# Pragmatics, Discourse and Society, Volume 2

## A Festschrift for Akin Odebunmi

Edited by

Niyi Osunbade

Foluke Unuabonah

Ayo Osisanwo

Akin Adetunji

Funke Oni

# Pragmatics, Discourse and Society, Volume 1

# Pragmatics, Discourse and Society, Volume 1:

## *A Festschrift for Akin Odebunmi*

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Niyi Osunbade, Foluke Unuabonah,
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and Funke Oni

**Cambridge
Scholars**
Publishing

**PROFESSOR STEPHEN AKINOLA ODEBUNMI**
B.A. (Ed.), M.A., Ph.D.

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# PROFESSOR STEPHEN AKINOLA ODEBUNMI

## Bio-Data

Born on December 21, 1967 in Ogbomoso, to Yoruba parents of Ogbomoso origin in Ogbomoso North Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria, Akinola Odebunmi, popularly known as Akin Odebunmi, received his primary and secondary education in Ogbomoso. He later obtained his B.A. (Ed.) (1992) and M.A. (1997) degrees in English from the University of Ilorin and earned a Ph.D. in English (Pragmatics) in 2004 at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. He took up an appointment with the University of Ibadan as a Lecturer I in the Department of English in September 2005, and rose to the rank of Professor of Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis in 2013 in the same university, as a highflyer.

Professor Akin Odebunmi is, in the main, a specialist in Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis. He is specifically interested in Clinical Pragmatics, Linguistic Pragmatics, Critical Discourse Analysis and Literary Pragmatics.

Professor Akin Odebunmi has to his credit at least 85 academic publications in local and international outlets across all the continents of the world. Some of his journal articles have appeared in the Ibadan Journal of English Studies (Nigeria), Ife Studies in English (Nigeria), Studia Anglica Posnaniensia (Poland), Pragmatics (Belgium), Intercultural Pragmatics (Germany), California Linguistic Note (United States), Marang (Botswana), Review of Cognitive Linguistics (Spain), Pragmatics and Society (Amsterdam), Pragmatics and Cognition (Amsterdam), Multilingua (Germany), the Iranian Journal of Society, Culture and Language (Iran) and the Journal of Pragmatics (United States). His professional competence in producing his many papers has aided his provision of refereeing services for several international journals, some of which are Pragmatics and Society (Amsterdam), the Nordic Journal of African Studies (Finland), California Linguistic Notes (United States), the Journal of Modern Languages (Malaysia), the International Journal of Society, Culture and Language (United States), the International Journal of Information Communication Technologies and Human Development (United States) and Apples: a Journal of Applied Linguistics (Finland).

Professor Odebunmi's sound academic knowledge and hard work awarded him with the prestigious and highly competitive German Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship Award for Experienced Researchers between 2010 and 2011; and the follow-up and renewed-stay awards of the same fellowship in 2012, 2014 and 2017. He is currently a research collaborator with Professor Dr Karin Birkner of Bayreuth University and Professor Sigurd D'hont of the University of Jyväskylä, Finland.

Professor Odebunmi was an official external examiner to the Department of English, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo. He has served as a PhD external examiner at the University of Ilorin, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Covenant University, ~~and~~ Ota and Periyar University, India. He is currently an official external examiner in the Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko. He has supervised about 30 B.A. long essays, 60 M.A. projects and twelve Ph.D. theses, (as of December 2017), at the University of Ibadan. He has also served as a consultant to the United Nations under the direction of the International Labour Organisation, on academic and research-based projects.

Professor Odebunmi belongs to different academic and professional organisations, among which are the International Pragmatics Association, Belgium, the Nigerian Pragmatics Association, the Reading Association of Nigeria and the English Scholars Association of Nigeria. Also, he has occupied several administrative and editorial positions: Sub-Dean, Postgraduate Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan (August 2011-2014); Deputy Editor, Journal of Nigeria English Studies Association (2011-2012); Postgraduate Co-coordinator, Department of English, University of Ibadan (August 2008-January 2010; March 2011-July 2011), Member, Local Organising Committee for the International Conference on African Literature, Department of English, University of Ibadan (July 2008); Member, Finance Committee Department of English, University of Ibadan (2007-2010); Member, Publication Committee, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan (2007-2010); Deputy Editor, Ibadan: Journal of English Studies (2006-2010); and Editor, Ibadan Journal of English Studies (April 2013 to date). He is currently the director of the University of Ibadan Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. He is also the pioneer president of the Nigerian Pragmatics Association.

Professor Odebunmi is married to Mrs Funmilola Janet Odebunmi, and the marriage has been blessed with three children: Verena Ayotomiwa, Gloria Oluwafikayomi and Olamiposi Goodluck.

# Publications

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(15) Odebunmi, A. 2011. Defining Pragmatics ([ISBN: 978-0-521-73203-1] written by Mira Ariel; published by  Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom. Discourse Studies. (13 (6): 663-664.
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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The idea for this book, *Pragmatics, Discourse and Society: A Festschrift for Akin Odebunmi* was first mooted by Dr Foluke Unuabonah in 2016, in celebration of the academic prowess and golden jubilee (on December 21, 2017) of our boss and professional mentor, Professor Akin Odebunmi, a renowned linguist of international standing and a Professor of Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. We, the editors, then sought the honouree's approval, after which work commenced in earnest. We are, therefore, grateful to God for giving us the grace to initiate and complete this project. Also, we greatly appreciate Professor Odebunmi for giving us the opportunity to do this in his honour. This project has afforded us access to his international professional network, and we will cherish this for the rest of our professional lives.

Following the impressively positive reception received by our Call for Papers on the *Linguist List* website and similar outlets, the publication process started at a speedy pace. The process, however, became delayed down the line, when some of the revised manuscripts were not returned on time. Serious editorial work on the revised manuscripts logically started late and we became pressured as Professor Odebunmi's fiftieth birthday anniversary celebration—the event where the festschrift was planned to be publicly presented—approached; yet, we were conscious of the standards expected of a good book. We were a bit relieved around September 2017 when Professor Odebunmi informed us that he had decided not to publicly celebrate his golden jubilee and advised us to attend to the rest of the publication process with less haste.

We owe debts of gratitude to the established and budding academics in Africa, Asia, Europe and the United States of America, whose contributions have made this two-volume book a reality. We thank them for their cooperation and patience. Apart from papers received from colleagues as responses to our Call for Papers, some professional mentors and colleagues of Professor Odebunmi were invited to send in their contributions. Those invited include Professors Jacob Mey, Paul J. Hopper, Joel Olatunde Ayodabo and Dr Aloysius Ngefac (in Volume 1) and Professors Wale Adegbite, Ming-Yu Tseng, Edmond Bamiro, Joyce T. Mathangwane, Zouhair Maalej and Gabriel Osoba (in Volume 2). We

thank all these individuals and other contributors for submitting their articles which have enriched the two volumes of the book. Also worthy of thanks are our anonymous reviewers, whose profound and professional inputs have contributed immensely to the success of this book. We sincerely thank all members of our immediate families for sacrificing the attention due to them while we were working on the book. Mr Gbenga Olaoye equally deserves our appreciation for the preliminary formatting of the manuscript. We are grateful to all other contributors, a number of whom are Professor Odebunmi's former and current students, colleagues and friends. We are also grateful to everyone who provided financial support to ease the burden of the publication cost.

We are especially thankful to Professor Peter Auer, who is the festschriftee's German host and mentor, for accepting to write the foreword to this book. Our very tasking, though pleasant, editorial experience has interestingly made our professional dream (of honouring our boss and mentor with a book project, which, according to Professor Jacob Mey, "is eminently deserved by him") a reality. We hope the readers will find this book an invaluable read and a remarkable addition to their knowledge.

# PREFACE

This volume brings together no less than 51 scholarly papers on a diversity of subjects written in honour of Professor Stephen Akinola Odebunmi, Ph.D., on the occasion of his 50th birthday. The volume is a testimony to the remarkable academic standing of his jubilee in Nigerian linguistic academia and to his enormous impact on the training of young scholars in this country, but also to the international embedding of his scientific work.

In a European context, a festschrift on the occasion of somebody's 50th birthday would be exceptional. Usually, the genre is reserved for those who are approaching (or have already reached) the end of their academic career, and being given a festschrift resounds with overtones of imminent retirement, and of looking back on a lifetime of academic achievements—in short, of an ending rather than a beginning. Akin Odebunmi's festschrift is of a different type. It is presented to him at a stage in his career in which nothing is coming to an end, and many things are just beginning. Although an established and renowned scholar, although installed as full professor of English linguistics and also recently as Director of the University of Ibadan Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Professor Odebunmi is in the middle of his academic career, and we are expecting a wealth of new insights and initiatives from his future work, just as we have received from his past work, the foundation of the Nigerian Pragmatics Association being just one, very recent example.

The breadth of Professor Odebunmi's research is impressive. To be sure, it can all be subsumed under the heading of pragmatics, but as we all know, pragmatics is a huge field. Akin Odebunmi has contributed to it in theoretical ways through his often-cited 2006 book on "Meaning in English", but he has also worked on many empirical issues, some of them with a distinctly applied focus. A total of twelve completed PhD theses, supervised by him, reflect these competencies and interests, ranging from political discourse, media discourse, sexual discourse and religious discourse to literary studies. And, of course, he is professor of English and therefore concerned with the varieties of English spoken in Nigeria.

But at the heart of his empirical work lies for me the big theme of medical interaction, which was the topic of his PhD thesis. It is this topic that brought him to Germany (as a Humboldt fellow at the Freiburg

Institute of Advanced Studies, first in 2010, and later again for various shorter stays). Among his numerous publications in international journals, it seems to me that those on medical communication are the most important ones, not least because it is of such utmost importance to investigate the ways in which doctors and patients communicate and, not rarely, miscommunicate in Nigeria. Research on doctor-patient interaction is flourishing internationally, but it still has a strong "western" bias; we know very little about the conditions under which illness and healing are organised outside the western sphere, and about the cross-fertilisations but also the cultural conflicts and ideological clashes that are brought about by the import of "western" medicine into Africa. Medicine as a social institution is a key issue for the development of a country and for the well-being of its citizens. But while this is generally acknowledged, doctors and politicians often do not understand that more is involved here than medical drugs and technologies. Medicine is not only about the body and its physical diseases, but it is also, and most centrally, about communication. Without successful medical interaction between doctors and patients, the institution of medicine as a whole is bound to fail. Akin Odebunmi is one of the few who have understood that we need a holistic medicine which sees the patient first of all as a human being, and not only a body to be repaired when it does not function well. Language and interaction are part of such a holistic, non-reductive, approach to medicine. I wish Akin Odebunmi all the success he and his cause deserve to put this message across to the Nigerian public!

There is another point I would like to make in this preface. The scientific dialogue between Europe and Africa has for a long time been a rather one-sided issue, with European knowledge being channelled "southward" without much of an understanding of the cultural context in which it is received. No big words such as postcolonialism are needed to understand this. As somebody who is trained in the western tradition of linguistics and interaction analysis, I cannot avoid believing that many of the insights gained in this tradition must also be applicable and helpful in Africa. But this belief is sometimes wrong. It needs an open as well as a critical mind such as Professor Odebunmi's in order to engage in a fruitful dialogue about the limits of western thinking. It needs somebody who is extremely knowledgeable about the current trends and developments in western pragmatics, but who is at the same time well-rooted in his own culture and tradition in order to resist the temptations of an all-too-easy transfer of western theories and concepts to African issues. Akin Odebunmi is such a person. His ongoing scientific concern with topics such as face-work and politeness in Africa is perhaps the best proof.

Talking with him about these and related issues has been inspiring and fruitful for me. I hope that this dialogue will continue.

Prof. Dr Peter Auer,
University of Freiburg,
Freiburg, Germany.

# INTRODUCTION

Pragmatics, Discourse and Society: A Festschrift for Akin Odebunmi* is a two-volume ensemble of research articles written by established and budding academics to celebrate Professor Akin Odebunmi's academic prowess and golden jubilee (December 21, 2017). The articles in it, across the two volumes, consistent with the editors' proposal, cover theoretical and empirical grounds in pragmatics, applied linguistics, stylistics, literary discourse and various other genres with high contextual constraints, demonstrating Professor Akin Odebunmi's commitment to strict engagement with textual and discursive salience and pragma-discoursal properties at micro and macro levels of interpretation. The two-volume book is structured into seven sections (four in Volume 1 and three in Volume 2), comprising 52 chapters (1-24 in Volume 1 and 25-52 in Volume 2), to demonstrate Professor Odebunmi's research engagement.

In this volume (Volume 1), Section One, Chapter One, **Jacob Mey** seats Odebunmi's research in international pragmatics scholarship. The chapter discusses the value of certainty or lack of certainty as a major pragmatic value relevant to the theory and practice of life sciences. It thus grounds its argument in the analysis of how communicating certainty and uncertainty plays a decisive role in the context of the medical interview and the professional treatment of patients, as amply demonstrated by Akin Odebunmi in much of his recent work.

Section Two, entitled "Theoretics", opens with **Paul Hopper**'s paper (Chapter Two), which addresses the theoretical place of Pragmatics in the overall scheme of language and the study of language. He notes that understanding the place of pragmatics in language usage extends into the empirical study of human interactions and general questions of semiotics. He ultimately explores the latter thread, with attention to two figures whose influence in linguistics is, at the present moment marginal, but which has the promise of growing—Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin and Roy Harris—by comparing the theory of the "sign" developed in Bakhtin's essay, "The Problem of Speech Genres" with the independently conceived "integrational sign" of Harris. In Chapter Three, **Abdullahi-Idiagbon** focuses on deictic resources in English and Yoruba discourses. Using simulated samples of common utterances in English as well as Yoruba languages for illustration, the author discovers that the role of culture in

influencing structural difference between these two languages is significant.

Section Three, which is captioned, "Context and Contextualisation" starts, in Chapter Four, with **Amaka C. Ezeife's** research into patriarchal ideology issues in literary discourse. The chapter combines aspects of a socio-cognitive model of critical discourse analysis, dominant gender theory and contextual beliefs (CBs) model to investigate the place of lexical reiteration and how it is used to orient contextual beliefs that control patriarchal ideology in Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*. The findings show that certain forms of lexical reiteration are used by the author to unveil two acts (dominance and weakness), characterising patriarchal ideology in the text. In Chapter Five, **Folasade Oloyede** investigates contextual constraints in the academic sermons of student-pastors in the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso. Adapting Peter Auer's theory of context, the author indicates that the sermons feature four context types, namely, epistemic (EPI), scriptural (SCR), institutional (INS) and recipient management (RCM). She posits that the positive constraints signal the student-pastors' positive orientation to training while the negative constraints indicate where more attention is needed in their training.

Chapter Six by **Monica Jegede** examines naming as a meaning resource in the Holy Bible's synoptic gospels, adopting aspects of the theory of context. Deploying the purposive sampling technique, six groups and seven categories of names, as well as eleven contextual and five co-textual categories, are identified and analysed. It is concluded that contextualising onomastic resources reveals valuable information about Jewish linguistic, social and cultural identities. In Chapter Seven, **Kehinde Odekunbi** identifies and analyses the lexico-semantic elements in Zulu Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods* within the context of Nigerian English, against the backdrop of Adegbija's (1989) lexico-semantic categories. Dividing 34 randomly sampled conversations into three contextual categories, six major variation types are revealed—transfer, semantic extension, coinages, analogy, idioms/proverbs, borrowing—ultimately confirming the expediency of Nigerian English in expressing Nigerian socio-cultural meanings.

A pragmatic reading of Lágbájá's music based on the Yoruba socio-cultural concept of Ọmọlúàbí is **Toyin Makinde's** preoccupation in Chapter Eight. Anchoring an analysis of eleven albums (78 tracks) in Odebunmi's (2015) three Ọmọlúàbí pragmatic constructs of integrity, considerateness and deference, she reveals Lágbájá's songs as preserving integrity, enhancing considerateness and promoting deference, essentially

making his music have the explicit intention to confront ethical issues. Chapter Nine by **Ibukun Filani** critiques Odebunmi's (2006) Model of Contextual Beliefs, a model posited as advocating a socio-cultural perspective of common ground, where context is a given of beliefs or assumptions, fixed and created by egocentric or social interactants. While the model's major strength lies in its successful combination of physical and cognitive aspects of context, its weakness, it is noted, resides in its inability to indicate the strategies for determining or negotiating shared contextual beliefs in interactions.

Section Four, "Institutional and Non-Institutional Communication", opens with Chapter Ten, in which **Aloysius Angefac** investigates speakers' intentions when they perform speech acts in certain conversational situations, and the effects of these acts on the hearers, relying on some speech acts in Cameroon English (collected in real-life situations). The author shows how the pragmatic meanings of the acts in the data contrast with the meanings suggested by the semantics of the words uttered during the conversational exchanges investigated. Chapter Eleven, by **Kehinde A. Ayoola** and **Oluwayomi Olaniyan**, explores the pragmatic meanings of intertextual references in campaign-related cartoons in Nigeria's 2011 general elections. While using Raskin and Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humour, they reveal that, in addition to the humour and satire embedded in cartoon messages, intertextual references are used creatively in the cartoons to convey multiple pragmatic meanings associated with Nigerian politicians and the Nigerian socio-cultural milieu: entertaining the Nigerian newspaper-reading public; lampooning negative traits exhibited by Nigerian politicians and the ruling elite; and portraying Nigerian politicians and their parties as ill-suited for governance. In Chapter Twelve, **Bimbola O. Idowu-Faith and Mayokun O. Adeleye** adopt Mey's Pragmatic Acts Theory (PAT) and the linguistic concept of context to interpret humorous acts in Lola Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*. The analysis reveals that humour functions within the level of characters' communicative events and the level of the text as an utterance. Idowu-Faith and Adeleye, thus, conclude that humour's functions in literary discourses are beyond merely propelling laughter.

In Chapter Thirteen **'Niyi Osunbade** explores the pragmatic strategies engaged by the Ifa diviners for demonstrating face orientation in diagnostic news delivery in their consultative encounters with clients in Oyo State, Nigeria, as regards proffering culture-motivated spiritual solutions to health-related problems. The chapter concludes that the diviners' face-oriented use of language is a cultural, practice-motivated professional strategy they usually engage in for the delivery of health

diagnostic messages, to secure the cooperation of the clients towards spiritual healing during divinatory consultations. Chapter Fourteen, by **Romanus Abo** and **Dimoye Amgbapu,** investigates the contextual uses and significations of '*it is well*' as a discourse-pragmatic marker in Nigerian English. With a theoretical anchorage in Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory, the findings reveal the roles of this marker, including conversation closure, expression of empathy and concern, discourse interruption, hedging and negative response, and pragmatic presupposition marking.

**Ayo Osisanwo** and **Tunji Ojora's** paper in Chapter Fifteen examines the discourse-pragmatic value of impoliteness in Nigeria's TV game show, MTN's *Who Deserves to be a Millionaire*. Analysing data sampled from three purposively sampled episodes of the show, the authors report the host's and the contestants' strategic deployment of impolite acts and impolite counter-strategies to achieve laughter, reduce tension and mitigate face damage. Chapter Sixteen, by **Akinbiyi Adetunji**, grounds Nigeria's President Mohammadu Buhari's first-year commemorative address (May 27, 2016) in Cap's (2013) proximisation theory, a three-tier cognitive-pragmatic construal of distance in discourse along spatial, temporal and axiological axes. He submits that the proximisation strategies in the address are ultimately legitimisation devices meant to positively project the speaker as worthy of political leadership and authority. In Chapter Seventeen, **Adeniji A. Adedayo and Badejo O. Olabisi** investigate conversational structure and face constitution in Facebook interactions. Employing Arundale's *Face Constituting theory,* they show that conflicts are managed and face constituting strategies are co-jointly interpreted in the interactions.

Chapter Eighteen by **Ezekiel Opeyemi Olajimbiti** focuses on the discourse representations of children's roles in selected Nollywood movies. Using a combination of theories, the author shows that the movies express four children's roles: the victim role in all the movie genres; the peacemaker role in evangelical and family movies; and the troublemaker role and the baby role only in family movies. The findings reveal that children are largely victims of adult irresponsibility, discriminators and naive individuals. **'Dayo Ogunsiji**, in Chapter Nineteen, explores the discourse representation of orthodox medicine and alternative therapy in network marketing discourse in Ibadan, Nigeria. The chapter shows that network marketing organisations, through their network marketers, represent orthodox medicine as inadequate, ineffective, inconvenient and unreliable while they portray alternative therapies as effective and convenient. Chapter Twenty by **Idayat Modupe Lamidi** investigates the

pragmatic acts in the antenatal health talk sessions of the University College Hospital, Ibadan. The author indicates that the antenatal health class is an interactive one which is enhanced through the practs of questioning, informing, instructing, appealing, warning and advising employed by the health workers and the expectant mothers' contextual knowledge of the messages conveyed through them.

In Chapter Twenty-one, **Onwu Inya** and **Blessing Inya** investigate the metaphorical construal of sex in Lola Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*, combining insights from conceptual metaphor theory and relevance-theoretic pragmatics. Considering eight conceptual metaphors that provide cognitive framing for sex and the male sexual organ as data, the study reveals that the identification and interpretation of these conceptual metaphors are aided both by metaphor identification procedure (MIP) and the pragmatic processes of narrowing and broadening. Chapter Twenty-two by **Joel Olatunde Ayodabo** examines the politeness strategies and speech acts that characterise the utterances of the beggars in the Kaduna metropolis of northern Nigeria, with insights from Brown and Levinson's theories of "Politeness" and "Face". The author submits that the knowledge of pragmatic mappings, such as common ground, presupposition, implicature and inference, is critical to utterance processing in begging events.

In Chapter Twenty-three, **Taye M. Odionkhere's** paper examines speech acts, psychological modes, contextual features and components of love in the *Song of Solomon*, by adopting Searle's speech act theory, Sternberg's triangular theory of love and Stumpf's cognitive-evaluative theory of emotion as tools of analysis. While identifying three macro acts—expressives, directives and commissives—Odionkhere concludes that the correlation between speech acting, psychological modes and components of love is a clear indication that *Song of Solomon* is meant to perform an amatorial function rather than a transcendental one. **Temidayo Akinrinola** and **Temitope Ajayi's** study, in Chapter Twenty-four, explores the pragmatics of hedges in police-suspect interaction in Ibadan, Nigeria, with a view to describing the pragmatic functions of hedges used by interrogating police officers and suspects. Using Mey's pragmatic act theory, they reveal that IPOs, in a bid to get suspects to confess to crimes, employ hedges with shared situation knowledge, inference, and shared cultural knowledge to pract warning, blaming, encouraging, justifying and rebuking, while suspects employ hedges with shared situation knowledge and inference to pract feigning ignorance, refuting, vaguing and offering explanations. They show that these interactions involve the use of psychological acts performed by both the officers and the suspects.

Volume 2, Section Five, "Interactional Orientations in Discourses and Texts", begins with **Joyce Mathangwane's** paper, in Chapter Twenty-five. The author focuses on how ICTs can be used to promote African languages within the continent. She also highlights some of the challenges faced in the promotion of African languages, which include but are not limited to, unfavourable language policies, poor infrastructure, and lack of resources. Considering these challenges, the paper questions whether ICTs can (or cannot) help promote and preserve African languages. **Foluke Unuabonah**, in Chapter Twenty-six, explores the language of evaluation and intersubjective positioning in the Nigerian Federal Capital Territory (FCT) administration hearings, with a view to exploring the attitudinal meanings expressed in the hearings and how participants engage dialogically with addressees in the hearings. Using insights from Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal theory, the study reveals that addressers engage their addressees through appraisal resources to achieve their communicative goals of complaining, defending and interrogating.

In Chapter Twenty-seven, **Tolulope Akinseye** adopts Appraisal Theory to analyse how undergraduate students' use of language reveals their emotional, ethical and aesthetic evaluations of situations, things and people. Analysing fifteen purposively selected narrative essays on the topic, the findings of "My Experience as a Fresh Student" reveal mostly the AFFECT value of "happiness", more JUDGEMENT values of "social sanction" than "social esteem", and generally, more AFFECT than JUDGEMENT attitude types. **Tolulope Oluremi's** paper in Chapter Twenty-eight investigates the African cultural practices of forceful woman inheritance and girl-child marriage in Ahmed Yerima's *Aetu*, and observes that the writer uses Yoruba mythology and makes deliberate lexical choices (proverbs, metaphors and hyperboles) to make this injustice to women appear as vicious as possible and to appeal to a wide audience. In this study, Yerima has been read as having used language and style to interrogate the ideologies that feed these anti-female, though antediluvian, cultural practices. Using Locher's and Graham's (2010) interpersonal pragmatics, conversation analysis and social constructionist theory, **Simeon Ajiboye**, in Chapter Twenty-nine, investigates the construction of gender identity in Nigerian alternative dispute resolution (ADR) centres, in order to know how identities are expressed in local contexts. The chapter discovers that "macho", "womanist", and "chauvinist" are the three categories of gender identity that characterise the South-western ADR centres. The paper concludes that identity expression in any human interaction is both a priori and emergent.

Chapter Thirty by **Grace Olutayo** and **Oyindamola Olabode** examines the frequency and functions of backchannels in a Nigerian television talk show, "Moments with Mo". Three purposively selected episodes of the talk show are analysed and findings reveal that female participants use backchannels more than the male participants in the conversations, and that, contrary to the positions of some scholars, some backchannel signals are used to take the turns of the current speakers. In Chapter Thirty-one, **Akin Tella** determines the discourse structure of Nigerian Inaugural Presidential Speeches (NIPS) and examines how social actors are linguistically framed in it, using five inaugural speeches as data. Adopting Halliday and Hassan's (1989) Generic Structure Potential (GSP), Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) transitivity and modal assessment systems, and Kuypers' (2009) framing analysis as rhetorical criticism, the author reveals that the GSP catalogue of NIPS contains ten rhetorical elements: six compulsory but four optional, and that in these elements, the speakers variously frame Nigerians, themselves, past leaders, party supporters and God through choices from the transitivity and modal assessment systems. The study concludes that the linguistically established frames serve the communicative goals of positive self-presentation, negative other-presentation, political association maintenance and populist alignment. Chapter Thirty-two, featuring **Opeyemi Atolagbe's** study, investigates Chris Abani's novel, *Becoming Abigail*, applying insights from Trauma Theory. Projecting the themes of sexual exploitation and the struggle to become, the chapter reveals that the life of Abigail, a tragic heroine, is so much marked by pain, denial, grief, guilt and absurdities that trauma becomes a part of her identity until she commits suicide.

In Chapter Thirty-three, grounding their investigation in Systemic Functional Grammar, **Moses Ayoola** and **S.T. Babatunde** analyse the systems of mood and modality in Nuhu Ribadu's and Goodluck Jonathan's political advertisements, as related to the 2011 Nigerian presidential election. While the imperative mood is preponderant in Ribadu's adverts, and Jonathan's adverts are full of the declarative mood, modality in Jonathan's adverts is higher than in Ribadu's. The study concludes that politicians use mood and modality to create varying levels of interpersonal meaning and ideological stance. Chapter Thirty-four, by **Joseph Alagbe,** delves into the motivations for code-switching deployed by George Adegboye in his selected sermons, adopting communication accommodation theory. The study discovers that Adegboye uses his expressions for ethnic identity, rhetorical purposes, and accommodation with the congregation. It concludes that code-switching is employed to entrench Adegboye's oratorical dexterity. In his study, **Reuben Kehinde**

**Akano**, in Chapter Thirty-five, employs an eclectic approach in interpreting or analysing incantatory poems for the purpose of elucidation, illumination and illustration. He explores the aesthetics, orality, genre and efficacy of incantations as sourced from the Yoruba artistic enterprise, and submits that the aesthetics of incantatory poetry can be explicated in relation to its mystical efficacy within a given animated context.

Investigating social vision in Niyi Osundare's and Mongane Wally Serote's selected poems, **Mayaki Joseph**, in Chapter Thirty-six, uses Marxist theory as a critical lens to analyse and unveil the social vision of the poet's selected poems. The analysis reveals that both poets canvass and campaign for egalitarian societies, ones where there are no class divides based on education, wealth or skin colour. Mayaki submits that both poets creatively champion societal changes and stir societal revolution. In Chapter Thirty-seven, **Ronke Adesoye** gathers twenty memes—out of which seven were purposively selected—and uses Kress and van Leeuwen's Multimodality theory to establish how the memes are strategies for euphemising Nigerians' challenges. The analysis reveals that meme producers try to achieve humour, inform readers, and incite viewers' thoughts, among others. Chapter Thirty-eight, featuring **Samuel A. Akinwotu's** paper, investigates the discourse functions of mood in Christian religious tracts and the communicative import of mood in creating and maintaining interpersonal relations in the selected tracts. The study identifies the significance of the declarative, interrogative and imperative moods in Christian religious tracts. While declarative clauses reveal the commitment of the writer to his/her propositions, interrogatives facilitate interaction between writers and readers, and imperatives are employed to persuade readers to act in a particular way.

In Chapter Thirty-nine, **Kazeem K. Olaniyan** and **Nafiu Ige** analyse the discourse functions of modality structures in Background Information (BI) segments of arts-based research article abstracts, using insights from the systemic functional linguistic tool of "modality". The study reveals that the engagement of possibility, necessity, prediction and prohibition modals in expressing the generic compliant functions of Defining Core Item or Concept (DCI), Profiling (P), Establishing Research Perspective (ERP), and Anchoring Research Thesis (AN) potentially impacts on the writing of BI by budding academics. Chapter Forty, by **Osas Iyoha,** explores the reportage of crime in two Nigerian newspapers, *The Punch* and *The Sun*, drawing analytic insights from aspects of Systemic Functional Linguistics. It submits that how different grammatical structures are engaged to represent the Criminal Justice System (CJS) in the news calls the objectivity and fairness of the press into question.

**Kolapo Oluwakemi's** paper, in Chapter Forty-one, examines the notion of discourse coherence and analyses coherence in Remi Raji's *Sea of My Mind*, with a view to investigating how certain coherence-motivated linguistic devices account for meaning in the poetry collection. The chapter sheds light on the understanding of the role of coherence features in enhancing access to the author's intended message and overall meaning of the text. Chapter Forty-two contains **Gabriel Osoba's** eclectic analysis of the poem "rithmetic of ruse" in Osundare's collection, entitled, S*ongs of the Market Place*. The paper demonstrates that the literary, linguistic and discourse features of the poem combine to contribute to the understanding of the work as a coherent poetic text with a thematic focus on electoral fraud in a presidential election in Nigeria. Chapter Forty-three, by **Odirin Abonyi**, focuses on language use by Tanure Ojaide, to engage his readers within the universal and cultural contexts in which his writing, *God's Medicine Men & Other Short Stories,* are situated. In the author's analysis of the data, using the linguistic perspective of symbolic language theory, findings reveal that generic expressions in the texts are iconic patterns of language that are used to couch the theme, develop the characters, and sequence the events. In Chapter Forty-four, **Aondover Alexis Tsavmbu** and **DooChen Imotyoo** examine Adichie's use of satire in the portraiture of her central character, Eugene Achike, in *Purple Hibiscus*, using the sociological critical approach. The portraiture depicts his characterisation as a kind and generous person in his relationship with others outside his family but as a cruel, impatient and unforgiving individual to his family at home.

Section Six, "Cognition, Ideology and Society", opens with Chapter Forty-five, by **Yu-Kai Huang and Ming-Yu Tseng**. The authors investigate the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A (SEA) JOURNEY, drawing examples from scenes selected from the movie *Titanic*. The chapter elucidates the ways in which LOVE IS A (SEA) JOURNEY is multimodally represented and motivated in the movie, by the use of visual/verbal messages, camera angle and framing. Chapter Forty-six by **Zouhair Maalej** investigates how an escalation in hate speech may lead to intergroup political violence using a corpus consisting of two short articles published on social media by affiliates of the Islamist party and the secularist opposition in post-revolutionary Tunisia. Combining insights from rhetorical move analysis, critical discourse analysis, and cognitive linguistics, findings suggest that Islamists are more tendentious than secularists in escalating hate speech, which may raise serious fears of political violence. **Wale Adegbite and Taiwo Adeniyi's** paper, in Chapter Forty-seven, is a semiotic description of the inscriptions on the T-shirts

worn by some university students in Nigeria, with a view to interpreting their meanings as expressions of the wearers' identities as well as contextual and cultural undertones of the codes, with insights from the social semiotics framework adapted from Halliday and Kress and van Leeuwen. The findings revealed that many of the students wore clothes with different inscriptions on them, based on individual and social (peer group and fellowship) ideological and religious beliefs and feelings, using linguistic resources of plain words and acronyms as well as phrases and short sentences expressed in slang, jargon, colloquial and formal codes.

In Chapter Forty-eight, **Edward Bamiro** adapts insights from Systemic Functional Grammar to elucidate the interpersonal functions of figurative language in two novels, one each from Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe. He discovers the prominence of "pejorative" attitudinal force and indicates that the metaphorical vehicles do not only assist the authors in character selection and weighting but also reveal the writers' attitudes towards aspects of the Nigerian social structure. **Oluwayemisi Akinmameji**, in Chapter Forty-nine, does a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of three of Osofisan's plays, focusing on the power-sharing formula and the feminist ideology that underlie the plays. Adopting Fairclough's socio-cultural model of CDA as inflected with Systemic Functional Grammar, the author identifies how Osofisan deploys linguistic devices to project feminist ideology and gender equality.

Chapter Fifty is **Olawunmi Oni-Buraimoh** and **Funke Oni's** investigation of concealment strategies that are deployed by tertiary institution students when discussing sex-related phenomena, with a view to unravelling the linguistic resources deployed by the students and the implicit assumptions embedded in the discourses. Deploying Mey's (2001) theory of pragmeme and van Djik's (2006) Socio-cognitive model, the chapter reveals slang words, abbreviations, indexicals, name-calling and doublespeak as concealment strategies couched in implicit assumptions that ride on shared belief, shared situational knowledge and shared experiential knowledge. In Chapter Fifty-one, **Chuka Ononye** investigates the lexico-semantic choices in Nigerian newspaper reports on Niger Delta (ND) conflicts, in order to establish their link to specific ideological goals of the newspapers in relaying conflict news. The study establishes the occurrences of paradigmatic and syntagmatic features which are utilised for three ideological ends: picking out and framing participants as perpetrators of the violence in the discourse, evaluating specific entities and their roles in the conflicts, and reducing the impact of the activities of the news actors.

Section Seven, with the caption "The Master and His Art", contains only one paper, in Chapter Fifty-two, by the festschriftee, **Akin Odebunmi,** as a mark of his approval of the project and an authoritative voice in the discipline of medical pragmatics. In the chapter, **Odebunmi** deploys insights from theoretical perspectives on code selection, Stephen Levinson's notion of activity types and Skirant Sarangi's concept of discourse types to catalogue the generic structure of the interactions at first meetings in Nigerian hospitals and examines the pragmatic features and functions of the codes used by doctors and clients at the different units of the generic structure. The chapter demonstrates that the phenomenon of code selection reflects the multi-code nature of the interactions, shows the culture-institution nexus that governs the meetings, reveals linguistic flexibilities despite the dominance of English in the Nigerian orthodox medical institution and presents a context-sensitive communicative terrain that permits linguistic and goal negotiations.

This book, which marks a significant milestone in the professional life of our teacher, boss and mentor, is essentially meant for undergraduate and postgraduate students, and scholars of Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis. Scholars and students (undergraduate and postgraduate) in allied disciplines such as stylistics, literature, applied linguistics (in the strict professional sense), anthropology, sociolinguistics and medical sociology will also find the book valuable.

# SECTION ONE:

# AKIN ODEBUNMI IN INTERNATIONAL PRAGMATICS SCHOLARSHIP

# CHAPTER 1

# IN TEMPORE OPPORTUNO: OF CERTAINTY AND UNCERTAINTY IN (NON-)TIME

## JACOB L. MEY

### Abstract

*Among the main pragmatic values, relevant especially to the theory and practice of the life sciences, is the necessity of providing certainty (or, if appropriate, lack of certainty). Both under normal and special (e.g., pathological or life-threatening) conditions, we expect a responsible agency and discourse from scientific workers and their spokespersons. In particular, we attribute responsibility to scientific discourse (in utterances and written texts) and their producers; if they choose, or need to, "deresponsibilise" themselves—avoiding responsibility—as is done by techniques such as "hedging" (Caffi 2007), we need to know the reasons for this and must be able to evaluate the effects.*

*A major part of the present paper is dedicated to showing how communicating certainty (and uncertainty) plays an often-decisive role in the context of medical interviews and the professional treatment of patients, as amply demonstrated by Akin Odebunmi in much of his recent work (e.g., Odebunmi 2001, 2005, 2006).*

*Against the background of Bakhtin's familiar concept of "answerability", it will be shown how the practice of deresponsibilising militates against accepted forms of providing certainty, such as by the use of "evidentials". The "willed uncertainty" involved in the use of "hedges", in particular through the use of Caffi's "bushes" (2007: 98ff), will be discussed from the angle of what is pragmatically appropriate, not least in terms of "temporal opportunity", in tempore opportuno. A special opportunity, in this case, is the 50th birthday of an outstanding communicator of medical (un)certainty, the Nigerian scientist and teacher, Akin Odebunmi, to whom the present article is dedicated.*

## 1.1 Introduction: Time and Non-time

Among the premier conditions for successfully realising a pragmatic (or speech) act are the constraints of time. An act is only "felicitous" if it is executed "at the appropriate time" (*in tempore opportuno*). As St. Paul in 2 Cor. 6:2 puts it, the Apostle specifically adds the constraint of "acceptable time" (*tempus acceptable*), for which he refers to the Prophet Isaiah, who has God telling him of "the acceptable time [at which] I have heard your prayer" (*in tempore acceptabili exaudivi te*, Is. 49: 3).

Scriptural words like these are aptly used as blessings before meals in Catholic communities when the important daily practice of partaking in the communal act of eating is made "felicitous" by placing it in the appropriate pragmatic frame, so that our food is given and consumed in "acceptable" forms of acting: "You [God] give us our food at the right time; you open your hands, and fill every living being with blessing" (*tu das eis escam in tempore opportuno; aperis tu manum tuam et imples omne animal benedictione*; from Psalm 145:15).

In other words, the right moment, the "timing", not just for praying or eating, but in general for successful (pragmatic) acting, is of the greatest importance for these biblical authorities; but this is also no less the case for modern people trying to accomplish their duties at the appropriate times and with "acceptable" outcomes, while avoiding what the Classical authors called "nefarious", i.e., "non-times" (from the Latin word *nefas*, "ill-timed, forbidden").

Professor Akin Odebunmi has, in many of his works, illustrated the relevance of the biblical sayings by identifying cases of "non-time", times that are *not* acceptable, moments that are *not* appropriate, such as when doctors discuss a (terminal) condition within earshot of one of their patients. Here, "hedging" and otherwise securing one's professional utterances can be of paramount importance, as when a doctor uses medical terminology to convey to his colleagues, in the presence of the patient's father, a delicate finding, like that of an unwanted pregnancy in his underage daughter; however, this (and other similar) hedgings regularly fail, more often than not with disastrous results.

The present contribution first discusses, in general terms, this problem of pragmatic (in)felicity in (non-)time; among the crucial notions here is that of uncertainty in terms of the evidentiality provided. Following

this, I will illustrate my findings by referring to and discussing some relevant cases described in various places in the recent work of the festschriftee, Professor Odebunmi.

And yes, to continue with the Apostle's admonition in Second Corinthians, ch. 6, "now is the acceptable time" (*nunc est tempus acceptabile*) to congratulate our festschriftee, not only on his birthday, but also on his many and variegated exploits in the service of the users of our human communication devices, first of all, language. It is hoped that my modest essay will also help to divulge his important views beyond the limits and limitations of the present celebration.

## 1.2 From Evidentials to Certainty

According to the Berkeley anthropological linguist, William Hanks, "[e]vidential marking is a species of indexicality in which the evidential form indexes the relation between the speaker, the object or event spoken about and the linguistic act of producing the 'evidential utterance'" (2012: 169). Considering the (actual or desired) effects of an utterance or in general, of a communicative act, one could further ask what the relation is between the use of evidentiality and the result, the perlocutionary effect of one's utterance. Does adding a source of information, for example, add to the credibility of my utterance, and does it enhance its effect?

The question is appropriate, especially in languages where the adding of an evidential is obligatory rather than optional. Thus, certain Amazonian languages do not allow utterances to be "evidential-free": one always indicates, explicitly or implicitly, the source of one's information (see Michael 2012), while in languages of the Andesian Jaqi family, such as Aymara (spoken in Bolivia and Peru), "it is difficult to utter *any* sentence without indicating the source of one's information" (Hardman 1986: 114; see Nyan 2015: 550). Even in English, Nyan observes that the intended perlocutionary effects "are more likely to occur when no reference is made to the information source than when that source is provided" (2015: 548). For instance, if I say, "According to Galileo, the earth revolves around the sun", my utterance produces a less credible effect, that is to say, less certainty, than if I just state the fact by saying "The earth revolves around the sun". When no evidentials are needed and no source marking is offered or expected, this means that one's utterance is in no need of being "ascertained": the mere uttering of the words produces the perlocutionary effect of creating certainty.

## 1.3 Scientific Certainty

Compare now this observation with what is most valued in scientific writing. Here, the obvious effect that an author wants to produce is "certainty", understood as the recipient's firm belief that what the author says is in accordance with the facts. Immediately, two problems arise. For one, we are talking about a "belief"—but how can one *know*, that is, be certain of anything at all, in any sense other than "believing" it? The Mormons have a practical (a tad specious, but pretty effective) way around this conundrum: a true Mormon should never say, for example, "I believe that Joseph Smith is God's Prophet"; such a "belief" should always be formulated as *knowledge*: "I know that Joseph Smith is God's Prophet" (Wakefield 2016: 900). While for most people, "saying" normally includes some form of believing (even the liar, to be successful, has to "believe" his own lie!), still, when one person expresses an experience or a thought (which by nature is strictly "personal"), how can another person, such as the recipient of the utterance or communicative act, obtain certainty about what is being said or communicated?

Since whatever is received is done so in accordance with the recipient's "affordances" (James J. Gibson, the 20th-century psychologist, and St. Thomas Aquinas, the 13th-century philosopher, walk arm in arm here), it stands to reason that even in cases of evidently misunderstood events or facts, our utterances generate beliefs (however "false"), and that (even false) beliefs may turn into certainties (however "unwarranted").

## 1.4 (Un)certainty and Pragmatics

Uncertainty is interesting, not just because it is the (supposedly ugly) other face of certainty, but as a form of being that has its cause and *modus operandi* in other domains. For a pragmaticist, the question is first and foremost, where do uncertainties come from? If pragmatics is about the use and users of language (Mey 2001: 6), the primary pragmatic questions in any context are how language establishes certainty, and what role certainty (or uncertainty) plays in the use of language, whether we are thinking of everyday conversation or of scientific communication in professional contexts.

In science and scientific communication, truth depends on certainty, and certainty in science is corroborated by an appeal to facts, as the British/US physicist, Freeman Dyson, points out in his well-known apophthegm, "facts are supposed to be true or false; theories have an entirely different status" (Dyson 2014). But how is it then that scientists,

when expressing themselves about matters they have "seen", or "experienced" (recall the linguistic origin of the term "experiment"), prefer to "hedge" their statements, and often publish their results in a "veiled" form—not only by using scientific "jargon", but more generally eschewing responsibility by crawling under a "bush" of weakened responsibility, or "deresponsibilisation"? (Caffi's *deresponsabilizzazione*; 2002: 118, 2007: 159, and more below).

## 1.5 Context and Situation

The answer, as always in pragmatics, is to be found in what the Polish/Austrian anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski (1923) used to call the "context of the situation", also known as the "context of use(rs)". We have to know the situation in which the scientist-writer formulates his or her sentences, arranges his or her descriptions of experiments, formulates hypotheses and conclusions, and so on. In particular, it is important to know "whose language" he or she is speaking (Mey 1985): is it the voice of the independent researcher we hear, or the voice of one who is beholden to a sponsor (a government, a company, or a foundation), to a world view, a *Weltanschauung*, or even a religion?

One look at the colophon of any current scientific publication will reveal that there are indeed a lot of "competing interests" involved in the production of a scientific journal, article or book. The author(s) must declare that they are not biased with respect to their various sponsors; importantly, such statements must be made to convey *certainty*, either implicitly in a "bush"-like formulation (Caffi 2007: 98; see also below), or by an explicit mentioning of names and institutions.

Similarly, when reporting on experiments or results, it is not acceptable to use wordings like "one thinks", "we believe" or "it may be the case that". One's own thoughts and feelings being what they are, they do not normally enter into the scientific equation; hence there is normally no reason to express certainty (or a lack of it) with regard to one's state of mind or emotions. By contrast, whenever one states an observation of a fact, or reports on an experiment, the recipient of the message needs to know, with certainty, that the experimenter has done the experiments, and that the tests and reports are (re)produced to the best of the experimenter's competence and knowledge, and not according to some unfounded belief or pre-established opinion or judgement—or even, in the worst-case scenario, based on previously arranged "facts" and "finds" (the nefarious practice of "salting the dig", as it is called in anthropology and archaeology).

## 1.6 Uncertainty, Hedging and (Pseudo-) Modesty

Whereas in normal human interaction, uncertainty (such as that expressed by vagueness or indirectness) may be used to prevent an author from "forcing the recipient into one or the other direction" (of action or interpretation; Caffi 2002: 119), the use of such "hedges" in scientific writing is not conducive to the overall goal of one's writing efforts: namely, to persuade the recipient of the correctness of one's views, irrespective of the authenticity of one's experiments and results.

I am making an exception here for what I will call the "pseudo-modest" wording that one may encounter in a fair number of (mostly humanistic) writings where the author pretends to be more ignorant about, or less certain of, what he or she is saying, in order not to appear prepotent or arrogant. To the initiated reader, when an author like Noam Chomsky says, using one of his favourite hedges, that something is "fairly certain" or "fairly obvious", or when Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber attest to their "fairly precise expectations of relevance" (1986: 156), it will immediately be clear that these authors are pretty "certain" on the matters in question, which to them are "precise" or "obvious" in the extreme; the hedges in this case, by displaying a modicum of modesty, convey a maximum of self-assuredness on the part of the authors. Similarly, a remark such as Chomsky's (in an interview with the psychologist Robert W. Rieber; 1983: 13) that the term "universal grammar" represents "a terminology that is now fairly standard", dissimulates, or even obfuscates, the fact that the very existence of a universal grammar is still one of the most hotly disputed issues in theoretical linguistics.

Compare also the way writers/speakers (mostly of German or Scandinavian provenance) tend to routinely "hedge" their opinions by adding qualifiers like (German) *wohl* or (Danish) *måske* "perhaps", (German) *kaum* or (Danish) *næppe* "hardly", or by using *verba sentiendi et declarandi* like "I think", "I suppose", "I feel", etc. In all these cases of (pseudo-)modesty in speech acting, the competent interlocutor or reader will be able to discount the hedge's value in relation to (un)certainty. One is never uncertain as to the hedgers' true persuasions or feelings—unless of course the speakers or authors belong to different cultures, where the expectation is "to be told it like it is".

## 1.7 Responsibility and its Discontent:
## "Deresponsibilisation"

To go back to the matter of (un)certainty and its motivation(s), let us have another look at what Claudia Caffi has called the "common macro-function" of mitigation: the utterer removing or reducing his/her responsibility for what is said—an action dubbed *deresponsabilizzazione*, "deresponsibilisation", by Caffi (2007: 67).

Elsewhere (2002: 118; 2007: 123, 152), Caffi observes that the idea itself of a "weakened responsibility" stems from the study of abnormal (e.g., psychotic) speech, where the attribution of normal intentions and motivations to the utterer would lead to catastrophic misunderstandings. But, as she remarks, the phenomenon is also well known in non-pathological speech, as when we use vagueness or indirectness in order to avoid conflicts, or in an effort to be polite.

Compare how in Japanese business interactions, it is customary to "beat around the bush" as long as possible, often over several days, trying to leave the initiative to the other party until such time as both parties judge that the moment has come to move ahead and conclude the deal.

Likewise, in scientific discussions, one does not want to commit oneself until one has assembled all the facts, considered all the options, weighed up all the hypotheses, and judged that the time is ripe for a decision (and hopefully, a publication).

## 1.8 Hedges and Responsibility

What George Lakoff many years ago started calling "hedges" was originally no more than a typically vague way of combining, under a general denominator, various ways of diminishing responsibility on the part of the speaker (Lakoff 1972). Similarly, in a more recent development, the above-mentioned "bushes" are locutory instruments intended to deflect speaker responsibility by introducing vagueness, thereby "reduc[ing] the speaker's commitment to the propositional content of the utterance" (Caffi 2007: 96). For instance, if I use common locutions like "similarly" or "by the same token", I am referring to a previous statement or description: a "bush" under which I can hide my current utterance. In other words, such use of vagueness limits, or even eliminates, my responsibility.

As may be expected, this kind of "token talk" is not always welcome in a scientific context. I recall how my good friend, the Czech computational linguist Petr Sgall, used to berate me for using precisely this

expression in my writings; as he said, one could put anything into (or underneath) such a "token", hence aptly called a "bush" (*cespuglio*), in Caffi's terminology (2002: 119). On the other hand, if one considers the dynamic, evolving character of any interaction (whether in everyday conversation or a scientific debate), vagueness, and in general, "deresponsibilisation", may have a useful function. I can hedge my statements (as the aforementioned Japanese business leaders are wont to do) in order to draw out my opponents, or "look at them over their shoulders", so to say, in order to figure out what cards they have to play with.

## 1.9 Vagueness in Mamre

Hedging techniques are timeless and universal, as may be seen from a classical instance of hedging that was practised about 3,000 years ago in the plains of Mamre, in biblical Palestine. The reference is to the episode in the book of Genesis in the Judeo-Christian Bible, where Patriarch Abraham haggles with the Hittite Ephron, the son of Zohar, over a piece of land that Abraham wants to purchase as a grave for Sarah, his recently deceased wife.

Abraham is told, "in the audience of the children of Heth" (the Hittites) that "none of us shall withhold from thee this sepulchre" (*Gen.* 23: 3). Here, first note the hedging: no clear conditions are named for what is basically a "non-activity". Abraham then asks the "audience" to intervene and make Ephron allow him to buy the land: "for as much money as it is worth, he shall give it to me" (here, note the vagueness of "give"). Ephron counters with an explicit offer to let him have the land, but uses the same ambiguous expression for the transfer: "the field I give thee".

Abraham, picking up on the ambiguity of Ephron's use of the verb "to give" (in particular, the uncertainty with regard to the amount of money), retorts (again using the same verb): "I will give thee money for the field". Some of the uncertainty has now been removed as Abraham has specified the "giving" as "giving money" (in other words, a direct reference to his wish to buy the field, but with continued vagueness as to the actual money involved).

Notice that it is only at this point of the negotiations that the Hittite can be certain that there will be a deal, and that he need not lose out on it; nevertheless, Ephron is equally indirect in his reply by casually mentioning, as if it were an unessential monetary factoid, "the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver" (read: "in case you need to know").

Subsequently, the Hittite "deresponsibilises" himself anew by immediately "de-certaining" the matter with regard to the money aspect, and diminishing the financial importance of the deal: "What is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead". Abraham, in contrast, upon recognising that Ephron's pretence that "money has got nothing to do with it" is purely ceremonial, now "responsibilises" himself with regard to the "giving", and weighs up the required sum of money: "four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant", for "the cave in the field of Machpelah before Mamre, that belonged to Ephron the Hittite, the son of Zohar" (*Gen.* 23: 3-16).

## 1.10 Hedging and "Answerability"

As the above extract from *Genesis* shows, hedging is with a purpose; in particular, it is a device intended to work as a catalyst, to ease and facilitate the reactions taking place between the participants in a negotiation. But this catalyst depends, for its successful operation, on the negotiators being aware of the role of the omnipresent "hedges"; taking an indirect expression at "face value" is (if nothing else) a sign of pragmatic incompetence (and could in fact index a speaker's placement on the autism spectrum).

What this implies is that "deresponsibilisation" can only function in a "responsible" environment; and here is where Bakhtin's notion of "answerability" or "addressivity" comes in useful. For Bakhtin, an utterance never comes alone (except in linguists' textbooks); it is always part of an ongoing dialogue, and as such, is dialectically established in the participant/s' discursive interaction: "dialogue *and* dialectics", as Bakhtin has it (1994: 174; my emphasis).

Bakhtin's notion of "responsibility" in dialogue (*otvetstvennost'*; from the Russian *otvet* "response, answer") is pragmatically realised as "answerability", along with its dialogic mirror image "addressivity"; both are captured by the Russian term *obrashchennost'*, from the verb *obrashchat'sja* "to address oneself to, to turn to" (as in "turn-taking" in "con-vers-ation"; Morson & Emerson 1990: 131). Answerability implies that the interactive stance of the utterance is modified by the reactions the utterance receives from the addressee(s); in fact, without those reactions, the utterance itself remains a "dead letter".

When I hedge an utterance, I appeal to the interlocutor(s) to understand me in a certain way; they are asked to *share* the responsibility for what I am saying by ratifying my utterance. Here, it is important to note that both agreement and disagreement can be ways of ratifying: the

worst thing to happen is not for my discourse to provoke disagreement, but for my words to fall flat on their faces, to elicit no reaction at all ("zero answerability"). In addition, as I intimated earlier, answerability is the main active ingredient of any interaction; it is, in fact, its essential condition. I speak to be understood, but the understanding itself is strictly none of my business: it is the responsibility of my addressees. As Bakhtin says, "[for] the word, and consequently for a human being, there is nothing more terrible than a *lack of response*. Even a word that is false is known to be not absolutely false and always presumes an instance that will understand and justify it, even if in the form 'everyone *in my position* would have lied too'" (1994: 127; italics in original).

Now what happens if I "deresponsibilise" myself by hedging my words? The obvious reason for doing so is not that I want to *weaken* my statement by conveying *less* certainty in what I am arguing. Quite the contrary: what I want to obtain is the *heightened* impact of my contribution: I want to make it clear that I am a serious participant who does not issue brassy statements but takes into account the fact that many others may have said (and in fact, *have* said) some of the same things that I am propounding. Also, others may disagree (or have disagreed) with what I say, and I must respect those other voices, likewise resonating within my discourse. "Dialogue is understanding" as Bakhtin has it (1994: 119); but "without addressivity, an utterance does not and cannot exist" (1994: 99), and consequently cannot be understood in any way. On the other hand, since complete understanding, just like complete agreement or disagreement, is not possible (see Bakhtin 1984: 183), "turning to" our interactants always happens according to the conditions of adjustable reciprocity, addressivity *and* answerability—which is why hedging and, in general, "deresponsibilisation" are such important pragmatic tools of calibrating and adjusting the ongoing interaction.

