

JOURNAL OF ISSUES IN LANGUAGE AND LITERARY STUDIES (IL&LS)

of the

Department of English

Faculty of Humanities

Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo

Oyo State, Nigeria.

Volume 10, Number 1, December 2024

ISSN: 2659-0212

eISSN: 1595-3440

Online access to and submission of articles: <https://illsjournal.acuoyo.net/>

and

email: editors.ills@gmail.com

Telephone: +234 8036661540

MANAGING EDITOR

Professor Solanke, S. O

Department of English,

Faculty of Humanities,

Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo

Oyo State, Nigeria

+234 8036661540

EDITORS

Oduola, M. O. Ph.D.

Department of English,

Faculty of Humanities,

Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo

Oyo State, Nigeria

Agboola, O.T. Ph.D.

Department of English,

Faculty of Humanities,

Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo

Oyo State, Nigeria

EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS

Professor Olu Obafemi FNAL

*Department of English,
University of Ilorin,
Ilorin, Nigeria*

omoajon@yahoo.com

Professor Ayo Kehinde

*Department of English,
University of Ibadan,
Ibadan, Nigeria*

ayobamikehinde2000@yahoo.com

Professor Duro Adeleke

*Department of Linguistics and
African Languages,
University of Ibadan,
Ibadan, Nigeria*

duroadeleke@yahoo.com

Professor Sola T. Babatunde

*Department of English,
University of Ilorin,
Ilorin, Nigeria*

solababatunde2012@gmail.com

Professor Olatunde Ayodabo

*Department of English,
Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo
Oyo State, Nigeria*

ayodabolatunde@yahoo.com

Professor Ahmad K. Babajo

*Department of English & Drama,
Kaduna State University,
Kaduna, Nigeria*

drbabajo@yahoo.com

Nahum U. Butari, U. Ph.D.

*Department of English & Drama
Kaduna State University,
Kaduna, Nigeria*

nwunubete@yahoo.com

Journal of Issues in Language and Literary Studies (IL&LS) is a bi-annual peer-reviewed journal of the Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, focusing on essays and research works in linguistic theory, general language and literary studies. Given the volume and quality of patronage from diverse backgrounds and the acceptance of earlier editions published from 2013, the Journal has now metamorphosed into a full-fledged University-based journal published bi-annually, with reputable scholars as consultants. The establishment of the journal is considered a milestone development, given the tremendous scholarly interest that English and Nigerian languages and studies of Literature in English and English Literature attract locally, nationally and internationally at different academic fora.

Contributors are, therefore, invited to submit reports of original research for consideration in *IL&LS*. Preference shall be given to the presentation of new theories, as well as data-based papers.

Instructions for Contributors

The *Journal of Issues in Language and Literary Studies (IL&LS)* is a bi-annual (June and September) publication of the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo. The focus of *IL&LS* is to capture all the levels of English usage globally, drawing from classical theories and principles of language, literature and linguistics, and with case studies, data and illustrations from activities, experiences and situations around the globe. In this regard, we welcome papers that cover the following areas:

- a) General Linguistics- Psycholinguistics, Historical Linguistics, Computational Linguistics;
- b) English in Nigeria- History of English in Nigeria, Phonology of English in Nigeria, Morphological processes, Syntax, Semantics of English in Nigeria;
- c) Pragmatics- Analysis of language in use;
- d) Applied Linguistics- Utility values of applied linguistics (Stylistics, Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics);
- e) Sociolinguistics- Language variation: regional, social, occupational, etc. varieties;
- 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)
- i) Popular Culture (films, music and stand-up comedy)

- j) Gender Discourse (with a focus on contemporary theories)
- k) Literature and Law (recreation of legal and judicial matters in literary texts)
- l) Literature and Environmental Studies
- m) Any other topic(s) reflecting language, literature and linguistics not mentioned.

Note to Contributors

Language: This should be simple and communicative enough for the target audience (students at the tertiary level, scholars, and researchers). Illustrations should be devoid of religious, political, racial, or gender colorations except where the context demands. Contributors should explain technical words, where applicable.

Structure and Formatting: The Title should be a brief phrase describing the paper's contents. The title page should include the authors' full names and affiliations, as well as the name of the corresponding author, along with phone and e-mail information. Present addresses of authors should appear as a footnote.

Referencing: Contributions can be in MLA or APA, depending on the contributor's choice.

Abstract: This should not be more than 300 words with not more than 6 Keywords

Introduction: This should provide a clear statement of the problem, the relevant literature on the subject, and the proposed approach or solution. It should be understandable to colleagues from a broad range of scientific disciplines.

The volume of an article: A chapter contribution should be between 3000 and 5000 words processed in MS Word format. All manuscript portions 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 spelled 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.

Authors are responsible for securing permissions from copyright works, as well as for providing high-resolution files of images for reproduction. If your chapter contains extracts from other works, especially Figures, Tables, Poetry, etc., please obtain permission from the authors and publishers before submitting the final version to *IL&LS*.

The journal is online, domiciled and hosted on the website of Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Nigeria. There are no hard copies.

All contributions, correspondences and inquiries should be sent to editors.ills@gmail.com.

Managing Editor

Content

Volume 10, Number 1, December 2024

- 1. Laura Haruna-Banke and Anastesia Ikyase. Nature's Aesthetics in Dalene Matthee's *Dream Forest: An Ecofeminist Outlook*.**
- 2. Febisola Olowolayemo Bright. Pragmatic and Socio-Cognitive Reading of Selected Ugo Jesse's Politically-Motivated Online Cartoons in Nigeria.**
- 3. Olanike Olaneru. Echoes of Environmental Degradation and Social Dislocation in Niyi Osundare's *City Without People*.**
- 4. Simeon Ajiboye and Shirley Olatunji. "Speak Up and Say Malaria Must Die": Pragmatic Acts of Malaria-related E-adverts.**
- 5. Ayodabo, J. O., Oduola, M. O. and Olanrewaju, R. F. Language, Style, and Ideology in Selected Nigerian Banks' Advertising Slogans: Doing Things with Words Exemplified.**
- 6. Oriola Titilope Oluwaseun. Metaphoric Representation of Barrenness as Witchcraft in Kunle Afolayan's "Anikulapo" and "The Rise of the Spectre".**
- 7. Salawu Rashidat Omotola. Politeness Strategies in the Communicative Sequence of Characters in Toyin Abiodun's *The Trials of Afonja*.**
- 8. Oduola, M. O. and Adeleke, A. J. Discourse of Politics and Politicking with Politeness in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's National Broadcast on Oil Subsidy Removal.**
- 9. Halima Tosin Oladimeji. Cognitive Dynamics of Creative Writing and the Place of the English Language.**
- 10. Dubamo Tomere and Damilola Ajakaye. #ENDBADGOVERNMENT Vs #SAYNOTOPROTEST: The Multimodality of the *Days Of Rage* Online Protests and Counter-Protests in Nigeria.**
- 11. Busari, Jibola Kaosara. Disintegration and Historical Imperatives: A Postcolonial Criticism of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half Of A Yellow Sun*.**
- 12. Halima Tosin Oladimeji. Digital Pedagogy and Tools in Enhancing English Language Teaching in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions.**
- 13. Yakubu, Salamat O. and Omolaoye, Adenike O. Linguistic Devices and Meaning Significations in Covid -19 Safety Precaution Signs.**
- 14. Kifayat Gambari-Olufadi. Comparative Approach to Accommodation Strategies in Selected Doctor-Patient Interactions in the Nupe and Yoruba Contexts.**

15. Avwata Elizabeth Erivona. Sisterhood as Survival Strategy: Overcoming Child-marriage Trauma in Phebe Jatau's *The Hounds*, and Maryam Bobi's *Bongel*.

Nature's Aesthetics in Dalene Matthee's *Dream Forest*: An Ecofeminist Outlook

Laura Haruna-Banke (PhD)

*Department of English Education,
Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University,
Makurdi, Benue State.*

laurabankr@gmail.com, 08034401374

and

Anastesia Ikyase

*Department of English Education,
Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University,
Makurdi, Benue State.*

ikyaseann21@gmail.com, 08139598382

Abstract

This article examines the realities of the coexistence between humanity and the natural environment. It explores what an ecofeminist outlook might entail by discussing the beauties embedded in nature's elements by employing Dalene Matthee's *Dream Forest*. The aim is to examine nature's aesthetics in *Dream Forest* from an ecofeminist outlook. The study applies the ecofeminist theory for its analysis. A theory that sees a close connection between nature and the woman and argues that the depletion of nature amounts to the oppression of the woman. Using the content research method, the article analysed the novel to unveil the similarities between humanity and nature elements. The study established that everything nature spells beauty, that nature is alive- it has a voice, can feel, hear and is therapeutic. The paper concludes that humanity owes it a duty to respect, preserve and protect nature and nature elements for the benefit of future generations.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Nature, Ecofeminism, Preservation, Women

Introduction

According to Kathryn Miles, more than four decades have passed since the French feminist Francoise d'Eaubonne coined ecofeminism. This was on the occasion of the publication of the book *Le Feminism Ou LA mort* in 1974 (1). From then on, ecofeminist values, principles, practices, tenets and orientations have been explained, described, questioned and criticized. In light of the above, studies have shown how environmental problems such as pollution of air and water, land degradation, deforestation, and the extinction of animal and vegetal species all tend to affect the peace of humanity. These circumstances by no means are fueled by the uncaring attitude of humanity toward the natural environment, jettisoning the conservation and preservation of nature and ultimately destroying it. As a theory and a movement, ecofeminism maintains a healthy, beautiful and conducive environment for all life forms. This is because its campaign shows consideration for humans, plants and animals. The movement advocates for a relationship between nature and humanity that will showcase nature's aesthetics. Writers in the field of literature have given a significant place in their works to the natural environment. The works of fiction are used as tools to bring to the fore the beauty that lies in nature, they are also used to impress on humanity to necessarily conserve and preserve nature for future generations. As an interdisciplinary field, ecofeminism is interested among others in interrogating the complex relationship between humans and non-humans. The aim is to make readers conscious of their environment and to compel an earth-centered angle to literary studies.

Etymologically, the term 'ecofeminism' derives from two different words 'ecology' and 'feminism'. While ecology is the term that relates to plants and animals as well as their environment, feminism is a women's movement that campaigns for equity of the right between males and females in society. In this paper, ecofeminism is discussed as the study of ecology and how women relate to it. It also implies the campaign by women over the right of the natural environment to ensure its beauty. The objective of this paper is to view and explain ecofeminism as the move by women as well as their contribution to unearth the beauty of nature and nature elements, as exemplified in Dalene Matthee's *Dream Forest*. The next section dwells on the theoretical framework adopted for this research.

Theoretical Framework

Ecofeminism is the apt theory that gives a clear understanding of the discussion in this study because it emphasises that both women and nature must be respected. Therefore, such a tenet of the theory validates the theory's choice as a theoretical base for this study. Historically, Ecofeminism was born out of the strong desire to eradicate all forms of social injustices, including those against women and nature. According to Kathryn Miles, the French feminist Francoise d'Eaubonne coined the word when she argued that there are particular and significant connections between woman and nature (2016.) To this, Karen Warren adds that ecofeminism relates the oppression and domination of all subordinate groups (women, children, the poor) to the oppression and domination of nature (animal land, water, air, etc.). All these groups have been subjected to oppression, domination, exploitation, and colonization by patriarchal societies that emphasise and value men. (1997). Ecofeminism expanded over time, and strands such as nature-culture, social constructionist ecofeminism, and spiritual ecofeminism were born. Some notable proponents of ecofeminism around the globe include Caroline Merchant, Karen Warren, Vandana Shiva, Kathryn Miles, Salleh Ariel, etc. The following section is a discussion on a review of related literature.

Review of Related Literature

Though published in 2006, Matthee's *Dream Forest* has hardly enjoyed reviews in articles and other scholarly works; however, several online scholars have reviewed the novel. They highlight various themes for their discussions. In her review titled, 'Beautiful and Magical', reviewers such as Sue narrates the plot while expressing her excitement about the storyline and how magical the forest is presented in the novel. On her part, Linda Hendry does a character analysis of the novel while depicting it as portraying the protagonist, Karoliena Kapp, as a heroine that people misunderstand in her attempts to do good. Another reviewer is Andrea Nucholenas, who compares *Dream Forest* to Matthee's other novels. He states that in her description of the Knysna forest, the setting of all her novels, she romantically brings her readers close to nature by making them perceive the trees and hear the birds close to them. Essentially, Nucholenas reviews the novel from an ecocritical perspective. In a Journal article titled "Wild Volksmoeder in the Forest: An analysis of the Human-non-human relationship in Dalene Matthee's *Dream Forest*", Delia Rabie discusses the relationship between human and non-human from an ecocritical angle. According to the

reviewer, the novel suggests a connection between the sexist and class treatment of the protagonist Karoliena and the deforestation of the Knysna Forest. In his article titled “Identity, place and “the Gaze” in *The Woodlanders*” by Thomas Hardy and *Dream Forest* by Dalene Matthee, Pat Louw focuses on the theme of identity. He pays attention to the identity of the people in the novel as constructed about the forest. He argues that the people live, work and suffer in the forest, all of which inform their identity. Like Andrea Nucholenas and Delia Rabie, Louw also employs the ecocriticism theory in his review of the novel. While the foregoing reviewers read *Dream Forest* from a diver’s angle, the preoccupation of this article is to examine nature’s aesthetics from an ecofeminist perspective, paying attention to and directing its argument on how nature is giving due attention in the novel. The following section looks at the synopsis and discusses the theme of nature’s aesthetics in Matthee’s *Dream Forest*.

Synopsis: *Dream Forest* is a forest novel. It tells the story of the intimate relationship between an initiated forest woman and the heart of the forest and how it becomes an obstacle in her experience with the man she loves. Karoliena Kapp, the protagonist, is an only child of an unsympathetic mother who has had three men. A streak of lightning had killed her father while she was young, causing her to access the forest as her primordial mother. Karoliena is beautiful and is soon spotted by Johannes, the child of a woodcutter who frees himself from the stranglehold of poverty in the forest and makes Karoliena his wife. The union between the two does not enjoy the traditional togetherness of a husband and wife, as Karoliena’s heart remained with the forest till the end.

Analysis of Nature Aesthetics in Matthee’s *Dream Forest*

This section discusses the realities associated with the connection between humanity and the natural environment, which is a given. Such realities, however, do not present without complexities. The idea of bringing to the fore a necessary connection between humanity and nature is one of the principles that the theory of ecofeminism campaigns strongly for, which this article through *Dream Forest* foregrounds. Further, the idea of nature’s aesthetic is examined and discussed about the connection between nature and humanity, especially the woman.

In the novel, the world of the forest and the village in Knysna are juxtaposed, each representing a different order of existence. The forest makes a mystical existence possible, the kind of ecstasy Karoliena looks for, while life in the village is dedicated to the self-directed search for money.

Karoliena is in love with Johannes; however, she uses the first opportunity to run away from Johannes straight back to the forest because she knows something is wrong the very first day after their wedding ceremony. She made the wrong choice, leaving the forest. She exchanged her precious freedom for a cage and returned to the forest.

Employing the character of Karoliena Kaap and using content analysis, this article showcases the beauty of everything in nature, which is scarcely visible to ordinary eyes. Through the actions of Karoliena, Matthee depicts that women have inherited a global environmental reality that they must necessarily alter. In *Dream Forest*, the Knysna forest is the setting in which Karoliena's connection and activities of showing pride in the elements of nature are situated; her character and role contribute to the conservation of the beauty of nature. One of the ways she displays regard for nature is that, like an ecofeminist, she does not see a distinction between human and non-human nature; she appreciates the fact that they are alive, can feel, have a voice, and can speak. This is affirmed in the narrative when she speaks to the trees using statements such as "tree ..., I wish I could go and stay somewhere deep in the forest until I can see the light again, it's so dark around me" (150). She speaks to the tree because she believes it is alive and can hear. In affirming that the tree is alive are the following words by Old Man Botha: "The tree blows out his breath when he falls, just like a human. The spirit is his breath" (151).

There is an uncommon and unpopular attachment between Karoliena and nature elements. The elements are at home with her, coming to her without fear, as displayed in the narrative: "Tree, she said look, there's a little bird sitting on my hand ... then it hopped boldly on to her other hand" (133). In affirming that there is a great similarity between humans and nature, the narrative states that there are "signs of life in the sleeping forest. All those creatures that slept by day woke up and quietly went about their lives" (133) ... "which meant that the trees had woken up too" (138). The idea that nature possesses the ability to speak is also visible in the narrative, "...and when he hisses like a snake, he's telling the elephants that you're close" (49). By this, the author is sending out the idea that nature elements have their ways of communicating even when humans might not understand. Karoliena's close connection with elements of nature propels her to deeply appreciate their beauty. She is heard for instance speaking in praise of the ambience and freshness of nature elements in the following words: "the whole swamp was covered with the most beautiful red lines; so beautiful that it was unreal" ... "if this really was the elephants' garden, they had chosen the

most amazing place to hide it” (160). Also, she beautifies nature by personifying them, such attributes abound in the novel. The forest for instance “was in utter chaos and seemed exhausted from the turmoil” and “... her father told her the forest was resting” (162), also, “the forest was actually in pain because of the draught” (252). All the foregoing statements show how human features are attributed to nature, which stems from the belief that they are also alive. On another accession, the narrative attributes eyes and legs to the tree in the following statement; “A stink-wood tree, with eyes that could see from deep inside. A tree that started walking slowly along the footpath into Kom’s bush” (168).

The narrative advances its description in such a way that an astute reader is equipped with a wholesome picture of nature elements as no different from humans. An addition to the description is the fact that nature has a voice and can make sounds, though to be heard only by people like Karoliena who has according to the ecofeminist Karen Warren, been transformed by simply connecting with nature (187). Such is depicted in the narrative as the reader observes that Karoliena “listened to the sound of the forest” (179), “... River says we may cross”, and “can a river speak?” “Yes. You must always ask his permission; you can’t just go through” (150). Because Karoliena connects well with nature, she attains “transformation” which according to Warren is, “trying to come to an understanding of what it might mean to respond to something in the nonhuman environment as a member of one’s moral community” (187). One can understand this to mean that, an understanding and connection with the natural environment translates one to a level of viewing nature with a different eye. All of the foregoing signifies that Karoliena possesses qualities that demonstrate the theme of nature’s aesthetics. Another human attribute that nature elements possess as depicted in the novel is the ability to hear. Karoliena is found speaking freely and extensively to trees, forests and birds. In talking to the tree for instance, the reader can hear her say, “tree, it will be best for me if I can find a safe place somewhere in the forest to hide forever, become a tree. At least I will then live in peace until I die” (191). The people around Karoliena are confused and inquired who she is talking to. They are confused because they do not understand the language of the forest and the “forest-words” (192). Karoliena even speaks to the wind, appealing to it on behalf of the tree, and she says “please wind ... wind please” (162). The reason other people in Knysna are confused at Karoliena is because as depicted in the narrative “the outside world does not understand the world of the forest” (172).

The voice of nature can also be heard loud and clear by Karoliena. The scenario is depicted when Karoliena and Abel had to wait for the river to speak and permit them to cross over, Abel is heard saying: “River says we may cross” ... “Yes, you must always ask his permission, you can’t just go through (150). This is an indication that nature has a voice and speaks. Such is a show of respect and consideration for the place of nature in the affairs of humans. The purpose of this presentation is to provoke man to positive thinking regarding nature as well as the zeal to preserve it. Similarly, is the fact that birds can sing as observed in the narrative: “when she woke up the birds were singing” (258). The bird also spoke to Karoliena, at the stream, A brown canary called loudly; “who are you-who are you”? (267). Because of her deep and extraordinary understanding of the world of the forest and nature, and in appreciating nature for its beauty and mystery, Karoliena is inspired and has a strong desire to have a taste of what nature elements feel. According to the narrative, “she wanted to take herself away from the outside world and walk deep into the forest ...” (168), this is because of the notion that there is freedom and protection in being an element of nature thus: “... nothing can touch her, she was free, she was a tree with a new spirit, a human-tree” (168). In a bid to emphasize the reality of the freedom enjoyed by nature, the narrative reveals that “As she walks further into the world of the forest, a peace grew slowly inside her. The frogs did not stop their calling when she approached. The other trees looked in awe at the tree with feet ...” (168). In other words, elements of nature are not frightened at the presence of another, only the tree is surprised at another tree with feet, and “she felt as if she was wearing the most beautiful dress” (169). Karoliena testifies to Master Fourcade that “it’s different from being a human being”. She finds freedom and comfort amid trees and in the forest, she wants to talk to, relate with and have a deep company with them for instance, “the only thing she wanted to do was get to her tree and tell him that she was feeling strangely uneasy ...” (172). Also “she wanted to stay in the forest world a little longer” (173). For reasons such as the intense desire to stay connected to nature, and more, Karoliena is seen to believe more in nature than in humans and so while in dialogue with Johannes, she relates that “in the forest I am real, with you, I am a lie” (203).

Karoliena’s deep connection with nature makes her feel real with nature, she can confide in and tell the tree about her worries. The reader can hear her in the following words: “tree I don’t know what kind of person I am. I feel as if I am being rejected everywhere. I walk through the village; people stare at me... I keep on walking, telling myself they don’t know about tree-spirits; I get on

the train strangers stare at me ...” (224). Although people do not understand Karoliena’s relationship with the forest, she still finds peace with everything in nature. The novel narrates for instance that “... The peace of the forest enveloped her with every breath she took, washing away her worry about the woodcutter and old man Bother’s pension. She wishes she could fall asleep right under the tree and just let the stillness of the forest sink into her body”. (228). Besides finding peace, Karoliena also achieves her dream of knowing what it feels like to be a tree thus; “when she had made herself the body of a stink-wood tree, she knew what it was to be a tree” (260). She also wanted to be an elephant and according to the novel, “she was even prepared to exchange her greatest wish for it ... Forest please take me and make me an elephant” (265), she says.

In addition to achieving her dream, Karoliena finds freedom in deep association with nature. The narrative reveals that “... her fears left her, she felt as if she had been cleansed and set free ... as she walked through the forest in elephant feet, happiness spread through her” (266). Karoliena’s eyes are no longer ordinary there is something special that comes with her new status which comes with her association with nature, she can see that “there was a spirit in every tree, ... even if she could not physically see them. ... it was a magic forest, a dream forest where life was a dream, even if you were awake” (267). In other words, there are deep-seated mysteries that exist in the heart of one who is transformed through association with nature as depicted in the character of Karoliena. At this point, it may be safe, therefore, to say that nature has all of the answers and solutions that humanity seeks. Ecofeminists who have a deep association with nature, understand and can feel what nature feels, they can also speak to and hear the voice of nature. Karoliena is in praise and appreciation of the elements of nature. Her attitude depicts love, protection and preservation of the natural environment. The words, for instance, are in praise of nature thus: “the forest chestnuts ... is a very beautiful tree, large, providing lots of shades and flowers ... Wonderful pink flowers that attract the most beautiful butterflies” (196). She revealed this to the council while advising on the most suitable forest tree for beautifying the village. She sees beauty in moths and her expression, she states: “Moths, as beautiful as that? ... Four wings on a bright orange body, the two bottom wings a light orange; the top wings, huge and light orange” (230). Karoliena also believes in nature’s soothing power as depicted in the narrative. “She took the footpath to visit the tree in the hope it would make her feel better. She let the stone-chat sit on her shoulder, fly around her head ...” (205). More depiction of such is seen in the following expression “Nothing made her feel better until she rested her head against the tree’s old body of coarse bark and whispered her

fears to him, I am scared and confused, please help me. I don't know which way to turn" (206). Because of such feelings about nature, Karoliena keeps longing for the forest even after she grudgingly leaves and returns to her husband, Johannes "At night she longed for the forest" (307), and the reason is simply that nature is also in acceptance of Karoliena thus, "when she got up and started walking, the bird stayed with her, around her, on her head, on her shoulder, almost all the way back to the station" (147).

Conclusion: This study specifically explored the diver's areas showcasing nature's beauty. The study also showcases Karoliena Kapp and her strange and uncommon relationship with the elements of nature. The relationship is described as uncommon because Karoliena's outlook in the novel is not what obtains in a human-nature relationship. Karoliena is closely attached to nature in such a manner that she desires to behave, feel and do like nature, and to achieve this, she decides to dress up like a tree. Even when she married her love, Johannes, her heart and soul were still with nature; essentially, she could not detach herself from nature. Matthee employs personification to serve the purpose of giving deeper meaning to the narrative. Personification adds vividness to the expression of the theme for an in-depth understanding of the message, as humans always look at the world from a human perspective only. Matthee uses Karoliena to let humanity understand that it is nearly impossible to be detached from nature. For this reason, humanity must necessarily see nature with Karoliena's type of eyes and resolve to respect, protect, and conserve nature for future generations.

Works Cited

Matthee, Dalene. *Dream Forest* Penguin Group, South Africa. 2006

Warren, Karen. *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on what it is and why it matters*. New York: Rowman and Little-field Pub. Inc. 1999.

Internet Sources

Louw, Pat. Identity Place and 'The Gaze' in Dalene Matthee's Novels. *Alternation* 14.2.2007-115. Accessed Dec. 2016.

Miles, Kathryn. "Ecofeminism". www.wncyclopediabritanica.inc. Accessed December 2016.

Dalia, Rabie. www.researchgate.net. Accessed December, 2023.

Sue. 'Beautiful and Magical' www.goodreads.com. Accessed November, 2023.

Linda, Henry. www.goodreads.com. Accessed November, 2023.

Andrea, Nicholenas. www.goodreads.com Accessed November, 2023.

Pragmatic and Socio-Cognitive Reading of Selected Ugo Jesse's Politically-Motivated Online Cartoons in Nigeria.

Febisola Olowolayemo Bright, Phd.

olowolayemofebisola4@gmail.com

Department Of English,

Aminu Saleh College of Education Azare,

Bauchi State, Nigeria

Abstract

Recently, cartoons on digital platforms have been one of the invaluable means of expressing diverse opinions on social-political events. Owing to this, the visual presentation and messages from cartoons have been approached from linguistic, multimodal and pragmatic perspectives. Most of these studies have concentrated on cartoons published in the print media, while some have focused on cartoons from the websites of some mainstream news publishing outfits. Scant attention has been given to Ugo Jesse, one of Nigeria's notable digital cartoonists, who addresses Nigeria's various social interactions and experiences via his Instagram page. Therefore, this paper describes the pragmatic features and identifies their socio-cognitive import towards the foregrounding of the dominant themes inherent in the images. With the application of some linguistic tools, twenty purposively selected cartoons from Ugo Jesse's Instagram page were selected and analysed using Mey's pragmatic act and van Dijk's socio-cognitive theory. Various generalisable pragmatic features were found. However, the shared situation knowledge may be easily understood only by the Nigerian audience and/or others who are unaware of the implications of these images and dialogues. These cartoons are invaluable examples of how digital platforms can help document a society's present for the future, from which the citizens of that society may be able to infer. Social media cartoons are a potential avenue for information digitalisation capable of aiding readers' proper interpretation of the underlying meanings of similar information on social platforms.

Keywords: Socio-Cognitive Study, Pragmatics, Ugo Jesse's Cartoons, Instagram

1.0 Introduction

Before the advent of social media in Nigeria, print media platforms such as *The Concord*, *The Guardian*, *TELL*, *The Punch*, *Newswatch*, *This Week*, *Fun Times*, *The Champion*, *Prime People*, *Vintage People*, and *Vanguard*, among others, have presented series of political cartoons that contain criticism and reflection of varying social and political issues in Nigeria. Previous research

has shown that with imagery, metaphor, allegory, and other rhetorical strategies, cartoons have functioned as distinctive tools that are valuable in understanding local and national politics in an amusing and thought-provoking manner. A careful observation indicates that recurrent issues in Nigeria, such as security challenges, bad governance, faulty political system, massive loss of lives and properties, corrupt practices, and electoral malpractices, have been engaged via cartoon illustrations on different print and electronic media. With the emergence of technology, the coverage of cartoons on these issues has extended to social media and tele-messaging platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Telegram, among others. All these have been attracting scholarly interest from diverse fields of study with varying perspectives on the artist's or creator's presentation style, among others. This study is a digital cum applied linguistic perspective to some of the artistic creations of an Instagram cartoonist, Ugo Jesse.

Ugochwuku Jesse, also known as Ugo Jesse, is a Nigerian cartoonist who gained popularity on some social media networks, especially Instagram and Twitter, beginning in 2016. This cartoonist presents topical issues such as body shaming, sexual harassment, political commentaries, etc. Offiong (2019) observes that Ugo Jesse has, over time, become popular for his illustrations on cancer awareness and different health issues. He adds that Ugo Jesse has also endeared himself to many who draw inspiration from his works. Careful observation reveals that the image-oriented nature of Instagram has allowed Ugo Jesse to upload his cartoons with thematic preoccupation around health, societal and political issues in Nigeria. His political cartoons are often presented with applied allegory, sarcasm and indirect characters. In Ugo Jesse's interview with Offiong (2019), he stated that the goal for creating his political cartoons is not to trend but to send a conscious and subconscious message to the mind of his audience so that they can be politically awakened, among others.

These observations have motivated this study to contribute to the existing literature on political cartoons by attempting a pragmatic and socio-cognitive analysis of selected politically motivated cartoons posted on Ugo Jesse's Instagram page using Mey's pragmatic act theory and van Dijk's socio-cognitive theory. These cartoons were selected because they portray different political themes and issues prevalent in Nigeria at different times.

1.1 Nature of political cartoons

As observed by Musa, Atinga and Iowar (2022), Bright (2013), and Sani, Ali and Abdullah (2012), political cartoons, also known as editorial cartoons, belong to the group of opinion cartoons because they express the cartoonist's political views on events and personalities playfully. Bright (2013) observes that political cartoons are “a deliberate distortion or exaggeration of a person's features to satirise well-known figures who are often politicians...to question authority and draw attention to corruption and other social ills in the society”. According to El-Zouka (2018), a political cartoon is a type of cartoon which uses language and/or images to comment on and criticise political figures and events humorously. Genova (2018) opines that political cartoons address newspaper readers (and recently TV and internet viewers). He adds that the recognition of the images of political and public figures in political cartoons requires extensive background knowledge of current events and politicians' comments on the events on the part of the interpreter.

Al-Hindawi and Abdulazeez (2016) observe that cartoons are created to convey messages about ideas and judgments that the cartoonist makes about people, events or institutions. Oluremi and Ajepe (2016) aver that political cartoons place interest and comments on what the cartoonist perceives to be recurrent issues of the time whereby the intent is to encourage readers to adopt a specific point of view and incline them to a certain course of action. To describe the nature of political cartoons, they explicated that political cartoons in some Nigerian daily newspapers were one of the main tools deployed to educate, inform and moderate the misperceptions of the electorates. As observed by them, these cartoons were critical of politicians, political office holders and political parties as various issues were exposed through symbolism, stereotyping, caricatures, visual metaphors, exaggerations, humour, captions, and the cartoonist's perspectives.

Streicher (1967) avers that what in literature is “satire” in pictorial art is “caricature/cartoon”. As he explained, satire usually deals with a demonstration and exposure of human vices or follies to scorn or ridicule humans, while graphic caricatures ridicule pictorially. He adds that in political cartoons, the intent is to ridicule, discredit or expose persons, groups or organisations engaged in political or social scenarios. Tsakona (2009) argues that the cartoon analysis mechanism rests on verbal and non-verbal devices. In another study, DeSousa and Medhurst (1981) argue that political cartoons serve four functions: entertainment, aggression reduction, agenda-setting, and framing. It also documents specific political policy and history. DeSousa and Medhurst (1981) provide

principal themes to understand the nature of political cartoons. They are political commonplaces, literary/cultural allusions, personal character traits and situational themes. As they explained, these four themes cover all the aims and objectives of the cartoonist. As observed by Ariyo (2017), a cartoonist's job is to attack a represented phenomenon through the convention of satire. He adds that political cartoons are indispensable, a visual medium that engages the audience and helps them understand and interpret the country and the world's political, social and economic scene.

Based on the foregoing, existing research on political cartoons such as Sani, Ali and Abdullah (2012); Kulikova and Detinko (2014); Mwetulundila and Kangira (2015); Shaikh, Tariq and Saqlain (2016); Usman and Momoh (2016); Ariyo (2017), Genova (2018); El-Zouka (2018); El-Falaky (2019) and Olajimbite and Jolaoso (2024) have presented insightful researches that focused on the linguistic and visual representation of different political issues in political cartoons. Pragmatic studies on political cartoons are also included in this category. Examples of such studies include Bright (2013), Kondowe, Ngwira and Madula (2014); Al-Hindawi and Abdulazeez (2016); Oluremi and Ajepe (2016); Musa, Atinga and Iowar (2022) and Alyebo and Zayol (2023) among others. A critical observation shows that despite the availability of these insightful research on political cartoons, there are no previous studies on Ugo Jesse's political cartoons. This study, therefore, documents the significance of Ugo Jesse's cartoons within the theoretical standpoint of pragmatic and socio-cognitive theories.

1.2 Aim and objectives

This study aims to document artistic criticism of political actors and activities in Nigeria's social-political realities by carrying out a pragmatic and socio-cognitive investigation of selected cartoons by Ugo Jesse with the specific intention to:

- a. describe the pragmatic features of the select cartoons
- b. identify the surrounding socio-cognitive features
- c. examine the inherent practs/pragmatic acts, and
- d. foreground the dominant thematic preoccupation(s) in the select cartoons.

2.0 Review of related literature

With the aid of Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) *Grammar of Visual Design* and Machin and Mayr's (2012) *Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis* approaches to the analysis of visual communication, El-Zouka (2018) examines the linguistic and visual resources used in political cartoons that represent human rights in three world powers namely the United States, Russia and China. The study shows that these three world powers adopt a double-standard policy regarding the human rights issue; claim to protect and promote human rights, but commit human rights violations with no concern about the international community or respect for human rights principles. The study also reveals that human right is one issue that can play a role in shaping the relationship between the three world powers. Ariyo (2017) in another multimodal study on political cartoons analyses the multimodal features of selected cartoons from *TELL* news magazine. The study discusses the manner these cartoons were deployed and relates their features to the contexts in which they were applied to discover their intended messages. The study concludes that the selected cartoons are deployed to enhance easy understanding and comprehension of the messages on sensitive political issues.

Deploying conceptual metaphor and metonymy theory, Genova (2018) focuses on the interpretation of political cartoons and means of expression such as visual metaphors, visual metonymies as well as metaphors inferred from the image and/or text a cartoonist uses to convey a message. The study reveals that visual and inferential metaphors are viewed as incongruities as a result of the interaction between image, title and/or caption. The study reveals further that political cartoons can have more than one focal (visual) incongruity that enables the introduction of a logical mechanism from the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) to (partially) resolve the incongruity/ies. The study concludes that visual metaphors and metonymies function as contextualisation indexes in the interpretation of the cartoons and that humour is the means to get the cartoonist's message across to the viewer/reader and not an end in itself.

Using insights from Critical Discourse Analysis, Usman and Momoh (2016) analyse the use of satire as a form of imagery to depict some political issues in cartoons featured in the Nigerian national dailies. The study reveals that images of corruption, official responsibility, political failure and brutality/cruelty/suffering are the dominant concerns of the cartoons featured by the selected papers. The study reveals, further, that the corrupt nature of personalities who have links with the

past government is dominant in the image of corruption portrayed, while those in and out of government are subjected to some satiric exposure in respect of official responsibility, failure in politics and brutality/cruelty/suffering. The study of Shaikh, Tariq and Saqlain (2016) is considered relevant to this current study. The study presents a semiotic analysis of political cartoons published during the general election campaign of 2013 in Pakistan. It analyses how cartoons were used as communicative tools on the internet and print media to produce significant meaning and dominant political themes at a crucial period when Pakistan was marred by Taliban attacks and needed a way forward to a new beginning.

Kondowe, Ngwira and Madula (2014) is a pragmatic study relevant to this present study. The study presents the verbal and non-verbal features of Malawi newspaper political cartoons in the manner they employ linguistic features in their portrayal of political leaders. To achieve this, twenty “Point of Order” cartoons that depict President Joyce Banda and her government were selected from *The Nation* newspaper from October 2012 to May 2013 and were analysed using Grice’s Conversational Implicature. Results of the analysis specify that Malawi cartoonists oftentimes do not stick to the conversational maxims by flouting, suspending, and opting out. The study indicates that flouting the maxim of manner is found to be the most preferred way of exploiting the maxims through the use of hedges.

Oluremi and Ajepe (2016) is another study of pragmatics found relevant to the present study. This study examines some political cartoons published in Nigeria before the 2015 general elections. Data for the study comprise fifteen purposively selected political cartoons published in major Nigerian newspapers from November 2014 to February 2015. The selected cartoons were mainly those that featured the two prominent presidential standard-bearers for the 2015 presidential elections: General Muhammadu Buhari and President Goodluck Jonathan; their parties: All Progressive Congress (APC) and People’s Democratic Party (PDP); their antecedent activities as head of state and incumbent president, and generally Nigerian politicians. Using insights from Mey’s 2001 pragmatic act theory, the study reveals the practs of satirising, promoting/demoting, indicting, condemning/sensitising, revealing, and cautioning within Nigeria’s political context. The study concludes that the interaction of the political cartoons and Mey’s theory of pragmatic act results in an understanding of the selected political cartoons, as well as the context of events, beliefs and activities attached to the 2015 elections in Nigeria.

From a pragmatic perspective, Bright (2013) evaluates the verisimilitude of nine selected editorial cartoons from *The Punch* newspaper website by using insights from Grice's Conversational Implicature. The contexts surrounding the selected cartoons are prevalent issues in Nigerian society. The study reveals that there are cases whereby Grice's cooperative principles were observed, flouted, violated, and suspended. It also reveals that the observance of Grice's cooperative principles and the knowledge of the contextual factors surrounding the selected editorial cartoons help in proving their verisimilitude. Al-Hindawi and Abdulazeez (2016) is a study in pragmatics on irony in American political cartoons. Findings from the study reveal that cartoons are pragmatic occurrences by nature, as they communicate far more than what is written or drawn. The study reveals further that irony in political cartoons is overtly graded because it is meant to achieve the purpose of criticising a particular situation.

Recent researchers related to this study are Musa, Atinga and Iowar (2022); Alyebo and Zayol (2023); and Olajimbiti and Jolaoso (2024). Alyebo and Zayol (2023) analyse the different functions of political cartoons about context, cartoon characters, intentions, world knowledge, implicatures, and mutual contextual beliefs. Their study analyses online cartoons through the lenses of Pragma-crafting Theory as a broad and systematic instrument for the explicit and valid pragmatic analysis of texts. The findings of the study reveal that there are latent meanings in cartoons which transcend sentence meanings and sketched images. The findings also reveal that the intentions, attitudes, expectations, the context in which the cartoons are used and the targets cartooned leave definite impressions on the minds of the readers and viewers. Olajimbiti and Jolaoso (2024) is a related study that examines the pragmatic resources inherent in COVID-19-related cartoons. To achieve this, forty COVID-19-related cartoons, circulated on social media, were collected on Twitter and WhatsApp platforms between March and April 2020 as data. Multimodality and presupposition served as theoretical framework and descriptive research design was adopted. The findings of the study reveal five socio-contextual domains, religion, health, economy, politics and governance and family, characterising the social experiences of Nigerians during the pandemic. Through the evocation of situational reality, pragmatic sarcasm, punning, and orientation to government insensitivity, the cartoonists evoke pragmatic functions of informing and warning about social behaviours in the religion, family and health domains; recreating situational realities on socioeconomic impacts in the domain of economy; and satirizing government policies and mocking politicians' insincerity in the domain of politics and governance

on sociopolitical experiences of Nigerians before and during the pandemic. The study concludes cartoons are a strong means of portraying societal realities and people's experiences comically and graphically.

3.0 Theoretical framework

This study derives its theoretical perspectives from Jacob Mey's (2001) pragmatic acts and van Dijk's socio-cognitive theories. Jacob Mey's pragmatic act theory is adopted because the selected cartoons contain many pragmatic features relevant to this present study. Van Dijk's socio-cognitive theory is also adopted because it is relevant to this present study.

3.1 Mey's pragmatic act theory (PAT)

Jacob Mey's (2001) pragmatic act theory hence, PAT originates in the sociocultural-interactional view on language which emphasises the primacy of socio-cultural and societal factors in meaning construction and comprehension. According to Mey (2001), PAT is a reaction to the critique of speech act theory that concentrates on "speech" to the omission of other phenomena such as writing that also fall into the category of language. As explicated by Mey (2001), the theory of pragmatic acts does not explain human language use by starting from the words uttered by a single, idealised speaker; rather, it focuses on the interactional situation in which both speakers and hearers realise their aims. Mey clarifies that the explanatory movement is from the outside in, rather than from the inside out: "the focus is on the environment in which both speaker and hearer find their affordances, such that the entire situation is brought to bear on what can be said in the situation, as well as on what is actually being said" Mey (2001:221). The implication of this is that instead of starting with what is said and looking for what the words could mean, the situation in which the words fit is invoked to explain what can be (and is being) said. He emphasises that the focus on PAT is not on rules for the use of individual speech acts but on characterising a typical, pragmatic act as it is realised in a given situation.

From the previous explanations of pragmatic act theory, it can be deduced that the emphasis on pragmatics is based on the notion of context. PAT, therefore, implies that a pragmatic act is an instance of adapting oneself to a context, as well as adapting the context to oneself. To Mey, this depends on the understanding that participants have of the situation and on the outcome of the act in a given context. PAT is schematically represented in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1

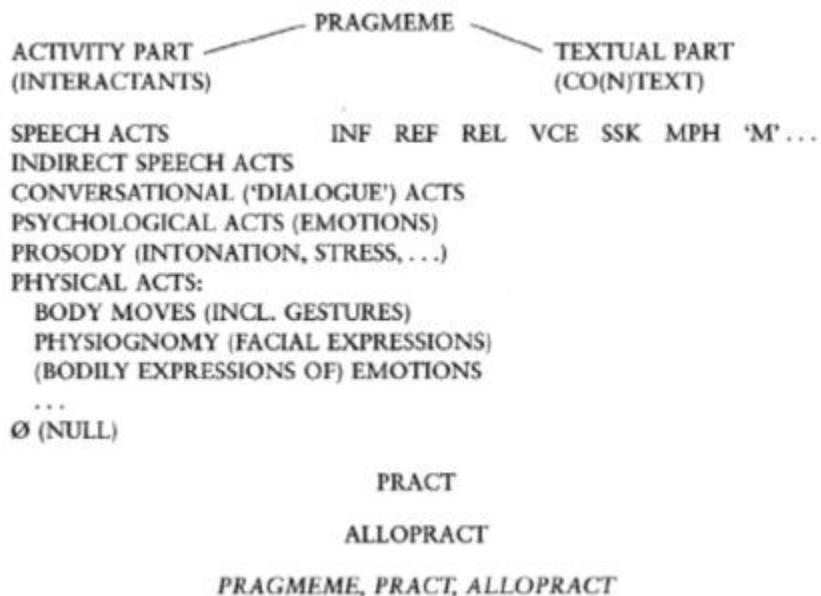


Fig 1: A model of pragmatic acts (Mey 2001: 222)

In Figure 1, the various abbreviations to the right are classified as textual features. They include INF for ‘inference,’ REF for ‘reference,’ REL for ‘relevance,’ VCE for ‘voice,’ SSK for ‘Shared Situation Knowledge,’ MPH for ‘metaphor’ and ‘M’ for ‘metapragmatic joker’ - that is, any element that directs our attention to something happening on the metapragmatic level. The activity part (on the left) covers speech acts, indirect speech acts, conversational (‘dialogue’) acts, psychological acts, prosodic acts and physical acts.

3.2 van Dijk’s socio-cognitive theory

The socio-cognitive theory by van Dijk’s is founded on the aspiration that cognition intersects between society and discourse. As observed by van Dijk (2001), an examination of the issues individuals discuss represents the ideas existing in their minds. In van Dijk’s view, these ideas are psychological and individual beliefs about ethnic actions. He believes that media texts are a rendezvous for a display of cognitive or mental schemata. Van Dijk (1995) argues that cognition or mental models allow for many personal experiences and opinions which also combine with context constraints to influence or reproduce discourse. He describes these as self-identity

descriptions, activity descriptions, goal descriptions, norm and value descriptions, position and relation descriptions, and resource descriptions.

The ideological square is a concept in van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework that embraces the notion of "positive self-presentation" and "negative other-presentation". Van Dijk (1998) explains this concept by presenting a four-dimensional classification that characterises the ideological square. These are summarised:

- I. It emphasises optimistic/positive opinions/things about us;
- II. It emphasises undesirable/ negative opinions/things about them;
- III. It de-emphasises undesirable/negative opinions/things about us;
- IV. De-emphasises positive opinions/things about them.

The implication is that through emphasis and mitigation, the aforementioned concepts polarise members of the in-groups and members of the out-groups. Its ideological discourses present the good *self* and the bad *other*, and simultaneously mitigate the bad *self* and the good *other*. The motivations of the speaker/writer inform the above classification as it is in the interests of the speaker or writer to emphasise positive aspects of the in-group and de-emphasise any negative aspects. Likewise, emphasising the negative aspects of the out-group and de-emphasising any positive aspects work in favour of the speaker/writer and his/her group.

4.0 Methodology

Data for this study were collected from Ugo Jesse's verified Instagram account. These cartoons were selected because of their revealing nature and relevance to this study. From over eighty cartoons noticed on the page, twenty cartoons were purposively selected for this study. The selected cartoons were posted between March 2017 and January 2019. They were primarily those that exposed social vices such as corruption, deceitfulness, insecurity, violence, poverty and insensitivity prevailing in the Nigerian landscape. These cartoons were analysed using insights from Jacob Mey's pragmatic act theory and van Dijk's socio-cognitive theory. These tools aid the description of the pragmatic and the socio-cognitive features as well as the identification of the inherent practices in the selected artworks.

4.1 Instruments

Since the corpus for the study was collected from an online social platform, internet-enabled personal computers (PC) and mobile telephones were used. A combination of screen-grabbing and “save as” options was used to extract the cartoons. The extracted data was then inserted into a Microsoft Word document and saved for this study.

5.0 Results and Discussions

Cartoons have been and continue to be an integral part of the mainstream societal culture (Pryor, 2004:2). However, cartoons have often been categorised in academic literature as belonging to different resources, ideologies, histories and settings. One of such categorisations is the twentieth century. The twentieth-century drawings are modern in terms of the types of drawing, the platform/material, their messages as well as their canvas of history. The classification of twentieth-century cartoons will, therefore, include illustrative, comic strips, gag strips, animated, and political (Mankoff, 2002).

The data selected for this analysis belongs to the twentieth-century temporal categorisation due to its chosen means of dissemination and target audience which is the digital platform, its messages, and history among others. Though Jesse’s Instagram cartoon collection is more political, it still features the other classes such as comic strips and gag strips. While concentrating on only the trio of comic strips, gag strips and political cartoons in which Jesse's works can be categorised, Pryor (2004) offers some explanation on identifying these types of cartoons. According to her, “comic strips are more often than not found in newspapers and magazines and their purpose is to induce laughter from their readers. Gag strips are described as cartoons which are usually composed of a single picture combined with one to two sentences and can potentially produce laughter. The political cartoons are intended for adults and usually convey a point of view concerning a societal issue current to its time of publication.

Since this study is aimed at documenting the artistic criticisms of political actors and activities in Nigeria’s social-political realities by carrying out a pragmatic and socio-cognitive investigation of Ugo Jesse’s selected cartoons, the set objectives which are pragmatic features and acts, socio-cognitive features, and predominant thematic preoccupation are presented in this section.

5.1 Pragmatic features of the selected cartoons

This section examined the features of pragmatics deployed in the cartoons to foreground the social interactions and experiences being advanced by the cartoonist.

5.2 Satirisation in Ugo Jesse's cartoons

A satire is a figurative way of presenting reality about a person or situation in a rather indirect manner using different but linkable characters, known mannerisms and other linguistic cues. For example, in the excerpt below



Plate 1: February 23, 2018

Various issues such as the abduction of 110 girls from Government Girls Science and Technical College (GGSTC), Dapchi, Yobe State on February 19, 2018; the erratic power supply in Nigeria, inability of the government to secure citizens' safety; the non-maintenance of Nigeria's aircrafts by the relevant authorities; and the increased level of corruption prevalent in Nigeria were all subsumed. The practice of satirising was achieved using the caricature of a heroic comic character popularly referred to as Black Panther in a conversation with an unnamed boy who is in another location. The boy, using his personal computer, sends a message to the Black Panther, who is a famous character in an American movie. The Black Panther, being widely accepted as a heroic figure is approached by a boy who is seeking the intervention of the Black Panther to help Nigeria

rescue the abducted Dapchi girls. Afterwards, the cartoonist presents some other prevailing issues in Nigeria via the character of the boy. As a result, the depiction of the boy as a character conforms with one of the ideological concepts in van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework whereby the good self and the bad other are placed side-by-side. In furtherance to this, Ugo Jesse satirises the insincerity of the government towards the rescue and welfare of the Dapchi girls with the utterance *"PLEASE WHEN YOU GET HERE DON'T ASK FOR UPDATE BCOS THEY WILL LIE TO YOU THE SAME WAY THEY LIED THEY RESCUED THE GIRLS INITIALLY"*. He then proceeds to present the erratic power supply being experienced in the country: *"PLEASE COME IN THE MORNING BCOS WE DON'T USE TO HAVE LIGHT IN THE NIGHT"*. In the same vein, the perceived state of Nigeria's aircrafts is inferred with the utterance, *"DON'T ENTER OUR PLANE O, IT WILL THROW YOU INSIDE BUSH"*. Again, the cartoonist de-emphasises the positive opinions about the Nigerian aviation industry using a generalised assumption of badly maintained aircrafts which "throws" the passengers into the "bush".

In advancing the "negative other-presentation", the cartoonist criticises the reported corruption as at the time in the country by referring to the case of an official of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) who claimed that a mysterious snake swallowed the sum of 36 million naira from the Board's vault in her care. In all of these, the cartoonist deploys a pragmatic conversational feature to satirise social, economic and political realities in the country.

5.2.2 Pragmatics of the bad others

In the context of this study, the bad others, a notion in socio-cognitive theory is approached from two perspectives. First, the original (adjusted) message and, second, the presentation of that message by the cartoonist. Consider the example below.

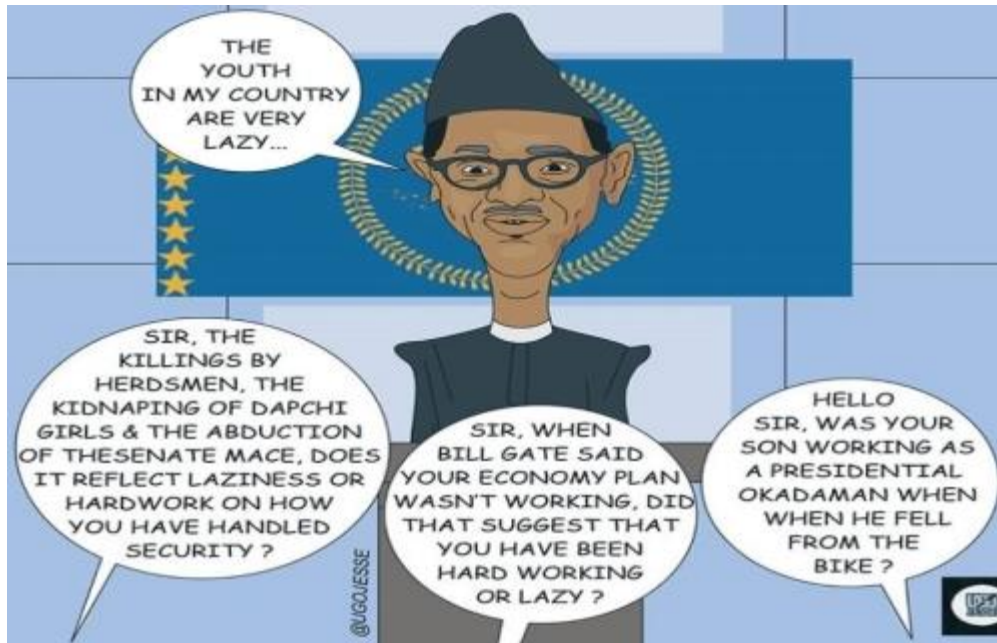


Plate 2: April 19, 2018

In the above, the supposed original message is that of Nigeria’s president who has been presented to have advanced the “bad others” ideology by allegedly calling “the youth” in Nigeria “lazy”. The statement had attracted media irk and many made different deductions from it. As seen in Plate 2, the cartoonist is emphatic that the president made the statement about the youth of the country he leads. He then goes ahead to present the responses of the audience which attacks the original speaker and presents him as the one who is the lazy president. The cartoonist who can be considered the in-group in the socio-cognitive postulation attempts to emphasise the negative aspects of the out-group to which the president belongs. Using the Shared Situational Knowledge (SSK) of the cartoon with Instagram’s audience, the cartoon presents a caricature of President Buhari addressing an imaginary press conference. As a form of defence for the in-group which serves as a social-cognitive means of de-emphasising undesirable/negative opinions/things about us, rather than directly attacking the President, the cartoonist referred (REF) to recent occurrences such as the killings by criminal herdsmen in the country, the abduction of the Dapchi girls, the theft of the senate mace and the president’s weak economic plans. The cartoonist seems to be telling the president to address those issues requiring urgent attention instead of labelling Nigerian youths as “lazy”. Also, in a hilarious and rhetorical manner, he made another reference to the accident the President’s son involved in during a power-bike racing on December 26, 2017. With

the contextual features of the Shared Situational Knowledge (SSK) and reference (REF), the cartoonist adequately pragmatically satirises the president in plate 2.

5.2.3 Pragmatic foregrounding as discourse reproduction of social realities



Plate 3: January 15, 2019

Cartoonists often use multi-dimensional practs in reproducing discursual issues with their audience. This is seen in plate 3 above. The first part of the cartoon is labelled 2009. It presents the symbol of a masked man carrying two guns and a torn placard with the inscription “*AMNESTY FOR NIGER DELTA RISE OF BOKO HARAM*”, another symbol with the inscriptions “*UNEMPLOYMENT, UNEQUIPPED HOSPITALS, INSECURITY, POVERTY, BAD ROADS, NO LIGHT, FUEL SCARCITY*”. The first part of the cartoon also presents the caricature of a troubled man carrying a placard with the inscription “*ASUU STRIKE*”. The second part of the cartoon is labelled 2019. It presents the caricature of a boy with an amputated leg carrying a torn Nigeria flag dripping with blood, of a shot woman carrying a baby, a masked man slaughtering a defenceless man with a knife in a background with a Biafra flag, a masked terrorist shooting, stray bullets, and the inscriptions “*MAD HUNGER, ASUU STRIKE, RISE OF RITUALISTS, CORRUPTION AND POLICE BRUTALITY*”. The symbols and inscriptions highlighted in the two parts of the cartoon

are relevant (REL). They satirise and negatively label Nigeria as a country with numerous challenges ranging from social to economic and security issues. The inscriptions 2009 and 2019 indicate that the intensity of Nigeria's problems has increased within a space of ten years. All these perform some pragmatic inferences. For example, the inference (INF) drawn from the caricature of the boy carrying a torn Nigeria flag dripping with blood indicates that Nigeria has experienced massive bloodshed within this period. The image reveals further that the massive bloodshed experienced in Nigeria has negatively affected a lot of innocent citizens. Relevance is depicted by the caricature of the woman shot in the chest and simultaneously carrying her baby; that of a man trying to escape from a bullet, a terrorist trying to shoot and another terrorist slaughtering an innocent man. All of these negatively present the pathetic security situation in Nigeria at the time.

5.2.4 Situational contexts in the cartoons



Plate 4: January 19, 2019

Most times, cartoonists try to recreate the contexts of their drawings by presenting instances where their audience can easily relate. As such, most of them establish shared situational knowledge within the arts being displayed. For instance, plate 4 exhumes the Shared Situational Knowledge (SSK) surrounding the cartoon by pointing to the failure of President Buhari and Mr Atiku Abubakar (the prominent presidential standard-bearers for the 2019 presidential elections) to

attend the presidential debate held on the 19th of January 2019. These are considered “incompetent”, yet people voted them against others considered as the lightweights in the election which included Professor Kingsley Moghalu of the Youth Progressives Party, Dr Obiageli Ezekwesili of the Allied Congress for Progressive Nigeria Party and Mr Fela Durotoye of the Alliance for New Nigeria Party. Ugo Jesse presents the caricature of a presumably poor man listening to the presidential debate on a transistor radio while lying on a couch. Though the radio is not visible in the picture, through the monologue, *“NO LIGHT, NO FOOD. LISTENING TO THE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE ON RADIO, YOU CAN TELL WE HAVE CREDIBLE PEOPLE TO SAVE THIS COUNTRY, BUT MANY OF US WILL STILL GO & VOTE SOMEBODY THAT IS NOT EVEN QUALIFIED TO BE JSS 2 CAPTAIN, THE THING WORRYING SOME OF US IN THIS COUNTRY IS TURNINONINOWN”*, many of the audience can easily identify with the thought-flow and share in the feeling of the caricatured speaker.

5.2.5 Mocking as a pragmatic strategy



Plate 5: March 31, 2017

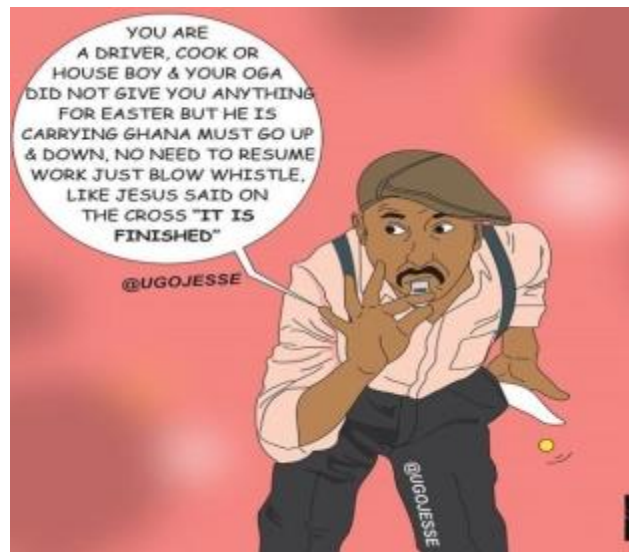


Plate 6: April 17, 2017.

In the pragmatic co-construction of cartoon discourse, various strategies may be deployed to perform certain acts using varying communicative modes. Such can be seen in plates 5 and 6 above. In plate 5, the caricature of an unnamed pressman with a worrisome and inquisitive gesture is seen asking the caricature of President Buhari a question: *“SIR, DO YOU THINK THE YOUTH*

WOULD STILL VOTE FOR CHANGE? SINCE YOU ARE YET TO PAY THE 5K YOU PROMISED MONTHLY”, to which the president responds: *“WALHI, I DON’T KNOW, BUT I AM HEARING SOMETHING ON SOCIAL MEDIA LIKE “KEEP THE CHANGE BRUH”*. In the exchange, the cartoonist tactfully mocks the main actor, the president considering the inability of President Buhari to fulfil his campaign promise of paying a five-thousand-naira stipend to unemployed youths in Nigeria upon his victory at the polls as President in 2015. Hence, this cartoon is used to indict and also mock the President. Through this, the cartoonist foregrounds the inadequacy of the response of the president to the question asked as the president mentions “social media” having earlier declared his lack of awareness of the promise “I don’t know. The use of “bruh” may be interpreted as a camouflaged way of using the register of the youth or/and the social media. By these, the cartoonist presents a president who seems not to be confident nor sufficiently coherent in explaining himself before the press. Thus, the cartoonist pragmatically presents a mockery of the president’s inability to do what he had earlier promised as well as his non-compliance with the happenings around him.

