



**LANGUAGE REVIEW:  
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF  
LINGUISTICS**

**MAIDEN EDITION | September 2022**

A publication of the Department of Linguistics &  
African Languages, Federal University Lokoja  
Lokoja, Nigeria

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(A Journal of the Department of Linguistics and African Languages,  
Federal University Lokoja  
Lokoja, Nigeria)

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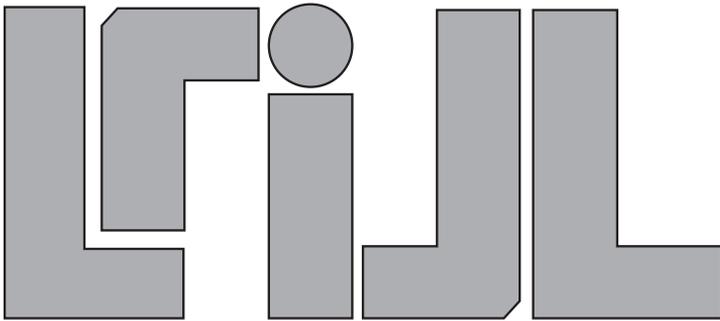
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## List of Contributors

1. Adebayo, Mosunmola Oluyinka  
University of Africa  
Toru Orua, Bayelsa. Nigeria
2. Adebajojo, Damilola A.  
University of Georgia,  
Athens, Georgia, USA.
3. Adeleke, Lateef A.  
University of Ibadan,  
Ibadan, Nigeria
4. Agbum, Terwase Philip  
Benue State University  
Makurdi-Nigeria
5. Akanmu, Dayo  
Lagos State University of Education  
Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos Nigeria.
6. Akinola, Stella Tonyo  
University of Africa  
Toru-Orua, Nigeria.
7. Amale, Felix Aishe  
University of Ibadan,  
Ibadan Nigeria.
8. Atinga, Larai Azuwo Adamu  
Languages Department, CASSS  
Kaduna Polytechnic  
Kaduna, Nigeria
9. Balogun, Nasrudeen Akanbi  
Kwara State University, Ilorin,  
Nigeria
10. Bodomo, Adams  
University of Vienna  
Austria
11. Chieorga, Gwadue  
Benue State University  
Makurdi-Nigeria
12. Chieorga-Gwadue, Ruth Doofan  
Nigeria Association of University Women  
Benue State University Branch  
Makurdi-Nigeria.
13. Ik-Iloanusi, Adaobi Ifeoma  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University  
Awka, Nigeria
14. Ikoru, Onyinyechi Stella  
Abia State Polytechnic  
Aba. Nigeria.
15. Ikpelemoh, Sunday Emmanuel  
Federal University Lokoja  
Kogi State, Nigeria.
16. Kugbayi, Lateef Iyanda  
Zamfara State University  
Talata-Mafara, Zamfara State  
Nigeria
17. Legbeti, T. Agnes  
Federal University Lokoja  
Nigeria
18. Odewumi, Joy O.  
Lagos State University of Education  
Oto/Ijankin, Nigeria.
19. Okpeh, Peter Ochefu  
Federal University Lokoja  
Nigeria.
20. Olaogun, Simeon  
Adekunle Ajasin University  
Akungba-Akoko, Nigeria
21. Oloso, Yeseera Omonike  
Kwara State University,  
Malete, Nigeria.
22. Oyinloye, Mayowa Emmanuel  
University of Jos  
Nigeria
23. Tijani-Sanusi, Muibat  
Kaduna Polytechnic  
Kaduna, Kaduna State  
Nigeria

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# The Structure of Ideophones in Dagaare and Idoma

Adams Bodomo & Peter Ochefu Okpeh

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## ABSTRACT

*In this paper, ideophones in two West African languages are compared. They are Dagaare, a Mabia language spoken in Ghana, and Idoma, a Kwa language spoken in Nigeria. Various similarities but also differences are found at the levels of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. This comparative descriptive linguistic analysis serves to illustrate the fact that while ideophones are a pervasive word class in West African languages, there are substantial variations that should be captured in any formal and theoretical studies of ideophones cross-linguistically.*

## Afu

*A kaataa nga perekaanye la idiofooniri Afirika kɔkɔɛ ayi pɔɔ. A kɔkɔɛ la Dagaare, Mabia kɔkɔɛ kanga ba nang yele Gaana pɔɔ; ane Idoma, Kwa kɔkɔɛ ba nang yele Nagyeeriya pɔɔ. Yitaa bebe kye tɛtɛɛlong meng be la a yelbie boɔloo pɔɔ (fonologyi), yelbie maaloo pɔɔ (mɔfologyi), a Yelbie delantaa segebo pɔɔ (sentakese), ane yelepalebombo pɔɔ (semantekese). A kɔkɔɛ peretaalong tegrenyaabo mannoo wuli ka ane azaa ka idiofooniri laare la Wɛse Afirika kɔkɔɛ kye tɛtɛɛlong kanga bebe nang seng ka a pɔɔ zannoo nimizie zaa nang kyaara idiofooniri kɔkɔboorɔboorɔ pɔɔ.*

## Okakpiyi

*Ipu k'ɔkpa no yɔ nya, e l'ɔda n'oyibo hɔ ku idiyofonu ipu k'uche ki gwu k'ache n'obi no ɲ'eyɔne gbulɔha. Aa uche a wu Dagaare, uche ku Mabia ne ge ka Ugaana, mɛ mulu Idoma, uche e ku Kwa ne ge ka Unaijeriya. Olo gbulɔha kaa mɛ mu lu eyeyi eyeyi ne mafu aya ku ɔkɛla (ufonɔloji), eyeye k'ɛla no ge je p'ikpɛla (umɔfɔloji), ege ne ge gb'ikpɛla kwɔha ɛ (usintasi), mɛ mu l'ooje k'ɛyi k'ɛla (usemantis). Oo gbulɔha ka uche no yɔ nya chabɔ mafu ka hi nii, nana ku ɔda ne ge hi ku idiyofonu gbabɔ ipu ku ɔkɛla k'achenobi ke y'ɔne, ochika ku el'eyeyi ka ɔkɛla no ba nya ch'abɔ mafu ipu ku oda oje.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper extends research that has been done on ideophones in Dagaare (Bodomo 2006), by comparing the structure of ideophones in this language with the structure of ideophones in Idoma as a way of teasing out how ideophones manifest themselves in different language groups in the West African subregion. It is well known in linguistics that words and how they are categorized into classes constitute a fundamental aspect of knowledge about the structure of language. Indeed, when children learn the words of their first language they learn and develop three basic types of information within their mental lexicon: categorial information e.g. *greet, verb*; sub-

categorial information, e.g. *greet, verb, transitive*, and thematic grid: semantic roles e.g. *hit <agent, patient>*. Such information constitutes important ingredients for modeling the grammar of the language in question and the architecture of grammar as a whole.

Developing clearly definable categories for all words of a language is therefore an important endeavour in linguistic analysis. This is so because words of a particular category or subcategory tend to have their own peculiar grammar. In Dagaare, for instance, there are separate rules and constraints governing nominal and verbal tonologies. However, it is often difficult to pin down the words of a language into neatly groomed word classes. And certainly not all word classes are existent in all languages, nor are their relative occurrences the same from language to language, which is one good reason why we must subject phenomena to crosslinguistic analyses.

*Ideophones*, also known as *expressives*, as a class of words are a case in point. While a lot has been written about ideophones in some language groups, not much has been written about this group of words in some other language groups, again another reason why a comparative analysis, especially of lesser researched languages is important.

In this paper, we aim to address a number of questions, as outlined below, surrounding the concept of ideophones with data from Dagaare, a Mabia language of Ghana, and Idoma, one of the Kwa languages of the Niger-Congo language family spoken in North-Central Nigeria. Examples are sometimes drawn from other African languages towards an understanding of this group of words.

- i. What are the properties of an ideophone/what makes a word qualify as an ideophone? In other words, are there peculiar phonology, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features for ideophones?
- ii. Do Dagaare and Idoma have ideophones? Are there different types of ideophones in each of these languages?
- iii. If there are ideophones in Dagaare and Idoma languages, are there any similarities between ideophones in these two groups of languages? Any systematic differences? Do the ideophones within each language and across languages belong to the same word class or are they in different word classes?
- iv. What can the study of ideophones in Dagaare and Idoma languages tell us about the universality of word classes? Are ideophones important for formal linguistic studies?
- v. What do ideophones tell us about the link between language, literature, and culture?<sup>1</sup>

Towards responding to some or all of these questions, aspects of the methodology used included the sourcing of data from adult native speakers of Dagaare and Idoma through the instrument of focused group surveys conducted physically and virtually. Recorded texts of focused group sessions were transcribed and translated into English. We claim that both sets of data pass as ideophones,

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<sup>1</sup> Earlier aspects of this research were presented at ACAL35, Harvard University, USA and published as Bodomo (2006). We thank participants at the conference and reviewers for the paper published as selected conference proceedings.

which were consequently presented and discussed. The discussion is structured to reflect comparison of Dagaare and Idoma ideophones.

## 2. TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF IDEOPHONES

Doke (1935) is often credited with the term “ideophone” which is defined as: “A vivid representation of an idea in sound . . . a word, often onomatopoeic, which describes a predicate, qualificative or adverb in respect to manner, colour, sound, smell, action, state or intensity.” (Doke 1935: 118, cited in Voeltz and Kilian-Hatz 2001). The term has found its way into many linguistic texts, especially dictionaries and lexicons. Trask (1993: 131-132) defines an ideophone as “[O]ne of a grammatically distinct class of words, occurring in certain languages, which typically express either distinctive sounds or visually distinctive types of action.” Crystal (1997:189) on the other hand defines an ideophone as a “. . . term used in linguistics and phonetics for any vivid representation of an idea in sound, such as occurs through onomatopoeia.” Crystal goes on to specify that in Bantu linguistics, “it is the name of a particular word class containing sound symbolic words.” Dingemane (2012: 654) considers ideophones to be “. . . marked words that depict sensory imagery found in many of the world’s languages.” Indeed, in many other languages of Africa and other parts of the world, ideophones are often treated as belonging to a specific word class (Bodomo (2000) for Dagaare, Kulemeka (1997) for Chichewa, Newman (1968, 2000) for Hausa, Dingemane (2012) for Siwu, etc.). However, there is considerable controversy as to whether they constitute a coherent class or are indeed distributed across many word classes. Whether or not they belong to different word classes, the following general criteria are often attributed to ideophones.

### Phonology/Morphology

Ideophones are said to form a phonologically distinct group from other words in the language. Though they employ the same phonological inventories as other words, they have distinct phonological properties or even processes with regards to other words in the individual language. These properties have to be identified for each language.

The morphology of the ideophone often displays more iconicity and sound-symbolism than other words in the language. In many African languages, they tend to be longer words to describe repetition or the intensity of an action or event they lexicalize. A salient feature that distinguishes ideophones from many other words is that there is hardly any affixation in the morphology of this group of words.

### Syntax/Semantics

Ideophones cannot normally be syntactically modified whereas other words in the language can be modified. As will be shown for Dagaare in section 3, and for Idoma in section 4, ideophones do not usually enter into phrase structure constructions with other words like adjectives to form compound words and phrases. Semantically, they are characterized by the lack of hyponymy, i.e., they cannot usually have hyponyms below them as one would have for nouns e.g. *furniture: chairs, tables, beds*.

### Pragmatic Functions

There are often very large numbers of ideophones in spoken texts. These often express more spontaneous reactions of the speaker in the speech context as compared to similar expressions in written texts. A second pragmatic function of ideophones is one of phonesthematicity. Ideophones are phonesthemes in function in the sense that they directly imitate sounds in nature. In other words, most, though not all, are onomatopoeic in nature, such as imitating the cock's crow, e.g. *konkoliirikoo* (Dagaare), *kokrokoo* (Akan), *cookoo* (English), *cock-a-doodle-do* (American English), and *gok4-gok1-gok3-gok6* (Cantonese). In order to address some of these issues more concretely, we will now outline and discuss some candidate data in Dagaare and Idoma.

### 3. IDEOPHONES IN DAGAARE

Ideophones in Dagaare have specific morphophonological, syntactic, and semantic characteristics that no other word class in the language consistently exhibits. The data in (1) with example sentences in (2) may be used as an illustration to begin analyzing the phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic/pragmatic structure of what we consider to be ideophones in Dagaare.

- (1) *gbànggbàlàng / gbàngbáláng* v'of a long pole or thing falling down'  
*vàrkpàrà / várkpára* 'in a messy way'  
*gàrmàná / gármána* 'spread across a surface'  
*bònggòlóng / bónggólóng* 'of a fat and unwieldy mass'  
*bìlbàfà / bìlbáláá* 'of a huge item lying down'

- (2) a. *à lán gbàráà lá ká ó dé lóó, gbàngbàràng*  
 DEF hook FOC COMP 3.SG take throw down, IDEOPH.  
 'It is the hook s/he has thrown down.'
- b. *bíní lá ká ó nyè bing, v àrkpàrà*  
 excreta FOC COMP 3.SG shit put down, IDEOPH.  
 'It is excreta s/he has shit.'
- c. *à bíé bàfèè lá, à páà fè gàngè, gármána*  
 DEF child tire-PERF FOC DEF then fall lie down, IDEOPH.  
 'The child is tired and then is lying there.'
- d. *nyé ò nàng páà zèng bònggòlóng lé*  
 see 3.SG when then sit IDEOPH. PART  
 'Just see how s/he is seated!'
- e. *ò dé lá à òngmáá lóó, bìlbàfà*

### Phonology

Four salient features characterize the Dagaare ideophone. The first feature is about syllable struc-

ture. The Dagaare ideophone generally has a three-syllable structure. This is exemplified by all the ideophones presented in (2). The second feature is that the vowels of the first syllable are usually copied on to the subsequent syllables, as illustrated by the ideophone words in (2a-d). However, there are some exceptions, such as with the ideophone word in (2e). Third, and quite importantly, there is usually only one tonal quality, either low or high, on the entire stretch of the three-syllable word. Finally, each ideophone can be produced either as a uniquely low tone lexeme or as a uniquely high tone one, with a slight variation in meaning, as explained further below in section 3.2.

### Tonosemantics: Synesthesia

The low-toned ones refer to heavier, longer, or fatter entities, while the high-toned ones refer to lighter, shorter, and thinner entities.<sup>2</sup> This is often referred to as synesthesia, situations where oppositions in phonological qualities may correlate with oppositions in meaning qualities. This is the case in many languages (Watson 2001) and extends to issues like segment quality, height, and ATR features.

### Morphology

The morphology of the Dagaare ideophone is quite distinct from that of words with similar morphological appearances. In many instances in Dagaare words, morphemes ending with final consonants can have an epenthetic vowel at the end, as the basic syllable structure of the language is CV. The following words belong to different word classes and exhibit this feature of vowel epenthesis on their morphemes:

- (3) Article: *kàńg* ~ *kàngá*            “a certain”  
 Verb: “to gath” *làng* ~ *làngè*  
 Verb: “to kee” *tàng* ~ *tàngè*  
 Noun: “scorpion” *náng* ~ *nángá*  
 Noun: “book” *gán* ~ *gánè*  
 Adjective: *kpông* ~ *kpóngè*            “big”

The following ideophones, which end in consonants, however, do not exhibit this feature of epenthesis or final vowel realization.

---

2 Symbols and abbreviations used in this paper: 2. = second person; 3. = third person; CL = classifier; COMP = complementizer; DEF = definite; DET = determiner; FOC = focus marker; IDEOPH. = ideophone; INTENS = intensifier; NEG = negative marker; PART = particle; PERF = perfective aspect; PL = plural marker

- (4) a. *gbàngbàlàng* - \* *gbàngbàlàngè*  
 ‘of a long pole or thing falling down’

*Á lán gbàrà à dà lè gán gée lá, gbàngbàlàng!*  
 DEF hook past fall lie.down FOC IDEOPH.  
 ‘The hook fell down very hard (in a loud noise).’

- b. *bònggòlòng* - \* *bònggòlóngè*  
 ‘big, unwieldy in nature’

*Á dòò zú bònggòlòng nǎ wàè lá*  
 DEF man head IDEOPH. DEM come FOC  
 ‘The man with the big/unwieldy head has come.’

The ideophones in (4a) and (4b) modify verbs/predicates and nouns, respectively, without any change in their morphological structures.

**Syntax**

Ideophones in Dagaare, unlike those of comparative word classes, do not lend themselves to morphosyntactic modifications, nor enter into phrase structure constructions with other words, as do, for instance, adjectives and nouns:

(5)	<b>Noun-----</b>	<b>Adjective</b>	<b>NP</b>
a.	<i>zú</i>	<i>fáá</i>	<i>zú-fáá</i>
	<i>zúrí</i>	<i>fáá</i>	<i>zú-fáá-rí</i>

(6)	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Ideophone</b>	<b>Noun Ideophone</b>
a.	<i>zú</i> ‘head’	<i>bònggòlòng</i> ‘unwieldy-like, big’	<i>zú-bònggòlòng</i> ‘unwieldy-like head’
b.	<i>zúrí</i> ‘head.PL’	<i>bònggòlòng</i> ‘unwieldy-like, big’	* <i>zú-bònggòlòng-rí</i>

To express the concept of big, unwieldy heads, i.e. two or more heads that look big and unwieldy using ideophones, one would have to reduplicate the ideophone: *zú bònggòlòng bònggòlòng*, thus leaving its internal morphology intact and integral!

In addition, as mentioned earlier and as can be seen in the sentences above, ideophones are often used as independent clauses, though not always, as in (4b). Even when they occur within the

clause they still behave differently from comparable words. One of such features is the possibility of inserting a pause before pronouncing them.

### Semantics/Pragmatics

Besides their unique phonological, morphological, and syntactic features as outlined above, ideophones, unlike comparable word classes such as adjectives, adverbs, and verbs do not seem to have independent semantics. As can be seen from the above glosses and transliterations, it is hard, though not impossible, to pin them down and assign denotational, dictionary meanings to them. They depend on adjacent words and other contexts for their meaning. This again makes this class of words unique in the language. To fully understand the denotational meaning of an ideophone, one would have to glean hints from various contextual cues. Rather than giving a comprehensive picture of all contexts in which ideophones occur in this language, we illustrate the point here in

- (7) a. *À pòg-lée dà àrèè lá, gyírménée*  
 DEF woman-small past stand.PERF, FOC IDEOPH.  
 ‘The girl stood there, IDEOPH.’
- à *dàgarâa dà ìe gángéé lá, gàrmàna*  
 DEF pole past fall lie.down FOC IDEOPH. ‘It  
 has fallen down, IDEOPH.’

The ideophone in (7a), *gyírménée* can have any denotational meaning expressing something like ‘not heavy’, ‘not fat’, ‘not thick’ and ‘not large’, but one cannot pin down the real semantics from among these possibilities. One would, however, expect that since we are talking of a girl (‘small woman’), we are referring to her being light in weight, slim, and generally small in size.

In addition, as shown with the synesthesiac characterization of the ideophone, the speaker is more likely to choose high tones to express the ideophone for small and lighter things and lower tones for the heavier, bigger, and longer things. In this case, higher tones are likely to be deployed in pronouncing the ideophone in (7a), as we are dealing with a small, lighter entity while lower tones would be used to express the ideophone in (7b), as we are dealing with a pole which, by nature, is a longer, possibly heavier entity.

Finally, ideophones in Dagaare, as in many other languages, are very much used in oral descriptions and recounting such as in stories and folktales.

It is clear, therefore, from the above that there are compelling reasons for assigning a word class of ideophones in Dagaare. From a comparative point of view, these facts of ideophones constitute important empirical issues for discussing linguistic categorization.

## 4. IDEOPHONES IN IDOMA

There have been efforts to characterize the grammar of Idoma with regards to its syntax (Sanusi and Oyewole 2019; Bosan 2021) and morphonology (Apeh 2012). Other linguistic studies on the language include Amali (2002), Oga-Adejo e ta;l (2022), and Ogli and Okpeh (2022). We affirm

that neither these studies nor any other on Idoma available to us have looked at the subject of ideophones in the language, hence the current effort intended to remedy this gap. Our effort, in what follows, draws upon candidate Idoma ideophones characterized phonologically, semantically, morphologically, and syntactically.

### Analysis of Idoma Ideophones

SN	Ideophone	Meaning	Lexico-semantic context
a	<i>Fiyéntélé</i>	Vary tall and slim (especially of human height)	Idoma: <i>Oñchonya oma je fyiéntélé</i> English: That damsel is very tall and slim.
b	<i>gòóm</i>	Tall and huge (also of human height, especially with regards to male)	Idoma: <i>Ada oma je gòóm</i> English: That man is tall and huge
c	<i>Finéfiné</i>	Extremely tall (of inanimate things, especially trees)	Idoma: <i>Ochi oma je finéfiné.</i> English: That tree is extremely tall.
d	<i>Kpaátaá</i>	extreme, unimageable wideness, sometimes exaggerated.	Idoma : <i>Eho ka' dam l'owa kpaátaá</i> English: My father's farm is extremely wide.
e	<i>gbóhgo</i>	Extremely long used for inanimate things such as rope, human corpses and animate things like snake.	Idoma <i>Egwa oma likpo gbóhgo</i> English: That snake is very long.
f	<i>Liigii</i>	Extreme and very sharp sweetness, like sugar and salt, when not yet used in food substances. Thus, when food is described as such, it connotes a sweetness beyond the normally acceptable degree.	Idoma: <i>'Usugar koo oma l'onye liigii,</i> English: That your sugar is extremely sweet.
g	<i>kátsi</i>	Extremely hard, especially the texture of a traditional corn meal that is swallowed usually without being chewed first.	Idoma: <i>Ona a' l'ofu kátsi.</i> English: That corn meal is very hard
h	<i>tsiü</i>	To be in a state of quietness/stillness, occasioned by an occurrence.	Idoma: <i>Ada oma ya je tsiü</i> English: That man sat quietly
i	<i>hiim</i>	Also relating to a state of quietness/stillness, but, but one <i>pregnant</i> with something sinister. This is used for both humans, and also metaphorically for non-humans.	Idoma: <i>Otu a yò hiim</i> English: The night was quiet and still.
j	<i>Yágáyaga</i>	Of excessive, irritating noise	Idoma: <i>Oyi oma yuya yágáyaga</i> English: That child makes so much noise irritatingly
k	<i>Plékété</i>	Of shortness in relation to human height. The shortness in this context has a sense of smartness associated with it.	Idoma: <i>Oklobiya oma je plékété</i> English: That young man is both short and smart

SN	Ideophone	Meaning	Lexico-semantic context
l	<i>Gbliigbli</i>	Of shortness, still in relation to human height, in this sense negatively. Usually used with regards to a dwarf. Pragmatic context is a very pivotal consideration here	Idoma: <i>Ada oma wema gbliigbli</i> English: That man has the shortness of a dwarf
m	<i>Péé</i>	Very bright	Idoma: <i>Oya nya fiaye péé</i> English: this moon shines very bright
	<i>Fiyúúú</i>	Very black	Idoma: <i>Ehi aa w'onobi fiyúúú</i> English: The pot is very black.
n	<i>tsóli</i>	Tonal variations in its phonological realization result in two different meanings. When realized with the falling tone as <i>tsólí</i> it denotes weight in relation to inanimate things, including human corpses. However, when it is realized with the rising tone as <i>tsólí'</i> , it denotes weight with regards to a living human.	Idoma: <i>Ekpa aa gbenu tsóli</i> English: The bag is very heavy Idoma: <i>Oyi oma tsólí'</i> English: That child is weighty.
o	<i>Akpákpá</i>	Unexpected suddenness	Idoma: <i>Okaa wa achigli akpákpá</i> English: The news came with an unexpected suddenness
p	<i>ttsátsá</i>	Of rain falling heavily	Idoma: <i>Owo ha ttsátsá</i> English: It is raining heavily.

### Phonological Properties

Phonological analysis of ideophones in Idoma reveals significant similarities and differences between them and those of Dagaare. These similarities and differences are discussed under two broad headings: Syllabic structure and Tonosemantics.

#### Syllable Structure

With regards to similarities, first, both Dagaare and Idoma have ideophones of three syllable structure. Examples from Idoma as seen in (8) include: *ttsátsá*, *akpákpá*, *plékétéi*. These ideophones, like their Dagaare counterparts, all have the open syllable as their last syllable. Also, like ideophones in Dagaare, ideophones of three syllable structure in Idoma also have their first vowels copied on to the subsequent syllables. Unlike Dagaare however, Idoma has more of other ideophones of both four syllable structures and two syllable structures. Examples of the former in Idoma, as seen in (8), include *finéfiné*, *fyéntélé*, *yágáyága*. Again, some of the vowels of these four syllable ideophones in Idoma are copied onto subsequent syllables, like those of the three-syllable structure ideophones in Dagaare. The same phonological behaviour is noticed in two syllable structure ideophones in Idoma, as represented in the following examples: *fiyúúú*, *gbliigbli*, *tsóli*, *kpaátaá*, *katsi*, *ligii*. Still on their syllable structure, the first syllables of most ideophones in Dagaare and Idoma as

illustrated by the data begin with a consonant sound, except for examples like *akpákpá* in Idoma. Regarding their tonal quality, Idoma ideophones have near mix of both the falling and rising intonations as illustrated in the analyzed data. This is unlike Dagaare ideophones which seem to have more of the falling intonation.

### **Tonosemantics: Synesthesia**

A striking similarity between Dagaare and Idoma ideophones is the connection between tonal variation and meaning. For example, the ideophone *'tsoli* has two meanings, depending on its tonal rendition. When realized with the falling tone as *'tsoli*, it denotes weight in relation to inanimate things, including a human corpse. However, when it is realized with the rising tone as *'tsóli*, it denotes weight with regards to a living human.

### **Semantic/pragmatic Properties**

The analysis in (8) reveals that Idoma ideophones in comparison with those of Dagaare earlier discussed have more differences than similarities in terms of their semantic and pragmatic properties. One of such similarities relates to the possibility of an ideophone to have two different meanings orchestrated by tonal differences which was earlier accounted for under phonological analysis. Also, the meanings of some Idoma ideophones, like those of Dagaare, are recoverable only from within the lexico-semantic context of their use. Such ideophones are however very few in the Idoma data. Some examples are *ttsátsá*, *akpákpá*, *gbliigbli*. Like most of the ideophones in Dagaare, these ideophones do not possess any independent denotative meaning of their own, except when they are situated within a linguistic context.

However, unlike many of the Dagaare ideophones reported in this paper, there are a number of ideophones in the Idoma data that appear to have independent meanings of their own, even outside the linguistic context of their use. Some examples in the data include: *fyéntélé finéfiné katsi*, *tsoli*, *péé*. *hiim tsiii*, *fyúúú*. Any of these ideophones, when mentioned to an adult Idoma speaker, suggests a denotative meaning even when it has not been used in a sentence. This explains why some of them can be used both as intensifiers + adjective, and also as only an adjective without any intensifiers. The data in (9) illustrate this point.

(9)

a. Ehi aa w' onobi fiyúúú; b. Ehi aa yo fiyúúú

a. The pot is very + black. b. The pot is black.

Another striking semantic feature of Idoma ideophones which is lacking in the Dagaare examples here is the semantic differences of usage that exist among certain ideophones of the same broad semantic inventory in the Idoma data. For example, although the ideophones *fyéntélé*, *finéfiné* and *gòóm* are all ideophones denoting height, each has its unique shade of meaning whose application is somewhat contextual. Appropriate usage of these ideophones among speakers of Idoma depends not only on knowledge of their semantic meaning, but also on the pragmatic competence

of the user. This is so because of the highly culture-sensitive nature of the meninges associated with these ideophones. Other ideophones in the Idoma data with similar sensitivity to cultural context are the ideophones denoting silence. As the analysis demonstrates, both *tsii* and *hiim* relate to a state of silence/stillness. However, whereas the former is used to describe a state of stillness/quietness resulting from an occurrence (positive or negative), the latter is used to characterize only a stillness/quietness that is *pregnant* with something sinister.

Finally, Idoma ideophones further differ semantically from the Dagaare examples, and possibly ideophones of other languages, in that whereas the latter appear to have their usage limited more to oral descriptions and recounting in stories and folktales (Bodomo 2006), Idoma ideophones seem to have wider communicative purposes beyond the restrictive domain of oral narratives and entertainment. The data reveals ideophones with encompassing usages that touch on the various aspects of the normal, daily, social life of the Idoma. For example, there are ideophones of height but with varying contextual applications, and ideophones of colour, among others. This is why Idoma ideophones exhibit similar communicative usefulness as the other more generally used words in the Idoma lexicon.

### Morphological Properties

Morphologically, some Idoma ideophones, like the Dagaare examples, have preponderant instances of reduplication which appears to be characteristic of the morphology of ideophones in other languages. Some examples from the Idoma data are: *tsátsá*, *akpákpá*, *gbligbli*, *yágáyága*, *plékété*, as shown in (8). Compared with the Dagaare examples, however, these Idoma samples seem to have an irregular reduplicative pattern. The reduplication process ranges between final reduplication (*plékété*), initial reduplication (*tsátsá*), and consonant alternation (*yágáyága*). We do not see this sort of irregular reduplication pattern playing out in the morphology of the Dagaare examples.

However, like the Dagaare examples, reduplicants in Idoma ideophones have an epenthetic vowel added to their final consonants. Only two samples in the Idoma data are exceptions to this epenthetic final vowel realization. They are: *hiim*, *góóm*, and they are basically monosyllabic words. It is interesting to note the absence of such monosyllabic ideophones in the Dagaare data. Still on their morphological similarities, Idoma ideophones, like their Dagaare counterparts and expectedly ideophones in other African languages, do not lend themselves to the inflectional or derivational word formation processes like other words in Idoma. Idoma ideophones possess a form that seems resistant to any kind of morphological alteration.

### Syntactic Properties

The first syntactic feature of Idoma ideophones is their modification functions. All the samples in the data are seen to be either modifying a noun (phrase) or a verb. In the latter case, all the ideophones postmodify nominal elements. Interestingly, adjectives in Idoma are all postmodifying elements of nominals. There are hardly any cases of adjectives pre-modifying a noun in Idoma. Some examples of ideophones that postmodify in Idoma are shown in (10):

(10)

a. Ọnchonya ọma jẹ fiyéntélé

That damsel is very tall and slim.

b. Ada ọma jẹ ọọóm

That man is tall and huge

c. Ochi ọma jẹ finéfiné.

That tree is extremely tall.

As could be seen above, the ideophones *fiyéntélé* and *ọọóm* postmodify the noun phrases *Ọnchonya ọma* (that damsel) and *Ada ọma* (that man), respectively. This noun- postmodifying function of Idoma ideophones appears to also play out in the analysis made earlier of the syntax of the Dagaare examples. What the foregoing demonstrates is that, functionally speaking, Idoma ideophones, like their Dagaare counterparts, align more towards the adjectival and adverbial grammatical categories. In the Idoma data especially, no ideophone was found to be performing the function of a noun or denoting the performance of an activity. It could therefore be argued, based on the available data, that functionally speaking, ideophones of the verbal and nominal grammatical categories do not exist in Idoma.

Also, Idoma ideophones, like those of Dagaare, do not yield themselves to morphosyntactic modifications. This, as we earlier observed, is because of their resistance to morphological alteration. Because of this characteristic, it is difficult to change their form to fit into any changes made on the syntactic framework of their linguistic context. Another possible reason for their resistance to morphosyntactic modification could be the absence of the verb and the noun function performing ideophones in the data samples of these languages, especially in Idoma, which we earlier affirmed. This is perhaps one of their most striking syntactic similarities to Dagaare ideophones.

## CONCLUSION

The study was a comparative descriptive analysis of the structure of ideophones in Dagaare and Idoma languages. Findings demonstrate that ideophones have a striking grammatical structure that sets them apart from other word classes in each language. In the establishment of word classes, it is usually these same formal and functional criteria that are used to tease words apart. We therefore affirm that ideophones are a cohesive class of words and that this cohesive class exists in each of Dagaare and Idoma. Within this cohesive class, however, one may have subparts, and sub-categorization is indeed a feature of word classes in general. Also, a number of similarities and differences have been found to exist between the structure of ideophones in Dagaare and Idoma languages in terms of their phonology, semantics, morphology, and syntax. Phonologically it was found that although ideophones in Dagaare and Idoma possess some differences in terms of their syllable structure and tonal quality, they exhibit a striking similarity with regards to the connection between tonal variation and meaning. We found that in both languages, some ideophones have

double meanings, depending on their tonal rendition. Semantically, ideophones in both languages were found to exhibit more differences than similarities, with the only fundamental similarity in this regard being their reliance on linguistic context for meaning elicitation. Morphologically, we found that ideophones in both languages are similar with regards to the preponderant instances of reduplication in them and the resistance to inflectional or derivational word formation processes, unlike other words in these languages. In terms of their syntactic similarity, ideophones in both languages were seen to be modifiers of verbs and nouns, and while they do this, they themselves are resistant to morphosyntactic modifications.

What the foregoing demonstrates is that although ideophones are a grammatically unique class of words, they possess a structure that makes them amenable to the kind of linguistic analysis generally associated with other linguistic expressions in language. In other words, like other grammatical words, ideophones can also be analysed phonologically, semantically, morphologically, and syntactically. While the present study remains essentially at a level of description, the comparative descriptive linguistic features adduced here are important for any formal theoretical linguistic analyses. The study has also addressed the fact that ideophones have a special expressive and dramaturgic function that other words may lack in any one language. This therefore means that the study of ideophones can indeed go beyond the realms of core linguistics to areas like literature, narrative strategies, indirection, and the expression of emotion with linguistic and semi-linguistic or dramaturgic resources. Ideophones seem to form an important element of verbal art and a study of these words could link one from linguistics to the realms of communication, cognition, and culture.

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# Brymo's Music: A Reflection of Social Issues

Damilola A. Adebajo

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## ABSTRACT

*Musicians in Africa, especially Nigeria, do not just entertain their listeners; they perform many other functions such as educating their listeners, criticizing destructive behaviors, promoting positive thoughts, and generally mirroring societal issues. As times change and music improves in various genres, the quality of music is now being defined by beats. While most Nigerian musicians now focus on beats rather than the values that should be embedded, a few others still ensure that the lyrics of their songs are valuable. This paper examined how the music of Brymo, an afrobeats musician fits into the category of those who put out quality music—focusing on the typical social problems his music addresses and the impact of his art on its listenership. Based on the Functionalist perspective, the paper asserts that musical artists can use music to improve social stability if musicians strive to improve their songs' lyrical elements. It encourages contemporary Afrobeat musicians to emulate Brymo and take up their responsibilities of being the voices for their communities.*

*Keywords:* contemporary Nigerian music, functionalism, Afrobeats, Brymo music

## 1. INTRODUCTION

**M**usicians as core entertainment industry members have always had the biggest voices in our society. Due to their tons of followership and fan base, their voices get heard better—or rather on time. As members of society with the upper hand, they tend to help change the spoils around us today for good. If they use their voices to talk about the ills of the society; concerned “stakeholders” in such cases, i.e government officials would listen and do what is expected.

In light of Emile Durkheim's Functionalist approach, musical artists as an integral part of society need to play their part to make their society work. Following Brymo's example, playing their part here asserts that contemporary musicians should assume their role of being the voice of the voiceless—including burning issues in their art, which will in turn make us have a fully functional society.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A famous saying goes that music is a universal language, and people from different parts of the world love music and find solace in listening to their preferred musical genres. Among the scholars worldwide who have attempted to analyze the true meaning of music is Godt (2005). In his pa-

per, he examined previous thoughts about music and concluded music as defining characteristic of humankind; that is, music is a necessary—*though not a sufficient condition for determining what we are*.

Nigerian popular music, also known as Afrobeats, is one of the thriving genres of music in the Nigerian music industry. Famous Nigerian musicians in this genre category include Simi, Adekunle Gold, Wizkid, Davido, Timaya, Burna Boy, Tiwa Savage, Brymo, Olamide, and Yemi Alade. Many Nigerian scholars have worked on various areas of study surrounding Afrobeats. While Nnanyelugo et al. (2019) worked on romance dynamics in Davido's music, 'IF.' Yaya et al. (2020) examines some of these artists' famousness trends. Their study investigated datasets from web search parameters about artists like Davido, Burna Boy, Tiwa Savage, and Wizkid on News, Images, YouTube, and Google trend searches.

Eromosele (2021) previously examined the appropriation of Lagos in Brymo's image, and he examined the ways multisensory qualities were deployed to engage several narratives about Lagos. Adebonojo (2021) also discussed language use and social issues in four out of Brymo's albums; *Yellow, Merchants Dealers & Slaves, Oso*, and *Tabula Rasa*, in a Yorùbá master's dissertation.

### 3. FUNCTIONALIST THEORY & THE ROLE OF BRYMO'S MUSIC

This study establishes its root in the theory of functionalism, which originated in the works of Émile Durkheim (1893). Émile was particularly interested in how social order is possible or how society remains relatively stable. He established how breaking responsibilities in each unit of society goes beyond economic interests, and in the process, it also shows social and moral order within a society. In his work, he argued that "The division of labor can be effectuated only among members of an already constituted society."

Music is a component of society's fundamental institution, the media. For a social system to work together, each unit must be fully functional by itself. Some degree of internal consistency is expected for all of the components to work together towards the same goal. Functionalism also postulates that all cultural or social phenomena have a positive function and are indispensable.

Brymo's music serves as entertainment as well as a social stabilizing tool. Through his songs, he points out every wrongdoing in society. His strategy allows everyone who listens to his music to think deeply and reflect on themselves. As a result, his music enables people to grow as individuals and contribute positively to society.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

This paper analyzes different tracks from Brymo's albums for different themes of social issues. Lyrics of specific songs to be cited were culled from music streaming platforms and analyzed to investigate specific social issues mentioned. The title of the tracks analyzed in this paper are;

Down	Brain gain	No be me	Ozymandias
Jungle fever	One Pound	Rara rira	Purple Jar
Everyone gets to die	Jélé ó sinmi	Grandpa	Dear Child

Mama	Money launderer and heartbreakers		
Prick no get shoulder	Black man	Black woman	

### 5. SOCIAL ISSUES IN BRYMO'S MUSIC

Almost every society in the world faces challenges or has concerns about specific issues. From nation to nation and continent to continent, the extent of these issues varies. Often, citizens of particular places think their immediate society has more problems than other places until they visit those places, many times, it is not their fault. The famous Yoruba adage, *Kò síbí tíṣe ò sí* [acts exist in all places], supports this stance. As Yorùbá folks would say, a person who has never been to another family's farm will always assume his farmland is the biggest.

In Africa, many issues affect the overall wellbeing of the continent. They include terrorism and insurgencies, youth unemployment, human and economic security, human trafficking, child abuse, domestic violence, and, the biggest of all, corruption. There are also issues facing Europe. Matters like discrimination, intolerance, poverty, inequality, foreign policy, etc., are significant areas of concern. Each with its social problems, the intensity of social issues varies, and the case remains the same with every other continent.

Creative people on the continent often reflect on themes of their immediate society in their literary works. As prominent persons in society, their opinions always count, and those in power often respect them to avoid being called names. Political leaders try to maintain excellent relationships with these people to always seek them out during elections because they influence their fan base.

#### Corruption and Bad Governance

Corruption disrupts social and economic development and weakens society around the world. The fight against corruption is a global concern, as corruption occurs in rich and developing countries, although evidence suggests it significantly harms poor people. Corruption disrupts social and economic development and weakens society around the world. It hinders social and economic development and increases poverty by diverting domestic and foreign investment away from where it is most needed.

Corruption is a very significant obstacle in every social institution in Nigeria. Although more prominent in the government sector, every other industry, including religion, suffers from its effects. The topic of corruption is one of the critical themes in Brymo's music. Some of his tracks express this concern. He describes how this issue has eaten deeply into the Nigerian political system in his song, *Down*. In the following lines from this track, he expresses the intention of nearly everyone in power to eat their share of the national cake: "Chop your own and clean mouth now / We print and loot and share around. . ."

The two lines above show how the leaders embezzle public funds. According to Brymo, these

leaders pretend to steal what belongs to society. He speaks on how they are printing the bills and looting them. The following excerpt is another part of the song that mirrors corruption in religion;

*Dem say the priest  
E dey pray for the thief  
Shadaka for Allah  
Blood for the spirit  
People no bother, Dem they wait on the Lord fa  
Réré run (Things are happening)*

These lines above show how this issue has affected the religious sector too. It shows us how religious leaders take advantage of the situation for their gains. It expresses how Pastors and clerics enable this corruption by praying for thieving politicians and how powerless this has made the masses. The second to the last line shows how the masses have resorted to waiting on God for basic human needs since those in power are not providing them.

In another track, “Mama,” where it seemed like Brymo was writing a letter to his mother, he expresses how nothing has changed in terms of corruption since he was born and how things have gone from bad to worse. In one of the lines below, he also mentioned how the government enforces *veto* power to oppress the masses. “..The government dey VETO dey fuck us oh.”

In the track *Brain Gain*, he also mentions how the seed of corruption germinates everywhere. It is like the sky, which exists everywhere. He advises his audience indirectly in this track to stop assuming that there are other societies where corruption does not exist. He says;

*I been dey tell my brother  
Make e hear  
He say e know the place wey sweet pass here  
Where the people care and the government fear  
I tell am say I hear  
If I hear*

The Nigerian government continually fails to address systemic problems such as election fraud, terrorist attacks, herder-farmer conflict, armed banditry, and police brutality. Leadership is attained through bribery, intimidation, and violence in this current system.

A majority of Nigerians are unhappy with the government’s performance. Brymo often speaks out against bad leadership in his songs on behalf of the masses.

A song he wrote titled *No Be Me* shows the mindset of people in positions of power. According to him, it is always about power in the pocket. “ ...But our governor e fat pass before oh / One day, my turn go come to chop.” He mirrors how everyone who gets into politics does so to share the national cake, and it shows the iota of selfish-mindedness in most Nigerian leaders. In *Ozyman-dias*, he reminds us how people tend to forget how much they suffered under a particular govern-

ment's regime. He further encourages the people to get up and fight for themselves, urging them to end the anarchy once and for all. He says:

*Ozymandias, Ozymandias*  
*History forgets all Ozymandias*  
*Ozymandias, Ozymandias*  
*He who grease destroys us ozymandias*

In the last line above, he expressed the everyday act of bribery in the Nigerian system. It shows how this single act has ruined the system and is still doing so. Different articles and researches have examined the act of bribery in Nigeria. Adindu et al. (2020) investigated how contractors with the government grease the pockets of those in these positions and end up doing substandard jobs. Most of these issues are evident in Nigerian society, and infrastructures do not last since contractors use substandard materials that cause the projects to deteriorate within a few years. In most cases, contractors are left with no choice but to opt for this option since significant amounts have been deducted from their contract fees to bribe government officials. As a result, this cycle cannot be broken because substandard infrastructures lead to more projects for contractors and more bribes to their pockets.

In 2012, Oby Ezekwesili, Federal Minister of Solid Minerals, Nigeria (2005–2006) mentioned that Nigeria had lost up to \$400 billion made from crude oil due to funds mismanagement. Brymo mirrored the people's frustrations in light of all these facts at the end of *Ozymandias*, as seen below:

*And the people shall no longer... Settle for mediocre systems*  
*And all streets are singing*  
*Songs about anarchy and all*  
*It is time for the new... The old rule must go (Òfin àtìjọ gbọdọ lọ)*

His points in the lines above predict what could happen when the people get tired of bad governance. His thoughts show the day the people will arise and say 'No to bad leadership.' Brymo's prediction in this song came to pass in October 2020, when the youths of the country decided to stage protest walks across the nation to request good governance and an end to police menace. Unfortunately, the Nigerian government did what they knew to do: silence the people. Following an order, the Nigerian Army shot and killed many unarmed, peaceful protesters and wounded dozens of others during the demonstration. This situation has not stopped Nigerians from this demand of good governance, although many fear getting killed. Brymo's thoughts in this song show that the people have the power to end this menace. In his opinion, when the time comes, the people will no longer fear. The lines below from *Jungle Fever* does justice to these thoughts;

*Jungle fever*  
*The people see ba, They lead Aluta*  
*The people shout Aluta*

*Check your time, It's free yourself o'clock..*

### **Black Immigration**

Another thing Brymo always expresses his concern about is how black people move out of their nations in search of greener pastures. In light of this, most of them do jobs less honorable than they would initially do in their countries. The lines below from *Brain gain* capture how most black people do not get to know how much suffering exists abroad until they see it themselves:

*Dark skin people dey hear*

*Plenty plenty stories, Na wen you go*

*You go hear the full story*

*Things dey hard for everybody, Brain gain na e we need*

Brymo also mentioned the same in *Rara Rira*. He spoke about some of the reasons why black people move around. According to him, most of these people work very hard but have nothing to show because of their country's economy. The following lines from the song captured these thoughts.

*Me and the people)*

*Our hard work been no dey pay*

*The world e dey turn*

*We dey constantly on the run*

*Everybody dey come*

*Dem dey bring the chains and the cuffs*

*Dark skin people dey run run*

*Some dey wait for help from the Lord*

The excerpt above also echoes the thoughts of many people who would rather wait for God to resolve their problems than move from location to location in search of economic prosperity.

In the track *Jungle fever*, he also mentioned how some people sought *visas* to leave their countries and *looked for a greener flag*. As much as Brymo is not pleased with the nation's current state, he advises immigrants to stay back in their countries and make it work. According to his opinion in the line below, if citizens from other countries keep moving around, their nations would not be in the better state it is today: "If you do your own, we go get enough to chop / Dem other people no care if we no chop / Shey you dey feel the fever? I dey feel the fever..."

From his words above, the fever of economic downturn is almost everywhere, felt by every nation. Only the citizens of a country can make it better. The second line from above mirrors how no one can love us beyond how we love ourselves.

### **Poverty and Social Inequality**

Poverty poses a massive threat to many countries in the world today, especially Nigeria, a nation regarded as the poverty capital of the world. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in 2020 did research and reported on the poverty level and social inequality in Nigeria. This research showed

that 40% of the nation lives below the poverty line, earning \$381.75 in a year. This means that the people in this category do not earn up to \$2 daily in Nigeria. This report was based on data from the latest round of the Nigerian Living Standards Survey, conducted in 2018-2019.

In his songs, Brymo usually mentions this embarrassing fact about Nigeria, a country endowed with natural and human resources. His songs mirror the iota of inequality in the typical Nigerian society. In *1 pound*, he reflected the beauty of how poor people still enjoy love. The piece showed how one pound could afford only a meal in the real sense. As shown below, he showed how these people make meals for a whole family with the same amount;

*Fun mi ni poun kan (give me one pound)*

*Ki n lo je iyán poun kan (let me go eat a pound worth of pounded yam)*

*Kí n je sèré poun kan (let me eat a pound worth of beans)*

*Ikùn mi fúyè gidi gan (My belly is so empty)*

*Omo iyá ilé òṣókán (neighbor's daughter from across the street)*

*Mo ní ifẹ re gidi gan (I love you so much)*

*ṣo lè sebè pound kan (Can you cook a pot of soup worth a pound?)*

*Àyànfẹ mi gangan (Love of my life)*

The character from the excerpt above has only one pound from the look of things — everything he does or requests centers around the same amount, the size of his pockets.

In *Jungle Fever*, Brymo reflected the sad reality of Nigerian society's income inequality. He talked about how honest workers (civil servants) who earn peanuts do not get paid, but the speaker of the House of Representatives gets paid more. As shown below, workers such as teachers who have a significant impact on younger generations are not well compensated: "No pay for teacher / More pay for speaker." In *Everyone gets to die*, he also expressed the level of poverty in some families when he said: "People no get money for drugs / And the pikin dem never chop." In some other parts of the song, he showed different examples of the kinds of inequality that exist in Nigerian society. Which includes the rich buying out communities that belong to the poor and making them live miserable lives by kicking them out of their communities. See below;

*The poor man wants his space, the rich man wants the place*

*How many people, How many sequels*

*The rich stay greedy)*

*The poor stay needy, Ey ey ey..*

Brymo lamented in this song. He further reminded the oppressors in the society of one equal thing that happens to every human, Death! He wonders when and if this trend of oppression will ever stop.

### **Racism/Ethnicism**

Just like racism, ethnicism is another matter of great concern to Nigeria and her citizenry. It has

been demonized and mismanaged by Nigerians and the ruling elites. Consequently, it has failed to alleviate the status of Nigeria and its citizenry. Instead, it is gradually breaking the nation into different fragments, creating a social change in Nigeria. Most Nigerians see themselves first from their ethnic origins or groups before seeing themselves as Nigeria.

Nigerians embrace foreign culture so much that they allow these cultures to influence them. As Brymo always says in interviews, his music is for every black person worldwide, and he highlights race and ethnic issues in some of his songs.

In *Black Man, Black Woman*, he pictured how black people have not stopped acting like slaves even though slavery ended centuries ago. He criticized how Africans tend to idolize foreigners. How they live their lives to impress foreigners He mentioned in the following lines;

*But I be black man, I bend the whole town*

*To impress some crazy clown, Wey dey spread the hate around*

*I own the whole town, To impress some silly clown*

*Wey dey spread the hate around*

*I forget to care for my own, I carry the problem of the world*

*But I no care to solve am for my own, dey show, I dey buy, I dey owe*

*Na society dey enforce the rule*

These lines above tell how society is the cause of all this. Brymo made similar points in *Jungle Fever* when he mentioned how people see ‘*dem other tribes inferior.*’

### Parenting Responsibilities and Child Abuse

Parenting is a responsibility, a process, and a role essential for society to ensure social stability, harmony, and progress. To fulfill this responsibility, commitment, sacrifice, perseverance, knowledge, tolerance, and determination are required. In the family system, parenting is seen as a societal function, and it is characterized by care, relationships, love, compassion, and hope. It is an act of close supervision and control at the most minor level. It can be seen as the process of imparting social norms and values, educating children and youths at microsocial levels.

In Africa, parents must ensure that their child’s basic physical needs are met. This includes ensuring that their children receive a good education and become responsible members of society. In his songs, Brymo often reflects the expectations of parents in society. In addition, he illustrates examples of good and bad parenting. In his song *Dear Child*, he praised his grandmother, whom he considered a good parent. Excerpts: “Grandma... Was a very good old lady / She tried and died, Working to feed her grown babies / From dusk to dawn, She labored for more. . .”

As these lines illustrate, this mother took good care of her children until the very end. Brymo provided a counterexample in the song *Grandpa* that demonstrates that not all parents are good. Brymo portrayed this father as a bad parent who did not care about his children and family. Here is how he described him:

*He had a dozen wives, get plenty children*

*He told a dozen lies, Always denounce his children  
My grandpapa no get time for bedtime stories  
Kòmọ tó dogún ma dogbọn, That's his favorite song  
He rides in big big cars, no get time for anybody's  
Spends the dough for chicks and booze, Whether she black or blonde*

Another part of the song shows how this man has no impact on the lives of his children. He took no responsibility for his children emotionally or financially according to the lines: “He prefers everyone, but his own children / He get bigi bigi house, we still dey sleep for gutter / Ask my grandpapa for wisdom, only shayo you go get.”

Many parents in the African society today are just as illustrated in *Dear Child* and *Grandpa*. Brymo promotes good examples and criticizes the bad ones. In *Jélé ó sinmi*, he mentions expected parent roles in the family. The lines below is an advice to teach parents how to stay safe in society: “Ìya Délé, sọ fún Délé (Dele's mom, tell Dele) / Kó yé fò'nà, Ko tó wò'na, Kó tó m'éré (to look both ways before crossing the road).”

After the above, he criticized the act of child abuse; child labor is one of the most monumental issues in Nigeria, a country with a developing economy, affecting a large portion of the country's children up to age 17. In another part of the song, Brymo mentioned how shameful it is if children work before their basic needs are met. The title of this song means ‘Kindergarten.’ The song's chorus repeated how homes should be allowed to rest during school hours, ensuring that children are in school.

### Human Behavior

A variety of factors influence human behavior in any society. People's negative behaviors can create issues that affect society as a whole. These behaviors are self-centeredness, betrayal, lying, stealing, anger, adultery, ignorance, lack of insight, indebtedness, envy, slander, apathy, worry, and slander. Brymo does not do without highlighting various human behaviors in his songs, especially those that could deter society's stability. In *Everyone gets to die*, he shows the selfish nature of humans, especially the rich and powerful, and how they keep wanting everything to themselves. This attitude is also reflected in *Grandpa*, where he showed the self-centered behavior of the character in the song. *Money Launderers and Heartbreakers* also showed how people always want to win without empathy for others “Me, my friends, we are money launderers and heartbreakers / And all we do is win, win.” These lines show the natural human quest to win without caring about others.

Another theme of human behavior that Brymo mentions in his songs is Betrayal. The song *Banuso (Speak to self)* is a piece of advice from Brymo to people not to trust anyone and learn to keep their vices to themselves.

Adultery is another behavior Brymo highlights in his song. *Purple Jar* shows how it ruins relationships between lovers. In *Down*, he expressed how this act of promiscuity is the order of the day. The lines below show the series of events in a typical society: “Dem say the Chief, E dey sleep

with the thief wife / Aboki for corner, E dey sleep with the chief wife / The neighbor daughter carry belle for the thief child, Reré run!”

In *Prick no get shoulder*, Brymo warns adulterers to be wary of those with whom they have sexual relations. A part of the song says: “Be careful who you fuck, Be careful where you go / Make you do the thing you talk, Your karma na your own.”

Another behavior Brymo talks about in his songs is ignorance and its effects on society. Some lines in the song express how people ignorantly do things that affect others, as shown below:

*Everybody say them dey go their way  
But I notice say, say we dey block each other way  
Lai, lai... You no go hear the people say  
Say na our ignorance dey make life hard*

In Brymo’s thoughts, people do not always accept that their ignorance is the cause of their problems. This song shows how people ruin things with their actions unknowingly.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Brymo is one of the Afrobeats artists who put out meaningful content for his audience to consume. This shows a musician that cares about society and his listeners’ wellbeing. This paper reveals his connection to society and nation by discussing social issues as a musician. Brymo is an excellent example of how Nigerian musicians can improve their lyrics in addition to the entertaining beats that their songs contain. They can empower the people and contribute to society’s overall stability through their music.

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# An Explication of Optimality Theory

Mayowa Emmanuel Oyinloye

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## ABSTRACT

*The general goal of every linguistic analysis is to make explicit, through formal means, the implicit knowledge that a speaker has about their language. The realization of this goal is oftentimes aided by the adoption of several approaches, depending on the analyst's choice and/or the nature of the phenomenon under analysis. One of these approaches is Optimality Theory (OT). This paper, therefore, gives a brief but detailed exposition of OT, a constraint-based encompassing model whose touch has been felt in virtually all areas of linguistics in the past three decades of its evolution. The motivation for this explication stemmed from the observation that the majority of the budding Nigerian linguistics scholars are caught in the web of not appropriately applying the tenets of this theory when they do their analysis, both in their theses or dissertations and published articles, more or less due to their lack of profound knowledge of its tenets as well as its modus operandi. It is hoped that the explication done in this paper would assist the initiates of the theory, particularly in the Nigerian linguistics circle, in judiciously deploying its principles in their research and stimulate the non-initiates to embrace its application in resolving many of the lingering issues in Nigerian languages which the rule-based models could not satisfactorily address hitherto.*

*Keywords: optimality theory, constraint-based model, linguistic theory, Nigerian languages*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Particularly in the field of phonology, one out of every five young Nigerian researchers wants to be associated with optimality theory (OT) probably because of its current unrivalled influence in the world of phonological theorizing or due to the unpronounced 'glory' that is often associated with one's thesis or article being OT-based. Unfortunately, their lack of profound knowledge of OT usually exposes the disconnect between their data analysis and the purported application of the theory. What is more often than not contained in the analysis component is a skeletal, disjointed and incongruent application of the theory that is completely devoid of rigorous argumentation. In other words, many of those researchers do not really apply the theory as it ought to have been done.

