeness by not violating the tact maxim and by adhering to the maxim of sympathy. By providing an informative response, the vendor shows sensitivity towards the buyer's feelings and minimizes personal benefit. The vendor's explanation for not recommending the specific clothing item avoids appearing self-centred by transparently sharing the potential negative perception it may convey. This face-saving act allows the customer to make an informed decision without feeling deceived or misinformed. Analysing the interaction, the vendor's adherence to the maxim of sympathy can be seen as an effective face-saving strategy. The maxim of sympathy, as outlined by Leech (1983), emphasizes minimizing antipathy and valuing the feelings of both the speaker and listener. In this case, the vendor's informative act aligns with the maxim of sympathy by considering the buyer's perspective and avoiding actions that could lead to negative emotions or judgments. This empathetic response helps preserve the customer's positive face by avoiding any direct criticism or judgment. Moreover, the vendor's transparency in explaining their reasoning prevents the customer from feeling deceived or misinformed, contributing to the maintenance of a positive customer-vendor relationship.

### **Observance of maxim of approbation in Nigerian online service encounter**

The maxim of approbation, as defined by Leech (1983), emphasizes minimizing expressions of dispraise and maximizing expressions of approval towards others. In Nigerian online service encounters, the observance of this maxim plays a crucial role in maintaining positive face and fostering harmonious customer-vendor relationships. This analysis examines various instances where the maxim of approbation is employed as a face-saving strategy in Nigerian online service encounters.

Text 10: Bejaid Wears

Buyer: I received my bag this morning. I love it

Thank you for your patience

In this interaction, the buyer exemplifies the maxim of approbation by expressing approval and satisfaction towards the online vendor. Through the use of emotive language, the buyer conveys a positive evaluation of the product. Additionally, the buyer acknowledges the vendor's patience, attributing a positive trait to the vendor's behaviour. By maximizing expressions of approval, the buyer engages in a face-saving act that reinforces the vendor's positive self-image and fosters a positive customer-vendor relationship.

### **Maxim of approbation as face saving act strategy**

Text 12: Bejaid wears

Online Vendor:	I understand your fear but will I scam myself? Is it because I asked you to transfer to me?
Customer:	I choose to trust you o.
Online Vendor:	Don't worry. You will surely come back for more after this first purchase.
Customer:	Okay o. I pray so.

In this dialogue, the online vendor performs a face-saving act by addressing the customer's fear and assuring them of a positive experience. By acknowledging the customer's concerns and countering them with reassurance, the vendor minimizes the potential damage to the customer's positive face. The vendor's commitment to customer satisfaction and the promise of future transactions aim to build trust and maintain a positive customer-vendor relationship.

Text 13: Bejaid Wears

Customer:	“I will send 15k now ma. Then will balance....”
Online vendor:	“Oh. It's full payment days...”

In this example, the maxim of approbation is utilized as a negative face-saving strategy. Instead of directly informing the customer that full payment is required before delivery, the online vendor employs an indirect approach to communicate the delivery policy. The customer interprets the message as expected and assures the vendor of their intention to fulfil the payment before the due date. This face-saving act allows for a smoother transaction and preserves the positive face of both parties.

### **Observance of maxim of agreement in Nigerian online service encounter**

The maxim of agreement, as outlined in linguistic politeness theories, emphasizes minimizing expressions of disagreement and maximizing expressions of agreement between interlocutors. In Nigerian online service encounters, the observance of this maxim plays a significant role in maintaining positive face and fostering effective communication. This analysis examines instances where the maxim of agreement is employed as a face-saving strategy in Nigerian online service encounters.

Text 11: Bejaid Wears

“Yes. Appointment still stands”

Text 12: Emperor shoes (Kaduna Instagram)

Bro Wasup. Can I pay now?’

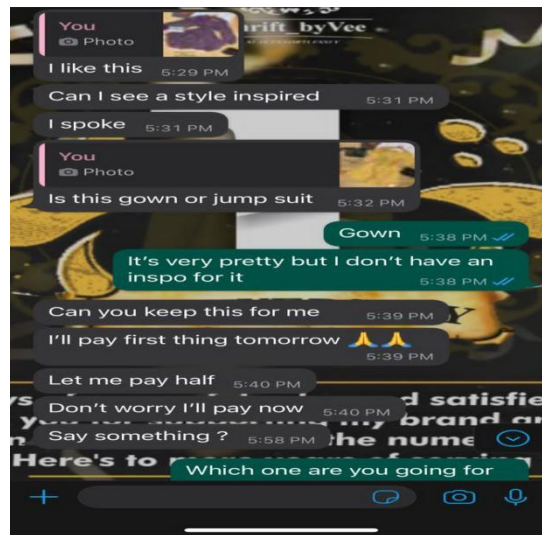
In Text 11, the online vendor demonstrates the maxim of agreement by affirming the customer's question and assuring them that the appointment is still valid. This affirmation eliminates any doubt the customer may have had and strengthens the vendor's credibility and reliability. Here, by assuring the customer that the appointment still stands, the vendor protects their own negative face by projecting reliability and commitment to the agreed-upon arrangement. Also in Text 12, the buyer's request to make payment is interpreted as a request for the online vendor's account details. This observance is essential in this context as the buyer wants to establish an agreement between themselves and the vendor, considering they are not paying the full amount upfront. Recognizing and practicing the maxim of agreement is crucial for vendors to maintain positive customer relationships and ensure smooth transactional processes.

### **Indirect speech act as politeness strategy in Nigerian online service encounter**

In Nigerian online service encounters, the use of indirect illocutionary acts contributes to the enhancement of politeness. By employing indirect acts, speakers reduce the imposition of choice on listeners, thereby adhering to the politeness principle. This study explores how online vendors strategically utilize indirect acts as a means of achieving politeness in their communication. The



In Text 24, the online vendor frequently employs the honorific "ma'am" in her responses to the customer's inquiries and comments. The honorific is used four times, primarily in response to the informative acts of the customer. This further substantiates the evidence that Nigerian online vendors adhere to politeness maxims and prioritize positive face-saving for their customers. It is worth noting that the use of honorifics is primarily observed among the online vendors themselves, emphasizing their role in fostering politeness in online service encounters."



### **Emoticons as tools for observing politeness maxims**

Emoticon is a pictorial representation of a facial expression or gesture, used to convey the writer's emotions, tone, or intention in digital communication. Emoticons are commonly used in social media posts to add context or convey nuances that may be lost in written text alone.

Figure 7: ThriftbyVee Akwa Ibom

In this excerpt, the buyer utilizes emoticons as a means to convey a plea for purchasing the item on an instalment basis to the online vendor. Within the realm of social media communication, this particular emoticon employed by the buyer above signifies 'please.' This practice serves as a face-saving act towards the online vendor, drawing upon the shared socio-cultural understanding that sellers typically prefer receiving full payment upfront. Therefore, the intentional use of appropriate emoticons aligns with the politeness maxim of generosity, as the buyer employs them sincerely to request the vendor's understanding and willingness to allow her until the

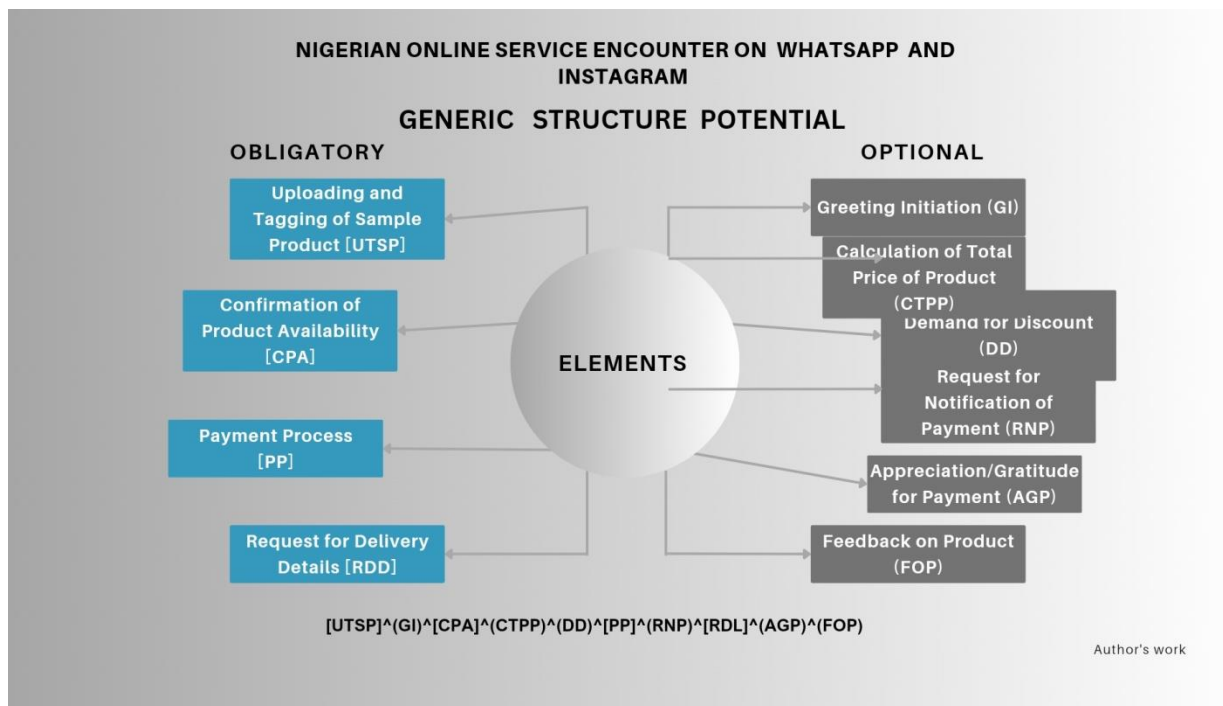
following day to balance the payment. This utilization of emoticons as tools for observing politeness maxims highlights the dynamic nature of online interactions and the adaptation of linguistic resources within digital communication platforms. It demonstrates the buyer's awareness of the social norms and expectations governing online transactions and her conscious effort to navigate them with politeness and consideration.

### **Discussion of findings**

The findings of this study reveal a notable linguistic discrepancy in the generic structure of Nigerian online encounters on Instagram and WhatsApp. Despite involving similar products and services, these two social media platforms do not host identical contextual configurations. One of the major reasons for this divergence is the presence of different vendors offering various services. In WhatsApp, the obligatory items include the selection/uploading of product samples, inquiries about product availability, the payment process, question-and-answer interactions, confirmation/acknowledgment of payment, notifications of payment, expressions of appreciation, and requests for the delivery period. On the other hand, Instagram has a more limited set of obligatory items, which comprise uploading product samples, confirming product availability, stating product prices, the payment process, question-and-response interactions, and requesting the delivery period. The optional generic features in Nigerian Instagram and WhatsApp online service encounters include greetings, providing payment options, offering feedback on products, assurance of continuous patronage, requests for proof of business legitimacy, calculating the total price of selected products, permission to pay, requesting confirmation of the amount to be paid, and requesting notifications of payment. In a typical Nigerian WhatsApp online encounter, optional elements include greetings, demands for discounts, requests for the vendor's opinion, requests for details on delivery, and notifications of product delivery. The generic structure of deliberation on instalment payment can be either optional or obligatory, depending on the relationship between the online vendor and the customer. The evidence from this study demonstrates that the obligatory features of Nigerian online service encounters on Instagram and WhatsApp usually follow a generic structure potential that includes uploading/selection of product samples, confirming product availability, the payment process (which involves requesting product details), and finally, requesting delivery details (including time and venue). The optional elements in a typical Nigerian online service encounter on these social media platforms often encompass greetings, calculating the total price

of selected products, demanding discounts, requesting notifications of payment, offering feedback on products, requesting proof of business legitimacy, and expressing appreciation for patronage. Consequently, this study concludes that Nigerians employ different linguistic features on Instagram and WhatsApp to achieve customer satisfaction and increase sales. Furthermore, it is evident that Instagram online encounters among Nigerians tend to be less friendly and congenial compared to WhatsApp online encounters.

### Sequence of Obligatory and Optional Elements



**Figure 6: Nigerian online service encounter on WhatsApp and Instagram**

The analysis revealed two types of elements: obligatory elements and optional elements. In total, ten elements were identified, namely Uploading and Tagging of Sample Product (UTSP), Greeting Initiation (GI), Confirmation of Product Availability (CPA), Calculation of Total Price of Product (CTPP), Demand for Discount (DD), Payment Process (PP), Request for Notification of Payment (RNP), Request for Delivery Details (RDD), Appreciation/Gratitude for Payment (AGP), and Feedback on Product (FOP). Among these elements, four were found to be obligatory, while six were categorized as optional. The obligatory elements include UTSP, CPA, PP, and RDD, and they can be sequenced as follows: [UTSP] ^ [CPA] ^ [PP] ^ [RDD]. The caret

symbol (^) represents sequencing markers or ordering in relation to another stage, while the square brackets [ ] indicate the stability of occurrence.

The optional elements consist of GI, CTPP, DD, RNP, AGP, and FOP, and they can be sequenced as <(GI) ^ (CTPP) ^ (DD) ^ (RNP) ^ (AGP) ^ (FOP)>. The round brackets ( ) signify optionality, indicating that they do not appear in all the analysed conversations. Recursiveness at once (<>) is used for optional elements: Greeting Initiation (GI), Calculation of Total Price of Product (CTPP), Demand for Discount (DD), Request for Notification of Payment (RNP), Appreciation/Gratitude for Payment (AGP), and Feedback on Product (FOP) because they occur more than once but not throughout all the conversations. This symbol indicates that the element recurs within individual interactions but not universally across all interactions being analysed. The caret symbol (^) represents sequencing markers or ordering in relation to another stage. Therefore, the generic structure of a typical Nigerian online service encounter can be outlined as:

[UTSP] ^ (GI) ^ [CPA] ^ (CTPP) ^ (DD) ^ [PP] ^ (RNP) ^ [RDD] ^ (AGP) ^ (FOP)

It is worth noting that while Omoniyi and Akinseye (2020) identified Request for Account Details (RAD) as an optional element in banking discourse, this study positions RAD as an obligatory process within the Payment Process (PP). The Payment Process involves the adjacency pair of question and answer, encompassing the Request for Account Details and Confirmation of Amount to be paid. This finding highlights the distinct difference between physical service encounters and online service encounters.

Furthermore, the predominant politeness maxims observed in Nigerian online service encounters on Instagram and WhatsApp include the tact maxim, sympathy maxim, and generosity maxim. This study revealed that Nigerian online vendors tend to adhere to these politeness maxims more diligently than their buyers or customers. Regarding positive and negative face-saving acts in Nigerian online encounters on Instagram and WhatsApp, the study findings indicate that negative-face saving is accomplished through the utilization of politeness maxims such as tact, generosity, sympathy, and approbation. On the other hand, adherence to the maxim of approbation independently contributes to positive-face saving. It can be inferred that instances of impoliteness between online vendors and buyers are relatively infrequent in Nigerian online service encounters on WhatsApp and Instagram. The study also indicates that most of Leech's politeness maxims are generally observed, except for the maxim of modesty, which is rarely adhered to. Additionally, the study findings show that online vendors tend to observe the

politeness maxims more than customers. The analysis further demonstrates that politeness is reciprocal in Nigerian online service encounters on Instagram and WhatsApp. Also, lexical items used to underscore politeness include honorifics, and apologetic lexicons, which are also frequently employed to soften requests and demands.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study has provided valuable insights into the correlation between politeness and the generic structure of Nigerian online service encounters on WhatsApp and Instagram. The analysis of social media conversations and screenshots has revealed that politeness is predominantly observed in the optional elements of these encounters, with online vendors demonstrating politeness primarily through the elements of Greetings Initiation (GI), Request for Notification of Payment (RNP), Request for Discount (RD), and Gratitude/Appreciation (GA). The findings strongly suggest that politeness plays a crucial role in enhancing the overall experience of the online service encounter between virtual vendors and their clients or buyers. By employing politeness strategies in these optional elements, vendors are able to establish a positive and friendly tone in their interactions with customers. Consequently, this contributes to increased satisfaction and enjoyment during the online service encounter. The presence of politeness in these optional elements creates a congenial atmosphere, fosters a sense of appreciation, and facilitates effective communication between all parties involved. Therefore, the incorporation of politeness in the optional elements of Nigerian online service encounters on WhatsApp and Instagram significantly enhances the overall quality of the interaction. This, in turn, leads to a more positive and favourable experience for both vendors and customers. By prioritizing politeness in their online interactions, vendors can establish strong customer relationships, foster trust, and ultimately drive customer satisfaction and loyalty. Future studies could further explore the specific linguistic strategies employed by vendors to enhance politeness in these online encounters and their impact on customer behaviour and business success.

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## Epistemicity and Evidentiality with Pragmatic Strategies in Newspaper Headlines on Spousal Conflicts in Nigeria

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### Abstract

*The marriage institution is believed to be the smallest unit of society, although, it is at the same time one of the most conflict-ridden units, with consequences of the conflict affecting diverse aspects of human existence. This has attracted scholarly attention from scholars of different disciplinary perspectives. However, the linguistic insight into spousal conflict has been scarce. This study therefore seeks to analyse newspaper headlines on spousal conflict in Nigeria in order to determine the stance-taking and pragmatic strategies contained therein. Twenty newspaper headlines from four famous Nigerian online newspapers were downloaded from the websites of: Punch Newspapers, Vanguard News, The Guardian and Tribune Online Newspapers. The headlines were transcribed and subjected to linguistic analysis using a triangulation of the stance theory by Biber et al. (1999) and Hyland (2005) as well as Odeunmi and Oyelede's (2016) Pragmatic Strategies. The findings reveal two stance types: Epistemic and Evidential stances which were pragmatically realised through three pragmatic strategies: Reference to Facts, Evocation of Antecedence and Quoting/Naming Authority. The study concludes that newspaper headlines are projected from semantic defined stances realised through the pragmatic interests of the reporters.*

**Keywords:** Marriage, Stance, Pragmatic Strategies, Spousal Conflict, Newspaper headlines

### Introduction

Headlines of newspapers, also called 'caption' are attractively designed news summary intended to induce or attract the attention of the readers to desire reading the news contents. The headlines are purposely shaped to speak the mind of the presenter or publisher. The shape and structure of

a headline reflects the content, which is politically oriented and ideology-driven. The nature of the news headline can tell the whole story, can question issues or be questioned. According to van Dijk (1998), the discourse of newspaper headlines can be looked at from the position of the headline, the boldness of the headline, the vocabulary used on the headline, the use of punctuation marks, the syntax of the headline, the number of occurrences on the same event and above all, the power of the presenter. He also states that headlines serve three important functions. First, they provide a brief summary of the main news to the reader; hence, readers do not have to read the whole story to capture the point. Second, they attract attention. Headlines distract people's attention by various font sizes and vocabulary used. And third, they often provide an initial indicator of the content and style of the news value of the newspaper (van Dijk 1998). This shows various ways in which newspaper headlines appeal to its audience.

Some scholars have found this aspect of news reportage very interesting. Anyanwu *et al.* (2022) using content analysis carried an investigation on Nigerian newspaper coverage of Covid-19. The Guardian and Vanguard News newspapers were chosen for analysis. The aim of the study is to measure the level of awareness created by the newspapers and the attitude of government and citizens to the COVID-19 course. It was found that the headlines reflect indifference to the disease by both the government and citizens despite the level of awareness created by the newspapers in comparison with other countries. The current study, however, is not comparative and its focus is on spousal conflicts in Nigeria using both Semantic (stance) and pragmatic tools. Taiwo's (2007) is a Critical Discourse Analysis of Nigerian newspaper headlines. The study relied on three hundred Nigerian newspaper headlines randomly selected for its analysis, and the vocabulary and rhetorical features were examined as devices used which reflects the ideologies behind their constructions. The study concludes that "headlines have hidden ideological meanings, being divided along some ideological lines reflecting the views of those whose interest is being served and those whose interest is being undermined". Thus, headlines are a tool for shaping thoughts and perceptions on topical issues of society.

The language of newspaper headlines has been investigated from various perspectives as acknowledged by Shu and Wei (2022), but not much has been done on its representation of spousal abuse, and particularly on how stance and pragmatic strategies are interwoven into the headlines to engage and persuade readers. To undermine this gap is to overlook the linguistic-

mediatic representation of stances on spousal conflicts encrypted in the ‘objective’ use of language in news headlines, which has the potential to shape the thoughts and attitudes of readers towards spousal conflicts, or even their entire opinion on marriage. Thus, this paper seeks to unravel the use of language to create epistemic and evidential stances along with pragmatic in newspaper headlines on spousal conflicts.

### **Linguistic Studies on Marriage and Marital Conflicts**

Some linguistic studies have examined linguistic features in some spousal and spousal conflict discourses. Calderwood (2017) investigated the semantics of the narratives of Interpersonal Violence from the perspectives of linguistics and psychology using Reader Annotations and Physiological reactions. The linguistic result shows how readers process and label roles in IPV discourse such as when abuses are linked to violent actions and some affect states. This labelling was observed by the researchers through automated semantic role labelling. The study shows that certain affect states and semantic role labelling are often employed in IPV discourses. Eze et al. (2013), however, focused on a literary text. Using Grice’s Conversational Maxims, they aimed at exploring how knowledge and compliance to the “Conversational Maxim” can aid to foster marriage relationships in Nigeria. Using the play, "Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again" by Ola Rotimi, they find that there are certain ways couples should not converse in order to reduce conflicts and divorce. Similarly, Haryono and Winisono (2020), using Hymes’ “Ethnography of Communication” and Politeness Principle, interrogated the linguistic issues with cultural underpinning that trigger marital conflict leading to divorce. The data comprise non-participation and recorded interviews. They found that some sensitive matters that can trigger marital conflict include lack of inter-ethnic cultural understanding inputting on the violations of politeness and cooperation principles leading to conflicts.

Observably, there has been a growing interest in the study of spousal conflicts as observed in literature. While most of the non-linguistic studies (e.g. Frye 2018, Ali et al. 2022) have paid particular attention to the social and psychological effects of spousal conflicts, linguistic studies (Calderwood 2017, Haryono and Winisono 2018, Owu-Ewie 2019 etc.) have analysed the discourses of wedding/marital ceremonies, spousal conflicts in literary texts and the use of proverbs in spousal unions. Meanwhile, studies on media/ newspaper headline reportage on spousal conflicts have been largely neglected, with a rare use of the stance theory and

pragmatics. The newspaper headlines on spousal conflicts manifest the use of semantic and pragmatic strategies, but regrettably, enough scholarly attention has not been paid to this pervasive style of news reportage. This gap, if un-investigated, may undermine the role which the media plays in featuring and relating events regarding marital conflicts. Thus, this study examines how stance is realized through pragmatic strategies in newspapers' headlines on spousal conflicts in Nigeria using a triangulation of the stance theory by Biber *et al.* (1999) and Hyland (2005) as well as Odebunmi and Oyelede's (2016) Pragmatic Strategies.

### **Stance in Semantics and Pragmatics**

Shi and Wei (2022) commented on the development of the field of stance-taking: from the 1970s, several studies on stance-taking have been carried out thereby developing the area into a tangible aspect of linguistics, with three main themes in the studies on stance-taking from previous scholars. According to the authors, the first theme focuses on the theoretical underpinnings and analytical methods on stance-taking, and an example is Biber & Finegan's (1989) proposing three categories of stance markers; Hyland (2005) has further created an analytical framework for stance markers from an academic discourse point of view, while Du Bois (2007) has developed the "stance triangle" from a dialogic perspective; the second theme, however, takes on comparative studies on stance-taking, including stance-taking expression between different genders, genres, cultural backgrounds or disciplines by linguists such as Neff *et al.* (2003) and Martínez (2005) contrasting the stance markers between users of native speakers and foreign language learners; and Coates (1996) who locates the similarities and differences in the use of stance markers by males and females; the third theme, lastly, focuses on the diachronic study of stance markers, and such includes Biber (2004), who examines the use of stance markers in plays, letters, medical articles, and newspapers between 1650 and 1990.

Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu (2022), commenting on the terminological differences between 'stance', 'perspective' and 'view point' argues that they are basically the same. According to him, stance-taking is inherent in verbal communication, and it comprises of both a subjective and an inter subjective side, as expressing a position on a certain matter is open to challenge or debate by others. He further argues that stance-taking is a multifaceted activity; it not only has a linguistic and discursive component, but includes sociocultural, epistemic, and psychological components. Englebretson (2007) also stressed that stance-taking has a cross-cultural, cross-linguistic,

historical, and a developmental nature. Some other notable works on stance were included in Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu (2022) volume; Hoinărescu (2022) interrogated the persuasive force of epistemic markers of certainty in a collection of debates from the British and the Romanian parliaments. She brought forward some functional similarities and differences, arguing that the markers express not only the speakers' discursive and rhetorical commitment, but also the political stance which they are engaged with.

In addition, Shi and Wei (2022) carried out a small corpus-assisted semantic inquiry on the linguistic epistemic markers and attitudinal stance markers of English and Chinese news headlines discussing the feasible similarities and differences. Using Biber *et al.* (1999) theoretical framework, their results reveal that, in the Chinese news headlines, certainty stance markers and evidentiality markers are frequently used. But, in English news headlines, hedging stance markers and evaluation stance markers appear more. Stance has also been highlighted by some pragmatists. For example, studies have been carried out on pragmatic strategies employed by speakers to negotiate meaning in interaction. Odebunmi (2008) investigated the pragmatic strategies employed in diagnostic news delivery in the south western part of Nigeria. Following Meynard (2003, 2004 etc.), the study finds that pragmatic strategies namely 'asserting the condition', 'citing the evidence' and 'mitigating the blunt news through veiling and hedging' are utilized in diagnostic news delivery. Notably, there are pragmatic strategies in every sphere of human interaction not only in the health sector, but also in the news.

Ellah and Ekoru (2018) carried out an investigation of stance taking and pragmatic strategies utilized by editors in their editorials on herds-men and farmers' crises of Benue State. The researcher found out that the use of 'evocation of antecedent' (EA), 'strategic use of numbers' (SUN), 'quoting authority' (QA), 'appeal to emotions' (AE) 'indirect condemnation' (IC), blunt condemnation (BC), 'visual representation' (VR), and 'revelation of facts' (RF) are pragmatic strategies corresponding to the epistemic, evaluative, evidential and affective stances. Thus, the study concluded that editors take stances in their editorials that reveal their levels of certainties, value judgements, and affections to the events they write about. Also, Innocent and Odebunmi (2016) examined the stance and engagements in conversations on terrorist attacks on a social media platform called 'Nairaland'. Using the appraisal framework, they found out that negative evaluations are often associated with the group called 'Boko Haram', and the northerners are

often evaluated as 'evil'. The study concluded that these evaluations reflect the opinions of many Nigerian citizens, and they are capable of fostering disunity and unrest among the Nigerian citizens.

Thus, both semanticists and pragmatists have found some solid interests in the stance theory and some have attempted to merge both semantic and pragmatic models to the understanding of stance like the present study, but there are just few works that focused on media discourses let alone the mediatic representations of spousal conflicts.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical consideration for this study is the stance theory by Biber *et al.* (1999) and Hyland (2005) and an aspect of the 'Pragmatic Act' theory known as Pragmatic Strategies. The motivation for combining these approaches is to identify the semantic expression of stance used in the headlines and to reveal the pragmatic strategies through which the stances are realised. This provides a semantic inventory of newspaper headlines on spousal conflicts and the pragmatic intentions behind their creations. The data for the study contain twenty (20) purposefully selected news headlines collected between March 2021 and March 2023. This period marks the time span of the Guardian Newspaper report of March 2023 stating that 4,860 cases of spousal conflict has been reported. The headlines were collected from four different online newspapers in Nigeria: Punch Newspapers, Vanguard News, The Guardian, and Tribune Online. They were selected because of their wide coverage of readership across Nigeria and the reputation they have built over the years.

### **Methodology**

The approach of the data analysis for this study is qualitative. This method is used to describe, interrogate and interpret the stance markers and the pragmatic strategies contained in the data. The headlines are carefully examined, and the words and expressions indicating epistemicity and evidentiality are categorised based on the stance theory (Biber *et al.* 1999, Hyland 2005) and subjected to pragmatic analysis. The two stance types for this study are the Epistemic and the Evidential, while the pragmatic strategies include: 'revelation of facts' (RF) 'evocation of antecedent' (EA) and 'quoting of authority' (QA) (Odebunmi and Oloyede, 2016; Ellah and Ekoru, 2018).

### **Data Analysis: Stance Types and Pragmatic Strategies**

The table contains columns showing the texts (newspaper headlines), the stance markers, and the stance types from the data. The last column comprises the pragmatic strategies used to realize the stance.

**TABLE SHOWING THE STANCE TYPES AND THE PRAGMATIC STRATEGIES THROUGH WHICH THEY ARE REALIZED**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>N/P Headline</b>	<b>Stance Marker</b>	<b>Stance Type</b>	<b>Pragmatic Strategy</b>
<b>1.</b>	Court remands Lagos car dealer, Ogbonna, over wife' death.	Lagos, Car Dealer, Ogbonna	<b>Epistemic</b> (Certainty)	Reference to Facts
<b>2.</b>	Danish man sentenced to death for killing Nigerian wife, child.	Danish Nigerian		
<b>3.</b>	20-year-old wife stabs husband to death in Adamawa	20-year-old wife Adamawa		
<b>4.</b>	Ogun man kills wife, burns corpse with iron	Ogun man		
<b>5.</b>	Rivers: Wife stabs husband to death over misunderstanding	Rivers		
<b>6.</b>	Woman allegedly machetes husband to death in Rivers	Allegedly		

7.	Police arrest Nnewi North LG Chairman, who allegedly killed wife	Allegedly	<b>Epistemic</b> (Hedging)	Evocation of Antecedence
8.	Husband allegedly killed wife in Edo, as deceased family seeks justice	Allegedly`		
9.	Kuje: Osinachi's husband still in Custody– Correctional service	Kuje Correctional service	<b>Evidentiality</b> (Marking the source of knowledge)	Quoting/ Naming of Authority
10.	Oyo police arrest woman for stabbing husband to death	Oyo police		
11.	I mistakenly crushed my wife with car, killer husband tells police	Police		
12.	Man arraigned for burning wife, brother-in-law to death	Arraigned	<b>Evidentiality</b> (using words from the law register)	Reference to Facts
13.	Lawyer backs arrest of Osinachi's husband, demands justice	Lawyer Arrest Justice		
14.	How my wife dumped	_ Julius Agwu		

	me_ <i>Julius Agwu</i>		<b>Evidentiality</b>	
<b>15.</b>	How husband caught with side chick announced wife's death– <i>Brother</i>	– Brother	(Tracing statement to an individual)	Reference to Facts
<b>16.</b>	My wife abandoned me for 12 years, man tell court	, man		
<b>17.</b>	My husband threatened to kill me – Divorce-seeking woman	–Divorce-seeking woman		
<b>18.</b>	How I killed my wife with axe, cut off daughter's hand–	I My	<b>Evidentiality</b>	
<b>19.</b>	I left my husband because I thought I could do better	I	(Use of personal pronouns)	Quoting/Naming Authority
<b>20.</b>	My husband's second wife doesn't know I exist	My I		

### Discussion of Findings

This section comprises the discussion of findings emanating from the analysis of data. As could be seen from the table, Epistemic and Evidential stance types are found in the analysed headlines, along with pragmatic strategies through which they are realized.

### **A. Epistemic Stance Denoting Certainty or Hedge**

An Epistemic stance reveals the level of certainty, doubt or the degree to which a speaker or writer commits himself to a proposition. A proposition is a statement or assertion that expresses a judgement or opinion. It is also often interchanged as 'sentence'. Epistemic stances are used in different contexts i.e. when a spousal conflict case has undergone trial and sentences are declared as well as when the suspects are still on trial. From its usage in the analysed headlines, the epistemic stance can be further subdivided into *certainty* and *hedging*. The prominent pragmatic strategies used for the realization of the Epistemic stance type are the Revelation of facts (RF) and Evocation of Antecedent (EA).

#### **i. Certainty Explicating Assurance**

Certainty markers are words that show the stance taker's degree of assurance towards a particular proposition. Certainty markers are often used to show the writer's commitment to some information with linguistic devices such as nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc. Below are texts from the data with certainty markers:

Text 1: Court remands *Lagos car dealer, Ogbonna*, over wife' death (1st Feb. 2023, *Vanguard News*)

Text 2: *Danish* man sentenced to death for killing *Nigerian* wife, child (20th May, 2022, *Punch Newspapers*)

It is observed from the texts above that reporters oftentimes express certainty towards an information in order to enhance its credibility and acceptability to readers. In Text 1, the writer demonstrates the knowledge of the incidence with linguistic devices that express certainty ('Lagos' 'car dealer', 'Ogbonna'). To ensure the credibility of the news, a known place is indicated with the proper noun, "Lagos" which functions as an adjective in the text. The occupation and name of the alleged suspect are also stated (car dealer, Ogbonna). The use of such linguistic elements adds some sense of credibility to the headlines as they appear factual to readers. Also, the national adjectives "Danish, Nigerian" in Text 2 appear to demonstrate the reporter's certainty towards the death of a woman and a child as well as the identity of the killer. With no further ado of checking the details of the news, many readers (as observed in literature) will go on with a perception of belief on the news because of the certainty portrayed through selected linguistic devices such as proper nouns and adjectives. These devices suggest the fact

that the writers of the news headlines have the knowledge and information and are certain of what and who they are writing about in the society. The pragmatic strategy used here is Reference to Facts showing the writer's knowledge of the incidence while resonating the (epistemic) knowledge of readers for alignment. With the use of 'factual' adjectives as "Nigerian", "Danish" and nouns as "Ogbonna" and "Lagos", the headline writers align readers to the position that these statements are true and reliable. Thus, the reporters employ Reference to Facts to engage with their readers and express their certainty towards stories of spousal conflicts collected from the Nigerian society.

## **ii. Hedging Signifying Doubt or Enclosure**

The use of hedges is common in news reportage (Biber et al.1999) as reporters sometimes, try to avoid directly accusing suspects who have not been prosecuted in the court of law. The frequently used hedge contained in the data is "allegedly."

Text 6:           Woman *allegedly* machetes husband to death in Rivers (28th Oct. 2021, *Vanguard News*)

Text 7:           Police arrest Nnewi North LG Chairman, who *allegedly* killed wife (17th Aug. 2022, *Tribune Online*)

The use of hedges (written in italics) as seen in texts 6 and 7 above, shows the reporter as an objective viewer of the scene or a distant but trusted informant. In Text 6, the hedge 'allegedly' offers the reader a transient view of the incident i.e. the woman who is still a suspect, at least temporarily, is not declared accused in the law court yet, but she could have done the killing. However, it is noted that the epistemic stance of certainty sometimes overshadows the hedge or doubt by giving the reader a firm perspective, while narrowly escaping the tendency to render the suspect as guilty of the offence. For instance, the certainty expressed by adding the state where the crime was committed (Rivers State) gives the reader more information on the incidence and this can ensure the believability that the incidence of *macheting* is true despite the use of a hedge (allegedly). This is also observed in Texts 7 where nouns indicating known names, 'Nnewi North LG Chairman', alongside 'allegedly' is employed in the creation of the headlines. Nonetheless, it is 'safer' for headline writers or reporters to write this way using a hedge to avoid accusing a

suspect who may be later tried and found ‘not guilty’ in the court of law and consequently be found culpable of publishing false news.

The pragmatic strategy that commonly follows a hedge is the Evocation of Antecedence. The event that leads to the death of the victim, ‘husband’ in sample 6 was the *macheting* which is an antecedence to the present event\_ the death of a man. Also, in text 7, the antecedence -death of a woman was pronounced through the hedge, ‘allegedly’ before the present event\_ arrest. Therefore, the antecedence is required in the headlines to balance the previous scenario to the present event and to give readers a sense of factual representation of an event while giving some space for variant interpretations through the use of a hedge.

Hedging is important for society because of the manifold implication involved in producing false statements meant for public consumption. In fact, if caught publishing false news, the news company can lose its license subsequently. Thus, it is ‘harmless’ to include a hedge such as ‘alleged’ in crime writing especially on spousal conflicts.

### **B. Evidential Stance Denoting Factuality**

An evidential stance refers to the writer's provision of the source of knowledge or reverential facts to support his stance. The pragmatic strategies employed here from the data are the quoting of authority (QA) and revelation of facts (RF). Journalists or news writers assume this stance to provide a legal or factual backup to support their statements. This is evident in the following headlines:

- Text 9:           *Kuje: Osinachi's husband still in Custody– Correctional service* (12th July 2022, *Punch Newspapers*)
- Text 10:          *Oyo police arrest woman for stabbing husband to death* (25th Nov. 2022, *The Guardian*)
- Text 11:          I mistakenly crushed my wife with car, killer husband tells *police* (2nd June, 2022, *Punch Newspapers*)

Text 9 evidentially provides information contrary to the opinion of many Nigerians about the escape of Osinachi's husband from prison. At the event of prisoners' escape from Kuje prison which happened on the 5th of July 2022 coinciding with the case of a gospel singer's death

attributed to her husband as culpable homicide, rumours had it that the late singer's husband joined the other prisoners in the escape. However, the headline here informs citizens of a contrary information about the whereabouts of the culprit\_ he is still in custody. The evidential marker used here comprises the name of the prison 'Kuje' and the name of the authority, 'correctional service' which was preceded by a hyphen. By adding such evidences or source of knowledge, alarmed citizens may be rest assured that the proposition of the headline is true and factual. In Texts 10 and 11, the names of legal authorities (court, Oyo police, police) are inherently stringed with other words in the statement. Though different in structure from Text 9, they serve the same function which is to authenticate the fact of the proposition contained in the headline.

The pragmatic strategy employed here is the quoting or naming of authority which is done to point readers to social authorities associated to the news. 'Naming authority' happens when the words in the newspaper headlines are not direct quotes, but with events that can be traced to a specific authority. This happens as a result of the space limitation in the writing of newspaper headlines; many reporters prefer not to quote, but to add the names of the authority in the headline for authentication. Again, for space limit, some reporters prefer to use some terms in the register of law as a legal backing to the statements presented in their headlines. Such words include, 'arrested', 'arraigned', 'remanded', and so on as observed in the texts below:

Text 12:           Man *arraigned* for burning wife, brother-in-law to death (7th Feb. 2023 *Punch Newspapers*)

Text 13:           *Lawyer* backs *arrest* of Osinachi's husband, demands *justice* (11th April 2022)

The words, "arraigned", "lawyer", "arrest" and "justice" in the texts above are from the law register indicating that the propositions have some legal backing, thereby presenting the information as factual. However, in the following texts, the stance takers do not name any authority, but they provide evidences through the pragmatic strategy, revelation of fact. This is done by tracing the event of the proposition to an individual that is related to the event or scene of the spousal conflict. So, to mark the source of knowledge or information, reporters on spousal conflict news sometimes prefer to report victims' utterances or people related to the event often

without the use of quotation marks and usually with a hyphen or comma to indicate the source of the statement. Example:

Text 14: How my wife dumped me\_ *Julius Agwu* (11th Dec. 2022, *Punch Newspapers*)

Text 15: How husband caught with side chick announced wife's death–  
*Brother* (24th Sept. 2022, *Punch Newspapers*)

Similar to the above texts is another type of evidentiality demonstrated with the use of the personal pronouns, "I", "me", "my" and so on as seen in the following texts:

Text 18: How *I* killed my wife with axe, cut off daughter's hand– (11th March, 2023, *Punch Newspapers* **derived from an interview**).

Text 19: *I* left my husband because *I* thought *I* could do better (13th March, 2022, Vanguard News).

Text 20: *My* husband's second wife doesn't know *I* exist (2nd February, 2022, Vanguard News).

The difference between the above texts and the previous is that the writers attach no source to the statements (if at all they were made) except for Text 18 containing a hyphen which indicates an unknown source. This style is perceivably, an invitation by the reporters for readers to click in and view the details of the news, which also means spending more time on the news sites. However, it is observed that most of these statements are paraphrased by reporters who prefer to use the active reporting voice instead of the passive voice (e.g. "how I killed", instead of 'Wife killed by...' and so on) to further increase the density of the incidence and to align the subject to directly participate in the crime committed. For instance, Text 18 is a headline derived from an interview with the suspect who admits to killing the wife. However, the expression of the news headline was not found verbatim in the statements of the interviewee captured in the news story (though this is not the focus of the present study). The pragmatic strategy employed here is the Reference to Facts. The pronoun "I" associated with a statement increases the believability of an expression and it is often interpreted in association with the supposed speaker. Reporters utilize this method to show that the event is true and can be traced to an individual who admits to the spousal crime or stands as a victim of the conflict.

Thus, evidential stance is useful in the writing of news headlines through the pragmatic strategies of Quoting of Authority and Reference to Facts because information attached to a source in the society is often viewed as true. This, perceivably, helps the news writers or reporters to be 'invisible' and to avoid being socially 'entangled' with the information presented in the news.

## **Conclusion**

This study has accounted for stance types that mark epistemicity and evidentiality and has detailed the pragmatic strategies through which the stances are deployed with some implications for society. Selecting newspaper headlines from four widely recognized online newspapers in Nigeria and analysing them through the stance theory and pragmatic strategies, the study establishes that spousal conflicts newspaper headlines are not disconnected from the reporters' points of view or perceptions. The study also reveals that the stance types evident in the newspaper headlines are associated with three pragmatic strategies namely: Reference to Facts, Evocation of Antecedent and Quoting/naming of Authority.

In sum, the arguments of this study are to further the claim that news writers or reporters express their stances in newspaper headlines especially on spousal conflict as well as to establish the link between stance and pragmatic strategies\_ which are rare adventures in linguistic studies. It is quite succinct to note that reporters also make stances in the creation of news headlines for epistemic and evidential purposes, and their verbal selections contribute to readers' interpretations. Nonetheless, the account of this study is necessarily a partial one, representing only a fragment of newspaper headline (spousal conflict). Also, the stance and pragmatic methods selected for the analysis are not broad enough to encompass linguistic and non-linguistic items such as font type and font size, boldness, space, structure, style, context etc. This calls for further research which may investigate these areas. Thus, it is hoped that this study has demonstrated that stance and pragmatic strategies are interwoven in the way reporters carve new headlines on spousal conflicts in Nigeria. The models used here show how news writers anticipate and control their readers responses towards the event contained in the news headlines.

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## A Systemic Functional Exploration of Koro-Ashe Pronoun System

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### **Abstract**

*In every language, certain lexical items display similar behaviours which account for the grouping into the same word class with prototypical members, which manifest all the important features of the class. Koro-Ashe, as language, equally has lexical items which also belong to various classes. One of these classes is the pronoun. This study is an exploration of the pronoun system of Koro-Ashe with focus on the classifications. Halliday's (1961) Scale and Category is the theoretical underpinning for the study. The study employed a purposive random sampling technique and the data were generated using unstructured questionnaire, informal interactions with native speakers and introspection. Findings revealed that the pronouns of Koro-Ashe are classed into personal, possessive, reflexive, emphatic, demonstratives, interrogative, relative, reciprocal, numerical and quantifying pronouns. These pronouns appear in different forms for different purposes – referential coreferential and deictic. This research, therefore concludes that pronouns are part of the linguistic properties and systems of Koro-Ashe and are useful for the avoidance of needless repetitions and ensuring a coherent and concise communication.*

*Keywords: Systemic, Functional, Pronoun, Koro-Ashe*

### **1.1 Introduction**

There can never be a language without a people and vice versa. This implies that language is owned by a people and it exists because speakers or users of such a language exist and use it for different purposes. That is why language is never studied in isolation but rather in connection to

its users. Koro-Ashe is a member of the cluster of Koro languages whose family relation is traced to west-central plateau languages or Benue-Congo in the Niger-Congo group of languages (Godon, 2005). The nomenclature 'Koro-Ashe' has often served a twofold purpose – it refers to the people and their language as well. It is spoken in Kagarko Local Government Area of Kaduna State and Karu Government Area of Nassarawa State. Arams *et al.*, (2017), SIL Nigeria (2018) and Blench (2020) identify two standard varieties of Koro-Ashe; they are Koro Ashe Itorn /itōr/ and Koro Icek associated with Ice. However, the difference between the two dialects is at the phonological level. Ashe is spoken by about forty thousand (40,000) people (Ashe Dictionary SIL, 2018). However, Eberhard *et al.* (2023), says the language has between 10 thousand to 1 million L1 users and it is a stable indigenous language though not institutionalised as it is not used beyond the mother tongue context.

Koro-Ashe has linguistic features noticeable at phonological, lexical, morphological, syntactic, and semantic level. At the lexical level, the pronoun class constitutes an integral component. The presence of pronouns in the grammar of every language is an indication of their indispensability and the important role they play in human communication. Affirming this, Radford (2009), notes that the pronoun class is one of the functional categories in the word class division, and though lacking lexical semantic content of its own, it is an important component of language. Pronouns in a language ensure precision and clarity of expressions and help to avoid needless mindless monotonous repetitions. They can convey various types of information depending on the language and these include indicating formality, reflecting cultural and social factors such as gender distinction, indicating number, expressing case and so on.

Even though the pronoun class is a universal phenomenon that cuts across different human languages, its forms and classifications in Koro-Ashe is different. This is because the Koro-Ashe grammar and its elements are peculiar to the language alone. Again, the pronoun system of Koro-Ashe has not been well examined, hence, the forms and classifications are yet to be identified and specified. Until this is done, the accurate description of the use and placement of these pronouns in the language cannot be determined. Also, most Nigerian indigenous languages, Koro-Ashe inclusive, have remained in the oral form with very few appearing in print such as translated Bibles, hymn books and dictionaries. Once a language remains oral and is not documented, it risks underdevelopment, endangerment and even extinction. Hence, there is the need to document and promote the language through scholarship such as this. This is a part of the

community concerted effort and contribution to promoting the language, preserving it and ensuring its survival and continual use. This study, therefore, aims at examining the forms and classification of the pronoun system of Koro-Ashe.

## **Literature Review**

### **Systemic Functional Grammar**

Systemic Functional Grammar is an approach and a paradigm to language study propounded by M.A.K. Halliday in 1961. Halliday, in his postulation, maintained that “a theory of linguistics must incorporate the functions of language in use.” In this regard, the theory centred on the notion of language function. The systemic places the function of language as primary, as the “fundamental property of language itself” (Halliday & Hassan, 1985:17). The Systemic began with Firth’s attempt to develop a model that relates language function and context. To achieve this, he proposed a framework based on the concept of the system, defined as an “enumerated set of choices in a specific context” (Kress 1978: xiii). This gave rise to two sets of contexts for any item: the context of culture and context of situation. The structural configuration restricts the choices that can be made. Therefore, the fusion of these two constructs – system and function - reveals that the main pursuits of Systemic Functional Grammar are to demonstrate a speaker’s actual use of language, to predict what choices the speaker can make and to show to what extent these choices are contextually conditioned. Halliday regards acts of speech as a simultaneous selection from among a large number of interrelated options.

### **The Pronoun Class**

In linguistics, word classes, also known as lexical categories, and parts of speech in traditional grammar, are groups of words that display similar grammatical properties, syntactic, morphological, and semantic behaviours. Halliday (1963), describes a class as a set of items that are in some respect alike. In the view of Quirk, *et al.* (1982), items belong to a class in that they have the same grammatical properties and structural possibilities as other members of the class. This suggests that a pronoun should possess grammatical properties similar to those of the other members of the same class. Greenbaun (1996), Radford (2004), and O’Grady and Archibald (2016) delineate the criteria upon which word classes are determined to include notional (meaning), morphology (form) and grammatical (relations with other words and language units).

In the linguistic configuration of categories, pronouns are classed as functional words because they pick out objects as full lexical nominal when they enter interpretation but they lack descriptive contents.

Many linguists have defined and described pronouns in several respects. Traditional grammar, for instance, views the category of pronoun to denote a class of words which is said to ‘stand in place of’ or refer back to noun expressions (Radford, 2004). According to Davidson (1874) as cited in Rauh (2010), a pronoun assumes the place of a noun, and indicating definite persons and comprising six accidents: person, gender, number, case, form, and species. Morley (2000), reconceptualises pronouns by regarding them as fitting to substitute for a nominal clause, a nominal phrase or, in just some cases, a nominal word, i.e. a noun. Harley (2006) espouses that since they stand in for a noun phrase, pronouns are themselves noun phrases, as far as their grammatical category goes. Concurring to this, Ogungbe and Bossan (2013) point out that the substitutionary role of pronouns to all nominal category is geared towards circumventing unnecessary repetition and besides avoidance of repetition, Ojo (2011, p.58), remarks a pronoun is used in a sentence also to ensure referentiality between elements in a sentence. Adding to the characteristics and function of pronouns, Greenbaun (1996, p.163), explains that pronouns are in effect closed set of nouns, and are typically deictic, pointing to entities in the situation or pointing to linguistic units in the previous or following context”. Baskervill and Sewell (2013), assert that pronouns are used because of the need for short, definite, and representative words. This is to say that the employment of pronouns in discourse is to ensure conciseness and precision of expressions.

### **Classification of Pronouns of English**

The classifications of pronouns of English have been approached from different standpoints by different scholars. Greenbaun (1996), groups pronouns into primary pronouns (personal, possessive and reflexive), wh-pronouns (interrogative, exclamative, relative, nominal, relative, wh–conditional), and indefinite pronouns (assertive, non-assertive, negative, quantifying, and universal). Other smaller sets are reciprocal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, generic pronoun, and substitute pronoun. Quirk, *et al.* (1982 p.95), broadly distinguish between items with specific reference and those with more indefinite reference. Radford (2004), says that the different types of pronouns exist in English and other languages for some reasons. He identifies the types to

include pronominal noun (N-pronoun), pronominal quantifier (Q-pronoun) and pronominal determiner (D-pronouns).

### **2.1.1 Empirical Studies**

There are quite a number of studies on the pronoun system of different languages. These studies are reviewed because of their relevance to the current study.

A study was conducted by Rai (2013) on ‘A Comparative Study of Pronoun between English and Bantawa’ and aimed at identifying the types of pronouns in the two languages. The study purposively sampled thirty Bantawa native speaker students in both languages and data were gathered using questionnaire and observation. The study revealed that both languages have different types of pronouns. The result also proved that while some pronouns of English have one to one correspondence with Bantawa, others do not. Most significantly, since the study focused on the pronouns used by Bantawa native speakers in context in both English and Bantawa languages, it was discovered that that Bantawa native speakers commit error in reflexive pronoun of English language while learning English pronoun. The present study differs from the previous one, in that in addition to the types of pronouns, the various morphological features, and structural tendencies of English and Ashe pronouns as well as their functionality in discourse are examined. Furthermore, on instrumentation, this study combines questionnaire with recordings of informal interactions with native speaker of Ashe.

Another research was conducted by Faloju and Ajikobi (2017), comparative the personal pronouns in Russian and Yoruba languages. The paper, using a descriptive paradigm, focused on analysing the class, usage structure and meaning of the personal pronouns in Russian and Yoruba. The study established that a proper understanding of the personal pronouns of each language is the key to understanding the language and the culture of the two people since elements of culture are embedded in the personal pronouns. The study therefore concludes that denotative meaning is the primary role of personal pronouns in a given proposition, while connotative meaning is seen as the secondary role.

Research was conducted by Ekah (2018) on a contrastive analysis of demonstrative patterns in English and Ibibio. The data for this research were drawn from elicitation. The findings indicated that syntactically, Ibibio demonstratives consist of a three-way opposition while those of English consist of a two-opposition. It was also discovered that demonstratives in English inflect for

person and number while those of Ibibio behave in different ways, while some inflect for person and number, some do not. The paper further established that Ibibio has two classes of demonstratives, with each being syntactically different from the other. Findings also revealed that demonstratives in both languages can function as determiners, subject of the sentence, articles as well as a verb in Ibibio; properties which are not found in English. The previous studied demonstrative pronouns in English and Ibibio, while the present work explore the types of pronouns in Koro-Ashe.

Al-Jarrah1, *et al.* (2020), conducted a comparative study of personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns and relative pronouns in Arabic, English and Spanish. The study aimed at unearthing areas of variances and resemblances in the types, classifications and main features among the three languages under investigation. The comparison was accompanied with illustrative examples to enhance understanding of the use of pronouns in the three languages. The research data were drawn from different linguistic resources including books, research papers and articles. Findings showed that pronouns in the three languages share the same referential function, which is assigning some elements to their actual referents. The analysis also portrayed that the three languages act differently in terms of using those pronouns, in the sense that the differences are mostly exhibited in the pronouns specifying the number of referents, their gender and distance from referents. The earlier study and the current one explored the pronouns system of different languages. While the former examined the personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns and relative pronouns in Arabic, English and Spanish, the latter explored the whole classification of pronouns but in Koro-Ashe alone. Also, in the previous work, data were drawn from books, articles and research papers whereas the current work employed questionnaires and introspection.

Garba (2021) researched on “A Comparative Analysis of the Hausa and Jar Pronouns”. The work analytically compared the nature and positions of pronouns within sentences or noun phrase of both languages. The theoretical frame work upon which this work was anchored is comparative theory of languages. The data for this study were sourced by interviewing the native speakers from both languages as well as gleaning on information from some text books of both languages. Contrastively, Hausa demonstrates gender distinction in second and third person, Singular Pronouns ‘kai’, ‘ke’, ‘shi, and ‘ita’. While Jar languages have no gender in second and third person pronouns. Also, where English and Jar languages have shared the same rules in second

person and object pronouns (you), the rule differs with Hausa. Another difference is that some singular subject pronouns in Jar languages are most times placed after a verb in a sentence, while in Hausa, singular personal subject pronouns are most times positioned before a verb. Both the previous and the present study focused on the exploration of the pronouns. However, while the reviewed work compared the pronouns of two languages, the present study presented the classification of the pronoun system of Koro-Ashe.

Another work was carried out by Turdikulovna (2021), on the Comparative Study of Interrogative Pronouns ‘what’ and ‘who’ in English and Uzbek, centering on their semantic and morphological usages. The research was anchored on observations of the opinions of scholars who have conducted researches on the same subject. The results indicated that Uzbek is related to agglutinative as there are more words derived through the affixes. Thus, the interrogative pronouns ‘kim’ and ‘nima’ can be declined in category of case via the different inflectional suffix – ni, ning, ga, da, dan. In English, the pronoun ‘what’ does not manifest the characteristics of a case in grammatical category, but is generally regulated by the semantics and meaning. English interrogative pronouns remain unchanged, in both the number and gender. Being an analytical language English does not mark interrogative words ‘who’ and ‘what’ as the derived affixes it belongs to. Hence, it is seen that morphological differences between the languages taken in consideration are significantly greater than the similarities. Although grammatical categories of Uzbek are very close to those of English interrogatives, ‘kim’ and ‘nima’ in Uzbek show notable case. Even though the previous work is related to the present study in subject, the latter examines other types of pronouns in addition to the interrogative pronoun in Koro-Ashe. Again, while the previous work interrogates the semantic and morphological properties of the interrogative pronouns in Uzbek, the present research is a description of the various classification of pronouns.

From these existing studies, and to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, there is no existing work on the classification of Koro-Ashe pronoun system and this is the focus of this paper.

## **Methodology**

This study adopts descriptive research design in order to describe the forms and classifications of pronouns in Koro-Ashe. The study purposively selected two respondents from 50 years and above from three Koro-Ashe speaking communities – Katugal, Shadalafiya and Kondoro, using

the variables of language competence, duration of stay within the speech community and exposure to western education. The data were drawn from unstructured questionnaire, consisting of one hundred items, unstructured informal interactions with native speakers on traditional marriage rites and initiation into adulthood, and being a native speaker, the researcher also relied in introspection. These interactions were recorded and transcribed so as to identify the various pronouns in the language. The questionnaire helps to corroborate and validate the findings in the informal interactions. The data were presented in tabular forms according to the different classifications of pronouns in the language. The analysis was anchored based on Halliday (1961) Scale and Category Theory.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Scale and Category theory is Halliday's early thoughts on linguistic theory Halliday's (1961) Scale and Category was formulated on four grammatical categories – the unit, structure, class and system and the scale of rank, exponence and delicacy which relate to the categories. In the 'scale and category framework', the categories are essentially theoretical constructs, whereas the scales serve to relate the categories both to each other and to the textual data.

### **Unit Category**

The category of unit proposed by Halliday accounts for stretches of language of varying lengths and composition. It includes sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme. Units are hierarchical arranged on a scale such that each unit of a particular rank consists of one or more unit next below.

### **Structure Category**

Structure is the category set up to account for likeness between events in succession (Halliday 1961, p.59). It describes the pattern of syntagmatic relations at the grammatical level and captures the similarities between them.

### **Category of Class**

The category of class is the grouping of members of a given unit (sentence, group, word, and morpheme) which is defined by operation in the structure of unit next above (Halliday 1961).

According to Butler (1985), the class takes into account the paradigmatic possibilities associated with particular element of structure. How this relates to Halliday's model can be seen in the P-element (predicator) of a clause structure – for the group unit, there is a verbal class which has the potential for occurring in the P- Position.

### **System Category**

The category of system is set up to account for the occurrence of one rather than another from the group of members of like events (Halliday 1961). Specifically, a system is a set of terms with these characteristics: the number of terms is infinite, they can be listed A, B, C, D, and all other items E... are outside the system, each term is exclusive of all others as a given term A cannot be identical with B or C or D, and if a new term is added to the system, this changes the meaning of all other terms. The system may be number system, person system, gender system, polarity system, finiteness, tense mood and voice.

### **Scale of Rank**

Rank is a term which refers to one of the scales of analysis, which interrelates the categories of the theory, viz. the hierarchical arrangement of linguistic units within a linguistic level. The rank requires that every item in the unit is accounted for. A sentence consists of a single clause, which itself comprises a single group, containing a single word and which, in turn consists of single morpheme. These items undergo rank-shifting.

### **Scale of Exponence**

Scale of exponence relates terms in system of unit, class, and structure and allow the analysis to achieve a maximum generalisation (Butler, 1985). Through the scale of exponence, the categories are related to each other and to the textual data. The paradigmatic possibilities themselves illustrate the scale of exponence. Using the clause structure, the items, which represent, (expounds) the S-elements (subjects), are members of the nominal class of the group unit.

## Scale of Delicacy

The scale of delicacy is concerned with the degree of detail which is incorporated into the analysis. In other words, the scale of delicacy can be defined as that scale which refers to the degree of detail in which a structure is specified (Halliday, 1961 as cited in Fawcett, 2000).

## Data Presentation and Analysis

For the classification of the pronoun system of in Koro-Ashe, ten types are identified namely: personal, possessive, reflexive, emphatic, indefinite, relative, demonstrative, interrogative, reciprocal, numerical and quantifying pronouns. Each of these types is explained below with data:

### Classification of Koro-Ashe Pronoun System

#### Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns often refer to the trio agents in communication. Collins (2004), views personal pronouns as referring to something or someone that has already been mentioned, or to the speaker or hearer. Quirk *et al.* (1982), assert that personal pronouns function as replacements for co-referential noun phrases in neighbouring (usually preceding) clauses. The personal pronouns in Koro-Ashe also reflect the three participants in speech, that is, the addresser, addressee and the topic/subject. As seen in Table 1 below, the personal pronouns in Koro-Ashe contain various forms for each category from the speaker selects depending on the context.

**Table 1: Ashe Personal Pronoun**

Ashe	English	Category					
		Unit	Class	Structure	System		
					Person	Number	Gender
ime	I	group, word, morpheme	personal	Subjective	1 <sup>st</sup> person	singular	neutral
ime	me	„	„	Objective	„	„	„
inte	we	„	„	subjective	„	plural	„
inte	us	„	„	Objective	„	„	„
inyime	you	„	Personal	subjective &	2 <sup>nd</sup> person	plural	neutral

				objective			
iye	he		personal	subjective	3 <sup>rd</sup> person	singular	masculine
iye	she	„	„	„	„	singular	feminine
iye	it	„	„	„	„	singular	neuter
imbɔɔ	they	„	„	„	„	plural	generic
iye	him	„	„	Objective	„	plural	masculine
iye	her	„	„	„	„	singular	feminine
iye	it	„	„	„	„	singular	neuter
imbɔɔ	them	„	„	„	„	plural	generic

Source: Author’s Compilation (2024).

### Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns show to whom the person or thing referred to belongs or is connected with (Collins, 2004). In much clearer term, Swick (2011), explains that possessive pronouns show ownership just as their noun counterparts. Koro-Ashe possessive pronouns are derived from the personal counterparts by affixing the vowel ‘e-’. These pronouns maintain the same form to express both pronominal and determinative functions. Table 2 below presents the possessive pronouns in Koro-Ashe capturing the three participants.

Table 2: Koro-Ashe Possessive pronouns

Ashe	English	Category					
		Unit	Class	Structure	System		
					Person	Number	Gender
e me	mine	group, word, morpheme	possessive	genitive	1 <sup>st</sup> person	singular reference	Neutral
e te	ours	„	„	„	1 <sup>st</sup> person	plural	Neutral
e ɲo	yours	„	„	„	2 <sup>nd</sup> person	singular	Neutral
e nyime	yours	„	„	„	2 <sup>nd</sup> person	plural	Neutral
e ye	his	„	„	„	3 <sup>rd</sup> person	plural	masculine
e ye	hers	„	„	„	3 <sup>rd</sup> person	singular	Feminine
e ye	its	„	„	„	3 <sup>rd</sup> person	singular	Neuter
e mbɔɔ	their	„	„	„	3 <sup>rd</sup> person	plural	Generic

Source: Author’s compilation, (2024).

## Reflexive Pronouns

According Greenbaun (1996), reflexive usually co-refers with the subject. The reflexive may be the direct object, the indirect object, the subject predicative, the object of a prepositional verb, or the agent in a by-phrase. In other words, reflexive pronouns indicate that the subject is performing an action on itself. It is through these pronouns that actions performed by the subject bounce back to the subject thereby, making it the target or recipient of the action. Swan (2016), affirms that reflexive pronouns are used as objects, in cases when the object refers to the same person(s) or thing(s) as the subject. In Koro-Ashe, there are pronouns that cause the effect of the action performed by the doer to bounce back to the doer. Koro-Ashe reflexives are derived by prefixing the morpheme ‘eche’ (literally meaning ‘head’ and translated ‘self’) to both singular and plural personal pronouns. In terms of person, 1<sup>st</sup> person (echeme; echete or echeyir), 2<sup>nd</sup> person (echejo; echeyim), 3<sup>rd</sup> person (echeye; themselves/echebɔɔ) as captured in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Koro-Ashe Reflexive Pronouns**

Ashe	English Equivalent	Category					
		Unit	Class	Structure	System		
					Person	Number	Gender
echeme	myself	group, word morpheme	reflexive	objective	1 <sup>st</sup> person	singular	Neutral
echeyir	ourselves	„	„	„	1 <sup>st</sup> person	plural	Neutral
echejo	yourself	„	„	„	2 <sup>nd</sup> person	singular	Neutral
echeyim	yourselves	„	„	„	2 <sup>nd</sup> person	plural	Neutral
echeye	himself	„	„	„	3 <sup>rd</sup> person	singular	Masculine
echeye	herself	„	„	„	3 <sup>rd</sup> person	singular	Feminine
echeye	itself	„	„	„	3 <sup>rd</sup> person	singular	Neuter
ochebɔɔ	themselves	„	„	„	3 <sup>rd</sup> person	plural	Generic

Source: Author’s compilation, (2024)

## Emphatic Pronouns

Greenbaun (1996), explains that emphatic reflexives function as a kind of apposition to a noun phrase, which they emphasise. If that noun phrase is the subject, the reflexive may either immediately follow the subject or occur at various positions later in the clause. The emphatic pronouns in Koro-Ashe appositive in nature and often reinforce their antecedents by emphasising the role of the subject in relation to the action performed or the state of being assumed. There are formed by prefixing the morpheme “naza” to the personal pronoun forms. They have different form with the reflexive pronouns. Table 4 below shows Koro-Ashe emphatic pronouns.