In another example as seen in Plate 6 which was posted on April 17, 2019 and titled “blow it and poverty is finished”, the cartoon which overtly seems to be promoting the government’s effort in combating corruption is pragmatically and covertly performing the mockery of the system. The cartoon, in plate 6, is referring (REF) to Channels Television’s report of April 12, 2017. According to this report, EFCC recovered 43 million Dollars, 23 million Naira and 27,000 Pounds from an apartment located in the Ikoyi area of Lagos state. Channels Television also reported that EFCC announced the recovery of €547,730, £21,090 and N5, 648,500 Naira from a Bureau de Change operator in Balogun Market, Lagos. As reported in the media, the recovery of a huge amount of money in different locations in Nigeria made the Federal Ministry of Finance initiate a whistle-blower policy. According to the Federal Ministry of Finance, the whistle-blower policy is a process whereby information bordering on violation of financial regulations, mismanagement of public funds and assets, financial malpractice or fraud and theft that is believed to be in the interest of the public can be disclosed. In consonance to these, using a shared situational knowledge (SSK), the cartoonist employs a common analogy using the caricature of a man with a whistle in his mouth saying: *“YOU ARE A DRIVER, COOK OR HOUSEBOY AND YOUR OGA DID NOT GIVE YOU ANYTHING FOR EASTER BUT HE IS CARRYING GHANA MUST GO UP & DOWN, NO NEED TO RESUME WORK, JUST BLOW WHISTLE, LIKE JESUS SAID ON THE CROSS, “IT IS*

FINISHED". From this monologue, many pragmatic imports can be deduced. For instance, the words "driver, cook, houseboy" are references to the commoners who are often paid lower than the services they offer. This, in the notion of the socio-cognitive, is good self and bad others. The cartoonist thus offers a way of fighting the bad others by merely "blowing the whistle" which translates to the bad others being "finished". Again, since the policy seems to be poised at enriching individuals who expose the rich and corrupt Nigerians, the infallibility of the bad others is foregrounded

Cartoonist and satirising: a socio-cognitive perspective



Plate 9: February 11, 2018

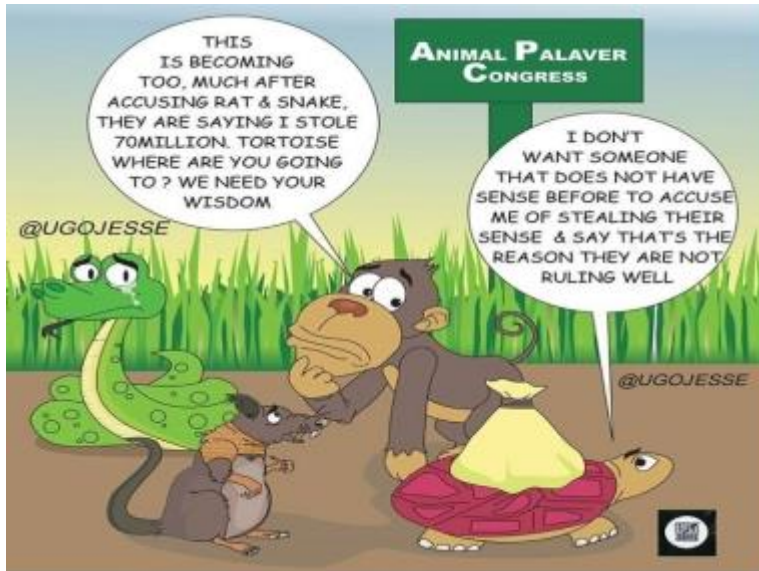


Plate 10: February 22, 2018

Satire is one major tool used by cartoonists to mimic the society. Ugo Jesse’s cartoons sufficiently use this as a socio-cognitive means of hitting back at the “bad others”. For example, in Plate 9, the caricatures of a snake and a rat having a conversation are presented. In the ensuing dialogue, the snake says: *“HOW CAN THEY SAY I SWALLOWED 36 MILLION NAIRA; PEOPLE WILL START HUNTING ME TO RETRIEVE MONEY I DID NOT SEE”*, and the rat’s response is *“THAT IS HOW THEY SAID I PURSUED THE PRESIDENT FROM HIS OFFICE, YOU WILL SOON HEAR ALANGBA (LIZARD) RAN AWAY WITH VOTES DURING ELECTION”*. In this, though the animals were seen in the dialogues, the cartoonist presents the roles that these animals were mentioned to have played in Nigerian political life. Before this, a government worker had tried to explain away when asked to give an account of a missing amount of money that a snake had in reality carted away the money. Ugo Jesse thus re-presents what is imagined to be the thought of these animals as the animals worry about the roles they are alleged to have played in human affairs. Similarly, another instance is presented in plate 10 which satirises the ruling political party in Nigeria with the inscription *“ANIMAL PALAVER CONGRESS”*. In Plate 10, the caricatured monkey expresses his frustration: *“THIS IS BECOMING TOO MUCH. AFTER ACCUSING RAT & SNAKE, THEY ARE SAYING I STOLE 70 MILLION. TORTOISE WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO? WE NEED YOUR WISDOM”*; to which another actor, this time, the tortoise while trying to leave, responds: *“I DO NOT WANT SOMEONE THAT DOES NOT HAVE SENSE BEFORE TO*

ACCUSE ME OF STEALING THEIR SENSE & SAY THAT'S THE REASON THEY ARE NOT RULING WELL". First, the bad others are well attacked by the dialogues made by the animals. The height of the whole exchange is that the ruling humans are actually "senseless" by involving the animals in their various corrupt enrichment games. The cartoonist provides a basis with his audience as many of them have shared situational knowledge (SSK) surrounding the two cartooned exchanges. Recall that an official of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) had claimed that a mysterious snake allegedly swallowed 36 million Naira from the Board's vault, and that another 70 million Naira handed over to the Northern Senators Forum has been allegedly swallowed by monkeys in the farm of a ranking senator (*Vanguard*, February 21, 2018). The third Shared Situational Knowledge (SSK) surrounding Plates 9 and 10 is the revelation made by the Senior Special Assistant to President Muhammadu Buhari on Media and Publicity, Mr Garba Shehu that the President's office was ravaged by rodents during his medical trip to London (*Daily Post*, August 22, 2017). By the foregoing, the cartoonist uses the two cartoons to satirise the bad others as they lie to cover up their corrupt practices.

Summary

5 Conclusion

Ugo Jesse makes use of the images portrayed in his cartoons to make his message clear to the viewers. This cartoonist utilises the textual part of the pragmeme to buttress his messages. Hence, the observable textual pragmatic features in the collected drawings include reference, relevance, inference, metaphor (through the use of symbols and caricatures), and shared situation knowledge (SSK) based on the comments from the audience. Regarding the pragmemic activity part, this artist utilises some elements of speech acts, indirect speech acts and conversational acts replicated via the labels, speeches, comments, and captions. The aforementioned features and the notion of "positive self-presentation" and "negative other-presentation" in the socio-cognitive framework generated the pragmatic acts observed in the selected political cartoons.

From the foregoing discussions, pragmatic features include the practs/pragmatic acts of satirising, satirising/condemning, satirising/sensitising, criticising/sensitising, indicting, promoting, and condemning. Based on different contextual factors situated in Nigeria, these practs commend some of the government's initiatives; and negatively present anomalies such as erratic electricity supply,

the pathetic state of Nigeria's aircrafts, the government's inability to secure its citizens' safety, insecurity, Nigeria's weak economic plans, lack of basic amenities, poverty, alarming corruption cases, unruly behaviour and insincerity of Nigerian leaders. A pragmatic and socio-cognitive interpretation of the selected political cartoons enabled viewers to interpret the underlying meanings of the cartoons as intended by the cartoonist.

In the selected political cartoons used for this study, Ugo Jesse ridicules Nigerian politicians and reveals their deceitful nature. By so doing, he employs the socio-cognitive notion of the good self against the bad others. Through the selected political cartoons, social vices such as corruption, insecurity, poverty and insensitivity prevailing in the Nigerian landscape in general are foregrounded. Hence Ugo Jesse's cartoons can be regarded as an activist cartoon through which he fights the common cause of the people.

References

- Al-Hindawi, F.H. and Abdulazeez, R.F. (2016). A pragmatic approach to irony in American political cartoons. In F.H. Al-Hindawi and W.R. Al-Juwaid (Eds.), *Pragmatic Analysis of Political Data* (pp14 -30). Hamburg: Anchor Academic Publishing.
- Alyebo, N.O. and Zayol, M.T. (2023). Pragmatic Analysis of Online Cartoons of the 2023 Presidential Election in Nigeria. *International Journal of Arts, Languages, Linguistics and Literary Studies (JOLLS)*12:4, 97-109. Available on <http://www.jolls.com.ng>
- Ariyo, K.S. (2017). Satirizing the Nigerian climate: Multimodal discourse analysis of selected political cartoons from TELL news magazine. *Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences* 3(4), 1-10.
- Bright, F. O. (2013). Verisimilitude in Editorial Cartoons from *Punch* Newspaper: A Pragmatics Analysis. *Language in India* 13(5), 43-66.
- DeSousa, M. A., & Medhurst, M. J. (1982). Political cartoons and American culture: Significant symbols of campaign 1980. *Studies in Visual Communication* 8, 84-97.
- El-Falaky, M.S. (2019). Caricaturing two revolutions: Multimodal discourse analysis of Egyptian political cartoons. *Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2019- 6th International Conference on Education, Social Sciences and Humanities* (pp. 24-26). June 2019, Istanbul, Turkey
- El-Zouka, M.K. (2018). *A multimodal critical discourse analysis of human rights in the world powers as depicted in political cartoons*. Retrieved from bfa.arts.alexu.edu.eg.
- Genova, D. (2018). Grasping political cartoons? Not an easy matter. *European Journal of Humour Research* 6(1), 85-99. Retrieved from www.europeanjournalofhumour.org

- Kondowe, W., Ngwira, F.F. and Madula, P. (2014). Linguistic analysis of Malawi political newspaper cartoons on President Joyce Banda: Towards Grice's conversational implicature. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 4(7), 40-51.
- Kress, G. and Van Leeuwen, T. (1996/2006). *Reading images: the grammar of visual design*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Kulikova, L.V. and Detinko, I.I. (2014). Construction of political "others" through multimodal texts (cartoons) in British press. *Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences* 8(4), 1381-1392.
- Machin, D and Mayr, A. (2012). *How to do critical discourse analysis: a multimodal introduction*. USA: Sage Publications.
- Mankoff, R. (2002). *The naked cartoonist: A new way to enhance your creativity*. New York City, NY: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishing. Retrieved from <http://www.cartoonbank.com/naked/book.htm>.
- Mey, J. L. (2006). Pragmatic acts. In J.L. Mey (Ed.), *Concise encyclopaedia of pragmatics* (pp. 747-752). Elsevier: Oxford.
- _____ (2001). *Pragmatics, an introduction*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.
- Mwetulundila, R. and Kangira, J. (2015). An analysis of rhetoric and humour in Dudley's political cartoons published in the Namibian newspaper in 2012. *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies* 2(6), 63-75.
- Musa, A.S., Atinga, L.A. and Iowar, E.A. (2022). Pragmatic Analysis of Editorial Cartoons in Online Nigeria Newspapers. *International Journal of Social Science Research and Anthropology* 8:6, 366-378.
- Offiong, A.V. (2019). *Ugo Jesse: Illustrating to inspire*. Retrieved from <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/ugo-jesse-illustrating-to-inspire.html>
- Olajimbidi, E.O. and Jolaoso, O.B. (2024). Contexts and pragmatic strategies of COVID-19 related cartoons in Nigeria. *Language Semiotic Study* 10:2, 267-289. <https://doi.org/10.1515/las-2024-0001>
- Oluremi, T.A. and Ajepe, I. (2016). Signifying cartoons: A pragmatic reading of Nigeria's 2015 political cartoons. *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies* 26(2), 1-33.
- Pryor, M. E. (2004). *The Evolution of Cartoons*. Purdue: Ivy Tech State College. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/8262380/THE_EVOLUTION_OF_CARTOONS
- Sani, I., Ali, A. M., & Abdullah, F. S. (2012). The Role of Humor in the Construction of Satire in Nigerian Political Cartoons. *Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, 2(3), 148-165.
- Shaikh, N.Z., Tariq, R. and Saqlain, N. (2016). Cartoon war. A political dilemma! A semiotic analysis of political cartoons. *Journal of Media Studies* 31(1), 74- 92.
- Streicher, L.H. (1967). *On a theory of political caricature*. Routledge: Chicago. Illinois.

Tsakona, V. (2009). Language and image interaction in cartoons: Towards a multimodal theory of humor. *Journal of Pragmatics* 41(6), 1171-1188.

Usman, S.O. and Momoh, T.N. (2016). Satire as tool of political cartoons in the Nigerian national dailies: A critical discourse analysis. *European Scientific Journal* 12(29), 124-141.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Critical discourse analysis. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen & H.E. Hamilton. (Eds.), *The Handbook of discourse analysis*. (pp. 353-371). U.S.A: Blackwell Publishers.

_____ (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. London: Sage.

_____ (1995). Discourse analysis as ideology analysis. In C. Schaffner & A. Wenden. (Eds.), *Language and pace*. (pp. 17-33). Aldershot: Dartmouth.

Echoes of Environmental Degradation and Social Dislocation in Niyi Osundare's *City*

Without People

Ọlanikẹ Ọlaleru PhD

Department of English and Linguistics,

Kwara State University,

Malete, Nigeria

Abstract

Sustained research on the poetry of Nigerian writer Niyi Osundare has largely concentrated on his socio-political preoccupations and unrelenting celebrations of nature, particularly in the tradition of the Romantics, including the unique stylo-linguistic character of his writings. Moreover, as a nationally and internationally decorated poet, scores of well-placed studies continue to privilege Osundare's more popular volumes, creating a critical gap in his overall "global humanistic vision" (Diala). One such issue, addressed in the less-acclaimed *City Without People* (2012), is environmental abuse and its direct link to human suffering. The sombre, quite melancholic *City Without People* dwells on nothing else but Osundare's own traumatic experience of Hurricane Katrina. However, starting with the volume's ominous title, a closer reading reveals a work that points to environmental degradation as a vital part of the larger issue of climate change. Eco-criticism, a broad investigative tool for dissecting global ecological issues through the intersections of literature, culture, and the physical environment has been adopted as the theoretical framework for this paper.

The devastating consequences of environmental ill-treatment on all aspects of human life are signified in this work. While the volume's super-ordinate focus stays on Osundare's losses from Katrina, the causative theme of climate change, particularly as engendered by human mishandling of the natural environment, is firmly embedded. Therefore, this paper argues that *City Without People* echoes environmental degradation as a contributing factor to climate change.

Purposively selected for analysis of this focus are four poems: "Water Never Forgets" (19), "Path of Thunder" (20), "City Without People" (35), and "Katrina's Diaspora" (43). The paper concluded that Osundare's *City Without People* compellingly addresses environmental degradation and its severe threats to man's physical and social well-being.

Keywords: Nature, Hurricane, Environment, Climate change, Physical and social well-being.

Introduction

Starting with his first volume, *Songs of the Marketplace* (1983), followed by *Village Voices* (1984), and the ultimately career-defining *The Eye of the Earth* (1986), Niyi Osundare firmly established his poetic agenda of putting “Humanity first” (2002: 141) quite early in his poetic career. In subsequent works and over an almost forty-year period, Osundare has essentially kept to his commitment to humanity’s welfare. The humanist ethos of his poetry, well-articulated in a distinctive poetic style, has been described diversely as: “the voice of the underprivileged” (Irele, 2003: xvii), “people-oriented poetry” (Ojaide, 2003:25), “class-conscious poetic” (Anyokwu, 2015: 4), “social poetry...for the masses” (Arnold, 2003: 437&440).

Dissecting the informed views of many scholars, it appears Osundare has primarily focused his socialist-oriented, humanist-defined poetic radar on the African continent and sometimes even exclusively on his beloved but beleaguered Nigeria. Notable Osundare scholar E. E. Sule captures this trajectory as one in which “...the social tenor ... had always been tied to events in Africa” (2017: 285), while Diala (2017: 380) describes this Afro-centric immersion as a prevailing “fixation” upon which scholars have been dwelling over decades of Osundare poetry criticism and scholarship. As Diala further observed, this has come at the cost of “the virtual exclusion from critical attention of an equally vibrant and sustained global humanistic vision” of Osundare as a poet (380).

Nevertheless, a few others have noted and highlighted Osundare’s concern for global human issues. For instance, Cynthia Hogue and Nancy Easterlin (2003) note, astutely, that in addition to his culture-rich, oral-infused poetry, Osundare’s poetic ambience also manifests a quite strong “faith in the unity of man and nature” (2003, 462). Hogue and Easterlin are not the only scholars who have said this. Right from his very insightful introduction to Osundare’s first volume (*SoM*1983), Jeyifo had observed, albeit fleetingly, that, among other things, Osundare’s poetry also reveals a “closeness to the earth, closeness to nature” (xv). This is a kind of closeness, which, apart from just celebrating its beauties and bounties of the earth, also at the same time, raises urgent concern about how it is treated.

Osundare and his many Songs for Nature

Scholars have explored the connections between Osundare's poetry and Nature from several interesting angles. Their attentions have ranged from his dedication to Nature as the bread basket of Man to the rhythms of planting and harvesting, including the seasons of drought and rain. Studies have been done on the ubiquitous Osundare songs for the rocks and mountains of his home town, Ikere-Ekiti, as well as the animals, birds, reptiles and even earthworms that populate its evergreen rainforests. Through his penchant for profuse metaphors, Osundare constantly deploys the different aspects of Nature as images and symbols for his different thematic focuses.

These studies have deepened the understanding of Osundare poetry by constantly employing nature as a useful tool for theorising the socio-political and socio-cultural concerns of the poet (see Oloko 2018)

Introducing his paper titled "Osundare as a Nature Poet: The Earth as a Metaphor for Destruction and Cohesion in *What the Earth Said*," Oloko Jamiu states:

The earth which represents the environment and the oppressed is predominantly expressed in this poem and indeed the entire volume of *The Eye of the Earth* (190).

Explaining Osundare's goal for taking on the earth at these two differing levels of symbolism, Oloko stated that the poet aimed at using Nature as a "platform for commenting and projecting the socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural ideologies of his country, Nigeria" (190). Jimi Ogunnaike and Adeniyi David (2018), in a paper titled "Studies in African Ecocriticism- a Thematic Analysis of Selected Poems in Niyi Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth*", observed that the volume "contains many poems with ecological stances and messages" (58), in which the poet "weaves history, culture and nature into literature" (68). Ogunnaike and David asserted in their paper that Osundare depicted the earth as a human being who has a voice with which he cries when maltreated and subjected to inhumane treatment (66).

In his observations of Osundare's romanticising of Nature in *The Eye of the Earth*, Kofi A.N. Mensah (2003) broaches the poet's focus on environmental and ecological issues from a different angle. Unlike other scholars before him, Mensah emphasises that Nature is the issue for deliberation in Osundare's work, and not just a mere by-line for other interests. He submits, therefore, that the entire volume of *The Eye of the Earth* is a deliberately sustained meditation on

Nature “in order to lead to a cautionary message for the reader’s benefit” (287). However, this kind of “cautionary message” is not exclusive to Osundare but is common to most poets and writers involved in one way or another with Nature.

Ecological bodies, such as the Green Peace Organisation, Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), UN Forum on Forests, and others. Their works constitute a form of ecological-cum-environmental activism which takes into cognisance the reality of the earth’s “more complex social conditions” (288) in contemporary times and raises awareness, through creative means, about the earth’s importance for man’s sustenance and survival. They make us realise that this earth of ours is “something we can no longer take for granted” (288). This sense of mission accounts generally, as Mensah has noted, for the profound display of love- (he calls it “sentiments”) - for the earth in the works of this class of writers. Their great depth of feeling thus accounts for the often-painstaking detailing of the earth’s beauty, bounties, resources and potential. Osundare has abundantly exhibited this characteristic over time and in different poetry volumes.

For instance, Osundare’s Nature-immersed childhood, coupled with his tremendous poetic gifts, has equipped him with the experience leading to such a poem as “Forest Echoes” (*EoE*, 3). This is a nine-page long poem, which in Mensah’s evaluation, is not only an “encyclopaedic portrait of the variety of the rain forest” (293) but also one featuring “the finest tributes to the majesty and variety of the rain forest ever achieved in writing” (290). In “Forest Echoes”, Osundare displays his fine mastery of the *oriki* (praise poetry) while meticulously noting and annotating the amazing particularities of the dense flora and fauna of the rainforest of his childhood homeland. Also, not forgetting the breathtaking topography of rocks, hills, and anthills creating their scenery. He also captures the incredible spectacle of flowing rivers and overhanging boughs in masterful superlatives.

Because of their immense affection for it, Nature-centred poets also protest and often grieve when their beloved earth is at risk or abused. In this wise, the same sense of celebration of nature in their works typically carries with it also an ironic “sense of the elegiac” (289). In effect, they write about Nature with nostalgia, using very evocative language to praise its beauty, even as they long for its lost glories. Based upon the preceding, Mensah concludes that Osundare’s *The Eye of the Earth* is “a very clear statement of his concerns” (287) about the Earth.

Another fundamental trait of eco-inclined poets is perceiving in Nature a kind of in-dwelling presence that is palpable and commands deep reverence. This distinctly Words worthian characteristic also permeates Osundare’s poetry. Just as William Wordsworth would meditatively contemplate the remarkable presence of the Divine in Nature, so also does Osundare in his poetry. This is the principal reason; for instance, in *The Eye of the Earth*, where Osundare presents Nature as a living being whose eye we must not step upon. Even though now a Westernised modern poet, Osundare, in this volume, stages a decisive homecoming to the Yoruba philosophy regarding the earth.

The title, “The Eye of the Earth”, intimately encapsulates the Yoruba reverence for the earth, which informs the folk saying: ‘*k’á má tẹ ojú ilẹ̀ mọ̀lẹ̀*’ (may we not trample the eye of the earth!). The saying, functioning both as a prayer and an admonition, also has a binary other which says: *k’á má tẹ aṣọ àgbà mọ̀’lẹ̀* (May we not trample the garments of the elders). As an admonition, the folk wisdom behind the two sayings reflects the Yoruba recognition of the earth and all they believe it stands for: nourishment, health, wealth, sustenance, peace, and man’s final resting place. As a result, certain sections of the Yoruba even worship the earth as a goddess, whose essence in this capacity is conceived as an *abiyamọ* (devoted Mother). As a prayer, however, the saying is a cautionary admonition, especially to a young person who appears to be quite uninformed in the norms of a culture or to an adult who seems somewhat presumptuous or oblivious.

The reader will observe that the common denominator to the two-fold saying is “ilẹ̀” (the earth), whose sacredness, just as respect for the elderly, is aggregated to “ojuilẹ̀” (eye of the earth). Stepping on this “eye” potentially provokes unpleasant consequences. This is the entire message of Osundare’s *The Eye of the Earth*.

Erratic Nature and Unceasing Human Mishandling

We take our cue from the foregoing to argue that Niyi Osundare’s *City Without People: The Katrina Poems* (2011) is an eco-focused volume, not minding that it seems to dwell on the poet’s personal tragic experience of Hurricane Katrina. In *City Without People*, the poet expresses grave concerns for the environment and how its wrong handling puts modern man at grave risk. Apart from those addressed to personal friends and colleagues, a sizeable number of poems in the volume feature the poet’s warnings about calamitous consequences should the dimensions of abuse, misuse, exploitation of, and even cruelty to the earth’s natural resources continue unchecked.

Missing the mark would be that reader or critic, who on encountering Nature in Osundare's poetry, consigns its implication to his being a "farmer-born," "peasant-bred" countryside child who had had a "happy intimacy with nature" (287). While this may be true of his childhood, the present reality is that Osundare is now the vastly travelled, internationally-exposed poet whose earlier simple, innocent experience of Nature has become quite complicated. His exposures to the more scientific, machine-powered cultures of the West and other parts of the planet have combined to re-image his delightful childhood romping with Nature, into a far more diverse understanding of its many complexities.

Reflecting on eco-strains in Osundare's poetry, Bhupendra Limbu (2019) asserts that the poet has textualised nature in his poetry to "create an eco-literary discourse" (2) and thereby achieve "environmental consciousness" in his readers (2). While observing that "Our Earth Will Not Die" is an eco-critical poem connecting "the issue of environmental crisis with literature," Limbu emphasises that in it, the poet "has shown the destruction and exploitation of the environment done by humans" (1). He also highlights the poem's exposure of nature abuse as a form of cruelty in which not only the earth but also humans suffer unpleasant repercussions. Limbu's conclusion, therefore, is that Osundare used the poem to raise humanity's awareness of their anti-environment behaviour and the dangers to which it exposes them.

The question of climate change, its causes and consequences for man's continued peaceful existence on the earth has been a persistent thematic focus of Osundare's poetry; albeit more forcefully projected in some than in other volumes. However, in *City Without People*, Osundare confronts this issue head-on, presenting Nature not as the charming, beautiful, and benevolent Friend he had known and related with in his youth, but rather now as an ugly, unpredictable, and wild creature with frightening killer instincts, whose honour it is better not to "trespass"(19). Given the unfortunate benefit of his suffering, losses and near-death experience from Hurricane Katrina, Osundare has composed the poems in *City Without People* with a mixture of passion for the environment and pain for its abuse. His urgent, sometimes biting tone, reveals that the poet seeks to raise the bar of apprehension about rapidly eroding ecosystems largely caused by man's continual mishandling, as well as how this problem precipitates untold human misery when the environment fights back.

In “Water Never Forgets” (19), water is personified as a woman who has been subjected to serial abuse, but who ends up retaliating, with devastating consequences against her abuser. To establish this charge, the poet endows water with its own “mindscape,” (v.1, l.3) to signify its capability for rational thought. He also refers to its “heart” (v.3, l. 1) to indicate that water, just like any normal human being, has its own emotions which, as the poet established, have been dealt hard punches. Moreover, the poet talks of water’s violated “honour” (v.4, l.3), which, in trying to avenge, water bared her “vengeful teeth” (v.5, l.3) just as the floods of Hurricane Katrina. This highlights the crux of the poem’s title: “Water Never Forgets,” which is a subtle warning of water’s unpredictable reaction to acts committed against it.

The poem “Water Never Forgets” (19) comes under the section: WATER, WATER,” while “Katrina’s Diaspora” (43) features under the section: “AFTER THE FLOOD.” In “Water Never Forgets”, Osundare, perhaps as a son of water himself, exploits the benefit of his obvious familiarity with water to inform his readers that just like any other living being, water cannot only feel pain but give it back to when it has had enough. In “Katrina’s Diaspora,” however, the poet particularly highlights the socio-economic problems of modern living that get further complicated by natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina.

With the title “Water Never Forgets” the poet casts a deliberately delicate portrait of water’s faculties, with the cautionary hint that its retentive powers be not taken for granted. The fact is, just as he had said, “Water Never Forgets,” he could easily have said: “Water Always Remembers,” which would have communicated a quite positive message, especially if water had had good treatment in its relationships with humankind. But the way the title is cast suggests a kind of ominous foreboding, especially about occurrences of hurt in a relationship. Moreover, depending upon individual temperaments, the duration of pain in situations such as this differs. Typically for women, the gender attributed to water in this poem, the ache persists for as long as it takes and can develop ultimately into bitterness, except or until, it is assuaged. This is why the poet cautions that when the water has had enough, it will “roar back” (v.4, l. 2). The word “roar” captures graphically an unlocking of water’s sweltering wrath that had been held in its belly through the ages. When released, as seen in the instance of Hurricane Katrina, the outcomes were counted in human costs, and utterly devastating economic disasters, including complete social chaos.

Given what he suffered in Hurricane Katrina, Osundare ironically holds brief for Nature in “Water Never Forgets”. Passionately arguing its cause and going to meticulous lengths to detail the hard actions against it, and for how long; Osundare thereby justifies Nature’s destructive response. As a Nature lover and advocate, the poet here actively gives his support, not to Nature’s destructive reactions, but rather to its case. His conclusion here is that persistent human abuse has forced water to take the path of violence which unfortunately hurts humans. The sum of the poet’s appeal in this poem, therefore, is: ‘please stop abusing Nature!’

“Water Never Forgets” is also a sharp rebuke of the authorities of the city of New Orleans. Given his impassioned description of the scale of human and material losses, Megan Burns in her review of *City Without People* designates Osundare as the citizens’ “unacknowledged legislator” (3).

Osundare believes that the regulatory authorities failed woefully in their responsibility to keep the city safe from avoidable ecological disasters.

National Geographic, *Britannica*, and *Wikipedia* all record the devastation of Hurricane Katrina from different perspectives. While *National Geographic* estimated property damage alone at \$108b, *Wikipedia* estimated \$60b worth of physical damages and www.dosomething.org put Katrina’s total economic impact at \$150b. *National Geographic* states that by the time Katrina’s flooding was in full mode, 80% of New Orleans was “effectively underwater,” and CNN’s reports showed that 70% of occupied housing consisting of 134,000 units were eventually lost to the floods. *National Geographic* records that 400,000 persons were permanently displaced, while CNN puts the figure at more than one million people. CNN’s statistics of fatalities recorded 40% of deaths as caused by drowning, 25% by injury and trauma, and 11% by heart conditions. In the same vein, *Wikipedia* recorded that while number of deaths was set officially at 1,245, the estimated figures are as high as 1,836, while www.dosomething.org features on its website a total number of 705 reported as still missing. In its QuickFacts section, *National Geographic* reports that if all the debris from Hurricane Katrina were stacked on a football field, the pile would reach over ten miles in height.

All the above grim statistics came about because the city’s infrastructural deficits, which the Hurricane flooding ultimately took advantage of, had been in a state of neglect for decades. Available information from *National Geographic* reveals that at least fifty, which represents 85% of the built-in flood control mechanisms, known as levees, failed as they were overwhelmed by

the flood waters of Katrina. These levees, www.dosomething.org reports, had been constructed since 1965 and were originally built for a category 3 storm, whereas Hurricane Katrina made landfall at category 5 in 2005.

Specific words lodged in the body of “Water Never Forgets” contribute powerfully to a reader’s understanding of the poet’s definition of environmental abuse, which definitively point to a subsequent unleashing of water’s terrible fury in this particular instance:

So, when we **steal** its swamps

un-fin its fishes

and **trample** its shells

- stanza 2, ll. 1-3 (bold emphasis are mine).

Here the poet takes on the verb “steal”, to assert pointedly that humans have stolen so steadily from Nature until it could endure it no more. The first line indicts the New Orleans city authorities directly. Like Lagos in Osundare’s native Nigeria, New Orleans is a city sitting on water. Available public records state that almost 70% of the city is built on land originally reclaimed from the swamps. The poet therefore takes his time to detail what exactly the New Orleans city “stole” from water. First, they: “un-fin its fishes.” The verb “un-fin”, coined from the noun “fin”, is carefully positioned to emphasise a violent action taken on a vital body part of the fish. Obviously, without its fins, the fish cannot swim. And of course, when not moving fish is as good as dead. However, with the way the poet graphically presents the process of detaching this indispensable limb from the fish’s body, it sounds more like an amputation, which it is.

To further his original thesis that this action, like all others, ultimately represents forms of human cruelty against water, the poet uses here the possessive pronoun “its” to indicate who owns the fish that were being “un-finned” by fishers. Yet in this verse, the poet reports that people also “trample” water’s shells,” to indicate that her delicate treasures were mindlessly destroyed. This is more like saying water’s children were being ravaged for human profit alone, but for water, these are painful experiences that go straight into its memory banks.

Water Fights Back

The poet maintains the sense of an impending recall of mankind's reckless acts against water throughout this poem in a very creative way. He introduces the possessive pronoun 'its,' right from the first line of the first stanza, and carries it through the entire five stanzas. This pronoun serves as the power key which keeps turning the wheel smoothly sustains his delicate argument in support of water.

In the next verse which continues the narrative of human unkindness against the person of water, the poet uses the possessive 'its' in all three lines:

When we **scoop** *its* heart

Steel *its* span

And **cement** *its* stomach

- Stanza 3(bold emphasis and italics are mine)

The verbs employed here are also quite strong. While "scoop" ordinarily refers to the practice of sand-dredging large bodies of water to reclaim land for erecting physical structures, Osundare chooses that intensive verb to help communicate his strong opinion of deliberate hard actions against water's softness. And in the first line, we see an instance of water's "heart" (l. 1), the 'eye' of its softness being "scooped", or gouged. This was not a transplant, but an excavation of vital organs of the body. It metaphorically talks of killing water's positive emotions. The large hollow left behind stored up hard feelings against those responsible for that violence. The poet had pointed this out from the outset, by stating that even before the eventual flooding, the water had begun to shed bitter tears through: "its drip-drop, drop-dead/hints." He confirms that these are deadly "echoes" from water's "mindscape" (v.1, l. 2-3), which we can also equate to its memory. Recall that before the Katrina flooding, mild rains had first started, advancing into the non-stop downpours that precipitated the massive floods, which eventually overwhelmed the levees, and then the city. So mightily must water have wept on this occasion.

Further, the next line says we: "steel its **span**" (v.3, l. 2), alluding to the practice of fencing off large bodies of water for potential conversion to hard ground; we also "**cement** its stomach" (v.3,l.3), with concrete reinforcements built to hold it back from over-running the set bounds.

While these two lines both describe the reining in water as a form of flood control taken as a whole, the poet infers that the process is a show of force which can succeed only in further hardening water, because it puts her under hard, unnatural control. Hurricane Katrina's massive flooding is a powerful testimony to how the environment puts a lie to mankind's assumptions, that it can be perpetually controlled without consequences.

In line 3, the noun "stomach", which could also be used as a verb to mean 'liking', 'tolerance' or 'fondness' as in the expression: 'to have a stomach for something or someone,' is employed by the poet here to imply soft feelings turning to hatred. So, stating that mankind "cemented" the "stomach" of water, he implies that water was dealt "hard" deeds intended to inhibit her, but that rather than man cowing water, mankind only succeeded in turning her "stomach" (soft spot) into a hardened cauldron of pain. Water's ultimate reactions to the hardening processes were terrifying.

This entire verse brings to mind a Yoruba proverb which says: "èniyàn'ók'ẹ̀şinl'óró; ẹ̀şin ò ní'kàníńúrará. Wọ̀n so idẹ̀ wẹ̀rẹ̀-wẹ̀rẹ̀p apọ̀, wón fi kọ ẹ̀şinl'ọ̀rùn" (Mankind taught the horse to be wicked as it never had any innate streak of wickedness. They strung small pieces of steel together, and with it they goad the horse). The idea is an admonition that cautions the horse rider to have empathy for the animal, as a sudden turn-around could be deadly. As implied in the proverb, an over-prodded horse can turn around in frustration and thus throw its rider. Their resultant accident may cost the rider their life or end them up in a debilitating condition. Corroborating human complicity in such otherwise avoidable disasters, Osundare makes the following clarification in the interview which was published along with the poems in *City Without People*:

"Afterall, Katrina was not a totally natural disaster. No. The water that took away everything we had, that nearly took our lives, came from a broken levee" (132).

In light of all that "Water Never Forgets" has complained about regarding the difficult relationship between water and man, Osundare's reference to the "broken levee" here can allude to the "broken heart" of water, which released the vast floods that practically obliterated an entire city and subsequently jeopardised millions of lives. This also seems to be Osundare's conclusion about the irrationality, as well as the 'rationality' of Nature's "logic" when it fights back against humankind.

Our second poem is in the AFTER THE FLOOD section of *City Without People*, which focuses on matters that arose in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. In addition to the tragic loss of lives and

property, another major aftermath was the massive dislocation of people. As shown in the poem, family life became completely disrupted, not by death this time, but by exigencies of survival. Poignantly titled “Katrina’s Diaspora” this very short but crisp poem sports a high economy of words, with which the poet fuses several significant aspects of history with contemporary events to present a single thread of narrative. “Katrina’s Diaspora” is also annotated in brackets as “Katrina’s Refugees,” the appellation given to the displaced victims of Hurricane Katrina by the American press and the politicians. Osundare adopts it however to stress his point in the poem that indeed it was a “refugee” situation. He depicts a scenario typical of a Third World situation being visited upon American citizens right inside the United States.

“Katrina’s Refugees” narrates the harrowing experience of a Black family which was broken up while being relocated. Osundare, at his satirical best, evokes in this poem, the entire Black history of four-hundred years of slavery, and the yet-to-be-mitigated social injury of the average Black citizen of the United States today.

The keyword with which the poem operates, and through which all other words in it acquire their significance, is “diaspora”. Already quite charged with varied political, historical and sociological connotations of its own, the term “diaspora” is surrounded in this poem by a dense field of allusive collocations which help cast into sharp focus the government-enabled social dilemma into which this Black family was thrown after the Katrina floods. The way the poet presents their situation, it appears that the family—predictably of meagre resources, and sheltering together—had been providing not just financial sustenance, but also emotional support to one another. Regrettably, however, this filial shield was completely shattered by the government’s evacuation methods, which caused them to be sent in different directions. As they were separated and haphazardly scattered all over the vast country, what the poet sees is: “A new diaspora/Of desperate dislocations” (v.2, ll. 2-3) to “placeless destinations” (l.3). This is the poet’s reason for tagging the family’s new location a modern “Babylon” (v.3, l.2), about the slavery and suffering of the Biblical Jews in a strange land.

Secondly, by calling their current experience a “new diaspora,” the poet infers that these African-Americans had gone the route of this kind of forced and haphazard family-fragmenting treatment before. This was in the days of slavery when their ancestors were transported forcibly and more violently from their African homelands to the “placeless destinations” of the New World. Using

this old experience as background, the poet reveals that the situation has hardly changed today. The poem shows that just as sons and daughters, fathers and mothers were scattered into the captivity of different slave traders who took them away to unknown places of the slave-holding nations of the Americas, so also are their descendants in the contemporary United States. Today, formerly well-bonded families are broken up and scattered into different parts of the massive United States, with scant regard to the social complications this creates. This is the logic behind the poet's assignment of peculiar names to their strange destinations, such as: "Albuquerque" (v.1., l.1), "Utah" (v.1, l.2), "Ashtabula" (v.1, l.3), "Wala-Wala", (v.1, l.4). Osundare adopted these mostly multi-syllabic and high-sounding names not only for their sensational pronunciations but also to accentuate the relocations - he calls it "dislocations" (v.2, l.2) as more of a throw in the dark.

As far as the poet is concerned this is an infliction of a form of social violence against these people who are citizens of the United States in their rights. For instance, while the father was "bussed-off" to Albuquerque (v.1, l.1) in New Mexico, a distance of some 17 hours away, the mother "found herself" in Utah (v.1, l.2), some 44 hours away from Louisiana, while her daughter was "Black-Hawked" to Ashtabula" (v.1, l.3) in Ohio state, some 17 hours away. In the father's case, the poet deliberately added of "off" to his being "bussed", thus making it sound like "buzz off"-an expression of rude dismissal. Secondly, he also purposely chose the daughter as the one to be "Black-Hawked" right in front of her mother. The poet utilised here the "Black-Hawk" helicopter brand name of the American National Guard to evoke the black hawk (Àşá) in the African folkloric tradition. This Àşá (black hawk) is a large predatory bird well-known for hovering ominously over chicks exposed from under their mothers and swiftly swooping them off for its dinner. Osundare uses this ill-omened imagery to suggest a child-swooping, family-breaking black bird airlifting this family away to unknown destinations.

Finally, the family's son "hitch-hiked to WalaWala" (v.1, l.4). This is in the Washington area, some 35 hours away from New Orleans. Another crucial point Osundare drives at by carefully detailing these destinations is the sheer size of the United States. The country is so vast and diverse that it has different time zones from coast to coast as if they were different countries. This perhaps makes it customary for scores of American citizens to hardly venture beyond their home states their entire lives, and thus know little or almost nothing about other parts of their country. This

puts in perspective the kind of apprehension that the “Katrina’s Refugees” must have been subjected to while being “Black-Hawked” all over the diverse country. Osundare also uses this Black family’s current dilemma to evoke the unfortunate epoch of slavery when Africans (now African-Americans) were uprooted from their homelands and taken to strange places they had never known before. The poet successfully achieves this historical connection with the expression “auction lock” (v.1, l. 5), by which he means “the auction block,” where the captured men, women and children were sold off against their will to the white slave owners.

Secondly, the expression “bussed-off” (v.1, l.1) signifies another instance of Black social dislocation in the United States, which the poet feels strongly about. “Bussing” or properly stated “desegregated bussing”, is the controversial “bussing” policy of the American school system which eventually acquired its socio-political notoriety because of the perceived unfairness in its implementation. For instance, regardless of how within reach a school is, a Black child would not be welcome there if it is a predominantly white school. As a result, Black children are compelled to walk several blocks down the road to catch the school bus to get to an all-Black school. As is often the case, it takes an almost city-round trip for Black children to get to school and back. This practice, which is easily identified with the ubiquitous American long yellow school bus, is what the poet refers to in his use of the word “bussing” in the poem.

Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to deliberate on Osundare’s concern for Nature, and reveal how environmental degradation negatively impacts man’s life on Earth. In examining this, the paper discovered that man’s multi-dimensional disregard for the earth, exhibited in serial violations of the unwritten laws under-guarding the earth’s resources and its biodiversity, greatly contributes to this extant threat.

Summing up this disregard as a form of disrespect and contempt for Nature and the environment; the poet lists issues such as: “stealing” the swamps by sand-filling wetlands that ought to be left for bio-diversity, “scooping its heart,” “steeling its span” and “cementing its stomach” (Water Never Forgets”- stanzas 3-4). Also, government neglect of reports of imminent or potential danger of flooding foretold by city officials (“City Without People” ll.23) are some of the concrete examples of Man’s contempt for the environment.

This paper reaches the conclusion, through a careful analysis of the selected poems, that Nature's fight-back causes dimensions of havoc, which, in the long term, has the most harmful impact on mankind.

WORKS CITED

- Adegboyega, O. O. 2017. Philosophical Issues in Yoruba Proverbs. *International Journal of African Society, Cultures and Traditions*. 5.2. 21-30. Online edition.
- Alpers, P. 1990. Schiller's Naïve and Sentimental Poetry and the Modern Idea of Pastoral. *Cabinet of the Muses: Rosenmeyer Festschrift*. 320-331
<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/25986405>.
- Amore, K.P., Amusan, K.V. & Okoye, C.J.2016. Aspects of Conceptual Metaphor in Selected Poems of Niyi Osundare. *Language and Style in Niyi Osundare's Poetry: Selections from Osundare Research Conference, TASUED*, (2016): 232-247.
- Anyokwu, C. 2015. The Essentials of Niyi Osundare's Poetry. *Transnational Literature*. 8. 1. 1-17.
- Ayinoluwa, F. I. & Onwuka, E. 2014. "Yoruba Eco-Proverbs in English: An Eco-critical Study of Niyi Osundare's *Midlife* and *Horses of Memory*." *Journal of Literary Society of Nigeria*, (JLSN), 6 (2014): 29-40.
- Bamikunle, A. 1995. "The Development of Niyi Osundare's Poetry: A Survey of Themes and Technique." *Research in African Literatures* 26. 4 (1995): 121-37.
- Bhupendra, L. 2019. "Eco-Critical Analysis of the Poem "Our Will Not Die" by Niyi Osundare." <https://bhupendralimbu.com.np>
- Burns, M. 2012. Review of Niyi Osundare's *City Without People*. <http://solidquarter.blogspot.com/2012/03/review-of-niyi-osundares-city-witout.html>
- Diala, I. 2016. Burden of the Visionary Artist: Niyi Osundare's Poetry. *Contemporary Literature*, 57. 3 (2016): 379-409.
- Godwin, D. J. 2009. *The Eye of the Earth: Niyi Osundare as a Poet of Nature*. *African Research Review*. Vol. 3(2), 2009: (66-77). Online Edition.
- Irele, A. 2003. Niyi Osundare: Between Self and Commitment. Na'Allah, A. (Ed.), *The People's Poet: Emerging Perspectives on Niyi Osundare*. Trenton, NJ & ASMARA, Eritrea. Africa World Press, Inc.xvii-xxii.
- Kofi, A. N. M. 2003. Osundare as Nature Poet: A Simple Sentimentality.

- Na'Allah, A. (Ed.), *The People's Poet: Emerging Perspectives on Niyi Osundare*. Trenton, NJ & ASMARA, Eritrea. Africa World Press, Inc. 287-297.
- Lesley, K. 2019. "What Led to Desegregation Busing- And Did it Work?"
<https://www.history.com>> July 9, 2019.
- Ogunnaike, J. & Adeniyi, D. 2016. Studies in African Ecocriticism- A Thematic Analysis of Selected Poems in Niyi Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth. Language and Style in Niyi Osundare's Poetry: Selections from Osundare Research Conference, TASUED*. 54-69.
- Oloko, M. J. 2016. Osundare as a Nature Poet: The Earth as Metaphor for Destruction and Cohesion in "What the Earth Said." *Language and Style in Niyi Osundare's Poetry: Selections from Osundare Research Conference, TASUED*. 190-209.
- Osundare, N. 2011. *City Without People: The Katrina Poems*. Black Widow Press, Boston, M.A.
- Prior, R. 2019. "Why New Orleans is Vulnerable to Flooding: It's Sinking." <https://edition.cnn.com/> 201. July 11, 2019.
- Romaguera, C. L. 2020. "Reading *City Without People: The Katrina Poems* in an Isolated New Orleans." <http://blog.pshares.org/index.php/reading-city-without-people-the-katrina-poems-in-an-isolated-new-orleans>
- Sule, E. E. 2019. "Uses of Environmental Humanities." <https://seeingthewoods.org/series> _____.
 2012. "A Poet's Trauma in New Orleans: A Review of Niyi Osundare's *City Without People*." <https://www.africanwriter.com/a-poets-trauma-in-new-orleans-a-review-of-niyi-osundares-city-without-people>
- Uzoечи, N. 2013. "Nature in the Balance: The Commodification of the Environment in Niyi Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth*." *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, (2013): 22 (3):196-212
- Wei, L. S. 2003. Reconstructing the Forgotten Nature's History: Approaching Osundare and His *Horses of Memory*. Na'Allah, A. (Ed.), *The People's Poet: Emerging Perspectives on Niyi Osundare*. Trenton, NJ & ASMARA, Eritrea. Africa World Press, Inc. 299-312.

"Speak Up and Say Malaria Must Die": Pragmatic Acts of Malaria-Related E-Adverts

Simeon Ajiboye

Bowen University,

Iwo, Osun State.

and

Shirley Olatunji

Central Michigan University,

USA.

Abstract

This paper examines various pragmatic functions of language in medical-related E-adverts, which are unique and can reveal the advertisers' intentions. Previous studies on medical advertisements have focused on posters, television, and leaflets emphasising language use, persuasive strategies, communicative acts, and style, neglecting the pragmatic functions of malaria-related E-adverts. This study, therefore, examines the pragmatic implications of language use in selected malaria-related E-adverts using Jacob Mey's (2001) pragmatic acts theory. One hundred randomly sampled downloaded and transcribed YouTube videos constitute data for this study. The findings reveal that E-adverts are characterised by two categories of practs: preventive and awareness practs. Preventive pract manifests exposing, warning, appealing and informing practs, while awareness pract bifurcates into challenging and encouraging practs. The study concludes that context and advertisers' intentions constrain language use in malaria-related E-adverts.

Keywords: preventive pact, awareness pract, pragmatic acts, malaria-related, e-adverts

Background to the Study and Research Gap

In every society, advertisements play essential roles ranging from informing to endowing people with the power of choice and the power of knowledge that helps them make critical decisions every day. Advertisement turns the audience's attention towards a product, idea or service. One of the main objectives of advertising is to influence the behaviour of consumers. It motivates prospective buyers by arousing their needs. Advertisements are not only about promoting brands and products but also delivering the ideas of texts that are intended to create the image of an individual, group, or organisation (Goddard 2002).

Advertisement is the mechanism used to make goods or services known to the public, and it is also an avenue to reach a larger audience. In this light, Osisanwo (2013) explains that advertising is an

attention-calling strategy for a particular product or service on the one hand and to make the public patronise such product on the other hand. This means that advertisement is a form of communication that connects the seller to a large audience. This buttressed Dyer's (1982) view as he considers advertisement a type of communication in the field of communication; his perspective positions advertisement not only as a strategy but also as a communicative act. Thus, adverts do not only call public attention to products but also communicate deep messages to the audience.

The diverse ways advertising agencies convey messages to their prospective customers and the public include television, newspapers, magazines, radio, billboards, and the Internet. These listed means are known as advertising media. In this digital age, the internet has been a veritable channel of advertisement. It has grown to the extent that promoting goods, services, or ideas is easily presented to large audiences far or near. Advertisements on the internet are called electronic advertisements, also known as E-advert, which include email, social media, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, amongst others.

It is important to note that advertisement also serves as an instrument of awareness in several fields, such as law, education, banking, religion and medicine, which is the main focus of this study. The use of advertisements in the medical sector has been very instrumental on several grounds. It has proven to be a veritable tool whereby medical problems are explained, medical conditions are cured, medications are prescribed, and awareness is created about a particular disease, such as malaria, which this study focuses on.

Malaria is a severe disease that plagues Africa as a whole, with Nigeria having the highest record in Africa. It is known to be a disease that kills faster than any other disease. According to the 2022 World Health Organization's (WHO) malaria report, there are an estimated 249 million malaria cases around the globe, with 608,000 malaria-related deaths. In Nigeria, Africa's most populous continent, about 68 million people are infected with malaria, and more than 194,000 people die of the disease, as reported by the World Health Organisation in 2022. Malaria is caused by a parasite that spreads to humans through the bites of infected mosquitoes. Thus, medical advertisements significantly sensitise people to prevent and cure malaria. Hence, this work will look at the various pragmatic functions of E-adverts and how malaria is constructed in YouTube adverts.

Previous studies on medical advertisements have focused on posters, television and leaflets, considering their language use, communicative act and style, neglecting the pragmatic functions of medical advertisements, especially on the internet with its enormous viewers. In this category,

studies like Oyebode and Unuabonah 2013 through the lens of multimodal discourse analysis examine the generic structure and communicative acts in HIV/AIDS posters; Jolayemi and Idegbekwe's 2019 'Effective communication of patient information leaflets (PILs) in selected malaria drugs in Nigeria' examines the effectiveness of communication in patient information leaflets ; Kahari 2013; Velychko 2015; Oluwo and Akinkurolere (2015) through the theoretic perspective of multimodal discourse analysis explores the linguistic and visual elements of malaria drug advert of selected advertisement of malaria drugs ; Faleke 2012 examines language use in medical-related advertisements through the ethnography theoretic perspectives; Mavunga et al. 2016 through intersectional and kyriarchy heuristics examines examines how informal herbal healing flyers and posters in the Johannesburg CBD reinforce norms which govern and legitimate desirable male and female bodies and lives through written texts and images; and Trisnayanti et al. 2021 examine the hidden messages in COVID-19 advertisements by analyzing the verbal and non-verbal signs used in the Covid 19 "Stay Home Save Live" advertisement. Despite the fact that all the above studies focus on medical adverts which is the focus of this study, however, this study depart significantly from the above mentioned in that it examines the pragmatic functions of the malaria-related adverts on the YouTube. Though Makinde (2007) examines the pragmatic functions of medical advertisements on HIV/AIDS, her study does not focus on malaria E-adverts and the way malaria is metaphorically constructed, which the current study examines. Therefore, unlike earlier studies, this study examines the pragmatic functions of malaria-related E-adverts on YouTube.

This study relates to the aforementioned studies in that they all centre on medical advertisements; however, it departs significantly from them as it focuses on the pragmatic functions of language in electronic advertisements. The study focuses on contextual functions of language use in electronic advertisements rather than persuasive or communicative functions, which centre on how to do things with discourse or speech and theoretical communicative actions.

Theoretical Anchorage

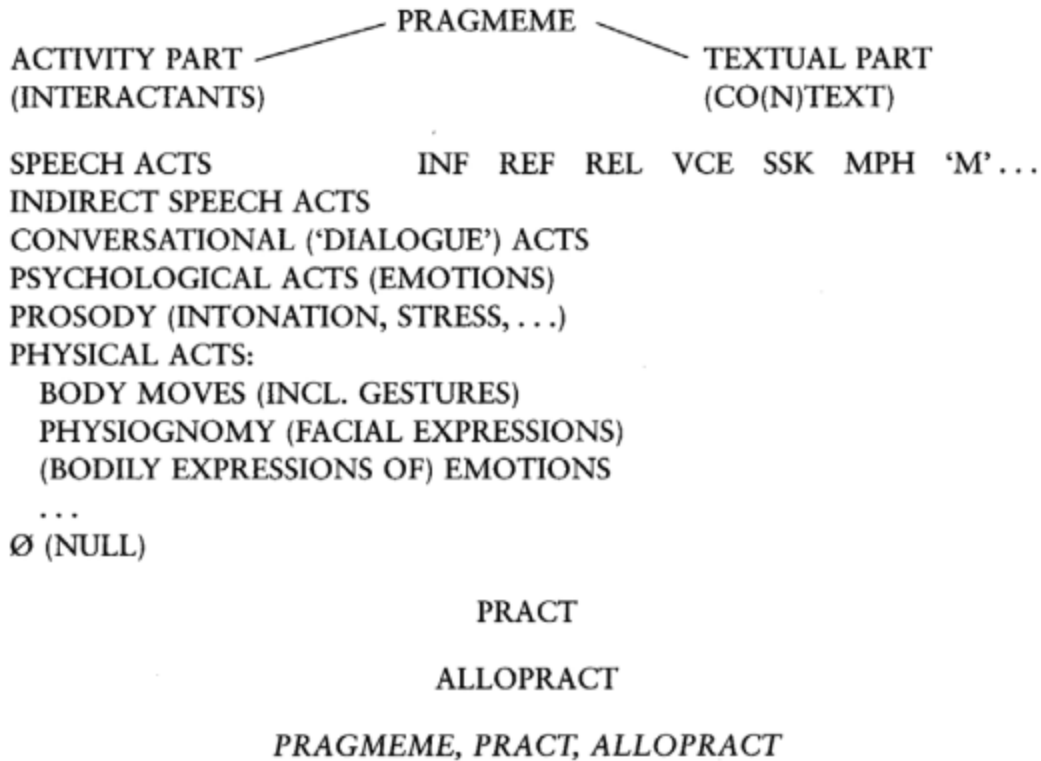
A pragmatic act theory is a way of looking at language use among people (Ajiboye 2020). It is a theory that considers context and looks at the socio-cultural interaction view of meaning, emphasising "the priority of socio-cultural and societal factors in meaning construction and comprehension" (Kecskes 2010:2889). Pragmatic act theory was propounded by Jacob Mey (2001)

to rescue the speech act theory from the weakness of not being situated and lack of action. Hence, a pragmatic act is considered a speech act in context or a situated speech act. It is a theory of context and action. Mey (2001:211) says context is a determinant or central factor in knowing the nature of a pragmatic act. Mey introduces the notion of "pragmeme", "pract" and "allopract", "where pragmeme is a general situational prototype which is instantiated through individual pragmatic act or pract", (Odebunmi and Unuabonah 2014: 109). This means that pragmeme is an abstraction while pract is the actual instantiation or physical realisation of pragmeme. Pragmeme can be seen from the agent's and act's division. According to Mey, agents are the resources that people dispose of as community members in terms of communication (Mey 2001). To Fairclough, the agent is the background knowledge in communication. These resources are characterised as a set of limits on what an individual is allowed to do in society as touching communication, while 'act' is the language used to perform a pragmatic act.

In Odebunmi's (2006:158) words, a pragmatic act is performed when we communicate implicitly. This does not mean that pragmatic acts cannot be explicitly performed. He further says that we co-opt others, set them up, influence them in our conversation, deny certain claims, and so on without betraying such acts through our lexical choices. Looking at the various manifestations of a pragmatic act, we see that it resembles an indirect speech act. Mey expresses this as speech acts uttered in context as pragmatic acts, but pragmatic acts need not be speech acts. This means that the contextual speech act is an aspect of pragmeme. Therefore, a speech act uttered in context is a pragmatic act, for example:

It is hot in here.

The utterance above is a request for windows to be open or for a fan or an air conditioner to be switched on. Mey presents pragmatics act theory in the schema below:



In the schema, the activity part contains the lists of various choices available to language users in communication. In contrast, the textual part consists of the elements in the textual chain. The elements in the textual part are INF which stands for inference, REF, which stands for reference; VCE, which is for voice; SSK, which means shared situation knowledge; MPH, which suggests metaphor M, which represents metapragmatics. Metapragmatics jokers deal with the use of indexicals, where the meaning resides at the level of indexical rather than the whole expression. The ellipsis shows that the list is inexhaustive. Odebunmi (2006) added that SCK, which is shared cultural knowledge, caters for all socio-cultural issues in pragmeme. To realise a pract, therefore, there must be a synthesis between the activity and textual parts. This is bolstered by Odebunmi (2011:623) when he says the union of the activity and the textual parts produces a pract or an allopract which is an instantiation of a pragmatic act. Similarly, in Mey's words, ipras or pract is the instantiated, individual pragmatic acts as two practs can never be identical. Therefore, every pract is at the same time an allopract; this means a concrete and different realisation of a particular instantiation of a particular pragmeme, (Mey 2001:221).

In this study, components such as direct speech acts, indirect speech acts and conversation acts (on the activity part) and REF, INF, SSK and REL (on the Contextual part) are of immediate

importance to exhumate the practs in the electronic advertisements. MPH is of great importance because malaria is metaphorical in the data. Since context is perceived in Mey's view as action, and interactive-electronic adverts are action-based and discourse-in-action texts, a study of malaria-related e-adverts is best done with action/context-based theory such as the Pragmatics Act.

Data and methodology

The data for this study consists of one hundred downloaded YouTube videos on malaria-related advertisements. These videos are selected based on their direct and explicit relevance to the issues of the discourse of the current study. The selected videos are a mixed bag of English and Pidgin English that centre on various malaria issues; they are equally largely dialogic with minimal monologic narratives that centre on malaria. The downloaded YouTube data are mostly subtitled, making the transcription easy. YouTube is selected as the base for the data set because of the large audience it reaches and because of the affordance of the dramatic presentation of the advert which other mediums do not afford. YouTube tends to have over 2.5 users and many of the adverts run on the YouTube channel tend to reach a vast population of people. Central for the analysis was Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Act theory which explains and unearths the true pragmatic functions and implications of utterances and adverts on YouTube channels. Relevant samples of malaria-related electronic adverts were extracted to demonstrate various pragmatically driven acts in the analysis. The theory is selected because of its capability to unravel various pragmatic functions entrenched in e-adverts. The paper adopts a top-down analytical method to unpack selected pragmatic functions in the E-Adverts. This is done through categorising, defining, characterising and exemplifying various malaria-related utterances in tandem with the objectives of the study and the application of aspects of the theoretical insights adopted for the research

Analysis and findings

Two broad practs: awareness pract and preventive/ regulatory pract characterised malaria-related e-adverts. The preventive or regulatory pract manifests in the form of exposing, appealing, informing, and warning, while awareness pract manifests in challenging and encouraging practices with their various activities and contextual parts. Each of these practs will be taken in turn for elucidation.