Worse, some researchers do not even end up applying the theory despite explicitly claiming in the introductory segment that the study's tool of analysis is OT and even subsequently reviewing it in the literature review section. Moreso, the manner – "copy and paste" – of review of the theory is a pointer to the inadequate knowledge most of these researchers have about the theory. It seems

to me that the majority of the Nigerian budding scholars, particularly postgraduate students, merely lord or impose OT on their data without necessarily doing justice to its application in the course of the analysis. For me, most of those studies would have even been better off being handled within the context of rule-based frameworks or as a purely descriptive effort than falsely deploying OT when in actual fact its application is either not reflected at all, not convincing enough or wrongly deployed altogether!

No doubt, there are countless publications out there on OT that could assist interested individuals in getting familiar with the principles and *modus operandi* of the theory. However, I have personally observed that within the Nigerian linguistics circle, little attention has been paid to providing a detailed explanation of how the theory works most especially as it concerns its application to Nigerian language data. Rather, most of what we see in the literature are articles written by well-grounded Nigerian practitioners of OT in which the theory is deployed in analyzing some phenomena in Nigerian languages. Of course, there are a few materials in which some portions are devoted to introducing the theory to ‘new comers’, for example, Omachonu’s (2011) chapter five and Oyebade’s (2018) chapter eight, yet a lot still need to be done by Nigerian linguists with regard to elucidating the nature of the theory and providing an easy-to-follow guide on how its principles can be judiciously applied.

Indeed, due credit must be given to Prof. Oladiipo Ajiboye for his pedagogic book on OT published in 2020. As far as I know, the textbook is the first most daring attempt by a Nigerian scholar to explain OT in a more profound way and particularly in the context of a wide variety of linguistic phenomena, as most of the existing materials that solely focus on OT are written by foreigners whose language of expression may sometimes prove difficult to be understood by young Nigerian academics. To sustain Ajiboye’s (2020) bold step, more publications that specifically ‘teach’ OT in a more simplified way need to be produced by Nigerian scholars. The more we simplify OT, the beneficial it would be for the emerging practitioners, most especially taking into consideration the rapid rate at which new versions of the theory are being proposed by European and American adherents.

It is against this backdrop that the present paper deems it necessary to provide an easy-to-follow, self-explanatory explication of OT, with regard to its informal and formal definitions, motivation for its evolution, its basic premises, and mode of operation as far as analysis of empirical data is concerned. Without mincing words, the target audience of this paper are the emerging advocates of OT in the Nigerian linguistics sphere, that is, Master’s and PhD students who wish to venture into the OT enterprise in their research career. Of course, teaching OT in a mere article-length material such as the present one may not produce a sufficiently remarkable result; but it would go a long way in familiarizing the target audience with the theory, especially those encountering it for the first time. At least, it would serve as an appetizer to their curiosity about OT before they lay their hands on more lengthy and more detailed materials, such as Ajiboye (2020) as well as many others that have been written by foreigners.

## 2. THE EVOLUTION OF OT: HISTORICAL ANTECEDENT

Modern or current linguistic theory whose tradition can be carefully traced back to the 1950s is all about a movement called *Universal Grammar* whose major leading advocate is Noam Avram Chomsky. The crux of this highly influential movement is that the human species have a certain innate predisposition to learn any language whatsoever and this predisposition results in languages being fundamentally similar both in terms of inherent features and the structures produced by the native speakers. For example, all known languages have nouns and noun phrases in their grammars and the majority of languages follow the subject-verb-object structure in sentence formation and production. In the context of this orientation is the assumption that production of utterances essentially entails converting abstract strings of lexical materials existing in the mental faculty of man to a surface phonetic speech with the use of human vocal apparatus (organs). This theoretical thought birthed what is now widely referred to as *transformational generative grammar* (TGG).

In the standard TGG, the conversion of the underlying form to its surface counterpart at various domains: phonology, syntax, etc. is formally explained by rules (or re-write rules). Consider a schematic illustration of the transformation of an underlying representation (UR) to its surface representation (SR) in (1).

(1) /DAE/ → [db]

Rule 1 (assimilation):      A → B /D \_ E; thus, /DAE/ → dbe

Rule 2 (deletion):          E → ø /DB \_ ; thus, /DBE/ → [db]

The sketch above aptly illustrates the significance of re-write rules in Generative Phonology (GP), one of the integral components of TGG: they provide a formal explanation of the derivational journey from the UR '/DAE/' to the SR '[db]'. Note that the rules apply in a step-wise fashion where the output of rule 1 forms the input to rule 2. An empirical example involving the phonetic rendition of the word 'dogs' is given in (2).

(2) /dɔg + s/ → [dɔgz]

where rule of voicing assimilation takes place between the coda of the root morpheme 'g' and the pluralizing suffix 's' such that /s/ is changed to [z] due to the influence of /g/, as superficially formalized in (3).

(3) /s/ → [z] /g \_

What could be deduced from the foregoing is that, in the beginning were *re-write rules* that constituted the hallmark of the generative (derivational) framework of linguistics, using phonology as a quick example. Several years later, the re-write rules were, however, observed to be inadequate in accounting for certain linguistic phenomena. (The inadequacies to be examined later). In the process of time, deliberate but gradual efforts were made to shift the explanatory burden of linguistic theory from *input-based rewrite rules* to *output-based constraints* (McCarthy & Prince, 1993, p. 6), implying that the orientation of TGG within the age-long collective movement known as "uni-

versal grammar” (UG) that was led by Chomsky dramatically took a new turn with respect to the approach adopted. This radical theoretical evolution, that is, campaign against language-particular rules but canvass for linguistically universal constraints, led to the development of several constraint-based grammars or theories, the most influential of which is OT in which, of course, no recognition whatsoever is given to rules. Suffice it to say that OT emerged out of the need to address the inadequacies inherent in its predecessors, i.e., rule-based and representational theories, such as the standard GP, autosegmental phonology, lexical phonology, and metrical phonology. Employing constraints (the indispensable ingredients that form the pillars of every language’s grammar) at the expense of rules provides a way of resolving some of those shortcomings, together with achieving a more convincing explanatory adequacy which is a necessary yardstick for measuring the quality and authenticity of any grammatical analysis.

### 3. MOTIVATION FOR THE EVOLUTION OF OT: ISSUES WITH THE RULE-BASED MODEL

Among others, the salient issue the proponents of OT have with the rule-based framework is aptly captured by McCarthy (2008, p. 1) as follows: “Re-write rules can explain lots of phenomena, but they do a poor job of explaining how phonological systems fit together.” In other words, phonological rules lack the formal mechanism for explaining the functional unity of phonological processes. Interestingly, OT is equipped with the necessary apparatus for explaining functionally related processes, both in phonology and in other aspects of grammar. Let us quickly examine the derivation of the agentive prefix /oní-/ before vowel-initial nouns in the Standard Yorùbá (SY).

(4) oní + ata → aláta ‘owner/seller of pepper’

oní + epo → elépo ‘owner/seller of palm oil’

oní + ẹran → ẹlẹran ‘owner/seller of meat’

oní + omi → olómi ‘owner/seller of water’

oní + ojà → olójà ‘owner/seller of goods’

A sample derivation of /oní + epo/ → [elépo], the second item in (4), is sketched below:

UR: /oní + epo/

Rule 1: vowel deletion      on’ epo

Rule 2: consonant denasalization      ol’ epo

Rule 3: vowel assimilation      el’ epo

Rule 4: tone docking      elépo

SR: [elépo]

The most obvious issue with the derivational approach illustrated above is the presence of multiple rules which need to apply iteratively, failure of which may lead to ill-formedness. Within OT, however, a single constraint hierarchy, tentatively proposed in (5), suffices to formally explain how

the four phonological processes fit together (that is, the functional unity among them) in the grammar of SY. (See Oyinloye (2021) for a detailed analysis of the phenomenon at issue).

- (5) NO-HIATUS, NO-FLOAT<sub>[TONE]</sub>, MAX(GRWD) >> ALIGN[VOC]-L >> IDENT(AFX) >>  
MAX(AFX)

The implication of the single system of constraint ranking shown in (5) for the derivation of the agentive prefix /oní-/ before vowel-initial nouns in SY is that the four processes operate in a parallel fashion (simultaneously); thus, they all drive towards the same ‘output goal’.

Another challenge with the rule-based framework is that re-write rules are excessively input-driven; they offer little or no insight into the outcome of the derivation. For example, where there are multiple rules governing a derivation, as in the Yorùbá example cited above, the application of a rule solely depends on whether the structural description is met by the output of the immediately preceding rule. This means that rules are *blind* to their own outputs. In fact, each rule is blind to the output of the derivation as a whole. (See Kager (1999, pp. 57-58) for more details on this issue). Interestingly, OT resolves this problem by assuming that constraints are largely surface-based: constraint interaction ultimately determines well-formedness of forms, and the instantiation of well-formedness is strictly reflected at the surface phonetic level.

Finally, since rules are language-specific, they do not have the full capacity to synchronize the peculiarities of individual languages with linguistic typology or language universals. Interestingly, “One of the most compelling features of OT...is the way that it unites description of individual languages with explanation of language typology” (McCarthy, 2002, p. 1). This is made possible by the theory’s assumption that constraints are linguistically universal and differences in languages are only reflected in the way the same set of constraints (made available by UG for all languages) are ranked on the basis of the peculiarities of each language. So, as we are describing what is happening in a language under investigation using the mechanism of OT, we are ostensibly explaining what is going on in a number of languages out there and even languages yet unknown or yet in existence.

#### 4. EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF THE CONSTRAINT-BASED APPROACH

There are two kinds of evidence which entrench the need to shift the focus of linguistic analysis (phonology in particular) from rules to constraints: conspiracy of phonological rules and duplication of rules and constraints.

##### Conspiracy of Phonological Rules

It was observed that two or more phonological rules may conspire within a linguistic system to produce a single surface structure from several underlying structures. The ultimate goal/target of this conspiracy is to satisfy a particular surface structure constraint in the given language. If this is so, then, grammars are ultimately defined by surface-true constraints, and not rules which are excessively input-driven. Hence, the need to focus solely on constraints at the expense of rules.

### Duplication of Rules and Constraints

It was equally observed that when rules apply, they are aimed at satisfying (or expressing) certain morpheme structure constraints (MSC) which govern the surface structures of morphemes in a given language. Let us briefly examine the adaptation of English loanwords in Yorùbá, as shown in (6).

- |     |            |           |         |
|-----|------------|-----------|---------|
| (6) | a. /bleɪd/ | [búlèèdì] | ‘blade’ |
|     | b. /gəʊld/ | [gòòlù]   | ‘gold’  |

In (6a), the rule of ‘u’ epenthesis serves to fulfil an MSC in Yorùbá which forbids consonant clusters; the rule of monophthongization (i.e., /eɪ/ → [e]) and the corollary rule of vowel doubling/lengthening (i.e., /e/ → [ee]) both conspire to obey another MSC in Yorùbá which disallows diphthongs; finally, the rule of ‘i’ paragoge aims at satisfying another MSC in Yorùbá which frowns at closed syllables. Similarly, in (6b), monophthongization of /əʊ/ to [o], in addition to the doubling of /o/ to [oo], is geared towards satisfying the constraint ‘Avoid-Diphthongs’; epenthesis of ‘u’ between the /ld/ cluster is to ‘Avoid-Consonant Cluster’; and the deletion of the final consonant /d/ is to express the constraint ‘Avoid-Coda’. All these rules are ‘invoked’ to satisfy the respective MSCs in Yorùbá and the given MSCs generally govern the derivation of surface structures in the language. OT proponents, however, feel that such duplication of functional roles of rules and constraints smacks of redundancy. The thinking is that, if both rules and constraints are ultimately exploited to derive surface structures, then emphasis should be laid on constraints which are largely surface-driven, rather than rules which are strictly input-based. Therefore, OT is designed to focus only on constraints rather than the mixture of rules and constraints since the latter can single-handedly handle whatever the combination of the former and the latter can.

From the foregoing, the standard or classical OT differs from the rule-based derivational frameworks in two main ways: (i) absence of *re-write rules*, replaced by *constraints*; and (ii) absence of serial, sequential, step-wise or systematic *derivation*, replaced by *parallelism*.

### 5. WHAT THEN IS OT?

OT is a constraint-oriented theory of Universal Grammar (UG) which proposes that surface forms in language are ultimately a product of constraints interaction. These constraints are linguistically universal (all languages use the same set of constraints) and they coherently form a system from which individual grammars are constructed. Construction of grammars is done by idiosyncratic ranking of the same set of constraints based on the languages’ peculiarities. The individual grammars are the formal instantiations of the different rankings of the entire system of constraints contained in UG. In other words, different rankings produce different grammars. Therefore, linguistic typology is provided by the various (different) rankings, such that languages belonging to one dimension of typology (e.g., partial reduplication) mirror a similar ranking of the set of constraints present in UG.

### What are the “takeaways” from the foregoing definition of OT?

- In OT, the grammar of every language is conceived as a system of conflicting, violable, universal constraints.
- OT is packaged to formally explain the points of *convergence* and *divergence* among all grammars of natural languages with the aid of *constraints* (not rules!). The point of convergence is construed by the assumption that all languages are the same in terms of the constraints used in constructing their individual grammars whereas the point of divergence conceals in how those constraints are ranked on a language-particular basis. In other words, constraints are assumed to be linguistically universal while their rankings are language-specific.
- By and large, OT is fundamentally a theory of linguistic variation: intra-linguistic and cross-linguistic, and it synchronizes the description of individual languages with linguistic typology.

### 6. BASIC OR GENERAL FACTS ABOUT OT

- i. The term *Optimality* first ‘ghostly’ appeared on the linguistics scene in April, 1991 during a Phonology conference held at the University of Arizona, Tucson, USA, courtesy of a paper, tersely titled “Optimality”, presented by Alan Prince and Paul Smolensky.
- ii. The proponents/founders of OT are Alan Prince, a linguistic phonologist of the Rutgers University (USA), and Paul Smolensky, a cognitive scientist (whose area of specialization is connectionism) of the Johns Hopkins University, USA.
- iii. The two founders followed up their initial attempt to introduce the theory in 1991 by producing a manuscript in 1993 titled “Optimality Theory: Constraint Interaction in Generative Grammar”, which was widely circulated across America and then to other parts of the world, particularly Europe.
- iv. The manuscript, which circulated like a wild fire for many years, was eventually published as a book in 2004 with the same title. (That was 11 years after!). It goes without saying that the manuscript was published after the theory had gained huge acceptance across the world.
- v. From the title of the manuscript and the published book, it could be deduced that OT is a development, a version or an offshoot of *Generative Grammar*. By extension, it is a theory of *Universal Grammar*.
- vi. However, OT, particularly the classical or standard model proposed in 1993/2004, radically differs from the standard Generative theory particularly in the area of accounting for the surface forms: whereas its predecessor was driven by *serial derivation* in which the UR is transformed to the SR in an *indirect* fashion, OT is driven by *parallelism* in which the input (roughly, the UR) is mapped onto the actual output (SR) in a *direct* fashion.
- vii. Although OT is a linguistic theory, it has its root in connectionism.
- viii. Although OT was originally developed for and firstly applied to the domain of phonology, it is an encompassing theory of grammar covering other areas, such as syntax, semantics, including sociolinguistics and historical linguistics.
- ix. OT is not necessarily an alternative model competing with other existing theories of generative grammar, such as auto-segmental phonology (ASP), Lexical phonology and morphology (LPM), Metrical Phonology (MP), etc. Rather, OT is best conceived as a theory which subsumes and, of course, adapts some of the tenets of its predecessors. For instance, the *Obligatory Contour Principle* (OCP) of ASP is a parameterized constraint in OT and the principle of spreading in ASP is equally instantiated in OT in various ways. Also, alignment constraints are basically used in OT to formally explain the interface relations between morphology and pho-

nology, the major preoccupation of LPM. Finally, OT-centric constraints, such as TROCHEE, FOOTBIN, and NON-FINALITY have their roots in MP.

- x. OT is not a theory of constraints per se; rather, a theory of constraints interaction. The constraints had been existing before the advent of OT itself since they are inherently part of UG and UG is funnily ‘older’ than OT. So, OT has little to say about constraints themselves. What it mainly does is to provide a formal mechanism for explaining how they (the constraints) interact in the grammar of every language.
- xi. OT is strictly a surface-based theory. That is, it is crucially concerned with well-formedness of surface forms with little regard to the underlying forms. In fact, no constraint in OT imposes restrictions on the input alone. While faithfulness constraints relate the output with the input in some way, markedness constraints exclusively govern the well-formedness of the output without any reference to the input.
- xii. OT sees grammar as an optimization process where an ‘infinite’ number of candidates (possible output forms) are assessed or evaluated with respect to a given hierarchy with a view to picking the *optimal* form, that is, the best or most desirable output. In optimality-theoretic parlance, such output is referred to as the *optimal candidate*, which in a layman’s term is referred to as the *actual form* recognized by the grammar of the given language. Note that the optimization process begins with a *parallel* assessment of the candidate set (possible outcomes on the basis of a given input) with respect to an established ranking and culminates in the selection of the optimal candidate. In summary, OT is a theory of optimality, the property of being optimal, and the process of achieving this is known as *optimization*.
- xiii. The standard OT is neither derivational nor representational in its modus operandi; rather, it is strictly comparative. For example, OT would first and foremost assume that the input /dɔg + s/ in English could be phonetically realized as: *dɔg*, *dɔgs*, *dɔgz*, or *dɔgz*. These four possible outcomes would then be compared with respect to their performance on a given ranking system and the most desirable outcome, e.g., *dɔgz*, which the grammar of English allows would be selected as the optimal candidate. What OT does is to give a principled explanation of why *dɔgz* is recognized as the actual surface form of /dɔg + s/ in English at the expense of the other three forms.
- xiv. OT has developed into a number of versions over the years: Parallel OT, which is the classical or standard model proposed by Prince and Smolensky (1993/2004); generalized alignment (McCarthy & Prince, 1993); correspondence theory (McCarthy & Prince, 1995); Stratal optimality theory (Kiparsky, 1998, 2000, 2003); sympathy theory (McCarthy, 1999); comparative markedness (McCarthy, 2003); OT with candidate chains (McCarthy, 2007); emergent optimality theory (Mohan, Archangeli & Pulleyblank, 2010); and harmonic serialism (McCarthy, 2010). Although recent research efforts are now shifting towards the direction of Harmonic Serialism, the tradition of the parallel model still permeates most known OT studies.

## 7. THE CORE PRINCIPLES OR TENETS OF OT

OT’s modus operandi revolves around five core principles (see *inter alia* Prince & Smolensky, 1993/2004; McCarthy & Prince, 1993, 1994; Kager, 1999):

- i. *Universality*: The set of CONstraints provided by UG is present in all grammars.
- ii. *Violability*: The constraints are violable; but violation must be minimal.
- iii. *Ranking*: The constraints are ranked in each grammar on the basis of the peculiarities of such grammars. In other words, ranking is language-specific.
- iv. *Inclusiveness*: The candidate analyses supplied by the GENERATOR must be admitted by very general considerations of structural well-formedness. What this means is that the candidate set must include all of the forms that are possible in every language.
- v. *Parallelism*: The evaluation of the entire candidate set with respect to their performance on

the entire constraint hierarchy is a wholistic affair premised on simultaneity. That is, there is no room for serial or sequential derivation.

## 8. THE COMPONENTS OF OT

There are four crucial elements that are fundamental to the architecture of OT:

**LEXicon:** The lexicon is the base of the grammar where every grammatical construction begins from. In particular, the lexicon provides the lexical materials which form the input to the generator. Put in another way, the generator produces the input from the lexicon. This shows the significant role of the lexicon in the construction of grammar in general and OT in particular.

**GENerator:** The generator has the role of generating an infinite set of candidate output forms on the basis of a given input made available by the lexicon.

There are three principles which underlie the theory of GEN (McCarthy & Prince, 1993):

- **Freedom of Analysis:** Any amount of structure may be posited, that is, the candidate set is free to include elements from a broad or wide range of possibilities.
- **Containment:** No element may be literally removed from the input. In other words, the input is contained in every candidate form.
- **Consistency of Exponence:** No changes are permitted in the exponence of a phonologically-specified morpheme. In other words, any given morpheme's phonological exponents must be identical both in the underlying (input) and the surface forms (output).
- **CONstraints:** Constraints are the formal substances of OT. They are housed in UG and form a coherent system or network. It is from this network that individual languages construct their grammars. (An extensive discussion on constraints will be provided in the next section).
- **EVALuator:** This is the agent, actor or function that is saddled with the responsibility of scanning the candidate set with respect to their performance on a given constraint hierarchy. The scanning culminates in selection of the optimal candidate.

## 9. OT AS A THEORY OF CONSTRAINTS INTERACTION

As maintained earlier, OT is not a theory of constraints per se; otherwise, the only thing we would be doing in the theory is to be unearthing and proposing constraints, or writing epistles about how they look like or should look like. It is not OT that manufactures the constraints; they are the essential, inherent properties of UG, a super force from which OT itself emerges. Thus, OT has just little to say about constraints. Its major relationship with the constraints is characterized by the hypothesis that they interact in the grammar via ranking. In other words, it theorizes that the universal constraints interact in individual grammars by hierarchical ranking on the basis of relevance. Factoring out those rankings is, therefore, the major task undertaken in the theory. Hence, it is widely held that OT is a theory of constraints interaction, and not a theory of constraints in and of itself.

### What are Constraints?

In simple terms, constraints are grammatical forces that exert pressure on linguistic forms with respect to their featural or structural well-formedness. Alternatively, constraints are featural or struc-

tural restrictions imposed on linguistic forms towards achieving grammaticality. So, if a constraint says ‘Avoid-Coda’, it means that a given linguistic form, say /papa/ for example, must not have a syllable-final consonant – [pa.pa]; otherwise, it would be ill-formed – \*[pap.a]. Also, if a constraint says ‘Do not delete’, it means that the target form, e.g., [papa], must preserve the lexical features (contrasts) of the input (underlying form), /papa/. If the contrary is done, an ill-formed structure may be the outcome, for example, \*[apa].

In OT, constraints are NOT absolute, sacrosanct grammatical forces or restrictions; otherwise, they would not be violable. That is why no matter how stringent a featural or structural restriction expressed in a constraint may appear, the actual output form may still flout such restriction in some way even without reducing its well-formedness or grammaticality in any way. For example, ‘Avoid-Coda’ is a powerful and highly respected constraint in UG due to the marked status of codas cross-linguistically, yet it is violated by the following well-formed or grammatical English forms: [sæt], [kɪk.stænd], and [æ.nɪ.məl]. Similarly, although the constraint DEPENDENCY forbids inserting an extraneous segment in the output which is not originally present in the input, it is flouted by these Yorùbá-adapted words of English origin, and yet they are well-formed:

- (7) a. /treɪ/ → [tírèè] ‘tray’  
 b. /kart/ → [káìtì] ‘kite’

The next question is: *How do constraints come about?* That is, *what is the source of constraints?* In plain terms, constraints are formal descriptions, characterizations or codifications of the observable features of natural languages. In other words, constraints are formal statements that mirror the inherent properties (either featural or structural) of human languages. For example, a constraint that requires every syllable to have an onset (ONSET) implies that there is no language in the world where onsets are generally disallowed. Put simply, onsets are a universal feature of syllables. Likewise, a constraint that frowns at metathesis (LINEARITY) reveals a universal fact about natural languages, namely “languages do not tamper with the linear arrangement of segments within a morpheme or word *unless* there is a need to do so.” In a nutshell, what are referred to as constraints are just mere facts about human languages which are expressed in the form of featural or structural restrictions.

### Characteristic Features of Constraints in OT

There are four crucial properties of constraints in OT; they are discussed as follows:

- i. **Universality:** Every constraint you find in one grammar is existing in another. This is because all constraints are resident in UG, and it is from UG that all languages construct their individual grammars.
- ii. **Violability:** Any restriction expressed in a constraint may be infringed. Note, however, that violability does not connote ungrammaticality. Nevertheless, even though violation of constraints is permissible in OT, it must be minimal. Minimal violation can be tersely paraphrased as “the least offence.” In layman’s terms, even if there will be an offence, such offence must not be costly.

- iii. **Conflict:** The restrictions imposed by or expressed in constraints usually clash with each other. For example, one constraint says ‘Do not insert’, and another is saying ‘Avoid-Coda’. In a language like Yorùbá, the best way to avoid coda especially in loanwords is to insert a vowel after the coda. Consider the examples in (8).

- (8) a. /ka:d/ → [káàdì] ‘card’  
 b. /rɔb/ → [róòbù] ‘rob’

Given (8), DEPENDENCY (‘Do not insert’) and NO-CODA (‘Avoid-Coda’) are in conflict with each other in Yorùbá: If we fail to insert vowels ‘i’ and ‘u’ in (a) and (b), respectively, codas will arise in the output; if we need to prevent codas ‘d’ and ‘b’ in (a) and (b), respectively from appearing in the output, we need to insert the vowels. What a clash of interest! Interestingly, situations such as this are ubiquitous in every language. How then do we resolve conflicts in OT?

- i. **Ranking:** Conflicts are resolved by ranking. Constraints are ranked in a hierarchy of relevance or significance, and the ranking is language-specific. Given the immediate past examples, it is completely irrelevant to refuse to insert when such refusal would result in the presence of a coda in the output form. On the other hand, it is highly significant to prevent a coda from showing forth in the output even if it would require inserting a vowel. Since no syllable has a coda in Yorùbá, a vowel may be inserted after a ‘potential’ coda to ensure that this sacrosanct fact is maintained. This implies that NO-CODA takes precedence over DEPENDENCY in Yorùbá. Speaking in OT’s terms, therefore, Yorùbá would rank NO-CODA above DEPENDENCY. In this way, the conflict between the two constraints is resolved. The resolution simply means placing them where they belong in the grammar of the language, namely that NO-CODA is given a higher status whereas DEPENDENCY is given a lower one.

### Types or Families of Constraints Recognized in OT

Broadly speaking, there are two types or families of constraints in OT: *Faithfulness* constraints and *Markedness* constraints. There is another type or family known as *Alignment* constraints, which could be roughly classified under the markedness constraints due to their nature of operation.

#### Faithfulness Constraints

They are grammatical forces that exert pressure towards preserving lexical contrasts. They are used to express the correspondence relation between the input and the output. In particular, they require that *whatever* (feature or structure) is in the input must be preserved in the output, exactly as it is in the input; or *whatever* is in the output must be an exact representation of what is contained in the input. In a nutshell, faithfulness constraints mandate that the output form of a morpheme, word or sentence must be a replica of (i.e., faithful to) the input form of the same morpheme, word or sentence. For example: /ABC/ → [ABC] or /ABC/ ← [ABC]. It should, however, be noted that the restriction imposed by faithfulness constraints is possible only in principle, not in practice simply because phonology is about sound change. Interestingly, this is where violation of constraints in OT comes into force since every phonological transformation necessarily implies displacement of faithfulness of the output to the input. The following are examples of faithfulness constraints:

- (a) MAXIMALITY: Every segment in the input must be *maximized* (preserved) in the output. That is, every input segment must have a correspondence in the output.

**Interpretation:** There is no room for *deletion* of any input segment in the output.

Illustration: If /abc/ → [ab], it is wrong!

(b) **DEPENDENCY:** Every output segment must *depend* on (reflect) the input segment. That is, every output segment must have a correspondence in the input.

**Interpretation:** There is no room for *insertion* of an extraneous segment in the output that is not originally present in the input.

Illustration: If /abc/ → [abcd], it is wrong!

(c) **IDENTITY:** Every output segment must be *identical* with (be a replica of) the corresponding segment in the input.

**Interpretation:** There is no room for *sound change* (assimilation, etc.) in the output.

Illustration: If /abc/ → [aβc], it is wrong!

**NB:** **IDENTITY** is a broad family of constraints that are usually rendered with respect to a specific feature. For example, IDENT[VOICE], IDENT[HIGH], etc. are instantiations of **IDENTITY**.

(d) **UNIFORMITY:** Two distinct input segments must be *uniformly* so (distinct) in the output. That is, two input segments must not merge into one segment in the output.

**Interpretation:** There is no room for *coalescence* of two input segments in the output.

Illustration: If /abc/ → [xc], it is wrong!

(e) **LINEARITY:** The *linear* arrangement (precedence relation) of input segments must be preserved in the corresponding output segments.

**Interpretation:** There is no room for *metathesis* in the output.

Illustration: If /abc/ → [acb], it is wrong!

Other examples of faithfulness constraints include **INTEGRITY**, **ANCHOR-L**, **ANCHOR-R**, and so on. Note that, because faithfulness constraints usually lay emphasis on the correspondence relation between input and output segments, they are otherwise called *correspondence* constraints.

### Markedness Constraints

They are grammatical forces that exert pressure towards realization of unmarked features or structures. They require that the output form (surface phonetic representation) be well-formed. Markedness constraints do not make any reference whatsoever to the lexical representations in the input; they strictly require that the output form has certain feature or structure that is universally *unmarked* (preferred, common, ideal, prevalent, expected, more natural) in natural, human languages. In a nutshell, markedness constraints are strictly output-based constraints, regardless of the content or structure of the input. Thus, they constitute the heart of OT since OT itself is a theory which shifts from input-based re-write rules to output-based constraints. A few examples of markedness constraints are provided below:

(a) **ONSET:** Every syllable must have an onset.

Illustration: If /VCV/ → [CV.CV] or [CV], it is correct; but if /VCV/ → [V.CV], it is wrong!

(b) NO-CODA: Every syllable must be devoid of a coda.

Illustration: If /VCV/ → [V.CV], it is correct; but if /VCV/ → [VC.V], it is wrong!

(c) NO-CONSONANT-CLUSTER (\*CC): A syllable must be devoid of two or more consonants in a (linear) sequence.

Illustration: If /CCVCVCC/ → [CCV.CVCC], it is wrong; but if /CCVCVCC/ → [CV.CVC], it is correct!

(d) FOOT-BINARITY (FT-BIN): Every foot must be parsed into (or made up of) two syllables or moras.

Illustration: If /CVCVV/ → [(CV.CV).V] or [CV.(CVV)], it is correct; but if /CVCVV/ → [(CV).(CVV)], it is wrong!

(e) NON-FINALITY: The prosodic head of a word must not fall on the word-final syllable.

Illustration: If /CVCVCV/ → [CV.CV.CV], it is wrong; but if /CVCVCV/ → [CV.CV.CV], it is correct!

(f) TROCHEE: Every foot must be trochaic in its structure. That is, the first of the two syllables or moras within a foot must be the head (e.g., stressed) of the foot.

(g) \*HIGH: Avoid a segment that is specified for the [high] feature. For example, low vowels are preferred to high vowels.

(h) AGREE[VOICE]: Two adjacent segments must agree in voicing, either both being voiced or both being voiceless.

(i) \*NASAL: Avoid a nasal segment (e.g., avoid a nasal consonant – \*m, \*n, etc.); or avoid a segment that is specified for the [nasal] feature (e.g., avoid a nasalized vowel – \*V[NAS]).

Note that, because markedness constraints usually lay emphasis on the well-formedness of the output form, they are otherwise referred to as *well-formedness* constraints.

### Alignment Constraints

They are grammatical forces that exert pressure towards ensuring coincidence between edges of phonological and/or morphological constituents. They stipulate that the edge of one constituent (e.g., a prosodic word) must not be distant from the edge of another constituent (e.g., foot). Alignment could be required either between two constituents from different categories, for example, between a morpheme (morphology) and a syllable (phonology); or between two constituents of the same category, for example, between a stem (morphology) and an affix (morphology). Although alignment is usually required between corresponding edges (e.g., right and right, or left and left) of two constituents, it could sometimes be required between opposite edges (e.g., right and left, or left and right). Alignment constraints are evaluated in a gradient or relative (not categorical or absolute) manner. That is, they are assessed by virtue of degree of violation incurred by a given candidate. Consider these few examples of alignment constraints:

- (a) ALIGN (PRWD, L, FT, L): The left edge of each prosodic word must match with the left edge of some foot. It could be shortened as ALIGN-PRWD.
- (b) ALIGN (FT, R, PRWD, R): The right edge of every foot must coincide with the right edge of the prosodic word. It could be shortened as ALIGN-FT.
- (c) ALIGN (AFFIX, R, STEM, L): The right edge of an affix must coincide with the left edge of some stem. It could be shortened as ALIGN-AF.

On the whole, alignment constraints are used to express the interface relations between morpho-prosodic constituents: morphology and phonology. Although they are normally used to measure structural *distance* between two constituents, they can equally be deployed to express coincidence between a constituent and a certain *feature*, e.g., ALIGN-NAS. Hence, a distinction could be made between positional or structural alignment and featural alignment.

### 10. INPUT-OUTPUT MAPPING ORIENTATION IN OT

If not all, almost every phonological theory embraces the tradition of mapping a UR to an SR. Within the rule-based frameworks, the mapping is done in a step-wise (serial) derivational or transformational fashion with the aid of re-write rules. In OT, however, such kind of mapping is not recognized. Rather, allowance is made for the specification of a large set of output candidates from which the actual form (that is, the only one permissible in the language) is picked after a parallel evaluation of their performance on a given constraint hierarchy has been objectively done by EVAL. We can illustrate this by using example (2), repeated below as (9).

- (9) /dɔg + s/ → [dɔgz]

OT would not say that /dɔgs/ is phonetically rendered as [dɔgz] via a rule of ‘voicing assimilation’ because GEN is already equipped with the capacity to produce an output candidate in which voicing assimilation takes place, e.g., [dɔgz] itself. Rather, OT would say that /dɔgs/ could be pronounced as *dɔg*, *dɔgs*, *dɔgɪz*, *dɔgz*...till we run out of options! Note, intuitively, that the realization of /dɔgs/ as either *dɔg*, *dɔgs* or *dɔgɪz* is indeed a possibility because life in general is all about possibilities, particularly unknown possibilities. We could confidently say that only *dɔgz* is recognized in the phonological grammar of English only because we were already told so by our teachers of English grammar; it could have been a different ball game if we had been forced to figure it out ourselves! Take note of the following facts: *dɔg* could be produced by a child learning English who cannot produce consonant clusters at the very early stage; *dɔgs* could be produced by an uneducated Yorùbá speaker because of lack of /z/ in Yorùbá; *dɔgɪz* could be produced by a young trendy individual in an informal setting. These are tenable possibilities even though *dɔgz* is the correct form in the English grammar. The beauty of OT is that options are kept open; only the best option is regarded as optimal.

Through the *optimization* process in which all the options (that is, *dɔg*, *dɔgs*, *dɔgɪz*, *dɔgz*) are parallelly assessed with respect to their performance on a given hierarchy, OT would claim that the input /dɔgs/ is mapped to the correct output that is observable in English, which, of course, is

[dɔgz]. Note, crucially, that the mapping is not done in an indirect, serial manner; rather, it is done in a direct, parallel manner. Then, the big question is: If OT still recognizes the fact that /dɔgs/ is actually mapped to [dɔgz] in English, then, what are we really doing in OT that is different from, or more special than, what is done in the rule-based framework? This leads us to the next section.

## 11. TWO MAJOR PROBLEMS CONFRONTED IN OT: SELECTION AND RANKING

In every OT analysis, either of two crucial problems is intended to be solved; these are *selection* problem or *ranking* problem (McCarthy, 2008). For the former, the ranking has already been figured out or established; hence, the analyst is confronted with the problem of determining the actual output candidate, out of the pool of candidates generated by GEN, that is permissible in the grammar of the language under investigation. For the latter, the actual output candidate is already known ahead of the analysis; hence, the analyst is faced with the problem of determining the specific constraint ranking that produces the actual output candidate in the grammar of the given language. It must be stated that roughly 99% of what is done in OT is to solve the ranking problem since every researcher must have known the actual output form ahead of the analysis by virtue of the fact that the data collected have clearly revealed what the speakers of the language actually produce phonetically. The task, therefore, is to factor out the particular ranking that favours the actual output form at the expense of all other possibilities.

The major task in OT is to explain why the grammar of a given language prefers a particular actual output form, e.g., [dɔgz], to all other possibilities made available by GEN; every other thing done therein is similar to what is done in other theories: pure descriptive analysis. Thus, in OT, it is not really about which form, but crucially about why this form and not the other(s). In particular, why [dɔgz], and not \*[dɔgs], \*[dɔg], or \*[dɔgɪz]? OT answers the *why* question in the following simple way: It is [dɔgz] because it is what is unmarked as far as linguistic typology is concerned on the one hand, and that is what the grammar of English recognizes on the other hand. Interestingly, this answer is innovatively encoded by the ranking of the relevant constraints. That is, the ranking formally explains why the language chooses one form and dispenses with the others. The established ranking that produces the optimal candidate is assumed to be a possible or potential grammar in some other languages; hence, the term *factorial typology* in OT. This synchronization of the description of individual grammars with the explanation of linguistic typology constitutes the analytical edge which the theory has over its contemporaries. Also, it drives towards a more convincing explanatory adequacy than is done in other theories.

## 12. OT'S MODUS OPERANDI: A GUIDE ON HOW ANALYSIS IS DONE IN OT

First and foremost, the constraints relevant to the phenomenon under analysis are determined. Their ranking is then proposed. Selection of a number of output candidates, including, of course, the actual output form recognized by the grammar of the language under investigation then follows. The output candidates are compared through parallel assessment with respect to a given input and an already established constraint hierarchy. The candidate which satisfies the constraint hierarchy in a better way (for two candidates) or in the best way (for three or more candidates)

is chosen as the winner, that is, the optimal candidate, otherwise referred to as the actual output form. ‘Better or best satisfaction’ is arrived at if the candidate in question incurs a minimal (less/least costly or offensive) violation on a given constraint or a system of constraints compared to how the other candidates fare on the hierarchy as a whole.

In another sense, the candidate with minimal violation(s) is picked as the optimal candidate. An instantiation of minimal violation is when a lower-ranked constraint is violated in order to satisfy a higher-ranked constraint. This implies that in OT, no candidate is expected to be perfect, not even the optimal candidate itself. It is as a result of this that OT unequivocally posits that violation is permitted, only that it must be kept to a minimum. Bear in mind that violation of a constraint does not connote ungrammaticality of a candidate because the grammatical form can equally violate a constraint. The analysis is shown in a tableau and a short explanatory note usually accompanies it. Ideally, a descriptive analysis of the data is first of all provided before presenting the formal OT analysis.

### 13. CONVENTIONS USED IN OT

The following conventions are used when doing an OT analysis:

Double greater down (>>): It means ‘ranked higher than’ or ‘dominates’.

Illustration: NO-CODA >> DEPENCENCY

Comma (,): It is used to indicate that there is no mutual ranking between the given constraints. In a tableau, it is shown by a broken line between the constraints in question.

Illustration: ONSET, NO-CODA >> MAXIMALITY, UNIFORMITY

Asterisk (\*): It indicates violation of a constraint. However, if it is used in a constraint, it reads ‘avoid’, e.g., \*CC means *avoid consonant clusters*.

Exclamation mark (!): It is conventionally placed after an asterisk to indicate fatal, serious or severe violation of a given constraint.

Shaded cells: Although now outdated in contemporary OT works, they imply that the remnant constraints (whose cells have been shaded) are no longer relevant to the optimization process because the optimal candidate has already been determined on the earlier constraints.

Thumbs-up or pointed finger (☞): It is used to indicate the optimal candidate.

Tableau (tableaux, for plural): Referred to as ‘illustrative table’ in layman’s terms, it is used to show the formal analysis of the phenomenon under investigation. What are shown in a tableau include:

*Constraints* and their hierarchical ranking (arranged in the first row from the top)

*Input* (placed in the first leftward column from the top)

*Output candidates* (arranged, usually randomly, in the subsequent leftward columns immediately below the column where the input is placed)

*Violation* shown by the use of asterisk and exclamation mark (placed in a cell directly below the relevant constraint and against a given candidate form)

*Optimality* indicated by the use of thumbs-up or pointed finger (placed in the same cell where the optimal candidate is situated)

There are three types of tableau format used in OT: violation tableau, comparative tableau, and combination tableau. The first type is most commonly used.

**A. Violation Tableau:** Used to show the usual violations of constraints by the output candidates:

**Tableau 1: Ranking argument in favour of [dɔgz]**

/dɔgs/	AGREE[VOICE]	IDENT[VOICE]
[dɔgs]	*!	
☞ [dɔgz]		*

Tableau 1 demonstrates that the first constraint is ranked higher than the second: AGREE[VOICE] >> IDENT[VOICE]. With the aid of a pointed finger, the second candidate is chosen as the optimal candidate because the first candidate incurs a fatal violation on the higher-ranked constraint, that is, AGREE[VOICE]. Note, however, that the winner is not impeccable itself, as it violates the lower-ranked constraint, that is, IDENT[VOICE].

**B. Comparative Tableau:** Used to show favouring relations vis-à-vis the given constraints and the selected candidates:

**Tableau 2: Ranking argument in favour of [dɔgz]**

/dɔgs/	AGREE[VOICE]	IDENT[VOICE]
[dɔgs]	W	L
☞ [dɔgz]		

In Tableau 2, W stands for *Winner* while L, for *Loser*. In comparative tableau, violation marks are not indicated for the winner; the W and L labels are rather placed in the columns against the losers to indicate which constraints favour the winner and which favour the losers. Once the highly-/higher-/highest-ranked constraint favours a candidate, then such candidate is declared the winner. Therefore, the second candidate in Tableau 2 wins because it is favoured by AGREE[VOICE], the higher-ranked constraint, although the lower-ranked constraint, IDENT[VOICE], favours the loser (the first candidate).

C. **Combination Tableau:** Usually more informative than the other two, it is used to capture violations and winner-loser favouring relations at the same time:

**Tableau 3: Ranking argument in favour of [dɔgz]**

/dɔgz/	AGREE[VOICE]	IDENT[VOICE]
☞ [dɔgz]		*
[dɔgs]	*W	L

The first candidate wins the contest in Tableau 3. The second candidate loses out for violating AGREE[VOICE], the undominated constraint which also favours the winner. Although the first candidate disobeys IDENT[VOICE], a constraint which favours the loser, it still emerges as the optimal candidate because such violation is a minimal one by virtue of the fact that the constraint in question is lowly ranked.

Note that in each of the three tableaux shown so far, there are two constraints and there are two candidate outputs. This is the basic pattern of analysis in OT – at least two constraints must be ranked with respect to each other and at least two output candidates must be presented for comparison. Anything less than this runs afoul of the theory’s modus operandi.

#### 14. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF OT

No theory exists without its areas of strengths and weaknesses. In this light, the salient strengths and weaknesses of OT are highlighted as follows:

##### Areas of Strengths

- i. It helps to accentuate the inherent properties of UG with the aid of constraints.
- ii. It has the capacity to describe cross-linguistic variations by integrating the description of individual languages with the explanation of language typology.
- iii. Its ability to account for phonological conspiracy (i.e., explaining the functional unity of phonological processes) is another advantage it has over the rule-based approach.
- iv. Its assumption of richness of the base allows for combatting the potential challenge of deciding on the actual input among a series of options.
- v. Its all-encompassing approach to linguistic theory cannot be over-emphasized.
- vi. It is a theory of many theories in that it subsumes the key features of other theories.

##### Areas of Weaknesses

- i. Lack of consensus in constraint definition, including existence of some constraints that are not easily defined, is a glitch in itself.
- ii. Its assumption that constraints are linguistically universal is somewhat questionable.
- iii. Because of the infinite number of constraints, there is a tendency to proliferate them.

- iv. An analyst can easily be stuck if they run out of constraints while developing an analysis.
  - a. It has a tendency of proffering too many solutions to the same problem, thereby resulting in the confusion of which one is the most desirable solution.
  - b. The issue of having multiple optimal outputs from a single input is still an area OT has not neatly addressed. However, McCarthy (2008, pp. 260-263) has presented some proposals.
- vii. Difficulty to explain opacity equally remains a bottleneck particularly for the classic OT although some solutions have been proposed within the Harmonic Serialism framework.

## 15. CONCLUSION

Optimality theory, a subset of universal grammar, is built around the assumption that the grammar of every language is constructed using constraints as its building blocks; the constraints are the same in all grammars, the point of divergence existing only in their ranking. Needless to say, OT is a theoretical empire in the modern linguistic enterprise. In fact, it is the lingual franca of the contemporary phonological theory. Over the years, it has been proved to be applicable to a wide range of linguistic phenomena in virtually all languages of the world, particularly those of African origin. Thus, African linguists should keep extending its frontiers to their languages, especially the under-researched ones because whether we like it or not, OT is a theory of the present and the future, at least until another super force emerges. Nevertheless, no one should be deluded into thinking that OT is the best theory of phonology (or any other aspect of grammar) perhaps as a result of its frightening popularity, imperial force and wide acceptability among the extant comity of linguistic theories. In short, no ‘best theory’ exists in the world; every theory is only fulfilling its mandate in the best way possible.

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# Interrogating Subjective Masculinity: Perspectives from Stella Oyedepo's *Rebellion of the Bumpy Chested* and Tracie Utoh's *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again*

Emmanuel Sunday Ikpelemoh

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## ABSTRACT

*The work examines masculinity in Stella Oyedepo's play, Rebellion of the Bumpy Chested and Tracy Utoh's Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again. The perceptions built around the relationship between the male and female genders, as illustrated in the two plays, is interrogated with a view to appraising traditional conceptions in gender discourse. The interest for the research work derives from the observation that scholarly materials on gender discourses are inundated with arguments that the female gender suffer oppression such as sexual harassment and violence; domestic abuse, and rape from the hands of the men who are traditionally considered to be stronger. The theory of subjectivity is adopted for this study. Although it is true that the female gender suffer oppression from their male counterpart, the study discovered that the male folk are not insulated from similar oppressions perpetrated against them by the female gender. And that such female-engineered violence against men have a significant negative impact on them just as male-engineered violence affects the women. The study concludes that violence, abuse and dominance are not gender-specific. The rights of any human, irrespective of gender, can be abused, both physically and emotionally. Rather than continue to 'genderize' issues of abuse, scholastic attention should shift to interrogating human rights abuse, especially in these days of transgenderism and transfeminism.*

*Keywords: masculinity, gender, inequality, violence, dominance, transgenderism, transfeminism*

## I. INTRODUCTION

**M**asculinity relates to the actions and behaviors of the male gender. The one thing that is constant each time masculinity is defined is the rational and subjective perception of the social and cultural actions built around the male gender, in exclusion of his inner essence – his true personality. Different cultural civilizations ascribe attributes of masculinity to the biological male from perspectives conditioned only by their sociocultural worldviews. The expectation that men and boys must be tough, aggressive, unemotional, and brutish derives from society's perception of the male as the stronger gender. Society frowns at men who openly show

any emotions even when, like the women, they are also naturally emotional. Such perception of the male can be harmful to his development, thereby leaving them in very difficult positions of existence.

In the words of Hoffman (2001, p.79), 'different personal and cultural concepts of femininity and masculinity indeed exist and contribute to one's identity as a man or a woman'. This position is reinforced by Kachel Sven et-al (2016) when they defined 'traditional masculinity' and 'traditional femininity' as 'relatively enduring characteristics encompassing traits, appearances, interests, and behaviors that have traditionally been considered relatively more typical of women and men, respectively.

It is true that the male gender's physiological build accords him certain physical advantage over the female, and that such physicality has been used, alongside the social and cultural powers that society accord the man, to oppress women and their rights. Yet it does not suggest that men and boys do not experience challenges and violence in their relationship with women. Though it may be given that men are physically stronger than women, the same cannot be said of their thought capacity and emotional strength. Tomasz Frymorgan (2018) observed that Research has shown that under extreme conditions women are able to survive for longer than men. This contradicts the sociocultural myth that women are the weaker sex, a perception that has conditioned the male gender to live with feigned bloated emotions that have caused the death of many of them. While it is correct that women face some forms of gender discriminations that may limit their potentials in life, certain biological, cultural, social, and so-called masculine behaviors that are highly risky combine to kill men in greater numbers.

Gender issues are widely associated with women and the abuse of their rights in relationships. In most policy discussions, perspectives on gender always seek to address the concerns of women. It must however be understood that gender is inherently relational, with consequences on both male and female and their social contexts. In fact, a critical look at gender issues, as espoused in Stella Oyedepo's *Rebellion of the Bumpy Chested* and Tracie Utoh's *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again*, shows that the concept of masculinity is much more complex than simple. The way both genders understand and handle power must be properly understood to be able to create a balance and a sense of objectivity. Connell (2001, p.2) advanced this position when he stated that:

We must examine men's gender practices, and the ways the gender order defines, positions, empowers and constrains men. The gender position that society constructs for men may not correspond exactly with what men are, or desire to be, or what they do. It is, therefore, necessary to study masculinity as well as men. By "masculinity" I mean the pattern or configuration of social practices linked to the position of men in the gender order, and socially distinguished from practices linked to the position of women.

In dealing with masculinity, society's prescription of positions for the male and female genders is skewed in favor of the female such that attention is hardly paid to the constraints and limitations that these societal positions have placed on the male gender. The understanding of masculinity as

it is today is better appreciated as a social construction. Nothing really stops us from talking about “masculine” women, when women act or behave in a way the society prescribes as being male.

In policy designs, both at national and international levels, documents and platforms often discuss women and the infringement of their rights without any consideration for the rights of men and their infringements. The men are often seen as the advantaged wherever women are discussed or seen as disadvantaged. On violence against women, the men are implicated, and sometimes fingered as the agents. On gender and HIV/AIDS for instance, men are usually seen as the agents of infection. And when women's exclusion from power and decision-making is being talked about, men are often implicated as the wielders of power. Constantly men are made to carry enormous burden and they are not expected to show any sign of weakness or weariness. Society fails to appreciate that a man is a human before becoming a man. The humanity of a man is often not considered thereby putting the male gender under undue pressure.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical theory as a mode of interpreting literary works from the standpoint of the inner state of mind is adopted in view of its suitability for interrogating the true essence of man. Sigmund Freud believes that emotional experiences highly influence personality development. In his study of gender's relationship to psychoanalysis, he interrogated issues of how individuals adapt to their genders, and this is integral to this paper's discourse. He goes further in his study of gender and psychoanalysis to articulate the feminine, maternal and sexual difference and development through his introduction of feminist psychoanalysis. For Freud, the mind is best conceptualized in the conscious and unconscious, a position that seem to have been abandoned when masculinity is being discussed. More than anything else, masculine discourses have primarily been perceived from a subjective point of view. If Freud's argument were of any import, society must understand the man from his extraneous qualities, as well as his inner essence. He proposed the tripartite psychic parts of personality developments: the id, ego and superego. The appropriateness of the theory to this study derives from the attempt to remodel society's conceptualization of masculinity from a narrow perspective.

This paper looks at repression as an act of the superego, which allows individuals to assess themselves, based on morality, societal and familial upbringing and ideas of 'wrong' and 'good'. Freud (1915, p.147) once wrote, “The ideas of repression lies simply in turning something away, and keeping it at distance, from the conscious.” Repression, therefore, entails the denial of access to some mental contents to conscious thoughts. He goes further to say that repression is defensive, a 'fending off', preventing 'incompatible ideas' that arouse displeasure (such as shame, self-reproach, or psychical pain) from association with conscious thinking.

## 3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Masculinity studies, which emerged in the 20th Century, is broadly concerned with the behaviors, social roles, and relations of men within a given society as well as the meanings attributed to them. The term *masculinity* emphasizes gender, unlike the *male*, which is concerned with biological sex.

Though most scholarly discourses on gender inequality focuses on women, their subordination to men, and their disadvantaged placement, Scholars of inequality are of the view that men, like women, can fall on either sides of inequality - the disadvantaged and the privileged.

In defining masculinity, Whitehead and Barrett (2004: 64) posit that the closest attempt to this is to state that ‘masculinity consists of those behaviors, languages and practices existing in specific cultural and organizational locations, which are commonly associated with males and thus culturally defined as not feminine’. So, masculinity exists as both a positive, in as much as they offer some means of identity significations for males, and as a negative, in as much as they are not the ‘Other’ (Feminine). Masculinity and male behaviors are not the simple product of genetic coding or biological predispositions (Clatterbaugh, 1990; Whitehead & Barret, 2001).

According to Pleck (1981, p.75), research on men and masculinity in the later twentieth century are focused either on what was missing from male lives, compared to women’s lives, or the social problems associated with masculinity. David and Brannon (1976, p.44), for example, argued that the central tenets of masculinity were: ‘no sissy stuff; be a big wheel; be sturdy as an oak and give ’em hell’. Thus, to be seen as masculine, boys and men were expected to show no fear or weakness and to hide all traces of inadequacy and anxiety. In the words of Connell (2005, p.68)

The concept of masculinity is inherently relational. ‘Masculinity’ does not exist except in contrast with ‘femininity’. A culture which does not treat women and men as bearers of polarized character types, at least in principle, does not have a concept of masculinity in the sense of modern European/American culture.

As opined by Alsop, Fitzsimons, and Lennon (2002: 54), attention to historical specificity and historical change illustrates the social construction of masculinity, the multiplicity of ways in which masculinities can be enacted or lived and the existence and potential of change.

### **SOCIOLOGY OF MASCULINITY**

The sociology of masculinity relates to the critical study of men, their behaviors, practices, values and perspectives. Since its beginning in the 1950s, the sociology of masculinity has moved through three prominent theoretical waves in similar shifts as in the theoretical patterns of feminist thinking. The first of these waves was concerned with the problem of male role performance and the cost to men of attempting to strictly adhere to dominant expectations and masculine ideology, what Pleck (1979, p.89) has termed ‘male’ gender role discrepancy. The second wave arose in the early 1980s and sought to highlight the centrality of male power to dominant ways of being a man. Exemplified by the works of Carrigan, Connell, and Lee, the second-wave theorizing introduced the concept of masculinity as a political, multiple, contested, yet powerful concept. The third wave within the sociology of masculinity has been primarily influenced by feminist post-structuralism and theories of post-modernity. Here the theory is validated through dominant discursive practices of the self, and how men’s sense of identity work connects with (gender) power and resistance.

## GENDER, MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

When gender issues are raised, the focus most times is on the female gender. Little or no attention is given to the male gender. This is because men are generally seen as the originators and beneficiaries of societal gender constructs. If a rape case is to be reported for instance, the first conclusion to be drawn will be that it was a woman who was raped. Men are most often than not disadvantaged in gender discourses.

Any report with a title like “Gender and Development” is likely to be really about women and development. It is often assumed that men are the norm, and that “gender” is about the way women differ from this norm. Thus, gender issues often in practice drift into questions about the special needs of women. Raewyn Connell (2005, p.23-24) argued that:

Ironically, feminist thought has sometimes reinforced this drift, because feminist research has, by and large, focused on the lives of women. There have been good reasons for this, given the historic exclusion of women’s experience from patriarchal culture. Gender is also about relationships of desire and power, and these must be examined from both sides. In understanding gender inequalities, it is essential to research the more privileged group as well as the less privileged. This requires more than simply an examination of men as a statistical category (though it is useful to do that)

The historical study of masculinity portrays ‘manliness’ as heroism, strength; and emphasizes upon the public nature of man as natural; and sees femininity as the characteristics associated with the female sex. The historical study of femininity documents feminine identity as linked to passivity nurturing, co-operation, gentleness and relation to motherhood. Roper and Tosh (1991, p.112) posit that since the late 1970s masculinity has been studied about continuity and change in its perceived forms and gender relations and sexual politics. For French feminist theorists like Cixous, Helen & Kristeva, Julia ‘feminine’ is an arbitrary category given to a woman’s appearance or behavior by patriarchy. Therefore, changing the social constructions of masculinity and femininity will mean a fundamental shift in our conceptions of femininity and masculinity within the context of dominant conceptions of rationality and morality. The following extract from an Oxfam online publication (2017) speaks to the big chasm in the attention given to the experiences of the male and female genders in cases of war and terrorism:

The conflict blighting Northeastern Nigeria is known to the world for one thing: the 276 girls abducted from the town of Chibok by Boko Haram in 2014...In mid-2017, 82 Chibok girls were released. But...another tragic story was unfolding: the disappearances, detention and deaths of men and boys...Alongside shocking levels of violence against women, men have been killed, abducted or detained...people reported 41% more killings of men and boys by Boko Haram than of women and girls; and the number is even higher among adults, with 77% more men killed than women...Just as the Nigerian public and international community demand the whereabouts of the Chibok girls, we should also ask, where are the men - the fathers, sons, husbands and brothers?