## 1.11 The "End" of Responsibility: Medical Hedging

Hedging, just like other forms of mitigation, is a form of deresponsibilisation, a way to decrease responsibility by downgrading the importance of what is being said, by referring to an authority, or even by "masking" one's utterances such that they appear to originate from another source, belong to another speaker, or are at home in another context where they cannot be

distinguished among the cacophony of "voices" that interfere in the interaction (the latter case is aptly characterised by Caffi as a "bush").[1]

The importance of dialogic deresponsibilisation in the form of hedging and other defensive measures cannot be overrated, especially in the case of medical discourse, and more particularly in doctor-patient interaction, which is the main thematic area of Caffi's investigations (2002, 2007). It is also the main preoccupation of the Nigerian linguist, Akin Odebunmi (2005, 2006, 2011), to be discussed below. Most conspicuous are forms of "obscuration" due to the use of medical jargon, not thought to be understood by the non-initiated (the patients), facing the experts (the doctors). In the following, I will provide some examples.

## 1.12 Deresponsibilisation at Work (1): The Medical "Dialogue"

Studying doctor-patient interaction in his country's hospitals, Professor Odebunmi refers to many examples of doctors withholding technical-medical information from patients, either to avoid the embarrassment of adverse reactions, or to prevent a negative outcome in ongoing interviews or treatment due to a patient's unhelpful reaction (controlled or not).

Here is a doctor giving a patient, brought in with a life-threatening attack of an allergy, an injection of adrenaline, after which the patient, who is still worried, asks the doctor if she will be OK now: "Doctor, Thank you sir. I hope I'll survive this" (Odebunmi 2006: 34). The doctor, in an effort to calm down the patient, tells her "Just calm down; it is well. The injection given now is a *potent bronchidilator*" ([sic]; italics original). The use of the "high-sounding" term *bronchodilator* (a technical expression which makes no sense to a patient who is medically illiterate), serves to underline the professional ascendancy that the doctor has over the patient and her symptoms; hence it has "the perlocutionary effect of sufficiently impressing the [patient] and giving her hope" (Odebunmi 2006: 34).

In another case, a 17-year-old high school student is brought in by her father on account of stomach pains. The doctor, who has performed an ultrasound scan on the girl, then remarks to his colleague, in the father's presence, that "The ultrasonic scanning revealed twelve weeks' cyesis" (Odebunmi 2006: 33). The father, who did not have an inkling of the

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[1] The English word "thicket" is perhaps a more evocative translation of Caffi's Italian *cespuglio*, a word which connotes some degree of disorderliness and (wilful or natural) lack of organisation.

possibility that his daughter was pregnant ("cyesis" is the medical term for "pregnancy"), inferred (wrongly) that his daughter was suffering from an illness that had lasted 12 weeks. In the case at hand, the doctor did not give him access to the actual truth in order "to avoid the father's sudden psychological and physical upset" (ibid.). The euphemism "cyesis" served to protect the doctor from having to deal with an unpleasant situation in his office: the father possibly suffering a collapse of a moral, physical, and mental kind on account of a socially highly ostracised condition in a young, unmarried woman who happened to be his daughter.

## 1.13 Deresponsibilisation at Work (2): Codes of "Obscuration"

But also, more intricate ways of deresponsibilising, based on a professionally shared, often highly idiosyncratic and "obscurating" use and understanding of "normal" language, may come into play. Odebunmi refers to cases where apparently normal expressions convey professional information of a sensitive kind—so sensitive that they need to be kept away from the patient, or at least sufficiently "veiled" so they cannot be made the object of subsequent legal action on the part of the patient.

As a case in point, consider a doctor who, prior to examining an incoming patient, asks the nurse on duty: "What's wrong with this handsome man?" The nurse replies "Sir, he has a social disease" (Odebunmi 2006: 36); actually, the disease in question is gonorrhoea, arguably the most common sexually transmitted disease worldwide, but still, in Nigeria as elsewhere, the target of much "socially transmitted" prejudice.

Similarly, when a patient has symptoms that could indicate the presence of an HIV infection, the examining doctor would say, both the patient and a nurse being present, "I have written some laboratory investigations that are to be carried out on the patient including 3'3'3' screening". To this, Odebunmi adds the comment: "The code *3'3'3' screening* serves as a veil to prevent the patient from knowing that he was to be tested for HIV/AIDS" (2006: 35). In fact, the number "333" could mean anything; likewise, the term "screening" is commonly used in everyday conversation, so this kind of communication can only function properly in the presence of certain decoding conventions known exclusively to the doctor and the nurse.

In other cases, the "veiling" is so complete that it can only be interpreted correctly by the particular persons employing it, such as a

doctor-nurse team who have been working together for a long time. Odebunmi provides a striking example.

A patient in an apparently serious condition is brought into the ER of a Nigerian hospital. A doctor and nurse are at the examination table while the family sits around and witnesses the procedure. The following mini dialogue then develops:

Doctor (to attendant nurse): "Matron this case *Oh! God*. Get me gloves".
Nurse: "Alright sir" (Odebunmi 2011: 640; italics original).

Here, as Odebunmi remarks, the common exclamation *Oh! God* has the potential to be misinterpreted as an expression of frustration on the doctor's part (compare the slangy English *OMG*, often transcribed as "omigod"); in reality, however, this is how "shared assumptions cue medical interactants onto the diagnostic truth in the common ground" (ibid.). In the case at hand, as Odebunmi remarks, the expression "identifies a specific condition in the mental picture of the nurse" (2011: 640); but this "identification" can only happen on the condition of there being a long-standing agreement on the use of such expressions, common to the doctor and the matron of the emergency ward.

Also here, hedging leaves the patient out of the conversation, as it does the bystanders, in particular the patient's family, who may have their own legitimate grounds for not wanting the diagnosis on his "social disease" proclaimed officially in everybody's presence. Both the patient and the medical interactants, along with the bystanders (ratified or not), are protected by these hedges or "veils".[2]

## 1.14 Linguistic Hedging

One way of hedging one's medical statements is to formulate them in another language, one that supposedly is not familiar to the patient. In older times, Latin was the preferred choice of physicians when transmitting sensitive information about patients, prognoses, treatments, and so on; the classical example is *mors in tabula*, used to express the (expected) mortal outcome of a surgical intervention.[3]

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[2] See Mey 1985 for a definition of this term in pragmatics.
[3] Earlier, matters of female sexuality were thought to be so sensitive that a psychiatrist like Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840-1902), when he had to mention certain highly loaded or controversial female body parts or activities would, in the middle of his (already purposeful) "veiling" Latin medical discourse, resort to

In much of the developing world, where local languages (and often the local pidgin) are used for communicating between medical practitioners and patients, physicians' and nurses' use of Standard English can often be interpreted as providing a "shield" against premature and unwelcome interventions on the part of patients and possible lay bystanders (relatives of the patient, non-medical hospital personnel, or other outsiders). However, this technique may backfire, as when the doctor assumes the patient is illiterate and nominally does not understand English. What was intended to be a protective device for the medical expert who wants to communicate with colleagues in ways the non-initiated won't understand, may end up provoking a reaction in the patient or the bystanders that is as unexpected as it occasionally is fateful. Below, I will quote a particularly telling example, also due to Akin Odebunmi.

An expat US physician in a Nigerian hospital was examining a terminal patient suffering from achalasia, a life-threatening condition that prevents the lower parts of the oesophagus from working properly, thereby blocking the passage of food into the stomach. While the patient was expecting the outcome of the examination, the doctor addressed the other doctors present and the attending nurses with the words:
"This patient is having esophageal achalazia [sic] and he goanna [sic] live for just eighteen months" (Odebunmi 2005: 50).
Upon which the patient mumbled, incoherently, "Myself, me, me, doctor", and then "fainted and dropped dead" on the scene (Odebunmi ibid.).

Clearly, the American doctor could not have foreseen the effect of his words; he assumed, in his fallacious ethnocentricity, that most common people in Nigeria do not understand English, so he could safely communicate his views on this particular patient (who probably did not impress him as being overly educated), by just using his own professional English, without having to hedge his statement in any way. Whereas this doctor evidently assumed that the use of his native language would neutralise any possible negative effects of his remark, as it could not possibly be understood by a simple Nigerian patient, his faith in the "hedging power" of English in a foreign environment was put to shame, with the disastrous result mentioned.[4]

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Classical Greek equivalents in order to deter possible prurient colleagues or laymen.
[4] Likewise, on another occasion, a certain young Nigerian doctor, having commented on a patient's condition by remarking that "this baba [slang for 'elderly gentleman'] is on his way out", had to be severely berated by his colleagues for improper speech and unprofessional conduct (Odebunmi ibid.).

## 1.15 Deresponsibilisation and (Un)certainty: Voice

In pragmatics, a common query is "Where does the utterance come from?" Or, more explicitly, "Who is the utterer and what are the conditions for 'voice production' that he or she is subject to?"—questions that I have addressed *in extenso* elsewhere, mainly in my books *Whose Language?* and *Pragmatics* (Mey 1985, 2001). Consequently, I would like to bring the crucial concept of *voice* to bear on the problems of (un)certainty that we are dealing with in the present context.

Very simply put, a person's "voice" represents the way he or she communicates with the surrounding world. When it comes to communicating (un)certainty, a person may choose to modify his or her "voice" in such a way that it makes the hearer feel (more or less) certain about what is being said and, not least, implied. For instance, a commanding officer in the armed forces will use a determined register (maximal sonority, low pitch, careful enunciation, and so on) when giving orders, so as to avoid any possible uncertainty about what needs to be done.

By extension, the concept of "voice" also includes one's choice of words, the way one's utterances are constructed syntactically, and the hidden or overt references to one's position in society (like "pulling rank" in the military); in face-to-face interaction, even one's bodily expressions (stance, face, closeness vs. distance, touch) will convey (un)certainty. Thus, when talking to an employee who has messed up an important order, I can say something like "you really should be more careful next time" (a gentle hint), or I can utter a formal statement such as "I will not countenance such careless behaviour among my employees", making the reproach explicit and official, with the implied certainty that there will be consequences if the behaviour is not corrected.

What is happening in cases like these is a weakening of responsibility on the part of the communicating interactant. This weakening, referred to above as "deresponsibilisation" (*deresponsabilizzazione*; Caffi 2002, 2007 *passim*), often represents the speaker's wish to diffuse or transfer an inconvenient responsibility, and may be based on a variety of reasons: religious, traditional, societal, political, personal, technical, legal, and so on. The next section will examine a few cases of deresponsibilisation with respect to (un)certainty in societal, authority-infused interactions.

## 1.16 The Voice of Authority

When persons who are traditionally endowed with a high spiritual or worldly authority (like popes or patriarchs, kings, chieftains, presidents,

and so on) speak from their "seat of authority" (think the Holy See), their proclamations (bulls, decrees, laws, etc.) regularly use the pronominal form called the "majestic plural". As an instance, consider the phrase "We, Frederic the Ninth, by the grace of God King of the Danes, the Goths, the Wends…" and so on, as I have it on a 1958 royal decree in my possession, documenting my being exempt from paying a fine, incurred in connection with a failure to pay my radio licence. Any uncertainty as to the sender's legal status is removed here, its certainty being doubly confirmed by the document's local and temporal steadfastness; the latter includes the obligatory reference to "my hand and seal" (King Frederic's authentic signature, along with a relief of his royal seal affixed to the decree), and to the time (the date of issue) and the place the document in question was "given" ("the Royal Palace in Copenhagen").

Other, even more careful examples of such excessive legal "ascertaining"[5] are found in Papal Bulls, a kind of decree issued by the Holy See to legislate in matters of canonical jurisprudence (by contrast, Papal Encyclicals deal with questions of faith and morals). At the end of each such Bull, all the various legal speech acts that have been used throughout the document are repeated in their nominalised forms. For instance, if the Bull has "commanded" something, its final paragraph will contain the phrase: "Let nobody dare to go against this command"; if there has been an act of "revoking", then the corresponding verbal noun ("revocation") is displayed; the verb "abrogate" is matched by the noun "abrogation" at the end of the document, and so on. Correspondingly, any Papal Bull has the following, standardised final clause which wraps up the document's certainty in one fell swoop of legal substantivising:

> If anybody should be so bold as to go against these letters of command, admonition, abrogation, revocation, …let him know that he will incur the wrath of Almighty God and of His Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. Given in Rome, at the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul's, in the Year of Our Lord *NNNN*, in the *nn*-th year of Our Pontificate (Bullarium S. I. 1892: *pass*.; Mey 1993: 172-173).

By referring to the document issuer's authority, legally due to divine authorisation (as in "the grace of God" or "the wrath of Almighty God"), the certainty established by these legal voices, while "ascertained" to the highest degree, is at the same time "deresponsibilised": the human author

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[5] Compare the US legal term *certiorari* (lit.: "being made more certain"), used when a higher court determines it needs to re-examine documents offered to, or decisions made by, a lower court of justice.

of the legal document speaks in the voice of a higher authority, thereby investing himself and his utterances with far greater certainty than would be possible if he had spoken as a regular person.

Similarly, a generation or two ago it still was customary for authors of scientific works to assume the "plural of (pseudo-)modesty" (mentioned above, Sec. 6), rather than the "royal" plural); presumably, it was thought that using the "we" rather than the "I" form when reporting on one's results or venturing forth a hypothesis would afford greater confidence in the issuer. The latter use seems to appeal to what Mikhail Bakhtin has called the "superaddressee", or to a "higher court of history, or science" (Bakhtin 1986: 126). Alternatively, an author may prefer to be hiding in an impenetrable thicket, a Caffi'esque "bush" (*cespuglio*) of voices—if you wish, a secular variant of the common saying "*vox populi, vox Dei*"— "transposed" as *voce di cespuglio, voce di Dio*; didn't the Lord Himself speak to Moses from a "burning bush"? (*Exod.* 3:4 ff.).

## 1.17 The Dialectics of Scientific Writing: "Willed Uncertainty"

Above, I mentioned the importance of determining whose "voice" it is that the listeners/receivers are registering. Every speaking voice has a hearing counterpart: the reverse side of the medal of speaking is listening, and with this comes the importance of what kind of voice we, as speakers, intend our listeners to receive. In the case of scientific writing, the voice of our prose should neither be flippantly self-assured nor negatively doubt-laden. A scientific "tone of voice" comprises, among other things, the modesty included in the presentation of one's scholarship that was alluded to earlier. But there is more.

A scientific writer wants to be perceived as having a certain distance from his or her subject; call it "neutrality", "lack of self-interest", or "absence of competing motivation"—it all boils down to some degree to the "deresponsibilisation" that Caffi has highlighted as one of the prime features of scientific writing. What I propose to call the "willed uncertainty" that is practised in scientific writing has to do with the wish not to impose one's personal views on the audience: "to let the facts speak", as it is often, somewhat slogan-like, formulated. But, of course, facts do not speak unless they are "be-spoken"; that is, facts need a *human* "mouthpiece" (Latour 2002) in order to be understood.

Conversely, reducing the fickle humanness of this mouthpiece is important in order to maintain the purely scientific character of one's discourse. Hence, in scientific writing, passive, agentless constructions are

preferred to active ones, as the latter for some may carry undesirable connotations, like when I have to make it clear that in the course of my experiments, I had to perform certain, some would call unethical, acts like "killing" one's test animals—which is probably why standard formulations in scientific reporting have it that "the rats were sacrificed after 10 days", rather than "killed".[6] Also, one prefers to say that "it was found that …", rather than "I found …" ("we found …" is also better, for the same reason as mentioned above).

## 1.18 Enter the "Spokesperson"

The question "who are we writing for?" thus opens a window on an aspect of discourse that has been mainly disregarded with respect to scientific writing. It has to do with the dialectic interactivity that is characteristic of the relationship between an author and his or her audience (see Mey 2000). The message contained in the author's text is not "real" until received, read, and reacted to by the recipient (who of course receives it in his or her own way, as we saw earlier). But, as Bruno Latour has insisted on in many of his works (e.g., Latour 2002), the recipient is not isolated in the act of receiving: he or she interacts with a "spokesperson" for the facts, who tells the recipient what to see, and where to look for it (e.g., in a visual representation, a still from an experiment, or the output from a Geiger counter). "We never see the neutrinos", as Latour remarks (2002: 71); but note that he adds a cautious "yet".

Generally, in scientific writing, "the author behaves as if he or she were the mouthpiece of what is inscribed on the window of the instrument"—which, according to Latour, is the true function of the mouthpiece, the "spokesperson" (2002: 70ff). The distance created between the experimenter/author and his or her audience, whether lay or professional, as mediated by the spokesperson(s), is the kernel in the process of "deresponsibilisation", and a hallmark of scientific writing. In return, the shared response, in the form of applause, oral or written, or rewards (pecuniary or professional) is what is expected to accrue to the originator of the text; however, the award should not come as the result of a sleight-of-hand (or even a "hand-waving") kind of representation, or of a smartly formulated, modish or adventurous, but factually empty hypothesising; it should arise from the spokesperson's neutral, "deresponsibilised" delivery of the facts—a delivery that necessarily

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[6] Or even "murdered", as certain well-meaning animal rights activists would love to see it formulated.

includes the kinds of hedging and "willed uncertainty" that were discussed above.

## 1.19 Conclusion: An Anniversary of "Study-cum-practice"

Confronted with the problem of how to successfully communicate "certainty", while avoiding excessive claims and safeguarding one's personal integrity (as expressed in one's writings and social dealings), scientific authors and societal workers prefer to employ the "willed uncertainty" that was alluded to above.

Mikhail Bakhtin, while referring to the ascription and assumption of "answerability", can be read as having indirectly pointed to deresponsibilisation as a means to safeguard oneself and one's integrity. Above, basing myself on various kinds of hedging, notably the ones known as "bushes"—a concept which connotes the non-attributability of the "voices" involved in uttering or writing—, I raised the question of "whose voice" we are hearing. The companion question: "whose voice" we are speaking with, was likewise discussed in terms of the inevitable societal responsibility of the utterer or author, a feature which is especially relevant in cases where the situation (such as the medical interview or the scientific report) demands a "hedge", or even a "bush". The scientific writer or the medical expert may operate as a "mouthpiece" or "spokesperson" for a higher authority, or even for the ever-silent "facts, all the facts, and nothing but the facts"; still, "certainty" is never a given, but has always to be negotiated in the face of "uncertainty".

In all of his work, Professor Akin Odebunmi has given us an example of a scientific production distinguished by clarity of presentation, excellent use of language and style, and abundance of authentic materials (mostly self-collected in the form of interviews and recordings). The versatile author moves comfortably between various fields of research and investigation, drawing relevant conclusions for further work in the areas studied, specifically in those of public health and hospitalisation. As I have pointed out above, Akin Odebunmi has devoted many of his research activities to a critical examination of practices and procedures as they are performed on a daily basis in Nigerian hospitals. The overwhelming problems that are encountered by practising nurses and medical personnel are not just of a medical character; more than just establishing certainty in diagnosing, they have, above all, to do with communicative skills in a multilingual environment. Professor Odebunmi's perspicacious comments on the various, often conflictual, aspects of hospital practice make it clear

that we have to reorient our views on doctor-patient and patient-nurse communication, turning them in a pragmatic direction.

In Nigeria, the interaction at the bedside and in the doctor's office is often hampered by the fact that there is no generally accepted medium of transmitting "certainty". Akin Odebunmi is aware of the special difficulties of communicating in a socially less accepted idiom or pidgin, even to the degree that medical treatment may fail if one does not take these linguistic and social problems into account. Of course, these are problems that not even Professor Odebunmi can be expected to solve (at least not single-handedly!); nevertheless, his research in this context bears the clear imprint of what I suggest calling a "communal pragmatics"; that is, his work indexes an area of study-cum-practice, relevant at the right place and at the right time and benefitting not just its practitioners, but first of all the people "practised upon", the patients. In this, I think, lies one of the greatest merits of the festschriftee's endeavours; and it is one for which he rightly deserves to be honoured by a humble presentation from a circle of colleagues and friends.

## 1.20 Valediction: *Ad multos annos …*

Varying a Socratic dictum, and applying it to Akin Odebunmi's work in relation to "(un)certainty", the main theme of the present paper, we may safely say that the only thing we may be completely certain of is that (even in the face of seemingly overwhelming evidence, or a profusion of "evidentials") we cannot be completely certain of anything, except what we are doing in the here and now as regards our professional engagement with human necessity and people's global needs.

Professor Akin Odebunmi deserves to be congratulated on an anniversary that marks a milestone in his scientific career and life span, but at the same time evokes a further, future dedication to the needs of our entire community of users, both locally and globally, for many years to come. And this, finally, is why the present Festschrift sees the light of day at a most appropriate time, *in tempore opportuno.*

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# SECTION TWO:

# THEORETICS

# Chapter 2

# Bakhtin and Modern Linguistics[1]

## Paul J. Hopper

## Abstract

*What is the place of pragmatics in the overall scheme of language and the study of language? It is a question whose ramifications extend into the empirical study of human interactions, as my FRIAS colleague, Akin Odebunmi, whose birthday we celebrate with this volume, has so amply illustrated in his research, and into general questions of semiotics. It is this latter thread that I would like to explore in this contribution, paying attention to two figures whose influence in linguistics is at the present moment marginal, but has the promise of growing: Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975) and Roy Harris (1931-2015). In particular, I will be comparing the theory of the sign developed in Bakhtin's essay "The Problem of Speech Genres" with the independently conceived "integrational sign" of Harris.*

Keywords: *Semiotics; integrationalism; theory of the sign; linguistics*

Integrational in Harris' sense is to be understood as in opposition to "segregational". A segregational approach to language is one that identifies within an act of communication a specifically linguistic stratum. In the segregational view, language is a separable component of communication that can be studied for itself. By contrast, integrationalism sees an act of communication as a nexus in which the sign serves not to

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[1] The late Professor Roy Harris, of Oxford University, generously sent me written comments on an earlier draft of this paper. I am grateful to Professor V. V. Ivanov, of the University of Moscow and UCLA, who was once a student and colleague of Bakhtin's, for illuminating discussions about the political background to Bakhtin's essay on speech genres. They are in no way responsible for any use I have made of their help.

signal pre-established meanings but to link together all the different aspects of the act. The integrational view of the sign was summed up by George Wolf as follows: "…sign-makers create signs for the purpose of integrating various activities in the communicative contexts in which they find themselves" (Wolf 1999: 1).

The integrational concept of the sign finds its ancestry in what Wolf called "an extended meditation on Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale*" (ibid.). It proceeds from the view that "…making sense of our linguistic experience involves creations for new contexts rather than the addition of gratuitous parts to a prefabricated theoretical framework" (Wolf 1999: 2). It thus emerges in opposition to the Saussurean sign and pretty much all of linguistics insofar as linguistics assumes a fixed system of signs based on a pre-determined relationship between a form and a meaning. But Harris and his followers have been somewhat unwilling to acknowledge their predecessors, and rarely discuss the work of other dissenters from the linguistic mainstream other than to find contrastive features that can accentuate their own uniqueness. It has been hard for the steadfastly Oxonian integrationalist school to overcome this bias against outsiders. But Michael Toolan's *Total Speech* (1996), the first comprehensive account of the integrationalist take on language, and required reading for anyone wishing to understand the relevance of integrational linguistics for a general academic audience, identifies a number of linguists whose thinking more or less parallels that of the integrationalists. There we find the following discussion of Bakhtin, who might, at first sight, seem to be a good candidate for status as a congener and predecessor of Harrisian integrationalism:

> Bakhtin wrote frequently and celebratedly of the dialogic in language: "Linguistics studies 'language' and its specific logic in its commonality as that fact which makes dialogic discourse possible, but it consistently refrains from studying those dialogic relationships themselves...dialogic relationships are totally impossible without concrete and logical semantic relationships, but they are not reducible to them; they have their own specificity" (Toolan 1996: 155; the citation is from Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 1973).

Toolan goes on to cite the Norwegian scholar, Ragnar Rommetveit, a critic of mainstream linguistics, who remarks:

> This passage from Bakhtin sounds as if he might very well endorse the kind of pure semantics of literal meaning proposed by [Jerry] Katz…as some sort of prerequisite or base for his own literary or 'metalinguistic' analysis of dialogical relationships. Even Vygotsky and Bakhtin as well as

> Habermas, it seems, are thus somewhat and in certain respects constrained by the myth of literal meaning (Rommetveit 1988: 20).

Finally, Toolan ratifies the conclusion of T. Pateman:

> In the end, I think, Voloshinov (and Bakhtin) hold back from an ultra-Wittgensteinian contextualism ('meaning is use') in favour of something closer to an orthodox distinction between semantic and pragmatic aspects of meaning, distinguishing what a sentence means from what a sentence-in-an-utterance means and does (Pateman 1989: 208).

Toolan follows Rommetveit and Pateman in finding in Bakhtin an adherent of a standard and traditional view. In this picture of a language, speakers have at their disposal syntactic units like words and sentences, and they put them together for pragmatic purposes by using grammatical rules. Bakhtin, as he is presented by these scholars, would have been quite at home in any organisation of modern mainstream linguists, and had times and places been slightly different, we might well have found him standing before a meeting of the Linguistic Society of America and delivering yet another of those interminable papers on markedness and invariant meaning in the Russian verbal system. And, as I will show, there is plenty of apparent evidence in Bakhtin's writings to attribute to him this mainstream and (in a narrower sense) structuralist view of language.

Yet Bakhtin has also been held up as an example of the countertrend, the author of subversive notes from the linguistic underground. Susan Stewart, for example, writes (Stewart 1986) of Bakhtin's "anti-linguistics" in precisely the sense of reverse linguistics, a kind of linguistics in which the hierarchies of linguistic methodology—first find the set of contrasts that yield the grammatical units and their meanings, then infer the rules used by the individual in forming discourses, then assess the social forces that are reflected in these rules—are ritually inverted. This perspective is equally well represented in Bakhtin's writings, and indeed is the one that most prominently attracted the attention of scholars writing in the postmodern vein when Bakhtin first became known in the Western world shortly after his death. In it, language is dialogic and polyphonic. Language does not stay still long enough to be analysed. While language cannot be thought of as a possession of the individual, it is also far from a Saussurean collective. Language is constantly created through verbal interactions, and its values are established ad hoc in the mêlée of the marketplace rather than in the orderly mind of the individual speaker or by the impulse of the speech community towards uniformity. Communication takes place through the

exchange of "speech genres": snippets and linguistic hand-me-downs, along with their familiar contexts.

How could two such diametrically opposite views of the same thinker arise in the same work? In this paper, I will juxtapose examples of the two opposite perspectives in one and the same document, Bakhtin's essay, *The Problem of Speech Genres,*[2] and will attempt to give some reasons for suggesting that Stewart's view of Bakhtin has more going for it than that of Toolan, Pateman, and Rommetveit. I will suggest that Bakhtin's view of the sign as it is articulated in this essay is compatible with that presented by Harris and his integrationalist school.

I will start by presenting the case for the Toolan-Rommetveit-Patemen position that situates Bakhtin in the camp of formal linguistics. Bakhtin argues that:

> Language is regarded from the speaker's standpoint as if there were only *one* speaker who does not have any *necessary* relation to *other* participants in speech communication.… Language essentially needs only a speaker— one speaker—and an object for his speech (p. 67).

This speaker's language orientation presupposes a monologic language that precludes any idea of the joint creation of communication. But perhaps we might expect that this single speaker perspective will dissolve as a more dialogic conception is elaborated? Not so, for communication is a secondary aspect of language, one that builds on the primary fact of the speaker's ability. The individual speaker's knowledge constitutes the *essence* of language. Bakhtin is quite explicit about this:

> And if language also serves as a means of communication, this is a secondary function that has nothing to do with its essence. Of course, the language collective, the plurality of speakers, cannot be ignored when speaking of language, but when defining the essence of language this aspect is not a necessary one that determines the nature of language (67-8).

The isolated speaker, then, is the locus of language. The speaker forms language in sentences. The speaker formulates utterances first in terms of sentences that correspond to complete thoughts:

> The sentence is a relatively complete thought, directly correlated with the thoughts of a single speaker within his utterance as a whole…the context of the sentence is the speech of one speaking subject (speaker) (73).

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[2] Citations of Bakhtin in this paper, unless otherwise indicated, refer to Bakhtin 1986.

Moreover, sentences are emancipated from any connection with communicative realities:

> The sentence itself is not correlated directly or indirectly with the extraverbal context of reality (situation, setting, prehistory) or with the utterances of other speakers (73-4).

The emphatic "directly or indirectly" leaves no room for hedging on the autonomy of the sentence as a structural unit. It is a statement that would warm the heart of a dedicated Chomskyan syntactician. The point is repeated when the sentence is assigned a role as the foundation of the utterance:

> Any sentence can act as a complete utterance, but then, as we know, it is augmented by a number of very essential nongrammatical aspects that change it radically. And this circumstance also causes a special syntactic aberration (82).

The distinction that is being made here is the familiar one between the sentence as a grammatical unit and the utterance. The relationship of sentence to utterance is one of mutilation and deformity. The sentence is grammatically complete. When it is transformed into an utterance, it is subjected to degenerative changes that are not part of grammar. It is hard not to read into such statements some distinction such as competence and performance, or langue and parole.

It is a feeling that is reinforced when Bakhtin notes the anonymity of the sentence:

> The sentence, like the word, has a finality of meaning and a finality of *grammatical* form, but this finality of meaning is abstract by nature and this is precisely why it is so clear-cut: this is the finality of an element, but not of the whole. The sentence as a unit of language, like the word, has no author. Like the word it belongs to *nobody,* and only by functioning as a whole utterance does it become the expression of someone speaking individually in a concrete situation of speech communication (83-84).

Being intrinsically without a context and without an author, the sentence necessarily also lacks expression. Expressivity for Bakhtin, it appears, is not part of the sign, as it is for Harris, but is a diacritic on the sign that accrues to the sign when the sign is put to use in discourse and the sentence becomes an utterance:

> The sentence as a unit of language is also neutral and in itself has no expressive aspect. It acquires this expressive aspect only in a concrete utterance.… A sentence like "He died" obviously embodies a certain expressiveness, and a sentence like "What joy!" does so to an even greater degree… As sentences, they lack this expression and are neutral. Depending on the context of the utterance, the sentence "He died" can also reflect a positive, joyful, even a rejoicing expression. And the sentence "What joy!" in the context of the particular utterance can assume an ironic or bitterly sarcastic tone (85).

Statements of this kind are segregational in spirit. They speak of stripping the sentence of its extraneous context and this will lead, if pursued consistently, straight to the project of linguistic structuralists from Saussure to Chomsky, the project that James Edie has called a "pure *a priori* grammar" (Edie 1977: 137). Taken together with a number of other entirely parallel statements about the Word, which is likewise presented as an abstract, autonomous linguistic unit that acquires extra meanings as it is deployed in discourse, they would appear to preclude any possibility of understanding Bakhtin as an avatar of Harrisian integrationalism or an "anti-linguist" in Susan Stewart's sense.

However, this is not the whole story, for Bakhtin's essay *The Problem of Speech Genres* itself has a dialogic structure, and the other pole of the dialogue is a direct inversion of the linguistic picture that I have been painting. Now the linguists' story is undermined, not by direct argument, but by a strategy of a simple juxtaposition of assertions in which the structural account is always followed by a dialogic one. The appearance is of a symmetrical laying out of the two positions, appearing on the face of it not to favour either, and indeed sometimes suggesting that they are equally valid:

> When one analyses an individual sentence apart from its context, the traces of addressivity and the influence of the anticipated response, dialogical echoes from others' preceding utterances, faint traces of changes of speech subjects that have furrowed the utterance from within—all these are lost, erased, because they are all foreign to the sentence as a unit of language. All these phenomena are connected with the whole of the utterance, and when this whole escapes the field of vision of the analyst, they cease to exist for him (100).

The consequence of grammatical analysis, then, is to bleach out from the utterance all that is particular to the situational context. Such statements leave the reader wondering what role remains for grammatical analysis as such. In a number of places, Bakhtin himself seems to strike up

this same query. For example, he notes that the linguistic source for utterances is normally not the standardised lexicon but other utterances, utterances heard and used in previous situations that are in various ways analogous to the occasion of speaking:

> When we select words in the process of constructing an utterance, we by no means always take them from the system of the language in their neutral, *dictionary* form. We usually take them *from other utterances,* and mainly from utterances that are kindred to ours in genre, that is, in theme, composition, and style. Consequently, we choose words according to their generic specifications (87).

And in discussing style, he notes that the autonomous linguistic position is simply untenable:

> A stylistic analysis that embraces all aspects of style is possible only as an analysis of the *whole* utterance, and only that in a chain of speech communication of which the utterance is an inseparable *link* (100).

To sum up, Bakhtin's statements about linguistic units (decontextualised sentences and words) sometimes seem to validate them as legitimate objects of study, even while contrasting them with utterances and speech genres, and sometimes seem to reject their legitimacy altogether and dismiss them as misleading confusion. It might at first seem that Bakhtin is hedging his bets, siding simultaneously with the structuralists and with dialogism. Yet, even in the translation, a tone of suspicion of linguistics can be discerned. He repeatedly insists that grammar and lexicon are not the whole story, and that the account of language is incomplete unless it includes existential speaking situations. We might object, as do Toolan and Rommetveit, that even this concedes too much, and that it will not do to add to, or supplement, the linguist's account with a secondary one of the "uses" of language in situations. Rather we must contend that a radically new concept of the sign is needed, a Harrisian one in which signs work to integrate activities of speaking and doing.

In many places, Bakhtin suggests precisely such an approach. He notes, for example, that "An actively responsive understanding of what is heard (a command, for example) can be directly realised in action (the execution of an order or command that has been understood and accepted for execution)…" (69-70). This is precisely the position of the integrationalists. Thus, Nigel Love (2004: 532) uses a similar example of an order to which a well-formed response can be either an utterance or an action that responds to the order. And like Harris, Bakhtin challenges the

Saussurean model of language processing in which speakers first formulate ideas, then code them in language, and finally issue them forth to a listener who reverses the process and duplicates in his own mind the ideas of the speaker. Referring to the famous "talking heads" diagram in Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale,* Bakhtin observes:

> Still current in linguistics are such fictions as the listener and "understander" (partners of the "speaker"), the "unified speech flow", and so on. These fictions produce a completely distorted idea of the complex and multifaceted process of active speech communication. Courses in general linguistics (even serious ones like Saussure's) frequently present graphic-schematic depictions of the two partners in speech communication—the speaker and the listener (who perceives the speech)—and provide diagrams of the active speech processes of the speaker and the corresponding passive processes of the listener's perceptions and understanding of the speech. One cannot say that these diagrams are false or that they do not correspond to certain aspects of reality. But when they are put forth as the actual whole of the speech communication, they become a scientific fiction. The fact is that when the listener perceives and understands the meaning (the language meaning) of speech, he simultaneously takes an active, responsive attitude toward it. He either agrees or disagrees with it (completely or partially), augments it, applies it, prepares for its execution, and so on. … Any understanding is imbued with response and necessarily elicits it in one form or another (69).

And:

> What is represented by the [Saussurean] diagram is only an abstract aspect of the real total act of actively responsive understanding, the sort of understanding that evokes a response, and one that the speaker anticipates. Such scientific abstraction is quite justified in itself, but under one condition: that it is clearly recognised as merely an abstraction and is not recognised as the real concrete whole of the phenomenon. Otherwise, it becomes a fiction. This is precisely the case in linguistics, since such abstract schemata, while perhaps not claiming to reflect real speech communication, are not accompanied by any indication of the great complexity of the actual phenomenon. As a result, the schema distorts the actual picture of speech communication, removing precisely its most essential aspects (69-70).

In arguing that Bakhtin's view of language is an integrational one, we must find a way of disposing of the many contradictory passages in the essay *The Problem of Speech Genres* and in other parts of his writings in which the standard structuralist ideology of linguistics is articulated. I would suggest that these passages are intended as the other half of a

dialogue with imaginary colleagues who are invested in the Saussurean view of the sign. These colleagues would be linguists, producing (one infers from the essay) reference works on Russian. Their output would be dictionaries with official definitions, prescriptive grammars, and official models of usage. It was the academic project of language engineering, the creation of a standard language for the new society that was eerily like Orwell's Newspeak. Indeed, when Bakhtin refers to "a language", he often appears to mean not a particular cultural mode of communicating, as when I might say "We were speaking French", but always a highly codified, normalised object of the standardised national language. National languages are built on regulations imposed from above. They involve the submerging of individual voice and the levelling of generic and registral differences, the very aspects that are highlighted in the discussion of speech genres. In Bakhtin's essay, the entire concept of a language is relativised. In this, too, Bakhtin is a predecessor of Harris, who argues that the concept of a language is deeply and richly determined by the history of ideas (Harris 1980). When Bakhtin, as he does here and in the passage from *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* cited by Toolan (above), writes of linguistics, it is in an anti-dialogic voice, as a field of study oriented towards monologic descriptive techniques. The semantic and other categories of these techniques "have their own specificity", but they are not those of dialogism. The technological premises of the new language science are orthogonal in spirit and substance to Bakhtin's own thinking. Linguistics was an established rival that needed to be confronted.

Still, Bakhtin's real or imaginary opponents in this debate are not his enemies. Differences of academic opinion are suppressed in solidarity for their common opposition to the Soviet authorities.[3] Bakhtin goes out of his way to show that he does not wish to invalidate the work of linguists, saying: "Such scientific abstraction is quite justified in itself…" (69). However, in appearing to endorse their project, Bakhtin risks giving his readers the mistaken impression that he subscribes to their linguistic ideology. By understanding Bakhtin's essay on speech genres as a dialogic argument in which his opponents' views are given equal weight, we can see not too far beneath the surface of the essay a view of the linguistic sign that is at virtually every point in harmony with that of Roy Harris and his integrationalist school.

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[3] There is more to be said about Bakhtin's "kid-gloves" critique of linguistics. According to V. V. Ivanov (personal communication), the cultivation of structuralism in the academy constituted a silent protest against the Soviet system, a protest with which Bakhtin was in intellectual alignment. He could not be seen to reject linguistics too vehemently.

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# CHAPTER 3

# DEICTIC RESOURCES IN ENGLISH AND YORUBA DISCOURSES

## M. S. ABDULLAHI-IDIAGBON

## Abstract

*Deictics are inevitably indispensable words in utterances as knowledge of them is key to the encoding and decoding of all forms of discourse. Various views and assertions on deixis, typology and their pragmatic imports were considered. Simulated samples of common utterances in English, as well as in Yoruba, were given to illustrate the dialectics of deictic behaviours in English language-based discourse as opposed to that of the Yoruba language. Among others, it was found that the role of culture in influencing structural difference between these two languages is significantly noteworthy. The paper concludes by further identifying another area of non-universality of universals in languages. Researchers in comparative and contrastive linguistics will find the content refreshingly useful.*

Keywords: *Dialectics; deictics; discourse; English; Yoruba; culture*

## Introduction

To begin with, effective understanding of the meaning of utterances depends on having the knowledge of who is speaking, about whom, where and when. To fully understand the speakers' or writers' intended meaning, their identity, situation, time and the setting should be known to the readers/hearers. This will serve as a common ground between the interlocutors on the basis of which communication is propelled. Thus, the more the interlocutors have in common, the less they require in their interactions in terms of words. For instance, personal pronouns like we,

him, and it, and adverbs like here and there, or now and then, can be freely used in a speech discourse taking common ground with the audience for granted.

To achieve this, we need words to guide interlocutors to successfully navigate through the jungle of communication. The linguistic tool for this function is known as deixis or deictics. Deictic items lexically and syntactically belong to parts of speech but they are imbued with a central communicative role in pragmatics due to their semantic significance. Hence, it is a point of intersection between linguistic structure and social settings (Hanks 2001), or an intersection between syntax and pragmatics.

In order to explain that deictic items serve as a compass to guide interlocutors to successfully sail across the ocean of communication, as well as a prerequisite linguistic resource to strengthen the context required for the understanding of utterances, deictic typology was identified and explained using simulated but common examples as found in our day-to-day use of language. Essentially, the views of scholars like Chiluwa (2010), Levinson (2000) and Nunberg (1998) on how deictic elements function in discourse were considered, among others. Also, the pragmatic influence of the deictic *centre,* i.e., the speaker's location, on the overall meaning of utterances was stressed, and, finally, the influence of the Yoruba culture on deictic behaviours in the Yoruba language was examined with exigent gloss provided to further aid textual understanding of this discussion.

Literature abounds on what "deictic" or "deixis" is because it is a common issue which grammarians, pragmatists and discourse analysts deal with in the course of their studies. Deixis, also known as indexicals, is a phenomenon which reinforces the requirement of contextual information in understanding the meaning of words and phrases in utterances. Deictic expressions are among the first forms to be spoken by children to fill the vacuum in terms of their knowledge of or acquaintance with objects and other environmental phenomena. As a matter of fact, they are also resourceful elements readily accessible to a speaker with no knowledge of the names of people or places in a speech situation.

Research into the pragmatics of deictic elements was inspired by Karl Buhler in 1982. He identifies what he calls the *deictic phenomenon* which, according to him, inevitably interacts with gesture (conventionalised or not) and with many other parts of grammar, including status, modality, aspect, noun classification, possession, and spatial and temporal description (Hanks 2001).

*Deixis* is originally Greek and it means to "show", "point", "demonstrate", "display", "refer", "indicate", or "denote". These are elements in language which refer directly to the discourse situation (Renkema 2004). Thus, someone referring to a book held by another person would say *that book,* but the holder of the book, referring to the same book, would say *this book* (Cruise 2000).

Expressions like *I, we, you, this, that, here, now, yesterday, today, next week,* etc. take their immediate interpretation from the speaker at the moment of speaking. The onus, therefore, lies with the interpreter or analyst to identify the speaker, the time and the place of the utterance to fully interpret not only what was said but also what was meant by what was said. Deictic expressions, therefore, do not have rigid meanings; their meanings are fluid and flexible.

Deixis entails a spatio-temporal context and a subjective experience of the encoder of an utterance (Green 2006: 178). The structural behaviour of deictic elements further strengthens pragmatists long-held position that, interpreting an expression or utterance can hardly be carried out successfully without considering the physical setting. In other words, the physical context of the utterance is germane to the overall meaning of certain utterances. Let's consider these two examples:

1. No credit today, come back tomorrow.
2. See me here now.

The two utterances above, for instance, appear understandable but on a closer look, their interpretations are not that easily comprehensible. Except with the understanding of the physical setting or a common ground with the interpreter, it will be difficult to know:

   i. When is today and when is tomorrow?
   ii. What type of credit; is it a bank loan or a recharge card?
   iii. Who is me referring to?
   iv. Where does here refer to?
   v. When does now refer to?

So, it is difficult or almost impossible to interpret these sentences because the underlined words might pose problems. These are words called DEICTICS or DEIXES in the English language.

Deixis is a type of reference marker as established in semantics, pragmatics and discourse analysis which effectively locates either a real-world referent or a linguistic referent in terms of its orientation to the

speaker, spatially and temporally (Comrie 1989). Fillmore (1982: 35) corroborates this with the assertion that deictic items are the "… categories of lexicon and grammar that are controlled by certain details of the interactional situation in which the utterances are produced". Levinson (1983) agrees with Fillmore (1982) that deictic expressions have the imprint of grammar but are tied directly to the circumstances of the utterance.

Therefore, deixes are "those lexical items and grammatical forms which can be interpreted <u>only</u> when the sentences in which they occur are understood as being anchored on social context. This is the context that identifies the participants in the communication act, their location in space, and time during which the communication act is performed" (Fillmore 1997: 59).

It is standard in contemporary English language sources to distinguish Spatial (*here, there*), Temporal (*now, then*, tense), Person (pronominals), Discourse (co-reference or reference to prior talk) and Social Deixis (honorification and any indicator of social identity or status relations among participants and contexts).

As Levinson (2000) claims, nearly all deictics are heavily dependent on pragmatic resolution. "Come here" may therefore mean come to this chair or come to this city, according to the context. After all, tense can also be considered as deictic; it is deictic in the sense that "nearly all sentences when uttered are deictically anchored to a context of utterance" (Levinson 1983: 77). The *here* of one person could turn out to be the *there* for another, similarly for *now* and *then*. In other words, one other noticeable feature of deixis is that it shifts. Deictics are dynamic and flexible. They do not have permanent referents. Their reference shifts from utterance to utterance. A's *I* becomes B's *you*, etc. Deictic expressions can be performed with a gesture or accompanied by gestures, such as "this house" or "that man". Consider this example:

3. He beat <u>me</u> <u>yesterday</u> with a stick <u>this</u> big.

## 3.1 Types of Deixes

Generally, deixes can be classified into the following types:

i. Spatial Deixis
ii. Temporal Deixis
iii. Personal Deixis
iv. Social Deixis
v. Discourse Deixis

### *3.1.1 Spatial Deixis*

Space or place deixis is a referent in a linguistic expression which specifies locations in a speech event. Examples of spatial deixis in English are the demonstratives *this* and *that, these* and *those* and the locative adverbs *here* and *there*. They are used to focus the attention of the hearer on elements in the speech situation, in a spatial reference frame. All languages are said to have demonstratives, though the forms, meaning, and use vary across languages. English, for example, makes a distinction between what is closer to the speaker (this), and what is closer to the hearer (that).

Apart from the relativity in terms of meaning, deixis makes no distinction when the object referred to is far from both the speaker and the hearer. Generally, demonstratives are described as those morpho-lexically encoded expressions that are accompanied by pointing to the objects which establish their referent(s) (Fludernik 1990).

According to Dixon (2003), there are three types of demonstratives:

(A)    Nominal: occurs in a noun phrase (e.g., "this store" is hot) or can substitute a complete noun phrase (e.g., "this" substituting "this store" is hot).

(B)    Local Adverbial: occurs either alone or with a noun taking a local marking.

       4. Put it *here*.
       5. Put it on the table *there*.

This use of demonstratives is respectively called dependent and independent (Stirling and Huddleston, 2002).

(C)    Verbal: occurs together with a modal verb.
       6. Do it like *this*.

Demonstratives, from the above examples, indicate whether the referent is near to or remote from the speaker or whether it is moving towards or away from the speaker.

       7. <u>That</u> man is generous. (distal)
       8. <u>This</u> man is generous. (proximal)
       9. <u>Here</u> she comes. (towards)
       10. <u>There</u> she goes. (away)

Again, these demonstratives seem connected in some way. For instance, it will look odd to say:

    11. This book there or that book here.
    12. Rather, this book here or that book there.

    Hence, *this, these* and *here* are proximal while *that, those* and *there* are used to mark far distance relative to other or specific items that are considered close to the speaker and/or hearer. In sum, English has a two-term spatial deictic system consisting of the proximal demonstratives *here* and *this* and their distal counterparts *these* and *that* (including their plural forms). In other texts, yonder (more distant from the speaker), hither (to this place), and thence (from that place) are also used to determine location. The adverbs deal with meaning of motion towards or away from the speaker.

    Relativity in terms of time and space is germane to the precision of these demonstratives. Consider the following examples:

    13. The office is along the corridor *on your right.*
    14. I'm going to Kaduna.
    15. I'm coming to Kaduna.

    Supposing the above description is given to the speaker's friend who is going to that place, one will assume that the position that friend is standing in when the description was made will determine the location of the speaker's office, i.e., the context indicates whether the office is "on the hearer's right or left". If you and I stand facing each other, your right will be my left, while your left will be my right. So, it is always important to know where the speaker is at the time s∕he was speaking to be able to interpret his/her utterance correctly. Similarly, in examples 14 and 15, the difference between the two expressions depends on the location of the speaker and what s/he considers as either moving towards or moving away from. Proximity to Kaduna from where the speaker is may be a determining factor to the deictic centre.

    Spatial reference can be fixed mentally and physically. The speaker becomes the determinant by projecting self onto a location. The truth-conditional value of the utterance doesn't matter as we shall see in this example:

    16. *I am not here now.*

The sentence shows that the speaker is physically but not mentally present at the location; hence, the use of "now". In this case, the self of the speaker is split into material and non-material entities. The physical materiality is indeed present, but the mental stability is, at that moment, elusive. Yule (1996) illustrates how spatial deixis can be mental.

> 17. I was looking at the boy in a cage with such a sad look on his face.
> 18. It was like, oh I am so unhappy here.

The sentence shows that the location *here* is mentally fixed. It is not talking about the speaker's location but "the boy's". This is the case in direct speech in which the location is usually mentally fixed.

### 3.1.2 Temporal Deixis

Time deixis refers to an event of an utterance; it takes place anytime relative to the time of speaking and is represented by tense, time adverbials and other temporal expressions. According to Comrie (1985), all human languages have ways of locating events in time. However, there may be some considerable differences between them. Across languages, time is represented by three classes of expression:

Grammatical expression (whether by tenses, by means of auxiliaries or aspects)
Lexical expression (e.g., today, yesterday, etc.)
Lexically composite expressions (e.g., five minutes ago).

Chiluwa (2010) refers to time deixis as a deictic reference that points to the time an utterance is made as well as the time the speaker intends to communicate to the hearer. The reference of the following deictic items can only be determined by the time the utterance is made. Examples of temporal deixes are *now, then, soon, before, later, ago; yesterday, today, tomorrow; next, last; Monday, week, month, year,* etc. Let us consider the illustration given by Chiluwa. If your father's letter to you last year reads: (a) Try to stay at school more often *this year*, you are not likely to be mistaken about "this year" since the expression was not made at the time you pick up the letter. Therefore, the instruction to stay at school may not apply to you at the time you are reading the letter, but probably the second or the third time.

He (Chiluwa) explains further that if your dad wrote you a letter this year which reads: (b) I hope you perform well *this year,* the sense there will be that "this year", in your understanding, refers to the school year and not necessarily the calendar year. But if the expression was part of a card that he gave you on the 1st of January, of course, you will know he meant the new year (the calendar year). These varieties of references are also peculiar with deictic items like *today, now, tomorrow* or *Wednesday*. For example:

> 19. My exams start *today.*
> 20. *Today,* women participate actively in Nigerian politics.

If a speaker utters that on a particular day, say Monday, then Monday is the day scheduled for the commencement of the exam. But if s/he says it on a Monday, the referent merely includes Monday plus all other times the speaker considers as "today". In Example 20, "today" is used to refer to the present age of Nigerian politics; not the time when women were preoccupied with household chores.

> 21. I need my money *now.*
> 22. I don't really know what to do *now*.

In these examples, "now" refers to the present time in the former and its interpretation relies on the actual time the speaker makes the statement. However, "now" in the latter refers to an unspecified moment and remains unexpired.

> 23. Our next meeting will be next week.

"Next week" starts from the present week the utterance is made. In other words, next week refers to the week that follows the week when the speaker made the statement, provided the speaker and the hearer are within the same time frame. Otherwise, the hearer's "next week" may not be the speaker's "next week".

More examples below can corroborate the mental conceptualisation of time.

### 3.1.3 Personal Deixis

The personal deictic system in English marks a distinction in gender and number while the second-person pronoun is neutral, i.e., it refers to both

singular and plural entities. Personal deixis also reflects the social status of the referent. "Person" is defined as each of the three classes of personal pronouns indicating the person speaking, the person being spoken to and the person or thing being spoken of; these are first person, second person and third person respectively. By implication, the speaker and the hearer, who are the first and second persons respectively, are treated as +*participants* while the third person is a -*participant* in a speech event.

Personal deixis is structured in an egocentric way where the speaker is the central person, i.e., the deictic centre. It is egocentric in the sense that the speaker ascribes to themselves a superior status and, thus, relates everything to their viewpoint. The speaker is a sort of centripetal entity. This deictic switches as the role of the speaker is transferred from one participant to another in a conversation.

Personal deixis thus has to do with encoding the role of participants in a speech event. Pronouns are the common personal deixis in English, and all of them come in singular and plural forms while the third-person singular forms show gender. They could also be either nominative (subject) or accusative (object).

**Table 1. Personal deixis according to the role of the participants**

|  | Nominative Singular | Accusative Singular | Nominative Plural | Accusative Plural |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st person | I | Me | We | Us |
| 2nd person | You | | You | |
| 3rd person | | | They | Them |
| M | He | Him | | |
| F | She | Her | | |
| N | It | | | |

Other examples of personal deixis are *thou, they, thine, thee, ye*, etc. These deictic expressions are archaic but are still commonly used in the fields of law and religion.

### 3.1.4 Social Deixis

Social deixis anchors language in its immediate interactional context of use. This process includes, at its most elementary level, what is called person deixis. Face-to-face communication involves a number of social actors whose roles underlie the basic three-fold distinction between the first person, the deictic or addresses, and the third person or others.

Social deixis is the encoding of social distinctions relative to participants' honorifics e.g., "you" (Levinson 1983: 63). It talks about status which indicates a higher/lower status relationship between speaker and addressee, i.e., by implicitly or explicitly indicating the entity who is older, more powerful, younger, less powerful, etc.

### 3.1.5 Discourse Deixis

Discourse deixis is involved whenever a form of expression points at an earlier, simultaneous, or following discourse. For example:

24. General Babangida, the only military president we ever had in Nigeria, is nicknamed Maradona.
25. The only military president we had in Nigeria was General Babangida.
26. We shall examine the characteristics of his regime compared to other regimes.

The expressions in 25 and 26 are referring to the discourse in 24. "His regime" in 26 points to General Babangida, mentioned in 24. This is an example of discourse deixis.

Thus, discourse deixis points to a (preceding or following) portion of the text/discourse (Kryk-Kastovsky 2006: 153).

A distinction could be drawn between reference (anaphora) and deixes (or deictic expressions). Cornish (2006: 184) draws the line along text and discourse distinction saying that an anaphor is more of an intralinguistic or intrasentential element which is generally understood to be the process whereby a linguistic element is interpreted derivatively from its antecedent (Stirling and Huddleston 2002). By implication, deixis is subsumed under pragmatics as it relies so much on the context of the utterance within a certain space and time. For example:

27. *That* man told me that *he* is interested.

*That* is a deictic expression which points to a referent that exists within the space of the speaker who is relatively far from the deictic centre—the speaker—while *he* is a referent to a man that had already been brought into the text. In a way, we can see deixis as a form of exophoric reference while anaphora may be seen as an endophoric reference. This is also known as text deixis. It refers to the use of expressions within an utterance to refer to parts of the discourse that contain the utterance and the utterance itself. For instance:

> 28. "*That* was a wonderful performance" refers to a prior portion of the text, while
> 29. "*This* is a wonderful performance" refers to an upcoming performance.

Theoretically speaking, lexicalisation and grammaticalisation are two major ways of expressing time. The former includes time adverbials which possess or indicate a more specific time reference. The latter covers notions such as anteriority, simultaneity or posteriority. The grammaticalised elements are often called *tense.* Lexicalisation of temporal deixis has two dimensions: simple lexical adverbs like *now, then, soon, tomorrow,* and *today*, and lexically composite deictics such as *this day, the penultimate day, before yesterday, next week, last week*, etc. Examples: I will come <u>now</u>. He came <u>last week</u>. We can say <u>right now</u> or <u>just now</u> where "right now" means it is being produced and "just now" is used to indicate a short period of time before the coding time. The grammatical function of tense is to indicate temporal deictic.