Preventive/Regulatory pract

Preventive practs are practs that limit the activities of malaria and provide ways to prevent or combat it. It is a situation where e-adverts are used to thwart or stop the spread of malaria among

people. The e-adverts, in a bid to stop malaria, expose, warn, inform and appeal to the general public about the activities of malaria and how it can be curtailed. Preventive pract manifests as exposing, appealing, informing and warning.

Exposing Pract

Exposing pract entails uncovering or revealing the true nature of something or someone. This pract reveals the seemingly covering capacity of malaria to kill and waste human lives and unearths the importance of using treated mosquito nets to stay healthy. This pract is evident in excerpt (1)

Background

The interaction in excerpt (1) occurs in several settings, such as a shop, a bus and a mechanic workshop. The interaction is between Bulus and a businesswoman, a mechanic in his workshop and a man on a bus. Bulus and the other interlocutors expose the intrinsic power of malaria and also subtly metaphorically map malaria as a killer, a waster and an enemy that must not be allowed in any community.

Excerpt 1

- 1 Oga Bulus: what can someone person call that thing that does not pity small children inside the belly
- 2 Female speaker: Shuuuu
- 3 Oga Bulus: Talk less of a pregnant woman
- 4 Female speaker: ewo Oga Bulus that is a wicked killer
[Oga Bulus at the mechanic's shop]
- 5 Oga Bulus: Pato the ogoboge mechanic. Please tell me what can knock you down not to come to work and all your customers will go.
- 6 Pato: that one is a waster ooo
[Oga Bulus inside bus with a man with two children]
- 7 Oga Bulus: what can you call that thing that stops your children from going to school and make them sick.
- 8 Man: ha-ha that is my number one enemy Oga Bulus
- 9 Malaria is that number one wicked waster and enemy but you and your family
- 10 Speaker: can free yourself if you sleep inside an insecticide-treated mosquito
- 11 net every night. Test and treat confirm malaria with ACT the correct malaria
- 12 medicine that the Ministry of Health recommends. Go for antenatal when you get

13. pregnant. For a malaria-free Nigeria, play your part.

The excerpt does not only expose the identity of malaria as a killer, a waster and an enemy of people, especially in Nigerian society that is ridden with malaria but also exposes that malaria has no regard for anybody: children, strong men and pregnant women. The framing of malaria as a killer, a waster and an enemy presents a precarious situation that Nigerians are facing in the hand of malaria (Khanam 2017). This, by implication, exposes malaria's damaging ability on children to make them inactive, as its ability to render energetic and working-class people inactive, which, in turn, would cause poverty and can make pregnant women lose their pregnancy (Erhabor et al. 2010, Jenavine et al. 2015). The interaction opens with Oga Bulus through indirect speech, punctuated with interrogation, cognitively through shared situation knowledge and metaphor, exposing malaria's capabilities to kill, waste, and cause poverty in lines 1 to 6. Bulus, capitalising on shared situation knowledge with the other interactants about the power of malaria, reveals sleeping inside a treated mosquito net and using ACT medication when knockdown by malaria as ways to stay safe from the attack of malaria in line 9. The advert exposes how to make families in Nigeria free from malaria by sleeping under a treated mosquito net and confirming and treating malaria with ACT, a good medicine. The utterance "For malaria-free Nigeria play your part" does more than admonish but expose that Nigeria has been under the siege, bondage and captivity of malaria (Adepoju and Akpan 2017; WHO 2016; WHO, 2022) and to be free from malaria's shackle, every Nigerian has a role to play since malaria has no regard for anybody be it small or old as evident in the excerpt.

Warning Pract

A warning is a statement or expression made to convey possible danger or other unpleasant thing(s) or situation(s) to people. It is a cautionary advice that can save people from impending danger. Warning pract in the context of this data deals with people being warned against self-prescription and self-medication against malaria, as seen in the excerpt.

Background

The interaction occurs in the hospital after Kofi and his wife visit for a malaria test. Kofi tested positive for malaria after the test. In the interaction, the doctor advises people to always go for malaria tests because all cases of fever are not malaria and also warns Kofi to take the full course of his medication.

Excerpt 2

1. Doctor: It is important Mr. Kofi came to the hospital to get tested
2. and get the right treatment. Some people don't get tested and simply go to the
3. pharmacy to buy medicines that can be detrimental and dangerous to their
4. health. Always go to the hospital or your local clinic to get tested for malaria
5. to ensure you get the right treatment. Not every fever is malaria\
6. Nurse: I have done the malaria test for you and it is positive
7. The doctor prescribes a course of ACT
8. Doctor: make sure you take the full course
9. Kofi: Babe you know this is my last tablet, I have taken the full course and
10. I'm feeling great
11. Kofi's wife: I can see that
They both smile
12. Kofi: and you know what from today, this house a malaria-free zone is
13. Kofi's wife: that sounds great and emm where are you going to sleep tonight
14. Kofi: only one place of course
15. Kofi's wife: hmmm
16. Kofi: and from now on, sleeping under an insecticide net

The excerpt above does more than inform the audience about the importance of going to hospitals; it mainly warns the audience against self-medication or self-prescription when affected by fever. The doctor, through shared situation knowledge of the practice of many Africans, especially Nigeria, who usually engage in self-prescription and self-medication, directly warns them against such practices but should visit hospitals and get tested to ascertain the actual sickness and eventually get the proper treatment. The expression "right treatment" in line 5 implicates different treatments for different fevers. Therefore, knowing or getting the appropriate treatment is a function of being tested in the hospital. The doctor, through the voice of medicine, sternly warns against such practice as it is harmful and dangerous to health. The doctor, through the institutional voice of medicine, direct speech act and possible situation knowledge of African practices and ways of handling any form of fever, warns Africans to desist from such acts but instead visit the hospital and get tested to have the proper treatment. This is evident in the exchanges between the

nurse and doctor in lines 1-3. Through the direct speech act, the doctor prescribes the appropriate treatment for malaria after a test confirmation, but not without warning Kofi to finish the course of his medication. This implies that many Africans, especially Nigerians, tend to stop treatment or medication when they feel well without completing their medication. The doctor warns against such a practice.

The remaining interactions from lines 4 to 9 reveal the perlocutionary effect of yielding the doctor's warning. Kofi, capitalising on the shared situation knowledge with his wife about the effectiveness of using the right drug and completing the medication, informs his wife about the possible way out of a malaria-free zone. The advert warns against self-medication and self-treatment, but the proper treatment after getting tested will produce the correct result. It equally warns and encourages the audience against sleeping without a treated mosquito net because it is only through it that a malaria-free zone is achievable.

Appealing Pract

Appealing is an act of pleading with someone to do something beneficial to both the person and the entire people. It is a statement of request to do something. The advert pleads with people to go to the hospital for tests and treatments against malaria and to sleep under the mosquito net to end malaria activities.

Background

In excerpt (3), the interactants, primarily children in sportswear, spoke out against malaria. They are calling for a fight against malaria and its activities. They discovered that malaria could stop their future and their dreams.

Excerpt 3

1. Boy1: my dream is to represent my country in the 2026 World Cup, but to
2. achieve this dream we must not wait for malaria to attack. Future champions
3. prevent it from happening by ensuring every child sleeps under its mosquito nets.
4. Boy2: come on Nigeria join us today
5. Everybody: yessss
6. Boy 1: chase malaria from your home to keep your child's dream alive by ensuring your
7. child sleeps under a mosquito treated net every day
8. Everybody: protect our dreams, chase malaria today!!!

The excerpt opens with the boy stating his life dream, but not without presenting malaria as a stumbling block. The boy metaphorically refers to malaria as an attacker and a destroyer that not only cuts short the lives of future champions of a country but also destroys their dreams. Therefore, through the direct speech act, he appeals to Nigeria and Nigerians to join in the fight against malaria and sleep under mosquito nets to protect against malaria. This implies that malaria in Nigeria is not only a dream killer but also a dangerous disease that cuts the lives of children short. The advert corroborates scholars' assertions about malaria being responsible for Nigeria's high child mortality rate (UNICEF 2019; Dasgupta et al. 2022; Bayode and Siegmund 2024). The response in line 4 supports the boy's revelation about malaria and affirms the call to stop malaria activities. The speaker in line 5 also appeals to the audience to rise without procrastinating and stop the activities of malaria by sleeping under mosquito nets. Through the appeal, the advert unearths mosquitoes as the principal agent of malaria. It, therefore, appeals to the audience that every child's dreams are kept alive by sleeping under the mosquito net. The advert, through direct speech act and metaphor, appeals to the emotions of Nigeria and Nigerians to stand up and stop the activities of malaria.

Pract of appealing is further bolstered in excerpt (40).

The interaction in the excerpt occurs in the context of family, and it presents an interaction between Kofi and his wife. The wife is appealing to Kofi to come to bed and sleep under a treated mosquito net to avert a possible malaria attack.

Background

The interaction below is between Kofi and his wife. Kofi's wife is seen appealing to him to come and sleep in the room and under-treated mosquito net to avoid being sick. Mosquito is presented in the interaction as an agent of malaria, and sleeping under the net can help prevent it.

Excerpt 4

[Kofi sweats and drinks water]

- 1) Kofi's wife: let's go to bed Kofi, it's late
- 2) Kofi: let me lie down for a bit I'm coming too

[Mosquito buzz]

[Kofi's wife tries to kill it by clapping her hands]

- 3) Kofi's wife: there are deadly mosquitoes here please come to bed, you don't want to fall sick again

- 4) Kofi: I'm coming
- 5) Kofi's wife: *[sighs and walks away to go and sleep under a mosquito net]*
[On the dining the woman talks to her daughter to eat up]
- 6) Kofi: babe, I'm feeling sick. I think it is malaria. can you get me some anti-malaria tablets from the pharmacy?
- 7) Kofi's wife: why don't we go to the hospital?

Through direct speech, the wife appeals to Kofi to come to bed and sleep under a treated mosquito net to avert malaria attack. The act of wives appealing to their husbands to go and sleep is an unmarked activity in the context of family, but the eventual place where he is asked to sleep is a marked event in the excerpt. Similarly, the act of trying to kill mosquitoes by Kofi's wife also suggests that their abode is not a malaria-free zone; this foregrounds Kofi's wife's appeal in line 2 to her husband to come to where they will not be disturbed by mosquitoes. Her utterance buttresses this in line 3. The expression "there is a deadly mosquito here. Please come to bed, you don't want to fall sick again" implicates that mosquitoes are agents of sickness and the only way to be free is to sleep in a mosquito-free environment. Similarly, it also implies that Kofi had been a victim of mosquito bites before, resulting in sickness. It is equally apparent in the interaction that there is a shared situational knowledge that mosquitoes cause malaria and that the only way to prevent malaria is to sleep under a mosquito net daily.

Kofi's eventual complaint of feeling sick and his call for self-prescription and self-medication is jettisoned and discouraged by his wife in line 7 but she appeals to her husband to visit the hospital for proper treatment. Through shared situation knowledge of mosquitoes as an agent of malaria and direct speech act, the advert appeals to the audience to sleep under treated mosquito nets to be free of malaria and visit the hospital whenever they are feeling feverish rather than resulting in self-prescription and self-medication.

Informing Pract through Asserting

Informing is an act of providing information about something. It deals with an act of telling something novel to another party either for the sake of speaking or for the person to be aware of the event so that necessary action can be taken. In this data, the advert informs the audience about the power and potency of a medication, "Forever quinine", to combat malaria and its activities.

Background

The interaction in the excerpt occurs as a drama in a home setting, though before then, an advertisement agent spoke about the damaging effect of malaria in the world and the necessity of using Forever Quinine, a malaria medication.

Excerpt 5

1. Prelude: Since 1940 over 40 million human beings have died of malaria due to wrong
2. diagnosis or ineffective drugs. Due to our love for humanity, we've called a
3. solution that will enable you to recover quickly. this is it Forever Quinine It's fast
4. effective and efficient. This is the end of malaria
5. Man 1: What happened to you
6. Man 2: I don't know what is happening to me, my head is just hot and I have pour
7. two gallons of water on my head but it is still hot
8. Man 1: But you know that it is a symptom of malaria?
9. Man 2: You sure?
10. Man 1: yes, ahan you haven't heard of forever Quinine
11. Man 2: Forever Quinine?
12. Man 1: Yes
13. Man 2: What is that?
14. Ahan you want to kill yourself. Forever Quinine is the *oga patatata* of all malaria
15. drugs once use it immediately you close your eyes you will be well
16. Man 2: serious?
17. Man 1: take two
- [One minute thirty-seven seconds later]*
18. Man 2: Ehhhh!!! I am now strong. I can go to work forever queen thank you ooo you
19. are the baba Forever Quinine Forever Quinine!! Forever Quinine!! It is the baba and
20. oga patapata of all malaria drugs in the world but if symptoms persist after two or
21. three days don't forget to consult your doctor.

The excerpt opens with a piece of information, through a direct speech act, about the number of deaths recorded through malaria. The interaction in lines 1 to 2 metaphorically positions malaria

as a killer and an enemy of the human race that must be curtailed, and also presents a medication that will bring a permanent solution to the damaging effect of malaria on the other hand. The advert informs the audience about the killing capability of malaria if it is not treated with the proper medication. To arrest the situation and stop malaria's havoc, the advert informs the audience about the power of "Forever Quinine", a potent medication in neutralising malaria's capacity. The advert informs the audience that Forever Quinine is a solution that will enable quick recovery as it is fast, effective, and efficient. This shows the speaker's assurance of the potency of "forever Quinine as the best medicine to use to end and neutralise malaria.

Similarly, Man 1, through interrogation in line 5, metaphorises malaria as a disease and equally unearths possible symptoms of malaria. Having cognitively and metaphorically established headache as a potential symptom of malaria, he, through direct speech act and the knowledge of Man 2's situation, informs the man about the effectiveness and potency of the drug "Forever Quinine" to cure malaria. The strength and potency of the drug are foregrounded in the utterance "the *oga patapata*" which means that the forever Quinine is a trusted malaria boss. The lexical item "oga patapata" is a Yoruba word which means "the boss of bosses" or the highest superior which positively positions Forever Quinine as the boss of medication that can cure malaria. It also implies that among all the medicines against malaria, Forever Quinine is perceived to be the most effective. The potency of the Forever Quinine as the king of all drugs against malaria is foregrounded in Man 2 perlocutionary effect in lines 13 to 15. Thus, through direct speech acts, shared situation knowledge, and metaphor, the advert informs the audience about the power of Forever Quinine as a potent medication against malaria.

Awareness pract

Awareness pract is a kind of pract that not only alerts the general public about different activities and nomenclature of malaria but also calls for joint action against malaria. E-adverts are deliberately and strategically used to sensitise people about the danger of malaria and are used to awaken the consciousness of the general public towards the hazard of malaria and eventually for action against it. Awareness pract bifurcates into challenging and encouraging practs.

Challenging Pract

Challenging is an act arousing competitive or provocative action against the seemingly perceived or unwanted situation. It is a call to action against an event. There is a call to challenge malaria from wreaking havoc in a particular community.

Background

The excerpt (6) presents Mundo, a traveller who can tell the story of humanity. Mundo presents malaria as a deadly disease, killer and thief that must be fought against.

Excerpt 6

1. I am Mundo, an ancient line, a line that travels and grows to tell the story of
2. humankind's oldest enemy malaria, the deadly disease that is stealing our futures.
3. The hopes of our mothers and fathers, the lives of our children and even as we
4. fight other enemies. Malaria, we won't let you steal from us anymore. We stand
5. with our leaders to fight you. To invest in our health, to strengthen our
6. community with the love of our continent together we will defeat you. Malaria,
7. we are too proud. We are strong, too smart. Join me and line by line, we will be
8. the generation that will end malaria. Draw the line.

The excerpt reveals malaria's identity as an old enemy of humankind and challenges malaria with full assurance of winning. This implies that malaria is an old foe and a thief that has stolen people's future. The words "thief and steal" foreground the identity of a thief that malaria is cast into. Line 2 of the excerpt negatively presents malaria as an enemy of the human race and an age-long problem of humankind. This implies that one of the most significant problems facing the planet is the issue of malaria. The advert negatively positions malaria as an enemy, a disease and a thief that has wreaked devastating havoc on the human race. It is equally evident in line 3 that the activities of malaria do not respect age or gender as it affects mothers, fathers and children. Hence, the speaker challenges malaria to put a stop to it and its activities. Lines 7 and 8 present a call to challenge malaria and stop its activities. In the excerpt, the speaker uses the expressions 'we won't', 'we stand', 'we are strong' and 'we are smart' to challenge malaria and end its nefarious activities. The inclusive pronouns "We and Our" in those expressions represent the people of the present generation rising to end malaria. This presupposes that if the older generation cannot challenge malaria, they are ready to fight it and end its activities. Reference to malaria as an enemy, a thief and a disease shows that it should not be allowed among humans.

Encouraging Pract

Encouraging is an act that persuades people to do something. E-adverts are used to create awareness among people, even as they encourage people to stand against malaria. It is an act of hope. In the excerpt, people are encouraged to speak out against malaria.

Background

In excerpt (7), malaria is presented as a world menace. Different world languages are used to speak against malaria and call for joint action against the deadly disease. This is done through different languages but across the same message of the fight against malaria.

Excerpt 7

1. David Beckham: malaria isn't just any disease. It's the deadliest disease that has ever
2. been.
3. Spanish: It is said to have killed half people who have ever lived
4. Kinyarwanda: More than fifty billion of us.
5. Arabic: And it still kills a child every two minutes.
6. French: But we can end it we have the knowledge. We have the opportunity.
7. Hindi: We just need more action.
8. Mandarin: We need to make the world's leaders pay attention.
9. Kiswahili: So we're launching the world's first voice petition.
10. Yoruba: your voice can help end malaria.
11. David Beckham: Speak up and say malaria must die. One voice can be powerful but all
12. of our voices together then they will have to listen. Malaria must die so millions can live.

The excerpt metaphorically positions malaria as a killer and a disease that should not be allowed to thrive and must be exposed. The interactants in the excerpt encourage one another and the world to rise and unite not only to make the world know the possible danger malaria poses but also to unite to eradicate malaria. This is done effectively by revealing the ultimate activity of malaria: killing. Malaria is not only referred to as a killer of children but is also seen to be responsible for over fifty billion deaths in the world. Hence, they encourage the world to come together to bring the activities of malaria to the awareness of the world leaders so that a decisive decision can be taken against it on the one hand and to put an end to malaria on the other hand. David Beckham, a

renowned British footballer, therefore, encourages people of the world, like other interactants: French, Hindi, Mandarin, Kiswahili, and Yoruba, to speak with a voice so that the world leader will know that malaria is a killer that must be put to death. The exchanges involve different people from different countries and continents. This situation portrays malaria as a global menace on the one hand and also negatively portrays malaria as the world's greatest enemy, with David Beckham representing the English world. In the same manner, Spanish represents Spain and the European world; Kinyarwanda represents Rwanda; Arabic represents the Arab world, including Israel; French represents the French world; Hindi represents India; Mandarin represents China; Kiswahili represents the South African countries and part of East Africa, while Yoruba represents Nigeria and West Africa. Malaria is presented as a world problem that must be dealt with.

Conclusion

In the foregoing, two categories of practs have been identified in the malaria-related E-adverts on YouTube: preventive/regulatory and awareness practs. The protective/regulatory pract manifests exposing, warning, appealing and informing practs, while awareness pract bifurcates into challenging and encouraging practs. These practs are realised through a union between the activity and contextual parts: direct and indirect speech acts, reference, metaphor, voice and shared situation knowledge. The practs seated in the theoretical frames of Mey's pragmatic act theory have demonstrated the ability to contextually unearth the true pragmatic meaning of language use in any form of interaction or discourse, including mediated interaction such as Youtube. Its emphasis on context and the socio-cultural interaction view of meaning offers the strategic arsenal for unpacking the implicit meaning in the use of language in malaria-related adverts. The paper has argued that language use in any advertisement is not only to change consumers' behaviour but also to unearth different pragmatic implications of language use.

References

- Adepoju, Kayode. and Godwin. Akpan. 2017. "Historical Assessment of Malaria Hazard and Mortality in Nigeria: Cases and Deaths, 1955-2015." *International Journal of Environmental and Bioenergy* 12 (1). 30–46.
- Bayode, Taye. and Alexander Siegmund. 2024. "Identifying Childhood Malaria Hotspots and Risk Factors in a Nigerian City Using Geostatistical Modeling." *Scientific Reports, Nature* 14. 5445.
- Capone, Alessandro. 2005. "Pragmames: A Study with Reference to English and Italian." *Journal of Pragmatics* 37 (9). 1335–1371.

- Cook, Guy. 1992. *The Discourse of Advertising*. New York: Routledge.
- Dasgupta, Rishav, Wenhui Mao, and Osondu Ogbuonji. 2022. "Addressing Child Health Inequity through Case Management of Under-Five Malaria in Nigeria: An Extended Cost Effectiveness Analysis." *Malaria Journal* 21 (1). 81.
- Dyer, G. 1982. *Advertising as Communication*. London: Routledge.
- Faleke, Victoria. 2012. "An Analysis of Medical Related Advertisements on the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Network News." *Zaria Journal of Communication* 1 (1). 135–146.
- George, Innocent., Balafama Alex-Hart, and Angela. Frank-Briggs. 2019. "Mortality Pattern in Childhood: A Hospital-Based Study in Nigeria." *International Journal of Biomedical Sciences* 5 (4). 369–372.
- Gogoi, Minakshi. 2020. "The Language of Advertisement: A Study from Linguistic Perspective." *Journal of Xi'an XII* (X). 751–760.
- Lopez-Gonzalez, Hibai, Frederic Guerrero-Sole, and Ana. Estevez. 2017. "Betting is Loving and Betting are Predators: A Conceptual Metaphor Approach to Online Sports Betting Advertising." *Journal of Gambling Studies* 34. 709–726.
- Hermeren, Lars 1999. *English for Sale: A Study of the Language of Advertising*. Lund: Lund University Press.
- Jafri, Sepideh and Tengku Mahad. 2014. "The Language of Advertisement and Its Features and Characteristics: Investigating the Issue from a Deeper View." *International Journal of English and Literature* 4 (6). 9–14.
- Jagran, Josh. 2021. *World Malaria Report (WMR) (2020): Complete Analysis of the WHO Report*
- Jolayemi, Demola and Destiny Idegbekwe. 2019. "Effective Communication of Patient Information Leaflets (PILS) in Selected Malaria Drugs in Nigeria." *Cross-Cultural Communication* 15 (3). 26–32.
- Kahari, Leslei. 2013. "A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Selected Male Circumcision Posters Used in Zimbabwe." *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* 1 (4). 61–71.
- Khanam, Sabina 2017. "Prevalence and Epidemiology of Malaria in Nigeria: A Review." *International Journal of Research in Pharmacy and Biosciences* 4 (8). 10–12.
- Kecskes, Istvan. 2010. "Situation-Bound Utterances as Pragmatic Acts." *Journal of Pragmatics* 42 (11). 2889–2897.
- Lakoff, Robin. 2021. "Language in Context." *Language Linguistic Society of America* 48 (4). 907–927.
- Leech, Geoffrey. 1996. *English in Advertising: A Linguistic Study of Advertising in Great Britain*. London: Longman.
- Linghong, Z. 2006. "The Linguistic Features of English Advertising." *ELEA Journal* 29 (1). 71–78.
- Makinde, Toyin. 2014. "Pragmatic Acts in HIV/AIDS Social Management Advertisements." *Linguistik Online* 67 (5).
- Mavunga, George. and Darmarris Kageda. 2016. "Combating the Pandemic: An Analysis of Selected Adverts on HIV/AIDS on Zimbabwean Broadcasting Corporation Television (September 2008 to May 2011)." *South African Journal of African Languages* 36 (2). 173–188.
- Mey, Jacob. 2001. *Pragmatics: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mey, Jacob. 2006. "Pragmatics: Overview." In *Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics*, 786–797.

- Odebunmi, Akin. 2006. "A Pragmatic Reading of Ahmed Yerima's Proverbs in Yemoja, Attahiru and Dry Leaves on Ukan Trees: Intercultural Pragmatics." Germany: Walter de Gruyter, 153–169.
- Odebunmi, Akin. 2011. "Concealment in Consultative Encounters in Nigerian Hospitals." *Pragmatics Quarterly Publication of the International Pragmatics Association (IPrA)* 21 (4). 619–645.
- Olowu, Ayodeji. and Susan Akinkurolere. 2015. "A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Selected Advertisements of Malaria Drugs." *English Review: Journal of English Education* 3 (2). 166–173.
- Ortony, Andrew. 1993. *Metaphor and Thought*. USA: Cambridge University Press.
- Oyebode, Oluwabunmi. and Foluke Unuabonah. 2013. "Coping with HIV/AIDS: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Selected HIV/AIDS Posters in South-Western Nigeria." *Discourse & Society* 24 (6). 810–827.
- Pérez-Sobrino, Paula. 2013. "Metaphor Use in Advertising: Analysis of the Interaction between Multimodal Metaphor and Metonymy in a Greenwashing Advertisement." In *Metaphor in Focus: Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor Use* 67–82.
- Taflinger, Richard. 1996. *An Overview of Advertisement*. Belmont.
- Trisnayanti, Desi., Desak Pratiwi, and K.amang Candra. 2021. "Discovering Hidden Messages in COVID-19 Advertisement 'Stay Home Save Lives': A Semiotic Analysis." *Retorika: Journal Ilmu Bahasa* 7 (1). 25–31.
- Tuan, Luu. 2010. "Metaphors in Advertising Discourse." *Studies in Literature and Language* 1 (6). 75–81.
- UNICEF. 2019. "Nigeria Malaria: Status Update on Children."
- Zaltman, Gerald. and Robin Coulter. 1995. "Seeing the Voice of the Customer: Metaphor-Based Advertising Research." *Journal of Advertising Research* 35 (4). 35–51.
- Zhang, Xianrong. and Xingliang Gao. 2009. "An Analysis of Conceptual Metaphor in Western Commercial Advertisements." *Asian Social Science* 5 (12).

Language, Style, And Ideology in Selected Nigerian Banks' Advertising Slogans: Doing Things with Words Exemplified

Ayodabo, J. O

Dept. of English

Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo

08033604983

jo.ayodabo@acu.edu.ng

Oduola, M. O

Dept. of English

Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo

08034227134

mo.oduola@acu.edu.ng

and

Olanrewaju, R. F

Dept. of English

Kwara state College of Education, Ilorin

08037177174

[*folukeola@gmail.com*](mailto:folukeola@gmail.com)

Abstract

Studies in Applied Linguistics have examined the use of slogans in political campaigns and social advocacies with meagre considerations for its entrepreneurship relevance. This study, therefore, investigated 'critical stylistic canons' in selected banks' advertising slogans to examine the discourse-bearing linguistic elements with functionally packaged ideological loads, constitute marketing strategies for staying ahead in the competitive banking business world. Lesley Jeffries' (2010) Critical Stylistics (CS) was complemented with Fairclough's (2021) stripe of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the framework. These were used in analysing seven advertising slogans sourced from the official facebook pages and websites of the selected first- and second-generation Nigerian banks. The data were subjected to qualitative analyses, using descriptive research design. The paper revealed that (i) the form and structures of the banks' advertising slogans examined are noun phrases deployed with the use of excessive modifiers (ii) The thematic focusing styles identified are those of *naming and describing*, showcasing the qualities of

the banks, and *enumerating and exemplifying* to elliptically imaginatively make a list of the benefits of the banks. (iii) The examined slogans revealed, through the use of language, the ideological underpinnings such as *power dynamics* that were supposed to influence the perception of the potential customers. Banks' advertising slogans are indexical of a gamut of inherent discursive facilities as a matter of choices from various linguistic or stylistic options for socio-economic and entrepreneurship purposes. Studying further such functional sloganeering performance in other commercial sector-contexts provides unique 21st century entrepreneurship discourse.

Keywords: Stylistics, Language and ideology, Bank advertising Sloganeering performance, Entrepreneurship discourse, commercial sector-contexts

Introduction

Advertisements as meaning-expression entrepreneurial instruments are discourse-sensitive phenomena whose importance has attracted scholarly attention not only in Nigeria but also on global entrepreneurship discourse platforms. They, however, constitute an important aspect of Applied Linguistics whose functional operations have been strongly considered for sloganeering campaigns in the banking industry. It is, therefore, necessary to attempt a study which projects some ideological thoughts that are often housed (overtly or covertly) in the Nigerian bank's advertising slogans. Such investigative discourse platforms should necessarily seek to examine certain communicative elements that guarantee productive propagation of the ideals-on-sale of the selected banks regarding their unique products and services.

Slogans are specially structured and content-laden textual materials with unique discourse-bearing linguistic elements that are deployed for advantageous promotionalism. An advertising slogan, therefore, is a tagline promotional catchphrase associated with a particular product or service by which a manufacturer or its middlemen create awareness about the product or service at the expense of others.

The main interest of this study is to examine the systematic packaging of textual collateral contents used to enhance product sales in the competitive financial bank market. What should be looked out for here is, given that studies on language use are of high interest to linguists, the sloganeering study must critically interrogate the effectiveness of such language use in bank product or service advertisements in non-text-linguistic forms, birthing our idea of critical stylistics. The bottom line is the need for 'further steps' in considering how 'stylistic forms' function in projecting life-streaming philosophical campaigns that remain part of the best marketing strategies for staying

ahead in the competitive banking business world. This boils down to language, being a fascinating phenomenon in itself, is a necessary part of any investigation into human and social organization (Brown and Miller 1999:1). Thus, advertising slogans are to be ‘discursively’ presented as promotional tools that enable companies or organizations, banking institutions inclusive, to introduce themselves, their products or services (Olateju, 2007: 122). Exploring these, with all the organizational ideals and motifs adequately secured and well projected in brand-specific and consumer-friendly manners (Abdi and Irandoust, 2013: 62), has to be a matter of critical discourse-stylistics (Jeffries, 2010; Oduola, 2017; Abegunde, 2019; Oduola and Abegunde, 2021).

Statement of the problem

Studies abound in the field of applied linguistics that have considered advertisement as a domain of language use mainly from text-linguistic perspectives. Haulofu (2012) carried out a stylistic analysis of English online advertisements by Telecommunication providers in a case study of MTC and MTN mobile. Targeting young adults, the study explores how Namibian telecommunication providers use rhetorical devices in advertisements with incorporated non-verbal elements to persuade the considered productive population. The study found that advertisers use the AIDA principles (Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action) to attract the attention of young adults.

In his investigation of the language of online Bank advertisements in English, Lazovic (2014) establishes the fact that trust in banks has declined over the years due to the significant impact the global financial crisis has had on ordinary people’s lives. Thus, the need to revitalize customers’ confidence in banking products and operating systems projects the idea to focus on bank advertisements. The study, therefore, purposively examines the main linguistic strategies deployed in such advertisements to gain a better understanding of how the banks affect the customers’ emotions about their products and services.

Also, in 2016, in a case study of Dangote cement’s billboard advertisement in Bameda, Cameroon, Famukong examined what is communicated, and how it is communicated and interpreted. It is crystalised that advertisers on billboards use different stylistic devices that carry positivity and common ground that makes the readers (that is, prospective buyers) identify with the advertisements, persuading them to buy Dangote cement.

In Agbede's (2016) comparative interrogation of selected Bank advertisements in South Africa and Nigeria Newspapers and Magazines, it is found that the effectiveness of language choice in bank advertisements is a matter of style.

Finally, Namwandi (2019), did a stylistic analysis of language use in advertising in which the most common stylistic devices used in attracting the attention of customers by small to medium entrepreneurs (SME) in Ohana region are discussed. In the desire to further brighten the horizon in the field of entrepreneurship mostly in socio-economic terms, and then project the primary themes that constitute entrepreneurs' language use, Oduola and Abegunde, (2021) examine the ideologies by the means of critical linguistic applications in entrepreneurship discourse in selected Nigerian newspaper advertisements. Averting that advertisement, as a business communication form, is an area of entrepreneurial discourse that cannot be ignored. This is so in the sense that language is found a psycho-social reflex of intrusion into the potential consumer world for entrepreneurial profitability of socio-economic interests.

The main thrust of the foregoing review is that restricting scholarly stylistic exercise to mere text-linguistic description can be described as rather too atomistic. Considering the socio-economic nexus with ideological motifs is necessary for the 21st Century globalisation drive. Therefore, pursuing a critical stylistic scrutiny of Nigerian banks' advertising slogans in the line of Oduola and Abegunde's (2021) discourse-stylistic thoughts seems a step in the right direction.

Aim and Objectives

Searching into the Applied Linguistic drive of entrepreneurship discourse is a plausible enterprise that requires knowing the nitty-gritty of Critical Stylistics (CS), as a field of practical applications for problem-solving purposes. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the potentials of language use in projecting peculiar stylistic considerations and underpinning ideologies in the selected banks' advertising slogans. Capturing the wealth of linguistic representationspotential and discourse-stylistic complexes of the selected banks' advertising slogans requires answers to the following questions:

1. What are the forms and structures of the banks' advertising slogans?
2. How can the thematic focusing style of the banks' advertising slogans be understood?

3. In what ways are the ideologies behind the banks' advertising slogans explicable?

Addressing such questions, as above, spells out the focus of the research problem, and then provides the guide to appropriate qualitative analysis of the lexico-grammar, stylistics and the ideologies behind the banks' advertising slogans.

Significance of the Study

Studies such as this are capable of hugely contributing to the growth of informed scholarship in the field of applied linguistics with a special interest in critical stylistics that projects the crucial imports of language and ideology in a social context. Such scholarly contributions are capable of facilitating psycho-social comprehension of the inherent discourse mechanisms of banks' advertising slogans. A sloganeering discourse of this nature is capable of projecting useful entrepreneurship discourse pedagogy that can trickle down the important gains of applied linguistics in its practical sense.

Besides, and more importantly, the socio-economic advantage that is channelable by the intents and contents of this critical stylistic study is what the Nigerian commercial banks and other financial institutions can thrive upon, for sporadic growth. In the final analysis, the relevance of researching banks' advertising slogans in ideological terms, as contemplated in this study, could, in the long run, reveal some communication strategies being employed by advertisement content producers.

Review of Related Literature and theoretical framework

Targeting similar goals, as above had inspired scholarly efforts on 'how to do things with words'. Reviewing such academic positions on language, style and ideology to pin-point their discursive importance in the field of advertisement is, therefore, a step in the right direction.

Language - Forms and Structures

Language, that symbolic system which enables representations and communication of thoughts, ideas, and emotions (Sandler and Lillo-Martin, 2019), has been identified as a dynamic and ever-changing phenomenon that evolves. Crystal (2020) discusses the concept of language change and emphasizes the ongoing nature of linguistic variation. He highlights that language adapts and develops in response to social, cultural, and technological changes, leading to the emergence of

new words, expressions, and grammatical structures. Two years earlier, Ochs and Schiefelin (2018) had isolated the socio-cultural significance of language, leading to the exploration of the socialization processes and language acquisition within specific cultural contexts. They emphasize that language acquisition involves not only learning linguistic structures but also understanding and adopting the cultural norms, values, and practices associated with a particular speech community. Examining the operational relevance of such understanding and adoption within the Nigerian banking industry, typifying such speech community has remained a gap to be filled.

Systemic grammar emphasizes the social function of language

According to Osisanwo (1999:10), systemic grammar is referred to as scale and category grammar in Halliday (1961), and later called systemic grammar in Halliday (1966). “The core concept of this theory is that there are four fundamental categories: UNIT, STRUCTURE, CLASS and SYSTEM” (Olujide 1999:56).

Unit: This is the category that accounts for structures carrying grammatical patterns. In other words, unit accounts for grammatical patterns that must be followed in our utterances. The unit can be illustrated with the examples below:

The red car belongs to the medical doctor.

The statement above is a stretch of utterance within which we can identify some other utterances which can be put together neatly. E.g.

The red car

The medical doctor

Since we can neither say “car red the” nor “doctor medical the”, this shows that there are acceptable grammatical patterns an utterance should have. The units of English grammar include: morpheme, word, group, clause, and sentence.

Structure: This is the category which describes the likeness between events successively. Osisanwo (1999:15) says the structure is the category set up to account for the pattern that the unit carries. For example, consider the sentences below;

The students swept the class.

The class was swept by the students.

The two sentences mean the same thing but have different patterns. In grammar, five units are identified; morpheme, word, group clause and sentence.

Structure therefore accounts for the nature of the patterns of the relationship at the grammatical level; such as mhq (modifier, headword and qualifier) in nominal word group and SPCA (Subject, Predicator, Complement and Adjunct) in sentences. E.g.

S	P	C	A
Debbie	swept	the floor	neatly

Class: Class is the grouping of a number of units. It is referred to as any set of items having the same possibilities of operation in structure. (Olujide 1999:57). Words from different utterances, with the same function, are members of the same CLASS. This implies that individual words used in utterances have natural groupings. For example

<i>m</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>h</i>
<i>The</i>	<i>red</i>	<i>car</i>
<i>The</i>	<i>medical</i>	<i>doctor</i>

From the above pattern, it is obvious that words in the same column belong to the same group.

System: This is the category that accounts for the occurrence of one rather than another from among several similar events. Alabi (1997:58) says a system implies a list of choices. The sentences below are used as illustrations:

Example 1. I gave it to the children.

Example 2. I gave it to the child

Why do we have 'children' in Example 1 and 'child' in Example 2?

The system accounts for this.

With the notion of SFL, we are enabled to look at language as a matter of choice from various linguistic or stylistic options for socio-economic and entrepreneurship purposes. This is further

strengthened by the SFL's stratification quality that makes it possible for language to be 'functionally' analysed in terms of four strata: context, lexico-semantics, lexico-grammar, phonology, and graphology.

Quoting Bex (1996: 158), Ayodabo's (2002: 312) seminal observation on 'cohesion as an aspect of textuality in 'vacancy' advertisement in the newspaper' presents advertisement as a unique aspect of the various field of communication in which text requires a careful blend of dexterous grammatical construction in a limited space. The grammatical items of a sequence of construction and the "novelty" they facilitate remain the hallmarks of text-variation in the perception of the potential consumers of the various goods and services being advertised. Similar investigation relating to language, style and ideology in banks' advertising slogans is, therefore, long overdue.

Style and Stylistics

Style is the mood and message of the inner mind of the writer conveyed to the audience or reader. The style employed in writing dictates the type of responses of the reader. This is to say that style can stimulate the reader to read the text further, and at the same time style can weaken the interest of the reader. Even if the writer is equipped with good points and the techniques of using them are not there, the reader cannot understand the message. Style is an essential ingredient employed in writing to enhance the interest of the reader. The poor use of style makes a text uninteresting and unintellectual. Ayodabo (2019), identifies three approaches to the study of style. These include:

- i) Style as choice from variant forms: This involves the study of style as deliberate choice from variant and competing forms. This is predicated upon the selection possibilities and constraints which exist within each language regarding the paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations among linguistic elements. Here, the language is at liberty to make certain choices from an array of possible elements and their combination for easy expression.
- ii) Style as Deviation from the Norm: This refers to the study as divergence in frequency from a norm. Such divergence may depend on the breaking of normal rules of linguistic structure (phonological, grammatical etc) or overuse of normal rules of usage (Wales, 2007).

- iii) Style as Idiosyncratic and Constant Forms: This approach derives from the sociolinguistic concept of idiolect and the pervasive influence of science and computers. It aims at a more objective description of the relative frequencies of stylistic features in a text or a group of related texts.

Jefferies (2010) presents a set of analytical tools through which critical stylistics uncovers the ideologies hidden in the texts and discourse thereby saving the analyst from subjectively looking for them in an attempt to confirm preconceived assumptions. The tools of critical stylistics include the following:

- (a) Naming and describing
- (b) Representing Action/Events/States
- (c) Equating and contrasting
- (d) Exemplifying and Enumerating
- (e) Prioritizing
- (f) Assuming and implying
- (g) Negating
- (h) Hypothesizing
- (i) Presenting the speech & thoughts of other participants
- (j) Representing time, space & society

Ideology and critical studies

The term "ideology" refers to a system of beliefs, values, ideas, and principles that shape and guide individuals' understanding of the world, their behaviour, and their social interactions. Analyzing recent sources, we can gain insights into the multifaceted nature and contemporary understanding of ideology.

Using the lenses of Eagleton (2016), ideology is to be perceived as socially constructed framework that influences our perception of reality and structures our thoughts and actions. Eagleton highlights that ideologies are not neutral or objective but are deeply intertwined with power relations and serve the interests of particular social groups. This perspective emphasizes the role of ideology in maintaining or challenging existing social, political, and economic structures just as Slater's (2020) analysis underscores the persuasive and hegemonic nature of ideology in shaping collective consciousness.

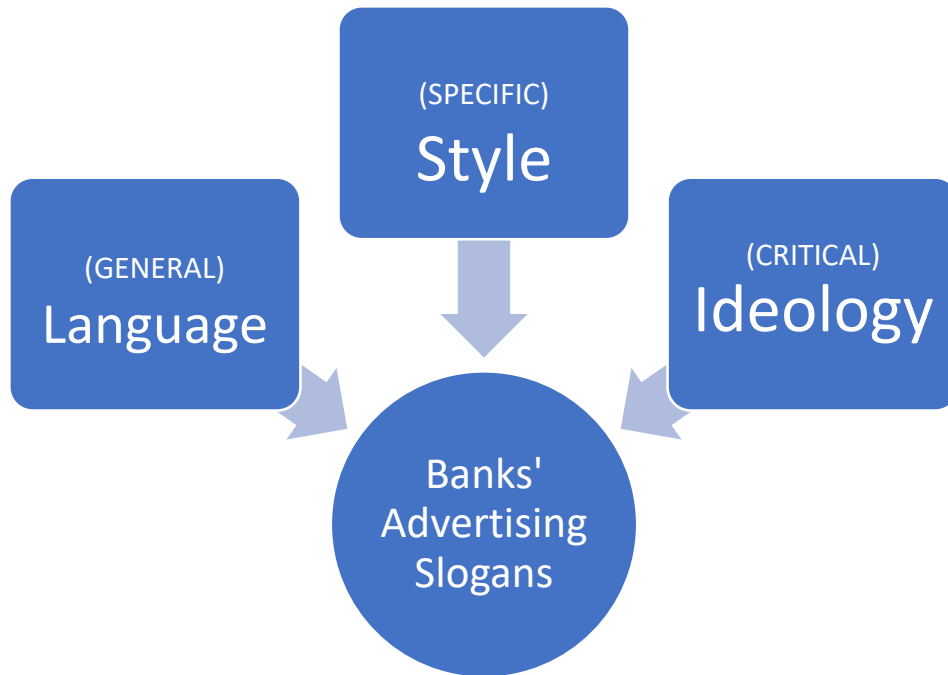
The main thrust of the foregoing discussions is that certain philosophical thoughts underlie every opportunity to use language in any field of human interaction, banking industry for instance. language is thus intertwined with power relations, discursive formations, political preferences, entrepreneurial discourse and social identities.

The contemporary understanding of ideology and the insights into its roles in social control as well as the construction of collective consciousness contained in the selected Nigerian banking slogans establishes the importance of the present research engagement. In the view of Lupyan and Bergen's (2016) argument, therefore, language is to be seen as the instrument that shapes and influences our thinking processes which in turn affect how humans perceive and understand the world around them.

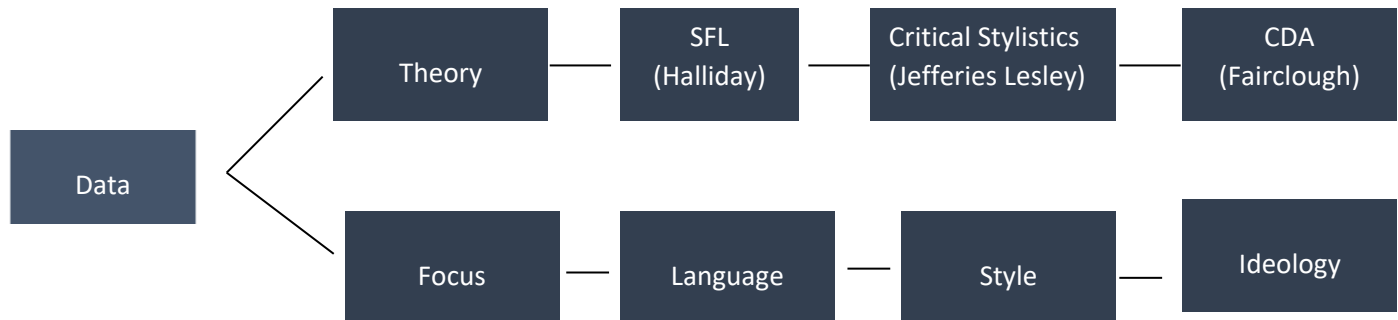
In the submission of Fairclough (1995) the exercise of power is dominantly achieved through ideology. He says ideology is pervasively present in language. In his version of CDA, he says that critical discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice. Fairclough (1995) says that any case of language is a communicative event. Fairclough's CDA, is concerned with how power is exercised through language. He developed a model for CDA which consists of three categories which he referred to as three dimensions. These are: text, discursive practice and social practice. In his opinion, language helps create change and can be used to change behaviour, therefore he sees language as a power tool.

Arising from the review of literature done, so far, there is the need to come up with a framework that can assist us in the analysis of data collected for this study. This framework is premised on the fact that just one existing theory may be incapable of satisfying the dynamics of data on the language, style and ideology of the slogans.

Framework for analysis of Nigeria banks' advertisement slogans



The model



From the framework and model schemed above, it is crystalised that the sole reason for ‘discoursing’ banks’ advertising slogans in ideological terms calls for theoretical orientations that are critical. This is informed by the deliberate desire to avoid the usual text-linguistic studies that often generally end up with atomistic stylistic analyses. The sole interest of this research is rather to examine the functional, social and contextual interpretations of the entrepreneurship discourse contents and intents housed in the Nigerian commercial banks’ advertising slogans. Hence, for the reason of ideological pursuit, our preference for Lesley Jefferies’ Critical Stylistics which is cast in the mode of MAK Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). For the same critical, social and contextual reasons, this framework is backed up by Fairclough’s strand of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

Study methodology

This study is structured within the methodological framework of Lesley’s stylistics. The data for this study comprised advertising slogan-extracts from three (3) Nigerian commercial and microfinance banks’ advertising slogans. The restriction to three banks is informed by the temporal limitation in the sense that the study has to be carried out within a short period. The slogans are drawn from the official websites and television adverts of the selected banks. The slogans are purposively categorized to suit the thematic interest that calls for an adequate description of the various stylistic options so displayed in them. This enables the functional explication of the lexico-grammatical, lexico-semantic and graphological discursive elements, inherent in the slogans.

Data presentation

Thus, the three (3) advertising slogan-types collected from 3 Nigerian banks as pilot data are hereby presented for analysis in this Seminar Presentation. These, as earlier mentioned were extracted from the official websites, and Facebook pages of the selected banks:

Data	Bank	Advertising Slogan
Datum 1:	Access	More than banking
Datum 2:	UBA	Africa’s global bank

Datum 3: Eco Bank The Pan African Bank

Data analysis

Datum 1: “More than Banking”

Form and Structure

The structure of Datum 1 is a noun group (NG) or Nominal Word Group (NWG). This group is an ellipited clause/sentence. It is a noun group with the structure **mmh** (*more than banking*) with banking being the headword, ‘more’ and ‘than’ as modifiers; mmh as used here spells out one structure of NWG.

The elliptical group appears to be a completive element of Clause expression:

//We/do/more than banking// or //We/offer/more than banking//. This simple structure is so deployed to launch the idea that the bank provides something beyond the concept of saving and withdrawing money (banking).

Thematic Focusing Style

The Group consists of only three words making it concise and direct. The slogan is suspected of a succinct intentionality; a kind of deliberate ‘deviation from the norm’ approach, that leaves room for multiple interpretations, allowing potential consumers to individually imagine, by enumerating and exemplifying what and what the bank offers beyond traditional banking services.

Metaphorically, the phrase “more than banking” extends the meaning of the word ‘banking’ beyond its literal financial context. It suggests that there are additional dimensions or aspects associated with the concept that go beyond traditional expectations.

Ideological underpinnings

The slogan “more than banking” implies that the bank possesses additional capabilities beyond traditional banking services thus positioning the bank as powerful. By positioning themselves as more than just a financial institution, the bank may be attempting to establish a sense of power and influence in the industry. This can create a power dynamic where the bank assumes a dominant position potentially influencing customers’ perceptions and

decisions. Presenting themselves as “more than banking” may create a perception of expertise, trustworthiness or reliability. This can establish a power dynamic where customers can rely on the banks’ guidance, thus potentially limiting their ability to critically assess or challenge the banks’ actions.

Datum 2: Africa’s global bank

Form and structure

The structure of this expression is a Noun group (NG). The ‘boastful’ nominal expression ‘Africa’s global bank’ has the Nominal Word Group (NWG) structure with the constituents ‘mmh’ with ‘bank’ being the headword while ‘Africa’ in possessive case form and derivational attributive adjective ‘global’ remain as modifiers.

Thematic Focusing Style

The slogan is typically carved out to ‘name’ to ‘describe’ UBA’s matchless, wider and continental coverage. The slogan ‘Africa’s global bank’ conveys a tone of confidence and ambition in its strategic way of ‘naming and describing’. It aims to project a positive and assertive mood, emphasizing the bank’s strong presence and influence in Africa while also highlighting its global reach. The choice of ‘Africa’ in the possessive case form as the focal point of the slogan establishes a sense of pride and ownership, appealing to the bank’s African clientele and emphasizing its commitment to the continent.

In describing the qualities of the bank, the use of the term ‘global’ exaggerates the bank’s reach and suggests that it operates on a wider scale, thus enhancing its prestige and authority. The attributive adjective ‘global’, is strategically placed to emphasize the bank’s international and intercontinental standing and further enhance its reputation.

Ideological Underpinnings

The slogan implies that the bank holds a position of power as it presents itself as a global entity originating from Africa. It positions the bank as a dominant player in the financial sector, suggesting that it has influence and control over resources and markets beyond Africa. The slogan’s positioning of the bank as ‘*Africa’s global...*’ institution suggests that it plays a leading pivotal role in driving economic development and progress within the

continent. The phrase “Africa’s global bank” may evoke a perception that the bank represents Africa’s interest on the global stage.

Datum 3: The Pan African Bank

Form and Structure

The Pan African Bank is also a ‘boastful’ nominal expression, operated in the Nominal Word Group (NWG) structure with the constituents ‘mmmh’ (The Pan African Bank). The headword here is ‘bank’ while ‘the’, ‘Pan’ and ‘African’ are modifiers. “The Pan African Bank” employs a linguistic graphology strategy of capping every first alphabet in every word to convey the bank’s unique positioning and identity. The definite article ‘The’ indicates the importance placed on the specific bank being referenced, thus suggesting a sense of distinction and importance. The modifiers ‘Pan’ and ‘African’ emphasize the bank’s festering and extensive reach and involvement across the entire African continent. Thus, the slogan is structured deliberately that way to communicate the intention of the owners of the Bank.

Thematic Focusing Style

The advertising slogan has also strategically employed the tool of naming and describing to present the bank’s wide and matchless coverage. The choice of words in the slogan is straightforward and concise. The advertisement slogan thus contains a few words that are thematically structured to project the scope and reach of the Bank. The inclusion of “Pan African” emphasizes the bank’s broad coverage and presence across the African continent. With the slogan, the bank has been able to effectively ‘describe’ the bank’s commitment to serving the African continent as a whole and implies a sense of inclusivity and understanding of the diverse African market.

Ideological Underpinnings

The use of the term “Pan African” in the slogan suggests broad coverage and inclusivity across the African continent. The word “Bank” inherently implies financial power and influence. By positioning itself as “The Pan African Bank” the slogan suggests a certain level of economic dominance and scope across Africa. This can indicate a desire for market

control or a claim to being a significant player in the banking industry on the continent. the adjective of origin, ‘African’ indicates that is not just operating on the African soil, but one that is rather truly African, and therefore, knows the shoes pinch in Africa and how to address the pang financially.

The use of the definite article “the” in the slogan suggests a definitive position of authority. It implies that the bank holds a significant position in the African banking landscape, potentially creating a power asymmetry between the bank and other financial institutions. This power dynamic can impact competition, market control and the bank’s ability to influence financial policies and practices.

Summary of Findings

Arising from the analyses of data, we can succinctly report that:

- i. The linguistic forms and structures identified in the data reveal that all the examined slogans are Noun Groups. It is interesting to note that all the Noun Groups, in the three data use, with the structures ‘mmh’, ‘mmh’ and ‘mmh’ exhibit much use of excessive modifiers. This is a marketing strategy that is meant for advantageous profit.
- ii. Of stylistic interest, is the use of the critical stylistic tools of *naming* and *describing*, *enumerating* and *exemplifying*, and other stylistic devices through which the ‘canons’ of the banks’ hidden agenda of organizational interest are ‘fired’.
- iii. The examined slogans have revealed, through the use of language, the ideological underpinnings of power dynamics, and the scope of operations that are used to influence the perception of the potential customers.

Overall, these findings corroborate some of the existing views interrogated in our literature review. In particular, the forms and structures, so revealed, are in line with Halliday’s (2004)’s SFL. This is beside the fact that critical linguistics is assigned to Lesley Jefferies’ work, which is based on CDA using different analytical methods to display the link between language, power and ideology (Tesler and Sears, 2021).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of the three banking slogans reveals significant insights into how language is strategically used to shape customer perceptions and construct ideological power dynamics within the banking sector. The linguistic forms, particularly the Noun Group structures, serve as effective tools for conveying specific messages that align with the banks' broader marketing and organizational goals. These slogans, while simple in structure, leverage modifiers to create a sense of superiority, dominance, and extensive reach, positioning these institutions as powerful and influential players in the financial industry.

Stylistically, the deliberate use of naming and describing, alongside other rhetorical devices, enables the banks to portray themselves as indispensable entities that go beyond traditional financial services. This use of language not only reflects the banks' broad operational scope but also embeds an underlying sense of authority and trustworthiness, encouraging customer loyalty and potentially limiting critical engagement with their practices.

From an ideological standpoint, the slogans function as tools for reinforcing power dynamics. The use of phrases like “more than banking,” “Africa’s global bank,” and “The Pan African Bank” suggests that these institutions are not merely financial service providers but are actively shaping the economic and political landscape. By positioning themselves in this way, these banks influence customer perceptions, ultimately establishing themselves as dominant forces in the market.

These findings align with theoretical frameworks such as Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as outlined by Lesley Jefferies, which emphasize the relationship between language, power, and ideology. The study thus underscores the importance of understanding how linguistic structures and strategies can subtly influence consumer behaviour and reinforce organizational power.

Recommendations and suggestion for further studies

The analysis of the three banking slogans highlights several key areas where future studies and practical applications can benefit the banking sector and beyond. One important

direction for future research is expanding the exploration of linguistic forms, particularly Noun Group structures, and their impact across industries such as telecommunications or retail. A comparative study could offer a broader understanding of how these linguistic tools influence consumer behavior and shape brand identities, while also providing insights into how power dynamics are constructed in different contexts. This approach can help organizations refine their marketing strategies across sectors.

Additionally, given the ideological power embedded in these slogans, there is a need to raise consumer awareness about the role of language in shaping perceptions. Banks and other financial institutions should consider the ethical implications of using rhetorical devices that might limit critical engagement with their services. Future research could focus on enhancing consumer education, helping individuals critically evaluate advertising slogans and marketing strategies, and fostering a more informed and empowered customer base.

While the analyzed slogans convey a strong sense of authority, future campaigns should emphasize inclusivity and transparency. Financial institutions could benefit from using language that fosters trust and addresses concerns about monopolistic power dynamics. By providing clearer information about their operations and services, banks can create a more open dialogue with customers, potentially enhancing loyalty and building long-term relationships.

A cross-cultural analysis of these slogans is also recommended, as they are rooted in specific cultural and geographical contexts. Examining how similar linguistic structures are perceived in different regions could help multinational banks tailor their marketing strategies to resonate with diverse audiences, without relying on overly dominant or exclusionary language. This could lead to more effective global campaigns that are sensitive to varying socio-political environments.

The study also underscores the need for further integration of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in understanding the relationships between language, power, and organizational practices. Researchers can build on this framework to analyze discourse within other business contexts, such as internal communications or leadership rhetoric, revealing how

language shapes organizational culture and authority. This could promote more ethical and equitable practices within organizations.

Finally, banks and financial institutions should focus on improving linguistic flexibility and adaptability in their marketing communications. With the rise of digital banking and a growing influence from younger, more diverse consumer groups, updating slogans to remain relevant is crucial. The future of banking communication may benefit from adopting more flexible and inclusive language that aligns with evolving consumer values such as sustainability and social responsibility. The uniqueness of our research design has provided a valuable platform for analyzing the critical stylistic tools used in banking advertising slogans, offering detailed lexicogrammatical explanations. These insights can guide Nigerian commercial banks and other financial institutions in strategically deploying language as a dynamic system to achieve operational goals.

This study offers valuable insights into the strategic use of language in banking advertisements and highlights the connection between language, power, and consumer behaviour. By implementing the recommendations outlined above, banks and other organizations can better navigate modern marketing complexities while fostering stronger, more ethical relationships with their customers. In sum, Banks' advertising slogans reflect a wide range of discursive choices that are carefully selected for socio-economic and entrepreneurial purposes. Further exploration of such functional sloganeering in other commercial sectors could provide unique insights into 21st-century entrepreneurship discourse.

References

- Abdi, S. and Irandoust, A. (2013) "The importance of advertising slogans and their proper designing in Brand Equity". *International Journal of Organization Leadership* 2013 vol 2 No 2:62-69.
- Agbede, G. T. (2016) "Stylistics in Advertising A Comparative Analysis of Selected Bank Advertisements on Newspapers and Magazines from South Africa and Nigeria". (An unpublished master's thesis submitted to the Department of Media, Language and Communication Durban University of Technology).

- Al-Marsumi, N. H. and Al-Janabi, S. F. (2021) ‘Doing Stylistics versus critical stylistics: An analysis of if by Ruyard Kipling. *In Arab World English Journal* DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol 12 no 1.17> pp 239-252.
- Ayodabo, J. O. (2002). “Cohesion as an aspect of textuality in vacancy advertisement in Newspapers”. In S.T. Babatunde and D. S. Adeyanju (Eds.). *Language, Meaning and Society. Papers in honour of E.E. Adegbija at 50*. Ilorin: Haytee Press.
- Ayodabo, J. O. (2019). *English in Nigeria and Beyond. Essays in Pragmatics, Stylistics & Socio-Linguistic. A selection of publications of Olatunde Ayodabo*. Shoguro, B.O (Ed). Oyo: English Dept, ACU.
- Breeze, R. (2020). *The Language of Political Leadership: Style, Identity and Legitimacy*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Brown, K. and Miller, J. (1991). *Syntax: A Linguistic Introduction to Sentence and Structure*. London: Routledge.
- Crystal, D. (2020). *The Cambridge encyclopedia of the English language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eagleton, T. (2016). *Ideology: An introduction*. Verso Books.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, London: Longman.
- Famukong, SEA (2016) “Stylistic Analysis in advertising discourse: A Case of the Dangote Cement Advertisement in Bameda- Cameroon”. In *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, Vol. 7 no 6 pp105-112
URL:<http://dx.dor.org/10.7575/919c.all.v.7n.6p.105>.
- Halliday, M.A.K. (2004). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Oxford Univ. press.
- Haulofu, L. T. (2017) “A Stylistic Analysis of English Online Advertisements by Telecommunication Providers: A case study of MTC and TN mobile”. (An unpublished masters thesis submitted to the Department of English studies, University of Namibia).
- Jefferies, L. (2010). *Critical Stylistics the power of English*. London: palgrave Macmillan.
- Lazovic, V. (2014) “The language of online Bank advertisements in English” in *Journal of English for Specific Purposes* vol. 2(1) pp 88-104.
- Lupyan, G., & Bergen, B. (2016). “Language as a tool for thought: The hypothesis of linguistic relativity”. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 20(6), 399-401.