The above points to the fact that even though men were also victims of attacks, the tragedy of the Chibok girls was the only one the world cared about and paid attention to. No one ever talked of the men and boys that were killed in their numbers.

### **SOCIOLOGY OF MASCULINITY: CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCT**

Several authors agree that, more than biologically, masculinity is socially and culturally constructed. A good point with which to start is Morgan's assertion that what is masculinity (and femininity) is best approached from the standpoint of what men and women do (that is, how they behave) rather than what they are. To Beynon (2002, p.77), if gender is cultural, then it follows that women, as well as men, can step into and inhabit masculinity as a 'cultural space', one with its own sets of behaviors. In this view 'the masculine' and 'the feminine' signify a range of culturally defined characteristics assignable to both men and women. In other words, masculinity consists of those behaviors, languages and practices existing in specific cultural and organizational locations, which are commonly associated with males and thus culturally defined as not feminine, thereby making people's understanding and treatment of masculine discourses subjective in most cases.

Rather than focusing on biological universals, social and behavioral scientists investigate the different meanings that masculinity and femininity have in different contexts. While biological "maleness" varies very little, the roles, behaviors, bodies, and identities that are thought of as "masculine" vary enormously. This variation gives credibility to the argument that the concept of masculinity is more of a social construct than it is biological. And because scholars of masculinity come from diverse backgrounds and disciplines, their various backgrounds illustrate the multiple levels of variation in masculinity. It is therefore not surprising that in African societies for instance, the biological male is associated with attributes that resonate with strength and power. It is generally believed that the women are weaker, and that they get abused by the male

Simply put, not all men are the same. More specifically, "being a man" means something very different to a straight white boy of college age living in Oxford than it does to a middle-aged, homosexual, Latino man living in San Francisco. Since masculinity varies so much, we cannot speak of "it" as though it were a timeless essence common among all men. Rather, we must speak of "masculinities" precisely because masculinity means different things to different people in different cultures and different historical periods.

Messner's construction of Masculinity in sports, for instance, speaks to its importance in institutional setting. He said, 'when boys start playing the competitive sport, they are not just learning a game, they are entering an organized institution' (1992, p.52).

### **MEN AND RAPE**

On the issue of rape, society is heavily against a man such that it will take a miracle for a raped man to win in a rape case. When rape cases are discussed, it is always tailored towards the female. If a man should reveal that he was raped by a female, the first question will be 'Didn't he enjoy it? You don't hear it with female rape victims. How can a man prove that he was forced to have sex when he had an erection? How can he prove that he had sex without his approval when he penetrated

the woman ejaculated? It is always difficult for a man to prove a rape case. According to WHO, Sexual violence is,

any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic women's sexuality, using coercion, threats of harm or physical force, by any person regardless of relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work (WHO, P.1).

The definition above is biased because men also experience sexual violence, even though more women fall victims. Sexual violence is not an only women-affair topic. In 2012, the FBI's Uniform Crime Report defined rape as: "The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim." Yet the "the carnal knowledge of a female against her will" remains the concern, and this does not recognize that the Male can be a victim of rape.

Male rape cases have not been given the attention it deserves in the media partly because the male victims never get to discuss their ordeals at the hands of their male or female rapists. But whether males who are rape victims (majorly young boys) talk about it or not, Nigeria, like most other countries is replete with reports of males being raped by either their fellow men or women daily.

#### **MEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)**

According to Kerr, Levine and Woolard (2007, p.27) domestic violence is a mix of physical and coercive behaviors designed to manipulate and dominate another competent adult or adolescent to achieve compliance and dependence. There are far less the number of reported cases of domestic violence perpetrated on men than the number being actually violated. In families where the wife is the breadwinner, the story is even worse. This is well documented in Stella Dia Oyedepo's *Rebellion of the Bumpy Chested* and Tracie Chima Utoh's *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* where we see how the women subject their husbands to all forms of mental and domestic torture because they are the breadwinners of their respective families. Campbell (2002, p.32) explains that the term *intimate partner violence* (IPV) is often used synonymously. Other terms have included *wife-beating*, *wife battering*, *man beating*, *husband battering*, *relationship violence*, *domestic abuse*, *spousal abuse*, and *family violence* with some legal jurisdictions having specific definitions.

Even though research has consistently documented that men are often the targets of female-perpetrated IPV, the American National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control, and World Health Organization have revealed that most nations pay more attention to and provide services for male-to-female IPV than other types of IPV. Cook (2009, P.44) opines that qualitative research of help-seeking among men sustaining IPV indicates that the domestic violence (DV) service system is not always able to provide services and that many men are turned away.

Gelles (1974, p.24) explains that 'incidence reports of women physically aggressive toward

their male partners have appeared since the study of IPV began in the early to mid-1970s. According to Catalano (2009, p.27),

Recently, crime statistics from the Department of Justice (DOJ) showed that in 2004, 1.3 per 1,000 men were physically assaulted by an intimate partner, most of whom were women, which represents 20% of all IPV victims that year. In contrast to the 61% decline of reported physical IPV toward women between 1993 and 2004, the rates of IPV toward men only declined 19%

Tjaden and Thoennes (2000, p.20) present that in the 1995–96 National violence against women survey, 0.8% of men reported being physically assaulted by an intimate partner in the previous year, which represented approximately 40% of all IPV victims during that period. Lye and Biblarz (1993, p.93) argue that, when seeking help for any type of IPV victimization, one can imagine that the obstacles must be great, given our gendered notions of male and female roles in heterosexual relationships and the framing of IPV as a women's issue.

#### 4. SUMMARY OF THE PLAYS

Stella Oyedepo's *Rebellion of the Bumpy-Chested* treats women's revolt against a society they consider to be controlled by men. To achieve this revolt, the women, led by Captain Sharp, started the Bumpy-Chested Movement (BCM) where women get brainwashed to see child-bearing and house-keeping as a sign of weakness. The movement also empowers the Women, through physical training, to suppress their husbands towards achieving the reversal of role. In the words of Captain Sharp, the Bumpy-Chested Movement aims to liberate women from men's oppression and reversing the status quo.

On the other hand, Tracie Utoh's *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* is a satire on women's engagement in politics. The story revolves around five prominent female characters on a course to dominate their husbands. They struggle to acquire and maintain powers that are masculine and traditionally associated with the biological male. The play exposes women exhibiting the same immorality and highhandedness that they have always accused men of perpetrating.

From the perspective of subjective masculinity, the action of the women in both plays are bold dramatic statements to the effect that masculinity, often associated with male strength, brute, and oppression, are mere perceptible traits and not innately male characters or traits. The women too can be brutish and oppressive thereby capable of exhibiting so-called masculine behaviors.

#### INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND MALE SUBJUGATION IN THE PLAY TEXTS

*Merriam Webster Dictionary* defines subjugation as defeating and gaining control of someone or something by the use of force; to conquer or gain the obedience of a group of people, a country, etc. Male gender subjugation is not common as it is hardly reported by men. A lot of husbands live under harrowing conditions in their homes, but because of societal stigmatization, they don't talk about their ordeals so that they are not taken to be weak.

Domestic violence is generally associated with men but in the two play texts, there is a ne-

gation of the norm with the women becoming perpetrators of violence. The husbands in *The Rebellion of the Bumpy Chested* suffer various degree of brutality in the hands of their wives. This is also the case in *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again*, where Inyang is subjected to all forms of abuse by Ene, his wife. She domesticates Inyang and turns him to a house help. She rebukes him even in the presence of her friends.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) has always been thought to be exclusively a male action. But this is a not correct. In *The Rebellion of the Bumpy Chested* (2002, p.45) the character, Akanbi exposes the pains men silently go through when he boasts that he has acquired a skill of dodging his wife's attacks thus:

... at least, I have cleverly dodged my wife's thunderstorm of physical attack. So like the hawk, I have had a baptism of fire without losing a feather. I congratulate myself and pity you for not being able to ward off a woman's blows.

Like Akanbi, most men unconsciously begin to accept the acts of repression from their wives because of their ego. Society makes them believe that men don't cry. Consequently, they device means to live with these violent experiences rather than talk about them.

The women in the two plays strive to make nonsense of the man's penis because they consider it to be the symbol of his power and dominance. Falilat went as far as hitting her husband, Jolomi on his manhood because the man's penis is a metaphorical weapon of oppression. Falilat aims her blows with the intention to incapacitate her husband. In *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again* (2001, p.45), the Women celebrate when one of them cut off her husband's penis. Irene asks, '...did you hear about the man who died from bleeding after his wife took a blade and *neatly sliced* off his 'member'?' Ene answers mockingly, saying:

... it is possible the 'member' was not even working. What is the use of a member that does not function? She probably did him a favor. I will not call such an action murder. I would call it 'mercy killing'. She deserves some gratitude from the dead man's ghost.

The narrative would have been different were it a man who cuts off a woman's breast for instance. Just recently, people demanded the head of one Umoh for killing and dismembering a young girl, Ini. A few weeks later, a 21-year-old Chidimma stabs her older male lover and blames it on drugs. Surprisingly the tone of the public changed. The dead man was blamed while excuses were sought for the murderer. They victim became the one at fault. The truth is that violence has no gender. A woman can equally be violent as a man, or even worse. Irrespective of the gender of the perpetrator, reactions and public outcry must be the same.

#### THE QUESTION OF POWER IN THE GENDER WAR

Power is always at the center of gender discourse. Humans of all gender instinctively hunger for it. In the two play texts, the interest of the women is to take power from the Men and to suppress them. In *The Rebellion of the Bumpy Chested*, the women devote time for physical exercises so that

they can level up with the men physically. While trying to justify the need for the exercises that the women go through, and the need to remain physically strong, the character Sharp said:

If we become so tremulous at the sight of our men's muscles, then we have lost the battle before it is fought. And all our vigorous physical exercises would have been in vain ((2002, p.9))

She charges the women to go all out to exert their physical strength on the men thus:

Our activities henceforth must have a volcanic impact on the status-quo of men vis a vis women. This existing order must be blown into billions of infinitesimal fragments. (2002, p.16)

The women tagged their rebellion 'war' to show the seriousness of the struggle. Sharp reminds the other women that they are fighting a war that is long overdue. Falilat and Tara confront Oye, saying even if it means that they have to take up arms, they would do so. They argue that rights are hardly won by peace. The women paint the picture of captives in desperate search for freedom.

The man has been made to assume the 'provider' position in the family and as such, the women conclude that the reason the men dominate them is because they control the economic domain. The women decide to rebel against this and rather decide to ensure the things become reversed. In the two play texts, we get to see the women engage in different forms of economic activities to take charge of the power attached to it.

Being the breadwinner should not become an avenue to lord it over another. The position of a breadwinner does not arrogate the power of violence and dominance to an individual. It is established that society places the burden of provision on the man, and so, it is taken to be 'unnatural' for the woman to become the breadwinner. When a man is a breadwinner, he is not expected to complain as it is his natural duty, and should not use it as an excuse to intimidate or dominate the wife. However, this becomes different when a woman assumes this role. Ene maltreats her husband, Inyang and subjects him to all forms of physical, mental and emotional abuse all because she is the breadwinner. In *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again*, Irene, who is a presidential aspirant, deploys all forms of mischief and trickery usually associated with the male gender in order to emerge as her party's flag bearer. One question underlying the motive behind the whole fight for power is if the fight is for equality or dominance? Do the women want equality, or do they just want a taste of the power they assume that the men possess? Sharp's statement gives one an idea of what the entire movement against men is all about:

Men should be made to descend from the Olympic heights in which they have carved an exclusive niche and shake hands with women on the platform of equality. Women must emerge from a state of submissiveness to that of parity, if not of dominance. (2002, p.17)

### REVERSAL OF ROLES

Masculinity can be said to be possessing attitudes and behaviors attributable to the male sex such as strong, powerful, authoritative, stoic, aggressive, unemotional, and tough. These attitudes are usually taken to be 'traits and anything opposite is seen as or feminine. These behaviors were, of

course, framed by the society and have over time, come to be the accepted norm. Gender roles are socially ascribed roles given to genders based on their perceived strengths. The male gender has been known to be the providers and as such, is always out of the house to make ends meet to cater for the family while the women are most times left at home to attend to the home. The women in the play decide that such a situation can no longer be maintained and therefore forces a reversal of roles. Ashake, in *The Rebellion of the Bumpy Chested*, speaking to Oye says ‘...why don’t you do all the chores?’ and Falilat added, ‘...your wife’s underwear inclusive. Prepare your wife’s most relished dishes for her and even satisfy her food fads’ (2002, p.57 - 58)

The difference between sex and gender is that sex is biological, while gender is a socially construct. It is therefore surprising that breastfeeding is considered to be a burden for women when her biology allows her to be pregnant. In pages 6-7 Rade is made fun of and rebuked when she complains that the overflowing milk from her breast is causing her pains. Sharp then advises that she instructs her husband to give the baby artificial milk. A man feeding his child should not be discouraged. However, the place of the mother breastfeeding her child cannot be thrown away. This is a biological responsibility. To substitute breastfeeding is rather senseless and should be discouraged. The reversal of ‘roles’ is the women’s main driving force. They expect that the ascribed roles are reversed and the status quo upturned. To them, they want to know if the home will remain ‘happy’ if this is done.

#### MEN AND MENTAL HEALTH

Men grow up from childhood with the understanding that a lot is demanded of them. In Africa, for instance, a boy child is expected to learn the art of money-making early in life to be able to take care of family. Very little or no attention is paid to men’s mental health in dealing with the enormous gender expectations and roles placed on their shoulder. Masculinity should not be defined based on one’s material, physical and financial possession. A man’s mental health should not be sacrificed on the altar of societal pacification. Men should be encouraged to grow at their pace and not subsumed in the endless ocean of gender expectations.

A lot of men experience sleepless nights as they are always on their toes to meet up. They work and most times, they do not even spare up 2% of their earnings for their selves. So for all their lives, they work for others. This explains why more men die than women. Statistically, the world had more women than men. One wonders why we have more widows than widowers. A lot of men die in their prime and most times, their death can be traceable to a mental related problem.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

The paper has explored the representation of masculinity, male gender victimizations and how men cope and adapt to their realities as espoused in Stella Oyedepo’s *The Rebellion of the Bumpy Chested* and Tracie Utoh’s *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Gain*. The two plays highlight situations where the male gender is at the receiving end of gender violence against the traditional narrative that concentrates efforts and attention on the female gender.

The women in the plays end up playing out the same things they accuse the men of. They en-

gage in abuse – verbally, physically, emotionally, economically and psychologically, blackmail and even murder. They become the same devil they claim to be fighting. The men lose their voices and the women lord over them. The men become slaves who cannot publicly express their torturous experiences at the hands of their wives. The women become even more toxic than the men they are fighting against. They engage in the same dirty tactics of politicking that the men are known for. They bribe, blackmail and murder their opponents.

This, therefore, establishes that violence, abuse and dominance are not gender-specific. Any human, irrespective of gender, is prone to violence, therefore attention must also be given to the plights of the male gender because there also exists a female-engineered violence against men.

The men in the two texts are presented as weak, ineffable, foolish, lazy, dependent, helpless and hopeless, which are all the opposite of what the male gender is associated with. The women violate abuse and dominate their husbands. The men, rather than fight the women, decided to accept their new roles and try ways to adapt to them. They take on the new roles in a rather sarcastic way, which is suggestive of an attempt to mock and belittle the women's rebellion.

Therefore, this study asserts that the unbalanced gender discourse engenders victimizations of the male gender and strips them of the voice to express their hurts. The study further concludes that victimizations of the male gender has rather been swept under the carpet, and should be given the attention as that of the females. Gender discourses should not be only female-focused. It should be all-encompassing for both genders. Men should be encouraged to speak out in the face of victimization and should not be stigmatized and forced into silence. Men are human and also possess emotions. Therefore, they should not be made to repress their emotions because they want to live up to society's expectations.

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# Contrastive Analysis of the Basic Clause Patterns and Structural Based Sentences in English and Rigwe: Implications for Second Language Learning and Teaching

Felix Aishe Amale & Larai Azuwo Adamu Atinga

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## ABSTRACT

*The position and relevance of English in the Nigeria have reached a level that has given the English language an edge over all the indigenous languages in Nigeria. Though many research works have been carried out on English and other languages, none has investigated the clause patterns and sentences based on structure in English and Rigwe, and this is what this study sets to do. The study also considers the implications of the divergences in both languages on second language learning and teaching. The research study adopted the contrastive analysis theory. For the data in Rigwe, six (6) informants were engaged in a conversation, which was recorded with a phone and later transcribed, and sentences were extracted. Relevant English structures were sourced from some English textbooks. It has been observed that there are divergences in English and Rigwe, and which have implications for the learning and teaching of English as second language. The study concludes by making suggestions on how to proffer solutions to problem Rigwe learners of English may likely encounter, as well as the problem English learners of Rigwe would encounter.*

*Keywords: clause patterns, sentences based on structure, Rigwe, second language*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Contrastive analysis was introduced by Lado (1957) in the book *Linguistics across Cultures*. It was a tool developed to aid second language teaching and learning. Contrastive analysis (CA) is the careful study of the structures of languages with the intention of comparing and contrasting their forms. Lado's view of similar structures is that they do not pose difficulty in second language learning. The areas of differences are such areas that pose difficulty in second language learning. The parts in a language that can be compared and contrasted with another language include: phonetic, phonemic, morphological, syntactic and semantic structures. This is in order to bring out areas that would help learning of the language or the areas that would hinder the learning of the second language.

The early application of CA was structural. That is, the looking at the structures of a language

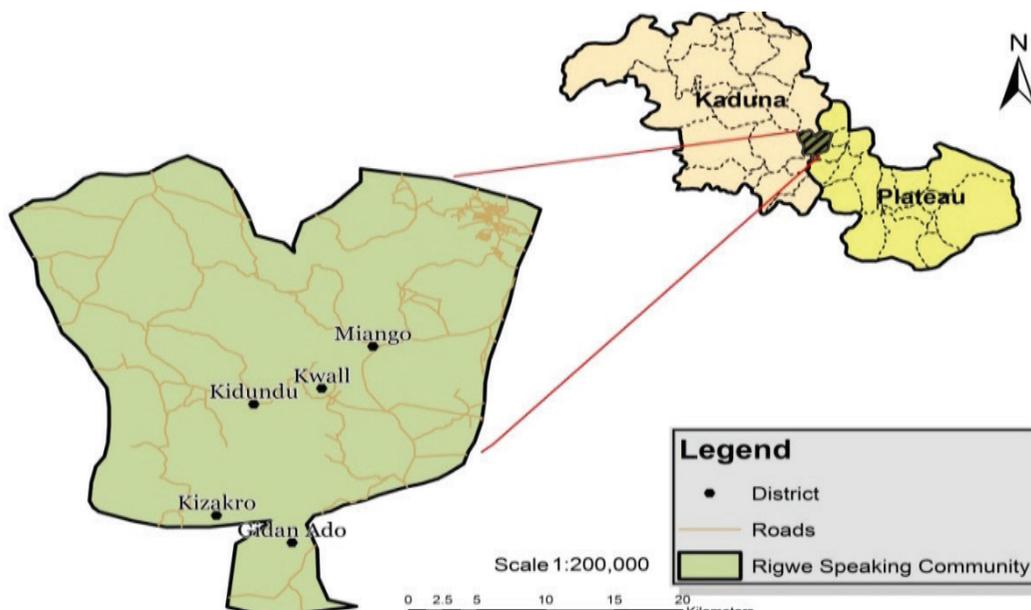
in a relation to another language. So, it was believed that by identifying points of similarity and difference between the LI and the TL (Fries 1945, Lado, 1957), a more effective methodology could be developed to account for all the problems encountered by language learners. Lado (1957:2) points out that the student who comes in contact with a foreign language will find some of its features quite easy and others difficult. Those elements that are similar to his/her native language will be simple for him/her, and those elements that are different will be difficult. The teacher who has made a comparison of a foreign language with the native language of the student will know better what the real problems are and proffer solutions to the problems identified. Contrasting English basic clause patterns and sentences based on structure the Rigwe basic clause patterns and sentences based on structure becomes imperative as a result of the status of English in Nigeria vis-à-vis the mental preference of most Nigerian parents.

To Simons and Charles (2008:1) Rigwe belongs to the Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo and Plateau West Central Nigeria. Gya (2011) says Rigwe (Irigwe) is a Plateau language of the Central sub-group, spoken by people living in Miango (SW of Jos), Kwall and several other hamlets in Bassa Local Government, Plateau State and Kauru Local Government Area, Kaduna State, Nigeria. Recently, a community (Ri Do or Gidan Ado in Hausa) in Aten (Ganawuri) District of Riyom Local Government Area of Plateau State has also been identified as Rigwe speaking community (Amba, 2012).

Since the theory of contrastive analysis rests on the premise that there are structural differences between  $S_1$  and  $S_2$ , and the areas of differences are said to inhibit learning of the TL, this research work aims at looking at the contrast between the English basic clause patterns and sentences based on structure and that of Rigwe in order to bring out these differences and similarities and use them to improve teaching and learning of English in schools. However, there are works in comparing the English structures and the Rigwe language structures like (Gya, 2009); on Rigwe pronouns (Blench & Gya, 2009), focus in Rigwe syntax (Gya, 2012), Amale (2021a), (Amale 2021b) Atinga and Amale (2022). Little attention has been given to the study of the basic clause patterns and sentences based on structure in English and Rigwe. This is the gap this study sets to fill.

### LINGUISTIC MAP OF RIGWE

The maps provided show that Rigwe people are in two states in Nigeria. That is Kaduna and Plateau States. The second map shows local governments areas and districts covered by Rigwe. The map did not capture Bauchi State as given by Barry (2012). This is because the version given by Barry (2012) on Rigwe being indigenes of Bauchi is still controversial, so, it was not captured in the map below:



## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

For the works related to the current study, Adaji (2018) did a contrastive syntactic study of the sentence structures of English and Igala. The structural theory was employed by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartik (1985) was adopted as the theoretical framework. Using data from recordings, native speakers intuition, informal conversation and books written in Igala. Findings are highlighted below: verbs in Igala lacks morphological inflections as used in English; the past form of the simple or habitual tense is formed by removing an auxiliary verb “a” instead of simply adding “d” or “ed” as done in English. Also, in the “svo” sentence structures in Igala, the direct object precedes the indirect but always connected by a preposition “to” or “for” (ng). For compound sentence, it was discovered that Igala uses different words on particles for the conjunctions and “ngo, lango” and but “Muda, amaa” and for the complex sentence structures the subordinators in Igala are fewer than those of English as one can be used to express more than one different subordinate clauses.

Godwin (2014) investigated the contrast between English and Igarra sentence structures. The study showed that Igarra has both verbal and non-verbal sentences. In the non-verbal sentence, there is no verb. The verb is said to be realised in the deep structure whereas it is not so in English. The verb is an integral part of a sentence in English which must not be ignored. The study also revealed that Igarra does not have auxiliary verbs. The use of verbs in English by Igarra learners of English could be said to be the major problem likely to be encountered. However, the study did not consider other aspects like noun phrase, prepositional phrase, adjectival phrase and adverbial phrase and this is the gap which the current study tends to fill.

Gbaaikyo (2014) attempts the contrastive study of English and Tiv sentence structure; their similarities and differences; likely problems Tiv speakers of English would encounter and how to

proffer solutions to such learning difficulties. The study made use of the Standard Theory as its theoretical model. The findings of the study show that the major difficulties Tiv learners of English have are in the subject and object elements formation. While noun phrases occupying subject and object positions in English take articles and other determiners pre-nominally, Tiv in nearly all cases take them post-nominally or does not have them at all. The study also reveals that Tiv does not have gender dichotomy in both subject and object positions.

### 3. THEORETICAL ANCHORAGE

The study adopted contrastive analysis as its theoretical perspective. Contrastive analysis was propounded by Robert Lado in the 1950s, and has often been linked to aspects of applied linguistics, for example, to avoid interference errors in foreign language learning (Di Pietro, 1971). Williams, De Francqa, Coleman and Noel (2003:1) assert that CA refers to the research about differences and similarities between limited numbers of languages carried out for its own sake. This definition is so rich as it looks at the difficulty second language learner might encounter. This is because the differences between their native language and the target language inhibit the learning of the target language. Contrastive analysis, like error analysis and translation theory is a form of inter-lingual study in that two languages are involved. Contrastive analysis deals with issues that arise after the basics of the first language  $L_1$  have been learnt and how these basics of the first language learnt can affect the learning of a second language. The emphasis of contrastive analysis is to investigate what happens when a monolingual is trying to become a bilingual and this is what James (1980:8) calls bilingualisation.

Contrastive description can be made at every level of linguistic studies: speech sounds (phonology), written symbols (graphology), word formation (morphology), word meaning (lexicology), collocation (phraseology), sentence structure (syntax) and complete discourse (textology) (Hartmann, 1997). To the above, contrastive analysis is not specific to one level of linguistics. That is it can be used at all levels of language: it can be used by the phoneticians/phonologists to compare and contrast sounds of two or more languages; it can be used by syntacticians in analysing the sentence structure of languages; it can also be used by discourse analysts in evaluating cultural differences across the world, etc. Klein (1986) cited in Obadan (2016:183) defines contrastive analysis as, “any investigation in which the sentences of two languages are compared.” This definition looks at CA from the angle of grammar by considering the differences in the sentence structure between the native language and the target language.

To this research work, contrastive analysis is the systematic study of a pair of languages with a view to identifying their structural similarities and differences; looking at how the differences could inhibit learning of the second language and how to proffer solutions to the learning difficulty. So, in this study, contrastive analysis is used to see the areas of convergence and divergence in the basic clause structures of English and Rigwe, with the target of seeing how Rigwe learners of the English language would encounter problems as a result of the divergence in both language.

Likewise, the study targeted at how English language of the Rigwe language would encounter problem too as a result of the futures that are in Rigwe but not in their first language.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

The data for this study, especially Rigwe were primarily derived from two sources. The first was the recording of expressions made by people in social and informal gatherings (festivals, local pubs, churches and markets) where Rigwe is predominantly used as a means of interaction in Kwall and Miango districts of Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State. The secondary source was from Rigwe New Testament Bible and also from a book titled, “How to Read and Write Rigwe” by Gya (2006) which served as a useful guide for correct transcription of the data and also for placing tone marks. Likewise, some relevant English structures were borrowed from the English syntax materials such as: *An Introduction to English Grammar* (Greenbaum, and Nelson, 2002); *An Introduction to the Grammar of English* (Gelderen, 2010) and *An Introduction to English Syntax* (Miller, 2002). Sentences were selected from the recorded expressions and subjected to a native speaker’s intuitive judgment for a correct transcription and translation to English by two Rigwe speaking respondents. For the analysis, these sentences were contrasted through the application of Contrastive Analysis Theory. Thereafter, the basic sentence patterns and sentences based on structured were carefully juxtaposed in both English and Rigwe, after which the necessary contrastive statements were given accordingly. This is to show the areas of differences and similarities in the way sentence pattern and sentences based on structure are formed in languages under study.

#### 5. DATA ANALYSIS

In this segment, the analysis on sentence pattern in both English and Rigwe would be made followed by analysis on sentences based on structure in both languages under study. After each similar analysis, a contrastive statement is provided to bring out the possible areas of divergence and convergence in the two languages (English and Rigwe).

##### Sentence Elements in English

Greenbaum and Nelson (2002:33-34) give the following as sentence elements:

1a. SV:	subject	+ intransitive verb: e.g.		
	Someone	is talking.		
b. SVO:	subject	+ transitive verb	+ direct object:	
	We	have finished	our work.	
c. SVA:	subject	+ verb	+ adverbial complement:	
	My parents	are	living in Chicago	
d. SVC:	subject	+ linking verb	+ subject com- plement: e.g.	

	I	feel	tired.		
	I	have named	representative		
		my			
e. SVOO:	subject	+ transitive verb	+ indirect object	+	direct object:
	She	has given	me		e.g.
					the letter (dO).
f. SVOA:	subject	transitive verb	+ direct object	+	adverbial complement:
	You	can put	your coat		e.g.
					in my bedroom.
	She	caught	me		off my guard
g. SVOC:	subject	+ transitive verb	+ direct object	+	object complement:
	You	have made	me		very happy.

From the examples given by Miller (2002) above, it is observed that the English simple sentence can have SV, SVO, SVC, SVA, SVOA, SVOO and SVOC. *1a* and *1b* show that the English language can have a subject and a verb. The subject is an NP; the verb can be a linking, transitive or intransitive verb. It should be noted that the V is the most important component amongst all the elements in the English sentence. V alone is realisable in English. E.g. come, sit, go, etc.

### Sentence Elements in Rigwe

Rigwe has subject, verb, object, complement and adjunct. This order can produce different simple sentence structures such as SV, SVO, SVA, SVC, SVOC, SVOA and SVOCA. It should be noted that the V is also the most important component amongst other sentence elements in Rigwe. The verbs *bé* (come), *nné* (go), *shwo* (adjust), etc. can be used by the Rigwe to pass messages. The examples below are the occurrences of sentence elements in Rigwe.

2a. SV:	Dẹ	njé			
	Mother	my	come	+ Past	
					'My mother came'
b. SVO:	nnà	bí	+ mátò		
	Man	the	has	+ pres	car
					'The man has a car'
c. SVC:	Meli	áà	nyi	nemièngnkà	
	Meli	RP	be+Pres	teacher	
					'Meli is a teacher'
d. SVOC:	Dre	nn	áà	cí	Nuvu
	Association	this	RP	make+past	name
					nekwádrẹ
					leader
					'The association made Nuvu the chairman'
e. SVOO:	Icho	ngwa	Ituwa	ncu	

	Icho	give+Past	Ituwa	chair			
	'Icho gave Ituwa a chair'						
f. SVA:	Áà	nné	á	cwú			
	3sg	go+past	at	today			
	'S/he left today'						
g. SVOA:	Mgbá	mbrrù	nná ríye	dẹgli	a	kááwé	
	Fat	woman	the	sell+pres	potato	in	market
	'The fat woman sells potato in the market'						
h. SVOCA	Dre	nnè	cí	Nuvu	nẹkwádrẹ	a	rwi
	Association	this	make+Past	name	leader	at	Yester- day
	'The association made Nuvu the chairman yesterday'						

In Rigwe, the SV, SVO, SVA, SVOO, SVOA and SVOCA patterns are realisable. It should be noted that the V is also the most important component amongst other sentence elements in Rigwe sentence. The verbs *bé* (come), *nné* (go) *shwó* (adjust), etc. can be used by the Rigwe and would make a complete thought. However, when a verb is transitive, Rigwe uses an SVO syntactic word order if the object is a noun phrase (NP) or a prepositional phrase (PP). The SVO word order is the canonical structure in Rigwe but the syntactic position of the direct object (DO) and the indirect object (IO) change when they are represented by pronouns. Examples of SOV pattern in Rigwe are extracted from Gya (2014:21-22).

3a.	Áá	ré	miêng
	3sg	them	teach+past
	'S/he taught them'		
b.	Óvú	kí	ríó
	Dog	him	bite+past
	A Dog bit him		

3a shows that Rigwe sentence order becomes SOV when the object is a pronoun but when the object a noun, the SVO pattern is realised. Another pattern that can be derived in Rigwe is the SOVO. This is derived when there are two objects. That is when the indirect objects (iO) are objective pronouns *nìng* (me and us), *ré* (you), *wé* (them), *kí* (her, him and it) and there is a direct object. The direct object can be a noun or pronoun. It should be noted that the SOVO pattern is derived when the iO is a pronoun but when it is a noun, the SVOO pattern is maintained.

The occurrences of SOVO pattern are presented below:

4a.	Áá	wé	miêng	Nkànsára
	3sg	them	teach+pres	English
	'He teaches them English'			



The examples given above in 6a-c show simple sentences in Rigwe are made up of an independent clause. They have subjects, verbs, object, complement and adjunct as their components. Gya's (2009:41) assertion on agreement between the subject and the verb is not feasible to this study as Gya's claim states that agreement is achieved through the use of plural verbs and singular verbs but it is observed that the same verb that is used for singular subject is used for plural. Although Gya further asserted that at times tones are used to demarcate agreement in Rigwe. All the verbs in the examples given above have been observed to function with singular subject and plural object. The verb *cí* in 6a, *nyí* in 6b, *ngwà* in 6c, *bí* and *nwié* can be used for either singular subject or for plural objects. There is no agreement between Rigwe subject and verb in simple sentences.

### Contrastive Statement

Simple sentences in both languages under study can have all the elements of a sentence. The difference that occurs between the simple sentences in English and Rigwe is that the verb in Rigwe does not have demarcation as in when to be used with singular subject and when to be used for plural subject whereas English verbs indicate agreement. Therefore, no agreement between the subject and the verb in Rigwe simple sentence whereas there is in English.

### Compound Sentences in English

Compound sentences are sentences that have two simple sentences joined by a coordinating conjunction. Examples are given below

- 7a. Benwick married Louisa and Wentworth married Anne.
- b. Henry Crawford loved Fanny but Fanny loved Edmund.

From the above sentences, English compound sentence is made up of two simple sentences joined by a coordinating conjunction.

### COMPOUND SENTENCES IN RIGWE

Rigwe has compound sentences. The examples below are compound sentences in Rigwe:

- 8a. Klà            ce            Ngèri            medi    Neeri            ce            Rúkú  
       Name        love+pres    name        but        Name        love+pres    Name  
       'Kla loves her but Neeri loves Ruku'
- b. Nzhí            nywà            zhí            ba            hó            ne            uucwu zhí  
       fpl            go+past        fpl            and        hear+past    with        ears            our  
       'We went and we heard with our ears'
- c. Mbé            ye            mbé            shwe  
       They        eat+past        they        satisfy+past  
       'They ate and they were satisfied'

Examples in 8a-c show that Rigwe has compound sentences which can either be joined by coordi-

nating conjunction or without a coordinating conjunction. In sentence 8a, it is observed that there are two independent clauses joined by coordinating conjunction *medi*, while in 8b the conjunction *ba* comes after the subject of the second IP. It is also shown in sentence 8c that Rigwe compound sentence can be realised with or without a coordinating conjunction.

### Contrastive Statement

English and Rigwe have compound sentences that are joined by coordinating conjunctions. However, the difference that exists between English and Rigwe compound sentence has been illustrated in tree diagram 8b where the coordinating conjunction comes after the subject of the second independent clause whereas such is not realised in English.

### Complex Sentence in English

A complex sentence is made up of one independent clause and one or two dependent clauses

- 9a. When Lydia went to Brighton, she eloped with Wickham.
- b. Nurse Rooke has discovered where Anne Elliott stayed.

The position of the independent and the dependent clause in a complex sentence is not static in English. We can have the independent either at the beginning or after the dependent clause. In some cases, the independent clause comes first.

### Complex Sentence in Rigwe

- |      |   |         |        |         |        |         |     |           |       |       |     |
|------|---|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|-----|-----------|-------|-------|-----|
| 10a. | Kóndù   | ngwé    | rí shí | ning    | ru,    | nje shì | ré  | ting      | ngwie | ánà   |     |
|      | If  | 2sg     | fut    | me      | back   | I       | fut | 2sg       | tell  | place | the |
|      | 'If you will take me on your back, I will show you the place' |         |        |         |        |         |     |           |       |       |     |
| b.   | A   | bî      | yâ     | nnè     | né     | lo      | ngú | nyí       | Rekwi |       |     |
|      | There   | be+pres | a      | man     | who    | name    | is  | be+pr.t   | Rekwi |       |     |
|      | 'There is a man whose name is Rekwi'                          |         |        |         |        |         |     |           |       |       |     |
| c.   | Bénenche  | nyí     | hèni   | áhà     | be     | ngù     | kí  | ce        |       |       |     |
|      | Name  | do+pres | this   | because | father | her     | 3sg | love+pr.t |       |       |     |
|      | Benenche behaves that way because her father loves her'       |         |        |         |        |         |     |           |       |       |     |

Rigwe has complex sentence which is made up of an independent clause and a dependent clause. The independence clause can either be at the beginning or after the dependent clause. This can be seen in 10a where the dependent clause comes first while in 10b and 10c the independent clauses come before the dependent clauses.

### Contrastive Statement

English and Rigwe have complex sentences made up of an independent clause and a dependent clause which depends on the independent clause to make a complete thought. The difference between English and Rigwe complex sentence is, the second IP of the second sentence as illustrated

in 10a that in Rigwe, IP of the second sentence is generated through the V<sup>I</sup> of the first sentence that is when the object of the clause (dependent or independent) is an objective pronoun.

## 6. FINDINGS

Through the adoption of contrastive analysis by Lado (1957), the study has been able to bring the structural differences in the basic clause patterns and structural based sentences in English and Rigwe. The result of the study reveals that both languages have areas of convergence and divergence in terms of the patterns of clause and how their sentences based on structured are formed. This word order difference is another level of difficulty that must not be ignored. When a pronoun replaces a noun in the object position, the word order changes from SVO to SOV and also at times when the indirect and direct objects are pronouns especially the pronouns *nìng* (me and us), *ré* (you), *wé* (them), *kí* (her, him and it) the word order changes from SVOO to SOVO whereas such is not so in English. So, the Rigwe learners of English must be taught properly to avoid transferring this word order into the target language (English).

Our analysis of complex sentences shows that Rigwe learners of English may have problem as there is structural difference between the complex sentences in their L<sub>1</sub> and the L<sub>2</sub> especially if either the independent or the dependent clause has the SOVO pattern rather than the SVOO pattern. This may constitute a problem to Rigwe learners of English as they may tend to transfer this pattern into the target language. Structural arrangement in the target language must be thoroughly taught to avoid this challenge.

Rigwe coordinating conjunctions at times come after the subject of the second simple sentence, whereas in English, the coordinating conjunctions come only before the subject of the second simple sentence. It has also been observed that compound sentences in Rigwe could be realised without coordinating conjunctions. Coordinating conjunctions are used to form compound sentence in Rigwe but at times with a difference. So, this will lead to having new shape in the target language. Rigwe learners of English might transfer this pattern into the target language.

## 7. IMPLICATION FOR SECOND-LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

The paper has looked at basic clause patterns in English and Rigwe. Through the findings, we can see that the areas of differences observed in the course of the study would constitute learning difficulties for not only Rigwe learners of the English language, but also English learners of the Rigwe language. So, the implication of the study above on the learning and the teaching of the English language would thus far be necessary to covering the following by the English teacher in a Rigwe dominated community, as well as be helpful to English learners of the Rigwe language: before teaching a Target Language (TL), the grammar of the Source Language (SL) should be properly mastered by looking at the subject, verbs, object, adjuncts and complement components very well. These aspects must be thoroughly checked because it is through their combination that we have a well-formed sentence. Furthermore, the structural based sentences in both languages must be thoroughly taught to avoid the predictable problems identified do not interfere with the learning and the teaching of the either language under study.

Standard teaching materials that discuss the grammar of English should be consulted, especially books that dwell on determiners, verbs, complements, adjuncts and objects. This would enable the teacher to be well-prepared in order to avoid wrong transfer of knowledge to the learners. This is often seen as some teachers of English consult substandard books without looking at the implications of the materials chosen on learners of English as second or foreign language.

Curriculum designers/planners, educationists, theorists and authors in Rigwe communities and schools should plan and design curriculum and educational programmes that would make the learning of a second or foreign language easier and interesting. Further researches should be carried out on sentences based on functions and negation in English and Rigwe languages. Also, researches should be done through Error and Needs Analysis Approaches to help the up-coming Rigwe learners/speakers of English.

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# Accents in Humour: A Case Study of Nigerian Standup Comedy

Mosunmola Oluyinka Adebayo

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## ABSTRACT

*As a form of relief to captivate their teeming audience, Nigerian stand-up comedians seemingly use multicultural accents to create humour in order to evoke laughter. The type of accent used appears to be one of the determining factors of their success with their audience at comedy gigs. A lot of researches have been carried out on the linguistic analysis of stand-up comedy but there is still a dearth of researches on the segmental/ suprasegmental aspects of the language of humour. Several phonological aspects such as pitch (tone and intonation), rhythm, stress (accent), variation in length and formants have received little or no attention. The study therefore, explores this area to bridge the gap in the Literature. This study investigates a corpus of five pre-recorded audio-visual performances of two notable Nigerian stand-up comedians (Helen Paul and Akpororo) downloaded from the You Tube with nothing less than 120k views in each of the skits in order to identify the type of accent adopted in Nigerian stand-up comedy. The study espouses a qualitative method of data collection. The research attempts to highlight the vowel variation as present in the conversation of the comedians. The audience and referee designs by Bell (1994) are adopted for the analysis of the data. The study also adopts the received pronunciation (RP) classification of vowel sounds by Roach (2004) in the analysis of the phonological processes present in the data. A group of five words each are selected from the comedy gigs of the comedians. The study analyses conversations held between the first 5 minutes of each of the used pre-recorded videos of the comedians. The study limits its investigation to variation in vowel sounds, irrespective of the observed variations in consonants. This is because they are different forms of speech sounds. A set of 10 pre-recorded audio videos were selected for each of the comedians, and an alternate number was used to select each of the five used ones. The words that are observed different from the RP pronunciation are transcribed, and the observed phonemes are compared with the phonological sound system of English, using the contrastive method of analysis. The result reveals substitution as the main phonological process present in Nigeria stand-up comedy with sub processes, such as: decentralisation, vowel lengthening, vowel reduction, vowel strengthening, diphthongisation and monophthongisation which are peculiar to the language of humour used, in the comedies. It is observed that monophthongs, as against diphthongs are preferred in their accent due to its absence in their indigenous languages. These phonological processes discovered have apparently contributed to the deliberate indigenised accent displayed by Nigerian comedians.*

*Keywords: humour; phonological processes, stand-up, comedy, accent*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English is used globally as a communication tool with the number of users increasing tremendously. This confirms Kachru's view as quoted in Andrews and Sui (2007), that the next few decades will experience unprecedented massive growth in the population of English users of language globally, ranging from 700 to 800 million to an estimate of 2 billion. This invariably implies that a number of English users from different parts of the world have different styles, dialects and accents.

Language varies regardless of speaking the same language. Nigerian English differs from that of British or American English, and as such has its peculiarities as a variety of English Language. There could be discrepancies that may call for attention from linguistic scholars, since all aspects of language are affected (syntax, morphology, semantics and phonetics/phonology). Most noticeable is the spoken aspect of language, which has its intrinsic features that delimits it from Standard English or Received Pronunciation, which is the main parameter for the description of phonemes.

Comedians apparently often times, in their expressions, use phonemes from their native languages, as well as other languages they are exposed to, such as Yorùbá, Pidgin or Hausa, as the case may be, in addition to a few English phonemes, to create humor. Most times, they pronounce several of the English phonemes / words with indigenous articulations. They sometimes imitate to make a mockery of something, or better still, pass a message to their ever-teeming audience. Comedians seemingly deliberately, often, use ridiculous accent to create comic. Their use of multicultural accents often contains encoded meanings, which invariably creates relief to their audience. This is buttressed by Adam, (2018) who views accents as contributing a part to how well a comedian is received by the chockfull audience across the country.

According to Schwarz (2010), the objective of stand-up comedians is to appeal and sustain the interest of the audience throughout the performance. The accent utilised may be classified as phonetic and phonological. For phonetic, different languages may have the same phonemes present in the phonological system, but however realise it differently, although still maintains the same meaning. In other words, the phonemes and phonemic contrast of two varieties of English pronunciation may be the same as the case of Australian and British English, but the differences still maintain the same meanings. The phonological aspect is suprasegmental. There could be differences in the use of stress, rhythm, intonation, etc., which affect the accents of the comedians. Humour is assumed or viewed to be a therapy in soothing the nerves when jokes or puns are cracked. Audience get amused or smile at hilarious gags. Humour that provokes sarcasm via accent appeals more to mature audience. This type of humour is the focus of this study.

A lot of studies have researched on the linguistic aspect of Nigerian stand-up comedy, but a few have considered describing it from a phonetic/phonological perspective. None, to the best of my knowledge, has described the accents explored by Nigerian Stand-up comedian. This study, therefore, intends to fill this gap.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Accent has been variously defined by different scholars, as there is no consensus regarding the exact meaning. However, a few extant views are reviewed.

Accent is an identifiable style of pronunciation, often varying regionally or even socioeconomically (Nordquist, 2021). According to Wells (1982), accent is a

pattern of pronunciation used by a speaker for whom English is the native language or, more generally, by the community or social grouping to which he or she belongs. More specifically, ... the use of particular vowel or consonant sounds and particular rhythmic, intonational, and other prosodic features.

Raja (2018) views it as a distinctive way of pronouncing a language, especially one associated with a particular country, area or social class. Accent can be defined in a broad term as the way one sounds when one speaks. Specifically, it can then be defined as speaking with a particular accent, pronouncing the words of a language in a distinctive way that shows which country, region or social class one originates from. Accent is relevant in all the aspects of language use in society which include: dialects, idiolects and sociolects. Idiolect refers to the peculiar way an individual uses language, as against dialect which constitutes the grammar, pronunciation, and the syntax of a particular language, while sociolect is a dialect determined by one's position/class in society. Accent is of two types; foreign accent, which occurs when a speaker speaks a language adopting some of the rules or sounds of another language. A situation where there is difficulty in articulating a particular sound of such a language, and thus substitution takes place with similar sounds from the acquired or native language, then it is an error to the native speaker or perhaps foreign to their hearing.

The other kind of accent is basically the way a group of people speak their native language. This is indomitable by where they live and what social groups they belong to. People who live in close contact grow to share a way of speaking, or accent, which will differ from the way other groups in other places speak.

According to some scholars, the type of accents used for humour is preferably the one with regional traits. This is key to achieving the aim of evoking laughter. For instance, Adam (2018), proposes that 'accent can play a part in how well a comedian is received across the country'. He opines that by speaking with a regional accent, other regions will respond more positively. He claims that "... if you've got a middle-class accent – or you haven't got an accent – you're going to have a much tougher time." This view is also buttressed by O'Hanlon (2018) who claims that "It's quite telling that the really big comedians – like John Bishop from Liverpool, Kevin Bridges from Glasgow, Peter Kay from Bolton – stand out with their strong regional accents," The success of humour, therefore, lies in the type of accents utilised during comedy gigs.

Several scholars have different views on humour. There has been no consensus regarding the appropriate definition. Crawford (1994: 57) defines humour as any communication that generates a 'positive cognitive or affective response from listeners.' However, Martineau (1972) describes it as any communicative instance perceived as humorous, while Romero and Cruthirds (2006: 59)

explains it as ‘amusing communications that produce positive emotions and cognitions in the individual, group, or organisation. Nonetheless, Sen (2012) views it as a universal occurrence that is exhibited by most cultures. Critchley (2002), Ritchie (2004) and Sen (2012) assert that humour is mainly made up of jokes, either spoken or written, and actions which evoke laughter or produce hilarity. According to Davis (2019), humour improves people’s total quality of life. Davis identifies four types of humour: Affiliative humour or humour designed to strengthen social bonds, self-enhancing humour, which is similar to having humorous view of life in general; aggressive humour, such is mocking others, and self-defeating humour, in which an individual encourages jokes that have themselves as the target or self-deprecate.

### 3. STAND-UP COMEDY

Stand-up comedy is a certain kind of performance, often given while standing on a stage in front of a microphone, during which an artiste tells a scripted series of made-up accounts in a way as to submit that they are unscripted, in order to evoke laughter from the audience (Sankey, 1998, Roy-Omoni, 2021). However, Lindsay (2021) views it as a form of comedic performance in which a comedian stands up on stage in front of an audience, and deliver a preprepared routine – usually a mixture of jokes and longer humorous stories. Roy-Omoni (2021) defines it as a subgenre of oral literature or orality. Stand-up comedy is a comedy performance to a live audience, addressed directly from the stage. The performer is known as a comic, comedian or simply stand-up comedian.

Adetunji (2013) highlights the major pragmatic strategies used by Nigerians stand-up comedians to get their audiences participate or engage in the formation of the interactional context of humour. He concludes that Nigerian stand-up comedy ‘interactional tenor’, could be uniquely hinged on linguistic coding, especially the code-alternation of Nigerian Pidgin and English language. However, Roy-Omoni (2021), however investigates comedy in relation to its therapeutic or healing function, and discovers that stand -up comedy as performed by selected comedians has in no small measure contributed to the creation of harmony, peace and stability in the mental health of people in the Niger Delta region. Nonetheless, Ayakoroma (2013) reveals that stand-up comedy genre compared to theatre entertainment has risen to a level of a live entertainment. He further asserts that Nigeria stand-up comedy guarantees quality assurance for live theatre, and concludes that stand-up comedy genre has metamorphosed from nothing to something.

Munoz-Basols, Adrjan & David, (2013) research the verbal humour on phonological jokes where phonemes and words of one’s language are made to ‘imitate or parody’ the sounds of another language. The study reveals that the linguistic strategies used in phonological jokes humorously represent foreignness. Tsang and Wong (2004) investigate an instance of comedian-audience construction of identity, and thus reveal that comedians use personal pronouns (I, we, and you) frequently, and code mix. However, Orhiunu (2007) discovers that comedians use different tribal stereotypes, while Dessau (2021) observes that regional voices are well tolerated or accepted in comedy compared to the Received Pronunciation or the Queens English with 6% usage, which adds little to punchlines.

As observed from the foregoing, scholars have argued from the linguistic perspective, the role of accent in humour as a form of relief to the teeming audience, and from the health perspective, accent in humor is discovered as a healing therapy to create harmony, peace, and stability in the mental health of victims with depression. In consonance with other scholars, the importance of accent in creating humor to solve barriers, issues, or problems cannot be overemphasized. It is against this backdrop that this study builds on the phonological aspect of humor and identifies the peculiarities of Nigerian stand-up comedians.

#### 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Audience and Referee designs are adopted in the study because of their suitability. The Audience design is a sociolinguistic model delineated by Allan Bell in 1984 which suggests that linguistic style-shifting arises mostly in response to a speaker's audience. In other words, speakers shift their stylistic choices. According to this model, speakers regulate their speech mainly in the direction of their audience with the purpose of expressing solidarity or intimacy with them, or outside their audience's speech to express distance. "Audience design applies to all codes and repertoires within a speech community, including the switch from one language to another in bilingual situations (Gal 1979, Dorian 1981)."

The audience design model differentiates between quite a few forms of audience types based on the following criteria:

- Addressees – These are audiences known, acknowledged, and addressed directly.
- Auditors–These are known and acknowledged listeners who are not directly addressed.
- Overhearers – These are unacknowledged or unaddressed listeners, that the speakers are aware of.
- Eavesdropper – These are unacknowledged listeners that the speakers are not aware of. The effect of the audience on the speaker's style-shifting is relative to the extent to which the speaker acknowledges and approves them.

In addition to audience design, Bell introduces an additional component of style shifting which he terms 'referee design'. This type of style-shifting refers to situations where the speaker does not accommodate the speech style of their immediate audience, but somewhat creatively uses language features ... outside the immediate speech community. In contrast with audience design, which can be defined as a responsive style-shift where the speaker responds to specific factors of the speech context, referee design is characterised as an initiative shift. In such situations, speakers may use styles associated with non-present social groups to signal hypothetical allegiances with these speakers (Bell, 2001).

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### RP monophthongs by Roach (2004)

/i/ - high/close unrounded front vowel	/ɪ/ - mid high/close lax unrounded front vowel
/e/ - mid-low lax unrounded front vowel	/æ/ - open/low lax unrounded front vowel
/ɑ:/ - open/low tense neutral back vowel	/ɒ/ - open/low lax rounded back vowel
/ɔ:/ - mid-open tense rounded back vowel	/ʊ/ - mid-high/close lax rounded back vowel
/u:/ - high/close tense rounded back vowel	/ʌ/ - mid-open lax central vowel
/ɜ:/ - unrounded tense central vowel	/ə/ - unrounded lax central vowel (schwa)

### Used RP Diphthongs

/eɪ/, /əʊ/ - closing diphthong

/eə/, /ɪə/ - centering

/eə/, /ɪə/ - centering diphthong

### Used Yorùbá /Pidgin Vowels

/i/ - high/close unrounded front vowel

/e/ - a mid-close unrounded front vowel

/ɛ/ - mid-open front vowel

### Used Yorùbá/Pidgin Nativized Diphthongs

/a/ - unrounded neutral vowel

/ɪa/ - opening diphthong

/i/ - closing diphthong

/ɔ/ - low rounded back vowel

/o/ - mid-high rounded back vowel

The concept of monophthongisation, in this study, is not restricted to diphthongs changing to monophthongs, but also, monophthongs still changing to monophthongs, but with different qualities.

## DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Excerpt 1

2015: AY Live in London: Helen Paul (1.4 million views)

From Lagos yiaport, people were snapping pincture with me.

But when I got here, I notis that the sufferin of men is tellin

in their heart. ...

Broda AY, còm and call me egen.

**Table 1: Accent used by Helen Paul**

	Standard focused words	Standard pronunciation	Observed pronunciation
1	Airport	/eəpɔ:t/	/jɪapɔt/
2	Noticed	/nəʊtɪzd/	Notis
3	Brother	/brʊðə/	/brɔda/
4	Come	/kʌm/	/kɔm/

	Standard focused words	Standard pronunciation	Observed pronunciation
5	Again	/əgeɪn/	/egen/

### ANALYSIS

/eə/ becomes /ɪa/ as in 1; diphthongisation

/əʊ/ becomes /o/ as in 2; Monophthongisation/vowel reduction

/ə/ becomes /a/ as in 3; Decentralisation/strengthening

/ʌ/ becomes /ɔ/ as in 4; Decentralisation

/ə/ becomes /e/ as in 5; Strengthening

/eɪ/ becomes /e/as in 5; Monophthongisation/vowel reduction

In Table 1, it is observed that the main phonological process present is substitution as seen in examples 1-5. All the RP phonemes are substituted with the available phonemes in Yorùbá and Pidgin. The sub phonological processes of substitution utilised are: diphthongisation which maintains the same status as a diphthong. For instance, in example 1, /eə/, a centering diphthong changes to an opening diphthong /ɪa/. Also observed is monophthongisation, for instance, in 2 and 5b respectively, diphthongs change to monophthongs, thereby reducing the quality. /əʊ/, a closing diphthong changes to a mid-high rounded back vowel /o/, and /eɪ/, a closing diphthong changes to a mid-close unrounded front vowel /e/. Also observed, in 3, 4, and 5, is the decentralisation of the unrounded lax central vowel /ə/ to become an unrounded neutral vowel /a/, and the unrounded mid-open central vowel /ʌ/, to become a low rounded back vowel /ɔ/. The schwa sound /ə/, thus becomes strengthened.

Excerpt 2: Laff up and Helen Paul at Comedy Njoy-2017 (318k views)

O my goodness, I made this hair just for you.

Turn to your neighbor and say there is nobody Jesus cannot use.

...If you are doing cashia, tell me. ...Sorry, am not abusing you. (Laughter). ... Is lawya work?

**Table 2: Accent used by Helen Paul**

	Standard focused words	Standard pronunciation	Observed pronunciation
6	Hair	/heə/	/hiɛ/
7	Jesus	/dʒɪzəs/	/dʒizɔs/
8	Neighbor	/neɪbə/	/nebɔ/
9	Cashier	/kæʃɪər/	/kɔʃɪa/
10	Work	/wɜ:k/	/wɔk/

**Analysis**

- /eə/ becomes /iɛ/ / (ieh) as in 6; Diphthongisation
- /ə/ becomes /ɔ/ as in 7 and 8; Decentralisation/ strengthening
- /ei/ becomes /e/ as in 8; Monophthongisation /vowel reduction
- /ɪə/ becomes /ia/ as in 9; Diphthongisation
- /æ/ becomes /a/ as in 9; lengthening
- /ɜ:/ becomes /ɔ/ as in 10; Decentralisation

Data 2 reveals substitution in all the sub phonological processes. In 6 and 9, RP diphthongs are realised as indigenised diphthongs. For instance, the diphthong /eə/ in 6 maintains its status as a diphthong, but changes it to an indigenised articulation of /iɛ/. This is also seen in 9a. Examples 7, 9a and 9b reveal vowel strengthening. The unrounded lax central vowel /ə/ in 7 is decentralised and strengthened to a low rounded back vowel /ɔ/ which is strong in Yorùbá, and Pidgin. In 8, the closing diphthong /ei/ reduces its quality to become monophthong /e/ (mid-close unrounded front vowel). In 9b, /æ/ becomes /a/, thereby strengthening the realisation from lax to strong vowel. In 10, the unrounded tense central vowel /ɜ:/ is decentralised to become a low rounded back vowel /ɔ/.