So, to interpret an utterance, it is important to differentiate between the moment of utterance (i.e., coding time CT, the time of communication act TCA, and the moment of reception, i.e., receiving time RT, the time the message is received). Let us consider the examples below:

> 30. I wrote this letter <u>while talking to Ade</u>. (present continuous)
> 31. The programme was <u>recorded last month</u>. (past)
> 32. He <u>died</u> of cancer. (past)
> 33. I <u>promise</u> to let you enter tomorrow. (present)
> 34. If he <u>comes</u> tomorrow, beat him. (future)
> 35. John <u>is going</u> to London next year. (future)

Central to the overall discussion of deixis is the deictic centre. The deictic centre is used to refer to the speaker's location e.g., *now, here*. It explains some points or periods in time with the time of the speaker's

utterance as its reference point. Let's consider the example given by Chiluwa cited in Example 13 regarding the location of a lecturer's office. The speaker's location at the time of the utterance is the *deictic centre.* In this example, the lecturer's office is along the corridor *on your left.* The right interpretation of the deictic reference here relies on the context. In this case, the direction the hearer is facing determines his left or right. The introduction of a modifier "your" (which technically constitutes a co-text) in the example aids the meaning and also advises the addressee that the deictic centre has shifted from the speaker's location to the location of the addressee. This is done most often to save the hearer the trouble of asking a further question, "Do you mean your left or my left?"

In other words, each deictic has its semantic import; that is, the meaning associated with it. According to Levinson (1983), words are deictics which have their semantic meaning fixed though their denotational meaning varies depending on time and/or place. This assertion forms the basis for distinguishing the relationship between the meanings of deictics like *here* or *now* and their various references. Hanks (2001: 52) says that *here* is "the region immediate to you" while *now* is "the time immediate to the utterance". This implies that whenever a deictic expression occurs in a given sentence, the propositional meanings remain constant and static but the place and time the speaker refers to change in tune with the context. Let's consider this example taken from Grundy (2000: 33); the expression is an advert in a Mazda showroom. It reads:

36. The car you saw today and intend to buy tomorrow, somebody saw yesterday and intends to buy today.

In Example 36, the person who saw the car yesterday but intends to buy today referred to "today" as "tomorrow" to him. So, it is evident that the knowledge of the particular day is revealed by the deictic. Everything depends on the knowledge of the time of the utterance.

Nunberg (1998) proposes a theory of *deferred reference*, and illustrates it with "this is a biro: and these are the latest in town now". Nunberg points out that by picking out a single biro and referring to a plural form, "these" can clearly show that the reference is not the biro I picked out, rather other biros of the same kind that are the latest in town. The interpretation of these English deictics will depend on how s/he is able to link the index with the right reference, which is not evident in the immediate context. Nunberg believes that all deictic references work in this manner; this is what is meant by *deferred reference*. Thus, the task is first to identify the index and then the index will lead to its interpretation.

Temporal deixis reveals the reason why it is important to pay attention to expressions that indicate the time for a proper interpretation of the intended meaning. As observed by Levinson (1983), linguists recommend that when reporting a speech or utterance, attention should be paid to expressions that indicate the time for the proper interpretation of meaning.

If someone says:

37. Ade will be travelling to Ilorin tomorrow.
A good report of that expression will be:
38. Ade would be travelling to Ilorin *the next* day.

This is because "the next" is more general in capturing the intended meaning, irrespective of the speaker/hearer's time. If the reporter reports "tomorrow" he will definitely mistake the time that the speaker actually had in mind, because the speaker's "tomorrow" may not be the hearer's "tomorrow", especially in relation to the time the report is being read.

## 3.2 Deictic Elements and Yoruba Culture

Unscientific societies, mostly African societies, do not make use of absolute time. Yoruba, for instance, do not make use of absolute time (*time deixis*) in most of their discussions.

39. *Ranti ojoola* (Remember tomorrow)
40. *Gbogbo oun toba se loni* (Everything you do today)
41. *Waa ka lola* (You will reap it tomorrow).

The use of "*ola*" (tomorrow) in the excerpt above does not mean the next day but many years to come. Likewise, the use of "*oni*" (today) does not actually mean the present day; it could mean the present generation or period in history.

42. Speaker A: *Ekaasan, se anti Jumoke wa nibi?* (Good afternoon, is Aunty Jumoke       here?)
43. Speaker B: *Oti jade lati aaro* (She has gone out since morning)
44. Speaker A: *Koburu, eso fun won pe mo de bi* (Alright, tell her I came here)
45. Speaker B: *Moti gbo, ma so fun un* (Okay, I will tell her)
46. Speaker A: Odabo, ma pada wa nisin (Bye, I will come back now).

The use of "aaro" (morning) does not necessarily denote "a.m."; it is just a way to explain that the person has been out for a long time. The use of "nisin" (now) in Yoruba culture does not mean an action is being done. In some cases, e.g., *mo nbo nisin* (I am coming now) the speaker might actually be leaving the scene! The use of "*ni bi*" (here) is a spatial deixis which denotes a region including the speaker.

Also, in using the person deixis in the Yoruba culture, honorifics are employed. Honorifics involve the usage of particular lexemes in order to show the actual status of the interactants. The traditional notion of "we" as "plural" as applicable to the person system is not sacrosanct; it is sometimes culture-specific because it could be used by a person of high social status, e.g., royalty.

The use of *"won"* (they) does not necessarily mean "more than one" but could be used as a singular pronoun, referring to one person. This is because in Yoruba culture, someone older or of higher status is not referred to as he/she out of respect. Unlike the English language that has different ways of referring to a person's gender, the Yoruba language has no differentiation between genders. Whether a male (he) or female (she), both are referred to as *"O"*. As in *O'un.*

In the Yoruba language, the use of the first-person and second-person personal pronoun is applicable.

"Emi"          -          (I) first-person personal pronoun
"Iwo"          -          (You) second-person pronoun

The use of number is involved in the Yoruba language, just as the use of the honorific plural is applicable as well.

"Awon"          -          (They)
"Awa"          -          (We)

The Yoruba language has no grammatical gender in the aspect of pronouns. It does not have a distinction between the common gender divisions which include masculine, feminine and neuter. Neither does it have a distinction between human and non-human pronouns, nor animate and inanimate.

The interpretation of personal deictic words depends on the physical context of the speech event. For instance, if a lecturer hangs *I* on his door, it will be difficult for a passer-by to know who the pronoun 'I' refers to if there are more lecturers in the office. Examples:

47.         I am hungry.
48.         She is stupid.
49.         Give me the pen.
50.         I will be back in an hour.
51.         Have you done it?

Another interesting example is when one eavesdrops: <u>I </u>will kill <u>you</u>. One will not be able to state who "I" and "You" refer to especially when it is later reported that one person died in the situation. It might be the "I" who died or survived. One just can't be sure!

The application of person deixes in the English language, for instance, is different from how they are used in some other languages. Among the indexical pronominals that refer to persons in English, as observed by Chiluwa (2010), only the lexeme "you" appears to be deictic (the context is required to determine the referent). This is because, as mentioned earlier, for proper understanding of certain words and phrases in an utterance, one requires contextual information. This fact distinguishes deictic elements from anaphors. Other third-person pronouns *he, she, it* or *they* do not function as deictic. They rather refer anaphorically to persons or objects already mentioned in the text.

Unlike other languages such as French, or even nativised Nigerian English, which is usually ridden with the context of using honorific pronouns, "you" in English is used to refer to an individual or a group. Sometimes, a speaker may add "you-all" when s/he wishes to make a distinction but has only one form available to him/her. In Nigerian English, as mentioned earlier, we have a way of using pronouns honorifically—the use of pronouns to show respect or group identification. This explains why we often use "we", "us" or "they" as referents (person/persons being referred to) rather than to the addressed (person being addressed).

Let's consider these examples below. The researcher is not, however, claiming that these expressions represent Standard Nigerian English:

52. As I told *us*, we do not need to wait any longer.
53. I was talking to *us*, about the issue involved; it should not be taken with levity.
54. *We* shall investigate your case before the commencement of the trial.
55. *They (my dad)* are coming to beat you.

The use of *we* in 52 is speaker inclusive but *we* in 54 appears to include the speaker but is used honorifically. The "*we"* is referring to a single person. More so, the use of "us" in 52 and 53, instead of *you*, intends to portray the speaker as being actively part of the speech event in the two sentences. The use of "they" in 55 is often used by children as a mark of respect to elders; the fact is that "they" is not a referent to the antecedent in the co-text but a pointer to the context which, here, is an individual (the child's father).

A small shift in deictic perspective can turn the same person (for instance, John) into a second person "you" and into a third person "he"; this is realised in Yoruba as

56. John lo si Ile Iwe
57. O lo si Ile-iwe

"O" in sentence 57 is a second-person singular pronoun. The same applies to the 3rd person singular pronoun in Yoruba. It is important to note that the Yoruba language does not specify gender as does the English language; it only describes some attributes peculiar to the referent. For instance,

58. Jones sleeps early.
59. He sleeps early.

The Yoruba interpretations of these two sentences above are:

"Jones ma n tete sun" for 58.
"O ma n tete sun" for 59.
"O" in Yoruba is a deixis that can be used for male, female, young or old, unlike the English language which has different referents for male and female, e.g., he, she, I, and so on. Social deixis is a way by which culture imposes its idea onto its language. Yoruba exhibits this by extending the scope of the plural *you* to cover a referent to someone who is elderly or as a sign of respect. Social deixis is obtainable whenever the pronoun system of a language grammaticalises information about the social identities or relationships of participants in a conversation. It exposes the speaker's social distance to their addressee. For instance, while *Daddy Temmy gave it to me* is informal, *Prof. Akin gave it to me* is formal.

In the Yoruba language, one can refer to discourse deixis as illustrated below:

60. Baba mi ni oga agba Ile Eko Girama Ipata ti mo n lo. This sentence can be interpreted as: My Father is the principal of Ipata Secondary School that I attend.

61. <u>Ohun</u> ni oga agba ile eko mi. He is the Principal of my school.

"Ohun'" which means "He", points to the principal which was mentioned earlier. As such, "He" is a discourse deixis. In summary, deixes in the Yoruba and English languages have points of divergence and convergence; this is important for pedagogical reasons.

Discourse deixis is used to refer to an event or object in the future. For instance, *this* and *that* are used to point to future discourse elements, that is, things which are about to be said.

62. Listen to this, it will kill you!
63. That was not a very nice thing to say.

## 3.3 Conclusion

When people make statements, they are selective to let the listeners understand when and where they are speaking in order to enable the listeners to interpret their intentions correctly. If they don't manage words that indicate time effectively, for instance, they may end up confusing the listeners. Thus, we can then conclude that deictic expressions are very important elements in communication and demand proper understanding and management. You will agree with me that a word like "we" would definitely create a problem for a listener who does not understand whether it represents a deictic reference or just a mere first-person pronoun. Similarly, words like *here, there, right, left, now, then, today* etc. that indicate place and time need proper understanding and interpretation which the context of the utterance should generally provide.

This paper has established how the Yoruba people see the world around them. That is, how the speakers of the language imagine themselves as being in the centre of the universe from where other entities have to be located. It has established that some expressions are not understood unless the interlocutors have some knowledge about their referents in the real world. This is because these words have no constant meaning: they shift; they are deictics; they are dialectical!

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# SECTION THREE:

# CONTEXT AND CONTEXTUALISATION

# CHAPTER 4

# LEXICAL REITERATION, CONTEXTUAL BELIEF AND PATRIARCHAL IDEOLOGY IN SEFI ATTA'S *EVERYTHING GOOD WILL COME*

## AMAKA C. EZEIFE

## Abstract

*Although studies on gender relations abound, extensive treatment of lexical reiteration in relation to patriarchal ideology in literary texts can hardly be found in the literature. This study combines aspects of a socio-cognitive model of critical discourse analysis, dominant gender theory and a contextual beliefs (CBs) model in investigating the place of lexical reiteration, and how it is used to orient contextual beliefs that control patriarchal ideology in Atta's Everything Good Will Come (EGWC). Atta's EGWC is among several African novels which have drawn attention to the use of language in depicting unequal gender relations in an African community. However, studies on her novel have paid inadequate consideration to the connection that exists among discursive use of language, contextual beliefs and patriarchal ideology construction. The analysis shows that certain forms of lexical reiteration are used by the author and interactants during interactions to unveil information that depicts patriarchal ideology. The only contextual belief that characterises patriarchal ideology is shared knowledge of patriarchal superiority (SKPS). Two acts characterise this contextual belief—dominance and weakness. These acts are represented through the use of repetition of the same word (word repetition), a synonym or synonyms, superordinates/hyponyms, and a general noun to promote patriarchy.*

Keywords: *Gender relations; contextual beliefs; patriarchal ideology; lexical reiteration; African novel*

## 4.1 Introduction

Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* (henceforth *EGWC*) introduces a story set in her African (Nigerian) homeland which redefines the existing traditions of African storytelling. Her debut novel was published in the United States, England and Nigeria in 2005 and received the inaugural Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature in Africa. It discusses the fate of two African girls: one who is prepared to manipulate the traditional system, and one who attempts to defy it. Enitan, who attempts to defy the traditional system, is an intelligent, strong young woman coming of age in a culture that insists on feminine submission. Sherifat, on the other hand, tries to manipulate the traditional system. She remains a spinster after being raped and impregnated as a teenager. Thus, *EGWC* depicts the struggles women face in a patriarchal society, and remarkably, the need to speak out when all around is falling apart.

The concept of gender and its underlining ideology is not new to linguistics, but how the concept of patriarchal gender ideology is expressed in Atta's *EGWC,* using lexical reiteration in expressing contextual beliefs, has not been given sufficient scholarly attention. Moreover, most works on *EGWC* approach their search from the literary perspective. For instance, Eze (2008) uses Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Atta's *EGWC* to analyse the philosophical underpinnings of African feminism, and avers that these two works seek the flourishing of communities with the liberation of women in the background, thereby portraying the feminism of these women writers as free of resentment. Similarly, Orabueze (2010) uses Atta's *EGWC* to explain and portray the existence of gender performance, where men exhibit feminine qualities, such as lack of physical prowess, lack of manipulative intelligence, etc., and where women, on the other hand, exert physical prowess and manipulative intelligence on men. While Akung (2012) reveals that *EGWC* aims to cultivate a moral lesson for the Nigerian girl-child to develop an independent mind, and makes a clarion call to women to come together to fight for the common goal of the woman in society, Ezeife (2015) combines the perspectives of transitivity and feminist linguistics in revealing the discoursal resources deployed by Atta in *EGWC* to orient gender issues. Except for Ezeife (2015), who investigates the place of language in the construction of feminist ideology in Sefi Atta's *EGWC* using transitivity and feminist linguistics, other studies have not concentrated on language use in depicting gender ideology as explicated in the novel. Yet Ezeife (2015) does not examine how patriarchal ideology is

influenced by reiteration and contextual beliefs in the novel. By exploring this view, the present study is justified.

While gender ideology comprises a set of ideas, values and norms accorded to men and women, which then serve as a basis for according different spheres of life and specific productive roles to each of the two sexes, patriarchal ideology involves a set of ideas, values and norms accorded to men and women, which then accord powerful roles to men and less influential ones to women. Reiteration, therefore, is the act of saying something repeatedly, and it is a basic means in linguistic communication. Contextual beliefs are acquired, or ongoing assumptions held, by people that precede an interaction with others. For instance, the situations of most interactions and authorial intrusions in the sampled text illustrate that the interactants/characters, as well as the writer, have shared knowledge of gender issues in society; they have shared knowledge of the word choices, referents and references that portray such perceptions; they also have shared knowledge of previous and immediate socio-cultural experiences and opinions of the subject. Evidently, all these are expressed through lexical reiteration. Lexical reiteration is a means of repeating lexical items in speech or writing. As such, representing in most cases intentional and manipulative reiterations of words, phrases, clauses or sentences, repetitions are an irrevocable means of expression of a given gender discourse. Repetitions make sense in the activities of men and women in their capacity for invaluable expressions of social experience, re-asserting every single truth or convention. The role of repetitions (reiterations) is to harmonise with others the continuance of personal manifestations and to provide the necessary "time-durability" of communicativeness, namely transforming it into a socially legitimate linguistic interactivity, and in the long run, into a communication of full social value.

Therefore, reiteration and contextual beliefs influence gender ideology in such a way that the formation and expression of patriarchal ideology through language are influenced by contextual beliefs. And sometimes, such ideology, which is associated with specific contextual beliefs, is repeated for emphasis. In literary texts, characters are created to act and interact on contextual beliefs which are based on the shared knowledge of a particular discourse genre. And the actions and interactions on contextual beliefs can be expressed through reiteration.

In Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework, lexical reiteration is a mechanism of producing cohesion in a text by means of repetition of two or more lexical items that are observable at the surface of the text. Within this framework, lexical reiteration comprises four categories:

repetition of the same word (word repetition), a synonym or synonyms, superordinates/hyponyms, and/or a general noun. These four categories are understood as a set of options to achieve cohesion that range from most specific (use of the same word) to most general (use of a general noun). As Halliday and Hasan (1976: 278) put it, "Reiteration is a form of lexical cohesion which involves the repetition of a lexical item, at one end of the scale; the use of a general word to refer back to a lexical item, at the other end of the scale; and a number of things in between—the use of a synonym, or superordinate". This study adopts Halliday and Hasan's (1976) classification of lexical reiteration in determining and analysing the sampled reiterations in the novel.

The reason for choosing Atta's *EGWC* is that it provides a good ground for studying the interrelatedness between patriarchal ideology and situated lexical reiteration that characterise the ideology in the Nigerian novel. Evidently, the novel has copious lexical reiterations that address recent gender subjects in society.

## 4.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is provided by van Dijk's (1995) socio-cognitive model of CDA, Odebunmi's (2006) situation model of context, and Lakoff's (1975) dominance theory of gender.

The socio-cognitive approach to CDA links language practice to social cognition. This approach focuses on the fundamental importance of intuition and society in the critical analysis of discourse. According to van Dijk (1995), discourse and social structure are mediated by social cognition. In essence, the human mind is a very significant dimension in the socio-cognitive approach. Van Dijk (1995: 18) defines social cognition as "the system of mental representations and process of group members". He further states that "although embodied in the minds of individuals, social cognitions are social because they are shared and presupposed by group members" (van Dijk 1995: 257). The central claim of the socio-cognitive approach is that the relation between discourse and social structure necessitates that the micro-level discourse and macro-level social structure are mediated by ideology and social cognition. It is a systematic and context-based model such as the socio-cognitive CDA that can account for the diverse nature of the language in a literary text; hence, we have chosen it over others. To understand gender discourse, there is a need to examine the underlying gender cognition of participants in gender communication. Such gender discourse is not only social in orientation but also embodies individual characteristics. Therefore, the socio-cognitive

approach is quite relevant to this study because it is capable of accounting for implicit information that forms writers' (or speakers') mental models.

Odebunmi's (2006) model of context emphasises shared knowledge and beliefs that exist among the interactants. According to Odebunmi (2006: 25), context is the "linguistic, socio-cultural and psychological background from which the meaning of a word springs". Contextual beliefs are, therefore, assumptions held by interactants that precede an interaction with others. These assumptions may have been acquired or could be an ongoing acquisition process during an interaction (van Dijk 2001). Therefore, the contextual beliefs shared by the speakers and hearers are very important in discussing context. Odebunmi (2006) categorises contextual beliefs into two levels of beliefs: language level and situation level beliefs. This study adopts the latter. According to him, language level beliefs are indicated by interactants' understanding of the language of communication. For example, communication between two people will only be successful if they share the same language, perhaps Igbo. On the other hand, the situation level deals with the assumptions which "are held on the basis of interactants' shared code (linguistic and non-linguistic) and experience" (Odebunmi, 2006: 28). Thus, the participants work under shared assumptions and beliefs. Odebunmi (2006) suggests that beliefs at this level cover interactants' shared knowledge of subjects/topics; shared knowledge of word choices, referent and references; and shared knowledge of socio-cultural experiences, previous and immediate. Shared knowledge of subjects/topics facilitates the comprehension of utterances among participants and contributes to the ongoing discourse. Shared knowledge of word choices relates to the knowledge of terminology, referents and references. This also involves the knowledge of referents of pronouns and indexicals that are evident in the discourse. The shared knowledge of socio-cultural experiences, previous and immediate, implicates the knowledge of the culture, norms, and socio-economic and socio-political experiences of the interactants. It is a theoretical description of context that presumes writers'/interactants' shared knowledge on gender issues, the word choices, referents and references, and shared socio-cultural experiences that help in forming their gender ideologies as explicated in the sampled novel.

Also, Lakoff's (1975) dominance gender theory provides useful insights in analysing lexical reiteration that characterises gender ideology in the novel. This dominance approach developed during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Nemati and Bayer (2007: 3) propose that "men and women are believed to inhabit a cultural and linguistic world, where power and status are unequally distributed". In this power-based theory, the focus

is on male dominance and gender division. Cameron (1995) explains that the dominance approach emphasises inequality as the root of any problems in cross-sex interaction; and suggests that to solve the problems, we must eliminate the underlying inequality. This explanation stresses the belief that men are the powerful group as opposed to women who belong to the powerless group. Evidently, the dominance theory refers to the view of the male as the norm and the idea of a patriarchal order. It claims that it is difficult to challenge this power system, since the way we think of the world is part of, and reinforces, this male power. Therefore, the dominance theory of gender helps to explain how a particular gender controls or influences the other in social practices.

## 4.3 Contextual Belief and Patriarchal Ideology

Patriarchy is a social system that promotes the institutions of male rule and privilege, and entails female subordination. This system of belief establishes male dominance and control over females in society, in general, and particularly within the family. Since patriarchy is perpetuated through a process of institutionalisation of the social, cultural and religious practices in society, and is legitimised through the political, legal and economic systems of society, it causes women to internalise, as well as further perpetuate, patriarchal ways of thinking, both in values and behaviour. Therefore, this ideology deals with the male-oriented culture that depicts the supremacy of man above woman. This system of belief centres on the dominance of man, and his authority, influence, and control in society. The contextual belief that characterises this ideology is shared knowledge of patriarchal superiority (SKPS).

### *Shared Knowledge of Patriarchal Superiority (SKPS)*

Patriarchal superiority portrays the awareness of male dominance in society. It suggests some characteristics of a culture in which men are the most respected and most powerful. This culture institutionalises the domination of men over women, who are regarded as inferior. It involves a political-social system that insists that males are inherently principal and superior. Patriarchal superiority is embedded in our government, economic, political, religious and social institutions to perpetuate structural inequality between men and women. This social system also regards men as the authority within the family and society at large, and this supremacy is passed on from father to son. The language of the novels exposes shared knowledge of such social practice among characters during interactions,

and through the novelist's authorial interventions. Two acts characterise
this contextual belief: dominance and weakness.

## *Dominance*

Dominance captures a situation whereby men display attitudes, actions and
speech that control or influence women in social practices. Here, society
puts up subjugating behaviours by using forces, tricks and other influential
gimmicks that index "sovereignty" in their dealings with men and women.
This act is reflected in society's laws/by-laws, and in men's behaviours
and utterances either with their fellow men or women, especially under the
auspices of societal laws. It deals with authority, control, power and
supremacy as exhibited by males over females or their fellow men in
society. This is established in the example below.

> "Really, I don't know why we continue to follow native law
> anyway, when civil law is in existence. It has no moral grounding, no
> design except to oppress women."
> My father laughed. "Who's oppressed? Are you oppressed?"
> "I didn't say me, but yes, in a way."
> "How?"
> "I'm part of this..."
> "This what?"
> "This group, treated as chattel" (*EGWC*, 141).

Atta, in the above instance, expresses the emphasis that society puts
on inequality in gender relations, especially in legal matters. This is
expressed through the use of word repetition to create cohesion in a text.
The word *oppress(ed)* is repeated three times to emphasise the subjugated
positions of women when it comes to legal cases. The repetition is clearly
understood as a shared knowledge by the participants because it expresses
the obvious fact that we are born with biological labels (male and female);
however, society does its bigotry marking by addressing individuals as
men and women and attributing responsibilities to them. Even as Mr
Taiwo tries to disagree with his daughter on the issue through his repeated
questions, his non-verbal act (*My father laughed*) contradicts his
questions. Another indication of this contradiction is the nature of his (Mr
Taiwo's) repeated question which embodies the word *oppress(ed)* which
simply means "dominate" or "subjugate". Further, this is promoted
through Enitan's insistence in her reply that the oppression of women
makes society treat them like chattel. As this oppression is specifically
present in native law, the writer uses another reiteration to buttress it: *it*

*has no moral grounding, (it has) no design except to oppress women.* In the above context, *no moral grounding* and *no design* can be seen as synonyms. This is because the cultural design (plan) of native law for women is not honourable and does not serve them (women) better. They are repeated synonymously to strengthen the emphasis that society attributes unequal responsibilities to men and women. Society, therefore, makes men dominant over women. Obviously, the fact that the native law has *no moral grounding* and *no design* authenticates the fact that women are oppressed.

Another instance of reiteration which indicates dominance emerges as Mr Taiwo tries to convince Enitan that she is not part of the oppressed group.

> "Your grandmother was married off at fourteen, into a household with two other wives, and she had to prove she was worthy of her dowry by cooking better. I'm not sure what your gripe is. I made sure you had a good education, encouraged you to fulfil your career goals…"
> "Can you change our culture for me?" I asked.
> "We know there are problems with native law and custom, but these things are changing…"
> "How do we know? The women don't come to court, and when they come, it's men like you who conspire …"
> "Me? Conspire?"
> "Yes, all of you, conspiring" (*EGWC*, 142).

It is obvious that the repetition of an assertion increases the degree of belief in that assertion. In the context of the above, the word *conspire(ing)* is repeated three times to portray this. The implication is that in the context of native law, women are not treated fairly; men plot against them to their favour. In this context, "to conspire" simply means to "work against" or "plot against" somebody. Patently, since men formulate the native law and how it is carried out, the inference is that they work together to connive against women by placing a lot of things in their (men's) favour. In essence, Enitan's interest in the use of repetition above steadily strengthens a specific way of perception and understanding of reality, whose aim is to experience the world around us in accordance with the social ordinance. In SKPS, dominance is an enabling act and the above discussion between Mr Taiwo and his daughter, Enitan, establishes this fact. And it is promoted through native law. Mr Taiwo acknowledges that there are problems in the act of dominance as perpetuated by the law as indicated in his statement: *we know there are problems with native law and custom, but these things are changing.* In fact, the issues of "oppression" and "conspiracy" as embodied in the *problems with native*

*law and custom* are encapsulated in the general noun: (*these*) *things*. Therefore, as all these are repeated, the act of dominance of men over women is decoded and socialised among the people.

A similar instance is shown below:

> "Hm, may be somebody I can sit with my feet up and grumble about food. I will have to go shopping this weekend, since my Lord and Master is not pleased with the food I have at home" (*EGWC*, 201).

Enitan, in the above instance, addresses her husband as *my Lord and Master*. These are synonyms. Idiomatically and traditionally, one's *Lord and Master* simply means "one's husband". However, the concepts have a lot of connotations: power, dominance, control, respect, superiority and nobility. They suggest that Enitan cannot be equal to her husband; therefore, she should be under him, and he should have power over her or be in charge of her. As the word, *lord* means "a master, male ruler" and *master* implies an "employer, superior, principal", the implication is that the referent (Niyi) is the boss, chief, and most important in the house, better and greater than his wife (Enitan). Enitan uses these synonyms to refer to her husband because of his superior and domineering attitude towards her at home. Additionally, Enitan's acknowledgement of her husband (Niyi) as her Lord and Master indicates that she has internalised and enabled patriarchal ways of thinking (as a subordinate), both in values and behaviour. This, therefore, validates the fact that patriarchy is perpetuated through a process of institutionalisation of the social, cultural and religious practices in society, and legitimised through the political, legal and economic systems of society.

Atta uses another lexical repetition below to reveal the patriarchal conception of men as infallible even when they are morally wrong in their actions.

> "What your father did was wrong. Wrong!" "I can accept it; so can anyone else." "Just make up with your father. That's all I'm asking. It's enough now. …These things happen in families. They happen. It's what you do afterwards that matters. Your father raised you. He never abandoned you. Don't be stubborn."
> "I can't trust him. Not even with my friends."
> "Which friends?" I pointed. Her eyes widened.
> "You think your father is after me?"
> I imitated him: "My dear this, my dear that."
> "He does the same to you."
> "Well, I know him. He thinks I don't, but I do."

"This is Lagos," she said. "You can't behave like this. You won't be the first, and you won't be the last. Our fathers, we know what they're like. We just have to accept them as they are" (*EGWC*, 171).

Enitan's discussion with her friend, Sheri, in the above context shows the double repetition of lexical items that uphold patriarchy. First, *wrong* which belongs to the word class of an adjective is repeated by Sheri to express Mr Taiwo's (Enitan's father) bad deeds to his daughter and family, and how the interactants see it, yet accepting the society's justification of it. Second, the phrase, *my dear this, my dear that,* is used repeatedly to reveal Enitan's resentment towards her father's womanising act and neglect of her mother. Mr Taiwo divorces his wife and goes after young ladies. Enitan visits Sheri and tells her how she confronted her father on her discovery of his extra-marital affairs. Her father has a son outside marriage and hides it from his family. Enitan even suspects that Sheri is going out with her (Enitan's) father. This irritates Enitan and she seems to be unforgiving of her father's actions. However, the interactants (Enitan and Sheri) have shared knowledge of the polygamous nature of men in the socio-cultural setting as captured by the writer. Therefore, these repeated items describe Sheri and Enitan's personal and social views towards Mr Taiwo's womanising act. Also, Sheri tries to make her friend, Enitan, understand the superiority of man in society and that she has to forgive her father because what he does is not out of the ordinary, hence her statement: *our fathers, we know what they're like. We just have to accept them as they are.* These two opposite phrases, *You won't be the first, and you won't be the last* are also used to suggest the fact that men are powerful, and are pardoned easily for some bad things they do where the women are hardly pardoned. In essence, the repetition of what is significant makes it generally known to the community; it decodes it in the eye of all social actors and, in short, *socialises* it. The above repetitions used by Sheri and Enitan respectively refer to the powerful man and society's pliability as regards his wrongdoing. All these instances validate a culture that upholds SKPS.

Correspondingly, the next instance portrays a traditional culture which also approves men's polygamous nature.

"But Sheri was sugary, as we said in Lagos; she had a man, an older man, a man as old as my father even, and he would pay her rent" (*EGWC*, 100).

Atta uses the phrase, *an older man* and its modified synonym, *a man as old as my father* to describe Sheri's way of life. The synonymous repetition strengthens the societal expectations of a younger girl as regards

an elderly man in relationships. Therefore, the implication of the synonyms is that as every father is older than his children, and provides for their daily needs, Sheri's man-friend, the Brigadier, is expected to provide for her needs. The Brigadier is in charge; he is elderly and mature, is likely to take care of "young" Sheri, and this includes *paying her rent*. Evidently, this is what happens in the social setting where an older man dates a younger woman. Perhaps, the writer highlights this notion and shared belief through the repetition of the words, *old(er)* and *man*. It can be deduced that she uses the reiteration to draw attention to the possible societal expectations that have formed the cognition of a young girl when she dates an older man. In a relationship, *an older man* must be active and ready to provide, financially and otherwise, for the younger woman he is dating. Sheri goes further to describe the active Brigadier to Enitan as follows, *Hassan, ...the Brigadier. Have you heard of him? He collected polo ponies and dates women as young as his daughters...* and when Enitan asks whether he treats her well, she responds, *I live here. I don't have to worry about money* (*EGWC,* 103). This buttresses her cognition of the societal view concerning younger women who date older men. By implication, it does not matter if he treats her well or not, provided he covers her financial/material needs as a powerful man.

## *Weakness*

Weakness captures a situation whereby women display attitudes, actions and speech that indicate their inadequacy, inferiority or lowliness in social practices as designated by society. Such women consciously or unconsciously accept defeat or shortfall as their fate and become docile, passive and submissive in virtually all circumstances. Here, society subdues and restrains women through subtle and deceitful laws that index "obedience" in their dealings with men. This act encompasses allegiance, compliance, devotion, passivity, loyalty and submissiveness as exhibited by the female gender in society, and is seen as a form of recognition. An example is presented below.

> "Isn't he married, Sheri?"
> She nodded. "To two women, and he can marry two more if he wants. He's a Moslem"
> "Is that what you want?"
> She laughed. "Want? I beg you; don't talk to me about want. When my father died who remembered me? We didn't know where our next meal was coming from, and no one cared. Not even my uncle, who took all his money" (*EGWC*, 103).

In the above excerpt, Enitan tries to advise Sheri (her friend) against the old Brigadier she (Sheri) is dating. Yet Sheri feels incomplete without him. As the verb *want* is repeated above, it simply connotes weakness on the part of the woman, Sheri. The lexical item *want* belongs to the word class of verbs. It simply means "desire, crave, covet, yearn for", and these are attributes of weakness. We can see in the interaction that Sheri has no other means of taking care of herself and her younger siblings after the death of her father. Since her uncle took all her father's wealth afterwards, Sheri's only option is to be in *want* and go after the Brigadier, so as to survive. Everything boils down to the shared knowledge of patriarchal superiority; society supports her uncle who took all her father's wealth after his death. She is left to fend for herself and siblings, thereby becoming continuously dependent on a man. Therefore, the verb *want* is repeated above to draw attention to Sheri's incapacitated situation which is promoted by the society that puts her in the situation of perpetual craving for a man's support, even against her wish.

The concept of weakness as an aspect of SKPS is also evident in:

> "But your father and uncle were close."
> "Don't let anyone deceive you. Pray you're never in a situation to need them.
> It is then you will know what two plus two really makes. Listen, I take care of my family, I even take care of Ibrahim. Since morning I'm cooking. He may not show up, and this won't be the first time, so if I have to tie my head up when I go out…"
> "You have to tie your head?"
> "He's a strict Moslem" (*EGWC*, 104).

Apparently, two different repetitions signify weakness in the above excerpt: One, *take care of* which is repeated thus: *I take care of my family, I even take care of Ibrahim*; two, *have to tie my head up;* both enhance the value and significance of the concept of weakness. Here, we are made to understand that in the context of family and other relationships (as encapsulated in patriarchy), a woman is expected to *take care* of the members and even the husband or boyfriend, as the case may be. To *take care of* somebody in this sense goes beyond making sure that somebody is safe and well; it equally connotes to "enslave" oneself to somebody, as Sheri cooks and satisfies Alhaji's sexual needs. Sheri's power is weakened by the little favour she gets from Alhaji to sustain her family and herself. This necessitates the repetition of the phrase, *take care of* perhaps to indicate the underrated value of a woman at home, as a cook and "sex satisfier". She has to cook whether Alhaji is coming to eat or not; she has

to tie her head up when she goes out because Alhaji is a Muslim, and wives/girlfriends to such men are expected to tie their heads to "show respect for their men". Evidently, *to tie one's head up* indicates submission to the superior. Sheri has to do all these, probably against her wish because she is handicapped and has to dance to the tune of Alhaji for survival. What a world! In fact, her miserable life after her father's death makes her think in an ideological way that the mental torture that she suffers at the hands of Alhaji amounts to *taking care of* and *tying her head up* for him always.

Equally, we can see another instance when Enitan brought jollof rice from Sheri for her father (Mr Taiwo). Mr Taiwo asked where the rice came from:

> "It's my friend. She has a catering business."
> "Which friend of yours does that?"
> "Sheri"
> "…Chief Bakare's daughter?" I nodded. "The one who?"
> "Yes, the one who, and now she's catering, so if you ever need help…" (*EGWC,* 108).

In the above, there is a phrase-to-phrase repetition which can be termed an elliptic reiteration. This is seen in Mr Taiwo's inquiry about Chief Bakare's daughter, *The one who?* and Enitan's subsequent repetitive response: *Yes, the one who*. The reiteration expresses weakness on the part of the woman. It is apparent that the phrase, *the one who,* is repeated to indicate shared knowledge between the discussants. The implication is that Mr Taiwo and Enitan know the daughter of Chief Bakare who's now catering. Yet, this elliptic reiteration connotes something that does not sound good, something unpleasant and repulsive based on society's standards. When Sheri was younger, she was raped and got pregnant as a result. People in the neighbourhood despised her for that, and some discouraged their daughters from becoming friends with her again. Evidently, it is this past experience of Sheri's that Mr Taiwo remembered and coded elliptically in identifying her. In fact, Sheri's rape, pregnancy and subsequent abortion during childhood have become a kind of stigma in her life, something ugly that people remember her by, anytime her name is mentioned, even as an adult. Invariably, this is based on the social cognition that a young lady who gets pregnant before marriage is a nuisance, irresponsible, or a wayward person. However, a man who impregnates a woman before marriage does not receive any serious frown from society.

The fact that lexical reiteration is a mechanism of producing cohesion in a text by means of repetition of two or more lexical items that are observable at the surface of the text is apparent in the next excerpt.

> She told me the most awful things about blood and babies and why it was a secret. "I will not marry," I said.
> "You will," she said.
> "I will not have children,"
> "Yes, you will. All women want children." Sex was a filthy act, she said, and I must always wash myself afterwards (*EGWC,* 26-27).

The above instance portrays Arin and her daughter, Enitan, discussing womanhood and motherhood, and the societal expectations on both. As a young girl, Enitan has a different view of life from society's expectations. Her persistent argument that she will not have children indicates her wishes and desires which are contrary to that of society. However, Arin's relentless repetition of the imperative sentence, *you will*, simply connotes that a woman's desire may be weakened by societal influence. This imperative is a command which requires obligatory compliance to what is specified through action. In essence, society expects every woman to settle down with a man and have children at a certain stage of her life. Obviously, her failure to achieve those things reduces her worth in society; she is seen as an irrelevant or less relevant individual, irrespective of her other achievements. This is why Arin emphatically tries to impact the ideology in her daughter's cognition as a child. Perhaps she wants Enitan to always remember, and work towards, becoming a wife and mother, and attain fulfilment based on society's standards.

Even female children tackle their fellow young girls who go contrary to society's expectations for women as seen in:

> "I'll be an actress," she said. "… and when I arrive, I'll be wearing a red negligee".
> "You'll need fans. All actresses have fans."
> "Oh, they'll be there," she said. "And they'll be running around, shouting,
> Sheri, Voulezvouz, Bonsoir, mercredi. But I won't mind them."
> I sighed. "I want to be something like… like president."
> "Eh? Women are not presidents."
> "Why not?"
> "Our men won't stand for it. Who will cook for your husband? Oh, women aren't presidents," she said (*EGWC,* 33).

As children, two friends, Enitan and Sheri, are discussing their future life careers. During the course of their discussion, Sheri expresses surprise when Enitan discloses her intention of becoming a president. This is seen in her repetition of the declarative sentence *women are not presidents* to construct the ideology in the cognition of her friend. The repetition of this negative declaration indicates that society supports gender inequality which has job specifications for each gender. Invariably, becoming the president of a country is not a design for females because *our men won't stand for it*; they (men) prefer women to be at home and cook for them. A president is simply the head, administrator or general overseer of a country, and husbands (men) want to retain such power for themselves alone. The repetition and its co-text expose men's stake in the post of president, and society's distribution of the expected duties of man and woman. In essence, the implication of this notion that *women are not presidents* strengthens a specific way of perception and understanding of reality, aiming at living our lives in accordance with the social ordinance.

## 4.4 Conclusion

The paper has examined reiteration and contextual belief which influence patriarchal ideology in Sefi Atta's *EGWC*. It combines aspects of the socio-cognitive model of critical discourse analysis, dominant gender theory and the contextual beliefs (CBs) model in investigating the place of lexical reiteration, and how it is used to orient contextual beliefs that control patriarchal ideology in the sampled novel. The analysis identifies SKPS as one contextual belief that characterises patriarchal ideology. Two acts characterise this contextual belief: dominance and weakness. Further, the analysis shows that Atta represents patriarchy by the use of certain forms of reiteration such as repetition of the same word (word repetition), a synonym or synonyms, superordinates/hyponyms, and a general noun which are used in the novel. In essence, the novelist captures interactants that have shared knowledge of the polygamous nature and supremacy of men in a particular socio-cultural setting. Therefore, the use of situated repetitions by interactants reinforces a specific way of perception and understanding of reality as regards male and female behaviour patterns in accordance with the social ordinance.

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# CHAPTER 5

# CONTEXTUAL CONSTRAINTS IN ACADEMIC SERMONS OF STUDENT PASTORS IN THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, OGBOMOSO

## FOLASHADE OLOYEDE

## Abstract

*This study explores how student pastors adapt to contextual constraints generated in the contrived contexts of academic sermons in the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso. Previous studies on sermonic discourse have identified the structure and stages of sermonic discourse, assessed meaning achievement across the genre of contemporary sermons, but have not recognised the influence of contextual constraints on the overall output of academic sermons. This study seeks to identify the context types in academic sermons to establish the performance constraints of the student preacher. Adapting Peter Auer's theory of context, the data are analysed using the qualitative analytical method. The purposive sampling method was used to select the foremost Baptist theological seminary from which the academic sermons were gathered. The penultimate year students were purposively selected for data collection as the only candidates of Preaching Practicum. A third of this class was randomly selected for data collection. The data collection techniques include electronic recording and participant observation. The selected academic sermons featured four context types, namely: epistemic (EPI), scriptural (SCR), institutional (INS) and recipient management (RCM). EPI featured a positive competence orientation constraint; SCR revealed positive and negative competence orientation constraints; INS is marked by positive norm alignment, negative voice clash and negative perspectival constraints; and RCM revealed positive displacement,*

*positive rapport management, negative role orientation, negative face management and negative rapport management. The positive constraints signal the student pastors' positive orientation to training, while the negative constraints indicate where more attention is needed in their training.*

Keywords: *Academic sermons; context types; contextual constraints; Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary*

## 5.1 Introduction

Language cannot be divorced from the religious experiences of a people as it is a viable tool of expression in religion. Adeyanju (2016) affirms that "…language plays a crucial role in the delivery of [a] sermon" (Adeyanju 2016: 365). It follows, then, that an (in)appropriate use of language contributes to the success or failure of the response expected from participants in a religious experience. This is more so in the case of the academic sermon, the practicum of Christian preaching, which is a discourse type that combines features of academic discourse and religious discourse. While academic sermons take on the elegance of academic writing with its formality and precision, the persuasive nature of religious discourse is still resident in them. An academic sermon is different from a regular sermon in that while the latter is delivered in a context with a real audience in attendance, the former is done in a contrived context. This suggests the presence of an audience that may not be real, especially when the academic sermon is for examination purposes. Given the peculiar nature of this type of sermon, and its role in determining the quality of the preachers and their qualification for theological certification, it is observed that the linguistic competence of the preachers in this context influences their pragmatic designs with which they manage the delivery constraints.

Obviously, academic sermons, like any other type of sermon, have set objectives which are pursued as the preacher uses linguistic features which are reflected in the delivery of the sermons. The success of the delivery is promoted by the student pastors' mastery and proper management of their roles but inhibited by the mismanagement of the same within the context of the academic sermons. This, then, calls for a study of the contextual constraints of academic sermons and the adaptation strategies engaged by the student preachers in the delivery of the sermons. To this end, the study investigates the academic sermons delivered by pastors-in-training in the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, which is the oldest theological institution of the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

The study examines the context types and the contextual constraints in academic sermons. However, it does not cover other linguistic fields such as phonetics and phonology; neither does it attempt a comparative study of the sermons of the preacher in a more natural context. Though the data for this study are strictly oral, they are more monological than dialogical; thus, the study has not veered into a conversational analysis of the data set. A study of contextual constraints in academic sermons in the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso is worthwhile as it will identify the context types in the academic sermons in the institution in order to establish the performance constraints facing the student preachers. It will help the student pastors to recognise the importance of linguistic proficiency to the success of their sermon delivery. Ultimately, the findings of this research will enhance the efforts of the Nigerian Baptist theological institutions as they strive to provide quality theological education that translates to more efficient ministry.

## 5.2 Previous Research on Religious Discourse

Religious discourse has attracted the attention of many scholars, some of whom have attempted a study of apologetics (Inya 2012), Bible texts (Babalola 2007), Christian home videos (Adetunji 2007), religious advertisements (Odebunmi 2007) and other subgenres of religious discourse. Expectedly, sermons have attracted the attention of a large number of scholars (Smith & Campbell 1952; Antola 2002; Taiwo 2005; Adedun & Mekiliuwa 2010; Konč ar & Dobrovoljc 2014; Musyoka & Karanja 2014; Acheoah & Abdulraheem 2015). Sermons have been widely studied in areas such as stylistics (Acheoah & Abdulraheem 2015), semantics (Antola 2002), sociolinguistics (Allen 1998; Chen 2013), and pragmatics (Smith & Campbell 1952; Konč ar 2008; Adedun & Mekiliuwa 2010; Konč ar & Dobrovoljc 2014). Adedun and Mekiliuwa identify transactions, members and acts as some of the linguistic categories marking sermonic discourse as a highly structured speech event. They also reveal that "formal structures are influenced by socio-functional goals of the speaker, one of which is to exhort and persuade hearers to right thinking and right living" (Adedun & Mekiliuwa 2010: 21). Their study, however, does not take into account academic sermons with the peculiarity of the contextual constraints faced by a preacher who delivers the sermon before an audience that will evaluate them for examination purposes.

Koncar (2008) employs tools within systemic functional linguistics and corpus linguistics to explore how meaning unfolds in the genre of

contemporary sermons (Končar 2008: 503). In their impressive collaborative effort, Koncar and Dobrovoljc (2014) engage tools developed within systemic functional linguistics in their assessment of meaning achievement across the genre of contemporary English sermons (Končar & Dobrovoljc 2014). The identified distinguishing stages of sermonic discourse, the argumentative structure, and argumentative way of persuading believers towards a commitment to a Christian lifestyle and faith are valid and true to sermons in various regions of the world. However, the research did not explore meaning achievement in academic sermons with the peculiarities of its contextual constraints. In addition, their study is limited to "the interpretation at semantic level and description of lexico-grammatical patterns" of the sermons (Končar & Dobrovoljc 2014: 292) without paying attention to how linguistic resources are engaged to adapt to contextual constraints.

While impressive attempts at linguistic studies of sermons abound, previous studies have not recognised the influence of contextual constraints on the overall output of academic sermons. Given this neglect, the findings of such studies may be inadequate or inappropriate to be applied to academic sermons which constitute a crucial part of theological education. This generates the need for this current research which attempts a study of contextual constraints in academic sermons in the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso.

## 5.3 Theoretical Background

"Context" is central to studies in meaning production and achievement. Discussing a widely used definition of pragmatics, Auer concludes that "context has become a central notion of pragmatic thinking" (Auer 2009: 1). In the same vein, van Dijk (2008: xi) affirms that context models "define the conditions of [the] appropriateness of discourse, and hence are the basis of a theory of pragmatics". If context so defines the conditions of the appropriateness of discourse, it is expedient to consider what constitutes context. Levinson has described context as "the selection of … features that are culturally and linguistically relevant to the production and interpretation of utterances" (Levinson 1983: 22-23). This position of Levinson appropriately captures the idea that context is essential to the appropriateness of linguistic choices and meaning achievement. A closer look at Levinson's position also reveals that the constituent features of context can be cultural or linguistic.

In the opinion of Mey, "Context is a dynamic, not static concept: it is to be understood as the continually changing surroundings, in the widest

sense, that enables the participants in the communication process to interact, and in which the linguistic expressions of their interaction become intelligible" (Mey 2001: 39). Mey's submission clearly reveals that context is an all-encompassing concept which allows for mutual intelligibility in a communication process. It can thus be inferred that context includes cultural and linguistic features (as mentioned by Levinson) as well as other factors that may be seen in discourse, provided such factors enable the participants of a communication process to interact in an intelligible way.

Following Goodwin and Duranti (1992), Auer has used the figure-ground metaphor to explain the relationship between text and context. While text is likened to figure, context is likened to the ground on which the figure appears and against which the latter can be clearly interpreted. Consequently, he classifies theories of context along three dimensions, namely: indexed features, indexicals and the indexed/indexical relationship (Auer 2009: 2-3). The indexed features are the aspects of the physical surroundings (such as participants, time and space) which are believed to be relevant. The indexicals are the deictic elements of a language, while the indexed/indexical relationship is unidirectional as the meaning of an utterance is determined by the context (Auer 2009: 2-3). However, Auer is of the opinion that "The triple represents the most narrow theory (theories) of context in linguistics" (Auer 2009: 3) because linguistic structures other than deictic elements also perform denotational functions.

Given the wide notion of context, Auer argues that "it is useful to distinguish types of indexed entities in order to come to grips with the complexity of the sign/context interface" (Auer 2009: 6). In doing this, he identifies five dimensions of context to include linguistic context, physical context, social context, participants' background knowledge and channel of communication. The linguistic context pays attention to the intertextual relationship between texts. The physical context of a speech event refers to "Everything that can be 'pointed' to, including time…. The second dimension of context, therefore, seems to be directly linked to the 'narrow' construal of context" (Auer 2009: 7). Social context constitutes the third dimension identified by Auer and it refers to the participants, their social roles and the social activity they are involved in. The fourth dimension of context has to do with the participants' common background knowledge which may have been accumulated from previous interactive episodes. Auer presents the channel or medium of communication as the fifth dimension of context.

# 5.4 Methodology

The purposive sampling method was used to select the seminary from which the academic sermons were gathered. The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso has been purposively selected because it is believed that this seminary, with the oldest history, has a more sustained tradition of academic preaching. The penultimate year students were purposively selected as the only candidates of the Preaching Practicum. A third of this class was randomly selected for data collection. The data collection techniques include electronic recording and participant observation. Using Auer's theory of context, the data are analysed using a qualitative analytical method. The first four elements of Auer's theory are the relevant ones to this study. Below is a graphic presentation of the analytical model.

There are four elements under "Auer's contextual variables" and another four elements under "adapted context" representing the types of context found in academic sermons. The letter marks under each of the context types indicate the relationship between Auer's contextual variables and the types of context realised in academic sermons. The chart presents the delivery process as involving a direct flow of discourse from the academic preacher to the academic audience and an indirect flow from the academic audience to the academic preacher. The adapted context of the academic sermons features epistemic, scriptural, institutional and recipient management types. The epistemic and the recipient management contexts relate to Auer's physical context and participants' common background knowledge. The scriptural context relates to Auer's intertextual context and the institutional context to his social context. In the process of delivery, contextual constraints are generated from the interaction among the academic preacher, the academic audience and context types. Eight contextual constraints are so generated, two of which are exclusively positive (norm alignment and displacement constraints), with three being exclusively negative (perspectival, voice clash and face management constraints) and the other three being both positive and negative (competence orientation, role orientation and rapport management).

Competence orientation constraints are defined here as controlling factors that indicate the student preachers' ability to preach well. Norm alignment constraints refer to factors indicating whether or not the student preachers comply with the usual way of preaching in their particular context of theological training. Role orientation constraints include factors relating to the mode of operation expected of the preachers given the part they play at the point of sermon delivery. Displacement constraints involve the preachers' use of language to communicate things that are not immediately
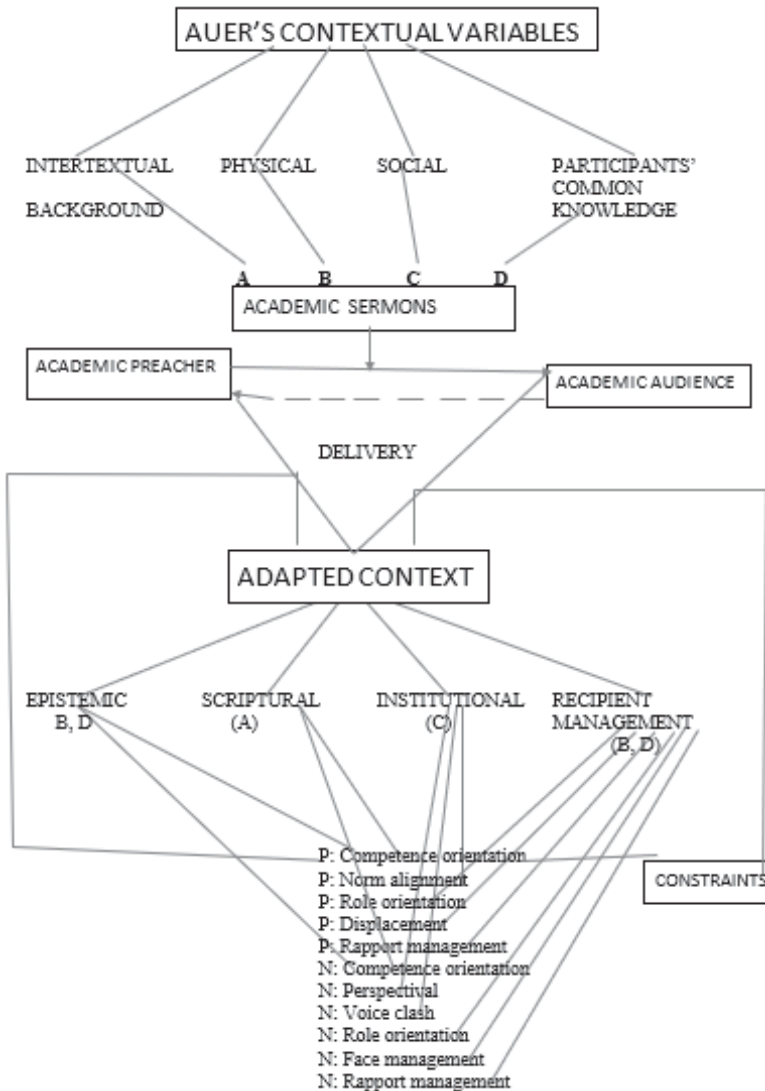
P: Rapport management        N: Competence orientation
N: Perspectival              N: Voice clash
N: Role orientation          N: Face management
N: Rapport management

Figure: Modified Model of Auer's Theory of Context

present. Rapport management constraints are defined as the controlling factors with which the preachers demonstrate their understanding of their audience's feelings or ideas in order to communicate smoothly and maintain a close and harmonious relationship. Perspectival constraints emerge from the preachers' particular way of viewing things which depends on their experience and personality. Voice clash constraints indicate the co-existence of distinct points of view within the sermonic discourse. Face management constraints include the factors with which the preachers maintain their own sense of dignity in the presence of their lecturers and peers who are there for the purpose of assessing the sermon delivery.

The model above presents a link between the theoretical framework, the data and the objective of this study. While the elements under Auer's contextual variables constitute the theoretical basis for this study, the elements under adapted context present the context types found in the academic sermons and their relationship to Auer's model. This part of the analytical model adequately handles the first part of the objective of this study which concerns identifying the context types in the academic sermon. The last segment of the model presents the contextual constraints in the academic sermon; this relates to the second part of the objective which is to establish the performance constraints to which the student pastors have to adapt. This next section presents an analysis of the findings where each of the context types is discussed with the associated constraints which are positive in some instances and negative in others.