**Table 4: Ashe Emphatic Pronouns**

Ashe	English	Category					
		Unit	Class	Structure	System		
					Person	Number	Gender
nazame	myself	group, word & morpheme	emphatic	appositive	1 <sup>st</sup> person	singular	neutral
nazayir	Ourselves	„	„	„	1 <sup>st</sup> person	plural	neutral
nazaṅo	Yourself	„	„	„	2 <sup>nd</sup> person	Singular	neutral
nazayim	Yourselves	„	„	„	2 <sup>nd</sup> person	plural	neutral
nazai	Himself	„	„	„	3 <sup>rd</sup> person	Singular	masculine
nazai	Herself	„	„	„	3 <sup>rd</sup> person	„	feminine
nazai	Itself	„	„	„	3 <sup>rd</sup> person	„	neuter
nazaboo	Themselves				3 <sup>rd</sup> person	plural	neutral

Source: Author’s Compilation, (2024).

## Reciprocal Pronouns

According to Greenbaun (1996), the reciprocals co-refer only with noun phrases that are plural in form or meaning. The separation places a greater emphasis on the reciprocity. These pronouns express mutual relationship thereby indicating that two or more subjects are performing the same action towards each other. Herring (2016), in his description of reciprocal pronouns, says they are used to refer to two or more people who are or were the subject of the same verb, with both or all parties mutually receiving or benefiting from that action in the same way. Koro-Ashe displays three morphological forms of reciprocal pronouns – ‘adokyir’, ‘adokyim’ and ‘adokboo’

all of which cover for both two and more than two referents. Koro-Ashe has three forms of reciprocal pronouns which inflect to reflect the first, second and third person in speech as shown in table 5 below:

**Table 5: Ashe Reciprocal Pronouns**

Ashe	English	Category					
		Unit	Class	Structure	System		
					Person	Number	Gender
adɔkyir adɔkyim adɔkbɔɔ	each other	nominal group, word, morpheme	reciprocal	objective	1 <sup>st</sup> person 2 <sup>nd</sup> person 3 <sup>rd</sup> person	plural reference	neutral
adɔkyir adɔkyim adɔkbɔɔ	one another	”	”	”	1 <sup>st</sup> person 2 <sup>nd</sup> person 3 <sup>rd</sup> person	plural reference	neutral

Source: Author’s compilation, (2024).

### **Indefinite Pronouns**

Indefinite pronouns are used to refer to people or things without indicating exactly who or what they are (Collins, 2004). By implication, they reference unspecified referents. This view is sustained by Crystal (2008), who stresses that indefinite pronouns often convey indefiniteness and are incapable of specific identification. Greenbaun (1996), elucidates further that the indefinite pronouns assumed that nomenclature because they have a general reference. There are also pronouns in Koro-Ashe that do not point to a specific entity. These pronouns constitute one of the largest classes and some of the forms are capable of multiple reference while others can be used interchangeable. Table 6 below presents the indefinite pronouns in Koro-Ashe:

**Table 6: Ashe Indefinite Pronouns**

Ashe	English	Category					
		Unit	Class	Structure	System		
					Person	Number	Gender
Koinyãã	everyone	group, word, morpheme	indefinite	subjective objective	neutral	singular reference	Personal
Koinyãã	everybody	”	”	”	”	”	”
kouhwei	everything	”	”	”	”	”	non personal

koinyãã, uyom	anyone	”	”	”	”	”	Personal
Koinyãã	anybody	”	”	”	”	”	”
Kouwhei ubineye	anything	”	”	”	”	”	non personal
Abom	some	”	”	”	”	plural	personal/ non personal
Nyom	someone	”	”	”	”	singular	personal
Nyom	somebody	”	”	”	”	”	”
ibinyom	something	”	”	”	”	”	non personal
umeye	none	”	”	”	”	”	neutral
unyom/ emeye	no one	”	”	”	”	”	personal
unyom emeye	nobody	”	”	”	”	”	”
ubinyom	nothing	”	”	”	”	”	non personal
Unyom	another	”	”	”	”	”	neutral

Source: Author’s compilation (2024).

### **Relative Pronouns**

According to Greenbaun (1996), relative pronouns are used in the construction of relative clauses, which post modify nouns. They normally are used to introduce relative clauses. In agreement with Greenbaun, Swick (2011), observes that two sentences can be combined by using a relative pronoun as a subordinator. Baskervill and Sewell (2013), state that because relative pronouns have conjunctive use, they help to unite short statements into longer sentences, thereby making discourse effective. Koro-Ashe relative pronouns are pronouns which serve as binders of clauses of unequal status – independent and dependent. There exists a single form of relative pronoun in Koro-Ashe which references its antecedent whether subject, object or possessive as illustrated in able 7 below.

**Table 7: Ashe Relative pronouns**

Ashe	English	Category					
		Unit	Class	Structure	System		
					Person	Number	Gender
sha	who	group, word, morpheme	relative	subjective	neutral	neutral	personal
sha	whom	„	„	objective	„	„	personal
shu/sha	whose	„	„	genitive	„	„	personal
sha	which	„	„	subjective objective	„	„	Non personal
sha	that	„	„	neutral	„	„	neutral

Source: Author’s compilation, (2024).

### **Demonstrative Pronouns**

Demonstrative pronouns are pointers – they point to specific entities in relation to the location or distance of the entities they are referring to. The demonstratives present two types of contrast. The first is a contrast in number (singular and plural), while the second is a contrast in proximity - indicate relative nearness and relative remoteness. In addition, the proximity may be in space or in time (Quirk et al., 1982). The general meanings of demonstratives are those of ‘near’ and ‘distant’ reference. Koro-Ashe demonstratives point to entities and there are multiple forms which are used in relation to their antecedent as well roles (pronominal or determinative). From the above table, Ashe has several forms of demonstrative pronouns because the context of use and the antecedent that is referenced may allow for selection of a different form. For instance, ecee, igwene, iyene, umi, ocee iyee; correspond to ‘this’ in English though in relation to the referent and its number. Also, imbone, imbene, abee, ogwee, akee, equals ‘these’ in English; iyococ, uyoc, iyoc, eococ, relate to ‘that’ in English and akoc, ogwoo, aboc, imbococ tally with the ‘English ‘those’. Even though these forms are used specially for the determinative function of the demonstratives, some of them assume the pronominal role.

**Table 8: Ashe Demonstration Pronouns**

Ashe	English	Category					
		Unit	Class	Structure	System		
					Person	Number	Gender
Igwene, iyene	This	group, word	demonstrative	subjective objective	Neutral	singular	neutral
iyɔnɔɔ, uyɔɔ, cho	That	„	„	„	„	singular	„
imbone, imbene	These	„	„	„	„	plural	„
abɔɔ	Those	„	„	„	„	plural	„

Source: Author’s compilation (2024).

### Interrogative Pronouns

To Swick (2011), the interrogative pronouns are used to introduce or ask a question. On a similar stance, Crystal (2008), affirms that the interrogatives are typically used in the expression of questions. It is also noted that interrogative pronouns represent a piece of missing information that the speaker wants the hearer to supply and like other pronouns, they replace nouns (Greenbaun, 1996). Table 9 below indicates that Koro-Ashe has pronouns used for asking questions. In Koro-Ashe, a form can be used for dual reference and two forms can have the same referents.

**Table 9: Ashe Interrogative Pronouns**

Ashe	English	Category					
		Unit	Class	Structure	System		
					Person	Number	Gender
inyãã	who	Group, word	interrogative	subjective	neutral	neutral	personal
inyãã	whom	„	„	objective	„	„	personal
enyãã	whose	„	„	genitive	„	„	personal
shu shoje	which	„	„	subjective objective	„	„	non personal
uwhei	what	„	„	subjective objective	„	„	non personal

Source: Author’s Compilation (2024)

## Numerical pronouns

Greenbaun (1996) and Swick (2011) identify numeral as another class of pronouns. Elucidating this, Swick establishes that if a pronoun is a word that replaces a noun, then a number that does the same thing can be considered a pronoun. If the number stands alone, it is no longer just a numerical value or an adjective modifying a noun, but rather functions as a pronoun. In Koro-Ashe, numbers can stand alone to function as pronouns. Ashe also inflects on its cardinal in order to realise the ordinals. Take for instance, awhei-ewhele, itar-atarke, ina-enai, okou-okokpe etc. In Ashe, the article is fused to the ordinal. Ashe has numerals in the cardinal group such as unyiŋ, awhei, itar, ukow, ishōkiwhei, etc. The ordinals include ihĩidei, ewhele, entarke, enai, ukokpe etc. Ashe also has quantifiers like arere, kochak, kepiu, be mak, /be cika etc., as represented in table 10 below:

**Table 10: Ashe Numerical Pronouns**

<i>Ashe</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Category</i>					
		<i>Unit</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Structure</i>	<i>System</i>		
					<i>Person</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Gender</i>
unyiŋ	one	group, word, & morpheme	numerical	subjective objective	neutral	singular reference	Neutral
awhei	two	”	”	”	”	singular & plural	”
itar	three	”	”	”	”	”	”
ukow	ten	”	”	”	”	”	”
ishōkiwhei	twenty	”	”	”	”	”	”
ihĩidei	first	”	”	”	”	singular	”
ewhele	second	”	”	”	”	”	”
entarke	third	”	”	”	”	”	”
ukokpe	tenth	”	”	”	”	”	”
imaatake	last	”	”	”	”	”	”

Source: Author's compilation, (2023).

### **Quantifying Pronouns**

When quantifiers do not precede nouns but stand alone in the slot of nominals, they are regarded as quantifying pronouns. In Koro-Ashe, there are quantifying words that serve pronominal roles. They can be used to refer to either large quantity or number of things or small quantity or number of things. Their use in respect to count and non-count reference matches the position outlined in connection with their determiner function. Table 11 below shows the quantifying pronouns in Koro-Ashe:

**Table 11: Ashe quantifying pronouns**

<i>Ashe</i>	<i>Englis</i> <i>h</i>	<i>Category</i>					
		<i>Unit</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Structure</i>	<i>System</i>		
		<i>Group, word, morpheme</i>	<i>Numerical</i>	<i>Subjective objective</i>	<i>Person</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Gender</i>
arere	many	„	quantifier	„	„	plural reference	„
kochak	all	„	„	„	„	singular & plural	„
arere	much	„	„	„	„	non-count	
kepiu	few	„	„	„	„	plural	„
be mak	enough	„	„	„	„	non count & plural	„
kepiu/ be cika	little	„	„	„	„	non count	„
arere	much	„	„	„	„	non count	„

Source: Author's compilation, (2023).

## **Discussion of Findings**

The pronoun system of Ashe is classified to include personal, possessive, reflexive, emphatic/intensive, reciprocal, relative, interrogative, demonstrative, indefinite, numerical and quantifying pronouns. Ashe Personal Pronouns include ime, inte, iṅo, inyime, iye, and imbɔɔ. They are used for referential roles. The possessive pronouns are e me, e te, e ṅo, e nyime, e ye, e mbɔɔ used for referentially and are employed to express possessiveness. Also, the reflexive pronouns comprise echeme, echete or echeyir, echeṅo, echeyim, echeye and echebɔɔ while the emphatic pronouns consist of nazame, nazayir, nazaṅo, nazayim, nazai/nazaye and nazabɔɔ. It is indicated in the study that reflexivity and emphasis are expressed through pronouns. The both reflexive and emphatic pronouns in Koro-Ashe are derived through affixation particularly prefixing the morpheme “eche” for reflexive and “naza” for emphatic pronouns. This result corroborates some previous studies. For instance, Dhami (2019), found that reflexive pronouns in Bajhangli are formed by adding ‘afui’ suffix to both singular and plural reflexive pronouns. Tafida’s (2008) work showed that the reflexive in Nupe language is expressed by adding a syllable ‘tso’ to all the subjective personal as well as prefixing with the letter ‘E’. Furthermore, Koro-Ashe express reciprocity of action between two participants. This is conveyed through reciprocal pronouns such as adɔkyir, adɔkyim and adɔkbɔɔ. These pronouns even reflect the trio agent in communication. Koro-Ashe can refer to things without being specific. This act of general reference is conveyed through indefinite pronouns including ko inyãã, unyom, unekeye, ume e iye, ubin, ubineye/ubinyom, ubin kochak/ko uhwei, and abom. In a long stretch discourse, pronouns are deployed as subordinators binding two or more stretches of sentences in Koro-Ashe, the relative pronouns sha, and shu serve that function. Koro-Ashe equally has demonstrative pronouns such as che/igwene/iyene, iyɔnbɔɔ/uyɔɔ/cho, imbɔne/imbene, and abɔɔ which are used to point at reference referred to. In addition, the interrogative pronouns which include inyãã, e nyãã, shu shoṅe, and uṅwe aid the framing of question. Finally, the numerals - unyiṅ, awhɛi, itar, ukow, ishɔkiwhei, ihĩidei, ewhele, entarke, enai, ukokpe and quantifiers - arɛrɛ, kochak, kepiu, be mak, /be cika also assume the functional role of pronouns in Koro-Ashe.

## **Conclusion**

Human languages have properties that are common to and shared among them as well as those that are atypical to each language and it is on this ground that the pronoun system of Koro-Ashe

was investigated. The study indicated that there are various classifications of pronouns across different languages, and in the case of Koro-Ashe, ten classes are identified. Each of the classes has its members which share similarly functional possibilities. It is worthy of note that the classification may not be the same in other language grammar is language specific. However, it is logical to assert that pronouns are fundamental properties of human language and just as they make up the lexical element of Koro-Ashe, they are likely to be found in every human language. The presence of pronouns in the linguistic properties of Koro-Ashe is not accidental as language is well structured and patterned to require and employ them for a more cohesive and coherent discourse. Suffice it to say that communication is placed at the heart of language and a coherent and effective discourse is achievable if referential, coreferential and deictic elements such as pronouns are adequately employed.

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## Linguistic Strategies for Dominance in Political Interviews: A Case Study of Arise TV Morning Show

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### Abstract

*This study employs Norman Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the interaction between Arise TV anchor Rufai Oseni and APC chieftain Jesutega Onokpasa. Purposeful sampling was used to select one interview from 17 available, meeting specific criteria set by the sampling objectives. The paper dissects the conversation through textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice, and the analysis reveals how insertions and interruptions shape power relations. Onokpasa's frequent interruptions and condescending tone serve to assert dominance, undermine Oseni's role, and divert the discussion from substantive issues to personal attacks. The live broadcast context heightens the stakes, influencing both participants' behaviour as they navigate their public personas. The broader ideological context reflects ongoing conflicts in Nigerian politics, with Oseni's critical stance on economic policies countered by Onokpasa's defensive posture. The study highlights the struggle for control in public discourse and underscores the role of language in shaping power relations, reflecting deeper cultural norms and expectations regarding respect and hierarchy. Through Fairclough's CDA framework, the analysis demonstrates how conversational strategies are employed to reinforce or challenge existing power structures in media interactions.*

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Power relations, Interruptions, Nigerian politics, Media interactions

### 1.0 Introduction

In contemporary media, the interaction between journalists and political figures often highlights the intricate relations of power and control in public discourse. The televised interview is a potent site for examining these relations, especially in politically charged contexts. This study employs Norman Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore the interaction during the Arise TV morning show of *October, 30th 2023* between Arise TV anchor

Rufai Oseni and APC chieftain Jesutega Onokpasa, focusing on how insertions and interruptions shape power relations.

Fairclough's CDA model involves three key dimensions-(1) textual analysis, (2) discursive practice, and (3) social practice. Textual analysis scrutinizes language features and structures, revealing how interruptions and overlaps serve to assert dominance and control. Discursive practice examines the production, distribution, and consumption of texts, highlighting the influence of the live TV setting on participants' behaviour and the power struggle between them. Social practice considers the broader social and cultural context, including power relations and ideologies, reflecting ideological conflicts in Nigerian politics and cultural norms regarding respect and hierarchy.

Previous studies have extensively explored linguistic strategies in media interactions (Clayman and Heritage 2002; Bull and Mayer 1993; Montgomery 2007; Opeibi 2009). However, there is a notable gap in understanding how these strategies, specifically interruptions, are employed by political figures to assert dominance and control, particularly in the Nigerian political context. This study addresses this gap by examining the linguistic tactics used by Jesutega Onokpasa in his interview with Rufai Oseni. It aims to uncover the specific strategies Onokpasa uses to assert dominance, analyse their influence on the power dynamics between him and Oseni, and contextualize these interactions within the broader ideological and cultural power structures of Nigerian politics. Through this analysis, the research hopes to provide a deeper understanding of how linguistic strategies in political discourse shape and reinforce societal power relations.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Language and Politics**

Language plays a crucial role in politics, serving as a medium for politicians to convey their ideologies, persuade the public, and assert dominance. According to Fairclough (1989), political discourse is a form of social practice that reflects and shapes power relations within society. This perspective emphasizes the importance of analysing language to understand the operations of power in political contexts. Wodak (2009) expands on this by arguing that political language is inherently strategic, used by politicians to gain and maintain power, influence public opinion, and legitimize their actions. She highlights the use of rhetorical devices, such as metaphors, euphemisms, and repetitions, as tools for political persuasion and control.

Chilton (2004) explores the cognitive aspects of political language, suggesting that politicians use linguistic strategies to frame issues in ways that align with their ideological positions. This framing can shape public perception and discourse, reinforcing the politician's agenda. Similarly, Van Dijk (1997) discusses how political elites use language to manipulate public opinion, often through subtle forms of control, such as implicatures, presuppositions, and the management of topical relevance.

## **2.2 Political Media Interviews**

Political media interviews are a unique context where the power relations between politicians and journalists are prominently displayed. Clayman and Heritage (2002) describe these interactions as a "site of struggle" where both parties attempt to control the conversation and influence the audience. They note that politicians often use evasive answers, counter-questions, and topic shifts to avoid direct responses and steer the conversation in their favour.

Bull and Mayer (1993) investigate the techniques used by politicians to handle aggressive questioning, identifying strategies such as repetition, refutation, and recontextualization. These strategies enable politicians to maintain a favourable image while managing the flow of the interview. Montgomery (2007) further elaborates on the performative nature of political interviews, where politicians engage in impression management to project authority and credibility.

In the context of Nigerian political discourse, Opeibi (2009) examines how politicians use language to manoeuvre complex socio-political environment. He highlights the role of code-switching, proverbs, and rhetorical questions as tools for connecting with diverse audiences and asserting dominance in public discourse. This is particularly relevant for understanding the linguistic strategies employed in Nigerian political media interviews.

The interaction between Jesutega Onokpasa and Rufai Oseni on Arise TV's Morning Show exemplifies these relations. Onokpasa's frequent interruptions and attempts to control the narrative illustrate the linguistic strategies used by political figures to assert dominance in media interactions. This case study aligns with the broader literature on language and politics, providing insights into the power relations and argumentative strategies in Nigerian political discourse.

## **2.3 Definitions and Concepts**

Insertions in conversation refer to additional elements or comments inserted by a speaker during an ongoing turn of talk. These can be clarifications, elaborations, or comments that add to the current topic without necessarily interrupting the flow (Bublitz, 1988). Interruptions, on the other hand, occur when one speaker cuts off another, thereby disrupting the ongoing speech (Zimmerman & West, 1975). While both insertions and interruptions can influence the structure and model of conversation, interruptions are often viewed as more intrusive and potentially confrontational.

## **2.4 Types and Functions**

### **2.4.1 Insertions**

Insertions serve various interactional purposes, such as providing additional information, making clarifications, or expressing agreement or disagreement. They can enhance the coherence of discourse by connecting ideas and maintaining thematic continuity (Schegloff, 1982). According to Tannen (1989), insertions can also function as backchannels, signalling active listening and engagement without overtaking the conversational floor.

### **2.4.2 Interruptions**

On the other hand, interruptions can be categorized into several types based on their function and intent as follows:

- 1) Cooperative Interruptions: These are interruptions that support the current speaker, such as completing their sentences or expressing agreement (Goldberg, 1990).
- 2) Competitive Interruptions: These aim to take control of the conversation and redirect the topic, often reflecting underlying power dynamics (James & Clarke, 1993).

## **2.5 Sociolinguistic Perspectives**

### **2.5.1 Sociocultural Context**

The use of interruptions and insertions is influenced by sociocultural context. In some cultures, interruptions are seen as a natural part of lively conversation, whereas in others, they may be considered rude and disruptive (Blum-Kulka, 1997). This cultural variability underscores the importance of context in interpreting the function and appropriateness of interruptions and insertions.

### **2.5.2 Power and Politeness**

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory offer insights into how power relations shape conversational behaviour. They argue that speakers use interruptions and insertions strategically to manage face needs and negotiate social hierarchies. For instance, a higher-status individual might interrupt more freely, reflecting their relative power and lower need to mitigate face-threatening acts.

### **2.6 Interruptions in Institutional Talk**

Studies of institutional talk, such as courtroom interactions and medical consultations, reveal how interruptions function to maintain or challenge institutional authority (Atkinson & Drew, 1979). In these settings, interruptions can be a way for professionals to assert expertise and control the direction of the conversation (Heritage & Clayman, 2010).

#### **2.6.1 Media and Political Discourse**

In media and political discourse, interruptions are often used strategically to manage time, control narratives, and assert dominance (Greatbatch, 1988). Research by Clayman (2002) shows that political interviewers use interruptions to challenge interviewees and steer the conversation, reflecting the adversarial nature of political discourse.

It is worth noting that insertions and interruptions are complex, multifaceted phenomena that play crucial roles in conversational structure. They serve various functions, from managing interactional flow to asserting power and negotiating social relationships. Understanding these elements requires considering factors such as social status, cultural context, and institutional settings.

### **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a multidisciplinary approach to studying discourse that views language as a form of social practice. It aims to uncover the ways in which discourse shapes, and is shaped by, power relations, ideologies, and social structures. This overview will discuss CDA from various perspectives, highlighting key theorists and their contributions to the field.

### **2.7.1 Fairclough's Approach**

Norman Fairclough is one of the most prominent figures in CDA. His model involves three interrelated dimensions: textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. Textual analysis examines the language features and structures within a text. Discursive practice analyses the production, distribution, and consumption of the text, while social practice considers the broader societal and cultural context, including power relations and ideologies (Fairclough, 1995).

Fairclough emphasizes the role of discourse in constructing social identities, relationships, and systems of knowledge. He argues that discourse is both shaped by and shapes social structures, highlighting the dialectical relationship between language and society (Fairclough, 2001).

### **2.7.2 Van Dijk's Socio-cognitive Approach**

Teun A. van Dijk offers a socio-cognitive perspective on CDA, integrating cognitive theories with social analysis. Van Dijk focuses on the role of mental models and social cognition in discourse production and comprehension. He argues that ideologies are embedded in discourse and influence how individuals process and interpret information (van Dijk, 1998).

Van Dijk's approach examines how power and dominance are reproduced through discourse, particularly in media and political contexts. He highlights the importance of context in understanding discourse, considering factors such as the social and historical background, the participants' knowledge, and the situational context (van Dijk, 2009).

### **2.7.3 Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach**

Ruth Wodak's discourse-historical approach (DHA) combines historical analysis with discourse analysis. DHA aims to uncover the historical roots of discursive practices and how they evolve over time. Wodak emphasizes the importance of context, including the sociopolitical and historical environment, in shaping discourse (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Wodak's approach is particularly useful for analysing political discourse, as it considers how historical events and processes influence contemporary discourse. DHA involves a systematic analysis of various types of data, including written texts, spoken language, and visual media, to understand how discourses are constructed and maintained (Wodak, 2001).

### **2.7.4 Critical Linguistics**

Critical linguistics, developed by scholars such as Roger Fowler, Robert Hodge, Gunther Kress, and Tony Trew, is a precursor to CDA. This approach focuses on the ways in which language reflects and reinforces social power structures. It analyses the linguistic features of texts to reveal underlying ideologies and power relations (Fowler et al., 1979).

Critical linguistics shares with CDA a commitment to social critique and an interest in the role of language in social life. However, it tends to focus more narrowly on linguistic analysis, whereas CDA incorporates a broader range of social theories and methodologies.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) views discourse as a social practice shaped by power relations, ideologies, and social structures. Key theorists offer various analytical perspectives. Norman Fairclough's approach includes textual analysis (language features), discursive practice (text production and consumption), and social practice (societal context and power relations). Teun A. van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach examines mental models, social cognition, and how ideologies influence information processing and power reproduction. Ruth Wodak's discourse-historical approach emphasizes historical roots, sociopolitical context, and systematic analysis of diverse data. Critical Linguistics, developed by scholars like Roger Fowler, focuses on how language reflects and reinforces power structures, revealing underlying ideologies. Fairclough's framework is ideal for analysing the Arise TV Morning Show interview due to its comprehensive approach, enabling a deep understanding of how interruptions and aggressive language reflect power relations and ideologies in Nigerian political discourse.

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Data Collection Method**

The primary data of the study is a televised media interview on the Arise TV Show, aired on October 30, 2023. This interview was selected from a pool of 17 similar interviews using the purposeful sampling technique. Researchers meticulously transcribed the interview by repeatedly playing the video, ensuring an accurate capture of all verbal exchanges, interruptions, and notable linguistic features. Following transcription, the researchers carefully analysed the content to extract detailed insights and linguistic patterns relevant to the study's objectives.

The interaction between Jesutega Onokpasa and the interviewers, particularly Rufai Oseni, is highly relevant for studying interruption and dominance by political figures. Onokpasa frequently interrupts and tries to control the conversation, especially when his views are challenged. His dismissive responses and narrative control illustrate how political figures use

linguistic strategies to assert power in media interactions. This interaction aligns with the research objectives by highlighting power relations in Nigerian public discourse. The interview examines the political landscape following the Nigerian Supreme Court's affirmation of President Bola Ahmad Tinubu's election, covering court ruling implications, political faction reactions, and discussions on policies like fuel subsidy removal.

This study employs Norman Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the interaction. Fairclough's model, which includes textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice, is well-suited for exploring the complexities of power relations in discourse (Fairclough, 1995)

#### **4.0 Data Analysis and Discussion**

**Table (1) Textual Analysis**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
Interruptions and Overlaps	"It's okay. How are you?" "Don't raise your voice at me young man."	Frequent interruptions by Onokpasa serve to assert dominance and control over the conversation. These interruptions undermine Oseni's position as the interviewer and disrupt his argument.
Tone and Address	"Don't raise your voice at me young man." "I can't believe this boy."	Onokpasa uses a condescending tone and diminutive terms like "young man" and "boy" to reduce Oseni's status and assert his own authority.
Defensive and Offensive Language	"That is a lie. You are a liar. You are pretending to be a journalist." "...badly brought-up little boy" "How dare you disrespect me... nonsense."	Onokpasa's defensive stance involves accusing Oseni of lying and sensationalism, diverting the conversation from substantive issues to personal attacks in an attempt to discredit Oseni.
Strategic non-response	"I will walk out the studio if you raise your voice at me" "I am not dignifying that insulting question with a response."	Onokpasa avoids answering difficult questions directly, instead critiquing the question itself to evade accountability and shift the focus from the content of the question.

#### 4.1 Discussion on Textual Analysis

The analysis of Onokpasa's discourse during the interaction reveals several strategic elements used to maintain dominance and control over the conversation. Frequent interruptions and overlaps, such as "It's okay. How are you?" and "Don't raise your voice at me young man," serve to assert dominance and disrupt Oseni's line of questioning. Additionally, Onokpasa employs a condescending tone and diminutive terms like "young man" and "boy" to undermine Oseni's status and reinforce his own authority. This hierarchical positioning is further supported by defensive and offensive language, where Onokpasa accuses Oseni of lying and sensationalism ("That is a lie. You are a liar. You are pretending to be a journalist"), thereby diverting the discussion from substantive issues to personal attacks. Furthermore, Onokpasa's strategic non-response, as exemplified by statements like "I am not dignifying that insulting question with a response," allows him to avoid answering challenging questions directly and shifts the focus from the content of the questions to their perceived propriety, thereby evading accountability. These tactics collectively illustrate a deliberate effort to control the discourse and diminish the interviewer's authority.

**Table (2) Discursive Practice**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
Production and Distribution	The interaction is broadcasted on live TV, which influences the behaviour of both parties.	Oseni, as the anchor, aims to uphold journalistic standards by pressing for answers, while Onokpasa, aware of the audience, seeks to project authority and loyalty to his party (APC).
Power Relations	The power struggle is evident through the use of language and interruption.	Oseni's role as interviewer is challenged by Onokpasa's aggressive interruptions and refusal to engage substantively. The live TV setting heightens the stakes, as both individuals are aware of their public personas.
Audience Consumption	Viewers witness a conflict that not only informs them about political issues but also showcases the power relations between media and political figures.	Oseni's perseverance in questioning juxtaposed with Onokpasa's evasiveness informs the audience's perception of both individuals and their respective institutions.

## 4.2 Discussion on Discursive Analysis

The discursive practice in the interaction between Rufai Oseni and Jesutega Onokpasa, as analysed through Fairclough's model, highlights the complexities of media and political relations. The broadcast on live TV significantly shapes the behaviour of both parties, with Oseni striving to maintain journalistic integrity by persistently seeking answers, while Onokpasa leverages the platform to assert his authority and demonstrate loyalty to his party (APC). This setting intensifies the power struggle, where Onokpasa's aggressive interruptions and avoidance of substantive engagement challenge Oseni's role as the interviewer. The live nature of the interaction amplifies the stakes, making both participants acutely aware of their public personas. For the audience, this exchange provides not only political information but also a vivid display of the power relations between media and political figures. Oseni's determination to extract answers, contrasted with Onokpasa's evasiveness, shapes the viewers' perceptions of both individuals and the institutions they represent, reflecting broader societal and ideological conflicts.

**Table (3) Social Practice**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
Ideological Context	Oseni's questioning represents a critical stance on government policies, while Onokpasa's responses reflect a defensive posture typical of political loyalists.	The conversation reflects broader ideological conflicts in Nigerian politics, particularly regarding economic policies and governance under President Tinubu.
Power Relations	Onokpasa's attempts to dominate the conversation and undermine Oseni's credibility.	The interaction exemplifies the struggle for control in public discourse. Onokpasa's behaviour reflects a hierarchical power dynamic where political figures often attempt to assert dominance over media practitioners.
Cultural Norms and Expectations	"I am your guest; you must respect me." "Don't talk to me rudely" "Talk to me respectfully."	The exchange highlights cultural expectations regarding respect and hierarchy. Onokpasa's insistence on being treated with respect taps into cultural norms that emphasize respect

		for elders and authority figures, which he leverages to his advantage.
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### **4.3 Discussion Social Practice**

The interaction between Oseni and Onokpasa, analysed through the lens of social practice, illuminates key ideological and power relations within Nigerian politics. Ideologically, the conversation underscores the broader conflicts over economic policies and governance under President Tinubu, with Oseni's critical questioning reflecting dissent and Onokpasa's defensive responses embodying the loyalty of political adherents. Power relations are starkly evident as Onokpasa's frequent interruptions and attempts to dominate the dialogue serve to undermine Oseni's role as interviewer, highlighting the hierarchical power relations where political figures assert dominance over media practitioners. Furthermore, the exchange reveals cultural norms regarding respect and hierarchy. Onokpasa's insistence on being treated with respect, invoking his status as a guest, leverages cultural expectations that prioritize respect for elders and authority figures, thus bolstering his position and attempting to silence critical inquiry. This interplay of ideological stances, power struggles, and cultural norms provides a rich context for understanding the complex structure of public discourse in Nigerian society.

### **5.0 Conclusion**

The study has analysed Jesutega Onokpasa's linguistic strategies in his interview with Rufai Oseni to assert dominance, assess their impact on the power relation between interviewer and interviewee, and contextualize the interaction within Nigerian politics' broader ideological and cultural framework. Onokpasa utilized frequent interruptions, a condescending tone, offensive language, and strategic non-responses to assert control and deflect substantive questioning. The broadcast's live nature intensified the power struggle, with Oseni striving for journalistic integrity while Onokpasa projected authority and loyalty to the APC. This relation, marked by aggressive interruptions and evasion of substantive engagement, challenged Oseni's role as the interviewer and heightened awareness of their public personas. The conversation reflected ideological conflicts over governance under President Tinubu, with Oseni's questioning representing dissent and Onokpasa's responses embodying political loyalty. Additionally, cultural norms emphasizing respect for authority figures allowed Onokpasa to bolster his

position and stifle critical inquiry. Overall, the interaction provided insight into the intricate structure of public discourse in Nigerian society, where power, ideology, and culture intersect.

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## **Violation of Maxims and Implicatures in 'The Fuel Subsidy Controversy' Editorial in *The Independence Newspaper***

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### **Abstract**

*The fuel subsidy system in Nigeria, initiated in the 1970s, was designed to make petroleum products more affordable for citizens by reducing the cost of fuel. Historically, while the subsidies aimed to alleviate economic pressure on the populace, they have often been criticized for causing financial strain on the government and fostering corruption. Existing literature lacks a focused pragmatic analysis of editorial content on Nigeria's fuel subsidy issue, particularly in examining the violation of Gricean maxims and the generation of implicatures. Thus, the purpose of this study was to analyse the discourse on fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria as presented in the editorial titled 'The Fuel Subsidy Controversy' published in *The Independence Newspaper* on April 14, 2023. The methodology employed involved a thorough examination of the editorial's implicatures to uncover the various perspectives, concerns, and proposed solutions related to the fuel subsidy controversy. The study's findings revealed a diverse array of implicatures that illuminate the complexities of the issue, ranging from concerns about corruption and mismanagement within the oil sector to discussions about the economic impacts of subsidy removal and the importance of inclusive decision-making processes. Through implicatures, the editorial conveyed the urgency of addressing corruption, the need to consider the socio-economic effects of subsidy removal, and the significance of collaborative efforts among stakeholders. The study concluded that pragmatic implicatures in the editorial vividly shape the discourse on fuel subsidy removal. The findings reveal how editorial violations of Gricean maxims and implicatures shape public opinion and influence policy debates, emphasising the media's role in framing narratives and potentially swaying governmental decisions and public perception regarding fuel subsidy reforms. The study concluded that pragmatic analysis reveals the critical role of editorial content in shaping public discourse on the fuel subsidy issue. It is recommended that media outlets adhere more closely to Gricean maxims to ensure clearer communication and foster informed public debate.*

**Keywords:** Fuel Subsidy, Gricean Maxims, Editorial Content, Implicature, Public Opinion, Media Influence

## **Introduction**

The fuel subsidy controversy in Nigeria has been a persistent and complex issue, deeply intertwined with economic, political, and social dynamics. Historically, the Nigerian government has implemented fuel subsidies to cushion the impact of high global oil prices on its citizens, aiming to maintain affordable fuel prices domestically. However, the subsidy system has long faced challenges, including allegations of corruption, mismanagement, and inefficiencies in its administration. The controversy intensified as the government grappled with the economic burden of sustaining the subsidy, especially amidst fluctuating global oil prices. Calls for subsidy removal have often been met with public resistance, rooted in concerns about potential adverse effects on the cost of living, inflation, and socioeconomic stability. Additionally, the discourse surrounding fuel subsidy removal is marked by differing perspectives from political, economic, and social stakeholders, further complicating the issue. Against this backdrop, the fuel subsidy controversy in Nigeria remains a focal point of public discourse, reflecting the intricate interplay between economic policies, political decisions, and the welfare of the Nigerian population.

The fuel subsidy controversy in Nigeria poses diverse challenges encompassing economic, political, and social dimensions, yet there exists a gap in understanding the linguistic and pragmatic elements within the discourse. Some of the existing literature provides insights into the economic implications and political ramifications of fuel subsidy removal (Adeoti, Chete, Beaton, & Clarke, 2016; Obasi, Ezenkwa, Onwa, & Nwogbaga, 2017; Igbokwe-Ibeto, Ewuim & Agbodike, 2015; Agiri, Erude & Ohanyelu, 2023); others have focused on pragmatic analysis on various issues (Hambali, Risdianto, & Rahma, 2024; Pranoto, 2024; Ratri & Bram, 2023; Hassan, Al-Rawe, Abdullah, & Hlaimi, 2023; Widya & Agustiana, 2023), but a comprehensive analysis of conversational and conventional implicatures in editorial writing on this issue is notably lacking. This study seeks to bridge this gap by investigating how deliberate violations of conversational maxims and the use of conventional implicatures contribute to the rhetorical strategies employed in the editorial 'The Fuel Subsidy Controversy' from The Independence Newspaper (April 14, 2023).

Thus, the purpose of the study is to unravel the employment of implicature within the editorial, exploring how linguistic and pragmatic choices shape the narrative surrounding fuel subsidy removal. By uncovering these linguistic elements, the research aims to enhance our understanding of how editorial content influences reader interpretations and contributes to the

broadier discourse on fuel subsidy controversies in Nigeria, providing valuable insights for linguistics, pragmatics, editorial writing, journalism, and political discourse analysis.

## **Literature Review**

### **Importance of Linguistic and Pragmatic Analysis in Editorial Discourse**

Linguistic and pragmatic analysis holds paramount importance in revealing the features of editorial discourse, especially in the context of a sensitive and controversial topic like fuel subsidy removal. Firstly, linguistic analysis enables a meticulous examination of the language employed in editorials, shedding light on the specific choices made by writers to convey their arguments (Alba-Juez, 2016; Jegede & Osoba, 2019). Jegede and Adesina (2020) note that understanding the features of syntax, semantics, and lexical choices provides insights into how editorial messages are crafted, emphasizing certain aspects of the discourse while downplaying others. Pragmatic analysis, on the other hand, explores the contextual and implied meanings, offering a deeper understanding of the rhetorical strategies at play (Jegede, 2020a). In the context of fuel subsidy controversies, linguistic and pragmatic analyses can reveal the persuasive techniques employed in editorials, allowing for a good comprehension of how language shapes public opinion on complex issues.

Secondly, linguistic and pragmatic analyses contribute significantly to deciphering the impact of conversational implicatures within editorials (Jucker, 2017). Jegede (2020b) observes that conversational implicatures arise from deliberate violations of conversational maxims, influencing reader interpretation and comprehension. By employing linguistic tools such as implicature analysis, researchers can unravel the layers of meaning within editorials, revealing the subtle ways in which writers strategically convey their perspectives. In the context of fuel subsidy controversies, implicature analysis becomes crucial for understanding the unstated assumptions, implied connections, and rhetorical emphasis embedded in editorial language. This approach allows researchers to go beyond the surface-level content and explore the deeper implications that shape public discourse.

Furthermore, linguistic and pragmatic analyses offer a comprehensive understanding of how editorials function as persuasive tools within the broader context of political and social communication (Al-Hindawi & Saffah, 2017). Editorials serve as platforms for expressing opinions, influencing public sentiment, and advocating for particular viewpoints. By applying

linguistic and pragmatic lenses to editorial discourse, researchers can unveil the intentional strategies used to persuade and engage readers. This insight is particularly relevant in the fuel subsidy context, where divergent opinions and interests are at play. Thus, linguistic and pragmatic analyses not only decode the linguistic choices made in editorials but also elucidate the persuasive mechanisms that contribute to shaping public narratives on critical issues like fuel subsidy controversies.

### **Pragmatics, Discourse and Society**

Jegade (2024) observes that the interdisciplinary field of pragmatics and discourse analysis has been a subject of interest for scholars across various domains, shedding light on the ways language is used in communication. In his recent work, Jegede (2024) highlights the growing significance of the interdisciplinary field encompassing pragmatics and discourse analysis, which has captivated scholars across diverse fields. He emphasises the fundamental insights offered by this interdisciplinary approach, revealing the crucial and complex mechanisms through which language functions in communication. Similarly, Jucker (2017) examines the historical evolution and foundational aspects of pragmatics and discourse, emphasizing their relevance in understanding language use in context. This exploration serves as a backdrop for contemporary studies that continue to investigate the complexities of language in societal interactions.

Al-Hindawi and Saffah (2017) contribute to this discourse by examining the application of pragmatics and discourse analysis within the context of education and practice. Their work highlights the practical implications of these linguistic theories, particularly in educational settings, where effective communication is paramount. By analysing discourse patterns and pragmatic strategies, educators can enhance instructional methods and foster better understanding among learners. Similarly, Osunbade et al. (2021) present a collection of essays that further enrich our understanding of the relationship between language use and societal dynamics. Through diverse perspectives and case studies, the contributors explore how pragmatic principles influence discourse in various social contexts, offering insights into cultural, political, and ideological dimensions of communication. The study reveals the significance of pragmatics in unravelling the realities of human interaction and shaping social discourse.

In Gross's handbook for higher education (2023), linguistic pragmatics emerges as a foundational component of language proficiency and communication skills. Understanding the contextual features of language use, including implicature and discourse strategies, is essential for effective communication in academic and professional settings. Integrating pragmatic principles into language instruction helps educators to better prepare students to explore diverse communication contexts and become proficient communicators.

In light of these discussions, Agbede and Mheta's study on pragmatic acts and discourse strategies in Nigerian newspaper editorials (2023) offers a valuable contribution to the field. By employing a socio-cognitive approach, the researchers examine the ways in which language is used to convey meaning and shape public discourse. Their analysis of implicature and other pragmatic phenomena sheds light on the persuasive strategies employed in editorial communication, providing valuable insights into the intersection of language, society, and ideology. Thus, their study reveals the relevance of pragmatics and discourse analysis in understanding and critically evaluating communicative practices in contemporary society.

This study serves as a fitting complement to the broader discourse on pragmatics and discourse analysis discussed above. By focusing on a specific textual example within the Nigerian media setting, this study provides a micro-level analysis that illuminates the application of pragmatic principles in real-world communication contexts. Through an examination of implicature and other pragmatic devices employed in the editorial, the study offers valuable insights into the persuasive strategies used to shape public opinion and influence discourse surrounding contentious issues such as fuel subsidy policies. By contextualizing the analysis within the broader framework of pragmatics and discourse, this study reveals the practical relevance of linguistic theories in understanding and interpreting communication practices within society.

### **Existing Studies on Fuel Subsidy Controversy**

Several existing studies have examined the different dimensions of the fuel subsidy controversy in Nigeria, offering insights from diverse perspectives such as economics, politics, and sociology. Economic analyses have been prominent, exploring the implications of fuel subsidy removal on government expenditure and fiscal sustainability. Studies by authors like Edeme and Okeke (2017) have investigated the economic rationale behind subsidy policies, examining their impact on national budgets and the overall macroeconomic stability. These works contribute to

understanding the financial considerations that underpin the subsidy system, providing a foundation for evaluating the economic feasibility and consequences of subsidy removal.

On the political front, research has focused on the decision-making processes and political implications associated with fuel subsidy policies. Studies such as those by Akinbobola (2016) have explored the political dynamics surrounding subsidy removal decisions, examining the role of political actors, interest groups, and public opinion in shaping policy outcomes. By analysing the political landscape, these studies highlight the intricate relationships between government decisions, public sentiment, and vested interests, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the fuel subsidy controversy as a political phenomenon.

Social impacts and public perceptions have also been central to existing studies, offering valuable insights into how subsidy policies affect citizens' daily lives and shape their views. Research by Ajayi (2019) investigated the social consequences of fuel subsidy removal, emphasizing its implications on household budgets, transportation costs, and overall living standards. Such studies contribute to the broader societal discourse, capturing the tangible effects of subsidy policies on the well-being of the Nigerian population.

While these studies provide crucial perspectives, a noticeable research gap exists regarding the linguistic and pragmatic analysis of editorials addressing the fuel subsidy controversy. The economic, political, and social dimensions have been extensively explored, but there is a dearth of literature specifically examining the language and Pragmatic strategies employed in editorials to convey perspectives on subsidy removal. This study aims to fill this gap by employing linguistic and pragmatic analyses to unravel the implicit meanings and persuasive techniques within editorials, offering a complementary perspective to the existing body of research.

In the context of fuel subsidy controversies, linguistic and pragmatic analyses become essential for deciphering the persuasive mechanisms employed in editorial discourse. While economic analyses provide quantitative insights and political studies unravel decision-making processes, linguistic analysis adds depth by examining the subtle nuances of language. Understanding how editorials strategically use language, conversational implicatures, and conventional implicatures contributes to a holistic comprehension of the narratives surrounding subsidy policies. This study builds on the existing research by bringing linguistic and pragmatic dimensions into focus, enriching the overall understanding of the fuel subsidy controversy in Nigeria.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Cooperative Principles**

Herbert Paul Grice's Cooperative Principle proposes that in conversation, participants assume each other's cooperation to achieve mutual communicative goals. This principle is reinforced by four conversational maxims: the maxim of quantity (where speakers provide just enough information without excess or deficiency), quality (where speakers convey truthful and well-supported statements), relation (where contributions are relevant to the ongoing conversation), and manner (where contributions are clear, orderly, and unambiguous). Violations or flouting of these maxims can generate implicatures. Implicature is a technical term for accounting for the implications of an utterance that goes beyond what is strictly implied by the content of the utterance; or a violation of any of the

Interestingly, speakers usually mean more than they say, especially drawing upon the context of the utterance. Implicature is a component of speaker meaning that constitutes an aspect of what is meant without necessarily being part of what is said. It denotes the implicit inferences drawn by listeners based on contextual clues, shared knowledge, and conversational principles. Essentially, implicature involves what is meant by a speaker but may not be explicitly stated. This layer of communication relies on the cooperative nature of language interaction, where listeners actively engage in interpreting not only the literal meaning of words but also the implied information that contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the intended message. Implicatures play a crucial role in facilitating efficient and contextually rich communication by incorporating shared assumptions and pragmatic considerations into the interpretation of spoken language.

### **Types of Implicature**

#### **1. Conversational Implicatures**

Conversational implicatures are implicit meanings conveyed in communication beyond the literal interpretation of spoken words. These implicatures arise through conversational principles like the Cooperative Principle, where speakers are expected to contribute relevant and truthful information. Conversational implicatures arise from the pragmatic context and depend on shared knowledge, assumptions, and the cooperative nature of communication. They often involve inferences made by listeners to reconcile what is said with what is pragmatically expected. The

basic assumption in conversation is that, unless otherwise indicated, the participants are adhering to the cooperative principle and the maxims. In short, conversational implicature usually occurs when the conversational maxims are violated. Thus, literary devices and advertisements often violate the maxims.

#### Examples

##### Example 1:

Person A: "Can I borrow your car?"

Person B: "My car has been having some issues lately."

In this example, the Maxim of Quantity is flouted. Person B does not provide a straightforward answer to the question but instead hints at potential problems with the car. The listener is expected to infer that lending the car might not be a good idea due to the mentioned issues.

##### Example 2:

Person A: "How was the party?"

Person B: "The cake was delicious."

The Maxim of Relevance is flouted here. Person B's response does not directly address the question about the party; instead, they provide information about a specific aspect (the cake). The listener is prompted to infer that perhaps the cake was the most noteworthy part of the party.

##### Example 3:

Person A: "Did you enjoy the movie?"

Person B: "The cinematography was

The Maxim of Quality is flouted in this instance. Person B does not directly express enjoyment or lack thereof but focuses on a specific positive aspect of the movie. The implicature is that the overall experience might not have been enjoyable.

##### Example 4:

Person A: "Do you like my new hairstyle?"

Person B: "It's certainly unique."

The Maxim of Manner is flouted as Person B's response is vague and non-committal. The listener is led to infer that "unique" might not necessarily be a positive assessment of the new hairstyle.

Example 5:

Person A: "Can you help me move this weekend?"

Person B: "I have some plans."

The Maxim of Relation is flouted in this case. Person B's response is intentionally vague about the nature of the plans, and the listener is expected to infer that the plans might conflict with helping move, implying a potential unavailability.

It is important to note that it is speakers who communicate meaning via implicatures and it is listeners who recognize those communicated meanings via inference. The inferences selected are those which will preserve the assumption of cooperation.

## **2. Conventional Implicatures**

In contrast to conversational implicature, conventional implicatures are not based on the cooperative principles or the maxims. They don't have to occur in conversation, and they don't depend on special contexts for their interpretation. Conventional implicatures are linguistic phenomena tied to particular words, contributing additional layers of meaning when these words are employed in communication. Unlike conventional meanings directly encoded in the definition of a word, conventional implicatures emerge from the use of specific words in context, adding nuances beyond the literal interpretation. These implicit meanings are generally associated with conjunctions, adverbs, or other function words. The essence lies in the inferred contrasts, emphases, or qualifications that arise when such words are utilized, enriching the conveyed message with subtleties that extend beyond the explicit content of the words themselves.

The English conjunction 'but' is one of these words that give rise to conventional implicatures. When 'but' is employed in a sentence, it introduces a contrast or contradiction between the information preceding and following it, creating an implicit meaning that goes beyond the explicit content of the words. This contrastive element enhances the depth and nuance of the

communication, illustrating how certain words, beyond their primary functions, contribute additional layers of meaning through conventional implicatures in language use. In the sentence, 'Mary suggested black, but I chose white', the fact that Mary suggested black is contrasted, via the conventional implicature of 'but', with my choosing white. Similarly, in the sentence, Sarah is intelligent, but her brother is a genius, the conventional implicature of 'but' highlights a contrast between Sarah being intelligent and her brother being a genius, emphasizing a difference in intellectual capabilities.

The English word 'even' possesses a conventional implicature that imparts a sense of contrast or surprise when used in sentences describing events. Its inclusion suggests an implicature of 'contrary to expectation.' When 'even' is deployed, it subtly conveys that the mentioned event is noteworthy or unexpected, emphasizing a deviation from what might be considered typical or anticipated. This conventional implicature with 'even' enhances the expressiveness of language, allowing speakers to convey nuances of surprise or emphasis by invoking the contrast between what might be expected and the actual occurrence described in the sentence. In the sentence, she finished the marathon, even with a sprained ankle, the use of 'even' highlights the surprising achievement of completing a marathon despite the challenging circumstance of a sprained ankle, emphasizing the unexpected nature of her accomplishment. Also, in the sentence, the team won the game, even though they were the underdogs, 'even' suggests a contrast with the team being the underdogs, emphasizing the unexpected victory and adding a layer of surprise to the statement.

Additionally, the word 'yet' in the English language carries a conventional implicature, indicating an anticipation or expectation of a change in the present situation in the future. When 'yet' is incorporated into a statement, it implies an assumption that the current state of affairs is temporary and likely to evolve, potentially in a contrasting direction. This implicature adds a temporal dimension to the discourse, suggesting that the conditions mentioned may not persist indefinitely and inviting an expectation of change or development over time. In the sentence, 'She hasn't finished her work yet', the use of 'yet' suggests an expectation that she will complete her work in the future, emphasizing the temporary nature of the current unfinished state. Similarly, in the sentence, 'The rain hasn't stopped yet,' the word 'yet' implies an anticipation of a change in weather, emphasizing the expectation that the rain will cease at some point in the future.

### **Implicature as a Pragmatic Approach to Editorial Discourse**

The application of conversational maxims in editorial writing plays a crucial role in shaping the persuasive and communicative effectiveness of the discourse. Editorial writers, consciously or unconsciously, adhere to or deviate from Grice's Cooperative Principle and its associated maxims—Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner—to influence reader interpretation and engagement. By strategically violating or adhering to these maxims, writers create conversational implicatures that prompt readers to infer implicit meanings beyond the explicit content. For instance, a deliberate omission of specific details in an editorial discussing fuel subsidy removal may violate the Maxim of Quantity, emphasizing the gravity of the situation without providing exhaustive information. Writers may also employ conversational implicature to reveal specific viewpoints, downplay opposing arguments, or create emphasis. Analyzing the application of conversational maxims in editorial writing provides valuable insights into the rhetorical strategies employed to convey perspectives, shaping public opinion and discourse on complex issues such as fuel subsidy controversies. Understanding how these maxims operate in editorial language enriches our comprehension of the deliberate choices made by writers to influence readers and shows the interplay between linguistic choices and persuasive intent in editorial communication.

Conventional implicatures, a concept crucial in linguistic pragmatics, refer to specific word choices or expressions that carry additional, non-literal meanings beyond what is explicitly stated. Unlike conversational implicatures, which arise from the violation of conversational maxims, conventional implicatures are associated with certain linguistic elements that inherently convey extra meaning. For instance, the use of conjunctions like 'but' or 'yet' introduces conventional implicatures by signalling contrast or unexpected continuation in meaning. In the context of fuel subsidy controversies, an editorial employing 'but' might emphasize a shift in the situation—perhaps from historical subsidy support to an unsustainable present state. The deliberate choice of these linguistic markers adds layers of meaning that extend beyond the literal interpretation, influencing how readers perceive the information. So, analyzing conventional implicatures in editorial writing allows linguists and researchers to reveal the relationships between linguistic choices and inferred meanings, providing insights into how language is strategically crafted to shape interpretations and reinforce rhetorical strategies within the context of complex and contentious issues.

## **Methodology**

The methodology employed in this study involved a qualitative analysis of the editorial 'The Fuel Subsidy Controversy' published in The Independence Newspaper on April 14, 2023. The April 14, 2023 editorial was chosen due to its comprehensive coverage of the fuel subsidy controversy at a critical juncture in Nigeria's economic policy debates. This timing provided a rich context for examining the use of language and pragmatic elements in shaping public opinion. For identifying and analysing implicatures, the study employed Grice's Cooperative Principle to examine how editorial content conveys implicit meanings and adheres to or violates conversational maxims. The first step involved a comprehensive reading of the editorial to identify excerpts that explicitly presented conversational implicatures. These excerpts were then categorized based on the conversational maxims they violated. Subsequently, conventional implicatures marked by specific conjunctions, such as 'but' and 'yet,' were identified to uncover shifts, contradictions, or emphatic utterances in the discourse. The analysis was conducted with a keen attention to linguistic and pragmatic principles, examining how deliberate violations and implicit meanings contribute to the overall rhetorical strategies employed in the editorial. The analysis began with categorizing instances of maxim violations within the editorial, specifically noting breaches of Grice's maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner. This was followed by a thematic analysis to identify recurring implicatures and their potential impact on public opinion and policy debates.

## **Results**

This section presents a detailed analysis of conversational and conventional implicatures within the editorial titled, 'The Fuel Subsidy Controversy,' published in The Independence Newspaper on April 14, 2023. Through a meticulous examination, the study identifies instances where conversational maxims are intentionally violated to shape the discourse surrounding the contentious issue of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. Additionally, the study explores the role of conventional implicatures marked by specific conjunctions in introducing coded meanings, shifts, and contradictions within the editorial.

Excerpt 1: "The President Muhammadu Buhari-led administration has elected to pass on the baton of partial or complete deregulation of the downstream sector to the incoming government

while the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has warned that the move might set the nation on fire."

In this excerpt, the conversational implicature arises from the warning that the move to pass on the baton of partial or complete deregulation of the downstream sector to the incoming government might set the nation on fire. The maxim violated here is the Maxim of Quantity. While the warning is issued, it lacks specific information about why such a move might lead to severe consequences or set the nation on fire. The conversational implicature is that the speaker assumes a shared understanding of the potential risks without providing a more detailed explanation. The violation serves a rhetorical purpose, emphasizing the perceived gravity of the situation, but it leaves room for interpretation and inquiry into the specific concerns raised by the warning.

Excerpt 2: "Doing so will save the country from preventable social and economic crises and potential anarchy."

In this excerpt, the conversational implicature arises from the statement that taking a particular action (presumably related to fuel subsidy) will save the country from preventable social and economic crises and potential anarchy. The maxim violated here is the Maxim of Quantity. The statement is concise and lacks specific information about the nature of the action required, the potential crises being referenced, or the link between the suggested action and the prevention of anarchy. The conversational implicature is that the speaker assumes a shared understanding of the gravity of the situation without providing a more detailed explanation. While brevity can serve rhetorical purposes, the violation of the maxim leaves room for interpretation and may lead to questions about the feasibility or effectiveness of the proposed action in averting the mentioned crises.

Excerpt 3: "From the perspective of those in vehement opposition to fuel subsidy removal, the federal government has said more than it has done in tackling the root causes of the corruption-ridden oil and gas sector."

In this excerpt, the conversational implicature arises from the perspective that the federal government, in the eyes of those opposing fuel subsidy removal, has spoken more than it has taken substantive actions to address the root causes of corruption in the oil and gas sector. The

maxim violated here is the Maxim of Relation. The statement implies a gap between the government's discourse and its actual efforts in addressing corruption, but it lacks specific details about the government's initiatives or the concrete steps it has taken. The conversational implicature suggests a disconnect between words and actions without providing sufficient information to support this claim, potentially leaving room for interpretation and questioning the effectiveness of government measures. The violation serves a rhetorical purpose, emphasizing perceived shortcomings in the government's commitment to addressing corruption in the oil and gas sector.

Excerpt 4: "According to the NLC, the federal government told Nigerians in 2016 that it had removed fuel subsidy. So, how can the same government come back in 2023 to tell the long-suffering citizens that have been buying petroleum products at exorbitant prices, amidst orchestrated scarcity, that it wants to remove subsidy again?"

In this excerpt, the conversational implicature arises from questioning the consistency of the government's stance on fuel subsidy removal over time. The maxim violated here is the Maxim of Relation. The speaker implies that the government's previous statement in 2016, claiming the removal of fuel subsidy, contradicts its current intent in 2023. However, the violation lies in the lack of a clear explanation of the specific details or circumstances surrounding the government's previous claim and the subsequent reconsideration in 2023. The conversational implicature suggests a logical inconsistency in the government's position without offering a more detailed analysis or context, potentially leaving room for interpretation and questioning the government's credibility. The violation serves a rhetorical purpose, emphasizing a perceived inconsistency in the government's statements regarding fuel subsidy.

Excerpt 5: "Such a decision will definitely lead to an upswing in the pump price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) and other related petroleum products with spin-off effects on the costs of transportation, food prices, rent and school fees, etc. leaving the masses to bear the brutal brunt."

In this excerpt, the conversational implicature arises from the statement that the decision to remove fuel subsidy will lead to an upswing in the pump price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) and other related petroleum products, affecting various aspects like transportation, food prices, rent, and school fees, placing the masses in a challenging position. The maxim violated here is

the Maxim of Quantity. While the statement provides a general overview of the potential consequences, it lacks specific details about the extent of the price increase or the nuanced impacts on different aspects of daily life. The conversational implicature is that the speaker assumes a shared understanding of the severity of the consequences without delving into more precise information, potentially leaving room for interpretation and further inquiry. The violation serves a rhetorical purpose, emphasizing the broad negative implications of the decision.

Excerpt 6: "Instead, the focus, according to both the NLC and JAF, should shift towards getting the four refineries working and producing petroleum products at all costs."

In this excerpt, the conversational implicature arises from the statement that the focus should shift towards getting the four refineries working and producing petroleum products at all costs. The maxim violated here is the Maxim of Quantity. The statement is concise and lacks specific information about the reasons or strategies behind the suggested focus shift. The conversational implicature is that the speaker assumes a shared understanding of the necessity and urgency of the proposed action without providing a more detailed explanation. While brevity can be intentional for emphasis, the violation of the maxim leaves room for interpretation and may lead to questions about the practicality or feasibility of achieving the stated goal. The conversational implicature highlights the prioritization of refinery functionality but lacks clarity regarding the comprehensive plan to achieve this objective.

Excerpt 7: "Furthermore, findings by experts on the economy have revealed that if the controversial fuel subsidy is eventually removed, it would increase the revenue base by no less than N6 to N7 trillion on an annual basis. Although this revelation looks mouth-watering, it raises the fundamental, burning questions, as always."

In this excerpt, the conversational implicature arises from the statement that removing the controversial fuel subsidy would increase the annual revenue base by no less than N6 to N7 trillion. The maxim violated here is the Maxim of Quantity. While the revelation is presented as substantial, the lack of detailed information or the specific methodology used by the experts to arrive at this estimation violates the maxim of providing sufficient information. The conversational implicature is that the speaker assumes a shared understanding of the significance of the revenue increase without offering a more comprehensive explanation. The violation serves

a rhetorical purpose, emphasizing the potential economic benefits of subsidy removal, but it leaves room for ambiguity and questions about the reliability of the presented figures.

Excerpt 8: "Similarly, sundry allegations over unscrupulous procurement of raw materials and equipment, mismanagement of the uncovered illegal refineries as well as vandalism of oil pipelines despite the presence of members of the armed forces in these areas have angered those in opposition to fuel subsidy removal."

In this excerpt, the conversational implicature arises from the mention of sundry allegations related to unscrupulous procurement, mismanagement of illegal refineries, and vandalism of oil pipelines despite the presence of armed forces. The maxim violated here is the Maxim of Relation. The implicature suggests a connection between the mentioned allegations and opposition to fuel subsidy removal, implying a causal relationship. However, the violation lies in the lack of specificity and clarity regarding how these diverse allegations are directly related to the opposition to subsidy removal. The speaker assumes a straightforward connection between the various issues, potentially oversimplifying the complex reasons behind opposition. The conversational implicature highlights the need for more precise information to establish a stronger and more transparent link between the mentioned allegations and the stance against fuel subsidy removal.

Excerpt 9: "Nigeria, being an oil-producing country, does not need to import petroleum products, which warrants fuel subsidy and the attendant wanton corruption in the subsidy regime."

In this excerpt, the conversational implicature arises from the statement that Nigeria, as an oil-producing country, does not need to import petroleum products, justifying the existence of fuel subsidy and implicating corruption in the subsidy regime. The maxim violated here is the Maxim of Relation. The statement links Nigeria's status as an oil-producing country directly to the necessity of importing petroleum products and the resulting fuel subsidy, implying a causal relationship. However, the implicature suggests that this causal link may oversimplify a complex issue, violating the maxim of providing precise and relevant information about the relationship between oil production, importation, fuel subsidy, and corruption. The conversational implicature is that the speaker assumes a straightforward connection, potentially neglecting nuanced factors that contribute to the subsidy regime and corruption issues.

Excerpt 10: "Nevertheless, we call for a roundtable of all stakeholders, the private and public sector players in the oil and gas sector as well as Non-Governmental Organizations, on the desirability or otherwise of fuel subsidy removal."

In this excerpt, the conversational implicature arises from the call for a roundtable discussion involving various stakeholders to deliberate on the desirability of fuel subsidy removal. The maxim violated here is the Maxim of Manner. While the speakers express the need for a comprehensive discussion involving both private and public sector players as well as NGOs, they do not specify the specific details or methods for conducting the roundtable. The violation of the maxim of manner leaves the manner of organizing and executing the proposed roundtable open to interpretation. The conversational implicature is that the speakers assume a shared understanding of how such discussions are typically organized, leaving room for flexibility in the actual implementation of the proposed roundtable, but potentially causing ambiguity regarding the precise logistics.