Excerpt 3: How ladies get husband (496,893 views)

Pastor Kinsley, God blenss you. You have been the one blessing people, now I want to blenss you. Kneel down there.

Stella say make she ask me how much I wan collect, na im I com ask her. Excuse me, is it really a church?

For dis pastor to give me dis amont, somebody com demand for 10 percent.

Anybody wey wan enta industry, wey no wan enta wit selfishness o, but witi plain mind, make im connect to ram, Hallelujah!

**Table 3: Accent used by Helen Paul**

	Standard focused words	Standard pronunciation	Observed pronunciation
11	Pastor	/pɑ:stə/	/pɑstɔ/
12	Church	/tʃɜ:tʃ/	/tʃɔtʃ/
13	Amount	/əmaʊnt/	/ɑmɔnt/
14	Percent	/pəsent/	/pisɛnt/
15	Connect	/kənekt/	/kɔnɛt/

**Analysis**

- /ə/ becomes /ɔ/ as in 11 and 15; Decentralisation/strengthening
- /ɜ:/ becomes /ɔ/ as in 12; Decentralisation

/ə/ becomes /a/ as in 13; Decentralisation/strengthening

/aʊ/ becomes /ɔ/ in 13; Monophthongisation /vowel reduction

/ə/ becomes /i/ (ee) as in 14; Decentralisation/strengthening

All the vowels experienced substitution. In Table 3, the schwa sound /ə/ is decentralised and strengthened in examples 11, 13, 14 and 15 to assume the following vowels: /ɔ/, /a/, /i/ and /ɔ/ respectively. For instance, the unrounded lax central vowel /ə/ is realised as a low rounded back vowel /ɔ/, as unrounded neutral vowel /a/, and as a high/close unrounded front vowel /i/, in so doing, strengthening it. In example 12, the unrounded tense central vowel /ɜ:/ is realised as a rounded back vowel /ɔ/. Also observed is that in example 13, the closing diphthong /aʊ/ is realised as monophthong /ɔ/, a low rounded back vowel, thereby reducing the quality.

Excerpt 4: Helen Paul AY Live 2017 Easter Sunday (266k views)

If you go local, you can never be hungry.

The wey dem dey take cut the money, dey provoke me.

If dey call you for party, you go dey here, hello

You people that go abroad go give birth, and you say I gave birth...

**Table 4: Accent used by Helen Paul**

	Standard focused words	Standard pronunciation	Observed pronunciation
16	Local	/ləʊkəl/	/ləkəl/
17	Hungry	/hʌŋɡrɪ/	/hɔŋɡrɪ/
18	Money	/mʌni/	/mɔni/
19	Party	/pɑ:ti/	/pɑti/
20	Birth	/bɜ:θ/	/bɛt/

### Analysis

/əʊ/ becomes /o/ as in 16; Monophthongisation/ vowel reduction

/ə/ becomes /a/ as in 16; Strengthening

/ʌ/ becomes /ɔ/ as in 17 and 18; Decentralisation

/ɪ/ becomes /i/ (ee) as in 19; Lengthening

/ɜ:/ becomes /ɛ/ as in 20; Decentralisation

In Table 4 in example 16, the closing diphthong /əʊ/ changes to a mid-high rounded back vowel /o/, thus reducing the quality. Also, in example 16, unrounded lax central vowel /ə/ becomes /a/; a central vowel becoming a back vowel, thereby strengthening the schwa sound, and decentralising it. In example 17 and 18, the unrounded mid-open central vowel /ʌ/ becomes a low rounded back vowel /ɔ/, and strengthens it. In example 19, the short front vowel /ɪ/ becomes a high/close unrounded

front vowel /i/, thus lengthening it. Example 20 reveals that the unrounded tense central vowel /ɜ:/ is realised as a mid-open front vowel /ɛ/, thereby decentralises it.

Excerpt 5: AY Port-Harcourt (261k views)

Na wah o! Today na different day.

On top this matter of girls wey like to dey form for market. They plenty for LAG, MAULAG.

...the albino no move, but blood come out.

**Table 5: Accent used by Helen Paul**

	Standard focused words	Standard pronunciation	Observed pronunciation
21	blood	/blʌd/	/blɔd/
22	different	/dɪfrənt/	/dɪfrɛnt/
23	girls	gɜ:lz	/gɛls/
24	market	/mɑ:kɪt/	/mɛkɛt/
25	plenty	/plɛntɪ/	/plɛnti/

### Analysis

/ʌ/ becomes /ɔ/ as in 21; Decentralisation

/ə/ becomes /ɛ/ as in 22; Decentralisation/strengthening

/ɜ:/ becomes /ɛ/ as in 23; Decentralisation

/ɪ/ becomes /ɛ/ as in 24; monophthongisation

/i/ becomes /i/ (ee) as in 25; lengthening

There is the decentralisation of the central vowels in examples 21-23. The unrounded mid-open central vowel /ʌ/ is decentralised to become a low rounded back vowel /ɔ/. In example 22, the central vowel /ə/ is strengthened to become a mid-open front vowel /ɛ/. **Example 23 also shows the decentralisation of unrounded tense central vowel /ɜ:/ to a mid-open front vowel /ɛ/.** **Examples 24 and 25 display** the mid close front vowel /ɪ/ being realised as a mid-open front vowel /ɛ/, and a high/close unrounded front vowel /i/ respectively, where /i/ is lengthened. In these two instances, the RP monophthongs are replaced with indigenous monophthongs. Substitution is revealed in all the sub phonological processes.

### DATA ANALYSIS 2

Excerpt 1: Akpororo –AY live- Warri (624k views)

Nobody is ugly. We are just broke. When you get money, all the spare parts for your body go come out. How wish you know, you for do this kind hair.

... Every police dey use computer dey detect thief.

**Table 6: Accent used by Akpororo**

	Standard focused words	Standard pronunciation	Observed pronunciation
26	Ugly	/ʌɡli/	/ɔɡli/
27	Broke	/brəʊk/	/brɔk/
28	Spare	/speə(r)/	/spia/
29	Hair	/heə/	/jiɛ/
30	Police	/pəli:s/	/polis/

**Analysis**

/ʌ/ becomes /ɔ/ as in 26; Decentralisation

/əʊ/ becomes /o/ as in 27; Monophthongisation/vowel reduction

/eə/ becomes /ia/ (ah) and /iɛ/ (ieh) as in 28 and 29; diphthongisation

/ə/ becomes /o/ as in 30; Decentralisation/ strengthening

In table 6, as observed in Tables 1-5, the RP vowel qualities changed tremendously. The major phonological process is substitution. The unrounded mid-open central vowel /ʌ/ in 26 is replaced with a low rounded back vowel /ɔ/, thereby decentralising it. In 27, the closing diphthong /əʊ/ is realised as a mid-high rounded back vowel /o/, hence reducing the quality of the vowel. Examples 27 and 29 have the centering diphthong /eə/ replaced with indigenised diphthongs /ia/ (ah) and /iɛ/ (ieh). **In 30, the central vowel /ə/ changes to a mid-high rounded back vowel /o/, and thus strengthens it.**

Excerpt 2: Akpororo drops it hot @ ay S (337k views)

See wetin dis boy wan marry? ...We dey carry property. We no dey marry break up o!

Abi wetin I com do for Port-Harcourt? No be money I com find?

**Table 7: Accent used by Akpororo**

	Standard focused words	Standard pronunciation	Observed pronunciation
31	Marry	/mæri/	/mari/
32	Property	/prɒpəti/	/prɔpati/
33	break	/breɪk/	/brek/
34	Com	/kʌm/	/kɔm/
35	Money	/mʌni/	/mɔni/

**Analysis**

/æ/ becomes /a/ as in 31; monophthongisation/lengthening

/ə/ becomes /ɔ/ and /a/ as in 32; decentralisation/ strengthening

/eɪ/ becomes /e/ as in 33; monophthongisation/vowel reduction

/ʌ/ becomes /ɔ/ as in 34; decentralisation

/ɪ/ becomes /i/ (ee) as in 35; decentralization/ lengthening

In example 31, the low lax unrounded front vowel /æ/ is realised as the low unrounded neutral vowel /a/. The unrounded lax central vowel /ə/ in 32 is realised as low rounded back vowel /ɔ/, and the low unrounded neutral vowel /a/, thus strengthens it. In 33 the closing diphthong /eɪ/ is realised as a mid-close unrounded front vowel /e/, thereby losing the dual quality. The unrounded mid-open central vowel /ʌ/ in 34 and 35 is replaced with a low rounded back vowel /ɔ/, thereby decentralising it. The mid close front vowel /ɪ/ in 35 is realised as a high/close unrounded front vowel /i/, thus, lengthening it.

Excerpt 3: Best of Akpororo that made Vice President Osinbajo laugh (270k views)

If you know you are flexing like this, look at your neighbour...

... I dey imagine sey I be pastor.

...My daddy, well done sir, yes sir.

See how Pastor Paul wife fine like today bread.

If I be pastor now, I don blow...

**Table 8: Accent used by Akpororo**

	Standard Focused words	Standard pronunciation	Observed pronunciation
36	neighbour	/neɪbə/	/nebɔ/
37	pastor	/pæstə/	/pɑstɔ/
38	sir	/sɜ:/	/sa/
39	today	/tədeɪ/	/tode/
40	blow	/bləʊ/	/blo/

### Analysis

/eɪ/ becomes /e/ as in 36 and 39; Monophthongisation/vowel reduction

/ə/ becomes /ɔ/, /o/ as in 36; Decentralisation/ strengthening

/ɜ:/ becomes /a/ as 38; Decentralisation

/əʊ/ becomes /o/ as in 40; Monophthongisation/vowel reduction

In 36 and 39, the closing diphthong /eɪ/ is realised as a mid-close unrounded front vowel /e/, thus reducing the quality. In 37, the unrounded lax central vowel /ə/ is realised as a low rounded back vowel /ɔ/, in 39 it is realised as a mid-high back vowel /o/, thus decentralising it. Also, in 37, the low lax unrounded front vowel /æ/ is realised as the low unrounded neutral vowel /a/. In 38, the unrounded tense central vowel /ɜ:/ is realised as the low tense unrounded neutral vowel /a/. The closing diphthong /əʊ/ in 40 is realised as a mid-high back vowel /o/, losing the initial quality to a monophthong.

Excerpt 4: Why Akpororo is the best...?

... I don check dis full world, men of God no dey marry wọwọ woman... Na im make me I no wan hear story... I no wan hear sey I born, my pikin be like prayer point.

Which one we need to start with, na comedy or music?

**Table 9: Accent used by Akpororo**

	Standard focused words	Standard pronunciation	Observed pronunciation
41	World	/wɜ:ld/	/wɔld/
42	Story	/stɔri/	/stori/
43	Comedy	/kɔmɛdi/	/kɔmɛdi/
44	Hear	/heə/	/jiɛ/
45	Prayer	/preɪjə/	/preja/

### Analysis

/ɜ:/ becomes /ɔ/ as in 41; Decentralisation

/ɒ/ becomes /o/, /ɔ/ in 42 and 43; Monophthongisation/lengthening

/eə/ becomes /iɛ/ (iɛh) as in 44; Diphthongisation

/ə/ becomes /a/ as in 45; Decentralisation/strengthening

/eɪ/ becomes /e/as in 45; Monophthongisation/vowel reduction

In 41, the unrounded tense central vowel /ɜ:/ is realised as a low rounded back vowel /ɔ/, hence decentralises it. The open/low lax rounded back vowel /ɒ/ is realised as a mid-high back vowel /o/ in 42, and realised as a low rounded back vowel /ɔ/ in 43, and as such, lengthens it. The vowel is lengthened from a lax vowel to strong vowels in the indigenous languages. The centering diphthong /eə/ in 44, is released with indigenised diphthong /iɛ/ (iɛh). The unrounded lax central vowel /ə/ is realised as a low unrounded neutral vowel /a/ in 45, decentralising, and strengthening it. The closing diphthong /eɪ/ is replaced with a monophthong; a mid-close unrounded front vowel /e/.

Excerpt 5: Akpororo attacks Zubey Michael (604k views)

If I no funny for here, I no dey comot. We don close.

... Our village, na kill dem dey kill people, so we no dey bother go dat place.

**Table 10: Accent used by Akpororo**

	Standard focused words	Standard pronunciation	Observed pronunciation
46	Funny	/fʌni/	/fɔni/
47	Village	/vɪlɪdʒ/	/viledʒ/
48	Kill	/kɪl/	/kil/
49	Bother	/bɒðə/	/bɔda/

50	Close	/kləʊz/	/kloz/
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### Analysis

/ʌ/ becomes /ɔ/ as in 46; Decentralisation

/ɪ/ becomes /e/ (eh) as in 47; Monophthongisation

/ɪ/ becomes /i/ (ee) as in 47 and 48; Monophthongisation/lengthening

/ɒ/ becomes /ɔ/ as in 49; Monophthongisation/lengthening

/ə/ becomes /a/ as in 49; Decentralisation

/əʊ/ becomes /o/ as in 50; Monophthongisation/vowel reduction

The unrounded mid-open central vowel /ʌ/ in 46 is replaced with a low rounded back vowel /ɔ/, hence, decentralising it. In 47 and 48, the mid close front vowel /ɪ/ is realised as a high/close unrounded front vowel /i/, thus, lengthening it. Also, in 47, the mid close front vowel /ɪ/ is realised as a mid-close unrounded front vowel /e/. The open/low lax rounded back vowel /ɒ/ in 49 is realised as a low rounded back vowel /ɔ/, thereby lengthening it. The unrounded lax central vowel /ə/ is decentralised, and thus, realised as a low unrounded neutral vowel /a/. The closing diphthong /əʊ/ in 50 is realised as a mid-high rounded back vowel /o/, losing the diphthong quality.

From the foregoing, it is observed that all the focused words in Tables 1-10, have the same peculiar feature of vowel substitution with the regionalised vowels of the languages used. The following sub-phonological processes of substitution used includes: vowel strengthening, lengthening, reduction, monophthongisation, diphthongisation, and decentralisation. The concept of monophthongisation used is not restricted to diphthongs changing to monophthongs, but also, monophthongs still changing to another monophthong, but with different quality. All the English words with the central vowels (/ʌ, ɜ:, ə/) are observed decentralized with similar sounds in Yorùbá and Pidgin languages. They either substitute the vowels of English with that of Pidgin and/ or their indigenous language, as well as using the appropriate English vowels. They are not cautious of the differences, because it is assumed to be part of their comic tactics, to arouse laughter from their attentive and expectant audience.

Diphthongs are found to be sparingly used, as against monophthongs. In virtually all their expressions, monophthongs are dominant because the sound inventories of their indigenous languages lack diphthongs. The two comedians have no difficulty shifting communicative styles to create humorous effects.

### 5. CONCLUSION

Several of the use of the indigenous pronunciations are deliberate, which conform to their regional accents. It is observed that there is no consistency in the use of the phonemes under investiga-

tion in all their conversations. They use it in any conversation to suit their purpose of hitting their punchlines.

From the analysis, comedians are finding common ground through language. In the process of code switching and code mixing, there is the deliberate use of phonemes from the sound systems of the different languages adopted. In other words, regional accents are combined in the actualization of humorous effect in comedy skits observed in Helen and Akpororo's comedies. In an attempt to code switch, the style of speech and expressions are adjusted in order to maximize the comfort of the audience, hence the use of the different sound systems of the languages used during their comedy skits. Comedians use Pidgin, Yorùbá, and English as the case may be. They display a performance of playful subversion of the authority of English which is the superstrate language of discourse in Nigeria. As observed, comedians adjust their speech in the direction of their audience with the purpose of expressing familiarity with them, or outside their audience's speech, to express distance.

It can however be concluded that the two comedians use regionalised accents of the languages they are exposed to. They inter switch the phonemic sounds of their indigenous language (Yorùbá), coupled with that of Pidgin, and English. This is attributed to the fact that Helen Paul and Akpororo are both from the southwestern part of Nigeria. The comedians have their roots in the West, as well as Edo and Delta States, and are both grounded in Yorùbá, and Pidgin, which have assisted them greatly in purposive comic relief

In conclusion, it is observed that the two comedians have the capability to shift styles. They multi use accents, and this is deliberate. It is for the purpose of actualizing the proposed objective of evoking laughter because the two comedians are well educated and can speak standard Nigerian English, with very good accents. In submission to Adam (2018), O'Hanlon (2018) and Dessau's (2021) view, no posh accents could have been able to arouse the interest of the audience in stand-up comedy.

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# A Pragmatic Analysis of the Invisible in Taboos: A Yorùbá Paradigm

Lateef Iyanda Kugbayi & Tijani-Sanusi, Muibat

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## ABSTRACT

*Pragmatics as a subfield of linguistics primarily centres on the identification of “invisible” meanings in what is said according to the intention of the speaker and the context of utterance. The field is opened to analysing utterances like taboos. Taboo in itself is also characterised by a double layer of meaning. Separating one layer of meaning from the other therefore requires the application of a linguistic variable that is capable of digging out the invisible part of an utterance. Against this backdrop, the study considers it a worthy exercise to pragmatically evaluate the unsaid in selected taboos of a Yorùbá origin in order to underline the part of each of them that has unclear meanings, and as well reveal the goal of that part. To achieve this, the paper adopts a purposive method of data collection through which taboos that are relevant to goal of the study are selected from common Yorùbá conversational contexts. The data gathered are subsequently pragmatically analysed based on an eclectic procedure as adapted from Austin’s Speech Acts and Grice’s Conversational Implicature models. Through the analysis, it is established that taboo, as a linguistic token, fits into individual home and communal strategies of dialogues, and consistent digging out of its goals will greatly enhance awareness creation, warnings, production and reduplication of historical facts; all of which, by extension, can lead to promotion of unity, hard work, dignity of labour, inviolable moral standards, respect and value for human lives in any crisis-ridden world.*

*Keywords:* pragmatics, direct and indirect illocutionary acts, conversational implicature, contexts, taboos and pragmatic aspects of taboos

## 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the features many world languages share is taboo. The term, taboo, as an English word, is derived from a Polynesian word, “tabu.” Its definition, too, is usually considered from a bipartite point – linguistics and culture. Linguistically, many languages of the world contain words and phrases that are prohibited from being used in the public, suggesting that certain things are not supposed to be said in certain circumstances – religion, politics, death, sex, etc. Uttering such words in unexpected situations will not only be shocking, but will also be offensive and promote vulgarity. Hence, the utterances are forbidden. However, since language is pliable enough in the hands of those who use it to achieve expected conversational goals, speakers still achieve the goals without necessarily using taboo words or phrases by resorting to euphemism. The same manner utterances can be termed impermissible; behaviour can be prohibitive as well.

Thus, in various societies around the globe, there are actions that peoples' cultures do not accommodate. Such are consequently regarded as cultural taboos. Yorùbá, for example, has a lot of them.

By placing a great deal of value and importance on adhering strictly to those Yorùbá cultural taboos, the people have been able to sustain and successfully transmit the taboos in their various forms from one generation to another for centuries. The strict adherence enjoyed so far, however, is to an extent, credited to the mythically induced punishments they attached to breaking the taboos. It is sufficed then to conclude that such myths, which some sections among the people (like the young generation) were culturally made to believe and fear, are not actually the goals for formulating the taboos, but the means to achieving the goals. Thus, the essence of uttering the taboos is neither directly constituted in the transmission of the taboos nor in the fear of and awareness creation about the dreadful punishments attached to breaking them. Therefore, often than not, the actual goal of uttering a cultural taboo, especially in Yorùbá, is not visible. To make it visible, therefore, there is a need to evaluate the goal of taboo application from the point of view of a linguistic variable that is capable of revealing the invisible meaning of what is said to substantiate the speaker's intention, and by no small means that is the central interest of pragmatics. Since looking directly for the goals of the use of taboos is somewhat misleading, this study considers it worthwhile to pragmatically examine the phenomenon from a Yorùbá standpoint in order to unearth the embedded meanings of taboos in relation to the contexts in which they are used.

## 2. PRAGMATICS: AN OVERVIEW

Providing an all-encompassing definition of pragmatics has been a great challenge to linguists around the world owing to the domains of meaning the sub-field of linguistics covers. Against that backdrop, the existing definitions of pragmatics have been given based on different standpoints from which scholars have seen the phenomenon. Among such definitions, Levinson (1983:5) states that pragmatics is “the study of language use. Searle, Kiefer and Bierwisch (1980: viii) have earlier proposed that pragmatics “is one of the words . . . that give impression that something quite specific and technical is being talked about when often in fact it has no clear meaning.” In the same vein, Yule (1996: 127) explains that “pragmatics is the study of ‘invisible’ meaning or how we recognise what is meant even when it isn't actually said.” From the foregoing, what “has no clear meaning” (Searle, Kiefer and Bierwisch *ibid.*) or is “invisible meaning” is therefore the “intended speaker meaning” (Yule *ibid.*) – the central interest of pragmatics.

Consequently, within the framework of pragmatics, identifying speaker meaning for the purpose of decoding the actual message in an utterance may not be achieved based on a straightforward interpretation. It has to reflect some level of “the ability of language users to pair sentences with their contexts in which they are used” (Levinson (1983:25). According to Denham and Lobeck (2010:331), the meaning of utterance “is bound up with the context in which you hear it – where you are, what you are doing, who says it, what kind of experiences you've had, your cultural expectations, and so on.” They emphasise that “How speaker intention and hearer interpretation affect meaning is the subject of pragmatics, the study of *utterance meaning*, or how the meanings of the

things we say are shaped by context” (ibid.). In pragmatics, understanding meaning of an utterance based on the context in which it is made is very important. This is more than grammatical view of the form (syntactic structure) of the language used; rather, it is highly dependent on ‘user-oriented’ view of language use which has to do with how the linguistic elements are used in the context of interaction (Mey2001). Considering the focus of the paper, Yorùbá taboos, which are somewhat mythical, are realised on two levels. On a surface level, taboos are conveyed in linguistic items. Beyond that, the same items contain something quite specific and technical but not clearly expressed or visibly presented, which incidentally is the goal of employing the linguistic items.

### Austin’s Speech Acts

The Speech Acts theory which was developed by J. L. Austin in 1962 arose from his criticism on the earlier view that a declarative sentence is always used to describe some state of affairs, some fact, which must either be true or false. This idea that was criticised by Austin is referred to as **constative**. According to him, apart from constatives, there are many declarative sentences which do not describe report or state anything, and it will make no sense to regard them as being true or false. Thus, any utterance that falls under this category of sentences is part of doing some action. Austin further emphasises that in every utterance, a speaker performs an act which may be stating a fact, confirming or denying something, making a promise and so on. He consequently provides examples such as *I do*, as uttered as part of a marriage ceremony; *I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth* as uttered by the appropriate person while smashing a bottle against the stem of the ship in question.

Austin called such utterances as above **performatives**. The performatives can either be felicitous when it is uttered by an appropriate person in a circumstance which should also be appropriate, and infelicitous when something has gone wrong in the connection between the utterance and the circumstance in which it is uttered. Accordingly, Austin affirms that each time an utterance is made, three simultaneous acts are performed. These are:

- i. **Locutionary Act:** which is an act of saying something with a particular sense and reference.
- ii. **Illocutionary Act:** which has to do with performing an act such as warning, accusing, promising, requesting by means of saying something.
- iii. **Perlocutionary Act:** which brings about effects on the audience by means of uttering something.

Austin also suggests five classifications of the speech acts based on their illocutionary force. These are:

1. **Verdictives:** which are typified by giving of a verdict. In this class, verbs like discharge, sentence, acquit, etc. are used.
2. **Excercises:** which represents acts that show exercising of powers, rights or influence. Examples of such are: vote, urge, advise, warn, etc.
3. **Commissives:** which consist of acts by which speakers commit themselves into doing

something such as promising or undertaking. They include declarations or announcements of intention. To perform the acts, verbs like promise, donate, undertake, etc. are used.

4. *Behavitives*: which covers social behaviour and attitudes. In carrying out such acts, verbs like apologise, congratulate, commend, condole, acknowledge, sympathise, etc. are used.
5. *Expositives*: which make it clear how utterances fit into the discourse of an argument or conversation. The speech act verbs in the category include reply, argue, concede, illustrate, assume, postulate, etc.

### Searle's Indirect Speech Act

Searle (1969), a student of Austin modifies Austin's *Speech Acts Theory* and comes out with a description of utterances in a slightly different form from his predecessor's triad of locution, illocution and perlocution. He argues that a speaker typically does four things when saying something, viz. **Utterance Act** which is the act of uttering words (morphemes or sentences); **Propositional Act** which is an act of referring and predicating; **Illocutionary Act** which includes acts of questioning, stating, ordering, wishing; and **Perlocutionary Act** which is an act of persuading or getting someone to do something.

Searle (ibid.) further draws a distinction between speaker's utterance meaning and sentence meaning. In performing an indirect speech act, a speaker does not only mean what he or she says but also means something else. To an extent, the utterance meaning includes within it the sentence meaning. At the same time, the meaning can extend beyond it. Therefore, a sentence containing an illocutionary force indicator for a particular type of illocutionary act is possible to be used to perform that act and at the same time another act of different type. Hence, for the listener to understand a force simultaneously with other force(s) included in an utterance, he/she must know the rules for performing speech acts, share some background information with the speaker, exercise their powers of rationality and inference in general and have knowledge of certain general principles of cooperative conversation. Malmkjaer (2006:569) describes this as "knowing the rules for speech acts enables one to recognise that a literal, secondary illocutionary act (sentence meaning) somehow contains reference within it to a condition for speech act, and this will be the speech act which is the primary non-literal illocutionary act (speaker meaning) performed by the speaker." This view seems to be contradicted in the application of behavioural taboos in Yorùbá because the non-literal illocutionary acts of the taboos are not shared by adults and children within the same sociocultural experience to achieve the performative effects of the taboos on the latter. Hence, emphasis is placed on the sentence meaning, which is mythically constructed, to deliberately overshadow the primary non-literal illocutionary acts, which the referents (especially the young generation) may take for granted if they have access to the information that can help them uncover the goal of the utterance.

Despite that, Searle's (ibid.) provision for indirect speech act generates some other classifications of speech acts aside Austin's, viz. **assertives** which have to do with committing the speaker to the truth of the same propositions such as stating; **directives** which have to do with attempts to

bring about some effect through the action of the hearer; **commissives** which deal with the speaker being committed to some future actions as promising or undertaking; **expressives** which are considered to be expressions of some psychological state such as commending, acknowledging, sympathising, congratulating; **declaratives** that represent the speech acts in which there is a successful performance that brings about the correspondence between the propositional content and reality. These may include any of christening, resigning or sentencing. When utterances are considered from the perspective of Yorùbá behavioural taboo usage, the invisible meanings of the taboos are expected to manifest in the forms of the listed acts to achieve the goal of prohibiting on the one hand and promoting on the other certain behaviours among various groups of individuals within the limits of the people's established system and beliefs.

### 3. TABOO: AN OVERVIEW

For the purpose of setting boundaries for delineating the concept of taboo and to provide guidelines on its relationship with other concepts, it is necessary to look into the concept's constitutive definitions. Al-Haj Eid (2020: 412) describes the concept as a "linguistic and cultural phenomenon universally recognised and often used in daily-life conversation. It is culture-specific as it digs deep into the specificity of the society." From a psychological stance, Walter (1978) alludes to Freud's (1913/1946:44) statement in which taboos are seen as prohibitions "for which there exists a strong indication in the unconscious" to suggest that some drives and desires have been repressed, sublimated or manipulated in someone's psyche. To make it look more behaviourally-oriented, Walter (ibid.) cites Hutton Webster's (1942: vii – viii) definition of the term, establishing that it is a "specific series of thou-shalt-nots . . . which, when violated, produce automatically in the offender a state of ritual disability – 'taboo sickness' – only relieved, when relief is possible, by a ceremony of purification." Incidentally, examples of such forms of taboo abound in Yorùbá sociocultural/religious beliefs. Many times the consequences of violating certain taboos can be very grave; it is required that specific rituals are carried out before the "evil" can be averted.

Walter (ibid.: 5) also proposes the corresponding criteria that the definition of taboo should meet. These are:

- i. *Behavioural/communicative Level*: which constitutes those actions which should not be performed but can be communicated about; those actions that are legal/moral but illegal/improper as topics of conversation; and those actions that should not be performed or talk about.
- ii. *Universal/societal/person-specific level*: which constitutes the various taboos that are recognised all over the world (like incest), those are recognised according to individual societies (in which what is a taboo to one community is acceptable to some other community); and those that are recognised on individual level (in which almost anything could be a taboo).
- iii. *Taboos bound by situation, time and referent of the message*: which constitutes behaviours or communications that are defined or redefined as taboos based on the participants or the setting, particularly when it involves personal morality or legislation change.

Putting the views together, definitions of taboos should:

- i. encompass behavioural and communicative restrictions, they should be based on moral or legal foundations.
- ii. have no temporal or situational restrictions, allowing for movement and situational specificity.
- iii. be generalisable in terms of the unit of analysis, permitting focus on societies, cultures, groups or individuals.
- iv. allow for the analysis of historical or contemporary prohibitions.
- v. methodologically, allow for direct and indirect measurement.

Based on the aforementioned, taboo is “a law, norm, or personal belief specifying situations in which behavior or topic should not be performed and/or communicated about” Walter (ibid.: 7 – 8), which can be presented for pragmatic analysis due to its openness to a directly and indirectly methodological measurement.

### ORIGIN OF TABOO

Allan (2018) traces the origin of the word, *taboo*, to the *Togantabu*. Quoting Radcliffe-Brown (1939:5), the author states that;

In the languages of Polynesia, the word means simply ‘to forbid,’ ‘forbidden,’ and can be applied to any sort of prohibition. A rule of etiquette, an order issued by a chief, an injunction to children not to meddle with the possessions of their elders, may all be expressed by the use of the tabu (Allan ibid.: 3).

Allan (ibid.) also quotes Cook (1967) to have said that the term, *tabu*, was first used on June 15, 1777 in the utterance, “When dinner came on table not one of my guests would sit down or eat a bit of anything that was there. Everyone was *Tabu*, a word of very comprehensive meaning but in general signifies forbidden.” Apart from that and some other days, Allan (ibid) further quotes Cook (ibid.) to have made an entry on June 20, 1777 that;

In this walk we met with about a dozen women in one place at supper, two of the company were fed by the others, on our asking the reason, they said Tabu Matte. On further enquiry, found that one of them had, two months before, washed the dead corps of a chief, on which account she was not to handle victuals for five months, the other had done the same thing to another of inferior rank, and was under the same restriction but not for so long a time.

According to Chen and Wang (2018), the British navigator, Captain James Cook later took back the word, *tabu*, to Britain and the word later became *taboo* in the English lexicon. “So, the term “taboo” comes from Togantapu or Fujian tabu (“prohibited,” “disallowed,” “forbidden”), related among others to the Maori tapu, Hawaiian kapu, Malagasy fady” (ibid.: 113).

### TABOOS VERSUS SUPERSTITIONS

From an etymological stance, Omobola (2013) establishes that both taboos and superstitions em-

anated from the early man's efforts to find explanations to nature as well as his own existence, especially in a bid to foreclose evils and attract fortune. For their realisation, the two concepts are therefore weaved in the culture and religious beliefs of some people in a given society. However, citing Webster in Magesa (1997) and Kegan (2012), Omobola (*ibid.*: 222) identifies the dividing lines between the two concepts thus:

The objects considered as taboo are perceived to contain within them certain assumed danger that always has repercussions against anyone who transgresses them though it may not be well defined or perceived immediately by senses . . . . On the other hand . . . a superstition is a belief or practice that is not based on facts or events that can be proven . . . primarily represent(ing) the underlying inherent fear of mankind, caused by the uncertainties of this world.

Based on the thesis of this paper, superstition operates in the background despite the possibility of its sharing certain characteristics with the concept of taboo. In essence, it is of more importance in this case to unravel the covert aspect of the latter by establishing clear-cut definitions or perceptions of the senses attached to the repercussions against those who transgress selected Yorùbá taboos, using a set of pragmatic tools.

#### THE PRAGMATIC ASPECT OF TABOO

From a pragmatic standpoint, the deconstruction of the intended messages embedded in taboos is beyond the linguistic tokens that are woven together for the purpose of utterance production. The actual meanings of taboos are usually invisible. The process of concretising the meanings is therefore context dependent. Hence, Malmkjaer (2018: 104) foregrounds the essence of pragmatic interpretation of taboos in the “processes of decision-making where solutions are made and then re-examined and modified, as new information is added in the construction of the context.” By relying on the pragmatic provisions of Austin's (1962) *Speech Acts* and Searle's (1969) *Indirect Speech Acts*, the processes that allow for the illumination of the embedded illocutionary forces of Yorùbá behavioural taboos can be exploited.

#### 4. AUTHORIAL REVIEW

Carrying out studies on taboo, particularly from a Yorùbá sociocultural context is not a novel enterprise. For example, Adebileje (2012), in *Sociocultural and Attitudinal Study of Selected Yorùbá Taboos in South West Nigeria*, presents a sociocultural description of some Yorùbá taboos which are an integral part of culture and youths' attitude towards the taboos. The author adopts Vygotskian's sociocultural approach as a theoretical framework for the study. Some sociocultural factors like age, sex and education are the variables employed in the analysis. Data is gathered from interviewing students and staff of Redeemer's University, Mowe, Ogun State and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun state in the South Western part of Nigeria. Books and documents are also consulted. In the process of describing some selected Yorùbá taboos, it is discovered that: (a) the language of a particular society is an integral part of its culture, (b) many of the taboos have been taken over by Christianity and technology (c) youths have a laissez-faire attitude as their belief in

taboos is fast disappearing because parents and guardians do not educate children in these acts any more. The study concludes that for the Yorùbá culture to be saved from imminent extinction, parents must expose the young ones to cultural beliefs and ensure that they speak the language.

Afe (2013) also examines the efficacy of taboos in the sustenance of social order in the Old Ondo Province before the advent of the British. This is germane to the understanding ways in which social order was maintained. The study as well facilitates the grasp of the peculiarity and relevance of taboos in providing peace and tranquillity during the pre-colonial times. Taboo forbids anything akin to evil as perceived by the people and any act of fraud. The paper relies heavily on oral traditions and other written materials. All materials used are critically deployed to conclude that taboos can be a necessary and complimentary tool in achieving a sustainable social order and moral rectitude in the contemporary times. In Akintan and Oyenuga's (2020) *Taboo and Moral Reinforcement in Yorùbá Traditional Thought*, it is established that many Christians and Muslims regard taboo as mere mythical construction to low unvaried mind through superstitious and further the relevance of African Traditional Religion. They therefore argue that it is a critical analytical blunder to examine taboo through the lens of Western logic. To the authors, modernity does not outlaw the pragmatic significance of taboo. Hence, taboo obeys a special metaphysical logic that draws on the synergy between the physical and the divine realm. They are therefore of the view that taboos do not only help in upholding social and moral order but also serve as the watchdog of the community making sure that all comply with the laid down rules and regulations guiding the society in which they are used.

The studies of Adebileje (2012), Afe (2013), and Akintan and Oyenuga as well as other numerous works on taboo that space does not permit to reflect in this study have justified the relevance of the phenomenon to human interaction and culture, especially in Yorùbá world view. There have been sociocultural descriptions of some Yorùbá taboos which are an integral part of culture and youths' attitude towards the taboos, examinations of the efficacy of taboos in the sustenance of social order, and arguments that it is a critical analytical blunder to examine taboo through the lens of Western logic. Beyond those views, this paper pragmatically evaluates the unsaid in selected taboos of a Yorùbá origin in order to underline the part of each of the taboos that has unclear meanings, and as well reveal the goal of that part.

## 5. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

### Pragmatic Interpretations of Taboo in Yorùbá Contexts

**Taboo 1:** Èèwò ní; ọmọdé kò gbọdọ jẹun ní ẹnu ọnà. [It is a taboo; children shall not eat food by the door]

### The Implication of Violating Taboo 1

Ọmọ náà kì yóò yó [Children that violate the taboo will not be sated after eating the food]

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In a typical Yorùbá traditional setting, many children do not only like food. They are also concerned about whether the food they are served is enough to satisfy them or not. Hence, as little children, many of them do not usually mind avoiding whatsoever is capable of depriving them the expected satisfactions from their meals.

## CONTEXTUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE TABOO

The contextual representation of the taboo is socioculturally dependent. One of the virtues Yorùbá hold in a high esteem is the culture of hygiene. They promote a view that eating by the door (or at any point of entry) is not hygienically ethical for contaminants can easily drop on the food from those who are passing through the door or from what they carry.

### Illocutionary Acts

- a. Direct illocutionary act: declarative – warning
- b. Indirect illocutionary act: expressive –moralising

### The Goal of the Utterance

The invisible meaning of Taboo<sub>1</sub>– Èèwò ni; ọmọdé kò gbọdò jẹun ní ẹnu ọnà/It is a taboo; children shall not eat food by the door, together with the implication of violating it, Ọmọ náà kì yòò yó/Children that violate the taboo will not be satisfied after eating the food – is an expression of Yorùbá belief about what is good behaviour as opposed to what is bad behaviour from a hygienic stance.

**Taboo 2:** Èèwò ni; ọmọdé kò gbọdò fi ọwọ gbe ọjò [It is a taboo; children shall not fetch water by hand in the rain]

### Implication of Violating Taboo 2

Àrá yòò sán pa ọmọdé náà [Children that violate the taboo will be struck dead by lightning]

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For recreation, typical Yorùbá children, according to Sodiimu (1986) as cited in Raji (2019), engage in games and plays like *búúrú*, *bojúbojú* (hide-and-peek), *bọkọbọkọ*, *paraonídèmọdé*, *sánsálùbọ*, *gbádù-gbádù*, *porogúnílá*, *adándélé*, *ìdí-ọdán*, *àlùbami*, *kínih'ewú*, *kíni n léjè*, *ẹyẹ mélòó*, *mopeyẹkẹyẹ kantòlòngòwáyé* and *imọ*. Most times, Yorùbá elders do not stop their children from engaging in any of the games as long as they are not done at odd times. However, they absolutely frown at the act of playing with water when it rains. Hence, they make their children believe that the thunder will strike any child who disobeys them in that regard.

## CONTEXTUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE TABOO

Typical Yorùbá communities depend largely on the rain as a system through which they obtain water for drinking, cooking and basic hygiene. They also link the raining season to the rumbling and

destructive effects of the thunder. As a demarcating line between the games they approve for their children and those they do not approve (particularly fetching water by hand in the rain), Yorùbá elders invoke the destructive power of the thunder as a means of punishing those children who prove to be disobedient.

### Illocutionary Acts

- a. Direct illocutionary act: declarative – ordering
- b. Indirect illocutionary act: directive – preserving

### The Goal of the Utterance

The invisible meaning of Taboo 2 –Èèwò ni; ọmọdé kò gbódò fi ọwọ gbe òjò/It is a taboo; [children shall not fetch water by hand in the rain], together with the implication of violating it, *Àrá yóò sán pa ọmọdé náà*/Children that violate the taboo will be struck dead by thunder, is to preserve the lives of the young ones who could have died of cold as a result of playing in the rain by creating in the children's consciousness the possibility of meeting untimely death through a more fearful source – the thunder – than the cold, which they have taken for granted by “*fi ọwọgbeòjò*/fetch(ing) water by hand in the rain.”

**Taboo 3:** Èèwò ni; aláboyúnkògbódò rínlòòrùn [It is a taboo; pregnant women shall not walk in the sun]

### The Implication of Violating Taboo 3

*Èbọra yóò kó sínú aláboyún náà; yóò sì pa ọmọ inú u rẹ; Aláboyún náà yóò bí èbọra dípò o ọmọ gidi* [A demon will enter the pregnant woman's womb, kill the foetus in it and turn itself to a baby in the womb]

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In a traditional Yorùbá setting, like many other places around the world, the arrival of a new-born child is a blessing to the family and the community. It symbolises family expansion. However, the joy will be short-lived in an event that the child is born with some deformity. Using traditional method to establish the cause of the deformity instead of a scientifically approved method has been leading the people into concluding that the deformed child is not from God, but an incarnation of a demonic being.

### Contextual Representation of the Taboo

The taboo relies extensively on cosmological context for its realisation. From a Yorùbá world view, demons exist. Many of them operate within the human territory at odd hours, like 1 pm, when the sunshine is at its peak. Hence, they connect giving birth to a deformed child to having a contact with a demon sometime in the afternoon during pregnancy.

### Illocutionary Acts

- a. Direct illocutionary act: assertive – **informing**
- b. Indirect illocutionary act: expressive – **caring**

### THE GOAL OF THE UTTERANCE

Naturally, moving in the sun at noon can have adverse effects on the pregnant woman and her child. An ignorant woman can, however, take the danger of the act on her health and that of the child for granted. To avoid that, a more severe context that attracts a grave consequence for the act has to be created, thereby accentuating the invisible meaning of Taboo 3 – *Èèwò ni; aláboyún kò gbódò rìn lóòrùn*/It is a taboo; pregnant women shall not walk in the sun, together with the implication of violating it, *Èbọra yòò kó sínú aláboyún náà yòò sì pa ọmọ inú u rẹ; Aláboyún náà yóò bí èbọra dípò ọmọ gidi*/A demon will enter the pregnant woman's womb, kill the foetus in it and turn itself to a baby in the womb – which is ensuring consistent maternal/foetal care.

**Taboo 4:** *Èèwò ni; a kò gbódò fi igbálẹ̀ na ọmọ ọkùnrin* [It is a taboo; a male child shall not be beaten with broom]

### The implication of violating taboo 4

*Okó ọmọ ọkùnrin náà yóò kú* [The male child will become impotent]

### Background Information

In the least, Yorùbá does not tolerate indiscipline. The people's culture therefore permits several measures that parents/adults can employ to punish wayward children. Some of such measures are use of cane, withdrawal of beneficial gestures and scolding. However, the culture forbids some other disciplinary measures for certain reasons. Among the modes of punishment that Yorùbá forbids is beating male children with a broom.

### Contextual Representation of the Taboo

**Taboo 4** is a reflection of Yorùbá sociocultural stance on the importance of incorporating punishments into child upbringing. The culture however foregrounds that there is a limit to what parents/adults can do when meting out punishments for offences by linking extremity in this respect to the loss of manhood.

### Illocutionary acts

- a. Direct illocutionary act: assertive – stating
- b. Indirect illocutionary act: expressive – cautioning

### The goal of the utterance

While the broom is a readily available tool for beating disobedient children, the culture forbids its use for that purpose through Taboo 4 – *Èèwò ni; a kò gbódò fi ọwọ̀ na ọmọ ọkùnrin*/It is a taboo; a male child shall not be beating with broom, together with the implication of violating it, The male

child will become impotent, to send the invisible message of the need to avoid the dangers of child abuse and dehumanisation, particularly that a broom stick can enter the child's eye and consequently make him blind when the broom is used in anger.

**Taboo 5:** *Èèwò ní; ọkùnrin kò gbọdọ tọ ọbẹ wò lóri iná* [It is a taboo; men shall not taste food on fire]

### The Implication of Violating Taboo 5

*Okó ọkùnrin náà yóò kú* [The man will become impotent]

### Background Information

In Yorùbá tradition, there are different vocations to different individuals according to gender. Men are predominantly farmers, blacksmiths, basket weavers, palm wine tappers, etc. They do their work mostly outside the home. However, women are home keepers. They prepare food for the family and ensure the major cleaning of the home. Men who are faithful to their responsibilities are therefore not expected to be in the kitchen preparing the meal not to mention tasting of it while it is still on fire.

### Contextual Representation of the Taboo

The contextual representation of the taboo is hinged upon the sociocultural milieu of Yorùbá people in the home where women are primarily responsible for the preparation and service of meals to the male adult members of the family. The men do not have any role to play in the kitchen. They are supposed to sit at the table to be served.

### Illocutionary Acts

- a. Direct illocutionary act: assertive – **stating**
- b. Indirect illocutionary act: expressive – **encouraging**

### The Goal of the Utterance

Any man who is found in the kitchen carrying the forbidden act of Taboo 5 – Èèwò ní; ọkùnrin kò gbọdọ tọ ọbẹ wò lóri iná/It is a taboo; men shall not taste food on fire, not minding its implication, Okó ọkùnrin náà yóò kú/The man will become impotent – has belittled himself. He is not worthy of being called a man. The taboo therefore links the act of tasting food on fire by men to impotence in order to establish its invisible meaning of encouraging men to imbibe the virtues of responsibility and diligence which will earn them the respect and honour of the members of their family and the community at large.

**Taboo 6:** *Èèwò ní; aláboyún kò gbọdọ jẹun nínú ìşasùn un ọbẹ* [It is a taboo; pregnant women shall not eat from cooking pots]

### Implication of violating taboo 6

*Ìdí ọmọ tí aláboyún náà yóò bí yóò dúdú* [The buttocks of the child the woman will give birth to will be extremely black]

**Taboo 7:** *Èèwọ ni; a kò gbọdọ wẹ ọwọ sù inú àwo tì a fi n jẹun* [It is a taboo; hands shall not be washed inside feeding plates]

### The Implication of Violating Taboo 9

*Ènití ó bá wẹ ọwọ sù inú àwo tì a fi n jẹun kì yóò yó* [Whosoever washes hands inside a feeding plate shall not be satisfied]

### Background Information

Generally, Yorùbá abhor uncleanness. They believe that failure to maintain good personal hygiene can lead to illnesses. Based on that, vessels that are used for preparations (as in **Taboo 6**) and service (as in **Taboo 7**) of meals are expected to be taken care of with utmost neatness. It will be very disgusting to then see someone eating from the cooking pot or washing hands in plates of food. Since it is possible for a woman or any other person to fall into the temptation of eating from the pot or washing hands in the plate respectively, thereby breaking the principle of hygiene, some measure has to be taken to prevent the act.

### Contextual Representation of the Taboo

The contextual representation of **Taboo 6** is also hinged upon the sociocultural milieu of Yorùbá people in the home where women are primarily responsible for the preparation and service of meals. While they are so much responsible, their being appreciated for good cooking is dependent upon a demonstration of hygienic behaviour when preparing the meal. In the same vein, the person eating the food is not free from the commitment expected of the cook. He/she needs to be aware of the need to maintain good hygiene in that regard. Any failure from the two parties will definitely attract grievous punishment.

### Illocutionary acts (*Taboo 6*)

- a. Direct illocutionary act: assertive – **stating**
- b. Indirect illocutionary act: directive – **correcting**

### Illocutionary acts (*Taboo 7*)

- a. Direct illocutionary act: assertive – **stating**
- b. Indirect illocutionary act: expressive – **warning**

### Goal of the Utterances

Those who ignore **Taboo 6**, which emphasises that aláboyún kò gbọdọ jẹun nínú ìsasùn un ọbẹ/ pregnant women shall not eat from cooking pots and **Taboo 7**, which states that a kò gbọdọ wẹ ọwọ

sì inú àwo tì a fi n jẹun/hands shall not be washed inside feeding plates, not minding their implications, ìdí ọmọ tí aláboyún náà yóò bí yóò dúdú/the buttocks of the child the woman will give birth to will be extremely black; ẹnití ó bá wẹ ọwọ̀ sì inú àwo tì a fi n jẹun kì yóò yó/whosoever washes hands inside a feeding plate shall not be satisfied, are enemies of the people through their promotion of actions that can jeopardise the safety of others. To deliver the people from the health hazard women and men whose actions could cause, such men and women must be made to fear some imaginary consequences.

**Taboo 8:** *Èwọ̀ ni; a kò gbọ̀dọ̀ gun igi ibẹ̀pẹ̀* [It is a taboo; pawpaw trees should not be climbed]

### The Implication of Violating Taboo 8

*Ẹnití ó bá gun igi ibẹ̀pẹ̀ yóò kú* [Whosoever climbs pawpaw trees shall die]

### Background Information

Yorùbá nation in southwest Nigeria is located in a forest region with plants of tropical varieties. The people have rich flora experiences and, at will, associate themselves with the principal timbers and varieties of trees from the people's world view in their conversations. For games, fruiting and some other purposes, they usually engage in tree climbing. However, while doing that, they are very conscious of their safety. Hence, trees like that of pawpaw, owing to their weak stems, are considered not climbable. There is a great danger for whosoever dares to do otherwise.

### Contextual Representation of the Taboo

**Taboo 8** is a reflection of Yorùbá sociocultural stance on the importance of monitoring child's behaviour during games. Owing to some exuberant tendencies peculiar to children, they tend to underestimate the danger of climbing pawpaw trees, especially when they are far away from adults who can monitor them. In such a situation, the society makes **Taboo 8** to operate in their subconscious for the purpose of caution.

- a. Direct illocutionary act: assertive – **Stating**
- b. Indirect illocutionary act: directive – **protecting**

**Taboo 9:** *Èwọ̀ ni; ọmọ̀dé kò gbọ̀dọ̀ mọ̀ ìyá a rẹ̀ lójú* [It is a taboo; children shall not eye (despise) their mothers]

### The Implication of Violating Taboo 9

*Ọmọ̀ tí ó bá mọ̀ ìyá a rẹ̀ lójú yóò tòsì* [Any child that eyes (despises) his/her mother will be wretched]

### Background Information

One of the values that are held in the highest esteem among Yorùbá is respect for elders. Children in particular owe their parents a great deal of respect. An attempt to lower that standard will at-

tract both human and divine wrath. Although the act of making eye gesture to one's parents may be considered ephemeral in some culture, such is one of the most intolerable actions among Yorùbá, especially between a child and an older person, not to mention that young person's mother.

### Contextual Representation of the Taboo

Yorùbá has many ways by which they abuse people. They can achieve that through verbal or body language. To despise an individual, there is a way such a person can be looked at. The way one's eyes are moved therefore portrays the inner thoughts of one's character toward the individual one makes the sign. By looking at an elderly person some way, one can be accused of uncomplimentary behaviour. The behaviour will attract stiffer punishments when such behaviour is against one's mother. Hence, defaulters will die in abject poverty.

- a. Direct illocutionary act: assertive – stating
- b. Indirect illocutionary act: expressive – moralising

### The Goal of the Utterance

Any child that does not respect his/her mother will not mind disrespecting the elderly in the society. To discourage the habit among the youth, a context that attracts a grave consequence for the act has to be created, thereby accentuating the invisible meaning of **Taboo 9** – . . . **omodé kò gbòdò mọ iyá a rẹ lójú/. . . children shall not eye (despise) their mothers** through the implication of violating the taboo, **omọ tí ó bá mọ iyá a rẹ lójú yóò tòṣì/Any child that eyes (despises) his/her mother will be wretched.**

**Taboo 10:** *Èwọ̀ ni; ọ̀kùnrin kò gbòdò bá aláboyún un ọ̀kùnrin míràn lò pọ̀* [It is a taboo; men shall not have the carnal knowledge of other men's pregnant women]

### The Implication of Violating Taboo 10

*Ọ̀kùnrin tí ó bá aláboyún un ọ̀kùnrin míràn lò pọ̀ yóò tòṣì* [Any man that has the carnal knowledge of another man's pregnant woman will become wretched]

### Background Information

Yorùbá honour the sanctity of marriage and disdain every form of voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man and some woman other than his wife or between a married woman and some man other than the woman's husband. Infidelity of any sort is unpopular among the people. Husband and wife are therefore expected to be faithful to each other.

### Contextual Representation of the Taboo

One of the consequences of infidelity in marriage is women's giving birth to bastards. Yorùbá consider children given birth to in adultery as illegitimate children. The people's culture does not give allowance for any act that is capable of promoting doubts about a child's paternity. Hence, every man must be careful not to have any hamorous relationships with a woman who is already in pregnancy for another man. To ensure that men do not dare to undermine the position of the people's

culture in that regard, every one of them must be sensitised on the need to uphold the value of the marriage sanctity.

- a. Direct illocutionary act: assertive – stating
- b. Indirect illocutionary act: expressive – moralising

### The Goal of the Utterance

Men who take Taboo 10 – Ọkùnrin kò gbọdò bá aláboyún un ọkùnrin míràn lò pò/Men shall not have the carnal knowledge of other men's pregnant women – foregranted despite its implication, Ọkùnrin tí ó bá aláboyún un ọkùnrin míràn lò pò yóò tòṣì/Any man that has the carnal knowledge of another man's pregnant woman will become wretched, do not value the sanctity of marriage. Instead, they promote infidelity and raising of children out of wedlock. The taboo therefore proposes beggary as penalty for committing the dastard act, thereby underlining the hidden purpose of achieving a modest society.

### 6. CONCLUSION

Studying those taboos, one could possibly suggest that the relationship between each of them and the punishment mythically meted out for breaking it is somehow incredible. One could also argue that a very intelligent listener would have queried while the symbolic child, woman or man should not do this or that. Incidentally, regardless of time and space, humans, across ages, are known to be inquisitive this way. Thus, instead of spending much time explaining the reasons why certain behaviours are prohibitive, which perhaps might lead to underestimating some value and denigration of conventions, Yorùbá – particularly in olden days – would rather respond to such inquisitiveness authoritatively, pronouncing the resultant effects of disregarding the essence of the taboos.

Despite the curiosity and the cultural reactions to it, most people in the past practically recognised and abide by those rules. History and experience also have no doubt justified the tremendous achievement of the unsaid goals in those taboos. Little wonder then that it was almost automatic to have children growing to becoming respectful and law abiding adults in a series of unbroken chains in the past. This generation, too, can benefit from the linguistic richness of taboos. Now that most societies of the world are bedeviled with child delinquency, social disorder, insecurity and crimes in various forms, language can be a very workable tool to addressing those social issues. It can automatically fit into individual home and communal strategies of dialogues, awareness creation, warnings, production and reduplication of historical facts, which in turn will promote unity, hard work, dignity of labour, inviolable moral standards, respect and value for human lives.

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# ‘Ìlẹ̀kẹ̀’ (Beads): A Sociocultural Appraisal of an Ornament of Beauty among Contemporary Yorùbá Women

Dayo Akanmu

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## ABSTRACT

*Fashion is a universal phenomenon, which exists all over the world in varied forms and idiosyncrasies. It is also an aspect of culture that has to do with people’s manner of doing things. However, this paper examines ìlẹ̀kẹ̀ (beads) as one of the earliest cultural manifestations of the Yorùbá people of the Southwest Nigeria which unfortunately is believed to have been transformed in our present contemporary society to have European outlook and more appealing than the African’s beads Emphasis is also given to the origin of beads traced to the Yorùbá people based on its reflection in the worship of Ọ̀bàtálá, Ẓàngó and names like Iyùnadé, Iyùnloyè, Ẓẹ̀gìlọ́lá, Adé ìlẹ̀kẹ̀, Ọ̀pá ìlẹ̀kẹ̀, even before the advent of imperialists. Schumpeter theory of economic development is adopted for the paper because of its ability to prove that innovation is a creative destruction especially when it prompts a new business to replace the old in a developing economy.. Data for this paper were collected through unstructured interview from two sources; one with a traditional bead maker and seller called Segilola Alakun at Akesan market in Oyo town and iya lagidigba from Osogbo in Osun State as well as the online interview with Araba Elebuibon, a renowned Ifa Oracle who also based in Osogbo. Through the explanation of an investigative and documentary narrative research technique, this paper will meticulously examine the Yoruba traditional beads, its place and use among Yoruba and effects of colonialism/westernization on the Yoruba traditional beads. The fact that beads making is not meant for ornamentation alone and that it is one of the earliest businesses of the Yoruba people which was once exchanged between the ancient African merchants and their European counterparts for other valuable items is also established in this paper for us to know how valuable and lucrative is African beads. By and large, the paper equally suggests a return to the basics by the people of Africa (especially women who are of the habit of craving for European beads at the expense of the African beads) in order for them to be proud of their cultural heritage, patronize and embrace what belongs to them, and strive to improve upon them.*

*Keywords: ìlẹ̀kẹ̀ (beads), Yorùbá, African beads, origin, Europeans beads*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

**C**ulture is a universal phenomenon that exists all over the world in varied forms and idiosyncrasies. According to Atanda (1984) aptly quoted in Edegbai (2021), culture in its wide ethnographic sense, is the complex whole which include knowledge, belief, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits required by man as a member of society. Howev-

er, fashion is unarguably an aspect of culture because it has to do with people's manner of doing things. There exists ample historical proofs that the Yorùbá have always been fashionable, they have their own distinct form of fashion without borrowing ideas from the West. *Ìlẹ̀kẹ̀* (beads) is one of the oldest amongst the numerous ornaments of beauty which had gained prominence in Yorùbáland before the advent of western culture, education and civilization. Unfortunately, *Ìlẹ̀kẹ̀*, like several other cultural manifestations was condemned by the European Imperialist, ostensibly to pave the market for their preferred ornaments such as gold, silver, bronze, diamond etc. This may well be a minute aspect of what Rodney (1972) refers to as "a day-light robbery of African values."