## 5.5 Analysis and Findings

The selected academic sermons demonstrate four categories of context types, namely: the epistemic context, the scriptural context, the institutional context and the recipient management context. In each case, the preachers are faced with certain constraints which affect their delivery positively or negatively. Essentially, these constraints contribute to meaning production and achievement, thus pointing to the success or failure of the sermons. The positive constraints signal the student pastors' positive orientation to training while the negative constraints indicate where more attention is needed in their training. It must be noted that the academic sermons were all delivered in classroom settings where student pastors were allowed to generate contrived settings of their choice. Besides the lecturer in charge of the course, other class members were also in attendance for the purpose of pair-assessment.

Below, each of the categories of context is handled. Relevant samples are selected to exemplify the types of context and the contextual constraints that inform the performance.

## 5.5.1 Epistemic Context and Competence Orientation Constraints

Relating to Auer's participants' common background knowledge (Auer 2009: 92-93), the epistemic context captures a situation where the preachers' knowledge of the principles of biblical hermeneutics and homiletics informs what is included or excluded in the sermon. Biblical hermeneutics is both the art and the science of Bible interpretation and homiletics is the art and science of preaching (Evans 1964: 11; Turnbull 1967: 99-100). The preachers' knowledge of these and the consciousness of the audience's awareness of the same necessarily constrain their delivery, as the student pastors are assessed on the basis of this shared background knowledge. The knowledge of the preachers portrays their competence or lack of the same in delivering the sermons as exemplified in the excerpts below. Please note: all the excerpts are written as transcribed with spelling and grammatical errors.

**Excerpt 1**
In this sermon, the preacher considers the reasons for the exploits done by Jesus' disciples with the aim of challenging the graduating student of a seminary on what they need to do in order to make an impact on their generation.

> Let's get back to the scripture that we have read, that is Mark chapter three verse thirteen, spare me, verse eighteen. The last line in verse eighteen says: and Jesus went up to a mountain and he called to himself those he wanted, my brother, he called to himself, those he wanted, not those that are agitating for it, … that God I want to do it; but out of his own volition…. Those he called are not best in their generation. But those he called are those that Jesus Christ know although they are not the best but they suit the purpose in which he wants to use them for. And at the same time, those he called like Peter, like James and the rest, they all have their weaknesses. But he called them with their weaknesses, because he saw in them potentials, he saw in them vision, he saw in them virtue and so on and so forth and because he know that for me, for you, to actualise your vision, your potentials, and everything in you, you must go to where you actually belong to.

This preacher demonstrates an awareness of the seminary's emphasis on expository sermons which demand that the preacher should

draw insights from a biblical text and apply the same to contemporary situations. The preacher draws from Mark 3:18 to emphasise that a minister who will perform exploits must be one who is indeed called by God. Aligning to this preaching tradition indicates the preacher's positive competence orientation. Again, mentioning disciples like Peter and James as those who were called by Jesus, in spite of their weaknesses, constitute apt and relevant illustrations for this part of the discourse, thus, contributing to positive competence orientation. These instances in the excerpt indicate that the preacher knows his audience well. Although the contrived setting presents the audience as graduating students in a graduation ceremony, the preacher demonstrates the knowledge of who they really are (as his lecturer and students of the Preaching Practicum class who know the rules of the preaching exercise and who are there to assess his compliance with the rules). Thus, this excerpt presents positive competence orientation constraints within an epistemic context.

## Excerpt 2

After reading the Bible, praying and making some preliminary comments, the preacher has just announced the topic of his sermon before what features in Excerpt 2.

> And before we go, we go to [the] nitty-gritty of this place, where we have read, elders permit me, some of us had known, that it's one of the synoptic scriptures we have in the Bible, and Mark chapter 3 that we have just read unto us is divided to five pericopes and the first pericope runs from Mark chapter 2 from 23 to verse 6 where he talks about the law of the Sabbath and the $2^{nd}$ pericope runs from chapter, from verse 7 to verse 12 when he talks about how [the] crowd were eager, how they were desired to hear from Jesus Christ and to believe, unlike the Pharisees. And the one we are going to concentrate on today, another pericope that runs from verse 13 - 19, it talks about how our master Jesus calls the first disciple. And the fourth pericope that's on from 20 to 30 talks about how people are referring to Jesus as a Belzebub, using the authority of the Belzebub to cast out the Belzebub. And the last one, which is the fifth pericope, is who is the brother and sister of Jesus Christ? So, today, we are going to concentrate so much on 13-19 and because of the time that is why I didn't read all the verse from 19, I only read 13 and 14; but others together we are going to dig deep, we are going to extract from those place [sic].

Aligning with the rules of the preaching which demands that a passage should not be treated in isolation but in the light of the larger context, the preacher rightly locates his passage within the larger context by looking at the surrounding pericopes. However, the preacher fails to

establish a link between his text and the surrounding pericopes, thus leaving his audience with fragments of information that have no direct bearing on the larger piece of information. Consequently, the information in this paragraph becomes irrelevant to the subject in the discourse. This non-compliance to the rule indexes negative competence orientation in an epistemic context.

**Excerpt 3**
The contrived setting for this excerpt is a teaching session during the annual Ministers' Conference of the seminary. Before the portion extracted here, the preacher has just read the Bible and announced his topic to be "Memorable Experience for Productive Service".

> Have you ever taken time to consider, the fact that sometimes, you are seeing many people, or many individuals who labour so hard with little or little result, have you ever stopped to wonder or ask that what is the reason or what happened to them? Precisely last year, Aah yes, last year the acting dove of ehn... huuuhh Baptist Theological Seminary Ogbomoso they presented a playlet, and in that playlet, there was a preacher, who was preaching and labouring and... and and he was preaching with all his energy and everything but with little or nothing, no result. And he was tired and he was…he was he was dejected and eehn…in that playlet somebody came and said, and give a cloth to the person as a form of allegiance and said that you are trying, but didn't you see yourself the way you are? In that playlet the man wore the cloth, the suit like this, he was not he was not eeh you know…upside down…there was just you know… Spot on all his cloth which give us eeh gi… gi… ve us example of the fact that the person there are some things in the life of that person that is not correct That is what the playlet Is telling us… so some ways I begin to see that there are so many people that, immediately they hear the call or the Lord is calling them or give them assignment they will not wait and... and let God do a special work in their life before they go out. I am trusting the Lord that by the time we finish this seminar, that the Lord will do a special works in our life (Amen). He will give, he will give us an experience that will, will make our ministry to flourish. Let's go have a quick prayer.

Excerpt 3 presents an epistemic context that features negative competence orientation. The preacher demonstrates feelings of incompetence which are shown in a long presentation of an illustration that can be otherwise presented in a concise manner. Again, the entire sermon is fraught with pauses and fillers that hinder the fluent delivery of the sermon, as shown in this excerpt. It would appear that the preacher is naturally not fluent but for the fact that he read the Bible more fluently than he delivered his sermon. It can therefore be inferred that the preacher's incompetence is

reflected in his self-consciousness which results in the presence of many pauses and fillers in his speech.

### 5.5.2 Scriptural Context and Contextual Constraints

As mentioned earlier, the student pastors are taught to consider their passage in the light of the wider context. This culture promotes giving attention to the scriptural context which is constituted by the relationship of a scriptural text to the other texts within the same chapter or in the wider context. This aligns with Auer's linguistic context which concerns "the intertextual relationship between texts produced on different occasions" (Auer 2009: 7). The preachers of the selected academic sermon rightly locate their passages in their larger intertextual contexts, thus depicting positive competence orientation. Excerpt 2 exemplifies this and it will be repeated here for proximity and clarity of reference.

### Excerpt 2
After reading the Bible, praying and making some preliminary comments, the preacher has just announced the topic of his sermon before what features in the excerpt below.

> And before we go, we go to [the] nitty-gritty of this place, where we have read, elders permit me, some of us had known, that it's one of the synoptic scriptures we have in the Bible, and Mark chapter 3 that we have just read unto us is divided to five pericopes and the first pericope runs from Mark chapter 2 from 23 to verse 6 where he talks about the law of the Sabbath and the 2nd pericope runs from chapter, from verse 7 to verse 12 when he talks about how crowd were eager, how they were desired to hear from Jesus Christ and to believe, unlike the Pharisees. And the one we are going to concentrate on today, another pericope that runs from verse 13 -19, it talks about how our master Jesus calls the first disciple. And the fourth pericope that's on from 20 to 30 talks about how people are referring to Jesus as a Belzebub, using the authority of the Belzebub to cast out the Belzebub. And the last one, which is the five pericope, is who is the brother and sister of Jesus Christ? So, today, we are going to concentrate so much on 13–19 and because of the time that is why I didn't read all the verse from 19, I only read 13 and 14; but others together we are going to dig deep, we are going to extract from those place [sic].

In this excerpt, the preacher rightly locates Mark, the book from which his passage was selected, within the larger context of the synoptic gospels. These are known to contain reports of Jesus' ministry from the perspectives of the different Evangelists after whose names the books are

entitled. This presupposes that one should expect a narrative that has to do with a part of Jesus' ministry on earth. The preacher goes on to identify his passage as the third of five pericopes in Chapter 3 of Mark. While this indicates positive competence orientation, the preacher's failure to make an appropriate link between the surrounding pericopes and the one used for the sermon indicates negative competence orientation as the whole essence of situating the passage within the intertextual context is frustrated by this omission.

### 5.5.3 Institutional Context and Contextual Constraints

Institutional context in the academic sermon relates to Auer's social dimension of context which "includes the constellation of participants, their social roles and the social activity they are engaged in" (Auer 2009: 7). As such, the institutional context of the academic sermons concerns the identity of the student pastors and the roles they are playing within the contrived context of their sermon. This context type also caters for factors relating to the religious context and denominational ideology. The academic sermons feature norm alignment on the positive axis, and perspectival constraints and voice clash on the negative axis. Examples of these occurrences are presented in the following excerpts.

**Excerpt 4**
The participants in this excerpt include the student pastor and his congregation which is made up of Year 3 students and the Preaching Practicum lecturer. However, in this contrived context, the student pastor assumes the role of a professional pastor who has been invited to preach to graduating seminary students. Consequently, the addressed recipients of the sermon assume the role of graduating students and their well-wishers.

> And for those of us that we are hoping to graduate come 2016, I pray, that,
> 2 pm bell will not ring for them in Jesus' name. You are not going to
> graduate before your time (laughter in the background).

The reference to the "2 pm bell" in this excerpt constitutes positive norm alignment. It is apt because the members of the audience are familiar with the "2 pm bell" as a call to an emergency assembly (hence, the background laughter). In the seminary culture, such emergency assemblies are called to announce unfortunate incidents such as bereavement, suspension or dismissal. Therefore, this prayer is understood by the recipients of the message to mean that they will be neither suspended nor expelled.

In this same excerpt, there is an example of negative perspectival constraint. The use of "us" in the first sentence portrays a case of confused roles. Rather than use an exclusive pronoun, the preacher uses the inclusive "us" thereby speaking from the perspective of a student rather than that of an invited minister. The immediate shift to the exclusive "them" in the second part of the sentence attests to this case of confused roles. In the excerpt below, in addition to the inclusive "we" the preacher mistakenly refers to their Year Two, thus reinforcing the case for negative perspectival constraint. The appearance of "remember in our Year Two" as a fragment in the discourse presupposes a sudden consciousness of the wrong choice of perspective against the backdrop of the social role suggested by the contrived context.

### Excerpt 5
This excerpt has the same background as Excerpt 4.

> Let me tell you brother and sister of the most high God, as **we** are going, a preacher without a character has no ministry. **Remember in our Year Two.** If you say you have a minister and there is no character, there is no ministry.

### Excerpt 6
This excerpt has the same background as Excerpt 4.

> I know that many of us have used three years in this place, or four years, and today is, of course, your graduation, it's not easy passing through the seminary and to come out in flying colours. I pray all your grade will not disappear into thin air in Jesus name [sic] (Audience: Amen).

This exemplifies a negative voice clash constraint within the institutional context. One possible reading of this prayer is that students' grades may get lost in the institution as a result of the negligence of some officers. Another possible interpretation is that some unseen forces may cause the grades to disappear into thin air. Neither of the two possible readings portray the institution in a good light. The first will imply loss of confidence in the institution while the second will signal syncretic thought from the preacher. Given the role of the preacher in this contrived setting (as an invited minister), it is presupposed that such an invitation will go out to people who have the best interests of the institution at heart. It will therefore be counter-productive to accuse the institution of being incompetent.

The second reading into the prayer indicates a clash of voice between African Traditional Religion's (ATR) belief (in unseen forces that may sponsor the disappearance of grades) and Baptist ideology. This may not be a misnomer in the context of the African Indigenous Church where such beliefs are promoted given the ATR background. However, the Baptist heritage, traced to her Western roots, does not promote such syncretic beliefs; hence, it presents a case of voice clash constraint in the speaker who is an African trained in the Baptist culture (with her obvious Western heritage).

### *5.5.4 Recipient Management Context and Contextual Constraints*

Recipient management context is the type that concerns how the preachers draw resources from the participants' common background knowledge and the physical context in constructing meaning. The academic sermons for this study feature contextual constraints such as role orientation, rapport management and displacement on the positive axis, and role orientation, face management and rapport management on the negative axis. Excerpts 7 and 8 demonstrate these features starting from the negative constraints that characterise this context type and then moving on to the positive constraints.

**Excerpt 7**
The preacher in this excerpt is contrived to be a guest minister invited to preach to graduating students. By the virtue of that assignment, he assumes a position of power over his audience and he is expected to operate at that power level; however, the content of this excerpt proves otherwise.

> And before we go, we go to [the] nitty-gritty of this place, where we have read, **elders permit me**, some of us had known, that it's one of the synoptic scriptures we have in the Bible, and Mark chapter 3 that we have just read unto us is divided to five pericope…[sic]. And as you know, **as little as I am**, I'm going to tell you that I know people in ministry, I have heard, I have read about many people in our generation that they do a greater thing….

"Elders permit me" is a formulaic expression usually employed by younger ones who want to quote proverbs in the presence of elders. It is a means of acknowledging their unworthiness and seeking the elders' approval and permission. The choice of this expression signals negative role orientation as the preacher in this context is supposed to assume a higher power rank

compared with his audience. The negative role orientation is further projected by the preacher when he later says, "as little as I am". These choices reveal the preacher's hidden feeling of incapability to address the given audience.

## Excerpt 8

The preacher here has just made some preliminary comments to establish his contrived context and the content of this excerpt is meant to introduce his sermon.

> Now today, we are going to be looking together, having known that the all of us are minsters in this generation, and two years ago, I was opportune to be in this place when the Lord use one of our pastors, in person of Pastor B. I., to exhort those who are graduating then that if they want to make head in ministry, they must write down their vision, **and what we are going to do the same, today, is in the same way, but we want to do it in another way but with the same focus** and what the Lord will be laying on our heart as we are going out to go and start our ministry afresh is what we are going to be considering together [sic].

The foregrounded portion of the excerpt projects a negative face management constraint. The preacher has earlier referred to another preacher (who in reality is a class member who was present during this preacher's presentation). He then presents his sermon as being the same as what his colleague had earlier presented. Within the same breath, he affirms that he is going to "do it in another way", an explanation that is not necessary but for the purpose of saving his face so that he does not appear to be playing second fiddle to the colleague who had presented earlier and to whom he refers.

## Excerpt 9

The preacher has just asserted that Jesus called his disciples so he can make them better persons. He then affirms that the reason for their call is the reason for their exploit. It is against this background that the content of this excerpt was uttered.

> Because the purpose of a thing is going to determine how you are going to treat it, because Yoruba will say, apology to non-Yoruba speaker, won ni *oogun taa ba fowo se, eyin aaro lo ma ngbe.* Because they know their reason, they can do exploit.

Here, the speaker starts on a positive note of rapport management when he tenders an apology to those who do not understand Yoruba. However, he

did not sustain the rapport as he failed to interpret the same proverb for which he had apologised to them. Hence, the whole process culminates in negative rapport management as the same group of participants to whom the apology was rendered was eventually edged out of the discourse by the speaker's failure to interpret the proverb used.

## Excerpt 10

The preacher in this sermon has just read the Bible and established his context as a revival service. In the process of introducing his subject, he engages in a song with which he establishes a positive rapport management constraint.

> I will [sic] like to sing this song, but before I will sing it, but before I will sing it, ah, because the song is in Yoruba, let me make it English for those that are not hear [sic] Yoruba. The song says:
>> This is not the end
>> Your fall is not the end
>> You can still rise
>> Do not allow evil,
>> Do not allow Satan
>> Do not allow anybody to rejoice over your life
>
> The song says:
>
>> *Eyi ki i se opin*
>> *Eyi kii se opin o*
>> *Isubu ti o subu yen, kii sopin re*
>> *O si le dide o*
>> *Ma faye fun satani ko gb'ogo lori re*

Unlike the preacher in Excerpt 9 above, the preacher here manages his recipients better when he attempts a translation of the song he renders in Yoruba.

## Excerpt 11

The preacher's focus is on the disciples' reason for their exploits. Beyond his reference to the disciples, he has also referred to the people he has heard and read about who did exploits in their time.

> I have read about many people in our generation that they do a greater thing, an excellent thing, in their generation and the generations to come. Though **those** people have died, we are still reading about them. They sleep, and the question remains: what is the source of their life?

The deictic expression highlighted here indicates a distance between the speech participants and the referent. Thus, the preacher appropriately engages displacement as a positive constraint to refer to people who are not visually present.

# 5.6 Conclusion

This study seeks to identify the context types in the academic sermons in order to establish the performance constraints of the student preacher. The study reveals four context types from the academic sermons; these include epistemic, scriptural, institutional and recipient management contexts. It also presents the contextual constraints that ensue from the relationship between the academic preacher, his audience and the delivery process. The epistemic context features positive and negative competence orientation constraints, implying that though the student preachers comply with the tenets of their training, there are still aspects where more improvement is needed. Expectedly, the scriptural context features positive competence constraints in consonance with the demands of the preaching exercise. However, there is a trace of negative competence constraints in the instance where the preacher fails to apply the essence of locating the text within the larger context. Positive norm alignment constraints, negative perspectival constraints and negative voice clash constraints manifested in the institutional context imply an immediate need for intensified training in role definition and role management. The recipient management context features constraints such as positive displacement, positive rapport management, negative role orientation, negative face management and negative rapport management.

In conclusion, it has been discovered that academic sermons, with their contrived context, feature contextual constraints that are associated with different types of context. These constraints contribute positively and negatively to the success of the delivery of the sermons. Therefore, to achieve a higher quality of theological education which translates to more efficient ministry, in addition to the course in preaching, the seminaries should intensify efforts on the promotion of communication courses where student pastors can be better trained to define and manage their roles in different instances. A clear definition and management of roles, as well as appropriate audience analysis, will reduce, to the barest minimum, the challenges of the negative constraints that feature in the academic sermons.

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CHAPTER 6

NAMES AND CONTEXTS
IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

MONICA JEGEDE

## Abstract

*This paper examines the names used by Jesus Christ and their contextual manifestations in the synoptic gospels of the King James Version of the Bible. The study adopted aspects of onomastic and pragmatic act theories, respectively accounting for name types and discourse intentions. All human proper names used in Jesus' direct speeches in Matthew, Mark and Luke were purposively selected. The paper identified twenty-seven personal names used by Jesus in the synoptic gospels. Jesus used six discourse-historical and seven context-based categories of names with direct and referential usage forms: names pointing to bad social and emotional experiences (political leaders, followers, forerunners and occasion-tied referents); greatness (religious leaders and forerunners); favour (occasion-tied referents, forerunners and fictional entities); divine superiority (occasion-tied referents); submissiveness (occasion-tied referents and followers); and biological ability (followers and religious leaders). The names occurred in the contexts of spiritual orientation, marked by imperative, assertive, reiterative, endocentric and metaphoric co-texts, and moral limitations, marked by interrogative and imperative co-texts. These demonstrate five onomastic contexts, largely opposed to the contexts of the larger texts: authority, loyalty, confrontation, judgement and martyrdom.*

Keywords: *Onomastic context; Jesus' discourses; synoptic gospels; pragmatic acts*

## 6.1 Introduction

Names, constituting onomastic resources, play significant roles in the accounts of the synoptic gospels (SGs) as they do in everyday life. However, beyond their values in normal life, names carry several other dimensions in the Synoptics. For example, in addition to the peculiarity of first names, often without the surname (except when there is the intention to emphasise fuller identity details), the names, especially when used by Jesus, sometimes bear context-influenced impressions. The result is often an implied meaning hidden from a reader not trained in pragmatic interpretations. While previous studies on SGs, limited to larger texts (whole passages), have explored their Marxist-historical and discourse-grammatical features (for example, Ogunleye and Olagunju 2007; Marshall 2009; Crowell 2009), very few have examined the exclusively context-dependent meanings of the names used by Jesus in his speeches.

This paper is interested in the implications framed by the contexts, social and linguistic settings in which the names occur. Thus, this paper expounds the actual names used and the circumstances that warrant their uses, but not their pragmatic functions, purposefully dropped due to space and focus. The contexts are deeply exploited so as to establish the historical, cultural and social backgrounds that account for the use of the names. Subsequently, it is necessary to review aspects of the theories of context and co-texts. In the sections that follow, this review is carried out together with a discussion of some aspects of Systemic Functional Grammar which constitute parts of the theoretical premise for the co-text. The methodology for the study is also provided, followed by the analysis and the conclusion.

## 6.2 Theoretical Perspectives

In this section, consideration is given to the theories and concepts mentioned above. Relevant insights from these constitute the tools for the analysis of data. I look at items one after the other.

### 6.2.1 Systemic Functional Grammar, Context and Co-text

Influenced by British anthropology and linguistics (Malinowski and Firth, respectively), Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and social semiotics show how the structures of discourse are to be defined in terms of the main dimensions of the context of the situation, which they call field (ongoing activity, subject matter), tenor (participant relations) and mood (the role

discourse plays in the ongoing activity). For details, see Halliday (1978) and Leckie-Tarry (1995). The locus of this study is not so much the theory of context itself, but rather the linguistic study of the assumed influences of context on register, that is, the textual counterparts of field, tenor and mode. The SFL concept of context is reviewed below.

SFL is championed by M. A. K. Halliday in his works (for instance, Halliday 1961, 1973, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1985/94) in Australia, on English as well as other languages; and with other scholars (for instance, Halliday and Hassan 1976, 1985; Matthiessen and Halliday 1997). SFL is based on a model of language as a social semiotic. It is a functional theory of language in the sense that it is concerned with the ways language functions to make meaning in various cultural, social and professional contexts. Central to the theory is its explanation, through the notion of register, of the interrelationship linking context and patterns of language choice in the construction of meaning. Register theory "argues that specific variables, within any context in which language is used, constrain and predict patterns of grammatical choices, and hence constrain and predict possible meanings" (Hammond 1995: 14).

Another important feature of the theory in our study is its description of discourse and grammatical recourses at the levels of texts as well as the levels of clause and group. These descriptions of the "systems" and functional categories of grammar provide a possibility for detailed analyses of spoken and written language at all levels. Having explained why SFL was adopted for the analysis of grammatical patterns of biblical texts undertaken in this study, it is important to explicate the principal components of the theory, especially those on which this study is based.

### *6.2.2 Context*

Firth was one of the founders of British Functionalism and was greatly influenced by Malinowski. He accepted Malinowski's context of situation and extended it to linguistics. According to Firth (1957) the "… context of situation is best viewed as a suitable schematic construct to apply to language events… it is a group of related categories at a different level from grammatical categories but rather of the same abstract nature" (182). Here, Firth claims that context of situation is central to the realisation of meaning. Halliday (1978: 109) quotes Firth: "the context of situation is not to be interpreted in concrete terms as a sort of audiovisual record of the surrounding 'props' but was, rather, an abstract representation of the environment in terms of certain general categories having relevance to a text" (109).

Building on Firth's context of situation, Halliday (1991: 12) again describes this in terms of three main features: field of discourse, tenor of discourse and mode of discourse. According to Halliday and Hassan (1980: 12) the field of discourse refers to what is happening, to the nature of the social action taking place. The tenor of discourse refers to who is taking part, the nature of the participants, and their statuses and roles. The mode of discourse, on the other hand, refers to the medium or the role the language is playing. Therefore, the context of situation is the immediate physical, temporal, spatial and social environment in which verbal exchanges take place.

### 6.2.3 Co-text

Literarily, co-text means the togetherness factors that determine the meaning of a word, i.e., the linguistic environment where a word is used within a text. Technically, co-text means the structural and lexical environment of a word. The co-text of a word means the words that come before or after a word or a sentence that help us to understand its meaning (Cuttings 2002). Auer (1995: 16) refers to co-text as the linguistic context. He states that "…what represents a co-text for a given linguistic sign may be located on a superordinate level of linguistic structure". As well, intertextuality is a component of co-text. Again, Auer (1995: 17) stresses that "it is well known that texts often (or, in some theories, always) respond to prior texts, and, at the same time, anticipate subsequent ones".

In the exploration of the context of situation, one cannot but make reference to the co-text, whose obvious manifestation is collocations. Firth (1957) opines that "you shall know a word by the company it keeps… collocations exhibited mutual expectancies" (195). This gives the idea of collocation which is the habitual re-occurrence of words in specific contexts or syntagmatic relationships. Halliday (1966: 9) corroborates that by the distribution of words in a text, as some words occur more predictably together than others. A lexical item is identified in most cases by its collocations, that is, a lexical item is unique and different from all other lexical items because of the uniqueness of the list of lexical items with which it can be collocated (Berry 1977). Garstang (2013) carried out a study on the learning approach to collocation and colligation. He stresses that a unit of collocation can be calculated by a node word that co-exists with a span of words on either side. He further states that individual words that occur within collocations can vary along both the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes.

### *6.2.4 Endocentric and Exocentric Structures*

In theoretical linguistics, a distinction has been made between endocentric and exocentric constructions. An endocentric structure is one whose distribution is functionally equivalent to that of one or more of its constituents, which could be a word or a group of words that serves as the head (Bloomfield 1935). It refers to a group of syntactically related words where none of the words are functionally equivalent to the group as a whole. Lyons (1977: 391) stresses that "endocentricity is a concept associated with phrase structure. A phrase is said to be endocentric if it is syntactically equivalent to one of its immediate constituents. Endocentric constructions, under the strictest interpretation of distributional equivalence, are necessarily recursive. For example, noun phrases containing an embedded relative clause are 'endocentric'". In an endocentric structure, the head constituent is comparable to the whole structure. For example, in the phrase: "Biola and Simeon", each primary constituent is a noun which functions like the combined constituent. Therefore, an endocentric structure is a compound word or phrase where one of the words links the other words syntactically. In this sense, the linking word is the head or primary constituent; other words are optional, and removing them will not affect the basic meaning of the structure.

Exocentric structure, on the other hand, is one in which the primary constituent or constituents do not function like the complete construction (Laurie 2008). For example, "on the bus" is exocentric because the constituent "the bus" functions differently from a prepositional phrase. Usually, sentences are exocentric because their constituents function differently from the whole. For instance, in "Biola killed a snake", none of the constituents are comparable to the entire sentence. Basically, the distinction between endocentric and exocentric structures is, in most cases, the difference between phrases and clauses (http://linguistics.bjfu.edu.cn).

## 6.3 Methodology

The stratified and purposive sampling techniques were adopted. First, the stratified technique was used to divide the books of the New Testament dealing with the life, activities and ideology of Jesus into gospels, acts, epistles and revelation. Then, the purposive sampling technique was used to select the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke which accounted for the ministry of Jesus in many related ways. The actual texts selected for analysis are all the names used by Jesus, together with their

co-texts. All twenty-seven human names in the SGs were collected together with all their co-texts, numbering 198. We have drawn upon aspects of onomastics, Systemic Functional Grammar, and co-text and context.

## 6.4 Analysis and Findings

Four stages of analysis are observed: the groups of names, categories of names, context types and co-texts. These are handled in turn.

### *6.4.1 Groups of Names*

Six groups of names are found in the Synoptics, namely, names found across the Synoptics, names found in Matthew, names found in Mark, names found only in Luke, names appearing only in both Matthew and Mark, and names appearing in Matthew and Luke. These are presented below.

**Names found across the Synoptics**
Nine names cut across all the Synoptics. These are provided in the table below.

**Table 1: Names in all the Synoptic Gospels**

| S/N | NAMES | MATTHEW | MARK | LUKE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | John the Baptist | 11:4, 11, 12, 13, 18; 21: 25; | 11: 30; | 7: 33; 20: 4 |
| 2. | David | 12:3; 22: 43,45 | 2: 25; 12: 35,36 | 6:3; 20:42; |
| 3. | Caesar | 22:21; | 12:17 | 20:25 |
| 4. | Moses | 23:2; 8:4; 19:8 | 10:3 | 20:37 |
| 5. | Abraham | 8:11 | 12:25-27 | 13:28; 16:29 |
| 6. | Isaac | 8:11 | 12:25-27 | 13:28 |
| 7. | Jacob | 8:11 | 12:25-27 | 13:28 |
| 8. | Elias | 17:11-12 | 9:11-12 | 4:25-26 |
| 9. | Simon Peter | 17:25 | 14:37 | 22;31 |

Table 1 shows that only nine names are recorded in all the Synoptics: John the Baptist, David, Caesar, Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Elias and Simon Peter. John the Baptist occurs more predominantly than

the others. Caesar had the least number of occurrences. The predominance of John the Baptist was most probably because Jesus placed a lot of emphasis on the question of his predecessor(s) in order to establish his ministry, owing to the resistance he was experiencing from the Jewish society, who refused to accept him as the Messiah. Caesar's name only came up regarding the issue of tax payments. This is in agreement with the fact that Caesar represented the secular Roman government of the era that opposed the Jewish theocracy. Again, the name came up as a pragmatic response of Jesus to the hypocritical attempt of the Pharisees to set Jesus up against the Roman government to which Jesus had extremely little contact.

The occurrences of the names are similar in some respects and different in others. For example, John the Baptist occurred when Jesus was asked to confirm his messianic status by the latter's disciples in Matthew (11:4), when Jesus defined the status of John the Baptist (11: 11,12,13, 18, also Lk 7:33), and also when Jesus was challenged by the Pharisees (Mt 21:25, Mk 11:30, Lk 20:4). David was mentioned on a Sabbath day (Mt 12:3, Mk 2: 25; Lk 6:3), and in a discourse centring on the "sonship" and lordship of Jesus and David (Mt 22: 43, 45; Mk 12: 35, 36; Lk 20:42). Caesar occurred when Jesus supported tax payment (Mt 22: 21; Mk 12: 17 and Lk 20:25). Moses came up in discourses on resurrection and divorce as well as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Simon Peter occurred when Jesus ordered payment to the Roman government (Mt 17:25), when Jesus admonished vigil ability (Mk 14:37), and when Jesus cautioned about spiritual fall (Lk 22: 31). Elias was used in reference to the coming of the Messiah (Mt 17:11-12; Mk 9: 11-12), and when Jesus discussed blessings (Lk 4: 25-26).

**Names Found Only in Matthew**

Only one name occurred exclusively in Matthew, namely, Barachias. The table below provides the details on the name:

Table 2 displays one name, i.e., Barachias. It occurred in Mt 23:35 in connection with a reference to the OT event.

**Table 2: Name only found in Matthew**

| S/N | NAMES | TEXTS |
|-----|-----------|-------|
| 1. | Barachias | 23:35 |

## Names Found Only in Mark

Only one name is found to be peculiar to Mark: Abiathar. The table below provides the details.

**Table 3: Name in Mark**

| S/N | NAME | TEXTS |
|-----|------|-------|
| 1. | Abiathar | Mk 2:26 |

This table shows only one name which is Abiathar. It was mentioned in Mk 2: 26 with reference to the Sabbath day discourse.

## Names Found Only in Luke

Nine names are found to be used exclusively in Luke. These are presented in the table below.

**Table 4: Names in Luke**

| S/N | NAME | TEXTS |
|-----|------|-------|
| 1. | Simon (the Pharisee) | 7: 40 |
| 2. | Judas | 22: 48 |
| 3 | Martha | 10: 41 |
| 4. | Mary | 10:42 |
| 5. | Lazarus | 16:24 |
| 6. | Zacchaeus | 19:5 |
| 7. | Naaman | 4: 27 |
| 8. | Lot | 17:28-29 |
| 9. | Elisha | 4:27 |

Table 4 reveals that eight names are mentioned in the book of Luke, in different discourses. The names are Simon (Pharisee), Judas, Martha, Mary, Lazarus, Zacchaeus, Naaman, Lot and Elisha. The name of Simon the Pharisee (Lk7:14) was mentioned when he was not happy with a woman who was regarded as a sinner but was generous to Jesus. Jesus interrogated Judas (Lk22:48) when he appeared with a multitude of people to arrest his former master. It was an event that led to the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. The names Mary and Martha, cited in Lk 10:42 and Lk 10:41, were respectively mentioned in their home when they hosted Jesus at dinner. Martha was busy with cookery preparations as Mary was listening to Jesus while he taught. Lazarus (Lk 16:24) was mentioned in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. When both of them died, the rich

man went to hell, while Lazarus went to heaven, Abraham's bosom. Zacchaeus was mentioned in Lk 19:5 when Jesus asked him to come down from the sycamore tree which he climbed in order to see Jesus. Naaman and Elisha were cited in Lk 4:27 when Jesus wanted to illustrate a teaching on faith during his early ministry. The name of Lot came up in Lk 17:28-29 when Jesus wanted to exemplify a teaching on the end of time signs.

**Names Found Only in Matthew and Mark**
Only two names, as shown below, appear exclusively in both Matthew and Mark.

**Table 5: Names only found in Matthew and Mark**

| S/N | Names | Matthew | Mark |
|-----|-------|---------|------|
| 1. | Esaias | 13:14, 15:7 | 7:6 |
| 2. | Daniel | 24:15, | 13:14 |

Table 5 shows that two names are shared between Matthew and Mark namely, Esaias and Daniel. Esaias (Matt 13:14, 15:7 and Mk 7:6) was used on the occasion of the Jewish religious leaders' unbelief, during Jesus' teaching. In point of fact, Jesus referred to Esaias to point out an antecedent of the stubbornness and unyielding attitude of the Jews, as earlier prophesied by Esaias. The citation of this prophecy evidently indicated that their unbelief was not a surprise to Jesus. Daniel was mentioned (Matt 24:15, Mk 13:14) in Jesus' eschatological discourse. In Mark 13:14, Jesus mentioned the prophecy of Daniel. According to Daniel, the end of time would be marked by the deconsecrating of the temple, as experienced in the era of Maccabean revolt between 167 and 160 B.C. (*The Free Encyclopaedia* https://.m.wikipedia).

**Names Found Only in Matthew and Luke**
Five names occur in both Matthew and Luke as indicated in the table below:

**Table 6: Names only in Matthew and Luke**

| S/N | Names | Matthew | Luke |
|-----|-------|---------|------|
| 1. | Solomon | 6:29 | 11:31 |
| 2. | Zacharias | 23:25 | 11:51 |
| 3. | Abel | 23:35 | 11:51 |
| 4. | Jonas | 12:39-41 | 11:30 |
| 5. | Noah | 24:37 | 17;26-27 |

Table 6 indicates that five names are shared between Matthew and Luke. The names are Solomon, Zacharias, Abel, Jonas and Noah. In Mtt 6:9, Solomon was mentioned when Jesus was teaching about anxiety. He was also mentioned in Lk 11: 31 when Jesus was expressing his superiority to King Solomon. Zacharias and Abel (Mtt 23:35, Lk 11:51) were mentioned during a discourse on persecution and hypocrisy. Jonas occurred in Mtt 12:39-41 and Lk 11:30 when Jesus was teaching about the needlessness of messianic proofs. Jesus used the name Noah in Mtt 24:37 and Lk 17:26-27 in connection with the signs of the end of time.

## *6.4.2 Discourse-historical Categories of Names*

Six discourse-historical categories of names are identified in SGs. They are names pointing to bad social and emotional experiences, with a common denominator of unpleasantness; names pointing to greatness, with a common denominator of abundance; names pointing to favour, with a common denominator of divine help/intervention; names pointing to divine superiority, with a common denominator of supremacy; names pointing to submissiveness, with a common denominator of managedness; and names pointing to biological ability, with a common denominator of auditory sense.

**Names Pointing to Bad Social and Emotional Experiences**
Names pointing to bad social and emotional experiences expound the names that the Jewish culture interprets as reflecting unfavourable events at societal and psychological levels, especially at birth. Five names fall in this category, namely, Abel, Caesar, Mary, Jacob and Lot. The denominator spreading through all these names is unpleasantness.

Abel means "vanity, breath or vapour" (Holman 4), or "Meadow, vanity or vapour" (Lockyer 22). Following the kind of experience he had, especially the death he suffered from his brother, Cain, his name could be said to be motivated as it is reflective of his life experiences. The name, Caesar, means "one cut out" (Lockyer 80). This naturally indicates unpleasant experiences, but his life experience as a successful political leader during the time of Jesus shows an unmotivated relationship between his name and his life experiences. Mary means "bitterness" (Lockyer 92). This is Mary, the sister of Martha, both close friends of Jesus. There is an unmotivated relationship between her name and the good life she lived, including the wisdom of choice and having a sister who assisted when she was not willing to labour. Jacob means "he grabs the heel, or cheats, supplants" (Holman 861), or "he that supplanted or followeth after"

(Lockyer 166). Naturally, Jacob is not supposed to live a fulfilled life as a result of his name and character but he was favourably chosen, deified and was very prosperous in business transactions in spite of some harsh experiences. Each time he was in a strange land, he had a positive upper hand over the indigenes. He had the benefit of a non-motivated name. Lot means "concealed". Lot's name is unmotivated compared to his experiences. There was nothing about him that was concealed, not even tough situations. When his servants and those of his uncle Abraham had a quarrel, it was a vehement and open one. Abraham expelled him by giving him a right of choice of location. Once, he entertained angels and boldly rescued them from gay persons of Sodom. When faced with loneliness after the death of his wife, he committed incest with his daughters, and this was revealed contra to the etymology of his name. Lot was even too drunk to have known what his daughters did but the paternity of the daughters' children had to be declared.

## Names Pointing to Greatness
There is a motivated relationship between the two names of greatness and the life experiences of the bearers. The meaning of Abiathar is "father of superfluity or excellent father" (Luckier 23), or "father of abundance" (Holman 5). Abraham means "the father of a multitude" (Holman 10). Abiathar had the privilege of being born to a priestly lineage. He became a priest during the reign of King David. The priestly office is an exalted one. Jesus recalled his priesthood to illustrate what the Sabbath was. As a priest of the people, he was also one of the symbols of the fathers of the nations. Abraham became great when his name was changed from ordinary childless exalted father (Abram) to Abraham (father of the multitude).

## Names Pointing to Favour
Thirteen names altogether point to favour in the Synoptics. Ten of them are motivated and three are non-motivated name types. We have Barachias, meaning Jehovah is blessing or Yahweh blessed (Holman 187). It is a motivated name type. Barachias was the father of a high priest called Zacharias which implied that he was a former priest or a high priest himself. David means favourite or beloved (Holman 391). David was a star. Although he was the youngest of his brothers, he emerged as the chosen one to replace King Saul. He defeated Goliath who could not be fought by the army of Israel for forty days. David escaped all dangers. All his wives were almost freely acquired. The favour he enjoyed outweighed the challenges of family embarrassments. His entire life displayed favour or great grace. Isaac means laughter (Holman 837), he laughed or the

laughing one (Lockyer 155). Isaac was born into wealth when his parents were very old. He was an achiever in his own right. He was the first known man in the Bible to be father to a set of twins. Lazarus, meaning "whom God helps" (Holman 1021), or "God has helped" or "without help" (Lockyer 217) is motivated. Although Lazarus was a fictional name, he was however helped by angels when he died because there was nobody to bury him. The meaning of Elias is "God is Jehovah" (Lockyer 99) or "My God is Yahweh" (Holman 478). The name Elias is a motivated one. Elias lived and functioned when his nation was dissolved in idolatry, the abuse of power and greed introduced by Jezebel, who was the king's wife. As a result, God punished all the people with drought. When Elias prayed, the rain came. We have Elisha, "God is salvation" (Wikipedia.org/wiki/Elisha), or "to whom God is salvation" (Bible, Names 11). Elisha succeeded Elias. His name is a functionally motivated one. Ahab and Jezebel were still very much alive in the days of Elisha. Through Elisha, Israel experienced food surplus, war victory, queer miracles, restoration of honour and deliverances. All these conform to the meaning of the name, Elias. Esaias, meaning "Yahweh saves" (Holman 458) or "God is salvation" (www.thinkbabynames.cc) is motivated. Esaias prophesied the birth of the coming Messiah, his ministry and the restoration of lost glory. Naaman is a motivated name pointing to favour. It means "pleasantness" (Wikipedia.org/wiki/Naaman and Bible, Names 21). Naaman experienced victories in his military career. He was an influential captain. When he became a leper, that sickness ruined his pride. He miraculously got healed through the ministry of Elias and lived proudly again as Naaman. John (the Baptist) means "Jehovah hath been gracious" (Lockyer 195) or "God is gracious" (www.thinkbabynames.cc). John the Baptist is a non-motivated name. He came as a forerunner to his cousin but he lived a spartan life and suffered a violent death by being beheaded on Herod's command. Moses means "drawn forth, taken out of the water" or "a son" (Lockyer 246) or "drawn out of water" (Holman 1151); it is a motivated name. His birth and heroic action confirmed that. Noah, which means "rest" (Holman P.) or "peaceful" (www.thinkbabynames.cc) is a motivated name. He and his extended family found peace and rest in the ark during and after the flood. Zacharias, a name that means "Jehovah remembers" or "Jehovah is renowned" (Lockyer 343), or "Yah remembered" (Holman 1701), functions as a non-motivated name. He was persecuted and murdered at the altar for the offence he did not commit. Judas's name means "praise" (Holman 959), or "Yahweh" or "praise of the Lord" (Lockyer 210) and it is non-motivated. Judas, who betrayed his master with a kiss, marred his name. The name Solomon means "His peace" or

"(God) is peace or his replacement" (Holman 1514). The name is a motivated one.

## Names Pointing to Divine Superiority

Divine superiority connotes God-connected success or supremacy accorded to biblical personalities, especially those mentioned by Jesus in the Synoptics. The only name that appeared in this group is Daniel which means "God is Judge" (Holman 385) or "God is my Judge" (Lockyer 87). It is a motivated name. Daniel was accused out of envy before the king while he was in exile, and consequently, he was thrown into the lions' den. Though he spent the night with lions in the den, strangely the lions did not harm him. The king brought him out of the den, justifying his innocence. This success was apparently in connection with the intervention of God.

## Names Pointing to Submissiveness

Submissiveness, in this context, means surrendering to a higher authority, admittance of a superior position or situation-driven humility. We have four names here, Jonas which means "dove" (Holman 941) or "a dove" (Lockyer 210) and is a motivated one. He yielded to God's instruction after a long resistance to be summoned for divine service in Nineveh. Martha's name is a motivated one. Her name means "lady (of the house) or mistress" (Holman 1085). She was the one who was always in charge of domestic affairs in their home. Martha, obviously the elder sister of Mary, did all the domestic chores when Jesus was invited to their home. This is a clear sign of humility. Zacchaeus means "innocent". His name is non-motivated. He was dubious, corrupt and possessed illegal wealth until Jesus rescued him from the burden of guilt. However, his desperation to get the attention of Jesus while he climbed a tree in spite of his social position shows humility. Likewise, the name Noah, meaning "rest", had a connection with the action of the bearer, for it pointed to submissiveness. Noah was asked to construct an ark against an imminent flood which he submissively did.

## Names Pointing to Biological Ability

Names pointing to biological ability are those that relate to the functioning of some organs of the body. The name, "Simon", refers to Peter and the Pharisee, and it means hearing. It also means "flat-nosed" (Holman 1504) or "hearing with acceptance" (Lockyer 315). The two Simons are non-motivated names in this study. As for Simon the Pharisee, he needed to be taught practically by Jesus to love his neighbours (Luke 7:40). The other

Simon, a disciple, fell into temptation, despite the warning he got and the prayer that was offered for him.

## 6.5. Contexts

There are two types of contexts of names used by Jesus in the Synoptics: they are spiritual orientation and mortal limitation. These contexts were determined by the textual content of the scripture of the synoptic gospels and the socio-cultural elements of the Jewish society, where needed, documented in them. The contextual categories are taken in turn below.

**The Context of Spiritual Orientation**
The context of spiritual orientation refers to the situations where Jesus and/or his disciples display extra-mortal qualities that attract the use or mention of particular names by Jesus. There are three manifestations of this context, namely, spiritual distinction, discipleship and lordship.

**The Context of Spiritual Distinction**
The context of spiritual distinction is associated with particular extraordinary spiritual insights shown by Jesus' disciples which called for the mention of some names, especially "Simon" in pragmatic ways. This, in a way, follows an act-reaction-effect pattern. It is important to the discourse because to a great extent, it brings out the leadership quality required by Jesus to identify the spiritual potential in his followers. Simon's affirmation about the messianic status of Jesus is a prime example of spiritual distinctiveness which Jesus also recognised. Jesus had earlier asked His disciples who people thought He was in Matt. 16:13: "who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" In response to this in verse 14, the disciples gave varied answers which did not please Jesus. Consequently, he pointedly asked his disciples in verse 15: "… but whom do you say that I am?" In verse 16, Simon Peter gave an answer which revealed what is beyond physical, human reasoning.

Peter's answer, "…You are the Christ, the Son of the living God", made Jesus declare him blessed in verse 17: "…Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven". Here, Jesus affirms Simon's spiritual distinctiveness for being spiritually above other disciples by his confession about Him. He further stresses Simon's spiritual distinctiveness in verses 18-19. Here, Jesus called him "Peter" and established him as the rock upon whom His church is to be built; and that He would give him the keys of the Kingdom of heaven.

Though Peter is known as Simon Peter, Jesus calls him Simon Bar-Jonah after making this excellent spiritual affirmation. This is a pointer to his spiritual distinction, another orientation that Jesus wants His disciples to have cognisance of, especially Simon who would eventually be the leader of the other disciples when Jesus left. Jesus needed to call him Simon Bar-Jonah so that he would begin to know the intensity of the responsibility that rested on him.

## The Context of Discipleship

A disciple is a person who believes in and follows the ideas and principles of a leader. Discipleship then means training to believe in one's ideas and principles, with the intention of shaping a person in a particular way. Therefore, the context of discipleship in the Synoptics captures situations where names were mentioned as per the role relationship that existed between Jesus, regarded as the boss (the leader) and his followers (regarded) as disciples. The Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) tenor is relevant in this part of the discourse as it shows how the use of the names reflects the relationships.

Three names are prominent in this context: Simon, Mary and Martha. We shall take them one after the other.

## Simon in the Context of Discipleship

Simon, being one of the disciples of Jesus Christ, had his name mentioned by his master in Luke 32:31. Calling Simon's name twice signifies that Jesus was about to say something very important to or about him. This repetition shows the three continua of tenor: power, contact and affective relation (see Halliday 1978).

When Jesus said, "... Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat", he displayed power by his emphatic mention. This mention also shows the frequency of contact as it displays a high level of intimacy. Finally, the surrounding text complements the power and contact factors by their suggestion of an affective relation—a great level of love which caused Jesus to announce his spiritual insight regarding the danger of the betrayer hanging over the head of Simon.

Jesus had earlier said that one of the disciples would betray Him (Lk, 22:1), making them wonder who that could be. There was also the issue of who would be the greatest in the Kingdom Jesus had been preaching about. Jesus joined the issue by telling them many other things regarding the kingdom of God, and the positions the disciples would occupy there. Then Jesus came up with this unprecedented, frightening

message. Jesus quickly added in verse 32, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren". This further explains the spiritual insight of Jesus and his affective relationship with Simon whom he had earlier described as "Bar-Jonah".

## Martha and Mary in the Context of Discipleship

Jesus paid a visit to the family of Martha and Mary in Bethany. Martha, the elder sister of Mary, thought she knew better about what should be done to host a visitor like Jesus. Hence, she was preparing food. Conversely, Mary stayed at the feet of Jesus to learn from Him. Of course, Jesus desired that people should learn from Him rather than getting involved in other frivolous things. Jesus expressed his view on Martha's invitation to Mary to assist her with cooking: "And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from her" (Luke, 10: 41 and 42). The repetition of the name, as in the case of Simon, evokes frequent contact and an affective relation as it indicates the closeness of the sisters to Jesus as his disciples.

## The Context of Lordship

This context refers to the situations in which Jesus showed his ability as Lord and superior. One of the orientations Jesus gave is His lordship, which means His right to act or behave in a special way to show His lordship over certain terrestrial and celestial issues. In Luke 13:32, Jesus expresses his lordship when He sent the people who came to tell Him that Herod (fox) would kill Him. His response was: "Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected". Jesus said this in order to show Herod that He did not fear him; and that He was Lord. In the subsequent verse, he mentioned what he would do and what would happen to Him. Here, Jesus shows His lordship over Herod by mentioning what He could use His lordship authority to do: "I cast out devils, I do cures…".

These miraculous deeds are proofs of His lordship and show that Herod could not do anything to Him. Likewise, in Matt, 23:35, Jesus communicated his lordship in the way he condemned the Pharisees and the Scribes. He had earlier referred to them as serpents and a generation of vipers that would not escape the damnation of hell because they have always been shedding the blood of the righteous ones. He alluded to the blood of Abel in Genesis 4:8, and to Zechariah, son of Barachias, in 2 Chronicles 24:20-21. The emphasis here is on Zechariah, a prophet of God sent to His people when they transgressed the commandment of God. The

people conspired against him and stoned him to death. Jesus shows His lordship by telling the people the evils that they have done and that they could not escape the repercussions. Then, in Luke 11:51, Jesus emphasises the heavy penalty of the blood of the innocent ones that were shed, like Abel's, which shall be required of the generation.

Jesus assumed his position as Lord, just as anyone who has been conferred the authority to tell his subject what he or they have done wrong and its consequences. That is why he mentioned the names of people like Abel, Barachias and Zechariah (Mtt, 23: 35). Meanwhile, in Luke 13:28, Jesus mentioned a canonical name in the Jewish religion, Abraham, a patriarch whom the Pharisees have always seen as a reference point for good works. Jesus said: "…ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out". This discourse asserts the lordship of Jesus because it expounds what will happen, which they themselves do not know. Also, in Lk, 13: 15-16, Jesus asserted his lordship by his reference to a Jewish progenitor and his empyrean relationship with him.

## The Context of Mortal Limitations

The context of mortal limitations enunciates situations where Jesus displays understanding with the human nature (flesh) he encountered in his associates. It also covers occasions when he displayed some mortal behaviours. These contexts include those of betrayal, grace, legality, materialism and contest. We examine them in turn below.

## The Context of Betrayal

Betrayal means an act of disloyalty to one's master, or the act of doing something harmful, for example, offering help to a common enemy. For example, Judas was mentioned in connection with betrayal. Before the actual act, Jesus had previously said that one of the twelve would betray him (Mk 14:18). Here, he did not mention his name. The actual betrayal context occurred in Lk 22:48. Jesus said: "…Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" In this example, Jesus brought in tenor. Power is shown by their common understanding of "Son of Man" as a superior force now brought under the influence of Judas. The mention of Judas showed frequent contact, which, by implication, goes back to the prediction Jesus made earlier of the betrayal by one of his disciples. Finally, mentioning the name, Judas, in the context makes the affective relation low.

## The Context of Grace

Grace, in this context, means approval or kindness that is freely given by God to humans, a pointer to human limitations. In Luke 19:5, Jesus showed this unmerited kindness unto Zacchaeus to make up for his limitations. His first limitation was that he was a sinner, while his second one was that he was short in stature, and as such, it was not possible for him to even catch a glimpse of Jesus in the midst of the crowd. As a result, he had to climb a sycamore tree just to see Jesus when passing. In Luke 19:5, Jesus extended to Zacchaeus the grace to see him: "...when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down. For today I must abide in thine house". This showed a demonstration of Jesus' spiritual insight to locate Zacchaeus, and the expression of understanding to accommodate his handicap.

## The Context of Legality

Legality is the fact that something is allowed by the law. Laws are made to check human limitations/excesses. There are human-made laws and divinely given laws, sacred laws, civil laws, etc. All laws are made to check mortal limitations. Legality is enshrined regarding divorce when the Pharisees came to Jesus to ask Him whether it was lawful for a man to put away his wife. They came with the intention to tempt Him. Jesus knew they believed very much in Moses and his laws and asked them, "what did Moses command you?" This brings Moses into the picture and situates the discourse in legality.

In Mk, 10 verse 3, the Pharisees claimed that Moses permitted them to write a divorce bill and put their wives away. Jesus' response was that Moses permitted them for the hardness of their heart, as it was not so at the beginning, because God made them male and female. This was a reaction to the situation in the context of legality. Given that order, it meant that Moses gave a law, and Jesus, referring to Moses, operated strictly within the provision of the law as any mortal arbitrator would.

## The Context of Materialism

Materialism is connected to the belief that having possessions is the most important thing in life without a special belief in the spiritual world. In Lk, 16 verse 20, Jesus gave a parable about a rich man and Lazarus, a poor man. The rich man believed so much in his wealth and suffered in hell after death, but Lazarus was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. Lazarus' name was mentioned in the context of materialism to explain the

effect of the material search and the lack of help for the needy, the major issue that led the rich man to damnation.

**The Context of Contest**

The context here relates to the act of getting engaged in argument or controversy with other parties over supremacy. In Matt. 11, while still in prison, John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus whether he was the Messiah they had been expecting or whether they should expect another person. One would have expected John the Baptist, as a man of high spiritual calibre, and a forerunner of Jesus, to know who Jesus was without asking Him. His action of sending his disciples to Jesus suggests some level of doubt. The answer given by Jesus, "go and show John again these things which you have heard and seen", in a way remotely points to a degree of competition.

In Mark, 11:30, there was another contest between the Pharisees and Jesus Christ after He had performed several miracles. They challenged Him with respect to whose authority is he performing the miracle. Jesus then asked them, "on whose authority was John baptising, was it from heaven or from men?" This interrogation pointedly challenges the Pharisees, and appears as a contest, especially with the mention of the name of John the Baptist.

# 6.6 Co-texts

SFG helps to provide theoretical explanations for co-occurrences of the names with the concept of the co-text, especially with respect to how they occur together with other texts which determine their peculiar meanings. Thus, the items bounding the names are considered to determine the co-textual manifestations and meanings of the onomastic resources.

There is a variety of co-textual forms in the synoptic texts, which characterise the overall contextual configurations of Jesus' discourses. These, as will be shown shortly, are associated with two main types of context earlier discussed, namely, spiritual orientation and mortal limitations.

**Co-texts Connected with Spiritual Orientation**

Five co-textual forms are associated with the context of spiritual orientation, namely, assertive, imperative, reiterative, endocentric and metaphoric. It may be necessary to indicate how you came about your co-textual forms since they are not common knowledge nor there in the literature.