Excerpt 11: "The trio of the National Operations Controller, the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN), Mike Osatuyi, the CEO of the Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise, Dr. Muda Yusuf and the Chairman of the Major Oil Marketers of Nigeria (MOMAN) insist that fuel subsidy removal should be carried out without further d

In this excerpt, the conversational implicature arises from the speakers insisting on the immediate removal of fuel subsidy. The maxim violated here is the Maxim of Quantity. The speakers, represented by the National Operations Controller, Mike Osatuyi, Dr. Muda Yusuf, and the Chairman of MOMAN, express a firm stance on subsidy removal but do not provide extensive information or elaborate on the reasons behind their insistence. By not offering a more detailed justification, the speakers assume a shared understanding of the reasons, violating the maxim of providing sufficient information. The conversational implicature is that they believe the urgency is apparent or widely understood, relying on the listeners to infer the reasons for their insistence. This violation serves a rhetorical purpose, emphasizing their strong collective stance on the issue.

### **Conventional Implicature**

Excerpt 1: "Osatuyi explains that the fuel subsidy has remained up till now because of the federal government's regulation of the oil industry but it is no longer sustainable."

In the excerpt, the conjunction 'but' operates as a marker of conventional implicature, introducing a contrast between two related clauses. The conventional implicature of 'but' suggests a shift or contradiction in the expected continuation of the idea. Here, the initial clause highlights the persistence of the fuel subsidy due to the federal government's regulation of the oil industry. However, the subsequent clause introduced by 'but' signals a departure from this status quo, indicating that despite the historical regulation, the subsidy is no longer sustainable. The use of 'but' as a conventional implicature serves to convey a critical meaning, emphasizing a change or development in the situation, enriching the understanding of the relationship between government regulation and the sustainability of the fuel subsidy.

Excerpt 2: "We cannot but at this point call for a full investigation into all acts of corruption in the oil

In this excerpt, the conjunction 'but' functions as a marker of conventional implicature, introducing a sense of inevitability or necessity. The use of 'but' here is not indicating a direct contrast but rather emphasizes the strong recommendation for a full investigation into corruption in the oil sector. The conventional implicature arises from the implication that, given the circumstances or information presented, there is no alternative action but to call for an investigation. It conveys a sense of compulsion, where the severity or urgency of the situation demands a specific response. The use of 'but' in this context enriches the meaning by framing the call for investigation as not just a suggestion or option but as a compelling and unavoidable course of action in response to perceived corruption in the oil sector.

Excerpt 3: "Billions of dollars have been expended on Turn Around Maintenance of the perpetually moribund state-owned refineries without any returns. Yet, members of staff of these refineries continue to draw salaries and allowances every month."

In this excerpt, the adverb 'yet' serves as a marker of conventional implicature, introducing a contrast or unexpected continuation of information. The conventional implicature of 'yet' emphasizes the paradoxical situation where significant funds have been spent on maintenance

without any returns. The subsequent clause, introduced by 'yet,' highlights an additional surprising aspect—the ongoing payment of salaries and allowances to refinery staff despite the lack of positive outcomes. The use of 'yet' implies a continuation of unfavourable circumstances, creating a sense of contradiction between the significant expenditures and the persistent lack of productivity. This conjunction contributes to the overall critique of the inefficiency in the management of state-owned refineries, employing conventional implicature to underscore the unexpected or contradictory elements within the described scenario.

### **Discussion of Findings**

In the presented results, various conversational implicatures emerge from the examined excerpts, shedding light on the complexities surrounding the discourse on fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. These implicatures often arise from violations of conversational maxims, particularly those of Quantity and Relation, and they play a crucial role in shaping the interpretations and perceptions of the audience.

The first set of excerpts highlights violations of the Maxim of Quantity, where speakers provide concise statements that lack specific details. This deliberate brevity serves rhetorical purposes, emphasizing the gravity of the situations discussed but leaves room for interpretation and inquiry. For instance, the warning about the potential consequences of deregulation lacks explicit information, triggering a conversational implicature that assumes a shared understanding of the risks without offering a detailed explanation. Similarly, violations of the Maxim of Relation are evident in excerpts where there is an implied gap between words and actions, such as the government's discourse versus its efforts in addressing corruption. The conversational implicature suggests a disconnect without providing sufficient information to support the claim, leaving room for interpretation and questioning the effectiveness of government measures. Moreover, some excerpts violate the Maxim of Quantity by presenting general overviews without specific details, like the potential consequences of subsidy removal on various aspects of daily life. This violation allows for the creation of conversational implicatures that assume a shared understanding of the severity of the consequences without giving more precise information.

The discussion of conventional implicatures further enriches the analysis. The use of conjunctions like 'but' and 'yet' introduces implied meanings, emphasizing shifts, contradictions,

or inevitabilities in the discourse. For example, the conjunction 'but' in the explanation of the fuel subsidy's sustainability implies a change in the situation, si a departure from the historical regulation. In a nutshell, the conversational and conventional implicatures identified in the examined excerpts contribute to the complexity of the fuel subsidy discourse. The deliberate violations of conversational maxims and the use of conventional implicatures serve rhetorical purposes, emphasizing key points and framing the narrative in a way that invites interpretation and reflection. Understanding these implicatures is crucial for comprehending the critical perspectives and arguments presented in the discourse on fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria.

## **Conclusion**

The analysis of implicature in the selected editorial unveils the different meanings embedded in the discourse surrounding fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. The deliberate violations of conversational maxims, particularly Quantity and Relation, strategically shape the narrative by emphasizing key points, invoking gravity, and encouraging interpretation. The use of conventional implicatures, marked by conjunctions like 'but' and 'yet,' adds further depth to the discourse, introducing shifts, contradictions, and a sense of inevitability. The findings contribute to existing theories in pragmatics by empirically demonstrating how editorial content on contentious socio-economic issues, such as the fuel subsidy controversy, can strategically manipulate implicatures to sway public opinion and influence policy discourse. This emphasises the practical relevance of Gricean maxims in analysing real-world communicative phenomena, shedding light on the interplay between language use, persuasion, and societal dynamics.

The findings are presented in distinct segments, each focusing on different types of implicatures found in the analysed editorial. One segment identifies explicit violations of Gricean maxims, noting instances where the editorial directly disregards principles of quantity, quality, relation, and manner. Another segment explores implicit implicatures inferred from the editorial's language use, encompassing critical implications and insinuations that influence reader interpretation. Together, these segments offer insight into how linguistic choices in editorial content contribute to shaping public discourse and policy debates surrounding the fuel subsidy controversy.

This study contributes significantly to academic literature by providing empirical evidence of how editorial content on the fuel subsidy issue strategically employs implicatures to influence

public opinion and policy debates, enriching our understanding of pragmatic language use in socio-economic discourse. Practically, it reveals the importance of media literacy in critically evaluating editorial narratives and highlights the potential impact of language manipulation on public perception and policy formulation. Future research could explore the role of implicatures in shaping diverse stakeholder perspectives on fuel subsidy removal, as well as investigate the effectiveness of different communication strategies in mitigating misinformation and fostering informed public discourse on complex economic policies.

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## Cartoons of Corruption in The Nigerian Newsprints And The Dynamics of Semiotic Discourse

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### Abstract

*Cartoons as elements of meaning significations have, doubtless, become a globally accepted route of scholarly perception in the print media. Extant studies in Nigerian Newspaper cartoons have examined various issues of socio-political concerns with stint consideration for the dynamics of semiotics in the representations of corruption in selected Nigerian newspaper cartoons, analysing the discursive elements that house corruption as the bane of the Nigerian economy. Kress and Leeuwen's multimodal approach to social semiotics, rooted in Pierce's theory of signs, is deployed as hermeneutic model for the corruption theme using descriptive research design. Six cartoons, two each from Daily Sun (DS), Daily Trust (DT) and The Punch (TP), were purposively selected for national spread, professional predispositions, and their relevance to nation-building processes. The data were subjected to Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA). Cartoon images, as meaning signification tools, manifested certain linguistic and non-linguistic resources in forms and structures that depict the Nigerian clime as corruption personified. With shrewd deployment of compound and complex clause structures, deliberate deployment of colour palette for emotional and symbolic meanings, composition for layout, framing, and salience (prominence) of elements to reveal the cartoonist's emphasis and priorities. These were combined with series of non-linguistic forms such as irony, hyperbole and symbolism. The artistic intelligence of the cartoonists deployed in DT cartoon, TP cartoon, DS cartoons respectively unearth the damning level of media corruption in the polity in much the same way the army and the political class were affected. Both expressive and non-expressive language forms project 'corruption identity' for the main effort of nation-building purpose. Cartoon texts, within their expressive and impressive language forms, embodied in iconicity, symbolism, and indexicality, have demonstrated the themes of corruption in the Nigerian newspapers for pragmatic actions. They, contributing to knowledge in imagistic interpretations, media studies, language pedagogy, and applied English linguistics, therefore constitute covert call to stakeholders for meaningful nation-building process in the Nigerian polity.*

**Keywords:** Semiotic representation, Corruption identity, Nigerian Newspaper cartoons, Artistic intelligent, Discursive dynamics

## **Introduction**

Cartoonists' representation of corruption as the bane of socio-economic reality in the Nigerian print media, and the valuable insights it offers into how meaning is created, communicated, and understood in especially nation-building contexts obviously depict semiotics as a dynamic field that continues to evolve even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global polity. It is thus necessary to think of a study in which language could be analysed beyond its purely linguistic properties, considering how it functions as a system of signs embedded within broader socio-economic, and cultural contexts. In this connection, we are set to investigate the relationships between the physical form of the sign, such as a words and images that manifest in cartoons and their associative concept or meaning that constitute social semiotics. Social semiotics is a term borrowed from Halliday (1978) to mean the way language functions both as expression of, and as metaphor for social processes of meaning making in reality (Akinwande 2018; Onugu 2020). What should, therefore, be looked out for is an analysis that is stud-bolted on the Peircean strand of semiotics, to be explicated in the light of groundwork provided by Kress and Leeuwen's semiotic perception. This is with a view to raising awareness that transforms mere scholarly perceptions on corruption to national concerns. In prognostic term, therefore, we project a topical discursive issue that can consequently generate some reader-interest moves towards taking personal and communal steps to eradicate corruption in our society. Such awareness and skill development are capable of not only brightening the readers' horizons but also generating the right perceptions and attitudes towards decoding corruption in cartoons. We are, therefore, set to explore semiotics as a dynamically evolving field, offering valuable insights into how meaning is created, communicated, and understood, intersecting between the contexts of media ideological representations and socio-economic threat posed by corruption. Examining newspaper cartoons of corruption, as embodying signs or symbols of semiotic authority sheds light on the complexities of socio-economic and media communication, enriching the understanding of how the established corruption culture has become the bane of Nigeria's existence.

## **Statement of the problem**

A large number of scholarly innovations have been mined in the field of media discourse that investigate cartoons mostly as humorous and satirical means of communication. Ashiru and Bello (2020), for instance, recognize cartoons as fast becoming important means of passing information in especially, the print media, used to examine happenings in a society with a view

to informing, criticizing, evaluating and evoking reactions to a particular perspective or narration, without fancies for explaining the message of a cartoons.

Two years earlier, Tyumbu (2018) had adopted Pierce's semiotic theory, examining cartoons of diverse themes in *The Nation* (a Nigerian daily newspaper) leaving out cartoons based on issues of corruption. Al Ghezy (2020) focuses on cartoons based on issues of corruption among Iraqi politicians using a cognitive semiotic approach. Abiodun and Omolabi (2020) is an onshore investigation which merely examines diverse themes such as embezzlement, lack of faith in the Nigerian government, greed, lies, and others in political cartoons. This obvious academic lacuna on corruption cartoons, especially in the Nigerian context automatically evokes an interest in seeing the way and manner modern Nigerian cartoonists tend to depict Nigeria and corruption issue in the newspapers whose views they are projecting. In view of this, and armed with the appropriate hermeneutic tools, the present study attempts to venture into semiotic interpretation of corruption (which has become the bane of Nigeria's socio-economic development) in selected newspaper cartoons in Nigeria. The study is to be anchored on Kress and Van Leeuwen's multimodal approach to social semiotics.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

Studies abound that have explored several issues of socio-political relevance meagre attention to analysing the discursive elements that house corruption as the bane of the Nigerian economy, manifesting in Nigerian newspaper cartoons. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the instrumentality of the linguistic and non-linguistic resources deployed in the presentation of various political themes, especially corruption and other related economic and financial offences in the Nigerian polity. The specific objectives are to:

- (i) identify and categorize the linguistic and non-linguistic semiotic resources employed to signify corruption in the selected cartoons;
- (ii) analyse the signalling imports of the linguistic and non-linguistic categories that signal corruption in the selected cartoons;
- (iii)interrogate the socio-political and economic implications of the semiotic resources signalling corruption in the selected cartoons.

## **Significance of the Study**

Semiotic analysis of cartoon texts gives insights into the intrinsic meanings such texts in order to enhance better understanding of the concepts embedded in the texts. This study is significant in the following ways: One, it will contribute to the existing literature on semiotic studies of cartoons, establishing the possibility of deploying theoretical eclecticism in harmonising Peirce's theory of signs and Kress and Leeuwen's multimodal approach to social semiotics. Two, the study is capable of raising awareness on corruption in the nation for the people to have proper perception of it. Consequently, interested readers can be moved towards taking personal and communal steps to eradicate the evil called corruption in our society. Three, expanding the frontier of knowledge in semiotics, the study will help to improve and increase further scholarly interest in the field.

Moreover, the study can further sharpen the readers' awareness and analytical skills of newspaper cartoons. Such awareness and skill development are capable of not only brightening the readers' horizons but also generating the right perceptions and attitudes towards decoding corruption in cartoons. Consequently, readers can be moved to taking steps towards stemming the tide of corruption in the society. In addition, the results of the study will help to broaden knowledge in the field of semiotics, making it a worthy venture.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Based on the content of the foregoing review which has displayed views and arguments that are in tandem with the preoccupation of the current research, it became obligatory to extend our investigative tentacles to accommodate Peirce's theory of signs and Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal discourse approach to social semiotics. Such framework permits observing a gamut of semiotic resources that are available in our data. This reveals a set of signs with representations that are interpretable in terms of their social significance.

## **Peirce's Theory of Signs**

Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) was an American philosopher, scientist, polymath and pioneer in modern semiotics who studied the history of epistemology for which he developed a new vocabulary which he called the "Study of Signs" (Esposito, 1998). In 1857, Peirce developed the first version of his triadic system of categories. This triad consists of "the I"

(identified with reason, goodness and permanence), "the thou" (reflected in love, beauty and causality) and "the it" (which manifests in sensation, truth and community).

Peirce's reflection on the history of epistemology revealed that the structure of the knower's relation with the known, with the structure of the process of knowing and what is known is governed by triadic relations. This then gives rise to a short list for formal relations which Peirce calls the firstness, secondness and thirdness. The firstness, as Aghaei (2015) explains, is a mode of mere being without reference to anything else. He cites the example of the mode of "redness" of an object before anything else in the universe is red. The secondness is the relation of a first to a second. This may be as a result of action, reaction, causality, reality, actuality or factuality of things that exist in our senses which in turn produce physical effects. The example of a weather vane turning to the direction to which the wind is blowing is cited here. Feeling pain as a result of a toothache is another example. The thirdness, Aghaei (2015) explains refers to itself by comparing one thing to another. A synthetic, "law" in the sense of a predictive concept is thereby established. The law of gravity which allows us to predict that each time an object is thrown up, it falls to the ground is cited as an example here.

### **The Peircean iconicity and the universe of discourse**

Peirce also called an icon a "likeness" (CP 1.558) as Ransdell (1979: 55) notes a subtle distinction in Peirce among icon, iconic sign, and hypoicon. An icon is, phenomenologically speaking, always a first. A map of a terrain, since it is an existent, could not, strictly speaking, be counted as an icon. However, it can act as an iconic sign, which Peirce wants to call a hypoicon (cf. CP 2.276). Ransdell clarifies the distinction in the following way: "An icon is any possible qualitative content of consciousness what Peirce calls a 'Firstness' considered in respect to its possible function in cognition as the form (that is, quality or character) of an actual or possible object. An iconic sign ('hypoicon') is anything which does or can function as a sign in virtue of its embodiment of some icon proper. See Short (1982: 291). For the sake of convenience, I'll forgo this subtle distinction in favour of using the term icon for all instances of similarity in signs regardless of phenomenological status.

The universe of discourse, according to Liszka (1996), is what an utterer and interpreter must share in order for communication to result, and so might be more appropriately called a

discourse community. In order for genuine communication to take place the sign which is the utterer must be part of a sense common to the interpreter; and conversely, it requires a sensibility gained from a common community. This allows in principle the exchangeability of utterer and interpreter; that is, the interpreter could in turn serve as the utterer to the utterer Peirce (CP 8.179) hints at this in the following passage:

Let him [the utterer] try to specify a place on the interpreter's panorama, and he can only look over his own panorama, where he can find nothing but his own ideas.

According to Atkin (2006), Peirce developed his ideas about signs and semiotics in three broad accounts. They are: the early account (from the 1860's), an interim account (developed from the 1890s and 1890s and presented in 1903) and the final account (developed between 1906 and 1910). Each of these accounts will be discussed in the subsequent sections. In precise term, Charles Sanders Peirce emphasises the pragmatic aspect of signs.

### **Kress and Leeuwen's Multimodal Discourse Approach**

Kress and Leeuwen's multimodal discourse approach is a recent approach in semiotic analysis. The approach according to Igwebuike, Abioye and Chimunuanya (2017 pp 5 and 6) "encompasses the linguistic features of a text which are usually regarded as speech acts; and non-linguistic features, like images, symbols, pictures and colours". It is a model which accounts for all modes in a communicative event. This approach to social semiotics sees signs as being culturally constructed and interpreted within certain cultural scopes. Confirming this, Omolabi and Abiodun (2020 pp. 154-155) posit that "media of communication are shaped by a culture into a range of meaning making systems, so as to articulate the meanings demanded by the practical, social requirements of different communities". They also observe that the construction of meanings in any society does not only involve verbal components but also non-verbal components.

Rather than venture into 'telepathic discourse theory' that explains discourse as a means of establishing or receiving involuntary projections of logocentric advertisement of a particular university's products through communication (Oduola, 2021). Kress and Leeuwen's (1996) belief that visual images like pictures, colours, typography and other semiotic modes are similar to language and can be used to fulfil three metafunctions is given deliberate emphasis. Building

therefore on Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, they propose three metafunctions in visual grammar. These are 'representational', 'interactive' and 'compositional' meanings which, according to Omolabi and Abiodun (2020), correspond with Halliday's ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions, respectively. Just like Halliday's metafunctions, Kress and Leeuwen's approach is based on functions of the signs. In complementary term, we, therefore, have a study in the light of Kress and van Leeuwen's multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) to examine how meaning is constructed through various modes of communication, such as language, image, sound, and gesture.

## **Methodology**

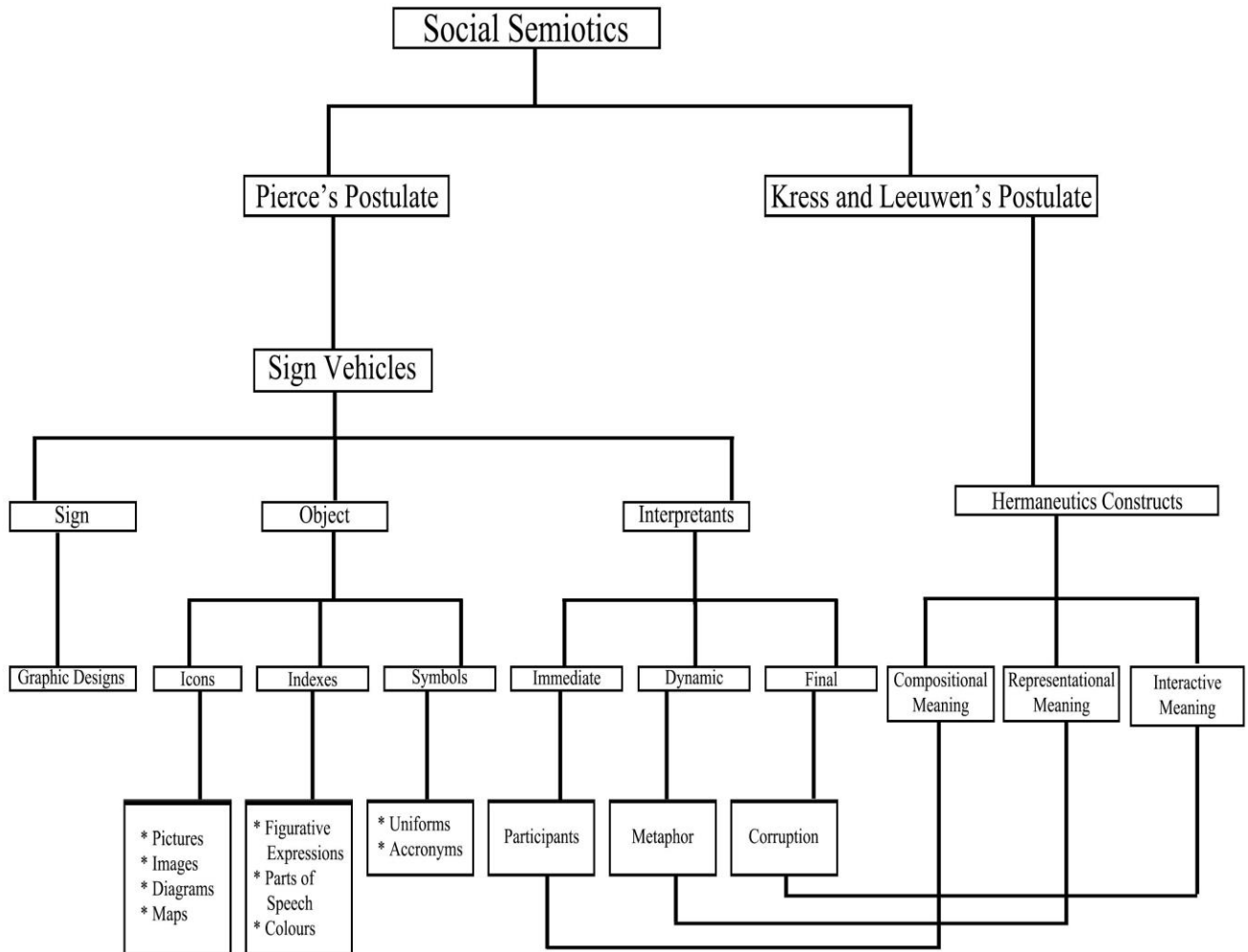
Being data-driven in nature requires that a naturalistic method be facilitated for the study. It follows, therefore, that deploying a descriptive and analytical research design is justifiable in the natural context of corruption issue in Nigeria. Thus, data were sourced from three Nigerian Daily Newspapers: *The Punch*, *Daily Trust* and *Daily Sun*. The newspapers were purposively selected based on the geographical location of their place of publication, their wide coverage of readership. The three Nigerian newspapers have private proprietorship with deep-seated personal and institutional ideological leanings as well as social and developmental interests.

## **A Model of Social Hermeneutics for Cartoons of Corruption**

As part of the methodological approach, and as Ojeniyi (2012, p.73) puts it, there is therefore the need for a "model of analysis which is capable of providing explanations for the interrelationship maintained between messages and the intertwined systems of codes that are employed to communicate them". In the light of this, attempts are made in this study to organize the semiosis of the various semiotic materials which have been employed to signify corruption in the selected cartoon-texts through the combination of a theory of signs and a theory of social hermeneutics.

The model takes its roots from Pierce's theory of signs and Kress and Leeuwen's multimodal approach to social hermeneutics. Pierce's theory of sign vehicles vis-a-viz, sign, object and interpretant are used to identify the signification process while Kress and Leeuwen's multimodal approach is used to provide the social interpretations of the signs. The need for designing such a model arises because cartoons are made up of both linguistic and non-linguistic signs in their signification processes; and to cater for semiotics' concern with signs and how they signify, there

is the need for a model which identifies the signifiers in the selected interpretation within the Nigerian cultural setting as presented below:



**Figure 1: Oduola & Adeyinka’s Social semiotic hermeneutic model of messages and systems of codes intertwined**

It is obvious that this model of ours, presented above, can provide a useful template for easy application of Pierce’s theory of signs and Kress and Leeuwen’s multimodal discourse approach to social semiotics the analysis of cartoon images. These automatically serve as instruments through which the cartoons as communication materials can be converted into signs which can be subjected to relevant social interpretations, setting the stage for smooth analysis of our data.

**Analysis and discussion**

Semiotics is a powerful tool used by Nigerian newspaper cartoonists to communicate the issue of corruption in the country. Through the use of visual signs and symbols, they are able to highlight the severity of the problem and the need for action to be taken to address it. It is of paramount interest to align with Onugu (2022) in the deployment of Odebunmi's (2020) analytical mappings in pragmatic analysis; that is, top-down approach of function to form. Our analysis, however, sets out for bottom-up analytical template that generates the functions from the forms.

### **Semiotic Analysis of Corruption in Selected Cartoons**

The analysis of our texts is in two parts. The signalling contents of each cartoon are categorized into linguistic and non-linguistic signs, employed to signal corruption in the selected cartoons. The linguistic signs are identified as icons and hypo-icons such as metaphorical statements, and so on. Indexes and sub-indexes such as proper nouns, personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, relative pronouns, acronyms, and other elements of linguistic categories, are also identified as part of the linguistic resources employed as signals to corruption in our data. Non-linguistic resources identified as signals of corruption in the selected texts include pictures, diagrams, images and colours. The signs so identified are seen as interpretants of corruption in our analysis.

### **Signals of Corruption in Government Institutions**

Such signals are essential tools that function as inherent instruments which invoke sets of interpretations in the mind of the sign reader. It is clear that corruption can be signalled through semiotic resources in institutions. Such institutions as observed in our data include government institutions, educational institutions and the oil sector. Mismanagement and embezzlement of public funds as impunity, scams and scandals, and political figures are all manifested as signals of corruption as exemplified below:

**Cartoon Text 1: DS cart: Daily Sun, Monday, 7th February, 2020**



The semiotic elements deployed in DS cart 1 to represent issues of corruption in the Nigeria Police Force depicts the role of the members of the House of Representatives in addressing corruption and their determination to weed out corrupt officers from the force. The cartoon emphasizes the need for comprehensive police reforms and the challenges faced in the attempt to eliminate corruption at all levels.

### **Categorizing the Semiotic Resources**

Using the MDA, the identifiable categories of semiotic resources are conveyed through such modes as images, text, colour, and composition. All of these come in the form of:

1. Graphical lettering modality includes (i) textual mode with (ii) specialized font style that suggests (iii) the tonal mode (iv) normal phraseology
2. Foregrounding modality includes quotations mode, capitalization mode

All of the above express Iconicity, indexicality, and symbolicness

The first statement is made up of a main clause: "WE IN THE HOUSE OF REPS HAVE DECIDED TO COME WEED AND OUT THE BAD ELEMENTS AMONGST YOUR PEOPLE" and a subordinate clause, "SO RELAX". The nominal word group (nwg), that is, the completive element of the prepositional word group (pwg), "in the House of Reps" embedded in the main clause serves as a complement for the pronoun "we". Embedded in the noun nwg is an abbreviation "Reps", which is an abbreviation of the House of Representatives which is the lower arm of the National Assembly in Nigeria.

Another element also embedded in the clause is the noun phrase, "the bad elements". The most important lexical item in this clause is "weed" which forms part of the infinitival verb phrase "to come and weed" which itself is the complement of the main verb, "decide".

The second statement is contained in the second speech bubble "(WHISPERS) CALM GUYS, NO "YAWA", THE MORE THEY LOOK, THE LESS THEY'LL SEE" is of a complex clause structure. Embedded in the statement is a verb phrase, "calm down". The noun "guys" as observed in the statement is a slang, a colloquial expression which means "fellow". The noun "yawa" is another slang with its origin in the Nigerian Pidgin. It means trouble or problem. "No yawa" means "no problem". "The more they look, the less they'll see" is an idiomatic expression mostly used in the performance of magical arts. The non-linguistic resources in the cartoon are the images of men of the Nigerian Police Force as projected by their uniforms, images of the members of the House of Representatives and images of farming implements (hoe and rake).

### **Signalling Imports of the Semiotic Resources**

The semiotic resources in DS cart 1 project a number of signalling imports. The abbreviation "Reps" which stands for "representatives" projects the visitors as icons of the members of the House of Representatives, the lower arm of the Nigerian Parliament. The verb "weed" from the agricultural register means the removal of unwanted elements. It is a metaphor for the cleansing assignment for which the members of the House of Representatives have come.

The whole whispered expression presented in the second statement is an 'index' to the bad state of the Nigeria Police Force reflecting the level of corruption. The whisper is an 'index' to the secrecy with which issues of corruption are usually handled. The verb phrase "calm down" in the imperative clause is an 'index' to the state of mind of the police officers. This projects them as being jittery at the visit of the members of the House of Representatives, hence the need to 'calm them down'. The idiomatic expression, "the more they look, the less they'll see" connotes the existence of mechanisms for proper covering up of all the atrocities the officers might have committed. It 'indexes' the confidence that no matter the depth of investigations, the corrupt practices can never be uncovered.

The uniforms of the officers (black boots, black pairs of trousers, blue tops and black berets) position them as 'icons' of the men of the Nigeria Police Force. The dressing of one of the

members of the House of Representative is 'symbolic' of the dressing of a farmer. His dressing synchronizes with the word "weed" which signals the cleansing assignment for which they have come. The pair of glasses the man is wearing is a 'symbol' of knowledge and insight. The man is therefore a symbol of a "farmer" who has insight and knowledge of the existence of corruption among the officers and has come to carry out a cleansing job. The red colour of his dress is possibly 'symbolic' of the danger which the visit portrays for the officers if their corrupt practices are uncovered. Protruding bellies of the police officers is an 'index' of the extra weight carried by the police officers as a result of their involvement in corrupt practices. The heavy weights and protruding bellies are indexes of the existence of corruption. The officers are seen as iconic representations of corrupt police officers. The police officer, possibly the most senior among the officers as he is being singled out from the others, looks down, unable to look into the eyes of the man addressing him. This indexes timidity occasioned by guilt. The rake and hoe are metaphors of the instruments with which they intend to rid the force of "bad elements".

### **Generated Interpretations**

It is implicated that the law makers have the thought of taking direct actions to address corruption. The inherent communicative force however is that no serious weeding is intended. The statement reflects the scepticism and cynicism prevalent among some police officers regarding anti-corruption efforts. It implies that there may be a belief that the actions of the members of the House of Representatives may not yield significant results as corrupt officers can evade detection.

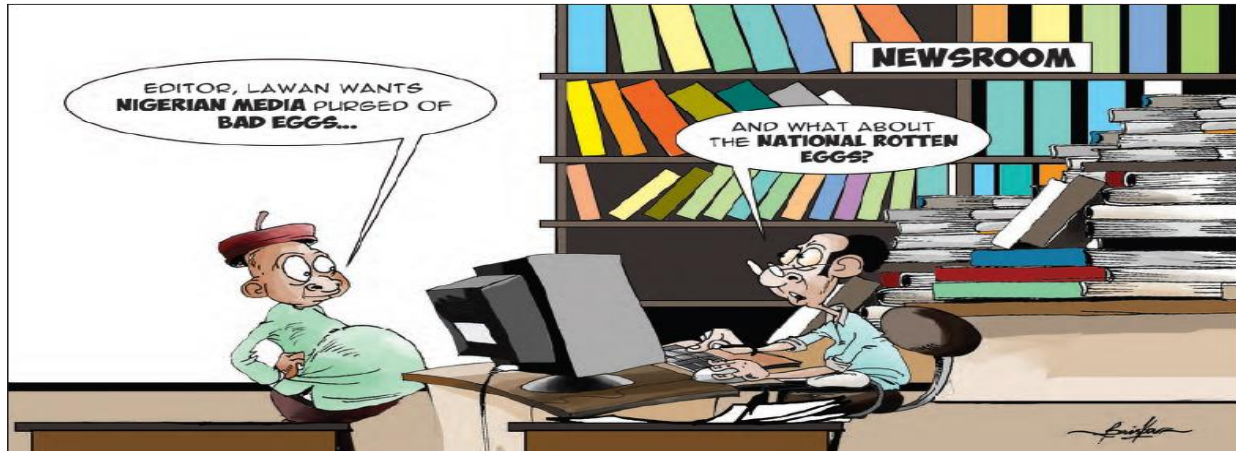
A number of figures of speech are observed in the presentations of the semiotic resources. The abbreviation, "Reps" as embedded in the noun phrase is a synecdoche for the House of Representatives, the lower arm of the National Assembly. The noun phrase, "the bad elements" is also a metaphor for corrupt police officers.

### **Socio-political and Economic Implications**

DS cart 1 is representative of the actual situation of corruption in Nigeria and the attendant difficulties faced in attempts to stamp out the rot. The text projects the endemic nature of corrupt practices among the men of the Nigeria Police Force and some sort of moral hypocrisy of corrupt members of the Parliament pretending to be fighting corruption. The cartoon, therefore, suggests

that there is a need for more proactive steps to be taken if corruption is going to be actually stamped out of the force and the nation at large.

### **Carton Text 2: DT Cart: Daily Trust, Wednesday, 5th May 2021**



DT Cart 2 depicts a man visiting a news room to demand that the Nigerian media be “purged of bad eggs.” The other participant then asks about the “national rotten eggs.”

### **The Semiotic Resources**

These are to be projected in terms of the following outline, using the MDA:

1. **Representation:** Identify the participants (people, objects, symbols) in the cartoon and their roles. Analyse how they are depicted, dressed, and positioned.
4. **Composition:** Study the layout, framing, and salience (prominence) of elements. This reveals the cartoonist's emphasis and priorities.
5. **Colour:** Investigate the colour palette and its emotional and symbolic meanings.

Both linguistic and non-linguistic semiotic resources are identified in the cartoon text above. The first linguistic resource in the cartoon is a statement credited to one of the participants in the cartoon, “EDITOR, LAWAN WANTS NIGERIAN MEDIA PURGED OF BAD EGGS...” Another linguistic resource identified is a rhetorical question from another participant, “AND WHAT ABOUT THE NATIONAL ROTTEN EGGS?” Also observed is the linguistic item, “NEWSROOM”. Other linguistic semiotic resources include an ellipsis (...) and a question mark(?).

The non-linguistic semiotic resources identified in DT cart 2 include two human interactive participants (a Senator and an Editor) positioned equidistantly with a desktop on a table in-between. Books of different colours and sizes arranged on a bookshelf at the background. The kind of cap gives out the symbol of Nigerian politician. The dilated eyes, open mouth and vector lines around the mouth and nose are all examples of framing and prominence that reveal the cartoonist's emphasis and priorities of depicting corruption as endemic. The politician's pot belly is salience and representational.

### **Categories of Semiotic Resources**

The simple sentence, "Editor, Lawan wants Nigerian media purged of bad eggs..." forms the basis of the theme of corruption in the cartoon. "Nigerian media" and "bad eggs" are of semiotic significance in the main clause. The rhetorical question credited to the editor has a noun phrase, "the national rotten eggs" embedded in it. Also observed is a normative expression "newsroom". The non – linguistic semiotic resources are categorised as images.

### **Signalling Imports of the Semiotic Resources**

The statement credited to the man with the protruding belly indexes the desire of the legislators to rid the media of corrupt persons. The proper noun, "Lawan" is to be understood as a metaphor for the entire house of Senate in Nigeria. It is a synecdoche which stands symbolically for the entire members of the Nigerian Senate. The speaker is therefore projected as a spokesperson and icon of a member of the Senate.

The two noun phrases "bad eggs" and "national rotten eggs" are metaphors which index the existence of corruption and corrupt individuals within the media (bad eggs) and in the Senate (national rotten eggs). The nominal expression, "newsroom" in which the dialogue takes place serves as an indicator of class struggle between the legislative arm and the fourth arm of the realm, the media. The presence of only two participants, one representing the legislative arm and the other representing the media is also symbolic of the class struggle between the two arms of government. The surprised new editor's response, "and what about the national rotten eggs" is clearly a dialogic rhetoric and it further indexes the struggle between the two arms of government represented by the two participants. Ordinarily, an acceptable English sentence should not be headed by a coordinating conjunction (and) but the ellipsis (...) in the proceeding

statement provides the cohesive tie that justifies the flow of discourse. It suggests that the editor interrupted the politician cutting his speech short. It could be an indication of the editor's anger at the politician's proposition.

The cap worn by the first speaker is semiotically significant. It is a symbol of the political class in Nigeria. It, therefore, adds to the interpretation that the speaker is a member of a political class, and a representative of the Nigerian Senate. The spokesperson's protruding belly is a symbol of the greed and excesses associated with the political class and corrupt politicians in Nigeria. His widely open eyes, vector lines around the mouth, nose and eyes are indexes of the emotion of surprise at being caught off balance by the editor's response. The politician uses his hands to support his back which carries the weight of the protruding belly. This symbolises the weight of the proceeds of corrupt practices.

The editor as an icon of the news media is represented working on a desktop. He wears a pair of glasses which is a symbol of intellectualism and insight. His bulging eyes, vector lines above the eyes, open mouth, enlarged ears and lowered eyeglasses are indexes of a bewildered expression. The physical space in which the dialogue takes place, (newsroom) and which is the space of the editor symbolises the isolation of journalists who attempt to report the truth in the face of political pressure and intimidation. The computer with which the editor is working and books of different sizes and colours on the shelf are indexes of the fact that the media has the needed tools to expose corruption in Nigeria and to hold those in power accountable. The arrangement of books on the shelf is also significant. The neatly arranged books could be symbols of a desire for order and transparency while the disordered ones could be symbolic of the chaotic and corrupt nature of the Nigerian political and media circles.

### **Generated Interpretations of the Semiotic Resources**

DT cart 2 effectively projects the scenario of the actual situation of the issue of corruption both among the political class and media practitioners in Nigeria. The deployment of the lexical items "bad" and "rotten" in the adjectival is instructive of the fact that the issue of corruption is worse with the lawmakers than with the media. The cartoon critiques corruption within the Nigerian political system and suggests the important role of the media in exposing and combating corruption.

### Socio-Political and Economic Implications of the Semiotic Resources

Overall, DT cart 2 has deployed both linguistic and non – linguistic resources to interrogate the issues of corruption among the two realms of government. The cartoon implies that corruption and malpractices are so widespread in Nigeria that they permeate every sector of the nation. The widespread nature of corruption creates a constant struggle between the legislators and the mass media such that the two arms are always in mutual suspicion. Many times, members of the mass media are even arrested, prosecuted and put behind bars. This to a great extent contributes to stifling of the press leading to lack of information for the masses.

#### Cartoon text 3: TP cart: The Punch, Thursday, 20th May 2021.



The cartoon text above presents a semiotic representation of issues of corruption in the security sector in Nigeria. It projects a picture of embezzlement and mismanagement of funds allocated to the security sector.

#### Semiotic Resources

The caption of the cartoon, “AWAITING IMPACT OF HUGE SECURITY FUNDING FOR SIX YEARS” provides the contextual information and acts as linguistic sign that draws the sign reader’s attention to the issue of misappropriation of funds and failure to effectively address security challenges in Nigeria, despite significant funding. Another linguistic sign observed is “\$ 10.02tn FUND” which serves as a label for a pot. “WE NEED MORE...” is another linguistic sign credited to one of the participants in the cartoon. It ends with an ellipsis.

Our selected cartoon text also features a human participant dressed in traditional kaftan and a tall cap. He holds a spoon in his hand from which he is tasting from the content of a pot. He is also depicted sticking out his tongue. Another group of participants are observed in green uniforms and black helmets. Also identified as part of the non – linguistic signs in the cartoon is a pot labelled “\$10.02tn” placed on a burning fire fuelled with firewood. Vector lines are also observed on the faces of the human participants in our selected text.

### **Categorising the Semiotic Resources**

“Awaiting impact of huge security funding for six years...” can be categorized as an elliptical sentence. The subject of the sentence has been elided to achieve a stylistic purpose. “\$10.02tn FUND” with which the pot is labelled is a noun phrase where the figure \$10.02tn serves as an adjective “WE NEED MORE...” is a simple sentence which ends with an ellipsis.

### **Signalling Imports of the Semiotic Resources**

The elliptical sentence, "Awaiting impact of huge security funds for six years" which serves as the caption for the cartoon serves as an index to the existence of corruption. It opens the sign reader’s mind to the quest to identify why the impact of such a huge amount of fund is yet to be felt. Such a quest eventually guides the sign observer’s mind to the represented participant, corruption. “We need more...” is an index to greed and insatiable desire for funding.

One of the human participants in the cartoon is depicted dressed in Nigerian traditional kaftan with a cap. The participant’s slim, tall body frame and facial build presents him possibly as an icon of an immediate past president of Nigeria, an iconic representation of a Nigerian politician. The pot labelled \$10.02tn is a symbol of the huge amount of funds expended on security with no tangible results. The fire and firewood are symbols of the resources meant for other failing sectors of the Nigerian political system all directed towards improving the security of the nation, yet, no favourable results. The participant is depicted holding a spoon with his tongue sticking out to taste from the content of the pot. The tongue sticking out and the vector lines on the face of the participant all index pleasure derived from enjoying the content of the pot. This symbolises corrupt practices and embezzlement of funds while ignoring the actual needs of the security sector.

In front of the first participant is another group of participants. They are dressed in black boots, army green attires and helmets. These are symbols of the uniform of the Nigerian army. The men are represented icons of the men of the Nigeria Army. Vector lines on the faces of the men, are indexes to unhappiness, dejection and depression. The drooping heads and arms folded across the chest are indexes of a state of helplessness in the face of danger. All are caused by their inability to access the funds voted to protect them in the face of danger. It is an index that the allocated funds failed to reach them to address their needs. This symbolises the absence of resources and support they require

### **Generated Interpretation of the Semiotic Resources**

The elliptical sentence, “Awaiting the impact of huge security funding for six years...” has an ellipted subject. This helps the sign reader to exercise the mind for the possible source of the statement. While the men of the Nigeria Army are obviously possible sources from which the statement might have emanated, the omission directs the sign reader’s mind to other possible sources of the statement. Such could include the Nigerian masses who daily face the consequences of insecurity aside from the soldiers who are made to face danger at the war front without any means of protection. This suggests that the only people enjoying the huge security votes are those who are at the source of the release of the funds – the politicians.

The presence of the participant tasting from the pot serves as an iconic representation of the executive arm of government. This suggests that the request for more funds, “we need more...” is addressed to the legislative arm of the government, the arm of government saddled with the responsibility to legislate laws that will facilitate the release of such funds.

Furthermore, the represented semiotic resources in the cartoon suggest misallocation and embezzlement of funds. It highlights the corruption within Nigeria’s security sector right from the executive arm of government. It suggests that the politicians enjoy the largesse of the funds intended for security while the soldiers and possibly the masses who are the true intended beneficiaries of the funds suffer.

### **Socio – Political and Economic Implications**

DT cart 3 is a critique of the failure of the government to effectively manage the resources of the nation in order to have a meaningful impact on improving the security situation of the country. It calls attention to the need for transparency, accountability, effective resource distribution and management of funds in order to combat corruption and address the pressing security challenges in Nigeria.

### **Summary of findings and conclusion**

So far, it has been made conspicuous in the analysis that the dynamics of semiotic discourse in cartoons of corruption in the Nigerian print media have indexed Nigeria as a nation on the precipice with corruption constituting the bane of her existence. These findings are, therefore, reflected through various levels of analysis that include:

#### **1. Textual Analysis:**

- (i) **Verbal Language** in the forms of linguistic texts accompanying the images sometimes with captions or speech bubbles to provide additional context or commentary on corruption in the Nigerian polity
- (ii) **Typography** in the form of font styles, sizes, and emphasis. Are certain words or phrases highlighted to convey specific corruption meanings in the Nigerian polity

#### **2. Gestural analysis:**

- (i) **Facial Expressions:** Interpreted as conveying emotions such as greed, guilt, or outrage in the Nigerian polity
- (ii) **Body Language:** explained in the form of postures and gestures of characters as signs of deception, confidence, or complicity in the Nigerian polity

#### **3. Intersemiotic Relational analysis:**

- (i) **Integration of Modes:** deployed to examine how different semiotic resources interact.
- (ii) **Imagistic complement:** there exist instances where text and imagery complement each other, creating tension which are traceable to corruption in the Nigerian polity.

Analysing newspaper cartoons of corruption, using Kress and van Leeuwen's Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) to complement Pierce's Sign Theory, has descriptively provided a rich understanding of how corruption is 'powerfully' represented and constructed in visual

media. Our use of MDA has focused on how various modes of communication, such as language, image, layout, text, colour, and composition work together to convey meaning, leaving us with the conclusion that cartoon texts, within their expressive and impressive language forms, are embodied in iconicity, symbolism, and indexicality, demonstrating the theme of corruption in the Nigerian newspapers for pragmatic actions. They, contributing to knowledge in imagistic interpretations, media studies, language pedagogy, and applied English linguistics, therefore, constitute covert call to stakeholders for meaningful nation-building process in the Nigerian polity.

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## **Shifts and Gendered Role Reformation: Establishing the Overturms of Binaries in Moses Isegawa's *Snakepit* and *Abyssinian Chronicles***

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### **Abstract**

The traditional gender roles assigned to women are nurturance and caregiving. This for a long time has entrenched their relegation and domestication. Presentation of women's dehumanisation and domestication in fictional works reflects the marginal space they occupy within their actual societies. Most stories curated within the African communities emphasise the severity of the disadvantaged position of women without reiterating the resilience these women build in the face of their traumatisation to combat oppression. As a result, little attention has so far been paid to triggers of shifts oppression evokes in female characters who reconstruct their positions of subjugation after encountering violence. I discover that Moses Isegawa despite being a male writer vividly exemplifies how continued traumatisation incites psychological shifts in victimised characters to be perpetrators of crimes themselves in his *Abyssinian Chronicles* and *Snakepit*. Isegawa narrates the story of self-discoveries, resilience and dominance as delineations of power in victimised female characters. These depictions of proliferations of unpredictability in expressions of assigned roles attest strongly to the similitude of power operation as capable of deconstructing polarities in the imagination of roles and women's personalities. Hence, the submission of this paper aligns closely with the fact that although encounters with pains and traumas, in general, are devastating, they sometimes reinforce humans' determination to assert their autonomy without respect to anatomical distinctions.

**Keywords:** Traditional gendered roles, Dehumanisation, Violence, Psychological shifts, Moses Isegawa

### **Introduction**

This study interrogates revolts and fluidity as evidently unfolding the ontology of intersexuality in contemporary Ugandan fictions. The problem of binaries has long persisted in shaping the realities of bodily presentations in literary works. Although the enormity of its implication on gendered relationships may differ from one continent to another, it is undoubted that the menace of these hierarchical reflections affects the progression of gendered role presentation in most fictional narratives.

In this study, therefore, an effort is made towards uncovering strategies of duplications employed by Moses Isegawa, a contemporary Ugandan writer, to depict the sequence of similarities that foreground this theorisation of wholeness, which erases the norms of dichotomous gaps in the presentation of gendered characters. Besides, the article explores reinvention, dispossession, ordering and the discontinuation of objectification in imaginative space through the enactment of transformations. The symbolic emergence of new cultures among victimised characters is also examined.

### **Erasures of binary in gender roles through re-appropriations of violence**

Feminist writers, despite their diversities, have expressed their expectation for literary works whose expression of difference is not dependent on philosophies of sexual distinction. Although the portrayal of such imagery has rarely been attained in the appropriations of roles in fictional narratives, this study establishes that categorisation of differences is gradually moving beyond the matrix of anatomical classification. Gendered roles, after incidences of violence, engender fluid interactions between male and female duties, thus cancelling biological stereotypes of differences in the performances of their roles. As a result of this annulment, performative actions initiate a dynamic interconnection that merges most formerly polarised duties to reveal trajectories of interrelations that are more pronounced than the dichotomy of sexual distinctions.

Mazrui's (1991) explication reveals the paradox of gender and proposes war as one of the effective options which can erase duality in gender role apportionment. He reinstates that the division of roles between males and females is mainly a cultural construction which can only be destroyed through an understanding of the norms that form the basic tenets of society. He explicates the visibility of this duality in gendering roles. He names women as the senior partners in the adoption of reproductive roles while men are ranked the senior partners in destroying lives. The adoption of differences endorses the ratification of the self-based on the distinctions in their adopted duties, enabling the retention of a chasm in the description of duties which translates into the perpetual reflections of polarised gendered duties. However, Mazrui supposes that the solution to the permanent erasure of gender role division in imaginative writings has to evolve from the redistribution of roles which offers equal opportunities to both males and females. He suggests two main possibilities, namely the demilitarisation of African politics (get the boys back

into the barracks; military rule at the moment is more masculine); and the androgyny of the African military (arm the girls as well as the boys).

As valid as the first proposition sounds, its realisation might not be possible considering the enormous impact militarism has on all functioning states in the world. Burke (1998:7) asserts that the hold military display of power has on society and believes that militarism has close ties with the political running of any society since it is through it that authority and validation are given to the words of men and social leaders. Burke particularly stresses the fact that women recruited into military fields do not enjoy the authentic version of power display allowed to men. As a result of this denial, they are reduced to clerical and other service jobs. Also, military women are known to face higher rates of sexual violence which are perpetrated by their male colleagues. Although women in the military are challenging gendered role stereotypes by becoming soldiers, they are still being affected by these same stereotypes. Hence, it will take more than the eradication of the male presence from society, which itself is not plausible, since militarism itself is constructed on ideas of patriarchy which itself defends the use of binary in relation to self and others.

Mazrui (1991) considers the effect of sexism in Africa to have a direct correlation with malignant sexism which he describes basically as the most precarious of all forms of sexism. He discovers that this form of gendered polarisation evolved as a result of the depiction of women's biological weaknesses which has denied them relevancy in the most significant areas of the community. He ascribes the varied effects which emanate from the practices of malignant sexism to the main fact that women are basically allowed to nurture lives and are exempted from destroying lives when violent life-threatening situations occur. This, according to him, not only makes them mostly the victims of the situation but also the subjected other, owing to the inactive roles they are consigned to in violent situations.

Consequently, this inability of women to match the destructive capacity of men results in a paradox that controls gender inequality. Mazrui (1991) also asserts importantly that the continued existence of binary, especially in Africa, is premised on the fact that women's duties revolve mostly around nurturing children and men while those of men are mostly linked with destruction. This, according to his study, is the only plausible way to erase the duality associated with gender roles completely. Hence, he advises strictly the need for gender planning schemes which can empower women. But for true liberation to occur, he firmly proposes the androgyny

of Africa. His research depicts that it is only through the process of androgynisation that “genuine power-sharing between the two halves of the black world, male-female can be evenly distributed.” (1991: 5)

Mazrui’s observation about the causes of gender imbalance and the proffered solution sounds overtly logical, however, his most pronounced declaration for androgyny in Africa is contrary to his opinion and cannot be anchored in societies whose customary laws exaggerate the rights of fathers at the expense of those of women and mothers. Rather, if his suggestion of androgyny will be of any effect, it will be constructive to, not just superficially arm women alongside men, but allow women to see the need to take up arms themselves to defend their interests, especially in violent situations. Only then will the process of androgyny be effective because it will come from the determination of the marginalised “other halves of the black world”, to fight gender polarisation, to use Mazrui’s term. In conclusion, Mazrui’s investigation of gender and the troubles it faces in Africa identify the practice of sexism in Africa as malignant sexism which he affirms as the worst form of sexism. He also agrees with the fact that the eradication of this form of sexism and its effects, even in imaginative works, will need a forceful violence.

In affirmation of Mazrui’s thought about androgynisation, Significantly Butler corroborates the fact that, for gender roles and its perception to gain the equality it desires, “the frame must break with itself to reproduce itself and, within this reproduction, there must be an emergence of a site where a politically consequential break is possible (2009: 24)”. Besides, essential to the understanding of the need for non-conformity to normativity is Butler’s suggestion about the way recognition is framed to accommodate the dynamics of the duality, significance and precariousness of life. At this point, the essentiality of life, just like gendered roles, is also polarised to reveal its livability between the forces of existence in life and non-existence in death. She explicates further that existence itself is determined through the recognition of the differences between the ontologies that sustain the distinctions in the categorisations of all lives. She also affirms, based on her investigation of the way recognition plays a main role in effecting differences, that destructions and degenerations are vital to the visualisations of the processes of life. Hence, she identifies a synergy between these life ontologies and politics which asserts the importance of recognition in the allotment of positions to the different subcategories of people and refers to it as biopolitics.

According to Butler (2009), biopolitics gives an in-depth understanding of life and its diverse expressions. This causes a significant shift to occur in the perception of life and allows modifications to be introduced to the synergised concept of war and reproduction which are offshoots of the biopolitical system that exists in a frame. But she explains further that, because of the force that the biological roles of reproduction enforce on the structural shaping of the frame, it becomes breakable if it comes in contact with violent situations, specifically war. She expatiates further that biopolitics undergoes a severe change as a result of the fact that recognition based on sexual categorisation during times of violence becomes irrelevant as much as a person does not function in line with the roles they are allotted during the times of sanity in the society. She asserts that it is almost impossible to have the same functional duties in violent periods as other times because survival is uttermost; violence challenges the willpower of the individual to take on as many tasks as possible as long as it assures them of survival.

Although as a result of the biological differences between men and women, men have been repeatedly asserted as the subject and initiators of actions in violence, according to Butler's investigation, the realisation of unworthiness associated with the lives of individuals who are seen as minorities can lead to their determination to take subject positions through participation in destructive activities. Their assertion of will according to Judith Butler (2009:13) buttresses the fact that "we each have power to destroy and be destroyed by others".

Invariably, Butler's study affirms the fact that the continued existence of polarisation in gender roles is much a result of the lack of determination of the unvalued lives to strive for their worth and not necessarily because of gendered differences or biological distinctions. She significantly links the experiences of war and survival to the impact of resistance they have on the literary works which evolve from such violent situations and explicates this through her analysis of the works of poetic writers on insurgencies that there exists a synergic connection between torture, coercion and the sound of resistance in the speeches of imaginative characters.

The foregoing re-echoes Kate Mcloughlin's (2001) assertion of the recreative abilities of war when she states that war recreates. This confirms that insurgency can be a catalyst for a re-ordering within the society and, specifically, in the depiction of gendered duties in imaginative writings. Mcloughlin's (2001) testimony about the refashioning abilities of insurgencies buttresses Butler's recognition of the synergy that exists between torture, force and change in

gender role allocation, and further authenticates its potency for destroying binary in gender role assignment. Thus, it creates a fluid pictorial depiction of duties in imaginative writings that erases the biopolitical presentations of bodies in literary works.

### **Ugandan literature and narration of war and gendered role disruption**

The combined tension from internal regional wars and the conflict on territorial demarcations exposed Uganda to the protracted menace of brutality especially during Idi Amin's era. This consequently formed the subject of Ugandan literature. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many writers began to write long narratives to give expansive expressions on the decadent conditions of the country. Notable fictions of the 19th century are Barbara Kimenyi's *Kalasanda Revisited* (1969), Robert Serumaga's *The Return to the Shadow* (1969), Peter Nazareth's *In a Brown Mantle* (1972), and Austin Bukonya's *The People's Bachelor* (1972). Most of these works depict the deteriorating state of Uganda.

Although cultural norms influenced the literature of the early nineteenth century, the latter periods of this era and the early twentieth century in Uganda witnessed the emergence of literary writers who recreated the horrors experienced in their diverse communities. This is done through the characterisation of individuals and groups of people in the community; and the effects of socio-economic and political realities on them. Therefore, the narratives of contemporary writers present confrontational reactions from different facets to the long suppression of violence. Such works include Timothy Wangusa's *Upon This Mountain* (1989); Julius Ocwinyo's *Fate of the Banished* (1997); Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* (2000); *Snakepit* (2004); and Ocwinyo *Footprints of the Outside* (2002).

It should be noted that the Ugandan war triggered multiple reactions that provoked rebellion from both male and female authors. Female writers also began to raise gender concerns to refute oppression, pain, anguish, poverty and horror meted out to females. Themes of survival, transformation, resilience and victory dominate these works. Gerotti Kymuhendo's *First Daughter* (1997); *Secret No More* (1999), *waiting* (2006), and Mary Okurut's *Invisible Weevils* (1998) foreground similar thematic concerns about the margins of power, the rebirth of war and, the relationship between women and peacebuilding.

### **Theoretical framework**

The study is predicated on feminist poststructuralism. The theory is deployed to interrogate gender issues in the selected Ugandan novels. Feminist poststructuralism combines insights from both poststructuralist and feminist thoughts to emerge as a viable tool with which duality of gendered roles are investigated in almost all global contexts since it allows the expression of a diversity of opinions (Ahmad, 1992). According to feminist theorists, sex is central to women's oppression. Hence, gender issues in literary texts are deduced from the construal of females as sex objects. The objectification of human experiences substantiates the process of women's subjugation and promotes the foundation for inequality in the allotment of gendered roles to both male and female sexes. Feminist poststructuralism mainly focuses attention on the task of undoing inherited stereotypic gendering of roles in literary texts. It probes the conception of subjectivity as well as the centrality of an author to a text. It is used as a diagnostic tool for analysing the connection between gendered role change and the language dynamism of characters in literature.

Maggie Humm (1995) asserts that poststructuralism breaks apart systems of representation rather than celebrating them. Hence, it seeks to dissuade readers from concentrating much on the author of creative works. Rather, it encourages the reader to do an independent study of the work as a cultural or historic testament and this affords the development of the reader's own critical opinions.

### **Invocation of shifts in gendered role presentation through strategic replications in Moses Isegawa's *SnakePit* and *Abyssinian Chronicles***

The polarised classification of gendered roles has left its imprint mainly on literary imaginative expressions. This empowers the indisputableness of the affirmation of sexual politics in the fictional portrayal of gendered duties. The most obvious gap in literary representations is to affirm one and discredit the other. Women, as a result of their 'nurtural' abilities, are automatically recruited by most societies to fulfil the position of otherness. Meanwhile, men usually represent the capable dictatorial selves; thus, fictional works essentially duplicate this dual pattern of visualisation. Promoters of patriarchy capitalise on the popularity of these shallow designations of difference to reinstate the inferior status of women through the defeatist attitude attached to the personality of figured female personas. As depicted in the novels selected for the

study, some of these traits that foreground the ideology of difference which causes disparities in the description of roles are already becoming neutralised. One such perception is the believed ability of all men to perpetrate crimes which is portrayed as lacking in women generally.

Isegawa's *Snakepit* narrates the ferociousness of power seekers and exposes their zeal to achieve invincibility as existing on the same parallel without deference to anatomical distinctions. Victoria's summation of herself as a "monster" (*Snakepit*, 24) and General Bazooka's confession to Victoria's possession of a lethal attitude: "When I first met you, I noticed that you had an assassin's intuition" (*Snakepit*, 29), reveal her insatiable flair for perpetrating violence like her initiator, General Bazooka. She realises that is the reason for her endearment towards Bazooka which makes her equate: "Perhaps I had simply been in romance by the General's ability to make people live or die" (*Snakepit*, 61). Since she knows that she possesses the same indomitability that has granted the General the splendour his personality extrudes during their initial meeting, Victoria visualises herself as capable of perpetrating violent overtures like the General. Hence, she envisages Bat, as the other, despite his enviable intellectual accomplishment: "Bat does not have that ability, so I am the one with the finger on the trigger: I can very easily destroy him, and this woman, and both their families" (*Snakepit*, 61).

The identified equilibrium between Victoria's destructive capacity and the General's brutality establishes the authenticity of power transference during situations of oppression. Victoria's encounter with oppressive and dehumanising experiences from General Bazooka rather than demotivate her to settling into a perpetual fate of the victimised, reforms her decision to become a perpetrator herself. This transformation foregrounds the complexity of representing binaries as having existential continuance in the description of gendered duties. On the other hand, the portrayal of the character's determination towards constant valorisation propels the dissolution of difference, culminating in the fluid presentation of all human activities. At this point, the other is the exact replication of the self. Hence, Victoria's vehemence resonates with that of her victimiser. The narrator's description of her swift response to Bat's arrogance attests to Victoria's attainment of the same invincible status as General Bazooka. The narrator's testimony confirms Victoria's expression of venom:

Blind with rage, she slapped him on the temple. It did not hurt very much, his eyes did not water... But Bat saw it as a revelation of Victoria's true colours. A wave of

fear coursed through his chest. What did I get myself into? He thought, remembering the toast he made to risk, to adventure, the evening they met (Snakepit, 63).

Victoria, on many occasions, reveals her capacity to unleash violent mishaps but Bat neglects the warning signs. His displayed carelessness stems from the ideology of sexual politics which reinstates women as inferior and mostly unfit to perpetrate violence. This observation explains the reason women are still presented as weak, inferior and predictable in most fictional narratives. It confirms such a view as popular among men. Despite being warned and advised by his wife that Bat should have a background check on Victoria, Mr Kalanda dismisses her worries as trivial, howbeit with a secret longing for a sexual escapade of his own:

How exactly does someone tell Bat anything like that? Kalanda pondered, his thoughts drifting to Victoria's physique. He preferred wild-spirited ladies; he hadn't had any in a while. To occupy the monotony associated with being married and having an ensured pussy, he hoped he had found one. He prayed Bat had been enjoying himself (*Snakepit*, 39).

However, this narrative faults the accuracy of this myopic description of gendered roles which grants continuance to the ideological stance of difference in imaginative work. It deconstructs the perpetual significance of visage affixed to the figuration of dichotomy, reinforcing the fact that aggression is an inherent feature of all humans and not specifically gendered. Thus, the writer through his revelation of the empowering abilities of dissembling circumstances rights the habitual erroneous extension of revivifying the strength of sexual politics in literary works. Instead, he shows that the ability of the victimised to replicate the pattern of their oppressors results in a fluid demonstration of powers which discredits the ingrained notion of distinction in the adoption of gendered roles. According to Victor Turner (1982: 57), violence creates a merging of all experiences. He authenticates that "The self which is normally "the broker" between one person's action and another's simply becomes irrelevant...All men, even all things are felt to be one".

In short, Victoria's attitude reiterates the rupture in the conventional depiction of otherness. The unfortunate experiences of being victims of oppression influence the decision of the oppressed to attain the control of their victimisers, turning them into perpetrators in the process. Converting

the pain of her sexual abuse into growth, Victoria emerges as a victimiser in absolute control of not just her sexuality but in charge of her victims' sexualities and their lives. A notorious dictator, she combines three destructive weapons that denote her versatility and expertise as a perpetrator: "Sex had only ever served as a tool, liken to a gun or a knife, for her work. (*Snakepit*, 24). The figuration of this woman who delves deep into crime through her determination to surmount the psychological hurdles of her victimisation demonstrates that oppression does not automatically result in the expansion of bodily dichotomies. It oftentimes influences disintegrations in behavioural patterns, resulting in the fluid presentation of gendered roles.

Victoria's decision to murder Babit, Bat's lover and soon-to-be wife, in the most gruesome manner further portrays the degeneration of sexual hierarchies and the diffusing effect of violence on gendered roles. To surmount the obstruction that stands between her and her marital goal, Victoria's threats to exterminate her rival fall on deaf ears. Babit stubbornly retains her position without giving much attention to Victoria's threats. The narrator observes the strong determination of the latter to remain:

Is that the housegirl speaking?