The most damaging and injurious consequence of this act was that thousands of Yorùbá people who earned their living from trading in beads were untimely rendered jobless and subsequently pauperized. However, in the usual imperialist style, the white man repackaged the bead he had earlier condemned only to re-introduce it as a new product now being exported to Africa and the rest of the world. It is ironical that the same people who had earlier condemned this aspect of our culture are now responsible for its return to the center stage as perhaps the most popular ornament of beauty worn by women in the contemporary world. However, this article shall endeavor to define and discuss the terms 'culture', 'ornament', the place of ornaments in fashion in the Yorùbá society as well as the subject matter; "Today's beads among contemporary Yoruba Women."

## 2. SEMANTIC EXPLORATION OF CULTURE AND ORNAMENT

Culture is never a monopoly of any nation or community, it is rather a universal phenomenon. However, its universality is not devoid of a generally accepted definition. Menamparmpil (1996) defines culture as the total manner in which a human society responds to an environment. It includes customs characterizing 'a social group; social heredity of a particular community; meanings, values, norms, their actions and relationships; beliefs, laws, traditions and institutions; religion, ritual, language, song, dance, feast, living habits, crafts and equipment.

Uka (1966:1) also defines culture as a patterned activity, humanly invented and discovered, socially learned, socially shared, and socially transmitted from individual to individual and from generation to generation. In other words, culture is a series of integrated patterns for behavior developed from habits. Culture is also a social element produced by a group of people (Ngele et al, 2019). By and large, culture does not spread itself evenly, for no society is totally homogeneous. In Yorùbá traditional society and in some parts of Africa, a number of cultural practices, have been identified as having tendencies to enhance human's beauty. Among other things, these include 'eyín pípa' (artificial creation of a fashionable tooth gap), 'Irun dídì' (hairdo or plaiting) 'Ìlà Kíkọ' (facial marks) and *Ìlẹ̀kẹ̀* (beads) which is the subject of discussions in this paper.

On the other hand, ornament according to Balik and Allmer (2016), Bothireddy (2007) is devoid of a precise universal definition based on its characterization, position, associative and interchangeable use of closely related expressions like decoration and adornment which are slightly different in terms of meanings. This position is equally corroborated by Bloomer (2006) and Trilling (2003) who are of the views that ornament and decoration are neither synonymous nor

interchangeable. However, in spite of the aforementioned, Agoke (2017), is of the view that ornament is a significant form of fashion for both male and female. In Yoruba tradition, male chiefs, high chiefs, kings and people who occupy exotic positions in the society use ornaments. *The New Lexicon Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language* (1992) defines ornament as an object or detail meant to add beauty to something to which it is attached or applied or of which it is a part. Such objects or details could be a stone window rich in ornament or a person who enhances or does credit to his society. *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* (1974), also defines ornament as any element added to an otherwise merely structural form, usually for purposes of declaration or embellishment.

By these definitions, it can be deduced that though *l̀̀k̀̀k̀̀* is an ornament which enhances the beauty of women, it is not every ornament that can be used for this purpose. Some ornaments are meant for decoration and embellishment of material things. For instance, three basic and fairly distinct categories of ornaments may be recognized: the mimetic or imitative ornament, the forms of which have certain definite meanings or symbolic significance; applied ornament, intended to add beauty to a structure extrinsic to it; and organic ornament, inherent in the building's fiction or materials.

Mimetic ornament is by far the most common type of ornament in primitive cultures, in Eastern civilizations and generally throughout antiquity. It grows out of what seems to be a universal human reaction to technological changes, that is, the tendency to use new materials and techniques to reproduce shapes and qualities familiar from past usage, regardless of appropriateness. For example, while most of the common building types in antiquity, such as tombs, pyramids, temple and towers began as rightful imitations of primeval house and shrine forms, modern Europeans beads emerged purely as imitation of the ancient *l̀̀k̀̀k̀̀* of the Yorùbá. In terms of quality for instance, the so-called modern beads are of far-less standard than the ones made in the traditional Yorùbá land. This may in fact suggest that the European condemnation of *l̀̀k̀̀k̀̀* during colonial era was probably a ploy to hijack the business from the people and consequently pave the way for their version of beads.

### 3. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION/ THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Data for this paper were collected through unstructured interview from two sources; one with a traditional bead maker and seller called Segilola Alakun at Akesan market in Oyo town and iya lagidigba from Osogbo in Osun State, as well as the online interview with Araba Elebuibon, a renowned Ifa Oracle who also based in Osogbo. Through the explanation of an investigative and documentary narrative research technique, this paper will analytically examine the Yoruba traditional beads, its place and use among Yoruba and effects of colonialism/westernization on the Yoruba traditional beads. The theory of Socioeconomic Development of Schumpeter (1911) which claimed that economic is a natural self-regulating mechanism when undisturbed by social and other meddlers is adopted for this paper. Its strength lies in the fact that innovation can prompt a new business to replace the old especially in a developing economy. According to Schumpeter (1934), when

this happen, booms and recessions are inevitable and cannot be removed or corrected without thwarting the creation of new wealth through innovation. It also emphasizes tenacious nature of the cultural values despite numerous and incessant modern changes. The theory placed much emphasis on the way the imported western arts and culture pushed the valuable traditions and people's cultural heritage to the background. The relevance of this theory is in the domain of the nature of the Yoruba traditional beads which continue to occur and re occur over the time and which imported beads are always produced and used to replace it thereby undermining its indigenous and economic value.

#### 4. THE PLACE OF ORNAMENT IN YORÙBÁ SOCIETY

Whenever the Yorùbá speak of fashion in the traditional sense, they often back up their statements with proverbs or wise sayings such as the following:

*Afínjú w'ojà, ó rìn gbẹ̀ndéke*

*Ọ̀bùn w'ojà pa s̀ìs̀ìs̀ì*

*Ọ̀bùn s̀ìs̀ìs̀ì ni ó rẹ̀rẹ̀ Afínjú wọ́lé.*

[A decent fashionable person walks  
majestically to the market

A dirty, filthy person walks

sluggishly to the market

The sluggish, dirty fellow must carry  
the load of his descent counterpart]

The excerpt above epitomizes the nature and place of ornamentation in the Yorùbá society. It portrays the Yorùbá as a fashionable set of people who detest dirtiness in any form. Before the advent of the Europeans (whether as missionaries, merchants or government officials, the Yorùbá people had a well-defined and well-structured approach to beauty and ornamentation, conspicuously evident in the cleanliness of their physical environment, mode of dressing, make ups as well as their domestic utensils.

With respect to their physical environment, the doors to the entrance of their various compounds and shrines were usually artistically carved and designed in such a way that it reflected the Yorùbá worldview. The wood pillars that upheld the houses were equally carved and designed with images of different kinds. Also, in those days, there were no rugs and tiles to cover and beautify their floors but cow feaces and indigo-dye were used to scrub their floors; this invariably beautified the floor of their rooms, living rooms and passages. However, their household utensils were made of clay, wood basket and calabash. Such utensils could be wooden spoons, soup pots, big pots for storing water, baskets and calabashes of different sizes, all of which were creatively and artistically carved, molded and weaved by the traditional wood carvers, potters and weavers.

Apart from the foregoing which corroborated how significant the concept of neatness is to the Yoruba and how they detest filthiness based on the belief that a dirty person is inconsequen-

tial and gets no significant attention in the society, their make-up items were enriched with various kinds of ornamental materials. For instance, Oṣùn (cam-wood dyeing) was used as a cosmetic for both the newly born children, women and men, when they applied it, it moisturized their skin and gave the skin a better outlook.

Also, in the Yorùbá society, ornament has a place in the way Yorùbá men and women treat their hair. Traditionally, men do not cultivate bushy hair, they shave their hair perfectly or at times partially. Often, young men design their hair in such a way that some measure of hair is left around the forehead. That way, the outlook is enhanced. Whereas, Yorùbá women plait their hair in different styles and patterns. Some women, especially princesses and their mothers decorate plaited hair with valuable beads as a display of royalty and affluence. The beads also beautify their outlook (Dáramólá & Jéjé, 1975).

The traditional loom cloth was also sewn in various designs for Yorùbá men and women and this gave a spectacular and peculiar mode of dressing. This particular clothe, in its finished form normally consists of several narrow strips about four inches wide, which have been creatively designed and sewn together by the weavers. After the strips have been sewn together, it is well beaten on a block of wood with a mallet so as to give it a smooth finish. When sewn into the 'bùbá' and 'ṣòṣòró's design' (tops and trousers) for men and 'bùbá' and 'iró' (top and wrapper) for women, they appear delicately elegant and flamboyant (Mustapha et al, 1990).

Apparently, there was a number of other things that were used for beautification among other ancient Yorùbá people. For instance, facial marks were not only meant for the purpose of identification but also for beautification. This is evident in popular expressions like: 'pélé yẹjù' (pélé befits face), 'pélé' is one of the types of Yorùbá facial marks.

In addition, the concept of Eyín pípa' (creation of a fashionable tooth gap) which equally beautified people's faces, especially whenever they smiled was an artificial creation of the ancient Yorùbá people. Although, it was a fashionable thing among them, the process of creating the gap between the incisors was always tedious and painful, nevertheless, people often ignored the pains and settled for the process.

*Ìlẹ̀kẹ̀* (beads) was the only material used by the Yorùbá people as Jewellery before the advent of western ornaments of beauty such as gold, silver, bronze, diamond etc: *ilẹ̀kẹ̀* was made of shells of the palm kernel and ostrich eggshells. These African beads are what scholars like Babalola (2017; 2015) and Blair (2014) refer to as 'African stone beads'. It is disk-shaped and was discovered in Ile-Ife around 10,000 B.C. It becomes the real beads only after it must have been rounded and smoothened. *Ìlẹ̀kẹ̀* was used to decorate the car as earrings, the necklace, waist and wrist beads. Like facial marks, *ilẹ̀kẹ̀* could be used to identify certain categories of people in Yorùbá society. Such people include, kings, chiefs, princes, princesses, Oloris and priests. It could also be used generally for the purpose of beautification as the user deems fit. Apart from *Ìlẹ̀kẹ̀*, there was also the use of 'rouge' (*làálì*) for the enhancement of a woman's beauty. Làálì is a red cosmetic for the face and leg. All these were already commonly practiced in Yorùbáland as far back as the time of Clapperton's visit in 1825 (Fádípè, 1970).

## 5. ÌLẸ̀KẸ̀ IN THE PRECOLONIAL PERIOD

It has been stressed earlier that *ìlẹ̀kẹ̀* was the only type of jewelry embraced and used by the Yorùbá women before the advent of western culture. Although, some men also wore beads for beautification purposes, it was primarily as a mark of identification especially, bead necklace and wrist beads identified men of special status such as kings, chiefs, princes and priests.

Although, females also wore beads for identity especially Oloris, princesses, chiefs and priestesses, it was more used for beautification among Yorùbá women. Yorùbá women often started wearing beads right from their childhood, especially as earrings. As a new baby girl, tradition allows that string of beads must be put in her ears to beautify her. Apart from the childhood stage, as adults, maidens in particular considered it unfashionable not to wear beads either as necklace or the waist. In those days, ladies wore as many strings of beads around their waist as they could afford and to seem as if the number of waist beads one wears determines the kind of attention you get from men. Traditionally, Yorùbá men appreciated the sexuality associated with waist beads so much that a mere feeling of the chain of beads around a woman's waist was enough to fire up passion and affection towards the lady. To a large extent, waist beads tended to enhance the body language of the Yorùbá women. Also, in those days, most young ladies were conscious of the fact that waist beads beautified their bodies and that men appreciated its worth. Thus, it was common for young women in particular who wear waist beads to catwalk in the Yorùbá style and waggle their buttocks sideways with so much dexterity that the beads produce a unique kind of sound which announces their presence. Traditionally, women, especially virgins wore beads around their waists to flaunt the face that they were *virgo intacta* (virgin). A virgin's waist beads must be intact otherwise such virgin would be considered to be *'non virgo intacta'* (Fádípẹ̀, 1975).

Dèjọ Fáníyì (1975) corroborates this assertion with his *'ẹ̀kún ìyàwó'* (a Yorùbá traditional nuptial chant) thus:

*Odò kan, odò kàn, À ní tí ñ bẹ láàrin ìgbé*

*Ará iwájú ò gbọdò mu;*

*Èrò ẹ̀yìn ò gbọdò bù wẹ*

*Èmi Àyòkà dé bẹ mo bù bójú*

*Ojú ù mi wá dojú oge,*

*Ìdí ì mi wá didìlẹ̀kẹ̀ o,*

*Ìlẹ̀kẹ̀, à ní tí ẹ bá kà tí ò pé*

*Èlẹ̀gbé mo ní, gbogbo ará ilé,*

*Ẹ máa kó mi láṣọ lọ.*

[There's a beautiful river that flows in the jungle

Those who walk in front dare not drink out of it

Those who walk behind dare not bath in it

I Ayoka, got there and washed my face,

And at once, I metamorphosed into a lovely virgin,

My waist is full of lovely beads  
 Count the beads, oh my dear friends,  
 If any is missing, strip me naked.]

Indeed, any virgin girl that is worth her sort was expected to wear beads around the waist and the beads were supposed to remain intact until she is married. The concept of 'intact waist beads' for virgin girls symbolized *purity*, *virginity* and by extension, *integrity*. It meant that the girl was yet to know' any man since she had not engaged in any sexual exercise, which could have altered her waist beads. Therefore, if any lady's waist beads were incomplete, it meant that, such a lady had lost her virginity before marriage and she would consequently expose herself and her family to a public ridicule.

Beads were of various types and colours; some were very expensive while some were not. For instance, beads such as Şègi, lyùn, Ọpòtò and Lágídígba were very beautiful and expensive, and this undoubtedly explains why these types of beads were commonly worn by kings, chiefs, princesses and princes.

However, trading in beads was a lucrative business because of its high demands in the traditional Yorùbá society. Some dealers engaged in it on a full time basis while others combined it with farming and other businesses. To some people, it was a family business passed on from generation to generation. This position is corroborated by Àràbà Èlèbùibọn, an Ifá oracle in one of his online interviews on this same subject matter that the origin of beads is associated with Ọrúnmilà whose major and favourite colour is Şéséẹfun, also known as white beads which invariably is a reflective nature of all divinities. This is because Şango's colour of beads is red and white while Ọsun uses colours like yellow, green and ash. To him, apart from its religious origin, its reflection in some traditional Yoruba names like Iyùnadé (a type of bead in Yoruba is crown), Iyùnloyè (a type of bead in Yoruba is chieftaincy title) and Şègilọlá (segi beads are wealth) is another evidence that beads originated from Yoruba people. According to Àràbà Èlèbùibọn, since then, the business of beads had become one of the most lucrative ventures that ever existed as recorded by Ẹşẹ Ifá, Ọwọnrín Méjì:

*Ọwọn owó ni a ní owó mi ni*

*Ọwọn ouíjẹ ni à ní pè náyàn*

*Omi ló wọn là ní lésun omi*

*Adífá fún Ohúnỳòwọn ọmọ Ọbáléyájorí*

*Níjọ tí ní ru àpá ilẹ̀kẹ̀ lọ ilé Onísín Ìko*

[The scarcity of money makes us spend less

The scarcity of food is what we call famine

The scarcity of water makes us fetch little drops of water

Ifá was consulted on behalf of the princess of Ohúnỳomí

On the day she was carrying her beads to the home of Onísín Ìko]

The expressions above establishes the fact that Ifá was consulted on behalf of Ohúnỳomí the prin-

cess of Ẹlẹ̀yọ Ajourí on the day she was taking her beads to the home of Onísín Ìko and this marked the beginning of trading in beads in Yorùbá land.

It should be stressed here that, apart from the old Benin Kingdom where the use of beads and trade in beads was equally prominent, no other part of the world could claim the ownership of beads better than the Yorùbá (Ògúndíran 2002). This cultural similarity between the Yorùbá and the Benin can be explained historically. The first Oba of Benin was a direct son of Odùduwà who happened to be the father and progenitor of the Yorùbá race. It is apt to aver that trading in beads was a big business among the Yorùbá before the advent of British colonial rule, which eventually altered some vital aspects of the Yorùbá culture and social life. The opening up of the interior to trade, which began in 1896 by the building of a railway line from Lagos enhanced the influx of foreign goods into the hinterland and also accelerated the abandonment of beads business and trading in several other indigenous products. The railway construction camps and railway stations on open lines attracted women and young girls to new trades. Their contact with clerks and artisans born or trained in Lagos even led some who were already married to abandon their husbands and become mistresses to some men from Lagos. Beautiful girls who had already been betrothed, almost invariably without their consent, could as a result of their new exposure to western influence, defy both their parents' and public opinions and get attached to some clerks or artisans as mistresses (Fádípè, 1975). These young girls, who were very useful and helpful to their mothers in their various businesses including the beads' business, did not hesitate to abandon their parents only to become full time mistresses. To worsen the matter, the colonial masters came with their own ornament of beauty such as gold, silver, diamond, bronze, copper, etc. to the detriment of the traditional Yorùbá beads.

Apart from these few material objects which the white-man brought with him to the Yorùbáland, other factors which endeared the Yorùbá man to him included the approach he employed in dealing with practical problems, the long distance he had covered by sea in his mammoth ship, the weapon of destruction which he brought along with him, his demonstrations of kindness towards slaves and the liberation of human cargoes. The admiration of everything British led to the adoption of European gold, silver, bronze and beads at the expense of the Yorùbá traditional beads which now have insignificant economic value as a result of what Joseph Schumpeter (1934) refers to as 'destructive creativity' on the part of the west in his theory of socioeconomic development. Walter Rodney puts it more succinctly that it was a broad daylight robbery of African heritage.

## 6. TODAY'S BEADS AMONGST CONTEMPORARY YORÙBÁ WOMEN

Since the Yorùbá people had lost their own traditional beads to the gimmickry of the colonial masters, the use of beads has continued to assume dramatic comeback in the Yorùbá society of today. It bounced back miraculously in a great form. Beads in modern form is European, It has lost all ingredients flavour of its Africaness. It is made up of various ornamental materials like rubber, precious stone and plastic. Unlike the Yorùbá traditional beads which is made up of shells of the

kernel of the oil- palm, ostrich eggshells and which cannot burn easily, the European bead is combustible. It also comes in various forms, sizes, shapes and colours.

In today's fashion, beads are, indeed, the in-thing among the contemporary Yorùbá women. There seems to be a beads revolution and it is noticeable all around the world. However, beads still serve their traditional purposes, which are not different from what it was several years ago. Women wear it as earrings, necklaces, and bracelets and of course, waist beads which most contemporary Yorùbá ladies have embraced with passion, when they wear it around their waists, they waggled their buttocks ravishingly to the attraction of the opposite sex as it was in the traditional Yorùbá society.

Also in modern times, there is a wide range of beads such as 'jade' which is in green colour, onyx, which is black, garnet, wine, while pink rose comes in light shade of pink. Others are haptic, crystal, amethyst, red coral, pink coral, tiger eyes, original coral, freshwater pearly, malachite, red jasper, Russian ambier and hoplite (Tell, April 19, 2004).

Incidentally, only the cora beads has a name that can be said to be of African origin, although it is purely a western product. Today's beads are creatively made, affordable and lovely to behold and that is why they are in vogue nowadays. Unlike the Yorùbá traditional beads, which were meant for beautification and identification then, today's beads, is primarily an ornament of beauty. They are not only eye-catching but unique. However, it should be established that apart from the uniqueness and eye-catching nature of the modern beads, most contemporary Yorùbá women changed from gold to beads because, wearing beads is of African origin and most women want to associate themselves with what is African. After all, several years ago, wearing of beads was common only among the Yorùbá people and the Mid-western women of Edo and Delta parts of Nigeria. Then, some Yorùbá women believed that a women without beads in her collection of Jewelry, was poor and did not have property (Dáramólá and Jéjé, 1975). Perhaps that notion is catching up with other women in the contemporary fashion. The fear of armed robbery attack, which is the beginning of wisdom for some women is also another reason why most women crave for the modern beads. For instance, most women who had experienced robbery attacks will readily recount that whenever the robbers come, the first thing they usually ask for is the location of their gold and, similar jewelry. Many have, in similar circumstances, lost their gold wedding rings to robbers. Today, no armed robber in his right senses will ask for beads, because they are still believed to be of far less value and attract far less attention in the markets. Interestingly, some beads are said to cost more than some kinds of gold or silver jewelry. For example, it has been speculated in fashion circles that complete set of high quality beads including earrings, bracelets and necklaces, can cost as much as seven hundred thousand Naira (N700,000) or more (Tell, April 19, 2004).

Evidently, beads have become the new craze not only among contemporary Yorùbá women but also women all around the world. Just as most Yorùbá women adorn beads, so also are the Yorùbá jewelers diversifying. Most of them, who, several years ago only sold jewelries in gold, silver, diamond etc. are now stringing beads and selling them. Their clients cut across the different strata of the society-bankers, doctors, businessmen and women, administrators and wives of prominent

politicians. Some of the bead jewelers do business by designing beaded ornaments especially for brides preparing for their weddings. Incidentally, beaded ornaments are now in vogue and the implication is that any Jeweler who must stay in business has to bend backward to imbibe the beads' culture.

## 7. CONCLUSION

In view of the fact that beads revolution in the present Yorùbá society can be described as a relatively new development, it must be emphasized that the revolution has been to the detriment of the maladjustments it has bestowed on the socioeconomic system of the Yorùbá society are only to be expected. It has been established earlier that the bead is traditionally of African origin. The African people developed this unique ornament of beauty and cannot be said to have borrowed it from anywhere. Though, it may be said to have returned from Europe sequel to its modification, it still remains of African origin, in the same manner that the shirt and tie remain of western origin irrespective of its modification in Africa and the other parts of the world. Therefore, the colonial masters who undermined the use of beads in Nigeria merely took advantage of the people in the same manner that they did in other aspects of the traditional African culture by condemning our traditional beads only to later impose it in a modified form. This imposition, which was enhanced by the gullibility of the people who whole-hearted admired everything British has undoubtedly undermined the production and use of the Yorùbá traditional ornament of beauty including the beads. Today, what belongs to us originally is being sold to us at exorbitant prices after they had deprived several people who depended on beads their legitimate means of livelihood. The same thing is happening presently to Yoruba language as American is spending millions of dollars sponsoring some of her citizens to learn Yoruba in Yoruba land whereas, the real owners of the language are still in the habit of calling it vernacular. It is believed that if care is not taken, white men will be hired to teach Yoruba in the future. The plight of the Yorùbá culture may be seen as a reflection of what the economies of the black African societies are passing through. Nigerians for instance, have abandoned agriculture, which used to be the mainstream of the economy in the 60s before the discovery of oil in commercial quantity. Incidentally, despite the fact that Nigeria is one of the world's leading producers of oil, her economic fortunes have continued to dwindle as can be observed from all indices of economic growth and development.

Finally, therefore, this paper suggests a return to the basics by Africans. They should be proud of their cultural heritage, embrace what belongs to them and strive to improve upon them. To do this effectively they must stop their neocolonialist instincts and tastes. Government should endeavor to promote the people's culture, encourage and finance the indigenous industries. It is the duty of Africans and their leaders to nurture and improve upon what nature gave to them. It is the responsibility of the Blackman to believe in himself and his culture, and then proudly impose it on the rest of the world, the reverse is the case, today. Also, African-friends from the other parts of the world should know that the entire world relies on culture and that the entire world needs to look at all world cultures to see to the totality of human knowledge and wisdom. Instead of obliterating

minor cultures through the obliteration of their languages and cultures, they should allow the cultures to show their dynamisms. Each culture has something to teach another culture. They should listen to the cries of the minor cultures and hear what they want to say, perhaps, the salvation of the world may come from them; they may have better medical or medicinal solutions for the so-called incurable diseases; indicating that they may understand the language and culture of nature much more than Euro-Americans would do. On the whole, they may sing more peaceful melodies and save the world from belligerent tendency.

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# Cartoon as a Veritable Vehicle for Societal Change

Onyinyechi Stella Ikoro

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## ABSTRACT

*There are several unsavouring incidents captured in pictures, graffiti and words in cartoons in most Nigerian National Dailies, whose impacts are not felt either as a result of ignorance or even misinterpretation of the signs and symbolic representations, which may be seen as mere humour, jokes, opinions which do not really matter, and as such not seen, recognized or attended to by the leaders of this nation. This paper entitled Cartoons as a Veritable Vehicle for Societal Change, through the engines of visual and social semiotics and schemata knowledge, seeks to address the above concern by looking at the denotative and connotative (symbolic) meaning extensions of political cartoons and comics, which are rooted in satire. The aim of this study to explore both the visual form (pictorial) as well as the message content of cartoons and their sociolinguistic implication. The data for this study are numbered cartoons. Random sampling method is used to select twenty (20) cartoons from The Punch, The Nation, Daily Sun and Vanguard Newspapers beginning from August 1 to 11, 2021, out of which a total of eight (8) political cartoons and comics are purposively selected and analyzed with emphasis on symbolism, exaggeration, labelling, analogy and irony. It is discovered that cartoons are quite visionary, since it uses inferences which do not make for war. Also, a proper understanding and interpretation of a cartoon depend solely on an individual's attitude and awareness of the story behind it. However, this paper concludes that cartoons can only convey the intended meaning(s) when cartoonists and their receptors share some experience, knowledge, language, value, etc. It is recommended among other things that a deliberate effort be made to raise the level of literacy of readers in visual art and semiotics by emphasizing visual art education at all levels since most of the meanings of cartoons may be lost at the point of interpretation of their signs and symbols.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Volumes of words have been spoken using diverse media highlighting the monumental corruption that is evident in every sphere of Nigeria. Unfortunately, instead of these debilitating vice waning because of these condemnations of it, it has been on the ascendancy. In this dilemma, we propose the use of cartoons in newspapers/magazines, which have been designed to be satiric. Cartoons communicate subtly with a tinge of humour, which ultimately may be misunderstood or misinterpreted by receptors if cartoonists and their receptors do not share some background information.

Basically, we communicate by means of visual aids of signification/images (such as dress, make-up, hairstyle, logo design, pictures, sketches), by means of actions and gestures (often referred to as paralinguistic means) and by means of language (spoken or written) (Hodge and Kress,

1991). The same message may be communicated, using one or all of the above means at the same instance.

It is a common knowledge that the press reaches its readers through news, editorials, features and columns, letters to the editor, and pictures and cartoons. The success of cartoon is in the accurate/inaccurate usage of verbal and visual ideas. Tsakona (2009) argues that the mechanism of cartoon analysis rests on both verbal and non-verbal devices. Cartoonists use living and non-living objects to make any point about the daily life, culture, politics and on-going situation (Shaikh, et. al, 2016). Morris (1992) opines that cartoons are weapons in the cartoonist's hands, who can hit whatever he feels like followed by freedom of speech. Published cartoon are not ordinary in their nature; they change minds, make beliefs, transform ideas, guide both directly and indirectly (Shaikh, et. al, 2016).

Cartoons are made to be very delightful and fascinating, possibly in reaction to certain happenings in and around society. The contributions of cartoonists in this respect is peculiar in the sense that it comes with a tinge of humour, which is at once catchy and incisive. At times, most of the message(s) cartoons disseminate pass unnoticed when people entertain themselves with just the pictures/images and not the connotative meanings represented. Cartoons are simplified version of a phenomenon, in most cases, which can be misconstrued. Thus, this work uses and interprets cartoons as satire; exposing human vices/follies in order to scorn or ridicule leaders of our dear country, through small images, graffiti, words, caricature, to portray a psyche, trend, culture and belief of our people. These cartoons reflect the popular culture of corruption and insensitivity amongst leaders – civil, public servants and politicians in Nigeria, and in general the sociopolitical issues. Through the opinions and jokes of the cartoonists, the researcher reads the signs as messages presented in witty manner, geared towards ensuring positive societal change is achieved. It is against this backdrop that we x-ray cartoons; a distinct art form, which can be deployed purposefully to comment on burning issues in the governance of a society.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptual Review

Cartoons are attention getters and have been considered by both editors and cartoonists as a very effective channel of communication. Cartoons are normally humorous drawing, pictorial sketch or caricature, which are usually published in a newspaper, magazine, or periodical. By it being a humorous drawing, it can depict a humorous situation, often accompanied by a caption, a drawing representing current public figures or issues symbolically and often satirical (The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 1975). It is a fun-based way of delivering deep thoughts (Nelson, 1975), and relied on the creative abilities of the cartoonist, who is from the same stream. However, the difficulty lies in whether the 'hidden message' has been understood or not as it needs proper background knowledge and analytical skills for that (Lent, 2005).

Goldberg (1992) says that cartoons generally tell stories or express messages. They may 'entertain, teach, or comment about a person, event or state of affairs. Cartoons may be with or with-

out words and can encourage the reader to develop an opinion about someone or something prominent in the news' (The World Book Encyclopedia). We have different kinds of cartoons: animated, comics, political, but for the purpose of this paper, the last two will be concentrated on based on the researcher's interest and the nature of data collected for analysis as well as space constraint.

Political cartoons serve as capsule versions of editorial in their satire and are running commentary on social change, when intended as a corrective to social vices. They make an effort to reveal mankind to itself, to penetrate artificial armours, expose hypocrisy, deflate pomposity, replace slam with truth, debunk and slowly destroy pretention through honesty (Collier's Encyclopedia, 1979). Political cartoon messages are usually hard-hitting because the tools of satire, irony, sarcasm, parody, innuendo are employed in packaging them.

Comics, on the other hand, are a term sometimes used interchangeably with cartoon. Comic art partners with words and images. This it does in vastly different ways (from purely pictorial sequences to segmented texts with corresponding illustrations). So many have seen comics as a convergence of seeing and reading, others see it as writing with pictures. Still others see it as a juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer (The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 1975).

Examined from a functional communicative standpoint, cartoon is a visio-verbal language used to inform, sensitize, and entertain. The sketched caricature is in itself communicative. The accompanying caption or graffiti, a word, a phrase, a sentence, or a brief talk exchange – usually conveys a 'detailed' message. So, if discourse is language use that is communicatively functional, cartoons as visio-verbal language used for communication qualified to be accepted as discourse (Brown and George, 1983; Yule, 2007).

### EMPIRICAL REVIEWS OF CARTOONS AND SEMIOTICS

Sani et al. (2012) did a study on Political Cartoons as Vehicle of Setting Social Agenda in Nigerian Newspapers to reorient and shape the public opinion through recurrent depictions mirroring current sociopolitical issues during the period of 2007 – 2010. The Data for the study are 100 cartoon texts, purposively selected through random sampling technique, from 2 Nigerian Newspapers; *Daily Trust* (45), *Vanguard* (45), and *Tell Magazine* (10) respectively but only analyzed five (5). Specifically, content analysis is used to identify the themes contained in the cartoons depictions. Qualitative method is used to analyze the cartoons through the theoretical planks of semiotics and McCombs and Shaw's (1972) agenda-setting theory. The analysis is mainly concerned with the interpretation of the sign system based on the connotative and denotative elements in the cartoons. Results indicate that 80% of the themes focused on substantive issue through which social agenda is set to reflect social practices in the Nigerian social political contexts.

The above work is similar to the present study in several respects since both focus on political cartoons, use semiotics as a part of their theoretical framework but differ slightly as the present work draws insights from schemata knowledge while above work under review uses agenda-setting theory.

Shaikh, et al. (2016) studied *Cartoon War...A Political Dilemma: A Semiotic Analysis of Political Cartoons*. The paper evaluates Pakistani political cartoons as a case study in order to increase general understanding of the structures and important features of political cartoons. Using quantitative measures, they carry out a semiotic analysis of select cartoons published during the general election campaign of 2013 in Pakistan, analyzing the ways cartoons are used as communicative tools on internet and print media to produce significant meaning and dominant political themes. The research further explores the impact of cartoons on common people in the backdrop of social, political, ethical and religious milieu. Data for the study are four hundred (400) cartoons collected from the duration of 90 days of election campaign from the e-papers, Facebook and Twitter pages of *Dawn*, *The News*, *Daily Observer*, [www.pakdiscussionforums](http://www.pakdiscussionforums.com), <http://nativepakistan.com>, <http://pakbee.com/political-cartoon/>, [www.denfence.pk/pakistanielections2013](http://www.denfence.pk/pakistanielections2013), analyzed through cartoonists persuasive techniques of symbolism, exaggeration, labelling, analogy and irony, to understand the general public and political state of mind for the elections and politicians. Findings are that cartoons are used as a means of manipulation of the will of the people.

Again, the above work is similar to the present study as both analyze cartoons from the semiotic purview with emphasis on symbolism, exaggeration, analogy, labelling and irony. However, there is significant difference since the above work under review uses both electronic and print media as sources of data while the current research uses only the print media and schemata knowledge, in addition to semiotics as theoretical anchorage.

Ikoro (2019) discusses *Achieving National Development through the Interpretation and Implementation of Semiotics*. The study identifies some regrettable indices with negative effect on the Nigerian nation as captured in some cogent headlines and comments in some of our National Dailies are highlighted and used as excerpts to lend credence to the work since the researcher is not alone. These indices are analyzed under sub-headings of insecurity, ethnicism/tribalism, religious influence, corruption and poverty and institutional weakness. Eight cartoons, selected through random sampling are adopted as references which are not to be further expanded but for emphasis form part of the data. Using semiotics as theoretical plank for analysis of the data, findings are that Nigerian leaders have continued to view the signs identified in the paper naively; as teething problems in nation building process rather than the terminal disease they constitute to national development. The paper concludes that an in-depth knowledge of semiotics can help our leaders navigate through these humongous signs effectively to achieve a better society. This ignorance is as a result of lack of understanding which semiotics will cure, if assimilated.

The above work is similar to the current study in all respect except for the additional insights drawn from Schemata knowledge in analyzing the select cartoons. Also, the above reviewed work only used cartoons referentially while the current work analyses political cartoons and comics.

Nnamdi and Ikoro (2014) work on *Introducing Nigerian Cartoon Movies in Early Childhood Education: A Prerequisite for Sustainable Cultural Literacy* focuses on the use of cartoon movies (an aspect of film genre) as a tool in enhancing cultural literacy in childhood education. The work, hinged on visual and social semiotics analyzes samples of foreign cartoon movies and the extent

to which lessons drawn from it can be used to introduce local cartoon movies in Nigeria. The paper observes that Nigerian children do not possess the primary cultural background to form/forge their cultural identity, and believes that the remedy to this scenario is that our cultural heritage (histories, epics, myths, legends, folktale etc) can be recaptured in cartoon movies so that Nigerian children, instead of gluing themselves to foreign cartoon movies that mostly feature alien cultures, absorb and consequently restore Nigerian's cultural knowledge. The research compared the practical lessons from cartoon movies from both the foreign example (Mulan) and the Nigerian example (Queen Amina) which include bravery, boldness, courage, patriotism, family duty, honour, women empowerment, good leadership, etc. the work concludes that it is left for the custodians of culture to continuously exploit, research on new and creative ways of promoting, sustaining and enhancing our rich cultural heritage, and that the Nigerian child needs to understand where he is coming from before knowing where he is going.

Again, this work is also similar to the present study in terms of being a semiotic analysis of cartoons but differ in that the former is a comparative study on the film genre. This current work draws insights from schemata knowledge too apart from semiotics.

#### **CARTOONS AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Most newspapers and magazines in Nigeria are not complete without some cartoons. Cartoons are attention getters, catching the fancy of both the literate and the illiterate in society, through its pictorial representation of ideas as well as happenings in and around society. Cartoonists use this humorous tool to subtly comment on current issues in such a scathing but sarcastic way that vices in the society are exposed with a view to correcting them. Cartoonists, who in their own rights, are critics of these evil in the society, comment using this peculiar art form to magnify the burden that corruption constitute to a nation. Cartoons play a large role in forming opinion. Cartoons also perform an agenda-setting function through providing readers with a sense of the most salient issues and topics in society (Sani, et.al, 2012). They constitute an important medium for framing social issues; distill complex social issues into a single frame that captures the essence of an issue. This instigates action and make for change, where necessary, thus, leading to national development and its stability. According to the opinion of Morris (1964), human and national development is dependent upon signs and systems of signs. There are lots of stops and caution signs but Nigerian leaders are neither taking cognizance of nor giving heed to them (Ikoro, 2019). Langrehr (2003) is of the view that people need to understand that the whole of human experience, without exception, is an interpretive structure mediated and sustained by signs and it is a viable means to analyze the logical process, by which we create inferences and make sense of things.

Moreover, in a predominantly illiterate society, cartoons can be a very effective channel of communication. Cartoons are more easily comprehensible by the less educated, cutting across class and age. The power of cartoons in Nigeria seems to rest on the old Chinese proverb that a picture is worth a thousand words. Cartoons do in pictures what editorial do in words, thus, clarify and intensify meaning which leads to a wide readership. The advantage of cartoons over, say, news

reports, is that cartoon images create in our minds pictures that stick with us, through the attraction of their presentation. Within a very small space in newspapers/magazines, cartoonists interpret nations, figures and events.

Also, cartoonists' use of pidgin in most cartoons helps bring people together in a nation where many languages are spoken. This ensures flow of information between a people, thus, promotes peace, harmony and understanding which eventually translate into national development and stability.

Furthermore, most of the cartoons in newspapers/magazines are made attractive through pictures and illustrations, thereby encouraging reading culture in the society as well as boosting the economy by reason of higher patronage of vendors. Moreover, in a nation like ours where stress cannot be avoided but managed, comics become very handy since they are therapeutic. This entertainment function of cartoons which derives from the ability of cartoons to make us laugh at situations and individuals; an aggression-reduction function, help prolong people's life span; improve productivity and general standard of living. Children stay glued to cartoon network channel in cables simply because of the educative nature of cartoons generally. They learn how to speak very well from there, which make them better people tomorrow. They grow into intelligible work force that pushes the economy forward.

#### CARTOONS AND SEMANTIC EXTENSIONS

Semantics is a branch of linguistics which is devoted to the study of meaning, as inherent at the levels of words, phrases, sentences and larger units of discourse (referred to as texts) (Udofot, 1998). By semantic extensions, this paper mean 'meaning extensions. It is the processes of making words acquire extended meanings (Udofot, 2007; Ogunsiji, 2006). Olusegun (1987) quotes Awonuga in defining semantic extension as referring to cases where a word retains its original meaning but acquires additional uses in the Nigerian variety of English. The extension of a concept, idea, or sign consists of the things to which it applies, in contrast with its comprehension or intensions, which consists very roughly of the ideas, properties, or corresponding signs that are implied or suggested by the concept in question (Goldberg, 1992).

The terms denotation and connotation, are used to convey and distinguish between two different kinds of meanings or extensions of a word. A denotation is strict, literal, definition of a word, devoid of any emotions, attitude, or coloration. The connotation of a word or term adds elements of emotion, attitude, or color (Ndimele, 1997; 2001). Another term that is closely related to the issue of semantic extension which is worth mentioning is 'metaphor'. Metaphor conveys additional or more complex meaning beyond the literal meaning, often in a subtle way; it can be a way of 'saying the unsayable' or 'expressing the inexpressible' (The New World Encyclopedia).

Using imagery, metaphor, and other rhetoric devices, the cartoonist defines sociopolitical as well as economic situations and attempts to interpret them visually in a way that is ideally both amusing and thought provoking.

### 3. THEORETICAL APPROACH

As it is common in every analysis of discourse, a deliberate choice is made of a theoretical framework. In our analysis of select cartoons, we shall use insights from semiotics, and what we refer to as ‘schemata knowledge’, an aspect of sociolinguistics.

Semiotics, as the study of signs and sign-using behaviour, especially in language, was propounded by Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is a theory that concerns itself with the production and interpretation of meaning. Its basic principle is that meaning is made by the deployment of acts and objects which function as ‘signs’ in relation to other signs. Semiotics study how meaning is formed – how first we interpret a sign, how the signs draw on cultural or personal experiences, that is the context in which they appear. Semiotics is the science of understanding the image and symbolic art. Signs have meanings and their analysis is rooted in denotation (literal) and connotation (symbolic) meanings.

On the other hand, Ndimele (2001) opines that ‘language, whether verbal or non-verbal, is often described as a semiotic system because it entails the use of certain agreed-upon symbols or signals to convey meaning from one person to another’. Cartoons, as signs, are a central part of our mass communication systems. Thus, systems of meaning are analysed and conclusions drawn by looking at the cultural and communication products and events as signs and their relationship with one another (Eco, 1976; Nnamdi and Ikoru, 2014).

Signs themselves, according to Eka and Inyang (1996) are deployed in space and time to produce ‘texts’ which use language in context. They further observe that one of the popular mediums of language is the visual medium. Signs can be any system of representations—words, ideas, concepts, carvings, paintings, graffiti, sounds, gestures (body language) and context (paralinguistic and extra-linguistic features) – all of which combine to create a visual language which aids understanding (McGregor, 2009).

Visual semiotics is a sub domain of semiotics that analyzes visual signs. Visual semiotics, therefore, has to do with turning from the spoken, face-to-face discourses to representations of same in the form of images and signs. These images are a central part of our mass communication systems. Thus, systems of meaning are analyzed and conclusions drawn by looking at the cultural and communication products and events as signs and their relationship with one another.

Social semiotics, on the other hand, examines semiotic practice, specific to a culture and community, for the making of various kinds of texts and meanings in various situational contexts and contexts of culturally meaningful activity (Eco, 1976; Irvine, 2004)). It deals with the origin, uses, and effects of signs within the behaviour in which they occur (Morris, 1946). Thus, this research examines how visual communication (words and graffiti) operates to create meaning.

Social semiotics is closely associated with multimedia analysis, educational research, cultural anthropology, political sociology, etc (Irvine, 2004). The semiotic approach to visual communication stresses the idea that images are collection of signs that are linked together in some way by the viewer. One way to understand how interpretation works is to analyze the logical process, by which we create inferences and make sense of things (Langrehr, 2003).

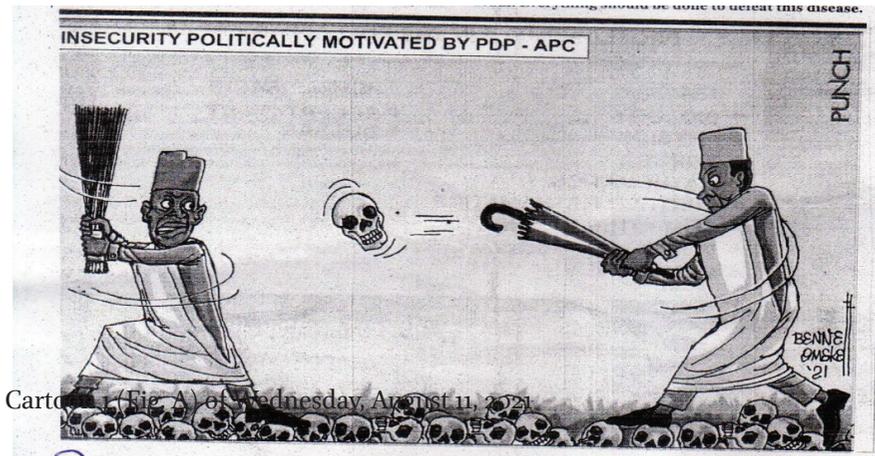
Moreover, sociolinguistics is an examination of language as it communicatively functions in society and is affected or influenced by social and cultural factors (cf: Mey, 2001; McGregor, 2009; Coupland, 2007; Osisanwo, 2003). Sanford and Garrod (1981) call schemata knowledge ‘scenario’ and their definition of scenario ‘as an information network called from long-term memory ...’ succinctly explain our idea of schemata. It is normal, at times, for an addresser (e.g. the cartoonist) to take it for granted that he shares some common experience with the addressee. Following this assumption, he makes his language precise, leaving a lot of things unsaid or unexplained. But for cartoons to have meaning, since the circumstances of their communication are not usually captured in detail, the analyst finds himself tapping resources from his memory pool. He takes recourse to stored experience in order to fill in the ‘missing’ information. This shared experience is what is referred to as schemata knowledge (cf: Hudson, 2001).

For instance, we know that the cartoonist assumes that he and his reader have a mutual knowledge of the social, historical, political, and economic events that informed his cartoon. He also expects his reader to know that his drawings and sketches have meaning ascribed to them. Where the reader lacks this assumed ‘shared knowledge’, communication is impaired; the cartoon may not communicate the intended message to him.

#### 4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Almost every newspaper and magazine in Nigeria has a corner for some cartoons. Even though there are thousands of cartoons to choose from, this paper collected 20 cartoons from *The Punch*, *The Nation*, *Daily Sun* and *Vanguard Newspapers* from August 1 to 11, 2022, but randomly chose eight which it considers representative enough to lend credibility to the assumptions raised as regards how cartoons communicate. The above choice is necessitated by nature of study, space constraints and the researcher’s area of interest in just political cartoons and comics. Mainly though, the onset of political activities in the run up to the 2023 general election informed the examination of the political issues and problems that is bedeviling this country. The thematic structure of the eight select cartoons for this study reflect the sociopolitical terrain of Nigeria. Substantive issues like democratic governance, corruption in the institutions – the police and the judiciary, insecurity, living standard, electoral practices are addressed in the cartoons.

## DATA PRESENTATION AND SEMANTIC EXTENSIONS

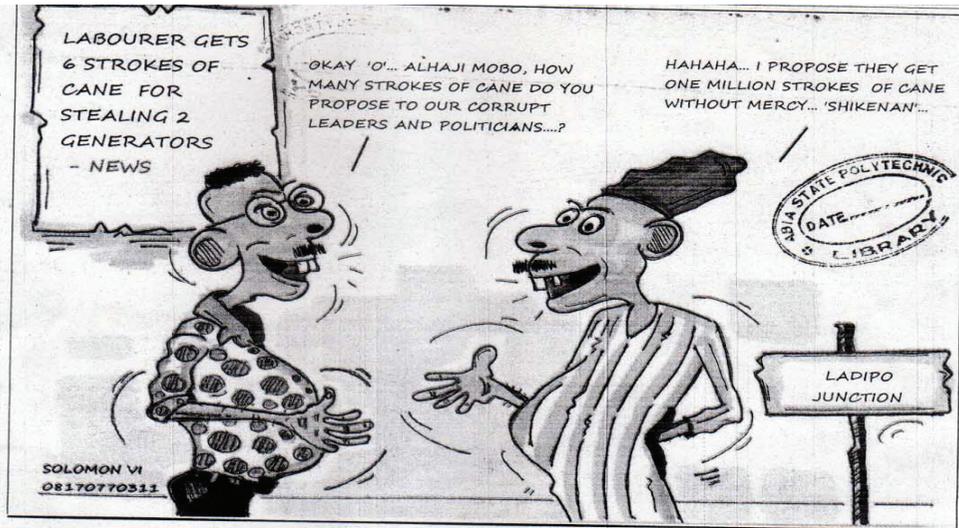


Cartoon (Fig. A) of Wednesday, August 11, 2021

This cartoon has a picture of two men with a broom and an umbrella, which signifies the two major political parties in Nigerian, APC and PDP. They are combat-ready, standing on top of skulls of various sizes and shapes, which represents the masses and the economy. The above cartoon shows the divisive nature of self interest in Nigerian politics because of selfish interest, rivalry ensued, each fighting to get the upper hand against the other. While politicians are engaged in a blame game against each other, nothing of worth is being done to contain insecurity in Nigeria, leading to massive loss of lives.

Connotatively, human life in Nigeria has become almost worthless to the extent that massacres, which is almost a daily occurrence, no longer shocks or numbs anyone. Unfortunately, those on whom the security of lives and property are entrusted, by the law and the people, are very callous and insensitive to this anomalous situation. It is very disheartening that instead of a party, in power, at the federal level and in majority of the states, making conscious and conscientious effort at finding a solution to the menace of insecurity, it is glibly passing the bulk unto another party that does not have the mechanism to deal with the ugly trend. It is also childish to insinuate that a political party can trigger off such state of insecurity which the security agencies, under the control of the federal government, will be unable to address. Labelling technique has been used by the cartoonist as the skulls, representing the human body and objects like umbrella and broom are named to make specific points and referents.

This cartoon represents the tugging war among the 2 leading political parties while the skulls, on the ground and the one afloat, represents the poor masses who are managing what fate have left behind, and the intolerable and wrong approach of politicians to be in power at any cost and not ready to think for national interest. It further depicts that governance is a wild goose chase generally misconstrued as fixed as election practices are nothing but an attempt to fool masses.



Carton 2 (Fig. B) of Wednesday, August 11, 2021

From the above cartoon, if a labourer gets six strokes of cane for stealing two (2) generators, the combined worth of which may not be up to hundred thousand naira, it means that a politician that steals ten billion naira will most probably die before even ten percent of the strokes of cane that are required to punish him for his crime are administered on him. Moreover, symbolically, the protruded stomach of both men as depicted in the picture show men who are benefitting from ill-gotten wealth at the detriment of the poor, and thus, the institutions within the Nigeria system make a mockery of very serious issues through irony, analogy and exaggeration. Labelling is spotted in the above cartoon as the cartoonist clearly claims what he thinks and believes through the use of bubble. They end up providing mere humour to the detriment of the society. While it may have taken just a few days or weeks to sentence a poor man who stole two generators, the trial of a public officer who stole Ten Billion Naira, for instance, will be interminable and in the end, such public officer may not even be convicted. The wretched of the nation is thus a scape-goat. While he suffers indignities for minor intransigencies committed by him, he is also the victim of the looting of the public teal by public servants in that the infrastructure that ought to have been provided with the looted fund is denied him.

Connotatively, this cartoon depicts the extent to which the elites, particularly those in political sphere and high-ranking public and civil servants, have made of the Nigerian judicial system a caricature. It does appear as if Nigeria operates a two-tier legal system wherein the poor are not only instantly but excessively punished for crimes committed while the elites go scot-free but sometimes even rewarded for humongous malfeasance. In this country, a politician who was indicted for the looting of public funds and from whom real estate worth over a Hundred Billion Naira and cash running into about the same amount, was recovered, was subsequently appointed into

a high office and had all that was recovered from him returned. The above example is just one out of several.

This is in contrast to infractions such as is depicted in this cartoon where the law easily shows its fangs upon the poor. If the system runs with any scintilla of sensitivity, certain crimes which are obviously induced by hunger and abject poverty should only have a warning, to the culprit, as punishment. Not too long ago, a video trended in the social media of a court trial in United States of America wherein the judge, having seen that hunger was the architect of the crime of stealing committed by a young man who was arraigned in his court, did not only set the young man free but he compelled everyone in the court room to contribute a minimum of ten dollars for the welfare of the young man. This is the kind of human face which the operators of Nigerian government, and its judicial system lacks.



**Cartoon 3 (Fig. C) of Tuesday, August 10, 2021**

The above cartoon shows a picture of two native doctors. The irony of Nigeria is that generally, people like to arrogate to themselves the power, authority or qualification they do not possess. It is a gross aberration for a native doctor to equate himself with a medical doctor. However, this cartoon is not a mere humour but the reality of our time. In every corner of every city of this nation, a gathering of men and women who address themselves as traditional healers, is found, and in these gatherings, all manner of sicknesses and diseases are claimed to be healed by these traditional medicine practitioners. It is no doubt, therefore, that the men in this cartoon consider themselves as credible alternatives to medical doctors and are therefore assuming that patients who ordinarily would go to hospitals will now flock to them.

Connotatively, the above cartoon is a mockery of the fact that nothing works in this country. Every sector of the Nigerian work force, particularly in the civil and public service, embarks on strike at the drop of a hat. A sector which is as fundamental for the wellbeing and health of the citizenry, such as the medical profession, is so non-challantly treated by the government, that strikes by it is common placed. The reason for the above is not really far-fetched. The neglect of the health

sector stems from the fact that the leaders of this country do not depend on it for their medical needs. In the circumstance, the people are abandoned to fate, making alternative medical practitioners not only attractive but the only option. Symbolically, the picture of these herbalists shows that they are comfortably enjoying the recognition and financial gains from their practice, to the extent of bragging with their new elevated status of having no competitors/rivals while brandishing their divination totem in the air; an aspect of labelling technique deployed by the cartoonist to make specific points.

Ironically, the traditional medicine practitioners are not actually protesting in solidarity with their 'colleagues' as it is but an exaggeration, but actually laughing at the government and their economic policies that have crippled the health sector.



*Cartoon 4 (Fig. D) of Monday, August 2, 2021*

This cartoon is loaded with meaning. In this cartoon, the dog (puppy) is actually used here to represent the corn man or internet fraudster – Ramon Olorunwa Abbas – popularly known as ‘Hushpuppi’ and the man with the inscription, Super Cop, on his singlet represents the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Abba Kyari, while the woman represents the general public, the Nigerian Police Authority and the American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), who are either directly indicting, questioning or alleging that he, Abba Kyari, is in league with Hushpuppi in his fraudulent escapades. It does appear, from all the circumstances that DCP Abba Kyari is making an indefensible defence or protestation of his innocence because the ‘faeces’ of the ‘puppy’ is visibly all over him.

Again, this is another aspect of rot in Nigeria. Ironically, even in very clear cases where a public or civil servant is shown or known to have significantly abused his office, such would raise infantile defenses in a bid to exonerate himself. If they do not seek to accuse phantom enemies of mak-

ing wild allegations against them, they are putting the blame on opposing political parties or politicians. This is one reason why corrupt civil or public servants are hardly convicted in this country. Analogy technique is deployed by the cartoonist by linking a famous police character (Abba Kyari), who is part of the Nigerian Police pollution and Hush-puppy, an internet fraudster. Through this cartoon, the consciousness of the Nigerian masses is awoken and many are beginning to speak up and hold their public officers accountable.

From the above cartoon, the statement of the superior officer is an allusion to the defense of ASP Abba Kyari which was to the effect that the money in his possession, linked to hushpuppy, was for purposes of procuring wearing apparels for Hushpuppy. In the context of the comments of both officers, in reference to tailors and wearing apparels, are metaphors for destructive channels in the Nigerian system, be it within the security agencies, civil service or among political office holders.

This cartoon shows a superior officer using coded language to instruct his junior to ensure that anything or anyone capable of incriminating them or exposing their dirty dealings is removed out of the way. And the smart junior officer assures his superior that their own operation is properly structured to avoid any possible embarrassment. He is confident in their own ability to cover their tracks as ‘real professionals’ in contra-distinction to amateurs (puppies), using labelling and analogy techniques, with no hope of salvaging this country from the stranglehold of corrupt civil and public servants.