## Assertive Co-text

The assertive co-text captures the text-environment that is framed in the form of a statement. These texts are in connection with discourses relating to Simon (Bar-Jonah) (Mtt, 16:17), Mary (Lk, 10: 42), Zacharias (Mtt, 23:35), Elias (Mtt, 17: 11-12), Abraham (Lk,13:28), Isaac (Lk, 13:28), Jacob (Lk, 13:28), Daniel (Mtt, 24:15), Abiathar (Mk, 2:26) and Jonas (Lk, 11:30).

Two assertive forms are manifest in the Synoptics, namely, direct and indirect. Below, each of these is developed, with an instance each from the relevant scriptural texts.

## Direct Assertive Forms

The direct assertive form is the form in which the name in focus is mentioned after an introductory or a concluding direct statement by Jesus. An example is provided below:

### Ex. 1

And, Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed art thou *Simon Bar-Jona*: For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father in heaven
(Mtt, 16:17).

Two direct assertive forms occur (one each) before and after the mention of Simon Bar-Jonah. The first one is the pre-quotation indirect structure, "And, Jesus answered and said unto him", and the second is the pre-onomastic quotation form, "Blessed art thou..." which serve as pre-assertive co-textual forms at the introductory stage. The adverbial clause of purpose, "For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father in heaven" provides the concluding direct assertive co-textual form.

## Indirect Assertive Forms

The indirect assertive form means there is a focus on the name that is situated within a strictly reportorial structure. In this framework, third-person pronouns and other indirect referential forms are prominent. An example is cited below:

### Ex. 2

And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful; and *Mary* hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from her (Lk, 10:41-42).

In the text above, the indirect form, "But one thing is needful, and..." is an intra-quotation co-textual form. The noun phrase, "one thing"

is an indirect referential form as it makes an exophoric reference, which only becomes localised in a somewhat cataphoric sense as it becomes clear when the onomastic text is introduced. The concluding verb phrase, "... has chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her", contains the seeming exophoric indirect nominal structure, "that good part" and the third-person pronoun, "her", all of which constitute the indirect assertive forms in the quote.

## Imperative Co-text

The imperative co-text is the command-form discourse structure environment in which the onomastic item occurs. Only one name, Abraham, is connected with this co-textual form. Prominence in this context goes in the direction of an intra-reportorial command. The textual example is quoted below:

> **Ex. 3**
> Abraham said unto him, they have Moses and the prophets; *Let them hear them* (Lk, 16: 29).

The imperative form, "Let them hear them", is a "let" command ascribed to Abraham by Jesus, but reported by him. In this context, perspective blending occurs, as Jesus apparently upholds the voice of Abraham. The functionally repetitive "them" is an endophoric reference, making an anaphoric pointing back to "they", "Moses" and "the prophets" in the preceding text. "Them", coming immediately after "let" refers back to "they"; "them", the object of "hear", makes an anaphoric reference to "Moses" and "the prophets".

## Reiterative Co-text

A reiterative co-text is a way of saying something again or a number of times, typically for emphasis or clarity. Two names (one male and one female), Simon and Martha, are connected with this co-text. The emphasis in this context goes in the direction of an intra-cautionary reiteration. Below is an example of textual occurrence:

> **Ex. 4**
> And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat (Lk, 22:31).

The text quoted above shows the repetition of the name, "Simon". This repetitive co-text, with a proper name content, which presents the

same structure as for Martha in Luke 10:41, indicates the emphasis Jesus places on the name by mentioning it thrice successively.

## Endocentric Co-text

The endocentric co-text captures the adjectival phrase structure embedded within a noun phrase, projected through a preposition initial structure. An example is cited below:

> ### Ex. 5
> From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation (Lk, 11:51).

The text above featuring the noun phrases, "the blood of Abel" and "the blood of Zacharias", contain the endocentric co-texts "of Abel" and "of Zacharias", both of which come with the nominal onomastic items, "Abel" and "Zacharias". In each case, the pragmatic implication of the names is somehow constrained by the preceding noun phrase, which embeds the adjectival phrase (the blood of Abel; the blood of Zacharias), the actual headword, "blood" and the prepositional head, "of", qualifying the names.

## Metaphoric Co-text

The metaphoric co-text captures the direct comparison typically achieved with a metaphor. In the onomastic framework of the synoptic gospels, this co-text always occurs as an adjectival phrase, preceding the actual name. An example of metaphoric co-text is shown below:

> ### Ex. 6
> From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple. Verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation (Lk, 11:51).

In the text above, the noun phrases, "the blood of Abel" and "the blood of Zacharias" contain the headword "blood", which presents a metaphor. Following these are the adjectival phrases, "of Abel" and "of Zacharias" which feature the names "Abel" and "Zacharias" under consideration in our analysis. "Blood" metaphorically means the death of Zacharias. However, beyond this general level, the co-text, "which perished between the altar and the temple", implies murder, placed on the forefathers of Jesus' audience, and thus by extension, his direct audience.

The pragmatic implications of the names within this context will be discussed presently.

### Co-texts Connected with Mortal Limitations

Two co-textual forms are associated with the context of mortal limitations, namely, imperative and interrogative co-texts.

### The Imperative Co-text

The imperative co-text in the context of mortal limitations takes two forms: imperative with a subject and imperative without a subject. We explain these in turn:

### Imperative with a Subject

Imperatives with a subject occur with specific reference to the discourses of grace and materialism which are respectively associated with Zacchaeus (Luke, 19:5) and Abraham (Luke, 16:24). Only the Zacchaeus example is cited below:

> **Ex. 7**
> And when Jesus came to the place he looked up, and saw him and said unto Him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down. For today I must abide in thy house (Lk, 19:5).

In the above text, the imperative co-texts are "make haste" and "come down", which are directed at Zacchaeus. As in the case of Abraham, the subject of the co-text is Zacchaeus: "Zacchaeus make haste". The pragmatic import of the name as supported by the co-texts is discussed shortly.

### Imperative without a Subject

The imperatives without a subject occur with specific reference to the discourse of contest which is connected with John the Baptist (Mtt, 11:4). Example 27 illustrates this.

> **Ex. 8**
> Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again these things which you do hear and see (Mtt, 11: 4).

In the text above, the imperative co-text is "Go and show ... again these things..." and the clause is presented without a subject. It thus comes with the natural or common structure of an imperative without a subject, which could be either "you" or "disciples of John". In the larger structure,

"John", who is the focus of the discourse, is the object of the imperative structure. Thus, the address form and this objective occurrence become important in interpreting the onomastic pract of the name, John. This is further co-textually assisted with the adverb "again", which makes an exophoric reference to the assertion implied in the speech of Jesus.

### The Interrogative Co-text

The interrogatives in these discourses are three types. They are the "wh" interrogative, the intonation-based interrogative, and the "yes/no" interrogative.

### The "Wh" Interrogative

The "wh" interrogative is the "what" type. Below is an example with reference to Moses.

> **Ex. 9**
> And he answered and said unto them, what did Moses command you?

In the text cited above, "what" is the question marker of the interrogative, followed by "did" which is the coordinator of the structure in which the onomastic element, "Moses" occurs. It typically seeks not just a response but also an explanation. The inclusion of Moses within the structure serves as an element within the interrogative, bounded by "what did" and "command you", both of which constitute major structural components in the onomastic interpretation of Moses.

### Intonation-based Interrogative

This structure represents the marker-free question form, seen only in the rendition. In the Synoptics, it appears with reference to Judas as cited below:

> **Ex. 10**
> But Jesus said unto him, Judas, Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?

In the text quoted above, after the report form, the interrogative "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss" comes with the vocative "Judas". The nature of the question, targeted at Judas, ultimately passes for a rhetorical question because both parties are aware of the object of the discourse. The pragmatics of the co-text, as it contributes to the onomastic interpretation, will be discussed presently.

**Yes/No Interrogative**

The "yes/no" interrogative typically requests a response along the line of the labels "yes" or "no". This interrogative form is only connected with John the Baptist. The text below exemplifies this interrogative type:

> **Ex. 11**
> The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men? Answer me (Mark, 11: 30).

The "yes/no" interrogative above occurs after the free-seeming indirect discourse, "The baptism of John". The actual question, "Was it from heaven or of men?" seeks a yes or no answer, as supported by the concluding statement form, "Answer me". As will be shown in the pragmatic analysis, the onomastic interpretation of the preceding "John" is significantly constrained by the "yes/no" structure which constitutes the co-text.

## 6.7 Conclusion

There are two types of contexts of names used by Jesus in the Synoptics: they are spiritual orientation and mortal limitation. These occur under three headings: spiritual distinctions, discipleship and lordship. The context of mortal limitations covers the issues of betrayal, grace, legality, materialism, and contest.

Co-texts were associated with spiritual orientation and mortal limitations. Five co-textual forms are associated with the context of spiritual orientation, namely, assertive, imperative, reiterative, endocentric and metaphoric. The assertive co-text is in connection with discourses relating to Simon Bar-Jonah (Mtt, 16:17), Mary (Lk, 10: 42), Zacharias (Mtt, 23:35), Elias (Mtt, 17: 11-12), Abraham (Lk, 13:28), Isaac (Lk, 13:28), Jacob (Lk, 13:28), Daniel (Mtt, 24:15), Abiathar (Mk, 2:26) and Jonas (Lk, 11:30). The imperative co-text, which is an intra-reportorial command, is connected with Abraham. The reiterative co-text takes two names, (one male and one female). Simon and Martha are connected with this co-text, with an emphasis on intra-utterance reiteration. The endocentric and metaphoric co-texts are in connection with grammatical structures and figuration related to the mention of Abel and Zacharias. Two co-textual forms are associated with the context of mortal limitations, namely, imperative and interrogative co-texts. The imperative co-texts, in the context of mortal limitations, take two forms: imperative with a subject and imperative without a subject. Imperatives with a subject occur with

specific reference to the discourses of grace and materialism which are respectively associated with Zacchaeus (Luke, 19:5) and Abraham (Luke, 16:24). The imperatives without a subject occur with specific reference to the discourses of contest which are connected to John the Baptist (Mt, 11:4). The interrogative sentence is the sentence that asks a question. The interrogatives in these discourses are three types: the "wh" interrogative, connected with Moses; the intonation-based interrogative, connected with Judas; and the "yes/no interrogative", connected with John the Baptist.

Overall, this study has argued that contexts, covering social and linguistic categories, not only index the points where onomastic items occurred in the synoptic gospels, but they have also contributed to a clearer picture of the semantic colourations of items. This means that the onomastic resources, when taken in context, provide a good entry into the Jewish socio-cultural life and the rich lingua-pragmatic considerations factored into the locutions of Jesus' speeches in the gospels. Therefore, this study is a clear contribution both to the pragma-linguistic dimension of the interpretations of the synoptic gospels and the possible theological extensions of the implications of the names as used in Jesus' speeches.

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# CHAPTER 7

# THE CONTEXT OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH LEXICO-SEMANTIC ELEMENTS IN ZULU SOFOLA'S *WEDLOCK OF THE GODS*

## KEHINDE ODEKUNBI

## Abstract

*The paper considers the context of Nigerian English lexico-semantic elements in Zulu Sofola's Wedlock of the Gods, with a view to demonstrating that Nigerian English lexico-semantic elements are better understood in their contexts rather than in isolation. The data analysed were collected mainly from the text. Thirty-four conversations were selected from the text based on the lexico-semantic features identified by Adegbija (1989). The findings reveal two broad types of context, namely, contexts of cultural affiliation and disaffiliation, based on the issues they discussed, with the aid of six major Nigerian English lexico-semantic elements: semantic extension, coinages, analogy, local idioms/proverbs, transfer and borrowing. The paper concludes that the contexts of Nigerian English words and expressions play significant roles in aiding access to their meaning. This study will be an addition to studies on lexico-semantic resources in Nigerian literary texts. It will also be of immense benefit to non-Nigerians who are not familiar with Nigerian English in that it will facilitate their understanding of lexico-semantic elements in literary texts written by Nigerians.*

Keywords: *Nigerian English; context; lexico-semantics; semantic extension; analogy*

# 7.1 Introduction

Many studies on Nigerian English have discussed it as either a variety or a deviation. See for instance Salami (1968), Adesanoye (1979), Adetugbo (1979), Akere (1982, 1985), Odumuh (1984), Afolayan (1987), Banjo (1971, 1995), Bamgbose (1995, 2004), Kujore (1985), Akindele & Adegbite (1999), Bababatunde (2001) and Ogunsiji (2001, 2004). Most of these works give the characteristic features of Nigerian English and support them with a catalogue of Nigerian English words and expressions and their Standard English equivalents to show that the two are different. For instance, Akindele & Adegbite (1999), Ogunsiji (2001 & 2004) and Babatunde (2001), in addition to taking a foray into the discussion on the advent of English in Nigeria and the factors that aided the retention of the language in Nigeria, they highlight the features that make Nigerian English differ from British and American varieties at all levels of linguistic analysis, i.e., phonology, grammar, morphology, lexis and semantics. They never ventured into contextualising their discussion or the examination of the features in literary texts. The present work differs from all these works because it considers Nigerian English lexico-semantic elements in their contexts with particular reference to Zulu Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods,* rather than in isolation as done in the cited works. NE, according to Akindele and Adegbite (1999: 146) is "the variety of English that has developed in the Nigerian non-native English situation". These scholars believe that it resulted from the colonial imposition of English and its culture in Nigeria. Thus, the variety is not wholly English and not totally Nigerian: it is a blend of the two. In other words, this variety of English has expressions, words and usages that are peculiar to Nigeria. For instance, some food-related and God-related words in the Nigerian indigenous languages such as dodo, fufu, Chineke, Ogun, Olodumare etc. have been borrowed into Nigerian English. This paper demonstrates how Nigerian English lexico-semantic elements function in contexts using Zulu Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods* with the objective of showing that Nigerian English lexico-semantic elements are better understood in their contexts rather than in isolation. In other words, the contexts of use of Nigerian English words and expressions, to a great extent, aid their understanding. This means that even non-Nigerians who are fairly familiar with Nigerian English words and expressions, but are careful to consider their contexts, may arrive at their meanings.

The Nigerianness of Nigerian English, according to Alo (2004: 116), can be observed at the levels of phonetics/phonology, lexis (vocabulary), grammar (morphology and syntax), semantics, pragmatics

and discourse. Nigerian English can also be referred to as an interference variety because when two languages overlap, the linguistic systems of one of the languages, particularly the dominant one, are transferred into the other one, i.e., the target or second language, when speaking it. For instance, when Yoruba and English are regarded as two languages that overlap, in an attempt by a Yoruba English bilingual to speak the English language, the linguistic systems of the Yoruba language—grammar, lexis, phonology and semantics—are transferred into those of English. The context of these Nigerian English lexico-semantic elements in Zulu Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods,* which this study explores, have been considered from the literary perspective (Solanke 2013; Adeseke 2014; Oyeleye 2014; Ezenwanebe 2014, 2015). For instance, Solanke (2013: 117-136), working on the topic "Mytho-Symbolic Representations: accessing Heroism in Zulu Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods*", divides the characters in the play into two groups, each representing a myth—the progressives and the conservatives. The two main characters, Ogwoma and Uloko, constitute the progressives who want development, while others who form the conservatives want the status quo to remain. The heroes, Ogwoma and Uloko, are resolutely united and determined in their fight against the savage traditions of forcing a woman to marry a man she hates and that of the woman's inheritance, in the case of the untimely death of the husband. Adeseke (2014) highlights the problems of African women such as polygamy, forced marriage, child marriage, having only female children, barrenness, prostitution, etc. using some drama texts, one of which is *Wedlock of the Gods*. For instance, he uses *Wedlock of the Gods* to condemn how African parents force their daughters into marriage to either solve their financial problems or raise their status, which, as in the case of Ogwoma, may destroy their joy and happiness and consequently lead to their tragic end.

Ezenwanebe (2014) argues that the action of the play is between the community and the individual. Ogwoma and Uloko represent individualism fighting against the community, and in the end, the community triumphs over the individual. In short, Ezenwanebe seems to be saying that no matter how strong an individual may be, he cannot triumph over his community. Oyeleye (2014) also believes that *Wedlock of the Gods* dwells on the battle between an individual and the community. She dismisses it as the ordeals of a woman who places personal love over societal beliefs. Ezenwanebe (2015) dwells on the issue of women's liberation struggles in Nigeria such as social and economic exploitation, Nigerian women mandatorily and forcefully losing their names upon marriage, and the social and sexual exploitation of widows, among others.

The work is situated in Theodora Ezeigbo's *Hands that Crush Stone*; the writer only makes a reference to Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods* when criticising Sofola's disregard for Ogwoma's point of view by reinforcing the indomitability of African culture.

It is obvious from the works cited so far that most of the available works on Zulu Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods* are literary rather than linguistic. Our present work differs in that it is linguistic; it dwells on the context of Nigerian English lexico-semantic elements in the play.

## 7.2 Varieties of Nigerian English

Given the multiplicity of ethnic groups in Nigeria, various types and subtypes of Nigerian English can be identified. Going by the parameter of dialects, we have ethnic dialects such as Edo English, Yoruba English, Hausa English, etc., and when talking of social parameters, we have educated and non-educated dialects. And, on the parameter of registers, we have three major types, namely: technical, literary and international. The ethnic varieties are identified by the transference of the features of ethnic languages into English at all linguistic levels, and the technical variety is used in academic discussions/paper presentations, legal reports, scientific reports and annual general meeting reports of financial institutions. All these are written/presented in a way that will be understood by every reader/listener, irrespective of their cultural/social background. This variety is not characterised by Nigerianisms. It is thus intra/internationally acceptable and intelligible (cf: Akindele and Adegbite 1999: 152).

Spoken Nigerian English has been categorised in different ways by different linguists. Brosnahan (1958), cited in Babatunde (2009), identifies three levels of NE, using education as the yardstick for differentiation. The first level is the pidgin spoken by those without formal education; the second level is the kind spoken by those who completed secondary education; and the last one is the kind spoken by those with university education. This categorisation has been vehemently criticised by scholars. Firstly, Nigerian Pidgin is now seen as a language of its own. Secondly, it concentrates on the use of English in the southern part of Nigeria. Thirdly, there are some other social-psychological factors such as opportunity for use, home background, innate ability and intelligence, and perseverance concerning private and correspondence studies that determine efficiency in the use of English.

Banjo (1971) identifies four varieties, highlighting the linguistic characteristics of each variety. As appropriately summed up by Bamgbose (1982: 100), though it is interesting to use education as a variable for

identifying speakers of different varieties and the one that serves as the
Standard Nigerian English, it is to be used as a flexible variable, because
factors such as prolonged exposure, self-help and other relevant social and
psycholinguistic factors could make a primary school leaver as proficient
as a university graduate. Some other scholars like Odumuh (1987), Jowitt
(1991), etc. also write extensively on the classification of Nigerian
English. Since our aim in this paper is not to do a review of works on
Nigerian English, we feel it is needless going over their works.

## 7.3 Lexico-Semantic Variation in Nigerian English

Bemigho and Olateju (2007: 153), quoting Osunbade (2004: 66), see
lexico-semantics as "a theory of language which accounts for how lexical
items are used to express meaning in specific situations". By lexico-
semantic variation in Nigerian English, we mean those lexico-semantic
items which make Nigerian English a distinct variety from either British or
American. English is spoken in Nigeria as a second language and since it
is used to express our cultural experiences and social realities, there is
bound to be differences in the form of English we speak in Nigeria.
Differences of this nature, according to Odebunmi (2006: 94), have
produced Nigerian—peculiar words such as "introduction" (a preliminary
formal meeting of the families of the would-be husband and wife), and
"bukateria" (cafeteria), etc. It is, therefore, necessary to give some
information on lexico-semantic variation in Nigerian English so that any
non-Nigerian discussions or readings of literary texts written by a Nigerian
will not be wasted. Odebunmi (2006: 94), quoting Adegbija (1989: 165
177), identifies six factors for the causes of the lexico-semantic variation
in Nigerian English. These are briefly discussed below.

**a. Socio-Cultural Differences between English and Nigerian People**
There is no doubt that social-cultural differences between native English
users and Nigerian users of English will lead to the emergence of new
lexical items. Before the coming of the English language to Nigeria, only
indigenous languages were used by the Nigerians to express their
thoughts, customs, experiences and ways of life. With the coming of
English and its assumption of an important place in intra- and inter-ethnic
communication, new words were bound to spring up. Examples of such
new words are:
   *Wrapper*: a cloth tied around the waist or body.
   *Social wake keeping*: staying awake for some time during or
throughout the night in honour of a dead person.

*Bride price*: the items paid to a bride's family by the groom's family before a marriage can be contracted.

**b. The Dynamics of the Pragmatics of a Multilingual Context**

In a multilingual nation like Nigeria, different linguistic systems mutually co-exist and struggle for dominance. Closely related to this is the pride of place given to English in practically every activity in the country. The resultant effect is the springing up of new lexical items through direct borrowing, code-switching, loan translations or calques. Some examples include: "hear a smell" (perceive an odour), "long legs" (undue influence, e.g., nepotism/tribalism to win a particular favour), and "eba" (a kind of food made from cassava flour or gari).

**c. The Exigencies of Differing Discourse Constraints**

Many lexico-semantic variations of Nigerian English are patterned on the conventions of the Nigerian indigenous languages in engaging discourse. Odebunmi (2006: 95), quoting Chisthimba (1982: 247 cited in Adegbija 1989), submits that "in the cultures of Africa, loquacity, ambiguity, redundancy, obscurity, and other strategies of verbal discourse are makers of wisdom, age, knowledgeability, sex and socially relevant criteria". Adegbija (1989) observes that in Nigeria, greetings, as well as the age of the participants, constitute an important factor in discourse that determines the politeness markers and greeting types to be used rather than social status as is the case in the Western world. In view of this, when English is introduced, new lexical items spring up. Therefore, to indicate age difference, adjectives like "junior" and "senior" are used with "brother" and "sister" in Nigerian English. This factor can also account for the excessive use of "sir" and "ma" in Nigerian English.

**d. The Indomitable, Pervasive and Omnipresent Media Influence**

The media help in no small way to introduce new words into English. Examples of such words are:

*Bottom power*: favours obtained by a woman through the use of feminine charm or the granting of sexual favours.

*Backing the camera*: with one's back to the camera.

**e. The Standardisation of Idiosyncrasies and Errors**

Adegbija observes that the idiosyncratic usage of words, especially by important persons in Nigeria, can make their usage acceptable. Examples of the words whose origins are traced to this factor are:

*A man of timber and calibre*: a very important and influential personality.

*Troubleshooter*: a person who causes trouble instead of the British equivalent "a person who quells trouble".

### f. The Predominantly Formal Character of the English Taught in Nigeria

Because the quality of the English taught in Nigeria is strictly formal as its mode of acquisition, the nature of Nigerian English is excessively bookish. This apart, the use of "big words" or "jaw-breaking words" constitutes a mark of knowledgeability and learnedness. Anybody who therefore masters their usage commands respect among users of English. Odebunmi (2016) observes that the elite speakers of English in Nigeria particularly go for the bookish variety of English. He then specifically mentions the word "conditionalities" used to describe the conditions required by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) before granting a loan as a good example.

## 7.4 Types of Lexico-Semantic Variation in Nigerian English

Types of lexico-semantic variation in Nigerian English have been discussed by many scholars (Adegbija 1989; Akindele and Adegbite 1999; Jowitt 1991; Ogunsiji 2001, 2004; Odebunmi 2006; Bemigho and Olateju 2007, etc). Odebunmi (2006: 96-98), toeing the line of Adegbija (1989), identifies five types, viz. transfer, analogy, abbronyms, semantic shift and extension, coinages or neologisms.

1. Transfer—this may include transfer of meaning, transfer of culture, transfer of context and transfer of Nigerian Pidgin features. Some examples are:
 i. I hear a smell (I perceive an odour).
ii. I'm coming (I'll be back presently).
iii. I'll branch on my way home (I'll stop over on my way home) etc.
2. Analogy—words in this category are formed on the basis of partial likeness in form or sense with words already existing in either the mother tongue or English, so that the newly formed words will be English or a blend of both. Affirmation is largely instrumental to the formation of words here. Examples are:
*Zikism* (ideology of Azikiwe).
*Write-in* (formed on the basis of sit in).
*Diviner's beads* (formed on the basis of the Standard English "diviner's rod").

Most non-pluralisable mass nouns such as equipment, furniture, advice, etc. that are pluralisable in Nigerian English are products of analogy. Words like "arrange", "decampee" and "invitee" are formed on the basis of analogy.

3. Abbronyms—these are words formed from letters or some parts of existing words, phrases or terminologies, which may or may not be pronounceable. The examples below are peculiar to Nigerian English:
NEPA—National Electric Power Authority
ASUU—Academic Staff Union of (Nigeria) Universities
NUJ—Nigeria Union of Journalists

4. Semantic Extension/Shift—some words in native English have their meanings narrowed, broadened or shifted completely in Nigerian English. Examples are:
*Chase*: to go after a woman with the intention of winning her love.
*Escort*: to see a guest off.
*Stay*: to live somewhere.

 5. Coinages / Neologisms

The need to describe new experiences, feelings, thought patterns, culture and customs, etc. which English has met in Nigeria has necessitated the creation of lexical items with nativised meanings. These kinds of lexico-semantic coinages/neologisms cut across all the other types that have been discussed. Adegbija (1989) observes that coinages are of three types: (a) the existing lexical stock in English; (b) the existing stock in the indigenous languages; and (c) a hybrid of the lexical stock in English and indigenous languages. Examples are half current, bean cake, tuwo, kola, bukateria, etc.

## 7.5 Zulu Sofola and *Wedlock of the Gods*

Zulu Sofola, the playwright (1935-1995), a professor of Drama and Theatre at the University of Abuja, Nigeria, was born to Igbo parents from Issele – Uku in Delta State, Nigeria. She was among the first generation of African female writers, with Ama Ata Aidoo, Efua T. S, Mariama Ba, Mabel Segun, Flora Nwapa and Bessie Head. She studied at Virginia Union Baptist Seminary and the Catholic University of America, but obtained her doctorate degree from the University of Ibadan. Some of her published works are *The Disturbed Peace of Christmas* (1971), *Wedlock of*

*the Gods* (1972), *King Emene* (1974), *The Wizard of Law* (1975), *The Sweet Trap* (1977) and *Old Wines are Tasty* (1981).

    *Wedlock of the Gods* is a tragic play rooted in the ritual of death and mourning. Ogwoma, the heroine of the play, is forced to marry Adigwu, a man she does not love, because her parents need money to take care of their son, Edozie, who is seriously sick. Fortunately for her, her loathed husband, Adigwu, dies three years after their marriage and she is to mourn him for three months, and then be inherited by Adigwu's brother to raise children for him. However, before the expiration of the mourning period, she gets pregnant by Uloko, the man she truly loves but who could not afford the payment of the money needed by her parents. A taboo is broken, the peace of the land is desecrated, the families of the two lovers are disgraced and Odibei, Adigwu's mother, is bent on taking vengeance. The offenders struggle hard to weather the storm, but to no avail. Odibei poisons Ogwoma, believing that she is behind the sudden and unusual death of her son, Adigwu. Uloko, avenging the killing of Ogwoma, kills Odibei and, like Shakespeare's Romeo, drinks the poisoned water that kills Ogwoma and he dies to meet Ogwoma in heaven where they will "continue their love".

## 7.6 The Concept of Context

Context, according to Odebunmi (2006: 22), is the spine of meaning, and it is extremely difficult to proceed with a reasonable search for meaning without considering the contextual usage of words. However, some scholars who belong to the school of semantic minimalism believe that meaning can be realised without context. They claim that context is tangential to meaning, or even sometimes completely irrelevant to its achievement. They contend that a user is expected to know what a word means before using it in speech or writing. Odebunmi (2016: 13), belonging to the school of contextualism, however, argues with illustration, that though it is true that words have some meaning in isolation, the full meanings of words are best realised in context, at least a cognitive or linguistic context.

    Context has been considered in different ways by scholars. For instance, Van Dijk (1977: 11) sees it as what "we need to know about to properly understand the event, action or discourse". Odebunmi (2006: 22), citing Levinson (1977; Gumperz 1982; Thomas 1995; Mey 2000, 2001), submits that context is the totality of the environment in which a word is used and constructed in interaction. Similarly, Ogundele (2016: 248-249), citing Wardaugh (1985), opines that context is the surrounding physical

context where the language is used (the objects there and the action taking place), previous conversations between the participants, relevant aspects of their life histories, the general rules of behaviour the speakers obey, their assumption about how the various bits and pieces of the word function, and so on. This is possibly what Odebunmi (2006) has in mind when he submits that "context, in actual fact, provides the background from which the meaning of a word springs".

### 7.6.1 Types of Context

Though Alo (2004) and Taiwo (2006) identify four types of context, we shall use Odebunmi's (2006) two-type category comprising the linguistic context and the social context. By linguistic context, we mean that the meaning of a word is determined by words before and after it. Odebunmi (ibid.) submits that meaning is largely determined by the lexical items that surround the particular words that interest a linguist or user of a language. This is referred to as co-text, which simply means that "the meaning of lexical items in an utterance or statement is largely constrained by the preceding or following item". Social context, however, goes beyond the environment in which a word appears in a sentence. We often need to consider relevant aspects of socio-cultural, religious and historical features of interaction to realise the full meaning of utterances. Odebunmi (2006: 34), for instance, observes that if a woman refers to herself as a bird in Africa, where birds are associated with witches, people might think she is a witch. This corroborates the fact that the socio-cultural perspective greatly contributes to meaning realisation and consequently dictates how English words should be used.

Odebunmi (ibid.) then supports his claim with the instance of Malinowski (1923) who, spurred by the failure to satisfactorily translate the text he recorded during his research experience in the Trobrian Island in the South Pacific, introduced the term "context of situation" built on the idea that meaning is realisable only in the context in which a word is uttered. This Malinowskian idea of meaning was furthered by Firth (1957), Hymes (1964) and later by Lewis (1977). Odebunmi (2006) then brings out his idea of social context from the submissions of these linguists as summarised below: (i) the utterance/topic or subject of discourse; (ii) participants and their socio-psychological world; (iii) relevant circumstances including socio-cultural experiences, non-verbal cues and prior knowledge of events; (iv) language/stylistic choices and setting of the place and time; and (v) participants' purposes and assessment/impression of the communicative events.

## 7.7 Theoretical Perspective

The theory of interlanguage is the one used in this paper, given that since English is learnt in Nigeria as a second language, even highly educated Nigerians can hardly do without transferring some features of their mother tongue into English. This apart, there are some socio-cultural experiences in African culture that are not present in English. This sometimes compels an African writer to resort to the translation or transliteration of his/her mother tongue into English. The theory of interlanguage was propounded by Selinker (1974). According to him, a language learner has three different conflicting linguistic codes to grapple with in his head, namely: the linguistic code of his first language, the linguistic code of the target language (TL), and a unique and separate linguistic code which he has formed for himself in his attempt to master the target language. The language learner is already a linguistic adult in a language different from the TL he is learning. The unique and separate language is derived from the learner's mother tongue and second language, but it is neither entirely the first nor the second language. The learner will have to pass through the tortuous task of mastering the rules of the TL, which, in most cases, conflict with those of the first language. Selinker gives three stages of interlanguage continuum, which are the basilectal, the mesolectal and the acrolectal stages. Each stage is known to be better than the preceding stage. Interlanguage can, therefore, be seen as a transitional language which favours a second language learner.

According to Selinker (1974), interlanguage is caused by five factors. The first one is traceable to the learner's first language. The learner, in this case, transfers the linguistic habits and features of his first language to the TL. The transfer may be positive, if the features facilitate the learning of the TL, or negative if they hinder effective learning of the TL. The second factor is rooted in the imperfect teaching of the TL. The third factor given by Selinker is the strategies of second language learning. The learner, here, simplifies the rules of the second language to suit his learning strategy. The fourth factor cited by Selinker is the strategy of second language communication. The second language learner resorts to avoidance because of his limited knowledge of the second language's vocabulary, structure and idioms; he uses paraphrases and simplifiers and looks for ways out of the difficult rules of the second language. These strategies can be psychological, cultural or idiosyncratic. The last factor in Selinker's interlanguage is the problem of the overgeneralisation of the second language rules. The rule of the past tense formation with the addition of the *–ed* morpheme is, for instance, sometimes generally

extended by overgeneralisation to other verbs. Similarly, the rule of plural formation with the addition of –s is at times extended to other nouns that do not form their plurals this way.

# 7.8 Methodology

The fact that Zulu Sofola is one of the foremost female writers in Africa, and *Wedlock of the Gods* is one of her best and most widely read plays, informed our choice of text. The data analysed were collected mainly from the text after its thorough and critical reading. In other words, we rely solely on secondary sources. Thirty-four conversations were selected from the text based on the lexico-semantic features identified by Adegbija (1989) including borrowing. The contexts of use of the Nigerian English lexico-semantic elements in our text were identified and categorised. A background was provided before every example to make it clear to anybody reading it, and every analysed expression was italicised for easy identification.

# 7.9 Analysis of the Text

Considering the context of use of the Nigerian English lexico-semantic elements in our text, two categories of context were identified: context of cultural affiliation (COCA) and context of cultural disaffiliation (COCD). COCA was again divided into four, namely: context of taboo (COT), context of death (COD), context of funeral rites (COFR), and context of communal bonding (COCB). COCD also bifurcates into two, namely context of love (COL) and context of taboo (COT).

## 7.9.1 Context of Cultural Affiliation (COCA)

*Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (2007: 25) defines affiliation as "connection with an organisation, especially a political or religious one". Our COCA should therefore be seen as the usage of a Nigerian English word/expression in a situation that shows connection/alignment with Nigerian culture. As said earlier, four types of context of cultural affiliation are discovered in the text. These are discussed and exemplified below.

**7.9.1.1 Context of Taboo (COT)**: This has to do with using a Nigerian English word/expression in a situation where an action that is forbidden in Nigerian culture has been done, as in the examples below.

**Example 1**
**Background**—in a dialogue between Ogwoma and Anwasia, Ogwoma proudly and shamelessly reveals to Anwasia that she is pregnant by Uloko, her former lover, while still mourning the death of her husband, Adigwu. Anwasia, in anger, retorts:

> *And you have the mouth to say it*. What will people say when they hear that you are already a month pregnant? (p. 8).

The expression, *And you have the mouth to say it* is an instance of Nigerian English formed from the transfer of the mother tongue of the playwright into English. The context in which the expression is used can easily guide a Nigerian to the meaning of the expression. A taboo has been broken by Ogwoma; she gets pregnant by her lover, Uloko, when she is supposed to be mourning the death of her husband, Adigwu. Anwasia, who is in support of the culture of their society, therefore utters the expression in anger. Considering the context in which the expression is used, it means "And you have the audacity or effrontery to say it". The playwright may consider the Standard English equivalent too bookish or grandiose if the nature of the characters involved (the fact that they are not educated) and her larger audience (Nigerians/Africans) are taken into account. She, therefore, resorts to the use of the simplified mother tongue equivalent. A non-Nigerian who is not in tune with the Nigerian socio-cultural situation will no doubt find it difficult to understand the expression due to the meaning of the individual words in it.

**Example 2**
**Background**—in a discussion between Udo, an elder in that community, and Uloko, over the abominable act committed by him (Uloko) and Ogwoma, Udo says:

> Udo – Your recent abominable activities with Ogwoma *have disturbed*
> *a lot of waters recently*. We, the members of Onowu family, met yesterday evening to see how we can make clean the peace you have soiled (p.35).

In the extract above, "waters" is an instance of analogy formed on the basis of pluralisation involving the addition of the -s suffix to the singular noun. The speaker, Udo, visits Uloko, his listener, to discuss the atrocity he has committed with Ogwoma and the crisis it has caused in the Onowu

family. Believing that it has caused intractable crises in the two families concerned, in particular, and in the community as a whole, the speaker, therefore, resorts to the pluralisation of the non-count noun, *waters*, to show that the problems are multiple. Although there is the idiom *water under the bridge* in Standard British English, meaning *problems that someone has had in the past that they do not worry about because they happened a long time ago and cannot now be changed,* Udo's *have disturbed a lot of waters* in this context is a transliteration of the Igbo language into English meaning the abominable act committed by Uloko and Ogwoma has generated a lot of crises in the community.

**7.9.1.2 Context of Death (COD):** This, in this paper, has to do with using a Nigerian English word/expression in a situation that surrounds the death of a person. This can be seen in the example below:

**Example 3**
**Background**—Odibei, in a dialogue with Otubo, suspects Ogwoma has a hand in the killing of Adigwu, her son. She, therefore, enters her room, looking everywhere for the charm/poison she (Ogwoma) used to kill him.

> Otubo – What are you looking for?
> Odibei – I am looking for the *medicine* she used (p.6).

In the extract above, Odibei, in support of the culture, believes that her son, Adigwu, did not die a natural death. She is therefore looking for the *medicine* that Ogwoma, her daughter-in-law, used to kill her husband. It is obvious that the meaning of *medicine*, which in Standard English is a substance used in treating disease, is extended to cover a poison or charm used to kill a person. The interlocutors, Otubo and Odibei, are friends. Otubo meets Odibei in Ogwoma's room where she is busy searching for something. This propels Otubo to ask her what she is looking for. In her reply, Odibei says she is looking for the *medicine* Ogwoma used to kill Adigwu, her husband. Otubo, being guided by the context in which the word is used, could understand the meaning of Odibei's *medicine,* because they are both from the Igbo community and, therefore, share the same cultural belief that *medicine* (poison/charm rather than the Standard English meaning) can be used to kill one's enemy.

**7.9.1.3 Context of Funeral Rites (COFR):** This is taken to mean using a Nigerian English word/expression in a situation where funeral rites, such

as mourning or sleeping in ashes, as in our text, are being performed. This can be seen in the example below:

**Example 4**
**Background**—Odibei, in a discussion with Otubo, her friend, expresses the feeling that Adigwu, her son, was killed by Ogwoma; that is why she (Ogwoma) sometimes stubbornly keeps away from the ashes but Otubo disagrees with her.

> Odibei – If she didn't, why is she not here in those ashes?
> Otubo – *A man who plays the flute also blows his nose* (p.6).

In the example above, Odibei enters Ogwoma's room expecting to find her at the fire, a mark of commitment to the mourning of her dead husband, but she is not there. This compels Odibei to suspect that Ogwoma must be behind the uncommon death of her husband, Adigwu. But Otubo only partially agrees with her. She thus utters the proverb, "A man who plays the flute also blows his nose". The Nigerian English lexico-semantic element identifiable in the example is the use of a local idiom/proverb. A non-Nigerian who is not familiar with the culture where flutes are being blown and has never seen a man who plays a flute (a local/traditional trumpet) and possibly observed that no matter how committed he is, he finds time to blow his nose, will have a problem understanding its meaning. In the context in which the proverb is used, Otubo, the speaker, uses the proverb to tell her interlocutor, Odibei, that no matter how committed Ogwoma is to the culture of sitting in ashes, she will have some moment of respite. This does not mean that Otubo is anti-culture, but her point is that the welfare of an individual should not be slaughtered on the altar of culture. Otubo uses the proverb to strengthen/deepen the force of what she is saying.

Proverbs, according to Okunoye and Odebunmi (2003), constitute the spine of language use in traditional Igbo society. They note that the Igbo see proverbs as "the palm oil with which words are eaten" (Okunoye and Odebunmi 2003: 290). Emenyonu (1987), cited in Okunoye and Odebunmi (ibid.), commenting on the importance of proverbs among the Igbo, submits that proverbs "emphasize and deepen the force of what is said… and also allow intent to emerge without having to resort to bare and blunt words". Odebunmi (2015: 16), writing on the usage of proverbs by Yoruba, adds that "while proverbs are public resources meant for use by all the Yoruba, the right to use them is largely a preserve of the elderly". He also points out that even when younger people are encouraged to use

proverbs, the acceptability of their usage lies in believing the elders to be the custodians of proverbs. The younger people, therefore, have to acknowledge the elderly ones when they want to use proverbs, whether they are in the place of usage or not.

**7.9.1.4 Context of Communal Bonding:** This has to do with the use of Nigerian English words or expressions in a situation that reflects belongingness to a group or community rather than acting as a single person. This is shown in the examples below.

**Example 5**
**Background**: Ibekwe, Ogwoma's father, conveys a family meeting to discuss the atrocity committed by Ogwoma. Ata, a member of the family, after welcoming the people in attendance, declares:

> Ata – *Men of Onowu family, I welcome you. Ibekwe, greetings to you and your household. Our people say that the man who ignores his*
> *family is the one who stands alone in the rain*. We have heard what you said. We are equally worried and our eyes cannot hold the flood that this matter has caused. *You are our brother and Ogwoma is our daughter* (p.25).

It is evident that all the elders of the Onowu family in the meeting in the example above are in a communal situation, in that they converge to deliberate on and proffer a solution to a problem they believe concerns everybody there. And this is cultural in Africa, particularly the Igbo community in Nigeria, which is the setting of the play. One, the mode of greeting in the example is a transfer of the mother tongue of the speaker into English: *Men of Onowu family, I welcome you. Ibekwe, greetings to you and your household*. Two, the speaker begins his point with an Igbo proverb transferred into English: *Our people say that the man who ignores his family is the one who stands alone in the rain*. As argued in the last example, Africans make use of proverbs for many reasons, but particularly to emphasise and deepen the force of what they say.

"Standing alone in the rain", as used in the proverb, means "suffering alone". The proverb, going by its context of use, therefore, means that anybody who disregards his family will suffer alone when he has a problem. By extension, this proverb projects the communal nature of Igbo society in particular and African society in general. It presupposes

that a personal problem is seen as a communal problem, provided the person involved carries his people along with his problem.

In addition to the proverb used in the example above, another Nigerian English lexico-semantic element identified is semantic extension. In the expression: *You are our brother and Ogwoma is our daughter,* the meanings of the two words, *brother* and *daughter,* are extended. Though Ibekwe has only one brother, Ike, the scope of *brother* in the context above has been extended to cover all the male members of the extended family, even when they were not born to the same parents. In the same vein, the word *daughter* has been extended to mean any female child that all the male members of the extended family are old enough to have as a child. In other words, since all the men in the family meeting are old enough to have Ogwoma as a child, she is then referred to as "our daughter". A foreigner who is not familiar with NE will therefore be at a loss when he hears something like this. It is in relation to this that Adegbija (1989: 167) submits that two males not related to each other by consanguinity may say to each other "we are brothers; we are both from Ogori". According to him, "in fact all people from the same ethnic group or *country* (mine) are theoretically consanguinally related". He, therefore, stresses that though some kinship terms in Nigerian English are superficially and structurally the same with similar terms in a native English context, their meanings are largely extended in Nigerian English.

## 7.9.2 Context of Cultural Disaffiliation (COCD)

This refers to using Nigerian English words in a context that shows disagreement with or fight against the culture. This type of context also bifurcates into context of love (COL) and context of taboo (COT). These are discussed in turn below.

**7.9.2.1 Context of Love (COL):** This deals with when Nigerian English words and expressions are used in relation to love. Let us consider examples 6 & 7 below.

**Example 6**
**Background**—in a discussion between Ogwoma and her mother, Nneka, the latter accuses Ogwoma of bringing shame and dishonour on her and her father for allowing herself to be impregnated during the mourning period. In response Ogwoma says:

> Ogwoma – You knew about me and Uloko. You could have given
> me away to him and received whatever money he could bring.
> But no, you were hungry for money *because you had never*
> *seen money before*. *Now you tell me that you cannot walk*
> *on the road for shame*. You should have locked yourself in
> your room (pp. 18-19).

It is evident that the speaker of the extract above is anti-culture. Because of the strong, uncontrolled love she has for Uloko, she gets pregnant by him at a time when she is supposed to be mourning her dead husband, Adigwu. Rather than accept her fault when she is being reprimanded by her mother, Nneka, she heaps the blame on her parents, claiming they forced her to marry Adigwu because they *were hungry for money because you had never seen money before*. The word "seen", as used in this context, is a transfer of an Igbo word into English meaning the money was more important to them than she, their daughter. Though "see", the present tense form of "seen", is in Standard English, all the meaning options given in dictionaries have nothing to do with the way it is used here. For instance, six meaning options are given in the Macmillan and Advanced Learner's Dictionary, namely: to make certain; to meet; to try to discover; to understand; to use eyes. "Never seen money before", as used in this context, means more than using one's eyes to be aware of money. Similarly, the sentence: *Now you tell me that you cannot walk on the road for shame* is also a transliteration of the speaker's mother tongue into English.

## Example 7
**Background**—Ogwoma has run away thinking that Odibei, having discovered the atrocity she has committed, might want to kill her. Uloko, her lover, goes to Odibei with a cutlass, believing that she knows Ogwoma's whereabouts. Uloko and Odibei are in a cat-and-dog stance, panting, with Uloko threatening to kill her, when Otubo enters.

> Otubo – Chineke! Uloko! (…) Uloko, what do you call this? A
> cutlass for a woman of your mother's age? Uloko, what has gone
> wrong with your head? (p.46-47).

"Chineke!" in the example above is an instance of an Igbo word borrowed by the playwright into English in preference to "God". This is a testimony to the fact that many words from Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba make an appearance in Nigerian English, in the form of code-mixing or as

borrowings (Alo, 2005: 117). The word, "Chineke!" is also used in the extract to express surprise. It is therefore followed by an exclamation mark. The speaker, Otubo, is surprised to see Uloko (a younger person) threatening Odibei (an elderly woman) with a cutlass. This behaviour is anti-culture in Nigeria. As submitted by Aremu (2004: 297), it is a mark of rudeness for a younger person to challenge an elderly person in a discussion or tell an elderly person that he is a liar, even when it is obvious that he is lying, not to talk of Uloko threatening a woman of his mother's age with a cutlass. The use of an Igbo word in the text also betrays the place from which the playwright comes. This supports the observation of Odebunmi (2016) that talk has a way of betraying the setting where a speech or an utterance is made.

**7.9.2.2 Context of Taboo:** This deals with using Nigerian English words and expressions in relation to the violation of culture. This is exemplified by examples 8 & 9 below.

**Example 8**
**Background**—in a discussion between Ogwoma and her mother, Nneka, on the atrocity she has committed by being impregnated when she was mourning her dead husband, the mother furiously and bitterly condemns her shameful behaviour, but Ogwoma remains unrepentant:

> Ogwoma: No matter how you beat me *I will not listen to you this time*.
> Nneka: You are a man's wife, not a harlot.
> Ogwoma: Adigwu is dead and I am free.
> Nneka: Adigwu has a brother... (p. 19).

 In the example above, Ogwoma is unrepentantly against the culture. She has broken a taboo by allowing herself to be impregnated when mourning her dead husband, Adigwu. The culture, as a matter of fact, demands that even after the fulfilment of the funeral rites, she is to marry the brother of her husband. Her mother condemns her abnormal behaviour but she remorselessly and unrepentantly claims that *no matter how you beat me I will not listen to you this time*. The meaning of the word *listen*, as used here, differs from the Standard English one. The dictionary meaning of *listen* is "to give attention to someone in order to hear them". The fact that Ogwoma hears what her mother says ordinarily means that she listens to her. However, in the context of the conversation above, the speaker means more than just hearing what her mother says; she means "obeying or doing

what a person wants". In Nigerian English, and as used in the context of the conversation above, *I will not listen to you this time* therefore means *I will not obey you or do what you want this time,* which is a form of transfer of the speaker's mother tongue into English.

**Example 9**

**Background**—Ogwoma is unrepentant after breaking a taboo. Therefore, Anwasia, her friend, vituperates her:

> Anwasia: Ogwoma, it is a sign of good sense to look *dry-eyed* and *clear-faced* after such a forbidden act. No matter how much a woman loves a man, the gods forbid what you have done (p.9).

The words "dry-eyed" and "clear-faced" are coined to show Ogwoma that after committing the abominable act, she is expected to be repentant and remorseful, and possibly be weeping, but instead, she has dry eyes and a clear face. The words, which function as adjectives in the excerpt, demonstrate that Ogwoma still has dry eyes (instead of weeping) and a clear face (remorseless). This means that she is shamelessly unrepentant. The speaker possibly believes that the coined words will convey her message more successfully, sufficiently and satisfactorily. Other instances of coinages in the text are water pot (p.7), hand-woven cloths (p.25) and drinking pot (p.45).

## 7.10 Conclusion

This paper has investigated the context of Nigerian English lexico-semantic elements in Zulu Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods*, with the goal of demonstrating that Nigerian English lexico-semantic elements are better understood in their contexts rather than in isolation. The paper has been able to demonstrate that Zulu Sofola in *Wedlock of the Gods* uses five major resources of Nigerian English, namely, transfer, semantic extension, coinages, analogy, local idioms/proverbs and borrowing. These have been observed in the contexts of cultural affiliation and cultural disaffiliation. The paper concludes that the contexts of NE words and expressions play significant roles in aiding access to their meaning. Apart from being an addition to studies on lexico-semantic resources in Nigerian literary texts, the study will also be of immense benefit to non-Nigerians who are not familiar with Nigerian English in that it will facilitate their understanding of lexico-semantic elements in literary texts written by Nigerians.

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# CHAPTER 8

# CONTEXT AND *ỌMỌLÚÀBÍ* MANIFESTATIONS IN LÁGBÁJÁ'S AFROCENTRIC MUSIC

## TOYIN MAKINDE

## Abstract

*Most studies on music and its genres have been directed at investigating the origins and forms of contemporary music in Nigeria from diverse perspectives, while few have studied the forms or functions of the language of music from a pragmatic perspective. Although there is research on the personalities of selected Nigerian musicians, but not the expressions of the Ọmọlúàbí concept in the Yorùbá social-cultural context, their linguistic-cum-cultural nuances in Lágbájá's music are based on the Ọmọlúàbí construct and their indices as shown in this study. Eleven albums consisting of seventy-eight tracks, the full extent of Lágbájá's production between 1993 and 2012, were subjected to a pragmatic reading in order to examine the expressions of the Ọmọlúàbí constructs and their indices in his music. Data were analysed based on Odebunmi's (2015) three Ọmọlúàbí pragmatic constructs of integrity, considerateness and deference. Findings revealed that Lágbájá's songs revolved around preserving Ọmọlúàbí integrity, enhancing considerateness and promoting deference. The manifestations of integrity are situated in domestic affairs, and socio-political and cultural contexts are indicated by inference to upbringing, truth, bad leadership, migration, hygiene, dress, food, and the culture of dance, respectively. Considerateness in the Ọmọlúàbí manifestation was situated in the socio-political setting in Nigeria. This was indexed by inference for unity and anti-social acts. Deference to people and constituted authority are situated in the cultural context and were indexed by greetings and supplication. Lágbájá's pragmatic intentions became more explicit to both cultural insiders and outsiders as*

*crucial ethical issues raised were pragmatically resolved. This makes the study applicable to cultural and ethical studies.*

Keywords: *Yorùbá culture; ideology; music; context; Ọmọlúàbí construct*

## 8.1 Background to the Study

Lágbájá in Yorùbá cultural ideology is an empty name holder which stands for somebody, anybody, everybody or nobody in particular. The name Lágbájá depicts the anonymity of the so-called common man while his mask symbolises the faceless and the oppressed voiceless in society, particularly in Africa. Bisade Ologunde (a.k.a. Lágbájá) is a popular contemporary Nigerian musician who eulogises himself as omo *baba mùko-mùko*—i.e., the son of a man who loves to drink pap (a traditional meal prepared from maize). He adopted Lágbájá as his stage name to create a personal identity and to project his ideology.

Adedeji (2010), reports that Lágbájá started his musical career in 1983 and drew his inspiration from watching and attending traditional festivals as a young man. Among his delights are the *Egúngún* (masquerade) and the popular *sun* festivals. The masquerade's regalia, the *Atókùn* (the guide) padded trousers, and traditional whips used in flogging one another during the festivals, are some of the motifs that inspired Lágbájá to dress and be masked like them on one hand, and to propel the African culture on the other.

Lágbájá, a noted follower of Fela Anikulapo Kuti, a progenitor of highlife music and a staunch freedom fighter, has specifically distinguished his brand as a skilful blend of horns, guitar, keyboard, and a full complement of traditional drums, producing highly flavoured traditional musical lyrics and styles that project Yorùbá cultural values and ideology. Adedeji (2010) states that Lágbájá performs a variant of Afrobeat, called Afrocentric. This is a genre of music based on African rhythm and percussion with influences from Western jazz, laden with Yorùbá nuances.

The remarkable Yorùbá socio-cultural projections, alongside his regular featuring of the Yorùbá philosophical world view, present Lágbájá merely as a creative poet to a cultural outsider, and consequently undermine the understanding of the meaning of his utterances which are deeply rooted in the understanding of the Yorùbá ideology. This study confirms that Lágbájá's intention will be clearer, and his music will be better understood, when explained within the Yorùbá cultural context from where his inspirations emanate.

The Yorùbá are a large ethno-linguistic group of people who live in West Africa and predominantly occupy the southwestern part of Nigeria. They are also found scattered in small units all over the world. Abimbola (2005: 30) avers that the Yorùbá originally referred to their homeland as *ilè e káàró ò jí i re* which translates as "the land where they greet one another good morning, did you wake up with *ire*". *Ire* is a word that means health, longevity, prosperity and being blessed with children. The name of the people also doubles as the name of one of the three major languages spoken in Nigeria. Yorùbá people, in their raw traditional set-up, are organised into a network of villages, towns and kingdoms. They, like other social groups, have set down principles/ideologies upon which their beliefs are based. Thompson (1990) refers to ideology as "a social form and processes within which, and by means of which, symbolic forms circulate in the social world". Thus, simply put, ideology is a means through which belief systems are entrenched and circulated among a people and across different generations. Eagleton (1991), Fairclough (2005) and Van Dijk (2001) added a new orientation by proposing that ideology is an interface between human cognition and the real world. Therefore, ideologies are products of thought and the realities of events, which a group have seen around them over a period of time. This is a recourse to the sociological definition of ideology as a schematic, inflexible way of seeing the world. This urge to explain the speaker's meaning via the Yorùbá socio-cultural context explains the pragmatic intention of this study. This study will therefore examine the manifestations of the *Ọmọlúàbí* construct and their indices in Lágbájá's music.

## 8.2 Music in Yorùbá Culture

Among the Yorùbá, songs are derived from speech patterns, while musical instruments like talking drums are also used to convey messages through speech simulations. This art is based on the tonality of the Yorùbá language. Stone (2005: 15) observes that music in the African context is a total embodiment of performance because it is difficult to separate song from movement or singing from drum speech. Omojola (2000) agrees that a musical performance is a multi-dimensional activity which involves not only singing or instrumental playing, but also features dance, drama and poetry. He states that:

> Music is often verbalised as 'song-singing' (orin kiko) or drum playing (ilu lilu), the all-embracing phrase for a music performance is (ere sise) entertaining, a generic term which encompasses singing or playing of instruments dancing and so on (Omojola 2000: 2).