It is the lady of the house speaking, Babit replied curtly.

I am the lady of the house child.

I am not your child, woman. Stop bothering us. Get yourself a man. Bat is my man. You are the intruder... Save yourself the humiliation and... Leave before something happens to you.

Nothing is going to happen to me. You are going to remain where you are. (*Snakepit*, 78).

Having hinted Babit about her intention to forcefully regain her position as the first wife and the mother of Bat's daughter, Victoria expects her to comply with the instruction she has given to her. However, she stays and disregards her rival's threats. Her careless rebuff of Victoria's warning evokes in the latter a menacing determination to kill her. The narrator reveals her determination to resort to violent means of achieving her goals: "The General's problem didn't interest her in the least. She had hers and it was called Babit. She had to go (*Snakepit*, 199).

Meanwhile, Babit's neglect of Victoria's threats stems from the supposed belief that Victoria is merely being harsh. Although aware of the increase in the record of perpetrated crimes and murder in the country as a result of political agitations, Babit's personality resonates with that of a good woman. Thus, her main duty represents traditional expectations of ensuring men are supported. She confesses her allegiance to Bat when she says: "A trustworthy woman inspects the fasteners" (*Snakepit*, 79). Hence, to fulfil her role as a good woman, she watches out for Bat's safety always without taking cognisance of her protection. She understands that her lover works amidst ferocious politicians who get easily paranoid. Therefore, she commits herself to keeping tabs on him and the activities that might affect him. Afraid that he might get caught again in the uncontrolled occurrences of manic car explosions, she states her concern: "Often I wonder if you ought to give up driving that vehicle" (*Snakepit*, 200). A very shielded woman, Babit believes that to be safe from trouble, one has to avoid it and live a very conservative life. This belief makes her accept minor insignificant roles: "Regarding his sibling and the funds, Bat remained silent. Babit was assigned the duty of listening to the radio during the entire day and night" (*Snakepit*, 199).

Her inability to conceptualise performing beyond the mundane chores she executes daily makes her undermine the capacity of women to perpetrate violence. Hence, her ideology that Bat is exposed to danger is grounded on the fact that he works within the wider circle of society while she considers herself safe from turbulence because she lives a conservative life. With that perception, she feels comfortable despite Victoria's threat. However, to underscore the unorthodoxy of her belief, Victoria decides to carry out her threats. The narrator describes the hideousness of the act as he captures Bat's neurotic reaction when he returns home:

He exhaled deeply a few times before leaving the sleeping area. He noticed big, blurry, pinkish footprints. As he flung open the restroom door, he yelled out. He came close to crushing her head. The wedding band was sparkling shatteringly in the light, and the torso lay in the bathtub with its arms falling loosely at its sides. He wasn't sure if he sobbed or just stood there. He wasn't sure if he passed out or puked. He managed to go to the police station somehow. That he didn't kill anyone en route was a miracle. He appeared suddenly from the windy realm of insanity, and at first, they believed he was insane (*Snakepit*, 210).

Victoria's determination to exterminate Babit to have her way with Bat explicates the involvement of dangerously deviant attitudes in women towards conforming to traditional roles. The vivid description of the scene and Bat's neurotic response to the onslaught shows the fierceness of the attack. Although Victoria does not appear physically at the scene of the crime makes it seem as though she is incapable of committing the crime by herself, her precision in masterminding the attack and the choice of the ferocious method of dismembering her rival shows her notoriety. Before the events, the men who murder Babit discuss the devilry details of their expertise with Victoria: "with style. They had jokingly said that people were animals, that when you got used to slitting the throats of cows as they did daily, you could easily do a person. Although she required proof, people asked. A hand or finger or something more intimate...." (*Snakepit* 218). She commits this felony against another human and sanctions the act. This establishes a non-gendered biased boundary in the perpetration and figuration of violence.

Therefore, the fact that Victoria loves to subject people to suffering makes her capable of overlooking the gravity of the pain her victims might suffer. The independent understanding of her dominance explains the mostly rebellious attitude she displays towards Bazooka's orders: "She understood that for that to occur, she was going to defy Commander Bazooka" (*Snakepit*, 24). Constantly expressing the superiority of her own will and independence, she suppresses the significance of Bazooka's personality: "She was left with two choices: either to fabricate information or to let the General fuck himself" (*Snakepit*, 40).

Essentially, the reflection of this twenty-first-century Ugandan writer on the shift in gendered roles reveals an exposure of strategic closures to the persistent challenge of duality. The depiction of the monstrous killing of Babit as masterminded by Victoria is the writer's conscientious forewarning of the main implications of the shift in gendered roles.

The writer's volatile eradication of Babit, the good woman in this novel, again metaphorises the speed at which the domesticated position of women is diminishing. The creation of awareness in the occurrences of a shift in gendered roles in the narrative, specifically in the perpetrations of violence poses a main challenge to the security of the continent in general and Uganda in particular. Since both male and female characters now demonstrate the capacity to initiate volatilities, it is difficult to apportion judgement of crimes based on gender differences. It also increases the incidence of crime rate within the community.

However, the effort of the writer in depicting these evolving nuances is not only to create awareness of the dissolution of definite gendered culture and roles but also to redress the imbalanced visualisation of the victimised in literary representations. This redress in the imagination of adopted roles aligns with the description of the complemented strength African male and female sexes exhibited before the infiltration of the adverse marginalisation of women during the colonial era. The reduction of women to merely domesticated beings in representations is a falsification that belies the complementary adoptions of gendered roles. In other words, the visualisation of duties goes beyond what has been by envisioning the “becoming” of what would be. This makes it a didactic African literature that not only reinstates the reflection of society but also refracts it.

Moreover, in Isegawa’s *Abyssinian Chronicles*, Padlock’s continuance of vehement assertion of authority culminates in the decline of duality in presentations of gendered duties. She again exemplifies the budding determination in visualised subjugated characters that not only explicates their confrontational resilience towards oppressors but adopt the instincts of the oppressors to perpetrate more severe barbarous acts on their victims.

Having established the dominance of her presence within her home and surroundings, Padlock demonstrates the similitude of how power operates. She reenacts her childhood traumatic experiences but reinterprets her role in it as the dictatorial authority. The testimony of the narrator’s rebirth as Padlock’s first son affirms the re-incarnation of her severity as the re-hashing of her parents’ oppressiveness. She treats her sons especially her first son with so much disdain that re-echoes her parents’ descent attitude towards her while growing up for being a girl. The arrival of Mugezi on a fiercely stormy day makes the birth process more complicated for Padlock. This forces Padlock to depend on the mascot delivery expertise of her aunty-in-law who is reputable for her apt prediction of destinies. Her eventual prediction of Mugezi’s future career as an assistant mascot aggravates Padlock’s hatred towards a child who chooses to arrive on an unfortunate day. Departing to the city with her husband in a bid to start a new life, she violently registers her disdain with humiliations. Mugezi narrates:

...It dawned on me that we were leaving. The house now echoed when one called. But why was I not dressed for the journey?... It was then that I was told I was staying. Serenity climbed into the cab. Padlock turned to follow him in. I touched

her, smudging her dress. She cringed and, with blind speed, drove her palm full into my face. I fell back in the mud and, in protest, rolled once or twice (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 68).

Abandoned in the village with his mascot's grand aunt, Mugezi feels the same detachment his mother feels while growing up. Although a legitimate part of the family, his dehumanisation and alienation make him a victim of abandonment. The fact that the narrator suffers traumatic violations perpetrated by his parents just like his mother confirms the flexible replications of the tyranny and shift in the imagination of gendered roles. The foregoing reiterates these duplications as influencing the initiation of shifts that dismantle stringent politicisation of duties into dichotomous linearity of victims/perpetrators. Hence, this presentation affirms the possible shift in the position of a victim to that of a perpetrator as exemplified by Padlock.

Establishing the convertibility of servitude experiences into autocrat models, the author deconstructs the habitual figuration of dehumanisation as reducing the totality of the victims to nothingness. Annihilation in its representation here fortifies victims to be perpetrators of violence in the future. Compelled to join his parents in the city after the death of his grand-aunt, Mugezi's servitude gets harnessed: "My coming was a blessing for her, and she made no secret of it. In one stroke, I had become the family shitman" (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 93). It is, therefore, clear that Mugezi is a victim of retributive exploitation and oppression. As a matter of fact, from his ruinations, Padlock restores the autonomy of power denied her for being a girl-child during her formative years. Unable to recoup her distorted worth mainly through the assertion of her significance over her husband and other male archetypes of her depreciation, Padlock reconstitutes the precedence of the pain she experiences by altering the sexual object of her oppression in the presence to truly explore the sovereignty of the dominant dictator. The narrator's reflection lends credibility to the assertion: "... the torture rack was grinding and spinning, slowly doing its jobs of breaking body and will" (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 114).

This skilful retaliation of suppression grants her access to recast the past, thus enabling her to function in the capacity of the autocrats' selves of the past. Recognising this synergy, her son states that: "In a dictatorship, the past and the present were Siamese twins, I learned, better left unseparated for good of public order and family harmony" (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 106). Thus, Padlock's determination to regenerate as a dictator is foregrounded in her previous encounter

with savagery. This implies that ferocious experiences produce counter-intuitive responses from sufferers. Therefore, it neutralises the elongated static dualism in the presentations of gendered duties, especially in fictional narratives. It also engenders dynamic exchanges of selves which further influence transformational shifts in literary works. The family conflict the narrator describes gradually evolves into a bloody battle for superiority. After listening to his mother's summation of his character, he visualises the eruption of a vast conflict: "A war had just been declared. I had no illusions of winning this trench warfare, but I was determined to become a very costly, very destructive victim" (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 113).

This makes the experience of dehumanisation too burdensome for Mugezi. Hence, he perceives the violent attack of his mother to be elevated beyond the level of conflict, "a trench warfare" (113). It means that an unmanaged family crisis can culminate in a full-fledged war because of its destructive aftermath. Nevertheless, Padlock always wins despite the preparedness of her victims, in this case, her son. This expounds her formidability as a dictator. It again clearly deregulates the persistent claims of difference between the activities of perpetrator/victim through its demonstration of Padlock's role shift, from that of the victimised to victimiser. This shift, therefore, permits an androgynous representation of violence which reflects its non-polarised implication on gendered duties. The narrator observes a resonating pattern in most dictators' operations:

...Finally, Fr. Mindi told us officially. He dressed his anger in curse-laden threats, ultimately announcing that if the culprit did not give himself up within three days, something was going to happen to him. I was in familiar territory, hardly able to believe how similar dictatorial thought patterns were. I had heard all this in my former life, it left me cold (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 216-217).

Observing consistencies in the dictatorial modes of oppression, the narrator expounds the fluidness of all violent overtures. The erasure of dichotomies in the representation of hostilities disassembles foregrounded politics that ascribes the valour of superiority in actualising dictatorial obligations to men. Tamale's (2011:94) submission reiterates this assertion when she says that "identifying perpetrators solely by their gender is an inadequate route to a full explanation of the myriad behaviours that can be called gender". This erasure of difference culminates in mostly all

the characters' featured desires to either perpetrate violence or avenge former injustices as a result of their encounter with traumatic situations.

Furthermore, the transformation of Milkjar from a fearful timid girl to a fearless staunch perpetrator indicates the consequences of violence as provoking slips that shift the consistency in the adoption of gendered roles. Initially fearful about Mugezi's prediction of a blank future without hope, she refrains from accepting the justice the headmaster provides: "Milkjar was pathetic: she could not stop crying. The headmaster thrusts a stick in her hand and ordered her to beat me. She dropped the stick as though it were a hairy caterpillar" (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 82). However, after leaving primary school, Milkjar metamorphoses into an affirmative autocrat who subjugates. The narrator identifies: "What I saw next made my lower lip fall: I thought I recognised the large girl as one from Ndere Primary School whom I had told that she would birth a limbless creature..." (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 362). To reinforce her now powerful position, Milkjar decides to sexually assault Mugezi alongside her colleagues. This act communicates experience to the narrator which makes him conclude thus: "I kept thinking that these women had raped other men before. I was sure the men had kept quiet about it. I was also going to keep my mouth shut" (*Abyssinian Chronicles*, 363).

This portrayal of characters' decentralised reaction to violence debunks the depiction of differentials as compulsory authentication of the dynamics of gendered role classification. Rather, the loss of stereotypes in characters' vehement responses to oppressive overtures shows the dynamic reversal of symbolic order. Victims of callousness in these narratives are reformed through the oppression to be expressive instead of being reclusive. According to Mamdani (2001: 7), the reoccurring eruption of violence can result in "the production of not only individual criminals but populations of criminals". Through this re-figuration of human capacities to overcome suppressions, it can be deduced not only that the adoptions of roles are becoming fluid and ungendered, but also that the notion of difference used to earmark features which distinguish the activities of the self from the other are gradually being erased. For instance, the fact that Kasawo, the narrator's aunty, is gang raped by male soldiers shortly before Mugezi is also gang raped by female soldiers reveals a non-dichotomous order in the operation of power. The foregoing implies that the trauma of sexual abuse is an unfavourable condition which happens to both sexes; however, this is not aptly represented in fictional narratives. The reason, according to the narrator, is because most males tend to keep quiet about it. Hence,

Milkjar's resort to rape Mugezi alongside other women is a revolutionary reaction against sexual political categorisation of women as mainly the receptor of violence and never the initiators.

Assuredly, the lethal effect of trauma is an ontological challenge which reverses the dichotomous mode in the imagination of gendered duties. It construes gendered roles from a dynamic intersexual perspective where adoption of roles or the happenstance of pain constantly oscillates between characters mutually without establishing physiological dualities. This enables occurrences of dynamic interchange in the description of roles where sexual opposition is not considered a factor to oppress or tolerate incessant victimisations. The unfolding of events in these narratives buttresses the fact that "each of us has a "peace" face and a "war" face, we are programmed for co-operation, but prepared for conflict (Turner, 1982:19).

Inferably, the figuration of male oppressors in literary imaginations as mostly ferocious without obvious forms of vulnerabilities mainly reiterates the severity of the promotion of sexual politics in fictional narratives. However, the depiction of power seekers as assuming the basest form of beggary to upscale their formidability reveals as falsely the illusion of their exemption from dehumanisation.

## **Conclusion**

From all indications, the narrative texts analysed here challenge the hegemonic retention of the persistence of binaries in gendered duties. Without pretence, the writers lucidly depict the aftermath of reducing women to their sexuality as having adverse social consequences since such reduction as portrayed here energises women to be hardened criminals. The perceivable division between victims and perpetrators becomes blurred and unpredictable. Readers are hereby sensitised to recognise these nuances of shifts as building evolutions in the transformations of sexual politics.

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## **D. O. Fagunwa and the Dynamics of Ethnographic Realia: Contemporary Translatory Cultural Communication Exemplified**

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### **Abstract**

*Realia, words and expressions for culture-specific elements, often perceived in material object or abstract concept terms, have been important subjects of scholarly attention in global term. Extant studies have largely concentrated on various contents of translation studies with sparse consideration for Culture-bound items (CBI) or Culture-Specific Terms (CST) indexing the flow of traditional experiences into the contemporary world of cultural perceptions. This study, therefore, explored D. O. Fagunwa’s Yoruba ethnographic realia in Ogboju Ode ninu Igbo Irunmole with a view to examining the stimulative force of the contemporary translatory cultural communication displayed in *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons: A Hunter’s Saga*. Nida’s Dynamic Equivalence theory was complemented with Venuti’s Foreignizing Approach in analysing the text-based data sourced from both the Source Language (SL) and the Target Language (TL). The data were subjected to textual analysis and thematic coding of Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). Translation processes and strategies reflected the skilfulness of a master-cultural castrator, carving new but not far-fetched Yoruba traditional concepts into the flesh of an enslaving medium (English), to achieve a cultural onslaught of a universal reach. Culture-bound items include such words as Ifa, Oso, Esu, Olodumare, ghommids, kobolds, sand-elves, sixteen-eyed dewild, Agbako, Iranlowo, Helpmeet, Iwapele, and others to establish the onomastic relevance of linguistic signaling of cultural sensitivity in representing Yoruba beliefs and practices. Such expressions as Onibode orun, (Gatekeepers of heaven, ogbun ainisale, (Bottomless Bog), ekun oloju kan, (one-eyed leopard), Olojo oni, (Owner of this day), Alewilese, (the One Who makes good His words), Alakoso ohun rere gbogbo (the Sower of all good things), and others, exemplifying Soyinka’s shrewd and strategic translatory manoeuvrings of borrowing, literal translation, adaptation, modulation, and equivalence respectively. These were essentially reflective of the translator’s authentic representation of Yoruba culture, preserving the dynamics of the Yoruba ethnographic realia, and avoiding stereotypes and cultural appropriation. Translation of *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons: A Hunter’s Saga* is a mastery and a creative rendition that preserves the cultural essence and poetic beauty of the original Yoruba text. Soyinka’s skilful handling of Yoruba ethnographic realia, cultural sensitivity, and poetic language setting a high standard for cross-cultural literary exchange, demonstrating the importance of cultural sensitivity, authenticity, and poetic nuance in translating cultural heritage texts, and affirming D. O. Fagunwa’s Ògbójú Ọdẹ nínú Igbo Irunmole as a masterpiece of Yoruba literature and philosophy.*

**Keywords:** Dynamic Equivalence, Source Language, Cultural sensitivity, Ethnographic Realia

## **Introduction**

Realia, in translation studies, refers to Culture-bound items (CBI) or Culture-Specific Terms (CST), concepts, or references that are deeply rooted in a particular language, culture, or society. It mostly usually manifests as cultural artefacts, historical events, social institutions, folklore, idioms, colloquialisms, slang, and proper nouns. Realia, referring to words and expressions for culture-specific material elements that may be perceived in a material object or abstract concept terms, originates in Medieval Latin, where it meant ‘the real things’. Vlahov and Florin (2004) trace the modern sense of the concept to the pioneering works of the Bulgarian translators who observe the inherent overtone of local colourations, making realia to pose a challenge for translation. Yet, as claimed by Palumbo (2009), the field of literary translation, from time immemorial remains a captivating domain where cultures converge, narratives unfold, and linguistic intricacies abound. Central to this dynamic exchange are elements that constitute realia, encapsulating the essence of a culture through its specific objects, customs, and practices. The translation of realia presents a unique challenge for translators as the elements are deeply embedded in their cultural context and may lack direct equivalents in the target language. Alla (2018) notes that realia are lexical items of the source language (SL) which denote unique objects and phenomena characteristic of its ancestral community with no direct lexical counterparts in the target language (TL). It follows, therefore, that when translating realia, the goal is to find equivalent terms or expressions in the target language that convey the same meaning, cultural context, and connotations as the original text. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the intersection of the dynamics of ethnographic realia and the challenges posed to scholarly translational efforts in contemporary Yoruba cultural communication, using D. O. Fagunwa’s *Ogboju-ode ninu Igbo Irunmole* as example.

In the context of African literature, the works of D. O. Fagunwa stand out as rich sources of realia, reflecting Yoruba traditions, folklore, and societal nuances. The present study interrogates how culture-bound vocabulary and lexical items in one of D. O. Fagunwa’s novels have been translated into English, with a specific focus on the strategies employed to convey Yoruba realia. By examining these translation strategies, the research aims to enrich our appreciation of the complexities involved in cross-cultural communication and contribute to the ongoing discourse within translation studies. This analysis underscores the importance of maintaining the cultural essence of the source texts in literary translation.

## **Statement of the problem**

Previous studies on Fagunwa's novels have primarily focused on their literary and cultural significance in Yoruba literature. For instance, Bamgbose's (1974) comprehensive study highlights Fagunwa's profound influence on the development of the Yoruba novel while Ibrahim and Jegede's (2016) analysis of health in Fagunwa's novels underscores the author's engagement with traditional Yoruba culture. Lindfors (1979) examines the form, theme, and style in Fagunwa's narratives, providing insights into the unique characteristics of his works. Such scholarly efforts probably fuel Olumuyiwa and Aládésanmí's (2016) interest in studying interrogative sentences in Fagunwa's novels to further explore the linguistic aspects of his writing. Additionally, the Fagunwa Study Group has conducted various analyses on the contemporaneous nature and stylistic distinctiveness of his novels (Fagunwa Study Group, 2018). These notwithstanding, addressing the strategies involved in translating Fagunwa's culture-specific elements into English, however, remains a critical 'virgin soil'. Yet, the spread of the English language across the globe and its growing importance in different nations in the modern age. It is, therefore, necessary to contemplate a scholarly navigation into the dynamic process through which a meaning in the Yoruba language (Source) is 'linguistically' and 'semantically' transformed into the language (Target), and the responsibility of the translator in discovering 'how to reconstruct the meaning' of the source 'and how to convey it' in the target language (Al-Hamad and Al-Shunnag, 2011:151). *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons: A Hunter's Saga* (1982) is the specimen for our exploration of the translation of the Yoruba ethnographic realia.

This study, therefore, aims to investigate dynamics of the Yoruba ethnographic realia and the burden of translation strategies to the contemporary translators of selected novels of D. O. Fagunwa. In the process of achieving this aim, the specific objectives shall be to:

1. Identify the Yoruba ethnographic realia (CBI) in the translations of the selected novel of Fagunwa.
2. Categorise the Yoruba ethnographic realia (CBI) in the translations of the selected novel of Fagunwa

3. Examine the strategies used to translate the Yoruba ethnographic realia in the selected Fagunwa's translated text.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in the translation of the Yoruba ethnographic realia in the selected Fagunwa's translated text.

In pursuing the foregoing objectives, finding answers to the following questions is expedient:

1. What are the examples of the Yoruba ethnographic realia (CBI) in the selected novel of Fagunwa?
2. What are the classificatory modes for the Yoruba ethnographic realia (CBI) in the selected novel of Fagunwa?
3. How do translators deploy various techniques in their translations of the Yoruba ethnographic realia (CBI) in the selected novel of Fagunwa?
4. How effective are the strategies used by the translator in communicating the specificity of the items?

### **Significance of the Study**

Considering the centrality of translated culture-based texts, and the understanding of linguistic and cultural navigation in the process, this study is significant to the extent of contributing valuable insights to the field of Translation Studies, particularly in the field of realia translation and its intersection with Yoruba literature. By exploring the strategies involved in translating the Yoruba ethnographic realia into English in the selected texts, this research seeks to fill a gap in existing scholarship and offer practical solutions to translators and scholars alike.

### **Micro-Significance of the Study**

#### **1. Translation Studies**

This research will significantly contribute to the field of Translation Studies by offering a balanced understanding of realia translation strategies, particularly within the context of Yoruba literature. By analysing the translated versions of D.O. Fagunwa's novels, this study aims to uncover the complexities involved in rendering Yoruba realia into English. Through a meticulous examination of translation choices and strategies, translators, scholars, and students

of Translation Studies will gain valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities inherent in realia translation, enriching their understanding of cross-cultural communication and literary translation practices.

## **2. Translators and Editors**

The findings of this research will offer practical implications for translators and editors involved in the translation of Yoruba literature. By critically analysing the translated versions of Fagunwa's novels, this study can provide insights and recommendations to improve future translations of Yoruba realia. Translators and editors will benefit from the identification of effective translation strategies and approaches, ensuring greater cultural accuracy and accessibility in their translations. Ultimately, this will contribute to producing high-quality translations that faithfully capture the cultural nuances and richness of Yoruba literature.

## **3. Readers of Yoruba Literature**

This study holds significance for readers of Yoruba literature by enhancing their comprehension and appreciation of D.O. Fagunwa's work. By illuminating the complexities of cultural elements embedded within the text, readers will gain deeper insights into the cultural context and significance of Fagunwa's novels. Through a clearer understanding of realia translation strategies, readers will be able to engage more meaningfully with the text, thereby enriching their reading experience and fostering a deeper appreciation for Yoruba literature and culture.

## **4. Scholars of Yoruba Literature**

For scholars of Yoruba literature, this research offers valuable insights that can inform further analysis of Fagunwa's novels and their translations. By examining the translation of realia in Fagunwa's work, scholars will gain a deeper understanding of his literary techniques, cultural references, and thematic concerns. This research can contribute to ongoing discussions within the field of Yoruba literary studies, enriching scholarly discourse and advancing our understanding of Fagunwa's contributions to African literature.

## **Macro-Significance of the Study**

### **1. Cultural Exchange and Understanding**

At a broader societal level, this research has the potential to promote cultural exchange and understanding between Yoruba and English-speaking communities. By bridging the gap between Yoruba and English cultures through an in-depth analysis of realia translation, this study can foster greater cross-cultural appreciation and empathy. Through a deeper understanding of the cultural nuances embedded within Fagunwa's novels, readers from diverse cultural backgrounds can develop a more nuanced appreciation for Yoruba literature and culture, thereby promoting mutual understanding and respect.

### **2. Preserving Yoruba Culture and Heritage**

This research contributes to the preservation and dissemination of Yoruba cultural knowledge by highlighting the significance of realia in Fagunwa's work. By examining the translation of realia in Fagunwa's novels, this study underscores the importance of preserving and celebrating Yoruba culture and heritage. Through the dissemination of accurate and culturally sensitive translations, this research ensures that Yoruba cultural knowledge is preserved and accessible to future generations, thereby contributing to the safeguarding of Yoruba cultural identity and heritage.

### **3. Development of Translation Theories**

By analysing realia translation approaches within the framework of Yoruba literature, this research may contribute to the development and refinement of translation theories, particularly within the context of postcolonial studies and interlingual communication. The findings of this study can inform theoretical discussions surrounding the challenges of translating cultural elements and navigating linguistic and cultural differences. By shedding light on effective translation strategies and approaches, this research can advance our understanding of translation theory and practice, thereby enriching the field of Translation Studies.

### **4. Enriching Literary Scholarship**

Lastly, this research enriches the landscape of literary scholarship by focusing on realia as a critical element in understanding and appreciating African literature. By highlighting the

significance of realia in Fagunwa's novels, this study expands the scope of literary scholarship to include a deeper examination of cultural elements and their translation. Through an interdisciplinary approach that bridges Translation Studies and Yoruba literary studies, this research contributes to a more holistic understanding of African literature, thereby enriching the scholarly discourse and promoting greater appreciation for the diversity and richness of African literary traditions.

In conclusion, the significance of this study is in its overarching aim of advancing the field of Translation Studies by unravelling the complexities of translating Yoruba realia. Beyond academic discourse, this research holds the potential to elevate Yoruba literature onto the global stage, fostering greater appreciation and understanding of this rich literary tradition. Moreover, by facilitating cross-cultural exchange and communication, this study contributes to bridging cultural divides and promoting mutual understanding. Its practical implications extend to translators and scholars, offering actionable insights that can enhance the quality and fidelity of translations while enriching scholarly discourse. Through its multifaceted approach, this research endeavours to catalyse meaningful dialogue and engagement, ultimately fostering a deeper appreciation for the nuances of linguistic and cultural diversity.

### **In the literature**

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in studies that analyse geographical and ethnographical realia in literary texts, particularly focusing on the translation of these elements. These studies offer valuable insights into the complexities of realia translation and its implications for cross-cultural communication and literary interpretation. Two notable studies in this area are *Realia vs irrealia in non-fiction vs fiction texts: A case study of translation* (Razumna and Movchan, 2023) and *Reading and Interpreting Ethnography* (Dourish, 2014). Razumna and

Razumna and Movchan (2023) conducted a comprehensive case study examining the translation of realia and irrealia in non-fiction and fiction texts. Their study investigates the nuances of translating geographical and ethnographical elements present in the non-fiction book by L. Johnson *What Foreigners Need to Know about America from A to Z* and the apocalyptic novel *Seveneves* by N. Stephenson and their translations into Ukrainian, exploring how translators navigate the cultural and linguistic challenges posed by these elements. By comparing translation

strategies employed in non-fiction and fiction contexts, Razumna and Movchan shed light on the dynamic relationship between realia and irrealia and their representation in translated texts. Their research offers valuable insights into the strategies used by translators to convey geographical and ethnographical realia accurately while maintaining the integrity of the original texts.

In *Reading and Interpreting Ethnography*, Dourish (2014) provides a detailed examination of ethnographical texts and the challenges inherent in interpreting and translating ethnographic realia. Drawing on insights from ethnography, anthropology, and translation studies, Dourish explores the complexities of understanding and translating cultural nuances embedded within ethnographic texts. His study highlights the importance of cultural mediation in the translation process and emphasizes the need for translators to possess a deep understanding of the cultural contexts in which ethnographic research is conducted. Dourish's research contributes to our understanding of the unique challenges posed by ethnographical realia and offers valuable guidance for translators working with ethnographic texts.

These empirical studies offer diverse perspectives on the translation of geographical and ethnographical realia, providing valuable insights into the challenges and strategies employed by translators. By examining the translation of realia in both non-fiction and fiction contexts, Razumna and Movchan's study highlights the importance of context in shaping translation choices and strategies. Similarly, Dourish's exploration of ethnographical texts underscores the complexities of translating cultural nuances and the need for translators to possess specialized knowledge and expertise in the field of ethnography.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Translation theories are copious, ranging from Eugene Nida's 'Dynamic Equivalence', Lawrence Venuti's 'Foreignizing Approach', Holz Mantori's 'Theory of Translatorial Action' to Reiss' 'Text Type Theory'. Exploring the key principles of these theories to ethnographic Realia has useful implications for contemporary translations studies in Yoruba literary and linguistic criticisms. The limited scope of the present study, however, precludes our amassing theoretical postulations. Therefore, the analysis shall solely rest on 'Dynamic Equivalence' and 'Foreignizing Approach'. This results from the fact that, in the context of Yoruba literature, both approaches offer valuable insights into the translation of realia.

### **Dynamic Equivalence**

This theory allows for the adaptation of Yoruba realia to resonate with English-speaking audiences, prioritizing clarity and communicative effectiveness. It nevertheless, runs the risk of domesticating the source text and diluting its cultural specificity. Domestication is the strategy that brings about close conformity to the culture of the target language (TL) and may bring about loss of information from the source text (ST).

### **Foreignizing Approach**

This theory preserves the cultural integrity of the Yoruba ethnographic realia, challenging readers to confront cultural differences and fostering a deeper appreciation for Yoruba culture. It though retains information from the ST and ‘involves deliberately breaking the conventions of the TL to preserve its meaning’, it, however, may alienate readers and impede comprehension.

Therefore, translators as well as analysts must carefully balance fidelity to the source text with the need to make it accessible to the target audience, taking into account the unique cultural and linguistic features of Yoruba literature.

Within this landscape, the focus on ‘Yoruba realia’ emerges as a particularly intriguing study area. With its rich traditions, folklore, and rituals, the Yoruba culture presents a wealth of realia that permeates its literary works. Translating Yoruba realia into English poses unique challenges due to the cultural nuances and intricacies embedded within these elements. Scholars such as Soyinka (1975) and Chinweizu and Madubuike (1983) have shed light on the significance of Yoruba culture in literature, highlighting the need for sensitivity and cultural competence in its translation.

This study seeks to illustrate the application of these theories to the translation of the Yoruba ethnographic Realia, exemplifying from D.O. Fagunwa’s novel *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmale (The Forest of a Thousand Daemons: A Hunter’s Saga)*. It is in the belief that such theories are capable of foregrounding the novel’s rich cultural elements, including names of mythical creatures, traditional practices, and supernatural phenomena.

## **Methodology**

Attempt at studying ethnographic realia naturally imposes a transparent and systematic approach to data collection and analysis. This is crucial in establishing the credibility of the research outcomes, and in providing a solid foundation for drawing meaningful conclusions. Following this pathway, this study adopts qualitative content analysis to enhance the quality and integrity of the research process, thereby strengthening the contributions to the field of translation studies and literary scholarship. To this end, a descriptive research design is deployed to explore the strategies of translating Yoruba realia into English from the STs, aligning with the research questions and objectives of the study. Again, our choice of this method is based on the conviction that it can facilitate:

- (i) textual analysis and thematic coding,
- (ii) uncovering of the underlying meanings and cultural nuances embedded within Yoruba realia,
- (iii) elucidation of the strategies employed by the translators of the Target Texts (TTs).

The decision to prioritize re-reading the texts and identifying culture-bound items was justified by its ability to capture the intricacies of realia translation at a granular level. Engaging directly with the STs, fosters gaining first-hand insight into the cultural specificity of the texts, laying the groundwork for a detailed analysis of the translated realia in the TTs. This further ensured that no culturally significant elements were overlooked and that the subsequent analysis was grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the STs. This enables the documentation and interpretation of a diverse range of culture-bound items.

## **Analysis and discussion**

Real-world elements in the selected textual narrative include historical events, cultural practices, or linguistic features, and these are to be featured in analysing how Fagunwa employs realia in his work could offer valuable insights into the text's meaning, context, and cultural significance.

Fagunwa, indeed, incorporates realia, such as Yoruba mythology, cultural practices, and language, to create a rich and immersive narrative. D.O. Fagunwa, a Yoruba writer and translator, is one whose work *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons: A Hunter's Saga*, originally

titled *Ògbójú Qdẹ nínú Igbo Irunmole* in Yoruba, remains a masterpiece of Yoruba literature. The work is remarkable for its rich use of realia, drawing heavily from Yoruba mythology, culture, and language to create a unique narrative that blends folklore, adventure, and philosophy. These are the properties that Soyinka grapples with his English translation of the text, showing great effort at translating the Yoruba ethnographic realia. It is an effort at preserving and sharing aspects of Yoruba heritage with a wider audience.

### **First level of analysis**

Barring such issues as loss of cultural specificity by which some nuances of Yoruba culture might have been lost in translation, as the text was adapted for a broader audience, and the challenge of interpretation versus literal translation of which Soyinka's translation was criticized by some scholars for prioritizing interpretation over literal translation, which might have altered the original meaning, the translation of "The Forest of a Thousand Daemons" is widely regarded as a successful effort in conveying the richness of Yoruba culture and realia as listed below:

some textual or lexical examples of skilful preservation of the cultural nuances and complexities of the original Yoruba text include

1. Proverbial statements such as

"Ọrọpò èku égbé nṣẹ"

Meaning:

"A thousand pieces of elephant tusk cannot be gathered in one place"

by this, Soyinka seeks to convey the idea that great things are difficult to achieve.

2. Idiomatic expressions such as:

"Ìgbà jé ẹsọ"

Meaning:

"The time has come to wear the masquerade's costume"

Which is translated to mean "the time has come to take action".

3. Metaphorical manoeuvrings such as:

"Ọṣọ́ ńṣẹ̀ ìgbà lẹ́sẹ̀"

Meaning:

"The sun is shining brightly on the farm"

By this, Soyinka maintains the symbolism of prosperity and abundance.

4. Lexical items of cultural references such as:

"Ọṣọ́" (the god of fertility) and "Èṣù" (the god of fate),

By these, Soyinka preserves references to Yoruba deities like maintaining their cultural significance.

### 1.2.1 Realia Denoting Folklore and Mythology

**Table 1**

S/N	ST 1	TT 1	Translation Strategy
1.	Eleda pg 2	Maker pg 8 / Creator pg 20	Equivalence
2.	Otalugba sigidi pg 2	two hundred and sixty incubi pg 9	Adaptation
3.	osanyin pg 2	birds of divination pg 9	Adaptation
4.	anjonnu pg 2	spirits pg 9	Adaptation
5.	isalu orun pg 3	vault of heavens pg 11	Modulation
6.	Olorun Alāye pg 4	Immortal God pg 11	Modulation
7.	Ero-isalu-orun pg 4	stranger from the dome of heaven pg 12	Modulation
8.	iwin pg 6	ghommids pg 14	Adaptation
9.	Edumare pg 7	The King of Heaven pg 17	Adaptation
10.	ebora inu awusa pg 8	a walnut troll pg 17	Adaptation

11.	Omi loju Egberere pg 9	Tears in the eye of a gnome pg 19	Adaptation
12.	Olorun Oba pg 10	God the King pg 20	Equivalence
13.	ewele pg 12	the sixteen-eyed dewild pg 22	Modulation
14.	Agbako pg 12	Agbako pg 22	Borrowing
15.	oro pg 16	spirits pg 29	Adaptation
16.	eseku pg 16	kobolds pg 29	Equivalence
17.	oku pg 16	the dead pg 29	Equivalence
18.	Olorun pg 16	Lord pg 29	Equivalence
19.	Oba Orun pg 18	the King of Heaven pg 31	Equivalence
20.	ese iya pg 23	maternal foot (left foot) pg 37	Adaptation
21.	Olodumare pg 25	Ruler of skies pg 41	Adaptation
22.	Olojo oni pg 25	Owner of this day pg 41	Literal Translation
23.	Olorun pg 25	God Almighty pg 42	Equivalence
24.	awon anjonnu pg 31	guardian spirits pg 49	Adaptation
25.	ekun oloju kan pg 31	one-eyed leopard pg 48	Literal Translation
26.	Aroni pg 42	Aroni, the one-legged ghommid pg 62	Borrowing
27.	Iku pg 42	Death pg 62	Adaptation
28.	ina orun apadi pg 43	hell pg 63	Equivalence
29.	ogbun ainisale pg 44	Bottomless Bog pg 65	Adaptation
30.	iwin-ile pg 62	sand-elves pg 89	Adaptation
31.	Onibode orun pg 68	Gatekeepers of heaven pg 96	Literal Translation
32.	Ogongo Olorun pg 75	ostrich of God pg106	Literal Translation

33.	ayorunbo pg 77	wanderer type of children pg 108	Modulation
34.	Alewilese pg 95	the One Who makes good His words pg 131	Literal Translation
35.	Eni Mimo pg 95	Clean Spirit pg 131	Adaptation
36.	Eni Iyanu pg 95	the Wonderous One pg 131	Literal Translation
37.	Alaye pg 95	the Owner of Life pg 131	Literal Translation
38.	Olubukun pg 95	The Blessed One pg 131	Literal Translation
39.	Oga Ogo pg 95	The Prince of Glory pg 131	Equivalence
40.	Onibuore pg 95	Dispenser of goodness pg 131	Literal Translation
41.	Alatunse pg 95	the Mender of ills pg 131	Literal Translation
42.	Alakoso ohun rere gbogbo pg 95	the Sower of all good things pg 131	Literal Translation
43.	Alabo pg 95	Proctector pg 131	Literal Translation
44.	Olupamo pg 95	Defender pg 131	Literal Translation
45.	Enikansoso ti O wa ti O si mbe titi lai pg 95	the One who alone is and the Omnipotent One pg 131	Literal Translation

### **Second level of analysis**

One interesting point of analysis is Soyinka's skilful retention of linguistic play like alliteration and assonance that characterize the ethnographic realia described above as examples of as Yoruba oral traditions in the original text.

With the spellings used based on the Yoruba orthography system, the foregoing analysis has demonstrated how Soyinka skilfully preserved the cultural nuances and complexities of the original Yoruba text, ensuring that the translation remained faithful to the spirit of Fagunwa's novel.

### **Thematic contextualization of heritage and identity**

Another level of analysis reveals Soyinka's mastery of contextualization of realia and their significance in the story. In the first instance, *Egungun* festival is explained as a phenomenon of high significance. With its relevance to the story's themes of heritage and identity, *Egungun* festival is presented as a Yoruba tradition of honouring ancestors

Excerpt 1:

"The Egungun festival was in full swing, with masked figures dancing and prancing to the beat of drums..."

Context:

The protagonist, Akara-ogun, is struggling to find his place in society, and the Egungun festival serves as a reminder of his cultural roots.

### **Thematic contextualization of divination process and spirituality**

Soyinka contextualizes the Ifá divination process, a Yoruba spiritual practice, to reveal the characters' destinies and the story's themes of fate and free will.

Excerpt 2:

"The Ifá priest revealed that Akara-ogun's destiny was tied to the forest, and that he must embark on a journey to fulfill his purpose..."

Context:

Akara-ogun's journey into the forest is a metaphor for self-discovery and fulfilling one's destiny.

### **Thematic contextualization of ethno-religious deities**

Soyinka contextualizes the roles of Yoruba deities like Olódùmarè (the supreme god) and Èṣù (the god of fate) to illustrate their influence on the characters' lives and the story's themes.

Excerpt 3:

"Akara-ogun sought the guidance of Olódùmarè to navigate the challenges of the forest, and Èṣù's wisdom to understand the mysteries of fate..."

Context:

The characters' interactions with deities reflect their struggles with fate, free will, and spiritual growth.)

The foregoing demonstrations of how Soyinka contextualized realia to reveal their significance in the story, doubtless, are potential sources of enriching the reader's understanding of Yoruba culture and its role in shaping the narrative.

### **Third level of analysis**

There are levels at which Soyinka demonstrates some dexterous show of cultural sensitivity in representing Yoruba culture and beliefs, showing respect, humility, and a commitment to authenticity.

#### **Respectful cultural representation:**

Soyinka respectfully represents Yoruba beliefs and practices, avoiding stereotypes and cultural appropriation. His deep-seated cultural affiliation or attachment to his root is illustrated in the depicting the *Ifá* priest as a wise and compassionate figure, rather than a stereotypical "witch doctor". Similarly, the level of veneration *Egungun* festival and *Ifá* divination is seen in his refusal to regard them as "exotic" ritual

**Authentic language appropriation:** Soyinka uses authentic Yoruba language and terminology, rather than simplifying or distorting them for a non-Yoruba audience. He, for instance, uses the term "Olódùmarè" instead of "God" to refer to the supreme deity, maintaining the cultural specificity of the Yoruba belief system, exemplifying Afrocentrism.

All these culminate into Soyinka approaching the story with cultural humility, recognizing the limits of his own cultural perspective and avoiding cultural appropriation. This he does by acknowledging the complexity and richness of Yoruba culture, avoiding simplistic or stereotypical representations.

## Fourth level of analysis

### Ethnographic Realia and the embodied poetic and lyrical quality

Examples of contemporary cultural communication abound in Soyinka's translational project entitled *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons: A Hunter's Saga*. Instances of Soyinka's deployment of poetic and lyrical quality, capturing the essence of Yoruba traditions include:

**Rhetorical decorations** by which the forest is vividly described, evoking the sensory details of Yoruba oral traditions. Let us consider the following excerpt for example:

"The forest was a tapestry of emerald, green, with threads of silver and gold woven by the ancient gods themselves."

In this translation, using rich imagery, Soyinka is able to display mastery and abundance of 'rhetorical decorations' in his writing, presenting and suggesting images of sensible objects in his discourse. These types of symbolic imagery can also be exemplified in the following expression

"The river flowed like a vein, pulsing with the  
lifeblood of the forest."

Akin to rich imagery is the deployment of **Implied comparison** by which symbolic forms of language are used to convey the mystical and symbolic aspects of Yoruba beliefs as can be seen in the following example:

<sup>1</sup>"The trees stood like sentinels, guarding the secrets of the forest, their leaves whispering ancient wisdom to the wind."

<sup>2</sup>"The trees were giants, their branches like outstretched arms embracing the sky."

The foregoing translation thus reveals the dynamics of ethnographic realia with which Soyinka invokes the implicit similarity between various aspects of the Yoruba flora. To achieve this, such tropes as metaphors, simile, personification and thingification for the descriptions and denotations of 'fulness of life and abundance of African or Yoruba forests.

### Other sundry manifestations of translatory cultural communication

In like manner, the Yoruba ethnographic realia of Fagunwa's penmanship in *Ogboju Ode ninu Igbo Irunmole* (Source Text 1) are translated with a rare combination of Soyinka's mastery of the English language and sophistication of the Yoruba language.

In other word, the translation of *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons: A Hunter's Saga* is a creative rendition of Fagunwa's original text, infused with the poetic and lyrical qualities that are characteristic of Yoruba oral traditions. Therefore, other range of literary devices skilfully employed to convey the rich cultural heritage and mythological themes that are central to the story are cursorily presented below:

**Rhythmic cadence:** Soyinka's translation captures the rhythmic cadence of Yoruba oral traditions, echoing the beat of drums and the rhythm of storytelling.

Example:

"The drums beat out a rhythm, a heartbeat that echoed through the forest, summoning the spirits of the land."

**Poetic repetition:** He uses repetition, a hallmark of Yoruba oral traditions, to emphasize important themes and motifs.

Example:

"The forest, the forest, ancient and wise, holding secrets and stories that only the trees could tell."

**Alliteration and assonance:** Soyinka employs alliteration and assonance to create a musical quality, reminiscent of Yoruba praise poetry.

Example:

"The leaves rustled and whispered, a soft susurrations that soothed the soul."

Other such alliterative phrases include:

"The leaves whispered secrets, their soft susurrations a soothing serenade."

These instances demonstrate Soyinka's skill in capturing the poetic and lyrical quality of the original text, conveying the essence of Yoruba traditions and oral storytelling.

**Vivid personification:**

"The forest was a living entity, its breath a gentle breeze that caressed the skin."

**Repetitive refrains:**

"The forest, the forest, a realm of wonder, a realm of awe."

It is crystalised through this analysis these peculiar uses of imagination not only create a sense of enchantment and wonder but also underscore the cultural significance of the forest and its inhabitants in Yoruba mythology. By capturing the poetic and lyrical essence of the original text, Soyinka's translation ensures that the cultural heritage and mythological themes of the story remain vibrant and alive for readers.

**Summary of findings**

Our findings highlight Wole Soyinka's skilful translation of *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons: A Hunter's Saga* (Target Text 1) in preserving the cultural nuances and complexities of the original Yoruba text, *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmole* (Source Text 1). We identified and discussed examples of:

- (i) Cultural sensitivity in representing Yoruba beliefs and practices, using contemporary cultural communication of the Yoruba ethnographic realia.
- (ii) Contextualization of the Yoruba ethnographic realia to reveal their significance in the D. O. Fagunwa's original story.
- (iii) Creative deployment of Poetic and lyrical language that captures the essence of Yoruba oral traditions, using the Yoruba ethnographic realia.
- (iv) Successful handling of the Yoruba ethnographic realia, including proverbs, idioms, and metaphors to project cultural heritage and mythological themes of the story.
- (v) Authentic representation of Yoruba culture, preserving the dynamics of the Yoruba ethnographic realia, and avoiding stereotypes and cultural appropriation.

In the overall analysis, Soyinka's translation demonstrates a deep respect for the source culture and a commitment to conveying its richness and complexity to a broader audience.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

In conclusion, our analysis of Wole Soyinka's translation of *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons: A Hunter's Saga* reveals a mastery and a creative rendition that preserves the cultural essence and poetic beauty of the original Yoruba text. Soyinka's skilful handling of Yoruba ethnographic realia, cultural sensitivity, and poetic language ensures that the translation remains faithful to the spirit of the original novel, making it an excellent representation of Yoruba culture and literature. This translation sets a high standard for cross-cultural literary exchange, demonstrating the importance of cultural sensitivity, authenticity, and poetic nuance in translating cultural heritage texts. Soyinka's literary efforts and matchless show of linguistic dexterity not only confirms D.O. Fagunwa himself as a unique Yoruba writer and translator; but also affirms *Ògbójú Qdẹ nínú Igbo Irunmole* as a masterpiece of Yoruba literature and philosophy.

Based on our analysis, we recommend:

- (i) Using Soyinka's translation as a model for translating cultural heritage texts, prioritizing cultural sensitivity and authenticity.
- (ii) Incorporating more Yoruba language and cultural elements in translations to preserve the cultural essence of the text.
- (iii) Encouraging collaboration between translators, cultural experts, and literary scholars to ensure accurate representation of cultural heritage.
- (iv) Developing translation workshops and training programs focused on cultural sensitivity and poetic nuance.
- (v) Promoting cross-cultural literary exchange programs to foster global understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural heritages.

By implementing these recommendations, ensuring that translations of cultural heritage texts maintain the richness and complexity of the original work, and promoting cultural understanding and appreciation worldwide is a 21<sup>st</sup> century global possibility.

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## **Human Resources Policy Development and Portfolio Administration in Nigerian Universities**

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### **Introduction**

#### **Registrar and Registry in the University Human Resources Development**

Human resource management (HRM) is the process of employing people, training, compensating, and developing policies relating to them, and developing strategies to retain them.<sup>1</sup> HRM is very crucial in line with universal principles of administration known as POSDCORB (*Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting, and Budgeting*) in the management of formal organizations<sup>2</sup> and big institutions like universities.

The traditional function of the Registry in the Nigerian University system includes the administration of Human Resources (HR) portfolios, which is generally the administrative work and professional coordination of HR matters through its Establishment Division,<sup>3</sup> while the HR policy direction is under the guidance of University Management and policy statements of various Appointment and Promotion Committees codified and approved by Council.

The role of Registrars in the administration of Human Resources in the Nigerian University system about its statutory organs and departments is diverse. No doubt, the administrative system adopted in Nigerian universities like other British Commonwealth is centralized with the Vice-Chancellor (*President in the American System*) being the Chief Academic and Executive Officer while the Registrar is the Chief Administrative Officer reporting to the Chief Executive on the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://open.lib.umn.edu/humanresourcemanagement/chapter/1-4-cases-and-problems/>

<sup>2</sup> **Mark H. Moore**, *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*, Harvard University Press; Revised ed. edition (January 1, 1995) ISBN-10: 0674175581; ISBN-13:978-0674175587

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Dr. Omojola O. Awosusi, (*former Chairman, Association of Registrars of Nigerian Universities and retired Registrar of Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti*), 64 years old, September, 2023;

administration of all aspects of the university, particularly management services and corporate governance which covers secretarial services and human resources etc.<sup>4</sup>

At Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, the administrative structure of the University of Ibadan was adopted from its inception. The University also follows the Federal Government Salary Scale and reviews all matters of industrial relations and staff development based on recommendations from appropriate University organs of the University and the approval of the Governing Council.

The Registrar plays a vital role in the administration of human resources ensuring that the university's HR system supports its strategic goals and objectives. The Registrar is integral to the administration of human resources across the university statutory organs and department, effectively coordinating and implementing HR policies and practices<sup>5</sup> as follows:

- a. Compliance with regulations: The Registrar ensures that the university complies with all relevant regulations related to human resources, such as employment laws, labour laws, and anti-discrimination laws.
- b. Secretary to the statutory bodies: The Registrar is the secretary to all the statutory bodies of the university, such as the Governing Council, Senate, and Congregation responsible for record-keeping, taking minutes of meetings, preparing agenda, providing necessary information to guide policy making and ensuring that decisions are implemented.
- c. Head of the Human Resources Department: The Registrar is the Chief Human Resource Officer and head of the human resources department of the university responsible for the overall administration of human resources, including recruitment, selection, training, development, performance management, and compensation and benefits.
- d. Liaison with other departments: The Registrar liaises with various departments of the university, such as the Bursary (finance department), the estates department (Works and Services), and the legal office on matters related to human resources to ensure that there is a coordinated approach to human resources management. This ensures coordination between the different departments regarding human resources matters.

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<sup>4</sup> J.E.T. Babatola, *Registry Manual, 2017* – See [https://www.academia.edu/36613356/Registry\\_Training\\_Manual](https://www.academia.edu/36613356/Registry_Training_Manual); See also J.E.T. Babatola, *The Role of Secretary in Committee of Nigeria University System, 2014* - <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313668466>

<sup>5</sup> J.E.T. Babatola, *Registry and HRD Policy Development* - <https://bard.google.com/share/d05006b78b35>

- e. Promoting a positive work environment: The Registrar promotes a positive work environment in the university by liaising with Staff, Faculties, and the Congregation and assisting the Management and the Appointments and Promotions Committee (Committee of Council) to draft, develop, and implement policies and procedures to promote respect, fairness, and inclusion in the workforce, subject to the approval of the Governing Council. This includes also advising the Management to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and equally and that they have a safe and healthy working environment.

The Registrar's role in human resources administration in a Nigerian university varies based on the institution's size, complexity, staff count, policies and procedures and traditions. The overall goal is to equip the Registrar with the authority and resources needed to manage HR functions effectively, ensuring a well-functioning system<sup>6</sup> that supports the university's strategic goals and objectives by:

- a. Advising the Vice-Chancellor and other senior management on human resources matters.
- b. Overseeing the implementation of the university's human resources policies and procedures.
- c. Developing and implementing training programs for human resources staff.
- d. Researching human resources issues and
- e. Representing the university at conferences and other events related to human resources.

The Department overseeing Human Resources administration on the other hand assists the Registry in the following tasks:

- a. Overseeing recruitment and selection process: Assist the Registrar in the recruitment and selection process for all staff, including academic and non-teaching staff by developing job descriptions; advertising positions, screening applications, and conducting interviews.
- b. Managing employee records: Helps the Registrar to maintain employee records, such as personnel files, performance appraisals, commendation and achievement reports, and disciplinary records.

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<sup>6</sup> National Universities Commission (NUC), *Manual of University Management*, Chp. 4, NUC, Abuja, June 1997.

- c. Providing advice and guidance to staff: Provide advice to the Registrar in guidance to staff on a variety of human resources matters, when required to do so such as Staff rights and responsibilities, Staff benefits, and Staff disciplinary procedures.
- d. Resolving employee disputes: Responsible to the Registrar for resolving employee disputes as required or directed by the Management, such as disputes on salary matters, disputes of promotion, or disputes on the mode of staff discipline or disciplinary action.
- e. Monitoring the performance of the human resources department: Monitors the performance of staff as required of the human resources department to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the university.

### **Professionalizing Human Resources Portfolio in the Nigerian University System**

The increasing need for focus on workers' well-being, employee relations and manpower development, professionalism, and work specialization in Human Resources development policies has made some universities over time rename or create additional Human Resources Units in the Registry separate from the Establishment (Personnel) Division.<sup>7</sup> In Universities, where additional HR Units exist, they are known as:

- a. Human Resources Development Centre,
- b. Pensions and Industrial Relations Office,
- c. Industrial and Labour Relations Office,
- d. Staff Development and Training Unit, and
- e. Staff Welfare and Manpower Development Unit

These above-named offices handle some aspects of human resources activities of the Registry in the University and are coordinated by qualified Human Resource personnel who are staff of the Registry. It is only in the case of the University of Lagos that the Human Resources Development Centre is running as an academic directorate for the training of staff and other academic programmes of the University.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Dr. Omojola O. Awosusi, (*former Chairman, Association of Registrars of Nigerian Universities and retired Registrar of Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti*), 64 years old, September, 2023;

<sup>8</sup> <http://hrdc.unilag.edu.ng/>

In all cases where the Establishment Office exists separate from the Human Resources (sometimes performed by the General or Central Administration Unit of the Registry),<sup>9</sup> the functions of the Establishment Office (Personnel Unit) are well specified and continue to exist as a responsibility of the Registry under the Registrar<sup>10</sup> as summarized below:

1. **The Establishment (Personnel) Office** is responsible for the following functions:
  - a. Recruitment and selection of qualified candidates for employment including sourcing candidates, screening applications, and conducting interviews.
  - b. Compensation, benefits, and onboarding new employees by providing them with information about the university, the job, and benefits and determining and administering salaries, wages, bonuses, and benefits for employees.
  - c. Maintaining personnel records which include keeping track of employee information such as names, addresses, dates of employment, and job titles.
  - d. Processing employee paperwork which includes processing new hire paperwork, termination paperwork, and other employee-related paperwork.
  - e. Performance management by setting performance goals and monitoring performance to provide feedback on employees to the Management and Council.
  - f. Providing information to employees about their benefits which includes explaining the university's benefits policies, answering employee questions, and resolving problems.
  - g. Ensuring compliance with employment laws and regulations by staying up-to-date on changes in employment law and ensuring that the university is conversant with laws and regulations on employment and employee relations.
  - h. Administering the university's payroll system which includes calculating employee wages, deductions, and taxes, and issuing paychecks.
  - i. Providing support to the Human Resources Office by providing data and information and assisting with the implementation of training and development programmes.
2. **The Human Resources Development Unit** on the other hand is responsible for the following functions:
  - a. Managing the performance appraisal process by setting performance goals, monitoring performance, and providing feedback to staff.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.ui.edu.ng/content/office-deputy-registrar-administration>

<sup>10</sup> J.E.T. Babatola, Registry and HRD Policy Development - <https://bard.google.com/share/d05006b78b35>

- b. Planning and implementing training programmes for employees by identifying their training needs, developing and delivering training programmes that are aligned with the university's strategic goals and objectives and designed to improve employee skills, knowledge, and competencies.
- c. Delivering training programmes for employees that may be done in-house or by contracting with external training providers and evaluating training programmes to improve the effectiveness of the University and ensure that they meet the needs of employees and the university.
- d. Managing employee development records such as training certificates and performance appraisals.
- e. Providing career counselling and guidance to employees by helping them to identify their career goals, develop career plans, and find opportunities for career development and providing career counselling to employees to help them develop their careers and progress within the university.
- f. Providing answers to employee questions, and resolving problems on their contract of employment that requires Management review in line with extant law and University regulations.
- g. Overseeing health and safety in the workplace by ensuring the safety and health of employees.
- h. Administering the university's employee relations policies by handling employee grievances, resolving disputes, and promoting a positive work environment.
- i. Equal opportunities by ensuring that all employees are treated fairly and equally, regardless of their race, gender, religion, or other factors.

The Establishment Office and the Human Resources Office whether combined or separate, share many functions and overlapping responsibilities despite some distinct differences. While the Establishment Office focuses on human resources administration, personnel records management, and compliance with rules, the Human Resources Office emphasises staff development, training, talent management and welfare. Together, they ensure the university has a well-trained and motivated workforce. Their specific activities vary based on the university's size and complexity allowing them to harmonize resources and capabilities to support the university's strategic goals and objectives.

## **HR Policy Development for Staffing Needs and Development in Nigerian Universities**

The challenges of Human Resources Development in Nigerian Universities are diverse. The University faces several challenges that can be summarized as follows:

1. Limited resources and limited funding for training and development
2. Lack of qualified trainers and coaches
3. Competition for talent from other institutions and organizations and
4. Lack of a culture of continuous learning and development due to cultural barriers often associated with environmental factors and workers' attitudes, enabling environment and infrastructure
5. Work schedule and lack of time for staff to engage in training and development.
6. Resistance to change.

Human Resources policies in Nigerian Universities are designed to address growing challenges aligning with the University's strategic plan, ensuring a comprehensive and integrated approach to human capital development. These policies ensure the university has the right people with the right skills to meet strategic objectives, fostering a skilled and motivated workforce<sup>11</sup> to achieve its goals through:

- a. Recruitment and selection of high-quality staff
- b. Training and development of staff to meet the changing needs of the university
- c. Performance management and appraisal of staff
- d. Career development and progression of staff
- e. Employee relations and welfare

Developing human resources policies is crucial for attracting, developing, and retaining a skilled and motivated workforce essential for achieving the university's goals and enhancing its human capital. These policies provide various training and development opportunities helping the University create a learning organization capable of meeting the 21st century challenges.

An effective HR policy development in the University system in line with fulfilling National Universities Commission (NUC) institutional accreditation requirements is therefore expected to:

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<sup>11</sup> J.E.T. Babatola, Registry and HRD Policy Development - <https://bard.google.com/share/d05006b78b35>;

1. Align with the University's overall strategic plan.
2. Be flexible enough to adapt to the changing needs of the University.
3. Be regularly communicated to all staff for effective compliance and
4. Be regularly evaluated to ensure that it is meeting its objectives.

### **Key Principles of Human Resources Development in Nigerian Universities**

The key principles guiding the review and implementation of human resources policy development in the Universities are:

- a. The University's commitment to developing its staff as a strategic asset.
- b. The need for the University to provide a variety of training and development opportunities to meet its staff needs.
- c. The University's determination to integrate the values and respect for diversity and inclusion in its workforce.
- d. The management's desire and intention to create a supportive environment for learning and development in the University.
- e. The budgetary provision for effective pursuit of training and development activities of the staff in the University and regular communication of the benefits of training and development to staff.
- f. The University desires to offer flexible training and development options to accommodate the staff's needs.
- g. The University's determination to create a culture of continuous learning and development by providing opportunities for staff to learn new skills and knowledge in their careers.

### **Goals and Objectives of Human Resources Policy Development in Nigerian Universities**

The goals of the human resources policy development are to:

- a. Attract and retain the best and brightest talent.
- b. Promote a high-performing and motivated workforce.
- c. Create a culture of continuous learning and development and
- d. Develop the skills and knowledge of staff to meet the changing needs of the university.

The specific objectives of the human resources policy development are to:

- a. Develop a comprehensive training and development plan for all the staff.
- b. Provide opportunities for staff to learn new skills and knowledge.
- c. Encourage staff to take on new challenges and responsibilities.
- d. Recognize and reward staff achievements.
- e. Create a supportive and encouraging environment for learning and development.

### **Activities of the Human Resources Development Department in Nigerian Universities**

The variety of activities to support the development of the University's human capital includes:

- a. Onboarding and orientation programmes for new employees
- b. Training and development programmes for current employees
- c. Mentorship and coaching programmes
- d. Leadership development programmes
- e. Career development counselling
- f. Employee wellness programmes

### **Strategies for Implementing Human Resources Development in Nigerian Universities**

The strategies adopted to facilitate the implementation of human resources development include:

1. Attracting, developing, and retention of high-quality staff.
2. Enhancing skills and knowledge of staff to meet the changing needs of the University.
3. Creating a learning organization that encourages continuous improvement
4. Promoting a culture of innovation and creativity.
5. Providing various training and development opportunities, including on-the-job training, workshops, seminars, and online courses.
6. Offer tuition reimbursement for staff who wish to pursue further education.
7. Creating a mentoring program to pair experienced staff with new staff and subordinates.
8. Establish a learning and development budget to fund training and development activities.
9. Measuring the impact of training and development activities to ensure that they meet the university's needs.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation on Human Resources Development in Nigerian Universities**

The human resources development plan should be continuously evaluated to ensure it meets the needs of the university and its staff. The monitoring and evaluation process which includes feedback from staff, managers, and other stakeholders can measure the following:

- a. The university's specific needs such as course offerings, research activities and campus locations.
- b. Availability of resources, including funding and training facilities.
- c. Staff satisfaction with training and development opportunities.
- d. Impact of training and development on skills and knowledge.
- e. Contribution of training and development to the university's strategic objectives.
- f. Challenges in human resource development such as a lack of skilled trainers and high training costs.
- g. Fair and transparent recruitment based on merit and qualifications.
- h. Provision of training and development opportunities for all staff, including types of training and eligibility criteria.
- i. Creation of a performance management and appraisal system to ensure staff perform to their full potential and receive necessary feedback.
- j. Designing a career development and progression system to provide staff with opportunities to advance within the university.
- k. Developing an employee relations and welfare system to meet staff needs in health and safety, equal opportunities, and disciplinary procedures.
- l. Proper implementation and regular review of the HR policy to ensure that it meets the university's needs.
- m. Consideration of the cultural context and societal values and expectations of university staff.