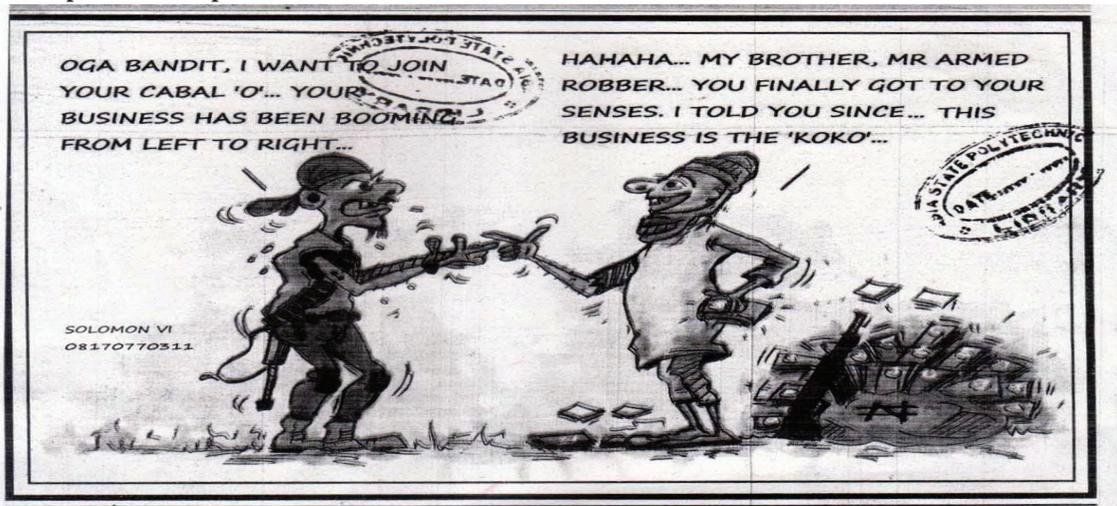
Cartoon 5 (Fig. E) Aug. 1, 2021



Cartoon 6 (Fig. F) of Monday August 2, 2021

This cartoon reveals choices between life and death. Fortunately or unfortunately, the choice for

life can only be made by the rich who like the swan, will swim in an ocean of good health in hospitals abroad. The hapless poor has the choice of death in Nigerian hospitals, which are in itself death traps, foisted upon him.

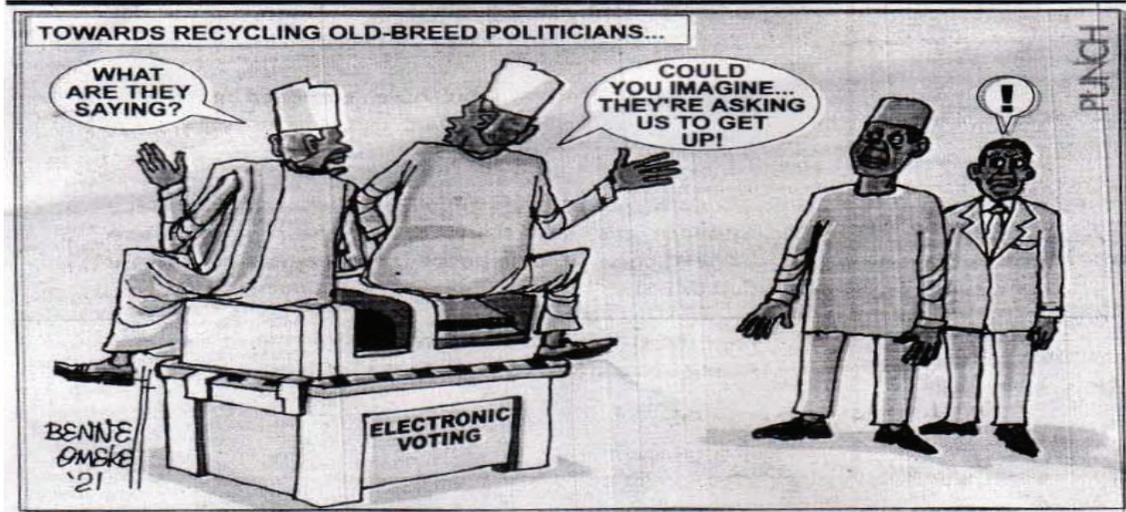


Cartoon 7 (Fig. G) of August 4, 2021

Denotatively, there has been a glamourization and even celebration of criminals by Nigerian government and highly placed individuals. And there has also been a categorization of criminal elements into bandits, herdsmen, terrorists, armed robbers, ritualists, and fraudsters, otherwise known as 'yahoo boys'. It appears that elements known as bandits and herdsmen occupy a pride of place in the committee of violent criminals. This is because in the North East, North West and North Central, these criminals have absolute control of a large swart of land, sometimes covering one or a number of local governments in a state. Their activities are so extensive to the point of exerting levies and taxes upon the citizenry within their areas of control. These criminals seem to have overwhelmed the army and police to the extent that states and federal government enter into agreements with them for the release of Nigerian citizens kidnapped by them. Some of the bandits and herdsmen's kingpins are known to have been invited to government houses and pictures taken with governors in the course of negotiations. The picture shows real coordination and synergy amongst these 'demons' and agents of death who are seen shaking hands with each other and the bandit specifically calling the armed robber 'his brother'. Their brotherhood is exemplified by the unwritten agreement to continue unleashing terror on the poor masses. Name-calling and labelling techniques, as revealed in their method of salutation and their fashion statements through their dressing codes, have been deployed by the cartoonist to reveal that this country is under siege by these criminal elements, who keep strategizing and re-strategizing, and constantly ahead of our security agencies.

Connotatively, this cartoon regrettably reveals that Nigeria has become a play field for criminals of all hue. The concern of the average Nigerian violent criminal is not for his safety because

such threat is virtually non-existent as the government celebrates any repentant one, and at times go into negotiation for ransom for the release of victims who are in their captivity. He is rather interested in finding out the most rewarding and competitive area of crime to join.



Cartoon 8 (Fig. H) of August 5, 2021

The cartoon buttresses the fact that transparency in the Nigerian political space is an anathema to fraudulent politicians. These are men who have over the years, used their positions to amass wealth and influence, with which they suppress everyone, and idea that is capable of improving the system. Information technology-driven innovations that ordinarily would have contributed to Nigeria's political development are aborted in embryonic stages by jittering old politicians while younger Nigerians who hoped to leverage on such innovations to rise to positions of responsibilities helplessly and forlornly watch.

A good example is the recent effort by a politician for Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to jettison the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BIVAS) for the old voting system which is easily amenable to compromising the will of the voting public. The old and corrupt breed of politicians prefer a system where their corruptly amass wealth will scare off the young, intelligent ones with integrity, from the political space. They are constantly scheming to make the teaming young population of Nigeria both irrelevant and subservient.

From the pictorial representation of these old politicians, their sitting posture on top of the electronic voting box shows how relaxed and confident they are in manipulating their through rigging while the young ones are locked out, confused and uncertain about their future which looks bleak. The young aspiring leaders (politicians) has been targeted who actually desire change from the status quo through electronic voting while the old politicians ridicule the effort of the senate and national assembly in backing electronic voting and transmission of election results by sitting on top of it, ridiculing the idea in a most comfortable posture. Looking at the symbols, there are

veiled/unveiled policies and intentions of these old politicians and their cronies who are directly or indirectly associated with the day-to-day running of the nation.

Findings are that from the above select cartoons, the first one talks of the danger the blame game and insincerity of our political class and its resultant effect on the masses, an issue of great concern to all and sundry, if we must survive as a nation. It talks of the wars within that stiffen progress of a nation at various level of her political life. Cartoon 2 points to the fact that for a reasonable progress to be attained in any nation, her institutions must not be weak in delivering justice and equity to her citizenry. This invariably means that we are our worst enemies, and lacking in moral stance.

Cartoon 3 expresses worry over the ridiculous claims of traditional medicine practitioners in addressing resident doctors as colleagues. On the other hand, cartoon four talks on another cancer that is eating up our nation which is fraudulent alliance of a respected super cop and a fraudster. Cartoon 4 depicts how neck-deep our forces are and their expertise in crime-covering. It goes on to stress the fact that if the head is sick, the whole body is sick, and that the Nigeria police force is made up of thieves trained to coach fellow thieves to occupy key positions in government. Cartoon 6 talks of the choice between life and death which the latter is foisted on the poor masses while cartoon seven shows how bandits and armed robbers are no longer afraid for their safety but in for full time lucrative business as they rule the nation while the military and other para-military institutions have gone into hiding. Finally, the last cartoon shows pictures of old-breed politicians who are out to stifle the political progress of the younger generation.

From the foregoing, these cartoons critically comment on topical issues in sociopolitical and economic events of the day. Satirically represented, they can stabilize and balance society.

##### **5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The main idea this paper has posited is that cartoons can be used as a veritable vehicle for societal change, and that they can only mean or communicate to the receptor if the cartoonist had read carefully and correctly the receptor's level of awareness, situationally and linguistically. The general unhealthy situations in the country, which is not conducive for development and wellbeing of both the citizens and the nation, is cause of concern to everyone who is a victim of the malaise. Therefore, from whatever angle one can make an effort to bring sanity to bear on the affairs of the country, such should be pursued. This work is the researcher's modicum contribution in this regard.

The principal institutions or structures that constitute the life wire of corruption in Nigeria are the Public Service in general, and in particular the Police and the Judiciary. It is possible and easy for a cartoon or a cartoonist to capture the unsavoury evils that emanate from these institutions with words and images. This art form plays a vital role in trying to rebuild the society in that everyone quite easily connects to it, both because of the humour and simplicity of presentation. Anyone who is ordinarily averse to extensive reading finds cartoons a quick means of information.

Some cartoons may not be understood literally (denotatively) alone. Thus, cartoons achieve

meaning when cartoonists and their receptors realistically live within a common communication circle, sharing the same experience, knowledge, language and values. And where this understanding abound, eradication of corruption and instability is imminent.

Also, communication relies on using something to represent something else (Saeed, 2009; O'Grady, Archibald and Kambata, 2011). An understanding of signs is essential for understanding how messages are transmitted. And when signs in a nation are decoded, they can help fix 'a floating chain' of signified, according to Roland Barthes (cited in Frank, 1983). These signs (words and graffiti) identified in the pages of newspapers are images of something used to illustrate and support the meanings and information provided by this research.

Semiotics can serve as a counter force because when a nation meets these signs with which she is confronted, with knowledge of how signs work, such a nation is better positioned to co-operate with others when cooperation is justified. Our attraction to using the engine of semiotics in solving societal problems is that semiotics parallels human freedom by calling language (Verbal or non-verbal) into question; by opening texts to new readings and new interpretations. Semiotics keeps us current and the writer relevant at all times since there is nothing final about life. It is, therefore, posited that an in-depth knowledge of semiotics would enable our national leaders to identify and analyze the several conflicts plaguing the nation and that a composite understanding of semiotics would equip them to interpret these humongous signs within the social context with a view to finding solutions to them.

Without the knowledge and understanding of semiotics, this nation would indefinitely continue to wallow in the abyss of disjointed unity, which is the bane of her under-development. This paper, therefore, advocates for a national colloquium by experts in these areas for purposes of producing a workable guide, based on the benefits of semiotics for present and future leaders.

Without being equipped with the knowledge of semiotics, it is impossible for national policy makers and decision takers to understand the debilitating and even terminal effects of the issues identified herein. Whenever issues are even noticed by them, the authorities ignorantly believe that they would try to curb them with brute force, which never works.

The research above is a little effort to compile the researcher's understanding of the importance of cartoons. One may take this study to use as reference to understanding opinions. The research will also help further studies by facilitating/suggesting psychological implications of cartoons.

Moreover, since people easily connect to cartoons rather than editorial pages owing to the pictorial presentation of the former, it is recommended that a deliberate effort be made to raise the level of literacy of readers in visual art education at various levels. By grounding cartoons within a theory of visual semiotics and visual persuasion, the meanings of cartoons will become more significant, offering deep reflection which will make for a more accurate interpretation of cartoons generally.

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# Aspects of Linguistic and Nonlinguistic Acculturation Patterns among the Nupe People of Jebba, Kwara State

Yeseera Omonike Oloso & Nasrudeen Akanbi Balogun

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## Abstract

*Jebba, one of Nigeria's border communities divided by the River Niger between Kwara State and Niger State has interesting patterns of acculturation. The Jebba community that is the focus of this paper is the one in Kwara State which is home to the Yorùbá people and the Nupe people. The co-existence of different languages, ethnic groups and cultures in Jebba contributes to the fluidity of identity in the community resulting in different patterns of acculturation. This paper seeks to explore linguistic and non-linguistic acculturation patterns among the Nupe people of Jebba with a view to evaluating the extent to which they have acculturated to the Yorùbá and the impact that the acculturation has on the overall Nupe identity in Jebba. Existing literature largely establish a unidirectional mode of acculturation hence, the intermediate states of acculturation in which some elements of ethnic identity are retained largely remain unrecognised. This study therefore brings to the fore, the different linguistic and non-linguistic elements of acculturation among the Nupe people of Jebba with a view to evaluating their degree of shift to the Yorùbá Language and acculturation to the Yorùbá culture. The Revised Social and Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory was adopted while ethnographic method was used for data collection which were quantitatively analysed. Acculturation patterns among the Nupe people of Jebba show that not all elements of group identity are involved in the process of acculturation. Hence, certain elements are retained even while converging towards the other group's identity.*

**Keywords:** *Border community, language, convergence, identity, groups*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

**J**ebba, a border town divided by the River Niger falls between Moro and Mokwa Local Government Areas of Kwara and Niger states respectively. In Kwara State, Jebba is home to the Yorùbá and Nupe people while in Niger State, it is home to the Nupe people.

Ethnic minorities in Yorùbá majority states such as the Nupe in Kwara State have undergone and continuously undergo varying degrees of acculturation which have yielded mosaic patterns of acculturation. As a result of the high degree of convergence to the external traits of ethnicity such as language, naming, dressing, cuisine and music, these minority ethnic groups are often misconstrued as part of the over-arching Yorùbá majority despite the maintenance of internal traits of ethnicity such as a distinct sense of ethnic belonging, values, orientation and general outlook on life. With the misconstruction of first languages and first names as ethnic labels that shed light

on ethnic identity, little or no attention is paid to the intermediate states of acculturation which enables groups to retain elements of their original identity while at the same time, converging towards another group's identity. The focus of this paper is therefore, to unravel the linguistic and non-linguistic patterns of acculturation among the Nupe people of Jebba in Kwara State.

This research aims to examine the social and linguistic implications of a variety of issues that emanate from prolonged contact between linguistically and ethnically distinct groups of people in the same community using Jebba as a case of study. Issues such as convergence, divergence and acculturation and the extent to which the different groups in the contact situation adjust to each of these phenomena. This study therefore aims to investigate the following:

- The linguistic elements that are the subject of convergence in the community under study.
- The linguistic elements that are the subject of divergence in the community under study.
- The non-linguistic elements that are the subject of convergence in the community under study.
- The non-linguistic elements that are the subject of divergence in the community under study.

With the aim of the research as a basis, the following specific research questions have been devised:

- Does the Nupe language serve as the first language and or mother tongue of the Nupe people of Jebba, Kwara State?
- Do the Nupe people of Jebba give their children Nupe names and do the children go on to answer such names?
- Do the Nupe of Jebba, Kwara State still regularly revel in Nupe cuisines?

This study incorporates elements of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative method was used for data gathering hence, the use of interviews and participant observation for data elicitation while the data obtained through the interviews and participant observation were quantitatively analysed.

Structured interviews were conducted with twenty (20) respondents of the Nupe ethnic stock of Jebba, Kwara State. Participant observation was used to assess the validity of responses obtained through interviews. The choice of structured interview for this study is premised upon the fact that it ensures the neutrality of the interviewer or moderator through the eradication of leading and ambiguous questions and through the standardisation of their delivery. The structured interview adopted for this study has been aptly described by (Edley and Litosseliti, 2006) who describe structured interviews as one which enables the interviewer to work through a series of pre-scripted questions while ensuring that both the order and the wording used is identical on each and every occasion. Despite such pre-scripted ordering of questions, interviewees were asked follow up questions where considered necessary. Such follow up questions helped to complete or clarify answers provided to the main (pre-scripted) questions where sufficient detail was lacking.

For this study, a total of 20 respondents across different age groups, social strata, and gender were interviewed and recorded on tape. It is important to add that not all the interviews were conducted in English; some were conducted in the Yorùbá Language since all the respondents are very fluent speakers of the Yorùbá Language. This is to enable the interviewer capture accurate perceptions of those with low or no proficiency in the English language. Hence, the need arose to conduct some of the interviews in the Yorùbá Language and later translate such into English for the purpose of the research. Highlighted below are some of the questions asked during the interviews:

- Which language is your first language?
- What other language(s) do you speak?
- What is your name?
- What kind of music do you enjoy listening to?
- What ethnic group do you belong to?
- Why do you not identify with the ethnic group whose language you claim as L1 and mother tongue? (In cases where linguistic and ethnic identities of respondents were at variance).

Participant observation was also used for data gathering. As a method of data collection, participant observation “is based on the idea that one has to participate in the world surrounding one in order to understand it, rather than just observe it” (Korth; 2005:55). It allows the researcher to take part in the everyday life and activities of the community being investigated without interfering (Silverman, 2001). Hence, it is a necessary complement of interview in any field research.

Participant observation is deemed very crucial for this study because it offers the researchers the opportunity to see if there is really a correspondence between the responses given by respondents during interviews and the ones they actually manifest in their daily lives. Participant observation as an instrument of data collection proved equally helpful in this research as it acted as the backdrop against which responses from interviews were juxtaposed.

Quantitative method was employed for the analysis of data gathered in the course of this study because it enables researchers to present findings in a quantifiable manner. Rasinger (2010) states that it also has the quality of being measurable in terms of the number of research instruments involved and the range of distribution of such research instruments across age, gender, occupation, social strata and so on.

According to Levon (2010), quantitative data analyses employ deductive reasoning to examine any hypothesis. Such analyses are about counting something - counting in an analytical or scientific sense. In order for something to be counted, two conditions are normally considered to be necessary: (a) What one wants to count must itself be “countable” (i.e., quantifiable) and (b) What one wants to count must have the potential to be “variable” (i.e., be able to change). For example, if as a researcher, one were conducting a poll on which issues most affected voters’ choice of candidate in an election. The condition of quantifiability requires that one operationalises the possible set of responses into categories such as “environment”, “economy”, “security”, “health”, and “educa-

tion”, such that one gives a certain structure to the diversity of responses one receives (this is typically called coding). It is this structure that will then allow one to quantitatively analyse the results by, for example, counting how many responses fall into each of one’s predetermined categories.

Rasinger (2010) further adds that quantitative research focuses on “how much” or “how many” there is/are of a particular characteristic or item. The great advantage of quantitative research is that it enables us to compare relatively large number of things or people by using a comparatively easy index. For example, when marking students’ essays, a lecturer will first look at the content, the structure and coherence of the argument and the presentation, that is, analyse it qualitatively, but will ultimately translate this into a mark (that is, a number), which allows one to compare two or more students with each other: a student gaining a 61% did better than a student achieving a 57% because 61 is larger than 57 - we do not need to look at the essays per se once we have the numerical value. The quantitative value indicates their quality.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of empirical studies have been carried out on language loss among ethnic minorities some of which will be examined here. In his foreword as an editor to Glaser (2007), Skutnabb-Kangas writes about the two major divisions on this topic. According to him, some researchers see languages as essential for ethnic identities, as possible and often likely core values of people’s ethnic identities. Without them, such researchers claim an ethnic group or a people can in most cases, not continue to exist as a group, for more than a couple of generations. For others like May (2005:327), languages are seen as at most, “a contingent factor of one’s identity. In other words, language does not define us, and may not be an important feature, or indeed even a necessary one, in the construction of our identities, whether at the individual or collective level.” The consequence of May’s position according to Skutnabb-Kangas is that, if language use were merely a surface feature of ethnic identity, adopting another language would only affect the language aspect of our ethnic identity, not the identity itself. Thus, the loss of a particular language is not the end of the world for a particular ethnic identity-the latter simply adapts to the use of the new language. Therefore, Eastman (1984:275) posits that “there is no need to worry about preserving ethnic identity, so long as the only change being made is in what language we use.” The “adaptation” that May alludes to in the preceding, is the same as the acculturation with which the current work describes the movement towards the Yorùbá Language and culture that have taken place among the Nupe people of Jebba in Kwara State.

Padilla (1980, 1987) and Keefe and Padilla (1987) dwell on acculturation amongst Mexican immigrants in the United States of America. Acculturation according to them relies on two major supraconstructs which are cultural awareness and ethnic loyalty. Cultural awareness represents the implicit knowledge which individuals possess of their cultures of origin and of their host cultures. Included in this are knowledge of things such as proficiency of the languages of each culture, knowledge of significant historical events that have shaped the cultures, understanding and appreciation of the artistic and musical forms of the cultures, and standards of behaviour and values

that have shaped how persons conduct themselves. If individuals show more knowledge of their heritage cultures than they do of the new contact cultures, the model shows that they are less acculturated; similarly, if persons possess more knowledge of the host cultures, then, they are more acculturated. Ethnic loyalty, on the other hand, is dependent on the self-ascribed ethnicity of the individuals e.t.c. In their study, Padilla (1980, 1987) and Kefee and Padilla (1987) show that cultural awareness declined from the first (immigrant) generation to the fourth generation of Mexican origin respondents. Furthermore, the steepest decline in cultural knowledge occurred between the first and second generation. However, an important discovery was the finding that ethnic loyalty to the culture of origin remained consistently high from the first to the fourth generation. In other words, although the Mexican heritage individuals possessed limited knowledge of the culture of their grandparents by the third or fourth generation, they still held on to their Mexican heritage identity. Using Keefe and Padilla's phrase, the present study shall show that the Nupe people of Jebba are "more acculturated" because a significant majority of them have more knowledge of Yorubá language and culture than Nupe language and culture.

Quite a number of scholars have also contributed conceptual studies to the issue of language loss among ethnic minorities. For example, Ulrike (2008) states that most scholars emphasize that although identity is deeply anchored in a society, thus leading to a strong emotional attachment to identity markers like language, language is not the only crucial aspect of minority group identity (Fishman, 1999; Romaine, 2000). For example, Blommert (2006) points out that linguistic behaviour is not necessarily an indicator of ethnicity and that administrative belonging does not always reflect sociolinguistic belonging. Blommert also posits that language constitutes one of the several characteristics that can place an individual in the majority or in the minority. In essence, language is just as much as an identity marker as religion, dress etc because these elements also determine the group (majority or minority) to which one belongs. The point in all of these and which strongly resonates with the current study is that, a shared language or a shared territory does not always necessarily translate into a shared ethnicity. What defines a group of people transcends their language and geographical location - other identity markers are equally important. As we shall later see in this work, Ulrike's position that language is not the only crucial aspect of minority identity is quite apt as language shift has occurred among the Nupe people of the community but for some respondents, there still exists an emotional attachment to their ancestral ethnicity.

The preceding is also in congruity with Ulrike's further assertion that the most critical concept here is the self-conscious sense of group membership of ethnic minorities, in contrast to how they are perceived from outside. In essence, self-consciousness as a group by ethnic minorities is more important in their identification than external perception.

Expressing an opinion similar to Ulrike's, Glaser (2007:6) asserts that "insider perceptions of a particular "language", "culture" or "tradition" are often at variance with external ascriptions, and the criteria by which an in-comer is granted or refused group membership in a given locality may have nothing to do with the grand narratives of the ethnocultural groups concerned." The situation of the Nupe people of Jebba lends credence to Glaser's position in that, relying on external percep-

tion without investigation would lead one to easily consider them as Yorùbá people but, such a perception would be at variance with their own self-ascription.

### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: REVISED SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY/ ETHNOLINGUISTIC IDENTITY THEORY

Different theoretical models in the past (Giles and Johnson, 1981; Tajfel and Turner, 1986), have conflated assimilation with acculturation such that large social groups were considered homogenous groups when in fact, large social groups according to Oakes (2001), comprise smaller sub-groups. Also, Tajfel and Turner's (1986) conceptualisation of social mobility only encapsulates assimilation to the dominant majority thereby neglecting the possibility of its applicability to all groups as separate entities (Oakes, 2001). Contrary to the stance of the Social Identity theory (Giles and Johnson, 1981) and Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986), models of acculturation such as Berry (1980) show that individuals can have multiple cultural identities without one being at the detriment of the other(s).

With the advent of the Bicultural Identity by Hamers and Blanc (2000) and the Revised Social Identity and Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory (Oakes, 2001) came the adoption of convergence mechanisms such as assimilation, acculturation/integration and overcommunication to the dominant group's culture by minority groups. Divergence mechanisms include the redefinition of previously negatively-viewed symbols, creation of new-positively viewed symbols, undercommunication of dominant group's culture etc. This research seeks to use the constructs of the Revised SIT/ELIT to tease out the acculturation patterns of the Nupe people of Kwara State.

As a result of the shortcomings of the SIT/ELIT, Oakes (2001) considers the need to review the SIT and ELIT and to also make some modifications to both theories leading to the birth of a revised framework encompassing the features of both the SIT and ELIT and even much more. In essence, the modified framework not only built on the strengths of both the SIT and ELIT, it also introduced the additional elements of integration, bilingualism and biculturalism. It is this modified framework that will be adopted for data analysis in this study.

Part of the modification done to the SIT/ELIT by Oakes is the reclassification of the notions of social mobility and social creativity into those of convergence and divergence. He also broadens the scope of linguistic and non-linguistic boundaries in order to be able to use them to account for the negotiation process which takes place between different dimensions of national identity. Lastly, he introduces the concept of different linguistic arenas.

According to Oakes (2001:41), "the notions of convergence and divergence have their roots in Speech Accommodation Theory" (Giles, 1973; Giles et al., 1977; Giles and Coupland 1991) which later became known as Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles et al., 1987) to enable it encompass non-verbal as well as discursive dimensions of social interaction. Giles and Coupland (1991:63) describe communicative convergence "as a strategy whereby individuals adapt to each other's communicative behaviours in terms of a wide range of linguistic/prosodic/non-vocal features, including speech rate, pausal phenomenon and utterance length, phonological variants,

smiling, gaze and so on.” Within the framework of the Revised SIT/ELIT, Oakes (2001:42) posits that convergence is used “to refer to some form of cultural movement towards the majority out-group.” Convergence as an additional element of Revised ELIT will be needful for the present study as a means of highlighting and discussing those areas where respondents demonstrate preference or ownership of features or behaviours that are known to belong to outgroups indigenous to the same community.

On the contrary, divergence refers to a situation whereby individuals or minority group members choose to emphasize their group’s communicative style thereby accentuating differences between them and the dominant outgroup. The difference between the notions of social mobility and creativity and that of convergence and divergence is that whereas the former fails to recognise the possibility of mutual acculturation and or integration, the latter expands the former to accommodate instances where majority and minority groups mutually embrace each other’s features without necessarily putting their ingroups’ features at disadvantages. This new concept gives recognition to intermediate states of acculturation and/or integration on the part of both groups involved unlike in the original SIT/ELIT formulation where such is taken to imply complete assimilation. In essence, the convergence/divergence concept recognises the possibility of individuals retaining elements of their original group identity even while converging towards the other’s identity. This mechanism will be useful for the present study in that it will enable one to account for areas of distinctiveness between respondents from different ancestral groups. This will show how members of different groups have maintained or accentuated certain features which serve as a point of difference between them and other groups within the same geographical entity regardless of the extent of acculturation that has taken place over the years.

Minority groups can adopt convergence mechanisms such as assimilation, acculturation/integration and overcommunication of dominant group’s culture (in the case of bicultural individuals). Divergence mechanisms from dominant out-group include the re-definition of previously negatively-viewed symbols, creation of new, positively-viewed symbols, selection of an alternative, less favourable out-group for comparison and undercommunication of dominant group’s culture.

The scopes of linguistic and non-linguistic boundaries were broadened to encompass hard and soft boundaries and these two in turn, rest upon the concepts of social mobility. The interaction of the notions of hard and soft boundaries creates four types of categories which are: hard linguistic boundary, hard non-linguistic boundary, soft linguistic boundary and soft non-linguistic boundary. Groups with hard linguistic boundaries have distinctive languages, those with hard non-linguistic boundaries have other distinctive identity markers like religion and culture, groups with soft linguistic boundaries adopt others’ languages yet, they retain other ethnic features while groups with soft non-linguistic boundaries adopt other ethnic features besides the language of the dominant out-group.

The newly introduced concept of different arenas for the construction of national identity recognises the fact that even when different groups converge and diverge simultaneously on different dimensions, they can also do so within different arenas such as on ethnic, national and global

scales. These arenas can be considered as existing independently of one another while they can also overlap. In the case of the former, such independent existence is possible because the status of a group may differ from one arena to the next such that a group may be dominant at the national arena but considered a minority at the continental and global levels.

This revised SIT/ELIT framework is considered appropriate for this research for its possession of the vital mechanisms of boundary delineation which is very apt for the analysis of the acculturation patterns of the Nupe people of Jebba. It is also considered a veritable tool for the analysis of the data generated in the course of this research as it incorporates the concepts of integration, bilingualism, biculturalism and acculturation. The concept of acculturation here is particularly significant to this study because of its consideration of the appropriateness of some degree of divergence on the part of minority groups towards the majority groups' cultures without necessarily completely assimilating.

#### 4. LINGUISTIC ACCULTURATION PATTERNS AMONG THE NUPE PEOPLE OF JEBBA

The linguistic elements examined in this study are language and naming. These two elements of ethnicity are about language use. The inclusion of naming as an index of measurement of the level of acculturation to Yorùbá among the Nupe people of Jebba, is premised upon the fact that, names are forms of ethnic identity which very often, tell us about the bearer's ethnicity. According to Ogunwale (2016), African names are social products which give us information about the workings of the language and society from which it emanates. Ogunwale goes ahead to state that, the socialisation, production and reception of life are entailed in the African name-word. They are systematically couched in specific words, phrases, or sentences in such a way that, they do not only convey the people's sentiments and affections but, they also reflect the unique contexts of the people.

The same set of structured questions were put to twenty (20) respondents to check the degree of acculturation to Yorùbá. Presented below are interview extracts which show the level of convergence of the respondents as far as their first language and/ or mother tongue are concerned:

- My first language is Yorùbá language. The language is also my mother tongue. ... (Michael).
- The language I spoke first is Yorùbá. Yorùbá is also my mother tongue is Yorùbá... (Bilkis).
- Yorùbá is both my mother tongue and first language. It is the language my parents speak to us... (Adunni).
- My first language is Yorùbá. My mother tongue is also Yorùbá... (Kola).
- My mother tongue is Yorùbá language. It is the first language I know... (Bola).
- Yorùbá is my first language. Yorùbá is also my mother tongue... (Yemi)
- My mother tongue is Yorùbá. Yorùbá is also my first language... (Quadri)
- My first language is Yorùbá. My mother tongue is also Yorùbá... (Bayo).
- My mother tongue and first language is Yorùbá... (Daniel).
- My mother tongue is Yorùbá ... (Yemisi).

- Yorùbá is mother tongue but my first language is Nupe...(Lawal).<sup>1</sup>
- My first language is Yorùbá... (Deborah).
- Yorùbá is my first language... (Ganiyu).
- My first language and mother tongue is Yorùbá language... (Adeola).
- Nupe is my first language ... (Nofiu).
- My mother tongue and first language is Yorùbá... (Faith).
- My first language is Yorùbá language... (Hawau).
- My first language and mother tongue is the Yorùbá language... (Dare).
- Yorùbá is my mother tongue. Yorùbá is also my first language... (Sola).
- My first language is Yorùbá... (Deji).

From these interview excerpts, one would see that two of the twenty respondents which constitute ten percent (10%) of the total number of respondents speak Nupe as their first language while eighteen of the twenty respondents which constitute ninety percent (90%) of the total number of respondents speak Yorùbá as their first language. With ninety percent of respondents of Nupe heritage having Yorùbá as their first language, one can easily conclude that, if the trend of language shift continues at its current rate, a complete shift to the Yorùbá Language in the next generation would be inevitable. It is imperative to note that, during interview, Lawal and Nofiu who are the two speakers of Nupe explained that they spent their childhood years in Mokwa, Niger State, where Nupe is the majority.

Through convergence and in this case, acculturation (Giles and Coupland, 1991), the overwhelming majority of respondents identified the Yorùbá language as their first language without putting their heritage language on the same pedestal as the Yorùbá language. Even those who said Nupe is their first language ironically felt the need to explain the reason that is so. The notions of hard linguistic/hard non-linguistic boundaries and soft linguistic/soft non-linguistic boundaries explain why ninety percent of the respondents in this study lack proficiency in their ancestral language. A noticeable trait amongst them therefore, is that they have a soft linguistic boundary. The language is therefore more prominent for serving symbolic purposes and less prominent for serving communicative purposes.

These findings echo the position of the Gaelic singer, Arthur Cormack (Glaser, 2007:266) who proposed that “one can be Gael without actually speaking Gaelic to a certain extent” because being Gaelic “is ... about your whole background, where you come from, ... your history.” Cormack’s position is synonymous with that expressed by Mackenzie (2002) who avers that culture is rooted in language but perhaps more importantly, it is also rooted in social structures and traditions. In this way, it is quite possible to be a Gael and not have fluent (or even working) Gaelic. Arthur Cormack and Mackenzie’s positions have helped to further prove that the respondents in the present study are no less members of their ethnicities than those who speak their heritage languages.

In a similar vein, Woodbury (1993) asserts that the analyses of language shift have demonstrated that traditional communication patterns do not necessarily cease when ancestral vocabularies and grammars are abandoned. This, according to Woodbury, constitutes an interesting argument against the thesis that lexico-grammatical language shift engenders full-scale assimilation. The cases of language shift experienced by the respondents discussed in this research, have not led to identity shift in all the respondents. Edwards (2009:251) also puts this succinctly when he says that “the attachment felt by the English-speaking Irish or Welsh to a culture and an ancestry whose language they no longer possess is a psychologically real one and demonstrates the continuing power of what is intangible and symbolic.” Edwards further adds that indeed, there often exists continuing attachment to the “lost” language itself as an important aspect of that ancestry. The fact that such attachments rarely lead to actual linguistic revival is regrettable in the eyes of those who feel that language is the pillar of culture. He further adds that these attachments (to a culture and ancestry whose languages are lost), however attenuated or “residual”, have a meaning.

From the names of the interview respondents, it is obvious that, none of the respondents has a Nupe first name. Half (50%) of the respondents have Yorùbá names, six of them which constitute thirty percent (30%) answer Muslim names while the remaining four which constitute twenty percent (20%) have Christian names.

The pattern of acculturation noticeable in language use also reflects in the naming system of the Nupe people who from all indications have chosen Yorùbá names and those from their faith traditions over ethnic Nupe names. Shore (1996) states that the objective of every act of naming is to make what is named knowable and communicable. Generally, in Africa, names are often semantically transparent and accessible (Neethling, 2003). Therefore, the meanings of African names reside in the messages they convey, the wishes they express, the histories they record and the gratitude (to God) they express (De Klerk and Bosch, 1996). Suleiman (2004) stresses the importance of names and ethnic labels as texts and semiotic practices that shed light on issues of ethnic and national identity. According to Arua (2009), examples of names that illustrate these objectives of naming in the Igbo language for example are *Chibiko* (a plea to God), *Ada* (first female child), *Nwanyiuzo* (a female born abroad), *Onukaogu* (dialogue is better than war) e.t.c. In the Yorùbá language, there are names like *Akínyelé* (the brave suits the home front – exclusive for male children), *Olúwafúnmiláyò* (God has given me joy), *Babátundé* (father has reincarnated- exclusive for male children), *Ìyáábó* (mother has reincarnated- exclusive for female children) e.t.c.

Naming system among the Nupe people of Jebba, is used as a convergence mechanism. As a convergence mechanism, giving children Yorùbá names or answering Yorùbá names seem quite the norm as shown in some of the names of the respondents interviewed. They answer names like Adeola, Bola, Yemi, Kola, Adunni, Yemisi, etc This favourable disposition towards Yorùbá personal names shows some level of acculturation which is one of the levels of convergence identified by Oakes (2001) amongst the features of the Revised SIT/ELIT. Acculturation according to Redfield et al. (1936) occurs when groups of individuals from different cultures come into continuous contact with each other, and subsequently, there are changes in the original cultural patterns of either

or both groups. Therefore, the use of Yorùbá personal names by those of Nupe ancestry in Jebba, Kwara State, is a form of cultural movement towards the Yorùbá ethnic group.

Having examined the acculturation patterns that are linguistic in nature i.e. language and names, we shall go on to examine non-linguistic element of acculturation in the community under study.

##### 5. NONLINGUISTIC ACCULTURATION PATTERNS AMONG THE NUPE PEOPLE OF JEBBA

The non-linguistic element mainly considered in this sub-section is cuisine. Some attention is also paid to dressing. Findings from this study show that, there has been a shift from this cultural element towards those which are Yorùbá as well. Nupe traditional meals are largely cereal-based often made from millet, guinea-corn and maize. Other sources of food for the Nupe are rice, yams and groundnut. Although Yorùbá people eat cereal-based foods as well, but not as much as the Nupe people do. We shall turn to extracts from the interviews about respondents' food choices to see whether the shift from the Nupe Language and names towards the Yorùbá is also obtainable when it comes to a non-linguistic item such as food.

Presented below are interview extracts which show the level of convergence of the respondents as far as their first language and/ or mother tongue are concerned:

I do not have a favourite food per se. I enjoy eating quite a number of meals some of which are pounded yam and egusi soup, amala with gbegiri and ewedu and adalu (beans and maize cooked together)... (Michael).

I really do enjoy eating amala with ewedu... (Bilkis).

I prefer any solid food like eba, semo, amala, iyan with any good stew... (Adunni).

I prefer rice and beans cooked together... (Kola).

Amala and pounded yam are my best meals especially with vegetable soup ... (Bola).

I like semo with vegetable stew... (Yemi).

Yam is my best food. I enjoy eating it a lot in different ways. It could be boiled, fried, as porridge and when pounded... (Quadri).

My best food is rice... especially jollof rice... (Bayo).

I really like rice a lot. In whatever form it is made, I prefer rice to any other food. ... (Daniel).

My best food is white amala with gbegiri and ewedu... (Yemisi).

My best food is beans. I also like other foods made from beans like moinmoin, ekuru, akara ... (Lawal).

Rice is the food I like the most especially white rice with plantain... (Deborah).

The food I like more than any other food is pounded yam... (Ganiyu).

My favourite food is rice and stew... (Adeola).

Rice is my best food ... (Nofiu).

The food I like the most is pap and moinmoin... (Faith).

My best food is jollof rice... (Hawau).

My best food is pounded yam with egusi soup... (Dare).

I like to eat amala and ewedu a lot. There is no other food I enjoy as much as amala and ewedu... (Sola).

My favourite food is rice... (Deji).

From these interview extracts, twelve respondents which constitute sixty-percent (60%) of the total number of the research respondents, expressed preference for Yorùbá meals. The remaining eight respondents which constitute forty percent (40%) of the total number of the research respondents expressed preference for rice, a staple food in many cultures across Africa. Hence, the category of respondents who expressed preference for rice can neither be categorised as having preference Yorùbá meals nor Nupe meals.

From this, one can see that the majority of respondents have experienced a shift in cuisines too. This observation is well-corroborated by the researchers' experience in the community under study. Through participant observation, the researchers' of this study saw glaringly, that the people of Jebba cook and consume Yorùbá meals more than any other kind of meals regardless of their ancestral ethnicity. This observation is in tandem with the responses from the interviews.

For other markers of identity like dressing, there is a close semblance between those which are traditionally Nupe and Yorùbá and so, a claim of acculturation to Yorùbá in this regard cannot be established. This is as a result of the fact that, Nupe people in Mokwa, Niger State, who do not share a community with Yorùbá people dress in the same manner that is akin to the Yorùbá. It would then seem that these cultures share things in common. This speaks to the fact that, it is not just convergence that is responsible for similarities in cultures. Different groups of people could share different markers of identity in common which is not necessarily as a result of convergence but these similarities do not obliterate the distinctiveness of each group's identity.

This finding is in line with Baker (2003:51), who states that "identity concerns the shared characteristics of members of a group, community or region. Identity provides the security and status of a shared existence. Sometimes, identity is via dress, religious beliefs, rituals, but language is almost always present in identity formation and identity display." He further adds that language is an index, symbol and marker of identity. Oloso (2017) states that Baker's position reinforces the

fact that identity formation can be actualised through different variables and that identity can be projected through different variables as well.

Oloso (2017) further adds that, Baker's position that identity could be via different variables is worthy of note as it establishes the importance of all identity markers in identity formation and projection. More worthy of note however, is the addition that language is almost always present in identity formation. This means that as important as language is in the list of the different variables, it is not a constant item in the identity manifestation of all groups. Taking it further from Baker's perspective, Oloso (2017) adds that whatever is deemed applicable to language as an identity variable should also be considered applicable to other identity variables as no single variable always cuts across as a shared feature. This means that cuisine, dress, religion(s), rituals are also not always equally present in the identity formation and projection of all groups of people. For example, two groups of people could share many identity markers in common except for language while other groups could share a language in common but have distinct identities as far as the other variables are concerned. An example is the case of the British people and the American people. The peoples of these nations share in common a first language and to a large extent, some aspects of dressing but the same cannot be said of their other identity variables. The Britons have in place a constitutional monarchy. That is, a royal dynasty in addition to a parliamentary system of government. In England, the Queen of England is the head of state though, with little political power while the Prime Minister and The Parliament have the major political influence and power. Generally, the English people can be considered as conservatives. The Americans on the other hand, have in place, a presidential system of government, have no monarchy and are mostly untraditional.

## 6. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Findings from this study show that, there is a high level of convergence by the Nupe people of Jebba to two linguistic elements of Yorùbá ethnicity. The language and naming system of the community under study has significantly shifted to that of the Yorùbá. The same can be said for the non-linguistic element of cuisine in which there is convergence towards the Yorùbá as well. The study has highlighted and discussed areas where respondents demonstrate preference or ownership of features or behaviours that are known to belong to another group indigenous to the same community.

The study concludes that, the Nupe people of Jebba have almost fully acculturated to the Yorùbá Language and culture. The reason the language has not gone into oblivion in the community is the geographical proximity between the community under study and another majority Nupe-speaking community (Mokwa, Niger State) from which ten percent of the research respondents who acquired Nupe first spent their childhood years. Hence, these respondents are bilingual in Nupe and Yorùbá with Nupe being their first language. Researchers also observed that respondents feel no sense of loss for their language and culture as the majority of them feel comfortable being identified as Yorùbá. If the current trend of shift continues, it is only a matter of a few generations before the community becomes completely monolingual and monocultural.

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# A Study of Repressed Language in “Living Next Door to Alice” and “Hello”

Stella Tonyo Akinola, PhD

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## ABSTRACT

*It has been observed that some people find it difficult to maintain interpersonal relationships as a result of repressed language, despite the fact that they are very interested in maintaining the relationship. People with repressed emotions often have trouble naming and understanding their emotional experience. This can make it tough to express how one feels to others. Having a hard time expressing feelings helps to bottle up emotions that eventually explode, sometimes in response to the smallest triggers. This study seeks to discover the consequences of repressed language study is descriptive. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in the analysis and presentation of data. The data is mainly a secondary one gotten from “Living Next Door to Alice” and “Hello.” The study revealed that repressed language seems to be responsible for some of the unrequited love. It also fuels social and emotional instability. Thus, repressed language which exemplifies repressed emotions, contributes to problems in interpersonal relationships. Social penetration theory forms the theoretical framework of this paper. This work concludes that the role of language in interpersonal pragmatics is crucial and that language repressed has dire consequences that may attract regret.*

*Keywords: repressed language, interpersonal communication, ideation, social penetration*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language, which is often said to be a means of communication between individuals who share a common code, has been studied for years from both formalist and functionalist perspectives. The deployment of language in different contexts has been a veritable means of demystifying human beings and the realities of our existence. Ayodele (2013) rightly observed that language is an indispensable tool in the life of an individual because, there is no aspect of human activity that can be successful without the effective use of language. Thus, language is the most significant tool in human existence. Language is about the essence of human existence indeed. It is the wellspring of human life and power. Ndimele (2010) acknowledged language as a tool with which one can subdue his environment and conquer the world.

The possession of language is what makes man distinct from all other animals and it plays a lot of roles, ranging from ideational to personal and textual functions. Language is primarily spoken and so the basic function of language is the expressive function. It is perhaps impossible to think of any place or situation in life where one can function without the help of language, whether verbal or non-verbal. Ayeomoni (2011) cast illumination on the subject that language is an im-

portant tool in society, because man needs it to share his ideas, experiences, emotions and interact with other people in the society or in his environment. Apart from the common functions of expression and communication, the psychological and social functions played by language are very crucial and are becoming more and more important in today’s world.

Interpersonal relationships are built and maintained with the use of language. Social (interpersonal) affords one the opportunity to establish, maintain and direct relationships with persons. In performing this function, language gives structure or life to experience and helps to shape our world view.

Repression has to do with desire or thought that is kept suppressed and unconscious in one’s mind. Repressed language is language that is not expressed, it is kept elsewhere. Not being able to express needs can possibly lead to feelings of uncertainty. This paper seeks to discover the consequences of repressed language. This work is premised on interpersonal pragmatics.

## 2. LIERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptual Review

A few literature that is relevant to the study shall be discussed. These include the concepts of language, communication and repression.

The concept of language is key to human existence as rightly observed by (Chomsky, 1970). Ability to acquire and use language is what sets man apart from other animals. Labe-Popola (2013) defined language as a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, desires and emotions by means of voluntarily produced symbols. Iwara (2008:6) attested to this when he describes language as “... a unified system of symbols conventionally agreed among its users to permit a sharing of meaning.”

To Ogunsina (2009) cited in (Ohen, 2018) language is the chief instrument for effective communication, for, according to him, language is not just a vehicle for transporting ideas, it is often times, the very chamber that generates those ideas. Origime (2011:81), who argued that language is the most momentous and at the same time, the most mysterious product of the human mind, viewed language as “an intricate system of symbols, gestures and sounds by which man communicates to or with others, his feelings, thoughts, desires and dreams as well as realities.

Ogungbe (2011:35) affirmed that “language as an instrument of communication is loaded with power and action oriented, which has the ability to influence or control other people’s actions and thoughts.” In the same vein, Egbokhare (2011:38) noted that language positively impacts the world view of a people and how they see the world around them.

Language lives and dwells with the people and the perception of the real world is construed by the language habit of the people or group of speakers (Emeka-Nwobia, 2015). It is the unique property of human beings and all the developments of man, be it intellectual, ethical, political, social, or economic, revolves entirely on the instrumentality of language (Ene, 2007). Lewis quoted in Algeo (1974), declared that,

The gift of language is the single human trait that marks us all, genetically setting us apart from the rest of life. Language is like nest building or hive making, the universal and biologically specific activity of human beings. We engage in it communally, compulsively and automatically. We cannot be human without it; if we were to be separated from it, our minds would die as surely as bees lost from the hive.

From the foregoing, it is crystal clear that language is the vehicle for human communication. The mind is not visible to anyone. So, it is expression in language either verbal or written that mirrors or reveals the mind, thoughts and feelings of an individual for the sustenance of interpersonal relationships.

Language expression is the ability to put words together to create a thought which is meaningful and relevant to the speaker, listener and topic of conversation. The expressive function has to do with expressing the speaker's feelings. The aim is to convey the speaker's emotions. Expression is a dynamic process which not only uses, but also creates meaning by making thought into verbal form. The act of expression underlies both the encoding of an utterance in speech and the creation of a text in writing. The reason for language is basically expression.

Repression is a key concept of psychoanalysis, where it is understood as a defense mechanism that "ensures that what is unacceptable to the conscious mind, and would if recalled arouse anxiety, is prevented from entering into it" (Davis, 2004). Psychoanalytic theory has it that repression plays a major role in many mental illnesses and in the psyche of the average person.

Repression is the action or process of suppressing a thought or desire in oneself so that it remains unconscious. It can also be seen as a mental process by which distressing thoughts, memories, or impulses that may give rise to anxiety are excluded from consciousness and left to operate in the unconscious. Repression could also be described as the involuntary rejection from consciousness of painful or disagreeable ideas, memories, feelings or impulses. The act of controlling strong emotions and desires and not allowing them to be expressed so that they no longer seem to exist (Oxford collocation dictionary).

This implies that when there is restraint, prevention or inhibition of a feeling, quality, etc., then repression is in operation. Feelings or thoughts that have their base internally which cannot be expressed are obviously repressed. Thus, repressed language is when one unconsciously avoids to express in language, feelings, emotions, ideas, impulses and the likes. Unexpressed emotions have the ability to push the pathogenic experiences in question out of consciousness.

Sigmund Freud, haven struggled with the intensity to get his patients to recall past memories led him to conclude that there was some force that prevented them from becoming conscious and compelled them to remain unconscious. The name "repression" was given to this hypothetical process. Freud considered that there was reason to assume that there is "primal repression." This seems to be a first phase of repression, which consists in the psychical (ideational) representative of the instinct being denied entrance into the conscious. He also considered a second stage of repression, "repression proper" which affects mental derivatives of the repressed representative.

In the primary repression phase,

it is highly probable that the immediate precipitating causes of primal repressions are qualitative factors such as . . . the earliest outbreaks of anxiety, which are of a very intense kind. The child realizes that acting on some desires may bring anxiety. This anxiety leads to repression of the desire which of course becomes language unexpressed.

### EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Patel et al. (2019) reviewed substantial amounts of the latest research and recent findings on the consequences of repression of emotion and found out that inhibitory factors to emotional expression and experience, can endanger one's health both physically and psychologically, including our general wellbeing. In addition, the connection between repression of emotion and certain mental disorders like depression and scientifically proven healthy ways to manage issues bothering on emotion were outlined. They concluded that expressing one's true emotions and the feeling is crucial to physical health, mental health and general wellbeing, while a reliance on concealment gives rise to a barrier to good health.

Cote (2005) stated that continual repression brings about stress on individuals making use of it. Stress brought about by such protracted repression of emotion can cause an increase in heart rate, anxiety, low level of commitment and other effects which can be detrimental to productivity.

Effective regulation of emotion enables the individual to adaptively cope with a broad range of environmental eventualities. But when it goes uneven or lopsided, it becomes increasingly recognized and its negative consequences may pose danger to emotion and cognitive health (Berenbaum & Raghavan, 2003).

Elsig (2022) observed that repressed emotions often relate to traumatic childhood experiences. If children experience trauma and are not given the space and care to process feelings, or if they grew with the impression that it is wrong to express themselves, emotions become chronically repressed. He added that emotions can be repressed but feelings will continue to exist. That is where the frustration sets in.

Faltis (1993) presented an argument that there are similarities between linguistic and cultural repression experienced by Basques in Spain and Mexican-Americans in the United States. Linguistic and cultural repression was analyzed both historically and culturally, in terms of various language policies, especially policies related to language use in school. He concluded that linguistic repression is also cultural repression and that the concern about linguistic and cultural repression is as imperative currently as it was historically.

McGinn (2011) discussed repression in light of disgust. She claimed that repression comes as a result of disgustingness and that repression is a part of human condition. On the basis of converging research, Otgaar et al. (2019) argued that memory wars still endure in multiple quarters. That repression can involve the automatic and unconscious blockage of autobiographical experiences of trauma. The conclusion was that repressed memories lead to physical and mental health problems and that recovery of the repressed memory is crucial to symptom relief.

As evident from the empirical review, a lot of scholars have researched on repression according to their career orientations but there are no works on repressed language. Repressed language in this context is a situation where one has the legal backing to speak a language, such a person is not mute and is in contact with an individual he has a soft spot for, with a thousand and one opportunities to speak about his feelings, instead he keeps quite and allows the relationship to go down the drain.

### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concern of social penetration as a communication theory is the analysis of the way persons are able to meet and maintain close relationships or stay apart. Social penetration theory was propounded by Irwin Atman and Dalmas Taylor in the 1970s in their quest about the development of relationships. In their book, *Social Penetration: The Development of Interpersonal Relationships*, they accounted for the development, maintenance and deterioration of social relationships. They viewed relationship, which has been made to bear rewardingly on language and communication, as a development process that involves four levels. These levels include: Orientation, Exploratory affective exchange, Affective exchange and Stable exchange. On the level of orientation, persons do not share information deeply. They merely relate conventionally as may be permitted by social conversations. There is no deep trust as to warrant intimate sharing of personal issues. Communication patterns open up a bit during the exploration, affective exchange level.

Participants begin to share information somewhat confidentially. They become more trusting but they never open up completely. On the third level which is affective exchange, communicators become close friends and many barriers of suspicion become resolved. Lastly, the level of stable exchange involves a continuous robust relationship and openness to each other. Effective communication on this final level may be carried out even nonverbally. At this level, there are no more holdbacks and both participants can fully, without resentment, rely on each other. This is when interpersonal relationship blossoms.

### 4. BACKGROUND

“Living Next Door to Alice” is a song co-written by Nicky Chinn and Mike Chapman. It was originally released by the Australian vocal harmony trio New World in 1972. The song later became a worldwide hit for British band Smokie.

The song is about a young man's long-standing love towards the girl next door and his neighbor, Alice, for twenty-four years. The persona had seen a limousine parked at Alice's home, learning through Sally that Alice is moving away. He begins to reflect on their childhood memories and his friendship with Alice. He becomes heartbroken as he sees Alice get inside the limousine. As he watches the car drive out of sight, the persona feels regret about; first, Alice leaving without an explanation, second, that in twenty-four years, he never took the opportunity to express his feelings to her.

“Hello!” is a song written and sung by Lionel Richie. The persona is a college professor, who is in love with a blind student in his class. His feelings for her torture him and he knows that she

doesn't know how he feels about her. He dreams about her and even kisses her in his dreams. He holds her in his head and sees her outside his door. In spite of the fact that he is a professor, he couldn't express his emotions to a mere student, with whom he interacted in class. As the song comes to an end, she shows him a sculpture, she made of him.

## 5. DATA PRESENTATION

### *LIVING NEXT DOOR TO ALICE*

*Sally called when she got the word*

*And she said, “I suppose you’ve heard*

*About Alice”*

*When I rushed to the window*

*And I looked outside*

*And I could hardly believe my eyes*

*As a big limousine rolled up*

*Into Alice’s drive*

*Oh, I don’t know why she’s leaving*

*Or where she’s gonna go*

*I guess she’s got her reasons*

*But I just don’t want to know*

*C’os for twenty-four years*

*I’ve been leaving next door to Alice*

*24 years waiting for a chance*

*To tell her how I feel, and maybe get a second glance*

*Now I’ve got to get use to not living next door to Alice*

*We grew up together*

*Two kids in the park*

*We carved our initials*

*Deep in the bark*

*Me and Alice*

*Now she walks through the door*

*With her head held high*

*Just for a moment, I caught her eye*

*As a big limousine pulled slowly*

*Out of Alice’s drive*

### *HELLO*

*I’ve been alone with you inside my mind,*

*And in my dreams I’ve kissed your lips a  
thousand times*

*I sometimes see you pass outside my  
door*

*Hello, is it me you’re looking for?*

*I can see it in your eyes, I can see it in  
your smile*

*You’re all I’ve ever wanted and my arms  
are open wide*

*‘cause you know just what to say and you  
know just what to do*

*And I want to tell you so much*

*I love you.*

*I long to see the sunlight in your hair*

*And tell you time and time again how  
much I care*

*Sometimes I feel my heart will overflow*

*Hello, I’ve got to let you know*

*‘cause I wonder where you are and I wonder  
what you do*

*Are somewhere feeling lonely or is some-  
one loving you?*

*Tell me how to win your heart, for I hav-  
en’t got a clue*

*But let me start by saying “I love you, I  
love you”*

*Is it me you’re looking for?*

*Hello, is it me you’re looking for?*

*Is it me you’re looking for?*

*(Repeat chorus)*  
*And Sally called back and asked how I felt*  
*And she said, "I know how to help"*  
*Get over Alice*  
*She said, "Now Alice is gone*  
*But I'm still here*  
*You know I've been waiting*  
*For twenty-four years*  
*And the big limousine disappeared*  
*(Repeat chorus)*  
*But I'll never get used to not living*  
*Next door to Alice*  
*No, I'll never get used to not living*  
*Next door to Alice.*

## 6. ANALYSIS

### Paradigm: levels of self-disclosure—Orientation

At the orientation level, persons do not share deep information. They merely relate in a conventional manner as may be allowed by social conversations. Trust seems to be very far, as to warrant intimate sharing of personal issues. The persona's self-disclosure to Sally and Alice is positive.