In essence, music in Yorùbá culture transcends mere singing, drumming or dancing, but it is an efficient means through which traditional values and skills are transmitted from one generation to another. In the traditional Yorùbá set-up, each dialectal group, profession or clan has a unique type of music that is relevant to them. For instance, *ìsípà, ewì, ìyèròsùn, ìjálá* etc. are poetic renditions common among hunters and those whose trade and family lineage have a link with a deity called Ògún, the god of iron. The likes of people whose lineage and profession revolve around Àyángalú, the god of drums, cherish the use of different types of drums in communication.

Nigerian music can be classified among the best and most popular in Africa and abroad. The appreciable level at which Yorùbá nuances, customs and aspects of the cultural ideology permeate Lágbájá's music is assumed as some of the endearing factors that have propelled his music beyond African shores to a variety of audiences, as well as attracting the attention of the researcher of this study. However, as appealing as the overall effects of his rendition, presentation and appearances may be, cultural outsiders will only enjoy Lágbájá's music for its aesthetics, with little understanding of the speaker's meaning, if they are not familiar with the basics of the cultural ideologies or Yorùbá philosophical world views that inspired the artiste.

## 8.3 Literature Review

Yorùbá people have fashioned out different ideologies to guide them in their daily interactions with one another. Central among the guiding principles is the concept of *Ọmọlúàbí*. Fayemi (2009) views *Ọmọlúàbí* as a paragon of excellence in character. It is a philosophical dimension of the Yorùbá personality in their ideological setting. He explains that the concepts of *Ọmọlúàbí* (good person) and communitarianism in relation to personhood are definite in understanding what constitutes personality in Yorùbá culture. It is also the determining paradigm of reckoning the social worth of a person.

Similarly, Oyeneye and Shoremi (1997) opine that, as the case may be, *Ọmọlúàbí* and its antonym *omolásán* (a worthless person) are general descriptions given of personhood to ascertain whether or not an individual is socially integrated, or is a misfit or a cultural deviant within a given social setting or organisation. Abimbola (1997) makes it clear that *Ọmọlúàbí* is a function of exhibiting and demonstrating the inherent virtue and value of ìwàpèlé. Ìwàpèlé means a gentle or good character and it is ultimately the basis of moral conduct in Yorùbá culture and a core

defining attribute of *Ọmọlúàbí*. Oluwole (2007) suggests that *Ọmọlúàbí* is applicable when a person has a developed sense of responsibility that shows in his/her private and public actions and thereby earns that individual social integrity and personality. In contrast, is *èèyánkèyàn* which means a caricature of a person or *omolásán* (a worthless person).

Abimbola (1975) highlights the fundamentals of the *Ọmọlúàbí* principle as *òrò síso* (spoken word), *ìteríba* (respect), *inú rere* (having a good mind towards others), *òtító* (truth), *ìwà* (character), *akíkanjú* (bravery) *iṣé ṣiṣe* (hard work) and *opolo pípé* (intelligence). Therefore, *Ọmọlúàbí* means a well brought up and highly cultured person. *Ìwà* (character) plays an important role in making and passing the right judgement on the integrity and personality of individuals because a human being without character in the Yorùbá context is no less than *eranko*—an animal. In essence, the absence of proper culture, moral probity and integrity devalues personhood in the Yorùbá socio-cultural context. Bewaji (2004) stresses that *ìwàpèlé* (good character and humility) also presents itself as being capable in all aspects of communication, be it in verbal salutations, musical constructions, poetic performances, religious and spiritual displays of utterances, or in negotiations of important formal and non-formal pacts, deals, treaties and business etc. (p. 159).

Unlike in Odebunmi (2013) where deterministic ideology acts as the final determinant of one's destiny, the *Ọmọlúàbí* concept believes that it is not absolutely the case that *orí* (the guardian soul, symbolic of one's destiny) is solely responsible for how the personality of an individual eventually turns out in life. Rather, it is man's character that aids man's destiny. Therefore, in knowing one's personality, whether of repute or disrepute, the elements of good character are imperative.

In a parallel perspective, Alli (1997: 55) stresses that by implication, there is no such person as *Ọmọlúàbí* who is perfectly ideal or with no flaws. This is because Yorùbá people abhor all claims of absolutism in whatever ramification and believe that as humans we can only, and ought to, strive towards the ideal. In a similar manner, Gbadegesin (2007: 87) avers that the interpretation of *Ọmọlúàbí* is not absolute because there is no guarantee that a baby would remain an exemplary character like the creator or biological father, and this ambivalence can also be seen in the possibility that a child may turn out not to be an *Ọmọlúàbí* while being born of someone of good character.

On the contrary, some scholars, like Oluwole (2007), lament the redefinition of ethical notions and concepts of *Ọmọlúàbí*. This is because of some undeniable factors responsible for moral decadence in contemporary Nigerian society. The semantic field has shifted in today's

world so much so that being moral among Yorùbá societies now connotes
"nothing more than being on [sic] the fast lane" (Oluwole 2007). What this
presupposes is that the initial values of the Yorùbá are being relegated and
referred to as what Oluwole (2007) calls "old morality".

In sum, it can be observed that the semantics of morality have
shifted to mean "corruption", "lies" and every other attribute of
*èèyánkèyàn* (worthless person) *or eranko* (an animal). With this, Lágbájá's
musical objectives will become clearer when placed alongside the old
morality and the new, redefined morality. His cautious and subtle
approach of skilfully leading his audience back to the old and much-
cherished concept of *Ọmọlúàbí* is the major attraction for this study.

## 8.4 Statement of the Problem

Studies on music and its genres are not novel in scholarship. Various
disciplines using different procedures have investigated the origin and
forms of contemporary music in Nigeria in the past. For instance,
Waterman (1990), Omojola (1995), Fenn and Perulla (2000), Sakar,
Winner and Sakar (2005), as well as Adegoju (2006), have investigated
the formulation of juju, fuji and hip-hop music in Nigeria and
neighbouring East African countries, respectively. Their foci were on the
structure of the language with particular emphasis on the multilingual
code-switching features of the selected brands. Although Adedeji (2010)
and Adegoke (2011) studied the language and influence of Yorùbá culture
and identity representation on hip-hop music, their studies were from
ethnomusicological perspectives. So, neither the form nor function of the
language were investigated.

Of note among scholars are Adegoju (2002) and Albert (2009),
who examined cultural and socio-political issues respectively in Lágbájá's
music, from stylistic perspectives. However, they studied neither the
pragmatic strategy nor the use of language to reflect ethical issues from
Yorùbá socio-cultural perspectives as intended by this work. Other
relevant studies were conducted by Odebunmi (2013, 2015), on the
personality and music of Sunny Ade, a popular Nigerian musician, from a
pragmatic perspective and with reference to the Yorùbá socio-cultural
context in order to explain Sunny Ade's locutions, idioms and cultural
ideologies. This work, like Odebunmi (2015), will examine the cultural
nuances in Lágbájá's music based on the Yorùbá socio-cultural context of
*Ọmọlúàbí* expressions from where Lágbájá's inspiration and intentions
stream. However, unlike Odebunmi (2005), the study is based on

investigating the manifestations of the *Ọmọlúàbí* construct and their indices in Lágbájá's music.

## 8.5 Methodology

A total of eleven (11) albums that consist of seventy-eight (78) tracks, representing all that Lágbájá produced between 1993 and 2012, were subjected to a qualitative pragmatic reading, in order to examine the expressions of the *Ọmọlúàbí* and their indices in his music. The research adopted a purposive sampling method to choose forty-seven (47) tracks that were relevant to the *Ọmọlúàbí* concept out of the seventy-eight (78) tracks produced by Lágbájá. The data were further grouped according to the language(s) of the lyrics, then according to the themes. This is a deliberate choice since the research requires lyrics that are not purely and mainly in the Yorùbá language but ones with a minimum of two languages that have an *Ọmọlúàbí* orientation. A qualitative analysis of the data was based on Odebunmi's (2015) pragmatic *Ọmọlúàbí* construct model.

## 8.6 Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the notion that discourse must interact with context in order to project ideology. Therefore, we situated the result of the pragmatic interaction of discourse with context into Odebunmi's (2015) *Ọmọlúàbí* mould, in order to determine the classification of the manifested indices, and to deduce the cherished Yorùbá moral values that culminated in the *Ọmọlúàbí* yardstick for measuring *Ọmọlúàbí* (a socially fit person) or *èèyán lásán* (a social misfit) among the Yorùbá.

Odebunmi (2015) affirms that *Ọmọlúàbí* is a highly context-sensitive cultural concept that encapsulates the idea of a good Yorùbá person. The concept also rests on the principles of good behaviour, social harmony and integrity, as observed by Awoniyi (1975). Odebunmi expatiates further that *Ọmọlúàbí* is grounded in the linguistic expression of respect and social warmth manifested in greetings, morally induced encounters and socially informed exchanges. These qualities are interpreted as indices of love, hospitality, commonality and sound upbringing among the Yorùbá in all areas of their lives. In sum, *Ọmọlúàbí* is an upbringing-dependent attribute that is taught right from infancy.

There are two discursive index markers of *Ọmọlúàbí,* according to Odebunmi's classification. These are: indexes marking social limits and indexes marking moral limits. Social limits are marked by greetings which express respect and achieve bonding in all aspects of life, such as work,

marriage, eating, travelling, etc. Greetings are a major way of showing politeness among the Yorùbá people. This, he avers, is to attract attention and to facilitate good interactions. Odebunmi (2015), however, indicates that greetings cannot be limited to mere categorisations but require a more pragmatic classification. Hence, he pragmatically classifies greetings into professional and game-based greetings, routine and casual greetings, expressions of appreciation, seasonal greetings and greetings in response to questions.

The second group of indexes of Ọmọlúàbí are those marking moral standards. These are a product of investigations by scholars which culminate in eleven moral values upheld by Idowu (1962) and Yoloye (2009), among other notables. Odebunmi (2015) has pragmatically operationalised and categorised these values into three mutually exclusive classes. These are (i) integrity which encompasses truth and rectitude, dependability in keeping covenants and bonds, straightforwardness and avoidance of hypocrisy. The second is considerateness which involves chastity in sexual matters, selflessness, hospitality, kindness, generosity, avoidance of wickedness and protection of women as the weaker sex; and the third, deference which entails according due respect to parents, elders and people in authority.

The Ọmọlúàbí construct, Odebunmi observes, can be identified by some marked or unmarked discursive cues. The unmarked discursive cues are embedded in common cultural doxas which serve as a basis for the selection of particular linguistic and discursive resources that indicate the Ọmọlúàbí character. For instance, the *E kú* resource is selected to greet older people, *kú* with younger people, and *E kú* and *A kú* with a group where deference is achieved with no implicative agenda. The unmarked cues for compliance with high moral standards, such as integrity, are realisable through pragmatic cues such as Grecian maxims and illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDS), while non-compliance is marked with covert choices through proverbs, idioms and metaphors. Considerateness can be determined by a set of pragmatic features indexing Ọmọlúàbí. The deference constructs are discoverable by strict adherence to Grecian maxims but the demarcations through age and status are signalled overtly to show respect. The marked cues indexing Ọmọlúàbí are impolite tags and inappropriate bodily actions.

Lágbájá's music is therefore situated in Odebunmi's model to determine if the songs are in tandem with the Ọmọlúàbí construct, their indices and the type manifested.

## 8.7 Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Three *Ọmọlúàbí* constructs, as categorised by Odebunmi (2015), are present in the data. This is an indication that the whole of Lágbájá's music revolves around a subtle re-enactment of the *Ọmọlúàbí* concept among his numerous fans and audience. Lágbájá presented the *Ọmọlúàbí* principle by recollection, reintroduction, correction, recommendation and sometimes condemnation of the erring community members through his music. His role as a cultural activist cannot be underrated, hence the need to determine the manifestation of *Ọmọlúàbí* as indexed by his music. The three *Ọmọlúàbí* constructs discovered are (i) integrity, (ii) considerateness, and (iii) deference. These findings are captured in Table 1 and discussed in detail in the subsequent subsections.

**Table 1: Manifestation of the *Ọmọlúàbí* construct in Lágbájá's music based on Odebunmi's (2015) *Ọmọlúàbí* pragmatic model**

| SN | CONTEXT | EXPRESSION OF ỌMỌLÚÀBÍ CONSTRUCTS | INDEXES | LINGUISTIC DEVICES |
|----|---------|-----------------------------------|---------|--------------------|
| 1. | Domestic | Integrity | Upbringing | Ironical language |
| 2. | Socio-political | Integrity | Truth | Code-switching |
| | | | Bad leadership style | Synonyms and Family Register |
| | | | Migration | Antonyms and Synonyms |
| | | | Hygiene | Repetition of words and Transliteration |
| | | Considerateness | Unity | Pidginisation, Synonyms and Antonyms. |
| | | | Anti-social acts | Repetition and Religious Registers |

| 3. | Cultural | Integrity | Dress | Pidginisation and Antonyms |
|----|----------|-----------|-------|----------------------------|
|    |          |           | Food | Comparison |
|    |          |           | Dance | Synonyms and Antonyms |
|    |          | Deference | Greetings | Interrogatives |
|    |          |           | Supplication | Chanting |

### 8.7.1  Ọmọlúàbí *in a Domestic Context*

The domestic context situates the use of language in the home. In this context, Lágbájá's language has an exophoric reference to the informal home training known as *èkó ilé*. Lágbájá skilfully used language to bring to the attention of his audience, the convention and expected obligations of the Yorùbá woman. The manifestation of *Ọmọlúàbí* in this instance is through the construct of integrity and the only index of the manifestation of integrity is upbringing.

**Integrity in a Domestic Context**

Lágbájá's use of language to plead for integrity is situated in the domestic context. The domestic context, in this instance, is about home training, particularly the ability of a wife to cook for her family. It also means a good representation of one's family. All of these are the expected behaviour of an *Ọmọlúàbí*. Lágbájá, in a subtle way, uses language to condemn the lack of home training and the wife's inability to cook properly. The protection of the family name is at stake because the characters, in some instances, fail to replicate the acquired home training or demonstrate that they outright lack one, as seen in Example 1.

*Ex.1 It is not that she cannot cook, but rather than eating something not palatable, I will go hungry.*

Lágbájá, in the example above, uses ironical language to express displeasure about the wife's inability to cook. Lágbájá, in a co-text, has indicated that the husband has provided the necessary facilities and assistance for the wife, thereby playing his cultural role as the head of the family. The utterance above implies a gender-biased statement that exaggerates the woman's weakness; that is, her lack of mastery of the art of cookery. This is a situation that is not taken lightly in the Yorùbá context. Lágbájá, however, through ironical language, points out the flaws in the hope of encouraging every family to contribute to social and

communal wellbeing, by replicating the *Ọmọlúàbí* virtue in every member of the family, and by training the girl-child in preparation for marriage.

## 8.7.2 The Socio-Political Context

The socio-political context of language usage situates Lágbájá's music in the style of governance, the bad economic situation and a lack of social infrastructure. The *Ọmọlúàbí* manifestation in this section is characterised by two constructs. One is integrity, indicated by truth and bad leadership, and the other, considerateness, indicated by unity and anti-social acts.

**Integrity in a Socio-Political Context**
The four indexes of the manifestation of *Ọmọlúàbí* integrity in Lágbájá's music in socio-political contexts are namely truth in both social and political contexts, and bad leadership in the political context only, while lack of proper hygiene and the mad rush to escape to developed countries are situated in the social context. Truth, to Lágbájá, is straightforwardness in daily interactions with others, honesty in management of government money, avoidance of hypocrisy in dealing with electorates and above all, keeping electioneering promises and oaths. Lágbájá, through his language, condemns the lack of truth in people holding political positions and, by extension in co-texts, urges his audience to exemplify the value of truthfulness. The extract below exemplifies truth in both social and political contexts.

*Ex.2 Let your yes be yes and your no be no, m*á f'*Ol*órun j*é*èrí èké,
*what concerns god for your lie.*

Let your yes be yes and your no be no, don't make God your alibi, what business does God have with your deceitful attitude.

Lágbájá, in inter-sentential code-switching from English to Yorùbá and Pidgin, in order to scale social status and language barriers, emphasises the necessity for truth in personal relationships with others in particular and as a requirement in governance in general. His affirmative repetition of the words "yes be yes and no be no" portrays the importance of rectitude, an aspect of the *Ọmọlúàbí* integrity construct. This will enable his audience to have a clearer understanding of his intentions. Lágbájá has indicated, in the example above, that people with integrity will always strive to tell the truth at all times without resorting to long explanations, exaggeration and having to use God as a witness.

        Bad leadership style, in Lágbájá's political context, means the
government's inability to provide the necessary social infrastructural
facilities, and in particular, to enhance the educational system. The abuse
of political power through the unlawful diversion of government funds for
personal benefits is also an issue. Lágbájá compares bad leadership to
AIDS—a disease which has no cure that has eaten deep into the Nigerian
political system. This accounts for the name-calling strategy he adopts in
the next example.

*Ex.3 Calling you corruption na sugar, your real name gangan na o* olè,
olè *-barawo,* olè *-onyochi,* olè ajíbolè, *in short, my brother, my sister,
you be thief ah* olè!

Calling you a corrupt person is really respectful your real name is a
thief. You *are barawo (Hausa), onyochi (Igbo), olè ajíbolè (Yorùbá),*
in short, my brother you are a thief!

In Example 3, Lágbájá's use of dysphemism is a strong reflection of the
feeling of disgust that he has for corrupt leaders and the gullible followers
whom he earlier on referred to as *Mùmú* (being stupid) in a co-text. The
complex sentence above uses pidginisation of the utterance and code-
switching by alternating the three major languages in Nigeria. The essence
of these linguistic devices is for Lágbájá's intention to be directly
understood by both leader and followers without mincing words. For
clarity, and in order to ensure the understanding of his utterance by every
member of each tribe in Nigeria, Lágbájá uses synonyms of words
denoting thief, from the three major languages in Nigeria, to qualify the
looters. *Olè Ajíbolè* is a conjoined Yorùbá word for thief, *onyochi* is its
Igbo equivalent, and it is *barawo* in the Hausa language. These derogatory
words are used with the intention of rebuking the looters with the hope
that if these shameless elected representatives are fully disgraced, perhaps
it will bring about a change in their attitude. There is also the use of family
vocables, like sister and brother, to show that the leaders are part of
Nigeria's extended family.
        Lágbájá used his language to dissuade emigration and promote
national integrity in the social context in the next example about the mad
rush out of the country. Emigration, in Lágbájá's view, is the uncontrolled
urge to seek a better condition of services in more advanced countries and
the psychological satisfaction of living abroad that some of his audience is
obsessed with. His appeal for patriotism is shown in the example below.

*Ex. 4 As we get our problems dey get their own, so why can't we too sit and do something. Wake up and let's make our life easy.*

As we have our problems, so they have theirs, so why can't we too sit and do something. Wake up and let's make our life easy.

The pragmatic strategy Lágbájá uses in this context is the demystification of the information that much of his audience have about living in developed countries; this is in order to dissuade Nigerians who are bent on travelling out of the country to reconsider their standpoint. Lágbájá uses simple lexicons and their antonyms to state the problems and solutions to socio-economic problems that have so disillusioned some Nigerians and forced them out of their country. For instance, in the dependent clause, the possessive pronouns "ours" and "theirs" are used to refer to problems in different countries. The verbs "sit" and "do" are used to connote individuals having to brace themselves to find lasting solutions to Nigeria's internal problems. An *Ọmọlúàbí* will always defend his/her nation and contribute to its development to an enviable standard.

Hygiene is situated in the social context of Lágbájá's music. In Lágbájá's opinion, a lack of hygiene connotes carelessness in the disposal of refuse, the dumping of refuse inside gutters, and living in a dirty environment. Lágbájá observes that many inhabitants of major and megacities of Nigeria are guilty of the offence and therefore plead for a healthy and plague-free society.

*Ex.5. For Ibadan the same thing ni, Oshogbo - séémù tìn ni, Onitsha – séémù ni,*
*Benin city, Kano city,* Égbá *ilé, for gótà, for the road, mákètì nkó, the same ni o,*
*house, everywhere the séémù tìn ni o*

At Ibadan it is the same thing, in *Oshogbo*; same thing, Onitsha; same thing, Benin city, Kano city**,** Égbá Ile*,* inside the gutters, on the road, in the market at home, everywhere it [sic] same thing o.

Through the listing of the names of affected cities, Lágbájá indicates that the problem of hygiene is common to all Nigerians. His poetic and rhythmic use of *séémù ni* (meaning, "it is the same thing") a compound word transliterated from a mixture of lexis from English and Yorùbá, provides a skilful repetition of the oneness of character that cuts across major cities in Nigeria. There is the use of transliteration where the sounds

of the English language for vocables such as *same, market* and *gutter*, are directly transferred to Yorùbá sounds to produce *séémù, gótà,* and *mákètì* respectfully in order to preserve the English meaning and cut across social and linguistic boundaries. This can be inferred to be a major feature of the listed megacities that are usually overcrowded with limited facilities, part of which Lágbájá implied to be a direct consequence of the lack of integrity on the part of people in government.

## Considerateness in a Social Context

Two indexes of considerateness can be seen in the social context of Lágbájá's music. Language usage in this context indicates the manifestation of considerateness through unity and anti-social acts. Lágbájá views unity as a peaceful co-existence among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria, lack of tribal or inter-tribal war, tolerance among people during business transactions and good neighbourliness. Anti-social acts, on the other hand, connote societal ills like rumourmongering, prostitution and fighting, all of which negatively affect other members of society.

Lágbájá's language, in this context, is to broker peace, and in a subtle manner, enact unity. This is achievable through peaceful co-existence among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria, tolerance among people during business transactions and good neighbourliness. Lágbájá recalls with pain the causes of the Nigerian civil war and the attendant effects on Nigeria in a co-text. In essence, the next example seeks considerateness on the part of Lágbájá's audience to prevent a re-occurrence of the civil war.

*Ex 6 If I die, you go mud because my people go revenge and then your people go avenge, and my people go retaliate, avenge…revenge…revenge….avenge…venge…venge…retaliate, na so the madness go dey go back and forth from generation to generation o.*

If I die, you will mud (die) because my people will take revenge and yours retaliate and the madness will extend to generations yet unborn.

Lágbájá uses pidginisation to neutralise social and ethnic boundaries. The use of synonyms: "die/mud, retaliate/avenge/revenge" pre-empts the likely resultant effects of the attack of a tribe on the other. The alternation of antonyms to its eventual pruned form "venge" also demonstrates the likelihood of transferred aggression that can continue from one generation to another. Although the alternate repetition may be for poetic and rhythmic reasons, it is also a way of emphasising the bad side of forceful

acts among the people. The artiste notes, in a co-text, that it is possible as humans to offend one another, and to clash during business transactions or in running our daily lives, but tolerance and patience will remove bitterness. Therefore, the considerateness of the *Ọmọlúàbí* construct encourages Lágbájá's audience to allow the peaceful nature of *Ọmọlúàbí*, brotherliness, to reign in their daily activities and interactions with others.

Considerateness in anti-social activities is the focus of the next example. Anti-social activities to Lágbájá, as listed in Example 7, are stealing, ungodly acts, atrocities, self-deceit, self-righteousness, corruption, lies, rumourmongering, prostitution, immoral acts and other uncompromising attitudes to man and God.

*Ex. 7 After you thief finish, after committing other ungodly atrocities, You go mosque on Friday-Alhakibar, you go church on Sunday hallelujah, you deceive yourself that you worship God, you quote all the verses of the holy book, but as long as corruption full your soul verily verily I say unto you, you worship not the loving god but the biggest idol in the whole world [sic].*

After you finish stealing and other ungodly atrocities, you will go to [the] mosque on Friday to say Alhakibar and church on Sunday to shout halleluiah. You deceive yourself that you worship God, you quote all the verses of the holy book, but as long as corruption fills your soul verily, verily I say unto you, you worship not the loving God but the biggest idol in the whole world.

Dysphemism is one of the pragmatic devices that Lágbájá employs in this instance of correcting anti-social activities in his audience. Another is the repetition of the lexical item *thief*, the English vocable meaning "stealing" or "looting the treasury". The use of the religious register—mosque, Muslim, worship, prayer, church, halleluiah, holy book and Sunday—can be seen by the linguistic items used to condemn hypocrisy in the audience. There is also the satirisation of the religious order and the hypocritical attitude of some Nigerians. Lágbájá, in strong terms, condemns the shift in the semantic field of *Ọmọlúàbí* as explained by Fayemi (2012). Hence Lágbájá advises against these societal ills and warns the audience to desist from such acts that can bring threats to them and to society by extension.

Another area of focus, in the social as well as political contexts of considerateness as used by Lágbájá, cautions his audience against the desperation to have money.

*Ex.8 Is money serving you or are you serving money. You are spending money or money spending you. After your prosperity do you share a penny or would you wait until your deathbed to look back and realise ah, this is vanity?*

Lágbájá uses rhetorical questions, the biblical register and allusion to advise people who amass wealth. The example uses rhetorical questions to caution against amassing wealth at the expense of godly living and the hope of an afterlife. Lágbájá plays with the syntactic arrangement of words by alternating the nouns in the object and subject positions to warn against putting all interest and hope in amassing wealth because nobody will be able to take anything to heaven; rather, the audience members are advised to embark on what they can do to serve humanity. The pragmatic strategy of repeating serving/spending money is to create what Olaosun (2012) refers to as a hypnotic effect on the audience. The *Ọmọlúàbí* always seek to help others; they do not seek to amass wealth through illegal means and corruption. On the whole, the intention here is to advise against the mad rush for wealth, a habit that will ultimately destroy society if not seriously cautioned against.

### 8.7.3 The Cultural Context

Lágbájá's reference to cultural context is situated in the valued traditions which have existed among the Yorùbá from time immemorial. These, in Lágbájá's view, include food, manner of dressing, dancing skills and associated musical instruments, and the art of worship and communicating with Almighty God or other deities. All these are cultural elements that the *Ọmọlúàbí* are expected to take pride in and protect. The instances of the manifestation of the *Ọmọlúàbí* construct from this context are in the form of integrity and deference. Integrity is indicated by African dishes, the mode of dressing and skilful dancing; while deference is in the form of respect accorded to humans and God(s).

**Integrity in a Cultural Context**
Lágbájá's advocacy for integrity lies in the ability of an *Ọmọlúàbí* to prove his/her personal and social worth, by preserving the much-cherished Yorùbá traditions. The culture of dressing, among the Yorùbá, is based on their social life, age and position in society. The art of dressing serves as a means of reinforcing social identity and solidarity through which the bearer assumes some commonalities with other members of the group.

*Ex 9 Even though na free society, you never hear decency, dignity? Se na anything* Òyìnbó *do you self must copy like* mùmú. *That our culture wey you no appreciate na from there* Òyìnbó *de find inspiration.*

Although it is a free society, have you not heard about being decent? Must you copy the foreign culture blindly? That culture that you do not appreciate is actually where the foreigners draw their inspirations.

The example above is extracted from the track, entitled, "Different clothes different occasion" through which Lágbájá cautions against wrong dressing. For a better understanding of his intention, Lágbájá uses pidginisation to break linguistic barriers in his different audiences. The use of antonyms is employed to address the problem of indecent dressing. For instance, the lexical item, "free society", denotes the freedom to do as one wishes, then "decency", as a pragmatic antonym, places limitations on such freedom. Dressing like Òyìnbó (foreigners) and mùmú (a dunce) the counterpart, cautions against blindly copying a foreign culture. Also, the word "culture", which denotes an underdeveloped civilisation, or a lack of one, is pitched against inspiration as its antonym. Outside the use of dysphemism, which refers to people as mùmú, Lágbájá satirises the unpatriotic attitudes of some people who blindly copy the foreign culture. The example above, for instance, subtly enforces the Yorùbá traditional way of dressing in a co-text by using vocables relating to Yorùbá-approved dress lists to include ìró and bùbá (traditionally sown blouse and wrapper) for women with beautifully adorned headgear—gèlè, while the men are expected to dress in long, flowing regalia with matching caps. Hence, it would be an aberration for an *Ọmọlúàbí* to attend a chieftaincy ceremony, coronation or to enter some demarcated spiritual premises either half-naked in micro and mini dresses or by simply dressing in jeans. Such poor dressers are simply deemed as uncultured and lacking in home training.

Lágbájá, as an ambassador of the Yorùbá culture, presents the Yorùbás as lovers of good and well-prepared meals. He demonstrates this through phrasal pauses by describing the process of eating a traditional meal, *iyán*- pounded yam. This affirms the belief that once the problem of feeding is resolved, poverty is conquered. The next examples are about integrity in a cultural context. The many Yorùbá tribes are noted specifically for different dishes available to each tribe. The intention here is to whet the appetite of the audience by describing with relish different Yorùbá food.

*Ex. 10 You don't know? just cut am; ham …senrere, put am pam pam, uhnum…straight... iyán*

*Ex. 11 You see now the educated men would eat sausage and bread every morning, they forget that èwà and móínmóín taste better. Colonialism makes you think bread and butter is better than gàrí.*

The pragmatic strategy in the example above is to subtly castigate the audience through the demystification of their preference for foreign meals over African dishes. The vivid description of the processes of eating pounded yam is necessary to prioritise it above foreign food like bread and butter. The reason that Lágbájá offers regarding why some Africans prefer foreign food and foreign dresses, as earlier discussed, is colonisation. There is also the use of registers relating to food where examples are drawn from both traditional meals, like *iyán, èwà, móínmóín, gàrí* and foreign meals, such as bread, butter and sausage. Lágbájá also equates Western education with colonialism. Colonialism, in this context of usage, may be emotional or mental. The examples imply that an *Ọmọlúàbí* will always cherish and protect what is culturally significant to their community.

Lágbájá, as a musician, must culturally value dancing. Dancing is a valued skill among the Yorùbá, and people who cannot dance are sometimes frowned upon. Lágbájá, as a culturalist, avers that it is a shameful thing for Yorùbá persons not to understand the lyrics of the drum which are based on Yorùbá tonality, nor be able to dance. They are often mocked and made fun of as seen in Example 12.

*Ex.12 Take it easy let me flow and you flow with me. Flow with the rhythm. Easy not so busy, enough jumping around, enough prancing are we dancing or exercising.*

In Example 12, Lágbájá uses synonyms to explain the rudiments of dancing. Through a skilful instruction, words like easy/flow/rhythm are employed to present the softness and ease with which dance must be done. The antonyms easy/busy, flow/jumping, and dancing/prancing are pragmatically used to contrast the dance steps of the Yorùbá people with those of foreigners. The dancing steps of the Whites and other foreigners are commendable in their own tradition; it is only that they do not conform to the requirements of the Yorùbá drumbeats and sequence. Hence the sweet melody and the swaying and twisting of the waist to the drumbeats represent some internalised skills that are missing in the Òyìnbó character

which accompany the multimodal aspects of the meaning. Lágbájá, like other Yorùbá persons, condemns the uncompromising dance skill of the lady in the example. Lágbájá indicates in the co-texts that dancing is neither pacing, wrestling nor gawking.

## Deference in a Cultural Context

Lágbájá's language manifests deference in a cultural context. Deference, according to Lágbájá, connotes respect for God, elders and constituted authority. The deference to god(s) is projected through supplication while deference to man is in form of greetings. Deference to God in this context is established by Lágbájá through supplication because He is regarded as the all-knowing and the most powerful being. The God figure among the Yorùbá is a highly revered being known as the *Eléèdá*, i.e., the creator of all things. As a form of reverence, the people do not directly approach God in the traditional setting; they have to go through mediators or intermediaries in the form of lesser gods like Ògún, Sàngó, Oya and a host of others. Most times, elders are required to pray for the younger ones. In the example below, Lágbájá, in this track, prayed through the mouth of a respected elder statesman, the late Attorney general of Nigeria, Chief Bola Ige. The belief in deference, in the Yorùbá culture, is that the elders have authority and their prayers are potent.

*Ex. 13 The God in His infinite mercy and wisdom crown you with all your desires, you will be greater than me (amen).*

In the compound sentence above, the independent clause eulogises God, while the dependent clause contains the request. This exemplifies the *Ọmọlúàbí* trait, as indicated by Bewaji (2004), that *Ọmọlúàbí* can be seen in an individual's capability to intelligently use language in all aspects of communication, be they verbal salutations, musical constructions, poetic performances or religious and spiritual displays of utterances.

Deference in the second cultural context of Lágbájá's music is indexed by greetings. Respect for association is the primary reason for greeting among the Yorùbá. Simpson and Abioye (2009: 2), in agreement with Odebunmi (2015), state that there is hardly any occurrence, either sad or joyous, for which the Yorùbá do not have a form of greeting. Lágbájá, like other scholars, believes that greetings are for phatic communion as well as a means of showing respect to one another. They are also transactional. Greetings are not just uttered in passing. A Yorùbá person does not stop at using them as a point of formality, but also uses them to show solidarity and identity.

*Ex. 14 How you dey, madam nko? pikin nko?*
      How are you, how is madam and the children?

      Greetings, among the Yorùbá, extend beyond "hello" as used in some cultures. When two people meet in a Yorùbá context and they do not exchange pleasantries, even if they are strangers and are coming together for the very first time, this sends a wrong signal and a better union may not be guaranteed. A child who does not master the habit of greeting is regarded as uncultured and manner-less. Therefore, bowing, kneeling or prostrating to courtesy, and the accompanying utterances, are also directed at achieving certain responses. The utterance in Example 14 is an interrogative sentence which enquires about the welfare of madam, i.e., the wife and the *pikin* (i.e., the children). This is a partially completed circle. Further enquiry ought to be about work, home and extended family etc. This would have completed the phase. However, this abridged form is acceptable in most instances where *Ọmọlúàbí* interlocutors do not have enough time to spare or in most formal situations.

      Lágbájá's music reveals that most instances of greetings are usually accompanied by some form of panegyrics. In Yorùbá culture, the art of panegyrics (i.e., a piece of writing or speech that praises someone or something) is very common. Apart from the evocation of phatic culture, fraternity and marking social relations, panegyrics also have a psychological effect on the hearer. This is used mostly to extol the virtues of a family as seen in the preceding example.

*Ex. 15 Lágbájá, Lágbájá, Olágbájá the son of Tàmèdùn, Tàmèdùn the son of lámonrín, lámonrín the son of Làkáasègbé, Làkáasègbé the son of Láàdò.*

The art of panegyrics and praise-singing is associated with greetings among the Yorùbá people. This mostly manifests when people engage in self-adoration or when elders greet their young ones, especially early in the morning or during special events. They are usually eulogised. It is also a way of getting someone committed to doing something or a way of boasting about renowned family achievements among the Yorùbá people. The repetitive chanting of Lágbájá in Example 15 evokes his ancestral spirit by tracing him to four generations before him. The names of his forefathers are mentioned in succession to recall their accomplishments. In ambivalence, panegyrics reveal people's occupations, their strengths and weaknesses, and their contributions to their community.

## 8.8 Conclusion

This paper has examined the manifestation of the *Ọmọlúàbí* construct in Lágbájá's music in the various socio-cultural and political contexts of occurrence. The pragmatic reading has made the utterances more explicit to a cultural outsider and the implied meanings when viewed along Yorùbá socio-cultural contexts of *Ọmọlúàbí* have projected the culture more prominently. The three-tier *Ọmọlúàbí* construct model of Odebunmi (2015) presents Lágbájá as a cultural apparatus and activist who took upon himself the responsibility of using his songs to re-enact and promote the *Ọmọlúàbí* social value as well as to correct his audience, in order to reform them according to the dictates of the cherished societal values. Therefore, his role as a promoter of Yorùbá culture is of value in cultural studies and instances of revealing the musical ideology of the icon.

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# NOTES ON ODEBUNMI'S MODEL OF CONTEXTUAL BELIEFS

## IBUKUN FILANI

## Abstract

*In interactions, participants go beyond the logical form of their expressions in encoding, decoding and inferring the meaning of their utterances. They depend on shared experiences in communicating. Depending on the shared experience they make reference to, interactants' utterances could be given different interpretations. In pragmatic analysis, the concept of context accounts for such shared experiences. In recognition of the role that context plays in interactions, scholars have developed different models which are used in the analysis of meaning in interaction. One such model is Odebunmi's mutual contextual belief theory. This paper examines Odebunmi's model of shared experiences. It was observed that a major strength of Odebunmi's model is its perspective on what context is—that it is made up of the physical setting where an interaction is taking place and the cognitive sources that inform participants' actions. On the other hand, one of the weaknesses of the model is its underspecification of when contextualisation takes place in an interaction and the strategies that could be used to achieve contextualisation.*

Keywords: *Contextualisation; interaction; meaning; Odebunmi's mutual contextual belief; pragmatics; shared experiences*

## 9.1 Introduction

Pragmatics is concerned with how utterances mean more than their logical forms. There are several definitions of pragmatics and different descriptions

of its concerns; however, what is common is the recognition of the role of context in explicating meaning (see Leech 1983, Thomas 1995, Mey 2001). Such context is defined in terms of the participants and their intentions, and the speech situation as well as the participants' cultural, language and cognitive backgrounds (Mey 2001). For Leech (1983), pragmatics is the study of meaning in use while Thomas (1995) describes it as meaning in interaction. These definitions point to the fact that participants go beyond the logical form of their expressions in encoding, decoding and inferring the meaning of their utterances. As opined by Thomas (1995), meaning-making is a dynamic process which involves negotiating the meaning between the sense of an utterance and its contexts (participants, physical and social). Therefore, pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning (Yule 1996).

Utterances have different interpretations depending on their contexts. It is possible to consider the meaning of a sentence without considering its context(s), as is the practice in literalism, an approach which argues that context is irrelevant to meaning (Palmer 1996). As observed by Leech (1983), sentences have both semantic representation (sense or logical form) and pragmatic interpretation (or force). One of the goals of pragmatics is to uncover the "force" of a sentence, and to do this, there is a need to consider the context of the sentence. I shall illustrate this with the exchange below:

Husband: The dog is at the front door.
Wife: ok.

One way to interpret the exchange is to find out the meaning of the utterances that make up the exchange without considering the context of the exchange. In this sense, one is to find out the semantic property of the expressions used by the couple (for instance, their truth conditions). Another way is to examine what the husband and wife mean by their utterances. In this sense, the goal is to uncover the meaning of the exchange in relation to the intentions of the couple (or the force of their utterances). Part of the requirement is to consider the contextual assumptions or beliefs existing between the couple. Depending on the contextual beliefs considered, the exchange will have different pragmatic forces. For instance, if the couple's dog goes to the front door whenever it is hungry, then a possible pragmatic force of the husband's statement is that he is informing the wife that the dog is hungry and that it should be fed, while that of the wife could be that she is agreeing to feed the dog. However, if the dog goes to the front door whenever someone is at the

gate, the husband's statement could mean that he is informing the wife that someone is at the gate, while that of the wife could mean that she would go and check the gate. The husband might also be telling the wife that they have a visitor, and that their living room is too untidy for them to receive a visitor, while the wife's response might indicate that she would quickly tidy up the living room.

What this example indicates is that participants depend on shared experiences in communicating, and depending on the shared experience they allude to, their utterances could be given different interpretations or meanings.[1] It is in view of the role that context plays in the interpretation of utterances that Odebunmi (2006) develops a model of contextual belief, which implies that meaning-making in interactions is facilitated when participants have the same contextual background regarding language and culture. To emphasise the role of context, Odebunmi (2006: 13) asserts that "context is central to all ventures into meaning, no matter the quantity of meaning that individual words may have". He further asserts:

> Context is the spine of meaning. It is, in fact, extremely difficult to proceed with any reasonable search for meaning without considering contextual pressure on word usage…. For communication to be effective, participants have to be sensitive to the cues that are given off by the entirety of the locale in temporal, spatial, cultural, psychological and physical terms. In actual fact, context provides the background from which the meaning of a word springs. It is the totality of the environment in which a word is used… and is constructed in interaction (Odebunmi 2006: 22).

This essay aims to present a critique of Odebunmi's theory of context. In order to achieve this, an overview of the theory is presented in the next section, after which the strengths and the weak points of the theory are outlined.

## 9.2 The Contextual Beliefs Theory

As noted above, context to Odebunmi (2006) is the spine of meaning and its scope is beyond human experience. The author opines that words are not said in isolation, devoid of context, and meaning cannot be identified without considering the context. The ontological foundation of Odebunmi's theory of context is that full meanings of linguistic expressions are best

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[1] The notion "shared experiences" has been given different terms in pragmatics. Here, I have used it in a broad sense to mean "context" as well as "contextual assumptions or beliefs".

realised in context. To him, context includes, but is not limited to, the physical, linguistic and cultural environments in which an utterance is instantiated. Odebunmi (2006) discusses two major types of context: linguistic and social. The linguistic context refers to the linguistic frame or environment in which an utterance is used. It denotes the concept of co-text, which "explains the view that the meaning of lexical items in an utterance or statement is largely constrained by the preceding or following item" (2006: 34). When a word is used in a sentence, its meaning is generally dependent on the other words (co-texts) in the sentence. The social context underscores the influence of participants' socio-cultural, religious and historical features in communication exchanges.

It is the explication of the concept of context by scholars like John Gumperz, Jacob Mey, E. Adegbija and Jenny Thomas in interactional sociolinguistics and pragmatics that motivates Odebunmi's thesis, which he terms "Model of Contextual Beliefs". Contextual beliefs are the "beliefs or assumptions held prior to or during occasions of interaction"; such beliefs or assumptions "come into and facilitate the communicative process" (2006: 24). In developing his model, Odebunmi identifies three aspects of situation level beliefs, namely shared knowledge of the topic, shared knowledge of word choices, and referents, references and shared socio-cultural experiences, previous or immediate. Furthermore, at the situational level, Odebunmi (2006: 24) opines that "assumptions are held on the basis of interactants' shared code (linguistic or non-linguistic) and experience. It is at this level that both the variety or dialect of the language selected and other situational variables are used to process meaning". The term "belief" in the model is synonymous with assumption, and when it is described as contextually shared or mutual, it denotes that which is known to both the initiator and recipient in a communication exchange. A mutual assumption or belief, therefore, is a proposition whose truth is taken for granted in a communication exchange, or technically, a pragmatic presupposition.

The situation level beliefs have to do with the situational factors or variables that influence communication exchanges. They are concerned with what the speech exchange is all about and where it is being carried out. The situation level beliefs are largely motivated by the participants' knowledge of the world and their socio-cultural experiences. When participants know the subject of interaction, they will be able to contribute to the interaction without hitches. They will also be able to deduce the meanings embedded in the exchange and the intentions of the people involved in the interaction. The shared knowledge of word choices emphasises the need for participants to have an in-depth knowledge of

"what referring expressions point to in the real world as this would smooth the interaction" (Odebunmi & Alo 2010: 470). On the significance of shared socio-cultural experiences, Odebunmi (2006: 30) points out that "interactions move on smoothly when participants have common socio-cultural and situational experiences".

Another level of belief identified by the scholar is the language level belief. This level emphasises the need for participants to have a common knowledge of the verbal and non-verbal codes used in an exchange. According to Odebunmi (2006: 24), "at the language level, meaning is potentially possible if participants have access to the same language of communication". In reality, participants have to assume that they all understand the language with which they convey their intentions. A speaker uses a language because s/he assumes that the hearer understands the language.

It is important to note that, as Odebunmi (2006) observes, previous scholars have also shown how context comes into play to facilitate communication exchanges and how participants depend on contextual information to instantiate their intentions and infer meanings from linguistic expressions. The contextual beliefs theory, therefore, is a repackaging of previous approaches to the role of context in the interpretation of meaning. In a pragmatic approach, Stalnaker (1974: 472) uses the term "presuppositions" to refer to "background beliefs of the speaker's propositions whose truth he takes for granted, or seems to take for granted in making his statement". For Stalnaker, every interaction is based on background beliefs and/or assumptions shared or presumed to be shared by the interactants. It is these beliefs that make up the common ground between the interlocutors. Jucker and Smith (1996) and Allan (2013) identify other terms like mutual contextual beliefs, common knowledge, mutual knowledge, shared knowledge, assumed familiarity, presumed background information and shared assumptions which have been used in the literature to describe common ground. An underlying principle in these studies is that participants take certain things for granted in their contributions to exchanges. What is taken for granted is assumed to be of common or mutual knowledge to the participants. Mutual beliefs or common ground features stem from a mutual awareness of the situation as well as community membership and personal experiences (Clark 2006). However, Sperber and Wilson (1986) contend the idea of mutual knowledge, noting that participants cannot be sure of each other's knowledge and beliefs. For them, for mutual knowledge to exist, it must be certain. Sperber and Wilson (1986) propose that participants only have assumptions about each other's beliefs. Jucker and Smith (1996) support

Sperber and Wilson's (1986) view by suggesting that participants can never be certain about each other's background assumptions or knowledge.

It must be noted that Sperber and Wilson and other proponents of Relevance Theory (RT) view common ground differently. For them, context is not a given and it is not emerging, rather it is a set of accessible items which are stored in the short-term memory and encyclopaedic knowledge, or which manifest in the physical environment (Grundy 2008). Their basis is that, since participants cannot be sure of what other interactants know, they can only make assumptions about their shared background beliefs. For Sperber and Wilson, participants hope that the assumption being processed is relevant and they try to select a context which will maximise relevance. Thus, in interaction, speakers must make mutually manifest to the hearers the needed assumption for the interpretation of their utterances. Their view perhaps contradicts Odebunmi's perspective on contextual beliefs, because Sperber and Wilson prefer the cognitive perspective while Odebunmi advocates the socio-cultural perspective. In relevance theory, context is treated as a variable (Grundy 2008) while in Odebunmi's approach, it is treated as a given entity. For Odebunmi (2006), and as Clark (2006) has shown, common ground is derived from community membership and personal experiences in the world, while for Sperber and Wilson, it cannot be ascertained. Macagno (2015: 472) also highlights the uncertainness of common ground by asserting that "the definition of a linguistic phenomenon in terms of beliefs or assumptions risks confounding the phenomenon with its accidental effects or possible explanations. How can a speaker believe or assume that a proposition is shared by the hearer?"

Another reason why Sperber and Wilson reject the notion of mutual knowledge is that it generates endless recursion (Yus 2006). Instead, they propose that interactions are attempts to make certain information mutually manifest to both interlocutors (Yus 2011). What is manifest is what an interactant is capable of inferring or perceiving. For Stalnaker and others like Odebunmi, communication takes place against the background of mutual knowledge or shared background beliefs. Such mutual knowledge or background belief may be taken for granted in exchanges. On the other hand, for Sperber and Wilson, communication takes place against the background of making mutually manifest background beliefs, which is an indication of the intention to alter an interactant's cognitive environment. Communication, therefore, "is a matter of making certain assumptions mutually manifest to both the speaker and hearer" (Yus 2006: 857).

The recursion within definitions of common ground, according to Allan (2013), imposes infinite processing on the part of both the speaker and hearer. Besides, it is underscored when analysts have to specify what exactly the common belief is. Stalnaker's definition of common belief and common ground illustrates this: "it is common belief that $\phi$ among a group of believers if all believe that $\phi$, all believe that all believe $\phi$, all believe that all believe that all believe that $\phi$, etc." (2002: 706) and "it is common ground that $\phi$ in a group if all members accept (for the purpose of the conversation) that $\phi$ and all believe that all accept that $\phi$ and all believe that all believe that all accept that $\phi$, etc." (2002: 716).

In a critique of Stalnaker's perspective of common ground, Abbott (2008) argues that not all presuppositions are assumed to belong to the common ground; therefore, there is the need for accommodation (a concept introduced by David Lewis and termed "Rule of Accommodation for Presupposition"). Accommodation denotes the ability of recipients to adjust and update their initial background knowledge whenever the speaker presents a proposition that is not part of the shared background belief. For Macagno (2015), accommodation is a reasoning process that should be evaluated according to the hearer's knowledge. There are two dimensions of accommodation: retrieval and acceptance (Macagno 2015). At the first level, "the speaker can presuppose a proposition because he or she can conclude that the interlocutor can retrieve such information" while the second level refers to "the major premise of reasoning or its conclusion. The possibility of constructing a presupposed proposition depends on the possibility of abducing it by means of defeasible reasoning, and, therefore, on the existence of the premises supporting the conclusion" (Macagno 2015: 475).

Clark's (2006) notions of communal common ground and personal common ground are also important here. Communal common ground is based on community membership and it has similar features to Odebunmi's situational level belief. Communal common ground is based on experiences that are derived from being a member of different communities like cultural groups, or groups denoted by geographical locations or occupations. Odebunmi's language level belief denotes the need for interactants to have access to the same language of interaction. Clark and Carlson (1991) describe this as linguistic co-presence. Language level belief has overlapping features with Clark's (2006) personal common ground, which is also based on linguistic experience. Besides, personal common ground is based on joint experience. From Odebunmi's perspective, there are two types of beliefs, independent and shared. "At the independent level, interactants experience the world separately or in the

company of a group; at the shared level, the different experiences of the groups converge during interactions. And their individual, but common experiences contribute to their access to and determination of meaning" (Odebunmi 2015: 203). Although common ground is based on joint experience, individuals may have independent experience of the world and their society. Thus, as Odebunmi (2006) suggests, contextual beliefs ride on participants' independent experience, which may be at the individual level or at the level of the group. By recognising independent level beliefs, the author suggests the role of an egocentric attitude in communication but he downplays it by noting that contextual beliefs ride on participants' independent experiences of the world. According to Adeoti (2015), by differentiating independent beliefs from shared beliefs, Odebunmi's model mirrors Clark's submission that when language users act on the basis of their common ground, they are in fact acting on their individual beliefs or assumptions about what is in their common ground. Participants would have individually observed and participated in an event (this makes their experience in that event personal), and when it is needed again, they call up the experience (now as shared experience when the situation demands).

## 9.3 A Critical Examination of Odebunmi's Contextual Belief Model

A major strength of Odebunmi's approach to context lies in its perspective of what context is. According to Jacobson (1996), the concept of context is generally described using two perspectives: the first is the physical aspect or the setting where the speech event takes place while the second underscores a cognitive dimension, and it "refers to the concepts, beliefs, and values in terms of which people behave, as well as interpret, their actions and those of others" (Jacobson 1996: 462). Odebunmi's theory is an attempt to combine these two perspectives on context. Odebunmi's situational level of belief and the mutual contextual beliefs that exist at this level connote the physical setting of an interaction and the interactants' ideational as well as cognitive sources of information that are needed for the interpretation of the stimulus.

Although his model of contextual belief does not overtly state that context is actively created by the participants in the interaction, it does suggest it. For Odebunmi (2006), therefore, the context of a speech exchange is given and fixed in that it refers to the event or situation in which the interaction is taking place and it is actively created as participants allude to their shared contextual beliefs. If the cognitive aspects of the thesis, the shared knowledge of the topic, the shared

knowledge of word choices, referents and references, and the shared socio-cultural experiences, previous or immediate, are considered, they could be viewed as the shared cognitive environments of the participants à la relevance theory's interpretation of context which is (un)consciously created in an interaction. Since participants make contributions through their verbal and non-verbal choices, they actively create the needed context required for interpreting their exchanges. Also, by identifying shared socio-cultural and situational experiences, the theory is able to account for how socio-cultural experiences influence the use of language and the interpretation of utterances.

Odebunmi's model of context has a number of deficiencies. The theory does not state how it can be ascertained that the mutual contextual beliefs are actually shared by the participants. Except through psycholinguistic and/or neuro-linguistic experiments, it may be too much to claim that a background belief is shared by the two individuals engaged in an interaction. Two individuals may be members of the same speech community and have the same or similar socio-cultural experiences; nevertheless, they may not necessarily have the same background beliefs. One can only agree with Sperber and Wilson (1986) that participants only work on the assumption that the contextual belief in which they are operating is shared among them. In view of this, Jucker and Smith (1996: 3) argue that "a shared experience is itself no guarantee that partners will be able to identify the relevant common ground. Making judgements about what information a partner will remember and under what circumstances it will be accessible requires quite elaborate social and metacognitive judgements". I must note that Odebunmi is not saying that participants must have exactly the same background beliefs since there are individual beliefs, but he is suggesting that regardless of the individual background beliefs, the contextual beliefs at the level of language and situation—especially, the shared beliefs—still dominate and control their interaction and meaning-making process. Besides, the approach does not touch on the strategies for negotiating shared contextual beliefs in interactions. The fact that shared contextual beliefs cannot be ascertained draws to mind that a speaker may assume that a belief is part of the common ground but the recipient may not be aware of the belief. A revision of Odebunmi's model should, therefore, cater for instances of "failed" shared contextual beliefs and when and how recipients would instantiate the rule for accommodation.

Following Kecskes and Zhang (2009), there are two approaches to communication and common ground in pragmatics. In the first approach, which is the pragmatic view, common ground is said to exist *a priori*

before communication. Communication is defined as an intention-directed practice in which participants recognise each other's goals and jointly work together towards achieving them. Communicators remain unintelligible if they restrict their intentions to themselves and if they employ codes which are not shared (Odebunmi 2006). Thus, cooperation is the driving force for communication. On the other hand, the cognitive view postulates the emergent property of common ground, as it argues that participants do violate their shared beliefs because of their egocentric tendencies (Kecskes & Zhang 2009). Citing Giora's (2003) graded salience hypothesis and Kecskes (2008) dynamic model of meaning, Kecskes and Zhang (2009: 337) argue that "cooperation, relevance and reliance on possible mutual knowledge come into play only after the speaker's ego is satisfied and hearer's egocentric, most salient interpretation is processed". What is salient to the speaker may not be salient to the hearer, thus, participants base their contribution and interpretation on what seems salient to them. Allan (2013) views egocentrism as a function of what is severally salient to the speaker and hearer. Allan opines that seeking common ground is an effortful process which employs cognitive resources to incorporate beliefs about the knowledge and perspectives of other participants. Thus, egocentrism is the main criterion for communication while common ground comes into play after interactants satisfy their egocentric tendencies. As observed earlier, Odebunmi recognises the egocentric tendencies of communicators since he identifies what he calls "independent experience of the world" (2006: 26). However, he gives egocentrism little or no role in successful interaction. The manner in which Odebunmi explicates his theory shows that the approach belongs to the pragmatic view of common ground. Nonetheless, in an application of common ground to medical discourse, Odebunmi recognises the roles of salience and other factors in successful communication. He asserts "common ground demands joint or participatory actions which are characterised by salience, sufficiency and solvability. With salience, participants exhibit mutual expectations about events or actions. With sufficiency and solvability principles, interlocutors relate to salience on the basis of assumed fullness of information and jointly orienting to issues emanating from the contact immediacy of interaction" (Odebunmi 2016: 3).