- Namwandi, A. I. (2019) "A Stylistic analysis of language use in advertising 'a study of advertisement of selected small to medium entrepreneurs in Ohana region' [URL:http://hdl.handle.net/11070/2581](http://hdl.handle.net/11070/2581)
- Ochs, E., & Schieffelin, B. B. (2018). "Language acquisition and socialization: Three developmental stories and their implications". In B. B. Schieffelin & E. Ochs (Eds.), *The handbook of language socialization* (2nd ed., pp. 1-26). Wiley.
- Oduola, O. and Abegunde, K. (2021). "Advertisement Discourse Strategy and Critical Linguistic Roles in Business Context". In *Journal of Africa Society for the study of Sociology and Ethnics of Religions*.
- Olaluwoye, L. (2015) "A critical stylistic Analysis of the identify of minority groups in the Nigerian print media" In *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics* vol. 16. Pp 87-93.
- Olateju, M. A. (2007). "The Structure of Yoruba Local Drug Advertisement" in *Socio-Linguistics in the Nigerian Context*. (Ed.) Adeyanju, D. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press. Pp 123.
- Olujide, M. T. (1999). "An Overview of English Syntax". In *The English Language and Literature in English: An Introductory Handbook*. (Ed.) Adegbija, E. Ilorin: Department of Modern European Languages, University of Ilorin. Pp 46.
- Osisanwo, W. (1999). *An Introductory Analytical Grammar of English for Undergraduates A Systemic Approach*. Lagos: Femolous Fetop Publishers.
- Padrakali, A. & Chellam, K. (2017). "Advertising slogans- Its emphasis and significance in marketing". *International Research Journal of Management and Commerce* Vol. 4 No. 111.
- Page, R. (2021). *Linguistic Style and Online Engagement: Text-based Analytics of Political Tweets*. London: Routledge.
- Sandler, W., & Lillo-Martin, D. (2019). "Sign language". In K. Allan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of the history of linguistics* (pp. 319-336). Oxford University Press.
- Simpson, P., & Mayr, A. (2019). *Language and Power: A resource book for students*. London: Routledge
- Slater, D. (2020). "Ideology and discourse". In *The SAGE handbook of discourse studies* (2nd ed., pp. 123-140). Sage Publications.
- Somayeh, A. Abdollah, I. (2013). "The Importance of advertising slogans and their proper designing in Brand Equity". *International Journal of Organization Leadership* vol 2 No 2:62-69.

Tesler, M., & Sears, D. O. (2021). "The rise of affective polarization: Understanding the partisan divide over policy preferences". *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24, 129-147.

Wales, K. (2001). *Dictionary of Stylistics*. England: Pearson Educational Ltd.

Metaphoric Representation of Barrenness as Witchcraft in Kunle Afolayan's "Anikulapo" and "The Rise Of The Spectre"

Oriola Titilope Oluwaseun Ph.D

Adekunle Ajasin University

Akungba Akoko

alake.titi@gmail.com

Abstract

This study interrogates the gender ideological underpinnings of the traditional African belief which constructs barrenness as a metaphor for witchcraft. Leveraging insights from a curated selection of works in the field of gender studies on witchcraft in Africa, the paper illuminates the complex social behaviour of women and response-trigger curated by the patriarchal society by exploring the Yoruba ideology on barrenness. Taking a drive from Òsòròngà (a negative and destructive women evaluation) against ajeism (a positive labelling of motherhood), the work delves into responsibilitisation as a concept of *performativity*. Shaping informed feministic identity construction on barrenness as a metaphor for witchcraft, the work sees witchcraft as a mere patriarchal historical fantasy and as such, renegotiates witchcraft as motherhood. Drawing upon the seminal theory of Barley's (1988) "Cultural Pragmatics", this paper scrutinizes two poignant literary narratives of Kunle Afolayan *Anikulapo* and *The Rise of the Specter* - offering a dive into the social discourse on witchcraft. The findings show that barren women over the years have become symbols of self-actualisation, self-empowerment and self-love. It compellingly argues that the negative witchcraft undertones discernible in these texts are anchored in entrenched social and historical contexts, rather than prescriptive mandates of social responsibilitisation.

Keywords: Barrenness, witchcraft, responsibilitisation, womanhood, performativity

Introduction

An average infertile African woman suffers the shame, reproach and negative labelling of society because of their seeming inability to meet up with their natural womanhood demands of motherhood. They are also considered wicked, vindictive and inhuman without considering other biological, social and external factors that may be hindering such. To address this lacuna, it is important to consider the literature that has examined the metaphor of witchcraft within and without the borders of Africa. Such works as Geschiere (1997);

witchcraft and justice (Ashforth 2015); witchcraft, power, and the distribution of resources (Leistner 2014; Smith 2017); witchcraft, intimacy, gender, and sexuality (Mavhungu 2012; Geschiere 2013; Richter et al. 2017; and Eboiyehi 2017). The paper explains that the negative labelling of barren women as witches in contemporary Nollywood tradition is merely representational and orchestrated by the institutionalized hegemony of patriarchal masculinity. The paper explores the perspectival stance embedded in the traditional Yoruba belief on infertility and tries to study the history of the blame ideology on women as a conscious distortion of historical facts to subjugate women as the object of male authority and caricature.

Borrowing from Yoruba oral literature, cosmology, religion, and mythology, Ogunde made films that contextualised African metaphysics, religion, modernity, and epistemology. He produced movies about the witchcraft phenomenon and constructed women, especially barren women, as evil. He depicted them as shapeshifters and presented the cosmic power that women possess as evil. In surreal images, Ogunde visualizes how witches decapitate their victims to drink their blood and feed on their entrails (Aiyé; 1980) and *Àyànmó* (1988). In the rituals he shows, he gives life to the legend of witches as bloodsucking mothers and cannibalistic sisters. Ajileye, like Ogunde, made movies that represented the metaphysical world of witches and their doppelgangers. He created narratives that paralleled Ogunde's stories and exposed his audiences to grotesque images of witches disturbing idyllic communities. Ajileye continually reimagined witchcraft in existential dimensions in Yoruba communities. Some of his films engaged with the intersections of gender, class, and group affinity in the lives and times of men and women across ethnic boundaries in Nigeria and Africa. The films sometimes portray witchcraft as a tool for social and retributive justice. However, many of these films show witches as naturally wicked, causing chaos and calamities without provocation. This reading of the films of both Ogunde and Ajileye shows how witchcraft is coded as an evil power that threatens the collective good of human societies. However, the current study, through the lens of Cultural pragmatics debunks the claim as a mere metaphor and cultural representation.

In contemporary times, there have been renewed multidisciplinary perspectives on the study of witchcraft. More recent research have explored the multilayered connections

between witchcraft and modernity (Geschiere 1997); witchcraft and justice (Ashforth 2015); witchcraft, power, and the distribution of resources;(Leistner 2014; Smith 2017); witchcraft, intimacy, gender, and sexuality (Mavhungu 2012; Geschiere 2013; Richter et al. 2017; Eboiyehi 2017), witchcraft and responsabilization (Soetan 2021). Close to the current study is Baloyi (2009), who examines the critical reflections on infertility in black Africans and focuses on how barrenness becomes a weapon for the oppression and abuse of women.

Existing scholarship on African witchcraft provides not just the theoretical base, they also provide renewed interest to challenging the archaic law of women as witches. In an attempt to challenge this law, this work examined the metaphor of witchcraft to reveal the complex phenomenal and conceptualizing of witchcraft; graduating from mere critical representation to practice through cultural pragmatics. To achieve this, we traced the development of a round character, Arolake, who developed from a marginalized woman to a nature-endowed and powerful woman in Kunle Afolayan's two-part movie-sequence *Anikulapo* and its concluding sequel, *The Rise of the Spectre* -offering a deep dive into the cultural discourse on witchcraft it showcases.

Methodology: Cultural Pragmatics

The social study of culture has been polarized between theorizing meaning as a text and investigating the pattern that provides autonomy, treating meaning as emerging from contingencies of individual and collective social behaviours as reflections of power. It demonstrates how social performances constrain the pattern of thoughts of individuals. The focus of cultural pragmatics is to look at how language acquires meaning through context and sociocultural embeddings. It examines how individuals perform social roles and communicate meaning within specific cultural contexts, focusing on the interaction between actors, the audience, and the settings. This helps to encode and decode cultural symbols and practices. By exploring the dynamic relationships between social structures and individual agency, cultural pragmatics provides insights into how culture shapes and is shaped by human behaviour. The metaphor of a woman as a witch has long been in existence all over the world and it seems to be a label of relegation for any woman who dares to break patriarchal rules that are laid down. Gerely (2021) asserts that witches are

those who transcend the binaries and the oppressive forces that hold them down' (p.3) such women are labelled as highhanded and rebellious. Zwissler (2018) identified various waves of feminism thus:

During the first wave of feminism, 'Women were not witches, men just thought they were and were horrifically wrong' (Zwissler, 2018, p. 12). The Second wave brought out the female differences that men so feared, and this was then articulated as Satanic and evil. It did not matter if these women practised magic or claimed supernatural powers: as women, they still threatened men in power and so their status as witches became irrelevant. Witches are women: sexual beings, hags, offering untamed power against patriarchy and thus binarized against fertility, submissiveness and social conformity. They are 'an untamed force of female solidarity and represent a threat to the . . . social structure' (Carroll, 2019, p. 7). The third wave of feminism aided the witch in transcending boundaries to become a transgressive woman of power and liberation. 'Throughout feminist waves, the witch has transcended her vilified position and restraints of socially constructed femininity to embrace her powerful position and combat patriarchy's attempt to subdue her' (2019, p.2).

The witch has thus become a metaphor for female resistance. In the modern alternative view, Zwissler sees witchcraft as a noble rebel against patriarchy. For him, this new wave of witches has undergone a cultural rebirth that repositions witches as beautiful, powerful and astute. They are no longer the hag, the crone, or the banished.

Synopsis of *Anikulapo* and *The Rise Of The Spectre*

Anikulapo describes the evolution of a beautiful young woman, Arolake, the youngest wife of the Alaafin of Oyo; loved, pampered and adored, but was infertile. Her infertility earned her a ridiculous position in the palace. Her life was made miserable when the co-queens found out that the king enjoyed her company more. She was constantly referred to as a witch and a mere tool of enjoyment for the king. She met Saro and decided to elope with him to begin a new life. Before her plan was actualized, the king's daughter who was also infatuated with Saro found out about her elopement plan and reported it to her mother. As it was an abomination for any other man to see the nudity of any of the Alaafin's wives while still alive, Saro was found guilty and ordered to be killed. Arolake, being the king's favourite, was given a lesser judgment of banishment. On the mountain where Saro was

left to die, a mythical Akala bird that possesses a supernatural power to raise the dead appeared to him to interrogate him about the cause of his death. A fear-stricken Arolake who was a few miles away approached and hit the bird. In fear, the bird left its mysterious gourd. Arolake realized the power of the gourd, and picked and carefully kept it. Saro came back to life and both of them journeyed to Ojumo where they settled as man and wife. It was in Ojumo that Arolake revealed the power and functions of the gourd to Saro who became its custodian.

Saro earned his livelihood and became famous by raising the dead. After a while, Saro became pompous and took to women, neglecting Arolake. At first, he blamed it on Arolake's barrenness and his desire to have a large family but later, his nature as an untamed woman-lover was revealed. The denouement of his fame came when the prince of Ojumo died and Saro was summoned. He demanded the hand of the only princess of Ojumo in marriage against the culture of the land. Arolake saw his act as boisterous and disregarding. To tame him, she poured out the magical substance in the gourd of Akala and left the community. Without the substance, Saro was incapacitated and so, shot dead by the guards. The akala bird that appeared to him at first reappeared to inquire of its gourd.

The concluding sequel, *The Rise of the Spectre* opened on the mountain where Saro was left dead. His soul journeyed to heaven amongst some other dead persons. At the entrance, he was denied entry on the allegation that he raised twenty people who deserved to die. To enter, he would have to bring the twenty persons along with himself. Saro thus became a ghost and was on a hunt to kill the twenty he had earlier raised. Unfortunately, one of the persons had acquired supernatural powers and refused to be killed. In order to protect her life, she proffered a solution to Saro to become a living-dead (*akudaya*). Fortunately, three of those he had killed allowed him three years to live.

In Oyo, the people were in chaos due to the gourd of the Akala bird. The Ifa priest divined that Arolake be brought back to make atonements to the Akala bird. In a malicious twist, the power drunken Bashorun, a shrewd warlord who desired the power of Anikulapo decided to wield the situation to his advantage. He plotted the arrest of Saro and Arolake and collected the chain that was given to Saro at the entrance of Heaven, as a sign of bond to those raised. Bashorun thus inherited Saro's debt and became the lead to Heaven. The

movies have many intriguing twists that border mostly on patriarchy, pride, disappointment, power tussle and greed.

The Portrayal of Barren Women in Nollywood Films

The term *Nollywood* has been used widely in the existing literature on the gigantic Nigerian film industry to refer to all films produced in Nigeria (Adesokan 2011; Harrow 2013; Haynes 2016; Krings and Okome 2013; Ogunleye 2008). The tradition of women's interaction in society as portrayed in Nollywood shows women as subordinate. According to stereotypical beliefs about sexes, women are more commonly domesticated (Eagly & Steffen, 2000) and portrayed as homemakers, child bearers, cooks and caregivers. Jekayinfa (1999) asserts that these roles are culturally vested. Swift (2013) indicates that women are valued based on their fertility. Women are considered essential childbearing machines and a failure in this area calls for abusive and contemptuous treatment from the society. Nollywood films have not favoured women, especially in the early days. In most early films, women were portrayed as derivatives of men and as a species that lacked full autonomy or capacity to carry functional power. The films represented women as witches, wives, prostitutes and maids. A few of the films that portrayed barrenness were: *Asiri Nla* (1993) by Jide Kosoko featuring Iya Rainbow as a barren woman who lost her rich husband to a ghastly road accident. Her in-laws immediately confiscated all the property because she was barren. Before the news of his death was announced, the woman found out that her sister was having an affair with her husband and pregnant with him. She took it in good faith and announced to the family that she was already pregnant and this afforded her unborn son his father's property; *Malaika* (2023) tells the story of a barren woman, Adetutu, who had anger issues. She was stigmatized as infertile. This was made more evident because her husband was once married and had a daughter -Chichi. The kindness of Adetutu was revealed when Chichi was kidnapped. She went out of her way to make sure that she was freed. Her kindness as against the belief that she was unkind and cruel was made evident. Other movies with the same theme include: *The Childless* (2020) and *Childless King* (2021). Also, movies that reveal that women are evil and witches include such as *Nneka the Pretty Serpent* (1994) which underscores the demonization of women and the glorification of Pentecostal power that men control. *Nneka, the Pretty Serpent*,

vilifies and reads the supernatural power that some women possess as evil. It reinforces the general belief that women are often responsible for ruining successful men; *Koto Orun* (1989); *Karishika* (1996); *Witches* (1998); *Married to a Witch* (2001); *Sharon Stone* (2002); *Omata Women* (2003). Emerging and contemporary producers such as Kunle Afolayan tell stories that promote the empowerment of women and show how women contribute to their communities and the nation at large.

Data Analysis

To explain the complex milieu of cultural *ajeism* through the lens of Cultural pragmatics, Afolayan creates a developing character, Arolake, who evolves from a timid young girl married to the Alaafin to a woman possessing the power of akala to controlling life and death, transversing every hurdle to becoming an affluent woman and controlling an endless wealth. Arolake becomes a symbol of feminine power as she becomes a female accoutrement of power that has the potential to subvert hegemonic/patriarchal authority that lords over women and frequently renders them weak. She became a symbol of protection, security and power for every woman and all the societies she visited. When eventually she re-emerged, Afolayan portrayed her as a captivating and queenly character, proclaimed as a progenitor of livelihood by both the living and the dead.

Witchcraft as Social Performance-Constraint in *Anikulapo* and *The Rise Of The Spectre*

Tapping into the spiritual manifestation of female power as a protection against hegemonic hostility and pretentious masking of male domination, Afolayan's *The Rise of the Spectre* creates the image of a gullible woman thrown about by her society. In the first part, "Anikulapo", the *Ifa* divination proclaimed that Arolake be brought back to the society for atonement. The patriarchy and chauvinistic male representations of Bashorun as a social clout clouded her. He made his counternarrative that flattened her images as a whore, witch and community distress. Thus, dispensing justice against conventional power arbitration logic, as Bashorun became the male gaze, manipulated justice against the womenfolk of Arolake who she referred to as a whore. The argument of Bashogbon (the *Ifa* priest) that the community needs cleansing was used by Bashorun who had nursed a lifelong enmity with the king as bait to ridicule him.

While the first sequel, *Anikulapo*, portrays barren women as witches, “The Rise of the Spectre” explicates the rise of womanhood and negotiates witchcraft in a positive light. The renegotiation of barren women as humane, kind mothers, protectors and road-mappers is portrayed in the character of Arolake who became the god-mother of Saro’s newborn. Wise Awarun(the newborn’s grandmother), understanding the affluence and power of Arolake, addressed her as queen and respectfully placed the child into her hands. Afolayan’s portrayal of Arolake as not only a godmother but also a succour and guardian to the baby reveals that the negative representation of barren women as bloodsuckers, and wicked is mere ideological labelling and not at par with reality. In that regard, the re-emergence of Arolake as an *aje* (a witch), who deploys the vital force in her to vanquish Bashorun and other male antagonists shows her power to control the cosmos.

The power transfer scene in *The Rise of the Spectre* where Bashorun takes the chain from Saro, misrepresenting it as the gourd of Akala and also collects the pouch of wealth from Arolake is an enchanting invocation of spiritual power. While the debt transfer of leading the *akudaya* went to Bashorun, Arolake was freed from all guilts and even retrieved her pouch of wealth. Saro died the death of shame all the same because of all his atrocities. In the sequels, Arolake and Saro’s self-awareness and uncompromising attitude offend Bashorun, and he subsequently plans to ‘discipline’ them. To justify the discipline, Bashorun justifies his excuses with the anger of Akala. He accuses the king of abetting a prostitute. These accusations are pretentious because they hide other sinister motives and intentions. To him, Arolake lacks credible moral standing and a graceful demeanour to carry the sacrifice to abate evil. Instead, he regards her as a debased personality suitable for clearing the mess with her head. The sudden appearance of the Ede people as led by Awolaran, Bashorun’s son against his father’s force seemed to be controlled by some forces in the cosmos and revealed that powers do not belong to the male gaze who are power-drunken and wicked. The pouch of wealth was not only regained by Arolake but she was also exonerated from every wrong and became the picture of an ideal woman in Oyo: sacrificial, kind, humane and powerful.

The freedom and power negotiated by Arolake negate her character in the first sequel where a senior queen, Olori Wojuola accused her of bewitching the king. She at first rebuffed the

negative evaluation of being a witch but quickly gave an increment that affirms that she agrees to be a witch, ...*Even if I were a witch, don't I have better things to do with my power?*

The plot twist introduced by *The Rise of the Spectre* and the desire of the Akala to have Arolake carry a sacrifice for atonement is not uncommon in the African tradition of female scapegoatism that Bashorun represents. The Alaafin, a spiritual connotation of the godhead has a strong love for Arolake just as Olodumare loves and places every woman in a position of honour and would want to protect them at all cost. Afolayan repositions women as the mother of the earth (*Iya aye*), and imbues Arolake with spiritual power, wealth and wit that fits that stature. The film represents an achievement in the history of Nollywood films for its overt feminist perspectives, especially regarding barren women's social empowerment.

Contextualised-Meaning Framing and Sociocultural Embeddings in *Anikulapo* and *The Rise Of The Spectre*

Two major framings of womanhood were portrayed in the movies: the positive and the negative labelling. Under the negative framing, women were portrayed as whores, witches, victims of infertility, and subordinate to men and baby-makers. The movies positively frame women as solution-givers, planners, protectors, kind and humane mothers.

Positive Framing in *Anikulapo* and *The Rise Of The Spectre*

Women as Planners

The theme that frames women as planners is predominant in “Anikulapo” and “The Rise of the Spectre”. The characters of Awarun, Arolake and Faderera helped the symbol of patriarchy, Saro, to surmount his major challenges. In the introductory part, when Saro is just a sojourner and sleeping under shades, Awarun is her first major helper who shelters him and offers him a job. Other men that he met on his arrival scorned his dirty look and warned him sternly not to go against the law. The man's gaze was negative, stern and judgmental. Awarun became his channel to establish his weaving outlet and paved the way for him to reach the palace. On one of his visits to the palace to advertise his wares, he was infatuated with Arolake, the youngest queen of Alaafin. Arolake thus became his *atona* (road mapper). Arolake snatched the power of Akala and channelled their escape. In Ilu

Ojumo, Arolake gave Saro the power of Akala and explained to him the intricacies, opening their channel to affluence. Even Saro agreed that Arolake was the source of his wealth and a meticulous planner in:

Excerpt 2

Saro: They have turned me into an idol in this town. Soon, I will even have my chief priest and shrine. They will bring sacrifices. We will both be chubby like a boa constrictor.

Arolake: I thought you were scared we would die of starvation.

Saro: I didn't understand, I didn't know. I should have known that you had it all planned out. People think it is I, Saro that is performing wonders. They don't know that I am not the one. I have a strong support named Rolake. Arolake who conquered Akala and took his pouch.

Arolake: Don't call out his name like that. Do you want him to haunt me in my dreams.

Saro: Don't be afraid. I will protect you. don't I have his power at my fingertips. Nothing can shake you. let him try killing you, maybe I won't bring you back.

The conversation above showed Arolake as living up to her words in all ways as a kind, humane and supportive woman and wife while Saro could only boast and fail in every promise. Saro was negligent, pompous, promiscuous and loose.

Women as Solution-Givers

Afolayan framed women as solutions to every knotty issue. This frame was evinced by the dictate of the gods to make Arolake carry a sacrifice for atonement to cleanse the community. Arolake in herself was the solution the Oyo community needed for peace to reign. Another example is the solution Iya agba rendered to Saro to make him an *akudaya* (a living-dead). The old woman taught him to become an *akudaya* which allowed him some leverage of living normally for three years.

Excerpt 3:

Iya agba: I will not die. Listen. If you spare my life and I live, I will also give you a way out

Saro: That is a big lie. It is impossible

Iya agba: There is no impossibilities...haven't you heard about the living wraiths? I will pave a way for you to become a living wraith

Woman as Humane and Motherly

While the first sequel, “Anikulapo”, portrays barren women as witches, “*The Rise of the Spectre*” explicates the rise of womanhood and negotiates witchcraft in a positive light. The renegotiation of barren women as humane and kind mothers is portrayed in the character of Arolake who was begged by Saro to take care of Faderera and their son. The wise Awarun, Faderera’s mother, understanding the affluence and power of Arolake, addressed her as a queen and placed the child into her hands. Afolayan’s portrayal of Arolake as not only a godmother but also a succour and guardian to the baby reveals that the negative representation of barren women as bloodsuckers, and wicked is mere ideological labelling and not at par with reality. In that regard, the re-emergence of Arolake as an *aje* (a witch), who deploys the vital force in her to vanquish Bashorun and other male antagonists shows her power to control the cosmos.

Woman as Protector

Tapping into the spiritual manifestation of female power as a protection against hegemonic hostility and pretentious masking of male domination, Afolayan’s “*The Rise of the Spectre*” creates the image of a gullible woman thrown about by her society. In “Anikulapo”, the *Ifa* divination proclaimed that Arolake be brought back to the society for atonement. The patriarchy and chauvinistic male representation of Bashorun made a counternarrative that flattened her images as whore, witch and community distress. Thus, dispensing justice against conventional power arbitration logic, as Bashorun became the male gaze, manipulated justice against the womenfolk of Arolake who she referred to as a whore. The argument of Bashogbon that the community needs cleansing was used by Bashorun as bait to get at the Alaafin whom he had a long-time hatred for.

Negative Labelling

Woman as Victim of Infertility

The Nollywood tradition of Kunle Afolayan aligns with the belief in the patriarchal system of women as the cause of infertility as manifested in the polygamous system of Alaafin with each queen birthing their children apart from Arolake accused of witchcraft. This manifestation is buttressed in her marriage to Saro when he impregnated Omowon. In her third marriage to Akin, she was already entrenched in the belief that she had a problem of infertility and was self-embittered.

Excerpt 4

Saro: Don't take this matter to heart. It is not a big deal. We ought to have discussed it. It is true, I impregnated Omowon. Arolake, it is our child. Come to think of it. I still love you but for how long will we remain like this without children in our house. You also know that to build a strong household, we need to have children to establish this family.

Saro appealed to the shared belief of the Yoruba cultural milieu that a child is the foundation of every marriage. Instead of conceding to being wrong, he shifted the blame on Arolake who could not be a mother. And they appeal to her sense of emotion by alluding to inclusiveness '*...the child belongs to all of us...*' and his repetitive assertion of '*...you know! ...You know!*' A way of self-asserting his position positively. Arolake became a social victim as incapable of her responsibility. Bimpe, Saro's youngest wife also made this succinct during an exchange with a guard:

Bimpe: What did the poor man do to you, pretentious queen?

Saro: Why would you reveal a secret unperturbed?

Bimpe: And so, what? Please, how is that a secret? That she is barren? Or was once a queen...

Arolake: I have now become an object of mockery to you, you highly ungrateful beast of a man.

Not only was Saro unable to vindicate her of the claim of being an object of ridicule, he also physically abused her for daring to accuse him. These show that women who are unable to reproduce are blamed for it. Substantial grounds were also foregrounded as all the other women were seen carrying their children.

Excerpt 5:

Queen A: *Princess kikelomo, please go and call Queen Arolake*

Queen B: *Please sit down! Which kikelomo should go and call Queen Arolake? Does my child look a slave?... if the hairdresser cannot go to her, then Queen Arolake should come out and if she can't come out, she should conceive a child and send them on errands. Failing that, you can send your own children on errands.*

Queen A: *Look queen Arolake you came to this palace. They have their children. I have mine. And you will also have yours...you won't be barren in this palace*

The shared knowledge that an elder can send the children to the same household errands is flouted by the metaphor of barrenness. A barren woman is disrespected and stripped of the cultural honour.

Woman as Subordinate to Men

The general belief that women are subordinate and can only live off men's wealth is predominant in the data. The wealth of Arolake was questioned because she was single and even when she sent gifts to the Alaafin, the queens wanted to know who her husband was to be able to afford such gifts. For them, it was culturally wrong that any woman would be able to control such wealth without the input of a man. Rowland and Klein's (1996) assumption that "men as a group enjoy the privilege of power and that it is in the best interest of men to maintain the existing patriarchal system" (17). The privilege of power that dominate male political figures enjoy expects one form of submission or the other from women and men without power.

Excerpt 6:

Olori Wojuola- *Who is her husband that left her so much wealth?*

Arolake refused to be called a queen and would rather prefer the label of a wealthy woman. The derision of a wealthy woman was voiced by Queen Wojuola who asked who are husband was is germane to evincing the Yoruba cultural belief that a woman can never be wealthy unless a man leaves her inheritance.

Excerpt 7:

Slave: You look like a queen.

Arolake: Not a queen but a wealthy woman

The prejudice of single women not being able to accrue wealth or be regarded by the society was countered by Arolake who denied her position as queen but a wealthy woman.

Woman as Baby-Maker

The belief that women are supposed baby-making machines is entrenched in the movie. Society has conditioned the female gender to see themselves as failures if they are unable to perform their societal responsibility of birthing a child. The woman's mind is tamed through the mind-controlling cultural rhetoric directed at cultivating them into a subjugated machine. Even Arolake did not mince words to say that she is barren and not good for any man after he has gone through a series of emotional torture and misrepresentations by co-queens:

Excerpt 8:

Queen 1: Princess Kikelomo, please go and call Queen Arolake.

Queen Sunkanmi: Please sit down! Which Kikelomo should go and call Queen Arolake? Does my child look a slave?... if the hairdresser cannot go to her, then Queen Arolake should come out and if she can't come out, she should conceive a child and send them on errands. Failing that, you can send your own children on errands.

These societal filters and framing make her believe that she is not good for any man and so she voices her bitterness thus:

Excerpt: You know I cannot bear children and children are germane to every marriage. Do not try to deceive me.

Woman as Witch and Whore

The framing of women as witches and whores is predominant in Anikulapo. The likes of Arolake and Awaarun are labelled as high-handed witches and whores. Arolake, the main character is portrayed as a witch because she has the heart of her husband. Alaafin went as far as depriving other wives of ‘sleep’ to satisfy her and would buy her all the choicest gifts. After Arolake was caught having an affair with Saro and banished from Oyo, Alaafin still imagined that she was close to him. Little wonder he disregarded the harsh confrontation of Bashorun who publicly called her a whore. Instead of Alaafin being ashamed, he defended her. Other queens saw this as an act of manipulation and witchcraft. Awaarun’s character in the data is labelled as witchcraft. She is rich, independent and affluent. The men assert that she manipulates young, handsome men, sleeps with them and enslaves them. She could not be married because she claimed she would not allow any man to dictate boundaries to her. As powerful as Bashorun is, she rejects his proposal because she desires independence. This is depicted in the following excerpts below:

Excerpt 9:

Queen Wojuola: You miserable woman. Witch! Full of hate.

Arolake; I am not a witch. And even if I were, I would use my power for better things than luring some old man who...

Queen Wojuola: We all have our uses here in this palace. For some of us...are you listening? We are to bear royal sons and daughters. But you...you have a different use. You are just for the king’s pleasure. Oh yes! You are useful for nothing else...

Excerpt 10:

Man: She is a married woman, you know? Awarun has the form of a woman but she is really a man. The woman you are involved with is a man-eater. She loves young, good-looking men like you. She sleeps with them and turns them into slaves.

Excerpt 11:

Queen Sunkanmi: Why should my children help her pick her beads? Denike, Anike, haven’t I warned you not to go close to her anymore. Why should my children help her pick

her beads? Are they her slaves. She what if her beads scatter? Clearly her hands hurt. I didn't cause her not to have a child to send on errands please. Hypocrite!

Excerpt 12:

*Princess Omowunmi: where are you coming from. Your lover, the moon is a gentle lover?
I said where are you coming from?*

Arolake: I already told you. I said I went to get some air.

Princess Omowunmi: Liar! My mother was right. You are a whore. Husband snatcher...

These sum up the notion of identity location and construction of high-handed and independent women as witches and whores. Awarun and Arolake are misrepresented because of their independence, affluence and beauty. Arolake is contextualised as a witch for being loved most by the Alaafin. To the other queens, only a woman who possesses a cosmic power can so reduce such a great king as Alaafin to a love bird. Awarun is rich, powerful and independent. She takes pleasure in seducing young men and then, enslaving them. Society sees her power as supernatural. These and many more themes point to the framing of women in the Nollywood tradition.

Albeit, the films represent an achievement in the history of Nollywood films for their overt feminist perspectives, especially regarding women's spiritual empowerment. In the quest to find happiness, Arolake brought a twist to the plot that placed her in the pedestrian of power. As such, she succeeded against all her patriarchal assailants and remained the rallying point for the gods and society. The message seems evident; that every barren woman has been endowed with supernatural intelligence and power to control the cosmic.

Conclusion

Delving into the ideological underpinnings embedded in the traditional social belief that barren women in Africa are malicious, wicked, ruthless, and unhappy, the data reveal that the social norms governing such beliefs are erroneous and detached from reality. With such a theoretical framework as cultural pragmatics, the document evaluates the context of representation. The study has therefore established that the assessment of witchcraft as an evaluation for infertile women is established through ideological nuance and unfounded.

A proper contextualization would reveal that women, especially the infertile ones, are warm, comely, motherly and kind. The findings illuminate the overarching universal ethos of women as controllers of the cosmos and possessing special power present in the reversed belief of barrenness as negative (witchcraft), evincing a grand design that accommodates the multifaceted cosmic behaviours of gender orientations. It compellingly argues that the negative undertone of barrenness as a marker of witchcraft is emblematic, misconstrued, subjective anchored in shroud fallacies constructed by the chauvinistic society rather than the African historical belief that sees barren women without children as empathetic, kind and hopeful. The paper concludes that barren women over the years have become symbols of self-actualisation, self-empowerment and self-love.

References

Primary Texts:

Kunle, Afolayan. Dir. 2022. *Anikulapo*. Netflix.

Kunle, Afolayan. Dir. 2024. *The Rise of The Spectre*. Netflix series.

Secondary Texts:

Ashforth, Adam. 2015. "Witchcraft, Justice, and Human Rights in Africa: Cases from Malawi." *African Studies Review* 58: 5–38.

Irele, B. & Irele, D. 2010. When words come from divination: Ifa and the image of women. *LWATI: a journal of contemporary research*, 7(3), 300-309, 2010

Donkor, E.S. 2008. "Socio-cultural perception of infertility in Ghana". *Africa journal of nursing and midwifery* 10(1), 22-34

Alexander, J.C. ed. 1988. *Durkheimian Sociology: Cultural Studies*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Foucault, M. 1978. *The History of Sexuality*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Haynes, J. 2016. *Nollywood: The Creation of Nigerian Film Genres*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Inhorn, M.C, 2003, 'The worms are weak': male infertility and patriarchal paradoxes in Egypt', *men and masculinities* 5(3),236-256

Leistner, Erich. 2014. "Witchcraft and African Development." *African Security Review* 23, no. 1: 53–77.

Nussbaum, M. 2000. "Women's Capabilities and Social Justice." *Journal of Human Development*, 1(2): 219–247.

Geschiere, Peter. 2013. *Witchcraft, Intimacy, and Trust*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ogunleye, F. 2004. "A Male-Centric Modification of History:" *Efunsetan Aniwura Revisited. History in Africa* 31(1): 303–318.

- Papreen, N., Sharma, A., Sabin, K., et al 2000' Living with infertility: experiences among urban slum populations in Bangladesh, reproductive health matters 8(15),33-44
- Soetan, O. 2021. "Transnational Agency, Nollywood Feminist Auteur, and patriarchy" In *Transnational Africana Women's Fictions* edited by Cheryl Sterling, 117-130. New York: Routledge.
- Soetan, O. 2020. *Òṣòròmòṣìgà: Representations of Witchcraft in Yoruba films*. African Studies Pennsylvania State University
- Sudarkasa, N. 1986. "The Status of Women" in Indigenous African Societies." *Feminist Studies*, 12(1): 91–103.
- Usaini, S., N. Chilaka, & O. Nelson. 2016. "Portrayal of Women in Nollywood Films and the Role of Women in National Development" In *Impacts of the Media on African Socio-Economic Development*. Hershey: IGI Global.
- Walby, S. 1990. *Theorizing patriarchy*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Filmography**
- Ajileye, Yekini, director. 2002. *Kòtò Aiyé*. Ajileye Film Productions.
- Ajileye, Yekini, director. 1989. *Kòtò Òrun*. Ajileye Film Productions
- Ogunde, Hubert, director. 1980. *Aiyé*. Ogunde Pictures.
- Ogunde, Hubert, director. 1988. *Àyànmó*. Ogunde Pictures.
- Steve Shodiya, director. 2022. *Malaika*. Abraham Pictures.

**Politeness Strategies in The Communicative Sequence of Characters in Toyin
Abiodun's *The Trials Of Afonja***

Salawu Rashidat Omotola

Department of English and Linguistics,

Kwara State University,

Malete, Kwara State.

Phone Number: 07034423147

Email: rashidato.salawu@kwasu.edu.ng or omotola2010@gmail.com

Abstract

Politeness is a universal concept aimed at mitigating the potential harm of face-threatening acts in human interactions. It serves as a tool to prevent conflict and facilitate seamless communication among interlocutors, even amidst societal complexities. Studies on drama texts have largely examined the use of lexical choices, implicature and discourse patterns neglecting the choice of politeness among the characters' communicative sequence. This has however received little attention among linguists. This paper examined politeness strategies in Toyin Abiodun's *The Trials of Afonja* with a view of seeing how characters exchange different politeness strategies in their communicative sequence either directly or indirectly. The paper adopted a qualitative content analysis to select twelve extracts randomly in the text. Leech's politeness principle was adopted as the theoretical framework. Findings revealed that agreement maxim is a politeness strategy used to minimise disagreement among the characters in the text. The study also revealed that praises or eulogies are politeness strategies used by characters in the text to abate anger. Studies have also shown that not bragging or boasting about one's achievements, titles or ability is polite as characters minimise praises to themselves in the studied text. The study concludes that to achieve a conflict-free interaction among characters in the text, their public self-image must be consciously put into consideration. This study recommends that dramatists intentionally integrate diverse politeness strategies into character interactions to mirror real-life communication, foster conflict resolution and inspire audiences to embrace empathy and respect in their everyday interaction.

Keywords: *Linguistic Politeness, The Trials of Afonja, Leech's Politeness Principle, Context*

Background to the study

For quite a long time, the examination of literary works was the domain of literary critics. In the last four decades however, researchers and linguists began to examine literary texts using pragmatics theories and in so doing, there was a shift in the way in which such texts are analysed. One of the prevalent pragmatic theories used in the analysis of literary works is the politeness theory. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness is the action, linguistic or otherwise, that redresses the speaker's and hearer's face in a situation whereby face is threatened. They further add that attending to face will either minimize or avoid conflict during interaction. Widdowson (1992) asserts that literary texts are language in use in a specific, context-dependent manner, where the primary goal extends beyond mere communication to creating an aesthetic experience. Plays, in particular, present a rich ground for examining the dynamics of interaction, as characters' speech acts often involve implicit meanings, power negotiations, and strategic use of politeness or impoliteness.

Abdul-Majeed (2009) points out that politeness principle has gained a great deal of interest in the past twenty-five years; and since then, much has been written on politeness principles and theories. Politeness in the linguistic sense, however, has little to do with good manners, as Goffman (1971) explains: in this linguistic perspective, politeness, deference and tact have a sociological significance altogether beyond the level of table manners and etiquette book. As human beings who employ language for communicative purposes, politeness is pervasive in our interactions because of the intricacies of our diversities in terms of age, status, rank, etc. (Babatunde & Adedimeji, 2008). Without being polite in interactions, the chances of achieving success in communication are slim. Thus, Cruse (2000) asserts that the purpose of politeness is to maintain harmonious and smooth relations in the face of the necessity to convey belittling messages. This conforms to the view of Thomas (1995) that politeness is the means employed to show awareness of another person's face - where the face means the public self-image of a person, without which communication may fail. Politeness is a means to avoid conflict and promote smooth communication between interlocutors in the face of complexities in society. This is expressed through communication between interlocutors taking cognizance of the social distance (mostly elderly to a younger person) and relative power (superior to subordinate). The primary aim of this paper, therefore, is to gain a comprehensive understanding of politeness theory by investigating

how Abiodun utilises politeness strategies in the utterances of characters in the text. This paper examines the specific face-threatening acts and politeness maxims employed by characters in *The Trials of Afonja*. It explores the cultural and contextual relevance of these strategies, situating them within the Yoruba socio-cultural setting depicted in the play. This study adopts Leech's (2014) politeness principle to investigate how characters in Abiodun's *The Trials of Afonja* use different politeness strategies in their communicative sequence either directly or indirectly.

Literature review

Pragmatics: An overview

Fetzer (2001) explains that pragmatics is fundamentally concerned with communicative action and its felicity in context, investigating action concerning the questions of what action is, what may count as action, what action is composed of, what conditions need to be satisfied for action to be felicitous, and how action is related to context. Leech (1983) declares that we cannot understand the nature of language itself unless we understand pragmatics: how language is used in communication. He therefore defines pragmatics as the study of how utterances have meanings in situations because pragmatics is a shift from the paradigm of theoretical grammar, in particular syntax, to the paradigm of the language user. Mey (2001) suggests that pragmatics as the study of the way humans use their language in communication, bases itself on a study of those premises and determines how they actualise human language use. Hence, pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society. Yule (1996) adds that pragmatics requires a consideration of how speakers organise what they want to say by who they are talking to, where, when and under what circumstances. Since the introduction of pragmatics, many classic theories and principles have been put forward by linguists targeting different aspects of pragmatics. Some of these include; speech acts, intention, presupposition, context, deixis, implicature, common ground, cooperative principle, politeness principle, etc.

Context

Context according to Mey (2001) is dynamic, not a static concept: it is to be understood as the continually changing surroundings, in the widest sense, that enable the participants in the communication process to interact, and in which the linguistic expressions of their interaction

become intelligible. Adebija (1999) says that the term “context” refers to the relevant aspects of the physical or social setting of an utterance. Adebija (1999) further identifies at least four types of contexts as having an impact on utterance interpretation. These are: the physical context which includes the time, and the place where a communicative event takes place; the socio-cultural context which includes the beliefs, habits, value systems or the cultures of those involved, their religious and cultural beliefs and how these relate to the occasion at hand; the psychological context which is the state of mind of those involved in the interaction; and the linguistic context has to do with the words appearing in the environment of the discourse. Babatunde (2007) avers that context is taken to refer to the environment and the circumstances in which language is used. It refers to what we can observe, hear or see to enable us to fashion out the meaning of a particular situation by our application. He identifies context types to include social, psychological and physical. Understanding context is crucial for interpreting meaning, as it influences how linguistic choices are made and understood. This study leverages the concept of context to explore how politeness strategies are employed in literary texts, with a focus on how characters navigate social interactions and power dynamics through their communicative acts.

Linguistic politeness

Language serves many purposes, and linguistic politeness is only one of them. Politeness is seen as something universal, although, what is considered polite does naturally vary from group to group or situation to situation but the basic need for the maintenance of interpersonal relationships is present in any human communication (Riekkinen, 2009).

Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that quite unrelated languages show strikingly similar patterns in conveying politeness:

even if one doesn't know the language, on seeing one person approach another, and speak to him with hesitations, umms, ahhs and the like, we have a strong clue that he is making a request or doing something that he considers (or considers that the other will consider) imposing.

Linguistic politeness has generally been considered the proper concern of pragmatics, the area of linguistics that accounts for how we attribute meaning to utterances in contexts or meaning in interaction (Thomas, 1995). Linguistic politeness is thus a matter of strategic interaction aimed at

achieving goals such as avoiding conflict and maintaining harmonious relations with others (Kasper, 1993).

Cheepen (2000) comments that politeness is an interactionally motivated phenomenon, since it is not directly oriented towards a communicative goal, but rather maintains social equilibrium. Holmes (2001) believes that being linguistically polite involves speaking to people appropriately in the light of the relationship. Fairclough (1989) suggests that “politeness is based on the recognition of differences of power, degree of social distance” proposing that the scale of politeness in any community depends on two factors: an assessment of the social relationship between interlocutors and knowledge of the social values and norms of the socio-cultural community involved. Watts (2003) concludes that:

The goal of a theory of linguistic politeness which takes (im)politeness as its starting point should not be to explain why speakers say what they say and to predict the possible effect of utterances on addressees. It should aim to explain how all the interactants engaged in an ongoing verbal interaction, negotiate the development of emergent networks and evaluate their position and the positions of others within those networks.

The cooperative principle

Grice (1975) proposes that communicative utterance and exchanges, typically in conversation, are by a general principle of cooperation what he called the cooperative principle which states: “Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which it is engaged” or Be helpful. The cooperative principle is observed in the application of four more specific maxims which fall under it, commonly called Grice’s Maxims (Kearns, 2000).

Maxim of Quality (also called the maxim of truthfulness)

1. Try to make your contribution one that is true.
2. Do not say what you believe to be false.

Maxim of Quantity (also called the maxim of informativeness)

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange).

2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Maxim of Relation (also called the maxim of relevance)

Be relevant

Maxim of Manner (also called the maxim of clarity)

Be perspicuous.

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief (Avoid unnecessary prolixity)
4. Be orderly.

These maxims specify the convention that participants in a conversation normally obey. Grice observes that on many occasions, many people fail to observe these maxims. Non-observance of these maxims can be in different ways such as flouting a maxim, violating a maxim, infringing on a maxim, opting out of a maxim and suspending a maxim (Thomas 1995). This failure might either be due to a person's inability to speak clearly or the deliberate choice to lie. He also points out that when things are not stated with specification, hearers assume contrary things to what is said with the meaning usually derived from a deeper level.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts Leech's (2014) Politeness Principle Approach as the theoretical framework.

Leech's Politeness Principle Approach

Leech (2014) has proposed a way of explaining how politeness operates in communication with others, which is called Politeness Principles. Politeness principles are a series of maxims used in analyzing politeness. They are: tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, obligation S to O maxim, obligation O to S, agreement maxim, opinion-reticence maxim, sympathy maxim, and feeling-reticence maxim. Subvertova (2013) notes that Grice's cooperative maxims do not cover all the situations that we may come across in communication. These maxims

do not even consider some specific situations like moral and ethical values. Therefore, even when adhering to all cooperative maxims we may very well be impolite. He adds that Grice's maxims are focused on truth value, adequacy and the content of our contribution in general. Leech provides us with the "politeness Principle" (henceforth, PP), delineated in his book *Pragmatics of Politeness* (2014). The principle of politeness analogous to Grice's CP is a constraint observed in human communicative behaviour, influencing us to avoid communicative discord or offence and maintain communicative concord (Leech, 2014)

Leech builds his outline of pragmatics principle that makes a distinction between two rhetorics: the interpersonal rhetoric that subsumes the CP, the Politeness Principle (PP) and the Irony Principle (IP); and the textual rhetoric which includes the principles of processibility, clarity, economy and expressivity (2014). Leech's (2014) model of politeness is founded on interpersonal rhetoric and views politeness as conflict avoidance. Leech introduces the politeness principle whose function is to maintain social equilibrium and friendly relations which enables us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place (Leech 2014). Leech defines politeness as strategic conflict avoidance, which can be measured in terms of the degree of effort put into the avoidance of a conflict situation and the establishment of maintenance of comity. Hence, the PP has a higher regulative role than the CP whose function is to regulate what we say so that it contributes to some assumed illocutionary or discoursal goals. He distinguishes between what he calls "Absolute Politeness" and "Relative Politeness".

The position of Leech (2014, p.132) is a grand elaboration of Grice's conversational maxim to politeness. Leech adopts the framework initially set out by Grice when he gave some set of maxims and sub-maxims that guide and constrain the conversation of rational people. His concept is based on terms; self and other (Leech 2014, p.133). In a conversation, the self would be identified as the speaker (or anybody or anything associated with the hearer). Leech (2014) names politeness theory (PT) as politeness principles (PP) a finer differentiation within his principles by proposing six interpersonal maxims (2014, p. 132); they are:

Tact Maxim:

- (a) Minimise cost to other;

(b) Maximise benefit to other

Generosity Maxim:

(a) Minimise benefit to self;

(b) Maximise praise of other.

Approbation Maxim

(a) Minimise dispraise of other;

(b) Maximise praise of other.

Modesty Maxim

(a) Minimise praise of self;

(b) Maximise dispraise of self.

Agreement Maxim

(a) Minimise disagreement between self and other;

(b) Maximise agreement between self and other.

Sympathy Maxim

(a) Minimise antipathy between self and other;

(b) Maximise sympathy between self and other.

Methodology

This paper adopts a qualitative approach to analyse some dialogues/conversations between characters in the drama text entitled *The Trials of Afonja*. It is qualitative because this approach enables a detailed and nuanced examination of language use in its contextual environment. Dialogues in literary works often reflect complex interpersonal dynamics and social norms, necessitating a focus on meaning and context. It analyses the data descriptively using Leech's maxims of politeness. What constitute data for this study are twelve purposively selected extracts from the text. The data were purposively sampled because the method ensures that only the

relevant dialogues to this study are analyzed, allowing for a focus and in-depth exploration in textual interpretation.

Data presentation and analysis

Generosity maxim

Datum 1:

Alaafin: Did you send men to Akesan?

Lafianu: Yes, Kabiyesi.

Alaafin: See to it that this man gets his wares back. As compensation for his loss, let you and your men to have my share of today's market duties ... (The Trials of Afonja, P.56)

Lafianu is in charge of collecting tax from traders at the market. Alaja-Eta, a citizen of Borgu complains to the king that his wares have been taken away by some Esos. Alaafin wants no dispute with the Sultan of Borgu, thus, he commands Lafianu to return his wares. Alaafin prioritizes the welfare of Alaja-Eta. He orders Lafianu to ensure that the man's wares are returned and further compensates the man by instructing Lafianu and his men to forgo the Alaafin's share of the market. This minimizes the man's loss while providing him with additional benefits. The Alaafin adheres to the generosity maxim by sacrificing his share of the day's market to compensate Alaja-Eta. This action reflects his willingness to bear a personal loss for the benefit of another, thereby demonstrating generosity "let you and your men have my share of today's market".

Datum 2:

Afonja: Go ahead! Share them, share them into equal parts!

Eso: Equal parts! My Lord! The share of the Aare-Ona-Kakanfo exceeds that of any general. It is the custom.

Afonja: Share them into equal parts! (The Trials of Afonja, p.29)

Afonja in the above excerpt minimises benefit to himself. After every war, the spoils of the war are divided and the generalissimo takes the biggest share. After the first fight with the Bambaras, Afonja insists that the spoils of war be equally shared between himself and the other generals. In

other for **S (Speaker)** to appear polite and considerate, he employs a **FSA (Face Saving Act)** by asking **H (Hearer)** to divide the spoils of the war equally. Giving consideration to others' needs is a politeness strategy employed to win others' loyalty.

Agreement maxim

Datum 3:

Akilapa: Let us divide the spoils of war.

Afonja: No! No! ... I say we wait until we get back home.

Ekerin: I say we divide the spoils here and now.

Afonja: Hide your weapons... We shall divide the spoils. I'll not have our blood give more nourishment to this scorched soil of Bambaras. (The Trials of Afonja, pp. 24-28)

After the war against the Bambara, the other six generals with Afonja decided that the spoils of war be divided immediately. Afonja feels sharing the war spoils before getting home (Oyo) will cause distraction to the men. Afonja's response would have been taken as a **FTA (Face Threaten Act)** without redress if he doesn't consent to their decision, although it causes them their lives. **H** upholds the maxim of agreement which says that one should minimise disagreement between oneself and others. Therefore, agreement is a politeness strategy that seeks to save the face of the interactants in the conversation.

Datum 4:

Young Witch: Yeye, what you're about to do will not bring doom to Afonja alone. It will give wound to the whole of Oyo.

Iya Mode (Yeye Eleye): I don't care!

Young Witch: But think...think, yeye, Oyo yet finds no replacement for its Aare-Ona-Kakanfo. Who shall stand for us against our enemies? ...Think of your children. Do not drag down the grindstone.

Iya Mode (Yeye Eleye): I...I...I buy your wisdom... Leave (The Trials of Afonja, p. 92-94)

Interlocutors can avert **X (Face threaten Act)** by adhering to the agreement maxim. Here, Iya Mode, a member of the Oyomesi is also the leader of the witches determines to end Afonja's life because he defiles her by sending her out of the palace when he wants to inform Alaafin Aole that Oyo loses to the Bambaras. The **H** saves the face of **S** by agreeing to what the **S** said in order not to threaten the face of **S**. Iya Mode finally sees a reason not to kill Afonja, Hence, She maximises the maxim of agreement which is a politeness strategy to avoid Oyo's destruction.

Approbation maxim

Datum 5:

Alaafin: Let everyone's lips be pressed together.

Afonja: ...but I think Kabiyesi should hear my...

Alaafin: ... Afonja! I say "let everyone's lips be pressed together"... I will tell you when to speak...maybe Afonja knows something...let him speak.

Afonja: No one dares caress your sword with his bare hands, it will cut him! Alaafin! You're the little stump of wood that is infested with soldier ants.. you're the marshy spot in the river... you're the easy-going elephant that the strongest wrestler must lift without breaking his back...

(The Trials of Afonja, p.17)

The conversation is between the **S** who is a King (superior) and the **H**; his subordinate. The redress utterance of the **H** which he uses in the form of praise for the **S** is a politeness strategy he employs to abate the **S**'s anger. In other words, **H** maximises the praise of **S**. Eulogising the king is a politeness strategy common among the Yorubas to entreat the king's favour. Thus, rather than to **X**, the **H** employs a **FSA** to save the face of **S** who is a king in public.

Datum 6:

Baale Gbogun: Afonja

Afonja: Baale Gbogun...

Baale gbogun: Afonja! The one who has the heart of a grindstone. Afonja Iji (storm)... You crash into your enemies like a sudden storm...one moment they see you; then the next, they die changing to empty space... (The Trials of Afonja, p.31)

Praises and eulogies are politeness strategies that interlocutors in a communicative act use as **FSA**. Here, the **S** praises the **H** to make the **H** feel loved and accepted. After the war, Afonja wants the spoils of war to be shared back home so that there will be no distractions. The other generals with him are anxious to quench their lust with the women of Bambaras; therefore, they disagree and go into their tents with those women. Baale Gbogun, a loyal friend of Afonja, seeing that Afonja is angry with his generals, maximises praise of Afonja. He praises Afonja to calm him and reassures him that there are still some who are forever loyal to him (Afonja) and ready to do his bidding.

Modesty maxim

Datum 7:

Afonja: Go ahead! Share them (spoils of war) share them in equal parts.

Labata: As you wish, my Lord. Okay, Aare, take your share.

Afonja: No! I take no share before anyone of you, my generals (The Trails of Afonja, p.29)

For a **S** not to threaten the face of the **H**, it is usually polite not to have an overly high opinion of oneself and one's position or ability. As the generalissimo of Oyo, and as custom demands, the share of Afonja exceeds that of any general. Nevertheless, he instructs his servant to share the spoils of war in equal parts. Also, as expected, being the leader of the army, he should pick his share first, but he insists on taking the last share. This is a politeness strategy, a **FSA** that Afonja uses to minimise praise of himself.

Datum 8:

Alimi: Who are you?

Afonja: I am Afonja, Aare-Ona-Kakanfo commander-in-chief of Oyo's army. (Alimi and all the Fulani men tremble visible fear and retreat). Be of ease. I do not come to you as the commander of Oyo's Army. What is your name?

Alimi: I am Alimi.

Afonja: Alimi. I like you. Will you be my friend? (The Trials of Afonja, p.67)

Not bragging or boasting about one's achievements, titles or abilities is polite and a **FSA (face saving act)**. Afonja minimises praise of himself in the above excerpt. Alimi and his men are mere shepherds, they are nomads who do not have a home in particular; nevertheless, Afonja is polite to them. Even when they are scared because he introduces himself as the commander of Oyo's army which might appear as **X** without redress, Afonja insists that they should not be afraid. He extends the hand of friendship to these wanderers and invites them to his home in Ilorin. Modesty is a politeness principle; a **FSA** makes others feel accepted and loved.

Sympathy maxim

Datum 9:

Afonja: You divide the spoils into five parts? ... But we are seven!

Labata: Two of your generals- Otun Balogun and Ekerin just fell by your sword, my lord.

Afonja: (Grieves). Ah! Oh! Well... Divide the spoils into seven parts nevertheless. Back in Oyo, we will give their parts to their wives and children... (The Trials of Afonja, p.29)

After the war with the Bambaras, Afonja suggests the spoils of the war be shared when they get back home. Otun Balogun and Ekerin see this as **X (Face threatening act)** and insist they share it immediately. Afonja accepts their proposition but commands them not to touch any of the spoils until they get home. This makes some generals challenge Afonja to a fight. Afonja fights them in a fast-and-furious battle and kills them. Although they are disloyal and disobedient, Afonja minimises the antipathy between himself and the generals by insisting that their share of the war spoils be given to their wives and children, thereby maximising sympathy maxim.

Datum 10:

Afonja: He is dead.

Alimi: What will I tell his daughter? She has no one but him. (The Trials of Afonja, p.80)

Sympathy is a politeness strategy used by participants in any discourse. Hafiz, the elder brother of Alimi and the father of Halimat goes to war with Afonja to fight against Alaafin Aole. Aole captures Hafiz and asks for Afonja's hideout but he (Hafiz) refuses to betray Afonja and makes Alaafin kill Hafiz. Hafiz's death is very painful to Afonja and Alimi. Alimi sympathises with Halimat who is the only surviving child of Hafiz.

Tact maxim

Datum 11:

Alimi: I have no home in Ilorin or anywhere. We are nomads, we move from place to place.

Afonja: You shall be my guest. If you wish, you may bring all your people with you. I have land that you may live on and use to graze and raise your cattle. (The Trials of Afonja, p.67)

Alimi and his family have no home according to him, they are 'nomads'. The **H** maximises benefits to **S** and his family by offering them a home and land to raise their cattle in Ilorin, the former's paternal land. All these benefits will cost Alimi nothing but it will cost Afonja a lot. Thus, as a **FSA**, Afonja maximises the benefit to others which is a politeness strategy used by him to make Alimi to be more comfortable around him.

Datum 12:

Afonja: What have you done to offend Aole that he seeks your destruction with that of your people...?

Apomu: ...I come forward and offer you my head to appease Alaafin. You need not kill my people... let him have my head... you must not kill my people... (The Trials of Afonja, p.74)

Alaafin Aole orders Afonja to kill Baale Apomu and his people because Apomu had him flogged when he (Aole) was a youth because he sold an Oyo man into slavery, a crime which attracts the heavier penalty of death. Apomu maximises the benefit to his people by accepting Alaafin's death penalty on the condition that his people be spared.

Findings

This paper has been able to analyse Abiodun's text using the six politeness maxims of Leech. In the text; generosity as a politeness principle is used to give consideration to others and reduce threat to the hearer's face; it makes hearers feel accepted and acknowledged. Maxim of agreement is primarily a conflict avoidance strategy as illustrated in the analysis. It helps to avert disagreements which could lead to destruction and conflict as seen in the analysis.

Approbation as a principle of politeness is important in the Yoruba community. Approbation is a sign of commendation and approval of others as portrayed in the analysis. In the text, praise and eulogies are the major tools used to abate anger among the participants in the conversations analysed. The modesty maxim is also an important politeness strategy; it portrays humility and promotes solidarity and loyalty as shown in the analysis above. Being humble and not boasting of one's achievement is a major attribute portrayed by the characters in the text which makes others feel loved and accepted

To live cordially with others in our environment, one needs to show sympathy to others when they are in a disadvantaged position. Sympathy enhances the mutual relationship between people in society and it helps to assure the hearer of the speaker's support as portrayed in the analysis. Tact Maxim, which is an important politeness principle, helps to show careful consideration to the face of the hearer. Participants put others into consideration at the detriment of themselves as a way of showing politeness to them.