## **Case Study of Human Resources Portfolios in selected Nigerian Universities**

The Aboriginal Establishment Office in the University system were routine workers, who were not specialists in Human Resources but trained to handle administrative duties including regular matters such as leave, maternity, sabbatical, study leave, promotion, service investigation panels

etc. Nonetheless, most federal, state, and private universities in Nigeria modelled their human resources administration along the same pattern as what exists at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria (*Nigeria's Premier University*), University of Nigeria, Nsukka, (*Nigeria's first full-fledged University*) and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (*Northern Nigeria's Premier University*) with the headship remaining a senior Registry Staff (*an Administrative Officer*) in the rank of a Deputy Registrar, Senior Deputy Registrar or a Director.<sup>12</sup>

The components of Human Resources Units in the above-mentioned Universities consist of the Establishments Division (HR/Personnel Services) responsible for Staff Recruitment, Staff Deployment, Management of Staff related affairs such as Housing, Leave, Training, Discipline and promotion, Retirement/Pension Registration, etc and divided into either:

- a) Establishment (HR/Personnel) Division (a University of Ibadan model) comprising: The Personnel Office, Welfare Department and Industrial Relations Unit are now under the supervision of the Deputy Registrar (General Administration) who coordinates the activities of the following Registry Units: Estate Office, Publications Unit, Training and Industrial Relations Unit and the Secretariat of Development Committee with its three Sub-Committees (Finance, Academic, and Research Grants). Additionally, the Deputy Registrar represents the Registrar on the Board of Health, Senior Staff Housing Committee, Board of Survey, Ceremonials Committee and serves as Secretary of Senior Staff Disciplinary Committee and Congregation.
- b) Establishment (HR/Personnel) Division (a University of Nsukka Model) comprising: Personnel Administrative Desk, Records/Statistics Unit, Staff Committee (SC) Desk, Recruitment, Training and Development (RTD) Office.
- c) Establishment (HR/Personnel) Division (a University of Lagos Model) comprising: Academic Staff Unit, Administrative and Technical Staff Unit, Junior Staff Unit, Staff Training and Development Unit, Health and Safety Unit and Pension Unit.
- d) Establishment (HR/Personnel) Division (an Ekiti State University Model) comprising: Academic Staff Unit, Non-Teaching Senior Staff Unit, Junior Staff Unit, Staff Development and Training Unit and Staff Welfare, Industrial Relations and Pension Unit.

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<sup>12</sup> J.E.T. Babatola, Registry and HRD Policy Development - <https://bard.google.com/share/d05006b78b35>;  
<https://registry.unn.edu.ng/2020/07/17/operational-strategic-offices-of-the-registry/>;

Several universities, such as the University of Lagos, Akoka; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife<sup>13</sup>; Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye; Covenant University, Otta; Baze University, Abuja, Hallmark University, Itele and Redeemers University, Ede have restructured their human resources management by renaming the Establishment Department as the Human Resources Department (HRD). The department is typically headed by a senior Registry Staff (*an Administrative Officer*) either a Deputy Registrar or a Director. In instances where a Director of Human Resources is appointed, they report to the Registrar who in turn reports to the Vice-Chancellor. The HRD oversees a team of professionals specializing in recruitment, selection, training, and development, performance management, compensation and benefits, employee relations, health and safety, and equal opportunities within the university framework.

At Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, the Registrar's Office oversees all administrative and operational functions of the university. The Directorate of Personnel Affairs reporting to the Registrar's Office manages staff appointments, promotions, and disciplinary matters, while the Staff Training and Development Unit within the Personnel Division handles ongoing training initiatives. Additionally, the Directorate of Planning, Budgeting and Monitoring/Management Information Systems also under the Registrar's Office develops the university's data bank for planning and budgeting purposes and manages its information systems.

At the University of Lagos (UNILAG), the Personnel Division now known as the Human Resources Department within the Registry plays a central role in managing human resources. It oversees recruitment, appointments, staff promotions, welfare, capacity building, leave processing, retirement and staff exit, disciplinary actions and ensures proper establishment and job descriptions. The department is organized into units dedicated to Academic Staff, Administrative and Technical Staff, Junior Staff, Staff Training and Development, Health and Safety and Pension. Additionally, UNILAG has established a Human Resources Development Centre as an academic directorate focused on staff-certificated training and fostering collaboration with professional bodies for professional and academic development opportunities.

At Mountaintop University, Prayer City, the Human Resources (HR) Unit overseen by the Registry manages various aspects of staff administration. This includes recruitment,

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<sup>13</sup> <https://oauife.edu.ng/registry/>; <http://hrdc.unilag.edu.ng/>

appointment, promotion, welfare, training, and development. The Unit oversees also handles leave, and staff redeployment as needed within the university's operational framework. Working closely with committees the Appointment and Promotion Committee under the Registrar's direction, the HR Unit places internal and external job advertisements, manages recruitment processes, from shortlisting to issuing appointment letters; ensures new staff comply with university regulations including medical examination and orientation programs, facilitates staff redeployment and manages the clearance process for departing staff members.

At Hallmark University, the Human Resources Department operating within the Registry oversees and coordinates all Academic, Non-teaching, and Junior Staff matters. Supported by a dedicated Data Entry and Statistics Unit, it manages leave records, updates service records, maintain staff nominal rolls, oversees staff file storage, monitors ICT server operations related to personnel, manages annual personnel budgeting, oversees the APER form and appointments/promotions schedule, verifies staff credentials, issues letter of introduction as needed by staff and handles other assigned duties within the unit.

At Baze University, Abuja the Human Resources Department focuses on diversity management and proactive partnerships to recruit, develop, and retain a highly skilled and engaged workforce. The division aims to inspire and support staff in achieving their personal and professional goals while delivering the University's mission. Committed to fostering innovation and better decision-making through a diverse workforce, the HR team oversees all aspects of employment including conditions of service, recruitment, faculty services, compensation, benefits, training, development, educational opportunities, employer-employee relations, pension, staff awards, onboarding, health and welfare benefits, employment verification and maintaining a safe work environment. They are dedicated to preserving the confidentiality and privacy of entrusted information.

At the Redeemers University, Ede, the Human Resources Department is a separate Registry Unit that performs core HR activities and functions like the Registry of UNILAG and also plays the role of:

- a. Planning and budgeting: involving the planning and budgeting process for the university, as it relates to human resources including forecasting staffing needs, developing training budgets, and managing compensation and benefits costs.
- b. Information management: maintaining the university's human resources information system including tracking employee data, such as personal information, job history, and performance appraisals.
- c. Research and analysis: Conduct research and analysis on human resources issues, such as employee turnover, compensation, and benefits. This research is used to inform the university's human resources policies and practices.
- d. Public relations: promoting the university's human resources policies and practices to employees, students, and the public. This includes developing and distributing publications, such as employee handbooks and recruitment brochures.

In universities where the Human Resources Department replaces the Establishment Office, they undertake the following core activities:

- a. Recruitment and Selection: Advertising positions, screening applications, conducting interviews, and making hiring decisions to recruit qualified candidates.
- b. Training and Development: Providing formal and informal training opportunities, such as on-the-job training, workshops, and seminars to enhance the skills and knowledge of the university's employees.
- c. Performance Management: Developing and implementing a system to set performance goals, monitor performance, and provide feedback to employees to improve their effectiveness.
- d. Compensation and Benefits: Determining and administering salaries, wages, bonuses, and other benefits while ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations.
- e. Employee Relations: Handling grievances, resolving disputes, and fostering a positive work environment through policy development and enforcement.
- f. Health and Safety: Ensuring workplace health and safety by developing and enforcing policies that protect employees from hazards.

- g. Equal Opportunities: Promoting fairness and equality for all employees regardless of race, gender, religion, or other factors, through inclusive policies and practices.
- h. Administrative Tasks: Maintaining employee records, processing payroll, and managing benefits administration efficiently.

### **The Registry and Human Resource Management at Ajayi Crowther University**

The office of the Registrar is responsible for a good number of administrative works of the university such as:

- a. Keeping the university records,
- b. Overseeing the administration of academic records;
- c. Handling establishment matters;
- d. Providing corporate information and undertaking public relations;
- e. Assisting with the coordination of student affairs;
- f. Seeing to arrangements for recruitment and promotion of staff;
- g. Secretariat of University committees and
- h. Other functions are assigned by law or delegated by appropriate organs of the University and the Vice-Chancellor.

As earlier mentioned, the Registrar is Secretary to the statutory bodies in the University, including the Council, Senate, their committees, and others. The Registrar discharges his responsibilities to the management and various committees through the Registry. Ajayi Crowther University Registry office is presently a combination of the following offices:

- a. Office of the Registrar
- b. Establishment Division: Establishment Desk for Academic Staff; Establishment Desk for Administrative and Technical Senior Staff; Establishment Desk for Junior Staff and Establishment Desk for Staff Welfare, Training and Development)
- c. Academic Affairs Division: Academic Matters & Senate Secretariat; Examinations & Record Office; Admissions Office; and Committee of Deans and Other Senate Committees

- d. Council Affairs and General Administration Division: Council Secretariat and Records; and General Administration, Central Registry and Facility Management
- e. Student Affairs Division: Student Records Administration; Students Welfare; Hostel Administration; Students Guidance and Counselling; ACUSA and Students activities; Students Clubs and Societies; Students Scholarship, Grants and Academic Prizes; NYSC Mobilization, Voluntary Services and Public Enrolment
- f. Faculty Offices/Centre/Directorate Administration and Programme Secretaryship

### **Activities and Duties of Establishment Division in Ajayi Crowther University Registry**

The Establishment Division at Ajayi Crowther University serves as the central hub for human resources management, overseeing policies, and administrative functions related to personnel. The Human Resources Officer in the University under the direction of the Registrar and ultimately accountable to the Vice-Chancellor, manages a broad spectrum of staff categories including academic, senior, junior, non-academic, and technical roles. Responsibilities encompass recruitment, welfare, training, and development initiatives across the university.

The Establishment Officer operates within a structured hierarchy where recruitment decisions for teaching and senior non-teaching staff necessitate approval from the Vice-Chancellor, with the Registrar overseeing junior staff and casual workers' approvals. This process aligns with budgetary oversight and administrative reporting requirements mandated by the Vice-Chancellor. The role also involves frequent coordination with supervisory staff (Schedule Officers) in the Department to relate with the Registrar and have direct access to the Vice-Chancellor when essential, particularly in assisting with delegation of duties and processing of cases before Appointments and Promotions Committees cases and policy execution under Registrar's guidance.<sup>14</sup>

Policy development within the HR framework is pivotal, driven by the Establishment Officer's execution of approved recruitment processes. Upon the Vice-Chancellor's approval to fill vacancies, the Registrar directs the Establishment Office to proceed with advertising, sourcing for the right hand, applicant shortlisting, interview organization and issuance of appointment letters, ensuring compliance with university regulations and operational efficiency.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.acu.edu.ng/the-registry/>; ACU Law (2003); ACU Condition of Service (under review)

The statutory roles of the Registrar as the Chief Administrative Officer which is often delegated or devolved in an Establishment Office under the Registrar's guidance or directives include:

1. Assisting the top management of the University in the interpretation of policies that relate to personnel or workforce, for the purpose of facilitating management decisions.
2. Advising the line managers in the University as a staff specialist.
3. Acting as staff advisors by explaining policies to staff and advising them on how to adhere to the university's rules and regulations governing staff employment and conditions of service.
4. Assisting the direct supervisors and managers in dealing with various personnel matters.
5. Acting as counsellors and attending to problems on employees' grievances as they relate with the University.
6. Acting as mediating professionals and serving as a link between management and staff.
7. Serving as the scheduling officer to the Appointments and Promotions Committee and the Senior Staff Disciplinary Committee which are statutory committees of Governing Council.

The administrative and professional activities of the Establishment Division of the Registry therefore consist of the following:

- a. Devising, storage and preservation of HR information and policy documents.
- b. Keeping of staff records and other matters in relation to staff employment.
- c. Servicing the various statutory committees such as the Appointments and Promotions Committee (Academic Staff); Senior Staff Appointment and Promotions Committee (Non-Teaching); Senior Staff Disciplinary Committee; Junior Staff Committee (Appointments, Promotions and Discipline).
- d. Implementation of Appointments and Promotions Committee decisions as well as management policies and policy decisions that relate to university staff.
- e. Preparation of minutes and issuance of decision extract of the committees serviced.
- f. Handling all pensions and gratuity claims.
- g. Handling issuance on appointments and promotions, staff discipline, and transfer of staff; also handles issues relating to leaves (training leave, study leave, leave of absence, annual leave, and sabbatical leave).

- h. Attending Faculty meetings to guide regulations and acquaint members of staff and management with policies and decisions on issues affecting staff of the unit and departments.
- i. Interpret, guide, and advise Appointments and Promotions (Academic, Senior, and Junior) Committees in the regulations of the University as contained in the conditions of service guiding staff on issues relating to promotions, appointment, transfer, confirmation of appointment, welfare, and discipline.
- j. Organizing the placement of advertisements for vacant positions.
- k. Treating emails and correspondence with dispatch.
- l. Updating staff records.
- m. Initiating disciplinary process as it relates to academic staff members.
- n. Preparation of Appointments and Promotions (Academic, Senior, and Junior) committee reports for the governing council's consideration and approval.
- o. Conveying the Governing Council's decision extract as it relates to academic staff and other categories of employees from time to time.

The functions of the Establishment Division handling the University Human Resources<sup>15</sup> is summarized as follows:

1. Recruitment and Staffing: The Establishment Office oversees finding and employing academics, support personnel, and administrators. Posting job openings, reviewing applicants, holding interviews, and extending job offers all fall under this category. They ensure that the university selects capable people who are consistent with the institution's objectives and values.
2. Onboarding and Orientation: Following hiring, the Establishment Office assists new hires with the onboarding procedure. This includes orienting new employees, outlining university regulations and procedures, and assisting staff members with the relevant documentation.
3. Management of Employee Records: They keep track of and update employee records, including personal data, contracts, job descriptions, performance reviews, and records about pay, benefits, and leave. This requires the regular update of Nominal Rolls.

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<sup>15</sup> J.E.T. Babatola, Registry and HRD Policy Development - <https://bard.google.com/share/d05006b78b35>;

4. **Compensation and Benefits:** The department oversees employee compensation packages, which may include salaries, bonuses, and perks like health insurance, retirement plans, and financial aid for tuition. They make sure that salaries are fair and in line with the university's standards and any applicable laws.
5. **Payroll Processing:** The Establishment Office oversees payroll processing, ensuring that employees are paid accurately and on time. They calculate salaries, deductions, and withholdings, and address any payroll-related issues.
6. **Employee Relations:** They mediate and resolve conflicts between employees, offer guidance on workplace issues, and facilitate communication between staff and administration. They also provide support during grievance processes.

The Establishment Office at the University remains pivotal in overseeing the workforce, ensuring adherence to employment laws, promoting a conducive workplace, and aligning human resources practices with the institution's mission. These responsibilities are crucial for nurturing a capable, engaged, and diverse staff that enhances the university's overall achievements.

To better manage the extensive responsibilities and diverse operational areas of Ajayi Crowther University, the Establishment Office can be structured into specialized units similar to practices in other universities. These units would streamline operations and focus on key functions such as recruitment, employee relations, compliance with regulations and fostering a supportive work environment viz.

- i. Academic Staff Unit in charge of Academic staff matters
- ii. Senior Staff (Non-Teaching) Unit in charge of non-teaching senior staff
- iii. Junior Staff Unit in charge of Junior Staff and Casual Workers
- iv. Staff Development and Training Unit
- v. Pensions and Staff Welfare Unit
- vi. Staff Investigation, Discipline and Policy Enforcement Unit

### **Transforming Human Resources portfolio in the University System**

The basic requirements and outlines for setting up, transforming, and dividing the portfolio and activities of a human resource department in the university system require the following:

- a. The human resources department should have a clear understanding of the university's strategic goals and objectives.
- b. The human resources department should have a strong understanding of the Nigerian labour market and the challenges facing human resource management in Nigeria.
- c. The human resources department should have a team of qualified and experienced professionals.
- d. The human resources department should have access to the resources it needs to be effective, such as funding, training, and technology.
- e. The human resources department should be organized in a manner that will give room for the arrangement of schedules to cover the following important areas among others:
  - i. Recruitment and Selection Team: Develop a strategic approach to recruitment and selection aligned with the university's goals. This includes creating clear job descriptions, using diverse recruitment methods, and conducting thorough interviews.
  - ii. Training and Development Unit: Provide training opportunities for all staff, covering both mandatory areas like health and safety, and optional professional development.
  - iii. Performance Management and Appraisal System: Implement a performance management and appraisal system to ensure staff perform to their full potential and receive necessary feedback for development.
  - iv. Career Development and Progression Monitoring: Establish a system for career development to ensure that staff have opportunities to advance within the university.
  - v. Staff Welfare and Relations Unit: Ensure staff needs are met in health and safety, equal opportunities, and disciplinary procedures.
  - vi. Compensation and Benefits: Determine and administer salaries, wages, bonuses, and other benefits.
  - vii. Employee Relations: Handle employees' grievances, resolve disputes, and promote a positive work environment.
  - viii. Risk Management, Health, and Safety Matters: Ensure workplace safety and health and evaluate risks associated with employees' activities.
  - ix. Equal Opportunities, Diversity, and Inclusion Process: Ensure all staff are treated fairly and equally, regardless of their race, gender, religion, or other factors

In addition to the key areas listed above, the human resources department may need to focus on the following HR issues for expansion purposes viz.

1. Employee records management,
2. Human Resources Information System implementation, and
3. Maintenance and sustainability.

## **Conclusion**

The challenge of staffing is not peculiar to one University, rather it is a common phenomenon in Nigerian University settings. A major factor is the preponderance of new public and private universities which naturally is attracting away and invariably depleting the pools of academics in the older universities. The newly established universities are poaching several academics and experts across the university sector apart from the challenge of aging professoriate which is negatively impacting the number of staff at the Senior Academic cadre. Despite all these challenges, every University should focus on asserting its leadership in the academic enterprise by attracting and securing desirable crops of academics that would help it achieve its primary goal of becoming a 21st-century Class University.

Looking at the role of the Registry in the portfolio and policy development of human resources in universities, a foremost respected University Administrator, and retired Registrar affirmed in what can be translated into a pillar of University HR Guidelines as follows:<sup>16</sup>

- 1) Every university operates under its enabling law, similar to the University of Ibadan Act of 1962 amended by Decree 11 of 1993, and the Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 2003 amended in 2012.
- 2) Unlike corporations or government agencies, universities have Governing Councils and Senates. The Council's authority includes staff appointment, promotion, compensation, and discipline. The Registrar, as the Council's Secretariat, ensures administrative integrity crucial for effective university governance.
- 3) The Registrar as the Chief Administrative Officer of the University reports staffing matters to the Vice-Chancellor, although Council retains ultimate responsibility.

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Dr. Omojola O. Awosusi, (*former Chairman, Association of Registrars of Nigerian Universities and retired Registrar of Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti*), 64 years old, September, 2023;

- 4) A unified Human Resource Department should incorporate the functions of an Establishment Division, avoiding duplication. Roles can be delineated for clarity: the Establishment Office focuses on appointments, discipline, staff records and welfare while HR manages staff development and training.
- 5) The Registrar as the Secretary to Council naturally occupies the role of Human Resources Manager in any University. Other Administrative Officers are Registrar's aides (Registry staff) trained to manage university functions and administrative duties including human resources functions while faculty focuses on teaching and research.
- 6) The Vice-Chancellor is distinct as Chief Academic and Executive Officer of the University CANNOT combine his roles with the Registrar, who manages administrative operations as a Principal Officer of the University.
- 7) In a centralized administrative system, the Vice-Chancellor or his aides are not required to keep multitudes of records generated from different segments of the University since administrative functions of record keeping are under the purview of the Registry. Multiplication of records apart from taking space, being wasteful and distractive would not validate records outside the repository and custody of the Registry.
- 8) The distinction between the Human Resources Unit and the Establishment Division lies in workload scope and not the removal of HR functions from the Registrar's oversight.
- 9) Staffing matters follow university statutes and tradition, overseen by the Registrar, with HR activities delegated to the Registrar's authority, reporting to the Vice-Chancellor and the Governing Council as appropriate.
- 10) The functions of Human Resources Departments sometimes enrich the process of employee relations and staff management through advertisement, recruitment, tests and interviews, selection, appointment, onboarding, staff development and training, talent management, succession planning etc unlike the portfolio of the Establishment Division that strictly implement policies on personnel administration without making specific input to the process outside of what is obtained in the books.

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### **Interview/Interaction (Participant Observers)**

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2. Interactions with Dr. Kayode Ogunleye, (*Registrar of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho*), Adult, September, 2023.

## **Political Communication and Conflicts Resolution: A Critical Analysis of the Factors that Influence Nigeria's National Security**

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### **Abstract**

*In Nigeria, where the winner of presidential election takes all and decides who gets what, political communication is as intriguing and sentimental as it is self-serving and aggrandizing. This unfortunate fact extends to conflict resolution. The consequence of this is the prevailing insecurity that permeates every facet of Nigeria's life. Nigerians are killed with impunity as perpetrators are encouraged by government's seeming inability and unwillingness to live up to its obligation of protection of lives and properties of the citizens they swore to defend. Thus, the challenges of National security are a concern to the Nigerian citizen. While political analysts have written extensively on insecurity in Nigeria, little has been written on the factors that influence national security or insecurity. Accordingly, this paper, using analytical research method, seeks to critically analyse the factors that influence national security in Nigeria some of which include ethnicity, religion, and political party affiliations and fraternities. The paper concludes that except the constitution is amended to enhance devolution of powers or restructuring that will reflect true federalism, national insecurity will continue to be a disturbing phenomenon in the years to come. It recommends that true political communication that will usher in national rebirth should be embarked upon to enhance conflicts resolution.*

**Keywords:** Nigeria, Political communication, Conflicts resolution, National security, Insecurity

### **INTRODUCTION**

With the prevailing insecurity in the country and government's seeming inability to address the scourge, it has become pertinent to examine the issues surrounding Nigeria's national security. Accordingly, many scholars, political and security analysts and commentators have done

enormous work on this subject. Most of them discuss the factors that are responsible for insecurity in the country and how they could be tackled. Scholars, political and security analysts accuse the government of deliberate lack of effort to curtail the menace of insecurity; still, scholars, political and security analysts blame the incapacity, cluelessness of leaders for the destruction of lives and properties. Ultimately, they link insecurity with lack of economic and social development. Truth to be told, no country can develop in a milieu of chaos and perennial insecurity.

This paper aims at discussing these same factors but not as causing insecurity but how they influence national security in the country. The protection of lives and properties is a primary constitutional responsibility of the government but when insecurity prevails, the government has failed in upholding this obligation. Further, the paper seeks to understand why these factors influence national security and how they could be addressed.

This research employs an analytical approach to dissect the intricate web of influences shaping national security policies. This method hinges on the meticulous examination of secondary sources, both online and offline. Scholarly journals, official reports, insightful newspaper articles, and even well-reasoned opinion pieces will be meticulously combed through.

The rationale behind this choice is multifaceted. Analytical research fosters the development of critical thinking skills, an essential tool for dissecting the complex tapestry of information (Aggarwal, 2023:2). It equips the researcher to meticulously assess the data and information at hand, ensuring its relevance to the specific research question. In this instance, the research delves into the potentially concerning use of cyberspace by religious leaders for personal gain, and how this phenomenon might influence national security policies.

Satter (2003:2) aptly captures the essence of analytical research, emphasizing its ability to generate fresh and more credible ideas by meticulously piecing together a multitude of seemingly insignificant details. By employing this systematic approach, the research aims to shed light on the often-opaque forces that exert influence on national security policies.

This paper argues that the government deliberately keeps people under multi-dimensional and extreme poverty, unemployed and uneducated in order to mentally enslave them. This is in a bid to forestall any challenge to whatever national security policy that is formulated. In addition, the government's Prebendal tendencies have made some citizens to lay in wait for their patronage

through handouts. Accordingly, most of security policies are done based on the patronage, religious, ethnic, friends, and political party cronyism.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The concepts discussed in this segment are for clarity and to enhance understanding to readers and our research focus.

### **National Security**

There are different forms of security namely: national security, human security, food security, cyber security, among others. The chief concern of this paper is to look critically at the nature of national security in Nigeria. This will enable the paper to properly appraise how national security could affect other forms of security in Nigeria as it is being experienced now.

Generally, security is defined as “freeing a person or a country from danger or threats; it is the ability of a nation to protect and defend itself, its cherished values and legitimate interests and the improvement of its well-being” (Adagbabiri and Okolie, 2018:48). Oghuvbu and Oghuvbu remarked that protecting people from poverty, hunger, unemployment, disease, natural disasters and so on is part of human security (2020:6). National security, on the other hand, means the deployment of coercive-force state apparatus to deal with crises, globally or nationally. All these forms of security “can only occur when there is harmony and stability in the political system” (Ighodalo, 2012:169).

Ajodo-Adebanjoko and Okorie while trying to establish the nexus between corruption and insecurity, defined insecurity as “a state of being subject to danger or threat.” They further explained that threats to human life emanate from not only situation of violent conflicts but also other non-conflict sources. In this regard, insecurity refers to:

...a situation of fear or anything that causes fear, harm or has the capability to cause fear or harm to an individual. Such issues could be politico-strategic, socio-economic, or ecological in nature; for instance, political instability, poverty, environmental degradation, lack of access to education, discrimination, diseases and unemployment (Ajodo-Adebanjoko and Okorie, 2014, 3).

This definition of insecurity is suitable to the thesis of this paper due to the factors or variables that are mentioned therein. They shall be discussed in detail as factors influence for national security as the paper progresses.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study adopts the use of two theories that are germane to the argument and focus of this paper: Prebendal and Frustration-Aggression theories. The choice of these two theories is because the paper believes that they will help in the understanding of the issues surrounding national security and insecurity in Nigeria.

### **Prebendal Theory**

Prebendal theory deals with the concept of primitive acquisition. Joseph Richard espoused the theory depicting the politics of corruption in Nigeria, where cronies or members of an ethnic group are compensated on their advancement to the position of power or where; state offices are regarded as prebends that can be appropriated by office holders who use them to generate material benefits for themselves and their constituents and kin groups. This patron-client or identity politics has encouraged corruption in the country to the extent that appointments, promotions, admissions, award of contracts among others are done with consideration for one's ethnic or religious affiliations (Ajodo-Adebanjoko and Okorie, 2014, 3).

This is why politics in Nigeria is a do or die affair. In Nigeria, the president possesses immense power that is equivalent to a winner-take-all situation. In a feeding bottle economy that is devoid of economic justice, the president decides who gets what thereby promoting cronyism, nepotism, and other forms of corruption. This has often led to the marginalization of other Nigerians that are not from the same ethnic group, religious affiliation or political affinities. The same is the case with national security policy. Such policies are formulated to service ethno-religious and socio-political sentiments not in the interest of the nation.

### **Frustration-Aggression Theory**

Frustration and aggression theory stipulates that aggression is the result of frustration, which results from an individual's inability to attain their goals. Accordingly, insecurity is the product of aggressive behaviour, which results from issues such as poverty and unemployment among others. Corruption in Nigeria has resulted in abject poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, injustice, absence of infrastructure, ethnic conflicts, militancy that in turn results in insecurity (Ajodo-Adebanjoko and Okorie, 2014, 3).

Classical examples of this could be the militancy in the Niger Delta over environmental degradation, the plundering of their commonwealth and resources, brazen malfeasance by their political representatives, government officials and the multi-national oil conglomerates; the separatists' agitations in the South-East by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) due to the marginalization of the Igbo ethnic group.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended in Section 14(2) (b) that "The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government." This is a constitutional primary obligation of any government in Nigeria. In fact, every citizen is supposed to feel secured wherever he or she find himself, herself, or he or she domicile. Sadly, this is hardly the case. Chigbo (2022:1) had in mind when he remarked, "All governments are expected to guarantee and provide security of lives and property of its populace. In the absence of the above, society will be on the brink of anarchy. Consequently, the society will be doomed to fail and become nasty and brutish."

Many scholars, political analysts and commentators have written on security and insecurity in Nigeria. Some go farther by discussing the factors responsible for insecurity even as they proffer solutions. This paper is aimed at critically analysing the factors that influence national security. This is to understand how national security policies are made. While these same factors may be listed as those responsible for insecurity and other vices in the country, in the context of this paper, they are listed as influencers of national security policy.

Ugo Okolie, in his deposition, argued that the fundamental basis for security lies in freedom from poverty, disease, hunger, arbitrary power, joblessness and ignorance. He then remarked that a country that invests heavily on modern or human security may not have to spend much efforts and money in fighting crimes like armed robbery, kidnapping, human trafficking, political motivated assassination, bombings, herdsmen militancy, student unrest, vociferous separatist agitations and other forms of violent crimes (Okolie, 2022:1).

Similarly, Otto and Ukpere (2012:1) expressed dissatisfaction lamenting that though the government claims to be on top of the situation, national security crisis persists thereby jeopardizing the possibility of economic and social development. On his part, Ebeh (2015:1) mentioned that "corruption, injustice, poverty, poor health care delivery services, decayed and

collapsed infrastructure, environmental degradation and socio-religious crises” are responsible for insecurity in Nigeria. Accordingly, both of them linked these variables to the crisis of underdevelopment as it is experienced in the country concluding that there is no way the country could develop with the current insecurity challenges.

Abraham Orhero, in his contribution, opined that the primary role of the government is to protect lives and properties of the citizens as it concerns human security. According to him, “human security involves protecting the citizens from poverty, hunger, diseases, unemployment and national disaster” (Orhero 2020:1) as without these, there cannot be stability in the polity. This argument entails that a government that is serious about national security will first of all social and basic amenities to all citizens to avoid any form of restiveness. However, it can be magisterially stated that the Nigerian government has seemingly weaponised these variables in order to keep citizens under perpetual enslavement. When citizens are under such precarious circumstances and impoverishment, they do not have the energy or the desire to question the policies of the government least they lose their meal tickets. They think government is doing them a favour by handing out cash or food giveaway to them.

In the course of presenting an overview of Nigeria’s national security strategy process and security architecture, Saleh Bala and Émile Ouédraogo averred that Nigeria’s security outlook remains precarious. They cited the militancy in the Niger Delta, the Middle Belt’s waves of reprisal violence ricocheting between Christian farmers and Muslim pastoralists, concluding that since 2009, *Jama’atu Ahlus-Sunna Lidawati Wal jihad*, or Boko Haram, now overtaken by Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP), has waged a bloody insurgency in the northeast (Bala and Ouédraogo, 2018:2).

According to them, the Nigeria’s National Security Strategy developed in 2014 defines security as “the aggregation of the security interest of all individuals, communities, ethnic groups, political entities and institutions in the territory of Nigeria” (cited in Bala and Ouédraogo, 2018:2-3). Despite the lofty and laudable definition of security above, it remains to be seen if the security in the country caters for all individuals, all communities, all ethnic groups, all political parties, among others. The discussion of these is nestled under the next subheading. Relating to this, Folarin and Oviasogie (2017:1) accused the Federal Government of not being decisive enough in tackling insecurity in the country. The reason for this indecisiveness might not be unconnected to the Federal Government’s Prebendal tendencies.

## **FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE NATIONAL SECURITY**

This paper discusses these factors not as causes of insecurity but as influencers of national security policy in the country.

### **Corruption**

Corruption has been adjudged a prominent and constant factor that influences national security or entrenches insecurity in Nigeria. Successive governments have been accused of corruption by those in charge of providing security for the protection of lives and properties of the citizens. Accusations of the diversion of funds meant for the procurement of armaments and the development of the armed forces and other security agencies have been rife and commonplace.

To this extent, some scholars averred that “corruption is one of the most dangerous ills in Nigeria and it is seen in the high rate of poverty, disease, unemployment, hunger, infrastructural decay, insecurity and deficit; it is a plague that has eaten deeply into the structure of the political system in Nigeria (Agbekaku, *et al*, 2016:291; Ngwube and Okoli, 2013:92 in Oghuvbu and Oghuvbu, 2020:2).

As a concept with wide range coverage, Yelwa (2011) cited by Oghuvbu and Oghuvbu, defined corruption in the public sector as:

The misuse of power by public officials to make personal profits in the performance of their official duties: ranging from fraud, bribery, embezzlement, favouritism, extortion, dishonesty; unethical or unethical actions in pursuit of personal goals (Oghuvbu and Oghuvbu, 2020:2).

It is to be noted that corruption in Nigeria runs across political, religious and ethnic affiliations via nepotism. This explains why some security appointments tilt towards favouring the president’s kin and kith. For example, during the Muhammadu Buhari’s administration, almost all those appointed to take charge of the entire security apparatus, i.e. the service chiefs, Police Inspector General, National security Advisor, heads of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and the State Security Service (SSS), otherwise known as Department of State Security); in addition to the Comptrollers of Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), National Immigration Service (NIS); National Corrections Service (NCS); Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), among others, were Northern Muslims.

This allowed corrupt citizens to smuggle in arms for some terrorists' organisations, as in some cases, both the Customs and Immigration services looked the other way leaving the northern borders porous. This festered insecurity in those axes extending to other regions of the country. This shows that the security of the country was not formed based on character, capacity and competence but on primitive nepotistic whims and caprices of the president.

## **Religion**

In Nigeria, politicians and religious leaders invoke religion to either curry favour or outwit one another in the game of politics. Religious sameness, not capacity or competence, has become a factor that yield leadership positions to individuals in Nigeria. Belonging to the 'right' religion is a key determinant for winning public office. This entails that the people affiliated with the other's religion, like ethnicity, seem to be mentally enslaved and can support you without question whatsoever. Sadly, some religious, traditional and political leaders have repeatedly exploited this loophole to always dragoon Nigerians into blind followership because of personal aggrandizement.

The choice of Tinubu's Muslim-Muslim ticket that has brought them to power was definitely appreciated by some Muslims who saw it as a *jihad* to take over the country. Many of them supported the ticket not because they are seen to be competent but just because of the allure of the religious angle. Now, the hardship and insecurity in the country is experienced by both the religious and the irreligious.

For context, during the Buhari regime, most of his security heads were mostly Northern Muslims: Hassan Abubakar (Chief of Air Staff), Ibrahim Attahiru (Chief of Army Staff), Awwal Gambo (Chief of Naval Staff), Usman Baba (Police Inspector-General), Ahmed Rufai (Director General, National Intelligence Agency, NIA), Yusuf Bichi (Director General, State Security Service), Hameed Ali (Comptroller of Customs), Mohammad Babandede (Comptroller of Immigration), Ahmed Audi (Commandant of National Security and Civil Defence Corps), Liman Ibrahim (Comptroller-General FFS), Buba Marwa (Chairman, National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency), Bashir Magashi (Minister of Defence), Babagana Monguno (National Security Adviser); few of them were Christians e.g. Leo Irabor (Chief of Defence Staff); John Mrabure (Acting Comptroller General, Nigeria Correctional Service).

Responding to critics of the lopsided nature of these appointments during an interview with Channels Television, Femi Adesina, the then Special Adviser on Media cautioned Nigerians:

Don't subject security to ethnic balancing; don't subject security to federal character. In fact, the constitution prescribes federal character even gives the President some prerogatives that he can appoint on his own. President will always have the prerogative to appoint those he feels can help him with the country and have the kind of country you deserve to have (Opejobi, 2023:1-3).

There you are. This explains the mentality behind the frivolous appointments that influence national security in Nigeria.

### **Feudalism**

Alade Rotimi-John, in his opinion in the Guardian Newspaper of December 7, 2023, defined feudalism as “a social system based on personal ownership of resources or as the exercise of personal fidelity between a suzerain and a vassal” (2023:1). There are few individuals in Nigeria, the rent-seeking elite, who control almost everything in the country, including security. They influence how national security policies are formulated for sentimental benefits. The truth is that the government panders to them mostly because they are power brokers called “god-fathers.” Those who seek to consolidate their regime security do not bear swords with these godfathers, as they are capable of unleashing chaos and anarchy on the country.

### **Poverty**

It is no longer news that Nigeria had overtaken India as the poverty capital of the world. Statistics show that the citizens are suffering from multi-dimensional extreme poverty as 88.4 million Nigerians live in extreme poverty while 133 million Nigerians are multi-dimensionally poor according to recent data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), while projecting that Nigeria's economic growth will fall to 2.8 per cent in 2023 from 3.3 per cent in 2022 (Ogbuokiri, 2023:2; Ichedi, 2022:2-3). Multi-dimensional poverty is not only about income based on lack of money but all-encompassing factors that go into decent human living. When a majority of a country, like Nigeria, is unable to meet basic needs like primary healthcare, security, housing, basic education among other indices, it is safe to say that such poverty is multi-dimensional and extreme.

Accordingly, about 70 percent of the population lives in abject poverty. This predisposes the poor to violence, fuelled by the ease of access to small arms. Developing countries' imports of weapons have increased dramatically (Otto and Ukpere, 2012:67). According to Yomi Kazeem, "The 86.9 million Nigerians now living in extreme poverty represents nearly 50% of its estimated 200 million population" (Kazeem, 2018:2). The statistics seem to differ probably because of the differences of the years in reporting as Kazeem was in 2018.

These statistics are grim, because having deliberately made the citizens poor; they have succeeded in mentally enslaving them. The poor throng to the rich for handouts to be able to put food on the table for their families and meet other filial obligations. Because of this unfortunate condition, the poor tend to follow the elite blindly without questions and are ready to surrender their lives just as they have already surrendered their thinking faculties, for them. This means that instead of holding their leaders accountable for decisions that influence national security, the poverty-stricken Nigerians acquiesce so that they will not jeopardize their daily bread. Having known this, the politicians formulate policies or make appointments that are detrimental to the welfare and common good of Nigerians without the fear of accountability. This is how the passivity of Nigerians influences national security.

### **Unemployment**

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the unemployed are numbers of the economically active population who are without work but available and seeking work opportunities, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work (cited in Nwankwo and Ifejiofor, 2014:1). Citing Oni (2006), Akeju and Olanipekun gave a doomsday scenario of the matrix or complexity of unemployment in Nigeria. They averred that there are underemployment cases in which people receive incomes that are inadequate to support their basic needs, in terms of food, clothing and shelter. There are also cases of disguised unemployment where people take up jobs that are below their educational attainment and experience. The worst case of all is that of people seeking for job opportunities but who cannot find any in either the public or the private sector. Some people are willing and ready to set up enterprises themselves and engage in one type of economic activity or the other but are constrained by the prevailing poor macroeconomic environment. All these have contributed

significantly to the high level of unemployment and poverty in Africa (Akeju and Olanipekun, 2015:1).

There is no gainsaying that unemployment is a big problem akin to a keg of gunpowder. This is because given the large number of unemployed citizens, when they become frustrated, they become restive and run amok. However, knowing the desperation of the unemployed, the government has set up some machinery to keep them in check. The unemployed are offered economic palliatives in form of government's 'benevolent' jobs like N-Power with unending promises of more goodies to come. Thus, the pressure to do anything in order to put food on the table has led to a passive and docile population that does not challenge any government policy. This way, having known that there will be no challenge to whatever they do, security policies are initiated based on sentiments and these same unemployed persons are recruited based on ethnic, religious and political party affiliations.

### **Mental Slavery**

*"Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery; none but ourselves can free our minds"* (Bob Marley, 1979).

The quoted line above is taken from the music legend, Bob Marley. In 1971, Bob Marley sang this song titled Redemption Song as a means of calling the people's attention to the happenings that involved politics and social justice of their day. Commenting further on the song, Hooley similarly asserted, "Marley's song addressed his contemporary audience and looked back across history to explore the intertwined stories of racism, imperialism and capitalist oppression. Marley borrowed the line 'emancipate yourselves from mental slavery' from an earlier radical thinker, Marcus Garvey, who also made the link between how people think about themselves and political change" (Garvey, 1938 in Hooley, 2015:9).

Garvey's words are sacrosanct and worthy of mention here:

We are going to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery because whilst others might free the body, none but ourselves can free the mind. Mind is your only ruler, sovereign. The man who is not able to develop and use his mind is bound to be the slave of the other man who uses his mind (cited in Hooley, 2015:10).

The words of Garvey aptly describe some average Nigerians who have seemingly leased out their thinking faculties to their church and, or, political leaders. This has made them incapable of

thinking by or for themselves and are unwilling to critically think and make decisions that could free them and their children from the shackles of these mental slave masters.

Piya Tan (2009:1), from the perspective of Buddhism, asserted that mental slavery is “A situation where one is deprived of personal freedom and is forced to serve another is slavery. But worse than bodily slavery is mental slavery, when we are so conditioned by a person, a group, an idea or an ideology that we are unable to think for ourselves to the extent of being unable to distinguish right from wrong, and from acting rightly. We remain mental slaves when we are ignorant of the true causes of the problems and sufferings, or when we are deluded with persons, events and ideas in our lives.” This reinforces the importance of mental emancipation.

Mental slavery in Nigeria is fast becoming a worrying and concerning phenomenon. Due to incisive and weaponised poverty and illiteracy, some Nigerians have found it a vocation being praise singers and foot soldiers for unscrupulous politicians. They do this to make a living from the peanuts handed out to them. These mentally enslaved Nigerians can do anything from killings, maiming, stealing, snatching of ballot boxes, rioting, rebellion, illiterate bigotry, among other crimes.

Jaiyesimi, in a Punch Newspaper opinion, describes mental slavery graphically when he stated that it is “to complement a master-elite group is a compliant and docile population manifesting the other side of the master-slave equation. The people willingly deify their leaders making themselves available as foot mats for their leaders. They willingly keep the shackles on especially if it is put on them by their tribesmen” (nd:3-5). These mental slaves influence national security policy by supporting their masters in power on any decision taken, no matter how unpopular and inconsequential it may be. They have lost their ability for critical thinking as they lease out their brains to their masters and can kill for the same.

### **Ethnicity**

According to Uwaifo, ethnicity involves the display of sentiments in bias to a special set of group one belongs to. He cited Omu as saying that ethnicity applies to the consciousness of belonging to, identifying with, and being loyal to a social group distinguished by shared cultural traditions, a common language, in-group sentiment and self-identity. On the whole, ethnicity has to do with a unique group with distinct and peculiar features which are sources of common ties on which the feeling of sentiment and emotion is being expressed in protest or support of an

action taken against or in favour of such a group. In sum, ethnicity is the deliberate and consciousness of tracing of one's identity to a particular ethnic group and allowing such feeling to determine the way one relates with people and things, ethnicity creates the brackets of 'we' 'they' 'ours', 'theirs' feeling. Ethnicity makes it very difficult for different ethnic groups to agree on anything (Uwaifo, nd:4).

In Nigeria, ethnicity is a major factor that influences mental slavery. In many cases than not, citizens follow those from their ethnic group without questioning their intentions or actions. They see Nigeria as a 'national cake', which is shared turn by turn. Accordingly, whenever any of them is in power, many of those from the same ethnic group tend to support. This unfortunate scenario has found much impetus in the political mantra of Mr. Bola Ahmed Tinubu *emi lo'kan*. In this same *emi lo'kan* milieu, there was birthed in Lagos state the *Yoruba Ronu*. This slogan, originally a call for Yoruba to think, unfortunately used out of context, became a fascist-like war cry by the All Progressives Congress (APC) to create ethnic tension and supremacy of the Yoruba ethnic group in Lagos gubernatorial elections. The Yorubas who pledged support to other ethnic aspirants were maligned and called *Omọ-Ale*, literally translated as 'bastards.'

Ethnicity has made some citizens to follow or support leaders just because they are from the same ethnic group and those leaders 'are our own.' This is done without a consideration of whether such leaders are qualified, have the character or capacity to execute the obligations of such offices. They just allow them to occupy those offices because of mental slavery. This is what Adegami and Uche had in mind when they aptly postulated that "the attendant effects of ethnic politics to include- emergence of incompetent political leaders who are not committed to the development of the nation; inability to choose leaders with national outlook or national acceptability; disconnected leaders (self-centred/self-seeking leaders); mediocre in governance; and corrupt leaders being supported by ethnic groups" (Adegami and Uche, 2015:1). No country can be secured like this with ethnic tensions and clashes all over the nation. This makes the conclusion that Nigeria lacks internal cohesion and unity due to the differences in ethnic group.

Ethnicity influences national security in many ways. Security policy makers formulate them with the members of their ethnic group in mind. Everything is done in their interest because it is their turn. Even the appointments to offices as security chiefs are not based on competence but on ethnic association.

## **CONCLUSION**

The same factors that are responsible for insecurity in the country are the same that influence national security policy in Nigeria. These policies are formulated based on group patronage of ethnicities, religious affiliations and party affinities. In addition, feudal rent-seeking godfathers influence national security policy that is why insecurity prevails in the country. Above all, a majority of the citizens are mentally enslaved due to weaponized poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, among others. They follow whatever their man in government dishes out without asking questions or holding any public official accountable. This is the bane of Nigeria's national security.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made based on the argument and conclusion of this paper:

**Psyche Reorientation:** Both the government and the citizens, especially the mental slaves, need psyche reorientation posthaste. This will enable the citizens to acknowledge the power of the people, knowing the government is answerable to the citizens and not the other way around. They should bear in mind that the government is not doing them any favours by those handouts or patronages. They are being cheated. On the part of the government, they will understand that the source of their power is the people. By this, they will be careful in their policy making because they will have to answer to the people. Once this is achieved, the divide and rule or punish will be outdated.

**National Security Policy:** Both the citizens and, especially, the government should note that the security of lives and properties of the citizens is a constitutional duty of the government. The primary obligation is supposed to be devoid of any sentiments. The government should therefore desist or refrain from importing primordial sentiments into such issues as these. Security is for everybody and must not be offered only to friends or kith and kin.

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## Cultural Prevalence of Mágùn And its Implication in Combating Infidelity Among Yorùbá

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### ABSTRACT

*The use of Mágùn as an anti-adultery device in curbing infidelity among the Yorùbá of the western part of Nigeria is an obvious reality that cannot be denied even by the Christians and Muslims. It is a devise used to punish adulterers among the Yoruba. Adultery is a condemnable act that is not tolerated in the Yoruba cosmological setting. It is a demeaning act to see a married man or woman having an affair with another woman or man. The act is not farfetched in our society and there are certain measures put in place to control or get rid of such demeaning acts. The adulterer could be laced with mágùn unknowingly. After the preparation of the charm, it could be imbued on a string of thread or on a single broom and put across the entrance of the room or house for the victim to cross over without his or her knowledge. The paper argued further that this dreaded device can also be employed to fight one's perceived enemies. Scholars have not deeply delved into this discourse. Previous works have not delineated the ingredients used in making the cham and have not chronologically explained how it is applied when it is ready to be used. This is the focus of the work. Primary and secondary sources were used to elicit information. Olubiyi's charm and infidelity which states that magun among the Yoruba is used to expose or prevent illicit sexual relationship between a man and a woman who are not properly married served as our theoretical framework The paper concluded by advocating that the use of mágùn is barbaric and must be discouraged in Yorùbá society. It also stated that another better means of curbing adultery and deviant behaviour should be used. The old and barbaric method of sanctions should be frowned at while moral sanctions that give respect for human life such as employing the services of the law enforcement agent should be encouraged.*

### Introduction

The Yorùbá of the Southwestern Nigeria are believed to be ubiquitous when it comes to the use of proverbs. They are so versatile and proficient in using proverbs to settle some difficult issues. They are also one of the tribes in Africa that are perhaps unmatched in the richness of proverbs in which all the beliefs of ancient wisdom and the accumulated experience of most generations

are condensed. "Proverbs are short sayings, full of sense which comes into common and recognized use". They emanate from the people themselves and as such are a "true index of what a people regard as true, and are interpretative of their principles of life and conduct"<sup>17</sup>. The quest for the peoples' assessment and appraisal of *mágùn* in their oral tradition begins with their proverbs. This painstaking attempt at discovering and gathering *mágùn*-anchored proverbs has been understandably difficult, simply because of the dreadful attributes of *mágùn*, which naturally douse the flames of proverbial creativity in this direction. Our effort however has not been in vain, as a bountiful harvest of few but significant proverbs have become our lot<sup>18</sup>.

The Yorùbá say, *mágùn*, "ìdẹkùn àfowófà èdà" (*mágùn* is a self-inflicted snare). The Yorùbá believe that the victims of *mágùn* are never innocent and that it is either the victim is an adulterer, or a member of his family sets the trap on him, for one reason or another. In other words, even the seemingly innocent husband who has been eliminated by a wife's concubine is not at all innocent because he made himself to marry a promiscuous woman, on whose account, he meets his fate<sup>19</sup>. This filial connection implicates the husband, in that he married a woman whose immorality caused his death. An interesting proverb has it that "A kíí rójò pẹlú *mágùn* ká jàrè" (A disputer in a case involving *mágùn* never wins). This is about the popular conception of *mágùn* as an instant judge. In every case involving *mágùn* it is both a defender and judge, and it is usually the winner because the plaintiff would have been judged (killed) before the case is tabled for hearing<sup>20</sup>. The complainant (victim) could in fact have a case (where a man has been killed in a socially unapproved manner) but *mágùn* waits for no trial before delivering its judgement. Therefore, it is better to have no case with *mágùn* than to seek solace in justice.

"Àjójé eyi, ajoje tohun, ajoje *mágùn* kii se fun pansaga obinrin". We ate this together, we shared that together, *àjójé mágùn* (a silent *mágùn*) food shared by a husband and wife, to kill any other man, besides the husband (in sexual congress with the wife) is never for the adulteress". In dealing with *mágùn*, one should critically examine one's moral qualities before going into a partnership. Failure to do this could lead to embarrassment and unnecessary loss of human lives. In the case of *mágùn àjójé*, only the husband could sexually cohabit with the wife without violent

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<sup>17</sup> S.A. Adewole, *Crime and African Traditional Religion* Orita in O.O. Adelu (ed) *Journal of Religious Studies*, Ibadan. Vol. xxxvi. 1994, 54

<sup>18</sup> D. O. Akintunde, "Rape: An Infringement on the Right of Women" in *Women and the Culture of Violence in Traditional Africa* in S. A. Alabi (eds.) 2002, 34

<sup>19</sup> S. O. Abogunrin, "Ethics in Yoruba Religious Tradition" in *World Religions and Global Ethics*. in Y. O. Funmilayo (ed.) Crawford S.S.) 1989, 65

<sup>20</sup> A. O. Dopamu, *Magic and Medicine in Yoruba Traditional Religion*. Ibadan: Ph.D. Thesis, 1977, 58.

consequences because of the immunity given to him as a result of the shared *mágùn* food. Every other man who attempts to have sexual relations with his wife is death-bound<sup>21</sup>.

Thus, *mágùn àjójé* is never for a promiscuous woman, for she will become a death trap to men. A proverb about *mágùn* defends chastity and good moral conduct by stating, "A *kíí gbé jẹ, ká má berù mágùn*" - We cannot be celibate and still fear *mágùn*. Only those who have a penchant for other people's wives need to fear being killed by *mágùn*. A sexually responsible man does not need such fears, for indeed, "only the guilty hearts are afraid since they are the ones that need judges"<sup>22</sup>. The potency and virility of *mágùn* is exemplified in another Yorùbá proverb which says, "*mágùn kì dúrò sára dáké, àbò ejò kí gbénu isà*" *mágùn* does not reside quietly in the human body (male body) as a sliced snake will not remain still in a hole. Unlike the female, the first contact of a man with *mágùn* is almost in every case entirely disastrous. *Mágùn* does not remain imperceptibly in the man's body. Even in the case of the silent *mágùn*, the power of the *mágùn* in the body of the paramour pushes him to do exactly what the *mágùn* forbids, so that its powers can be swiftly activated<sup>23</sup>.

Moreover, in the case of a silent *mágùn*, the innocent wife may die after seven days if she does not have sexual intercourse with her lover unless of course, the husband removes it before then. "*Ọdẹ a pàmòdò ni fòsán wòlú, bí èniyàn bá pẹlédè yó fòru jáde*", it is the hunter of the wild pig that enters a town in broad daylight with it, whoever kills a pig comes out in the night. It is only the husband of the woman whose concubine was killed by *mágùn* (placed by the husband) that could claim to be responsible for such death because he enjoys the force of social approval, but a concubine who kills the legitimate husband of his lover dares not claim so publicly because he will be lynched<sup>24</sup>.

*Mágùn* is a charm that originates from the Yorùbá land of Nigeria. In Yorùbá, it means "thunderbolt"; the literal English meaning is "Do Not Climb." It has been used for years to catch promiscuous people in extra-marital affairs and is still in use today. It traces its history back to Sango, the Yorùbá god of thunder and lightning. *Mágùn* is a killer charm that is placed on a woman by her lover, husband, family member, or in-law. Some parents put this charm on their

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<sup>21</sup> E. M. Dottoressa, *An Impossible Woman*. London: The Bodley Head Ltd. 1975, 34

<sup>22</sup> O.O. Familusi, *Women's rights (Analysis Women's rights (Analysis) Yoruba (African people) (Social aspects) Women (Social aspects)* in Y. O. Funmilayo Journal of Pan African Studies Publisher: Lagos Weekend.1993,1

<sup>23</sup> R. G. Miltenberger, *Training and generalization of sexual abuse prevention skills for women with mental retardation*. J Appl Behav Anal. 1999;32(3):385

<sup>24</sup> J. K. Ayantayo, "The Challenges of African Social Ethics in a Global-Context" in *Coping With Culture* in Ifie, Egbe (ed.). Ibadan: Oputoru Books. 1999, 118

daughters to either prevent them from sexual promiscuity or to punish anyone who rapes them<sup>25</sup>. It is also used in marriages or relationships that lack trust as either a means of catching the cheating lover or as punishment for the lover's promiscuity.

The effects of Mágùn are deadly and we will discuss how soon, but right now aren't you curious about how Mágùn is administered to these women? I mean, who would want to carry a charm like this? Mágùn is not given by consent. Women who carry Mágùn a lot of times do not know that they carry this charm until they find themselves in compromising positions<sup>26</sup>. The two popular ways the charm is put are:

1. By laying a charmed broomstick down and having the woman cross over it.
2. By charming a long thread and laying it on the ground for the woman to cross over it.

This is why people especially women are advised to not cross over brooms or threads lying on the ground.

There are different kinds of Mágùn put on women, with different results. Let us talk about the three most famous ones.

1. The woman and her lover are stuck together like glue. The man would not be able to detach himself from the woman. This is the most common form of mágùn because it not only shows who the woman is being unfaithful with, but it can also result in huge embarrassment. I mean, can you imagine the situation whereby an adulterer is stuck with another unfaithful man naked?<sup>27</sup>.
2. When a man sleeps with a woman who has Mágùn on her, he starts to crow like a rooster. It is said that the man would crow three times and by the third time, end up dead.
3. When a man sleeps with a woman who has Mágùn on her, he somersaults three times and dies on the third somersault.

### **Background of Mágùn**

Mágùn means "do not climb" in the English language. Mágùn is a charm that is placed on a woman (mostly married women) by her husband or on a young girl by her parents. A man can place Mágùn on his wife when he suspects that she is being unfaithful in her dealings with her.

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<sup>25</sup> B. A. Ifemesia, *Moral Revolution in Africa Stages 1 and 2*. Enugu, Holmes Weber Publishing Co. (Nig.) Ltd. 1985. 87.

<sup>26</sup> J. O. Kayode, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. London: Longman Group Limited, 1979, 65.

<sup>27</sup> J. O. Kayode, "African Ethics on Sex" in S. O. Abogunrin, (ed.) *Religion and Ethics in Nigeria*, Ibadan; Day Star Press, 1986, 51

Also, parents can put *mágùn* on their daughter to protect her from being raped, punish (death) anyone that attempts to rape her or to prevent her from having any sexual acts yet. The charm is majorly to prevent unwarranted and unsolicited sexual acts<sup>28</sup>.

*Mágùn*² (‘Don’t climb’) or ‘Edun ara’ means ‘thunderbolt’ in the Yorùbá culture of the Western region of Nigeria. ‘Thunderbolt’ can be traced to Sango – the god of thunder and lightning. Although it has its origin in the Yorùbá culture, it is also used by people all over Africa to curb promiscuity. This deadly love charm is always placed on a woman without her knowledge. From the reports Sunday Telegraph correspondents gathered from traditional medicine practitioners, the love spell can only be cast on a woman. In some cases, a broomstick can be laid at the entrance and the woman walks over it. Some people cast the charm on a long thread that will be put on the floor, usually on the doorstep or passage, and the woman is allowed to cross over it to activate the charm. In many cases, ‘*mágùn*’ only affects the male partner to serve as punishment to the victim and act as a deterrent to other men that commit adultery<sup>29</sup>. If a woman with this spell sleeps with another man other than her husband or lover, she will be inflicted with strange diseases or illnesses and later die. Men who have sexual intercourse with a woman with this charm also experience some of the symptoms peculiar to the woman. But, other strange behavioural symptoms for men include crowing like a cock, headaches, convulsions, somersaulting and enlargement of the penis. Both sexual partners may also remain glued together with the withdrawal of the male organ impossible<sup>30</sup>.

### **Effect of *Mágùn* among Yorùbá**

If the effect of this charm is detected early, there is a possibility of remedies. People who fall victim to this charm or those glued together during sexual intercourse are taken to the traditional practitioners or rulers to destroy the enchantment or for separation. All of this may sound like a clip out of a Nigerian Nollywood movie, but an Ifa priest, Chief Dr. Fashola Savage, the Awise of Lagos, speaking extensively with our correspondent, assured us

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<sup>28</sup> F. O. Ogunsakin. “*Contemporary theories of Magic: *Mágùn*’s disparate characteristics*” in (ed) *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*; vol. Xxvii 1 & 2, June and Dec. 1998, 9

<sup>29</sup> S. O. Abogunrin, *An Appraisal of Pauline Teachings on Sexual Immorality: Its Relevance to Warri – South Local Government Area, Delta State*. 2003, 65

<sup>30</sup> W. O’ Donovan, *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective*. Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 284.

that this kind of situation really exists in Nigeria and he has witnessed it and also had cases like this brought before him<sup>31</sup>.

He said, “Yes, ‘Mágùn’ really exists! In Yorùbá culture, if a man approaches a woman who has already been laid with ‘Mágùn’, there will be a reaction, whereby the man will not be able to perform or holds the man down or when the man discharges, he dies or he will get stuck<sup>32</sup>. “I have been practicing traditional medicine for over 45 years and I have witnessed just one when I was very young. I was 19 years old when I went to get some leaves in the bush and I saw a farmer having sexual intercourse with another man’s wife and all of a sudden, the man was urinating blood and he did that till he died.”

But how does ‘Mágùn’ really work? Dr Fashola had this to say, “If a man suspects his wife is promiscuous, he can ask his wife or warn the man if he knows him. If he doesn’t know him, he will look for a shed or mask and when the woman passes through it within the next seven days, if she sleeps with another man, the man will die. There is another type of handshaking ~~that~~ if you shake the woman and she goes to have fun with another man, he will ‘urinate’ blood and die. It can happen anytime<sup>33</sup>.

“There are some that will not occur immediately, that will wait for him to cut his hair before it manifests in him. Some occur when one eats pepper or when one eats egusi. There are about 201 types of ‘Mágùn’ that can be administered.”

### **Malicious acts of Mágùn (Thunderbolt) and Tesho**

Magic is generally considered under “good magic” and “evil magic”. The use of good magic is accepted and esteemed by society. Evil magic involves the belief in and practice of using this power to harm fellow human beings or their property. From the above standpoint, mágùn and tesho charms could be said to be part of evil magic because they kill even innocent persons. Mágùn and tesho charms are too barbaric and brutal to be used in curbing infidelity in this modern time<sup>34</sup>. They stand for anti-social employment of mystical power. The use of mágùn and tesho in Yorùbá modern society is still very rampant. A female banker and her concubine died

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<sup>31</sup> R. A. Kellen, “*Marriage*” in E. A. Charles, F. Pfeiffer (eds.) *Wycliff Bible Dictionary*. Hendrickson Publishers Inc., Massachusetts, U.S. A. 1975, 43

<sup>32</sup> R. C. Abraham, *Dictionary of Modern Yoruba*. London: Oxford University Press 1958, 776.

<sup>33</sup> J. A. Elewude, “*Mágùn, a means of causing sudden death*.” in Abayomi Kofoworola (ed) University of Ife Press 1979, 32 (3): 55

<sup>34</sup> A. A. Mawdud, *Towards Understanding Islam*. Lagos: Al-Wasilat Publishers 1986, 76.

while having sex at Ezuido autonomous community in Ezinihitte, Mbaise Local Government Area of Imo State. The two deceased are Mrs. Adejoke Ayeola, 44, from Iperu Remo in Ogun State, and Wilson Ugwunna, 42, from Ezinihitte. Both have two children each with their respective spouses<sup>35</sup>. Mrs Ayeola was said to have been married to a traditional ruler in Ogun State. It was noted that Mr. Ugwunna's family who resides in Lagos were alerted when both lovers were discovered in bed dead and their bodies were said to have started decomposing. The community disclosed they strongly suspected the tragedy was caused by Mágùn (Thunderbolt). Mr Ugwunna brought the woman, Mrs Adejoke Ayeola from Lagos down to his village to spend the weekend together. It was further gathered that the lady, Mrs Adejoke, who worked in a new generation bank, lied to her husband that she was going for a meeting at Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, while she followed her lover to Mbaise<sup>36</sup>. Another incident happened in Ondo town when a man had illicit affairs with a woman who had been put under the influence of tesho charm. The private part of the man could not grow erect while on the woman. The man has remained impotent since then. There are different types of mágùn and tesho. A type of Tesho has to do with penis captivus, an occurrence in heterosexual intercourse. Mágùn or tesho can either kill a victim or cause misfortunes, thereby making the victim's life very unbearable for the family. The thrust of this paper is that mágùn and tesho charms are brutal, barbaric and unjust. Adultery is sexual intercourse or relations with a person other than a marriage partner<sup>37</sup>. I suggest that; it applies equally to a betrothed woman it is deemed an outrageous crime, striking at the norm of the society and when it results in conception it inflicts a spurious offspring on the husband.

### **Social Importance of Mágùn**

The Yorùbá are perhaps unmatched in Africa in the richness of proverbs in which all the beliefs of ancient wisdom and accumulated experience of most generations are condensed. "Proverbs are short sayings, full of sense which comes into common and recognized use". They emanate from the people themselves and as such are a "true index of what a people regard as true, and are

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<sup>35</sup> J. O. Arowolo, *Religion and Human Value*. Ile-Ife: University Press, 2002, 65.

<sup>36</sup> P. S. Beler, *Fetishism in West Africa*. London: Charles Scribner's Eysenck M.W. Fundamental of psychology. Slovenia: psychology press- Taylor and Francis Group 1956, 89.

<sup>37</sup> W.M. Umman, *Sexual assault preventive programmes: current issues, future directions, and the potential efficacy of interventions with women*. 1999,19(7 ):739

interpretative of their principles of life and conduct"<sup>38</sup>. The quest for the peoples' assessment and appraisal of *mágùn* in their oral tradition begins with their proverbs<sup>29</sup>. I am of the view that the painstaking attempt at discovering and gathering *mágùn* anchored proverbs has been understandably difficult, simply because of the dreadful attributes of *mágùn*, which naturally douse the flames of proverbial creativity in this direction.

Our effort however has not been in vain, as a bountiful harvest of few but significant proverbs have become our lot. The Yorùbá say, *mágùn*, "idekun afowofa eda" "*mágùn* is a self-inflicted snare". The Yorùbá believe that the victims of *mágùn* are never innocent and that it is either the victim is an adulterer, or a member of his family sets the trap on him, for one reason or another. In other words, even the seemingly innocent husband who has been eliminated by a wife's concubine is not at all innocent because he made himself to marry a promiscuous woman, on whose account, he meets his fate<sup>39</sup>. As for me, this filial connection implicates the husband, in that he married a woman whose immorality caused his death. An interesting proverb has it that "A kii rojo pelu *mágùn* ka jare" "A disputer in a case involving *mágùn* never wins".