Furthermore, should Odebunmi's contextual belief theory be considered within the frame of Gumperz's (1982) notion of contextualisation, one would be left wondering what constitutes contextualisation (cues), when does contextualisation occur in an interaction and what strategies could be used to achieve contextualisation. For Gumperz (1992), contextualisation must be understood with reference to a theory of

interpretation (inference). Although Odebunmi's theory of context recognises that situated interpretation of utterances is dependent on inferences made within the context of an interaction, his theory seems to be silent about how inference is conceptualised.

I must note that, as stated by Odebunmi (2006: 13), the notion of context in the model of contextual belief is a "broad perspective". Taking such a view helps to have an elaborated approach which draws from different linguistic perspectives like interactional sociolinguistics, pragmatics and discourse analysis. It also helps in applying the model to a wide range of analysis across different genres and disciplines, for instance, computer-mediated communication (Odebunmi & Alo 2010), sexual discourse (Oni-Buraimoh 2013), medical discourse (Odebunmi 2016), analysis of cartoons (Adeoti 2015), and humour (Filani 2015) and (Adeoti & Filani 2016). Nonetheless, such a "broad perspective" needs delimitation so as to specify the scope of its applicability.

## 9.4 Applications of the Model

That Odebunmi's model has contributed to the understanding and analysis of the roles that context plays in interaction cannot be denied. Apart from pointing out what constitutes context, the model calls attention to how it facilitates the process of interaction. Even in his studies where the model is not applied, Odebunmi calls attention to how shared beliefs facilitate communication exchanges (for instance, Odebunmi 2006b, 2009). Odebunmi (2009: 11) reveals that contextual beliefs assist the participants of political interviews to achieve relational work. Specifically, the interviewer and interviewee depend on shared beliefs like knowledge of subjects, political gimmicks and ideological expectations to "produce politic verbal behaviours, polite verbal behaviour and impolite verbal behaviour" in their confrontations, criticisms, veiling and accusations. In Odebunmi (2006) where the model is explicitly presented, the author's examples and analysis show that one of the reasons why participants' verbalisations and contributions to conversations are implicit is that the participants depend on their shared beliefs. Uptakes are secured by the existing shared beliefs between the speaker and the hearer; implicature is also guided by shared beliefs.

Studies that have applied Odebunmi's contextual belief theory have projected a view that strengthens the main proposition of the model. Oni-Buraimoh (2013), which is a study on students' sexual discourse in a Nigerian tertiary institution, concludes that the use of metaphors, slangs, indexicals, as well as linguistic and cognitive mappings, is characterised

by the common ground that motivates the students' sexual discourse, and which trifurcates into shared cultural knowledge, situational knowledge and experiential knowledge. Linguistic mapping, which illustrates the existence of shared experiential knowledge, demonstrates the need for the existence of Odebunmi's three aspects of situational level beliefs. According to Oni-Buraimoh (2013: 227), linguistic mapping entails "using words arbitrarily to match any aspect of sexual discourse just because the words have some sort of resemblance or sound with the source domain". For this kind of mapping to be possible, it is expected that both the speaker and hearer would be aware of the subject/topic (the sexual discourse), have a good knowledge of lexical items and their referents and references (for instance, vagina and penis) and have socio-cultural and situational experiences about the subject (when and how to engage in such discourse and use words that denote such discourse). The conceptualisations of "having sex" as "rough play" and "vagina" as a "house", are dependent on the students' shared knowledge of social, linguistic, cultural, situational and conversational beliefs and resources.

In another study, Adeoti (2015) demonstrates that the three types of situational level beliefs are vital to understanding and unpacking meanings which are embedded in editorial cartoons. For Adeoti (2015), the situational level beliefs are considered in the conceptualisation of cartoons and at the same time, they facilitate the interpretation of cartoons. Because cartoonists employ the principle of audience design, they are able to make assumptions about the audience and deploy the common ground they share with them. Cartoons are understood when readers avail themselves of the contextual background which inspires the cartoonists. The cartoonists' use of language depends on aspects of common ground like shared linguistic codes, knowledge of socio-cultural beliefs and other experiences at personal or communal level; for instance, referring expressions are selected based on assumptions about the readers' knowledge and assumptions about their ability to correctly identify the referent—a function of Odebunmi's three aspects of situational level beliefs. Even generic and vague references generate expected implicatures and meanings because of shared knowledge. As Odebunmi (2006) demonstrates, Adeoti's (2015) analysis of cartoons shows that shared and contextual beliefs supersede in the interpretation process regardless of independent level beliefs. Adeoti also reveals that independent beliefs become "shared" once they are suggested or introduced in an interaction.

Clark (2006) opines that personal common ground is essential to the process by which people converse and one way by which participants make something common is information structure. Information structure

has to do with linguistic manipulation of utterances and sequencing of constituents of the clause. Of course, information structure depends on the existence of language level belief. Participants' ability to rhetorically manipulate linguistic structure for discourse and pragmatic purposes is closely connected to the language level belief. Odebunmi and Alo (2010) show that SMS users manipulate two levels of assumptions, language and situational, because shared beliefs at these levels exist between the initiator of the SMS and its recipients. Specifically lexical items like through, your, matters, for, office and book are worded as thru, ur, matas, 4, ofis and bk in SMSs because the writers and recipients of the messages are operating with the same language level belief and because at the situational level, the participants have the same assumptions about the subject matter and lexical items (their referents and references included).

Odebunmi's model has been applied to medical discourse, sexual discourse, computer-mediated discourse, cartoon analysis and the analysis of jokes. Filani (2015) and Adeoti and Filani (2016) have shown that shared beliefs in terms of culture, language and the practice of joking enhance the intention of the joke teller to achieve humorous effects in the joke recipients. Specifically, the language level belief and situational level beliefs are important determinants for incongruity, uncovering the targets of jokes as well as the humorous stereotypes attached to them, and interpreting the activity-in-the-joke. Overall, Odebunmi's contextual belief model has proven that when mutual assumptions exist between interlocutors, there is collaborative discourse, economy of language use and efforts, and interactants' intentions are easily achieved.

## 9.5 Conclusion

Odebunmi's "Model of Contextual Beliefs" takes care of the peculiarities of background beliefs in any interaction. Such peculiarities are defined by the language level and situational level beliefs. His explication of the model shows that shared beliefs are essential for accounting for language use, conventions of language use and how participants contribute to everyday conversations and other forms of discourse. As an analytical tool, the model's suitability seems to cut across disciplinary domains. However, as Jucker and Smith (1996) has shown, even inmates that share a lot of common ground need to determine whether they have the same representation of their assumptions. Thus, in applying and perhaps reviewing the model, it is important to pay attention to strategies for accommodation, for negotiating shared beliefs and the strategies participants use in accessing each other's assumptions.

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# SECTION FOUR:

# INSTITUTIONAL AND NON-INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION

# CHAPTER 10

## BEYOND SEMANTICS:
## A PRAGMATIC STUDY OF SOME SPEECH ACTS
## IN CAMEROONIAN ENGLISH

## ALOYSIUS NGEFAC

### Abstract

*This chapter aims to demonstrate that certain speech acts enacted in Cameroon convey meanings that are significantly different from those suggested by the semantics of the linguistic units. Based on the speech act theory propounded by Austin (1962) and defended by many pragmaticians, including Searle (1969), Mey (1993), and Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2010), certain speech acts found in real-life situations in interactions in Cameroon between 2012 and 2016 were analysed in terms of their locutionary aspects, their illocutionary effects, and their perlocutionary force. The analysis shows that in the Cameroonian context, like in other places where pragmatic studies have been carried out, the meanings of speakers' verbal actions depend more on the intentions and the shared contextual knowledge of the language users (speakers and hearers) than on the abstract conventional meanings of the linguistic units. For instance, in the sentence, "Please, help me to kill that child (shouting)", one can erroneously conclude that the speaker was asking the hearer to exercise the power of killing, especially if we go by the abstract linguistic units involved, but analysing the speech act in a socio-cultural context reveals that the speaker's intention was rather to enjoin the hearer to stop beating the child. The findings of the study, therefore, imply that one cannot absolutely rely on conventional linguistic knowledge to interpret speakers' verbal behaviour or to understand hearers' interpretations of speech acts enacted in a given communicative context. In other words, the meanings of utterances or speech acts in Cameroon depend almost entirely on the intentions of the interactants and their*

*shared knowledge. The findings also imply that semantics and pragmatics are significantly different, even though they work in tandem.*

Keywords: *Pragmatics; speech acts; Cameroon English; meanings; linguistic units*

# 10.1 Introduction

Before 1960, the Chomskyan theoretical approach to language study dominated the linguistic landscape, given that the theory of mental faculty, upon which his generative-transformational grammar was based, considered language as an abstract construct, which could be studied independently of its users and uses, from the perspective of "competence", and not performance (Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan 2010: 3). But by the second half of the 1960s and early 1970s, this theoretical orientation as regards language study was found to be largely inadequate in accounting for the meanings of certain speech acts, when language is used in context by its users. In this light, Mey (2001: 4) and Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2010: 3) point out that the "pragmatic turn", or the study of language in context, was necessitated by this inadequacy of theoretical paradigms championed by Chomsky and his followers.

When language is used in a given context by its users, the meaning that emerges is very different from the conventional meaning determined by the abstract linguistic aspects involved. This explains why Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2010: 3) distinguish between "meaning in the abstract and meaning in use". The former ("meaning in the abstract") constitutes the domain of semantics, while the latter ("meaning in use") concerns pragmatics. There is, therefore, a significant difference between semantics and pragmatics, which will be underscored in this chapter. It will also be shown that, when speakers of Cameroonian English use the language in context, they perform certain speech acts whose illocutionary and perlocutionary effects cannot be largely predicted from the semantics of the linguistic aspects of the acts. In other words, the determination of the nature and effects of the speech acts solely depends on the relationship between the speaker and his or her interlocutor, the context or the situation involving the enactment of the speech acts, and on many other factors that have nothing to do with the literal meaning of the words or the linguistic aspects involved. It is for this reason that a discussion of the speech act theory propounded by Austin (1962) and defended by Searle (1969), Grice (1975), Leech (1983), and Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2010), is indispensable in this chapter.

This chapter, therefore, relies on some speech acts in Cameroonian English (collected in real-life situations from 2012-2016) to investigate the speakers' intentions when they perform speech acts in certain conversational situations, and the effects of these acts on the hearers. An attempt will equally be made to show how the pragmatic meanings of the acts contrast with the meanings suggested by the semantics of the words uttered during the conversational exchanges investigated.

## 10.2 Distinguishing Pragmatics from Semantics

Both semantics and pragmatics are concerned with meaning, but these two subdisciplines of linguistics are significantly different. Semantics focuses on the conventional meaning of linguistic items (words, phrases, and sentences) as prescribed in the dictionary (Yule 1996: 114 and Cutting 2002: 1) and explores how these linguistic items "literally connect to things" (Yule 1996: 4), according to their pure linguistic meanings (Peccei 1999: 2). In other words, semantics is concerned with the general and objective meaning, which does not depend on what speakers intend to convey and how hearers interpret and understand what is said.

Unlike semantics which is concerned with "meaning in the abstract" (Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan 2010: 3), pragmatics focuses on "meaning in use" (Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan 2010: 3) or on the context-specific meaning that emerges when language users interact according to a shared knowledge of a given social context. Different linguists have provided diverse definitions of pragmatics, which clearly bring out its defining characteristics. Mey (1995: 5), for instance, considers it as "the science of language seen in relation to its users". In the same light, Peccei (1999: 2) sees pragmatics as the branch of linguistics that concentrates on those aspects of meaning that cannot be predicted by linguistic knowledge alone and that takes into account knowledge of the physical and social world (Peccei 1999: 2). Like Mey (1995) and Peccei (1999), Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2010: 1) consider pragmatics as "the branch of linguistics devoted to examining language use in communication including speakers' intentions when producing utterances in particular contexts".

In spite of the above-mentioned scholarly attempts to distinguish between these sister linguistic branches, Leech (1983: 6) thinks that it is very difficult to make this distinction. He argues as follows:

> The view that semantics and pragmatics are distinct, though complementary and interrelated fields of study, is easy to appreciate subjectively, but is more difficult to justify in an objective way (Leech 1983: 6).

According to him, the distinction between semantics and pragmatics can only emerge clearly if a distinction is made between what he calls semanticism, pragmaticism, and complementarism. Semanticism refers to the encroachment of pragmatics into semantics; pragmaticism refers to "semantics inside pragmatics" (Mey 1993: 7), and complementarism is concerned with the fact that both semantics and pragmatics complement each other, in spite of their significant differences. Leech (1983), in other words, maintains that semantics and pragmatics have well defined linguistic boundaries, even though they work in tandem or complement each other significantly in such a way that their differences can sometimes be masked.

Whatever the case, pragmatics as a relatively new approach to linguistic inquiry is not only significantly different from its closest linguistic neighbour (semantics), but it is a paradigm shift that markedly departs from the traditional or Chomskyan approach to language study. In fact, Mey (1993: 9) rightly maintains that the semantic component does not "meddle in pragmatic affairs, except when some philosopher forces it to" (Mey 1993: 9). The different definitions of pragmatics proposed by different scholars clearly show what the discipline is and what it is not. In other words, the characteristics of pragmatics are easily discernible from scholars' attempts to define it. First, "pragmatics is interested in the process of 'producing' language and in its 'producers', not just in the end-'product', language" (Mey 2001: 5). It should be noted that the old paradigm of studying language, championed by Chomsky and his followers, treated language as a "human product", focusing more on a native speaker's abstract knowledge or what Chomsky referred to as "competence", but the new paradigm, referred to as pragmatics, rather focuses on language in its human use, focusing on language users and extralinguistic factors, such as the context of use, that interact to determine meaning. In other words, pragmatics is concerned with what Chomsky referred to as "performance", and not "competence", the backbone of Chomskyan linguistics. It is not surprising that Katz (1977: 19), quoted in Mey (2001: 5), says "Grammars are theories about the structure of sentence types ... Pragmatic theories, in contrast, ... explicate the reasoning of speakers and hearers". The implication is that pragmatics is concerned with actual linguistic practice or performance, and not with competence or the abstract knowledge of language.

Second, pragmatics is not very concerned with users' respect of grammatical norms as they "are doing things in and with language" (Mey 1993: 6), in spite of the fact that Levinson (1983: 9) maintains that it studies "those relations between language and context that are

'grammaticalized' or encoded in the structure of a language" (Levinson 1983: 9). The implication of Levinson's view is that users need to respect the grammatical rules of language in order to express pragmatic meaning or meaning that is determined by contextual factors. Levinson (1983), in other words, claims that the respect of the grammatical rules of language is a prerequisite for the speech activities of language users to be pragmatically relevant, thereby claiming that there is an important relationship between pragmatics and grammar. But Mey (1993: 6) rather thinks that

> [a] truly pragmatic consideration has to deal with the users in their *social context*; it cannot limit itself to the grammatically encoded aspects of context, as the grammaticalization requirement seems to imply (Mey 1993: 6).

The respect of grammatical norms of language is not, therefore, a prerequisite for pragmatics, as Levinson's (1983) grammaticalisation requirement suggests.

Third, pragmatics is not a component of a language theory, but a perspective (Verschueren 1987 and Mey 1993). The question of whether pragmatics should be treated as one of the components of the theory of language (phonology, syntax, morphology, and semantics) has been a recurrent issue in some of the previous attempts to define the discipline. Verschueren (1987), quoted in Mey (1993: 9), maintains that pragmatics is a "perspective" that radically departs from the "established component view" and "tries to assign to pragmatics its own set of linguistic features in contradistinction with phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics" (Verschueren 1987: 36, quoted in Mey 1993: 9). Mey (1993: 9) points out that this "perspective" emphasises the pragmatic aspects of the different parts of linguistics. He further maintains that the pragmatic perspective seeks to find how users communicate using the linguistic resources at their disposal.

Fourth, pragmatics depends on the context and the world of language users for a full understanding of utterances. Without a pragmatic consideration or the context and the intentions of the language users, the meaning of utterances is mostly determined by an underlying element known as presupposition. Mey (1993: 27) provides the utterance:

> *John managed to sell all his shares before the market crashed* (to which a bystander remarks, *No, he didn't*) (Mey 1993: 27).

He points out that some linguists, especially those whose vision is couched in the traditional approach to linguistics, build the survival property of a presupposition "into the very semantics of a particular lexical item" contained in the utterance. He also states that for others,

> presuppositions are inextricably tied to a particular lexical item, as when the checker in an American supermarket tells you to 'Hurry back [to the store]'. Here, the use of the word 'back' logically presupposes that you've been to the store before: otherwise, you wouldn't come 'back' (Mey 1993: 28).

But without consideration of the context under which a given speech act is enacted and the consideration of the language users' intentions and interpretations, the full meaning cannot be determined or unveiled. This explains why Mey (1993: 28) maintains that

> neither a purely logical account, based solely on the truth or falsity of sentences in isolation, nor an exclusively semantic account, based on the value of individual lexical items, will be satisfactory; we must appeal to a *pragmatic* explanation, based on a particular context of a particular utterer (Mey 1993: 28).

The defining characteristics of pragmatics are summarised in Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2010: 5) as follows: (1) the use of language as a means of communication; (2) the importance of language use focusing on functions rather than on forms; (3) the study of processes which occur in communication; (4) the importance of context and authentic language use; (5) the interdisciplinary nature of pragmatics; and (6) the application of linguistic theories based on the notion of communicative competence (Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan 2010: 5).

The characteristics of pragmatics examined so far show that the language user and the context are the main determinants of meaning, and the conventional meanings of linguistic items play a very little role when language users interact in and with language in real-life situations. In other words, the authentic meaning of linguistic items emerges only when language users perform or enact speech acts in given contexts, based on the realities of that context and their shared knowledge. But what do we mean by speech acts?

## 10.3 Speech Act Theory

Instead of appreciating language in terms of "competence" or in terms of the linguistic rules that guide sentence correctness in a native language, as

was the case in Chomskyan linguistics, language use can be seen as an activity. In Austin's (1962) seminal work, entitled "How to Do Things with Words", he demonstrated that when language users interact, they perform actions with words, referred to as speech acts, which Searle (1969: 16) calls the "basic or minimal units of linguistic communication". Searle (1969: 16) explains this in the following words:

> When I take a noise or a mark on a piece of paper to be an instance of linguistic communication, as a message, one of the things I must assume is that the noise or mark was produced by a being or beings more or less like myself and produced with certain kinds of *intentions* (Searle 1969: 16).

It should be noted that speech acts are not linguistic units per se (words, phrases, sentences, etc.), but the type of actions that they can perform or the type of *intentions* they can express. This explains why Mey (1993: 93) says

> speech acts are produced not in the solitary philosopher's think-tank, but in actual situations of language use, by people having something 'in mind'. Such a production naturally presupposes a 'producer' and a 'consumer', human agents whose *intentions* are relevant and indispensable to the correct understanding and description of their utterances, quite contrary to the constructed, non-use-oriented examples of most grammarians and philosophers (Mey 1993: 93-4).

The implication of Mey's view (quoted above) is obvious. It implies that an utterance qualifies as a speech act when it is produced within a given context under the guidance of contextual norms of communication and when users genuinely express their intentions that are genuinely interpreted by other users within that communicative context.

The fundamental idea behind the theory of speech acts is that words are uttered to perform certain verbal actions that have a significant impact on the recipients of the actions. In other words, "words can change the world" (Mey 1993: 95), given that

> [s]peech acts are verbal actions happening in the world. Uttering a speech act, I do something with my words: I perform an *activity* that (at least intentionally) brings about a change in the existing state of affairs (hence the label, 'performative utterances', that originally was attached to speech acts). For instance, if I say to a newborn human: "I baptize thee 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'" (cf. Matthew 28:19), then this human being is from now on and forever a Christian— provided I took care to let my words be accompanied by the flowing of

water on the infant's head (or some other body part, in case of necessity). And if I belong to those who believe in the power of baptism, the world as a whole will now have changed as well: there will be one more Christian among the living (Mey 1993: 95).

The above quotation confirms Austin's performative hypothesis that language is not used only to say things, but to do things. This means language is used not to make statements, but to perform actions.

According to Austin (1962), speech acts or verbal activities are made up of different aspects: the locutionary aspect, the illocutionary aspect, and the perlocutionary aspect (Austin 1962; Searle 1969; Mey 1993; and Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan 2010). Locutionary aspects refer to the activity of saying something or the actual words uttered by a speaker. For example:

It seems you are very heavy today!

The illocutionary aspect refers to what the utterance does or the force or intention behind the utterance. In other words, is the utterance a statement, a wish, a command, a complaint, etc.? The perlocutionary aspect or act has to do with the effects of what is said on the hearer.

With regard to illocutionary acts, Austin (1962) identified five types. First, there is what he referred to as virdictives, which are concerned with the passing of judgement or verdict (e.g., You are convicted of two crimes and sentenced to five months of imprisonment!). Second, exercitives are illocutionary acts which involve the exercising of power, right or influence (e.g., I appoint you the new Minister of Finance). Third, there are commissives, which involve the assuming of obligation or the giving of an undertaking (e.g., I promise to be present at your birthday party; I bet you my car that it will rain tomorrow; I agree to build your house in ten days). Fourth, behabitives, which are illocutionary acts involving the adoption of a given attitude, such as an apology or a compliment (e.g., I am really sorry for coming late; You look great today!). Fifth, there are expositives, which include illocutionary acts that provide reasons, argument, or explanations for certain situations or tendencies (e.g., Peter had an accident because of drunkenness).

Speech act theory is particularly relevant in this chapter, given that certain speech acts performed in Cameroon are analysed in terms of their locutionary aspects, their illocutionary force, and the perlocutionary effects of the acts. It should be noted that it is only in the context of speech act theory that the real meaning of the acts and their correlation with the hearers' reaction can be determined. As shall be seen later, the semantics

(or the conventional meaning of the words uttered) has nothing to do with the speakers' intentions. This implies that the speech act theory provides the perspective from which the pragmatic or the context-specific real-life meanings of the acts can be assessed.

## 10.4 Methodology

The methodology used to carry out an investigation of this nature is as important as the findings obtained from the investigation and this explains why this section focuses primarily on the manner in which the data of the study were collected and analysed. As concerns the method of data collection, it is worth pointing out that the utterances that constituted the raw data for this investigation were collected between 2012 and 2016 during real-life language use by Cameroonians from different walks of life. Each time the investigator witnessed a speech act and the corresponding reaction from the hearer, he would describe it in a notepad. In addition, the investigator would take note of the social context of the interaction, the place where the words were uttered, and the medium through which the acts were performed. With regard to the method of data analysis, the speech acts collected were analysed in terms of their locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary aspects, as suggested in Austin's three-fold taxonomy. In analysing the speech acts, a conscious effort was made to highlight the differences between their meanings in context and their out of context meanings, which do not reflect the speakers' intentions and the hearers' interpretations of the acts.

## 10.5 Speech Acts and their Pragmatic Effects

As indicated above, many speech acts performed in Cameroon were collected over the last five years and five of these speech acts have been randomly selected for the writing of this chapter. The analysis of these speech acts reveals interesting results. Let's consider the following speech act performed by a woman who saw her babysitter beating her child:

> (1)  Please, help me to kill that child (shouting)! (The babysitter immediately stopped beating the child and apologised, but explained that the child was very naughty).

According to Austin's (1962) three-aspect taxonomy, the exact words uttered by the woman ("Please, help me to kill that child") constitute what he referred to as a locutionary act. But what is the illocutionary force of

this speech act? What are the intentions of the woman? In other words, what did the woman mean, when she performed the act? If we want to rely only on the semantics of the words, the only conclusion will be that the woman asked her babysitter to take away the life of her son. But the speaker's intention was far from that! The social context of that speech act and the relationship between the babysitter and the woman show that the woman could not in any way be asking the babysitter to take away the life of her own child. The perlocutionary effect of the speech act further shows that the meaning of the act does not depend on the linguistic aspects of the act, considering that the babysitter immediately stopped beating the child after the speech act, instead of going ahead "to kill the child", as the wordings of the act appear to suggest. This implies that the illocutionary force of the speech act is a command, which ordered the babysitter to stop beating the child. This explains why she stopped immediately, and even apologised for having beaten the child.

The following is another speech act performed by somebody whose wedding party could not be attended by his friend:

(2) Thank you very much; you are my wonderful friend! (The speaker's friend responded by apologising and providing an explanation for his absence at the wedding party!)

What were the real intentions of the performer of the above-mentioned locutionary act? How did the hearer (the speaker's friend) interpret it? In other words, what is the perlocutionary aspect of the speech act? What is the surface intention or meaning of the act, suggested by the linguistic aspects of the act without consideration of the context? If the utterance is analysed out of its context, one will fallaciously conclude that the speaker was extending words of gratitude or compliments to his friend (the hearer), but an appraisal of the speech act in context shows that the speaker's intention was rather to complain. This means the illocutionary aspect of the act is a complaint. This is confirmed by the fact that the perlocutionary effect of the locutionary act was an apology from the hearer. If the illocutionary act was actually a compliment or an appreciation in the true sense of it, the hearer would accept it and probably utter some friendly remarks in a cordial mood. But this was not the case; on the contrary, the hearer was defensive and apologetic.

The next speech act to be considered in this chapter is as follows:

(3) This is 12 o'clock! (A member of the teaching staff in a given institution reminded his colleague that it was already

midday and the colleague responded by thanking the
performer of the speech act, but indicating that he was not
yet ready for lunch.)

If the utterance is assessed out of context, one is likely to conclude that the
intention of the speaker was only to indicate the time of the day. But an
understanding of the utterance in context and the relationship between the
interactants show that the illocutionary aspect of the speech act is an
invitation for lunch. Instead of the hearer confirming or refuting the fact
that it was already midday or simply thanking the speaker for telling him
the time, he went ahead to thank the speaker for inviting him, even though
he was unable to honour the invitation at that particular time. The
perlocutionary effects of the speech act on the hearer further confirm that
it was an invitation, considering that the hearer talked about lunch, in spite
of the fact that the speaker (or the performer of the act) made no direct
reference to it.

          One of the speech acts randomly selected for this work includes
the following:

          (4) It seems that you are very heavy today. (This was uttered
              by a woman to her husband and he replied by stating that
              the government had paid his arrears.)

The analysis of this speech act out of context is likely to reveal that the
speaker was concerned with the hearer's weight, but the contrary is true
when the speech act is situated and analysed within the context in which it
was performed, especially if the interactants' shared knowledge of the
concept of "being heavy" is considered. When the locutionary act was
performed, the perlocutionary effect of the act on the hearer clearly
brought out the illocutionary aspect of the act, which was a question about
the financial situation of the hearer, not a statement about his weight as
implied by the linguistic aspects of the utterance. In other words, the
intention of the speaker was to find out whether the hearer had had any
financial breakthrough, given that the hearer's reaction rather made
reference to his financial situation, and not to his weight!

          The last speech act to be analysed in this chapter includes the
following:

          (5) I heard that you are now a bushman. (A statement made to
              me by my colleague when I returned from a recent stay in

Germany, and I responded by saying that I went to Europe just for a brief research stay.)

An appraisal of this speech act from a pure semantic perspective will suggest that the illocutionary aspect of the act is an insult. In other words, the analysis of the utterance out of context will give a false impression that the speaker's intention was to insult and be impolite. But the speech act in its social context has a completely different meaning suggested by the linguistic aspects of the act. In fact, the speaker's intention in this speech act was to give a compliment and highlight the fact that I constantly travel out of the country. The expressions "bush-falling" and "bush-faller" have gained admission into the linguistic spectrum of the English used in the Cameroonian context. "Bush-falling" refers to the phenomenon of migrating to a Western country for greener pastures and a "bush-faller" is he or she who migrates. The locutionary act: "I heard that you are now a bushman" was understood in the context of the phenomenon of "bush-falling", which is well-rooted in Cameroonian English. The illocutionary force of the speech act was not considered an insult because it was understood as a compliment or another way of recognising and appreciating my regular professional mobility.

## 10.6 Conclusion

The discussion so far in this chapter reveals a number of important facts. For instance, it is shown that communication in Cameroon, like in other places, depends very much on the intentions and interpretations of language users, as demonstrated by Austin (1962), Searle (1969), Mey (1993), Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2010), etc. In other words, in Cameroon, like in other places where pragmatic studies have been conducted, the meaning of utterances or speech acts depends more on language use in context than on the abstract linguistic units. This implies that there is, indeed, a marked difference between semantics and pragmatics, which capture conventional and contextual meaning respectively. Furthermore, the chapter shows that words are not only used to say things, but actually to perform different verbal actions, as propounded by Austin and his followers, but the nature of the actions cannot be easily determined if the context of the speech act is not considered. For instance, in (1) above (Please, help me to kill that child (shouting)), one can erroneously conclude that the speaker was asking the hearer to exercise the power of killing, especially if we go by the abstract linguistic units involved, but analysing the speech act in context reveals

that the speaker's intention was rather to command the hearer to stop beating the child. This speech act and the other ones analysed in this chapter clearly show that the speakers' intentions cannot be discerned from the abstract linguistic units; one necessarily needs knowledge of the context to be able to determine the illocutionary and perlocutionary forces of the speech acts performed.

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# CHAPTER 11

# PRAGMATIC MEANINGS OF INTERTEXTUAL REFERENCES IN CAMPAIGN-RELATED CARTOONS IN NIGERIA'S 2011 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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## AND OLUWAYOMI OLANIYAN

## Abstract

*The paper explores the range of intertextual references and pragmatic meanings in campaign-related cartoons published in two Nigerian newspapers some months before and after Nigeria's April 2011 general elections. The corpus comprised thirty editorial cartoons purposively selected because of the intertextual references in them. Data analysis was done through Raskin and Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), which enhances the identification and description of the intertextual features in campaign-related cartoons and situates them appropriately in the Nigerian socio-political context. The findings reveal that, in addition to the humour and satire embedded in the cartoon messages, intertextual references are used creatively in campaign-related political cartoons to convey multiple pragmatic meanings associated with Nigerian politicians and the Nigerian socio-cultural milieu. The findings further reveal that intertextual references are employed in the cartoons to satirise general misconceptions by Nigerian politicians and the Nigerian electorate about the real purpose of seeking public office in Nigeria. The study concludes that the use of intertextual references serves the multiple purposes of entertaining the Nigerian newspaper-reading public, lampooning negative traits exhibited by Nigerian politicians and the ruling elite, and portraying them and their party as ill-suited for governance.*

Keywords: *Intertextuality; knowledge resource; pragmatic meaning; verbal humour; campaign-related political cartoons*

# 11.1 Introduction

A political cartoon is a representational or symbolic sketch intended to convey a satirical, witty or humorous message. It can also be described as a humorous response in the form of visual imagery (Morris 1992). Political cartoons can be quite funny and they often convey indirect meanings that are usually comprehensible to readers that follow the prevailing media-political discourse or are familiar with a particular socio-political or spatio-temporal context. Political cartoons have played a significant role in public discourse; hence they have been analysed using methods from classical semiotics, semiotic morphisms, and in particular the study of blends (Bergen 2003). Such scholarly activities centre on interpreting the message of political cartoons, eliciting elements of serious social commentary from light-hearted, satirical and humorous sketches and accounting for the literary structures underlying the surface realisations in political cartoons, among others. Political cartoons, also known as editorial cartoons, constitute an unusual art form used to express opinions on public issues; hence they have played important roles in the examination of historical and contemporary issues and events.

Intertextuality in campaign-related political cartoons has to do with the re-use of borrowed or adapted excerpts or visuals from previous utterances and publications. According to DeSousa and Martins (1982: 49), writers use intertextuality to appeal to a particular memory bank that provides the right interpretation of texts. Intertextuality, therefore, accounts for the elements of a previous text that has been used in another. Intertextuality has been observed to be a major tool employed by cartoonists to convey punchy socio-political messages to the newspaper-reading public. According to Allen (2000), intertextuality "foregrounds notions of relationality, interconnectedness and interdependence in modern cultural life". Tannen (2007) added that it refers to the interconnectedness, interdependence and relationality in discourse. According to her, "intertextuality", in its many guises, refers to the insight that meaning in language results from a complex relationship of linking items within a discourse, and linking current to prior instances of language. Intertextuality therefore refers to an instance of a particular text or work, drawing from prior or previous texts. For Kristeva (1986), however, intertextuality implies "the insertion of history (society) into a text and of this text into history".

In their pursuit of humour and satire, cartoonists often resort to intertextuality and interdiscursivity. When analogies are drawn from historical events, literary allusions, or past cultural knowledge, readers' understanding of such analogies becomes restricted to their familiarity with the inherent events being alluded to. Cartoons are meaningful to those who understand something about the larger discourse within which they are constructed and read. Most rhetorical devices can be grouped under the broad categories of caricature and visual analogy (e.g., Hou and Hou 1998). Visual analogies are at the heart of cartoons and what captures thoughts and emotions. They consist of simplified situations, characters or objects designed to stand for more complex issues. Rather than making a literal statement about an issue, the artist likens it to something else, and through this comparison, invites interpretation. The point of an analogy is not just to present an opinion, but also to stimulate interest and thinking. Meanings arise as each viewer sees a comparison between the portrayed scene and the larger issue. By bringing two things together and implying a likeness between them, a metaphor is essentially ambiguous because it both highlights and hides meanings, and allows for multiple entailments and implications (Burack 1994).

## 11.2 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

According to Fauconnier and Turner (2002), editorial cartooning started with Benjamin Franklin who was attributed with the publication of an editorial cartoon in an American newspaper in 1754 with the legendary caption "Join or Die". The cartoon depicted the image of a dissected snake, labelled into different colonies (Burns 2007). Franklin wanted the colonies to unite so that they could effectively confront the force of British imperialism. Instead of merely writing about his thoughts in an editorial, he used an editorial cartoon to more effectively articulate his thoughts to achieve the ultimate goal of galvanising the leaders of the different colonies to come together and "live" instead of operating separately and "dying". Underlying the production of the cartoon was a prevailing myth during Franklin's time that if the pieces of a snake that had been cut into small pieces were put together, the snake would come alive again. The intertextual interpretation given to this cartoon, on account of this myth, made the cartoon even more meaningful to the reading public at the time (Fauconnier and Turner 2002).

A political cartoon can be a *distortion* of reality. In his exploration of the images of Hillary Clinton in cartoons, Templin (1999) observes that it is the norm for cartoonists to employ satire and distortion of the truth in

their cartoons. Lamb (2004) considers political cartoons as critical artefacts used to lampoon political leaders and their contemptible policies. Benoit et al. (2001) employed Symbolic Convergence Theory to analyse 2,000 political cartoons that centre on the investigation and trial of Bill Clinton in the wake of the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal in 1998. They observe that the free use of metaphor and allusion in the cartoons allows for multiple interpretations and made the fantasy themes in the dramas accessible to readers with widely divergent attitudes. They conclude that despite the fictional nature of the cartoons, their messages make moral judgements on the public figure involved in the scandal. Steuter et al. (2008) examined the process of composing editorial cartoons in terms of the roles they serve in society. Thus, it can be deduced that they are used for assessing rhetorical discourse with an emphasis on the visual message that provides the bases for the analysis of the imaginative language and imagery embedded in the cartoons.

Eko (2007) analysed cartoon images of African political leaders published in African newspapers, using the notions of "transilience", whereby human beings are given animal attributes for the purpose of satire, and "deterritorialisation", which symbolically take the offending leaders out of their natural "territories" in order to portray authoritarianism as animalistic and self-destructive. On the other hand, some studies show how political cartoons are used to promote candidates' reputations through positive representations. For instance, Conners (2005) explored how political cartoons constituted part of the popular culture in the 2004 American presidential campaigns. He claims that political cartoons are used as tools for manipulating voters' opinions on the candidates through cartoon messages during the campaign period. Thus, cartoons are used as elaborate campaign machinery during an election period.

Scholars differ in their submissions on the beginning of cartooning in Nigeria. According to Olaniyan (2002: 124), cartooning in its present mode in Nigeria had no indigenous provenance and was part and parcel of colonial modernity. He attributes it to part of the consequence of contact with the West. Contrary to the belief that satiric discourse is part of the Nigerian colonial heritage, Onipede (2007: 2) observes that caricature as a form of art had existed for a long time in the country before the advent of colonialism. Notwithstanding the different perspectives above, we would like to observe that satire is a fundamental art form that has served many social functions that included entertainment and correcting the ills in contemporary Nigerian society. Satire in traditional societies found expressions in verbal and visual elements which include abusive and mocking songs during traditional festivals such as *Oke Ibadan*, *Gelede,*

*Efe* and *Bolojo*. There were also sculptural mocking images on helmets and facial masks worn during *Egungun* festivals (Jimoh 2010).

The GTVH was first published in 1991 when Attardo and Raskin carried out a joint revision of Raskin's 1985 proposal about the script-based Semantic Theory of Humour (Attardo 2008: 107). In the original version of the theory, Raskin (1985) proposed an exclusively semantic theory where he stated that humour was based on the opposition of two different semantic scripts. This theory did not permit a clear-cut distinction between the semantic information and the pragmatic information occasioned by humour. Moreover, it is only applicable to the analysis of prototypes and simple humorous forms known as jokes. Attardo and Raskin teamed up to establish a new theory that differs from the previous one. They did this by extending the semantic and pragmatic perspectives and permitting the analysis of more complex forms of humour.

The GTVH (Attardo 2001: 22; 2008: 108) comprises six types of knowledge resources (KR) which make it possible to detect whether a text is humorous or not and show the hierarchical relationships that exist between them. The six KRs of the GTVH are summarised below:

- The situation (SI) refers to everything that surrounds humour, i.e., the context which evokes and generates the framework in the humour discourse.
- The target (TA) shows the person the humour is addressed to or the butt of the joke. According to Attardo (2001: 24), this knowledge resource is also optional, because it is not mandatory for a humorous text to ridicule someone or have a personal target.
- The logical mechanism (LM) is a feature of the GTVH that has to do with the incongruity-resolution process and it is optional in some instances of humour (Attardo 2001: 25).
- The language (LA) refers to "all the choices at the phonetic, phonological, morphophonemic, morphologic, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels of language structure that the speaker is still free to make, given that everything else in the joke is already given and cannot be tinkered with" (Attardo 1991: 298). The text contains suitable words which lead to an opposition of senses and possible double interpretation (e.g., polysemy, ambiguity, polyphony, hyperbole, etc.).
- The narrative strategy (NS) has to do with the genre used to express humour. In other words, if it is a joke, the strategy can

adopt a question-answer or riddle format. For instance, a humorous text might have more complex structural patterns.

- The script opposition (SO) refers to the central condition for a text to be considered as humorous. The text in question can be compatible, fully or in part, with two semantic scripts that are opposite in meaning, at least within the text itself.

Attardo (2001: 62) further points out that humour is different, depending on whether it takes place in narrative texts or in conversation. The essential difference lies in the lack of planning which exists in the latter and in the significance of context for the accurate interpretation of humorous utterances. As a joke teller produces a humorous text, the receiver must actively participate in the comprehension process, so that humour can arise (Shultz 1972). Conceptualised theoretically, the processes of production and comprehension are compatible. In other words, the hearer or reader processes and comprehends a joke in accordance with the joke teller's communicative plan.

The GTVH suggests that humorous texts are divided into two classes. The first class includes texts which are structurally similar to jokes and terminate with a punchline. The second class includes texts in which humour is not necessarily restricted to their end, but may be diffused throughout the texts, and encoded through words, phrases or sentences. In the first case, humour is based on the punchline that brings SO to the surface and causes the re-interpretation of the whole text. The texts in the latter case contain both a humorous and a non-humorous component, the latter being called serious relief (Attardo 2001: 89). Attardo introduces a second kind of humorous line, the jab line, which is a word, a phrase or a sentence that triggers the SO. Thus, the jab line is semantically identical to a punchline. The main difference is their position: punchlines are always final in a humorous text while jab lines may occur in any part except the end. Their function is also different; punchlines disrupt the flow of humorous text, while jab lines are fully integrated into it and are indispensable to the development of its plot (Attardo 2001: 82-83).

## 11.3 Research Design

The data for the study were collected from the cartoon sections of two leading Nigerian newspapers: *The Guardian* and *The Punch*. These two were chosen because they are generally viewed in Nigeria as being people-friendly and they have a reputation for consistency and objectivity in their portrayal of Nigerian socio-political happenings. A total of thirty cartoons

that contain intertextual features were purposively selected from both newspapers. The publication period was between January and June 2011, a period that covered the three months before and after Nigeria's general elections. This sampling method made the selection of campaign-related cartoons possible from an array of political cartoons.

The data analysis was essentially qualitative in view of the need to analyse each text independently without necessarily drawing a comparison with other texts in the corpus. Common features were alluded to where they exist and such instances were used to strengthen perceptions about observed trends in Nigerian socio-political discourse. The analysis was done using Raskin and Attardo's GTVH. The theory enhanced the identification and description of intertextual features in campaign-related cartoons and situated them appropriately in the Nigerian socio-political context. The first level of analysis entails the elicitation of the features of intertextuality in the data and an explanation of the situational factors (SI), the target (TA) and the logical mechanism (LM) underlying their production. The second level is the analysis of the punchline which is conveyed by the language (LA) and the narrative strategy (NS) employed by the cartoonists. The third and final level of analysis is the description of the script opposition (SO) and the contextual interpretation of the intertextual references in the cartoons.

# 11.4 Data Analysis

This section accounts for significant intertextual references associated with Nigerian political leaders in the selected cartoons. Generally speaking, campaign-related political cartoons in Nigerian newspapers often exhibit intertextual references in the form of borrowings, adaptations, adulterated expressions, allusions and socio-cultural practices. Instances of such intertextual references were classified under four broad categories in the data analysis as follows: metaphors from Nigerian socio-political discourse; a rehash of gaffs by national political leaders; scriptural references; and socio-cultural references.

## 11.4.1 Metaphors from the Nigerian Socio-political Context

As already stated in the research design, the situational (SI) context of the campaign-related political cartoons used for this study belongs to the period immediately preceding and the months after Nigeria's April 2011 general elections. The cartoons are produced mainly for the consumption of readers who are expected to be conversant with the prevailing socio-

political and temporal contexts of the publications. Corruption, in diverse forms, is a major issue in Nigerian socio-political discourse; hence it is a major trigger of LM in many of the cartoons. This Achilles heel underlies the cartoonists' portrayal of their misgivings about the real motives of candidates seeking elective positions in Nigeria. Consequently, political party leaders and top public office holders are the major target (TA) of most of the cartoons. The use of intertextuality makes it possible for Nigerian newspaper cartoonists to ridicule and satirise the politicians without attracting libel suits against their newspaper. Cartoon 1 contains an example of the intertextual use of metaphors from Nigerian socio-political discourse:
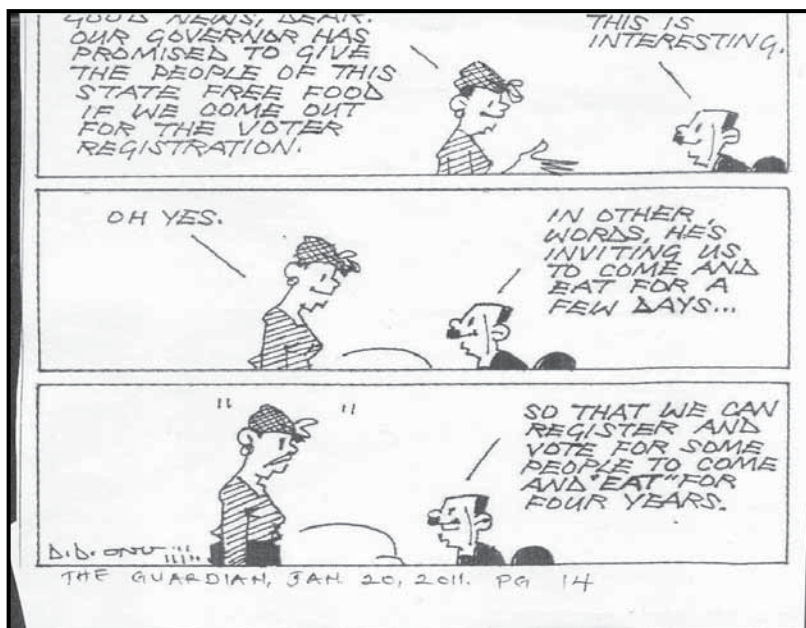


The Guardian, Jan. 20, 2011. Pg. 14 Cartoon 1

The intertextual expression, "come and eat", alluded to in Cartoon 1 is a dining metaphor that was first attributed to Samuel Afolabi, a former Nigerian minister between 1999 and 2003. It was widely circulated in the media during the period that he used the expression in a media altercation between him and Bola Ige, a fellow minister who had been brought in from the opposition party to serve in the Olusegun Obasanjo-led administration. The expression has its antecedent in the Yoruba metaphor,

*ko owo je* (eat money), an expression used humorously in standard Yoruba to describe the embezzlement of public funds. The expression is generally perceived by many Nigerians as an apt summary of the real motives of most Nigerian politicians seeking public office.

Another metaphorical expression used intertextually to allude to corruption in the Nigerian socio-political context is "Ghana-must-go" (see Cartoon 2). This expression denotatively refers to a cheap hold-all bag commonly used by Nigerian petty traders to carry their wares. The bag derived its name from an unfortunate incident in the late 70s when Ghanaians were expelled *en masse* from Nigeria. Consequently, many of the departing migrants were compelled by the prevailing circumstances to reduce their possessions into crude hold-all bags later referred to humorously as "Ghana-must-go". With the preponderance of the use of cash for business transactions in Nigeria, the bag gained notoriety as the medium of conveying excessive and often illegal cash transfers between politicians across the country. Consequently, the expression is used connotatively in Nigerian political discourse to describe the predilection of members of the Nigerian political class to plunder the country through the illegal transfer of cash from the public coffers.

While Cartoon 1 portrays a family situation in which a couple sees their political office as an opportunity for corrupt enrichment epitomised by the act of "eating" money (embezzlement of public funds), Cartoon 2 is a classroom situation in which a man representing the country's Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) reads out the rules of the game to political office seekers. The target (TA) of the joke in Cartoon 1 is the Nigerian electorate, while that of Cartoon 2 is the Nigerian political class. Both categories of Nigerians seem to agree that public office is more for personal enrichment than anything else. The language (LA) of the cartoons is simple and rich in local metaphor, comprehensible to anyone who is familiar with the Nigerian socio-political context. The cartoonists employ the NS of dialogue in Cartoon 1 and classroom instruction in Cartoon 2, not only to ridicule the Nigerian electorate and public office seekers, but also to show the general lack of commitment for the public good by all parties concerned in Nigerian politics.

PDP, NCP others reject INEC's code of conduct -News

**INEC CODE OF CONDUCT**
- NO THUGGERY
- NO FOUL LANGUAGE: e.g. RASCALS, DRUNKARDS
- DO NOT CARRY WEAPONS
- NO RALLIES NEAR EACH OTHER
- NO MAN IS ABOVE THE LAW
- ACCEPT DEFEAT AFTER ELECTIONS
- LASTLY, NO GHANA-MUST-GO DURING ELECTIONS
- AVOID DO-OR-DIE POLITICS

AND THE CLASS CAPTAIN WHO SHOULD LEAD BY EXAMPLE IS SLEEPING!

THE PUNCH, MARCH 15, 2011. PG 14

Punch March 15, 2011. Pg 14 Cartoon 2

The SO in Cartoon 1 lies in the ignorance exhibited by the couple being portrayed in the cartoon, representing the pervasive misunderstanding of the purpose of governance by ordinary Nigerians as an avenue for personal and sectional enrichment instead of pursuing the public interest. In Cartoon 2, the content of the rules being read out by the representative of the INEC portrays the Nigerian political class as a group of scoundrels united in their unwillingness to play the game by the rules; hence such people have no business seeking public office in a civilised society. Both cartoons demonstrate that with this calibre of ignorant electorate and corrupt public office seekers, no one should expect much development or progress in Nigeria after the 2011 general elections.

      Another intertextual expression that points to corruption in the data is "robust cheek", which became popular during Nigeria's Second Republic (1979-1983), after a member of the ruling political party used the expression to describe the phenomenal wealth acquired by the ruling party loyalists and their cronies. Likewise, the expression, "Toronto degree", used in another cartoon, is generally used intertextually in Nigerian media-political discourse to satirise public officers suspected of making bogus claims about their academic qualifications. The expression gained popularity after two public officers in Nigeria's Third Republic (1999-

2003) were discovered to have made bogus claims that they took their university degrees in the University of Toronto, Canada. Finally, the question "how much is he going to pay for the exam papers?" used in another cartoon, intertextually satirises the institutionalisation of examination malpractices in Nigeria. It is a common practice, already accepted as the norm in Nigeria, for public examination candidates to pay examination supervisors to look the other way while they engage in organised cheating during public examinations.

## 11.4.2 The Rehash of Gaffs by Political Leaders

Utterances and gaffs attributed to party flag bearers are often rehashed by cartoonists to serve diverse intertextual functions in Nigerian media-political discourse. Olusegun Obasanjo, a retired General and former Nigerian president, has a reputation for speaking bluntly. Some of his controversial utterances are often adapted and rehashed intertextually, sometimes out of context, to satirise him and the party he led. Goodluck Jonathan, Nigeria's former vice president, who later became president, was also reputed to have committed serious gaffs in the course of his political career; hence journalists and cartoonists often took such expressions and used them, often out of context, to achieve the media-political effect of ridiculing him and portraying him negatively before the Nigerian electorate. This subsection analyses the intertextual uses of some of the utterances credited to these two major participants in campaign-related cartoons published before and after Nigeria's April 2011 general elections.

Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigeria's former president, was credited with many controversial expressions that formed the butt of satirical jokes about him and his ruling political party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), in Nigerian newspaper editorial cartoons. Examples of such expressions often cited in the cartoons include the following:

- Operation totality
- Do-or-die politics
- Fight to the finish

The situational (SI) context of "operation totality" is traceable to when Olusegun Obasanjo used the expression to rally his party members during the campaign trail for Goodluck Jonathan's electioneering in the run-up to the April 2011 general elections. Olusegun Obasanjo is easily identified as the target (TA) of the joke, given his reputation for

intolerance of opposition while he was Nigeria's former military dictator (1976-1979) and democratically elected president (1999-2003). The LM of the intertextual expressions could be derived from his antecedent as a ruthless warlord, to whom the Biafra rebels surrendered, bringing an end to Nigeria's three-year brutal civil war in 1970. The NS of sloganeering, which can be used to categorise the expressions, is a common device in Nigerian media-political discourse to make a cause attractive to the Nigerian public. The SO of the expressions can be found in the absurdity of using such expressions in a democratic dispensation by a person who has previously benefitted from the principles of democratic practices. The intertextual expressions satirise Obasanjo, and by default, his party's preference for raw force in spite of the democratic dispensation that expects things to be done in a civil and orderly manner. The expressions also show that the prevailing rule in Nigerian political discourse is the survival of the fittest and not necessarily the people's choice through the ballot box.

In Cartoon 3, the cartoonist opens with an intertextual reference to Obasanjo's much-publicised farm and library project, often used to satirise him in Nigerian media-political discourse as a corrupt political leader. He closes the cartoon by drawing on three popular intertextual references "do-or-die", "fight to the finish" and "operation totality", often attributed to Olusegun Obasanjo, not only to satirise his intolerance of opposition, but to portray him as an undemocratic leader who was desperate to put his party in power at all costs in spite of its unpopularity. The intertextual expressions provide opportunities for multiple pragmatic interpretations of Obasanjo's crude tactics and the perceived desperation of his party to return to power by hook or by crook.

The Guardian, May 23, 2011. Pg. 16 Cartoon 3

       The expressions "I'm laughing", "I laugh *ke ke ke"* and several other real or fictional variants, often attributed to Olusegun Obasanjo, are repeated in many cartoons in the corpus. During a press interview in 2010 when Olusegun Obasanjo's opinion was sought about the chances of his former deputy, Atiku Abubakar, becoming Nigeria's president, he laughed uproariously for several seconds before responding sarcastically, "I laugh *ke ke ke"*. In Cartoon 4, "*ke ke ke*", an onomatopoeic expression signifying laughter in Yoruba is used light-heartedly to ridicule the chances of many political contenders that were desirous of wresting the leadership of the PDP, Nigeria's ruling political party at the time, from Olusegun Obasanjo. The joke's target is in the fictitious utterance, "Who are these weaklings? *ke ke ke*, I *dey* laugh *o*", which has the potential multiple pragmatic meaning of satirising Obasanjo as an undemocratic sit-tight leader and

ridiculing the other contenders for the position, especially Atiku Abubakar, as equally unworthy of leadership positions. The uncouth language (LA) exemplified by the fictitious question, "Who are these weaklings?" and the NS of bragging attributed to Obasanjo's image effectively satirise him as a crude and fearsome political gladiator. His utterance in this cartoon is in the same intertextual mould as "operation totality", "do-or-die politics" and "fight to the finish" often associated with him in the media.



The Punch, May 25, 2011. Pg. 18 Cartoon 4

The lexical item, "rascals", alluded to in Cartoon 5, had previously been credited to Goodluck Jonathan during his electioneering campaign at Ibadan and the jab is repeated in many campaign-related cartoons to negatively portray him as a simpleton and an unskilful politician.
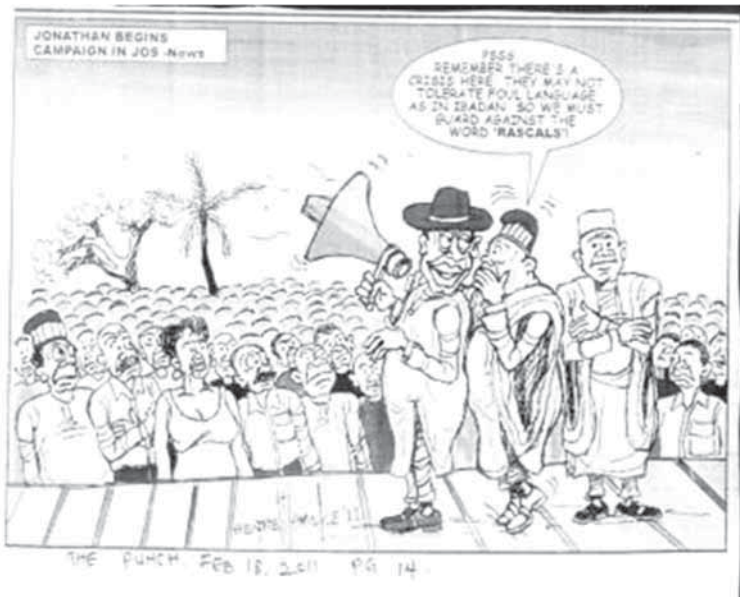
The Punch, Feb. 18, 2011. Pg 14 Cartoon 5

The SI of the intertextual expression is drawn from the incumbent president's previous inauspicious description of his political opponents in southwestern Nigeria as "rascals". Cartoonists loyal to the opposition subsequently single out this politically inappropriate choice of word and use it to whip up sentiment against him, thereby portraying him negatively, at least in the eyes of southwestern Nigerian voters, and mar his chances in the foremost stronghold of the opposition party. The LM of drawing attention to this lexical item in the cartoon shows that the incumbent president cannot afford to be careless in his choice of words in a new location, exemplified by Jos, in view of the damage done by his previous use of a campaign-unfriendly word at Ibadan. The SO, the central condition for a text to be considered humorous, lies in the inherent ambiguity of the word "rascals", which not only portrays southwestern Nigerian politicians negatively, but all Nigerian politicians, including Goodluck Jonathan and Olusegun Obasanjo.