Conclusion

This work deals with the politeness strategies used in Toyin Abiodun's *The Trials of Afonja*. This work presents a theoretical background of linguistic politeness and politeness strategies used in maintaining successful communication between speakers and hearers. The study thus opens the field for inquiries into politeness in texts where extremely little work yet exists. Communication with other members of society is an inevitable activity; it is not only for the exchange of information but also for the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. Thus, to achieve conflict-free communication among characters in the text and to maintain harmonious and smooth social relations, they must consciously and carefully consider their public self-image.

This study recommends that dramatists intentionally integrate diverse politeness strategies into character interactions to mirror real-life communication, foster conflict resolution and inspire audiences to embrace empathy and respect in their everyday interaction.

References

- Abdul-Majeed, R.K. (2009). The realisation of positive strategies in language. *Journal of College of Education for Women*, 20(2), 509-527.
- Abiodun, T. (2012). *The trials of Afonja*. Blackhouse Worldwide Publishers.
- Adegbija, E. (1999). Titbits on discourse analysis and pragmatics. In E.E. Adegbija, (Ed.), *The English language and literature in English: An introductory handbook* (pp. 186-205). MEL Department, University of Ilorin.
- Brown, P. & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Cheepen, C. (2000) Small talk in service dialogues: The conventional aspects of transactional telephone talk. In J. Couplend (Ed.), *Small talk* (pp.20-35). Pearson Education Limited.
- Cruse, A. (2000). *Meaning in language: An introduction to semiotics and pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. Longman.
- Fetzer, A. (2001). *Pragmatics as a linguistic concept*. In W.Bublito, & N. Norrick (Eds.), *Foundation of pragmatics* (pp. 23-51). Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co.
- Goffman, E (1971). *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the public order*. Anchor Books.
- Grice, H.P. (1975). *Logic and conversation*. In P. Cole, & j. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics*. Academic.
- Holmes, J. (2001). *An introduction to sociolinguistics*. Longman.
- Kasper, G. & Blum-Kulka, M. (1993). *Interlanguage pragmatics*. OxfordUniversity Press.
- Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of Pragmatics*. Longman.
- Leech, G. (2014). *The Pragmatics of Politeness*. Oxford University Press.
- Lunenburg, F.C. (2010). *Communication: The process, barriers, and improving effectiveness*, 1(1). Sam Houston State University.
- Mey, J.L. (2001). *Pragmatics: An introduction*. Blackwell Publisher.
- Osisanwo, W. (2003). *Discourse analysis and pragmatics*. Femolus-Fetop Publishers.
- Riekkinen, N. (2009). *Softening criticism: The use of lexical hedges in academic spoken interaction*. University of Helsinki.
- Subertova, A. (2013). *Aspects of politeness in classroom of English as a second language*. (Diploma Thesis). Charles University in Prague: Department of English Language and Literature.
- Thomas, J. (1995). *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics*. Longman.
- Watts, R. G. (2003). *Sociolinguistics of politeness*. Cambridge University Press.
- Widdowson, H.G. (1992). *Practical stylistics: An approach to poetry*. Oxford University Press.
- Whardani, A. (2013). *Humor as reflected in the use of Cooperative and politeness principles in Yes Man Movie*. Yogyakarta: Faculty of Adab and Cultural Sciences.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.

**Discourse of Politics and Politicking with Politeness in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's
National Broadcast on Oil Subsidy Removal**

Oduola, M. O

mo.oduola @acu.edu.ng

08034227134

and

Adeleke A. J

08067610331

Abstract

This study explored President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's broadcast on subsidy removal to examine how politeness principles were deployed in politicking the politics of subsidy removal in the Nigerian reality of heated polity. Using Leech's brand of Politeness Principle in analysing the qualitatively obtained data, the study projected subsidy removal as a policy roadmap for national recovery and the well-being of the populace. Tinubu, as a political leader, employs linguistic resources and discursive strategies to project his ideology, manage public perception, and foster constructive dialogue. By analyzing selected presidential broadcasts through politeness theory, this research aims to uncover the forms, structures, and functions of politeness strategies used by Tinubu. The findings highlight the role of politeness strategies in navigating political communication, emphasizing their importance in maintaining a balance between assertiveness and diplomacy. The study also reveals how these strategies contribute to self-profiling and ideological promotion within the complex socio-political landscape of Nigeria. The analysis provides insights into the pragmatic functions of politeness strategies and their implications for political discourse, offering a panoramic understanding of language use in leadership and governance. The concept of politeness in communication is, therefore, revealed particularly within the realm of political discourse. Politeness, defined as a polite social behaviour within a specific culture, is crucial for fostering comfortable and enduring social relationships. In the context of political communication, the strategic use of politeness becomes a vital tool for leaders as they navigate varied sensitive issues, oil subsidy removal for instance.

Key Words: Communication, politeness, political discourse, presidential broadcasts, Subsidy removal

Introduction

At this onset of the second quarter of the twenty-first millennium when political discourse has reached its peak, and communication, with all its complexities, has remained the important and most potent weapon or instrument, the artful use of politeness strategies becomes a cornerstone for successful engagement (McDowell, et. Al., 2017). This multifaceted landscape underscores the significance of skillfully applying politeness strategies, offering a pathway to foster constructive dialogue, build bridges of understanding, and instil trust among diverse constituents. The political realm, obviously, demands a delicate equilibrium between assertiveness and diplomacy (Yuan, 2023), the leaders must navigate through a mosaic of perspectives. The utilization of politeness strategies becomes more than a rhetorical tool (Adel *et al*, 2016); it transforms into a key facilitator for leaders seeking resonance and connection with the varied fabric of their audience (Ruthven, 2021). In precise terms, politeness strategies become more than a mere tool, they evolve into a nuanced approach essential for leaders aiming to traverse the intricate terrain of public sentiment (Liu *et al*, 2017). The ability to connect with diverse audiences and address sensitive topics with finesse not only defines effective leadership but also sets the stage for fostering a climate of open dialogue and mutual understanding. The bottom line, therefore, is to contemplate a study that projects how language users, as text producers, rely on certain linguistic resources as discursive tools or strategies with an ideological underpinning in their contributions to nation-building enterprises. Specifically, then, what is to be looked out for in the current research engagement is how President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (PBAT) navigated through certain sociopolitical mines using language – all according to Oduola (2021), emphasizing communication as one major and vital trait in human life, and most basic characteristics of the homo-sapience. Such linguistic manoeuvrings for communicative navigation are to be examined in PBAT's National broadcast on oil subsidy removal, using the politeness approach. The removal of oil subsidies in Nigeria has been a contentious issue, significantly impacting the socio-economic landscape. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's national broadcast addressing this policy shift is an exemplary case for analyzing the use of politeness as a discursive strategy. This study explores the linguistic features of politeness in the broadcast and how they function to frame the government's narrative. The crux of this research engagement goes with Renkema's (1993, p.8) point that “a strategy called

politeness is required to not only make a conversation run smoothly”, but also to maintain social relationships and personal behaviours (Wardhaugh, 1977, p.7).

Language also can be used as a tool to maintain social relationship and personal behaviours.

Statement of the problem

Several scholars in the field of English linguistics have examined speeches with various subject matters from the rather narrow text-linguistic perspectives that advertently or inadvertently ignored or sparsely considered the socio-political relevance of various discursive strategies. Besides, Bola Ahmed Tinubu (BAT), as President, appears to have brought some novelty and freshness to broadcasts as responses to front-burner national issues (Osisanwo, 2017; Osisanwo and Adeyemo, 2024; Ekwueme, 2013; Adedun and Atolagbe, 2011). Examining such speeches and broadcasts in pragmatic terms, using politeness principles as a matter of interest, therefore, remains an important gap. In the attempt to unearth and investigate the inherent significance of speeches as an accomplished art, having its origin from the classical period, several academic efforts have been made to analyze and bring out the relevance of and contributions of notable people in the society towards the actualization and development of the country. In this wise, different speeches and letters have been analyzed using different linguistic resources and tools to assess their power and worth. Ekwueme (2013), for instance, faintly examined the discourse strategies and ideology in selected open discourse of former President Olusegun Obasanjo using the socio-cognitive mode of V­an Dijk (1993, 2006a, 2006b) to identify the use of language by discourse marker. Adedun and Atolagbe (2011) expose the underpinning ideologies through a discourse analysis of President Olusegun Obasanjo's farewell to the Nigerian parliament. Balogun. K (2009) worked on the Pragmatic Analysis of inaugural addresses by selected Southwestern Governors in Nigeria while Ayodabo (2003) discusses the pragma-stylistic study of M K.O Abiola's historic speech of June 24, 1993. Odebunmi (2020) examines messages by images: Visual semiotic and digital storytelling in Endsars protest Facebook images in the context of the Nigerian political complications. It is, therefore, hoped that this pragmatic investigation of political text production would help in unearthing PBAT's ideology construction strategies with politeness as an instance of 'using words to do things'

This study explores the linguistic features of politeness in the broadcast and how they function to frame the government's narrative.

Aim and objectives

This research aims to investigate the use of linguistic elements that culminate into politeness strategies in political communication, with a focus on PBAT's engagement with sensitive issues of economic hardship. In other words, exploring the linguistic features of politeness in the broadcast and how they function particularly within the context of the intricate economic landscape orchestrated by the politics of subsidy removal in Nigeria becomes necessary. The specific objectives, therefore, are to:

- i. Identify forms and structures of politeness strategies in PBAT's choices in selected excerpts from PBAT's National broadcast on oil subsidy removal;
- ii. Categorize linguistic resources that constitute politeness strategies in selected excerpts from PBAT's National broadcast on oil subsidy removal;
- iii. Examine the discursive function of elements of politeness and forms of politeness as actionable expressions in selected excerpts from PBAT's National broadcast on oil subsidy removal;
- iv. Discuss the functionally packaged ideological loads in politeness strategies in selected excerpts from PBAT's National broadcast on oil subsidy removal.

The main thrust of the foregoing is finding the probing question that can assist in examining linguistically verbalized conventional discourse instruments as navigating strategies. It is pertinent to know that an investigation into this field of pragmatics with emphasis on politeness strategies is meant to probe into how the text producer deploys his linguistic resources such as structures and syntactic manipulation of choices to convince his text consumers. In the overall analysis, the study can provide a unique insight into how linguistics choices are made by PBAT in doing his nation-building business.

Politeness and the pragmatics of classroom interaction

The study titled *Leech's Politeness Principle Used by Teachers in English Language Teaching* by Dwi Santoso, et. Al., (2021) offers a thorough exploration of how teachers utilize Leech's politeness principles in the context of English language teaching. The study's primary aim is to investigate the types and forms of politeness principles applied by teachers, an important topic in the realm of education given that politeness plays a crucial role in effective communication and in maintaining classroom harmony.

One of the key strengths of this study is its clear objective. The research is focused on identifying and analyzing how teachers implement Leech's politeness principles, such as tact, generosity, and approbation, in their interactions with students. This is a highly relevant topic, as politeness is central to fostering positive communication within the classroom environment. By identifying nine types of politeness principles, the study demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of Leech's theory and how it can be applied in educational settings.

Another strength of the study is its structured analysis. The researchers employ a descriptive method to analyze the various forms of politeness used by teachers, which helps in presenting the findings in a clear and organized manner. This approach allows for a more understandable representation of the data, making it accessible to educators interested in improving their communication skills. Furthermore, the practical implications of the study are noteworthy. The findings provide useful insights for teachers who wish to enhance their interactions with students by incorporating different forms of politeness. Additionally, the research contributes to a broader understanding of classroom discourse, especially in terms of the social and cultural dynamics that exist between teachers and students.

Despite these strengths, there are several areas where the study could be improved. One notable limitation is the lack of contextual details regarding the classroom settings in which the data was collected. The study does not provide much information about factors such as the age of students, their cultural backgrounds, or the specific type of classroom environment. These factors can significantly influence the way politeness principles are applied, and a more detailed discussion of the context could enhance the interpretation and generalization of the results.

Another area for improvement is the study's sample size and diversity. While the research mentions using the documentation technique for data collection, it does not elaborate on the sample size or the range of teachers and classrooms involved. This lack of information limits the study's ability to draw broad conclusions. Including details about the diversity of classrooms and teachers involved would help strengthen the generalizability of the findings and offer a more representative picture of how Leech's politeness principles are applied across different contexts.

Additionally, although the study identifies various types and forms of politeness, it could benefit from a deeper exploration of how teachers consciously choose which politeness maxim to apply in particular teaching situations. More concrete examples or case studies could provide a clearer understanding of how these principles are practically implemented in everyday teaching. Such an addition would make the findings more relatable and actionable for teachers, providing them with tangible strategies for improving their classroom communication.

Finally, while the study aims to determine the most frequently used politeness principles, it does not provide a detailed quantitative analysis or a comparative study of the frequency with which each principle is applied. Including frequency counts or comparative data would offer a clearer picture of which politeness principles dominate in teacher-student interactions. This additional analysis would further enhance the clarity of the findings and provide a more nuanced understanding of how politeness operates in the classroom.

In conclusion, the study offers valuable insights into the use of Leech's politeness principles in English language teaching. It provides a clear framework for understanding the role of politeness in teacher-student interactions and emphasizes its importance for effective communication. However, expanding on contextual details, offering concrete examples, and including more detailed quantitative analysis would further enhance the depth and applicability of the study. These additions could make the research more relevant and useful for teachers seeking to improve their communication strategies in real-world classroom settings.

Theoretical considerations

Various theoretical options exist in exploring the structural and syntactic manipulation of choices used by PBAT to convince speech-text consumers in his national broadcast of controversial policy

shifts, employing various discursive strategies to communicate effectively with the public. The present study, however, focuses on the application of Geoffrey Leech's politeness principle, which emphasizes the importance of social harmony and the mitigation of face threats in communication. Leech's (1983) politeness principle outlines several maxims, including:

- (i) the tact maxim,
- (ii) generosity maxim,
- (iii) approbation maxim,
- (iv) modesty maxim,
- (v) agreement maxim
- (vi) sympathy maxim.

These maxims help to navigate social interactions and maintain relationships. In political discourse, where public sentiment is critical, these strategies can effectively manage potential backlash and foster support. This theoretical choice is based on the following reasons:

- (1) Leech's politeness principle is primarily concerned with social harmony and face management within communication. He emphasizes a set of maxims designed to facilitate polite interactions and minimize social friction. His framework is, therefore, more focused on the pragmatic aspects of language use in social contexts.
- (2) Leech's politeness principle adopts maximization and minimization by his six maxims to facilitate polite interaction management as follows:
 - (i) Minimize the imposition on others.
 - (ii) Maximize the benefits to others while minimizing self-benefit.
 - (iii) Maximize praise and minimize dispraise of others.
 - (iv) Minimize praise of self.
 - (v) Maximize agreement between speakers.

- (vi) Maximize sympathy and minimize antipathy.
- (3) Leech's theory emphasizes the maximization of social harmony and the panorama of politeness in various contexts. It considers the balance of benefits and costs in social exchanges.
- (4) Leech's maxims can apply broadly to various forms of communication, including written and spoken discourse. They are particularly relevant in understanding politeness in everyday social interactions.
- (5) Leech acknowledges the role of culture but does not focus extensively on cultural variations. His maxims are designed to be applicable across different cultures while emphasizing universal aspects of politeness.

This uniqueness maximizing social harmony through specific maxims, and their deployment as strategies in PBAT's National broadcast on oil subsidy removal, using linguistic elements, call for a study that can enrich our understanding of politeness as a crucial element of social interaction. Our analysis must, therefore, pursue the veracity of Yule's (1996, p.60) position that "politeness is a polite social behaviour in a particular culture".

Methodology

This study aims to conduct a qualitative analysis of President Tinubu's broadcast, focusing on specific excerpts that highlight the use of Leech's politeness maxims. The analysis looks for linguistic markers that embody these strategies, such as indirectness, inclusive language, and expressions of empathy. The 'qualitativeness' of the study, therefore, calls for Critical Discourse Analysis that examines how language in PBAT's broadcast shapes and reflects the Nigerian social dynamics and power relations. In the process, the analysis shall follow a structured methodological pattern to allow for a comprehensive textual analysis of politeness as a discursive strategy, helping to reveal how President Tinubu navigates a sensitive political issue through language.

Segment Analysis

The broadcast, expectedly, shall be divided into sections or such key points as 'introduction', 'rationale for subsidy removal', 'potential impacts', 'government measures', and 'conclusion'.

Analysis and Discussion

Our analysis of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's national broadcast on oil subsidy removal necessitates the need to consider how politeness strategies pragmatically function within discourse, especially in politically sensitive contexts.

PARAGRAPH ONE

Tinubu begins his broadcast with a clear intent to address economic issues, employing the politeness principle of *tact*. His opening statement is designed to set the stage for a comprehensive discussion about the state of the economy and his proposed solutions. Tinubu shows his commitment to transparency and clarity by stating his aim to ensure that the public is well-informed. This approach helps to foster trust and allows the audience to anticipate a detailed and accessible explanation of his policies. Also, by framing his intent in a straightforward manner, he establishes a cooperative tone, inviting the audience to engage with his message critically:

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
I want to talk to you about 'our' economy.	Declarative: Inclusive Language	Informative / minimizing	High Tact Maxim
It is important that you understand the reasons for the policy measures I have taken.	Declarative: Inclusive Language	Justification/ Explanatory	Tact Maxim

Going by the contextual background, the removal of oil subsidies is a controversial and potentially unpopular decision. Thus, Tinubu's speech has, as a rule, navigated the complexities of public sentiment while aiming to garner support for necessary economic reforms.

PARAGRAPH TWO

In this paragraph, Tinubu focuses on the principle of *clarity* by pledging to use simple, jargon-free language. His commitment to avoiding technical terms is a deliberate strategy to make his message more accessible to a diverse audience. This is in line with the politeness principle of *tact, modesty, generosity and agreement* as it seeks to reduce the potential for misunderstanding and confusion. Emphasizing his intent to communicate in plain language, Tinubu aims to reach not only policy experts but also the general public, ensuring that his economic plans are understood by everyone. This approach echoes his dedication to inclusivity and effective communication.

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
I am not going to talk in difficult terms by dwelling on economic jargon and concepts.	Declarative	Assurance/ minimizing praise of self	Modesty maxim High
I will speak in plain, clear language so that you know where I stand.	Declarative	Assurance / maximizing benefit to others	Generosity maxim High
More importantly, so that you see and hopefully will share my vision regarding the journey to a better economy.	Declarative	Persuasive/Explanatory Maximizing agreement between self and others	Agreement High

PARAGRAPH THREE

In this part, Tinubu justifies the removal of the fuel subsidy by outlining its adverse economic effects. This explanation employs the *generosity, agreement and sympathy* politeness principles by acknowledging potential public concerns and providing a rationale for the decision. Tinubu frames the subsidy as a measure that had become financially unsustainable and inefficient. Through addressing the subsidy’s negative impact and justifying its removal, he seeks to mitigate potential criticism and align his actions with a broader vision of economic reform. This approach mirrors his consideration of the public’s economic well-being and his commitment to addressing structural issues.

Sentences	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
For several years, I have consistently maintained the position that the fuel subsidy had to go.	Declarative	Justification/ Explanatory/ maximise agreement between self and Nigerians	Agreement High
This once beneficial measure had outlived its usefulness.	Declarative	Acknowledgement/ Justification/ maximise the benefit to Nigerians	Generosity low
The subsidy cost ‘us’ trillions of Naira yearly	Declarative inclusive language	Informative	Sympathy maxim High

Such a vast sum of money would have been better spent on public transportation, healthcare, schools, housing and even national security.	Declarative	Justification/ maximise benefit to Nigerians	Generosity maxim High
Instead, it was being funnelled into the deep pockets and lavish bank accounts of a select group of individuals.	Declarative	Critical/ minimize the cost to Nigerians	Tact maxim low

PARAGRAPH FOUR

In this segment, Tinubu criticizes the influential group that benefited from the fuel subsidy, illustrating a direct approach to addressing economic injustices. This critical stance reflects the *criticism* principle, aiming to highlight the unfair advantages enjoyed by a select few at the expense of the broader public. Drawing attention to the negative consequences of the subsidy for economic equity and democratic governance, Tinubu seeks to build a case for his reform agenda. This approach not only underscores the need for change but also aims to galvanize public support for his policies by framing them as necessary for achieving greater fairness.

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
This group had amassed so much	Declarative	Critical/ maximise agreement between	Agreement/ sympathy Moderate

wealth and power that they became a serious threat to the fairness of our economy and the integrity of our democratic governance.		self and Nigerians/ maximise sympathy between self and Nigerians	
To be blunt, Nigeria could never become the society it was intended to be as long as such small, powerful yet unelected groups hold enormous influence over our political economy and the institutions that govern it.	Declarative	Critical/Explanatory/ maximise agreement between self and Nigerians/ maximise sympathy between self and Nigerians	Agreement/ sympathy Moderate

PARAGRAPH FIVE

Tinubu asserts that the public’s needs should outweigh the influence of a wealthy minority, reflecting the *tact* and *approbation* principles. By emphasizing the democratic principle that the majority's needs should be prioritized over the interests of the elite, he ties his message with democratic values. This approach echoes his commitment to ensuring that policy decisions reflect the aspirations and needs of the broader populace rather than being swayed by powerful interests. Reinforcing the importance of democratic principles, Tinubu seeks to strengthen public support for his economic reforms.

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
The whims of the few should never hold dominant sway over the hopes and aspirations of the many.	Declarative	Persuasive/Informative	Tact maxim High
If we are to be a democracy, the people and not the power of money must be sovereign.	Declarative/ inclusive language/ conditional statement	Persuasive/Informative Minimize dispraise of Nigerians	Approbation maxim High

PARAGRAPH SIX

Acknowledging that the previous administration also recognized the need to address the subsidy issue, Tinubu places his actions within a broader context of ongoing reform efforts. This approach reflects the *approbation* and *modesty politeness* principles, as it shares credit and responsibility for addressing the issue. Connecting his policies with prior recognition of the problem, Tinubu demonstrates continuity and builds credibility. This strategy helps to frame his actions as part of a larger, collaborative effort to address economic challenges, thereby reinforcing his legitimacy as a reform-oriented leader.

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
The preceding administration saw	Declarative	Informative/ minimize dispraise of	Approbation maxim High

<p>this looming danger as well.</p>		<p>the preceding administration</p>	
<p>Indeed, it made no provision in the 2023 Appropriations for subsidy after June this year.</p>	<p>Declarative</p>	<p>Informative/ minimize praise of self</p>	<p>Modesty maxim High</p>
<p>Removal of this once helpful device that had transformed into a millstone around the country's neck had become inevitable.</p>	<p>Declarative</p>	<p>Justification</p>	<p>High</p>

With this maxim the President acknowledges the efforts of previous administrations, highlighting the challenges faced by the nation. By doing so, he minimizes the dispraise of his predecessors and creates a more collaborative atmosphere. This can help in unifying public sentiment rather than creating division

PARAGRAPH SEVEN

In this paragraph, Tinubu critiques the multiple exchange rate system, highlighting its role in enabling currency speculation and economic distortions. This analysis employs the *criticism* principle, presenting a formal critique of the existing system's inefficiencies. Pointing out the negative impacts of the exchange rate system on the economy, Tinubu aims to justify his proposed reforms and build support for policy changes. This approach not only addresses specific economic issues but also seeks to synchronize public opinion with his proposed solutions.

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
Also, the multiple exchange rate system that had been established became nothing but a highway of currency speculation.	Declarative	Critical	Moderate
It diverted money that should have been used to create jobs, build factories and businesses for millions of people.	Declarative	Informative/Critical	Moderate
Our national wealth was doled on favourable terms to a handful of people who have been made filthy rich simply by moving money from one hand to another.	Declarative	Critical	Moderate
This too was extremely unfair.	Declarative	Critical	Moderate

PARAGRAPH EIGHT

Analysis:

Tinubu addresses the broader implications of illicit wealth accumulation on democracy and the economy. This discussion reflects the *criticism* principle while maintaining a formal tone. Outlining the detrimental effects of wealth concentration and corruption, Tinubu contextualizes his economic reforms within a larger framework of addressing systemic issues. This approach aims to reflect the importance of reform not just for economic stability but also for preserving democratic integrity. By addressing these threats directly, Tinubu seeks to build support for his policies and emphasize the need for comprehensive reform.

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
It also compounded the threat that the illicit and mass accumulation of money posed to the future of our democratic system and its economy.	Declarative	Critical	Moderate

PARAGRAPH NINE

Tinubu reiterates his commitment to long-term economic reform by emphasizing the need to address significant imbalances. This statement reflects the *tact* and *generosity* principles, highlighting his concern for the nation’s future and his dedication to comprehensive economic reform. Framing the fight against economic imbalances as a critical task for national progress, Tinubu aims to reinforce his commitment to long-term stability and garner public support for his reform agenda.

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
I had promised to reform the economy for the long-term good by fighting the major imbalances that had plagued our economy.	Declarative	Commitment/ Explanatory	High
Ending the subsidy and the preferential exchange rate system were key to this fight.	Declarative	Informative/ Justification	High
This fight is to define the fate and future of our nation. Much is in the balance.	Declarative	Persuasive/ Explanatory	High

PARAGRAPH TEN

In this paragraph, Tinubu warns of potential resistance from elites who may be adversely affected by his economic reforms. This acknowledgement of potential opposition reflects the *criticism* principle while maintaining a formal tone. Preparing the public for possible challenges and reinforcing the necessity of his reforms, Tinubu aims to bolster public resolve and support for his policies. This approach helps to address potential criticisms and emphasizes the importance of perseverance in implementing necessary changes.

Sentence	Sentence Type	Functional Category	Level of Politeness
Thus, the defects in our economy immensely profited a tiny elite, the elite of the elite you might call them.	Declarative	Informative/Critical	Moderate
As we move to fight the flaws in the economy, the people who grow rich from them, predictably, will fight back through every means necessary.	Declarative	Informative/Critical	Moderate

Discussion of Key Findings

In analyzing the segment, it is evident that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (PBAT) has skillfully navigated public sentiment, using language to rally support for his economically challenging policy of subsidy removal. His speech employs several strategies rooted in Leech's Politeness Principle, aimed at minimizing opposition and fostering support. These strategies include framing the subsidy removal, discussing its potential impacts, and detailing the government's measures to manage it.

First, PBAT adheres to the **tact maxim**, minimizing the perceived imposition on the audience. By presenting the subsidy removal as a necessary step for long-term economic stability, rather than an immediate burden, he shifts the focus from personal sacrifice to collective benefit. Phrases like

"we must act for the greater good" exemplify this approach, reframing the policy as an investment in the future, with the welfare of the nation at the forefront.

Next, the **generosity maxim** comes into play as PBAT acknowledges the potential sacrifices that citizens will need to make. Phrases such as "I recognize the challenges we face together" convey empathy, positioning the president as a leader who understands and cares about the hardships of the public. This not only generates goodwill but also helps establish a sense of shared struggle, reinforcing the notion that the government and the citizens are partners in this difficult journey.

In a third instance, the president uses the **approbation maxim**, celebrating the resilience of the Nigerian people. Through statements like "together, we will rise," he aligns himself with the public, reinforcing a sense of shared strength and determination. This positive reinforcement serves to boost the public's self-esteem and strengthens the collective resolve, further embedding PBAT as a leader who is in sync with the aspirations of the people.

The **modesty maxim** is also evident in the president's speech, particularly in his attempt to downplay his role in the decision-making process. Rather than taking full credit, PBAT emphasizes the collaborative nature of the decision, stating, "this is a decision reached after extensive consultation." By doing so, he not only mitigates potential backlash but also fosters a sense of inclusivity and transparency in governance, inviting the public to feel part of the process.

Moreover, PBAT's use of **indirectness** and **rhetorical questions** invites the audience to reflect on the broader implications of subsidy removal. Questions such as "What future do we envision for our children?" encourage the audience to internalize the reasoning behind the policy, engaging them in a thought process that aligns with the government's perspective. Additionally, his reference to the previous administration—"the preceding administration saw this looming danger as well... it made no provision in the 2023 Appropriations for subsidy after June this year"—serves as a subtle way of shifting the blame while maintaining politeness. By doing so, PBAT aligns himself with the approbation maxim, reinforcing his leadership and the legitimacy of his decisions.

This analysis, in line with Leech's Politeness Principle, demonstrates that PBAT's speech is dynamic, reflecting the president's strategic use of language to navigate complex socio-political landscapes. His speech is crafted according to the maxims of tact, generosity, approbation, and

modesty, all of which help to ensure his communication remains socially appropriate, conciliatory, and engaging.

Summary of Findings

The application of Geoffrey Leech's politeness principle has provided a clear framework for understanding how PBAT strategically employs language to maintain social harmony and mitigate face-threatening acts. Through each of Leech's maxims, the president has:

1. Minimized the negative impact of the subsidy removal on the audience.
2. Emphasized the benefits and collective support for citizens.
3. Acknowledged the contributions of previous administrations and the need for shared effort.
4. Framed achievements and decisions without overt self-promotion.
5. Presented expressions of common ground and unity with the audience.
6. Employed empathetic language to connect with personal struggles and experiences.

Through these strategies, PBAT effectively manages potential opposition and seeks to maintain public support, underscoring the importance of empathetic communication in political leadership, especially in times of crisis.

Conclusion

The application of Leech's politeness principle in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's national broadcast provides a comprehensive view of audience engagement in political discourse. By emphasizing social harmony and minimizing face threats, the president aims to create a sense of unity and cooperation among citizens. The speech is structured to reassure the public, acknowledge the current challenges, and outline the government's plans to address them. By focusing on the long-term benefits of the reforms, PBAT seeks to build trust and patience among the Nigerian people. This detailed analysis illustrates how the speech's content and tone align with these principles, positioning the president's message as a persuasive communication tool designed to rally support for his government's economic reform agenda. Ultimately, this study highlights the crucial role of linguistic strategies in shaping public response to policy changes in Nigeria.

References

- Adedun, E., & Atolagbe, A. (2011). A man in whom I have great confidence: a discourse analysis of former President Olusegun Obasanjo's farewell speech to Nigerians. *Academia*, 1(1), 99-114.
- Adel, S. M. R., Davoudi, M., & Ramezanzadeh, A. (2016). A qualitative study of politeness strategies used by Iranian EFL learners in a class blog. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 4(1), 47-62.
- Ayodabo, J. O. (2003). A Pragma-Stylistic Study of Abiola's Historic Speech of June 24, 1993. In Lawal, A. (ed) *Stylistics in Theory and Practice*. Ilorin: Paragon Books.
- C. Amadi, I. Ken-Maduako (2019). An Analysis of Linguistic Politeness' Strategies in a Superior/Surbordinate Communication: A Speech Event in a University Setting. *KIU Journal of Humanities*, Vol. 4, pp. 29-38
- Castro, M. C. S. (2019). The Impact of Information and Communication Technology on Pedagogy: Benefits, Issues, and Challenges. [TAMANSISWA INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL IN EDUCATION AND SCIENCE](https://doi.org/10.30738/tjies.v1i1.5444) 1(1). DOI: [10.30738/tjies.v1i1.5444](https://doi.org/10.30738/tjies.v1i1.5444). [University of the Philippines System](http://www.up.edu.ph)
- Dwi Santoso, Fajar Indah Nuraini, and Kasiyarno (2021). *Leech's Politeness Principle Used by Teachers in English Language Teaching*. Atlantis Press SARL.
- Ekwueme, 2013 CCE Ugwu · 2013 — Ugwu, Chinonye C. *Ekwueme (2013) "Between the Signifier and the Signified: A Theological Approach," The WATS Journal: An Online Journal from West Africa*
- Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. Longman.
- McDowell, J., Lazzaro-Salazar, M and Marra, M. (2017) A discourse of caring: A case study of male nurses' discourse and identity construction in the United Kingdom and New Zealand www.researchgate.net
- Odebunmi (2020) Discursive Repetitions and Voices in Nigerian Clinical Meetings. *Ghana Journal of Linguistics* 10.1: 27–72 (2021)
- Odebunmi A (2010) "Tracking Ideology-Political News" *California Linguistic Notes*, XXXV (2)
- Odebunmi, A. 2010. "Ideology and Body Part Metaphors in Nigerian English". *Review of Cognitive Linguistics*. 8(2): 272-299. (11)
- Oduola, L. (2020) *English Language and Communication Skill for Tertiary Institutions*. Abila Crown Publishers, Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Osisanwo and Adeyemo, 2024; I am here... to serve you": pragmatic acts and strategies in the 2019 inaugural speeches of governors in Southwest Nigeria.

- Osisanwo, 2017; I Belong to Everybody yet to Nobody: Pragmatic Acts in President Muhammadu Buhari's Inaugural Speech. September 2017 [Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications](#) 3(4):297-320
- Renkema (1993) *Just Once*, Genre, Romance novel, Carol Publishing Group.
- Renkema (1993) *Just Once*, Genre, Romance novel, Carol Publishing Group.
- Renkema's (1993) *Introduction to Discourse Studies* John Benjamins Publishing, 1 Jan 2004 - [Language Arts & Disciplines](#)
- Ruthven, I. (2021). Resonance and the experience of relevance. First published: 23 October 2020 <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24424>
- Wardhaugh, 1977 *Introduction to Linguistics* McGraw-Hill, 1977 - [Language Arts & Disciplines](#)
- Yuan, S. (2023). Tracing China's diplomatic transition to wolf warrior diplomacy and its implications. [Humanities and Social Sciences Communications](#) **volume 10**, Article number: 837
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cognitive Dynamics of Creative Writing and the Place of the English Language

Halima Tosin Oladimeji PhD

Department Of English

Federal University Of Education Zaria.

tosinoladimeji2018@gmail.com

08020851657

Abstract

The significance of the English language in the cognitive dynamics of creative writing cannot be underestimated, as it is one of the instruments through which writers air their imaginative thoughts. This work highlighted the overview of creative writing, The English language as a catalyst for creative writing, cognitive processes and strategies for creative writing, incorporating the English language instructions into creative writing, and the place of the English language in the cognitive dynamics of creative writing: How cognitive processes influence the English language and how the English language use influences cognitive processes. The work made use of secondary materials as a source of data and used the views of other scholars who have excelled in the field of creative writing as well as the English language and cognitive process. This work also provided workable recommendations which will enhance the teaching and learning process of creative writing.

Keywords: Cognitive, Dynamics, Creative Writing, English Language

Introduction

Language is more than just a means of communication; it plays a crucial role in cognitive development. It shapes and structures our thoughts, allowing for critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making. Conversely, creative writing serves as a powerful avenue for self-expression and personal storytelling, enabling writers to cultivate their unique voices and articulate their perspectives and beliefs. In other words, Writing allows people to express their thoughts, ideas, and opinions coherently; we can therefore assert that there are three basic cognitive processes in writing namely: planning, translating, and reviewing. Creative writing is a multifaceted cognitive endeavour that engages a dynamic synergy of diverse mental processes, including imagination,

attention, memory, and language processing (Kaufman & Baer, 2012; Vandermeulen, 2017). Studies in cognitive psychology and neuroscience have unravelled the complex neural pathways that fuel creative writing, highlighting the delicate interplay between mental processes, emotional states, and the art of crafting imaginative works. (Dietrich, 2004; Heilman et al., 2014).

Mastering the art of language in writing is crucial, as it serves as the bridge through which authors connect their ideas, emotions, and stories to their audience. As upheld by Dietrich (2004), Effective language usage elevates clarity, fosters engagement, and leaves a lasting impression, forging a meaningful bond between the writer and the reader. Clarity is the bedrock of effective communication. By selecting precise words and constructing coherent sentences, authors ensure their message is easily understood. For instance, a technical manual written without clear, concise language can confuse users, leading to errors and frustration.

Engagement thrives on the power of well-crafted language. Thoughtfully chosen words create vivid imagery, stir emotions, and ignite curiosity. Take, for instance, the evocative prose of F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" where the poetic phrasing of, "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past," transports readers to a dreamlike, nostalgic realm nostalgic world. Impact defines memorable writing. Iconic speeches, like Martin Luther King Jr.'s, "I Have a Dream," remain etched in history because of their stirring, resonant language, which inspires action and change.

Ultimately, effective language is the foundation of compelling writing, whether it's technical instructions, literary masterpieces, or influential speeches. It ensures clear communication, captivates readers and leaves an enduring legacy.

Creative Writing: An Overview

Creative writing is a type of writing style that focuses on the expression of emotions, imaginations and ideas by using literary devices such as figures of speech, pictures, and symbolism. This type of writing allows writers to freely write and express themselves in unique ways that will lead to originality.

According to the University of Cambridge, creative writing is a way to develop one's style and voice as a writer, allowing for personal growth and self-expression (University of Cambridge,

n.d.). It is a form of art that can encompass a wide range of genres, including poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and playwriting.

Creative writing often involves the use of techniques such as character development, and dialogue to create a compelling narrative and plot structure. Writers mostly get inspiration from their own life experiences, peoples' experiences, observations, and imagination to make stories that appeal to readers. Also, creative writing can serve as a means for social commentary and advocacy. Through the telling of stories, writers can unravel important issues, challenge societal norms, and inspire change. Creative writing is a versatile and powerful form of artistic expression that allows writers to share their perspectives and relate with audiences on a deeper level.

English Language Proficiency as a Catalyst for Creative Writing

English language proficiency plays a pivotal role in unlocking the creative potential of writers, providing them with the tools and resources to craft compelling and impactful narratives.

1. Enhanced Expressive Capabilities: Proficiency in the English language equips writers with a broader range of vocabulary, syntactic structures, and stylistic conventions, allowing them to express their ideas and emotions with greater depth and precision (Gass & Ard, 1985). In other words, the ability to manipulate language effectively enhances writers' expressive capabilities and enables them to create vivid and engaging narratives.

2. Cultural Engagement and Inspiration: A strong command of the English language opens doors to a diverse array of literary traditions, genres, and cultural influences, providing writers with a rich tapestry of sources for inspiration (Kachru & Nelson, 2006). Engaging with English language literature from various cultures and time periods can spark creativity and ignite the imagination of writers.

3. Language Mastery and Creative Freedom: Mastering the nuances of the English language equips writers with the tools to innovate, experiment, and expand their creative horizons. It allows them to weave unique narrative techniques, embrace unconventional storytelling styles, and redefine the limits of artistic expression. (Carter, 2004). Proficiency in English affords writers the creative freedom to craft compelling plots, develop complex characters, and weave intricate themes into their writing.

4. **Access to Publishing Opportunities:** English language proficiency not only facilitates the creative writing process but also increases writers' accessibility to publishing opportunities in the global literary marketplace (Trimbur, 2014). Writers with a firm grasp of the English language can reach a broader audience and explore avenues for sharing their work through international publications and platforms. By exploring the nuanced connection between English language proficiency and creative writing, writers can harness the transformative power of language to craft compelling narratives, immerse themselves in diverse literary traditions and showcase their creativity to a global audience.

Cognitive Processes and Strategies for Creative Writing

Creative writing involves a complex interplay of cognitive processes that contribute to the creation of original and imaginative works. Researchers such as Kachru & Nelson, 2006 and Trimbur, 2014 have studied the cognitive dynamics of creative writing to better understand the underlying techniques involved in the creative process.

One key aspect of creative writing is divergent thinking, which is the ability to generate a variety of ideas and solutions to a particular problem. According to a study by Benedek and Neubauer (2013), individuals engaged in creative writing exhibited higher levels of divergent thinking compared to those engaged in non-creative writing tasks. This suggests that the creative writing process involves a flexible and open-minded approach to generating ideas (Benedek & Neubauer, 2013).

In addition to divergent thinking, working memory also plays a crucial role in creative writing. This means the ability to hold and manipulate information allows writers to experiment with different narrative structures, characters, and themes. Baer (2017) emphasizes the importance of working memory in creative writing, stating that, it enables writers to "juggle multiple ideas, perspectives, and storylines."

Furthermore, the process of revision and editing in creative writing involves higher-order cognitive processes such as problem-solving and self-regulation. According to a study by Hayes (1996), skilled writers engage in recursive processes of planning, drafting, revising, and editing to refine

their works and achieve their creative goals. This iterative process requires cognitive flexibility and metacognitive awareness (Hayes, 1996)

Cognitive processes and strategies play a crucial role in creative writing, influencing how writers generate ideas, plan their writing, and revise their works. Understanding these cognitive processes can help writers enhance their creativity and writing skills.

One important cognitive process in creative writing is idea generation. According to a study by Berkowitz, et al (2014), idea generation involves both divergent and convergent thinking, with writers generating a variety of ideas and then selecting and developing the most promising ones. Strategies such as brainstorming, mind mapping, and free writing can help writers generate and organize ideas effectively. Planning and organization are other cognitive processes in creative writing. Hayes (2012) emphasizes the importance of planning in the creative writing process, stating that, skilled writers engage in strategic planning to structure their ideas and develop coherent narratives. Techniques such as outlining, storyboarding, and creating story arcs can help writers plan and organize their writing effectively (Hayes, 2012).

For better understanding, Hayes enumerated the following cognitive processes and strategies for creative writing:

1. Cognitive Mapping and Outlining: Cognitive Strategy comes before writing. As such, creating a cognitive map or an outline helps organize thoughts and establish connections between ideas. This process aids in structuring the narrative and ensuring coherence.

2. Free Writing for Creativity: Cognitive Strategy Free writing encourages spontaneous thought and eliminates writer's block. This technique, known as free writing, involves writing non-stop for a set duration, letting thoughts flow effortlessly, free from concerns about grammar, structure, or coherence. It encourages creativity and helps uncover fresh ideas. Lamott (1994) advocates for free writing as a productive means of generating ideas and encouraging a creative mindset, which can lead to richer narratives.

3. Narrative Techniques and Perspective: With different narrative techniques, such as point of view or voice, we can add depth and texture to a story. Writers can manipulate perspectives to create complexity in character development and plot. Fuchs (2013) discusses how various narrative

perspectives affect readers' engagement and perceptions and provide cognitive layers to storytelling.

4. **Revision and Self-Reflection:** Cognitive Strategy and the revision process is critical for sharpening language and clarifying ideas. Engaging in self-reflection during revisions allows writers to critically assess their work and make necessary adjustments. Elbow (1998) stresses the importance of reflective writing and revision in honing an author's voice and enhancing overall quality while allowing the imagination to flourish.

5. **Cognitive Dissonance and Tension:** Cognitive Strategy: Introducing tension or cognitive dissonance within the narrative can create a compelling conflict, leading to deeper reader engagement. This strategy encourages writers to delve into complex themes and character motivations. Todorov (1977) examines how narrative tension propels stories forward, and emphasizes the cognitive response it elicits from readers.

Incorporating the English Language into Creative Writing

Incorporating English language instructions into creative writing can provide opportunities for language learning and skill development while also engaging students in the creative writing process. Here are some strategies for incorporating English language instructions into creative writing activities propounded by Hayes, 2012:

1. **Vocabulary Development:** The Introduction of and practice new vocabulary which relate to creative writing, such as literary devices (e.g., metaphor, simile) and descriptive adjectives is another way of merging English language into creative writing. Students should be encouraged to use these vocabularies in their creative expressions to enhance their language skills. Mayer, T. (2019). "Enhancing English vocabulary development through creative writing activities"

2. **Grammar Practice:** Use creative writing exercises to reinforce grammar concepts, such as verb tenses, sentence structure, and punctuation. Provide feedback on students' writing to help them improve their grammar skills. (Riazi, 2020)

3. **Writing Prompts:** Provide students with writing prompts that focus on specific language skills, such as narrative writing, descriptive writing, or dialogue. Encourage students to use correct grammar and vocabulary in their responses. (Truscott, 2017)

4. **Peer Editing:** Incorporate peer editing exercises into creative writing workshops to help students review and revise their peers' writing. (Tsui, 2017). This can help students practice giving and receiving feedback on language use and structure.

5. **Language Games:** According to Ur (2019), "Classroom games for creativity and language meaning" advocated for the integration of language games and activities into creative writing lessons to make learning fun and engaging. For example, play word association games, storytelling games, or vocabulary-building games to reinforce language skills.

The Place of English Language in the Cognitive Dynamics of Creative Writing and How Cognitive Processes Influence the Use of English Language

The English language plays a vital role in cognitive dynamics. It influences how people communicate, process, and perceive information. In turn, Cognitive processes, influence the comprehension, acquisition and production of the English language. Understanding the relationship between cognitive processes and the English language can provide insights into English language learning, use, and development.

One key aspect of the relationship between cognitive processes and the English language is language acquisition. According to a study by Evans and Levinson (2009), cognitive processes such as memory, attention, and problem-solving play a crucial role in language learning and acquisition. These processes help individuals encode, store, and retrieve English vocabulary, grammar rules, and linguistic structures (Evans & Levinson, 2009).

Cognitive processes also influence language comprehension and interpretation in English. Research by Gerrig and Zimbardo (2018) highlights the roles of cognitive processes such as perception, inference, and memory in understanding written and spoken English texts. These processes help individuals construct meaning, make connections, and engage with the content of English language materials.

In terms of language production, cognitive processes shape how individuals express themselves in English through speaking, writing, and other forms of communication. Studies by Hayes and Flower (1980) emphasize the role of cognitive processes such as planning, revising, and self-

regulation in the writing process, influencing the quality and clarity of English language output (Hayes & Flower, 1980).

For better comprehension, Hayes & Flower (1980) highlight the cognitive processes that influence the English language through the following:

1. **Memory:** Cognitive processes such as memory play a crucial role in the use of the English language. Memory influences the retention of English vocabulary, grammar rules, and linguistic structures, allowing individuals to recall and apply language knowledge effectively (Evans & Levinson, 2009).

2. **Attention:** Attentional processes impact how individuals focus on and process English language input. Attention plays a key role in language learning and comprehension, allowing individuals to selectively attend to relevant linguistic information in English (Rutherford, 2013)

3. **Reasoning:** Reasoning processes shape how individuals interpret and make sense of English language content. Logical reasoning skills help individuals conclude, understand connections between ideas, and engage with English texts in a structured and coherent manner (Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2018).

4. **Executive Function:** Executive function processes, including cognitive control and working memory, influence the use of the English language. Strong executive function allows individuals to manage multiple linguistic tasks, regulate language output, and adapt their communication strategies in English-speaking contexts (Bialystok et al., 2012).

How the Use of English Language Influences Cognitive Processes

The use of the English language can have a significant impact on cognitive processes, influencing how individuals think, perceive, and problem-solve. Language is a powerful tool that shapes and mediates cognitive functions, such as memory, attention, and reasoning. Understanding the influence of English language use on cognitive processes can provide insights into the relationship between language and cognition.

One key way in which English language use influences cognitive processes is through linguistic relativity, also known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. According to Boroditsky (2011), language

can influence how individuals perceive and categorize the world, affecting cognition and behaviour. Different linguistic structures and concepts in English can shape how individuals think about and interpret their experiences (Boroditsky, 2011).

Furthermore, the use of the English language can impact cognitive processes such as problem-solving and decision-making. Research by Keysar, Hayakawa, and An (2012) suggests that language can influence reasoning and decision-making processes, as individuals may approach problems differently depending on the language they use. English language users may employ different strategies and mental representations in cognitive tasks compared to speakers of other languages (Keysar et al., 2012).

Moreover, the bilingual experience can also influence cognitive processes, as individuals who use English and another language demonstrate cognitive flexibility and enhanced executive function. Studies by Bialystok et al. (2012) have shown that bilingualism can benefit cognitive control, working memory, and attentional processes, which can be attributed to the dual-language experience.

For better understanding, the following is through which the use of the English language influences cognitive processes:

1. **Linguistic Relativity:** The use of the English language influences cognitive processes through linguistic relativity, also known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Different linguistic structures and concepts in English can shape how individuals think and interpret their experiences. For example, the way English categorizes colour terms or expresses time can influence how individuals perceive and remember these concepts (Boroditsky, 2011).

2. **Problem-Solving Strategies:** English language use can impact problem-solving strategies and decision-making processes. It has been found that individuals may approach problems differently depending on the language they use. For instance, thinking in a foreign language like English can reduce decision biases and lead to more rational choices in certain decision-making tasks (Keysar et al., 2012).

3. **Reasoning and Comprehension:** English language comprehension and reasoning can be influenced by cognitive processes related to perception, inference, and memory. The way

individuals process and interpret written and spoken English texts can affect how they construct meaning and engage with the content (Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2018).

4. Cognitive Flexibility: Bilingual experiences that involve the use of English and another language can enhance cognitive flexibility and executive function. Bilingual individuals exhibit improved cognitive control, working memory, and attentional processes due to the dual-language experience (Bialystok et al., 2012).

Overall, the use of the English language can shape and influence cognitive processes in various ways, impacting perception, problem-solving, and cognitive flexibility. Further research on the interaction between language use and cognition can provide valuable insights into the complex relationship between language and the mind

Conclusion

The cognitive dynamics of creative writing shed light on the multifaceted nature of the creative process which includes: memory, attention, problem-solving, divergent thinking, self-regulation, planning, editing drafting, revising etc. Incorporating English language instructions such as peer editing, vocabulary development, grammar practice, writing prompts and language games can help in developing students' language skills while enjoying the learning activities which will lead to positive change in behaviour. The cognitive processes influence the learning, acquisition, comprehension and production of the English language. The English language use also influences the cognitive processes, that is, it influences how people think, reason, speak and perceive information.

Recommendations

More efforts should be channelled towards teaching creative writing not only at the higher level of education but also at the basic levels (Nursery, primary and secondary levels)

Creative writing materials should be made affordable and simplified for students to be able to acquire them and understand what they are reading from the materials

Provisions for Awards and scholarships should be made possible for deserving students or pupils.

English Language and its Relevance in the Creative Writing Cognitive Processes should be included in the school scheme of work at all levels of education backed by a strong policy enacted by the Ministry of Education.

References

- Benedek, M., & Neubauer, A. C. (2013). Revisiting the role of intelligence and divergent thinking in creative achievement. *Intelligence*, 41(3), 273-283. Oxford, UK: Elsevier.
- Berkowitz, S. R., Rosario, M., & Trockel, M. (2014). The effects of cognitive training on creative writing. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 14, 147-155. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Elsevier.
- Bialystok, E., Craik, F. I. M., & Freedman, M. (2012). Bilingualism and cognitive development: A review of the evidence. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 16(1), 3-18. London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Boroditsky, L. (2011). How language shapes thought. *Scientific American*, 304(2), 62-65. New York, NY: Nature Publishing Group.
- Carter, R. (2004). *Language and creativity: The art of common talk*. Routledge. London, UK: Routledge.
- Dietrich, R. (2004). *Language and Power: An Introduction to Institutional Discourse*. Peter Lang Publishing.
- Elbow, P. (2000). *Everyone Can Write: Essays Toward a Hopeful Theory of Writing and Teaching Writing*. Oxford University Press.
- Evans, N., & Levinson, S. C. (2009). The myth of language universals: Language diversity and its importance for cognitive science. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 32(5), 429-448. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Fuchs, S. (2013). *Fiction and the Growth of the Self*. Continuum.
- Gass, S. M., & Ard, J. (1985). Second language acquisition and linguistic theory. In S. M. Gass & C. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 3-20). Newbury House. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Gerrig, R. J., & Zimbardo, P. G. (2018). *Cognitive Psychology: Applying the Science of the Mind*. Pearson Education.
- Hayes, J. R., & Flower, L. S. (1980). Identifying the organization of writing processes. In L. W. Gregg & E. R. Steinberg (Eds.), *Cognitive processes in writing* (pp. 3-30). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hayes, J. R. (2012). Modeling and remodeling writing. *Written Communication*, 29(3), 369-388. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Heilman, B. (2014). The impact of English language proficiency on economic opportunities for immigrants. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 48(2), 341-354.

- Kachru, B. B., & Nelson, C. L. (2006). *World Englishes in Asian contexts*. Hong Kong University Press. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Kaufman, D., & Baer, J. (2012). The relationship between English language proficiency and socio-economic status among immigrant adults. *Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 11(5), 1042–1058.
- Keysar, B., Hayakawa, S. L., & An, S. G. (2012). The foreign-language effect: Thinking in a foreign tongue reduces decision biases. *Psychological Science*, 23(6), 661-668. Washington, DC: Association for Psychological Science.
- Kintsch, W. (1998). *Comprehension: A Cognitive Approach*. In D. B. Markman (Ed.), *Handbook of Language and Cognitive Science* (pp. 67–90). MIT Press.
- Lamott, A. (1994). *Bird by bird: Some instructions on writing and life*. Anchor Books. New York, NY: Anchor Books.
- Mayer, T. (2019). Enhancing English vocabulary development through creative writing activities. *Language Teaching Research*, 23(5), 633–651. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168818768694>
- Riazi, A. M. (2020). Grammar teaching and learning in the context of foreign language creative writing. *ELT Journal*, 74(1), 18–27. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccz062>
- Rutherford, A. (2013). The cognitive science of creative writing. In M. Burke (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of stylistics* (pp. 539-554). Routledge. London, UK: Routledge.
- Todorov, T. (1977). *The poetics of prose*. Cornell University Press. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Tsui, A. B. (2017). Peer editing in second language writing classrooms. *TESOL Journal*, 8(3), 739–757. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.385>
- Truscott, J. (2017). Writing prompts in the ESL composition classroom: Effects on learning and motivation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 51(3), 540–565. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.358>
- Ur, P. (2019). *Classroom Games for Creativity and Language Learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Vandermeulen, S. (2017). The impact of English language instruction on the linguistic and cultural identities of indigenous students. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 16(4), 251–265.

**#EndBadGovernment Vs #SayNoToProtest: The Multimodality of the *Days Of Rage* Online
Protests and Counter-Protests in Nigeria**

Dubamo Tomere

Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo

d.tomere@acu.edu.ng

and

Damilola AJAKAYE

Federal University of Kashere, Gombe

olamidelouis@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper undertakes a multimodal textual analysis of protests and counter-protests in Nigeria. As viable instruments for forcing difficult conversations, protests have a recurrent history in Nigeria with varying degrees of impact and had thus attracted studied attention from multidisciplinary strands. However, sparse focus is given the synergic force of both protests and counter-protests as strategic means of enforcing ideologically-motivated multimodal acts. This study, therefore, explores the multimodal, contextual and ideological features that characterise the construction of the *Days of Rage* protests and counter-protests in Nigeria. Through the theoretical anchorage of aspects of Kress and Leeuwen's (1996; 2006) Visual Grammar, thirty (30) protest and counter-protest images were purposively selected from August 1 to August 10, 2024 which come under the harsh tag #EndBadGovernmentInNigeria and #SayNoToProtest with the centralizing theme, *The Days of Rage*. The study revealed that both protest and counter-protest are entrenched in the contexts of anti/pro-people policy and national prevalence of hardship, (in)security, and corruption. Using the representational and compositional indices of participants, process, circumstance, informational value, salience and framing, these contexts were linked to the ideological frames of solidarism, and ingroup/outgroup polarisation among the protesters and counter-protesters. The contextual and ideological significations are foregrounded through, re-semioticisation of context of protest connected to policy divergence, lexicalized salience through capitalisation, and colour embossing to enact ideological informational value. Protest and counter-protests, in their construct, are constrained by the socio-economic and political triggers of their national enclave and are consequently underlined by connected ideologies that are contextually re-semioticised.

Keywords: Counter-protest, Days of Rage, Re-semioticisation, The Days of Rage,
#EndBadGovernment, #SayNoToProtest

1. Introduction

Many nations of the world are currently grappling with serious socio-economic and political crises, which invariably have effects on the lives of their people. In consequence, people react to these realities by seeking change or reform that would cushion the pangs of such harsh realities. One of the means of forcing the government to respond to these concerns is protest. Protests are considered viable for forcing difficult conversations to enact social change (Gallagher, Reagan, Danforth, and Dodds, 2017). In their composition and organisation, protests rely maximally on the multimodal strength of varied signification and modes with which grievances are registered. Such multimodally constructed conversations seeking to enforce social, political and economic change have come under different names in the history of Nigeria. Five notable ones that have left indelible prints in the annals of Nigeria's history are the Abba Women Riot of 1929, the Enugu Coal Miners' Strike in 1949, the Ali Must Go Protest in 1978, Occupy Nigeria in 2012, and the EndSARS Protest in 2020 (Pulse News, 2024). All these protests, although entertained to various degrees of dissenting voices, did not experience the kind of counter-protest that the *Days of Rage* protest of 2024 produced under the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. Scholarly works on protests in Nigeria (Agbedo, 2012; Idiagbon, 2015; Asogwa, Edeh, Ajah, Omeh, Asadu, Ogbuabor, Ngwu, 2021; David-Ojukwu, Orabueze, and Okoye-Ugwu, 2021) have diversely interrogated perspectives, including multimodality but with no sustained interest in protests and their counter-voices. Studies on counter-protests (Gallagher, Reagan, Danforth, Dodds, 2017; Lee, 2018; Inata, 2019; Dandolov, 2020), are minimally recorded in Nigeria, with the only available references are works from outside Nigeria, devoted to addressing organisational diversification, the divergent discourses characterising them and the original protest, and the strategies of separating protesters and counter-protesters. These are, however, mostly sociological studies, paying sparse attention to the multimodal construction of these protests and counter-protests. This current study, therefore, undertakes a multimodal approach to the determination of how online protests and counter-protests are constructed in Nigeria, using the example of the recent *Days of Rage* protest.

2. Context, Protests and the Nigerian State

Various forms of self or group expression of intent and clamour for change take the form of protest, and these acts are often influenced by various reasons. Ryan, Andrew et al. (2016) noted that protest movements have a long history of forcing difficult conversations to enact social change, and the increasing prominence of social media has allowed these conversations to be shaped in new and complex ways. The global past and current events of the history of protest represent collective efforts to agitate for change in the social, political, economic, and religious issues that affect the well-being of the people (Abang & Akpan, 2021).

Right from the primitive days, protest has been a tool used by people to express their feelings in situations that affect the state of human comfort in whatever way and to speak against the government policies that are inimical to the lives of the people. As Idiagbon (2014) identifies, protests can take the form of petitions, boycotts, and physical public displays like demonstrations and civil disobedience. In the case of Nigeria, protest serves to contest the policies and acts of institutions to facilitate social change; however, it is seldom used as a means to make fresh requests.

In Nigeria, five notable protests that have had enduring consequences in the history of the nation include the Abba Women Riot of 1929, the Enugu Coal Miners' Strike in 1949, the Ali Must Go Protest in 1978, Occupy Nigeria in 2012, and the EndSARS Protest in 2020 (Pulse News, 2024). The violent rallies have shown a campaign against the British government's tax policies on women, overdue salary payments of miners, hikes in students' fees, fuel subsidy elimination, and police brutality, among others. Other demonstrations that emerged include the Niger Delta protest in the 1990s, protesting the unfairness and environmental harm caused by major foreign multinational firms' oil extraction but receiving no recompense from the government to lessen the damage. Another occurred following the 1993 general election when General Babangida Junta nullified the June 12 presidential elections on June 26, 1993, which led to the NLC's Central Working Committee meeting in Lagos on June 28. Furthermore, protests in most Nigerian institutions and colleges as a consequence of disagreement between the federal government and academic unions; student/management issues when such protests finish violently and modify academic sessions (Tayo, 2006).