*Sally called when she got the word*  
*And she said, "I suppose you've heard*  
*About Alice"*  
*C'os for twenty-four years*  
*I've been leaving next door to Alice*

It is clear from the foregoing that in the development of interpersonal relationship, Sally's level of self-disclosure to the persona is positive. They do not share deep information but they interact well at this level. Alice's level of self-disclosure to the persona is also positive. There is an outstanding interpersonal relationship that makes provision for interaction.

*She said, "Now Alice is gone*  
*But I'm still here*  
*You know I've been waiting*  
*For twenty-four years*

Still at the level of orientation, Alice's level of self-disclosure to Sally is negative. In fact, there is

no line of interaction between both of them. So long as Alice was concerned, Sally does not exist. However, the Persona’s level of self-disclosure to Sally is positive. There is a clear evidence that a communication line exists between the persona and Sally.

The Persona’s level of self-disclosure to Alice is positive just as Alice’s to the Persona. A conclusion can be drawn that there is a triangular communication at the orientation level between Alice and the persona and between the Persona and Sally, but there is no such communication string between Alice and Sally. Thus, the Persona is the one that binds the three and not the other way round.

*Sally called when she got the word  
And she said, “I suppose you’ve heard  
About Alice”  
When I rushed to the window*

In Hello, there is an obvious relationship between the Persona and the said girl. So, the level of self-disclosure at the orientation level between the Persona and the girl is positive. The Persona, who is a college professor, happens to be the girl’s lecturer. Thus, they had a line of interaction on the basis of student/teacher relationship. This is clear that at the level of orientation, they interacted well, since the orientation level deals with relationship on the surface.

*Hello, is it me you’re looking for?*

This was all he could say to her to keep the communication line active outside the class.

The exploratory affective exchange is the second stage of interpersonal relationship. During this stage of “exploratory affective exchange”, communication patterns open up a bit. Sally is dropped at this level.

*We grew up together  
Two kids in the park*

Sally’s level of interaction with both Alice and the Persona does not exceed the orientation level. Her level of self-disclosure to both the Persona and Alice are negative and vice versa. On the other hand, the level of self-disclosure at the exploratory affective level is positive for both Alice and the Persona. Both of whom share information somewhat confidentially and become more trusting. Their interpersonal relationship was good but they were yet to open up completely. This stage has streamlined the relationship to two as opposed to three. The “watchdog” Sally, has been evicted.

*And Sally called back and asked how I felt  
And she said, “I know how to help”  
Get over Alice*

*She said, "Now Alice is gone  
But I'm still here  
You know I've been waiting  
For twenty-four years*

This implies that Sally was actually an intruder in the interpersonal relationship between the Persona and Alice but she was evicted along the developmental stages, specifically the second stage, of the relationship, since there was no further communication between Sally and the Persona.

Furthermore, the situation in "Hello" is different from "Next Door to Alice." The relationship between the Persona and the girl ended at the orientation level. The Persona had a lot to tell the girl but language at this point was repressed, not expressed. At the second stage of the Social Penetration Theory, trust is supposed to have built gradually but the Persona is not even sure of the state of the girl as he says:

*Sometimes I feel my heart will overflow  
Hello, I've got to let you know  
'cause I wonder where you are and I wonder what you do  
Are you somewhere feeling lonely or is someone loving you?*

The level of self-disclosure of the persona to the girl is positive but that of the girl to the persona is negative.

*I've been alone with you inside my mind,  
And in my dreams I've kissed your lips a thousand times  
I sometimes see you pass outside my door*

Thus, the second level of interpersonal relationship is equal to non-existence in Hello. He had a lot for her but to her, he did not exist. Hence, he could only dream and imagine.

Affective exchange is the third stage of self-disclosure. In Next Door to Alice, their levels of self-disclosure at the affective exchange stage is mutually positive. They have realized at this point that they share something in common. Alice and the Persona had a robust communication line at this stage as well. This reveals that they have become close friends and many barriers of suspicion were resolved as conspicuously evidenced in the lines of the song below.

*We carved our initials  
Deep in the bark  
Me and Alice*

The interpersonal relationship between Alice and the Persona enjoyed fruitfulness at this point. Most likely, the barks where their initials were carved were still standing. This implies that, it is not

enough to carve initials deep but expression solves it all. One may not carve initials deep in the bark but expression takes precedence. With all the “hulabaloo” experience, the Persona was still waiting for a chance to express himself and maybe get a second glance.

On the other hand, Hello, was a lopsided experience. The Persona’s level of self-disclosure to the girl was positive while the girl’s level of self-disclosure to the Persona was negative. Self-disclosure has to do with the level of trust and commitment to each other. How much of intimacy do they share? The Persona bottled up all the emotions. He was deeply in love with a blind female student. The girl had no eyes to see him. Thus, she could not insinuate his actions. She could not see him to draw a conclusion on his feelings for her. As a matter of fact, she was unaware of his intentions.

*You’re all I’ve ever wanted and my arms are open wide  
Sometimes I feel my heart will overflow  
Hello, I’ve got to let you know*

The status of the Persona would have propelled him to subject her to any condition that could enable him to express his love for her but no. The last lap was that he became frustrated was consistently asking:

*Is it me you’re looking for?  
Hello, is it me you’re looking for?  
Is it me you’re looking for?*

The last stage of the social penetration theory is the Stable Exchange level. Alice had a positive self-disclosure level to the Persona. This means that she had opened up completely to him in their interactions. There was zero suspicion from Alice’s angle. She had given her all and was expecting same from the Persona. Interpersonal relationship is mutual and not one sided. This accounts for her annoyance. The Persona did not reciprocate her level of communication. He stopped at the affective exchange level, little wonder he could not open up and assumed that she would understand.

*And I looked outside  
And I could hardly believe my eyes  
As a big limousine rolled up  
Into Alice’s drive*

Language at this point got repressed which made her pack away from the neighborhood without informing him. Alice must have prompted enough without a positive response.

*Oh, I don’t know why she’s leaving  
Or where she’s gonna go  
I guess she’s got her reasons*

He is pained that Alice is leaving. He cries out:

*Oh, I don't know why she's leaving  
Or where she's gonna go  
I guess she's got her reasons  
But I just don't want to know  
C'os for twenty-four years  
I've been leaving next door to Alice  
24 years waiting for a chance  
To tell her how I feel, and maybe get a second glance  
Now I've got to get use to not living next door to Alice*

But he guessed that she may have her reasons for the action she took, but he couldn't be bothered by that. Though he would be forced to get used to not living next door to her. The Persona was comfortable with the third stage, which is the affective exchange rate and maybe he thought, Alice would understand. He could repress his language because he felt that he had reached the peak of the relationship. The Persona found it difficult to maintain interpersonal relationship as a result of repressed language, despite the fact that he was very interested in maintaining the relationship. Repressed emotions made him have trouble naming and understanding his emotional experience.

Repression can make it tough to describe how one feels to others. Though he may have had some fears that restrained him from expressing himself or his emotions. His self-disclosure was not active. It seems that he must have had a lot of things repressed in him. A man who waits for twenty-four years to express himself or his emotions, is automatically a psychiatric case.

Alice took the bull by the horns by leaving the vicinity for the mad man. Repression on its own is equivalent to madness. The first noticeable manifestation is in language. Sally, on the other hand, volunteered to help him get over Alice by making herself available without restrains. She said:

*Now Alice is gone  
But I'm still here  
You know I've been waiting for twenty-four years*

Sally had been close-marking the relationship between Alice and the Persona, with the knowledge of the Persona. The fact that he knew someone else was interested in him, would have propelled him to express himself to Alice but no, he was swimming in the ocean of assumption. The Persona watched Alice leave not because he was not interested in her anymore but because language repressed domiciles in the subconscious and it was difficult for him to express how he felt. Someone who could not express himself for twenty-four years, would not at the spur of a moment, in spite of the fact that he knew the weight of her absence. He realized that he will never get used to living next door to Alice, though she was gone.

*But I'll never get used to not living  
Next door to Alice  
No, I'll never get used to not living  
Next door to Alice.*

## 7. CONCLUSION

The ideational function of language is so important that it helps to maintain social relationships. It is the relationships we keep that make life worth living. When those relationships are broken, one is left in despair. Language is the mirror of life. When language is repressed, emotions are also invariably repressed. This can possibly lead to depression. This cuts across board, as an ordinary next door neighbor repressed language as well as a professor.

The negative consequences of repressed language has a connection with the totality of one's wellbeing, just as emotional status has a direct and profound influence on physical and mental health. The relationship between emotional and physical health seems to be direct and reciprocal.

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# A Survey of Reading Ability and Performance of Students in English Language in Selected Junior Secondary Schools in Benue State

Gwadue Chieorga, Terwase Philip Agbum, PhD & Ruth Doofan  
Chieorga-Gwadue

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigated reading ability and the performance of students in English Language in some selected junior secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area, Benue State, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study. One hypothesis was formulated and tested. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 9,986 JSS II students. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample 371 JSS II students located in 10 junior secondary schools. Reading Ability and Students' Performance in English Language Questionnaire (RASPELQ) was used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using frequency and simple percentages to answer the research questions and chi-square to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. The result revealed that reading ability has significant effect on the performance of students in English Language. It was also found that factors influencing students' reading ability and performance in English Language include: inadequate reading materials, unavailability of libraries and noise in the environment. It was recommended among other things that, teachers, parents and school administrators should provide reading materials that match students' ability; organize workshops, seminars and symposia to expose teachers of English to different strategies to improve students' reading ability and performance in English.*

*Keywords: reading, ability, performance, English language*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental process in learning. Oyetunde, Ojo, Korb and Babudoh (2016) maintain that children do not learn to read by chance, they have to be taught to read. Thus, they learn to read by being exposed to meaningful literacy activities consistently. Oriogu, Subair, Oriogu-Ogbuiyi and Ogbuiyi (2017) assert that reading is a pre-requisite of effective study habit which enhance students' academic performance. That is, it is the hallmark of success, not just in the academic environment, but a means of life-long learning.

Reading is an active skill that constantly involves guessing, predicting, checking and asking oneself questions (Oakhill, Cain & Elbro, 2015). According to Pikulski and Chard (2014), reading

is the process of constructing meaning from written texts. It is therefore a complex skill that requires coordination of a number of inter-related sources of information. Oyetunde, Ojo, Korb and Babudoh (2016) define reading as a process of looking at a series of written symbols and getting meaning from them. This means that, we use our eyes to receive written symbols (letters and punctuation marks) and we use our brain to convert them into words, sentences and paragraphs that communicate ideas to us.

Reading depends largely on the dynamic interaction between the reader and information in the text being read. This entails that reading is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and writer. The reader uses knowledge, skills and strategies to determine the meaning. Gbenedio (2008) affirms that reading is an activity that involves the process of recognizing written symbols or words, phrases and sentences. Karim and Hasan (2007) considered reading as a process, mode of thinking, a kind of real experience and it involves many complex skills: the ability to perceive printed words, to skim for information and then perhaps read intensively.

Reading is the key to the most advanced stages (Otaburuagu & Igbokwe, 2001). In other words, reading is very crucial to learning because it exposes a child to a wide range of information and knowledge. This implies that child's ability to read is necessary for his or her academic performance. It therefore means that a student who cannot read efficiently might find it difficult to excel academically. Aina, Ogungbeni, Adigun and Ogundipe (2011) assert that reading is a skill that must be nurtured from a child's earliest years and the habit of reading should start at an early stage and should be imbibed throughout one's lifetime. Ofodu (2009) states that where there is little reading, there will be little language learning. This means reading opens the doors of the world for people especially students who can read effectively as such it improves students' academic performance.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptual Review

Reading ability means possessing the basic skills to look at, and understand written or printed symbols. It entails receiving, recognizing, retaining, recalling or remembering ideas or information from any piece of writing (Agbor, Ashabua & Iwok, 2020). This means that students' ability encompasses learners' ability to communicate or make sense of written or printed symbols and to extract information in the text by using his/her knowledge, skills and strategies to achieve the purpose of reading activity itself. This involves thinking and also affects the entire personality of an individual. Thus, a learner's attitude towards school, parents and life may be affected by his/her reading ability. Tella and Akande (2007) posit that students' ability to read is at the heart of self-education and lifelong learning and that it is an act capable of transforming life and academic performance of students. That is, reading ability is the basis to effective learning which in turn has impact on the academic performance of students in English Language.

Reading ability and academic performance are inter-related and dependent on each other. Students often come from different environments with different levels of academic performance. Some students have good reading ability due to their early exposure to reading materials while

some tend to exhibit poor reading ability due to either lack of interest or inability of parents and teachers to make provision for reading materials. This could have adverse effect on students' performance in English Language. The Education Standards Research Team UK (2012) pointed out that having access to reading resources and having books of their own has an impact on learners' reading attainment. The number of books available at home and school (school libraries) has been found to be positively related to students' reading ability and attainment of reading skills (Clark, 2011).

Family members can promote students' literacy through jokes and riddles, narratives, poetry and through informal conversations (Anderson, Anderson, Friedrich & Kim, 2010). According to the authors, child-shared book reading has been found to aid students' learning about print and decoding while they are still young. This indeed helps students to develop good reading abilities. Martucci (2014) notes that children are active agents in their communicative and learning experiences. Thus, engaging them in reading story books has been found to inspire their quest for reading that promotes their reading skills and abilities.

Students' reading ability could be affected by multiple factors. Research has also shown that there exists a link between library and students' reading ability. Students who use their school library are nearly twice as likely to be reading outside of class everyday (Clark & Hawkins, 2011). Introducing students into using schools' libraries could work to the advantage of encouraging the reading culture among students which could equally impact positively on their academic performance.

It is evident that environmental noise may equally affects students' cognitive development and students' reading ability. Availability of reading materials could also play a critical role in students' reading ability and academic performance (Agbor, Ashabua & Iwok, 2020). Therefore, it is imperative to note that school libraries and teacher's experience could impact positively on students' reading ability. Students' reading ability could also be influenced by factors such as support from parents, provision of reading materials to students, exposing students to reading resources at their early stage in life and early exposure of students to school libraries could indeed enhance students' reading ability and academic performance in English Language.

### **Empirical Review**

It has been reported that excessive noise reduces the ability to listen to lessons and has a negative effect on a child's ability to learn (Connolly, Dockrell, Shield, Conetta, Mydlarz & Cox, 2019; Klatt, Bergstrom & Lachmann, 2013). This means that students exposed to continuous disruptive noise can experience poorer reading ability, memory and academic performance. Szalma and Huncock (2011) found that noise of low to moderate intensity may in fact evoke substantial impairments in students' performance. This means that noise in classroom setting is a factor associated with students' poor performance in reading.

Research has revealed that students who have books of their own enjoy reading more, and read more frequently than students who do not have books of their own (Clark & Poulton, 2011). This means that students who are exposed to reading resources both at school and home environ-

ment perform well in reading task as well as academic. Clark and Rumbold (2006) reported that parents and the environment are essential supports for the early teaching of reading and fostering a love of reading therefore students who are exposed to reading early turn to possess good reading ability which affects their academic performance in English Language positively.

The unsatisfactory performance of students in English Language could be traced to students' inability to read fluently, lack of experienced teachers to develop the right reading skills in students using appropriate teaching strategies and lack of school libraries to provide reading resources to students at their early stage in life. It has been found that the poor performance of students in English Language is usually caused by learners' unwillingness to read or lack adequate reading materials to engage with (Agbor, Ashabua & Iwok, 2020). The questions are: do students really possess the reading ability? Are they well equipped with functional literacy skills like reading speed, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension skills? This study therefore investigated reading ability and performance of students in English Language in some selected junior secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

The researchers adopted descriptive survey design for the study. This is a type of survey research design that provides information on comparison of the existing status of a thing or situation with the hope of improving existing conditions. The research design uses survey via questionnaire, interview and observation to gather data about varying subjects and describe in a systematic manner the characteristics, features, or facts about a given population. The main objectives of descriptive survey design were to identify present condition and point to the present needs, to study the immediate status of a phenomenon and facts finding (Emaikwu, 2012). This research design was adopted because the study was aimed at identifying the present status of JSSII students' reading ability to obtain facts on factors that contribute to reading ability of students which affect their performance in English Language.

The population was made up of 9,986 JSSII students in Makurdi Local Government Area, Benue State, Nigeria. The sample comprised 371 JSS 2 (187 male and 163 female) students across 10 sampled drawn from 21 governments owned and grant-aided secondary schools in the area of study. The choice of JSSII students was because the students at this level of study ought to acquire basic reading skills and possess adequate reading ability which could enhance their performance in English Language.

Simple random sampling technique was used for the study. The names of each of the 21 schools were written on separate pieces of paper and squeezed into a bowl from which the researchers randomly drew out a school after another until the 10 schools were complete. The choice of this sampling technique was based on the fact that all the schools sampled had JSSII students and the sampled schools serve as representative sample with respect to the research purpose.

Reading Ability and Students' Performance in English Language Questionnaire (RASPELQ) was used for data collection. It was constructed by the researchers. The RASPELQ consisted of 10

items. Items 1-5 assessed the impact of reading ability on students' performance in English Language; while items 6-10 elicited the factors that influence students' reading ability and performance in English Language. It had 2-point response scale options of Agree and Disagree to which the respondents ticked. The instrument was validated by two experts: one expert in English Language Education and one expert in Test and Measurement, all from Faculty of Education, Benue State University, Makurdi. The experts scrutinized the instrument thoroughly to ascertain that the items were appropriate, clear and relevant to the purpose of the study.

Copies of the instrument were administered to the participants in their various schools. These were distributed with the help of the English Language teachers in the sampled schools. The respondents were intimated that there was no right or wrong answer and were assured that their responses were confidential. The administration of the questionnaire took place within three weeks. Tables and percentages were used to answer the research questions. Chi-square was employed to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level.

#### 4. Data Presentation

The data obtained were presented, analyzed and interpreted in line with the research questions and hypothesis as follows:

**Research Question 1:** What are the factors influencing students' reading ability and their performance in English Language?

**Table 1: Factors influencing students' reading and performance in English Language**

	Item description	N	Agree	Disagree	Mean	Std. dev.
1	Reading is affected by noise in the home environment.	350	237	113	.68	.468
2	Students perform poorly when they cannot read.	350	247	103	.71	.456
3	Students perform better when they can read.	350	249	101	.71	.454
4	Noise in the school environment affects reading.	350	243	107	.69	.461
5	Libraries positively affect students' ability to read.	350	202	148	.58	.495

Table 1 shows that 237 and 243 of students out of 350 students for items 1 and 4 agreed; while 113 and 107 disagreed that reading is affected by noise in either home or school environment. For items 2 and 3, the result indicates that 247 and 249 agreed while 103 and 101 disagreed that students can perform poor when they cannot read while on the other hand students can perform better when they can read effectively. For item 5, out of 350 respondents, 202 students agreed while 148 disagreed that libraries positively affect students' ability to read. Besides, items 1, 4 and 5 have a mean of 0.68, 0.69 and 0.58 respectively; while items 2 and 3 have a mean of 0.71 each. This means that

reading is affected by noise in any study environment. Also, students that read and go to school libraries perform better in English Language.

**Research Question 2:** What is the impact of reading ability on students' performance in English Language?

**Table 2: Impact of reading ability on students' performance in English**

	Item description	N	Agree	Disagree	Mean	Std. dev
6	Students in my school can read.	350	246	104	.70	.458
7	Students in my school are fluent in reading.	350	123	227	.35	.478
8	Reading aids English performance	350	244	106	.70	.460
9	Students in my school have time to read	350	134	216	.38	.487
10	Students in my school have books to read	350	131	219	.37	.485

Table 2 shows that out of the 350 respondents, 246 of students agreed that they can read; while 104 disagreed. For items 7, 123 agreed; while 227 disagreed. For items 8, 9 and 10, the results indicate that 244, 134 and 131 agreed; while 106, 216 and 219 disagreed with the items. Items 6 and 8 have a mean of 0.70 each; while items 7, 9 and 10 have means less than 1 (0.35, 0.38 and 0.37). This implies that more students have challenges in reading and availability of books which impact negatively on their performance in English Language.

Hypothesis: There is no significant impact of reading ability on students' performance in English language.

**Table 3: Impact of reading ability on students' performance in English**

	Test statistics				
	Students in my school can read	Students in my school are fluent in reading	Reading aids English language performance	Students in my school have time to read	Students in my school have books to read
Chi-square	57.611 <sup>a</sup>	30.903 <sup>a</sup>	54.411 <sup>a</sup>	19.211 <sup>a</sup>	22.126 <sup>a</sup>
Df	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Sig.	.000 <sup>b</sup>	.000 <sup>b</sup>	.000 <sup>b</sup>	.000 <sup>b</sup>	.000 <sup>b</sup>

Table 3 shows that the significance level for the five items stated are 0.000 each. Therefore, at 95% confidence interval or 0.05 level of significance, there is a statistically significant impact of students' reading ability on their performance in English.

## 5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding revealed that the factors influencing students' reading ability and academic performance in English include: noise in the home, students' inability to read, noise in the environment and unavailability of libraries. This entails that, students who are exposed to reading materials turn to possess adequate reading skills which impact positively on their academic performance. This study also aligns with Clack and Hawkins (2011) who found that students who use library are likely to perform well and also acquire good reading habits. This finding confirms Klatter, Bergstrom and Lachmann (2013) who reported that indoor noise and reverberation in classroom settings are factors associated with poorer performance of students. The classroom excessive noise reduces the reading ability of students and indeed has negative effect on students' performance in English Language. This study also agrees with Connolly, Dockrell, Shield, Conetta, Mydlarz and Cox (2019) who found that different levels of classroom noise affect students' reading ability and performance in English Language.

The result also indicated that there is significant impact of students' reading ability on their performance in English. This means that students' ability to read efficiently could enhance better performance in English. Thus, students that possess adequate reading skills have chances of performing exceedingly great in English. This finding is in tandem with the study of Otaboruagu and Igbokwe (2001) which revealed that students' ability to read is very crucial to learning because it exposes a learner to a wide range of information and knowledge. This entails that students' reading ability is necessary for their performance in English Language. Moreover, the finding of this study is in agreement with Tella and Akande (2007) who investigated on students' reading ability and found that students' ability to read effectively transforms life and academic performance of students.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study showed that the factors that influence students' reading ability and performance in English Language are: availability of reading resources and exposure of students to reading materials enhance students' reading ability and academic performance. Besides, the study found that students who use library most often perform better than those who hardly go to the library for reading. In addition, reading environment that has noise affects students' reading ability negatively. The study therefore recommends that:

1. Proprietors and proprietresses of secondary schools should establish school libraries and ensure that students are exposed to their use.
2. School administrators should provide adequate reading resources for students across all secondary schools in Makurdi.
3. Reading Association of Nigeria (RAN) and Language Teachers' Association of Nigeria (LTAN) should organize seminars to ensure that English Language Teachers are exposed to factors affecting students' reading ability and performance in English Language.

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# Portrayal of Women in the Nigerian Civil War in Selected Androtext Narratives

Joy O. Odewumi

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## ABSTRACT

*War is not gender sensitive. Everyone is at risk; from the children, the elderly, the sick and women. After the civil war, the surviving combatants became heroes, while the women who bore the brunt of the war are forgotten. The methodology is qualitative and content analysed. Three andro-text narratives were chosen, and they are: Achebe's Girls at War, where women are portrayed as cheap, selfish, wayward and victims of circumstances. Ike's Sunset at Dawn, which showcased them as materialistic, victims, spoils of war, home wreckers, spreaders of STDs, and cheap. While Okpewho's The Last Duty depicts them as rape victims, insecure, helpless and agonizing characters. The theoretical framework is performance theory as postulated by Org and Austin, because war is performative. This study has revealed that, most androtext war narratives portray women in a negative light as fringe characters deserving war pangs. There is also a stereotypic depiction of women as helpless, weak, abused, agonizing, fearful, nightmarish and in subtle suffering, while awaiting the return of their loved ones in combats and others outside the war zones. This paper, therefore, posits that, women are not the cause of war, yet, worst hit beside children, and described as borderline character,*

*Keywords: androtext narrative, home wreckers, espionage, portrayal, gender, civil war, women war*

## I. INTRODUCTION

**T**he Nigerian civil war between June 1967 and January 1970 was a disastrous phenomenon that left lasting marks on the country and its citizenship. Devastating as the war was, it also inspires writers' might according to Ogunpitan (2002):

War is a great national crisis and a vivid historical marker. It is an event that shakes society to its very foundation. It therefore does not tax only the souls of men and stimulate artistic expression and thoughts; it also quickens their imagination. It dramatizes the best and the worst in the nation and gives reliable examples of courage, resourcefulness, and self-conscience, dishonesty, stupidity and short-sightedness. (p. 29)

Most writings on the civil war depicted characters in all the above mentioned courageous and lofty examples especially male characters. According to Uchendu (2007, p.1) "it is only the combatant

that has tales to tell after the war.” War creates different types of horror for women as asserts Turslen and Twagaramariya (2001) about the Rwanda civil war:

The entrenchment of violence creates new daily insecurities for women i.e. constant and overwhelming fear, exposure to abuse and obscurities, rape and threats of rape, kidnapping or death for themselves, their children or other relatives. (p.8)

From ancient time, women have always been victims of war, facing all sorts of abuse. The prophet Isaiah wrote about them in the Bible “Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished” (King James Bible, 2018, Isaiah 13:16).

Askin (1997, p.67) opined that “To the victor goes the spoils, has been a war cry for centuries and women were included as part of the spoils of war.” All this suffering is viewed as spoils of war.” All this suffering by women during the war does not make their depiction in many male texts favorable. Only female texts portray them in favorable light and highlight their plight and resourcefulness during war times.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is qualitative in nature. The texts under consideration are: Achebe’s *Girls at War and Other Stories* (1977), Ike’s *Sunset at Dawn* (1976), and Okpewho’s *The Last Duty*. They were analyzed to show how the women were stereotyped as home wreckers, victims and spoils of war, raped, displaced, agonized, abused, fearful, nightmarish, helpless, weak, etc. The theoretical framework adopted for this study is performative theory as postulated by Org and Austin due to war being a performance. A dance of death as Org (1999, p.68) explains sound as performative performance act “I gather sound simultaneously from every direction at once. I am at the centre of my auditory world which envelops me, establishing me at a kind of core sensation and existence.”

The sounds of bombs, shellings, gunshots, running feet, out of fear by the characters in the selected narratives demonstrates performativity. Austin, in Black (1965, p.221) explained that in a typical speech situation the speakers would “have performed acts within the class which include making statements, asking questions, issuing commands, giving reports, greetings and warnings.” Each members of this class is what Austin called ‘illocutionary act’, which Austin claimed that there were over thousands of such performative expressions in English and the novels under study here are written in English language. Achebe’s *Girls at War and other stories* (1977), Ike’s *Sunset at Dawn* (1976) and Okpewho’s *The Last Duty* (1976) will be used as the background narratives for this paper to demonstrate the performance ability of women in war times in androtext narratives and their portraiture as marginal characters. Portrayal is a way of characterizing a person through action, speech and others’ observation. Women are the female gender, young or old. The Nigeria civil war was a reality performed between June 1967 and January 1970, where many lives were lost, especially innocent children and women. The selected Androtexts are purposively chosen male Nigerian war literature for the sole purpose of this paper to see how women were stereotyped in the narratives during the Nigerian civil war.

### 3. PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR IN THE SELECTED TEXTS

A) The portrayal of women in Achebe's *Girls at War and other stories* (1977) is a tale of how women behaved in the civil war and their survival tactics which made the male author portrayed them as cheap: "she just came and threw herself at him, sobbing" (Achebe, 1977, p.120) and to show their disguise about how cheap these girls are, one of the male Red Cross volunteers asserts that they are not only cheap, but also worthless as cited here extensively after he lost his friend, a fellow volunteer, in an air raid. He placed all the blame on women:

Why should a man, a decent man, throw away his life, for nothing! Charley didn't need to die. Not for this sinking place. Yes, everything stinks here all dolled up and smiling. What are they worth? Don't I know? A head of stockfish that's all, or one American dollar and they are ready to tumble into bed. (Achebe, 1977, p.116)

Why are the girls so cheap? No one wants to know, they did not ask for the war neither were they consulted, yet they must bear the brunt of the war, due to their nature as women. Men always go in search of these girls, because they see them as victims of circumstances. They approach them for sex at anytime and anywhere and when the girls show any sign of tiredness or plea of refusal, they insist. For instance, as tired as the young lady was: "He kissed her lips and eyes and mumbled something about victims of circumstance" (Achebe, 1977, p.120). Dating of girls during war times has many ulterior motives ranging from the mundane to the obscure. For the men, it is for exploitation and sexual gains, while for the ladies it is for protection and for feeding, because food was a very scarce commodity during the Nigeria civil war. In fact, a goat head was equivalent to about ten maiden during the civil war period in the Eastern part of Nigeria. The question is, what stops a man from offering a maiden help without a condition attached to it, yet they turn around and label these hopeless ladies all sorts of names; prostitute, good for nothing as seen here: "He had his pleasure but wrote the girl off. He might have slept with a prostitute, he thought (Achebe, 1977, p.119). They are perceived as wayward: "It was clear as daylight to him now that she was kept by some army officer (Achebe, 1977, p.119). Even when it is clear that these maiden were victims of circumstances beyond their power and control as depicted here; they are still blamed for every mishap:

what a terrible transformation in the short period of less than two years! Wasn't it a miracle that she still had memories of the other life (Achebe, 1997, p.119)

Two years of constant movement, displacement, insecurity, death, agony, rape, abuse, shelling, bombing, hunger, starvation, fear, sickness and despair, can make any sane being crazy especially in a senseless war of attrition and greed. Women are inadvertently described as wasted generation considering the fate that befalls them in a war negotiated on their behalf: "What a terrible fate to befall a whole generation! The mothers of tomorrow" (Achebe, 1977:119). What a pity, women always bear the brunt of evil castigation as cheap and loose. They come about in androtext war fictions as women of easy virtue who surrender to men's whims without hesitation or resistance and that they even encourage this abuse by their nature.

B. Ike's *Sunset at Dawn* (1976) presents a blow by blow account of the war on both the Nigerian and Biafran sides. The tale of woes was written in graphic detail where women are portrayed as materialistic in face of war:

He was not the adventurous type, and the way his wife moaned over the precious singer electric machines, her irreplaceable wedding album, her box of trinkets valued in four figures, her expensive silver ware, her precious wedding present...God forbid that he should risk his life for material possession. (p. 21)

By extension, instead of worrying over safety, women are mundane individuals who when not being materialistic are victims and spoils of war: "Professor Ezenwa seized an opportunity when it presented itself. She gave him the time she would close for the day and he agreed to pick her up at an arranged spot" (Ike, 1976, p.46). Women's negative portraiture as home wreckers and spreader of sexually transmitted diseases as if they manufacture such diseases themselves comes to the fore in the way they are perceived in the narrative:

I avoid those civil defenders, especially the group from Port Harcourt. They leave a trail of bonny disease wherever they go, and our doctors are too busy with shell shock and battered bones to find time to tackle that killer effectively. (Ike, 1976, p.37)

Then as home wreckers: "How safe was it to leave Ami to husband-snatching single girls at Umua-hia who had branded themselves into the "Trader Association?" (Ike, 1976, p.102). This unscrupulous branding of women in the negative are common denominators mostly in androtext narratives of the civil war. Whatever action women take is viewed as either a betrayal, display of overt emotion or outright condemnable act even as victims of circumstances.

C. Okpewho's *The Last Duty* (1976) exposes the war experience of Aku, Oshevire's wife from Biafra, fictionalized as Simba and Zonda, the fictional name for Delta State and Nigeria respectively. Her case and portraiture is not different from that of other female characters in androtext civil war narratives. No minding her travail, stigmatization, quarantine and treatment as an outcast, Chief-London Toje Onovwakpo after removing her husband through false accusation and malice exploits Aku's desperation to unleash his wickedness and evil plan on her: "no sooner he got there, then I heard the sound of gunshots from somewhere not far away! at once I rushed into the room and following the civil defense instructions, Oghenovo and I dive quickly under the bed and lie flat on our bellies" (Okpewho, 1976, p.13). War time's hide and seek game not only frightens but traumatizes their victims and this is a daily routine experience for almost all women in war situations. They are taken advantage of, and they know but cannot do anything about it as Aku recounts here: "I could very clearly see my role: Toje's whoring mistress, bound to minister to his animal desire at the price of food and clothing" (Okpewho, 1976, p.75). Aku is obligated to become Toje's mistress against her better judgment due to basic necessities that she is being deprived of in war situation. Men take advantage of the war to seduce women and then turn round to label them as material-

istic as seen in the case between the private and sergeant, who kill themselves over a girl's love accused of double-dating and materialistic (Okpewho, 1976, p. 15-19).

As adulterers who betray their husbands' trust, either because they are too lazy or insecure to protect them, whether present or away somewhere during the civil war, women see this danger but are helpless and can do nothing about it as depicted here: "And now I see a new danger, a new kind of danger. For several months now Toje has shown us kindness...but here lies the danger. It seems I have to pay a price for the assistance that he is rendering and what a price to ask! I can see it all quite clearly" (Okpewho, 1976, p.12). Head or tail, the argument is tilted against the woman in all fronts. For instance, Chief Toje is involved with an Iddu prostitute, contracts a deadly Sexually Transmitted Disease, and blames it on his wife. The wife calls to remembrance their many years of marriage and trust, yet, to him, it is nothing short of weakness as seen here: "Twenty-five years and ten children, she was quick to remind me but weakness rules their minds as powerfully as it does their hearts and it takes just one little knock, what has come upon me to make nonsense of twenty-five years" (Okpewho, 1976, p.29). This narrative blames everything that happened on Aku, ignoring her difficult circumstances, even the husband she loves so much and waited for his return cannot find a place in his heart to forgive her. Women are blamed for all and any kind of treatment meted out on them in war situations. They are always characterized as static, worthless, desperate, used to settle scores, hopeless and unreasonable even when without the comfort and protection of their male folks.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

More women should write about war and civil war experiences of woman to provide another perspective to the psychological mystification suffered by women in desperate war situations. It is, therefore, recommended that writers of war narrative must situate women within the context of their nature and the fact that wars are usually negotiated on their behalf in making any judgment about them. Again, it is imperative to see why woman behave the way they do in war times and things are not the way they seem. One needs to dig deeper to see why this women behave the way they do.

Androtext narratives should be more sensitive to women's plight during war times as done in Biyi Bandele's war narrative, *Burma Boy* (2007) where women are not neither debased nor abused during the war.

Finally, women do not cause war, are never consulted, yet bear the brunt, suffering, anguish, anger, and agony of the war. This is enough reason to consider, as war crime any oppression targeted at women in war situation.

Women should be celebrated as their male counterpart because it is not easy to be a survivor of all the inhumanity of war.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

Women never clamor for war, "They were clamoring for wa without knowing the cost. How true indeed to their situation in our people's saying that those who hurry into battle do not know that

battle and death are close allies” (Ezeigbo 1996, p.3). This is reminiscence of the situation in the pre-colonial situation explored in Ezeigbo’s *The Last of Strong Ones*, when men clamor for war as if it is a trade negotiation. War cannot be without casualties’ majority of which are women and children. Women do not like war, yet if adequate preparation is not put in place for their safety and comfort during war times, they will not only become victims but castigated for the bloodbath that attend the execution of the war.

When war comes and they decide to engage in attack trade, they are branded materialistic, when raped, beaten and abused they are seen to have caused it by their vulnerable nature and therefore deserve it. Androtexts should see the higher role women play as they take up a logistic and espionage duties during war times, their roles as head of the families, the keepers of the home front and providers when the men are away in combat. Women roles in the prosecution of war and their efforts at bringing about lasting peace to war-torn clime cannot be overemphasized in Africa and the world over. They, therefore, deserve accolades and qualified to be represented in positive lights rather than the usual stereotypical negative portraiture especially in most androtext war narratives in Africa.

The gap this paper wish to fill is that women, should not be portrayal in negative light wherever war is, especially if it is an androtext narrative. Due to the fact, that, women who feels this negativity seldom come out to write about their experiences during the war, so that everyone can see and applaud. Except for a few like Nwapa, Ezeigbo, Adiche, most war literature are written by men, hence they exhalt men more than women because they are the combatants who are in the war front, while the women stay at home to take care of the family they left behind. Hence they feel and think women do nothing, but move from place to place during the war and when the war end, they return and all their sacrifices go down the drain. If they mention any of the abuse or suffering they encounter, they will be either divorce or sent out of their homes, hence the quietness. Women contributions to the war should be acknowledge and written for all to see. So that their positive contributions will be acknowledge and not be treated as borderline character, never again.

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# A Pragmatic Analysis of Questions in *Efúnróyè Tinúbú*

Simeon Olaogun & Lateef A. Adeleke

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## ABSTRACT

*The structural representation of questions has received considerable attention in Yorùbá Literature. However, little attention has been paid to their pragmatic functions, as there is no known work that analyze questions in terms of expected responses and pragmatic functions of questions in Yorùbá Dramatic Discourse. Therefore, this work examines the illocutionary forces of questions in Efúnróyè Tinúbú with a view to identifying their pragmatic functions. The study employs secondary method of data collection as well as quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. The Speech act theory as conceived by Austin (1965) and further developed by Searle (1969) is adopted as the theoretical framework for the analysis. The study reveals that questions do indirectly perform context-based functions that are entirely different from information seeking that most grammar books emphasize. The work equally shows that the question types identified on the basis of speakers' expected response are yes-no questions, content word questions, alternative questions, action eliciting, and rhetorical questions. The work also identifies different pragmatic functions of questions in the book apart from the most popularly known information seeking function. Such pragmatic functions include seeking affirmation, expressing worry, objection, expressing accusation, degradation, expressing curiosity, expressing disappointment, expressing denial, seeking suggestion, providing information, providing suggestion, giving order, expressing confusion etc. Consequently, the paper concludes that to have a better understanding of forms and functions of questions in language, there is a need for an analysis that transcends mere structural classification and information seeking phenomenon.*

*Keywords: questions, illocutionary force, information seeking question, speech acts theory, context-based questions.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The structural classification of questions in natural language has received considerable attention in language. This is what informed Ilie (2015) to argue that several theoretical schools have been concerned with describing and defining the distinctive features of questions in general and of their multiple uses in particular. Focusing exclusively on syntax, structuralist grammarians pointed to relevant aspects of the formal construction of questions, such as word order or affirmative versus negative orientation. Quirk et al. (1973, 1985) posit that questions are sentences marked by one or more of these three criteria: the placing of the operator immediately in front of the subject: *will john speak to the boss today*, the initial positioning of an interrogative or wh-element: *who will you speak to?* Or with rising intonation: *You will speak to the BÓSS?* Similar-

ly, Awóbùlúyì (1978) states that there are two types of interrogative sentences in Yoruba: interrogative sentences that contain question words and those without question words which usually have a special rising intonation pattern. Bámgbósé (1967) is of the opinion that any clause with a question item is an interrogative clause in the Yorùbá language.

Function-wise, many scholars have discussed and classified questions into categories. However, many of these works did not go beyond the lens of information seeking function of question which is the most popular function of question among language users. In this regard, Angeliki (1990) observes that ‘the first thing anyone thinks of when reflecting on the purpose and function of a question is that it is a means of requesting information’. Similarly, Ilie (2015) reveals that ‘what we normally call questions, that is utterances that are syntactically interrogative sentences, are often perceived by language users as seeking an answer and/or information requiring or expecting an answer is often regarded as the most basic and most common functions of question’. Scholars have however employed other parameters beyond syntactic classification to classify questions. For instance, Ilie (1999) made distinction between standard questions and non-standard questions. Standard questions perform information seeking function while non-standard questions ‘fulfil other functions than requesting information or explicit answers’. In Huddleton and Pullum (2002), questions are classified putting semantics and pragmatics into consideration. They come up with three types of question i.e. polar question, alternative which expects response to be one of the alternatives provided by the speaker. i.e. the register or the bursar?, and variable question which expects diverse responses just like content word questions.

Nonetheless, more recent works on question have narrowed research on question to their pragmatic functions and bring forth many context-based functions of question. In Omotunde, et.al (2021), questions are examined with insight from pragmatic competence. They identified nine pragmatic functions of questions which include questions to indicate annoyance, questions to foster interpersonal relationship, question to persuade somebody, question to showing disapproval etc. the work concluded that ‘in a bid to build on a learner’s competence in a language, such learners should be introduced to the importance of contexts in determining the function which a particular question is meant to perform in any communicative encounter’.

While these works have been insightful to the syntactic and pragmatic classification of questions, little or no attention has been paid to the pragmatic functions of questions especially in Yorùbá Dramatic Discourse. Hence, we cannot claim that all context-based pragmatic functions of questions in human language have been exhausted. In this paper, we expand the scope of earlier studies on classification of questions according to speaker’s expected response and examined the unexplored pragmatic functions of each question type. To understand the pragmatic functions of question in Yorùbá, we examined questions in Yorùbá dramatic text *Eḡúnróyè Tinúbú* with particu-

1 *Eḡúnróyè Tinúbú* is a drama book written in English and Yoruba. The Yoruba version used for this study was published in 2009.

lar attention to speaker's expected response and provide contextual explanations that further support each context-based functions of questions.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The speech acts theory forms the framework on which the data analyzed in this work is based. Speech act theory is concerned with the performative aspect of utterances. The theory is of the idea that words do not just say something, but they do something. The basic assumption of speech acts theory is that we use language to do things or to perform acts and there are so many functions or ways in which we use speech. According to Austin (1965), in every utterance, a person performs an act such as stating a fact, stating an opinion, confirming or denying something, making a prediction or a request, asking a question, issuing an order, giving a permission, giving a piece of advice, making an offer, making a promise, thanking somebody or condoling somebody. All these are speech acts.

Austin (1965) introduced three basic components by which a speech act is formed. These are locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. Locutionary act is an act realised when the speaker utter words in a proper order that carries meaning, sense, and reference. Illocutionary act refers to the action intended to pass across by the speaker in producing a given utterance. Such speakers' intention may be, questioning, requesting, promising, giving, commands, warning, threatening, describing, appealing etc. Perlocutionary Acts, as the third component of a speech act, is the act of causing a change or creating an effect in the mind of the hearer as a result of producing a meaningful utterance. They are the consequences of the speaker's utterance on the behaviour of the hearer.

### 3. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This section deals with the presentation and analysis of data. We show that apart from information requesting function that questions in language primarily performed, they equally perform some pragmatic functions as exemplified in the following sections.

### 4. PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF CONTENT WORD QUESTIONS IN EFÚNRÓYÈ TINÚBÚ

A content word question is a question that requires the use of question words such as *ta*, *kí*, *mélòó* etc. It is also a question type that requires a clausal response. Here, the respondent is at liberty to provide as much information as he can provide. The speaker expects a response that is informative enough to clearly satisfy his curiosity. In content word questions, the speaker is not only requesting information but also performs indirect functions which are the illocutionary forces behind making the interrogative statements as given below.

#### Seeking affirmation

1. Tinúbú: *Taa ló dáwoṅ lẹ̀kun?* [Who stopped them?]
2. Tinúbú: *Taa ló lé gbogbo wọn lọ?* [Who sent them packing?]

Tinúbú uttered the excerpts above to restate her strong support for the king's rulings in Lagos and to confirm if the king is fully aware of all she has done to support his rulings. In her words, "when some chiefs wanted to revolt recently, who stopped them?" "When we heard that some people were playing secret visits to Kòsókó in Èpé, who sent them packing?" The king understands that these questions are affirmation seeking, hence he affirmed these questions as undisputable facts and as efforts channeled by the speaker to defend his government in Lagos. He confirmed this with his affirmative statement "You are the one, auntie."

### Expressing worry

3. Dally: *Ǹí wọn bá sá lọ tí wọn ò padà wá mọ́ òkọ́?* ["what if they ran away and they don't come back?"]

Tinúbú's disposition of trust on her servants got Dally really disturbed that he couldn't help but voice out his worry when he witnessed Tinúbú telling her servants to render the account of some money without monitoring. Dally voiced out his worry in form of question as he said "I am sure this is part of the money we gave you to buy goods for us. Suppose, I mean, what if they ran away and they don't come back?" Tinúbú quickly understands this as a statement of fear and worry as she answered "I now see your problem. You marvel at the trust implicit in the trust practice of masters allowing their servants to trade on their own....."

### Objection

4. Aya Adéyeyè: *Kí ni itumò gbogbo ohun tí ò ní wí yí?* [What is the relevance of what you are saying?]
5. Aya Adéyeyè: *Kí ló pa ó lérìn-ín lára ohun tí mo wò yí?* [What looks funny to you in this outfit I put on?]

The questions above are deployed by Mrs. Adéyeyè to show her displeasure towards Vikiasony's statement who tried to humiliate her traditional mode of dressing by saying "I have never seen a woman in this outfit before, it is funny. And I can see you also plait your hair." Mrs Adéyeyè objected to this humiliating statement with her questions. While the excerpt in (4) is used by the speaker to detest Vikiasony's statement, the excerpt in (5) is used to object to his statement that Mrs. Adéyeyè's outfit is funny as she responded "But Mr. Vikiasony, You are rather odd. **What looks funny in this outfit?**"

### Levelling Accusation

6. Turner: *Báwo lo ẹ̀ se mọ́ pé Èkó nílò agbowó òde?* [How did he know that Lagos needs a custom officer?]
7. Turner: *Kí ló dé tí àjẹ̀jẹ̀ yóò maa gbádùn ju omo, ilú lo?* [Why must a stranger be made more comfortable than a citizen?]

The excerpts above are questions deployed by the speaker to level an accusation against the parties concerned. For instance, the excerpt in 6. above is used to level an accusation against the consuls who suggested that Lagos needs to replace its incumbent chief officer with a white man. She said “When I heard of this move to replace Délé, a number of questions came to my mind. How did the consul know that Lagos needs a custom officer?” this is a question adopted to accuse the internal forces that motivated such idea. It is more obvious in her statement in excerpt 7 where she asked “why must a stranger be made more comfortable than a citizen? Kábíyèsí, you have a duty to protect your citizens and a compulsory duty to protect Lagos.” The two questions have the same force of sending accusation to the internal and external parties involved in the plan to replace a citizen with a stranger. Hence their pragmatic function of expressing accusation.

### Degradation

8. Adéjùmò: Taa tilẹ̀ ni ọ̀ gan? Ọ̀ba kejì? [‘Who exactly are you? A second Oba?’]

In the context of the excerpt above, Tinubu angrily confronts Adéjùmò and said “I will show you exactly who I am.” This statement got Adéjùmò angry that he responded with this question to degrade Tinúbú’s status. He therefore, challenged her to mention her status or position in Lagos that makes her feel like she is above everybody. Hence, the pragmatic function of the question is to degrade Tinubu’s status as a woman popularly known for her authoritative life style.

9. Tinúbú: Ta ni ní jẹ̀ ọ̀ba ní bi ti ajélẹ̀ òyìn bó wà? Ta ni tí yóò yí àse, ajélẹ̀ padà? [‘Who is the Oba anyway, where there is the consul? Who is he to challenge the authority of the consul?’]

In the context of the excerpt above, Tinúbú was talking about how irrelevant the king has become under the consul’s authority when Turner asked her if the consul sought the king’s consent before ordering the arrest of the masqueraders that beat up his boys, Tinubu responded with the expression above to degrade the king’s authority in comparison with the consul’s authority.

### Expressing Curiosity

10. Lọ́lá: Kí ló wá se lẹ̀? [And what happened?]  
 11. Lọ́lá: Ni àlẹ̀ ba sá lo? [And the lover escaped?]  
 12. Olórò: Báwo lo se mọ̀? [‘How do You know?’]

All the questions above are asked in the same context. Sofu narrated an experience she had about a woman who was almost caught cheating on her husband with another lover. In the process of her narration, Lola and Olórò who are so curious to have all information about Sofu’s experience deployed questions of the different forms above to express their eagerness to hear it all from their friend whenever she paused to take a breath. For instance, Lola uttered the question in (10) to show her eagerness to know what really happened when Sofu intentionally paused talking and burst

into laughter. The question in 12 expresses Olórò's curiosity to know how Sofu has all the information she shared them.

### Expressing Disappointment

13. Dòsùmú: Ó se wá jé eni tó jé iyá fún mi náà ni yóò tú Ìlú tí mo ọ̀ba lé lóri? ['Why would my mother want to destroy the very city in which I am a King?']

In the context of the excerpt above, Campbell entered the palace to report Tinúbú's aggressive dealings around the town to the king thus "I saw from afar some people rioting. I quickly turned back to run, because I was frightened. Some of the hooligans then ran after me. I was only lucky there was a great distance between us. I did not want to go home so I took the longest route to your palace. Your highness, we have a great problem on our hands." The king felt disturbed by this and many other atrocities that were reported to have been committed by Tinubu who is an auntie to the king. In response to this negative report, Dòsùmú (the king) expressed his disappointment in Tinubu by asking the above question. Hence, the pragmatic function of this question is not information seeking but rather expressing disappointment.

### Expressing Denial

14. Sofu: Kí ló dé ta ló ní lu taa ni? ['What happened? Who attacked who?']  
 15. Olórò: Kí ló ní wí? ['What are you talking about?']

In the context of the excerpts above, Vikiasony came with two naval officers and on seeing Sofu and Olórò, he said to the officers "Yes, here they are! These are two of the men who attacked me." Sofu quickly denied the accusation with the prompt questions "What happened, who attacked who?" and Olórò also followed it up with a question of similar force "what are you talking about?" these questions are deployed to deny the accusation. Hence, their pragmatic function is that of denial.

### Seeking Suggestion

16. Adéyèyè: Kí ni a wá lè se báyií? ['What can we do now?']  
 17. Adéyèyè: Èwo ni síse? ['What is the next line of action?']  
 18. Adéyèyè: Kí tún wá la lè se o? ['What else can we do?']  
 19. Adéyèyè: Báwo lẹ̀ rò pé a se lè se yẹn? ['How best do you think we can do that?']

The excerpts above are questions used to seek suggestions on different occasions in Efúnróyè Tinúbú. For instance, the excerpt in 16 was deployed by Adéyèyè to seek suggestion from Bada and Turner on how they can help the king to reclaim his authority from external influence.

### Seeking Confirmation

20. Tinúbú: È rò pé ọ̀ba yín máa gbọ́? ['You think your king will listen?']

In the context of the excerpt above, Turner was worried “we should warn the Oba against this danger, and he should in turn warn all non-indigenes to keep out of the affairs of Lagos” Tinúbú deployed the question above to confirm from the addressees if the king would adhere to any advice coming from them.

### Providing Suggestion

21. Turner: *Kí ló dé tí gbogbo omo ilú èkó ò le se ìpàdé?* [‘Why can’t all citizens of Lagos hold a meeting?’]

The question above is an expression given by Turner when he was deliberating on how Lagos can be freed of external influence. In this context, Adéyeyè asked “so, what else can we do?” and in response to this question, Turner used the above question to state his own suggestion that all citizens of Lagos should meet and pass a resolution to stop the consul and all non-indigenes from intervening in the affairs of Lagos. This is particularly interesting as it is a direct opposite of traditional function of question which is seeking information. It is amazing that question in this sense perform the pragmatic function of providing suggestion which is opposite of the traditional function of question.

### Expressing Confusion

22. Dòsùmú: *Kí ni gbogbo eléyí?* [‘What is all this?’]

In the context of the excerpt above, great noise rocked the palace, everyone laments different grief, for some, it is death of family or relatives, for others it is house break; everybody laments calamities outside the palace. The king who was in a meeting with other chiefs on the rampart issue of killings and house break in the city got so much disorganized and confused hearing such great noise of grief from outside. He expressed his confusion with the content word question in the excerpt above.

## 5. PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF YES/NO QUESTIONS IN ẸFÚNRÓYÈ TINÚBÚ

### Inquiring/Requesting information

Questions in this category are used to inquire or seek information. The most popular function of question is that it is a means of requesting information. Information question can thus be understood as a way of desiring for knowledge. Questioning is therefore the illocutionary act of all information questions. For instance, the following excerpts below from *Ẹfúnróyè Tinúbú* are used to inquire or request information and the addressees also realized that the speakers are requesting information.

23. Tinúbú: *Sé ẹ fẹrẹ mọ ẹnì tí o nìlẹ tele?* [‘Do you care to know who the rightful owner of the hole was?’]

24. Tinúbú: E si fé mo ohun tí o seḷè nínú ihò lóhùn-ún? [‘You want to know what happened in the hole?’]
25. Dally: Sé èyàn yín ni wón àbí ara àwọn ẹrú yín? [‘Are they your relatives or your slave?’]
26. Turner: Sé o ti bá oḅa so, ó kí ó tó gbé ìgbésè, yí? [‘Did he see the King before he took this decision?’]

In the context of the questions in 25 above, Dally was curious to know the relationship that Tinúbú shares with Lékè and Bepo that gave her so much confidence to entrust them with so much money. To seek this information, Dally asked “But madam, if I may just ask, the boy and girls you’ve just spoken to, **are they your relatives or your slaves?**” Tinúbú also understood this as an information seeking question and responded accordingly by providing the information thus: “They are not my relatives and not my slaves, I have no slaves but servants. We are all relatives in broad sense.” In the same vein, Turner expressed his curiosity in excerpt (26) when Tinubu informed him of the outrageous activities of the consul in the city of Lagos, Turner became so inquisitive as Tinubu reported how the consul ordered the arrest of the boys that followed a Masquerader. Turner then asked the question in 26 out of curiosity to know if the consul sought the King’s consent before giving such an order.

### Expressing Surprise

27. Tinúbú: Ìwo ti oḱo, tẹ̀mi mólé? [‘You incarcerated my husband?’]
28. Bepo: Sùngbón, sé wón ò ti ilẹ̀kùn ní? [‘But did they not lock the door?’]
29. Dòsùmú: Ajéḷè ló rán wón wá mú won? [‘Consul ordered their arrest?’]

The excerpt (28) was uttered in a courtyard at the front of Madam Tinúbú’s house where Sofu came to narrate what transpired between a woman who was almost caught by her husband for cheating with a lover. Sofu’s narration was very detailed that Bepo found it surprising that Sofu can get such detailed information. Hence, he expressed his surprise with the question “but, didn’t they lock the door?” Olórò found this question ludicrous and responded “Of course, they did. Wouldn’t you if you were in their shoes?” In the same vein, Dòsùmú who is the King of Lagos employed the question in 29 to express his shock and surprise when Tinúbú informed him of some decisions that are exclusively carried out by the consul out of the king’s awareness. Tinúbú said “Recently, I observed that foreign influence, especially from the side of the consul, is gaining ground and this is eroding your power.... Two of the boys were to be arrested in front of my house only yesterday, but I prevented their operation” Dòsùmú was shocked by this report that someone could be giving order to arrest without a consent from him as a king so he couldn’t help but expressed his surprise by asking the question in 29.

### Expressing Accusation

30. Adéjùmò: Sé iyan le fi n kiri ilú tí è n lu àwọn eni eḷéni? ['Is that why you are going around the town to beat innocent people?']
31. Vikiasony: Ñjé mi ò kíló fún yín lójó tí è n lù mí? ['Didn't I warn you when you were beating me?']
32. Vikiasony: Ñjé e, dámi lóhùn? ['Did you answer me?']

The excerpt in 30 was uttered by Adéjùmò to impute guilt against Sofu and Olórò for beating Vikiasony illegally. In the same scene, Vikiasony uttered the excerpt in 31 and 32 above to emphasize why the accused are guilty and how much he warned them not to beat him. In response to all these accusations, Sofu and Olórò understand that these questions are meant to accuse them for their wrongdoings, thence, they lamented that they shouldn't be arrested because their fathers are chiefs. In their words, "You can't arrest us like this. Our fathers are chiefs. Go and tell our fathers." This response itself reveals that the accused understand the consequence of such accusations.