This is in reference to the popular conception of *mágùn* as an instant judge. In every case involving *mágùn* it is both a defender and judge, and it is usually the winner because the plaintiff would have been judged (killed) before the case is tabled for hearing<sup>40</sup>. I suggest that, the complainant (victim) could in fact have a case (where a man has been killed in a socially unapproved manner) but *mágùn* waits for no trial before delivering its judgement. Therefore, it is better to have no case with *mágùn* than to seek solace in justice.

"Ajoje èyí, ajoje tòhún, ajoje *mágùn* kii se fún panságà obìnrin". We ate this together, we shared that together, ajoje *mágùn* (a silent *mágùn*) food shared by a husband and wife, to kill any other man, besides the husband (in sexual congress with the wife) is never for the adulteress". In dealing with *mágùn*, one should critically examine one's own moral qualities before going into partnership. Failure to do this could lead to embarrassment and unnecessary loss of human lives<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> O. G. Olaluba, *Mythological Dimension of Mágùn an Interpretation* in W.M. Umman (ed). ZAXRED Journal of Religions, Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo 1990, 19(7 ):8

<sup>39</sup> F. D. Owuamanam, *Mágùn: The Traditional Juju Among Yoruba Native in M. O. in Ojo* (ed): Journal of Religious Studies, Ibadan. 1994, Vol. xxxvi. 54

<sup>40</sup> C. W. Kungu, *Criminalization of Marital Rape in Kenya*. In M. O. Ojo, *Mágùn: Journal of Religious Studies*, Ibadan. Vol. 30 (3) 1997, 57

<sup>41</sup> B. W. Allen, *Mágùn: "Be aware of Mágùn, adulterers!"* Ibadan, Omoyele Publisher, 2013, 65.

### Examples of Lovers Trapped During Sex



**Fig 1:** <https://peakd.com/hive-181017/@debbie-ese/mágùn-charm-used-to-punish-adulte-in-yoruba-tradition>



**Fig 2:** <https://peakd.com/hive-181017/@debbie-ese/mágùn-charm-used-to-punish-adulte-in-Yorùbá-tradition>



**Fig 3:** <https://www.mangrovepen.ng/2023/12/06/why-more-men-die-during-marathon-sex-experts/>



**Fig 5:** <https://ladunliadinews.com/strange-married-woman-got-stuck-while/>



**Fig 6:** <https://www.nairaland.com/2947567/kenyan-lovers-trapped-during-sex/6>

## Types of Mágùn

### 1. Mágùn olókìtì

#### Ingredients

“A ó wá ewé Iná, a ó wá eja ààrò ààyè, a ó wá eja mota funfun, a ó wá irun àárín orí ọ̀bọ okin, a ó wá ewé olúwọ̀ngaga mèsàán (9), a ó wá ọ̀wú ọ̀jà awo, a ó wá èso akọ mèsàn, a ó wá èso tapara mèsàn, a ó wá pádi atare aja kan, A ó wá eekan àti èpo òkú igi ọ̀mọ, nígbà tá bá wá nkàn yí tán”.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

#### Translation:

We will find fire leaves, we will find morning starfish, we will find white motra fish, we will find the hair in the middle of the monkey's head, we will find nine (9) wolwangaga leaves, we will find cotton, we will find nine male fruits, we will find fruit nine steps, we will find a dog's paw pad, we will find a bone and the dead body of a baby tree, when will we find this thing?

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

#### Preparation:

A ó rẹ di ọ̀jọ méje léhìn ọ̀jọ méje a ó lọ kó ọ̀wú ọ̀jà awo a ó má nàà sílẹ̀ fún obìnrin tí a bá fé lòó fún, sùgbọ̀n ọ̀kùnrin nàà kò gbọ̀dọ̀ sùn pẹ̀lú obìnrin nàà ni orí ibùsùn kan nàà nítorípé yíò ma wu ọ̀kùnrin nàà láti ba se àsepọ̀ nítorí ohun tó wá lára rẹ. ọ̀kùnrin tó bá sùn mó obìnrin nàà yíò tàkìtì nígbà mètá tí kò bá tètè rí olùrànlọ̀wọ̀ yíò kú.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

#### Interpretation

It will be 7 days after 7 days, we will gather cotton for the market and we will give it to the woman we want to marry, but the man must not sleep with any woman in the same bed because this is not what the man wants to do. relationship because of what is in it. a man who sleeps with a woman will laugh three times if he does not find a helper soon, he will die.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

### 2. Mágùn Olorere

#### Ingredients

A ó wá ewé iná, a ó wá ewé aluro, a ó wá ewé wonganga, a ó wá ewé iyálóde pupa, a ó wá èpo igi tó bá wówé, a ó wá ifun inú pẹ̀pẹ̀yẹ odidi kan akọ, a ó wá èpo ajá, àti pádi atare ajá kan, a ó wá ilẹ̀kẹ̀ ifá iwọ̀n kan.**Source: Field work, 2024 .**

#### Interpretation

We will find fire leaves, we will find aluro leaves, we will find wonganga leaves, we will find red yalode leaves, we will find

the bark of a tree, we will find the entrails of a whole duck, we will find dog skin, and a dog's ginger pad, we will find a one-ounce bead. **Source: Field work, 2024.**

#### **Preparation:**

A ó wá kó gbogbo rẹ̀ pò, asọ tí wọn bá fí sin òkú a ó gé díè níbè a ó ko sínú asọ nàà àti èèpo ajá, a ó díí, a ó wá òkùsù aró a o rẹ̀ sínú rẹ̀ fún ojọ̀ méje, lẹ̀hìn èyí a ó mú ilẹ̀kẹ̀ ifá tó wà nínú rẹ̀ sówó, òhun ní wọn ó nà sílẹ̀ fún obìnrin tí wọn bá fẹ̀ lòó fún, ó léwu púpò láti sun pẹ̀lú obìnrin bẹ̀. **Source: Field work, 2024.**

#### **Interpretation**

We will collect it all, the cloth used for burying the dead will be cut a little and put in the cloth and the dog's hair, it will be soaked in the morning moon and soaked in it for seven days, after this we will take the left ear in it so, what they will do for a woman if they want to use it, it is very dangerous to sleep with such a woman.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

### **3. Mágùn Alakuko**

#### **Ingredients**

A ó wá ewé olówérenjeje, tí yìò pò díè, a ó wá ewé ogbe àkùkọ, a ó wá ewé iná, a ó wá odindi àkùkọ̀ ibílẹ̀ kan, a ó wá ewé àbámọ̀dá méesán.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

#### **Translation**

We will find a green leaf, which will grow a little, we will find a banana leaf, we will find a fire leaf, we will find a whole traditional chicken, we will find nine amado leaves

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

#### **Preparation:**

A ó kó gbogbo rẹ̀ pò, a ó wá ilẹ̀kẹ̀ ifá, a ó kó ifun inú adiyẹ̀ nàà a ó jo papò a ó wá mú asọ pupa díè a ó fí di ẹ̀bu yí, a ó fí ilẹ̀kẹ̀ ifá yí sí a ó wá rẹ̀ gbogbo rẹ̀ sínú òkú àkùkọ̀ adiyẹ̀ nàà, a ó gbe lọ sórí ààtàn, a ó bo mólẹ̀ síbẹ̀ fún ojọ̀ méje, lẹ̀hìn ojọ̀ méje a ó lọ yọ̀ ilẹ̀kẹ̀ kúrò, a ó máa nàà sílẹ̀ fún obìnrin tí a bá fẹ̀ lò fún.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

#### **Translation**

We will collect all of it, we will find the tail, we will collect the inside of the chicken, we will dance together, we will take some red cloth and tie it, we will put this tail and we will find it all in the carcass of the chicken, we will put it on the fire, we will stay there for seven days, after seven days the man will remove the beads, and it will be given to the woman if we want to give it to him.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

#### **4. Ado Tosi** **Ingredients**

Ewé iná pupa àti ewé iná funfun, a ó wá ewé egele, gbòngbó aluro, àfòmó orí oṣarun, a ó wá gbòngbò rekureku, a ó wá oṣarun tí ó bá ni omi nínú, a ó jo omi inú oṣarun yì síbìkan, a ó wá òwú ero iwòn kan, a ó wá owó àtijó ẹyọ mèèsán, bóyá kòbò tàbí sílè, a ó wá èso opele mèèsán.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

#### **Translation**

Red fire leaves and white fire leaves, we will find saffron leaves, saffron root, bamboo root, we will find reekuru root, we will find bamboo if it has water in it, we will boil the water in this bamboo somewhere, we will find a pound of cotton, we will find nine coins, whether it is kobo or not, we will find nine fruits.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

#### **Preparation:**

A ó pa gbogbo rẹ̀ pọ̀, a ó wá orù kékeré kan, a ó da omi inú oṣarun yì sí, a ó kó owó ẹyọ àtijó yì síbẹ̀, a ó sì kó àwọn òkan iyókù le lóri, a ó gbe sí àlàfo àlàpà fún ojó méje, òwu tí ó wà nínú rẹ̀, a ó yọ, ó di lílò, owó àtijó yì a ó ko dànù, a ó wá fọ̀ ikòkò tí a fí rẹ̀ òkan wònyí dànù.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

#### **Translation**

We will kill everything, we will find a small night and pour water in this bamboo and we will put this old coin in there and we will put the rest of the things on it, we will put it in the moonlight for seven days, the cotton that is in it ao yo, wall of use. This old money will not be lost, we will wash the pots with which these things are sold.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

**By Mr. Oluwasina Caleb Yekinni, Gbongan, Osun State**

#### **Mágùn Mafogota** **Ingredients**

Ewé irinrin, ewé oriji, a ó gun papò, a ó pò mó òrì tí á bá fẹ̀ lo fún obìnrin, a ó kó ìgbálẹ̀ sínú àpò, a ó rẹ̀ sínú àpò oṣarun fún ojó mèèsán.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

#### **Interpretation**

The leaves of the leaves, the leaves of the orij, will be grown together and tied to the head.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

**Ofo:**

Ìràwé kii dájó ilẹ̀ kó sùn ọ̀nà, a ó na ìgbálẹ̀ yẹn sí ẹ̀nu ọ̀nà, a ó pe obinrin pé kó wá, a ó fi ìgbálẹ̀ yẹn sí ẹ̀nu onja fún obinrin náà láti kojá lóri rẹ, léhìn náà, a ó mu kúrò níbẹ.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

**Interpretation**

Ìràwé does not judge the house and the road, he will put a vacuum on the entrance of the road, he will call the woman that she is not there, he will put that vacuum on the entrance of the market for the woman to pass over, then he will be taken away from there

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

**Mágùn Olomi (Mamumi)**

Eja ọ̀jìjì tí ó tóbi dáadáa, ewé iná funfun, ewé esisi, koríko tí erin tè mọ̀lẹ̀, ewé amunimuye, adígbonákú mẹ̀ta, ewé koríko di àti atare ẹ̀yọ̀ méesán (9) ileke tí ó kadi. a ó lọ gbogbo àwọ̀n èròjà yí papọ̀ a ó ko sínú eja ọ̀jìjì yi pẹ̀lú ileke tí ó kadi, a ó lọ rií mọ̀ odò tí ó nsàn ní àárò, a ó lọ wú ní àsálẹ̀ (Ale).

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

**Interpretation**

A large shadow fish, white fire leaf, esisi leaf, grass of elephant te mole, life-giving leaf, three adigbonaku, grass leaf and atare nine (9) beads. we will use all these elements together and put it in this shadow fish with a kadi ring, we will see the river flowing in the morning, it will be beautiful in the desert (Ale).

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

**Mágùn Oniwarapa**

**Ingredients**

Ewé amunimuye, irun orí odi, ọ̀kàn ọ̀kété, ewé rekureku, ewé abólójọkajọ, àkàrà obole tí nkan wà nínú rẹ, ewé jókòò jẹ̀ àti èkúté tí èbìtì pa.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

**Interpretation**

Liver leaves, hair on the wall, the heart of the mountain, rereku leaf, abólójọkajọ leaf, bread with a heart in it, leaves sitting on the edge of the edge.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

**Preparation:**

A ó gun gbogbo àwọ̀n èròjà yí papọ̀, a ó ko sínú èkúté tí èbìtì pa, a ó gbé sínú agbádá tí á fi nǹkàn, a ó fi odidi atare kan sí ní ègbé, a ó wá gbe lọ sí ibi omiekun eléyí ní ìhòhò nínú igbó, léhìn ojọ

méje a ó jo papò nínú igbó ni a ti máa ríjo, a kíi jo nínú ilé. Ebu yí ni a ó ta sílè tí obìnrin yòò da kojá.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

### **Interpretation**

We will collect all these elements together, we will put them in a reed, we will put them in a bowl to burn something, we will put a whole onion on the side, and we will go to this wet place in the hollow in the forest, after the rain, seven will dance together in the forest, we used to dance, not dance in the house. This curse will be thrown away and the woman will overcome it.

**Source: Field work, 2024.**

### **Recommendation**

This project addresses the issue of the traditional method of punishing adultery among the Yorùbá natives of the Western part of Nigeria. Mágùn is a Juju which is applied to punish adulterers in Yorùbá land. Using various research methods; interview methods and qualitative methods of data, the project identifies various categories of Mágùn and the varieties subsumed under them<sup>42</sup>. The project argues that the application of Mágùn for the punishment of adultery is no longer a common phenomenon as a result of Westernization and modernization. Yet, there are rural areas where the application of Mágùn to punish adultery is still found. Looking into this is a matter of expediency because one expects marital faithfulness on the part of spouses in a society that does not believe sex is superior to the other. I want to recommend that extensive research be conducted on Mágùn and other ways of punishing crime and deviant behaviour among the Yorùbá people<sup>43</sup>. Furthermore, adequate documentation of the findings to preserve the culture of the people in Yorùbá land and the Criminal Justice System is also highly recommended.

It is on this note that the following recommendations are made:

- i. Government should legalize mágùn and its antidotes, and also make both available, particularly for married men and women.
- ii. Any polygamist who laces any of his wives with mágùn should be legally tried for murder or manslaughter depending on the type of mágùn<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> A. A. Awake, *Teen Pregnancy: A Global Tragedy* (The Cover Page) A Publication of the Jehovah Witnesses, 2004, 76

<sup>43</sup> W. V. James, *Sexual assault preventive programs: current issues, future directions, and the potential efficacy of interventions with women*. 1999;19(7):739

<sup>44</sup> R.C. Abraham, *The Concubine*. London: Heinemann African Writers Series, 1966, 54.

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## Les Proverbes Et Leur Reception Dans Le Discours Romanesque D'ahmadou Kourouma

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### Résumé

*Ahmadou Kourouma est l'un des auteurs francophones africains qui utilisent les composantes du genre oral dans ses œuvres. L'une de ces composantes constitue les proverbes. Dans cette rédaction, nous avons examiné les proverbes et leur réception dans trois romans d'Ahmadou Kourouma à savoir: Les soleils des indépendances (1970), Monnè, outrages et défis (1990) et Quand on refuse on dit non (2004). Pour l'analyse des proverbes dans les trois romans, nous avons utilisé comme théorie, la sociologie de la littérature. Nous avons ainsi découvert que les proverbes dans les romans de Kourouma ont un rapport avec les animaux et les autres éléments de notre environnement. Certains proverbes ne sont pas faciles à comprendre. Aussi, l'auteur a-t-il employé des parenthèses et commentaires explicatifs pour faciliter la compréhension des proverbes par des lecteurs. Cependant, certains commentaires explicatifs ne donnent pas une explication claire des proverbes. Pour combler ce vide, nous avons expliqué quelques-uns des proverbes et suggéré que, les autres écrivains francophones africains qui voudraient emboîter les pas à Kourouma devront éviter toute ambiguïté en donnant des explications claires des proverbes à travers l'emploi des parenthèses et des commentaires explicatifs ou des notes en bas de pages.*

Mots clés: **Proverbes, réception, parenthèses et commentaires explicatifs**

### Abstract

*Ahmadou Kourouma is one of the Francophone African writers who used oral literature genres as a means of their literary aesthetics. One of these genres is proverbs. In this paper, we examined proverbs and the implication of their meaning in Ahmadou Kourouma's three novels: Les soleils des indépendances (1970), Monnè, outrages et défis (1990) et Quand on refuse on dit non (2004). The three texts were analysed using sociology of literature as a theory. The study revealed that the proverbs in the three novels relate to animals and other elements of our environment. Also, some of the proverbs used are ambiguous. We equally observed that the author used parentheses and explanatory comments to aid the understanding of the proverbs by the readers. However, it is not all the explanatory comments that contributed to that. To fill this gap, we explained some of the proverbs and suggested that other Francophone African writers who want to follow the footsteps of the Ivoirian author should avoid ambiguity by providing clear explanations of proverbs through the use of parentheses and explanatory comments or footnotes.*

Keywords: Proverbs, understanding, parentheses and explanatory comments

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ahmadou Kourouma est l'un des leaders de la génération des écrivains africains de la période post-indépendance qui ont fait de l'emploi des proverbes dans leurs romans l'une de leur esthétique littéraire. En effet, une lecture des œuvres romanesques de Kourouma permet de noter un foisonnement de proverbes malinkés ou africains en leur sein. Ce foisonnement des proverbes confère à ses œuvres une certaine authenticité et permet une découverte des richesses de l'univers linguistique et culturel africain. Les proverbes qui en milieu traditionnel africain permettent de meubler les discussions sont introduits par Kourouma dans son discours romanesque afin d'illustrer une idée, soutenir un point de vue ou enseigner une morale. Les proverbes utilisés témoignent en outre, la maîtrise des langues et des traditions africaines par l'auteur ivoirien. Cependant, on remarque que l'emploi de ces proverbes n'est pas uniforme. Ce manque d'uniformité se lit à plusieurs niveaux de ses romans notamment au niveau de la compréhension du sens des proverbes qu'il utilise. Dans le cadre de notre étude, nous avons choisi trois romans à savoir: *Les soleils des indépendances*, *Monnè*, *outrages et défis* et *Quand on refuse on dit non* afin d'étudier les proverbes employés par l'auteur d'*En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages* et voir si leur emploi est accessible aux lecteurs. Nous avons aussi proposé des solutions en vue d'une meilleure compréhension des proverbes de l'auteur ivoirien. Nous avons également fait des suggestions aux autres écrivains francophones africains qui voudraient emprunter la voie tracée par Kourouma.

### **Eléments sur la base théorique**

Comme nous avons eu à le mentionner un peu plus haut, la théorie adoptée dans notre étude est la sociologie de la littérature. Qu'est-ce que donc la sociologie de la littérature? Le terme sociologie de la littérature est composé de deux principaux mots: sociologie et littérature. Selon Baylon (1991), la sociologie est la science de tous les phénomènes sociaux. Il précise aussi que certains sociologues considèrent la société comme un tout, ce faisant, ils cherchent à dégager les corrélations entre ses principales composantes et institutions à savoir le régime politique, l'économie, la vie spirituelle. D'autres s'intéressent davantage aux éléments communs à tous ces sous-systèmes. Pour Cadwell (1997), la sociologie est d'une façon générale, l'étude des relations humaines. Il s'agit en quelque sorte de l'étude de la façon dont les gens vivent dans la société. Quant à Makinde (2010), la sociologie est une notion inventée par le philosophe français

Auguste Comte. Elle est une étude de la société. Sa fonction la plus importante concerne les interactions humaines ou les rapports sociaux. Pour Farayola cité par Makinde (2010), la sociologie s'intéresse à l'étude des influences et des activités des différents groupes humains.

De ce qui précède, on peut dire que la sociologie est l'étude de la société, de ses structures, de son organisation, des activités des hommes et des relations entre eux.

En ce qui concerne la littérature, elle porte également sur la société. Elle est selon Superville (1955, p.9) « l'expression choisie de la société humaine, le miroir fidèle des idées et des sentiments d'un peuple, d'une époque, d'une civilisation ». Pour Barber (1978) c'est une réflexion sur la société; elle joue un rôle important dans sa formation et permet de cristalliser les opinions de ses membres: opinions sur le monde, à propos de l'homme, à propos de la société elle-même. Elle a selon Ayeleru (2000) et Ogunsina (2006) à faire avec l'homme et sa société. Pour Akinseloyin (2014), la littérature permet aux écrivains de s'exprimer et de révéler ainsi leurs idées pour le bien-être de la société.

De ce qui précède, on note une relation entre la sociologie et la littérature dans la mesure où, les deux disciplines parlent de la société et de ses réalités. Cette opinion est celle aussi Akinseloyin (2014) qui estime qu'il y a un lien entre la sociologie et la littérature car la littérature ne peut pas être séparée de la vie des gens. Ainsi pour bien comprendre une œuvre littéraire, on a besoin de connaître sa sociologie c'est-à-dire les coutumes et les croyances dont parle son auteur. De même pour comprendre la sociologie d'un pays ou d'une nation, il suffit de lire les œuvres des écrivains qui parlent de ce pays.

Ogunsina (2006) cité par Akinseloyin (2014) explique les raisons de l'émergence de cette nouvelle discipline en disant que, c'est la volonté des chercheurs à développer une théorie littéraire scientifique qui puisse faire de la sociologie et de la littérature une discipline qui puisse adopter les mêmes méthodes que celles des sciences physiques et des sciences naturelles qui a conduit à la création de cette discipline relativement nouvelle dans le domaine des études littéraires.

Ainsi, les proverbes qui sont des réalités sociales ont eu un emploi particulier chez Kourouma. Cet emploi sera développé dans la suite de ce travail.

## **Bref aperçu de l'emploi des proverbes dans les romans africains d'expression française avant l'indépendance et dans ceux de Kourouma**

Selon Bilao (2007, p. 314): « .. les proverbes sont des énoncés doxiques qui véhiculent une vérité d'expérience vécue par une communauté donnée. Pour Okekunle (2014), les proverbes sont des paroles succinctes, généralement utilisées, et qui expriment les idées et les croyances générales d'une société. Pour Chinua Achebe cité par O Okekunle (2014), les proverbes sont l'huile de palme avec laquelle les paroles sont dites. Ce qui veut dire que, les proverbes constituent un moyen d'expression de la parole.

Suite à toutes ces définitions, on peut dire qu'un proverbe est un énoncé concis, généralement imagé et qui présente une vision du monde d'une communauté donnée. Précisons que dans les sociétés africaines, les proverbes sont du ressort des hommes âgés ayant acquis une longue expérience dans le domaine des traditions et notamment dans la maîtrise des langues du milieu africains. C'est sans doute la raison pour laquelle Kosemari (2010) estime que les proverbes ne sont pas de simples phrases inscrites dans la mémoire des enfants que ceux-ci peuvent utiliser à leur guise mais plutôt ce sont des énoncés que des adultes ayant acquis une longue expérience dans l'emploi des langues africaines font usage. Pour lui, les jeunes parlant les langues africaines doivent passer une bonne partie de leur temps auprès des hommes âgés afin d'apprendre comment utiliser les proverbes dans les discussions. Ajoutons que, la bonne maîtrise des proverbes dans une langue donnée est un signe de la bonne maîtrise de la langue dans laquelle les proverbes sont dits. Cette bonne maîtrise constitue un moyen d'une bonne éloquence et elle peut susciter beaucoup d'admiration pour un locuteur qui les emploie.

Notons qu'il y a une dichotomie entre l'emploi des proverbes africains dans les romans africains d'expression française avant l'indépendance avec ceux de Kourouma. En effet, dans les romans africains d'expression française avant l'indépendance, l'emploi des proverbes n'est pas récurrent ou accentué. Une lecture attentive des œuvres comme *L'enfant noir* de Camara Laye, *Une vie de boy* de Ferdinand Oyono, *Ville cruelle* d'Eza Boto, etc. traduit la justesse de nos propos. Réellement, dans ces ouvrages, les proverbes se font un peu rares. Leur emploi est donc infime comparé à ce dont nous avons constaté dans les œuvres de Kourouma. Dans les romans de l'écrivain ivoirien, les proverbes sont devenus un moyen pour l'auteur de faire couleur locale et de rendre ses œuvres authentiquement africaines. Cette dichotomie s'explique également par le

fait que la visée au point de vue esthétique des devanciers de Kourouma était de prouver aux lecteurs, composés majoritairement d'européens, qu'ils maîtrisaient bien la langue française. Ils cherchaient en conséquence à attirer la sympathie de ce public occidental. Or, l'emploi des proverbes africains par ces auteurs n'était pas donc un moyen pouvant leur permettre de réaliser cette ambition de grands écrivains, d'écrivains talentueux puisque cet emploi pourra remettre en cause la qualité de leur style. Les quelques proverbes qu'on retrouve dans les œuvres de ces écrivains sont accidentels et n'avaient pas pour but de remettre en cause les assises de la langue française. Cependant, avec la publication des œuvres de Kourouma, on assiste à un renouvellement de la langue, à une nouvelle esthétique du roman africain d'expression française. Ajoutons que l'emploi des proverbes et autres éléments stylistiques des langues africaines dans les œuvres de l'auteur ivoirien constituent un fait marquant. Des *soleils des indépendances* à *Quand on refuse on dit non* en passant par *Monnè, outrages et défis*, *Allah n'est pas obligé* et *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages*, les proverbes figurent en bonne place. Bilao (2007) qui désigne ces proverbes sous le vocable d'ethnostylistique de la parémie, signale en ces termes la prolifération des proverbes et surtout des maximes dans *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages*:

Autant Kourouma use-t-il des proverbes autant abuse-t-il de maximes. Dans *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages* ..., l'écrivain ivoirien jette son dévolu sur les maximes. Leur nombre est impressionnant dans ce roman. (2007: 298)

Il importe de dire que, avec l'utilisation accrue des proverbes et autres éléments de l'esthétique des langues africaines dans ses œuvres, Kourouma s'affranchit des contraintes d'une langue française que Joubert cité par Chanda (2006, p.164) décrit comme « carcan de mythologie (langue universelle, langue parfaite). Cette esthétique lui permet également d'esquisser les voies d'une littérature africaine d'expression française authentique et indépendante. Elle lui donne en également l'opportunité d'apprendre au monde les cultures, les pensées et les réalités africaines. Faisant particulièrement référence aux *soleils des indépendances*, Ngasolo cité par Bilao (2007: 298) estime que l'utilisation des proverbes dans ce roman est d'abord destinée à véhiculer une vision du monde, celle de l'espace social dans lequel est située la scène du récit, ici la société malinké. Dans ce contexte, il conclut que, Kourouma entend faire partager par-delà la langue, considérée ici comme un simple outil au service de la pensée, des valeurs philosophiques spirituelles et morales de portée universelle.

Ainsi, l'emploi des proverbes dans les œuvres romanesques de Kourouma est plus accentué que dans les romans de la période avant l'indépendance et cela s'explique par plusieurs raisons comme nous avons eu à le souligner plus haut. De même, l'utilisation des proverbes par Kourouma n'est pas uniforme dans ses œuvres romanesques et ceci affecte leur réception par les lecteurs.

### **La réception des proverbes d'Ahmadou Kourouma**

Le terme réception des proverbes, veut dire la compréhension des proverbes utilisés par Kourouma dans ses œuvres. Ici, nous voulons savoir si les proverbes employés par l'écrivain ivoirien peuvent être facilement compris par les lecteurs et si les parenthèses et les commentaires explicatifs qu'il a utilisés concourent à cela.

Avant de déterminer cela, signalons d'abord que, les proverbes utilisés par Kourouma proviennent du terroir de l'auteur c'est-à-dire de la société malinké ou africaine et ceux-ci font références soit aux animaux ou aux autres éléments de la nature. Dans les tableaux qui suivent, nous avons présenté au total cinquante-deux (52) proverbes identifiés dans les trois œuvres de notre corpus. Ceux-ci sont répartis de façon suivante: Dans *Les soleils des indépendances* et dans *Monnè, outrages et défis* nous avons choisi vingt (20) proverbes dans chaque ouvrage et dans *Quand on refuse on dit non*, nous avons choisi douze (12). Nous aurions pu avoir aussi le même nombre dans *Quand on refuse on dit non* mais il n'y a pas assez de proverbes dans cet ouvrage. Rappelons que cet ouvrage a été publié à titre posthume, l'auteur n'a pas achevé sa rédaction avant sa mort, ce qui aurait probablement affecté le nombre de proverbes qu'il a utilisés. Nous avons expliqué ensuite le sens de chaque proverbe et indiqué les passages qui permettent à l'auteur de les expliquer.

Chaque tableau comprend donc quatre colonnes : la première indique le numéro d'ordre, la deuxième les proverbes, la troisième leur explication et la quatrième les parenthèses ou les commentaires explicatifs.

**Tableau 1: Listes de quelques proverbes dans *Les soleils des indépendances***

No. dre	Proverbes	Explication ou sens des proverbes	Parenthèses ou commentaires explicatifs
1.	« La vérité il faut la dire, aussi dure qu'elle soit, car elle rougit les pupilles mais ne les casse pas » p. 15	On doit toujours dire la vérité à une personne, que cette vérité la blesse ou non. Ce proverbe dénote l'idée de souffrance pour la victime.	« Le plus ancien de la cérémonie excusa pour tous les musulmans pour Fama. C'était Fama qui avait raison, trancha-t-il » p. 15
2.	« L'hyène a beau être édentée, sa bouche ne sera jamais un chemin de passage pour le cabrin » p. 16	Un homme issu d'une famille d'honneur ne doit jamais quelles que soient les circonstances se faire dénigrer par quelqu'un. Celui-ci traduit l'humiliation.	« Fama se demandait s'il n'était pas trop âgé pour le défier en lutte. Un male ne se sépare pas de son arme. Il tâta sa poche; le couteau s'y trouvait pour répandre les entrailles du fils de chien. Alors, que maintenant Bamba revienne » p. 16
3.	« Quand un dément agite le grelot, toujours danse un autre dément jamais un descendant des Doumbouya » p. 19	Un homme d'honneur ne doit jamais se faire embêter, il doit s'opposer à toute forme d'humiliation. Ce proverbe est un défi contre l'humiliation de Fama	« Donc, vil de damnation, un damné abject, le bâtard de Bamba qui avait porté la main sur Fama. Alors pourquoi attendre sur un territoire un damné ?
4.	« Les mères chiennes font des enfants	Dieu donne facilement les enfants aux femmes qui ne vont pas s'occuper d'eux	« Elle (Salimata) voulait être une mère, une mère digne » p.50

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	malheureux » p.50	mais celles-là qui vont s'occuper d'eux les cherchent en vain. Ce proverbe traduit la souffrance de Salimata qui cherche à tout prix avoir un enfant.	
5.	« L'or ne se ramasse que par celles qui n'ont pas d'oreilles solides pour porter de pesantes boucles » p.54	Les gens qui n'ont pas des moyens pour supporter des enfants les ont facilement, tandis que, ceux-là qui ont les moyens n'arrivent pas à les faire. Ce proverbe traduit également la souffrance de Salimata qui veut à tout prix avoir un enfant.	« Un garçonnet de dix-huit mois, nu comme un fil de coton, nez et yeux grouillants et puants de morves et de mouches, se dandinait, marchait et tendait les mains à Salimata. Un enfant! en avoir et laisser trainer ainsi! » p.54
6.	« La suprême injure qui ne presse pas, n'oublie pas, s'appelle la mort » p.83	La mort est inéluctable. Celle du cousin Lacina annonce les autres morts surtout celle des traditions et des vertus en Afrique après les indépendances.	« Elle avait emporté le cousin Lacina du village ... ce décès est un malheur » p.83
7.	« La première puissance d'un chef de tribu d'affamés n'est autre chose que la famine et une gourde de soucis » p.92	Il faut éviter des problèmes que d'en avoir. Fama devait refuser de devenir chef car avec les indépendances, tout est gâté. Ce proverbe montre l'avènement des problèmes en Afrique, la déliquescence des traditions après les	« Etre le chef de la tribu avant la conquête des Toubabs, quel grand honneur, quelle grande puissance ... Dans ce monde renversé, cet honneur sans moyen, serpent sans tête revenait à Fama ... Fama, tu devais te préparer à refuser » p.92

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		indépendances.	
8.	« Un chef malinké couche dans la chambre patriarcale » p.108	On doit assurer toujours ses responsabilités. Ce proverbe traduit l'idée de responsabilité et de bravoure chez les Malinkés	« Il n'y avait ni hésitation ni palabre, la grande case patriarcale vide après le décès du cousin était-là ... Fama devait l'ouvrir et y déballer les bagages » p.108
9.	« Tant que le mur ne se fend pas, les cancrelats ne s'y mettent pas » p.142	Quand on ne crée pas des opportunités pour l'ennemi, il lui est difficile de pénétrer dans vos rangs ou de vous faire du mal. Ce proverbe signale que les nouveaux maîtres de l'Afrique sont dangereux.	« Cancrelats des indépendances, des partis uniques, de la révolution, vous ne pénétrerez pas, vous ne diviserez pas, vous ne gâterez pas Togobala ! Jamais ! » p.142
10.	« Une famille avec une seule femme était comme un escabeau à un seul pied, ou un homme à une jambe; ça ne tient qu'en appuyant sur un étranger » p.157	Quand on a une seule femme, on n'est pas en sécurité, car quand celle-ci quitte le mari celui-ci devient célibataire. Mais si le mari en a plusieurs, même si elle quitte, celui-ci pourra vivre avec les autres. Ce proverbe met en exergue la vie dans le milieu polygame.	« Mariam vint, on la présenta à Salimata: Voilà ta coépouse, considère-la comme une petite sœur ... Salimata avait salué avec joie la coépouse ... » p.157
11.	« Où a-t-on vu un trou rempli de ficelles ne présentant pas un seul bout pour tout	Pour résoudre un problème, il faut la patience et la persistance. Ce proverbe montre les problèmes des familles polygames.	D'ailleurs à bien dire les choses, son ménage (celui de Fama) ressemblait à un vase simplement penché; il n'avait pas encore versé son contenu. Il y a de l'espoir Où

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	en tirer? » p.159		a-t-on vu un trou rempli de ficelles ne présentant pas un seul bout pour tout en tirer? p.158-159
12.	« C'est en criant tous les soirs aux chèvres: entre! entre ! entre ! qu'elles finissent par rentrer » p.159-160	C'est avec la patience et la persistance qu'on arrive à résoudre les problèmes. Dans ce proverbe, il s'agit de comment résoudre les problèmes dans les familles polygames.	« Où a-t-on vu un trou rempli de ficelles ne présentant pas un seul bout pour tout tirer? Nulle part. Mais il fallait chercher le bout avec patience, avec persistance » p.159
13.	« Même la guêpe maçonne et le crapaud finissent par se tolérer quand on les enferme dans une même case et pourquoi pas Mariam et Salimata? » p.160	Deux ennemis jurés peuvent toujours se réconcilier. Ce proverbe suggère l'espoir de réconciliation entre coépouse dans les familles polygames.	«A bien faire le tour des choses, son ménage ressemblait à un vase simplement penché ... il y avait de l'espoir.. Fama pensait que tout allait finir par s'arranger » p.159-160
14.	« La politique n'a ni yeux ni oreilles, ni cœur ; en politique le vrai et le mensonge porte le même pagne, le juste et l'injuste marchent de pair, le bien et le mal s'achètent ou se	Il n'y a pas d'honnêteté, d'amis en politique. Ce proverbe montre l'échec des indépendances à travers la répression, la torture des citoyens.	Le président et le parti unique réprimèrent. Deux ministres, deux députés, trois conseillers furent ceinturés en pleine rue ... jetés dans des avions et expulsés... quatre ministre furent appréhendés sur le perron du palais, ceinturés, menottés, et ils furent conduits en prison » p.163

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- vendent au même  
prix » p.164
15. « Un Doumbouya, Un Doumbouya est un homme courageux. Ce proverbe illustre l'une des vertus d'un Doumbouya  
un vrai ne donne pas le dos au danger » p.164
16. « Le cougal a été pris au piège, quelles raisons a le francolin de se jeter et rouler à terre en disant qu'il ne passera pas la nuit? » p.164  
Si un homme puissant a été arrêté, l'homme faible ne peut résister à l'arrestation. Ce proverbe montre aussi l'échec des nouveaux maîtres de l'Afrique qui ont fait de la répression un moyen de faire taire les gens.
17. « A trop se mettre en peine pour d'autres, le malheur qui n'était pas la notre nous frappe » p.164  
Il ne faut pas se mêler d'affaires d'autrui sinon les problèmes d'autrui deviennent les vôtres. Ce proverbe illustre également l'échec des indépendances dont la répression n'épargne personne.
18. « Les choses qui  
« Un jour ce fut un d'abord, un autre jour deux et enfin trois amis de Fama disparurent, surement appréhendés dans la nuit. Fama subodorait les premières fumées de l'incendie qui le menaçait. Il pouvait s'enfuir » p.164  
« Un jour ce fut un d'abord, un autre jour deux et enfin trois amis de Fama disparurent, surement appréhendés dans la nuit. Fama subodorait les premières fumées de l'incendie qui le menaçait. Il pouvait s'enfuir... Ils s'étaient tous enrichis avec l'indépendance, roulaient en voiture... » p.164  
« Fama persistait et criait dans les palabres qu'il n'aurait de cesse tant que ses anciens amis ne seraient pas libérés ... Une nuit alors qu'il sortait de la villa d'un ministre avec son ami Bakary, tous deux furent assaillis, terrassés ... bousculés jusqu'à la présidence où on les poussa dans les caves » p.164-165  
« Une nuit, on le tirait des caves
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	ne peuvent pas être dites ne méritent pas de nom » p.165	le camp de torture où Fama et les autres prisonniers étaient internés. Ce proverbe montre l'horreur de la détention des citoyens	avec d'autres codétenus, on les poussa dans les camions; au petit matin ils arrivèrent aux grilles d'un camp où ils furent internés. Comment s'appelait ce camp? Il ne possédait pas de nom » p.165
19.	« L'esclave appartient à son maître ; mais le maître des rêves de l'esclave est l'esclave seul » p.173	Chaque individu est responsable de ses rêves. Ce proverbe montre l'arbitraire des nouveaux dirigeants qui condamne Fama pour n'avoir pas révélé ses rêves aux autorités.	« Les rêves de Fama n'appartenaient qu'à lui, Fama. Il pouvait en disposer comme il le voulait » p.173
20.	« Là où les graterons percent la coque des œufs de pintades, ce n'est pas un lieu où le mouton à laine peut aller » p.175	Il faut être prudent dans la vie et éviter de défier n'importe qui. Ce proverbe montre le manque de liberté d'expression sous les nouveaux maîtres de l'Afrique.	« On l'avait bien prévenu. Les gens de l'indépendance ne connaissaient ni la vérité ni l'honneur, ils sont capables de tout. .. Il (Fama) a voulu terrasser les soleils des Indépendances, il a été vaincu » p. 175

**Analyse du tableau 1 :** Le tableau 1 contient vingt (20) proverbes relevés dans *Les soleils des indépendances*. Ceux-ci sont suivis de nos explications. Notons que pour certains de ces proverbes, les commentaires explicatifs qui les précèdent ou les accompagnent ne sont pas toujours clairs pour leur compréhension. Le lecteur peut donc faire une interprétation erronée. Par exemple dans le tableau, les commentaires explicatifs des proverbes No. 3 et 4 ne permettent pas de cerner le sens de chacun de ces proverbes. De même, on remarque que la plupart des proverbes dénotent l'échec, la souffrance, l'oppression, l'arbitraire, la déception que traduit le titre *Les Soleils des indépendances*.

**Tableau 2: Liste des proverbes dans *Monnè, outrages et défis***

No. Dre	Proverbes	Explication ou sens des proverbes	Parenthèses ou commentaires explicatifs
1.	« J'étais une chèvre attachée à un pieu, obligé de brouter dans le lieu où je me trouvais » p.33	Face à l'imminence des troupes ennemies, Djigui ne pouvait pas fuir son village et abandonner sa population. Il était obligé d'y rester. Ce proverbe montre un défi, la bravoure de Djigui.	« Moi Djigui, je ne pouvais pas quitter Soba! Comment le lui dire autrement? » p.33
2.	« Le bienfait et l'honneur enchaînent plus solidement l'homme de bien que ne parviennent à l'accomplir la force et la corde qui retiennent l'esclave ou l'éhonté » p.44	Le bienfait et l'honneur permettent de solidifier les relations entre les hommes et de convaincre à qui l'honneur est fait. Ce proverbe traduit les vertus de l'honneur.	« Les sbires offrirent au griot: trois autres femmes, des chevaux, des cases et des richesses et le chargèrent et l'obligèrent si bien qu'il accepta de rester à Soba » p.44
3.	« Après le combat entre deux lutteurs qui ont tous deux pour totems le caïman, le saurien du vaincu devient un vil margouillat » p.53	Quand deux personnes s'affrontent le vaincu est réduit en état d'esclave. C'est le cas de la France qui a vaincu Samory et a occupé ses terres puis a imposé sa force. Ce proverbe montre l'humiliation des rois en Afrique par les colons.	« Le caïman totem des Noirs s'est avili, réduit en margouillat; celui de la France émerge en crocodile car, avec la capture de Samory, les nazaréens français instaurent leur paix et force dans toute la Négritie, du sud au nord » p.53

4. «Celui qui craint la destruction de ses épis par les singes demeure dans son lougan » p.54  
Pour protéger leurs intérêts, les troupes françaises doivent rester à Soba. Ce proverbe traduit la visée des colons français : la domination et l'exploitation de l'Afrique.  
« Les deux Blancs, des sous-officiers mulâtres, des tirailleurs et lui-même, l'interprète resteraient définitivement à Soba » p.54
5. « ... en réglant les préoccupations nocturnes de l'hôte, on règle en grande partie celles du jour » p.56  
Quand Djigui a accepté de coopérer avec les colons français par les visites de vendredis au Kébi, cette coopération sera pour toujours. Ce proverbe évoque l'humiliation de Djigui  
« Les Blancs et les mulâtres se consultent ... Le capitaine est satisfait... votre pays sera célèbre et vous deviendrez, vous, Djigui, un grand chef » p.56
6. « Quand tu as entrevu dans un fourrage, la groupe d'un éléphant, tu dois deviner que ce que tu as aperçu n'est qu'une insignifiante partie de la tête » p.57  
Les prestations de la population sont jugées insuffisantes, par le commandant qui attend beaucoup plus. Ce produit traduit l'exploitation de la population.  
« Le Blanc adit que les prestations ont réussi mais qu'elles ne sont rien, rien que la croupe d'un éléphant » p.57
7. « Quand il t'échappera un pet avec de l'argent, tout le monde s'en accommodera ; mais, sans argent, on te rossera. Quand tu te coucheras et  
La civilisation qui est synonyme d'argent est importante dans la vie des habitants de Soba. Ce proverbe montre l'hypocrisie des Français, l'exploitation et l'humiliation des Noirs de  
« La civilisation c'est gagner de l'argent des Blancs. Le dessein de la colonisation est de faire gagner de l'argent à tous les indigènes » p.57

- t'assoiras sans Soba.  
argent, tu ne seras ni  
couché ni assis »  
p.57
8. « Tout le monde doit L'impôt de capitation est « ... les chefs qui n'avaient  
savoir qu'il est obligatoire pour chaque pas d'argent parviendraient  
préférable de habitant de Soba et ceux qui ne quand même à payer l'impôt  
consommer de son pourront s'acquitter de seront du prix de la vie. Ils seraient  
totem plutôt que de sérieusement punis. Ce enfermés dans les cases où on  
refuser de payer proverbe insinue la force, la les enfumera avec du piment  
l'impôt de dictature et l'exploitation et et, si la toux ne parvenait pas  
capitation » p.59 l'humiliation des gens à Soba. à leur arracher l'argent, on  
mettrait des braises sous leurs  
pieds et dans leurs mains »  
p.59
9. « On ne circoncis Au-delà de ses pratiques « Les bienheureux seront les  
pas sans mutiler et oppressives, la colonisation indigènes qui après le  
faire saigner » p.59 vise le bien-être, le bonheur paiement de l'impôt de  
des Noirs. Le proverbe montre capitation auront de l'argent  
la souffrance, l'exploitation des de reste pour se procurer du  
Noirs. confort! » p.59
10. « Même dans les Ce ne sont pas tous les Noirs « Les tirailleurs appartiennent  
flammes de l'enfer, qui souffrent pendant la aux bienheureux qui seront à  
il existera un arbre colonisation. Les tirailleurs l'ombre pendant tout le règne  
qui prodiguera de sont un exemple. Ce proverbe du Blanc » p.61  
l'ombre à quelques traduit la coopération de  
chanceux » p.61 certains Noirs dans cette  
exploitation de l'Afrique par  
les colons.
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11.	« Un arbre qui produit des fruits a des branches; que des branches sont sorties d'un tronc qui plonge par les racines dans un sol qui reçoit de l'eau » p.62	Les Noirs doivent fournir tout ce que les Français ont besoin pour faire fonctionner leur administration. Ce proverbe évoque l'exploitation de l'Afrique.	« Vous avez deviné que les prestataires, les travailleurs forcés et les tirailleurs seront accompagnés de jeunes femmes solides pour cuire le mil et ce mil s et les condiments viendraient de nos greniers » p.62
12.	« Un margouillat ne se taille pas une culotte sans aménager un trou pour la sortie de la queue » p.62	Les Français ont pris des mesures pour empêcher des travailleurs forcés de désertter les chantiers. Ce proverbe illustre l'exploitation et la torture des Africains.	« Vous avez entrevu que les prestataires, les travailleurs forcés et les tirailleurs ne pourront pas désertter ... Le chef du clan du déserteur recevra vingt coups de fouet» p.62
13.	« De l'urine de ceux de Soba sont sortis les crocodiles qui les ont mordus » p.63	Les Noirs ont construit dans la douleur le Kébi qui est le siège du gouvernement et en même temps le symbole de leur oppression. Cela signifie que ce sont les Noirs qui ont mis en place le symbole de leur oppression. Ce proverbe indique l'oppression des Noirs par les colons français.	« La première réalisation des nazaréens à Soba fut le bureau du commandant. On l'appelle « kébi », ce qui signifie les briques » p.63
14.	« De même que le mil ne se sert pas sans assaisonnement, il ne faut jamais	Toute traduction s'accompagne de commentaires. Chaque fois que l'interprète traduit les paroles du commandant, il fait	« C'est à se demander si Allah ne nous a pas créés après les autres races et par dérision. Ces dernières

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	traduire les paroles sans commentaires » p.65	des commentaires et amplifie le message du Blanc. Ce proverbe montre la complicité de certains Noirs dans l’oppression et l’exploitation de leurs frères.	réflexions ne sont pas des dires du Blanc; elles sont mes propres exégèses » p.65
15.	« Le régime militaire et le régime civil étaient l’anus et la gueule de l’hyène mangeuse de charognard: ils se ressemblent, exhalant tous les deux la même puanteur nauséabonde » p.70	Le régime militaire et le régime civile sont les mêmes. Ce proverbe qu’avec l’indépendance, rien a changé en Afrique. L’humiliation, l’oppression, l’exploitation, etc. continue	« Ce maudit soleil de notre pays qui écrasait et étouffait au point que, les vautours avaient déserté le ciel, nous dimes que le changement ne pouvait et n’allait rien apporter » p.70
16.	« Le singe magistrat quels que soient par ailleurs les autres inconvénients de la blancheur de ses favoris, ne veut jamais sacrifier cette marque qui le distingue des autres singes et lui donne la prestance et la beauté qui font sa renommée » p.72	Djigui est un grand roi et a une grande renommée, il doit chercher à garder ce prestige. Ce proverbe illustre comment les Blancs trompaient certains rois en Afrique afin de les amener à coopérer dans l’exploitation et l’oppression des Africains.	« Votre réputation de grand chef est édifié, Djigui vous êtes connu et félicité partout, même à Saint-Louis du Sénégal. C’est un renom qu’il faut toujours défendre » p.72

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17. « On ne craint pas la nuisance quand on se porte acquéreur d'un panier de grelots » p.74  
Djigui veut avoir un train quel que soit le bruit qu'il pourra produire. Ce proverbe montre la naïveté et le désir fou de Djigui d'avoir un train. Il traduit également l'humiliation du vieux par les colons.  
« Je veux ma gare et mon train à ma porte » p.74
18. « Le suprême dans ce monde, c'est l'honneur. Qui vient à votre rencontre avec l'honneur, immédiatement, vous vainc » p.75  
Pour Djigui, ce qui est important dans ce monde est l'honneur et le train qu'on lui promet constitue pour lui un grand honneur qui l'emmène à rester fidèle à la France. Ce proverbe marque aussi l'humiliation du vieux qui à cause du train entre dans une coopération périlleuse avec les Français  
« Ce revers n'est pas la défaite ; l'histoire la pardonne. Les panégyristes chanteront que les Toubabs nazaréens vainquirent les Keita non pas par les armes, mais par l'honneur. Quel honneur peut être significatif que l'offre d'un train?
19. « Le monde d'Allah est un fleuve qui coule ; quand son courant t'emporte et que tu n'as pas le moyen de remonter pour retrouver ton ancien chemin, laisse-toi transporter, il existe d'autres villages en aval » p.76  
Djigui dont le territoire a été occupé a perdu son honneur de roi mais cet honneur a été remplacé par le train qu'on lui promet et qui à ses yeux paraît être une forme d'honneur. Ce proverbe traduit l'humiliation du vieux roi, qui est présenté comme un roi naïf.  
« Quel honneur peut être plus magnifique que l'offre d'un train? ... Donc Djéliba devait taire son chant de monnew et inventer un autre poème » p.76
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20.	« Quand on s'est engagé à tisser un pagne pour couvrir la nudité des fesses de l'éléphant, on s'est engagé à réaliser une besogne importante » p.76	La construction du wharf constitue le début d'un grand projet de construction du chemin de fer. Ce proverbe illustre comment le roi a été abusé. Il est considéré comme un roi naïf.	« Le train est un monstre qui, avant de courir sur la terre ferme, a besoin de marcher au-dessus de la mer sur un pont. Le travail a donc commencé à Petit-Bassam par la construction de ce pont appelé le wharf » p.76
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**Analyse du tableau 2:** Le tableau 2 contient aussi vingt (20) proverbes choisis dans *Monnè, outrages et défis*. Par ailleurs, on constate que tous les proverbes sont accompagnés de commentaires explicatifs. Cependant, ces commentaires ne sont pas tous explicites. Par exemple les commentaires explicatifs qui suivent les proverbes No. 3 et 4 ne permettent pas de saisir leur sens, le lecteur peut donc faire une interprétation erronée de ces proverbes. De même, on remarque que la plupart de ces proverbes dénotent l'idée de conflit, d'humiliation, de défis, d'inégalité et d'oppression que recouvre le titre du roman *Monnè, outrages et défis*. Il y a donc ici aussi, une relation entre les proverbes et le titre de ce roman.

**Tableau 3: Liste des proverbes dans *Quand on refuse on dit non***

No.	Proverbes	Explication ou sens des proverbes	Parenthèses ou commentaires explicatifs
1.	« Le singe qui s'est échappé en abandonnant le bout de sa queue dans la gueule du chien n'a pas dans l'échappé la même allure que les autres de la bande »	Celui qui a échappé à un danger devient méfiant et prudent dans sa vie. Le petit Ibrahim qui a déjà fait l'expérience de la guerre civile au Liberia et en Sierra-Leone est devenu prudent quand celle de la Côte d'Ivoire s'est	« Quand j'ai su que la guerre civile y était arrivée, j'ai tout laissé tomber et je suis allé au maquis ... pour me défouler ... Je me suis défoncé et cuité (drogué et soûlé) p.11

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p.11	déclenchée. Il a du quitter Daloa en abandonnant tout et s'est mis à se droguer. Ce proverbe montre les problèmes de la guerre.	
2. « Les Dioulas, les musulmans ignoraient que quelque chose qui n'a pas de dents allait les mordre vigoureusement » p.22	Cela veut dire que quelque chose de terrible attendait les Dioulas. Ce proverbe signale le grand danger que constitue la guerre.	« (... proverbe africain qui signifie que quelque chose de terrible les attendait) » p.22
3. « Quand cinq filous se chapardent deux œufs dans ta basse-cour, laisse-les partir avec leur butin ; tu auras de leurs nouvelles au moment du partage » p.29	Des objets volés entraînent toujours des conflits entre voleurs au moment du partage. L'argent retiré auprès des Dioulas par les soldats de Gbagbo a entraîné des conflits entre eux au moment du partage. Ce proverbe indique l'une des atrocités de la guerre. Les combattants font des gens ce qu'ils veulent, y compris les innocents.	« Le partage de l'argent recueilli dans nos portefeuilles avait opposé les chefs. Dès que le coup de fusil a éclaté, les militants qui nous surveillaient ont tous foncé vers le lieu d'où il était parti » p.29
4. « Et quand on refuse, on dit non » p.36	Quand on ne veut pas quelque chose on la rejette. Le petit Ibrahim refuse la dictature de gbagbo, l'injustice, les souffrances, la politique de	« Avec un kalach, je me révolterai, je refuserai! ... Samory a affirmé que l'on dit non quand on refuse, quand

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|--|---|---|
|  | <p>l'ivoirité. Ce proverbe montre que l'on doit refuser l'injustice, l'arbitraire et l'oppression d'où qu'elle vienne.</p>  | <p>on ne veut pas » p.36</p>  |
| <p>5. «Le singe taxe de pourri le fruit du figuier sur lequel il ne peut mettre la main » p.43</p>   | <p>Quand on ne veut pas quelque chose, on cherche des prétextes pour refuser de l'avoir. Ainsi quand les explorateurs refusaient d'aller en Côte d'Ivoire, ils avaient pour prétexte que les Noirs étaient des anthropophages. La vraie raison est que les côtes de ce pays plein de forêt étaient difficilement accessibles. Ce proverbe nous enseigne les réalités historiques de la Côte d'Ivoire.</p> | <p>« C'est vrai : les côtiers de l'époque aimaient la chair des blancs. En même temps c'était un prétexte ... les marchants de bois d'ébènes ... se sont éloignés des côtes ivoiriennes ... à cause de l'inaccessibilité des côtes » p.43</p> |
| <p>6. « On ne regarde pas dans la bouche de celui qui est chargé de décortiquer l'arachide. On ne doit pas être toujours là à regarder dans la bouche de celui qu'on a chargé de fumer l'agouti » p.91</p> | <p>Ces proverbes signifient qu'il faut savoir se servir en catimini sur la matière qu'on a en main et sur laquelle on travaille. Ces proverbes illustrent le problème de la corruption en Afrique après les indépendances, problème que l'auteur condamne.</p>  | <p>« Ces proverbes signifient qu'il faut savoir se servir en catimini sur la matière qu'on a en main et sur laquelle on travaille » p.91</p>  |
| <p>7. « Et chacun sait qu'il n'est pas facile de</p>   | <p>Il est difficile aux hommes de changer leurs habitudes. C'est</p>  | <p>« Ses obligations de dépensiers et de dilapideur</p>   |
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	faire modifier au vieux gorille sa façon de s'accrocher aux branches » p.95	le cas du président Houphouët-Boigny qui a l'habitude de dépenser avec prodigalité l'argent de son pays. Il est difficile de lui faire changer cette habitude. Ce proverbe montre l'attitude inflexible des nouveaux maîtres de l'Afrique qui estiment qu'ils ont toujours raison.	étaient assurées en partie par trois sacs pleins d'argent que la caisse de stabilisation des produits agricoles lui fournissait chaque jour... Après le directeur de la caisse, s'était présenté le ministre des finances, il avait des difficultés pour assurer le paie des fonctionnaires de la nation... Puis le représentant de la Banque Mondiale qui conseilla à Houphouët-Boigny de diminuer le train de vie de l'Etat ivoirien » p. 96-95
8.	« Quand on est sur le manguier, avant de laisser tomber des fruits pour ceux qui sont au sol, on mange bien d'abord, on se gave » p.99	Quand on confie un post de responsabilité aux dirigeants politiques en Afrique, il cherche à profiter au maximum avant de penser aux autres. Ce proverbe illustre la grande corruption qui caractérise les régimes des nouveaux dirigeants de l'Afrique après les indépendances que l'auteur condamne.	« C'est cela qui a amené la corruption généralisée partout en Côte d'Ivoire ... Houphouët-Boigny était un corrompu ... un corrupteur ... un dilapideur » p.99-100
9.	« Aucun accompagnateur ne	Aucun accompagnateur ne peut continuer infiniment à suivre	« Le matin avant de quitter la ville de Zenoula, Doumbia a

	protège le voyageur à pied contre la solitude de la longueur de la route » p.101	un voyageur. Il doit s'arrêter quelle que soit la situation et laisser le voyageur continuer sa route.  Ce proverbe n'évoque aucun problème lié à l'Afrique des indépendances.	tenu à nous accompagner. Il a marché avec nous sur près d'un kilomètre. Brusquement, il s'est arrêté et a dit le proverbe... » p.101
10.	« Le lignage qui va s'éteindre s'échauffe au feu pendant que le soleil brille » p.106	Qui embrasse mal, mal étreint. Le régime de Bédier qui prétend éradiquer la corruption a commencé la lutte contre ce fléau avec énergie mais hélas à la fin de compte au lieu que la corruption diminue, elle s'est empirée. Ce proverbe décrit exactement l'allure que prend souvent la lutte contre la corruption en Afrique après les indépendances.	« Il fallait d'abord se débarrasser de la corruption et faire en sorte que les expressions comme fais-moi, fais, mouille ma barbe... n'aient plus cours. Ce qui arriva fut pire encore » p.106
11.	« Où un homme doit mourir dit un proverbe angolais, il se rend très tôt, toutes affaires cessantes dès le matin » p.117	Les actes qu'on pose dans la vie sont toujours liés au destin. Le général Gueï qui s'est précipité dans la conquête du pouvoir n'a pas pensé à la mort qu'il a eue et qui constitue son destin. Ce proverbe montre donc l'égoïsme et la cupidité des dirigeants politiques africains qui, généralement ne pensent pas à la mort. S'ils	« Le général Gueï se lança dans une opération suicidaire de conquête du pouvoir à tout prix. On verra plus tard qu'il se dépêchait vers son destin » p.117

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	pensaient à la mort, ils éviteraient des bêtises.	
12. « Allah est la providence, il ne place jamais le bossu sur son dos » p.136	C'est Dieu qui nous donne tout ce dont nous avons besoin. Il est notre guide, notre protecteur et nous nourrit. Ce proverbe traduit la foi du petit Birahima.	« Nous avons d'abord constaté que nos compagnons burkinabés avaient suivi leur direction et nous la nôtre. Nous étions séparés sans nous dire au revoir. Ça c'est la guerre tribale qui veut ça » p.136

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**Analyse du tableau 3:** Le tableau 3 contient douze (12) proverbes relevés dans *Quand on refuse on dit non*. De même, on constate que tous les proverbes sont accompagnés de parenthèses ou de commentaires explicatifs. Cependant, les commentaires explicatifs ne donnent pas tous une explication claire des proverbes. Par exemple, les commentaires explicatifs qui suivent les proverbes des No. 1 et 5 ne sont pas clairs. Pour les proverbes dont l'explication n'est pas claire, le lecteur peut donc faire une interprétation erronée. De même, on remarque que ces proverbes évoquent la guerre, la corruption, la dictature, l'égoïsme des nouveaux maîtres de l'Afrique, le refus de l'injustice, etc. que recouvre le titre du roman *Quand on refuse on dit non*. Il y a donc une relation entre les proverbes et le titre de ce roman.

### Conclusion

La compréhension des proverbes employés par Kourouma dans ses ouvrages et précisément dans *Les soleils des indépendances*, *Monnè*, *outrages et défis* et *Quand on refuse on dit non* n'est pas toujours facile. Pour certains proverbes, le lecteur peut se faire une idée de leur sens et pour d'autres, il y a des difficultés pour les comprendre. Les parenthèses et les commentaires explicatifs utilisés par l'auteur ivoirien ne concourent pas tous à une compréhension claire de ces proverbes. Les lecteurs peuvent donc facilement faire des interprétations erronées. Pour une bonne compréhension des proverbes, les écrivains africains d'expression française devraient éviter toute forme d'ambiguïté en les expliquant mieux à travers les parenthèses et les commentaires explicatifs ou les notes en bas de pages.

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## Responding to the Inflow of Insurgency Victims to the Southern Nigeria: Issues and Solution

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### Abstract

*There is a unique set of forcefully displaced persons from Bandits, Terrorists and Boko Haram insurgency affected areas in the north-eastern part of Nigeria that wandered to the southern part of the country, majority of them we see today as okada (bike) riders. These people are not in any IDP center or camp, but came to settle down among the people whose culture and religion is different from theirs. Existing studies on peace building and conflict transformation processes have been on how to minimize conflicts and make peace a lasting process. However, scanty attention is given to people affected by the insurgency and compellingly displaced from their ancestral homes. This research examined to what magnitude the people of the south are responding to transforming the lives of these migrated displaced persons. Semi-structured interviews were conducted among fifty randomly selected persons in Ibadan metropolis. Some available documents were also used in analyzing the collected data. The study revealed that the government does not pay attention to this set of people and the public is not doing anything to responding to transforming the lives of the migrated displaced persons in their area, those who have become a kind of menace in communities where they settled down because they are left to struggle for survival which has led them to pick jobs they were never trained for such as Okada riders through which many people have been maimed or killed. It is recommended that the government should be proactive to keep a register of these displaced people in order to respond to transforming their lives, and faith-based organizations should intensify their efforts in responding to transforming their lives and they should start having documented records for these efforts.*

### Introduction

The world is a violent place full of many crisis, conflicts and wars.<sup>45</sup> These conflicts arise because of various political, economic, religious and other reasons. While some of these conflicts have caused many people to become refugees in other countries, it is more saddening that many people have become internally displaced in their countries. They are often camped in internally displaced persons' (IDPs) camps or centers where governments, non-governmental organizations

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<sup>45</sup> Conflict Barometer 2015, a publication of the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIC) at the Department of Political Science of Heidelberg (retrieved May 23, 2020. Refugees from the Former Yugoslavia, Professional Councillor, vol. 4, 2014. Retrieved May 23, 2020 from <http://tpcjournals.nbcc.org/counselling-people-displaced-by-war-experiences-of-refugees-from-the-former-yugoslavia/>

(NGOs), faith-based and other humanitarian organizations care for these people. Nevertheless, there is a set of people that are negatively affected by religious crises in the northern part of Nigeria especially the Boko Haram insurgency.

The case of conflict in Boko Haram insurgency has made many people to migrate from the northeastern part of Nigeria back to the southwestern part of the country.<sup>46</sup> This type of migration has been described as a forced/involuntary or irregular type because of the nature of the movement of the people concerned which “involves a change of residence under pressure which may therefore not be wholly permanent but may involve further movement, whose timing and direction are uncertain.”<sup>47</sup>

The displaced people in this case study is rightly referred to as migrated displaced persons rather than the popular term internally displaced persons because of their peculiar displacement. While most internally displaced persons in Nigeria are put in IDP camps and centers throughout the country and are “excluded from participating in the sociopolitical affairs of their host community...and are referred to as settlers or non-indigenes.