Recently, Nigeria's socio-political landscape, despite its wealth and natural resource abundance, continues to struggle with sustainable development that adequately supports citizen survival and societal growth, resulting in the #ENDBADGOVERNANCE protest. Chrisman (1984) defines development as societal growth that aims to enhance people's well-being through collaborative efforts including a wide range of sectors, corporations, and other social groupings. While economic growth is an essential component of development, it is necessary to consider that social, political, and technological factors all have a role in the development of the nation, which is the struggle of the protest participants. The basics of the struggle, such as health care, education, housing, and other essential services, are part of what Naomi (1995) considers to be standard definitions of development when enhancing the community's individual and communal well-being (Naomi, *ibid.*).

The fundamental philosophy, according to Mimiko, (1998) underlying the recurrent demonstrations in Nigeria is inadequate leadership ability, typified by a lack of dedication to advancement and empathy among leaders, accentuated by pervasive corruption and indiscipline. In the above purview, the government in Nigeria as time passes is run by corrupt officials who have turned the collective treasury into a tool for self-profit accumulation rather than a means to advance the people's interests in the hands of a government that has been infiltrated by organised crime; even the best-laid plans will fall short of their full potential (Mimiko, 1998). Nonetheless, no country can separate its people's ongoing protests from the backdrop of its prevailing socio-economic and political realities. Nigeria's high unemployment rate has created social, political, economic, psychological, and security challenges that have exacerbated poverty and raised crime rates. As a result, the country's citizens have taken to the streets to express their struggle for survival, which is why the protest theme for 2024 is *Days of Rage*.

3. The Counter-Protest Politics in Nigeria

The End Bad Governance protests, popularly referred to by the hashtag #ENDBADGOVERNANCE, are a mass movement protest that took place in Nigeria from August 1 to August 10, 2024. The protests were sparked by the country's recent economic hardship, which resulted from the removal of fuel subsidies, the devaluation of the naira, an increase in electricity tariffs, and high food prices. This protest served as a call to action regarding President Bola Ahmed

Tinubu's administration's attempts to alleviate the country's economic hardships. During the demonstration, a unique type of counter-protest hashtag #SAYNOTOPROTEST was observed to counterbalance the impact of the initial protest #ENDBADGOVERNANCE of the crippling hardship caused by government policy, where the cost of living is becoming unaffordable for the citizens who then took their complaints to the streets.

In the history of Nigeria, counter-protests have never been organised to alter the mobilisation of the traditional collective action to drive the government to the negotiation table to get concessions. Counter-protests are direct actions that take place in relative proximity to a protest that is held for an opposing cause (Dandolov, 2020). However, a counter-protest assumed to be sponsored by the government against opposition demonstrators emerged to indicate their support for the government and policies that also constitute the focus of the original protest. In certain advanced nations, counter-protest organisations are employed to restrict the amount of resources available for disruptive behaviour by investing in their organisational growth (Inata, 2019).

The counter-protesters took over the mass mobilisation of the original protesters on the street who were advocating for the reversal of President Bola Tinubu's government's economic reforms, forcing the Nigerian security services to put an end to the violent attacks. But some of the government representatives, including President Tinubu, have tried to dissuade the protesters by providing financial support to the youth who initiated the movement with the multimodal usage of displaying placards and banners with slogans such as Enough is Enough, Stop Anti-Masses Policies, Hardship is Unbearable, and so on while disrupting traffic and blocking key roadways. During the nationwide #ENDBADGOVERNANCE demonstration, which called for an end to economic misery, several Nigerians were seen in Kano waving the Russian flag during the march. This was deemed treasonous by the protest organisers (The Cable, 2024).

As part of the measure to dissuade the original protest, Odeniyi (2024) reported that some demonstrators against the #ENDBADGOVERNANCE protest arrived at the National Stadium in Abuja in five coaster buses (The Punch, 2024). One of the counter-protesters claimed that he wasn't aware he was brought for a counter-protest, which is part of the administration's political gimmick. The counter-protest was such a manipulation skill used by the government to dissuade the effect of the original protest as it would affect the daily GDP of the country. The ingenuine

concern of the political class is heightened by the act of mobilising and deceiving the counter-protesters, both literate and illiterates, to carry banners and placards inscribing #Saynotoprotest, which has become an excuse for incompetence by the Tinubu-led administration. Some of the ploys by some state party leaders accounted for by the counter-protesters were the palliatives given in cash to boycott the demands of the people from the #Endbadgovernance in Nigeria protest—a pursuit of good governance that should be focused on encouraging trustworthy and competent administration.

In many parts of the world, protesters communicate their plights through various semiotic resources including language, image, music, gesture and architecture which integrate across sensory modalities such as visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, gustatory, and kinesthetic in multimodal texts, discourses and events (O’Halloran and Smith, 2011, p. 2). Multimodal discourse analysis helps the understanding of the semiotic resources or modes deployed by both protesters and counter-protesters during the *Days of Rage* campaigns to register the thematic and ideological preoccupation of the actions and counter-actions. Essentially, multimodality entails a “unique semiotic system that allows us to go beyond superficial distinctions (such as media or format) to a more complex understanding of how a mode of expression affects the contextualized exchange of meaning(s) (Snyder, 2014). It is thus conceivable because the protest and counter-protest culture in Nigeria is a highly contextualised one which needs closer investigation.

4. Statement of the Problem

Extant studies on protests have investigated how the sociopolitical context influences citizens’ political participation, describing how the economic, political institution and cultural context shape the contextualisation of protests and counter-protests in Nigeria (Dandolov, 2020; Oyebode, 2022; Abang, et al., 2021).

From the linguistic point of view, Idiagbon (2014) studies the general highlights that are central to communication in the success of any form of protest. The study examines language and images and identifies the inter-semiotic and semantic coherence in this complementary multimodal mode, and in turn the discourse type essentially reveals how the fusion of linguistic expressions and the accompanying paralinguistic cues in forms of images and symbols can effectively be employed to

pass a message. This current study is however different in that it pays attention to the counter-protests deployment of multimodal features of meaning construction in the *Days of Rage*.

On their part, studies on counter-protests (Gallagher, Reagan, Danforth, Dodds, 2017; Lee, 2018; Inata, 2019; Dandolov, 2020) have mainly been on how organizational infrastructure influences the impact of protest groups' threats by lowering the probability that a counter-protest will offset the impact of the original protest (Inata, 2019), the divergent discourses characterising protests and counter-protests, and the strategies of separating protesters and counter-protesters. These are, however, mostly sociological studies that pay less attention to the multimodal construction of these protests and counter-protests to tease out the contextual and ideological affordances underlying the demonstrations. This current paper seeks to, therefore, investigate online protests and counter-protests semiotic construct in Nigeria, using the example of the recent *Days of Rage* protest.

5. Extant Works on Protest in Nigeria

Protest discourse in the Nigerian scholarship is considerably large and complex because of the influencing sociocultural and political nuances. The papers central to the core focus of this chapter are, however, unequal in representation, as works on counter-protest in Nigeria are relatively few compared with those on protest. The scholarly works on protest (David-Ojukwu, Orabueze, and Okoye-Ugwu, 2021; Asogwa, Edeh, Ajah, Omeh, Asadu, Ogbuabor, Ngwu, 2021; Okesola and Oyeboode, 2023) have predominantly examined some of the prominent violent demonstrations in Nigeria from different analytical perspectives. David-Ojukwu, Orabueze, and Okoye-Ugwu (2021), for instance, explored transitivity and violence in #EndSars discourse to pin down the participants of the protests and the circumstances constraining those movements within the theoretical scope of Halliday and Mattiessen's transitivity model complemented with Kress and Leeuwen's image theory. Issues of human rights preoccupied the study of Asogwa, Edeh, Ajah, Omeh, Asadu, Ogbuabor, Ngwu (2021); Okesola and Oyeboode (2023), and the role of the state in the EndSars protest. The authors deployed the liberal and radical state conceptualisation mechanism in terms of theoretical anchorage, which makes the study more sociological than the currently proposed efforts. For Okesola and Oyeboode (2023), multimodality, which forms the crux of our analytical focus, was engaged in interrogating appraisal choices in selected EndSars civil protest-related memes in Nigeria. What is striking about this study is the recency and topicalization

of the varying appraisal choices that characterize the engagement of the “*Soro Soke*” [speak up] movement. They, however, did not consider the online protests and counter-protests construct, which were not as conspicuous as they are recorded in the #EndBadGovernment vs. #SayNoToProtest campaigns, also called *Days of Rage*, as this current study is detailed to investigate through the prisms of multimodality. To realise this goal, the objectives outlined are to: examine the discourse issues and contexts underlying the *Days of Rage* protest and counter-protest; examine the multimodal and ideological features that characterise the construction of the issues and contexts in the protests and counter-protests; and determine the sociocultural implication of these protests and counter-protests for the protest culture and national unity in Nigeria.

6. Methodology

Thirty (30) online protests and counter-protest posters, purposively selected from Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter, from August 1 to 10, which define the *Days of Rage* protest constitute the data for the study. These posters were divided into two categories, comprising 15 protest and counter-protest posters each. The study adopts Kress and Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) multimodal discourse analysis informed by Halliday’s (1994) metafunction of language. Kress and Leeuwen’s (1996; 2006) is targeted at explicating the metafunction of discourse as represented in Figure 1:

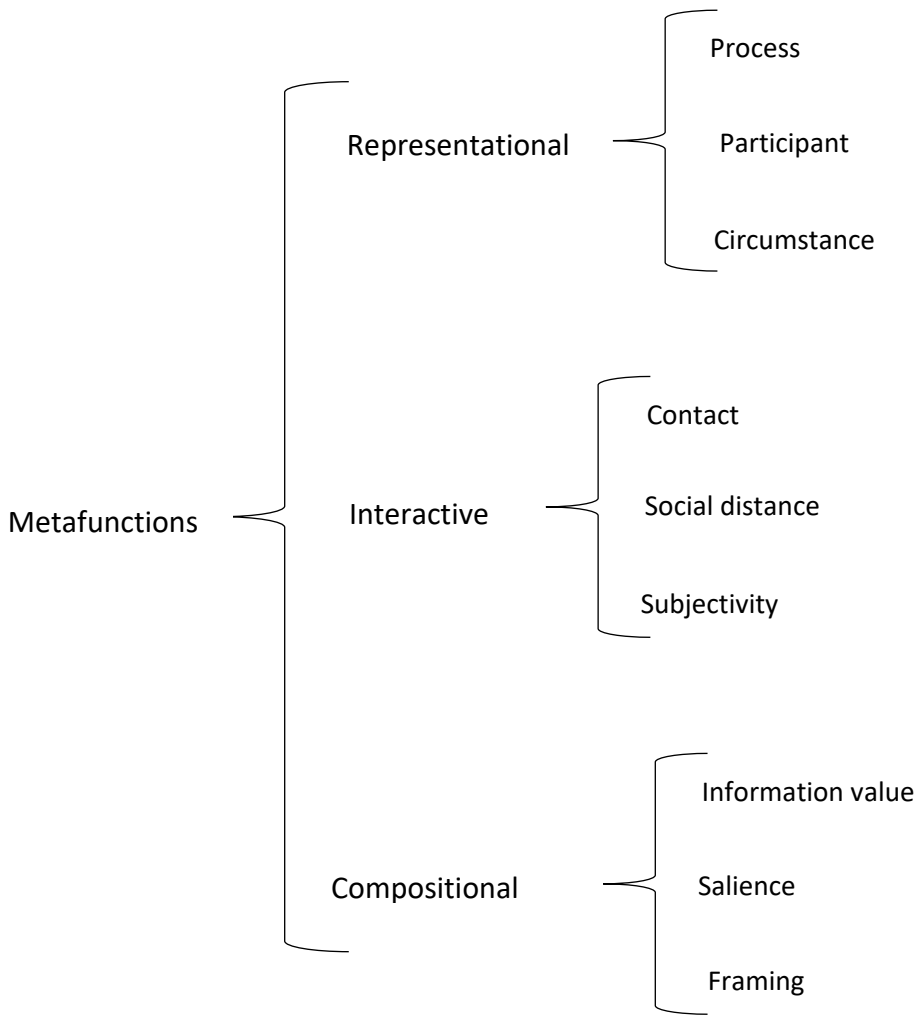


Figure 1: Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) metafunctional framework (Feng and Espindola, 2013)

The model in Figure 1 explains the importance of semiotic resources like visual images and language in serving the metafunctions of the representation of the experiential world in evincing representational meaning; participants’ interaction represented in visual design and its viewers depicting the interactional meaning; and the compositional structuring of visual resources in enacting compositional meaning. Relying on the above model, this study deploys the representational, and compositional functions in analysing the selected posters as they provide sufficient tools for the interpretation of the selected protest and counter-protest posters. These adopted two metafunctions technically evoke the Hallidayian ideational and textual functions of the clause. In their model of visual grammar, Kress and Leeuwen’s (2006) compositional meaning is characterised by three areas of focus, namely information value, salience and framing.

Information value concerns where the sign element is placed. Possible areas of placement include horizontal position between left and right; vertical positions connecting top-bottom and centre-margin. The left position is usually the given information (token) while the right depicts the new information (value) (see, Pramarta, 2021). Saliency has to do with prominence. It is also determined by whether the information is foregrounded or backgrounded, and it is indexed by relative size, and differences in colour sharpness. Framing refers to the dividing lines that explicitly or implicitly connect the images projected. All these contribute to the ideological orientation which underscores the meaning generated from the posters.

The representational metafunction entails the representation of the experiential world. In the sense it is captured by the systemic functional grammar, according to Liu (2019) language should be able to “represent[s] and construct[s] our perception of reality in the form of ‘goings-on’ or processes of various types, which incorporate different categories of participants (e.g. actors, goals, receivers, sensors, attributes)” In analysing images, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) divide representational meaning into two main categories of processes: narrative and conceptual. Our analysis will focus on these basic principles as evinced by the protest and counter-protest images and posters.

7. Analysis

The analysis takes a three-fold structure that first discusses the predominant issues contained in the posters and their enforcing contexts. The second fold unravels the multimodal features underlining the construction of the protest and counter-protest, while the third and final phase of the analysis explores the sociocultural (ideological) implications of the protest and counter-protest posters of *Days of Rage* protest. However, these are systemically fused into one straight analysis as presented below.

Common to both online protest and their counter-protest are issues bordering on the socio-political and economic reality of the Nigerian State. As implicated in the verbal form projected in the title of the protest, *Day of Rage*, the protest is an outburst or challenging reaction to the frustration and hardship the citizens are faced with. These posters therefore embed in them different shades of context-driven issues that orchestrate the ongoing uprising. Conversely, the counter-posts are also driven by issue-based rage in response to the protests, drawing their contexts. Considering the twin

approach to analysing issues projected in both the protests and counter-protests, we structure the analysis by starting with the context-driven issues in the Days of Rage from the analytical lenses of multimodality.

7.1.Hunger, hardship, and policy controversy in *Days of Rage*'s protests and counter-protests

The issues of hunger and policy controversy within the social and economic contexts pervade the Days of Rage protests. In the representation, both the protest and counter-protest posters acknowledge the hardship in the Nigerian state but disagree on the medium of and manner of expressing this experience. It naturally evokes ideological divides between propagandist and solidarist tendencies where protesters make claims in defence of their acts while counter-protesters also launch counter-claims in defence of their actions. Texts 1-3 exemplify these eclectic demonstrations.



TEXT 1: Protest highlighting hardship and anti-people policies

The semiotic resources or modes deployed in the multimodal construction of governmental and anti-people policies in the protest come in the form of organised images. From the compositional angle, the information value is set up in positioning of the visual modes from the left side to systematically highlight the protesters' disposition to government policies, a referential index to a particular policy and the impact on the people which serves as the old information and progresses to the specific of fuel subject (centred as the salience) and proceeds to the new informational value of "unbearable hardship". In Text 1, there is the image of two men and one woman carrying cardboards, while the woman stands in the middle. Their proxemics and the strategic standing postures as well as the order and messages in the linguistic resources displayed in the cardboard depict a fully organised text loaded with deep semantic import. For instance, the foregrounded cardboard presents the text "STOP ANTI-MASSSES POLICY, WE ARE NOT SLAVES" as receiving salience concerning the sharpness of the wine colour and the font size of the lettering. This imperative construction is directed at the government policy that put the masses in the spot of people with no rights – slaves. The progressive lettering of the message also emphasises the protester's demand for an end to such anti-masses policy which was not mentioned. With a frowned facial expression, suggesting the pain and discomfort of the masses, the man faces the woman who also held up her cardboard with the inscription "FUEL SUBSIDY MUST BE BACK". The woman's message invariably complements and validates the linguistic information of the first man about policy.

Fuel subsidy is thematised as the government's policy aimed at reducing the cost burden of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) on the people by paying for a part of the product's importation cost to minimise the cost of the product. On the day of his inauguration, Nigeria's President Ahmed Tinubu announced the removal of the subsidy, this announcement grounded a lot of things as the price of fuel skyrocketed, consequently leading to an exponential rise in the prices of goods and services. It is on this common ground that the semiotic resources of the above photo of This Day News is technically built. The woman's clamour for bringing for back the fuel subsidy abolished by the President is connected to the third man's visual information couched in the linguistic resources "#HARDSHIP IS UNBEARABLE#". The protester also brings salience to the text by carefully selecting the choice of his visual embossing of the letters. Both HARDSHIP and UNBEARABLE are printed or written in red which indexes the danger implicated in the message.

His outfit also iconises the comradeship gait by the use of the black spectacle which is suggestive of the time/weather of the protest and the grievousness of the issue being presented. In addition, all three cardboards employ capitalisation in lexicalising their linguistic mode. This is to amplify the seriousness of their demands as well as the essence of the protest which is against governmental policy and its impact on the people.

Two significant points of counter-protests are identified and explicated in the following Texts 2&3. While one admits to the hunger in the country but appeals for a no-protest solution, the other projects governmental policies that are pro-people. These are exemplified below.



TEXT 2: Counter-protest against protest

The poster above is a counter-protest launched against the #EndBadGovernance protest – a seemingly direct counter to the earlier protest poster in Text 1. In the visual mode credited to the

referent “Northern Youth Patriotic Forum of Nigeria”, the protester deploys informational value through a cardboard and red-coloured marker to present the declarative construction in the linguistic resource “We Know There is Hunger But Protest Is Not The Solution”. First, the mental process enacted through the choice “know”, validates the fact that both protesting sides agree on the looming hunger in the country. Where they are however divided is the mode of registering this plight – protest, particularly violent protest.

In addition, the linguistic mode overtly depicts a graphological salience that emphasizes two main clauses, in which the first main clause is constructed in small initial letters (We know that there is hunger...) while the second part receives prominence through the use of initial capital letters (But Protest Is Not The Solution). This implies that emphasis is placed on discountenancing the move for protest rather than the core issue of hunger is perfunctorily acknowledged. In the same breath, the counter-protest is regionalized through the northern voice under the auspices of the Northern Youth Patriotic Forum of Nigeria. This differs from the #endbadgovernance protest earlier considered which was not linked to any region of the country. A critical examination of this multimodal expression denotes that the counter-protest is a matter of patriotism to the Nigerian government and not driven by the plight of the hungry masses; hence, the resorting to ideological de-emphasizing of the discourse of hunger and the amplification of the no-protest call in the visual representation.



TEXT 3: Counter-protest, highlighting positive governmental, pro-people-oriented policies

The distribution of the information value in Text 3 places an image of the President of Nigeria as the central force of the counter-protest, which forges out the solidarity ideology. The counter-protesters have also positioned the ideal contributions (LGA autonomy, increased minimum wage and peace in Niger Delta) of the president and the real act of support he now enjoys from them (we stand with Jagaban). In this visual mode, three main pro-people-oriented policies/achievements have been thematised in the lexicalised linguistic codes: LGA AUTONOMY, INCREASED MINIMUM WAGE, and PEACE IN NIGER DELTA, which receive more salience by their upper text-top axis-placement. This triadic semiotic representation of the ASIWAJU BOLA AHMED TINUBU's governance is a direct response to the critics of the Presidency. The image is symbolically foregrounded by the Nigerian colour (green) to show hope,

loyalty and solidarist ideology, which is further reinforced by the linguistic force “we stand with JAGABAN”. The image positioning further centralises the president’s frame as a semiotic salience for the man whose government is targeted by the protests and to which the current counter-protests are launched. The Tinubu government recently endorsed the granting of Local Government Areas (LGAs) their autonomy of operation outside the absolute control of the state government under which they had been reeling for years. This is part of the achievement of the government. The administration also recently increased workers’ minimum wage to #70,000 (seventy-thousand naira) to cushion the impact of subsidy removal and its attendant inflation. In the same vein, the Tinubu-led administration also made changes to the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme in terms of change of personnel, a measure to ensure the peace of the Niger Delta which had been plagued with insurrection over the year. These issues constitute the kernel of the visual mode registered in the counter-protest poster in Text 3. This multimodal representation from the counter-protest again depicts regional solidarity, although unlike that of Text 2, it addresses national issues that bear a similar course to that of Text 1 which floated the issues of policy and hardship. Both the protests and counter-protests have a unifying point of convergence in the multimodal representations; however, the differences in their themes are connected to political and economic ideologies that underscore the spirit behind the protests. In essence, this particular counter-protest is designed to not only respond to the protester’s demands but to also recount the measures the government had put in place to mitigate the harsh effects of its policies, admissibly.

7.2. Discourse issue of (In) security in the *Days of Rage*’s protest and counter-protest

Issues of (in)security concerns evince ideologically-constructed multimodal resources, such that, both protests and counter-protests are constructed in the same premise but with highly re-semiotised contexts. Examples of this representation can be fetched from Texts 4 and 7 which address the multimodal issue of (in) security. In the two data, security is re-semiotised according to the group to which each protesting group belongs. While some of the protesters advocate for the masses’ safety or security, others make a case for the safety of the government’s properties and agencies. It therefore creates a divide in the goal of the protesting parties, resulting in multimodal incoherence and semantic undulation.



TEXT 4: Protest against Insecurity (kidnapping)

The visual mode in Text 4 draws salience on the old information token “Kidnapping is enough” (being placed at the left) and the new information value “#FUEL SUBSIDY MUST BE BACK” (being positioned at the right). The linguistic structure espoused is in the simple but inferentially imperative construction “KIDNAPPING IS ENOUGH” and thus topicalises the issue of insecurity as part of the agenda of the protest. The meaning potentially derived from the visual mode of the woman’s message is ingrained in the fact that the country has had enough of the spate of kidnapping ravaging it. Other protesters can be seen carrying cardboards with different inscriptions projecting other issues but her cardboard is the focus of this current examination as she sits at the centre of the rally. It should be observed that kidnapping protested against is not restricted to a particular region or environment; hence, it is targeted at addressing the general state of insecurity of the nation, especially.

Like a response, Text 5 below also addresses the issue of security and how “violent” protests can endanger the existing security architecture of the country, which the counter-protest group is warning against. Typical of other counter-protests, this is also pro-government ideology, giving

that a generic structure potential of “counter-protest being necessarily pro-government” apparently condemning every oppositional voice.



TEXT 5: Counter-protest against Violent Protest & State Insecurity

Carefully constructed in the visual and linguistic modes as well as multi-layered colours informing the salience of the lexicalised issues, the counter-protest linguistically encodes the message “SAY NO TO VIOLENT PROTESTS” where the act of “saying no” is painted blue signifying “love” while the act of “violent protest” is painted in red colour denoting “danger”. This semiotically implicates the informational value distribution aimed at enforcing the needed prominence. By implication, the counter-protest is inspired by the love for the country to discourage and sensitise people against violent/dangerous protests. Noticeably, the counter-protest here is organised under the aegis of the agency tagged “DEFEND NIGERIA MOVEMENT” a movement whose goal is symbolised by the salience in the clasped fist denoting solidarity. The multimodal construct or issues project eleven (11) linguistic structures that lexicalise the aim and ideology of the counter-protest movement. These are: (i) DEFENDING OUR PEOPLE; (ii) DEFENDING OUR CITIES; (iii) SAY NO TO (iv) VIOLENT PROTESTS; (v) WE SUPPORT PEACEFUL PROTESTS; (vi) PROMOTE A NEW PROGRESSIVE NIGERIA; (vii) DO NOT ATTACK THE POLICE; (viii) DO NOT HARM ANYONE; (ix) STOP SABOTAGING GOOD GOVERNANCE; (x) WE

SUPPORT RESTRUCTURING AND STATE POLICE; (xi) LET'S BE UNITED AGAINST CORRUPTION.

A critical appraisal of these linguistic structures reveals certain ideological motivations of the movement and what they stand for by their act of counter-protest. There are two major semantic imports projected in their eleven linguistic structures. The first import establishes the participants' stance as a movement and what they stand for. Secondly, they warn protesters against the destruction of lives and property. Finally, they appealed to the protesting populace and also advocated for a collective movement. The identity constructed for themselves, as a movement, presents them as defenders of their people and cities, (i-ii), supporters and promoters of peaceful protests and progressive Nigeria, as well as restructuring and State policing (iv, v, & ix). They also sternly warn violent protesters, using imperative linguistic constructions to emphasise the stop to violent protest, attacks on law enforcement agents, and citizens and sabotaging "good" governance (iii, vi, vii & viii). Finally, they issued a call for collective efforts against corruption (x). The linguistic resources deployed in calling for a stop to any act of sabotage against "good" governance and for collaboration in fighting corruption could take some time to decipher. However, the proxemics and positioning depicted in the visual mode reveal a woman in a black shirt and trousers with an electronic device at her back suggesting that she is using a microphone to address people whom she appears to be engaging in her posture and the facial gaze of the men holding the banner. Hence, it supports the advocacy role the movement is playing in its counter-protest goal.

7.3. Corruption in the *Days of Rage* protest and counter-protest

Corruption is an act of illegal or sociopolitical misconduct of individuals in authority. It could be realized in multifaceted contexts such as economic, legal (judicial), and social. Text 6 presents its representational and compositional dynamics in the *Days of Rage*.



TEXT 6: Protest against Corruption

Amidst the hordes of multimodal issues and the contexts that define the protests and counter-protests in the *Days of Rage*, corruption takes a central seat in the different semiotic modes deployed by protesters and counter-protesters in registering their petitions. In Text 6, the information value is couched in a multi-layered banner with a leading inscription harshly tagged “#EndBadGovernmentInNigeria” which implies that every issue raised within that harsh tag underscores the reason for the protest. Four issues are projected in the multi-modally constructed banner, including hunger and hardship, anti-poor policies and stolen wealth. These issues hang around corruption the root cause and are foregrounded among other backgrounded issues in the posters displayed. Hence, the caption “jail all corrupt politicians” is a stern position taken by the protesters that is drawn from the overall issue of corruption in the system and the need to curtail its agents.



TEXT 7: Counter-protest Suing for Dialogue and Condemning Opposition Voices

As represented in the counter-protest demonstration in Text 7, the recurring multimodal issue of opposition thrives as an ideological base for defending political ingroup against outgroup ideological construct in the text, as enacted through the compositional meaning generation. In Text 7, there is a counter-protest against protest and a plea for dialogue in the place of protest. Saliency in the text is constructed through the positioning from left to right of the visual mode of the counter-protest chants indexed by the opening of mouths, and organized rally indexed by the matching strides of the men in the image. While the capitalized “SAY NO TO PROTEST” is marked by the symbol “X” to establish disapproval to protest, the capitalized “YES TO DIALOGUE” is saliently enacted through the symbol “Approval Sign”. Aside from capitalization, the structure of the sentences also adds the required saliency to the semantic import of the message conveyed. For

instance, explicit and implicit imperative constructions can be found in the two structures. In the first, Say No to Protest, the subject is deleted to enforce the imperativeness of their stance, while in the second imperative structure “YES TO DIALOGUE” also demonstrates astute endorsement of dialogue over protest.

Another interesting focal point in the visual mode is the linguistic resources displayed on the poster of the third man in Hausa regalia. The linguistic inscription “OPPOSITION ELEMENTS ARE TRYING TO DESTROY OUR COUNTRY JUST LIKE THEY DID TO LAGOS DURING #ENDSARS” on the poster in hands possesses strong salience in terms of its circumspensive capitalization signifies the gradability and intensity of the issues projected. While emphasizing the OPPOSITION ELEMENTS, the other parts of the linguistic modes on the poster assume lesser prominence but add maximum salience to the issues fronted. The lexical choice of ELEMENTS as the nominal head of the group “opposition element” is a deliberate delegitimation ploy of rendering the protesters whom they counter as unknown and insignificant “things”. The narrative further resorted to the historical context in referencing the incidence of the #Endsars protest that took a destructive turn on October 20, 2020, in Lagos, leading to the loss of lives and property. The reference to #EndSars precedence hence becomes the basis for the counter-protesters to sue for dialogue rather than protest.

8. Conclusion

A critical evaluation of the protests and counter-protests of the *Days of Rage* through the analytical lens of multimodal text analysis has been exhaustively carried out in this study. It has revealed that protests and counter-protests are engendered by issues of anti-people policies, hunger, insecurity, and governance dividends while also being polarized along the lines of solidarity, projection of negative and/or positive governmental acts and appeal for peace and change. These issues are grounded in the contexts of regional politics, economic management, and partisan solidarity, forging out indices of regional interest, and national disintegrating acts. In their discursive distribution, the online protests mostly orient to problematized issues and contexts while the counter-protests foreground pro-governmental defences, peace movements and recorded achievements. General multimodal features characterising these issues, contexts and representations revealed online protests' significations indexing selected colour and participants,

capitalization and gestural postures to symbolize pain, discontent and collectivism in voice, while online counter-protests enact evidential and historical referencing, politicking and pro-governmental defences in their bid to amplify the good acts of the current administration and also enforce peaceful deliberation over violent protest. In sum, both protests and counter-protests operate in the same contexts, although often re-semioticised, with strong ideological bases for underscoring the salience of the group's subjective positions.

References

- Abang S. O, Akpan E.E and Uko, S.U et. al. (2021) COVID 19 Protest Movement and Its Aftermath Effect on the Nigerian State. *Journal of Public Administration, Finance and Law Issue 19/2021* 7. <https://doi.org/10.47743/jopaf1-2021-19-01>
- Agbedo C (2012) Linguistic Determinant of Militancy and Terrorism in Nigeria: The case of MEND and Boko Haram. *Developing Country Studies*. 2(11) 159-169. www.liste.com/journal/dcs
- Andrews K.T, Beyerlien K. and Farnum T.T (2016) The Legitimacy of Protest: Explaining white Southerners' Attitudes Towards the Civil Rights Movement. *Social Forces*. 94(3) 1021-1044.
- Asogwa K.O, Edeh H.C, Ajah A.C, Omeh P.H, et al (2021) The State, End SARS protests and Human Rights Violation in Nigeria. *Ikenga Journal of African Studies*. 22(2). 58-77.
- Dandolov, P (2020). Counter-Protests: A Gamble for Beleaguered Governments. *Geopolitical Monitor*.
- David-Ojukwu I, Orabueze F, and Okoye-Ugwu S, (2021) Transitivity and Youth Violence in #EndSARS Discourse. *Ikenga Journal of African Studies*. 22(2), 105-126.
- Ezegwu D.T, Ntegwung E.G and Olimma B.N (2022) Analysis of Online Readers' Comments on ENDSARS/SWAT Protest in Nigeria: A Study of *Sahara Reporters, The Guardian and Daily Trust* Newspapers. *Mass media review* 4(1) 66- 80
- Feng, W.D, and Espindola, E. (2013). Integrating systemic functional and cognitive approaches to multimodal discourse analysis. *Ilha do Desterro* (64), 85-110
- Gallagher R.J, Reagan A.J, Danforth C.M & Dodds P.S (2017) Divergent Discourse Between protests and counter-protests: #BlackLivesMatter and #AllLivesMatter. arXiv:1606.06820v5
- Idiagbon A. (2014) A Multimodal Approach to The Study of Discourse of Protest: An Example of the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Nigeria Labour Congress Face Off. *Zango*, Vol. 31 (15)
- Inata K (2019) Protest, Counter Protest and Organizational Diversification of Protest Groups. *SAGE CMPS* 00 (0): 1-23.
- Kress G. and Leeuwen T. (1996) The Grammar of Visual Design. in Veltman R. *Functions of Language*. *Benjanmins.com*. 3(2): 275-277

- Kress, G. (2009) What is mode? In C. Jewitt (Ed.), *Handbook of multimodal analysis* (pp. 54–66). London: Routledge.
- Lee, T.E (2018) The thin blue between protesters and their counter-protesters. *Journal of Africa Societies and Social Simulation* 21(2) 10.
- Liu, S. (2019). A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of the Interactive Meaning in Public Service Advertisement. *Journal of Advances in Linguistics*. (10), 1523-1534
- Mimiko O. (1998) “From neo regulation to guided deregulation: The Nigerian economy in transition, 1993-1998” in D. Kolawole and O. Mimiko, (eds), *Political democracy and economic deregulation in Nigeria Under Abacha administration 1993-1998*. Ondo State University, Ado-Ekiti.
- Naomi, O. (1995) Towards an Integrated View of Human Rights. *Hunger Teach Net*, 6(3): 6-7
- O’Halloran, K. L. & Smith, B. A. (Eds). (2011) *Multimodal studies: Exploring issues and domains*. New York/London: Routledge.
- Odeniyi, S. (2024) Police release #EndSARS anniversary protesters. *The Punch* (October, 20, 2024)
- Okesola, S.O and Oyeboade, O.O (2023) The soro-soke [speak up] generation: multimodality and appraisal choices in selected #EndSARS Civil- Protest-Related Memes in Nigeria. *Lang. Semiot. Stud., DE GRUYTER*. 9(2): 290-312.
- Oyeboade, M. O (2022) Violent Protests in Nigeria: Causes, Dynamics and Viable Solutions. *KIU Journal of Humanities* ISSN: 2415-0843; 7(2): 117-128
- Synder, J. (2010) Applying multimodal discourse analysis to the study of image-enabled communication. Retrieved from <http://www.ideal.illinois.edu/bitstream>.
- Tayo, A.S (2006) Towards a pro-active management of the student affairs in Nigerian University system: A case study of Babcock University. In Babalola, Ayeni et. al. (Eds.): *Educational Management: Thoughts and Practice*. Ibadan: Codat Publications 547-559.
- Tolu L. and Abe, O. (2011) National development in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Prospects. *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research* Vol. 3(9).
- van Stekelenburg J. and Klandermans, B. (2023) *A Social Psychology of Protest; Individuals in Action*. U.K; Cambridge University Press.

Disintegration and Historical Imperatives: A Postcolonial Criticism of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half Of A Yellow Sun*

Busari, Jibola Kaosara

jibolaadunni@gmail.com

08039155534

Kwara State University, Malate.

Abstract

The trajectory of Nigeria cannot be fully appreciated without referring to the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970. There have been different accounts of the war regarding the causes and consequences on the people and the nation. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's account of the Nigerian Civil War, as crafted in her second novel titled *Half of a Yellow Sun*, reconstructed the war in a way that brought life to it in a rather imaginative way. This paper aims to harvest the major highlights regarding the cause and consequence of the Biafran war in a way that will make the Nigerian people see the need to deviate from what led to the conflict at that time as currently being fueled through incidences of ethnic rivalry, religious intolerance, corruption, oppression, foreign influences among others. This is done through the lens of Postcolonial Theory as a theoretical framework. The study reveals that the scourge of disintegration that led to the war has colonial colouration. Adichie represents disintegration with symbolism and metaphor and deploys literature as a panacea to social disintegration. This paper recommends pursuing peaceful dialogue as a better alternative to conflict resolution rather than violence and bloodshed.

Keywords: Biafra, postcolonial, violence, history, Nigeria

Introduction

History plays a significant role in shaping the identity and collective consciousness of a disintegrated society. In the case of Nigeria, this disintegration can be traced to historical factors such as ethnic tensions, colonialism, religious intolerance, political instability, and the divisive impact of colonial borders. These issues culminated in the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), also known as the Biafran War, which was not only a military conflict but also a manifestation of deeper historical rifts. The colonial powers, by drawing arbitrary boundaries, ignored the ethnic and cultural distinctions among Nigeria's diverse groups, forcing them into a single nation-state. This

structural imbalance sowed the seeds of distrust and rivalry among ethnic groups, tensions that would persist and intensify in post-independence politics.

In such a context, literature holds a unique relevance. Unlike other fields of study, literature deeply influences and reflects the socio-political realities of a society, providing insights into the experiences of its people. It can serve as a mirror, offering a lens through which historical, cultural, and political realities are examined. Nigerian authors through their works, have not only chronicled the nation's history but have also become psychological and cultural commentators, offering lessons for future generations. Nigeria, as a nation before its evolution as one entity had operated in racial or ethnic enclaves where different tribes had strived in their existence. However, with its colonization and amalgamation in 1914, different ethnic groups have come to be addressed as Nigerians. Since this new identity, the country had an unfair share of terrible experiences. These experiences have coloured the country's growth and development. Nigerian writers, in living true to their calling, have risen to the occasion by taking up the challenges of nation-building through the recreation of past events in the country with the aim of making society leverage the past to manage the present and project into the future. Hence, Chimamanda Adichie portrays the effects of the Nigerian-Biafran war on the people through the lives of the characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

This paper aims to show how the third generation Nigerian Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie portrays the historical event of the Biafra Civil War; to x-ray the causes of the war; and to examine its consequences. This is towards making the Nigerian people see the need to deviate from what led to the war at that time as currently being fueled through incidences of ethnic rivalry, hate speeches, religious intolerance, corruption, oppression, and foreign influences among others and the potential consequences of all these on everyone if not promptly nipped in the bud. To achieve this, the paper adopted a close reading analysis and the interpretation of the selected textual material using Postcolonial Literary Theory as a theoretical framework. The adoption of the theory was to unravel some of the hidden historical foundations that underscored the Biafran war with the aid of symbols and metaphors as used by Adichie to preserve the history of the defunct Biafra.

The current crass disintegration heightened by the last general election in Nigeria, often displayed on social media, demands a historical reminder of the consequences of such volatility. Hence, this

study is a foray into the artistic representations of the disintegration and the subsequent civil war that ensued in the country in 1967. The adoption of the postcolonial theory helps situate the colonial and the neocolonial inputs to the fragility of the country as represented by Chimamanda Adichie in the text, *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

Chimamanda Adichie in the text, *Half of a Yellow Sun* has received several scholarly analyses from a different linguistic point of view: stylistics, historical cum political, trauma, and archetypal perspectives, as explicated in the works of Dey (2011), Anidi (2013), Dalley (2015), Orakwe (2015), Awelewa (2017), among others.

Historical Exploration of Civil War in Nigeria

The history of the African continent can be traced through her literature which has continued to play a functional role in portraying the changing times and needs of the African people. The putting together of unlikely bed fellows in the form of different ethnic groups to form a nation is a legacy of colonialism which has turned out badly for most African nations. The nepotism, corruption and disillusionment that resulted from this arrangement created a tension-filled atmosphere in many African countries. Writers began to hint at the inevitability of war if the tension continued. The political, economic and cultural tension resulted in the break out of civil war all over Africa- Nigeria (1967-1970), Angola (1975-2002), Liberia (1989-1997), Algeria (1999-2002), Congo (1997-1999) and a host of other African countries.

These Nigerian writers have taken on the task of unravelling the civil war phenomenon in Nigeria. They explore the events which led to the war, and the effects of the war afterwards. The recreation of the Nigerian civil war is an attempt by numerous writers to understand the rationale behind the war which claimed thousands of lives and destroyed several billions worth of properties.

Unsurprising, the events of the first decade of Nigeria's independence, particularly the Nigeria-Biafra War, generated an unprecedented literary outcome. According to Nwahunanya, at some points in Nigeria's literary history, "The Nigerian civil war was the subject matter of popular choice..." (xiii). Kole asserts that "The Nigerian civil war is the most important theme in Post independence Nigerian writing "(The Guardian 12). The theme of war in post-war Nigerian literature has perhaps found an explanation in Goldman's perspective that: "periods of crisis are

particularly favourable to the birth of great works of art and literature, because of the multiplicity of problems and experiences that they bring to men, and of the widening of affective and intellectual horizons that they provoke” (50). However, Goldman’s assertion can be perceived as accurate, as human society provides a tangible source from which literary themes are drawn.

The theme of war in literature becomes very important for any writer because it gives the writer an avenue to create history by recalling the past to shape the present, and possibly tell what might happen in the future. Therefore, a writer is drawn to the theme of war and feels compelled to explore what Ogunyemi describes as “the sheer urge to record as truthfully as possible an excruciating, indelible, visceral experience which the author has been physically and perhaps, emotionally involved in” (41). This assertion can be construed in *Sunset in Biafra*. The author, Elechi Amadi narrates his bitter experience with the authorities of Biafra during the war. *Sunset in Biafra* is an autobiography that takes the reader through the author’s journey and his sudden return to his native land, Ikwerre.

Similarly, Cyprian Ekwensi’s *Survive the Peace* addresses the issues of discomfort, unease and discomfiture some years after the Nigerian Civil War. Cyprian’s work portrays the challenges the Igbos encountered after the war which included hunger, disease, and most especially psychological trauma of the war. Hence, the aftermath of the war gave rise to a dangerous event which Nigeria has had to grapple with to this day: armed banditry and kidnapping.

The focus of many writers on the topic of the Nigerian Civil War has been the political dynamics which led to the war. Dominant themes in such literary works include but are not limited to death, deprivation, rape, betrayal, politics, power, domination, and the absurdity of war. Detailed description of people, events and settings characterize the war genre. As pointed out by Makosso (2020) are meant to recreate the effect of the war to derive valuable lessons to shape the present and project into the future in order to mitigate against the reoccurrence of the war. All of the writers who gave an account of the Civil War reported their experiences, probably as victims of the war. Unlike Chimamanda Adichie who imaginatively recreated the war she never witnessed. In her novel, Adichie artistically brought to the limelight once more the event of the war by drawing attention to both the causes and the consequences the war had and still have on both the people and the country. This is towards drawing clear attention to the need for Nigerians to sheath their

swords of violence is currently being fueled all over Nigeria through incidences of hate speeches, religious intolerance, ethnic rivalry and the power struggle, among others. If not, Nigeria might find herself repeating her past errors with a steep price on the continuous existence of the country.

Theoretical framework

Postcolonial theory as developed by various scholars like Edward Said, Franz Fanon, Gayatri Spivak and others, gained prominence in the 1960s and 1970s. The theoretical emerged to challenge the Eurocentric narratives that positioned the West as superior to formerly colonised nations, particularly in Africa. Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), originally written in French, became a seminal text advocating for anti-colonial struggles worldwide. Supporting this perspective, Berry argues that, "For centuries the European colonising power will have devalued the nation's past, seeing its pre-colonial era as a pre-civilized limbo or even as a historical void" (86). Berry further emphasises the importance of teaching children about pre-colonial histories from an early age to foster an understanding of equality between black and white people.

Postcolonial theory also calls for a reevaluation of the marginalization of Africans by their former colonial leaders. It advocates changing the dominant narratives surrounding, cultural relativism, questioning the dynamism of power within the African region, engendering critical thinking towards bringing about the true emancipation of Africa and as one of the ways of bringing to bare the truth about Africans' fate in the hands of the Europeans by retelling stories which expose hidden truth about Africans' realities in the face of colonialism and after independence (Abram and Harpham 306). Such efforts aim to empower Africans to reshape their agency in the postcolonial world.

Considering the import of the postcolonial theory vis-à-vis Adichie's text, it is evident that Adichie was trying to expose the effects of colonialism on postcolonial life of Nigerians as reflected in the Biafran war. The genesis of the war could be attributed to the wrong amalgamation of the different parts that make up Nigeria. This is because one of the reasons for the secession interest of Ojukwu led-Biafra was a perceived marginalisation of the Easterners in Nigeria, probably due to their low population compared to the massive population of the North with which the latter dominated the power struggle within the country at the detriment of other regions especially the Eastern part.

The 'postcolonial' in postcolonial writing thus amplifies the nature of its wider cultural work, how it interrogates the past and present operation of historical forces and dominant ways of reading them that underscores local, national and international identities (Mullaney 7).

One of the weapons used by postcolonial writers is history. History as a weapon is used to portray their past experiences. However, Chimamanda Adichie also portrays this past experience in her novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*. She retells the history to accommodate the questions of conflict and internal strife in Nigeria. The identity issues intertwine with the war history that is central to the Nigerian Biafran historical experience in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. It mirrors the early 1960s and the late 1960s period respectively. It encapsulates a complex interplay of ethnic, cultural (Igbo and Hausa), military, and war that have shaped the historical experiences of the Igbo and the Nigerian nation.

A Synopsis of *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born in 1977 in Enugu, seven years after the Nigerian Civil War (Hawley 18). She was awarded the 2007 Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction (The Women's Prize for Fiction) in 2007 (Strehle 652). and several other awards. She is a third-generation Nigerian writer. Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* depicts what transpired in Nigeria during the Nigeria-Biafran War (1967-1970). The novel opens with a poem by Chinua Achebe about the Nigerian Civil War. The title is derived from the rising sun sub-theme, which can be seen in the Biafran flag and the Nigerian coat of arms. *Half of a Yellow Sun* portrays the symbol in the Biafran flag. And it is obvious that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is an Igbo, and the title of the novel suggests where she belongs.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* focuses on a war narrative that has to do with the Biafran conflict. The novel centres around three major characters, namely Odenigbo, Olanna, and Ugwu, who represent different social classes in the society. Olanna represents the upper class, Odenigbo represents the middle class and Ugwu represents the lower class. Their characters are caught up in an obscure realm of betrayal, love, hope, deception, hatred, loss, and deprivation. Through one of the central characters, Ugwu, the reader can picture the lives of Odenigbo, a

Mathematics Professor at Nsukka who is a westernised radical intellectual elite of Biafra, and his wife Olanna, who nourishes him with positive feelings of love, care, and compassion. Olanna sacrifices all her money to keep Ugwu away from partaking in the war. The central characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun* witnessed the bloodshed at the different stages of the war. Two experiences influence Ugwu in the novel: firstly, the life he had with his master, Odenigbo, before the war, in which he boasts of the privileged life he enjoyed; and secondly, his traumatic and dramatic experience during the war, whose innocence was stolen in his prime which marked his stage of maturity. The novel is based on historical facts to craft her work of fiction. The author can blend historical evidence with literary creativity, giving the text uniqueness.

Adichie's Representation of the Effects of the Biafran War through the Lens of Postcolonial Theory

The Biafran war gave birth to sporadic massacres in the Eastern part of Nigeria, most especially the Igbos. One of the most significant causes of the Nigerian civil war was ethno-political rivalry. During the time of colonisation, the British adopted a method called "divide and rule" to divide the country into various regional governments diversified with different ethnic and religious groups in order to increase the political tension in the country. However, Adichie delves into the complexities of British colonial Indirect Rule in Nigeria, shedding light on the ethnic tensions, the Hausa-Igbo confrontation, and the instrumentalisation of religious beliefs. She explores how these elements interrelate and influence one another, offering a nuanced understanding of Nigeria's colonial and postcolonial history. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie depicts plot that favors the Northerners when she writes: "*They (the British) fixed the pre-Independence elections in favor of the North and wrote a new constitution that gave the North control of the central government. The South, too eager for independence, accepted this constitution*" (210).

Corruption among Nigerian leaders was the cause of the Nigerian Civil War. After independence, most of the officials from the North ran Nigerian politics, and the country was filled with all kinds of corruption. As portrayed in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the finance minister and Chief Okonji represent the corrupt elites. Some of the corrupt practices are: embezzlement of government funds, political patronage, inflation of government contracts, to mention a few. Due to the minister of finance's romantic gestures, Olanna suspects that her father, Chief Ozobia, is planning to give her

hand in marriage to Chief Okonji in exchange for contracts (32). Adichie describes the extravagant lifestyle of the leaders through Chief Ozobia, who only wears an outfit once. Adichie writes: “And do you know, they say he never wears any outfit twice? He gives them to his houseboys once he has worn them.” (34).

However, the people’s effort to gain independence from British rule in 1960 was totally in vain. The British have successfully created new-colonial (a new form of colonialism) exploitation, moral corruption, and favouritism by a group of native elites, privileged politicians, and businessmen who have looted the masses’ bread (Uche 155). The establishment of equality and stability among a multi-ethnic and religious nation by the central government was to no avail, resulting in provocation. In this way, the Igbos were not favoured, and this was aggravated by various bloody coups de état and the killing of the Igbos, especially the figure considered as the Igbo leader at that time; General Agunyi Ironsi in 1966. This coup was said to have been led by the Northerners against other regions, especially the Easterners. With recourse to this, the secession and declaration of independence of the sovereign state of Biafra were irresistible, and by 1967, the war flared up. The Igbo people decided to pursue self-determination by seceding from Nigeria, which led to the creation of the Republic of Biafra in 1967.

The Biafran War resulted in trauma for both Biafrans and Nigerians. The war brought about moral, psychological, political, social, and economic consequences (Makosso 168). According to Ojinnah (9) Adichie uses her prose fiction to bring out powerful memories of the Nigerian past, which still haunts the present.

One of the effects of the war is economic loss. To say that Biafrans suffered a great economic loss is an understatement. The civil war caused severe economic disruption, including which included environmental degradation and loss of productivity, leading to widespread poverty and hardship. For example, the annihilation of 1966 saw vast numbers of Igbo people move from all parts of Nigeria to their region (Eastern Nigeria). Hence, they left behind all their properties, investments, and all that they had worked for before the Biafran War.

Regarding all these losses, the class structure underwent a complete disruption, and this could be deduced from the character of Odenigbo, a Doctor of Mathematics who is middle class in the

novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Before the war, he had his car and lived a comfortable life. Adichie describes Odenigbo's house with one of the central characters through Ugwu's astonishment:

They were lucky to find one room now that Umuahia was thronged with refugees. The long strip of a building had nine rooms, side by side, with doors that led out onto a narrow veranda... Their room was close to the bathroom and, on the first day, Olanna looked at it and could not imagine how she would live here with Odenigbo and Baby and Ugwu, eat and dress and make love in a single room. (326)

The highest point of tension is when this once-a-comfortable family now has to eat from the refugee camp as a means of survival. However, immediately after the war, the Federal Government of Nigeria made provisions through the Ministry of Finance to compensate those who lost their properties and businesses to the war. However, this compensation never got to a number of the affected individuals, thereby, leaving those who were hitherto wealthy and affluent in extreme poverty.

Starvation was one of the major effects that scourged the Biafran people years after the war. After the civil war, the environmental degradation rendered the lands infertile for cultivation and planting and this also destroyed their livestock and aquatic animals, thereby resulting in extreme hunger. Moreover, aside from the shortage of food supplies that brought starvation, there are also continual air raids. The so-called continual air raids were responsible for a significant number of civilian human losses. Adichie, describes it as one of the greatest threats that villagers had to risk daily. This has brought school, properties and other institutions to destruction and created a kind of fear in the minds of the people; these people often spent hours and days in bunkers. . The narrator explains:

Olanna jumped each time she heard the thunder. She imagined another air raid, Bombs rolling out of a plane and exploding in the compound before she and Odenigbo and Baby and Ugwu could reach the bunker down the street.

Sometimes she imagined the bunker itself collapsing, squashing them all into mud... She made Baby practice running to the bunker... She taught Baby how to take cover if there was no time for the bunker... (346 -377).

One can infer that, during the war, the life of the people changed from grace to grass. This is portrayed by many characters who used to live a peaceful and pleasant life in the city, and become suddenly immersed in the realm of daily sufferings in the village as the situation deteriorated. As the war progresses, the trauma becomes more and more glaring and noticeable. The horror of death caused by the bombs of the brutal soldiers started to destroy the breach of hope the Biafrans had at the beginning of the conflict.

The effects of the war can also be drawn psychologically, focusing on the individual in mind. *Half of a Yellow Sun* not only portrays the war's effects on people's psyches during the war but also depicts the pre-war situation and aftermath of the war on the people. Thus, the primary effect of the Biafran war was the lasting psychological trauma it inflicted on the Igbo people, rendering them useless and restless. The events later move people's actions, consciously or unconsciously. They had to think of a way of protecting themselves from the bomb thrown by the Nigerian Army, and this led them to come up with the idea of bunkers. The need for a bunker will guard them from the Nigerian Army's bomb (331)

Olanna is psychologically traumatised when she sees the dead bodies of her relatives living in Kano (147). She was surprised when a friend of the family, Abdulmalik, was the one who led the killing of her family members. Olanna had met Abdulmalik once in their compound and he gifted her a leather slipper. Also, on the train Olanna boarded back to Nsukka, she saw a woman carrying the head of a little girl inside a calabash (149). With all these incidences, Olanna was psychologically traumatised to the extent that her legs and bladder failed and her doctor, Dr. Patel told her that her ailment was psychologically motivated.

Also, Odenigbo was traumatised after he received the heartbreaking news of the death of his mother, and the fact that he was not present to give his mother the final rites and befitting burial, led to the transfer of aggression to his family (322). Odenigbo was deeply traumatised because the Igbos believe that proper burial rituals ought to be performed to usher the dead back to the ancestors but the reverse is the case. However, the Igbos strongly believed in life after death even

before Christianity came. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe asserted that Igbos were highly religious before the advent of the whites, after which things fell apart. Hence, his grievance for the death of his mother was unbearable, and this made him drink to the point of stupor.

There were instances of human rights abuses as portrayed in Adichie's text. For instance, Adichie explains how soldiers maltreated the people, and forced the young generation to register for war. This is deduced in the character of Ugwu, the novel's main character and numerous other children are conspired by the Biafran Organization of Freedom Fighters to become child soldiers. This is portrayed below:

The skinny soldiers--- with no boots, uniforms, no half of a yellow sun on their sleeves --- kicked and slapped and mocked Ugwu during physical training. The parade left Ugwu's arm stiff. The obstacle training left his calves throbbing. The rope climbing left his palms bleeding. The wraps of gari he stood in a queue to receive, the thin soup scooped from a metal basin once a day, left him hungry (359).

Symbols and Metaphors in Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Symbolism is a literary device where one thing is meant to represent something else, often to create deeper meaning and evoke emotion in a story. It serves as a major tool in the writings of African writers. These writers frequently use symbolism to highlight the social, political, and economic challenges facing their countries during their time. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Chimamanda Adichie employs symbolism to explore critical issues such as corruption, exploitation, war, poverty, and ethnic barriers. These symbols reflect not only the causes of the Nigerian Civil War but also suggest that these fundamental problems persist to this day. According to Nwahunaya, he asserts that: "because of the carry-over of many wars time reign of terror and lawlessness" (127). This reveals that the war has ended but its causes and effects are still visible. Adichie Symbolically portrays this with Chief and Mrs. Ozobia's feeling for safety and only to come back after the war. Adichie concludes that the corrupt elite, who oppressed and exploited the masses, continued to maintain their influence and power. This can be depicted that many of the same individuals who were responsible for the causes and atrocities of the war continued to hold positions of authority and wealth after the war.

Olanna's refusal to call 'Baby' by her given name, Chiamaka, is symbolic. A name signifies permanence, and permanence is the last thing one finds during a war. Thus, her insistence in calling her 'Baby' is a sign of the tumultuous times and the ephemeral nature of life in Biafra at the time. The name 'Chiamaka' literally means 'God is good'. Thus, her refusal could stem from the fact that she does not recognise the good nature of a God who would stand by and watch the Igbos slaughtered mercilessly. It is a subtle sign of rebellion against religion.

The emblem of a half of a yellow sun on the Biafran flag symbolises the hope for the new nation of Biafra. It is the dawning of a new beginning of freedom after the nightlong darkness they have been plunged into. However, this sun never rises to its full brilliance. The emblem of a yellow sun, the head of the little girl in the calabash and the baby ripped out of Arize's womb are also symbolic of the death of a dream; the death of Biafra in its infancy.

Moreso, the abuse of military and political power was abused during the pre-war period. This represents the soldiers who use firearms to threaten the powerless. This is seen when Odenigbo and his family are threatened and maltreated by soldiers at the check point. One of the soldiers is seen victimising the intellectuals who supported the Biafran cause during the war. Two soldiers invaded Odenigbo's house in his home at Nsukka with the guise of searching for materials that threatened the unity of Nigeria. Odenigbo was bullied by the soldiers, and his food was carted away: Hence, Odenigbo voices angrily: "The war has ended but hunger has not" (433). Here, hunger implies that "hunger" becomes a metaphor for the call for materialism to the detriment of collectives of unity, peace and nationhood. Hunger does not refer to the need for physical food only. Feuser puts it thus: peace is expected to be a continuation of war, where the same conflict and power persist through other means (151). Nigeria's future depends on whether or not the country can overcome its tribal divisions and move towards a more enlightened perspective that prioritises unity and social justice.

Half of a Yellow Sun shows the metaphorical broken ties of Nigeria to connect the indigenous people across Nigeria. The novel portrays tribal and ethnic stereotypes. According to Greenwald, stereotypes refer to a widely accepted socially shared set of beliefs about traits that are characteristic of members of a social category group (14). This infers that overgeneralisations about a culture or group of people are sometimes based on unconsciously held beliefs and notions,

which can lead to stereotypes, cultural ignorance and unconscious biases. Onwuegbeuzia observed that: the Igbos use the phrase *ndi ofe mmamu* (this means people of oily soup) which tag the Yoruba as dirty, afraid, polygamous and weak, etc.; the Yoruba use the label *omo ibo* (an Ibo person) which tag Igbo an aggressive, money conscious, dubious, disrespectful. Meanwhile, Igbo and Yoruba use the epithet *aboki* (friend) to ironically label the Hausas as being brutal or aggressive, hubris, and so on.

In the text, Major Madu, who is Igbo is saved by Ibrahim, who is Hausa. Also, Olanna who happens to visit her relatives in the North only to find him dead, is saved by her Hausa ex-boyfriend. With these instances, Adichie intends to undermine the stereotypes of Hausa brutality. Moreso, the Nigerian survival strategies employed by the Igbo people during the war, combined with their willingness to surrender and integrate into Nigeria. Hence, this is contrary to the stereotype and biased argument that they seek to seize power and wealth for themselves alone.

Conclusion

The events of the period between 1967-1970 have provided the historical background for Chimamanda Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Adichie portrays how various ethnic groups in Nigeria perceived the events of 1967, presenting the war's reality in a fictional manner. Her work demonstrates that war is not a solution to societal deterioration. The study sheds light on the exploration of both form and content, emphasising the devastating effects of war on individuals and communities. It can be concluded that Adichie condemns the outbreak of the war in the first instance and as a third-generation writer, she frowns at the devastating effects on the nation for which she calls for global attention and rehabilitation of the victims.

WORKS CITED

- Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann. 1958.
- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Half of Yellow Sun*. Lagos: Farafina Kachifo Ltd,
- Atofarati, A.A. "The Nigerian Civil War, Causes, Strategies and Lessons Learnt" filed E: Nigerian Civil War, 1992. Web 3/09/2012.
- Berry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. New Delhi, Viva Books, 2017.
- Cyprian, Ewensi. *Survive the Peace*. London: Heinmann, 1997.