### Seeking Confirmation

33. Dòsùmú: Sé èyí tí eégún nà? ['Is it the one that masquerader beat?']

The question in the excerpt above occurred in the context where Tinubu had a private meeting with the king on account of how foreigners have delegated some power to themselves in the city. In her words, "Nothing can truer but care must be taken. Recently, I observed that foreign influence, especially from the side of the consul, is gaining ground in Lagos, and this is eroding your powers. Do you know that Campbell has taken up Vikiasony's case? The king who wants to be sure of who Vikiasony is, asked in confirmation "is it the one who was beaten up by the masquerader?." Tinúbú understands that this is a question with illocutionary act of confirming, thus he responded to this with "yes" which is an affirmation.

### Expressing Worry

34. Toker: Ñjé, èyí ò wa burú jù? ['Isn't this terrible?']

In the excerpt above, Vikiasony narrated what transpired between him and Tinúbú and the terrifying message she sent him to deliver to Adéjùmò and Toker. Vikiasony reported "She said you have no right whatsoever to poke your long nose into a matter already in the hands of the king. She said even, if you were there, her boys would beat you up too" Toker was so disturbed by this message, hence, he expressed his distress with the question in the excerpt above.

### Providing Information

Questions in this category perform an indirect function of providing information instead of the popular information seeking function of question. This is more interesting because it reveals that

question can perform an assertive function which is a popular function of declarative sentence. This is exemplified below with instances of such interesting occurrence in Ẹ́fúnróyè Tinúbú

35. Tinúbú: Njé o mò pé Kàńbè ti bèrè sí yanjú ọ̀rọ̀ Vikiasony. [‘Do you know that Campbell has taken up Vikiasony’s case?’]

This occurred in the inner room in Dòsùmú’s palace, Tinúbú was seen making reference to how foreigners have ascribed some power of decision making in Lagos to themselves without the consent of the king. To maintain modesty, Tinúbú employed the question above to provide information about one of the ways by which foreigners have influenced decision making in the town. she knows fully well that the king is not aware that Vikiasony’s case has been getting foreigner’s influence hence, she brings that information to the king’s notice with the question “**Do you know that Campbell has taken up Vikiasony’s case?**” The king also understands this as information providing question therefore, he responded “but I am still looking into the matter” which expresses how surprising he felt to receive such information.

36. Sandman: Sé kí se Tinubu ni, Tí ó ń da Ekó láàmú? [‘Is it not Tinubu that is terrorizing Lagos?’]

In the excerpt above, Campbell asked Sandman to mention who hurt him. Sandman responded to this question with “is it not always Madam Tinúbú, the terror in Lagos. Thus, this question is an indirect way of providing information to Campbell’s question.

37. Asogbon: Sé e, mò, pé Tinúbú náà lóré, òyìnbó? [‘Are you aware that Tinubu also has white friends?’]

This excerpt occurred in the palace where Dòsùmú vows to eliminate Tinúbú by seeking external power from the whites. Asogbon quickly reminds him why it may not be easy as Dòsùmú assumed because Tinúbú also has whites as friends. Asogbon provided this information with the aid of the question in excerpt 37 above.

38. Adéjùmò: Sé kò yẹ́ kí àwa ènìyàn dúdú ti mò pé òyìnbó jìna sí wa bí sánmò ti jìna sílẹ̀ ní? [‘Isn’t it not yet enough for the blacks to know that the white are far ahead of us like earth to sky?’]
39. Adéjùmò: Sé èyin tilẹ̀ rò pé àwa ènìyàn dúdú lẹ̀ dá ònkankan se láìjẹ̀ pé àwọ̀n òyìnbó bá wa lówọ̀ sí ní? [‘Do you think we black people can achieve anything without white people’s influence?’]

The context of the excerpts in 38 and 39 above is in a scene where chiefs disagreed on whether the power welded on the whites in Lagos is getting too much or not. In response to the chiefs who are of the opinion that foreigners are overpowered by the king, Adéjùmò responded “I think it is time to tell ourselves some home truths. Do we sincerely believe that we can really make progress without the able guidance of the whites? Is it not yet enough for the blacks to know that the whites are far ahead of us like earth to sky? What is there to be ashamed of? We are backward, that’s the truth.”

These questions are information providing questions because Adéjùmò employed them as evidence to drive his point home and as indirect way of giving supportive information to his points. Hence, these questions perform the exact opposite functions of what question is known for- information seeking.

## 6. PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF ACTION-ELICITING QUESTIONS IN *EFÚNRÓYÈ TINÚBÚ*

In this type of question, the questioner is asking a question to induce the respondent to act. In other words, they are actions eliciting questions as against information eliciting questions. They are polite requests. This is evident in the following excerpts from *Efúnróyè Tinúbú*. Action-eliciting questions have directive illocutionary act as illustrated below.

### Giving order

40. Tinúbú: È ti fi àwọn omọ yẹn sílẹ́ kí ẹ́ bá ẹ̀sẹ́ yín sòrọ́? ['Have you released the children and ran away?']

In the excerpt above, Tinúbú's utterance is an appropriate example of indirect request which has the directive illocutionary act because the speaker in actual sense gave an order to the listener to carry out the action of releasing as opposed to the act of expecting any verbal information from the listener. Interestingly, the listener understands the illocutionary force of the question and ran immediately. Thus, the speech act is successful because the hearers actually performed the expected action of releasing the children.

41. Turner: Kí lo ní seyín lóhùn-ún yẹn tí ẹ́ ní pàkúta sí òrò, oḅa báyii? ['What is your problem over there that you are interrupting the king's speech?']

In the excerpt above, Turner's intention for uttering the question is not to get a verbal response but rather to make the addressees perform the act of keeping their mouth shut. He however adopted the question to avoid being rude. Therefore, this utterance has a directive act because the speaker tried to get the hearer to do the act of keeping shut. The perlocutionary act is that the hearer performs the action of maintaining decorum immediately after the utterance. Hence, the act is successful.

42. Lékè: Ìyá, ònjé èyin náà ò ní wá kan ilẹ̀kùn òhún báyii? ['Mother, won't you come and knock the door like this?']

Lékè uttered the above statement after she had tried to knock *Tinúbú's* door several times without receiving any response. Her intention is to commit *Ìyá* to help her knock the door probably *Tinúbú* will respond out of a respect to *Ìyá's* old age. Therefore, the illocutionary act of this question is Directive act because it is an attempt by the speaker to get something done by the addressee. This act is successful because following this expression, *Ìyá* moved towards the door and knocked without any verbal response.

43. Dòsùmú: Àbí àwọn Asónà ti dé? ['Are the guards around?']

*Dòsùmù* uttered the above expression when he heard noise coming from the outside. The expression is to induce *Eletu* who sat with him to check if the noise from the outside signals the arrival of the guards he sent on an errand. Hence, the illocutionary act of the utterance is directive while the perlocutionary act is that *Eletu* quickly stand up and look through the window to confirm who the people are. This shows that the act is successful because the listener recognizes it as an indirect request of action and successfully carried out the action.

44. *Dòsùmù*: *Ìtàn tí ò n sọ lọ òkó, Kanbẹ?* ['Kanbẹ, what about the story you were narrating?']

*Dòsùmù* uttered the question above to propel *Kanbẹ* into action. *Kanbẹ* was narrating a story to *Dòsùmù* but he had to stop because some visitors entered, immediately after the visitors' departure, *Dòsùmù* adopted the question above to tell *Kanbẹ* to continue his story and *Kanbẹ* also understand this as a permission giving utterance as he continued his story where he stopped.

#### 7. Statistics of the pragmatic functions of questions in *Efúnroyè Tinúbú*

	Number	Percentage
Inquiring/requesting information	96	69.6
Seeking affirmation	4	2.9
Expressing worry	2	1.4
Objection	2	1.4
Expressing accusation	5	3.6
Degradation	2	1.4
Expressing curiosity	3	2
Expressing disappointment	1	0.72
Expressing denial	2	1.4
Seeking suggestion	4	2.0
Seeking confirmation	2	1.4
Providing suggestion	1	0.72
Expressing confusion	1	0.72
Expressing surprise	3	2
Providing information	5	3.6
Giving order	5	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100</b>

#### DISCUSSION

In the drama text, five question types, based on the expected responses, are identified. They are, content word question, yes/no question, action eliciting question, alternative question and rhetorical questions. However, as evident above, we only discuss pragmatic functions of three: content word question, yes/no question and action eliciting question.

The table reveals that there are more interesting context-based functions of questions that are not yet explored in Yoruba language as the work identified sixteen context-based functions of

question that have not been previously identified in the literature. Such functions are inquiring/requesting information, expressing worry, providing suggestion, expressing surprise, expressing disappointment, objection, degradation, expressing accusation, expressing curiosity, giving permission, expressing denial, seeking suggestion, seeking confirmation, expressing confusion, providing information and giving order.

It is also observed in the table above that the pragmatic function of inquiring/requesting information constitutes the largest percentage of all the pragmatic functions of questions in text examined. The reason for this, as said above, is that the primary function of question is information seeking or inquiring. Thus, it is not surprising that this is the most popular function of question among language speakers.

We exclude rhetorical and alternative questions because alternative question is similar to yes/no interrogative because both of them start with a finite operator and do not have a content word question while a detailed discussion of pragmatic functions of rhetorical questions was undertaken in Oládògún and Adélékè (2022). The statistics of all the question types identified in the text is given below.

#### 8. STATISTICS OF THE QUESTION TYPES USED IN EFÚNRÓYÈ TINÚBÚ

Question Types	Frequency	Percentage
Content word question	179	58.1
Yes/no question	102	33.1
Alternative question	4	1.3
Action-eliciting question	5	1.6
Rhetorical question	18	5.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>100</b>

#### Discussion

It is discovered that the book contains 837 propositions in all, out of which 308 are questions with different syntactic variations and pragmatic functions. It is further observed that the most commonly used Question in the book is the content word questions with 58.1% occurrence out of 100% in all. Yes/no Question has 33.1%, Rhetorical Question constitutes 5.8%, Action-eliciting question has 1.6%. while the alternate question has 1.3%. It is very clear that content word question is the most common because the book from which the data for this work was extracted is a drama book and there is tendency to find more content word questions in Drama than in any other genre of Literature. This is because Drama is conversational in nature where there is interchange of idea among the interlocutors. And the interlocutors rarely use other type of questions because of two reasons. One is because content word questions can be used to replace any other type of question without losing any information while other type of questions cannot be used to replace content

word question without losing some of the information we want to get. Let us take yes/no Question for example. Are you coming? When are you coming can be used instead of this, and we will get to know if the hearer is coming or not from the answer supplied while yes/no question cannot be used to replace content word question without losing some part or all of the meaning. Take for instance, when are you coming replaced with, are you coming? This will not supply us the intended response to know the actual time but rather this yes/no question can only get us to know if the respondent is coming or not. Thus, we suspect that the interlocutors employ content word question than yes or no question in the Drama book because it gets them detailed response than any other question type.

## 9. CONCLUSION

We discovered that questions can perform both suggestion seeking and suggestion providing functions just as it can perform information seeking and information providing functions. This interesting fact about question reveals that if we must have a better understanding of forms and functions of questions in language, there is a need for an analysis that transcends mere structural classification and information seeking phenomenon.

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# Hiatus Resolution in Ósósò: Vowel Elision

Agnes T. Legbeti

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## ABSTRACT

*Extant Edoid studies have shown that when vowels are in sequence within or across morpheme boundary, the choice of the eliding vowel in  $V_1 + V_2$  hiatus often lies between grammatical or phonetic considerations or both parameters. This paper therefore carries out the analysis of hiatus in diverse grammatical structures and phonetic frames in Ósósò to determine the most essential of these parameters for the choice of the eliding vowel in  $V_1 + V_2$  hiatus. Data comprises 95 different frames taken from folktales and procedural narratives as told by consultants who have lived virtually all their lives in the village and are versed in the tradition of storytelling, with additional data sourced from a self-structured 200-words list and Ibadan syntactic paradigm. Purely descriptive, the paper argues that although a phonological process, regardless of the phonetic frame, grammatical parameter is the main determinant of the choice of the eliding vowel in  $V_1 + V_2$  hiatus in Ósósò.*

*Keywords:* vowel, hiatus, morpho-syntax, Ósósò, Edoid

## I. INTRODUCTION

In most West Benue Congo languages, vocalic hiatus generally violates the permissible syllable structure necessitating the adoption of different resolution strategies. Extant studies on many Edoid languages like Edo: Amayo (1976) and Omozuwa (2010), Urhobo: Aziza (1997), Isoko: Donwa-Ifodo (1985), Emai: Egbokhare (1990), Ghotuo: Elugbe (1972), Etsako: Elimelech (1976) Ikhin: Opoola and Oladimeji (2021), show that vowel elision as hiatus repair strategy is pervasive. Elision is so common in Edo that Welmers (1973:43) reports “in the vast number of Edo utterances containing transitive verbs, the final vowel of the verb simply does not appear. After a considerable amount of elicitation, an investigator may well wonder how even a native speaker of Edo knows what the final vowel of a given verb is.” According to Egbokhare (1997:177), in Emai, elision applies in both deliberate and quick speech, “at any point in time listeners are presented with a highly phonetically reduced but natural stream of speech. Since despite this, communication is sustained, it means that vowel elision is systematic and represented in the grammar of the language in some ways.”

Considering Edoid languages have open syllable structure, words always end in vowels abutting in connected speech. As a boundary elimination process, the deletion of either  $V_1$  or  $V_2$  occurs in various morphological or morpho-syntactic configurations such as Noun+Noun, Verb+Noun, Noun+ Poss. Pronoun, and others.

Schematizing possible resolution strategies generally, Casali (1996:1) presents the following,

(mentioning beforehand that the parenthesized colon indicates that vowel elision, Glide formation and Coalescence may occur with or without compensatory lengthening, depending on the language):

Heterosyllabification:	$CV_1+V_2 > .CV_1.V_2.$
Diphthong formation:	$CV_1+V_2 > .CV_1V_2.$
Epenthesis:	$CV_1+V_2 > .CV_1.CV_2.$
Vowel elision:	$CV_1+V_2 > .CV_2(:). \text{ or } .CV_1(:).$
Glide formation:	$CV_1+V_2 > .CGV_2(:).$
Coalescence:	$CV_1+V_2 > .CV_3(:).$

This paper examines vowel elision as a process for repairing hiatus in Ósósò, focusing on the morpho-syntactic context where vowels are juxtaposed in order to determine whether the most essential parameter that determines the choice of the vowel that elides in Ósósò is phonetical or grammatical, or both. This will be done against the two justifications for the eliding vowel established by the previously mentioned extant studies as either syllable-based or/and morpho-syntactically induced.

## 2. ABOUT THE LANGUAGE

Ósósò (ISO 639-3 oso, Glottolog osos 1238) is Edoid and classified as North Central Edoid (NCE) by Elugbe, 1989 & Lewis, 2012 in the Edoid language family tree. Although non-indigenes and diaspora speakers often call it Òsósò [òsósò], native speakers refer to the language as Ósósò [ósósò]. It is spoken by several thousands of people in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State. The people and the language are both referred to as Ósósò.

### Vowel Elision and Edoid languages

Among the Edoid languages, syllables are lightweight V or CV with CV being the canonical syllable structure. Instances of heavy syllable weight of CVV are often re-syllabified. At the morphological level, most roots are monosyllabic with a CV structure, resulting in words always ending with vowel. When words are juxtaposed, this open syllable structure always led to words ending with a vowel followed by another word which begins with a vowel. In Òsósò, such vowels in sequence, either within stem or across morpheme boundary, violates the phonotactics of the language and the repair strategy adopted where  $V_1$  is a close vowel- i or u, followed by a non-close vowel, is glide formation and these glides- [j] or [w] results;

1. a. /òvìè/ → [òvjè] 'chief'
- b. /óvìè/ → [óvjè] 'cry'
- c. /úfùè/ → [úfwè] 'mosquito'
- d. /èmwùè/ → [èmwè] 'ashes'

## Across morpheme boundary:

2.	a.	/fí + ávà/ drag	→ [fjávà]	'shoot' bullet
	b.	/éwòní + òtábà/ smoke	→ [éwónjòtábà]	'smoke (cigar) tobacco
	c.	/tù + òsè/ to	→ [twòsè]	'spit' spittle

If  $V_1$  is a non-close vowel however, vowel elision occurs. Elision is a boundary resolution strategy and does not apply within stem, it also applies only within primary constituent boundaries such as  $N_p$ ,  $V_p$ , and never across boundaries of NP to  $V_p$  for instance. Interestingly, in their various analyses of hiatus resolution by elision strategy, Edoid scholars involve assimilation from opposing angles. Beginning with Donwa-Ifodo (1985:46) "The close vowel occurring as the second or third in a sequence of two or three vowels before a boundary is elided and the situation created by this elision is then ideal for the application of assimilation. The process of elision is thus never final in itself; it is always followed by another process." Derivation will thus be:

$V_1 + V_2 \rightarrow V_2 V_2 \rightarrow V_2 3.$

εɔ + agá  
'tongue' 'bat'

By V. Elision: εɔ + agá

V. Assimilation: εráágá

V. Contraction: εrága  
'tongue of a bat'

Implicationally, in Isoko, the resolution of last vowel of the first word meeting the vowel of the word following it across boundary involves either assimilation and/or contraction (though forms without contraction are reported as commonly attested):

4.	V	+	N		by assimilation	by contraction
i.	dé		'buy'	ɔka 'maize'	→ dɔ:ka	→ doka
ii.	ghe		'see'	amɛ 'water'	→ gha:mɛ	→ ghameɛ
iii.	vba		'plait'	Éto 'hair'	→ vbé:to	→ vbeto

In his account of assimilation in Emai and its connection with elision, Egbokhare (1990:194) says 'a bisyllabic verb conditions total assimilation. The direction of assimilation is determined primarily by vowel height. Lower vowels assimilate higher vowels and where two vowels are equal in height, the rounded vowel assimilates the unrounded counterpart', the data below does not according to him, support an assimilatory stage in the derivation of vowel elision in Emai but they are an acceptable stage in these examples:

5. i.	ò	réyé	óì	→	ò	réyó	óì
	he/she	rock	it				
	he/she	has rocked	it				
ii.	ò	kpéyé	é	→	ò	kpéyé é	
	he/she	shake	you				
	he/she	has shaken	you				

In Urhobo, Aziza (1997:86) chose vowel elision without the intermediate process of assimilation and/or contraction to account for the fusion of  $V_1+V_2$  based on a lack of intermediary stage acceptable as an alternative pronunciation even in deliberately slowed speech and lack of perceptible increase in length of vowel to following hiatus resolution. A few data from her work showing  $V_1$  and  $V_2$  deletion across different morphosyntactic relations between two juxtaposed lexical items are presented below to account for her position:

6	i.	dε	+	úkó	→	doúkó	→	[dúkó]
		buy		cup				'buy a cup'
	ii.	ònàná	+	ómótè	→	ònànoomotè	→	[ònàńómótè]
		this		girl				'this is a girl'
	iii.	úkó	+	ònàná	→	úkó nàná	→	[úkónàńà]
		cup		this				'this cup'
	iv.	éwú	+	òmé	→	éwú mε	→	[éwúmé]
		buy		cup				'my dress'

Omozuwa (2010:135) on his part says vowel elision is a very common phonetic phenomenon in Èdo and demonstrated this with copious data from which these are extracted:

7.	/òwá	+	èbé /	→	[òwé!bé]	'school'
	/èbé	+	èdó /	→	[ébé!dó]	'Edo manual'
	/àxà	+	ènÉ /	→	[àxé!nÉ]	'four sparrows'
	/òwá	+	èvá /	→	[òwé!vá]	'two houses'

Explaining instances of assimilation in Èdo however, Omozuwa (2010:141) ties it to the emergence of  $V_3$ : "the vowel [e]/[ɛ] or [ɔ] of a rising toned verb, assimilates the first vowel of the noun to its corresponding height before the elision of the assimilating vowel." With this position, Omozuwa agrees with Bamgbose (1995) and Oyebade (1998) who disagreed with Awobuluyi's (1987) coalescence as a phonological process. With copious data, Omozuwa argues that  $V_1 + V_2$  not resulting into deletion of either  $V_1$  or  $V_2$  but emerging as  $V_3$  is not a case of coalescence but a set of phonetically motivated, ordered, phonological processes in this order: vowel assimilation followed by vowel elision accounts for the  $V_3$ . This occurs in verb + noun collocation where the tone on the verb is a rising tone.

8.	/kpě + uru	→	[kpǒrú]	“preach”
	/xě + ùwà	→	[xǒwâ]	“wait for Uwa”
	/hǒ + ìkù	→	[hěkù]	“pack the refuse”
	/nǒ + uru	→	[iyó]	“ask for money”

Apart from the difference in the operation of assimilation in the resolution of vowel sequence, in a few Edoid languages like Ora/Emai, vowel clusters are allowed. According to Donwa (1990:8), in Ora, ‘there is no limit to the permissible number of vowels in sequence.

9.	i. saé	shoot	ói	thief	→	saéói
	ii. vaé	come	ea	here	→	vaeea
	iii. ékéé	belly	ea	three	→	ékéééa

Egbokhare (1990:39) also says vowel sequences occur in Emai and these sequences are mostly of two vowels, but there are instances of three vowels occurring in a row as shown below:

10.	i. /óìà/	‘ground squirrel’
	ii. /óìà/	‘person’
	iii. /ùìà/	‘vein’

Instance of vowel sequences with identical vowels are also commonplace in Emai and although Schaefer (1987) had earlier presumed these sequences to be long vowels, Egbokhare (1990:40) says these sequences are not long vowels, rather, ‘evidence from vowel elision clearly indicates that what we have are identical vowel sequences and vowel elision cuts the length of the sequence in hiatus:

11.	i.	/hòò	éwè/	→	[hòéwè]	‘search for goat’
		search	goat			
	ii.	/hàà	ósà/	→	[haósà]	‘pay debt’
		pay	debt			

where the vowels are not long vowels, it would be

12.	i.	/kò	èfó/	→	[kèfó]	‘plant vegetables’
		plant	vegetables			
	ii.	/dè	ófè/	→	[dófè]	‘buy rat’
		buy	rat			

Three points must be made about vowel elision in Edoid languages based on the foregoing: first, for some Edoid languages, there is an intermediate assimilatory stage between elision and lexical fusion in some hiatus. Secondly, even though elision is widespread, vowels in sequence are permitted by some Edoid languages. Lastly, vowel elision often targets  $V_1$ . As an Edoid language, this

paper now investigates the operations of vowel elision as a strategy for hiatus resolution in Ósósò to determine the major consideration resulting in the vowel that elides across boundary in the language.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

Data for this work comes from 21 language consultants, made up of 14 males and 7 females whose ages ranged from 17 to 85 years. The sample size was deliberately made to include informants from different levels of the social strata, gender, and age. The overriding criteria for inclusion of these informants are competence and proficiency in the language. Apart from eliciting basic vocabulary data using wordlist structured to cover different lexical categories, language consultants were made to tell stories, share procedural narratives as well as engage in normal discussion in a semi-FGD setting. Diverse frames showing two contiguous vowels separated by a boundary were then isolated. These frames varied from N + N, V + N, N + Qualifier to N + Possessive Pronoun. The study adopts a descriptive approach.

#### DATA ANALYSIS

In Ósósò, vowel elision is systematic and highly predictable as the vowel before boundary is usually the vowel that elides in  $V_1 + V_2$  sequence. Although not as common as  $V_1$  elision, the rightmost vowel, or the vowel across the boundary ( $V_2$ ), also elides in this language. This is because the choice of the eliding vowel is determined by morphosyntactic relationship between the lexical components juxtaposed and this is explained with the data below. With regards to tone however, it is important to mention the grammatical floating high tone in associative constructions which changes underlying Low tone on Nouns, before their modifier, to high at the surface realization. This is indicative of the grammatical function of tone in associative construction in Ósósò (Legbeti: forthcoming). Below are data illustrating vowel elision in Ósósò:

##### $V_1$ elision: involving N + N

13.	i.	/ègbè	+	áxíè /	→	[égbáxjè]	'grinding stone'
		body	+	pepper			
	ii.	/àmè	+	óvjè /	→	[ámóvjè]	
		Water (of)		cry			
	iii.	/èdè	+	òxì /	→	[édòxì]	'market day'
		day (of)		market			
	iv.	/óxòxò	+	ítà /	→	[óxóxítà]	'father's cock'
		fowl		old			
	v.	/àmè	+	òjò /	→	[ámòjò]	'Ojo's water'
		Water (of)		father			

##### $V_2$ Elision: involving N + V

14.	i.	/àmè	+	óbúráfì /	→	[ámóbúráfì]	'lake'
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	Water	sleep			
ii.	/àmè	+ ótùè/	→	[àmótwè]	‘rainfall’
	water	drip			
iii.	/òvò	+ ísà/	→	[òvísà]	‘sunshine’
	sun	shine			
iv.	/úkùbá	+ akàrà/	→	[úkùbákàrà]	‘salary’
	money	work			
v.	/àmè	+ óviè/	→	[àmóviè]	‘tears’
	water	cry			

**V<sub>1</sub> Elision: involving V + N (object)**

15.	i.	/rè	+ énrè/	→	[rénèrè]	‘to eat (food)’
		to eat				food
	ii.	/rámì	+ àkàrà/	→	[rámàkàrà]	‘to fry (akara)’
		to eat				food
	iii.	/gbè	+ ògbò/	→	[gbógbò]	‘to beat (person)’
		to beat	person			

**V<sub>1</sub> Elision: involving N + Demonstrative**

16.	i.	/úkùbá	+ érc/	→	[úkùbérc]	‘that money’
		money	that			
	ii.	/ótè	+ ónà/	→	[ótónà]	‘this stick’
		stick	this			
	iii.	/ògbò	+ érc/	→	[ògbárc]	‘that person’
		person	that			

**V<sub>1</sub> Elision: involving N + Qualifier (adjective)**

17.	i.	Òḃìr	+ ólòlò/	→	[Òḃìrólòlò]	‘palmoil’
		Oil	red			
	iii.	/ùmúsù	+ óbìbì/	→	[ùmúsóbìbì]	‘black cat’
		cat	black			
	iii.	/ògbò	+ órèrè/	→	[ògbóórèrè]	‘richman’
		person	big			
	iv.	/ògèdè	+ òkéké/	→	[ògèdòkéké]	‘banana’
		Plantain	small			
	v.	úkùbá	+ ébùbù	→	[úkùébùbù]	‘surplus money’
		money	many			

**V<sub>1</sub> Elision: involving N + Pronoun**

18.	i.	/ítà	+	èmè/	→	[ítèmè]	'my father'
		father		mine			
	ii.	/ímíní	+	àní/	→	[ùmúsàní]	'our cat'
		cat		our			
	iii.	/íjò	+	èwè/	→	[ímínàní]	'our relatives'
		mother		you			

**V<sub>2</sub> Elision: involving N + Qualifier**

In a very limited frame in the data used for this study, the vowels of certain qualifier prefixes in N+ qualifier frame is redundant, resulting in V<sub>2</sub> elision rather than V<sub>1</sub>. This is shown in the examples below (these two are the only set found in the data used for this work):

19.	i.	/ómò	+	ésè/	→	[ómòsè]	'male/man'
		child		male			
	ii.	/ómò	+	ésà/	→	[ómòsà]	'woman'
		child		female			

**V<sub>1</sub> Elision: involving N + morpheme + N**

In the data, insertion of the locative morpheme /wi/ or /mi/ also occurs in the language. Although such an occurrence is equally driven by the morphology of the language, elision also eliminates V<sub>1</sub> and the deletion is due to the redundant status of the vowel of this locative markers

20.	i.	/ókó + wí + àmé	→	[ókówàmè]	'boat'
		car in water			
	ii.	/ótí wi + èxè/	→	[ótíwèkè]	'car'
		walk on land			
	iii.	/úkwé + mí + owa/	→	[úkwémowa]	'rooftop'
		top of house			
	iv.	/o!dží + mí + ówà/	→	[o!džmówà]	'corpse'
		Masquerade of death			

**V<sub>1</sub> Elision: involving N + gerundive V**

21.	i.	/àmè	+	ìdádà/	→	[àmìdádà]	'drinking water'
		water		drinking			
	ii.	/ítsù	+	ìbábà/	→	[ítsìbábà]	'hair plaiting'
		hair		plaiting			
	iii.	/ìkperìmà	+	ìgbégbè/	→	[ìkperìmìgbégbè]	'beating drum'
		water		drinking			
	iv.	/àdò	+	ìrèrè/	→	[àdìrèrè]	'meat eating'

meat            eating

### *Focus movement and vowel elision blockage*

Elision may be blocked if abutting vowels occur across constituent boundary such as Np to VP. Also, in the language, elision does not occur to vowels in sequence if caused by operations such as the application of word order rule like focus movement. In such constructions, the morpheme now being focused moves to sentence initial position with a vowel sequence consequently occurring across boundary of the focused word and the subject, these remains undeleted as it results from movement as shown below (with the unaffected sequence boldened):

22. /énà ójì òdžó ́ gbè í wè/ → [énà ojì òdžó ́ gbè í wè ]  
 Goat that Ojo SCM kill PRE. smell      Goat that Ojo SCM kill PRE. smell  
 ‘the goat that ojo killed is smelling’

### **Vowel elision and tone**

As earlier mentioned, the deletion of either of the two vowels across morpheme boundary in Ósósò may results into tonal modifications at phonetic level in associative constructions through the operations of the underlying H-tomorph marking possession in Ósósò. The dynamics of tone change begins with the L tone borne by the vowels of head noun changing from L in citation to H at surface until it meets a high. This tonal change is further explained with the data below where Low tone on the head noun changes their citation form during derivation to High at phonetic level:

#### **23. Elision and tone:**

- |      |                    |               |                    |                 |
|------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| i.   | /àmè + óbùràjì /   | → [ámóbúrájì] | LL +HLLL → H!HHLL  | ‘lake’          |
|      | water      sleep   |               |                    |                 |
| ii.  | / òtjì + ̀xà /     | → [ótjéxà]    | LL LL → H!HL       | ‘monkey market’ |
|      | monkey    market   |               |                    |                 |
| iii. | /àmè + ótu/////ò / | → [ámótwè]    | LL +HLL → H!HL     | ‘rainfall’      |
|      | water      drop    |               |                    |                 |
| iv.  | /̀gbò + órèrè /    | → [̀gbórèrè]  | LL + HLL → H!HLL   | ‘rich person’   |
|      | person    big /    |               |                    |                 |
| v.   | /̀gèdè + òkéké /   | → [̀gédòkéké] | LLL + HLH → H!HHLL | ‘banana’        |
|      | plantain    small  |               |                    |                 |

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This paper discusses vowel elision and shows it is a common phonological process among Edoid languages, eliminating one of two vowels in sequence across morpheme boundary, whether in slow or rapid speech. The work began by showing that in certain vocalic hiatus in Ósósò, based on the data analyzed, if V<sub>1</sub> is a close vowel, glide formation resolves the sequence while in cases where

both vowels are identical, the process of elimination is vacuous otherwise elision occurs targeting either  $V_1$  or  $V_2$ . Deletion of the first of the two contiguous vowels separated by boundary is however common, thus making the process highly predictable in the language. Only in a limited set is  $V_2$  deletion observed in the language, Ósòsò consistently and predictably elides  $V_1$  in the following context:

1. N + N
2. N + V
3. V + N (object),
4. N + Dem.
5. N + Qualifier (Adj.)
6. N + morpheme + N
7. N + gerundive

The study also claims no intermediate assimilatory stage nor increased vowel length was perceived, even in slow speech. This situation aligns Ósòsò with Urhobo (Aziza, 1997), unlike Isoko (Donwa-Ifodo, 1987) where assimilation, sometimes followed by contraction occurs before fusion of lexical sequence is complete.

In summary therefore, when vowels occur in sequence across boundary through morphological or syntactic concatenation in Ósòsò,  $V_1$  or  $V_2$  of the lexical sequence gets retained depending on whether it occurs in an environment where it is grammatically functional or vacuous. Nouns, for example, historically always began with a prefix marking class while for the qualifiers (referring here to possessive Pronoun, nominal, adjectives, and demonstratives), the prefix marks number concord with their head noun thus it is the final vowels of these lexical categories that elides whenever they occur in sequence. Verbs, by its structure is however the only lexical category that starts with consonants in the language and so its vowel get elided when in sequence with other categories as it lacks grammatical role, but, when a vowel occurs before the consonant, that vowel may occur in the gerundivization process, thus it is a functional vowel and gets retained over the stem vowel of the head noun. Elision may however be blocked in constructions where abutting vowels are both grammatically functional and no overriding morphosyntactic consideration exist.

In conclusion, it follows that the morphosyntactic relationship between adjacent morphemes determines the choice of the vowels that elides in  $V_1+V_2$  hiatus, regardless of the phonetic frame. Therefore, vowel elision in Ósòsò is motivated by morpho-syntactic relations alone.

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# Body Parts Conception in Igbo and German Proverbs

Adaobi Ifeoma Ik-Iloanusi

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## ABSTRACT

*Proverbs are function-based statements, marked by shortness with the truth tersely expressed in them. This research sets out to identify the additional functions some body parts perform in proverbs as it pertains to Igbo and German languages, and also to decipher if there is a link between the literal function and the connotation attached to the proverbs in use. This study employs conceptual metaphor framework, and data was collected from speakers of both languages and through reviews of existing records on Igbo and German proverbs which has body parts like the eyes, stomach, hands, mouth, head, and heart imbibed in them. A total of twenty proverbs were extracted and categorized under four different sections. The annotations of these proverbs were done in three stages, the word-for-word gloss, English equivalent and conceptual equivalent using Leipzig glossing rule. The findings of this study reveal that body parts mentioned in the proverbs of both languages play figurative roles, and they also highlight the connection between the physical function of these body parts and the meaning they connote in both languages. Hence, the conclusion that given the same embodiment of transfer from one cognitive perception to another there are similarities in both languages. However, based on culture specifics, differences are inevitable. This study recommends the introduction of pragmatic teaching, in other to enhance metaphoric competence and also advocates for simplified teaching as a way to get the students to relate from the known to the unknown.*

*Keywords:* conceptualization, embodiment, German, Igbo, proverbs

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of body parts cannot be overlooked, as they form an integral make-up of the human physical appearance. Physical endowment and beautiful body structure are all the attributes of the human body parts, hence the important role they play in our existence. The rudimentary function these body parts perform has formed a necessary base in our existence as individuals, which extends to the relationship with our environment, daily life experiences, furthering into our culture, etc. Highlighting the fundamental roles of body parts especially with concerns to culture and daily life experiences, has engendered the employment of figurative expressions like proverbs, idioms, metaphor, adages, etc. in communication. The use of these figurative expressions promotes the communication / expression of ideas in euphemistic situations, dialogue, conflict resolutions and diplomatic discussions. Okolo (1985) opines that in using proverbs, it is not enough to simply memorize and recite them, but a good speaker has to use them in appropriate contexts

because contexts play a major role in their correct interpretation. The Igbo people value the use of proverbs, because it is of great importance in their communication as well as an indelible part of their culture and tradition. Likewise, in the German language, proverbs are used to convey salient messages, reflect different aspects of people's personal disposition like their sense of humor, work, discipline, way of life, etc. despite the fact that Igbo is a tonal language and belong to the Kwa subgroup of the Niger- Congo language family spoken in southern Nigeria, and German, a non-tonal language, that belong to a different language family called the Indo-European, it has not affected the certainty that the use of proverbs is not restricted to the Igbo language alone, but also extends to the German language. Acknowledging this, Iman *et al* (2022) confirm proverbs have long been used to learn foreign languages including German. This, of course, poses as a medium to understand the cultural background of German language. In the same light, proverbs are seen as being able to function as a “linguistic bridge” for cross-cultural communication, reflecting the cultural symbols of two different languages (Retnantiti, 2016). Communication of ideas using body parts in both German and Igbo languages is an embodiment of linguistic creativity, given that proverbs are context dependent, cultural oriented, possesses extra semantic features, etc.

This paper unveils the manipulative use of body parts concepts in both Igbo and German languages as a means to portray ideas other than what the literal body parts mentioned communicate. The conceptualization is such that the presentation of these body parts goes beyond the literal meaning to connote other ideas. This study has also noted that just like it is in Igbo language, the German language also connects to the same concept of proverbs being context dependent, where the actual words presented have a different connotation. However, works on figurative expressions that employed body parts are mostly in idioms, while similar works on proverbs are quite few especially with specifics on body parts concepts of Igbo and German proverbs

This paper centers on harnessing proverbs in Igbo and German languages that employed body parts, with the aim of unveiling the perception of the body parts used in these proverbs, highlighting the similarities and or differences in the perceived conceptualization.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

History has it that proverbs are handed down from one generation to another, and they belong to the oral genre. The use of proverbs in studies has gone beyond its use in linguistics or in literary studies and as such, highlights the extra semantic attributes they carry, metaphoric conception, the diverse roles they play in usage, etc. According to Finnegan (2012) the figurative quality of proverbs is especially striking; one of their most noticeable characteristics is their allusive wording, usually in metaphorical form. This point has been made evident, with the use of proverbs in handling different roles, especially those roles that concern the metaphorical use of words in different contexts, for instance, the role of proverbs in conflict resolution (Egenti and Okoye 2016), the role of proverbs as a tool for effective communication (Ik-Iloanusi 2021), meaning and interpretation on body- parts idioms (Okoye and Mmadike 2016), etc.

Mieder (1993) on the roles of proverbs says proverbs still play a significant role in today's

speech, where they continue to be used to moralize, to instruct, to advise and to reflect on everyday occurrences. This goes further to explain the roles proverbs play in communication, where it is used to perform diverse roles as mentioned above. Ehondor (2017) unveils that proverbs are pointless without consideration of its function in communication. Similar to the general definitions or opinion on proverbs, Isidienu (2016) has this to say on Igbo proverbs; Igbo proverbs and the Igbo people are not separate entities because the world view, philosophy and reasoning of the Igbo people are viewed or better understood through their proverbs. Similarly, Achebe (1958) is of the opinion that among the Igbo people, the art of conversation is regarded in high esteem, and proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten. Achebe's assertion simply points to Igbo proverbs as that which lubricates discourse and enhances speech.

It is worthy of note that the use of proverbs is not just for the Igbo people, or restricted to Africans, but other countries like Germany, France, Indonesia Finland, etc. also benefit and make use of proverbs for language acquisition, language teaching, communication, foreign language learning, etc. supporting this claim, Proverbs are known to contain potential content for language learning since they can broaden the linguistic and cultural insights of students and also encourage intercultural competencies and language acquisition (Marek, 2010; Brosh, 2013). In line with this assertion, Can Daşkin & Hatipoğlu (2019) say proverbs can be used to support the acquisition of communicative competence. This explains why proverbs are seen as a linguistic bridge for cross-cultural communication. Furthermore, relating to the use of proverbs to foreign language learning, German proverbs can be used as teaching materials to gain intercultural understanding especially if the equivalent of the proverb is also presented (Hanzén, 2007). Highlighting proverb equivalent, this paper looks at proverbs from two different languages that share the same meaning or closely related meaning, share roles and functions. Nevertheless, due to different or diverse cultural concepts and background, it is possible not to get the desired equivalence. Supporting this claim, Lubis (2018) opines that proverbs from one language may not have equivalents in other languages because speakers of one language have different cultural experiences from speakers of other language. However, there is still the possibility that proverbs of a particular language have equivalence in other languages.

Research has been carried out by different authors as it concerns the comparison between German and other languages in many aspects but not limited to the following; in comparing German, Finnish and French proverbs, Helomaa (2014) found there is high equivalence between German and Finnish proverbs because of the close cultural background both countries share. Kumaini (2014) discovers in his research that German and Indonesian proverbs containing the word *dog* have a certain moral message. But metaphorically, the same *dog* has a negative meaning. Then, Lapasau (2019) investigates the content of moral values in both German and Indonesian proverbs, especially those proverbs related to the notion / concept of time.

This paper focuses on the functions and different concepts portrayed by the use of some selected body parts in proverbs, as it unveils the ability to transfer from one cognitive domain to an-

other in both Igbo and German languages to decipher similarities, differences and also the level of equivalence, given the fact that both languages have different cultural backgrounds. In identifying the functions these body parts play in both languages, especially using proverbs, it is evident that in expressing the meaning of these proverbs, the representation accorded the human body parts embodiment has different meaning realizations in the sense that the understanding of one idea, or conceptual domain is placed in terms of another. In other words, what these body parts stand for could be presented or represented using another entity entirely.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

Data for this research was elicited from published works on the two languages such as *Mmanu Igbo* Ndubuisi (2008), *Mmanu e ji eri okwu* Onwudufor (2008), and *Dictionary of 1000 German proverbs* Mertvago (1997), for the German data. As a result, twenty proverbs from the above mentioned sources were discussed using the conceptual metaphor framework and the researcher's intuitive knowledge as a native speaker of the Igbo language. The conceptual metaphor theory was proposed by Lakoff and Johnson, which expresses in a nutshell the cognitive structure of a particular domain linked into another. In other words, conceptual metaphor theory states that mental representations are transferred into a particular domain, to express the cognitive structure already created of one domain into another domain. In order to foster adequacy of use, six speakers of both German and Igbo languages, 2 males and one female from both sides, within the age bracket of 45-65 years who are native speakers of both languages were consulted to further confirm the accuracy and usage of the selected proverbs. The choice of these consultants is based on the fact that they are native speakers, and also reside in the geographical location where Igbo and German languages are spoken. Notably, in this paper, data presentation is categorized under four sections to capture Igbo and German proverbs grouped under different body parts concepts, with three stages of annotation; First, the word-for-word gloss, secondly, English equivalent, and finally, the conceptual meaning using the Leipzig glossing rule. Also, the Igbo proverbs in use were tone marked in the following manner; the high tone is marked ['], followed by the down step which is presented using the mid tone diacritics [-] and the low tone marked [˘].

### 4. DATA PRESENTATION

Twenty proverbs have been selected in this section, eleven German proverbs and nine Igbo proverbs. These proverbs are further categorized into four different sections as follows; proverbs built on hand/arm concept, proverbs built on heart/mind concept, proverbs built on eye concept and proverbs built on head concept. Discussions under this section is channeled under different categories to highlight the similarities as it concerns the extra semantic features of proverbs in both languages, with the word-for-word gloss, English equivalent and conceptual meanings stated in all the four sections below.

#### A) Proverbs built on hand/arm concept

1) German—

eine ~ hand- wäscht- die- andere.  
 One ~ hand- washes – ART- other.  
 ‘One hand washes the other clean’.  
 One good turn deserves another.

2) German—

eine ~ bei – hand- ist- besser - als- zehn- vorher - besessene.  
 One ~ PREP- hand- is- better -than- ten- before- posses-PST.  
 ‘One at hand is better than ten previously owned’.  
 A bird at hand is worth more than ten in the bush.

3) German—

ein~ sauber-mund-und-eine- ehrliche-hand-werden-einen-mann-durch- jedes-land-  
 führen.  
 ART~clean-mouth-and-ART -honest- hand- will- ART- man- through(V)- each-land- lead.  
 ‘A clean mouth and an honest hand will take a man through any land’.  
 An honest man is believed without an oath, for his reputation and integrity speaks for  
 him.

4) German—

beiß~ nicht -in- die -hand, die -dich -füttert.  
 bite ~ not- in- the – hand, the- PRO-feed-CONT.  
 ‘Don’t bite the fingers that feed you’.  
 Do not pay back a good deed with evil.

5) Igbo—

áká~ ájá- ājā- n’ébúté- ọ́nụ́- ńmáńụ́- ńmānụ́.  
 hand~ sand- sand-bring-CONT-mouth-oil-oil.  
 ‘A soiled/dirty hand guarantees an oily mouth’.  
 Hard work breeds success / no pain no gain.

6) Igbo—

áká~ ńrī - kwōq̄- áká- èkpè,- áká - èkpè - à kwóq̄- áká- ńrī.  
 hand~right-wash-V- hand- left, hand- left- wash-CONT-hand-right.  
 ‘If the right hand washes the left hand, the left hand will in turn wash the right hand’.  
 One good turn deserves another.

7) Igbo—

nwátà~ kwóq̄- áká,- òsòró- ókènyè- ríé- ńrī.  
 child ~ wash- hand,-3SG-join- elder- eat- food.  
 ‘If a child washes his hands clean, he dines with the elders’.  
 Good character ushers a child into greatness.

## DISCUSSION

The hand is used to express friendship, help, service, brotherhood, gratitude, security etc. a hand extended in friendship attracts other gestures like; loyalty, cooperation, acceptance, love, along with others. This shows that the hand as a part of the body in its physical activities, exhibits the function of reciprocated kindness. It is evident that during the process of hand washing, where one palm is used to scrub the other palm to ensure absolute effect of the scrub, towards getting the desired result of clean hands, there is a significant show of loyalty, support in friendship, help, service, etc., where it is expected that support/ help rendered, ought to be reciprocated. This symbolic perception is an inference on the role of the hand from the literal function to the conceptual understanding. Another instance, in discussing the German proverb used in example (2) it is glaring that the hand is used to grip or grasp physically, this function demonstrates security, and by inference, this function of security is extended to the conceptual meaning, where something held in the hand is considered secured more than that which is still at large and yet to be captured. This simply means lack of security or guarantee towards that item, entity, or object that is still unreachable or yet to be obtained. Example (4) showcases a situation where the function of the fingers has been extended into real life situations, and conceptualized into diverse perceptions. Relaying the proverb literally/ practically, once the person who is being fed bites the fingers doing the feeding, an abrupt withdrawal is experienced. Likewise, considering other experiences which has been conceptualized, it has been noted that an expression of good deed stops instantly once the beneficiary shows any form of ingratitude, disloyalty and betrayal which is of course likened to the “bite” mentioned in the proverb in example (4). Therefore, it is expected that one who has received a good deed from another, shows a certain level of gratitude and loyalty towards his/her benefactor. Furthermore, example (5) shows that the hand toils both physically and otherwise, given different facets of work in order to earn a living. This particular discussion focuses on service and hard work in relationship and other life affairs, in line with the Igbo proverb in example (5), the simple expression of human endeavors and daily toil, where nothing good comes easy or on a platter of gold is unveiled. This depicts the fact that to get the crown, one must pass through the rigors of the cross. Hence, “hand” in the last highlighted example is seen literally as a body part, and then conceived as a tool for hard work which will eventually lead to an “oily mouth” (food, success, achievements...). Example (6) simply expresses reciprocation which is positive response towards a gesture. Likewise, example (7) also portrays a link with the literal and physical hand, where the hand serves as a revered tool used in achieving success, recognition, connection and wealth. The concept of washing and keeping the hand clean, shows a certain level of work and commitment the child in the proverb in example (7) has to go through to qualify in dinning with the elders. This work mentioned above, translates to a certain degree of decorum and maturity which the child must exhibit in order to stand a chance in the league of elders or the responsible cadre in the society.

### **B) Proverbs built on heart/ mind concept**

8) German—

blödes~ herz- buhlt- keine- schöne-frau.  
 stupid~heart- court- no-beautiful-woman.  
 'A faint heart has never won a beautiful lady'.  
 Fortune favors the bold.

9) German—

das~ herz- lügt- nicht.  
 ART~heart-lie- not.  
 'The heart sees farther than the head'.  
 To follow the intuition of the heart.

10) German—

galle~ im- herzen,- honig- im- mund.  
 bile~in the- heart,- honey- in the-mouth.  
 'Sweet tongue and a heart of gall'.  
 Beautifully packaged but rotten inside.

11) Igbo—

úchè ~bù- àkpà,- ónyé-ḡ bŭlà- nyà-̀̀̀kè- yá.  
 heart~AUX-bag- PSN- every- carry-own-3SG.  
 'The heart is a bag, every man with his'.  
 Everyone is entitled to his opinion.

12) Igbo—

úchè ~ ònyē- ā dī - yā - ñjō.  
 heart~PSN- be-NEG- 3SG-bad.  
 'A man's thought is always faultless to him'.  
 Self conceited opinion.

## DISCUSSION

Inferences are drawn from the physical representation and the people's perception of the heart and mind. This physical representation conceives and brings forth different assertions of the heart/mind in different ways like being brave, courageous, deceitful etc. for instance, bravery is perceived as having a strong heart. The embodiment of the heart / mind represents the extension of the physical heart as the entity that harbors the cognitive activities of conception, especially as it concerns proverbs in German and in Igbo languages. Some of the proverbs used in this section depict courage, insight, determination, deceit, etc. example no (8) explains that it is only a man with a courageous heart, or a brave man that can win/woo a queen or a princess. The physical representation of the heart as an entity that controls the human thoughts and understanding has connected to the extra sense in this analysis, to reveal courage and bravery as an extension of the perception

accorded the human heart/mind. In example no (9) ) which says the heart sees farther than the head, has an added meaning and function to the physical heart we know, and further represents a scenario where the head operates as the leader, but the heart through insight, perception, intuition... directs the activities of the leader (head). Furthermore, the heart is accorded the ability to perceive beyond the tenets of behavior or character. It also assumes the discerning ability and the capacity to perceive an exact and deep understanding of something, being that the mind is the focal point of cognition. Therefore, the intuition, perception and conceptualization of ideas begin in the heart/mind. Example number (10) presents the ability of the heart to mask intentions, and unveils its capability of conceiving negative and evil thoughts without a link of the mentioned vices expressed on the face. While example number (11) addresses the expression of diverse intent as it goes to show the heart as a bag carrying different thoughts as different individuals have theirs, bearing diverse intentions, opinions, ideas, etc. As noted earlier, the heart is the home of all cognitive activities, hence, its ability to conceal the mind's intention from being read like an open book. This shows the fact that a man's intention can only be communicated by him and as well, he enjoys and controls the flawless, unblemished perception of his thoughts as expressed in example (12). The deceit, personal opinion, hidden intent, accentuates the nuances expressed by the function of the heart / mind which cannot be neglected.

**c) Proverbs built on eye concept**

13) German—

das~ auge- sieht- weit, - der- verstand- noch -weiter.

ART~eye-see-CONT-far,-ART-mind- still- further.

'The eyes look, but it's the mind that sees'.

Seeing with mind's eye.

14) German—

unter~ den -blinden- ist- der -Einäugige- könig.

among~ART-blind- is- ART-one-eyed- king.

'The one eyed is king of the blind'.

The value of any ability is of a great advantage in the face of lesser abilities.

15) Igbo—

ifé ~ ñ- ñmā- nà- anyá- gbàlù.

thing~be-good-and- eye- together.

'A good thing is pleasing/ appealing to the eyes'.

Good things are aesthetically pleasing.

16) Igbo—

anyá~ kà -éjì- àmá- ókà- chārā āchā.

eye ~PREP-use-know-corn-ripe.

'A ripe corn is identified by its looks'.

The appearance of an item speaks volume.

### Discussion

The eyes serve as the window/ mirror in the human body that moulds the physical structure of objects and other natural endowments we view. This function of the human eye extends to the conception of the eyes as a tool that frames an insight in the mind. Example no (13) relates to the eyes as a functional object that connects to the intuition and perception in the mind. Through the eyes, images are seen, but the cognizance of these images happen in the mind. The eyes in example no (14) represents the opportunity which can only be provided by a special ability. This further explains that qualification which others do not possess is a step ahead of others which requires vision, insight, expertise, etc. In examples no (15) the eyes are used to ascertain quality, beauty and worth. This further shows the eyes as an instrument that picks and identifies an entity of worth, quality, and substance, beyond physical beauty. And same applies to example no (16).

#### 4) Proverbs built on head concept

17) German—

wenn~ das- kopt- krank- ist,- trauern- alle- glieder.

if ~ the- head- sick - is,- grieve- all – limb.

'When the head is sick, the whole body is sick'.

Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown.

18) German—

man~ sieht - das - hirn - nicht- an- der- stirn/ kopf.

one~ see-CONT- ART- brain- not- on- ART- forehead.

'You don't see the brain on the forehead/head'.

Do not judge people by their appearance / do not judge a book by its cover.

19) Igbo—

ó~ métú - ísì, - ò- métú- ányā.

CONJ~touch,- head-CONJ-touch-eye.

'Once it affects the head, it also affects the nose'.

One man's mistake is likely to affect his loved ones.

20) Igbo—

ísí ~kòtè- èbù,- ò - gbáá- yā.

head~bring- wasp,-PRO- sting- 3SG.

'The head that attracts the wasp will be stung by the wasp'.

Being ready to face the consequences of one's action.

### Discussion

Given our embodiment, the head is at the topmost position, therefore plays the lead role in the body structure. As such, this lead role translates and extends to other cognitive functions beyond the human physical appearance. In example no (17) *Wenn das kopt krank ist, trauern alle glieder* the head is presented as the anchor and bearer of the entire body, and as a strong link, the whole body gets the brunt of whatever happens to the head. This narrative is also likened to the head as a leader, directing the affairs of a group, once the leader is incompetent, there is a tendency that unskilled and inexperienced decisions and policies will be put in place, thereby dragging the entire administration into an unproductive regime/era. Therefore, there is a relationship of nearness and proximity when it comes to the relationship between the head and the entire body, as well as the leader because leadership comes with a lot of responsibilities and the head bears the largest share of stress to get things on track. Example no (18) *Man sieht das hirn nicht an der stirn/ kopf*, explains the fact that the brain isn't seen on the forehead, and translates to the reality that some qualities imbibed in a person or something is not always visibly seen in their appearance until tested. This equally means that a book should not be judged by its cover or the efficacy of a content judged by the beauty of its container. The Igbo proverb in example no (19) *Ọ metu isi, ọ metu anya* is likened to the German proverb in example no (17). Both proverbs share the same meaning, despite diverse language background. Finally, example no (20) *isi kote ebu ọ gbaa ya* brings to realization that one who brings ants infested firewood should be ready to host the lizards and also a case of being ready to face the consequences of one's actions. Also, by meaning extension from the physical head, given that the head is a symbol of authority, destiny, leadership, etc. it simply portrays disaster in one's life once a peaceful and upright lifestyle devoid of catastrophe is not maintained.

### 5. FINDINGS

It has been noted and observed that the use of proverbs in communication is not exclusive to Africans, Nigerians or users and speakers of the Igbo language. The effective use of proverbs in communication, especially in other languages like German, Indonesian (*Bahasa Indonesia*), Finish, French, etc. has been brought to limelight in this paper. This study has made evident the similarities that abound in the use of proverbs in both Igbo and German languages. The above claim is noticeable in the discussion of analysis which shows the similarities due to the understanding in experiences given the same body parts and functions across the globe. There is also evidence of clear correlation between the English equivalence of the proverbs in use, in both languages. Also, the non-compositionality of proverbs has been eminent in both German and Igbo languages. Hence, the body parts as expressed in the proverbs in use are represented with different concepts away from the constituting parts of their literal meaning, and are strictly interpreted within confines of the context of discussion. Therefore, there are context dependent, and this paper also discovers the connection and relationship between the literal/physical functions of these body parts and the conception it generates towards the metaphorical sense. In other words, there is an evident cor-

relation between the functions the body parts in use perform and the metaphorical meaning they convey in both German and Igbo languages.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Proverbs in Igbo language has proven to be a vital facet in communication and other aspects. However, it has become evident that this important use of proverbs is not only applicable to the Igbo language, but other languages especially German language as seen in this paper. Aside the fact that proverbs play an important role in communication, this paper relates to other forms of use especially as it concerns the different concepts and meanings these proverbs express while in use. Emphasis on this study is geared towards the extra semantic sense proverbs connote. The different connotation / nuances generated by the use of proverbs with body parts explain further the extra semantic sense implied by proverbs. There is evident realization that the connotation of these proverbs is similarly applicable to different languages, just like the comparison highlighted in this paper, using German and Igbo proverbs. Being that proverbs connote different semantic expressions, this study recommends the introduction of pragmatic teaching to ensure metaphoric competence. In doing this, simplified teaching is recommended, that is a start from the known to the unknown. This way, it is easier for the students to relate firstly, with what they know before delving into other concepts.

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#### Appendix:

3	third person
ADJ	adjective
ART	article
CONJ	conjunction
CONT	continuous tense
PR	pronoun
PREP	preposition
PST	past tense
SG	singular
V	verb