### **Background to Nigeria**

Nigeria is situated in West Africa with boundaries to Cameroon and Chad in the east, Niger in the north, Benin Republic in the west and the Atlantic Ocean in the south. Although, “without a proper roundtable agreement”, Nigeria came into existence as a nation as a result of the amalgamation of the then northern Nigeria protectorate and southern Nigeria protectorate by Sir Frederick Lord Lugard in 1914.<sup>48</sup>

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. It is a multi-ethnic country with over 400 ethnic groups. Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Ibo are the major ethnic groups of the country. These major ethnic groups represent around 70 per cent of the population. The Hausas are mainly in the

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<sup>46</sup> Albert T. Akume. 2015. The Question of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria: A Reflection on Present Realities. *Journal of Third World Studies*. Spring 2015, vol. 32 Issue 1. Retrived May 23, 2020 from <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/110434800/question-internally-displaced-persons-idps-nigeria-reflection-present-realities,221>

<sup>47</sup> Personal interview with Ven. Dr. Sunday Adepoju, a clergy in Ibadan North Anglican Diocese on April 15, 2020.

<sup>48</sup> Jacob Oluwole Odeyemi. 2014. A Political History of Nigeria and the crisis of Ethnicity in Nation Building. *International Journal of Developing Societies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 2014

northern part of the country; the Yorubas dominate most part of the southwestern part of the country; and the southeastern part of the country is the home of mostly Ibos.<sup>49</sup>

Nigeria is a multi-religious state. Christianity and Islam are the two major religious groups. Although, there is no scientific representation of either the numerical strength of these religious groups or their geographical distribution, however, if the country is divided along its socio-geographical zones, Islam dominates the northwestern and northeastern zones of the country; Christianity is more prominent in the southeastern and south-south zones; and the southwest and north-central zones have considerably balanced numbers of Muslims and Christians. Traditional religions and other religious groups are noticeable in the country.

The country is a heterogeneous society with a vast cultural history and heritage. The diversity in people, languages and cultures of Nigeria is more or less a curse than a blessing to the country. This is because since the country gained independence, there have been rivalries among the major tribes (and even the minor tribes), the two predominant religions and the political class of the country. Such rivalries brought about Boko Haram insurgency.

### **Terrorism and Religious Violence**

Scholars may have not agreed on a definition of terrorism, however, Sandler described terrorism as “the premeditated use or threat to use violence by individuals or subnational groups to obtain a political or social objective through the intimidation of a large audience beyond that of the immediate noncombatant victims.”<sup>50</sup>

Historically, the word “terrorism” first originated during the French Revolution (1789-1799) when it was used to describe the government. By 1848, the word was used to describe violent revolutionaries. The meaning of the word changed to portray the violent acts of some organized groups, like labor organizations, anarchists, nationalistic groups, and ultra-nationalistic political organizations by the end of the 1800’s and early 1900’s. Finally, nationalism became the major

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<sup>49</sup> Nigerian People, History and Culture, Retrieved May 23, 2020 from <http://africa-news-uk/nigerian-people-history-culture-10576/>

<sup>50</sup> Todd Sandler. 2014. Terrorism and Counterterrorism: An overview. Oxford Economic Papers. Retrieved May 23, 2020 from <http://oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2014/11/05/ogpu039.full.pdf+html,1>.

reason for acts of terrorism. Although, recently, a clear change has already begun as religion become the main reason of terroristic reasoning.<sup>51</sup>

Terrorism has been categorized into different categories that serve to differentiate terrorist organizations according to specific criteria, which are usually related to the field or specialty of whoever is selecting the categories. These categories include: separatist, ethnocentric, nationalistic, revolutionary, political, religious, social, domestic (or "homegrown"), and international or transnational. However, Suberu<sup>52</sup> cited Robert Pape that simply classified terrorism into three. These are demonstrative terrorism that seeks to be known publicly; destructive terrorism that wants to force people through threat harm and death in order to mobilize support for them; and suicide terrorism that makes the attackers to kill themselves with others.

It is unfortunate that "terrorism in the name of religion has become the predominant model for political violence in the modern world."<sup>53</sup> This kind of terrorism is a political violence that is inspired by a total belief that a strange force has authorized terrorist violence for the better exaltation of the belief. It is believed that acts committed because of the belief will be forgiven by the strange force and possibly be rewarded hereafter.<sup>54</sup> No wonder, more terrorist attacks are linked with one religion or the other.<sup>55</sup>

Historically, Martin<sup>56</sup> briefly highlighted some religious violence like Judeo-Christian Antiquity as referenced in the Bible, Christian Crusades during the Middle Ages, The Order of Assassins in Persia in 11th century, A Secret Cult of Murder in India between 13th and 19th centuries, modern Arab Islamist extremism in the Arab world that passed through several important political phases during the 20th century, mysticism and rebellion in Uganda that had two phases

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<sup>51</sup> C. C. Rausch. 2015. Fundamentalism and Terrorism. *Journal of Terrorism Research*, Volume 6, Issue 2 – May 2015. Retrieved May 23, 2020 from <http://doi.org/10.15664/jtr.1153>, 29

<sup>52</sup> Ibrahim Suberu, (2015). Martyrs or Terrorists: Suicide Bombing in Islamic Hermeneutics. *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies*. Vol. 5 No. 1. 2015, 121

<sup>53</sup> Gus Martin. 2011. *Essential of Terrorism: Concepts and Controversies*. Second Edition. Thousands Oaks, Sage Publications, Inc.; 130

<sup>54</sup> Gus Martin. 2011. *Essential of Terrorism: Concepts and Controversies*. Second Edition. Thousands Oaks, Sage Publications, Inc.; 130

<sup>55</sup> Israel Silberman. 2005. "Religion Violence, Terrorism and Peace: A meaning-System Analysis." In Raymond F. Paloutzian and Crystal L. Park (eds.). *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*. New York, The Guilford Press

<sup>56</sup> Gus Martin. 2011. *Essential of Terrorism: Concepts and Controversies*. Second Edition. Thousands Oaks, Sage Publications, Inc.; 130

(the Holy Spirit Mobile Force and the Lord's Resistance Army) in 1987, and the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion that originated in czarist Russia. Recently, there are ongoing conflicts that involve religious terrorism such as

...conflicts between Jews and Muslims in the Middle East, Hindus and Muslims in India, Catholics and Protestants in Ireland, and Christians and Muslims in the former Yugoslavia, East Timor, Lebanon, Russia, and many countries in Africa [particularly Boko Haram insurgency in] Nigeria; and the killing of physicians and nurses by Christian antiabortion groups.... [Worthy of note are] the 1995 nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway by Japanese followers of Shoko Asahara in the Aum Shinrikyo sect who were trying to hasten a new millennium, the September 11th, 2001, attacks on the United States in which thousands of civilians were killed by members of the Al-Qaeda organization, and a wave of bombings of civilian buses and public gathering places in Israel by the Islamic Hamas terrorists.<sup>57</sup>

As indicated from samples provided above, terrorism is a global phenomenon. However, a report attributed over 80 per cent of the lives lost to terrorist activity in 2013 occurred in only five countries – Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria and Syria.

This researcher is of the opinion that religion in itself is not the problem of terrorism. The overzealous adherents of these religions are the problem. All these terrorist acts in the name of religion can be stemmed if every adherent of one religion or the other can be tolerant of people of other faiths and be ready to live peacefully with other people regardless of their faith or background.

### **Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria**

The Name “Boko Haram” According to Adesoji,<sup>58</sup> is derived from a combination of the Hausa word Boko ‘book’ and the Arabic word haram ‘something forbidden, ungodly, sinful’. Literally, it means ‘book is sinful’, but its deeper meaning is that Western education is sinful, sacrilegious, or ungodly and should therefore be forbidden.

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<sup>57</sup> Israel Silberman. 2005. “Religion Violence, Terrorism and Peace: A meaning-System Analysis.” In Raymond F. Paloutzian and Crystal L. Park (eds.). *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*. New York, The Guilford Press

<sup>58</sup> Abimbola O. Adesoji. 2011. Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Response of the Nigerian State. *Africa Today*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (Summer 2011). 99-119. Retrieved May 4, 2020, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/africatoday.57.4.99>

It is commonly used to refer to a radical Islamist sect in northeastern Nigeria. However, the real name of the sect is disputed. In spite of the fact that Azumah<sup>59</sup> agreed that ‘Boko Haram’ means “Western education is forbidden or sinful” and that the group is “opposed to aspects of Western education because [it believes that Western education] is sinful and religiously forbidden.

The official name of the sect is *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awata Wal-Jihad*, which means "Association of Sunnis for the Propagation of Islam and Jihad"<sup>60</sup> or “People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad”. The sect is referred to as “*al-Qaeda’s* African ‘monsters’”. Specifically, the sect “has ties to northwest Africa-based al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Somalia's *al-Shabab*, and *al-Qaeda* in the Arabian Peninsula.” Apart from linking itself with “Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the leadership of Boko Haram claims today that it wants to be known as the Islamic State West Africa Branch (ISWAB).”

### **Emergence of Boko Haram**

There are many conflicting reports about its emergence in Nigeria. While many people widely believe that it came into existence in 2002 by one Mohammed Yusuf, but became prominent in 2009 after his extra-judicial killing,<sup>61</sup> Bukar Abba Ibrahim, as quoted by Ogunmade,<sup>62</sup> argued that “the sect had been in Nigeria since the 1970s following the killing of its spiritual leader in Egypt in 1970 by President Gammal Abdel Naseer. Ibrahim noted that the sect was not political miscreants created by some political leaders, but an ideological group who hate western democracy. According to Azumah,<sup>63</sup> Boko Haram’s origins can be traced “back to the mid-1990s, to a youth group...in Maiduguri...under the leadership of one Mallam Lawal. Mohammad Yusuf assumed the leadership after Lawal left for studies in Saudi Arabia.”

It has grown into a conflagration that has spread into different parts of northern states of Nigeria and it is perhaps one of the most well-coordinated mass-destruction religious violence in Nigeria

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<sup>59</sup> Azumah, John (2014). ‘Boko Haram’ in Retrospect. *Journal of African Christian Thought*. Vol. 17, No. 1, June 2014, 50-63.

<sup>60</sup> Campbell, John. 2014. Boko Haram: origins, challenges and responses. Retrieved February 27, 2016, from <https://www.ciaonet.org/attachments/27796/uploads>

<sup>61</sup> Campbell, John. 2014. Boko Haram: origins, challenges and responses. Retrieved February 27, 2016, from <https://www.ciaonet.org/attachments/27796/uploads>

<sup>62</sup> Ogunmade, Omololu. 2015. How Boko Haram Entered Nigeria. Retrieved February 27, 2016, from <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/how-boko-haram-enterednigeria/216981/>

<sup>63</sup> Azumah, John. 2014. ‘Boko Haram’ in Retrospect. *Journal of African Christian Thought*. Vol. 17, No. 1, June 2014, 50-63

in recent times. Terwase et al<sup>64</sup> were of the opinion that the inability of the northern part of Nigeria to complete its eight years of ruling Nigeria as a result of the death of the then President Umaru Yar'Adua and ambition of Goodluck Jonathan from the southern part who succeeded him empowered the Boko Haram sect to become a veritable tool to fight the government of Jonathan and the people of Nigeria. This opinion was originally posited by the Late General Andrew Azazi as cited by Liman<sup>65</sup> According to Idahosa,<sup>66</sup> it is the belief of many people that Boko Haram is leading an armed insurgency against corruption, abusive security forces and economic disparity in northern Nigeria security forces and economic disparity in northern Nigeria and feeding off tension that have existed between Muslim dominated north and Christian dominated south of Nigeria.

Whichever was the correct time of its emergence, Boko Haram has become one of the most dreaded terrorist groups in the world. Akande<sup>67</sup> opined, "The Boko Haram insurgency has been described either as a political or religious problem. However, the fact that the sect itself claims to belong to a particular religion, Islam, and often times attacks Christians makes it more religious than political.

As a religious movement, its combination of a sectarian agenda with violence is distinctive and its goal (according to the movement's rhetoric) is to create God's kingdom on earth through justice for the poor achieved by the rigid application of Islamic law, or sharia. As a political movement, it initially found support from dis-satisfied northern politicians in both of the country's main political parties that hoped to use it as influence to perpetuate themselves in power or gain power. It was even alleged that some northern governors made monthly payments to the sect, although it is unclear whether these politicians supported the sect or the sect imposed itself on them.

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<sup>64</sup> Terwase, Isaac Terungwa, et al. (2015). The Psychological Trauma on Boko Haram Victims in Nigeria: Conflict Resolution Perspective. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. Vol 6 No 6 S4 MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy December 2015. 519-525. Retrieved June 8, 2016, from

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<sup>65</sup> Liman, A. 2014. Boko Haram: Why the Northerners Believe Jonathan is Guilty. Retrieved June 8, 2016, from <http://leadershing/features/396929/boko-haramnortherners-believe-jonathan-guilty>

<sup>66</sup> Idahosa, Osaretin. 2015. Boko Haram and the Nigerian State: A Different Perspective. *Glocalism: Journal of Culture, Politics and Innovation*. 2015, 3, DOI: 10.12893/gjcp.2015.3.5. 1-28. Retrieved June 8, 2016, from [www.glocalismjournal.net/ImagePub.aspx?id=287157](http://www.glocalismjournal.net/ImagePub.aspx?id=287157)

<sup>67</sup> Akande, Tunji. 2014. Youth Unemployment in Nigeria: A Situation Analysis. Retrieved July 13, 2016 from <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/africa-infocus/posts/2014/09/23-youth-unemployment-nigeria-akande>

## **Philosophy of Boko Haram**

Boko Haram may be seen today as a terrorist group. However, it was founded as a Sunni Islamic fundamentalist sect that wants to promote strict form of Sharia law. It is a fanatical Islamic sect whose basic beliefs are different from those held by the majority conservative Muslims in Nigeria. It developed into a *Salafist*-Jihadist group in 2009. Members of the sect believe that their interpretation of the Quran is the ‘true’ Islam. They are of the opinion that this ‘true’ Islam is holistic and embraces all aspects of Muslims life in readiness for life after death. They reject Western civilization and its products like education, culture, and modern science.

As part of the ideological statement cited by Cook,<sup>68</sup> the sect is fighting against among other things:

...Western Ways of life which include: constitutional provision as if relates to, for instance the rights and privileges of Women, the idea of homosexuality, lesbianism, sanctions in cases of terrible crimes like drug trafficking, rape of infants, multi-party democracy in an overwhelmingly Islamic country like Nigeria, blue films, prostitution, drinking beer and alcohol and many others that are opposed to Islamic civilization.

## **The concept of Jihad according to the insurgents**

Since members of Boko Haram sect claim to be propagating Jihad, it is necessary to know more about this concept. A common definition of the word jihad is to struggle or strive (in the way or sake of Allah)” or, as erroneously defined by many people, “a holy war undertaken by Muslims against non-believers. Boer<sup>69</sup> argued that “the meaning of jihad varies greatly among Muslims; it can be violent or peaceful, communal or personal, political or spiritual. Malik<sup>70</sup> opined that the primary meaning of Jihad “is investing effort (in the sense of energy) in order to achieve a particular aim or to endure an effort (in the sense of a difficulty) caused by carrying out an action or putting a message into practice.”

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<sup>68</sup> Cook, David. 2011. Boko Haram: A Prognosis. The James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University. Retrieved June 9, 2016, from <http://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/Research/535dcd14/REL-pubCookBokoHaram-121611.pdf>

<sup>69</sup> Boer, Jan H. 2009. Christians and Muslims: Parameters for Living Together. Studies in Christian-Muslim Relations. Volume 8, Part 2. Belleville, Essence Publishing

<sup>70</sup> Malik, Ibrahim. 1994. Jihad - Its Development and Relevance. The Palestine-Israel Journal. Vol.1 No.2 1994 / Religion and Politics. Retrieved June 9, 2016, from <http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=741>

Having corrected the erroneous belief that jihad is an armed conflict or fanatical holy war, Martin<sup>71</sup> cited Burek and Norton in differentiating between the greater jihad and the lesser jihad. The former is the internal struggle that each person has in order to do what is right and good, while the latter has to do with the outward (which includes military) defense of Islam when the Islamic community is under attack.

Nevertheless, various terrorist groups (Boko Haram inclusive) have portrayed “jihad” as a “holy war” they are fighting in the cause of Allah. In contrast, many Muslim scholars have dissociated Islam from such activities. Quoting severally from Hadith, Suberu<sup>72</sup> asserted, “Islam has made it forbidden for a Muslim to kill another Muslim or to kill another person unlawfully.” In fact, Ahmad<sup>73</sup> emphatically declared, “As far as Islam is concerned, it categorically rejects and condemns every form of terrorism. It does not provide any cover or justification for any act of violence, be it committed by an individual, a group or a government....” Therefore, it can be concluded that all terrorist groups claiming to be fighting a holy war of jihad to propagate Islam are doing so erroneously or with other ulterior motives.

### **Trauma Caused to victims of insurgency**

Simply, trauma is a deeply distressing or disturbing experience. Physical and sexual abuse, neglect, bullying, community-based violence, disaster, terrorism, and war can cause trauma. While other injuries can be less visible, but have equally demoralizing effects, witnessing dreadful violence and seeing the bloody aftermath can lead to psychological trauma and impact negatively on psychosocial welfare. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been identified as the most frequently reported consequence of war exposure. There are three categories of people that are affected by trauma as a result of terrorism. These categories of people are:

1. Survivors of past traumatic events (e.g., refugees of wars, terrorism or torture, and survivors of domestic violence, child abuse or street crime). These individuals may have a heightened sense of vulnerability.

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<sup>71</sup> Martin, Gus. 2011. *Essentials of Terrorism: Concepts and Controversies*. Second Edition. Thousands Oaks, Sage Publications, Inc

<sup>72</sup> Suberu, Ibrahim. 2015. *Martyrs or Terrorists: Suicide Bombing in Islamic Hermeneutics*. *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies*. Vol. 5 No. 1. 2015, 119137

<sup>73</sup> Ahmad, Hazrat Mirza Tahir. 1990. *Murder in the Name of Allah*. Amritsar, Printwell. Retrieved June 9, 2016, from <http://www.alislam.org/library/books/Murder-in-the-name-of-Allah.pdf>

2. People who personally witnessed or were victims of the terrorist attack.
3. People who experience traumatization from learning of relatives, friends and acquaintances who were subject to the violence, or from exposure to repeated media accounts of the trauma.

Many people have been affected by the Boko Haram terrorism leading to psychological trauma. While there are many instances of terrorist attacks that have led to trauma both to people that are directly affected and people are indirectly affected, a good example of the victims of the Boko Haram terrorism that were psychologically affected were the parents of the Chibok girls. Unfortunately, there is lack of proper mental health support from the government and other organizations for the affected people in dealing with psychological and physical trauma associated with these Boko Haram insurgents.

### **Theological Bases for Humanitarianism**

To be humanitarian is to have concern for or help to improve the welfare and happiness of fellow human being. The Holy Bible states, “God created man in His own image” (Genesis 1: 27).<sup>113</sup> With this assertion, every human being is to be treated with dignity irrespective of the situation he/she finds him/herself. This is the foundation of every other teaching of the Bible about how to relate with or treat other human being. As a matter of fact, the Bible affirms that whatever a man does to his fellow human being (especially the less-privileged), he does it to his Creator. The writer of the book of Proverbs stated: “He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker” and “He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord” (14:31; 19:17). Jesus Christ reiterated this in His Parable of the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25:31-46: “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.... Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me” (verses 40, 45).

The exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt and later exile in foreign lands are good examples of migrated displaced persons (see Exodus 13ff and 2 Kings 24:10-16). The people were cared for on their journey to the land of Canaan, and countries that refused to care for them were punished (see 1 Samuel 15:2). Because of these experiences, God instructed the people of Israel not to discriminate against the less privileged and strangers (including those who are temporarily displaced, internally displaced, or forced out of their homeland to become refugees in other

countries), rather the people of Israel should take care of, and respond with love and justice to the plight of displaced persons. The writers of New Testament also re-echoed this. Taking care of people in needs is even considered the pure religion!

### **Basic Needs of displaced Boko Haram victims**

It is evident that what the migrated displaced Boko Haram victims' need most are basic needs of life like food, water, clothes, accommodation, and security.

### **Psychological Needs**

Apart from meeting basic needs of the displaced people, the churches also responded by meeting the psychological needs of the people through visitation, encouragement, and counseling.

### **Social Needs**

It is a fact that migrated displaced persons are socially victimized in our society today. In meeting the social needs of the displaced people, the social welfare of the displaced people should be a major concern of the church. There is a need in engaging the migrated displaced persons in cooperative societies where they can borrow money to establish themselves.

### **Spiritual Needs**

It is interesting to discover that only few Christians are praying for the displaced people as a way of helping them. It is the conclusion of this researcher, therefore, that the churches do not see the need to respond to the plight of the displaced people spiritually or the churches do not attach much importance to the spiritual dimension of their responses to transforming the lives of the displaced people.

### **Constraints in Responding to the Displaced People**

The major constraints as forty-six out fifty people interviewed indicated is lack or insufficient funds to meet the basic needs of the migrated displaced persons. Even pastors of some churches that this researcher considered to be buoyant financially also gave this complaint. These pastors opined that their churches would have done better if they have sufficient funds.

Undoubtedly, this constraint leads to another one as indicated by fifteen clergy: lack of needed resources to meet the immediate needs of the displaced persons. They admitted that they know what to do in providing for the displaced persons, but the resources to do such things are not

readily available because of insufficient funds. One way of resolving this is pulling resources together through the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) to do what churches cannot do individually.

One of the reasons for the insufficient or lack of funds is another constraint indicated by twelve clergy in their responses during the interview sessions: economic situation of Nigeria in general during the time of the research. The economic situation of Nigeria generally as a nation is getting worse,<sup>74</sup> and this affects every aspect of life of Nigerians. As at the time of doing this research, many government workers and workers of some private sectors had not received their monthly salaries for over six months. The clergy interviewed admitted that this harsh economic situation is affecting their church members adversely coupled with the lockdown of churches due to Corona pandemic commonly referred to as COVID-19 and by inference, it is affecting the income of the churches as well.

Other constraints that at least one clergy interviewed mentioned are:

1) Psychological Effects of the Insurgence to the Migrated Displaced Persons: many of the migrated displaced persons have not still overcome the psychological trauma of what they went through during the insurgency and on their ways back to the new community. Some of them are still referring to their properties and loved ones that they have lost. This is not far-fetched because it has been estimated that 50% of refugees [and internally displaced persons] experienced higher levels of PTSD [that is, post-traumatic stress disorder], depression and other psychiatric problems.”<sup>75</sup> These are hindering them from settling down. The churches are struggling to encourage and counsel them to forget the past and move on with their lives.

2) Unwillingness/Reluctance of the Migrated Displaced Persons: it is interesting to discover that some of migrated displaced persons are “reluctant or even unwilling to indicate that they are displaced persons.

3) Religious Barrier: in spite of the fact that there was no discrimination [in responding to the migrated displaced persons] as even Muslims among them are also helped, many Muslims prefer to stay away from the assistance that the churches are rendering in responding to transforming

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<sup>74</sup> Helena H. 2016. Nigeria is headed for a full-blown economic crisis. Retrieved on 13, May 2020 from <http://uk.businessinsider.com/nigeria-gdp-head-into-full-blown-crisi-2016-5>.

<sup>75</sup> Knezevic and Olson

the lives of the displaced people. However, this researcher is of the opinion that making a church building or religious center a meeting point for the migrated displaced persons will hinder people of other faiths to freely come and mingle with others, especially in a society where religious affiliation is strongly pronounced.

4) Church Members' Unfaithfulness: a clergy lamented, "Some church members are unfaithful in their act of giving to the church and commitment to helping those that are in needs. It is the opinion of this researcher that the economic situation of the people may be a factor in this.

5) Church Members' Ignorance of the Plight of Migrated Displaced Persons: some church members do not really know what the migrated displaced persons have passed through during the insurgency that made them forcefully left their places of abode, and what the displaced persons are still passing through psychologically. This ignorance is making many of the church members to be indifferent to the displaced persons. These church members could empathize with the migrated displaced persons after enlightenment about the situations of the displaced people.

6) Church Members' Illiterate Mentality: this factor related to the one just discussed above also is a challenge to a church pastor interviewed during the research. Some church members because of their illiteracy do not see the need to help the displaced people. They are of the opinion that they also need the help of the church. What these church members need is education about helping other people.

7) Church Peculiarity: one pastor indicated, the peculiarity of his church being mostly a student-oriented church [that is, a church that ministers mostly to students in tertiary institutions] is a constraint that makes many displaced persons not to consider joining the church or seeking help from the church. However, he admitted that his church has been contributing to the conference whenever there is need to for the cause of the migrated displaced persons.

### **More Effectives Methods of Responding to the Displaced People**

Foremost among the methods is more cooperation among churches. This researcher is not surprised that forty seven out of fifty pastors interviewed were of this opinion. These pastors agreed that it would be far better to pull their resources together and let the Christian body (CAN) coordinate the efforts of transforming the lives of the displaced people. A pastor

emphatically declared, “We just have to come together to meet the needs of these people [that is, the migrated displaced persons].

Another prominent method on ways the churches could do better in their responses is more awareness among church members about the migrated displaced persons. Thirty two pastors were of this opinion “Ignorance is the most serious disease of mankind and is the cause of all its ills. Healing is achieved through knowledge,” attributed to Buddha reiterates this. A pastor put it this way: “If church members are more aware about the plights of the displaced persons, pastors and church leaders would not have much difficulty in leading the church to respond to transforming the lives of the displaced persons.

Availability of more funds is another factor that could make churches respond more to transforming the lives of the displaced persons. This is the opinion of forty out of the pastors interviewed.

Creating a center (or centers) where the migrated displaced persons will be meeting and receiving assistance is another way those interviewed felt the churches could do better to respond to transforming the lives of the migrated displaced persons. A pastor even opined, “a church should be established purposely for [the migrated displaced persons] in order to meet their peculiar needs. However, in the opinion of this researcher, such center (or centers) should be different from many internally displaced persons (IDPs) centers that are uncared for because “[Nigeria’s] government’s support for the IDPs is grossly insufficient.

Inasmuch as the migrated displaced persons cannot continuously depend on what they are receiving from the churches, twenty seven out of the pastors interviewed saw the need to quickly integrate the displaced migrated persons into the society.

As part of the integration, forty pastors agreed that churches would do better if they could provide jobs for the migrated displaced persons. This will make the displaced people less dependent on the churches. Closely related with this is the issue of victimization by societies or associations of professionals and artisans. Twelve pastors were of the opinion that churches should come together to speak against this issue in favour of the migrated displaced persons.

Other ways to be more effective in responding by churches to the plights of the migrated displaced persons according to one pastor each are: providing farmland for the migrated

displaced persons; more organization among the migrated displaced persons; giving of loans to the migrated displaced persons; appealing to the politicians on behalf of the migrated displaced persons; and prayer for the migrated displaced persons.

### **Effects of the Displaced People to Church Members**

Mostly, the migrated displaced persons might have needed the assistance of the churches, and the thrust of this research has been to find out to what extents these churches respond to transform the lives of these displaced people.

Positively, the presence of the migrated displaced Boko Haram victims making members of the churches to be more aware of [the migrated displaced persons] and what are happening to people in the northern part of the country and other conflict-affected parts of the world.

Another positive impact of the presence of the migrated displaced Boko Haram victims in the society is that it makes the church members to be more committed in their faith. The reality of Boko Haram insurgency and the presence of its migrated displaced victims quicken the faith of Christians in the area and “keep church members on their toes and make them to be more alert and more committed. In fact, the presence of migrated displaced victims increases the faith of the church members and draws them closer to God.

Another important positive impact of the presence of the migrated displaced Boko Haram victims is that these displaced persons increase the membership of some churches in the area. Some of these victims are even active in church activities as “there is a case of one of [the migrated displaced persons] that has become a Sunday school teacher in the church.

The presence of the migrated displaced Boko Haram victims is a wake-up call in reaching out with the Gospel to the victims in the area and other places where there are internally displaced persons. A pastor was even suggesting sending out missionaries to these people.

Lastly, the positive aspect of the migrated displaced Boko Haram victims is that their presence enhances the need to pray more for affected people in conflict-prone areas and for peace in these places. Churches may not be able to actively do much in bringing peace back to those areas, but they can pray.

Negatively, the presence and situations of the migrated displaced Boko Haram victims increase the burdens/concerns of churches in the area and their members. The financial burden in

particular because of the economic situation of the Nigeria is making the churches to have concerns on how to respond to transforming the lives of the migrated displaced persons. This is in addition to other burdens that the churches already have.

### **Recommendations**

1. Based on the findings of this study, therefore, the following recommendations are made for more effective faith-based responses to the displaced Boko Haram victims:
2. Human rights of all people should be upheld at all times, including the rights of displaced persons, asylum seekers and refugees;
3. Political leaders should demonstrate ethical and non-partisan leadership in policy debates on immigration and the global movement of displaced persons; and
4. We encourage Christians to act as advocates for displaced persons and to develop plans to respond with compassion and hospitality to the needs of displaced persons.
5. Churches should lay more emphasis on meeting the psychological and spiritual needs of the displaced persons as the displaced persons may not get these needs met by other organizations that are not faith-based.
6. The church should organize awareness programmes for people on how to come together to establish small-scale business where these migrated displaced persons can be engaged.
7. The church should also encourage those that have small-scale businesses to assimilate the migrated displaced persons. Churches could be encouraged to do similar things. Churches should also speak up against victimization of displaced people in their chosen professions.
8. Church pastors should preach more and enlighten their members and others about peaceful coexistence with other people.
9. Churches should seriously consider organized prayers for displaced people and for peaceful coexistence where there are conflicts.
10. We call upon governments at all levels to uphold universal human rights and develop just and compassionate policies with provisions for:
  - a. Access to the protections afforded to displaced persons in international law including non-discrimination with respect to religious and ethnic identity;
  - b. Access to adequate psychological, social, and medical care;

- c. Ensuring that displaced persons whose claim for refugee status has been denied are treated fairly while awaiting repatriation;
11. We also urge governments to use peaceful means to address human rights violations in countries of origin and to pursue policies to strengthen regional cooperation and expand protection of displaced persons.

## **Conclusion**

There is a unique set of internally displaced persons (referred to in this research as migrated displaced persons). These persons are unique because they are not concentrated in any IDP center or camp; Churches are responding in some ways to transforming the lives of these displaced persons; while there are some constraints and challenges that these churches are facing as they respond to transforming the lives of the displaced persons. There are better ways the churches can be more effective in their responses to transforming the lives of the displaced people; and the presence of the migrated displaced persons is having positive and negative impacts on the members of the churches.

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## Archetypes, Identity and Cultural Continuity in Modern African Poetry

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### Abstract

*African oral traditions, deeply rooted in the principle of art-for-life orientation, continue to resonate strongly in the creative endeavours of modern African writers across various literary genres. From the rich tapestry of oral storytelling to the boundless possibilities afforded by the written word, African literature reflects the societal dynamics within which it exists. Rooted in didacticism, African oral performances celebrate individuals whose ingenuity contributes to communal progress, while also acknowledging the complexities of communal collaboration. These narratives often serve communal purposes by shaping character formations, depicting individuals whose personalities, influences, and achievements embody communal ideals. Archetypes in African oral literature serve as techniques for conveying cultural values, moral lessons, and societal norms, deeply entrenched in the oral traditions and folklore of diverse African cultures, mirroring the collective experiences, beliefs, and identities of the people. While interrogating Okinba Launko's Ire and Other Poems for Performance as a primary text, this paper engages postcolonialism as a theoretical framework, celebrating individuals who have attained the status of national and cultural heroes through their commitment and contributions. Figures pivotal in Africa's and particularly Nigeria's independence movement from colonial imperialism are revered for their role in shaping the continent's destiny. Through historical reflections and poetic tribute, their legacy is honoured, underscoring their significance in the collective memory and cultural narrative of Nigeria. The collection of poems challenges racist narratives that sought to diminish Africa's cultural and intellectual contributions, affirming the rich tapestry of African history and the enduring spirit of its people, thereby inspiring reflection, celebration, and a reaffirmation of African identity and heritage.*

**Keywords:** Modern African poetry, Oral traditions, Postcolonialism, Okinba Launko

### Introduction

#### Oral Traditions and Archetypes of Representation

African oral traditions thrive on the principle of art serving life, a concept that continues to resonate with the creative endeavours of modern African writers across various literary genres. These traditions emphasize the integral connection between storytelling and the lived experiences of the community. From the rich tapestry of oral storytelling to the boundless possibilities afforded by the written word, African literature has always been deeply influenced by the societal dynamics within which it exists. Rooted in didacticism, African oral performances celebrate individuals, whose ingenuity contributes to communal progress while also acknowledging the complexities of communal collaboration, including those involving

individuals with dubious intentions. Many indigenously created verbal narratives are rendered with the intention to serve communal purposes by shaping character formations. These narratives often depict individuals whose personalities, influences, and achievements showcase exemplary conducts of communal ideals.

Archetypes, as prototypical models, hold significant sway in narrative traditions across historical periods. Often embodying figures that played pivotal roles in their societies' histories, these archetypes are revered in many African cultures, sometimes even attaining quasi-religious status. Joseph Campbell (1949) explores the concept of the monomyth or hero's journey, identifying common stages and archetypal characters found in myths and stories from various cultures worldwide. He suggested that these archetypes reflect fundamental aspects of the human psyche and collective experience. Carl Jung (1953) enriched the discussion by defining archetypes as universal, symbolic images and motifs residing in the collective unconscious of humanity. Jung argued that these archetypes shape human behaviour, experiences, and perceptions, manifesting in dreams, myths, and cultural symbols.

Building upon Jung's work, Northrop Frye (1957) expands the concept by defining archetypes as recurring narrative patterns, character types, and symbolic motifs that transcend individual literary works. Frye proposed that archetypes form the structural framework of literary genres, guiding both writers and readers in their interpretation of texts, thus contributing to the universality and resonance of literary works across time and various cultural models. These archetypal frameworks are deeply embedded in African oral traditions and continue to influence contemporary African literature, providing a rich reservoir of symbolic meaning and narrative structure that resonates with readers and listeners alike.

Carol Pearson (1991) provides additional insights by examining primary archetypes such as the Hero, the Caregiver, and the Sage, which she argues are universal patterns of human behaviour and personality. Pearson proposes that recognizing and embodying these archetypes can aid individuals in personal growth and self-discovery. Burn (2008) offers contemporary perspectives on archetypes as recurring symbols, motifs, and literary constructs that convey universal themes and tap into the collective unconscious of readers, thereby enriching the understanding of primordial patterns in literature across different periods and cultural contexts. These contemporary perspectives demonstrate the enduring power of archetypal narratives in shaping both individual identities and collective cultural expressions.

In African oral literature, archetypes convey cultural values, moral lessons, and societal norms. These archetypes, deeply entrenched in the oral traditions and folklore of diverse African cultures, mirror the collective experiences, beliefs, and identities of the people. Far from being static, they evolve dynamically within the cultural contexts and oral traditions of African societies to serve as tropes that transmit historical knowledge while fostering a sense of identity and belonging among community members. Among these archetypes are trickster figures such as Ijapa the tortoise in Yoruba folklore and Anansi the Spider in Akan traditions. These tricksters embody cunning and mischief, challenging authority and societal norms while taking on anthropomorphic roles.

Furthermore, the archetype of the ancestor holds spiritual significance in African oral traditions, serving as an intermediary between the living and the dead. Ancestors may appear as archetypes in stories, offering wisdom, protection, and ancestral blessings. This reflection of ancestors extends to deities who occupy similar roles, playing significant parts as archetypes in African oral literature. These divine beings, often embodying aspects of nature, fertility, and the afterlife, wield influence over human affairs. Examples include Ogun in Yoruba mythology and Nyame, the sky god in Akan mythology. In Yoruba cosmogony, Ogun represents the deity of iron, war, labour, and technology. He is a powerful deity associated with strength, skill, and creativity, often seen as the patron of blacksmiths, warriors, and hunters. Ogun embodies both the constructive and destructive potential of iron, symbolizing the dual nature of technology and warfare in society. Conversely, in Akan mythology, Nyame, the sky god, represents the supreme creator and omnipotent deity. He is the embodiment of all that is divine and powerful, overseeing the universe, including the earth, the sky, and all living beings. Nyame is associated with the elements of life, such as rain, sun, and fertility, playing a crucial role in sustaining life and ensuring prosperity.

Additionally, the motif of the outcast or outsider archetype is prevalent in African literature, reflecting individuals marginalized or ostracized from society due to perceived differences or flaws. These characters navigate trials and tribulations as they seek acceptance or redemption, resonating with themes of identity and belonging in postcolonial literary productions. Writers such as Achebe (1977) and Aidoo (1985) critique colonial stereotypes and advocate for authentic representations of African identity, while others like wa Thiong'o (1986) and Mbembe (2001) explore the complexities of identity formation in postcolonial African societies. Gilroy (1993)

offers a transnational perspective on identity, emphasizing the interconnectedness of black diasporic experiences across Africa, the Americas, and Europe. Similarly, Mbembe locates the complexities of identity formation in postcolonial Africa, discussing the legacy of colonialism, slavery, and imperialism. Through their works, these writers contribute to ongoing discussions surrounding identity, culture, and belonging, as reflected in contemporary African literature and discourse.

### **Nationhood, the Postcolony and Belonging**

The theme of belonging in postcolonial literature navigates the realms of identity, displacement, and cultural assimilation experienced by individuals and communities in the aftermath of colonialism. It reflects the profound influence of colonial legacies on notions of home, nationhood, and belonging. Characters within postcolonial narratives embark on quests for identity amidst the intricate social, political, and historical landscapes they inhabit. They grapple with questions of self-discovery, cultural heritage, and the lasting impacts of colonialism, endeavouring to reconcile conflicting cultural influences, reclaim lost traditions, or construct new forms of belonging in a swiftly evolving world. Postcolonial literature also interrogates the trauma and memory of colonialism, portraying characters who confront painful recollections of oppression, displacement, and cultural erasure as they strive to reclaim their dignity, agency, and sense of belonging amidst historical injustices.

In poetic collections such as Okinba Launko's "Ire and Other Poems for Performance" (1998), poets frequently depict acts of resistance and reclamation as individuals assert their right to belong on their own terms. This may involve challenging colonial hierarchies, reclaiming indigenous languages and traditions, or amplifying the voices and perspectives of marginalized communities. Achebe's "Refugee Mother and Child" (1971) portrays the devastating impact of war and conflict on the lives of refugees, particularly mothers and children, highlighting the human cost of postcolonial strife. Similarly, Awoonor's "The Cathedral" (1971) explores the legacy of colonialism and its effect on African identity, addressing themes of cultural alienation and the struggle for self-determination. Aidoo's play "Anowa" (1970) locates the complexities of power, gender, and exploitation in a postcolonial African society, confronting the consequences of colonialism and capitalism, especially for marginalized women. Senghor's poem "Prayer to

the Masks" (1961) reflects on the tension between tradition and modernity in postcolonial Africa, examining cultural heritage and identity while critiquing the impact of colonialism.

Okigbo's "Lament of the Silent Sisters" (1967) addresses the violence and brutality of postcolonial conflicts in Africa, capturing the suffering and resilience of those affected by war and political upheaval. Okara's "Once Upon a Time" (1962) reflects on the loss of innocence and the erosion of traditional values in postcolonial Africa, exploring themes of cultural disintegration and identity crisis amidst rapid change. Shire's "Home" (2011) foregrounds the experiences of refugees and migrants, offering poignant reflections on the intricate dynamics of identity, displacement, and belonging. Similarly, Shire's "Conversations about Home (at the Deportation Centre)" (2014) confronts the challenges of displacement, migration, and the quest for belonging in a world shaped by colonial legacies. Through these literary works, postcolonial authors highlight the personal and collective struggles of individuals as they navigate the complex interplay of cultural identity and historical memory.

Additionally, Patrice Nganang's "Song of the Broken River" (2017) explores the enduring impacts of colonialism, examining the ways in which historical events shape contemporary African societies. Ladan Osman's "Exiles" (2018) captures the experiences of navigating cultural hybridity and historical trauma, offering insight into the ongoing process of identity formation in the face of displacement. Tjawangwa Dema's "A Love Letter to My Mother's Accent" (2016) provides introspective reflections on language, identity, and cultural heritage within the context of postcolonial realities. Through these diverse narratives, postcolonial literature continues to engage with the themes of belonging, identity, and cultural continuity, shedding light on the ongoing struggles and resilience of communities affected by the legacies of colonialism.

In interrogating the varied dimensionalities of the postcolony, writers may offer alternative metaphors of the archetypal hero for communal emancipation. The communal hero in African oral literature is celebrated for courage, strength, and resilience. These heroes, often ordinary individuals, embark on extraordinary journeys or quests to overcome challenges and enact positive change within their communities. Notable examples from Yoruba mythology include Ogun, Oya, and Sango, each embodying distinct qualities of resilience, strength, and bravery. Ogun, revered as the god of iron, warfare, and technology, epitomizes courage and bravery through his fierce warrior persona. Similarly, Oya, associated with wind, storms, and transformation, and Sango, associated with thunder, lightning, and fire, symbolize courage and

resilience through their unwavering commitment to justice and leadership. Other examples of communal heroes include Sundiata Keita from the epic of Sundiata in West Africa and Shaka Zulu from Zulu mythology, both of whom are celebrated for their leadership and transformative impact on their societies.

In works like Okinba Launko's "Ire and Other Poems for Performance," heroic figures are exalted with the lyrical flourish typical of oral poetry. Drawing from the praise-chant tradition of Yoruba oral poetry, Launko's collection depicts how the community elevates these individuals to the status of modern-day heroes, thereby commemorating their contributions to the socio-political and historical landscapes of major African nations. With a preponderance of imagistic expressions, the persona, like a traditional bard, sets out on a quest of storytelling, celebrating the virtues and deeds of these heroes. The lyrical and performative elements of Launko's poetry reinforce the communal aspect of heroism, emphasizing the collective memory and cultural significance of these figures.

By highlighting the heroism of individuals within their cultural and historical contexts, postcolonial literature not only preserves the rich oral traditions of African societies but also adapts these narratives to contemporary realities. These modern-day heroes serve as metaphors for communal resilience and resistance, offering a sense of identity and continuity in the face of postcolonial challenges. The interplay between traditional and contemporary forms of heroism in literature underscores the enduring relevance of these archetypes, providing inspiration and a sense of purpose for present and future generations.

Once again the season is ripe  
For the renewal of our songs

The Ruler of the Sky yawns,  
And a new calendar opens at once  
For the birds and the fishes  
And the plants growing new tubers

Lo! I clear my throat-and  
The hills re-arrange their wardrobe  
For my song. (*Ire and Other Poems*, 5)

The nexus of co-relational existence among the various elements in nature is profoundly recognized in many cultural traditions. There is a deep attachment to cosmic powers, particularly to the supersensible forces upon which the sustenance of all elemental forces of nature relies.

The bard pays homage to the deities, acknowledging that every constituent part of nature is imbued with energy that sustains cosmic balance. For the bard, every aspect of nature possesses an internal rhythm that daily finds expression in its own unique way. The morning, signifying the beginning of the day, carries a level of ritual observance. The cycles of the day, the phases of the moon, the sun's orbit, and the changing seasons all recur within the natural order. In oral traditions, it is believed that survival depends on the will of the deities, and any alterations in the natural order are seen as signs of their displeasure. It is within this rhythm of collaborative existence that people consciously or unconsciously build observatory rituals.

The planting seasons naturally precede harvest time, demonstrating nature's time frame for the emergence of certain phenomena. The association between humans and nature produces rituals that are intricately linked to these cycles. Harvest customs, sacrifices, and songs are derived from moments of harvest and reflect humanity's attempt to harmonize its energies with those of nature at specific cyclical moments. It is customary in such societies to appeal to certain deities for their benevolence during these times. Sacrifices intended to invoke the goodwill of these deities are offered, reinforcing the reciprocal relationship between humans and the divine.

In this intricate relationship, the bard's role is crucial as a mediator who interprets the signs of nature and the will of the deities. The bard's songs and stories not only pay tribute to the cosmic powers but also serve as a guide for the community, helping them to understand and navigate the natural cycles. The rituals and observances he describes are a form of dialogue with the divine, a way for the community to express gratitude, seek favour, and maintain balance. The cyclical patterns of nature, mirrored in the community's rituals, ensure that the cosmic balance is upheld, and that the community remains in harmony with the universe.

This harmonious relationship between humans and nature is essential for the community's survival and prosperity. By recognizing and respecting the rhythms of nature, and by performing rituals that honour the deities, the community fosters a sense of belonging and continuity. The bard's homage to the deities and the natural order underscores the importance of these traditions in maintaining cosmic balance. This interconnectedness of all things in the universe reflects a worldview where every element plays a vital role, and where human actions are seen as integral to the ongoing harmony of the cosmos.

Esumare,  
Voice of Orunmila, my father  
In your cloud of many colours

You will still daub my song ...

Cloths.  
Beads,  
red and crystal (*Ire and Other Poems, 5, 6*)

In the Yoruba cosmos, Orunmila is ascribed as the owner and controller of the sky, embodying both its benevolent and erratic tendencies. The sky, much like the dual nature of humanity, displays a range of behaviours that reflect its ambivalence. It can transform into a frightening blackness with the emergence of a thunderstorm, a powerful and intimidating display of nature's force. This unpredictability requires seafarers to perform sacrifices, appealing to the deity to harness the sky's benevolence for safe passage and protection. These rituals underscore the profound respect and reverence for Orunmila's power, acknowledging the deity's control over the sky's capriciousness. In other moments, the sky reveals a spectrum of iridescent colours, a beautiful and serene spectacle that captivates and inspires. The bard, through his poetic expression, seeks to capture this duality, drawing a parallel between the unpredictable nature of the sky and the complexities of human existence.

The bard's figurative exploration of the sky under Orunmila's dominion reflects a deeper understanding of the Yoruba worldview, where natural phenomena are closely tied to divine influence. This portrayal is not just about the physical sky but also about the spiritual and emotional realms it governs. The sky's varying states—its stormy darkness and its colourful brilliance—mirror the human experience of struggle and joy, uncertainty and beauty. By seeking to articulate this cosmic duality, the bard connects the audience to a larger existential framework where the sky's moods are manifestations of divine will and human emotions. This intricate relationship between the sky, the deity, and humanity is a testament to the interconnectedness of all elements in the Yoruba cosmology. It emphasizes the importance of rituals and sacrifices as means of navigating the unpredictable forces of nature, while also celebrating the awe-inspiring beauty that the sky can bestow. Through his lyrical quest, the bard not only pays homage to Orunmila but also evokes a profound sense of wonder and respect for the cosmic order

Mother of Fishes  
it is only in the hands of lepers  
that beads are mute-  
in dexterous hands, beads turn  
to song, to ornaments ...

...

Mother of Fishes  
silent I await your power  
of mutations. (*Ire and Other Poems, 6*)

As previously stated, all constituent parts of nature possess their internal energy, each expressing itself in distinctive ways. Among the Yoruba, Orunmila is believed to coordinate the affairs of the sky, while the sea and its various tributaries fall under the domain of the sea-spirit, known as Olokun. Each deity in the Yoruba pantheon has its own sphere of influence, operating independently without impeding on the domains of others. This structure reflects a harmonious balance within the cosmos, where each element and its corresponding deity contribute to the overall order and functionality of the universe.

The sea, under the stewardship of Olokun, is a microcosmic metaphor of the macrocosmic universe. It encapsulates different shades of mysteries that mortals still find hard to completely decipher. The vastness and depth of the sea symbolize the unknown and the unseen, realms that are governed by divine forces beyond human comprehension. Olokun, as the guardian of these watery domains, embodies the enigmatic and powerful nature of the sea. The sea's unpredictable tides, its hidden depths, and its life-sustaining waters all serve as reminders of the intricate and often unfathomable workings of the natural world.

In Yoruba cosmology, the clear demarcation of each deity's domain ensures a balanced and orderly universe. This belief system underscores the importance of understanding and respecting the distinct roles that various natural elements and their deities play. The sea, with its myriad tributaries and boundless expanse, reflects the broader universe's complexities and interconnectedness. Through their reverence for deities like Olokun and Orunmila, the Yoruba acknowledge the profound influence these forces have on their lives. The sea's mysteries and the sky's capriciousness are not seen as mere natural phenomena but as expressions of the divine, each with its unique energy and purpose within the grand tapestry of existence.

Yemoja is the mother of fishes, here identified by the bard.

Then Olokun, mother of Eri,  
Gave orders to her daughter  
And Eri swelled her breasts  
And rain seized the world. (*Ire and Other Poems, 9*)

The myth of Olokun's attempt to destroy the earth by means of a great flood re-enacts the dual nature of the sea, which holds both creative and destructive capabilities. In traditional Yoruba

societies, barren couples often seek Olokun's favour to have children, reflecting the deity's association with fertility and creation. The worship of Olokun, as the energy of the sea, is particularly prevalent around coastal areas, where the presence of the sea is a constant and powerful force in daily life. In these regions, the sea's influence is deeply ingrained in the cultural and spiritual practices of the people.

Mermaids, believed to be soldiers of Olokun, further emphasize the deity's powerful and mysterious nature. When floods occur, these coastal communities offer sacrifices to appease Olokun, hoping to mitigate the destructive aspects of the sea and restore balance. This practice underscores the deep respect and reverence for the sea and its governing deity. The ritualistic offerings serve as a means of maintaining harmony with the powerful forces of nature, acknowledging their potential for both creation and destruction. Through these traditions, the duality of Olokun's nature is recognized and honoured, reflecting the complex relationship between humans and the natural world.

Obatala  
I salute you:

Honours grow no weed  
in the forest of time  
all hail to your white honour

I am waiting: ...

Esu Laaroye  
Dweller on the fatal cross-roads

Confuser at Oke-Ado market  
Ruler of Bere roundabout  
It is morning  
Wash my eyes of the night

...  
King of Ire, your generous heart  
Filled with pity, and you  
Took Iron into your forge, and  
Iron became your *iwofa*

Oh Ogun, the sky is immense,  
But the sky grows no grass  
Take me too into your forge  
Let me taste the anvil of wisdom ... (*Ire and Other Poems*, 7, 8)

From the above lines, the bard alludes to Obatala, who in Yoruba cosmogony is revered as the sculptor-god. In the Yoruba creation myth, Obatala is entrusted by Olodumare, the Supreme Being, with the task of creating humans. However, due to a moment of carelessness caused by his over-indulgence in emu, the Yoruba equivalent of palm wine, Obatala's senses become dulled, and his hands falter while forming these beings. This lapse results in the creation of individuals with physical differences, such as albinos, cripples, and the blind. The myth underscores the idea that even divine beings possess human-like flaws and that these imperfections contribute to the diversity of humanity.

Esu Laaroye, often misunderstood, is regarded as the trickster deity in the Yoruba pantheon. Contrary to the interpretation of some Euro-American critics who equate him with the Satan of Judeo-Christian or Islamic texts, the Yoruba do not perceive any of their deities as inherently evil. Instead, they view the deities as embodying the characteristics and tendencies of their respective roles and domains. Esu, in particular, is seen as the god of Ifa, an intricate system of divination. Ifa serves as a vital tool for consulting the deities, revealing fate, destiny, and providing guidance in times of uncertainty. Despite advancements in science and technology, many Yoruba people continue to seek Ifa's counsel before making significant decisions, illustrating the enduring cultural and spiritual importance of this practice. Esu's role as the guardian of communities and villages further emphasizes his protective and guiding influence.

Cross-roads in the Yoruba worldview are spiritual and symbolic. They suggest a maze of uncertainty where only initiates, through the assistance of Esu, the dweller at the cross-roads, can make guided decisions. Sacrifices to this deity are often offered at designated cross-roads, signifying their importance in seeking clarity and direction. Esu's inclination to foment confusion is expressed in the characteristic chaos of marketplaces, such as the Oke-Ado market in Ibadan, Oyo State, Southwest Nigeria, as alluded to in the poem. This depiction of Esu highlights his complex nature as both a trickster and a guide, reflecting the nuanced understanding of deities in Yoruba cosmology.

Ogun, the Yoruba god of war and the patron deity of blacksmiths, hunters, warriors, and all those whose occupations involve the use of metal, is also honoured by the bard. In Yoruba tradition, several symbolic instruments are closely associated with Ogun, each reflecting his attributes and significance. These include iron and metal tools, chains, and palm fronds. The machete, a metal tool, is prominently used during many court proceedings in Yoruba traditional communities,

where individuals swear by Ogun by kissing the machete to affirm their truthfulness. Failing to tell the truth after swearing with Ogun's totem incurs the deity's wrath. Ogun is often invoked to witness contracts, ensuring honesty and integrity. This deity commands significant reverence and adherence, even in modern circles, highlighting his enduring importance.

In these intricate portrayals, the bard acknowledges the depth and complexity of Yoruba deities, each with distinct roles and attributes that influence daily life and spiritual practices. The interconnectedness of these deities with various aspects of nature and human existence underscores the rich tapestry of Yoruba mythology. Through these allusions, the bard emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting the divine forces that shape the world, reflecting a profound cultural heritage that continues to resonate in contemporary times. The depth of the destructive capabilities of Ogun is captured in the richness of his Oriki (praise-chant) as documented by Finnegan (1970) and partly re-produced here:

Ogun kills on the right and destroys on the right.  
Ogun kills on the left and destroys on the left.  
Ogun kills suddenly in the house and suddenly in the field.  
Ogun kills the child with the iron with which it plays.  
Ogun kills in silence.  
Ogun kills the thief and the owner of the stolen goods.  
Ogun kills the owner of the slave-and the slave runs away.  
Ogun kills the owner of thirty 'iwofa' [pawns] – and his money, wealth and children disappear.  
Ogun kills the owner of the house and paints the hearth with his blood  
Ogun is the death who pursues a child until it runs into the bush.  
Ogun is the needle that pricks at both ends.  
Ogun has water but washes in blood. (113)

In Yoruba culture, it is believed that many deities once existed in human form during prehistoric times. Upon their death, they did not cease to exist but rather transformed, changing their place of abode and ascending to divine status. This transformation allowed them to become archetypes of an idyllic and perfect civilization, embodying the cultural values and structures from which they emerged. These deities, now in their superhuman capacities, continue to influence the culture, guiding the people and providing a model for societal ideals. They remain integral to the cultural heritage, their legacies preserved and celebrated through ritual observances that keep their stories and influence alive.

These deities maintain their presence and significance in the community through ritual practices and ceremonies. The rituals serve as a means of communication with the divine, reinforcing the

cultural norms and values that the deities represent. The deities' transformation into divine beings allows them to perpetuate their influence on the culture, acting as custodians of tradition and moral standards. Their stories, recounted in oral literature and myth, provide a framework for understanding human experiences and the natural world, while their worship ensures the continued relevance of their teachings. Through these practices, the deities sustain their roles as both historical figures and living embodiments of cultural ideals, bridging the past and present in a continuous cycle of reverence and adherence.

### **Archetype of the mentor: Locating cultural memory and identity**

In "Ire and Other Poems for Performance," there is a deliberate celebration of individuals who, through sheer commitment, have attained the status of both national and cultural heroes. The poems, infused with the oral traditions of praise-chants, extend beyond the confines of ritual altars to honour these figures in various public ceremonies. This literary practice reinforces the intertwining of cultural reverence and national pride, showcasing how modern heroes are elevated to a quasi-divine status within the community. The deliberate invocation of deities in these chants signifies the continuity of cultural values and the transference of divine attributes to contemporary figures, reflecting a society's need to anchor its identity in both the spiritual and the temporal realms.

The poem "Mourning from a Corner of Shyness" is performed in honour of the late sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a significant figure in Nigeria's political history. Awolowo, known for his visionary leadership and profound impact on the nation's development, is commemorated through this poetic performance, highlighting his enduring legacy. The poem's performance serves as a sociopolitical commentary, merging cultural heritage with national memory. By evoking Awolowo's name within the framework of traditional praise-chants, the poet not only pays homage to his contributions but also situates him within the broader narrative of African heroism. This fusion of past and present underscores the dynamic nature of cultural memory and its role in shaping national identity.

The performance of the poem begins with a mention of Ogun before proceeding to the main body of the rendition, symbolically linking Awolowo to the attributes of this powerful deity. Ogun, the god of iron, warfare, and technology, embodies resilience, strength, and creativity—qualities that resonate with Awolowo's legacy. By invoking Ogun, the poet draws a parallel

between the divine and the human, suggesting that Awolowo's efforts and achievements were not merely political but also had a profound cultural and spiritual significance. This invocation serves as a reminder of the interconnectedness of the spiritual and sociopolitical spheres in African societies, where leadership and heroism are deeply rooted in both cultural and divine endorsement. Through this layered narrative, the poem reinforces the idea that true leadership transcends the political domain, encompassing a holistic vision that includes cultural preservation and spiritual integrity.

AH! A WO! A WO-O-O-O!  
Name that shapes the lips into a flute  
Awo!  
Name that trills in the throat like a song  
Awo!  
Song exploding into air, like iron gong  
Awo!

*but how shall I even dare to call you-I,  
with only this mouth, too small for your legend?  
No! –slender fern in an evening of forest trunks,  
I shall hide here in my corner and hoard my shyness.  
(Ire and Other Poems, 13)*

The journey to Nigeria's independence from colonial rule involved several key figures who played pivotal roles in the movement towards self-governance. Among these influential individuals was the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a prominent leader who was instrumental in the fight for Nigeria's freedom. The poet illustrates Awolowo's significant impact by portraying himself as a 'fern in the forest of trunks,' a metaphor that highlights the poet's sense of humility and insignificance in the presence of such towering figures. In this imagery, the fern, with its modest size and lack of flowers, symbolizes the poet's recognition of his own limited stature compared to the monumental contributions of leaders like Awolowo.

His legacy is profoundly captured through this metaphor, emphasizing his towering presence in the historical narrative of Nigeria's independence. The poet's self-depiction as a small, unassuming fern among mighty tree trunks serves to underscore the vast difference in their achievements and stature. This imagery not only reflects the bard's reverence for Awolowo but also speaks to the broader theme of individual contributions within a collective struggle for national liberation. It suggests a deep respect for the monumental efforts of those who paved the

way for Nigeria's independence, acknowledging that the poet, despite his own efforts, views himself as a minor participant in the grand historical journey shaped by such formidable leaders.

*OHAWO-*

Let me hide here in my shyness,  
Among the smaller mourners:  
For when bullocks start on a stampede  
The egret's grace is out of place-  
[or who can hear the soft fall  
Of a teardrop amidst a cascade of waters?  
Ah, in a market of weaverbirds  
Even the nightingale must sing unheard ... ]  
*(Ire and Other Poems, 14)*

In the preceding lines, the disparity in size between the bullock and the egret is depicted, much like a tear drop is insignificant in a cascade of water. This profound illustration highlights the immense stature of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and the ideological path he chose to follow. The poet's use of these metaphors underscores Awolowo's towering presence and influential legacy in Nigeria's history. The comparison to a small egret beside a massive bullock, and a tear drop within a cascade, powerfully conveys the vast difference between Awolowo's impactful contributions and those of others. Such analogies are fitting for heroes whose time on this side of the cosmic divide has significantly contributed to the progress of their society.

Awolowo's life and work are immortalized through these vivid metaphors, emphasizing the profound respect and admiration he commands. The poet's deliberate choice of imagery serves not only to exalt Awolowo but also to reflect on the broader sociopolitical landscape he helped shape. Awolowo's influence extended beyond his immediate actions; he was a symbol of the struggle for self-governance and the quest for a better, more equitable society. His ideological pursuits and the policies he championed were pivotal in steering Nigeria towards a path of progress and self-determination. The reverence depicted in the poem is a testament to the lasting impact of his leadership and vision, which continue to inspire subsequent generations.

By celebrating Awolowo through these metaphors, the poet acknowledges the enduring significance of his contributions. The imagery of the bullock and the egret, and the tear drop within a cascade, serves as a poignant reminder of the vast gulf between ordinary efforts and extraordinary legacies. Awolowo's life work is portrayed as a beacon of hope and progress, a standard against which the efforts of others are measured. His legacy is enshrined not only in the

annals of Nigerian history but also in the hearts and minds of those who continue to draw inspiration from his vision for a just and prosperous society.

For it is an evening of long, loquacious tongues;  
An evening when smart mourners with mealy  
Mouths  
Scramble to make profit of the ritual of shedding  
Tears  
...  
Oh Awo-  
Many voices will rise tonight in your praise  
But please don't listen:  
Many hands will be pleading for help from pain  
But don't even notice  
(*Ire and Other Poems, 14*)

Never in the historical pigmentation of the Nigerian political topography was there much contentions and threats of secession that heralded the advent of the civil war. Chief Awolowo was the premiere of the old Western region. As premiere, he insisted that the education educator and infrastructural development should take the major chunk of the region's economy. Amidst tensions, he introduced free education at the primary level in the entire Western region. In addition to that, Awolowo ensured the implementation of free medical healthcare facilities to individuals till the age of 18. Of all the regions in the nation today, none competes favourably in educational advancement than the southwest. Awolowo, going by historical records, had a robust and an all-embracing nationalist spirit to push the southwestern region forward. Within the spectrum of advancement, there were indications of unrest that were foisted on the nation with the events that led to the civil war.

remember, it was these same voices  
who jeered, when you were here,  
when you warned of storms about to break  
in the fragile house of freedom:  
remember, it was these same wringing hands  
that hung down helpless, so soon ago,  
when you screamed and screamed for vigilance  
against the onrushing roar of Terror  
(*Ire and Other Poems, 15*)

Awolowo argued against the drive for creating more states in Nigeria, emphasizing the nation's lack of capacity to manage them effectively. Nigeria's civil war, also known as the Biafran War (1967-1970), was primarily caused by a combination of ethnic, political, and economic factors. Deep-seated ethnic tensions among Nigeria's major groups—the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the west, and the Igbo in the east—were exacerbated by political instability following Nigeria's independence from Britain in 1960, including a series of coups and counter-coups. Economic disparities and competition over resources, particularly oil in the Niger Delta, further fuelled the discord. The immediate trigger was the secession of the Eastern Region, dominated by the Igbo, who declared the independent Republic of Biafra. The federal government's refusal to allow secession and the ensuing military confrontation led to a devastating war characterized by significant civilian suffering and loss of life. Even decades later, the nation continues to grapple with the profound losses and unresolved issues imposed by the civil war.

Awolowo consistently maintained that Nigeria is more of a geographical expression rather than a unified nation. The colonial powers, in their effort to unite over 300 ethnic nationalities, failed to consider the deep linguistic, ethnic, and religious differences that exist among them. Awolowo believed that each state should be viewed as a federating unit, each possessing its autonomy. According to the poet, Awolowo's prediction of inevitable national collapse is only natural, given the historical and ongoing challenges. Since independence, Nigeria has made little progress, largely due to recurring military interventions in its governance. The various states within the nation are surviving by a single thread, struggling to maintain coherence and stability amidst the persistent challenges of managing such a diverse and complex country.