- Elechi, Amadi. *Sunset in Biafra*. London: Heinmann, 1973.
- Emenyonu, Ernest N. "War in African Literature: literary harvests, human tragedies." *ALT26: War in African Literature Today*, 2008, pp.xi-xiv.
- Goldmann, Lucien. "Dialectical Materialism Literary History." *New Left Review* No. 29. Vancouver: Glendora, 1991.
- Greenwald, Anthony G., and Mahzarin Banaji. "Implicit Social Cognition: Attitudes, Self-Esteem, and Stereotype." *Psychological Review*, vol, 102, no. 1. 1995, pp.4-77.
- Hawley, John C. "Biafra as Heritage and Iweala." *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 39, no2, 2008, pp.15-26.
- Howard, Abram & Harpham Geoffery. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. USA: Wadworth Cengage Learning, 2005.
- Makosso, Alphonse. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of Yellow Sun: A Transmitted Trauma* in *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation (IJLLT)*. Vol. 2, no3, 2020. Pp. 163-172. ISSN: 2617_0299. Available at www.ijllt.org, DOI: 10.32996/ijllt,2020.3.2.1
- Mullaney, Julie. *Postcolonial Literature in Context*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010.
- Nwahunanya, Chinyere. "War as Communal Tragedy: The Nigerian War Novel." *Nigerian Literature in English: Emerging Critical Perspectives*, edited by Onyemaechi Udumukwu, M & JGrand Orbit Communications, 2007, pp. 108-33.
- Ojinmah, Umelo. "No Humanity in War: Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of Yellow Sun*" *Journal of Nigeria Studies*, vol. 1, no.2, 2012, pp.1-11.
- Okuyade, Ogaga. "Of the Versification of Pain." *ALT26: War in African Literature Today*, 2008, pp. 128-36.
- Omotosho, Kole. "The Nigerian Civil War. The most Important Theme in Post-War Nigerian Writing". *The Guardian* (London) October 6, 1981.
- Strehle, Susan. "Producing Exile: Diasporic Vision in Adichie's *Half of Yellow Sun*," *Modern Fiction Studies* 57.4 (Winter 2011): 650-72.
- Willfried, F. "Anomy and Beyond: Nigeria's Civil War in Literature." *Presence African*, vol. 137138, no. 1, 1986, pp, 113, no, 1, 1986, pp. 113-51.

Digital Pedagogy and Tools in Enhancing English Language Teaching in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Halima Tosin Oladimeji PhD

Department of English,

Federal University of Education, Zaria

08020851657

tosinoladimeji2018@gmail.com

Abstract

Digital literacy constitutes the basis for citizenship to be effective and efficient in the 21st century in professional lives. The set of skills and competences integrating digital literacy are expected to be guaranteed in higher education. The impact of digital devices and the internet has generated various changes at social, political and economic levels, the repercussion of which is a great challenge characterized by the changing and globalized nature of today's society. This demands the development of new skills and new learning models about information and communication technologies. Tertiary Institutions must respond to these social demands in the training of their future professionals. Learning English with the help of digital tools is a new initiation in the process of learning and teaching English. Digital tools are gaining more importance in the present day. It is being used with mammoth interest by modern-day instructors and learners. Consequently, this paper investigates digital tools prospects as powerful tools for teaching English language in tertiary institutions.

Keywords: Impact, Digital pedagogy, Digital Tools, English Language, Teaching, Learning

Introduction

This paper explores the impact of digital pedagogy and tools in enhancing English language teaching in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It is hinged on the fact that the concept of digital literacy (DL) was first introduced by Zur Kowski in 1974, who defined it as the ability to identify, locate, and analyze information. Despite its early origins, the interpretations of DL have evolved (Lim and Newby, 2021). Notably, Gilster (1997) expanded on the concept, emphasizing its connection to skills such as accessing, evaluating, and managing information within learning processes.

Digital literacy today is often understood as a comprehensive set of skills integral to navigating and utilizing information effectively in educational contexts. Digital learning encompasses the technical-procedural, cognitive, and socio-emotional skills required to thrive in a digital society (Eshet-Alkali, 2012; European Commission, 2018). It enhances foundational competencies such as reading, writing, and calculation with the effective use of technology across personal, social, and professional domains. Moreover, digital learning is deeply intertwined with the social and educational demands of contemporary society (Larraz, 2013; Brata et al., 2022). This multifaceted concept includes several dimensions, such as technological, informational, and multimedia aspects, reflecting its broad and integrative nature. It involves a complete process and multiple literacies (Gisert and Esteva, 2011; Lazaro, 2015; Valverde et al, 2022). It requires mastery of specific competencies related to identifying learning needs, accessing information in digital environments, using ICT tools to manage information, interpreting and representing information, and transmitting that information effectively (Corello and Lei, 2010; Walsh et al., 2020).

In Nigeria and other developing countries, a significant part of the population, including the elitist class, teachers and students lack digital skills, competence and access to digital technologies. Where digital technologies are available, usually in part, they are not fully embraced and explored to maximum advantage for various reasons. This unwholesome trend should no longer be tolerated as a digitally illiterate workforce, educators and learners have little place in government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs). In Nigerian institutions of higher learning which is the focus of this paper, there seems to be a yawning digital literacy divide that needs to be filled. Many colleges of education, polytechnics and universities may have provided internet connectivity, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment and tools such as computer sets and related devices, but it does not seem that digital teaching and learning have been prioritized in relevant and creative ways to make learning truly profitable and enjoyable.

In recent years, society has experienced profound transformations driven by the digitalization of numerous spheres, including information, communication, knowledge acquisition, social interactions, and leisure. These changes have significantly altered our habits and the ways we access, manage and transform information (European Union, 2013; Cantabrana & Cervera, 2015; Allen et al., 2020; Lopez-Meneses et al., 2020).

These advancements have significantly impacted the field of education, necessitating a reevaluation of two critical aspects. Firstly, it is essential to consider what kind of students are being prepared in terms of the skills required to thrive in today's digital society. Secondly, attention must be given to whether future educators are being equipped to teach a generation that regards information and communication technologies as integral to their personal and social development. Ultimately, digital communication has profoundly transformed knowledge development practices in the twenty-first century (European Commission, 2012; Perez & Nagata, 2019).

The European Commission (2013) emphasizes that initial teacher training must prioritize the integration of digital literacy, focusing on the pedagogical use of digital tools. This approach aims to empower teachers to utilize these tools effectively, appropriately, and contextually. Teaching competence in this area should adopt a holistic, contextualized, performance-driven, and development-oriented perspective. Ultimately, it involves incorporating and leveraging ICT as a valuable didactic resource (Choro & Wing, 2020; Voda et al., 2022).

We now live in a technology-driven world where skills and competence in digital technology for personal interactions and educational purposes are of the utmost significance. Digital literacy has been effectively applied to education for decades now. The teaching and learning of language skills - listening, reading and writing – in L₂ or foreign language contexts can be effectively digitalized in modern classroom teaching using multimedia (especially CD and DVD), digital workshops, podcast applications and other websites. The current curricula for language teaching in Nigerian higher institutions favour a traditional approach which consists of lecturers with handouts and the use of the chalkboard. Lectures can be more innovative and adventurous as they take advantage of the digital technologies stated above. Language laboratories and slides are additional equipment and devices to reinforce learning which is needed in L₂ context. ICT has been effectively infused into the teaching and learning of basic language skills in European and much of Asia (Ofodu & Oyinloye, 2014; Mustofa & Lestari, 2023) and Nigerian higher institutions have responded to the challenge.

Higher education institutions are undergoing a significant transformation, shifting from traditional teacher-centred models to active learning approaches driven by digital technologies. This

evolution has paved the way for a new era of education where the integration of digital devices is fundamental and intrinsic (Area, 2018; Aars, 2019).

As digital resources and devices become an inescapable part of contemporary and future teaching practices, digital competency training for future educators gains critical importance. Teachers must develop these skills during their initial training to effectively integrate them into their professional practices. The digital competencies acquired at this stage are strong predictors of how technologies will be utilized in future teaching (Nikou & Aavakare, 2021). This ranges from foundational digital literacy to the seamless integration of technology into everyday educational activities (Alanoglu et al., 2022).

Currently, literacy workshops for future professionals are being conducted through various formats, ranging from short, customized training sessions to more comprehensive semester-long courses in undergraduate and postgraduate programs. These workshops focus on specific aspects of digital literacy; however, there is a noticeable gap in providing comprehensive digital training (Vinokurova et al., 2021).

Digital Literacy in English Language Teaching

Nowadays with the improvement of technology, teachers are supposed to integrate technology into the classroom. In the 21st century, technology has become part of what constitutes the world we live in. Its influence has permeated every aspect of life, including the field of English Language teaching. This classroom actively involves students in the teaching and learning process through the use of media facilitated by technology. It is also believed that the use of technology in the language classroom can be integrated for English as Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning.

The integration of technology in language learning enhances the teaching and learning process, allowing teachers to design more effective lessons with the help of digital tools. For students, the opportunity to leverage technology can significantly improve their learning experiences; students must be able to understand and navigate these devices effectively. The more digital literacy skills they possess, the better chance for them to utilize technology for their education; Yet, not all students may have the same level of proficiency with these tools. This raises the question of how

students can effectively operate and engage with technology. In an academic context, particularly in English Language teaching and learning, digital literacy is considered a crucial factor in supporting and enhancing students' learning. As Harris (2015) proposed that digital literacy involves the way and how they participate in community life and gaining additional education and training, it is possible to include digital literacy as an important skill in the classroom to increase students learning process.

Recent research highlights the importance of enhancing student digital literacy to help learners better engage with media and technology for their educational needs. Benson and Chik (2010) argued that technological advancements have reshaped the way learning and literacy is understood in the 21st Century. Little wonder Sehmar Dobler (2003) had earlier emphasized the need for educators to adapt and integrate curricula into the new digital context. This view is supported by Kress (2003) and Luzon (2002), who asserted that teachers must utilize available digital tools to ensure that education meets the demands of contemporary society.

Technology has a significant impact on literacy abilities both within and outside the school setting. When discussing digital literacy, the use of technology is an essential component. Grimshaw, Dungworth, and McKnight (2007) found that technology usage can influence students' reading and comprehension skills, emphasizing the importance of digital literacy. However, it is also crucial that the teaching materials and methods engage students, as not all students are interested in technology. Digital literacy extends beyond the mere ability to use technology; it also involves the capacity to find, evaluate, and share information. Hague & Payton (2010) defined digital literacy as the ability to access, share, create, collaborate, and communicate effectively using digital media.

As English language learners build foundational digital literacy skills, they unlock countless opportunities to enhance their language learning beyond the confines of the classroom. With digital literacy, learners can engage in online platforms, allowing them to create and communicate with others, fostering an environment of continuous English language learning.

Digital literacy can be integrated into the four language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In a speaking classroom, digital tools can be used to enhance lesson objectives by encouraging students to create recorded audio files that are uploaded online, allowing peers to listen to and download them. This multimedia approach can be highly motivating for students. For

listening classes, students could be tasked with assignments such as listening to podcasts or YouTube videos. To meet the diverse needs, interests, and abilities of students, teachers should differentiate instruction to ensure engagement and effectiveness.

In reading skills, using digital texts or online materials can be particularly beneficial. Incorporating images, hyperlinks to word meanings, videos, and audio recordings of word pronunciations can significantly enhance the learning process. These elements do not only support comprehension but also promote vocabulary learning as students interact with various forms of information. Additionally, reading strategies that are effective in print-based environments should be adapted for digital contexts.

Writing skills also benefit from digital tools, which can offer students opportunities to write for authentic audiences. Such writing activities might include creating blogs, digital stories, or contributing to wikis, all of which encourage students to engage with the writing process and improve their language skills. These digital platforms not only enhance vocabulary and grammar learning but also provide students with opportunities to become authors and communicate both inside and outside the classroom. Thorne (2009) highlights that writing for external audiences can help students build identities and foster a sense of community with others who share similar interests, potentially leading to the creation of new, collaborative communities.

As digital technology becomes an integral part of English language learning, it is essential for students to be comfortable using these tools in the classroom. Digital literacy is crucial for effective learning, as it defines how individuals interact with technology. To develop digital literacy within educational programs, it is important to identify and integrate tools that align with the course content and learning objectives. Ultimately, the use of technology in the classroom should support the goals of learning while considering the complexity of the learning process. Designing learning environments that are compatible with these goals ensures that technology is used in meaningful ways to enhance students' language acquisition and overall learning experiences.

Current Status of Teaching English

The 21st century presents citizens with a dynamic blend of opportunities, challenges, and possibilities brought about by the pervasive influence of technology across all aspects of life. In

this transformative era, educational institutions can no longer function as simple arenas for transferring predefined information from teacher to student within a set timeframe. Instead, they must cultivate a culture of "learning to learn," equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills needed for lifelong learning. Consequently, teachers bear the critical responsibility of evolving to meet the ever-changing demands of the modern age.

In today's world, mastering the English language is a vital necessity, achievable through a seamless integration of traditional teaching methods and modern e-learning technologies. The advent of e-learning has revolutionized conventional education paradigms, offering a variety of innovative tools and systems. When employed by skilled and creative educators, these tools can transform teaching, making learning more engaging and meaningful for students. E-learning technologies are heralded as catalysts for educational innovation, driving significant advancements in blending digital tools with English language learning and paving the way for meaningful reform in the education sector.

Use of E-Learning Tools in Teaching English

E-learning, which integrates formalized learning with electronic resources, has transformed the educational landscape. While teaching can occur both inside and outside the classroom, computers and the internet are the primary components of this system. E-learning can be defined as a network-enabled transfer of skills and knowledge, enabling the delivery of education to a large audience at the same time or asynchronously.

Initially, there was resistance to this system due to concerns about the lack of the human element essential for learning. However, technological advancements and improvements in learning systems have led to widespread acceptance of E-learning. The introduction of computers played a pivotal role in this revolution, and with the advent of smartphones, tablets, and other portable devices, these technologies have become integral tools in the classroom.

In today's educational landscape, electronic resources like optical discs and pen drives are steadily taking the place of traditional textbooks. Moreover, the internet offers a 24/7, global platform for sharing knowledge, making it easier for students and educators to access learning materials from

anywhere, at any time. This shift not only enhances the accessibility of education but also provides a more flexible and dynamic learning environment.

Internet

The internet has become an indispensable tool in both daily and professional life, revolutionizing how we access and exchange information. In education, it serves as a critical resource for gathering information, conducting research, and expanding knowledge on a variety of subjects. For teaching and learning, the internet has proven to be especially effective, offering diverse methods to enhance the educational experience.

Teachers can utilize the internet as a teaching tool by posting learning materials such as notes, videos, and links on school websites or online forums, allowing students easy access to resources beyond traditional textbooks. This shift makes learning more dynamic and engaging, with the inclusion of multimedia elements like animations, PowerPoint slides, and images, which help capture students' attention and foster a more interactive learning environment.

The use of the Internet in education not only provides access to a wealth of resources but also encourages a more collaborative and flexible approach to learning, where students can engage with content at their own pace and from any location with Internet access. This transformation has made the learning process more accessible, engaging, and tailored to the needs of diverse learners.

YouTube

YouTube has become an invaluable resource in language classrooms, offering numerous advantages for enhancing various aspects of English language learning. By providing authentic examples of real-life English used by native speakers, YouTube allows students to hear and see how the language is used in everyday contexts, which is often more engaging and relatable than textbook examples. For listening and speaking skills, teachers can select videos featuring conversations, interviews, podcasts, or dialogue-driven content that help students improve their comprehension and pronunciation. By mimicking the accents and intonation they hear in the videos, students can also develop their voice modulation and speaking fluency.

In terms of reading and writing, YouTube videos can serve as a springboard for exercises where students summarize or respond to the content they've watched. Teachers can ask students to take

notes or create written summaries, helping to enhance their writing skills while reinforcing vocabulary acquisition. Teachers can use YouTube videos to introduce students to various accents, dialects, and cultural contexts, further enhancing their understanding of the nuances of the English language. The interactive nature of YouTube allows for repeated viewing, giving students the flexibility to pause, rewind, and replay parts of the video to reinforce learning.

Skype

Skype is a powerful tool that offers many opportunities for teachers and students to collaborate across geographical boundaries. By connecting students with peers from different countries, Skype provides a platform for authentic language practice, where students can engage in real-time conversations, enhancing their speaking and listening skills in a natural and interactive environment.

For foreign language students, this virtual interaction allows them to practice the language with native or fluent speakers, improving their fluency, pronunciation, and cultural understanding. Through Skype, students can participate in language exchange programs, interact with other language learners, and even collaborate on projects in a real-world context, such as presenting research or performing presentations for international audiences.

Teachers can leverage Skype for a variety of purposes, including mentoring students, offering personalized homework help, or conducting virtual office hours. This allows students to receive support outside of regular classroom hours, ensuring they remain engaged and motivated.

Additionally, Skype enables teachers to connect with other educators globally for collaborative professional development, sharing resources, teaching strategies, or even co-teaching virtual lessons. This kind of collaboration helps to broaden teachers' perspectives, enhance their teaching practices, and create a more dynamic learning experience for students.

Overall, Skype fosters a connected learning environment that transcends the limitations of physical classrooms, helping to create a more global and inclusive educational experience.

Twitter

Twitter, a technological marvel, serves as a powerful social networking platform that can significantly enhance students' English proficiency. As an online educational tool, its potential to engage students in learning is boundless. Teachers can incorporate a variety of activities using this digital resource to actively involve students in classroom interactions, fostering a deeper understanding of concepts and enriching their learning experience.

Smart-boards

Interactive whiteboards, such as SMART boards, have become excellent alternatives to traditional whiteboards and flipcharts, offering the ability to display everything available on a computer's desktop, including educational software and websites. These tools empower teachers to adopt a student-centred approach in language arts instruction. By leveraging SMART boards, educators can enhance reading comprehension, grammar, and writing lessons. The interactive capabilities allow teachers to seamlessly integrate video, audio, web browsing, and word processing, creating an engaging and dynamic learning environment for students.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones serve as versatile learning tools with a wide range of applications. They enable online classes to be conducted anytime and anywhere, offering unmatched flexibility. Their portability and ease of use make them an accessible and convenient resource for both teachers and students.

Podcasting

A podcast is a series of digital media files that are distributed online via a syndication feed, enabling playback on portable devices and computers. Using podcasts in the classroom is straightforward and effective. Today, students regularly listen to news clips, music, and videos online, so teachers can tap into this medium to engage them in new ways. By incorporating podcasts, educators can assign specific news channels, helping students not only stay informed but also learn to analyze information and understand how emphasis and tone shape communication.

Blog

Blogging has gained significant popularity in education as an effective way to share information and foster discussion. Many educators are turning to blogs, rather than traditional textbooks, to engage students and introduce them to different forms of social media. Setting up a course blog is simple, with free platforms like BlogSpot, WordPress, or Tumblr making it easy to get started.

Today, blogs can feature photos, audio, and even videos, enhancing the learning experience. Teachers should encourage students to visit the blog regularly and respond promptly to their posts with thoughtful comments. Asking questions about students' writing can stimulate further engagement and improve writing skills. Blogging could also be incorporated into class assessments, with students encouraged to post their homework on the blog, promoting a more interactive and collaborative approach to learning.

Teaching Methods

A teaching method is a set of principles and methods used by teachers to enable student learning. Teaching strategies are influenced by several factors, including the subject matter, the learners' expertise, and any constraints present. To be effective and appropriate, a teaching method must consider the learner, the nature of the content, and the desired learning outcomes.

Teaching approaches can be broadly divided into teacher-centred and student-centred methods. In practice, teachers often blend these approaches, adjusting their style based on learners' prior knowledge, expertise, and specific learning objectives.

In the teacher-centered approach, the teacher is the central authority figure, and students are seen as passive recipients of knowledge. The goal is for students to absorb information through lectures and direct instruction, with their learning measured by standardized tests. Teaching and assessment are generally separate in this model, with assessments typically focusing on objective scoring.

In contrast, the student-centred approach involves both the teacher and the students actively participating in the learning process. Often referred to as an authoritative approach, the teacher's role shifts to that of a coach or facilitator, guiding students' understanding of the material. In this model, learning is assessed through a combination of formal and informal methods, such as group

projects, portfolios, and class participation. Teaching and assessment are integrated, with continuous evaluation of student learning throughout the instructional process.

Digital Pedagogy in the English Language

Digital pedagogy refers to the study and application of contemporary digital technologies in teaching and learning across various environments online, hybrid, and in-person. Its origins can be traced back to distance learning in the early 20th century, especially through the use of correspondence courses. Understanding digital pedagogy requires a strong foundation in traditional pedagogy since it builds upon existing educational principles but adapts them to the digital space. Moreover, it requires a solid understanding of technological tools and their potential to enhance educational practices, as only specific aspects of digital technology in education have demonstrated genuine pedagogical value.

A commonly accepted definition of digital pedagogy is provided by JISC (2020/2021), which defines it as the study of how digital technologies can be used most effectively in teaching and learning. In simpler terms, it's about understanding how to teach using digital tools, while also critically assessing when to use or avoid these tools. Digital pedagogy extends beyond just the use of technology; it emphasizes thoughtful application, considering how digital tools affect learning, teaching methods, content, and assessments.

This field of pedagogy focuses on the design, implementation, and evaluation of educational experiences that incorporate significant digital components, such as virtual and mixed learning environments, learning management systems, digital tools for teaching, and the digital competencies of educators. It also encompasses educational policies and programs that support the integration of technology in education.

Today's students, often described as "digitally expectant," are immersed in technology outside of school, using tools like instant messaging, social media, smartphones, and digital entertainment. These technologies seamlessly blend into their daily lives, creating an expectation that their educational experiences will also be enriched with digital tools. However, despite their fluency in technology outside school, many students may be less adept at navigating digital technologies in

the educational context. Therefore, educators must continuously refine their teaching methods to meet the evolving expectations of these digitally native students.

The characteristics and behaviours of today's students are markedly different from those of their teachers. Teachers, often described as "digital immigrants" (Prensky, 2001), range from those who have made efforts to incorporate information and communication technology (ICT) into their teaching to those who have not embraced its use at all. Most teachers are self-taught or have learned from peers, with their technology skills typically limited to the tools they use in their personal and professional lives. While many educators use technology daily, the tools they rely on may not be as up-to-date as those their students are accustomed to, nor may they align with the evolving needs of teaching.

Effective digital pedagogy is not solely determined by technological proficiency. Instead, it is rooted in the attitude and aptitude towards using digital technologies in the classroom. It's about the willingness to integrate these tools effectively and understanding the purpose behind their use. Moreover, it's important to consider not only the expectations of students but also those of parents, employers, and the wider community. There is an increasing demand for the education system to produce technologically fluent students—individuals who can navigate a range of digital technologies and possess the knowledge and skills necessary to adapt to emerging technologies.

Digital Teaching Methods in English Language

1. Video conferencing: - this is a real-time online meeting where participants communicate using audio and video over the internet, it is a way to stimulate a face-to-face conversation, and also wing participants to see each other's expressions and hear what they are saying.
2. Flipped classroom: - this is a teaching method that reverses the traditional classroom model by having students learn content before class and then apply it during class. The goal is to increase student engagement and learning by using class time for active learning techniques such as discussion, problem-solving and group work.

3. Mobile learning: -this method allows students to access learning materials and encourage academic activities using portable devices like smartphones, tablets and laptops
4. Online group discussion: - this is a platform such as Google, Yahoo, or Facebook, where participants can post topics, share information and engage in conversation related to specific subjects or interests.
5. Interactive simulations: - this is a virtual environment that mimics a real-life system and allows users to interact with it, they can be used to create an experimental learning experience that helps users develop their understanding of a topic.
6. Gamification: - this is a process of adding game-like elements to non-game environments to motivate and engage users, the goal is to create an environment that's enjoyable and challenging and to encourage students to participate, learn and solve problems.
7. Virtual field trip: - this is a structured online learning experience that takes students on a guided exploration of the web. These trips are made up of a collection of pre-screened web pages that are organized around a theme. Virtual field trips offer significant benefits for students who face challenges with mobility or travel. These digital experiences allow students to explore new locations and engage with educational content from anywhere, without the need to physically visit the destination. This makes learning more accessible and inclusive, providing all students with opportunities to experience and learn about places they may otherwise not be able to visit.
8. Micro-learning: - This refers to a series of compact e-learning modules designed to minimize learner fatigue. These modules, which can be educational, professional, or skill-based, are typically short usually under 20 minutes and focus on a single learning objective or topic. Their concise format helps maintain engagement and enhances retention, making them ideal for learners seeking efficient, focused learning experiences.

Benefits Of Using Digital Tools in The Teaching and Learning of English Language in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Digital tools are very useful for learning English. Students can learn English more effectively with the support of internet facilities. The internet provides up-to-date and easily accessible data, storing vast amounts of information that can be quickly retrieved. Its immense collection of hyperlinked content is particularly valuable for self-directed learners. The Internet also opens up a wealth of learning opportunities for both teachers and students. According to Peterson (2000), an internet-based learning environment can serve as an effective instructional tool, while Ryder and Graves (1997) highlight that the internet is a dynamic medium offering teachers and students immediate access to a variety of tools and resources.

For English teachers, digital tools have become essential sources of teaching materials. The internet offers a wide array of learning techniques and audio/video resources that can enhance teaching. Teachers use it to gather materials and plan lessons. Many language educators have embraced the internet, especially with the advent of new ICT, which enables diverse learning methods and multimedia resources (Son, 2007). Through online resources, language teachers can tailor their classes to be more individualized or personalized, promoting self-empowerment in students' learning (Warschauer, Turbee & Roberts, 1996).

Digital tools have revolutionized education, improving teaching processes and fostering a student-centred learning environment that strengthens critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Creative language teachers use this powerful medium to enhance language exposure and communication, both within and outside the classroom. English teachers worldwide can now collaborate, exchange ideas, and share resources via the Internet, making the learning experience more dynamic. Teachers can not only find resources for their classes but also contribute their materials, knowledge, and ideas to benefit others (Warschauer, Shetzer & Meloni, 2000).

Digital tools have significantly transformed the teaching and learning of the English language, offering numerous benefits and opportunities for both educators and learners. Here are some key ways in which digital tools are relevant to the teaching and learning of English:

- 1. Access to Resources:** The various digital tools access to a wealth of resources for teaching and learning English, including educational websites, online courses, digital textbooks, multimedia materials, and language learning apps. Learners can access a wide range of authentic and up-to-date materials to enhance their language skills, such as articles, videos, podcasts, and interactive exercises.
- 2. Interactive Learning Tools:** Various interactive learning tools and platforms on the Internet offer engaging and immersive experiences for language learners. These include language learning apps, online quizzes, grammar checkers, pronunciation guides, virtual language labs, and collaborative learning platforms. These tools can cater to different learning styles and preferences, making language learning more accessible and enjoyable.
- 3. Communication and Collaboration:** Digital tools facilitate communication and collaboration among English language learners and educators from around the world. Learners can connect with native speakers, language exchange partners, and fellow learners through social media, online forums, language exchange websites, and virtual language exchange platforms. This enables them to practice their language skills in authentic contexts, receive feedback, and engage in meaningful interactions with others.
- 4. Authentic Language Use:** Digital tools offer opportunities for exposure to authentic language use in various contexts, such as social media, blogs, forums, news websites, and online communities. Learners can engage with authentic texts, videos, and audio recordings to develop their language proficiency and cultural awareness. They can also explore different varieties of English and learn about cultural nuances and expressions used by native speakers.
- 5. Self-directed Learning:** Digital tools empower learners to take control of their learning process and pursue self-directed learning goals. Learners can access online resources, tutorials, language learning platforms, and digital libraries, allowing them to study at their own pace, explore topics of interest, and customize their learning experience to meet their unique needs and preferences.

- 6. Global Perspectives:** Through the various Digital tools English language learners can gain exposure to diverse perspectives, cultures, and voices from around the world. They can engage with authentic materials from different English-speaking countries, learn about global AI/gloss issues, and develop intercultural competence and empathy.
- 7. Professional Development for Educators:** Digital tools offer professional development opportunities for English language educators through online courses, webinars, conferences, forums, and social networks. Educators can access resources, exchange ideas, collaborate with colleagues, and stay updated on best practices and innovative approaches to language teaching.

Conclusion

Overall, Digital tools play a crucial role in enhancing the teaching and learning of the English language by providing access to resources, interactive learning tools, communication opportunities, authentic language use, self-directed learning opportunities, global perspectives, and professional development for educators.

References

- Aarsand, P.** (2019). Categorization Activities in Norwegian Preschools: Digital Tools in Identifying, Articulating, and Assessing Front. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*, 973. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00973>
- Alanoglu, M., Astan, S., & Karabatak, S.** (2022). Do Teachers' Educational Philosophies Affect Their Digital Literacy? The Mediating Effect of Resistance to Change. *Education and Information Technologies, 27*(3), 3447-3466. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10753-3>
- Area, A., & Zhu, C.** (2016). Investigating Variables Predicting Turkish Pre-Service Teachers' Integration of ICT into Teaching Practice. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 48*(3), 552-570. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12457>
- Chow, S. K. Y., & Wing, J. K. L.** (2020). Supporting Academic Self-Efficacy, Academic Motivation and Information Literacy for Student in Tertiary Institution. *Education Sciences, 10*, 361. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10/20361>
- European Commission.** (2013). *The European Commission of the Twenty-First Century*. Oxford University Press.
- Corello, S., & Lei.** (2010). A Review of Digital Literacy Assessment Instruments. *IDE-712 Front-End Analysis Research Syracuse: Analysis for Human Performance Technology Decisions*.
- Digital Pedagogy.** (2012, August 30). A Digital Pedagogy in Conference. Retrieved January 6, 2017.

- Digital Pedagogy.** (2022, December 17). Definition and Conceptual Area – *Journal of Digital Pedagogy*. <https://doi.org/10.61011/jdp.0313>. Retrieved December 9, 2023.
- Eshet-Alkalai, Y.** (2012). Thinking in the Digital Era: A Reversed Model for Digital Literacy. *Information Science and Information Technology, 19*, 267-276. <https://doi.org/10.12845/1621>
- Larraz, E. F.** (2013). Competencia Digital En La Educación Superior: Instrumentos De Evaluación Y Nuevos Entornos. *Revista Venezolana De Información, Tecnología Y Conocimiento, 10*, 29-45.
- Gusbert, M., & Esteve, F.** (2011). Digital Learners: 19 Competencias Digitales De Los Futuros Docentes Como Se Ven Los Actuales Estudiantes De Educación. *Perspectiva Educativa, 55*, 34-52. <https://doi.org/10.4151/07189729.vol.55-1552.art412>
- Lopez-Meneses, E., & Singanano, F. M.** (2020). University Students' Digital Competence in Three Areas of the DigComp 21 Model: A Comparative Study at Three European Universities. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, 36*, 69-88. <https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.5583>
- Zurkowski, P. G.** (1974). The Information Service Environment: Relationships and Priorities. *Related Paper, 5*, 27.
- Lim, J., & Newby, T. J.** (2021). Preservice Teachers' Attitudes Toward Web 2.0 Personal Learning Environments (PLEs): Considering the Impact of Self-Regulation and Digital Literacy. *Education and Information Technologies, 26*, 3699-3720. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10432-3>.

Linguistic Devices and Meaning Significations in Covid -19 Safety Precaution Signs

Yakubu Salamat O

azeezsalamat2@gmail.com

+2347032255085

and

Omolaoye Adenike O

ao.omolaoye@acu.edu.ng

+2348066734063

Abstract

Corona Virus Pandemic (Covid-19) is a scourge whose impact has been felt across the world since its emergence in the global space. Over the years, there have been extant studies relating to Corona Virus and these studies examined different perspectives which include Critical Discourse Analysis, pragma-semiotics and stylistics discourse. However, insufficient scholarly attention has been given to the linguistic analysis and meaning significations of Covid-19 safety precaution signs. This study, therefore, examined the linguistic devices and meaning significations of Covid-19 safety precaution signs.

The Covid-19 safety precaution sign photographs were subjected to a qualitative analysis using Roland Barthes (1998) which emphasized the meaning of linguistic elements. Ten Covid-19 Safety precaution sign photographs were purposively selected for their richness in communicating meaning and the most suitable research design employed for this study to attain the study objectives is descriptive.

Results of the analysis revealed that the verbal mode of signification in the safety precaution signs are words, phrases and sentences. Findings showed that the message is easy to read and understand because most of the sentences are short. The typographic features such as upper case, lower case, and bold type were used as instructional guidelines on how to curb and contain the spread of the virus (COVID-19). Verbal mode of signification meaning according to the findings revealed that the linguistic elements communicatively perform informative, cautionary and collaborative functions to persuade the people to support the fight against the spread of Covid-19.

Roland Barthes approach and how meaning is negotiated in the selected safety precaution signs has given room for social interaction between the producer of the health protocol and the readers. It is recommended that the Government needs to create adequate enlightenment, an easily accessible media and not only photographs, during the period of crisis as it will help speedily spread the message to the public to prepare them to fight and survive the crisis.

Keywords: COVID-19, Safety Precaution Signs, Linguistic elements, Meaning Significations

Introduction

The disease caused by Coronavirus was first identified in Wuhan, China and has been named Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). ‘CO’ stands for Corona; ‘VI’ for Virus and ‘D’ for Disease (UNICEF, 2020). The virus is primarily spread among people in close contact, most often via small droplets usually from coughing, sneezing and talking. Transmission may also occur through smaller droplets that can stay suspended in the air for longer periods. Less commonly, people may become infected by touching a contaminated surface and then touching their faces. The COVID-19 Virus may survive on surfaces for several hours, but disinfectants can kill it (UNICEF, 2020).

The World Health Organization declared COVID-19, a public outbreak at a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on 30th January 2020 and a pandemic on 11th March 2020 due to the rate at it spreads, and there appear to be no vaccines nor specific antiviral treatment for it. Since then, both government and non-government parties have worked together to disseminate accurate information about COVID-19 throughout the country by having various approaches to meet the people’s needs. Placing the safety precaution signs everywhere is one of the approaches that was used to disseminate information and educate people about COVID-19. These COVID-19 Safety precaution signs explain the dangers of the virus, ways of preventing the outbreak in society, and a reminder to people each time they come in contact with the signs (Rinartha et al., 2019). Mainly, these safety precaution signs explain the danger of the virus and ways of preventing the virus outbreak. This form of awareness enables people to learn and be aware of the pandemic situation. Besides this, media helped to reduce the fear of uncertainty and any other negative psychological effects felt by society especially the young people (Fisher, 2021). It cannot be denied that, since this pandemic covered the whole world, it has led to various issues such as misinformation, rumours, prevention, and the theory of conspiracy about the beginning of this pandemic among people in society (Radwan, 2020). The safety precaution signs and posters mounted everywhere will serve as a guide and prevent the spread of the virus.

To create awareness of this infectious disease, signs abound everywhere to educate people on how to adhere strictly to the safety precaution protocols, and failure to do so means contracting the deadly virus. ‘Sign’ refers to an observable substance, the mental image of which is associated in

our minds with another image or concept (Yin, 2021). It is a form that is marked by an intention to communicate something meaningful to the people during the pandemic period.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, there have been different researches on different aspects of interests on COVID-19, ranging from its impacts/effects, causes, prevention, people's attitude towards vaccination, and treatment among others.

Esteban et al (2020) researched the impact of Covid-19 on student experiences and expectations. The study surveyed approximately 1,500 students at one of the largest public institutions in the United States using a designed questionnaire to gather data on the causal impact of the pandemic on students' current and expected outcomes. Results show large negative effects across many dimensions. The result revealed that 13% of students have delayed graduation, 40% lost a job, internship or job offer, and 29% are expected to earn less at age 35. The study finally shows that the economic and health-related shocks induced by COVID-19 have great effects on the students.

Ekwutosi, Jude and Valentine (2020) conducted a study on the response to the pandemic. The objective of the study was to examine how Nigerian media depict the Coronavirus pandemic and how the depictions shape people's perceptions and responses to the pandemic. The study employed a qualitative design (newspaper content analysis and questionnaire). The content analysis examines the nature of media coverage of the Coronavirus in Nigeria using four major national newspapers. The study found that continuous reportage of COVID-19 has proven to be effective in creating awareness about safety and preventive measures, the framing pattern adopted by the newspapers helped Nigerians to take precautionary measures.

A lexical-syntactic analysis of the language used by a government agency in Nigeria during the COVID-19 epidemic was looked into by Ogunrinde and Ajenifari in 2021. The framework for the study is dyadic and incorporates ideas from Systemic Functional Grammar and semantic theory, which deals extensively with lexical choices and the determination of the meanings associated with them. According to the research, the linguistic choices a writer makes in a specific piece are a reflection of his mood. This has a big and vital part to play in how the author arranges the lexical components in the text into strange sentence structures. In NCDC COVID-19 sensitization

messaging, repetition is used to highlight the significance of such words. Given that, the majority of the repeated words are action-stimulating words, it is intended to persuade the general public that only personal efforts or actions can stop the spread of COVID-19.

Lestari, Simarmata, Sitorus and Sidabutar (2021) worked on Code and message interpretation of COVID-19 street banners in Ghana. The study used qualitative research design methods with visual study design. The objective of the study is to teach human beings how to interpret the signs and symbols around us and how each of these signs and symbols negotiates their meaning. This study revealed that human being is the determinant of the meaning given to signs.

Onipede (2022) conducted a study to evaluate Nigerians' attitudes and views toward receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. It is a cross-sectional study that had 334 respondents from the southeastern part of Nigeria who were 18 years of age or older. The data was gathered using a validated questionnaire through an online Google form. Utilizing SPSS version 25, data analysis was carried out. Chi-square tests and Fisher exact tests were used to analyze the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics, attitudes and perceptions. A value of 0.05 was declared statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

All these researches have examined diverse aspects by examining the syntactic analysis of language, the use of media and the attitude of people. Little scholarly attention has been given to studies on the linguistic and meaning significations of COVID-19 safety precaution signs. This research, therefore, is designed to examine Covid-19 precaution signs from semiotic perspectives.

Aim and Objectives

This study aims to explore the linguistic devices and meaning significations of COVID-19 safety precaution signs and the specific objectives of this aim include:

- i. To identify and analyze the linguistic elements in the language of COVID-19 safety precaution photographs; and
- ii. to discuss how meanings are generated through the identified verbal signs.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the theory of semiotics by Barthes (1998) to analyse the COVID-19 safety precaution sign photographs. Semiotics, according to Barthes is a process used to interpret a sign in which language has a certain message from the society. This means that semiotics seeks to study how humanity makes sense of things. Barthes's theory of signs offers a framework for understanding how meaning is created and conveyed through codes and systems. Barthes built upon the ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure, another key figure in semiotics, but took them in a more expansive direction, particularly by examining how signs function in society. A sign, as defined by Ferdinand de Saussure, consists of two components: the signifier and the signified. The signifier refers to the form of the sign, such as a word, image, or sound, while the signified is the mental concept or meaning associated with the signifier. Barthes expanded this basic understanding to explore how signs function in the context of culture, ideology, media and the arbitrariness between the signified and the signifier. This arbitrariness, according to Barthes is central to understanding how signs operate in a broader cultural context. That is, they are products of shared conventions that are socially constructed. In Barthes' view, signs are not just simple units of meaning; they are deeply embedded within social and cultural contexts, carrying layers of meanings that go beyond their immediate use. This theory also uses the denotative and connotative levels of meaning to analyse the signs and has contributed significantly to perfecting Saussure's semiology theory which stops at the denotative level. Barthes opines that denotation signifies anything literal to indicate something real occasionally and involves using language in a way that is significant to what is said or known. On the connotation level, there is usually a relationship between a sign and the user's feelings and values. This means that connotation is an element of someone's opinion about a sign. Barthes' semiotic theory further emphasized the importance of intertextuality, the idea that texts do not exist in isolation but are interconnected with other texts. Barthes opines that text is composed of a complex network of references, codes, and signs that interact with each other to produce meaning. By exploring the relationships between these different elements, Barthes argued that meaning is not fixed or intrinsic to the text but is generated through its relationship with other texts, both literary and cultural.

Literature Review

According to Barthes (1998), words in a text, carry meaning through a series of signs and symbols that can be interpreted in various ways depending on cultural, historical, and social contexts. These meanings are shaped through the use of linguistic devices through the structure or context in which it is used (Glasscoff, 2014). To reveal a text's meaning, Barthes (1998) recommends four codes of seeing meaning in a text:

1. Language/speech (and concludes that language is always socialised)
2. Signifier/Signified - Barthes deviates from Saussure's idea that the relation between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary and argues that, the connection between the two is a process that gets naturalized over some time
3. System - that parallels with Saussure's syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes—operation of language as the interaction between two axes, where the syntagmatic axis is the combination of signs, while the systemic axis is equivalent to Saussure's langue.
4. Denotation/Connotation – These refer to the first and second order of signification respectively, and are closely associated with Barthes' concept of myth.

Linguistic and meaning significations in verbal signs are central to understanding how language functions in communication (Liu, 2013). Yin (2022) also added that verbal signs, which is a unit in meaning, primarily refer to words and their combinations in spoken or written forms, and how individuals make sense of the world around them.

Ferdinand de Saussure, a foundational figure in modern linguistics, proposed a model of language based on the dyadic structure of the "sign." According to Saussure (1983), a linguistic sign consists of two components: the "signifier" (the sound or form of a word) and the "signified" (the concept or meaning associated with the word). Saussure's theory established the idea that meaning is not inherent in words themselves but arises from the relationships between signs within a system. For Saussure (1983), meaning is relational and contingent upon the differences between signs, a view that laid the groundwork for structuralist approaches to language. According to Short (2004), Sanders Peirce developed a triadic model of the sign, which includes the "signifier," the "object" (the thing or concept the sign represents), and the "interpretant" (the meaning or understanding

generated by the sign). Short further stated that Peirce's model underscores the dynamic nature of meaning creation, as the interpretant can vary depending on the individual's interpretation and cultural background. This view expands the scope of signification beyond simple verbal signs to encompass a wider array of symbolic forms and the processes through which meaning is generated.

Methodology

This study adopts the descriptive qualitative approach and is anchored on the Semiotic theory of Roland Barthes (1998). This study is a descriptive survey aimed at investigating the meaning of the safety precaution signs used during the COVID-19 pandemic. A purposive sampling technique was used for this study and in selecting the sample size, ten images of COVID-19 Safety Precaution signs were carefully obtained online. Though we are no longer at the peak period of the pandemic, the precautionary safety signs are still available on the internet. The secondary data are acquired in the form of relevant books and journals.

Analysis and Presentation

1. The Analysis of the Verbal Modes in the Language of Covid-19 Safety Precaution Photographs

Photograph 1



Table 1

S/N	Verbal Texts	Linguistic Arrangements	Font Sizes
1.	Protect yourself from Coronavirus	Imperative, Order, Clause	Small letters, bold print
2.	Frequently wash hands with soap under running water or rub with alcohol hand rub	Imperative, Advise	Small letters with bold print
3.	Good Life	Group Imperative	Upper case, bold print
4.	Avoid close contact with people coughing and sneezing	Imperative Clause	Small letters
5.	Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth	Imperative, Clause	Small letters
6.	When coughing and sneezing, cover mouth and nose with tissue, or bent elbow (dispose of all tissue immediately and wash hands with soap under running water)	Imperative	Small letters
7.	If you choose to wear a face mask, be sure to cover your mouth and nose (avoid touching the mask once it is on)	Imperative	Small letters

The verbal signs identified in the above photograph are seven in number. The first verbal sign that stands as the caption is positioned on the left side of the poster and is positioned in a way that catches the immediate attention of every reader. The imperative sentence is written with an amber

colour in a green background in a trapezium-like shape placed horizontally. It is thematic and an admonishment or caution to every reader and audience to make sure they are well protected from the virus. The second part is the information ‘good life’ presented at the right top indicates that this information is not yet known to the reader and hence, deserves readers' special attention. The words are written in block letters with a white colour and the response to the slogan ‘GOOD LIFE’ is written in small letters on a green background in a trapezium-like shape with an amber colour placed around the borders of the shape vertically. Artistically, ‘GOOD’ is written horizontally which sits on the back of the capital ‘L’ of ‘LIFE’ written vertically. The response ‘live it well’ is also written artistically beneath the capital ‘E’. This indicates that if readers protect themselves from the coronavirus, then, good life is assured.

Frequently wash hands with soap under running water or rub with alcohol hand rub, Avoid close contact with people coughing and sneezing, Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth, When coughing and sneezing, cover mouth and nose with tissue, or bent elbow (dispose of all tissue immediately and wash hands with soap under running water), If you choose to wear a face mask, be sure to cover mouth and nose (avoid touching mask once it is on) are affirmative messages cautioning and admonishing readers on precautions to follow to protect themselves from coronavirus.

Photograph 2



Table 2

S/N	Verbal Texts	Linguistic Arrangements	Font Sizes
1.	COVID-19 is still a threat in 2021	Declarative, Clause	Capital and small letters, bold print
2.	We still need to wash our hands or use hand gel	Clause	Capital and small letters, bold print
3.	World Health Organization	Phrase	Small letters, bold print
4.	Coronavirus	Word	Small letters

From the above photograph, four verbal signs are identified. The first is a declarative sentence “COVID-19 is still a threat in 2021”. This sentence is written boldly in white to catch the attention of readers and a stern warning indicating that COVID is still active in our society. The second verbal sign indicates a preventive measure that must still be active to avoid contracting the virus. The third sign is the world organization which ensured the circulation and distribution of the photographs in public places and hospitals.

Photograph 3



Table 3

S/N	Verbal Texts	Linguistic Arrangements	Font Sizes
1.	Take all COVID-19 vaccine doses recommended to you by your health authority, including a booster dose	Imperative	Capital and small letters, bold print
2.	Being fully vaccinated will help your body develop and maintain protection against serious illness and death. It will also help reduce the likelihood of new variants emerging	Declarative	Small letters
3.	COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Series	Phrase	Capital and small letters

Based on the photograph above, three verbal signs are identified. The first declarative sentence is thematic and positioned at the upper part of the poster. It can be seen with the way it is presented that it is the whole essence of the poster. It is boldly written in white and this means that the sign will definitely catch the attention of every reader.

Being fully vaccinated will help your body to develop and maintain protection against serious illness and death is also an important sign on the poster. It is the second message to be read after the bold one. It is written in white which depicts purity and hale. The readers will immediately understand the message that the vaccine helps reduce the likelihood of new variants emerging. *World Health Organization* is the organization responsible for providing leadership on health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards as regards health-related issues and so on. Readers seeing the emblem of the World Health Organization will give a kind of rest to the mind as it portrays that the organization is involved and gives its utmost support in curbing and preventing the spread of this virus.

COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Series is written in blue coloured ink at the top, and it gives the readers an understanding of what the poster represents. The message is clear that the COVID-19 vaccines do not cause or create variants of the virus that cause COVID-19. Instead, it helps to protect the body and to prevent new variants from emerging.

Photograph 4

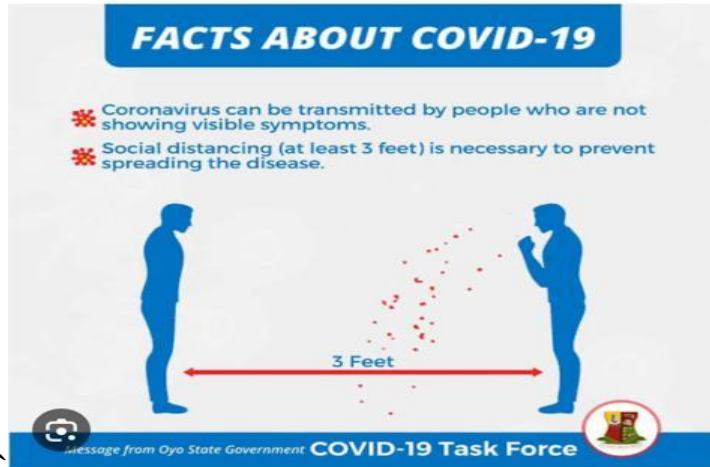


Table 4

S/N	Verbal Texts	Linguistic Arrangements	Font sizes
1.	Facts About COVID-19	Declarative, Phrase	Capital and small letters, bold prints
2.	Coronavirus can be transmitted by people who are not showing visible symptoms	Declarative	Small letters
3.	Social distancing (at least 3 feet) is necessary to prevent the spreading of the disease	Declarative	Small letters
4.	COVID-19 Task Force	Phrase	Capital and Small letters

The verbal sign *Facts about Covid-19* is positioned at the top of the photograph. It is boldly written and well displayed. Every reader knows what to expect immediately after that bold caption is read. There are three other verbal signs found. The imperative texts are the first two glaring signs on the photograph. The first text “*coronavirus can be transmitted by people who are not showing visible symptoms*” is written in blue ink passing awareness to the readers on a fact that needs to be known. The second text “*social distancing is necessary to prevent spreading the disease*” is a representation of the visual sign. It is a safety measure to prevent readers from contracting the virus if a foot distance is kept.

Photograph 5



Table 5

S/N	Verbal Texts	Linguistic Arrangements	Font sizes
1.	If you have any of the COVID-19 symptoms	Subordinate Clause	Capital and small letters
2.	Fever	Word	Capital letters
3.	Cough	Word	Capital letters
4.	Short of breath	Phrase	Capital letters
5.	Tiredness	Word	Capital letters

There are six verbal signs in the photograph above. The first is the sentence “*If You Have Any of the COVID-19 Symptoms*” which is boldly written and also appears to be the theme of the photograph. It is written in white and it indicates that it will catch the attention of readers. This is followed by a list of what to look out for in ensuring that good health is still intact or in a case of occurrence. This photograph informs every reader to be responsible for their safety. The symptoms such as *fever, cough, shortness of breath, and tiredness* are signs to carefully look out for and be careful of.

Photograph 6



Table 6

S/N	Verbal Texts	Linguistic Arrangements	Font Sizes
1.	COVID-19 Prevention	Phrase	Capital and small letters, bold print
2.	Persons with COVID-19 may not show any symptoms	Declarative	Small letters
3.	Practice social distancing	Imperative	Small letters
4.	Wear a face mask	Imperative	Small letters
5.	Carry a hand sanitiser	Imperative	Small letters

The first verbal sign that stands as the theme of the photograph is “COVID-19 PREVENTION” and is boldly written at the centre of the photograph. It can be said that this is the essence of the image as it carries the most attention on the image. The next is the imperative sentence “*Persons with COVID-19 may not show any symptoms*” which is written in lower cases. These sentences direct readers to the list of what is expected in the photograph. It is not as bold as the first because it is not the theme of the photograph. The photograph carries three verbal signs which are the symptoms of COVID-19 that the producer is trying to pass across to every reader and passerby.

Photograph 7



Table 7

S/N	Verbal Texts	Linguistic Arrangements	Font sizes
1.	Symptoms of coronavirus disease	Phrase	Capital letters, bold print
2.	Cough	Word	Capital letters
3.	Fever	Word	Capital letters
4.	Running nose	Phrase	Capital letters
5.	Sore throat	Phrase	Capital letters
6.	Breathing difficulty	Phrase	Capital letters
7.	Helplines in case of emergency	Phrase	Capital letters, bold print

The first verbal sign on the photograph is the phrase “*Symptoms of Coronavirus Disease*”. This sign illustrates what will be experienced if COVID-19 is been contacted. The phrase is written in white colour and boldly for readers to grasp the next important message. Symptoms such as *cough, fever, running nose, sore throat* and *breathing difficulty* are listed boldly on the photograph as possible signs of COVID-19. This is to make sure that everyone can protect themselves and in any case of emergency, the last verbal sign proffers a solution to the problem of what to do next- which is to call either of the emergency lines. The sentence is written in upper cases and boldly for easy sighting.

Photograph 8

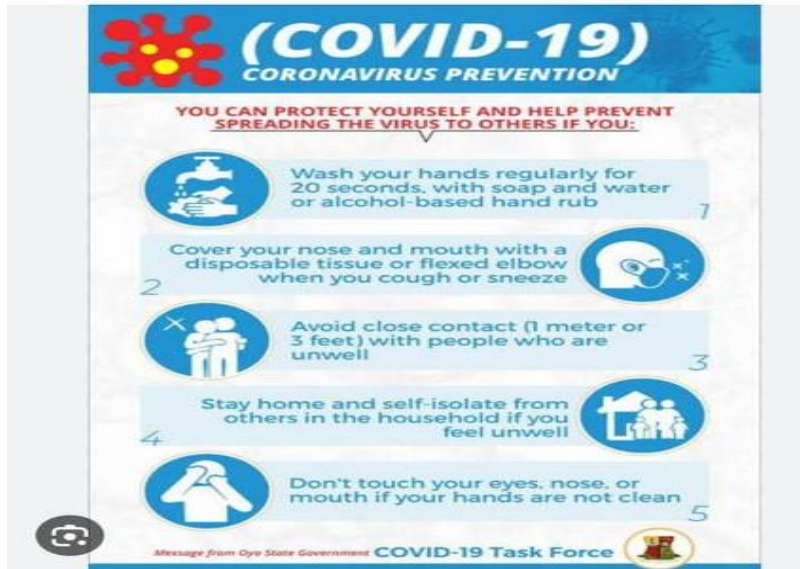


Table 8

S/N	Verbal Texts	Linguistic Arrangements	Font Sizes
1.	COVID-19 Coronavirus Prevention	Phrase	Capital and small letters, bold print
2.	You can protect yourself and help prevent spreading the virus to others if you:	Declarative	Capital letters, bold print
3.	Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub	Imperative	Small letters
4.	Cover your nose and mouth with a disposable tissue or flexed elbow when you cough or sneeze	Imperative	Small letters

5.	Stay home and self-isolate from others in the household if you feel unwell	Imperative	Small letters
6.	Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth if your hands are not clean	Imperative	Small letters

Photograph 9



Table 9

S/N	Verbal Texts	Linguistic Arrangements	Font sizes
1.	Stop	Imperative	Capital letters, bold print
2.	Do not self-medicate	Imperative	Capital letters, bold print
3.	If you have symptoms of coronavirus	Subordinate Clause	Capital letters, bold print
4.	Fever	Word	Capital letters
5.	Cough	Word	Capital letters
6.	Shortness of breath	Phrase	Capital letters
7.	Tiredness	Word	Capital letters

“Stop” is the first imperative boldly written sign on the photograph above. It is a warning to all readers that there is an act that must not be done or cease. The next sign is “*Do not self medicate*” which is an indication of what must not be done. With the way this sentence is presented, it indicates that it is an act no one should indulge in. The next linguistic text is a phrase pointing at a list of likely signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The symptoms are *fever, cough, shortness of breath, and tiredness*.

Photograph 10

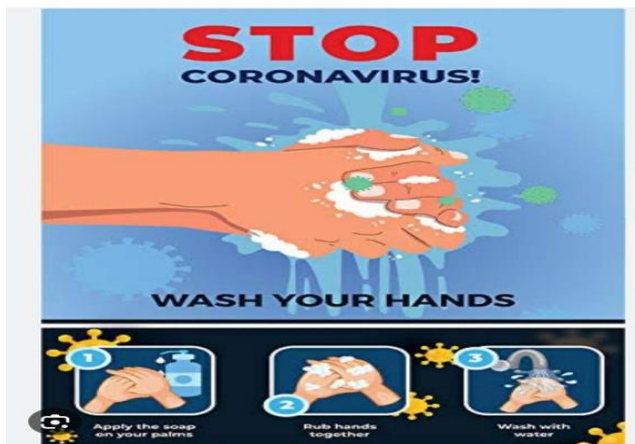


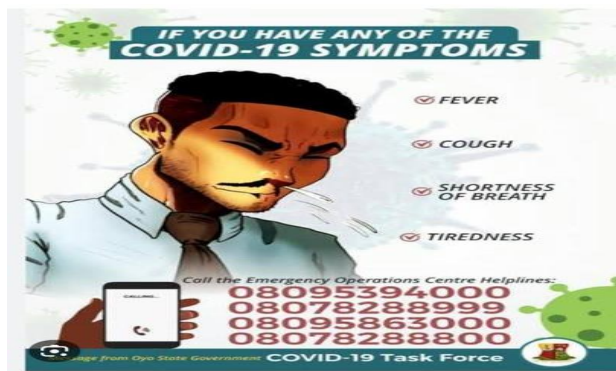
Table 10

S/N	Verbal Texts	Linguistic Arrangement	Font Size
1.	Stop Coronavirus!	Imperative	Capital letters, bold print
2.	Wash Your Hands	Imperative	Capital letters, bold print
3.	Apply the soap on your hands	Imperative	Small letters
4.	Rub hands together	Imperative	Small letters
5.	Wash with water	Imperative	Small letters

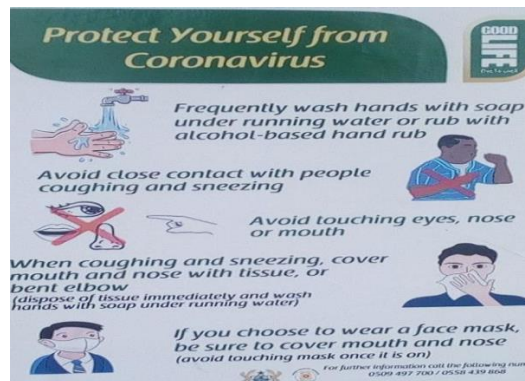
From the photograph, the first bold text indicates that everyone has a responsibility and a part to play in curbing the spread of the virus. This means that the responsibility of stopping the spread of coronavirus is not the responsibility of the government alone but also that of everyone. The word “stop” is boldly embedded in a glaring red colour that indicates danger if not adhered to. It shows that all readers must be ready to protect themselves at all costs from contracting or spreading this virus. It can be seen from the photograph that washing hands is one of the precautionary measures. This text is written boldly for readers to have a better understanding of how to wash and what to have while washing hands. The three steps listed are: *Apply the soap on your hands, Rub hands together* and *wash with water*.

2. Meanings Generated through the Identified Verbal Signs

Photograph 1



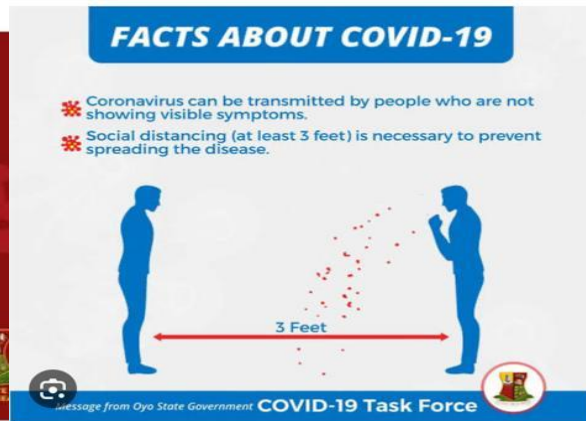
Photograph 2



Photograph 3



Photograph 4



Photograph 5



Photograph 6



The above photographs can be classified as awareness posters. Photograph 1 shows “*If you have any of the COVID-19 symptoms*” as its theme, photograph 2 expresses “*Protect yourself from Coronavirus*” as the main message, photograph 3 displays “*Symptoms of coronavirus disease*” as its major theme, photograph 4 shows “*Facts about COVID-19*”, photograph 5 shows “*COVID-19 Prevention*” and on photograph 6, “*COVID-19 is still a threat in 2021*” is written as the themes. All these photographs portray messages of information and awareness to the general public. The photographs preach alertness and consciousness of the virus through the general hospital in Oyo town. These photographs give facts and messages on precautions and protective steps to take to ensure safety. These photographs also enlightened readers, about the functions each sign serves in

keeping them out of danger, and save even health workers from the danger of being infected with the virus for lack of proper orientation of the symptoms. All the six verbal signs on the above photographs are boldly written for readers. Most of these signs are capitalized for emphasis purposes and the graphics are made clear for clear for attention of the readers. These photographs in general preach to the audience to be knowledgeably conscious, cognizant and alert. They further put readers in the state to perceive, feel, be aware and be conscious of the deadly virus. They give necessary information as it is directly available to bear in the direction of a wide range of behavioural actions.