Oh Awo-  
The road of courage is a harsh & solitary lane:  
But you walked it, unbowed, & were not once  
Astray—

*The rest of us have God above to take the blame:  
We make our choice of cowardice & meekly kneel to pray:*

*In the house of principles, even rafters are unsafe:  
but you lived in yours, unswayed by the wounds of Time-*

*The rest of us sell friend & faith for gold and for ease:  
In banks, or halls of power, the heroes are still the Harlots.*

*(Ire and Other Poems, 15,16)*

The bard here indirectly indicts the Nigerian collective for the retrogressive position the nation has maintained since independence. The activities of Awolowo were regarded as treasonable which led to his eventual arrest and imprisonment. He spent a total of three years in prison. Nigeria's First Republic (1963-1966) collapsed due to a confluence of political, ethnic, and economic tensions. The republic was marked by intense regional rivalries and ethnic divisions among the three major groups—the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the west, and the Igbo in the east. Electoral fraud, corruption, and violent political competition undermined democratic processes, leading to widespread disillusionment. The Western Region's crisis, including the breakdown of law and order and the subsequent declaration of a state of emergency, further destabilized the country. Economic disparities and disputes over resource allocation, particularly regarding oil revenues, exacerbated tensions. These issues culminated in a series of military coups in January 1966, which overthrew the civilian government, ending the First Republic and plunging Nigeria into political instability and eventually civil war.

After Awolowo's release from prison, the military government thought it wise to employ his services. He was asked to take up the portfolio of the federal commissioner of finance and as vice chairman of the federal executive council. He saluted the decision of the then military government for the creation of a 12- state federal system in 1967; however, he warned that certain considerations were neglected and so unrest and division were imminent. Many political analysts of Nigeria socio-political system still insist that the recent developments in the country have given solidifying credence to the fears registered in Awolowo's predictions that the nation's problems are largely based on ethnic, religious and linguistic divergences. Of this the poet reminisces that he (Awolowo) "warned of storms about to break/in the fragile house of freedom"

Oh Awo—  
no matter how many voices however passionate  
besiege your resting ears tonight, please  
refuse to listen, till History has flailed us:

leave us to suffer the scourge of hollow men,  
the lashing of former helots, now haughty commanders  
let the land first abjure its lust for venal gods

& only then, when we have been cleansed by

suffering

& are newly wise, oh Awo, return again to speak to us.

*(Ire and Other Poems, 16)*

The passion with which the poet articulates his contention is very dirge-like. Though dead, the poet engages the sage in a dialogue. Without doubt, there is an attempt at eulogy to the platform of an archetypal hero. The phase of the crusaders who tried to ensure the independence of the nation has passed. The poet calls the rulers of the nation hollow men who lack the full capacity to marshal the nation to its harbour of rest. The poet has succeeded in fusing diverse thematic concerns in this rendition starting from the historic background to the nation's attainment of independence to the contributions of Awolowo and finally to the present state of the nation.

In "Ire Ni", the poet employs the narrative technique of the dramatic as he lends voice to the celebration of Wole Soyinka, one of Africa's most fecund literary writers. The poem is particularly arranged for performing voices.

AM:

Forgive us!

Ah we see him now! We see the Great One!

We salute!

M1:

Baaba o! Ah step forward

Intrepid son of your father!

M2:

Welcome, forgive us!

We pay respects as due!

Forgive our blindness-

*(Ire and Other Poems, 34)*

Soyinka is remarkably the first African to have won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986, a prize most coveted by not a few writers. It is instinctual therefore that an attempt at celebrating the icon is expected. The poem therefore illustrates the creative prowess and literary ingenuity of Soyinka.

M1:

This is your birthplace, among us:

You who went dancing

In the stadium, where the spirits

Of white Masks dared to dance-

M2:

- And won the trophy there!

M1:

You who went riding  
In the race where only the proud horses  
Of white men alone  
Had ever been decorated-

M2:

-And you went prancing,  
And stole the victory there!

*(Ire and Other Poems, 35)*

Characteristic of African folktales is the depiction of the interaction of the human world and that of the supernatural. Within the lines above, a duel of some sort is brought up where the representative of the world of humans is expected to engage a delegate of the world of the dead. This kind of narrative is usually structured to portray the triumph of the human spirit. There is a journey motif where the hero embarks on a quest proving the worth of the human energy. The dialogue between the characters in the rendition foregrounds this narrative device. Celebrations and eulogy usually follow the triumphal return of the hero. The hero in such oral narratives undertakes such quest with the singular aim of bringing victory to the community. In other forms, the journey motif may be structured in cases where the need for a sacrificial lamb may be needed.

This brings up the issue of the scapegoat motif. This simply implies the ritual of cleansing usually carried out in specific and stipulated occasions. An individual is selected and made to bear the uncleanness of the whole community thereby averting the wrath of the deities and hence guaranteeing the continued existence of the community. Soyinka is thus captured in this symbol as “dancing/in the stadium, where only the spirits/of white masks dared to dance.”

M1:

Oh you Marathon Man  
Who went boldly into a competition  
Meant for the cream of  
the world's athletes-

M2:

-And brought the trophy back home  
Onto the wounded shoulders

Of the black race!  
(*Ire and Other Poems, 35*)

There is a subtle playback to history especially as regards the inaugural interaction with Europe which many believe resulted in the underdevelopment of the black race. The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the colonial incursion of Africa have remained the major outlets of discourse in African history. The assumptions that filtered in after the different stages of these contacts questioned the humanity of the black man and his contributions to the body of world advancement. Racist theorists hold tenaciously that Africa and the black man had no history but had been one long night of darkness and retrogression. They insisted that the black man lacked creative proclivities and so could not have cultivated a distinctly relevant cultural past worthy of scholarly inquisition. Since they did not share in the same cosmic pool which situates the African worldview, cultural, linguistic and religious aesthetics, it was expected that they would lampoon what they failed to understand.

The literary award of the Nobel Prize for Literature given to Soyinka eclipsed, earlier unfounded bias and racial prejudice held against the man of colour. The award stated in unambiguous terms that Africa possessed both aesthetic and literary potentials.

M1:  
If any white mouth dare open again

AF:  
To call us the sons of slaves-

M2:  
To say that we have built nothing-

AF:  
Contributed nothing-

M1:  
Planted nothing-

AF:  
Nurtured nothing-

M2:  
In the fruit garden of the world-

AF:  
In the rich earth of knowledge-

M1:  
We shall simply fill his ears-

AF:  
And the ears of his grandfathers-

M2:  
With the melody of his name!

AF:  
With the thunder of your name!  
*(Ire and Other Poems, 37)*

The dramatic ambience created by the bard engenders participation where dialogue, generally found in the domain of drama and prose narratives, is judiciously utilised. The deployment of this technique indicates that archetypal heroes uniquely represent the ideals of their communities and are thus collectively celebrated. Soyinka, therefore, takes the appellation of an archetypal hero whose activities have permanently led to test contentions and tensions about the African person. Soyinka's greatness is thus celebrated:

ALL:  
*WOLE SOYINKA!! WOLE SOYINKA!!*

PS:  
*Ehn, Wole gboye o*

ALL:  
*Ehn, Egbon gbayi o!*

Nothing more captures the elevation of the human spirit than the portrayal of the person of Nelson Mandela of South Africa in the poem "Tshotsholoza." The poem situates that dark period in the history of South Africa where the height of man's inhumanity to his kind was exhibited. Yet the poet takes a step further as he extols that worthy instinct in the human make-up which prioritises courage and self-sacrifice at the very face of dehumanising experience.

A man neither age nor prison has broken,

Nor the pain of separation from loving wife  
And pining children; nor the loss  
Of the unspeakable caress which comes  
From standing free in a forest,  
Touching leaves...

Any attempt at tracing the history of South Africa to its present state would be adjudged an adventure incomplete without Nelson Mandela. The darkest part of South Africa's history was the apartheid regime which saw the dominance of a minority white over the aboriginal majority black. This experience has been documented even in the literary productions of writers from that country. Mandela's South Africa was caught in this harrowing encounter. The apartheid system reduced black South Africans to sub humans, living within the margin set out by the racist white minority. Mandela's political and humanist ideologies were at- contrapuntal levels with what played out in South Africa. The psychological impairment that resulted from the system reached its limits when the likes of Mandela raised and supervised guerrilla attacks and sabotages against the perpetrators of the regime. The use of armed struggle was a last resort to Mandela after attempts with peaceful protests proved non-effective. Mandela was later charged and imprisoned on the basis of leading armed struggle against the incumbent government. Mandela's imprisonment lasted for over 27 years. The poet foregrounds the anguish he bore, vividly capturing both his psychological and emotional pain. Yet he salutes the courage of Mandela.

## **Conclusion**

African oral literature is a rich tapestry interwoven with archetypes that convey cultural values, moral lessons, and societal norms. These archetypes, deeply rooted in the oral traditions and folklore of diverse African cultures, evolve dynamically within their cultural contexts, acting as potent storytelling devices. They not only transmit historical knowledge but also foster a sense of identity and belonging among communities. Through these narratives, the collective experiences, beliefs, and identities of the people are mirrored, providing profound insights into the essence and evolution of African societies.

Postcolonial literature addresses the trauma and memory of colonialism, portraying characters who confront painful recollections of oppression, displacement, and cultural erasure. These narratives strive to reclaim dignity, agency, and a sense of belonging amidst historical injustices. The exploration of such themes serves as a critical examination of colonial legacies and their

enduring impact on individuals and societies, highlighting the resilience and struggle for liberation and cultural restoration. This literary approach underscores the importance of acknowledging and addressing historical wounds to pave the way for healing and empowerment. *Ire and Other Poems for Performance* celebrates individuals who have attained the status of national and cultural heroes through their commitment and contributions. Figures like Chief Awolowo, pivotal in Nigeria's independence movement, are revered for their role in shaping the nation's destiny. Through historical reflections and poetic tribute, their legacy is honoured, underscoring their significance in the collective memory and cultural narrative of Nigeria. The poems in the collection pay homage to icons like Wole Soyinka and Nelson Mandela, showcasing their sense of communality and exemplary courage in the face of adversity. Okinba Launko's collection serves as a reminder of Africa's resilience, creativity, and capacity for greatness despite historical injustices and challenges, affirming the rich tapestry of African history and the enduring spirit of its people.

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## **The Effects of Inter-ethnic Conflicts on the Education of the African Girl Child: A Reading of Chinua Achebe's *Girls at War***

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### **Abstract**

*Most countries in Africa are multi-ethnics. As it is in most civilizations in the world, different nationalities come together to form a geographical contiguity owing to such factors like proximity, migration, annexation and colonization among others. While some countries in the world have been able to manage the conflicts arising from their inter-ethnic relationships. The case is not so with African countries where inter-ethnic conflicts have been responsible for underdevelopment of many countries however, there is need to reverse this ugly trend. This study examines the impact of the recurrent inter-ethnic crisis on the education of the African girl-child. The study is based on the fictive world created by Chinua Achebe based on the Nigerian civil war fought between 1967-1971. The study used the fictive character of Gladys to explore the nature and the extent of the damage that inter-ethnic crisis could continue to have on the education of the African female children in particular by using psychoanalytic criticism as theoretical framework, by adopting the methods of "reading" employed by Freud and later theorists to interpret the text. The paper concludes that although crises generally have negative impacts on the society, the effects of wars and conflicts on the girl child education may be irreversible, therefore, the need to protect girl-child from traumatic experience of war if their education is to be enhanced is the objective of this paper.*

**Key words: Inter-ethnic, Conflict, Education, Girl, Child.**

## **Introduction**

Education is a human right that should be given to all human beings. There are lot of international human right instruments that provide for education as a fundamental human right which include the universal declaration of human right (1948), international convention on economic, social and cultural right (1960) etc. The relationship between education and development is well established such that education is a lay index of development. Research has also shown that schooling improves productivity, health and reduces negative features of life such as child labour. This is why there has been a lot of emphasis particularly in recent times for all citizens to have access to basic education. It has however been established by researchers that improving female education is crucial for national development.

Education is a basic human right and has been recognized as such since the 1948 adoption of the universal declaration of human rights. Since then, numerous human rights treaties have reaffirmed these rights and have supported entitlement to free compulsory primary education for all children. In 1990 for example, the education for all (EFA) communication was launched to ensure that by 2015, all children particularly girls, those in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality. According to UNESCO report, about 90 million children are not in school and majority of them are girls. Most girls do not have access to education despite the fact that it is their rights. The girl-child is often saddled with responsibilities, which may make her not to have access to quality education. The girl-child from birth may be considered a costly guest in her house. Her schooling is a waste of time and money and she is differently trained only for her role as a bearer of many children. A girl born into the family is received with mixed feeling while baby boy is considered a source of joy and pride to such families.

Some parents hold the view that it is better to have more boys than girls. Therefore, it is better for them to spend more time and money on the education of boys than girls, this summarizes the predicament of the girl-child as conceived by some families in some parts of Nigeria. Garba (2000) notes that for girls, their gender alone may keep their home locked in subsistence works or so isolated in the classroom that they become discouraged and drop out.

In Nigeria, fewer girls than boys are withdrawn from school for early marriage and the fact that they often assist in housework more than boys, they may not have time to study when they come

home from school. Free access to quality education is the right of every child without expectation or discrimination on gender basis. This paper however picks the issue of inter-ethnic conflicts as another major factor that is negatively affecting the education of girl child in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular and this may include psychological, emotional or social disconnect from the of idea educational attainment. The paper concludes that there is need for ethnic and national peace to ensure unhindered education for the girl child.

### **Theoretical framework**

Psychoanalytic criticism adopts the methods of "reading" employed by Freud and later theorists to interpret texts. It argues that literary texts, like dreams, express the secret unconscious desires and anxieties of the author, that a literary work is a manifestation of the author's own neuroses. One may psychoanalyze a particular character within a literary work, but it is usually assumed that all such characters are projections of the author's psyche.

One interesting facet of this approach is that it validates the importance of literature, as it is built on a literary key for the decoding. Freud himself wrote, "The dream-thoughts which we first come across as we proceed with our analysis often strike us by the unusual form in which they are expressed; they are not clothed in the prosaic language usually employed by our thoughts, but are on the contrary represented symbolically by means of similes and metaphors, in images resembling those of poetic speech".

Like psychoanalysis itself, this critical endeavour seeks evidence of unresolved emotions, psychological conflicts, guilt, ambivalences, and so forth within what may well be a disunified literary work. The author's own childhood traumas, family life, sexual conflicts, fixations, and such will be traceable within the behavior of the characters in the literary work. But psychological material will be expressed indirectly, disguised, or encoded (as in dreams) through principles such as "symbolism" (the repressed object represented in disguise), "condensation" (several thoughts or persons represented in a single image), and "displacement" (anxiety located onto another image by means of association).

Despite the importance of the author here, psychoanalytic criticism is similar to New Criticism in not concerning itself with "what the author intended." But what the author never intended (that is, repressed) is sought. The unconscious material has been distorted by the censoring conscious

mind. Psychoanalytic critics will ask such questions as, "What is Hamlet's problem?" or "Why can't Brontë seem to portray any positive mother figures?" Why Gladys cannot complete her school in Achebe's *girls at war*

**Psychological Criticism:** This approach reflects the effect that modern psychology has had upon both literature and literary criticism. Fundamental figures in psychological criticism include Sigmund Freud, whose "psychoanalytic theories changed our notions of human behavior by exploring new or controversial areas like wish-fulfillment, sexuality, the unconscious, and repression" as well as expanding our understanding of how "language and symbols operate by demonstrating their ability to reflect unconscious fears or desires"; and Carl Jung, whose theories about the unconscious are also a key foundation of Mythological Criticism. Psychological criticism has a number of approaches, but in general, it usually employs one (or more) of three approaches:

An investigation of "the creative process of the artist: what is the nature of literary genius and how does it relate to normal mental functions?"

The psychological study of a particular artist, usually noting how an author's biographical circumstances affect or influence their motivations and/or behavior.

The analysis of fictional characters using the language and methods of psychology.

### **Psychological approach to analyze literature**

The aim of psychological study folds in three natures. Foremost, the objective of understanding behavior, that is by defining factors that combine the development and expression of behavior. Secondly, the psychologist striving to develop procedure for the accurate prediction of behavior. Thirdly, psychology aims at developing techniques that will permit the control of behavior that is, way of "shaping" or course of psychological development through manipulating those basic factors to the growth and the expression of behavior.

The psychological approach leads most directly to a substantial amplification of the meaning of a literary work. When we discuss psychology and its place in a literary work, we are primarily studying the author's imagination. As all literary works are based on some kind of experience, and as all authors are human, we are necessarily caught up in the wide spectrum of emotional problems (caused by experience). Not all recourse of psychology in the analysis of literary work

is undertaken to arrive at the understanding of the literary work, to a certain extent, we must be willing to use psychology to discuss probability.

However, this study will be using Abraham Maslow theory of need to analyze the literary text and his theory states as follow;

The Hierarchy of Needs is a model in which Maslow attempted to capture these different levels of human motivation. It represents the idea that human beings are propelled into action by different motivating factors at different times – biological drives, psychological needs, higher goals which include; Basic/psychological needs, safety needs, love /belonging needs, self - esteem needs, self- actualization needs and self - transcendence needs.

Now the hierarchical arrangement is not meant to imply that those who focus on higher needs are somehow “better” than those who focus on lower needs. It’s not that kind of hierarchy. It’s a hierarchy within you, within your day-to-day experience.

It simply means that higher needs don’t appear unless and until unsatisfied lower needs are satisfied. If you are suffering from cold and hunger, for example, you just don’t have the time or energy to worry about your self-esteem. Your entire being is focused on food and warmth.

For this reason, the different levels also broadly correspond to different stages of life. The basic physical needs at the bottom are predominant in infancy; safety needs come into focus in early childhood; belonging needs predominate in later childhood; esteem needs predominate in early adulthood and self-actualization only really comes into focus with mature adulthood.

At the very top of the pyramid is the desire for self-transcendence — to experience, unite with and serve that which is beyond the individual self: the unity of all being. Therefore, the second basic need is safety or security which its absence may affect the psychological state of any individual especially the girl child education.

## **Methodology**

This study is qualitative research and it adopted a descriptive research design. The reason for this choice of research design is because the study does not assume or envisage any response from a set of audience or population. The study was therefore carried out and evaluated through the use of selected play. The analysis of the play using descriptive research to expose underlying

traumatic experience of the girl child education in Africa against. This study explored and guided the readers and the target audience, through close reading and analysis of this play, to help reduce the problem of out of school children especially for girl child education.

### **The multi- ethnic nature of Nigeria**

The culture of Nigeria is shaped by Nigeria's multiple ethnic groups. The country has 527 languages, seven of them are extinct. Nigeria also has over 1150 dialects and ethnic groups. The four largest ethnic groups are the Hausa and Fulani in the north, the Igbo in the southeast, and the Yoruba predominate in the south west. The Edo people are most frequent in the region between Yoruba land and Igbo land. Many of the Edo tend to be Christian. This group is followed by the Ibibio/Annang/Efik people of the coastal south southern Nigeria and the Ijaw of the Niger Delta. Nigeria's other ethnic group, sometimes called 'minorities', are found throughout the country but especially in the north and the middle belt. The traditionally nomadic Fulani can be found all over West and Central Africa. The Fulani and the Hausa are predominantly Muslim while the Igbo are predominantly Christian and so are the Efik, Ibibio, and Annang people. The Yoruba are equally likely to be either Christian or Muslim. Indigenous religious practices remain important to all of Nigeria's ethnic groups, and frequently these beliefs are blended with Christian beliefs, a practice known as syncretism

### **The Challenges of Ethnicity in Africa**

History has stripped Africa's people of the dignity of building their nations on their own indigenous values, institutions, and heritage. The modern African state is the product of Europe, not Africa. To attempt at this late date to return to ancestral identities and resources as bases for building the modern African nation would risk the collapse of many countries. At the same time, to disregard ethnic realities would be to build on loose sand, also a high-risk exercise. Is it possible to consolidate the framework of the modern African state while giving recognition and maximum utility to the component elements of ethnicities, cultures, and aspirations for self-determination? Ethnicity is more than skin color or physical characteristics, more than language, song, and dance. It is the embodiment of values, institutions, and patterns of behavior, a composite whole representing a people's historical experience, aspirations, and world view. Deprive a people of their ethnicity, their culture, and you deprive them of their sense of direction or purpose.

Traditionally, African societies and even states functioned through an elaborate system based on the family, the lineage, the clan, the tribe, and ultimately a confederation of groups with ethnic, cultural, and linguistic characteristics in common. These were the units of social, economic, and political organizations and inter-communal relations.

In the process of colonial state-formation, groups were divided or brought together with little or no regard to their common characteristics or distinctive attributes. They were placed in new administrative frameworks, governed by new values, new institutions, and new operational principles and techniques. The autonomous local outlook of the old order was replaced by the control mechanisms of the state, in which the ultimate authority was an outsider, a foreigner. This mechanism functioned through the centralization of power, which ultimately rested on police and military force, the tools of authoritarian rule. This crude force was, however, softened by making use of traditional leaders as extended arms of state control over the tribes or the local communities, giving this externally imposed system a semblance of legitimacy for the masses. Adding to this appearance of legitimacy was the introduction of a welfare system by which the state provided meager social services and limited development opportunities to privileged sectors. National resources were otherwise extracted and exported as raw materials to feed the metropolitan industries of the colonial masters.

This new system undermined the people's indigenous system, which provided them with the means for pursuing their modest but sustainable life objectives, and replaced it with centrally controlled resources that were in short supply and subject to severely competitive demands. Development was conceived as a means of receiving basic services from the state, rather than as a process of growth and collective accumulation of wealth that could in turn be invested in further growth. The localized, broad-based, low-risk, self-sustaining subsistence activities gave way to high-risk, stratifying competition for state power and scarce resources, a zero-sum conflict of identities based on tribalism or ethnicity. Independence removed the common enemy, the colonial oppressor, but actually sharpened the conflict over centralized power and control over national resources.

Today, virtually every African conflict has some ethno-regional dimension to it. Even those conflicts that may appear to be free of ethnic concerns involve factions and alliances built around ethnic loyalties. Analysts have tended to have one of two views of the role of ethnicity in these

conflicts. Some see ethnicity as a source of conflict; others see it as a tool used by political entrepreneurs to promote their ambitions. In reality, it is both. Ethnicity, especially when combined with territorial identity, is a reality that exists independently of political maneuvers. To argue that ethnic groups are unwitting tools of political manipulation is to underestimate a fundamental social reality. On the other hand, ethnicity is clearly a resource for political manipulation.

For instance, some of which have hostilities that dated back millennia, live in largely impoverished conditions in a forced co-existence dictated by colonial-era national borders.

### **Ethnic groups in Africa**

One of the clearest examples of ethnic and racial tension in Africa is the conflict between Arabs (and the Tuareg, who are Berbers) and sub-Saharan (black) Africans. For over 1,000 years Arabs enslaved black Africans; estimates of the victims of the Arab slave trade range up to 18 million. Although the Arab slave trade began to rapidly decline in the 1960s Mauritania did not criminalize slavery until 2007 and even today tens of thousands of Africans remain enslaved through bonded labor or other forms of slavery in the region (it is estimated that 8% of Nigeriens and 10-20% of Mauritians are slaves). Beyond this predatory relationship, interaction between Arabs/Tuaregs and black Africans was somewhat limited by the vast expanse of the Sahara Desert which acted as a natural buffer zone.

That began to change in the 1800s during the “Scramble for Africa” when European powers colonized and carved the continent into what became (for the most part) the modern national borders. Arabs, Tuareg and black Africans were lumped together in a band of French and British territory stretching straight across the southern expanse of the Sahara that later became the current states of Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, and Sudan.

In the past decade four of these countries (Mali, Niger, Sudan and Chad) have experienced rebellions or civil wars fought predominantly along ethnic or racial divisions. This is not to suggest that ethnicity and race are necessarily the root cause of these conflicts and that the racial conflict was inevitable, but the role of ethnicity and race cannot be dismissed either. The ethnic and racial animosity that exists is very real and apparent to anyone who has spent time in the region. These wars occurred for a multitude of standard reasons – politics, resources, religion,

history – but it was often quite clear that ethnicity and race were determining factors when the locals chose which side to fight for.

The latest Tuareg rebellion in Mali claimed the desert north of the Niger River as the independent state of Azawad in 2012, separating the Tuaregs from the black Africans in southern Mali. The previous Tuareg rebellion (2007-2009) occurred in both Mali and Niger with the Nigerien Tuaregs demanding decentralization and that the Nigerien military in their territory be dominated by Tuaregs instead of black Africans. Sudan fought two civil wars between the Arab-dominated north and the black African south, the most recent from 1983-2005 which resulted in autonomy and later the independence of South Sudan in 2011. The Sudanese Civil War spilled over into Chad from 2005-2010 as mostly a proxy war between Sudan and South Sudan utilizing the same ethnic militias from the Sudanese Civil War. Mali, Niger, Sudan and Chad should never have existed in their current form and the redrawing of borders in Mali and Sudan is long overdue. There may unfortunately never be any widespread reconciliation between Arabs/Tuaregs and black Africans given the history of slavery, racism, discrimination and competition for resources in combination with literacy rates that are among the lowest in the world (a substantial obstacle to education programs designed to foster racial harmony). Black Africans have been continually victimized by their Arab and Tuareg neighbors in Northern Africa for over a millennium, resulting in a hatred and fear that is deeply engrained. Religious (generally Muslim vs Christian and animist) and cultural differences further exacerbate the situation. Sudan and South Sudan are now on the brink of war after less than a year of separation, feuding over border demarcation and oil revenues. Both sides are using proxy rebel forces and Sudan has conducted air strikes against targets in South Sudan. If history is any indication, the violence will slowly but surely spill over into Chad as rebel groups conduct cross-border raids. It is also likely that Uganda will intervene militarily and fight alongside South Sudan if necessary. This would escalate the conflict into looking very much like a disturbing, regional race war.

In Mali the Tuareg rebellion is far from over. As the Tuareg celebrate their declaration of the newly independent state of Azawad counter-revolutionary forces are assembling into militias of their own and revenge is at the top of their agenda. One of my sources has told me on good authority that at least some of the militias are debating whether killing off the Tuareg fighters will be enough or if they should also execute the Tuareg women and children to prevent yet

another Tuareg rebellion in the future. The rest of the war won't be fought by the Malian army and the Tuaregs, but by disparate militias that will rack up a list of human rights abuses that will dwarf those that occurred during the Libyan civil war.

These ethnic conflicts are not only limited to Africa but Nigeria too has her own shares of these conflicts. Since the return of democracy to Nigeria on May 29, 1999, parts of the Middle Belt region now better known by its new geo-political identity as North-Central Zone, have witnessed a series of communal, religious, inter and intra-ethnic crises resulting into mindless destruction of lives and property. The most affected states in the zone are Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue and Taraba states. Although Kaduna and Bauchi states are not strictly within this zone, the crises in the two states have had some effect on the zone itself.

Generally, these clashes have reduced towns (Kaduna and Jos) and villages to charred evidence of the new spirit of intolerance stalking parts of our dear nation. When the president himself visited Kaduna in the wake of the crisis, he could not find words either to express his revulsion at the degree of destruction or to condemn the perpetrators of the mayhem. For a president who is not known to be short of words, this must have been a great source of grief for him. These crises have turned thousands of people into pitiable refugees in their own homes and communities. Unfortunately, the state governments do not have the financial means to adequately respond to the resettlement and security needs of these helpless victims.

The bloody clashes in Benue and Taraba states were inter-state and inter-ethnic; those in Plateau (Jos), Nasarawa (southern senatorial zone of the state) and Kaduna states were/are intra-state and inter-ethnic. The crisis in Bauchi was both inter-ethnic and inter-state. There is thus a common characteristic of inter-ethnicity in all these clashes. There is a religious coloration to the clashes in Kaduna and Jos. The religious coloration seeks to mask the underlying fundamental cause or causes of these crises. However, its interpretation by interested analysts gives the impression that it can stand on its own. We will so treat it but bear in mind that religion is quite often a ready weapon employed to gain advantage or obtain a victim status in the unending ethnic quest for social, political and economic advantages. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the fact that the religious coloration has become as dangerous and nearly as intractable as the fundamental cause or causes of these inter-ethnic clashes.

In Nigeria, it might look like a horror movie, scene of disembowelled body of a pregnant woman, headless body of a man; dead bodies of children who died of hunger; and so on. This wasn't fiction, it's real. The ancient oil town of Warri had exploded in violence between hitherto co-existing communities. This explosion has left scars, visible and invisible. Some of the visible scars were corpses, burnt out houses that were no more than hollow shells. The streets had a desolate look as business closed down and people fled the town in panic. This was the outcome of clashes between the three ethnic groups that makeup Warri - the Ijaws and Urhobos on one hand and the Itsekiris on the other. The scale and ferocity of the destruction are quite alarming- with hundreds of lives and properties lost. The antagonism among these ethnic groups is not new; it is a festering sore; it is merely increasing in frequency.

In Ondo State, it was a replay of the Warri mayhem as the Ijaws and Ilajes, went for each other's throat with the consequent loss of hundreds of lives and property. In most cases, whole villages were razed. Even in the riverine areas like the farming communities of Aguleri and Umuleri in Anambra State, the story is the same. The conflict, over land, is not new. It happened in 1933, 1964 and 1995. But, this recent one in 1999 assumed dangerous proportions with thousands of lives and properties destroyed, as more sophisticated weapons were used.

All across Nigeria there is an ever-lengthening thread of ethnic violence: Ife/Modakeke, Ogoni and Andonis, Sagamu, Kano, Zango-Kataf, Jukuns/Tivs, etc. These are not isolated events but are interconnected. Powerful social and economic factors gave rise to them.

### **Features of war Literature**

As long as there has been war, there have been writers trying to understand it, turning battlefield horrors into narrative, trying to make something useful out of its debris. From Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, which has remained in print since its first publication in 1895, and Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, a book that dramatizes (if not romanticizes) the author's youthful experience during World War I, to Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*, the Vietnam War novel that was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award in 1990, war has inspired some of the best-known works in the American canon and in Africa as well. A good example is Chinua Achebe's *Girls at war*

Today, our war literature is no less vivid and troubling—even if it is less grand in theme and less demure in detail. The last few years have seen the publication of several notable memoirs, such as *Who Killed Daniel Pearl?* (Melville House, 2003), the international best-seller by Bernard-Henri Levy; and *Jarhead* (Scribner, 2003) by Anthony Swofford, an ex-marine who fought in the first Gulf War and later attended the Iowa Writers' Workshop. and *end of war* by Okinba Launko a short poem which also discusses the negative impacts of war. While some consider the memoirs of war as merely a trend in an industry that is informed by popular consensus, Dan Conaway, an executive editor at Putnam and the editor of *My War*, says that publishers are not “collectively banking on war memoirs as a category to be the ‘next big trend’ à la chick lit or *The Da Vinci Code* knockoffs.”

Conaway says that war has always been a “wellspring from which urgent, dramatic storytelling can emerge, and that’s certainly the case today.... But in the end, a great book is a great book, and that—the quality and originality and vitality of the work itself—is going to be what makes a book stand the test of time.”

The features of war include; Intolerance, propaganda, inordinate ambition, selfishness, political nepotism among others have accounted for many of the ethnic conflicts in Africa in general and in Nigeria in particular.

Whether or not these books will stand the test of time, writers continue to write about war to find the unarguable point of it. And readers read about war for the same reason. It’s no surprise, of course, that this goal is never reached.

Still, writers struggle to tell the truest tale, to form true opinions, and to make sense of something that is hard to understand.

### **The Nigerian Civil War**

The Nigerian Civil War, better known as the Biafran War, (6 July 1967 – 15 January 1970), was a war fought between the government of Nigeria and the secessionist state of Biafra. Biafra represented nationalist aspirations of the Igbo people, whose leadership felt they could no longer coexist with the Northern-dominated federal government. The conflict resulted from political, economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions which preceded Britain's formal decolonization of Nigeria from 1960 to 1963. Immediate causes of the war in 1966 included a military coup, a

counter-coup, and persecution of Igbo living in Northern Nigeria. Control over oil production in the Niger Delta played a vital strategic role.

Nigerian Civil War Within a year, the Federal Military Government surrounded Biafra, capturing coastal oil facilities and the city of Port Harcourt. The blockade imposed during the ensuing stalemate led to severe famine—accomplished deliberately as a war strategy. Over the two and half years of the war, there were about 100,000 overall military casualties, while between 500,000 and 2 million Biafran civilians died from starvation.

The current social political cum ethnic crises have taken a dangerous dimension in which many ethnic groups are now agitating for secession and notice of quit notice from one ethnic group to another. For instance, the Arewa youth forum an umbrella group of youth in the northern part of Nigeria gave the Igbos in the eastern part of the country three months quit notice effective from October 1st, 2017.

### **A Synopsis of Achebe's *Girls at War***

Chinua Achebe is an African English-language writer. As an author, Achebe uses the power of English words to expose, unite, and reveal various aspects of Nigerian culture. His subjects are both literary and political. In general, Achebe's writings reflect cultural diversity in twentieth century African society. He focuses on the difficulty faced by Africans who were once under the rule of British colonials but later had to struggle with issues of democracy, the evils of military rule, civil war, tribal rivalries, and dictatorship. Achebe seeks to preserve the proverbs and truths of his Ibo tribal heritage by incorporating them into his stories, whether they be in his contemporary novels or his children's tales. His works do more, however, than entertain; they reveal truths about human nature and show the destruction of power corrupted. Achebe's writing does not cast blame but delivers a message to his readers, concerning unity and the necessity for political stability in Nigerian culture and a good example is *Girls at War*:

"*Girls at War*" is a tragic love story during the civil war in Nigeria. The story is centered on the short-lived romance between a militia girl called Gladys and the Minister of Justice, living on the edge during the dangerous times of the civil war.

The story about the war between the seceding state of Biafra and Nigeria, and both the theme and the plot are foreshadowed in the spare sentence introducing the principal characters: "The

first time their paths crossed nothing happened.” The second time they meet, however, is at a checkpoint at Akwa, when the girl, Gladys, stops Reginald Nwankwo’s car to inspect it. He falls back on the dignity of his office and person, but this fails to impress her, which secretly delights and excites him. He sees her as “a beautiful girl in a breasty blue jersey, khaki jeans and canvas shoes with the new-style hair plait which gave a girl a defiant look.” Before, in the earlier stages of the war, he had sneered at the militia girls, particularly after seeing a group recruited from a high school marching under the banner “WE ARE IMPREGNABLE.” Now he begins to respect them because of the mature attitude and bearing of Gladys, who seems both patriotic and savvy, knowing and yet naïve.

The third time they meet, “things had got very bad. Death and starvation had long chased out the headiness of the early days.” Reginald is coming back to Owerri after using his influence as an official to obtain some food, unfortunately under the eyes of a starving crowd who mock and taunt him. He is something of an idealist, and this embarrasses him, but he has decided that in “such a situation one could do nothing at all for crowds; at best one could try to be of some use to one’s immediate neighbors.” Gladys is walking along in a crowd, and he picks her up, but not because he recognizes her. She has changed: She is wearing makeup, a wig, and new clothes and is now a bureaucrat and no doubt corrupt. She reminds him that she was the one who searched for him so long ago; he had admired her then, but now he just wants her, and as soon as they get into town, he takes her into an air-raid bunker after Nigerian planes fly over, strafing.

Later, they go to a party, where in the midst of Biafran starvation there is scotch, Courvoisier, and real bread, but a white Red Cross man who has lost a friend in an air crash tells them all that they stink and that any girl there will roll into bed for a fish or a dollar. He is slapped by an African officer who, all the girls think, is a hero, including Gladys, who begins to appear to the protagonist—and to the reader—as the banal, improvident child she really is. Finally, Gladys goes home and to bed with Reginald, who is shocked by the coarseness of her language. He has his pleasure and writes her off. Then he begins to think she is nothing but a mirror reflecting a “rotten, maggoty society” and that she, like a dirty mirror, needs only some cleaning. He begins to believe she is under some terrible influence. He decides to try to help her; he gives her food and money, and they drive off together to her house. He is determined to see who is there and who her friends are, to get to the bottom of her life of waste and callousness. On the way he picks up a soldier who has lost part of one leg. Before, he would not have picked up a mere

private, not only sweaty but also an inconvenience with his crutches and his talk of war. Then there is another air raid. He pushes past Gladys, who stops to go back to help the crippled soldier, and, terrified, goes into the timberline, where a near-miss knocks him senseless. When he awakes, he finds the driver sobbing and bloody and his car a wreck. "He saw the remains of his car smoking and the entangled remains of the girl and the soldier. And he let out a piercing cry and fell down again

### **The analysis of Girls at war and physiological impacts of war on girl child Education**

The amoral relationship carried out between Biafran officer Reginald Nwankwo of the Ministry of Justice and a vivacious and beautiful girl named Gladys, who works in the Fuel Directorate of the Biafran army, allows readers to gain an insight into the details of life during the war. Both Reginald and Gladys relate their own stories, divulging the degree of discomfort they feel about the social malaise in which they are caught, a decadence that seems to have eroded the very fabric of society. Nwankwo specifically holds women responsible for the decay. The story's title, which is taken from a comment made by Nwankwo about a girlfriend of Gladys's, indicates the ironic distance with which the author views Nwankwo's position. The rumors being peddled by neighbors about the trips Gladys's girlfriend repeatedly makes to spend weekends in Liberiville in the company of her boyfriend provokes Nwankwo's comment that "she [Gladys] will come back on an arms plane loaded with shoes, wigs, pants, bras, cosmetics and what have you, which she will then sell and make thousands of pounds. You girls are really at war, aren't you?". The comment is unfair since Nwankwo himself is equally guilty of profiteering from the war. In any case, Nwankwo's observation regarding the character of Gladys refutes his biased explanation of the situation.

Gladys's beauty is so startling it gives Nwankwo the impression that "she had to be in the keep of some well-placed gentleman, one of those piling up money out of the war". Her behavior is also consistent with his description of her as "a girl, who once had such beautiful faith in the struggle and was betrayed (no doubt about it) by some man ... out for a good time". Nwankwo distinguishes between those who exploit the war situation as a tactic for survival and those who are so perverted and lacking in ethical values that they take delight in making material gains from the death of others.

With Gladys's horrible death, the protagonist understands the potential for nobility within the heart and soul of even the most banal and superficial of human beings. "Girls at War" confirms Achebe's faith in humanity and in Africa. It is pathetic in this short story that underage girls in the secondary schools are recruited to join the militia that fight the ugly civil war in Nigeria this automatically leads to the stoppage of their academic career since the second Maslow's hierarchy of need that is –safety is not available, they have to abandon the secondary need of self-actualization and defend their nation as seen in the statement below;

*Before, in the earlier stages of the war, he had sneered at the militia girls,*

*Particularly after seeing a group recruited from a high school marching under the banner*

*"WE ARE IMPREGNABLE.*

The conversation between an officer in the ministry of Justice Reginald Nwankwo and Gladys shows another negative effect of war on a girl child education;

**Gladys:** *You gave me a lift to Enugu that time I left school to go and join militia.*

**Reginald:** *Ah, yes you were the girl I told you, didn't I? to go back to school because girls were not required in the militia, what happened?*

From the above conversation, it can be seen that society does conform with the girl child or even females generally to join the militia let alone a high school girl to abandon her educational career to become a militia but in a place of inter-ethnic conflict everything goes and this will eventually have a psychological effects on the child and stoppage of her educational pursuit .It must be stressed here that if you educate a girl child, you are educating a nation .

According to a German proverb, war leaves three armies: an army of cripples, an army of mourners, and an army of thieves. The costs of war may seem obvious, yet there has been remarkably little scholarly research into this subject, especially as to its long-term consequences. This paper offers one of the most original examinations of the consequences of violent conflict. Rather than simply focusing on the tragedy of war, she looks at winners and losers. "Warlords," for example, enjoy economic gains from control of resources which are the basis of their patronage networks, and will thus seek to prolong the war. This analysis, also strongly argues that collapsed states are an important component of the global economic system, as warlords,

freed from the constraints of statehood, run their territories like a very bloody business. Influenced by world systems theory, he argues that these collapsed states are in symbiotic relationships with powerful global interests that benefit from uncontrolled and monopolistic access to natural resources such as oil and gems and even educational advancement as the case of Gladys in *Girls at War*.

“The war in Somalia...is a war on the woman. Any woman between the ages of 18 and 40 is not safe from being forcibly removed to the army camps to be raped and violated. If her husband finds out, he kills her for the shame of it all; if they know that he has found out, they kill him too; if he goes into hiding instead and she won't tell where he is, they kill her.” The same harrowing experience is typically fits the experience of Gladys who is not only killed physically, morally, but is also killed educationally.

### **Conclusion**

This harrowing account illuminates all too clearly the trauma of women in conflict. Though many still assume that the primary victims of conflict are combatants, in Africa this is not at all the case. Women and children account for up to 80% of Africa's displaced people and represent the most vulnerable populations in times of crisis. Stresses placed on women are immense and encompass not only war-related physical and sexual violence, but also increasing levels of domestic abuse which result from the breakdown of traditional community and family life and the ensuing erosion of cultural mechanisms that protect and support women. Their weak status also makes them particularly vulnerable to shortages of food and medicine; meanwhile, the burdens on women and educational dislocation, painfully, if you educate a girl child, you educate a nation and vice versa. Therefore, any inter- ethnic conflicts that would affect the girl child education should be avoided by all concerned citizens and then we would have better and peaceful society.

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## **Semiotics of Identity Construction and Communicative Function in Selected Tattoos in Oyo Town**

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### **Abstract**

*Extant studies have investigated tattoos from ethnographic, historical and medical points of view with inadequate scholarly attention paid to how identities and communicative functions are explored semiotically in selected tattoos in Oyo Town. This study was, therefore, designed to investigate semiotic resources in the tattoos with a view to identifying identities and communicative functions inherent in the tattoos. Roland Barthes' semiotic theory of structuralism and communication theory served as theoretical framework. Seven (7) tattoos which were gathered using snowball sampling technique were purposively selected. Both structured and unstructured interviews, which were recorded and transcribed, were used for data collection. The analysis shows that both linguistic and non-linguistic semiotic resources are features of tattoos that imbibe traditionalist, Eurocentrist, hedonist, cultist, optimist and religionist identities. Unity, pride, pretense, rebellion, edginess, stability endurance and remembrance are communicative functions that are inherent in the tattoos.*

**Keywords:** tattoos, identity construction, communicative functions, semiotic resources

### **Introduction**

From the time immemorial, communication takes different forms, and people of different cultures have diverse ways of expressing their feelings ranging from spoken words to other forms of body language. Signs, symbols and images are conventionally imbibed by different

social groups as means of communication and one of the most common ways of communicating these marks of identity or keeping the memory of these groups is through body tattoos. Tattoos are body inscriptions that are concerned with placing permanent marks on the skin. These marks are determined by the tattoo wearers and they may be in linguistic, non-linguistic and paralinguistic forms.

Velliquette, Murray and Creyer (1998) submit that, in all cultures, irreversible forms of body inscriptions are used as a vehicle for human expression. Different cultures view tattoos from different perspectives depending on what appeals to them. Many cultures see tattoos as symbols of purity, while some see them as marks of identification and beautification. According to Bohannon (1988), people put marks on their body to signify symbols of fulfillment, group social status, or willingness to endure pain in order to please a lover. In the olden days, people wear tattoos for fun and they are usually seen as part of fashion. The mark once inscribed cannot be easily removed and because of permanent nature of tattoo, many people have chosen to wear it in order to keep a memory of pain or a loved one permanent. Tribal marks of different types, piercings, scarification, and tattoos are made on the body to communicate identity; they may signify a wide array of meanings. Some wear tattoos to denote their past experiences like holocaust, civil wars and so on. On the other hand, there are those who wear it mainly for identification rather than beautification.

In some areas in Nigeria, tattoos practice was a fashion that was highly cherished and embraced in the time past. Tattoos were placed in the forehead, chin, cheeks, arms as well as stomach and other parts of the body. Palmer (2015) affirms that tattoo is used in South-Western Nigeria as tribal identification symbol that gives information about the individual. A child was tattooed at birth for the purpose of identification and keeping memory. The date of the child's birth, the grandfather's name and the name of the compound which the child belongs to would all be inscribed in the child's stomach. Elderly men have always been saddled with the responsibility of administering tattoos on babies and young people; they are professionals, who inherited the professions.

There came a period of silence for this practice in the history of fashion in Nigeria as Olusanya (1983) confirms that tattoo marks which were initially a thing of pride, suddenly turned to a symbol of idolatry and shame. This period might be as a result of influence of religion or what

Olukayode (2018) refers to as 'youth culture' which poses a threat to the accepted norms of adult society. As observed by DeMello (2007) that facial tattoos were viewed as extreme and socially unacceptable in any context, the custom and culture of facial tattoo in form of tribal marks is also being suppressed till today in South-Western Nigeria, though some local areas are still into the practices.

The practice of tattoo did not attract the attention of scholars for decades ago until recently when it is becoming a common phenomenon in different cultures of the world especially among the youths. Different schools have come up with different opinions about this practice. Effects of tattoos have been properly investigated by different researchers from medical lines; ethnographers have also done much on cultural value of tattoos. Language researchers are not left out in exploring the linguistic significance of tattoos. It is therefore pertinent to examine some of these works from semiotic viewpoints. The purpose of this study therefore is to explore the identities and the communicative functions hidden in signs and symbols of selected tattoos.

### **Literature Review/Statement of the Problem**

Research on tattoos from a socio-cultural perspective has yielded various findings. Howard (2017) explores how individuals construct their identities through tattoos, shedding light on intercultural communication and subcultures within society. Zambrano (2018) conducted a mixed-methods study, revealing that individuals with tattoos wear them to convey meaningful identities and construct different meanings. These findings suggest that tattoos play a significant role in identity construction and self-expression.

Martin (2018) investigates the growing trend of tattooing in his book "Tattooed Lives: The Indelible Experience of Meaning and Identity Body Art", examining the experiences of both tattoo enthusiasts and artists. By integrating symbolic interactionism, social semiotics, and Bauman's concept of liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000), Martin provides a comprehensive understanding of how tattoos serve as a means of meaning-making and semiotic expression for individuals within their broader social and cultural contexts (Martin, 2018). This thesis draws on extensive qualitative research, including over a year of ethnographic fieldwork in a tattoo studio and semi-structured interviews with enthusiasts. The findings indicate that, despite the fluidity of modern life, individuals continue to use tattoos as a means of self-expression, identity formation, and emotional connection. Moreover, the research reveals that tattoo artists must possess a high

level of dramaturgical discipline and symbolic interaction skills to navigate the evolving cultural landscape of their practice. This shift has led to tattooists being recognized as tattoo artists, and the art form has become more artistically demanding and aesthetically sophisticated. The study highlights the ways in which tattoo enthusiasts and artists co-construct meaning and identity through the tattooing process.

Lionberger (2021) examined the performative aspect of tattoos through the lens of semiotics, revealing how tattoos function as tangible signs that people use to express trauma. His research shows that tattoos serve as a means of communication, allowing individuals to convey their experiences and emotions through a visible symbol. Moreover, Lionberger argues that the performance of tattoos can elicit an ethical response from others, whether individuals or society at large, to acknowledge and address the trauma that others have endured. In this way, tattoos become a powerful tool for storytelling, healing, and social connection.

While all these scholars and some others have explored tattoos from different perspectives, sufficient attention has not been given to communicative function inherent in tattoos. Communication theory of identity by Hecht (1993) and Barthe's theory are not also sufficiently adopted in exploring tattoos. This work is therefore presented to fill this vacuum in the previous studies.

### **Theoretical Framework:**

The theoretical frameworks adopted for this study are communication theory of identity and an aspect of Roland Barthe Semiotic theory. Hecht (1993) proposed a communication theory of identity, positing that identity is shaped through interaction and communication. According to this theory, identity is not solely defined by individual or societal constructs, but also emerges through interactions with others. Hecht identifies four interconnected frames of identity: personal, enacted, relational, and communal. These frames represent different perspectives on identity, which intersect and influence one another. The personal frame focuses on individual identity and self-concept, while the enacted frame considers how identity is performed and presented to others. The relational frame examines identity in the context of relationships and interactions, and the communal frame looks at identity as shaped by group membership and community. These frames offer a nuanced understanding of identity as a dynamic and communicative process (Hecht, 1993).

According to Hecht (1993), there are four frames of identity that shape our understanding of self. The personal frame refers to the internal sense of self, encompassing self-cognitions, emotions, and spiritual identity. The enacted frame emerges through social interactions, where identity is performed and communicated to others. The relational frame highlights the mutual construction of identity within relationships, while the communal frame emphasizes the role of group membership in shaping identity. These frames are interconnected and influence one another, offering a nuanced understanding of identity as a complex and multifaceted construct.

Barthes' semiotic theory of structuralism explains two types of sign system: the denotative sign system and the connotative sign system. Signs and symbols create value and meaning in culture and community through signification. Semiotics is closely tied to visual semiotic analysis, which represents ideologies through images and symbols (Barthes, 1964). Mostafalou (2016) builds on this theory, identifying three levels of semiotic signification: denotation, connotation, and myth or mythology. The denotative level refers to the literal meaning of images and photographs, while the connotative level involves the deeper meanings associated with words, images, and photographs. The myth or mythology level represents the cultural values and beliefs that underlie the connotative meaning, shaping societal norms and perspectives (Mostafalou, 2016).

## **Methodology**

Population for this study consists of tattoo wearers in Oyo town. Seven of these tattoo wearers were sourced, using snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling method is used when the population of research is not easy to reach. It is a form of non-probability sampling technique which can be used to recruit participants via other participants. The participants in this study are tattoo wearers. The researcher therefore adopted snowball sampling technique. An access to a respondent paved way to others.

The study is qualitative in nature and as a result, both semi-structured and unstructured interviews were adopted for data gathering from the selected respondents in this study. The semi-structured interview consisted of a set of premeditated questions by the researcher in order to collect information related to the objectives of this study. The unstructured interviews were included to cater for some other information that was later discovered during the researcher-respondents' interaction which was later useful in this study. Seven respondents were

interviewed using iPhone camera in recording the interactions and capturing the images of the tattoos.

## **Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings**

### **4.1 Tattoo 1**



Tattoo 1 is an image of local drum and guitar inscribed in the shoulder.

The identity created in Tattoo 1 is traditionalist and Eurocentric. Traditionalist identity has to do with cultural heritage and preservation; it imbibes family values and community ties, historical legacy and ancestral roots. Eurocentric identity as it is portrayed in this tattoo is related to Christian values and religious superiority. The tattooed managed personal cum relational frames of identity (Hecht 1993). According to the tattooed, peer pressure lured him into having tattoos and that the young adults may be affected by peer pressure to get tattoos. The tattooed professed that he followed his friends to visit tattoos shop where they wanted to have the symbol of knife as tattoo on their body. The intension of these friends was primarily to create a sense of belonging or to communicate threat to some group of enemies somewhere. It was further discovered that that young adult may employ tattooing to build upon existing desires to be valuable, unique and stand out. The tattooed participant was, however, overruled with self-cognition, self-feeling and self-devotion to his lineage interest and religion.

The tattooed decided to have images of a local drum and a guitar. According to the tattooed himself, he is from drummers' family (Alayan) where drumming has become their profession. He was trained in his family to become a professional drummer. On the other hand, he had interest in playing guitar. The passion he had for playing these musical instruments was so strong

that he needed to express it through the tattoo symbols of the two musical instruments instead of the idea of the image of knife from his friends. From the tattoo symbols, the tattooed was able to express his personal identity as a drummer, a lover of music, a Christian, a lover of his culture and a Yoruba man. Also, it is discovered that tattoos as non-verbal signs and symbols are parts of discursive mix used to communicate individual and group identity.

A local drum in a general sense is a double-headed hour-glass drum with one end larger than the other. It is an important drum in the culture of Yoruba people. It is used for traditional and religious activities. Connotatively, the *bata* drum serves as a symbol of cultural heritage and identity within the Yoruba tradition of Nigeria. The distinct sound of *bata* drum evokes a sense of cultural pride, identity assertion and cultural affirmation. Bata drum can serve as a vehicle for oral tradition, preserving cultural ideas and transferring history to future generations. The image of the local drum can represent connection to tradition, culture, history and ancestral roots. It connotes that the tattooed is connected with his ancestral root; he is knowledgeable about his culture and traditions. The tattoo (local drum) suggests that the tattooed is a traditionalist and he gives a special regard to the profession (drumming).

A guitar in denotative sense is a stringed musical instrument usually made of wood with six strings and a long neck played with the fingers or a plectrum. It is commonly used in Christian religious activities. The guitar can connote personal expression and emotional communication. It can also stand as a symbol in Christianity. The image of guitar on the left shoulder of the tattooed depicts connection with Christianity. In one way or the other, the tattooed has something to do with Christianity. Shoulder in denotative sense is part of human body located at the upper part of the body. Connotatively, placing tattoo on the shoulder indicates a form of personal expression. It is a show of burden, responsibility and passion for something. It can be an indicator of pride or ego.

Generally, the images of the two musical instruments indicate that the tattooed is a lover of music. It connotes that he is not being driven by any religious sentiment, the tattooed freely relates with both traditional and Christian religions. The symbols can still be observed as a representation of unity between traditional and modern cultures. The shoulders where the tattoos are placed are significant. Putting something on shoulder can figuratively mean being responsible or obligated for something. Having the tattoos on the shoulders connotes tremendous

responsibility or passionateness of the tattooed for both religions and for local and modern music. This is affirmed by the tattooed himself that he had a great passion for beating drum and playing guitar in churches and also performing his traditional rites as a local professional drummer. The image of *bata* on the tattooed serves as an agent of transforming historical narratives of his lineage to future generations.

#### 4.2. Tattoo 2



#### Iconic Statue of Liberty, 'Richtalk'

The tattoo 2 is United States of America symbol of freedom, which portrays Eurocentric identity through the linguistic form of *richtalk* that reveals the innermost identity of the tattooed of his desire for riches. The logo is an identity of a personal journey towards freedom and new opportunities; it shows the tattooed pride in American values. The tattoo is a Eurocentric identity which depicts the western cultural dominance, European history and achievements.

The Statue of Liberty is an iconic symbol of the United States. It features Lady Liberty holding a torch in one hand and a tablet inscribed with the date of the American Declaration of Independence in the other. Therefore, the tattoo communicates a strong sense of American national identity, patriotism and cultural pride. The tattoo wearer is not an American but a Nigerian, therefore, his affinity for American ideas and his pursuit for opportunities can be clearly viewed in the tattoo. Not only that, the linguistic form *richtalk* that accompanies the USA logo in his tattoo can also suggest that the tattooed desires travelling abroad in search for greener pasture especially in time like this in Nigeria when people see travelling abroad as a means of

getting rich. Having the tattoo on the shoulder also connotes the passion of the tattooed for travelling to USA.

### **4.3 Tattoo 3**



Tattoo 3 is a snake, star symbol, “T money”, “my god and my prayer I want to be a Billionaire”

The identity created is hedonist. The tattooed is a young boy who chose to express his desire for money through his tattoo. The 'T' in 'T Money' is the first letter of the tattooed name which is 'Tobi'. He tried to associate his name with money. The prayer of the tattooed is also on money begging God to answer his prayer of becoming a billionaire. The tattooed actually did not give his total attention in this interview. He was restless and could not respond to some of the questions posed to him by the researcher. Nevertheless, a close study of the tattoos helped to understand the identity of the tattooed as somebody whose consistent desire is to get money and not even in naira but in dollar. The snake symbol also portrays the identity of this young tattooed as a dangerous or wicked person. Going about with snake tattoo speaks of the tattooed identity as being venomous, powerful, troublesome, rebellious and edgy.

A snake is a venomous animal; it is a limbless reptile with venomous elongated body. A snake can connote evil or danger; it can be attributed to cunning or deceitful behaviour. The position of the snake on the tattooed suggests danger or harm. The snake is with its mouth wide open meaning that it is ready to bite. The tattooed may be viewed as troublesome fellow, who always wants to harm others. In another way round; Yoruba describes somebody who is too conscious of money as a person who does not mind getting money from a snake's mouth. Considering the

linguistic content of the tattoos with the image of snake can therefore suggest the inordinate ambition of the young tattooed for riches. The ambition of the tattoo wearers should not also have been tagged inordinate if he is not a small boy who is not expected at that age to acquire riches but rather to be in school for learning. The words 'MONEY', Billionaire, Dollar, in his prayer and his name suggest that the tattooed desire for money is questionable.

The tattoo of star may communicate fame or popularity. You need to say something on star identity.

#### 4.4 Tattoo 4



**Tattoo 4** shows anchor, 'I refuse to sink'

The identity constructed here is optimist. The tattooed is a man of thirty-seven years. He got his tattoo ten years ago and he still admires it till now. The linguistic inscription is *I refuse to sink* and it is attached with image of an anchor. The tattoo is an identity of an enthusiast, a survivor and an optimist. According to him, I have faced a lot in life and I believe I will not be overcome by any of the problems of life. An anchor is an identity of a sailor, according to the tattooed; it is a sign of security. The tattoos are expression of the tattooed positive mind to life challenges.

A tattoo with the linguistic inscription *I refuse to sink* communicates a lot to the viewers. The statement connotes positivity. It can suggest hope in difficult situation, stability in the face of life challenges and determination to overcome problems. An anchor is a device used to hold a ship or a boat in place. From connotative lens, an anchor tattoo can be viewed as a symbol of stability, steadfastness, and security. Considering the linguistic side of the tattoo with the image of anchor, it can be deduced that the linguistic inscription is the interpretation of the image. The tattoos can

also depict that the tattooed is connected to something (may be a greater power) that makes him unshakeable. The tattoos also suggest that the tattooed is being faced with many difficulties and which he believes that none of them can overcome him. Nobody sinks from the head but from the leg, therefore, the placement of the tattoo at the ankle is of great significant.

#### 4.5 Tattoo 5



Tattoo 5 has 16 ; 8; 08, AMUNDA, ILE ; OLORIOSO, OYO

The tattoo is Yoruba local tattoo and it is imposed on the tattooed; it is placed on her by her parents for identification. The surname of the child which is the grandfather's name, the compound name and the birthdate of the tattooed are inscribed on the abdomen of the tattooed. The child can be easily identified, traced or located if she gets missed and if there is a wrong father's claim over the child. Names are very important especially in Africa culture; they reveal one's ethnic group, religious belief, parental belief and others (Ayinuola, 2020). The name "Amunda" is an Islamic religious mark of identity; it is the tattooed grandfather's name which depicts that the tattooed is a Muslim. The birthday of the tattooed is inscribed to keep the memory of when she was born. The idea of keeping record white and blue was not common in those days. The best method for them then was to write on the wall with chalk or to inscribe on the body for the purpose of remembrance or keeping record. The numbers "15: 8: 2008" show familial identity, they are symbols of the day, the month and the year the tattooed was born, by implication, the tattooed was born on fifteenth day of August in the year 2008. "Ile:Olori Oso" is a marker of ancestral identity, it is the name of the clan from where the tattooed has come.

Generally, the tattoo is familial identity where there is a wrong claim of ownership over the child (the tattooed). The sign ‘*Amuda*’ is one of the praise names given to male children in Yoruba culture; it is the grandfather’s name of the tattooed which has become the tattooed surname. The sign “*Ile Olori Oso*” is a compound name in Oyo town. It connotatively means a house or compound that belongs to a leader of wizards. The tattooed date of birth is 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2008.

From connotative sense, different meanings can be inferred from the tattoo marks imposed on the tattooed. Yoruba people give special regard to grandfathers and it is one of the reasons the grandfathers’ names are taken as surnames. The direct father of the tattooed might not be popular as such but the grandfather being an elderly man has been popularly known by many people. If the child gets lost, those that find her can easily locate the family where she comes from. Names influence people psychologically. The name of the tattooed’s clan “*Olori-Oso*” can terrify anyone who may make attempts to kidnap the tattooed. The name ‘*Olori-Oso*’ (leader of wizards) sounds scary and nobody will want to trespass. The abdomen where the tattoo is located is a meaningful signal. Having the tattoo at that location (abdomen) implies that the parents of the tattooed keep people in suspense on the ownership of the child. If there is any wrong claim of the child’s ownership, the right owner of the child can gently and surprisingly reveal the marks of identification.

#### **4.5 Tattoo 6**



Tattoo 6 has the inscription *FILA, 777*

The identity is cultist. Fila is a well-known sports apparel brand, according to the tattooed, it is just an indication of fondness and appreciation for the brand's values. For the numbers 777, the tattooed explained that it is the date that has been unanimously fixed by his group (unnamed) all

over the nation Nigeria to celebrate. He added that the celebration is observed July 7 of every year. From this explanation, it can be deduced that the symbolic numerals is cultist identity. There is another symbol on the tattooed which he refused to disclose what it stands for, he said 'don't go near that area'

The number 777 may communicate various meanings across cultures and beliefs. The numbers can symbolise perfection or completion. In gambling context, the number is associated with good fortune and wealth. All these meanings are just interpretive possibilities but the real meanings of these particular tattoo symbols were properly explored during the interaction of the researcher with the tattoo wearer. The 777 stands for July 7 of every year which is the date the group members have picked for their celebration. The inscription of the number serves as a reminder. Only the group members can actually attach correct meaning to the tattoo except for those who the tattooed has chosen to explain it to. The inscription of FILA may communicate fame or popularity as the tattooed would want to identify with the popular Italian brand. Having the tattoos at the dorsum (top of the hand) can suggest that the tattooed is rebellious, intentionally defying norms around socially-acceptable bodily inscriptions.

#### **4.7 Tattoo 7**



Tattoo 7: Rosary, Clapped hands, 'Let Christ lead you, get the path to follow'

Religionist identity was created in tattoo 7. The tattoo wearer is heavily tattooed with different symbols, clapped hands, rosary and some Bible verses. The symbol of clapped hands tied with a

rosary is a religion identity; it is an identity that the tattooed is a Christian from Catholic denomination. The symbols are identities of a praying fellow. The Bible verses 'Let Christ lead you, get the path to follow', according to the tattooed are expression of faith in God's guidance and direction. The tattooed also did it for aesthetic purpose and the heaviness of the tattoo according to the tattooed himself is a sign of subjection to endurance and ability to bear pain.

Literarily, the rosary and clapped hands tattoos denote religiosity; the symbols are used in both Islam and Christianity especially in catholic denomination. In connotative sense, when the linguistic aspect of the tattoos is considered along with the images of rosary and clapped hands, it suggests that the tattooed is a Christian from catholic denomination, it suggest that the tattooed believed in the Supreme Being (God). Having the tattoos on the shoulder depicts that the tattooed is passionate about his denomination; it suggests the tattooed is a prayerful man that depends on God's guidance.

### **Conclusion**

It is essential to recognise that people have their unique experiences, beliefs and reasons for their actions, tattoo wearers do not just decide to hurt their bodies for no reason, their tattoos speak volume of their identities. These identities are Eurocentrism, traditionalism, theism, cultism, hedonism, and optimism. The symbols and images of tattoos are also embedded not only with literal meanings but also with cultural meanings which are their (tattoos) communicative functions identified in this paper, they are, unity, pride, pretence, rebellion, edginess, endurance and remembrance. Tattoo practice therefore is a greener pasture for language researchers where they could further investigate pragmatic intentions and strategies of tattoo wearers.

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