Photograph 7



The photograph above enlightened readers that, everyone must participate in ensuring safety and not just the obligations of the health workers alone. This photograph can be classified as a cooperation/collaboration photograph. Photograph 7 is themed “(COVID-19) CORONAVIRUS PREVENTION”

Proper education and instructions must be given to everyone to guarantee safety during the period of the pandemic and individuals must take responsibility for their own lives and not rely on others. Everyone must keep to the rules, and regulations and keep to all directives in reducing the risk of the COVID-19 virus.

This photograph educated readers on the fact that information can be shared between them and health workers. Both the people and health workers must work together harmoniously to defeat

the spread of COVID-19. This photograph not only gives information on adjustments of activities but also makes stern warnings to all readers that the goal is to stay safe and this can only be achieved by adhering strictly to the rules slated by the health workers.

Photograph 9

Photograph 8



Photograph 10



The photographs above carry cautionary messages. Photograph 8 has “*Stop Coronavirus*” as its theme, photograph 9 has “*do not self-medicate, if you have symptoms of coronavirus*” as its cautionary message, photograph 10 has “*Take all COVID-19 vaccine doses recommended to you by your health authority, including a booster dose*” as the main message. These photographs give proper information of what is expected of everyone, what must not be done and what must be done. These photographs give directions and sorts of warning to everyone that reads them. With these, all readers who can adhere strictly to all given instructions can live in safety despite the spread of the virus. These photographs in general produce what each sign stands for and the

consequences that might follow if not strictly obeyed. These pictures made readers understand what to do and the need to be cautious and protect their health. It encourages readers not to stop doing what is right- which is following all guidelines and precautions. All information in these photographs is well interpreted with caution to reduce anxiety and emphasize the need to keep safe.

Conclusion

This study revealed different linguistic meanings which featured words, phrases, clauses and sentences (declarative and imperative). Findings from the linguistic meanings also revealed incomplete sentences (phrases) in some of the COVID-19 precaution photographs. The verbal texts identified in the selected photographs are imperative and declarative. The findings further revealed that the verbal texts on the selected photographs are explanatory and not ambiguous.

There is also the structure of prints and fonts in the presentation of the verbal signs in the photographs. Typographic features such as small letters, capital letters and bold prints are employed for emphasis purposes to achieve the aim of creating awareness, appeal for caution and support for cooperation in waging war against the spread of COVID-19. The verbal texts on the photographs are bold and readable and the font sizes are used to grab the attention of the audience.

References

- Barthes, R. 1998. *The Semiotics Challenge*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Ekwutosi S.N, Valentine O.E. & Jude, N.O. (2020). *Nigeria Media Framing of Coronavirus Pandemic and Audience Response*: 10(3):192-199 Published Online on July, 12. doi: 10.34172/hpp.2020.32.
- Esteban M, Jacob F, Maria Paola and Basit Zafar (2020). *The Impact of COVID-19 on Student Experience from a Survey*: NBER Working Paper, No. 27392
- Ferdinand de Saussure (1983). *Course in General Linguistics*. (Bally, C. & Sechehaye, A) New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Fisher, K.A. et.al. (2021). *Attitudes toward a Potential SARS-Voc-2 Vaccine: A Survey of US Adults*. *Ann Intern. Med.* 173, 964-973.
- Glasscoff, B. (2014). Engaging readers through language and pictures. A study of Montessori. *Journal of Semiotician*, 42(13), 2971-2881. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sem.2012.08.13>.
- Liu, J. (2013) "Visual Images Interpretive strategies in multimodal Texts. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*" Vol. 4, no. 6, PP 1259-166.

- Ogunrinde, E.D. & Ajenifari, J.O (2021). *Mood in Language: A lexico-syntactic Analysis of Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) Covid-19 Sensitisation SMS*: Journal of Theory and Practice in Language Studies, Vol.11 No. 7. Academy publication <http://www.academypublication.com>.
- Onipede, F (2022). *Nigerians' Reactions towards COVID-19 Pandemic Health Precautions: A Pragmatic Semiotic Analysis*. International Review of Social Sciences Research 1, no. 1: 1-24
- Radwan, E. (2020). *The Role of Social Media in Spreading Panic among Primary and Secondary School Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Online questionnaire study from the Gaza Strip, Palestine*, Heliyon, 6(2). E05807 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e05807>
- Rinartha, K., Suryass. W., & Kartika. L.G.S. (2019). *Comparative Analysis of String Similarity on Dynamic Query Suggestions*. In 2018 Electrical Power, Electronics, Communications, Controls and Informatics Seminar (EECCIS) (pp.399-404). IEEE.
- Short T.L (2004). *The Development of Pierce's Theory of Signs*: The Cambridge companion to Pierce. New York: Cambridge University Press. Pp 214
- World Health Organization. COVID-19 Weekly Epidemiological Update. [Internet] 2022 [cited 2022 October 18]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/docs/defaultsource/coronaviruse/situationreports>
- Yin, Y (2022). *Study on the Intelligent and Innovative Design of Traditional Graphic Semantics in China*. In 2022 15th International Symposium on Computational Intelligence and Design (ISCID) (pp. 37-41). IEEE.

Comparative Approach to Accommodation Strategies in Selected Doctor-Patient Interactions in The Nupe and Yoruba Contexts

Kifayat Gambari-Olufadi

Department of English, Faculty of Arts,

University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

olufadi.k@unilorin.edu.ng

Abstract

The interactional value of medical discourse is often affected by specific contextual and anthropological issues arising from the diversity in the sociocultural backgrounds of interlocutors. Also, contextual factors impact the interactional value of medical discourse. This study aimed to examine two distinct cultures within the Nigerian setup and their impact on doctor-patient interaction. The study examines how the Nupe and Yoruba anthropological characteristics influence the adoption of accommodation strategies in medical discourses to achieve the communicative goal. Also, how power and ideology are reflected and managed in the medical discourse in these distinct cultures is critically examined in this study. Two purposively selected doctor-patient conversations in the two cultures, Yoruba and Nupe, were analysed using the tenets of Dragojevic, Gasiorek & Giles' (2021) Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). The study found that cultural differences abound in the selected medical discourse under investigation. Also, the use of accommodation strategies depends on the individual linguistic prowess. Despite the fact that the adoption of convergence strategies is an expected norm in medical discourse; power negotiation arising from class and age differences among interlocutors often results to the use of divergence strategy.

Keywords: Doctor-Patient Interaction, Accommodation Strategies, Interactional Value, Communication Function, Yoruba and Nupe

Introduction

It is no doubt that both language use and language in use are context-bound, and these are the bedrock of language variation. Pragmatics is a linguistic approach which examines language use as dictated by contextual variables. From this conceptualisation of pragmatics, it's obvious that the notion of pragmatics itself, as well as the pragmatic concepts, theories, and methodological approaches provide explanations for the various aspects of language variation within and across

cultures. Language in use simply describes the categories of language use in different domains. Such domains include the professional domain, among which is medicine. The peculiarity of professional ethics and norms often shapes language use in such professions, even though other external variables such as social factors and social norms can reshape the way language is used in such domains.

It is based on the above backdrop that this study sets-out to examine selected doctor-patient interactions in Yoruba and Nupe languages using a comparative approach. Among the theories of pragmatics which account for linguistic variation among interlocutors is the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), which explains why interlocutors vary their speech styles to associate with or dissociate from their co-interlocutors. Due to the applicability of the theory of CAT to the analysis of language use in different domains of discourse, the approach has been found relevant to the analysis of the selected data under consideration.

Empirical Review of Literature

Within the purview of linguistics, aspects of sociolinguistic theories have been vastly explored by researchers. For instance, Gambari-Olufadi (2018) examined communication styles and speech accommodation in a family sitcom, *The Johnsons*. In this study, the researcher analysed the speech styles of the characters in the sitcom using the three tenets of Coupland, Coupland and Giles' (1991) Communication Accommodation Theory, which are convergence, divergence and overaccommodation; as well as Adesanoye's variety of the Nigerian English classification, which gives priority to education as a parameter for classifying standard and sub-standard varieties. The study found that the speech style of characters with high levels of education is upward convergence, while the less-educated characters exhibit downward convergence and overaccommodation. In the study, overaccommodation has been associated with code-mixing and code-switching, as well as grammatical infelicities. While Gambari-Olufadi (2018) explored the use of the three accommodation tenets in a family sitcom, this study evaluates doctor-patient interactions using the tools of convergence and divergence.

Apart from Gambari-Olufadi, Gobir and Bello (2020) examined the use of accommodation strategies in domestic conversations, with particular reference to a comic, *The Breadwinner*. In the study, gender-based issues in domestic conversations were examined. More specifically, the

characteristics of men's and women's language, about how they converge, diverge and overaccommodate were considered. The study found that the convergence strategies employed by the female characters include politeness markers, honorifics, modal construct, voice modulation and attitudinal cues. Contrarily, the male characters diverge using impoliteness strategies such as imperatives and vocal intensity. Gobir and Bello's (2020) work is different from the present study as it explores the linguistic strategies of accommodation in a comic, while the present study evaluates language use in medical discourse, especially in selected conversations between doctors and patients in hospital consulting rooms. Also, the present study evaluates the impact of distinct cultures on language use in the medical context.

Aside from the studies mentioned above which centre on the use of the accommodation approach to analysing conversational texts, there have been countless studies, whose focus is on doctor-patient interaction. Among such studies are Odebunmi and Adegbite (2006), Afzaal, Khan, Bhatti and Shahzadi (2019) and Odebunmi (2021). Odebunmi and Adegbite (2006) examined discourse tact in doctor-patient interaction in English using the pragmatic tools of speech act, MCB and politeness. Afzaal, Khan, Bhatti and Shahzadi (2019) investigated doctor-patient interaction using the discourse approach of Sinclair and Coulthard 1975)— IRF, Initiation Response and Feedback as well as van Dijk (2001) critical approach to discourse analysis. The study establishes that there is no compliance with the IRF structure in most of the conversations. Also, while the doctor played dominant role in the exchange, the patient maintains a formal relationship with the doctor, hence, there is no commonality, solidarity and familiarity in the exchange structure in the doctor-patient interaction.

Odebunmi (2021) adopted a socio-cognitive approach to the analysis of doctor-patient interaction in southwest Nigeria. The researcher examined the use of discursive repetitions and voices in Nigerian clinical meetings. In this study, Odebunmi identified four different voices in the context of language use in clinical conversation— the doctor's conjectural voice, the voice of the medical institution, the voice of medical science and the cultural voice, which he attributed to parenting. The study identified that the repetition of non-contiguous constituents and contiguous full and reduced constituents of turns characterised the doctors' language.

The similarities between the studies cited above and the present study rest on the scope of the data, which is the doctor-patient interaction. While Odebunmi and Adegbite (2006) adopted pragmatic approaches to the evaluation of doctor-patient interaction, and Afzaal, et al. (2019) examined doctor-patient interactions using critical discourse approach and discourse concepts, the present study adopts the communication accommodation approach to the analysis of the selected doctor-patient conversations. Odebunmi (2021) investigated doctor-patient interactions in southwest Nigeria using discursive repetitions and voices. However, the present study examines cultural similarities and differences about doctor-patient interaction in two different cultures in northcentral Nigeria, to evaluate whether cultural differences influence the use of accommodation strategies in doctor-patient encounters.

Theoretical Framework

Pragmatics simply studies language use based on the dictates of the underlying contextual factors constituting physiological, sociological and psychological constructs. Accommodation is fundamental to identity construction in pragmatics (Abrams, O'Connor & Giles, 2003, p. 221). In Tajfel and Turner's (1986) conceptualisation of communication within the purview of pragmatics, they stress that both verbal and non-verbal communication are informed by social identity by recognising the importance of self and its relationship to group identity. Hence, Communication Accommodation Theory assumes that communication conveys not only referential but also social and relational information. The referential, social and relational elements through which interlocutors accommodate or dissociates can be categorised under the headings of convergence and divergence.

a) **Convergence**: Convergence is based on attraction (Giles, 2008). When communicators are attracted to one another, they will converge in their conversations. Attraction is a broad term that encompasses several other characteristics, such as liking, charisma, and credibility. Giles and Smiths (1979) posit that a number of factors that affects attraction for others in communication include: having similar belief, having a similar personality, or behaving in similar ways prompt convergence. The linguistic elements of convergence are interpretability strategies, such as decreasing the diversity of vocabulary, simplifying syntax, or becoming louder to increase clarity,

and so on which enable an interlocutor to attend to his partner's ability to comprehend what is being said.

b) **Divergence:** Giles (1980) describes divergence as a tactic of intergroup distinctiveness, by which individuals or groups differentiate themselves from other individuals or groups. Interlocutors accentuate the verbal and nonverbal differences between themselves and others through the use of interpersonal control strategies, such as the use of interruptions or honorifics to remind the partner of their relative status or role are used when speakers are focused on role relationships in an interaction.

c) The linguistic tools that are common to both divergence and convergence, according to Coupland, Coupland Giles and Henwood (1988, p. 6) are approximation strategies. Others are discourse management strategies, such as offering speaking turns and selecting or sharing particular topics of mutual interest or concerns and vice versa, which are used by interlocutors to adjust their verbal and nonverbal behaviours towards or away from their interlocutors.

Methodology

This study examines doctor-patient interactions in two distinct cultures in northcentral Nigeria — the Yoruba and Nupe-speaking communities of Kwara state. Two doctor-patient conversations were purposively collected from the General-Out Patients section of a general hospital in Kwara State. This study adopts a descriptive design and a qualitative research approach. The study is situated within the linguistic discipline of pragmatics and the theoretical framework for the study is Dragojevic, Gasiorek & Giles' (2016) Communication Accommodation Theory.

The research setting in Ilorin, Kwara State Nigeria, where the inhabitants include the Fulanis, Hausas, Barubas, Yorubas, Nupes, and According to Jacob (1999) Nupe is a minority ethnic group dominant in the northcentral part of Nigeria, including Niger state, Kwara, Kogi, and Nasarawa states as well as the Federal Capital Territory. The Nupes are fondly called "Tapa" by the Yoruba-speaking community. Unlike the Nupe, the Yoruba are members of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria, dominant in the south-western states— Oyo, Ekiti, Osun, Ogun, Ondo and Lagos states with the minority in Kwara, Kogi and Edo states.

The data constitute two doctor-patient exchanges in the Yoruba and Nupe languages. The data were collected at the Teaching Hospital of Kwara state, a general hospital, taking cognizance of the ethical issues, especially the patients’ consent, which was sought through the design of a consent form administered to patients at the General Outpatient Department GOPD.

Results

The data constitute doctor-patient conversations in two different linguistic contexts, the Yoruba and the Nupe settings. While the doctor-patient conversation in the Yoruba setting represents datum one, the latter represents datum two. The deployment of the notions of accommodation, convergence and divergence, in each of the conversations are highlighted in the succeeding sections.

Datum One: Background

The doctor-patient conversation takes place at a government hospital. The doctor is a middle-aged young man, while the patient is an aged woman in her 80s. The flow of the conversation reveals that the doctor-patient encounter is the first; there has been no prior encounter between the doctor and the patient.

Accommodation Strategies

The identified strategies of **convergence** in this datum include *acknowledgement, encouragement, complaint and empathy, emotion-laden expressions, name-calling*, including the use of *honorifics, statements of appreciation* and the use of *intensifiers*. These features of convergence as evident in the conversation are presented in the extract below:

Extract 1

Yoruba	English Translation
Dokita: Ekaaro ma, Ero ra ma Patient: Eseun o Dokita: Mama e fi ara bale wole ti yin ni mon se	Doctor: Good morning ma, welcome ma Patient: Thank you

<p>Patient: Hmm dokita ese yii ni o Dokita: moti ri be mama epele, <i>ejo</i> ko ma Patient: Eseun <i>gan ni</i> o modupe</p>	<p>Doctor: Mama, take your time, come inside gently. I am here at your service ma Patient: hmm doctor it is my leg o Doctor: I have observed it mama. <i>Sorry</i>, you can have your seat. Patient: Thank you <i>so much</i> I am <i>indeed</i> grateful</p>
---	--

According to Giles, Coupland and Coupland (1991), in doctor-patient conversation, apart from social norms, social differences dictate and shape the level of accommodation, as to convergence or divergence. In the extract above, the age difference between the doctor and the patient is an underlying social factor that determines the level of convergence of the doctor. The degree of the doctor’s convergence is higher; the doctor adopts more acknowledgement, encouragement and empathy, emotion-laden expressions, name-calling, “Mama” and an honorific “ma”, in his speech styles. However, the patient’s level of convergence is minimal as she only reciprocates the acknowledgement and uses an intensifier “gaan— indeed” in the later part of the conversation.

Age difference can be said to ascribe more power to the patient over the doctor. The doctor uses “ma” repeatedly, while the patient uses the word, “doctor” once in the exchange. This reflects the interlocutors’ use of interpersonal control strategies. While the use of “ma” illustrates convergence towards the patient, a means of providing emotional treatment; the patient’s choice of “dokita— doctor” is illustrative of social distance.

Other means of providing emotional treatment and maintaining convergence by the doctor include the use of the emotional-laden words, “please” and “sorry”. The patient’s converging strategy is using appreciation “thank you”. In all, it has been observed that the doctor is more cautious towards the patient and aside from the job role and social role of the doctor, age difference has been the underlying factor behind the doctor’s speech style.

The patient maintains *divergence* by topic change. The patient’s statement, “Hmm doctor it is my leg o” illustrates divergence from the existing discourse pattern, which is the salutation. Even

though the patient changes the topic, the doctor still converges through his display of compassion for the patient.

Extract 2

Dokita: Epele, ema binu o, omo dun me lo ni yin na?	Doctor: Sorry, please do not be offended, how old are you ma?
Patient: Haa kosi iyonu,ibeere nla ni yen o. Ewo ewu ori mi ki efi di won ojo ori mi	Patient: Haa there is no problem— that is a big question, look at me and estimate with my grey hair.
Dokita: Oda mama, ikunle melo le ni? Se e binu mama ese yin loje kin beere.	Doctor: It is alright how many children do you have? I hope you are not offended.
Patient: ko buru, ise yin len se, ipele kerin ni omo ti o tele mi wa	Patient: There is no problem, it is your duty, the young man with me is my fourth generation.
Dokita: haa mama, ojo ti pe o ki le wa ba wa	Doctor: Haa, it’s been a long time, What complaint do you have?
Patient: Dokita ese yii no ni o	Patient: Doctor, it is my leg.
Dokita: idi timo fin beere gbogbo ibeere mi ni yen	Doctor: That is the reason for all my questions mama
Dokita: le yin yen nko?	Doctor: anything else?
Patient: pirin	Patient: nothing else

The opening of this extract illustrates divergence on the part of the doctor by topic change. Even though the doctor diverges, the patient’s initial response illustrates convergence-divergence-convergence postures as she displays surprise through the use of the exclamation, “Haa” and

satisfaction, by stating that “kosi iyonu— there is no problem” but later displays reluctance to answering the question and giving indirect response by stating that: “ibeere nla ni yen o, Ewo ewu ori mi ki efi di won ojo ori mi — that is a big question, look at me and estimate with my grey hair.

Extract 3

<p>Dokita: mo ri pe won ti wo ifunkpa yin. Kosi ito suga pelu. Mama, ikunle yin ati agba lo de ti ofa ese didun aafun yin ni ogun ti o royin lorun ti o ni pa yin lara ma</p>	<p>Doctor: I have seen your blood pressure report on your folder and no diabetes too Mama, It is child labour and old age that caused the leg pain. I will prescribe a mild pain relief for you ma.</p>
<p>Patient: Eseun gan ni o agba ti de looto ni o. Emo ibi ti ese yii ti rin de to ri ki ale jeere</p>	<p>Patient: Thank you so much, it is truly old age. Do you know how many kilometres I have walked just to make gains from my wares?</p>
<p>Dokita: ko ye mi mama. Irin to ri ke ba le jeere</p>	<p>Doctor: I do not understand mama, you walked the distance to make gains</p>
<p>Patient: ti aba wo oko eere die la mari ni</p>	<p>Patient: if we make use of transport, it will affect our gains.</p>

The discourse opening in the extract above is indicative of divergence by virtue of topic change. The topic has changed in this extract from the cross-examination of the patient in the previous extract, to identify the nature of the patient’s ailment by the doctor. Here, the doctor reaches a conclusion regarding the patient’s symptoms— “old age”. While the doctor diverges, the patient converges as she agrees with the doctor’s conclusion. Indicators of convergence in the patient’s remarks include *appreciation* and an exposition of the previous exploits of the patient. The patient,

however, does this through the use of rhetorical questions, for achieving indirect speech acts of stating, emphasising, and bragging.

The doctor’s reaction to the patient’s claims was a divergence as he indirectly condemns the patient’s point of view. Here, social distance, which reflects the age difference between the interlocutors, could be felt. Instead of the doctor condemning the patient openly, he hedges. Trying to appeal to the doctor’s emotive sense, the patient went further to justify her actions in the past.

Extract 4

<p>Dokita: mama, moba yin dupe eri aiye lo Ipele merin, open la ni o</p>	<p>Doctor: Mama I thank God on your behalf you have seen four generations.</p>
<p>Patient: Adupe, ope e po, ore nla ni</p>	<p>Patient: I am grateful, it is by grace, its truly a big gift.</p>
<p>Dokita: iru ore yii wunmi o, epele ma. Odi igba mi mama</p>	<p>Doctor: I seek for such blessings, take it easy mama, till next time.</p>

This extract is an extension of the previous one. Here, the doctor, as a result of the social distance, which is dictated by the age difference between the doctor and patient, has converged by acknowledging the patient for living long and going ahead to seek such grace. Both doctor and patient, in this extract, converge.

Datum Two: *Background*

The conversation takes place at a university teaching hospital between a young lady (the patient) and a female doctor. The flow of the conversation reflects that the doctor-patient interaction is not the first between the participants as the doctor is aware of the patient’s medical history. This exposition reflects a common ground between the patient and the doctor.

Accommodation Strategies: Extract 3

Nupe	English Translation
Patient: Kube lazhi, nna mi	Patient: good morning ma
Doctor: Kube lazhi, ke we wo be yina no?	Doctor: good morning, how are you doing today?
Patient: Me jebo, kube tun, nna mi	Patient: fine, thank you ma

Like in the first datum, the strategy of convergence, which opens the conversation is *greeting*. However, while the Doctor initiates the greeting in the previous data, the patient opens the discourse here. Not only this, the choice of the *honorific*, “ma” is associated with the doctor’s speech style in datum one. The patient uses the honorific in this datum. This is a clear indication of the fact that age is an important determinant of convergence in doctor-patient interaction, which also reflects the social distance, thereby making one of the parties more powerful.

Extract 2

Doctor: Ki la wo be asibiti in no?	Doctor: So what brings you to my office today?
Patient: Me a wo atan nakan me bo, Yina man I afo na mia be asitin na	Patient: I started developing new pains and today is my check-up day.
Doctor: Toh, lugwa mi cin takada wo na... Ina man ga yigo. To wo bebe wo gaye mi a na jiwo ne ko wa cin lakan wo ne?	Doctor: Okay, let me check your file and see... Today is indeed your check-up day. So, are you here to report any new pains or it's just the usual check-up you want to go through?

In the extract above, the discourse opening reflects divergence from the previous theme of the discussion which was greetings. Even though the doctor diverges, the patient converges by

providing answers to the query. The doctor’s response indicates divergence. Here, the power relation between the interlocutors is at play. The doctor’s response is indicative of someone with more power. The social distance, based on age and status is the major factor responsible for the doctor’s choices, including the underlying tone.

Patient: mi ga jin me awo atan sosei nakan kpeci mibo	Patient: I discovered new pains that can be frustrating and annoying.
Doctor: Baa bo?	Doctor: In what area of your body?
Patient: zuma tako mibo, gwalagi mibo and to vokpa mi zhewo	Patient: my lower back, my phalanges my knee ma
Doctor: Focin wun ce o?	Doctor: when did this pain start?
Patient: Wu de satin nini	Patient: it started sometime last week, ma
Doctor: Wu de satin nini ani?	Doctor: sometimes last week
Patient: Nba, nna mi	Patient: yes ma

This extract is an extension of the previous one. The patient’s choice of emotional laden vocabulary in her first turn is indicative of convergence; an attempt to make the doctor understand her pains. Not only this, the patient’s description of her physiological characteristics which are affected is further proof of convergence. However, the patient’s choice and use of the honorific, “ma” repeatedly indicates a social distance between the interlocutors, hence she diverges. Going by the norm of doctor-patient interaction, the doctor has more power as she plays the lead role in the conversation, however, she converges. The use of the accommodation strategies by participants from Yoruba and Nupe contexts indicate similarities in terms of the use of honorifics

Extract 4

<p>Doctor: Toh, ce fedun ar wo lo tsu bashampo, ta bami, mi ci wo le, to bo mi ka cigbe ya wo. Toh, abona sukun?</p> <p>Patient: hmm, wun tan!</p> <p>Doctor: Wen tan we abo?</p> <p>Patient: nba</p> <p>Doctor: Toh, to abo? Lugwa mi ci bici kukungi. Abo?</p> <p>Patient: Nba</p> <p>Doctor: Wen tan we abo sosei?</p> <p>Patient: Aa, sei we gala egwa tun abo, wun ga we tan mi sosei.</p> <p>Doctor: Mi ga la egwa tu abo, nga we tan we yo?</p> <p>Patient: Nba nna mi.</p> <p>Doctor: Toh, da fedun ta asa o.</p>	<p>Doctor: Okay, can you sit on the bed over there close to the wall, let me examine you so I can diagnose and prescribe some drugs. Okay, how about here?</p> <p>Patient: Oww...Umm it's painful! (inaudible)</p> <p>Doctor: Is it painful around this area?</p> <p>Patient: yes</p> <p>Doctor: Okay...what of...Let me check your ankle area and let me see.... This side?</p> <p>Patient: Yes</p> <p>Doctor: Is it extreme on this part?</p> <p>Patient: No, it's only when you go through this part that it is extreme.</p> <p>Doctor: You said when I check this part that it's extreme?</p> <p>Patient: Yes ma</p> <p>Doctor: Okay...so okay you can sit back on the chair.</p>
---	---

The interlocutors converge by virtue of politeness, emotional expression, and confession. While the doctor maintains a polite disposition to the patient in the questioning section, the patient's response to touch is illustrative of convergence as the patient is capable of hiding the pain if the

patient is concerned about self-esteem. Even though the doctor gives instruction, she does so cautiously using the modal auxiliary, *can* repeatedly. On the contrary, the patient demonstrates social distance through the adoption of the honorific, *ma*.

Extract 5

<p>Doctor: Your pains look serious. It looks very very serious but...Okay. Do you have erm temperature sometimes, like fever, like mild fever?</p> <p>Patient: Yes, I do sometimes, but</p> <p>Doctor: Coupled with the pains?</p> <p>Patient: Yes, sometimes if the pain is concentrated on the back, the back will be hot, just that back. If it's concentrated on the knee, the knee will be hot like, heated up</p>	<p>Doctor: Atan we tan sosei. Wu tan sosei. Am toh We da nakan wonan kandoci, ka degi oo?</p> <p>Patient: Nba, mi a dey, Ama</p> <p>Doctor: Be atan nana?</p> <p>Patient: Nba, kandoci atan na kuba zuman mi, zuman ce tan mi sosei, ama un ga kuba vokpa mi wan ce tan mi ke agun ananna</p>
---	---

In the extract, the doctor converges to the patient's report by establishing the existence of *pain*. The use of the intensifier “*very*” repeatedly is an indication of over-accommodation. The patiently adjusts to the doctor's speech style by providing details in support of the doctor's questions. She also enhances convergence by “being” explicit.

Extract 6

<p>Doctor: Toh, kandoci we wo ke zana agicin aba nya na?</p> <p>Patient: Kandoci, agicin aba mi nya</p>	<p>Doctor: Okay. Do you lose your appetite, like various types of the day?</p> <p>Patient: I lose my appetite sometimes.</p>
---	--

<p>Doctor: We ma aginci gi kafin wo be asibiti na?</p> <p>Patient: Mi a kunu fi.</p> <p>Doctor: Kunu...Won ge! ama wun guna wa gi ancin sosei na to bo nakan kpece wo bo. We wo agami ko? We kpe gan agye wen kpoka na? Baa bo wuncin, we fin nuwo kami dondo?</p> <p>Patient: Mi gin gorgondo, ama nji sosei.</p> <p>Doctor: Nuwo gukin we fin fo ni o? lita gukin?</p> <p>Patient: Mi e fin kwalaba guba foni....</p> <p>Doctor: We lo fin zo?</p> <p>Patient: Mi jin kokari mi ama gafi ga mi fin kadonci oo. Mi a fi zo wa.</p>	<p>Doctor: Did you have anything before coming to my office here?</p> <p>Patient: I had custard</p> <p>Doctor: Custard...wow okay you need to be eating more because this might add to what's wrong with you. Do you understand me? And you know your blood is sickle cell? And aside from that, do you drink enough water daily?</p> <p>Patient: I try my best but I feel like I'm not trying enough.</p> <p>Doctor: In a day, how like, how many amount of water do you drink?</p> <p>Patient: I have a two-litre water bottle but ...</p> <p>Doctor: Do you finish it?</p> <p>Patient: I always try my best but I end up drinking only half or sometimes very close to the bottom but I don't use to finish it.</p>
---	--

At the discourse opening, the doctor diverges by topic change but the patient converges by providing answers to the doctor's questions. The third turn indicates divergence as the doctor deviates from her professional role to over-accommodate by scolding the patient; this is a demonstration of a kinship role. Divergence here can be associated with the peculiarity of the

socio-cultural context for the exchange as well as the social variable of age which gives the older person dominance over the young.

The doctor diverges through the demonstration of impoliteness by rebuking the patient. This is indicated through the use of the expression— *you know your blood is sickle cell*. This statement is face threatening, the doctor is not conversant in the self-esteem of the patient. The doctor’s speech style triggers a reaction from the patient too, as she demonstrates divergence by being judgmental of herself. The doctor’s intimidation can be felt in the patient’s response (tone). This is illustrated in the expression, *I try my best but I feel like I'm not trying enough*. Again, the age difference is what makes the patient adopt this method as the societal norm of interaction in the Nigerian context frowns at an elder being disrespected by the young.

Extract 7

<p>Doctor: Wo kpe ga wun go ina wa ce fin nuwo do guna. Agye we gbonka, aze wulegi wen yo. Wun gun na we a fin nuwo sosei to bona kaga wa fin nuwo sosei, agye a dazen sosei.</p> <p>Kagan we fin nuwo sosei, we a ce de azozhi nakan wo bo kami dondo be asu ga be damuwa. We won a gami?</p> <p>Patient: Mba, nna mi, mi ga nuwo fin mi be.</p>	<p>Doctor: You know you need to drink enough water. Your blood is sickle cell, you're a sickle celled patient. You need to drink enough water because if you don't drink enough water, it won't push the blood to circulate all round your body.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">If you stop drinking water, there are times that you'll just have this... mid crisis midway, you can be outside, it can be anywhere and you'll just start feeling pains all around and it can make you extremely uncomfortable. Do you understand me?</p> <p>Patient: Yes ma, I will increase my water intake ma</p> <p>Doctor: Yes, it can be a factor to what's wrong with you as at now, so let me write something for you to take to the pharmacy so just get those</p>
---	---

<p>Doctor: Nba, anana zhi ga yi a na zhi gawasuna, ama lugwa mi ka cigbe ye wen.</p> <p>Patient: Kube tun, nna mi.</p>	<p>drugs and you should be good to go, up and running in no time</p> <p>Patient: (inaudible) Thank you ma</p>
--	---

This extract is an extension of the previous one as the doctor’s demonstration of divergence is still evident. Instead of making medical cases as a basis for correcting the patient’s lifestyle which impacts her well-being, through counselling, the doctor subjects the patient to scolding, a demonstration of power and dominance based on the distance in age and status. The doctor’s adjustment mechanism, a form of correctional procedure for converging is demonstrated through the expression— *Do you understand me?* to which the patient’s response indicates convergence by her understanding of the discourse background. This is what we can regard as Mutual Contextual Beliefs (MCB).

Extract 8

<p>Doctor: Gu kin na wa fin cigbe na dana. gin kokari wa fin so guba foni. Ga baci man, fin sosei.</p> <p>Patient: Nba, nna mi.</p> <p>Doctor: Me kpe na gala mi ye jin bayani nana zhi ya wo na.</p> <p>Patient: Nba, nna mi.</p>	<p>Doctor: This is the prescription. Make sure you use the (*) twice daily. Don't miss it, and drink enough water.</p> <p>Patient: Yes ma</p> <p>Doctor: I understand why I'm expatiating on that fact. Drink enough water.</p> <p>Patient: Yes ma.</p> <p>Doctor: Okay, when you go outside, call the next person in.</p> <p>Patient: Okay</p>
--	---

Doctor: Toh, wo ga da den, yi zandonci ya mi Patient: Toh Doctor: Kube tun! Patient: Kube tun, nna mi Doctor: Sa aka doci. Patient: Kube tun, nna mi, Sa aka!	Doctor: Thank you! Patient: Thank you ma. Doctor: See you next time Patient: Thank you ma. Bye bye!
--	--

Power relation and dominance are reflected in the opening of the discourse as the doctor demonstrates instruction and impoliteness rather than appeal such as *making sure*; an illustration of divergence. The patient, however, converges to the doctor’s remarks but her responses are clear indications of age and class distinctions; the use and repetition of *ma*.

2. Discussion of Findings

Nigeria as a West-African nation is a multilingual and multicultural context. In the existing cultures in Nigeria, among which are the Yoruba and Nupe cultures, it is the social norm to respect everyone at first encounter irrespective of their age, gender or role relationship, be it close or distant. Greeting is simply the foundation of maintaining a social relationship in these contexts. One can say that the doctor’s and patient’s awareness of this basic social norm dictates the opening of the doctors-patients encounter, which is illustrative of convergence in the two linguistic contexts examined.

Also, culturally, it is the norm that if any of the age groups should be rude, it should be the elderly, not the younger ones. This aligns with the proverbial (Yoruba) saying that: *agaba l’a fi re omode je, a ki f’omode r’agba je*— meaning, that: we use adulthood to cheat the young, a child cannot

override the elderly. This rule applies in some instances in the data analysis, one of which is in extracts 6, 7 and 8 of datum 2.

Another important deduction forms the analysis of the accommodation strategies in the doctor-patient conversations from the two contexts under study, Yoruba and Nupe, respectively, is the fact that even though age attributes power to the older interlocutor, the doctor controls the conversation, through the use of interrogative expressions. However, the doctor uses the power of interrogation to converge or diverge.

Conclusion

In this study, the accommodation strategies in doctor-patient interaction have been examined. From the data analysis, it has been found that even though there are professional ethics guiding doctors' linguistic choices in medical consultation, underlying socio-cultural norms and values override professional ethics in the demonstration of their jobs. An illustration of how this applies to the doctor-patient interaction in a multilingual set-up is reflected in the conversation between the doctor and patient in datum 2 extracts 6, 7 and 8 of datum 2. A more important point to note is that culture overrides linguistic resources. Even though Yoruba and Nupe are two distinct languages, the cultural practices of the two tribes are interwoven, hence the study concludes that culture plays an important role in shaping social interactions irrespective of type or genre of discourse or the formative rules guiding linguistic usages in specific contexts of situation. Lastly, from the analysis, the study establishes that there is no remarkable cultural practice of the Nupe and Yoruba people that influences doctor-patient interactions.

References

- Abrams, J., O' Connor, J. & Giles H. (2003). Identity and Intergroup Communication. In Gudykunst, W.B.(Ed.), *Cross-cultural and Intercultural Communication*. Sage.
- Adebite, W & Odeunmi, A (2006). Discourse tact in doctor-patient interactions in English: An Analysis of Diagnosis in Medical Communication in Nigeria. In *NORDIC Journal of African Studies*. 12-31 <https://doi.org/10.53228njas.v15i4.40>.
- Afzaal,M., Khan,M., Bhatti, A.& Shahzadi,A. (2019). Discourse and Corpus based Analysis of Doctor-Patient Conversation in the Context of Pakistani Hospital. RMIT University Australia. <http://www.european-science.com>.

- Coupland, N., Coupland, J. & Giles, H. (1991) Accommodation Theory Communication, Context, and Consequence. In Coupland, N., Coupland, J. & Giles, H. (Eds.), *Contexts of Accommodation: Developments in Applied Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511663673.001>.
- Dragojevic, M., Gasiorek, J. & Giles, H. (2016) Communication Accommodation Theory. In Berger, R., Charles, & Rollof, E. Micheal (Ed.) *The International Encyclopedia of International Communication*, Wiley & Sons Publisher. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118540190.wbeic006>.
- Gambari- Olufadi, K. (2018) Communication Style and Speech Accommodation in Conversation in *The Johnsons. Journal of the English Scholars Association of Nigeria (JESAN)*, 20, 340-355.
- Giles, H. (1980). Accommodation Theory: Some new directions. In S. de Silva (Ed.). *Aspects of linguistic behaviour*. York University Press.
- Giles, H. & Smith, P. M. (1979). Accommodation theory: Optimal levels of convergence. In Giles, H. & St. Clair, R. N. (Eds.) *Language and Social Psychology*. Oxford.
- Gobir, M. T. & Bello, M. (2021). Accommodation strategies in domestic conversations: A sociolinguistic analysis of *The Breadwinner*. 2 (1). 58-72.
- Jacob, H. L. (1999) *Transtalors and Language Engineering in Nigeria: A case study of Nupe Language News Translators*. Montreal University Press
- Odebunmi, A. (2021). Discursive Repetition and Voices in Nigerian Clinical Meetings In *Ghana Journal of Linguistics*, 10 (1), 27-72. <https://doi/10.4314/gjl.v10i1.367>.
- Tajfel, H. & Turner, J. C. (1986) The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations*. Nelson-Hall.
- Turner, L. H. & West, R. (2010). *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application*. New York: McGraw-Hill

**Sisterhood as Survival Strategy: Overcoming Child-marriage Trauma in Phebe Jatau's
*The Hounds, and Maryam Bobi's Bongel***

Avwata Elizabeth Erivona

Department of English and Literary Studies

College of Humanities and Culture,

Osun State University, Osogbo.

elierivona@gmail.com 08051234646

Abstract

Child marriage is a pervasive issue affecting millions of girls globally but more so in developing countries. Africa has one of the highest prevalence of child marriage globally while Nigeria has one of the highest prevalence in the continent. Within Nigeria, the prevalence varies with the north having the highest rate. The practice of child marriage is a violation of the rights of the child and it has negative devastating consequences for the girl child. Victims of child marriage are exposed to intersectional abuse and oppression which leaves them traumatized. Reflecting the social realities in their environment, the pathetic plight of the child bride is reflected by Maryam Bobi and Phebe Jatau in their literary works. However, despite the devastating trauma that the protagonists were subjected to, the authors contend that the victims can be liberated, empowered, and self-actualized. Using Maryam Bobi's *Bongel* and Phebe Jatau's *The Hound* as the critical literary text for the analysis, Obioma Nnaemaka's Nego feminism with particular emphasis on her sisterhood concept is the theoretical framework. It is discovered that though child marriage is a patriarchal supported practice that constitutes a threat to the girl child emancipation, female friendship offers comfort, support, stability, and healing in addition to helping victims overcome the ravages of child marriage and navigate the victims toward the pursuit of their dreams and eventual elevation. The authors demonstrate and assert the possibility of female friendship and sisterhood support in liberating and empowering victims of child marriage.

Keywords: Female friendship, Sisterhood, Child-marriage, Liberation, Empowerment.

Introduction

Child marriage, defined as a marriage before the age of 18 is a pervasive issue affecting millions of girls worldwide. Although child marriage affects both sexes, girls are disproportionately affected as they are the majority of the victims and have a ratio of six to one in comparison with

their male counterparts. With this understanding, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF, 2007) defines child marriage as “Any marriage carried out below the age of 18 before the girl is physically, physiologically and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibility of marriage and childbearing”. The practice of child marriage is noteworthy in the poor countries of the world and within the poor sections of most given country’s populations. Africa has the highest rate of child marriage globally, with 38% of girls married before the age of 18(UNICEF,2020), while Nigeria has one of the highest rates in Africa with 43%of girls married before the age of 18. However, the rates vary quite significantly across Nigeria as the Northern part of Nigeria has the highest rates of child marriage in contrast with the other regions. The practice of child marriage is a violation of the rights of the child and it has significant negative effects on the emotional, health, and psychological well-being of the child (Ahmed, 2017). Many interrelated factors can be said to be the cause of the high prevalence of this practice in the region. This includes the existence of cultural and religious norms that promote child marriage. For instance, countries with a preponderance of Islamic belief in “child or early marriage” are known to have a high prevalence of child marriage since influential religious leaders often support the practice and voice strong opposition to campaign against it. Poverty is another significant factor that encourages child marriage as families view early marriage as a means of reducing financial burden (Oxfam 2017). Cultural and societal norms also play a role, with child marriage often seen as a way to preserve family honour and protect girls from premarital sex (Murray 2018). In recent times, security issues, armed banditry and abduction of school pupils have further expanded the surge of child marriage. Such girls who marry early are more likely exposed to intersectional abuses such as domestic. A crop of female writers from northern Nigeria reflects the social reality of the victims of child marriage in their works. They not only reveal the pathetic plight of young girls forced into early marriage under a suppressing patriarchal system but also highlight how intersectional abuse and exploitation leave them traumatized and devastated. However, the writer goes on to suggest that through the strategy of women's friendship and sisterhood support the victim of child marriage can be helped and empowered to overcome child trauma and its devastating impact.

Female writers have in various instances in the past relied on the concept of sisterhood as one of their weapons to challenge the patriarchal system that has oppressed women in their society. Within feminism, sisterhood refers to the bond of solidarity and support among women. The

concept of sisterhood has been a constant theme in literature, particularly in the works of other female writers. As African female writers came to the scene, with Nwapa's *Efuru* in 1966, they exploited the theme of sisterhood support and female bonding in their works to help each other. This theme is woven into various literary works of African female writers. In Bauchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979), sisterhood support plays a crucial role in the lives of female characters, particularly the protagonist Nnu Ego, she finds solace in her relationship with fellow market women who provide emotional support. In Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter*, the author explores the strength of the female relationship and how two friends Aissatou and Ramatoulaye assist and support each other as they grapple with the challenge of marriage, family, and identity in Senegalese society. In Chimamanda's *Americanah*, female friendship and support in the life of the protagonist, Ifemelu helps her to cope as she navigates the challenge of immigration, identity, and relationships. Zaynab Alkali in *The Descendants* equally utilizes the concept of sisterhood and female friendship between her protagonists. Seytu and Glo to achieve self-actualization for Setyu who is a victim of child marriage.

Methods and Material

In this paper, two northern Nigerian authors, Maryam Bobi, and Phebe interrogate the possibility of using female friendship as a strategy of liberating and elevating traumatized child brides. Obioma Nnaemeka stated in her proponent "that women appropriate and refashion oppressive space through friendship, sisterhood, and solidarity and in the process reinvent themselves" (Nnaemeka 1997 p. 67). With the above assertion, Nnaemeka is of the view that the suffering of the oppressed and repressed African woman can be lightened by the friendship and support of fellow women. To this effect, such a show of alliance and solidarity empowers victims strengthens them emotionally, psychologically, and financially, and navigates them toward self-actualization. In African society, women frequently refer to one another as sisters out of a sense of togetherness. This sisterhood is manifested in the cooperation rather than the competition with each other. African women also share a collective identity, where individual interests are subsumed by the needs of the community, as seen in the common practice of African women sharing the responsibilities of things such as childcare, household chores, and economic activities with themselves in their community (Nnaemeka, 2004). Mama(1996) affirms that African women's communalism is characterized by mutual support and solidarity among women who often provide

emotional, financial, and practical assistance to one another. Sisterhood is thus one of the traits of African womanism in that it refers to the reality of women in Africa who are communal, looking out for the good of others rather than being individualistic. Nego feminism as a brand of African feminism draws on this innate nature of African women and advocates for its use as a tool for the emancipation of the oppressed gender. In this wise, Obioma Nnaemeka's feminist theory, known as Nego feminism with emphasis on the concept of sisterhood offers a realistic framework for this study. The employment of this theory enables a feminist strategic avenue to assist the girl child who goes through intersectional oppression, such as child marriage by rendering support and empowering victimized child brides to achieve gender equality. Nnaemeka argues that an appropriate feminist theory must recognize and adapt to specific cultural, historical, and social contexts, she thus suggests that feminist engagement in Africa should focus on collaboration, negotiation, and compromise, in contrast to Western feminism which seeks to challenge, disrupt, and deconstruct (Nnaemaka, 2004).

Nnaemaka describes Nego-feminism as no-ego feminism and negotiation. In her words, she asserts that; 'in the foundation of shared values in many African cultures are the principles of negotiation, give and take, compromise, and balance. Here, negotiation has the double meaning of "give and take/exchange" and "cope with successfully/go around." African feminism challenges through negotiations and compromise. It knows when, where, and how to detonate patriarchal land mines; it also knows when, where, and how to go around patriarchal land mines. In other words, it knows when, where, and how to negotiate with or negotiate around patriarchy in different contexts" (2004: 377 – 378). Writing on the relevance of sisterhood support, she insists that female friendship and sisterhood are essential components of African women's lives that should be utilized and reclaimed to achieve the goal of gender equality. Nnaemeka thus emphasizes the cultural significance and empowering potential of sisterhood and female friendship in Africa and extension Nigeria. The two authors contend through their narratives that the well-being, happiness, and ultimate victory of these victims of child marriage are intricately connected with the lives of other women. The authors explore diverse forms of deep and honest friendship between the child brides and other women who help and support them physically, financially, and emotionally.

In *Bongel*, Bobi reveals that Bongel's childhood is lost to an early marriage at the age of twelve to a sixty-five-year-old Alhaji where she is traumatized as a child-bride. A teen pregnancy results in

birth complications that culminate in a stillbirth and obstetric fistula, factors that lead to her abandonment and divorce. However, a fresh start as a student brings her to develop close friendships with Kauthar and Salma. These women's bonds help her to cope with the negative consequences of child marriage and the challenges she encounters.

Jatau's *The Hound* is a poignant portrayal of the complexities and traumatic effects of early marriage and the eventual liberation of the victim through the tool of sisterhood support and female friendship. Jatau's protagonist Rebecca is abused and repressed in an early marriage to Mr. James who later abandons her with "a hydrocephalus baby" (The Hound 90). Traumatized and left alone with a special needs child and without an obvious means of survival, Rebecca is perplexed about how to cope with her plight. However, in line with Nnaemeka's Neco feminism which encourages the identification of coping mechanisms by females in a patriarchal setup, the author employs sisterhood support and female friendship to elevate her from her trodden state.

Sisterhood as a Ray of Sunshine in Adversity in Bobi's *Bongel*

In *Bongel*, there is a focus on the peculiarities of sisterhood through the friendship of Bongel and Kauthar and later Salma. Bongel and Kauthar met on the first day of resumption at the university during the registration process. Bongel has just been admitted into the university on a state government scholarship after her ordeal in child marriage and the hurdles of surgeries for obstetric fistula. Grateful for the scholarship that covers her tuition, she is at a loss on how she will sustain herself in terms of feeding and other personal needs while on campus. As providence would have it, she and Kauthar meet and become close intimate friends. They start by "sitting beside each other in class. Whoever got to class first reserved a sit for the other" (*Bongel p 12*) and "hanging out at the Sultan cafeteria for lunch breaks" (*Bongel p:11*). Their friendship develops to the extent that "it became common knowledge that to find one of them, you must first look for the other person" (*Bongel p:11*). Their bond was obvious to everyone, "the peak of it came when Kauthar decided to move in with Bongel from campus instead of coming from home as she used to do" (*Bongel p;12*) the relationship is so knitted that "*Bongel* could hardly imagine life without Kauthar. They advise and empower each other stretching the bond of friendship into sisterhood. "They have become like Siamese twins" (p. 11). The friendship between Kauthar and Bongel reflects the interconnectedness of the African woman. Collaborating with Nnaemeka's view that African

women are culturally communal, taking pleasure in relating with their fellow women and rendering mutual support to each other, the friends extend their relationship to other members of their family. Kauther's mother accepts and treats Bongel as a daughter. With this situational context, Weems opines; "If all sisters simply loved each other, our children would be more secure, for they would not just have one female guardian, but many to attend to their needs" (as cited in El Arbaour, 2023, p. 54). The sisterhood relationship between Bongel and Kauther creates a bond that allows an alliance to assist each other. As depicted in the text, Kauther is from a relatively richer background compared to Bongel's. Thus, in their relationship, Bongel benefited financially such that when they go out for lunch at the cafeteria "Kauther always insists on paying for the snacks and soft drinks" (p 11). Also, during their stay in the hostel together "though Bongel didn't ask for it, Kauther improved her standard of living by ensuring they didn't lack essential household supplies. In addition, any weekend she went shopping or visited her home which was barely an hour's drive from school, she would buy things for *Bongel*" (p. 48). This financial support relieves Bongel from worrying about supporting herself through medical school. The financial support provided resonates with Nnaemeka's stance that the African woman needs to render mutual support and solidarity to enable the oppressed to navigate the challenges of poverty (Nnaemeka, 2004).

Again, the author brings up the need for emotional and psychological support for the African woman to the fore when Bongel is depressed and feels misunderstood by her close friends. Her period of pain and grief is made easier to bear with the friendship she makes with Salma a female coursemate. "It is the ever-smiling Salma" who announced in an attempt to cheer her up "I brought you breakfast" (83).). Accepting her arm of friendship, "Salma stayed on to watch Bongel eat and share jokes" (pg:83). Salma's sisterhood friendship helps Bongel to heal and carry on emotionally as she attests "Bongel couldn't have felt more thankful to Almighty Allah for bringing her some comfort at such a time" (pg. 83). Their friendship comforts Bongel and allows her to forget her negative experiences. Metaphorically, Salma is a ray of sunshine in Bongel's troubled existence. Bongel testifies that "Walking shoulder-to-shoulder with Salma to the exam hall on Monday morning evoked a feeling she had forgotten. It seemed as if the sun had inched out from under a cloud after a century." The emotional and psychological support provided by Salma helps Bongel to feel validated and understood, calming her feelings of isolation and loneliness. She is thus comforted and regains her sense of security and reassurance about her self-worth which in turn

boosts her confidence and increases her resilience to succeed and overcome the hurdles of the patriarchal society. The author here validates Nnaemeka's assertion that "women appropriate and refashion oppressive spaces through friendship, sisterhood and solidarity". (Nnaemeka 2004 p.67)

Sisterhood as an Alliance for Support in *The Hound*

In *The Hound*, the friendship, female bonding, and sisterhood support between Rebecca and some other female characters, Mulikat, Mrs. Ogunkoya, Ugozi, and Aunty Maimuna help Rebecca to survive and cope emotionally during and after an oppressive, repressive, and suffocating marriage. Her moving sojourn as a poor village girl, discriminated against at college, her toxic marriage experience, and her eventual emergence as a heroine are largely due to the sisterhood support, she enjoyed. At the beginning of Rebecca's academic pursuit at an "elitist school in Lagos" (*The Hound*, p:35), she is faced with a lot of challenges largely due to her background. "Rebecca became more conscious of her poverty day to day. Not only was she looked down on because she was from the north, her classmate also discriminated against her because she was poor" (*The Hound*, p:33). Consequently, "she felt little, she felt small in her own eyes" (*The Hound*, p:33). Her precarious situation makes her question her fate, "Why am I poor? she pondered" (*The Hound*, p:34). She needs a friend and wants to belong, but this she finds difficult as "she felt condemned to mediocrity: that everyone was better than her and that she has nothing to offer" (*The Hound*, p:34). The unfriendly atmosphere in which Rebecca finds herself is to affect her adversely if not for the timely close friendship she clicks with Mulikat, a daughter to a Nigerian diplomat who was serving in Romania. The bond between the two girls helps Rebecca to cope emotionally as well as academically. Before now, the author recounts that "Rebecca was not a very brilliant student obviously because of the major setback she had from lack of proficiency in the use of English language.... she lagged. Her father was often disappointed with her report card." (*The Hound*, p:44). However, the togetherness and bond soon have a positive effect on the girls, especially on Rebecca as "Mulikat and Rebecca often studied together during prep and at weekends. She learned to study from her friend. Mulikat.... "Who read her books over and again until she could make sense of its contents...she excelled. Rebecca learned to do the same" (*The Hound*, p:46-47). The solidarity between the two young girls helps them to overcome the challenge of not being accepted in a new environment and the challenge that comes with adapting. Studying together, they pass their 'O' levels with flying colours. They decided to enrol in the same school for their higher school

certificates. Rebecca at this point, admits that apart from the desire to acquire education, “her other motivation was Mulikat.... she looked forward to being with her so they could continue their friendship” (*The Hound*, p:52). On being informed that the best students in Arts and Science subjects were given government scholarships, the two friends strive hard to excel. In line with the feminist concept of sisterhood which has a positive impact, Rebecca and Mulikat can provide emotional and psychological support to one other which helps to build self-confidence, self-esteem, and resilience, thus enabling them to overcome obstacles, challenges, and barriers in the course of their study. Their togetherness provides a platform to share knowledge and skills thereby facilitating mutual learning and growth (Mama 1996, p.189). According to Amadiume, the concepts also help African women to develop a sense of identity and belonging which is essential for building self-confidence and self-worth (1987 p.156). As revealed in the novel, the two female friends were able to achieve academic height which they could not have reached on their separate efforts. This is evidenced when the author says; “Their joint efforts pay off as they both got the scholarship” (*The Hound*, p:53). “Having been set on the path of academic success through the bond of sisterhood with Mulikat, it is through the support, assistance, and intervention of Mrs Ogunkoya who takes special interest in Rebecca that she is admitted into the university. Furthermore, as a poor undergraduate who cannot even afford textbooks and clothes to go to class, it is another female relationship that gives her the financial and emotional support she needs during her most vulnerable time.

Her friend “Ngozi, one of her course mates gave her used clothes and jewellery. She was rich and was married to a rich lawyer” (*The Hound* p. 83). After her marriage fails, she is traumatized and feels abandoned. From her marriage experience with James. Aunty Maimuna, who is Rebecca’s older sister’s friend fills the void such that “they were close” (*The Hound*, p:94). Though Aunty Maimuna is not in support of the marriage between Rebeccas and James, “she however decided that hers was not to condemn but guide and side with Rebecca on any decision she made” (*The Hound*, p:95). The novel emphasizes how the mutual female solidarity eventually turns into female sisterhood. With this “Aunty Maimuna supported Rebecca and Ruth while they lived in the family house in Kaduna. She consistently supplied money, food, and clothing as often as she could” (*The Hound*, p:95). In this text, the sisterhood relationship between Aunty Maimuna and Rebecca is empowering and as such, the latter becomes stronger and revives her dream to forge

on despite the odds. The author recounts that “Aunty Maimuna brought Rebecca everywhere to the company she kept, the company of the high and mighty----that gave Rebeca new hopes, and she learned to dream again and to hold her dreams”. The author here also agrees with Nnaemeka’s concept that Nego feminism prioritizes the empowerment of African women, recognizing the significance of education in promoting gender equality and social justice (Nnaemeka 2004, 145). She argues that education should be contextualized within African cultural values, promoting a holistic approach that addresses the social, economic, and political realities of African women’s lives (Nnaemeka, 2004, 167). To her, the girl child should be empowered through education as this is a vital tool that promotes social change (Nnaemeka 2004, 213). In this regard, Rebecca’s achieving her goals and dreams impacts others. “She was interested in how to help women like her do school and be self-actualized (*The Hound* 111).

Results and Conclusion

The two authors depict through their narrative that the well-being, happiness, and victory of their protagonists are intricately connected with the lives of other women through the display of cultural and communal practice of sisterhood. A situational context that shows the interconnectedness of women’s lives, the rendering of mutual support to each other, Moreso to the more vulnerable. The writers collaborating on Nnaemeka’s stance also reveal how responsibilities are shared with other women in their communities to relieve pressure on the affected victims. In their novel, Bobi and Jatau emphasize how female friendship can ease pain and give women the strength they need to face and overcome trauma caused by male subjugation. The novels illuminate that female friendship and sisterhood empower victims of child marriage to overcome obstacles and challenges. To this end, Bongel and Rebecca’s fulfillment of their dreams and eventual elevation to heroines after traumatic experiences of child marriage serve as evidence of the power of female friendship that works to free the girl child from an oppressive patriarchal system.

References

- Amaduime, I. *Women's Studies, and Studies of Women in African Society*. Zed Books, 1996.
- Arndt, Susan. *African Feminist Literature: Identifying*. Peter Lang Publishers, 2015.
- Bijimi, J. "(Re) Examining Womanism in Phebe Jatau's *The Hound*." *Bobi Maryam, Bongel, Lagos, Parresia Publishers*, 2015.
- El Arbaoui. "Sisterhood as a Means of Resisting Patriarchy in Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter*." *Rainbow: Journal of Literature, Linguistic and Culture Studies*, 2023.
- Gyekye, Akua O. "African Feminism and Sisterhood in the Works of Ama Ata Aidoo." *African Literature Today*, 2013.
- Hudson-Weems, Clenora. *African Womanist Literary Theory: A Sequel to African Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves*. Africa World Press, 2004.
- Hudson-Weems, Clenora. *Womanism and African Consciousness*. Africa World Press, 2004. Jatau, Veronica P. *The Hound*. Zaria, ABU Press, 2014.
- Mabura, Lily. "Sister Circles: Female Friendship and Empowerment in African Literature." *Feminist African*, 2015.
- Mlambo, N. *Trauma, Resilience, and Survival Strategies in Crisis Times: An Afrocentric Literary Approach*. Scholar's Press, 2014.
- Murray, L. "Child Marriage in Northern Nigeria: A Cultural Perspective." *Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2018, pp. 23-35.
- Nnaemeka, Obioma. "Nego-feminism: Theorizing, Practicing, and Pruning." *The University of Chicago Press Journals*, 2004, pp. 357-385.
- Nnaemeka, Obioma, ed. *Sisterhood, Feminisms, and Power: From Africa to the Diaspora*. Africa World Press, 2004.
- Nnaemeka, Obioma, ed. *Sisterhood, Feminism and Power: From Africa to the Diaspora*. Africa World Press, 1996.
- Newson-Horst, Adele, and Mhoja Changa, eds. *Female Friendship and Communities in African Literature*. Routledge, 2020.
- Ogunyemi, Chikwenye Okonjo. "Womanism and Sisterhood in the Novels of Buchi Emecheta." *Sage Publications*, 1985.
- Oyewumi, Oyeronke. *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- Oyewumi, Oyeronke, ed. *Africa Women and Feminism: Reflecting on the Politics of Sisterhood*. Africa World Press, 2003, pp. 1-24.
- Sy, Kaidia. "Women's Relationships: Female Friendship in Toni Morrison's *Sula* and *Love*, and Art Criticism Ba's *So Long a Letter* and Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*." 2008. *English Dissertations*. http://digitalarchive.gsu.edu/english_diss/30.
- Vickroy, Laurie. *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction*. University of Virginia Press, 2002.
- Oxfam. "Child Marriage in Nigeria: A Review of the Literature."