### 11.4.3 Scriptural References

Nigeria is a religious community and many educated Nigerians are conversant with the Bible, especially those who are either Christians or who have had Christian contact in the course of their education or socio-cultural development. The corpus contains instances of direct excerpts from the Bible or modifications of biblical excerpts to suit the joke. Such excerpts are used intertextually in campaign-related cartoons to achieve various pragmatic interpretations of Nigerian political campaign discourse. This is illustrated in Cartoon 6 below:



The Punch, June 1, 2011. Pg. 18 Cartoon 6

The reference to the sale of birthright and the expressions, "SILVER AND GOLD I HAVE NONE …" are examples of intertextual references from the Bible. The quote "silver and gold I have none…", borrowed from the Acts of the Apostles 3:6, is used sarcastically in Cartoon 6 to show the expectation by the Nigerian electorate of financial inducements from seekers of political office to influence their voting. This explains the situational background of the cartoon and the logical mechanism underlying its production. The expression has been used as SO

in the Nigerian reality where it is laughable for anyone to expect to be voted for if he or she does not offer upfront gratification to the electorate. The target of the joke is on both the Nigerian electorate, who too often expect financial inducements during electioneering campaigns, and the corrupt politicians, who ultimately emerge as winners after paying out large sums of money to the electorate to influence their choice.

In Cartoon 7, the cartoonist plays on the rhythmic essence of Christ's utterance in Luke 4:4 where he rebuffs Satan by saying: "A man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God". This expression has been turned around to satirise Nigerian politicians who have a tendency to deceive the electorate; hence "A POLITICIAN CANNOT WIN BY RIGGING ELECTIONS ALONE BUT BY EVERY FAKE PROMISE THAT PROCEEDETH FROM HIS MOUTH". The cartoonist twists the expression sarcastically to show how Nigerian politicians, under the guise of religious piety, deceive the electorate with unrealisable promises during the electioneering campaign only to pursue their selfish interests once they are elected to office.
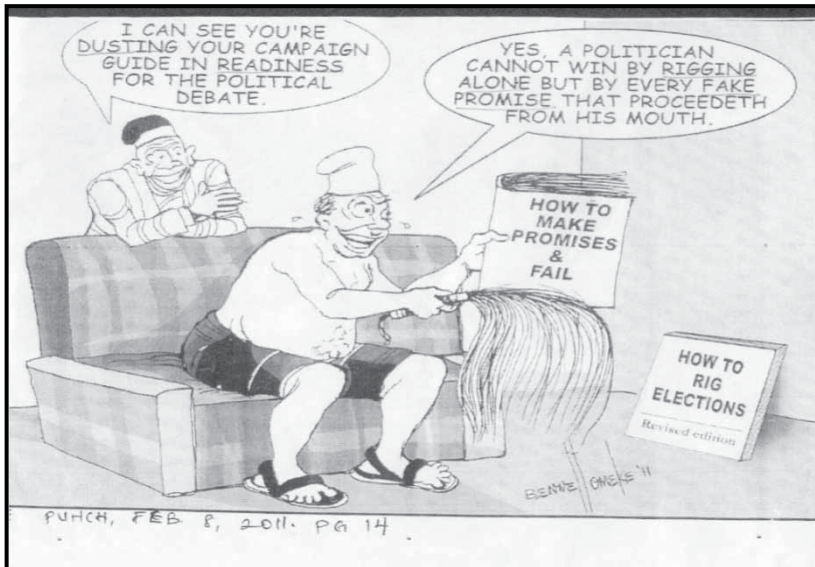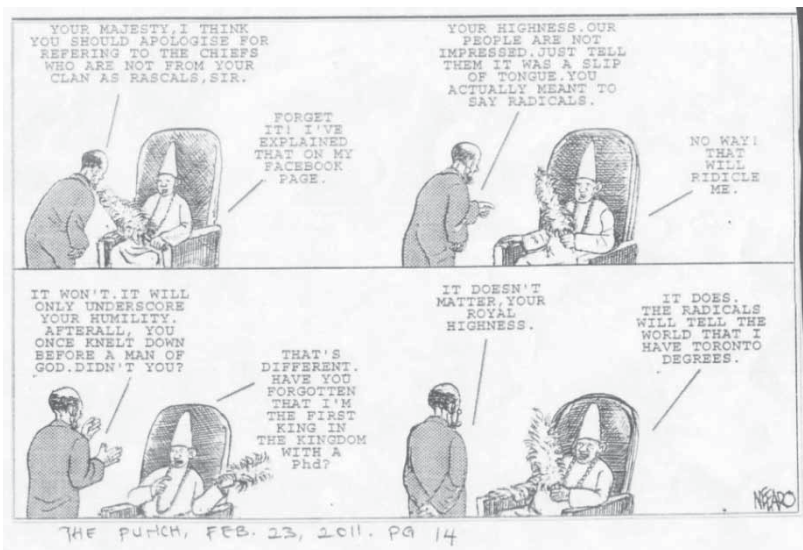


The Punch, Feb. 8, 2011. Pg 14 Cartoon 7

In another cartoon that features a dialogue between two interlocutors, the first person says, "Your party is full of fishy billionaires"; while the second person responds, "We are fishers of big men". This response is an intertextual reference to Christ's promise to transform his disciples from fishermen to "fishers of men" (Mark 4:19). The expression, "big men", in Nigerian English refers to rich and influential persons. The butt of the joke and the purpose served by the cartoonist's inclusion of the adjective "big" to the expression is to portray Nigeria's ruling political elite as a group of people whose ultimate goal is to make its members rich without necessarily concerning themselves with the yearnings of the Nigerian voting public.

### 11.4.4 Socio-cultural References

Expressions exemplified by "clan", "chiefs", "king", "kingdom", "your majesty", and "royal highness" which are used in Cartoon 8 are common in a typical Nigerian traditional or palace setting.



The Punch, Feb. 23, 2011. Pg 14 Cartoon 8

In the Yoruba traditional setting, for instance, a king (known as *oba*) is literally the second in command to the gods. No one dares question his authority because he is technically unquestionable; hence whatever he

does or says is final. He becomes king by virtue of his lineage and not necessarily by merit or dint of hard work; hence, he is not expected to be removed from office irrespective of whether he serves the best interest of the people in his kingdom or not. This background is used to summarise the primordial instinct underlying the predilection of many elected African leaders who seek to put and keep themselves in office by engaging in acts that undermine the democratic process. The target of the joke is the incumbent president whose utterances and acts are viewed as monarchical and in SO to democratic tenets that expect him to pursue the interest of the electorate who voted him into office. Expressions such as "Your Majesty", "Your Royal Highness" and "First king in the kingdom" borrowed from the traditional palace setting are used intertextually as SO to provoke laughter, ridicule the incumbent president and portray him negatively as undemocratic. More importantly, the cartoonist uses socio-cultural intertextual references to convey the pragmatic meaning that elective offices should not be viewed by Nigerian politicians as a permanent position.

## 11.5 Conclusion

Apart from the denotative meaning of the intertextual references used in the cartoons, the study demonstrates that the cartoonists used them to express their opinions of both Nigerian politicians and the Nigerian electorate to the Nigerian newspaper-reading public. Consequently, in addition to the humour and satire embedded in the cartoon messages, discerning readers are expected to elicit deep pragmatic meanings from the creative use of sarcasm, innuendo and polysemy in the campaign-related cartoons. The study gives insight into the application of Raskin and Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), for both the explanation of the humour in the cartoons and the elicitation of pragmatic meanings conveyed by the intertextual references found in them. The theory also enables a systematic analysis of intertextual references as tools used by Nigerian newspaper cartoonists to convey multiple pragmatic meanings in Nigerian media-political discourse.

The study further demonstrates the relevance of a semantic-pragmatic approach for the interpretation of campaign-related cartoons published in Nigerian newspapers. Not only has the approach been useful for a systematic and unbiased semantic analysis of the cartoons, but it has also enabled the elicitation of the shades of pragmatic meanings inherent in them. The study shows how intertextual references have been used to express general misconceptions about the purpose of seeking public office

by both Nigerian politicians and the Nigerian electorate. To sum up, the use of intertextual references in the campaign-related cartoons examined serves the multi-purpose aim of entertaining the reading public, lampooning negative traits exhibited by Nigerian politicians, and portraying them and their party as ill-suited for governance.

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# CHAPTER 12

# DOING THINGS WITH POETIC EFFECTS: HUMOUR IN LOLA SHONEYIN'S *THE SECRET LIVES OF BABA SEGI'S WIVES*

## BIMBOLA OLUWAFUNLOLA IDOWU-FAITH AND MAYOKUN OLANIKE ADELEYE

## Abstract

*Humour performs different functions in discourse. While there are vast studies on the nature and functions of humour in different discourses, there are sparse studies on the pragmatic functions which humour plays, either overtly or covertly in literary discourses. This study, therefore, investigates the pragmatic functions of humour in Shoneyin's The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives. The study adopts Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Acts Theory (PAT) as well as insights from the linguistic concept of context and relevant humour theories to interpret humorous acts in the novel. The analysis reveals that humour functions on two discourse levels—the level of characters' communicative events and the level of the text as an utterance in its own right. Characters, through contextual features such as REF, INF, SCK, SSK and VCE, engage different humour in their communicative events within the context of polygynous rivalry and the context of tension to produce practs of debasing others, justifying misdeeds, rejecting offers/compliments, and accusing/rebuking/cautioning. At the discourse level of the novel as an utterance in its own right, the author, as a feminist and social critic, makes Nigeria the socio-cultural context within which humour performs the pragmatic functions of criticising patriarchy, discouraging polygyny, satirising social decadence, trampling on male superiority, and condemning illiteracy. Therefore, the study concludes that humour in literary discourses is a serious business which goes beyond merely provoking laughter.*

# 12.1 Introduction

Humour is ingrained in our experiences of daily life as humans. Scholarly literature has constantly emphasised the centrality of humour to conviviality, laughter, interactions and the initiation and maintenance of relationships in social life. While individuals will, at a superficial level, most probably describe humour as anything that provokes laughter, humour transcends its conception as a cause of laughter accompanied by aching ribs and watering eyes. Humour accomplishes many other things besides laughter: "it relieves embarrassment; it signals aggression; it displays courage in adversity; it serves as a coping mechanism; it functions as an instrument of social influence; it rehearses and redesigns the categories and concepts of serious discourse" (Simpson 2003: 2). Basu (1999: 391, as cited in Simpson 2003: 3) therefore opines that humour performs three significant functions in human lives—lubrication, friction and glue. As a social lubricant, humour can be a good icebreaker and allows people to laugh; as friction, humour acts as "'a fine-grained social sandpaper', because comedy makes frankness less threatening and conveys criticism less contentiously"; and as a social glue, humour possesses that "rhetorical skill [that] can relax and entertain, and can incline one towards empathy with others" (Simpson 2003: 3-4).

# 12.2 Humour

Humour is a social factor that functions in all aspects of human life. It is used to tease, lighten tension, create bonds and establish and maintain relationships. Humour is conceived as a mode of discourse and a strategy for social interaction. It is a highly valued verbal art across societies and it is an essential ingredient of everyday interaction and socialisation (Boxer 1997: 1333; Crawford 2003: 1413). Ross (2005) emphasises the importance of the social context for the creation and reception of humour. She believes humour is a timeless phenomenon that is often dependent on particular cultures and attitudes.

This study takes a pragmatic approach to the study of humour in Lola Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* as it aims to "describe chosen types, functions and mechanisms of humour as a communicative phenomenon" (Dynel 2011: 2). Since pragmatics goes beyond the boundaries of semantics which stops at finding the meaning of *x* by investigating why a speaker or writer uses *x* and to what purpose, the

pragmatic approach to humour entails the consideration of what pragmatic functions humour plays in the context of its use. The pragmatics of humour has its basis in the fact that "most humorous activities invite non-standardized inferences as the core of the humour. Their inner dynamic comes from playing with scripts, formulation standards, normal ways of speaking and generic patterns, inviting unusual associations, disappointing expectations, and creating 'sense in nonsense,' as Freud (1985 [1905]) called it" (Kotthoff 2006: 273). Kotthoff (2006: 273) argues that, from Grice's model of pragmatic humour analysis, humour is realised through particularised conversational implicatures since "a humorous utterance must always be adapted to the current co- and context". This again solidifies the argument that humour cannot be divorced from its context if its full meaning is to be realised. As illustrated in Figure 1, the pragmatic analysis of an utterance involves a movement from the signification of what is said to what is implied from what is said. That is, the unstated or unsaid meaning of what is said. There is usually a conventional implication of what is said which may be totally different from the conversational meaning of what is implied. At this point, the centrality of the context of meaning becomes obvious. That humour in conversation is a particularised rather than a generalised one, further emphasises the importance of the context as regards the interpretation of the humour. In essence, there is a particular function and meaning that the utterance/text has in a humorous context different from its meanings in other contexts.
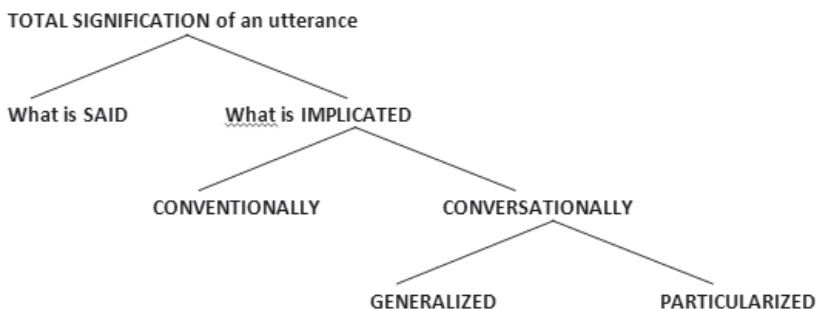


Figure 1. Grice's Humour Analysis Model (courtesy of Kotthoff, 2006, p. 273)

## 12.3 On the Pragmatics of Humour in Literary Texts

There are still gaps to be filled regarding the pragmatic nature of humour in literary texts, since most linguistic analyses of humour have concentrated

on humour in other texts. A pragmatic approach to a literary text is a considerably complex endeavour since meaning resides within multiple discourse levels where there is usually "an address from the author to the reader, embedded in an address from a narrator to a narratee, embedded in which are the characters in the fictional world addressing each other" (Jeffries & McIntyre 2010: 100) and "the voices of the [literary] text are anchored in the plurality of discourse, in a 'multispeeched' mode; this multivocality represents the dialectic relations between different societal forces" (Mey 2009a: 554).

The pragmatic implications of a literary text are further complicated by the standpoints of intentionalists and anti-intentionalists where the former argue that a "work cannot be interpreted without reference to the author's intention" and the latter hold that "the meaning of the work lies in what can be received from the text itself" (Leech 2008: 96). Leech (2008) believes a merge of the two opposing standpoints is the way out in goal-oriented stylistics. By taking such a stand, stylisticians will be able to interpret the meaning from evident intentions in the communicative events in a literary text as well as from the originator of the literary text. This implies that a pragmatic stylistic approach to literature is goal-oriented stylistics that "reconciles the autonomy of the text with the intentionality of meaning" (Leech 2008: 97). In this regard, stylisticians will be able to "uncover the pragmatic motives of characters, narrators and writers" (Jeffries & McIntyre 2010: 123) as well as the discoursal foregrounding that may arise from any deviant use of language.

In literary pragmatics, the literary text is approached either through the represented communicative acts in the work or by taking the literary text as an utterance in its own right (cf. Warner 2014: 373). This moves the aim of literary investigation beyond what is done with words or what poetic effects are created in texts, to what and how things are done with poetic effects in a literary text (cf. Warner 2014: 373).

The complex multi-layered discourse level of meaning equally manifests itself when humour is to be examined in the literary text. It is at this level that the reader of the literary text as a co-creator of meaning becomes evident since, as Mey (2009a: 552) argues, "pragmatically speaking, a text is the result of what Bakhtin (1994: 107) called 'the meeting of two subjects'". The life of the text "always develops on the boundary between two consciousnesses, two subjects" (Bakhtin 1994: 106), the two consciousnesses being the author's and the reader's. Mey (2009a: 554) further argues that "if it is true that texts only come into existence as human texts through an actual engagement by a human user (as already stated by Roman Ingarden in 1931), then a pragmatic view of

text, particularly literary text, is anchored in this user engagement". In essence, expressions of humour in a literary text are addressed not only to the other characters who may be present in the context of the humorous communicative event, but also to the reader of the literary text without whom the literary text cannot fully come into existence. Thus, the multi-layered level of literary discourse makes both the characters within the text and the reader of the text the listeners of the humorous events in the text. On this ground, Mey (2009: 554) submits that "the dialogue we engage in as authors and readers is a dialogue of users; the 'dialectics of dialogue' has been invoked to explain the users' co-creative roles, as authors and readers, in establishing the textual object (e.g., a story)". What pragmatics thus offers is "a view on this wider, social context and explains how it interacts with author, texts, and readers" (Mey 2009: 554). Thus, the pragmatic approach to a literary text will help reveal "the kinds of effects that authors, as text producers, set out to obtain, using the resources of language in their efforts to establish a 'working cooperation' with their audiences, the consumers of the texts" (Mey 1999, as cited in Warner 2014: 373). In view of the foregoing, a pragmatic stylistics approach to humour, as undertaken in this study, aims to discover other reasons that "drive stylistic choices, in terms of desired effects, communicative qualities, and the context or situation of the speaker or reader" (Warner 2014: 363).

## 12.4 Humour Theories

Theoretical formulations on humour have generally been classified into three types: incongruity theories, superiority theories and relief theories. Incongruity theories are otherwise termed theories of inconsistency, contradiction, or bisociation. Incongruity theories are essentially cognitive and work through the elements of incompatibility and surprise between what is expressed and the frame or isotope. Norrick (2003: 1334) submits that incongruity theories generally "describe the humorous object in terms of clashing frames of reference or sets of expectations; they do not focus on the humorous text".

      Theories of superiority are also known as theories of criticism, hostility or disparagement. Krikmann (2006: 28) submits that superiority theories usually "accentuate the (negative) attitude of the producer and/or user of humour towards its target and the often-alleged aggressive character of laughter". In Ross' (1991) understanding, superiority theories, as forms of mockery, may attack the target in two ways—(i) where the powerful groups make those of the perceived inferior groups the butt of

the joke and (ii) where people in superior positions of power and influence are made the butt of the joke as "a fight-back of the victim who has only words to use against money, might and status".

Theories of relief, or release, or relaxation have to do with humour functioning as a way of releasing stress. As Krikmann (2006: 28) argues, this class of theories is psychoanalytic and focuses on the psychological effects of the humour on its recipient. Krikmann (2006: 28) further argues that many relief theories build on the works of Sigmund Freund who holds that humour is "one of the so-called substitution mechanisms which enable one to convert one's socially tabooed aggressive impulses to acceptable ones and thus avoid wasting additional mental energy to suppress them". Norrick (2003: 1334) equally notes that "Freud related the compression he found in joke techniques to a saving of psychic energy which resulted in the release of repressed emotion as laughter".

An explicit linguistic approach to humour is Raskin's (1985) Semantic Script-based Theory of Humour (SSTH). The thrust of the SSTH is the consideration of jokes as composed of two scripts that are opposed to each other in a special way. Raskin (1985: 99) as cited in Krikmann (2003: 31) argues that:

> *A text can be characterised as a single-joke-carrying text if both of [two conditions] are satisfied:*
>   (i) *The text is compatible, fully or in part, with two different scripts.*
>   (ii) *The two scripts with which the text is compatible are opposite in a special sense defined … The two scripts with which the text is compatible are said to overlap fully or in part on this text.*

In 1991, Raskin and Attardo jointly revised the SSTH to the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) by integrating the SSTH with the five-level representation model of jokes outlined in earlier works by Attardo. As a result, a six-level hierarchical model of verbal jokes was proposed in the GTVH thus: Language (LA), Narrative strategy (NS), Target (TA), Situation (SI), Logical mechanism (LM) and Script opposition (SO). A further review of the GTVH is made by Attardo (1997; 2001) whose key argument is that "the incongruity element in a humorous text is bounded by a preceding 'set-up phase,' which establishes a neutral context for the incongruity, and a 'resolution phase,' which describes the knowledge resources employed by the humour processor to resolve the incongruity" (Simpson 2009: 337). However, the GTVH has been critiqued on a number of issues, basic amongst which is its inability to handle other forms of humour besides jokes, such as longer humorous texts with compound structures (Trezenberg 2004; Morreall 2004) and various other

non-humours whose participants are not divided into speakers and listeners (Norrick 2004). Considering the various critiques of the GTVH, Krikmann (2006: 54) concludes that what should be central to any theory of humour is the "social logic" of humour. By laying emphasis on the social logic of humour, then previous theories of humour are not lacking in their core truth.

## 12.5 Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives*: of a Feminist and a Social Critic

Lola Shoneyin, born Titilola Atinuke Alexandrah Shoneyin, is an established poet having authored three volumes of poetry before *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives,* her debut novel. From her poetry, Shoneyin is viewed as a feminist writer who advocates the equality of rights between men and women, women's liberation, and the dignity of women in society.

The main crux of *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* (henceforth *The Secret Lives*) is polygyny. To Shoneyin, polygyny brings out the worst in women, because it is depressing to see the way the wives would tear one another to pieces while fighting for the affections of the man who pitched them against one another in the first place. Shoneyin holds that polygyny is not only regressive, repressive and oppressive to womenfolk but, unfortunately, it devalues women.

*The Secret Lives* portrays the various dirty and demeaning political games women play in polygynous relationships in order to satisfy and secure the attention of their men; the way women are repressed and oppressed by the patriarchal systems in culture; and the rewriting of the image of the man by using many of culture's feminised codes like infertility, financial dependence, poverty and the commercialisation of the sexual act in order to deconstruct the phallocentric codes of patriarchy that have constantly privileged the man and subordinated the woman.

The choice of Shoneyin as a new generation novelist is premised on the argument of Osunbade (2009: 139) that "as in the works of the older generation of literary writers, the younger generation of Nigerian writers… equally exhibits a careful manipulation of linguistic resources to aptly express the 'civilizing function which literature performs….by dealing with the African image in the past or the politics of the present' (Izevbaye 1979: 14)". It is, therefore, not surprising that Shoneyin takes the ideological stance of rewriting the male image, much like Nwapa, El Saadawi and Emecheta. As a result, male characters in the novel possess personalities and physiques which are ridiculous, unreasonable and

repugnant and radically deviate from what was found in earlier male writers' works (cf. Idowu-Faith, 2016: 394). Adding her voice to those of the older generation, too, Shoneyin employs humour to criticise and deal with Nigeria's failed leadership and failing socio-cultural and economic systems.

In *The Secret Lives,* Shoneyin explores and exploits different humour types, not only to speak against polygyny as an oppressive system but equally to raise her voice as a social critic against all other forms of oppression and social malaise in Nigerian society. As the title suggests, the novel reveals the ills and infidelities that are rife, especially among the wives, in the Alao household. Baba Segi is married to three wives and has seven children. Trouble, however, starts in the home when he decides to marry the fourth wife, Bolanle, a university graduate. The moment Bolanle steps into the house, the other wives, especially Iya Segi and Iya Femi, pitch themselves against her. They employ every available strategy to oust Bolanle from their home. Bolanle's stay in the home becomes more unbearable when she is unable to conceive after about two years of marriage. Baba Segi makes use of every opportunity to remind and blame her for her infertility. He then begins to run helter-skelter, seeking a solution to Bolanle's so-called barrenness. His search for a solution makes him take Bolanle to the hospital for an examination. The other wives become scared at this development: the secrets they have been protecting all this while will soon be unveiled.

To avert the impending doom of the revelation, Iya Segi and Iya Femi connive to plant a charm in Baba Segi's bedroom and accuse Bolanle of witchcraft but their plan fails. The duo will not relent in chasing Bolanle out of the house and they decide to give Bolanle poisoned food. Unfortunately, Bolanle offers the food to Segi who gladly takes the food. After eating the food, Segi falls seriously ill and is admitted to hospital. While Segi's health deteriorates, the two wives can no longer pursue their goal but Bolanle is able to keep her appointment at the hospital where the medical test result shows that she is fertile. The doctors are thus forced to invite Baba Segi in order to untangle the cause of the barrenness. To Baba Segi's greatest shock, the result reveals that he is infertile. Again, the doctors wish to unravel the mystery of the fruitfulness of the other wives in view of Baba Segi's apparent sterility. Iya Segi, the first wife, is thus invited to the hospital. She knows their games are up and thus decides to tell the truth—Baba Segi did not father any of the children he calls his. Beaten and battered by the turn of events, Baba Segi asks his wives to leave his house with their children but Iya Segi intervenes on behalf of the other wives and pleads for forgiveness on the grounds that they must not

allow the world to know of his sterility. He forgives them and, in this way, covers the fact of his infertility. Bolanle leaves the Alao home to find her own path in life since there is no hope for conception.

## 12.6 Relevant Previous Literature

Few works have employed linguistic tools for the analysis of *The Secret Lives*. Pam (2012) evaluates the linguistic and literary peculiarities Shoneyin adopts to portray the societal oppression of women in an African setting. Ezekulie (2014) examines how metaphors in the novel are pragmatically deviant by infringing the maxims of the cooperative principle. Equally, the study reveals the writer's explicit use of taboo words and expressions.

Idowu-Faith (2016), using three tools of critical stylistics—naming/description of characters; speech and thought presentation of characters and other characters; and the representation of actions/events/states—investigates the politics of male characterisations in *The Secret Lives*. She submits that Shoneyin, being a feminist, has the objective of rewriting phallocentric codes that have been employed in culture by male writers to facilitate the domination of men over women and to ascribe negative and subordinating roles to women. On these grounds, many of Shoneyin's male characters are ideologically presented to possess detestable physical looks, character traits, reasoning and behaviours, in order to contest culture's "dual hierarchical oppositions" that had perpetually placed the woman on the negative side of the pole. She thus concludes that presenting men with feminised codes like infertility, jealousy/envy, and sexual objectification are means of rewriting masculine images and countering "culture's perpetual confinement of women to the negative side of [the] representational pole and proves that neither sex has an exclusive preserve of either side of the pole" (Idowu-Faith 2016: 408).

Idowu-Faith (2017) employs Culpeper's characterisation theory and impoliteness model in investigating the character of Iya Femi as a malicious woman whose characterisation is fuelled by her impolite language and behaviours, which are revealed in her self-presentations, other characters' presentations and authorial cues.

Odebunmi and Ogunleye (2003) is a significant study as it investigates humour in a literary text. The study examines how humour contributes to the development of themes in Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* to establish the centrality of context to the interpretation of humour.

# 12.7 Theoretical Foundations

## *12.7.1 The Pragmatic Act Theory*

The analysis in the study is built on Jacob Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Act Theory (henceforth PAT). Mey proposed the PAT as a socio-cultural interactional model which, unlike speech act theory, interprets the language use of individuals, not only in relation to the speech and the intention of the individual, but also in relation to the environment, since a language act is a "'situated action'—that is, an action made possible and afforded by and in a particular situation" (Mey 2009b: 750). Thus, the thrust of this theory is that language use is a pragmatic act; an inclusive act which relates to other acts besides speech, especially those extralinguistic aspects of communication such as gestures, intonation, facial expressions, body posture, head movements, laughter, etc. On this basis, Mey avers that "there are no speech acts but only situated speech acts or instantiated pragmatic acts" (2001: 218). The concern of the theory is thus to identify a general situation prototype, that is, the pragmeme which can be realised through individual pragmatic acts. Capone (2005: 1357) defines a pragmeme as "a situated speech act in which the rules of language and of society synergize in determining meaning, intended as a socially recognized object, sensitive to social expectations about the situation in which the utterance to be interpreted is embedded". Capone (2005: 1357) further indicates that a pragmeme requires three types of embedding:

- The embedding of an utterance in a context of use, with the aim of determining the referential anchors that complete the propositional form of the utterance.
- The embedding in rules that systematically transform whatever gets said in a context into whatever is meant there, in conformity with the social constraints and rules bearing on the utterance in question.
- The embedding in the co-text, whose features are transferred onto the utterance by eliminating semantic or otherwise interpretative ambiguities and enriching further its (range of) interpretations, by making them more specific.

The pragmeme realised by a pragmatic act is a pract. But because no two acts are completely ever identical in situation, every pract is an "allopract", that is, a different realisation of a particular pragmeme (Mey 2009b: 751).

As illustrated in Figure 2, there are two categories for realising a pragmeme: the textual part and the activity part. Within the activity category in the left column, language users have options such as speech acts, indirect speech acts, conversational ("dialogue") acts, psychological acts (emotions), prosody (intonation, stress,) physical acts, etc. for performing the various functions they so desire. When none of these choices is made, the activity part is rendered null and the communicative potential of silence will become evident.

The right-hand column of the figure represents the elements of the textual part. The choices available within the textual part are "INF" which stands for inference; "REF" for reference; "REL" for relevance; "VCE" for voice; "SSK" for shared situational knowledge; "MPH" for metaphor; and "M" for meta-pragmatic joker. Both categories depend on context for the realisation of the pragmatic function of a given communicative event.



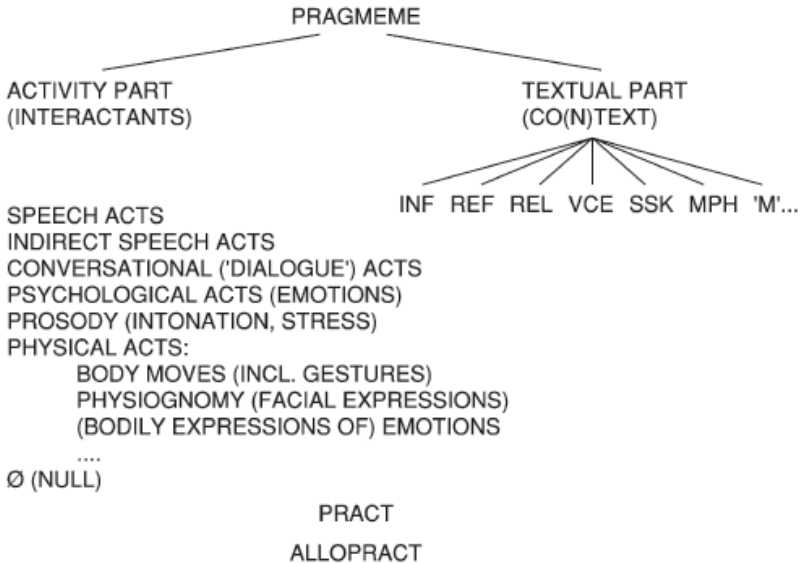Figure 2. Pragmeme, pract, allopract (Mey 2001: 222)

## 12.7.2 The Linguistic Concept of Context

Defined simply, context is the environment in which the text comes alive. The fact that texts have different purposes in different settings indicates that context is dynamic, rather than static, and that language users need to constantly give credence to the situational constraints in every communicative

environment so as to adjust to those constraints in order for their interactions to be considered apt, relevant, and meaningful. Van Dijk (2008: 18) holds that a theory of context will usually explain how language users adapt their discursive interactions to the current cognitive and socio-cultural environments which dictate felicity conditions of illocutionary acts, appropriateness conditions of politeness, and other dimensions of interaction.

Odebunmi (2006: 240) reveals that context has two levels: language and situation levels. At the level of language, meaning potential manifests when interactants share the same language of communication. At the situation level, the shared code (linguistic or non-linguistic) and experience of the interlocutors provide the means for making assumptions. Odebunmi (2006) further submits that three important features/aspects of context exist: shared knowledge of subject/topic; shared knowledge of word choices, referents, and references; and shared socio-cultural experiences.

Scholars believe that the linguistic concept of context is central to effective humour since expressions of humour are typical examples of language in use. According to Ross (2005), "the social context is important for the creation and reception of humour. The phrase 'there's a time and a place for everything' is true of humour" (p. 2). This affirms that the context which surrounds an expression or discourse will determine whether the expression is humorous or not. This is in line with Mey's (2001) reasoning that context is crucial to the true pragmatic interpretation of any pragmatic act (p. 41) and that context determines the nature of any pragmatic act (p. 211). In essence, expressions of humour are not just language in context but are pragmatic acts whose meanings depend on and are retrievable from context. The centrality of context to the production of humour thus informs the adoption of Odebunmi's approach to context on the grounds that it is capable of handling humour in different contexts.

## 12.8 Methodology

The responsibility of this study is to investigate the pragmatic functions of specific types of humour in particular contexts in the selected text. To adequately undertake the investigation, excerpts relevant to the subject are randomly selected from the text and subjected to analysis by identifying the social logic of humour in identifiable discursive contexts and by determining the nature of the humour as pragmatic acts. Humour in the novel is examined in relation to the situational contexts within two discourse levels—the level of the communicative events in the novel and

the level of the novel as an utterance in its own right. In essence, the analysis focuses on character-characters/readers humour and narrator/author-reader humour.

# 12.9 Analysis

## 12.9.1 Humour in Characters' Communicative Events

Characters' communicative events manifest in two situational contexts in the novel—the context of polygynous rivalry and the context of tension. Within the two contexts, characters employ a wide range of humour ingrained in incongruity to achieve various purposes and intentions. In their communicative events, characters rely on contextual elements like SSK, SCK, MPH, INF and REF in different expressions of humour to produce practs of debasing others, justifying misdemeanours, rejecting offers/compliments, and rebuking/cautioning/accusing.

### 12.9.1.1 The Context of Polygynous Rivalry

The context of polygynous rivalry is understood as one indicating two or more women's competition for one man who happens to be their husband. In the selected text, this context, which builds on SCK (shared socio-cultural experiences), is largely revealed as being a contentious issue in polygynous homes. Since the participants' relationship is central to determining the immediate discourse context (cf. Van Dijk 2008: 76), the rivalry among the participants is not unexpected, as participants see one another as rivals rather than friends. In essence, both the immediate discourse situation and the participants in the discourse situation highlight the context of polygynous rivalry.

The practs of debasing the other, justifying misdemeanours, rejecting offers/compliments, and rebuking/cautioning/accusing, which are all pragmatic functions that humour performs in the novel, are discussed below.

### Debasing the Other

Debasing the other refers to the verbal means of making the perceived rival, the other wives, less worthy. The pract is usually assisted by contextual features such as INF, REF, SSK, SCK and MPH to realise this goal.

**Ex. 1:**

> The next morning, Bolanle came out of her bedroom. The kitchen fell silent as soon as she cast a shadow on the doorframe. She said good morning and winced as she curtsied.
>
> 'Your legs resemble those of a collapsible chair.' Iya Femi pointed at Bolanle's knees and laughed out loud. 'You didn't expect to get that sort of thigh-thumping, did you?' She made her voice hoarse. 'Tell me, does your back ache?' (p. 50).

The humour in Ex. 1 is achieved through the incongruity which results from the failure to make appropriate word choices in addressing a co-wife. In essence, Iya Femi, relying on INF, SSK, SCK and MPH, uses a tease to debase Bolanle the morning after her arrival in the household. Oen understands Iya Femi's perception of Bolanle as a rival because, before the arrival of Bolanle in the home, Iya Femi was the youngest wife doted on by Baba Segi. Through inference that, while Baba Segi and Bolanle were together in the bedroom the previous night, they had sexual intercourse, Iya Femi used that knowledge to ridicule Bolanle, particularly because the wives believed that sexual intercourse with Baba Segi was always painful because his penis was bigger than that of an average man. Iya Femi's cause for ridiculing Bolanle was equally evident from SSK and SCK: Bolanle was Iya Femi's arch-rival since her arrival in the home would displace her of the privileges of the youngest wife. On this basis, Iya Femi will go to some lengths to debase Bolanle, make her feel inadequate as regards Baba Segi and possibly frustrate her out of the home. It was against this background that Iya Femi ridiculed Bolanle, first with an abusive act, saying Bolanle's legs resembled those of a collapsible chair; and second by asking her questions which invaded Bolanle's private space as a married woman, since with the knowledge of the cultural context of the Yoruba culture against which the novel was set, asking a woman about her sexual relationship with her husband was frowned upon and considered a taboo. It is therefore not surprising that Bolanle "looked like she would faint with shame".

**Ex. 2:**

> Let me tell you one of the things I did. Laughter kills me when I think of it. … when Baba Segi asked me to make *aso ebi* for the entire household. ….
>
> 'I want you all to look like queens,' he said. I looked at him and wondered why, if he wanted wives that looked like queens, he married a woman like a toad or that scrawny rabbit that nibbles at Bolanle's burrow.
>
> And that Bolanle! Is that his idea of a queen? Being a graduate does not make you beautiful. I know true beauty. And it is in pale yellow skin. I was born darker than this but I use expensive creams to make my natural

beauty shine. I take my nails to a proper nail studio. I buy good make-up, unlike Bolanle who wanders around with her face as haggard as a sack. Ha! Queens indeed!

….

I got dressed quickly and headed to the sitting room so I could see everyone come in. Iya Segi caught me in the corridor as she came out of the bathroom. She ran her eyes over my outfit. 'Such beautiful gold thread! Such fine sequins!' she said. Her throat was thick with fury.

'The tailor said he ran out of sequins when he started to sew yours. …. But if you want, let us exchange. I'll wear yours and you can wear mine.' I even started to unzip my blouse at the side. Ha! She would be lucky if she could fit just one of her breasts into my entire blouse. She hissed and turned into her bedroom.

Baba Segi joined me soon after to inspect us the way he always did. …. Iya Segi soon waddled in. Her dress resembled a pillowcase with long sleeves and a ruffled collar that extended all the way to her ears. That thick neck of hers is an embarrassment. If she always had to wear clothes with high collars maybe she would eat less. Maybe she'd stop grunting like a pig.

Iya Tope, for her part, looked no different from her three daughters. Did she not behave like them? Was she any cleverer than they were? I told the tailor to sew the skirt two sizes too big, and her blouse baggy without darts. The neck gaped and slid off one of her shoulders. ….

Bolanle's outfit looked like it had been knocked together by a roguish hand. To be honest, I sewed it myself. I watched the tailor on a few occasions and made the skirt from the discoloured ends that he did away with. Instead of the square metre that the rest of the wives received as headgear, Bolanle's head was bound by a bright purple strip of cloth about eight inches wide. I don't remember where the cloth came from. Her face was blank as if there wasn't a single thought in her head.

Who knows what the lizard was thinking! Everyone stared at her.

My husband finally asked me to stand up. You can trust me. I gave him the queen he asked for. My skirt was fitted and the slit rode just above my knee. My blouse was adorned with crystals and the dart shaped my figure and lifted my breasts. I was well accessorised too: matching court shoes and bag, coral beads on my wrists and a large, gold crucifix around my neck. It was a good day (pp. 67-70).

Ex.2 is a lengthy humorous anecdote told by Iya Femi. The anecdote, functioning within the general humour theory of superiority, relied on REF, VCE, SSK, SCK and MPH to mock both her husband and her co-wives. First, she belittled her husband and scorned him for his desire for all his wives to look like queens. To her, Baba Segi lacked aesthetic judgement on identifying/appreciating beautiful women. Using metaphor in relation to examples of fauna, she called the other wives several

uncomplimentary names—Iya Segi was a toad and a pig; Iya Tope was a rabbit; and Bolanle was a lizard with a haggard face like a sack. For readers who have prior knowledge of the Yoruba culture, Iya Femi would be adjudged a rude and self-seeking woman because the social distance and power relations which existed between her and her husband and the two senior wives gave a ranking of lower-higher status. Being at the lower end of the scale, the culture would not permit her to speak or think negatively of either her husband or the senior wives.

The height of debasing the other wives was exhibited with the dresses she made for each of them. Iya Segi's dress looked like a pillowcase with sleeves and ruffled collar; Iya Tope's was two sizes too big and without shape; and Bolanle's, which was the worst of the dresses, was personally made by her from an offcut. With no clue to such a malicious act other than that she sees them as her rivals, readers could see Iya Femi as a self-seeking sadist who deliberately debased her co-wives by ensuring that their dresses were eyesores so she could look the prettiest.

### Justifying Misdeed

The pragmatic function of justifying misdeed functions within the context of polygynous rivalry to indicate that every evil act is right in war and in love. With this pract accomplished through contextual features such as REF, SSK and SCK, Iya Femi consistently employed different forms of humour to justify her ill-manners and ill-treatment of others as Ex. 3 shows.

### Ex.3:

> I have suffered too much in my life to let that rat spoil it all for me. So what if she is a graduate. When we stand before God on the last day, will He ask whether we went to university? No! But He will want to know if we were as wise as serpents because that's what the Bible says we should be.
> If we let Bolanle ruin us, then we will all have failed before God. I reject failure in Jesus' name. I will not fail (p. 67).

Ex. 3 was the context where the wives planned to oust Bolanle from the home at all costs. Relying on REF, SSK and SCK, Iya Femi employed incongruity of allusion and distortion to justify their evil plans against Bolanle. Thus, by quoting the Bible out of context, Iya Femi justified their malicious plans against Bolanle.

*Rejecting Offers/Compliments*

The pract of rejecting offers/compliments refers to the act of turning down an offer/compliment. It thus catalyses the rivalry in the polygynous home by making the giver feel unappreciated and rendering the offer/compliment worthless.

**Ex. 4**

> To ease the uncomfortable silence, I told the wife with two-tone skin how gorgeous her skirt and blouse were. ….
> 'Uneducated women wear good things too,' she retorted.

Ex. 4 took place the day Bolanle got to the Alao home where she could read the hostility of the senior wives in their silences. To ease the tension, she decided to compliment Iya Femi on her gorgeous dress. Rather than appreciate the compliment, Iya Femi, leaning on SSK and SCK, retorted with an incongruity achieved through the clash between word choices and the discourse situation, to emphasise that she did not want to be complimented by Bolanle, whom she believed had come to displace her as the youngest wife in the home. Retort is an aggressive humour which "challenges, disagrees with or undermines the propositions or arguments put forward in earlier contributions" (Holmes and Marra 2002 as cited in Dynel 2009: 1292). Thus, with the knowledge of discourse and cultural situations, a retort is an unexpected and incongruous response to the first speaker's utterance and, in this situation, signified the rejection of not only a compliment but also an offer of friendship. Bolanle later realised that the other wives saw the polygynous home as a battlefield and every other wife as an enemy to be attacked.

**Ex. 5**

> …. I offered to teach the wives to read. Iya Tope was keen to learn but then I found Iya Femi tearing out sheets from the exercise books to line the kitchen cupboards. When I reminded her why I'd bought them, she said I could crawl into the cabinets and teach the insects if I still wanted the exercise books to serve that purpose (p. 22).

In Ex. 5, Bolanle's offer to teach the wives was rejected, not only with the deliberate non-linguistic tearing out of sheets from the exercise books she had bought to teach the wives by Iya Femi, but also through Iya Femi's retort that Bolanle could as well crawl into the cabinet to teach the insects if she still wanted the books to serve that purpose. Much like the situation in Ex. 4, Iya Femi relied on SSK and SCK to reject Bolanle's offer in Ex. 5.

**Ex. 6**

> One day, that fat frog, Iya Segi, asked if I'd noticed that Iya Tope had left *all* the house-cleaning to me. …. When I asked Iya Segi what she wanted me to do with the information she'd given me, she lifted both palms and insisted she was only telling me because she'd taken a liking to me. 'Thank you,' I said, looking her straight in the eye (p. 131).

Another instance where the pract of rejecting occurred in the novel can be seen in Ex. 6. Iya Femi again employed retort in a question form and the extralinguistic tool of looking straight into Iya Segi's eyes to indicate that she did not appreciate the information Iya Segi had given.

### *Accusing/Rebuking/Cautioning*

While accusing is an act that pragmatically serves to make the other culpable of some perceived injustice, rebuking and cautioning emphasise that the conclusion arrived at by the other is faulty and irrational. The practs are achieved through the incongruity in putdowns assisted by REF, INF, SSK and SCK.

**Ex. 7**

> 'Please, Iya Segi,' I pleaded. 'My daughters cannot sleep for dandruff. …. Can you not spare me one more scoop?'
> 'Who cares about your daughters? Do you hear me complain when Iya Segi takes more milk for her children when mine are younger and *need* more vitamins?' Iya Femi rolled her eyes and jerked her head in Iya Segi's direction.
> 'If you are not satisfied with the way I share provisions, take your ingratitude to another man's house. Mind you, make sure you are the first wife and not a lowly third.' She tucked the token in her bra (p. 49).

Ex. 7 contains practs of accusing and rebuking. The speech event occurred during a "sharing night". Where Iya Tope, the second wife, was pleading with Iya Segi, the first wife, for more pomade, Iya Femi relied on REF, INF, SSK and SCK and used a putdown to accuse and condemn Iya Segi for being unjust with the sharing model. Iya Segi responded with a retort to rebuke Iya Femi for her audacity and her implied ingratitude to their husband who provided the essentials.

**Ex. 8**

> 'Iya Femi, you can sleep in the gutter if you want to…that is where you come from. My sons were not born to sleep in the gutter so they cannot follow you' (p. 62).

In Ex. 8, Baba Segi relied on REF, SSK and SCK in a putdown to caution Iya Femi who insisted on not sleeping in the house when the plot to accuse Bolanle of witchcraft by planting juju in Baba Segi's room was thwarted and discarded by Baba Segi because of Bolanle's calmness and soft response to the accusation. Since Iya Femi had lived close to a slave's life at her Grandma's house before she pleaded to marry Baba Segi, he therefore made a reference to that lowly background in order to caution her never to flout his orders as her husband.

**Ex. 9**

'You will trip over in your haste if you are not careful, woman. Your mouth discharges words like diarrhoea'.

The utterance in Ex. 9 came up at the meeting, to which Iya Segi invited the other two wives in order to plot how to oust Bolanle from the home. Because Iya Femi kept complaining about Baba Segi's decision to marry a new wife, Iya Segi engaged the incongruity in a metaphor to caution her for being too hasty and rash with her speech, since the meeting was initiated to plot how to oust Bolanle from the home. In essence, Iya Segi employed SSK, SCK and MPH to produce the pragmatic act of rebuking/cautioning.

### 12.9.1.2 Context of Tension

The context of tension refers to the discursive manifestation of uneasy feelings in participants' relationships. It takes place outside of the polygynous home in those instances where there are unfriendly feelings towards the other and the other is attacked either verbally or physically.

### *Justifying Misdeed*

This refers to giving a reason or explanation for a blameworthy act. Within the context of tension, Iya Femi practs justifying misdeeds to deal with the issues of ill-treatment towards her and to consequently justify her revenge on her offenders. The incongruous allusion to and distortion of the Bible, assisted by REF, INF, SSK and SCK facilitate this pract as Ex. 10 and 11 below show.

**Ex. 10:**

In the Bible, God said: 'Vengeance is mine.' If God can delight in vengeance, how much more a poor soul like me who has been misused by the world? I must have revenge. Only then will I accept a reason for my suffering (p. 133).

When Iya Femi finalised her plan to set her uncle's house on fire in Oke'gbo, her hometown, she again made a distorted allusion to the Bible to justify her revenge against her uncle who deprived her of her parents' properties and practically sent her into servitude in her Grandma's house in Ibadan.

**Ex. 11:**

> Grandma used to throw skirts into the laundry basket with money in the pockets, hoping I'd steal it so she could accuse me. I wasn't that stupid! …. The day I left the house … I took a heavy cross too. If I was going to be a Christian, I would need a crucifix. The most stupid thing was what Grandma did about the pants though. She'd creep up behind me and ask me to lift my skirt to check which underwear I was wearing. She did this every time her daughters reported that their pants were missing. Why would I wear stolen pants? They were buried in the big sack of rice in the pantry. I hate it when people think they can outsmart me' (p. 131).

In Ex. 11, REF, INF, SSK and SCK provided readers with the archetype of wicked mistresses who maltreated their maids. Relying on such linguistic and cultural knowledge, Iya Femi justified her revenge on her Grandma and her daughters. In the first instance, she would bury Grandma's daughter's pants in the big sack of rice in the pantry to justify the fact that Grandma should not have attempted to outsmart her. So also, Iya Femi justified her decision to steal Grandma's crucifix on the grounds that she planned to become a Christian in her new world of freedom. Her stealing of the crucifix contrasted with Christian virtues and displayed humour facilitated by distortion.

### 12.9.2 Humour in the Discourse Level of the Novel as an Utterance

As explained in subsection 2.1, one pragmatic approach to the literary text is to take the text as an utterance in its own right. Obviously, Shoneyin uses the novel both to speak against different social malaises within the Nigerian socio-cultural context and to push forward her feminist ideology of rewriting the image of the man. Shoneyin thus employs the practs of criticising patriarchy, discouraging polygyny, satirising social decadence, trampling on male superiority and condemning illiteracy using different humorous forms and assisted by textual acts such as REF, SCK, SSK, MPH and VCE to achieve her intentions.

### 12.9.2.1 Criticising Patriarchy

This is understood as the expression of disapproval of any situation where men rule over and disregard women because of the superiority the patriarchal socio-cultural system had bestowed on them. Shoneyin humorously practs of criticising patriarchy within the Nigerian cultural context to demonstrate this patriarchal orientation.

**Ex. 12**

> Baba Segi, I think you should drag her to a medicine man if she doesn't follow you. You are the husband and she is a mere wife, and the fourth one at that! If you drag her by the hair, she'll follow you anywhere, I swear it!' Atanda licked his forefinger and pointed it in the direction of his maker' (pp. 4-5).

The writer's stylistic choice of the incongruous word "drag" provoked humour in Ex. 12. The lexical choice portrayed the extent to which a woman's pride could be trampled upon in the patriarchal culture and demonstrated the author's stand against polygyny as an oppressive institution of marriage. With the utterance, Shoneyin, as a feminist writer, addressed the prevalence of female subordination in the patriarchal society. Since Atanda believed that Bolanle was a mere wife, then she could be dragged about as if she were an unwanted load of garbage. With the choice of the words "drag" and "mere", Shoneyin succeeded in criticising and speaking out against the disregard for women in a patriarchal society. Equally, Atanda's childish body movement of licking his forefinger and pointing to heaven humorously suggests that the socio-cultural system was unjust in placing men over women.

**Ex. 13**

> …he claimed that he'd beaten his wife senseless for letting his only son suck on a coin. This happened about a week after a male senator slapped a female colleague... men were slapping their womenfolk as if it had become a national sport. At every street corner, disgruntled wives swung suitcases onto their heads, hoping to be persuaded to return home... (p. 26).

In Ex. 13, REF, SCK and MPH were employed to satirise how women's rights were trampled on when a man of national standing such as a senator could slap a female colleague and this would provoke different forms of domestic violence against women.

As a matter of fact, Shoneyin's episodic satire in Ex. 13 is a reference to the case of Senator Isa Mohammed who slapped Senator Iyabo Anisulowo in the senate chambers on 15 October 2004. The

characters of Taju and the male senator in Ex. 13 indicated that any man who upheld the patriarchal culture, whether placed within the lower or upper echelons of society, had little regard for women and therefore could go to any length to maltreat women. In the same vein, the fact that a female senator and Taju's wife received ill-treatment from the men around them indicated that no woman was spared from the oppression of the patriarchal system, hence the need to criticise the system.

### 12.9.2.2 Discouraging Polygyny

Shoneyin uses the pract of discouraging polygyny to depict polygyny as an oppressive marriage institution so as to discourage women from venturing into such a demeaning marital relationship. She employs incongruous humour assisted by REF, SCK and SSK to accomplish her purpose.

#### Ex. 14

My only worry was that Bolanle's arrival would disrupt the sex rotation. Baba Segi normally went from wife to wife, starting each week with Iya Segi. By Thursday, he'd start the cycle again, leaving him with the freedom to choose whom to spend Sunday night with. Baba Segi used this night to reward whichever wife had missed a night because of her menstrual flow. Sometimes, a wife would have Sunday night if she knew he'd been heavy-handed in scolding her (pp. 47-48).

Ex. 14 depicts Baba Segi as the only person that enjoyed sex in a polygynous marriage since he had access to variety. By humorously depicting how Baba Segi placed his wives on a daily sex roster, Shoneyin showed that no woman could have sexual satisfaction in such a relationship. This lack of sexual satisfaction in polygyny was revealed in the mind of Iya Tope in order to criticise polygyny and discourage women from entering into such a marriage.

#### Ex. 15

After a few months, the same Iya Segi invited me and Iya Femi to a meeting, saying that there were words to be spoken. These words were nothing but curses and insults: the bigger Bolanle puffed out her chest, the smaller Iya Segi became...Iya Segi said we had to join hands and force her out. 'Don't you see her highbrow and unconcerned eyes? She thinks we are beneath her. She wants our husband to cast us aside as the illiterate ones,' she said. 'As a wife who has recently joined our household, it is her duty to submit herself to our wishes, not to think she can teach us!'

'Iya Segi is right. She walks around as if she owns this house. Who made
her queen over us? .... And look at all the lace Baba Segi buys her! What
has she done to deserve it?' (p. 52).

The pract of discouraging polygyny is the goal in Ex. 15. The
apparent envy, dirty politics and insecurity prevalent amongst the wives
should discourage any woman from entering a polygynous relationship for
whatever reason. Iya Segi and Iya Femi could not hide their worries and
envies at the way Bolanle enjoyed privileges from Baba Segi. Another
cause of their envy was the fact that Bolanle being literate was a satisfying
achievement for Baba Segi, who would not hide his fascination with
having a literate wife.

### 12.9.2.3 Satirising Social Decadence

Satirising social decadence relates to how Shoneyin humorously reveals
the weaknesses in the Nigerian socio-cultural context. REF, SCK and VCE
are some of the textual strategies employed in Ex. 16 below.

### Ex. 16

'...'Hol' it!' he yelled. He didn't lower his baton or open his eyes until the
pick-up's bonnet was within half a yard of his worn black trousers. 'Where
are you going this early morning? Are you crimina's?' He peered at them
through the passenger's window...who are you? Identify yoursef's!'...
'Who is sick?' the policeman enquired, feigning interest. He had spotted
the bulging pouch and the tentative journey Baba Segi's hand was making
towards it...the policeman's eyes were squarely fixed on the blue 50-naira
note edging towards his open palm. He looked in the direction of his
colleagues. When he was certain that they were still bent over their
raincoats, he shoved his crotch into the passenger window and stuffed the
note into it (p. 29).

Shoneyin relied on REF, SSK and SCK to indicate how, over the years,
the Nigerian Police had become notorious for extorting road users. This
straying away from the path of honour and integrity to become road
beggars was the reason for making the Nigerian Police the target of satire
in Ex. 16. With VCE, readers could aptly contextualise that the interest of
the police officer was not in maintaining law and order but in possibly
extorting Baba Segi. It was equally sad and disappointing that police
officers would not only cheat on the helpless masses but would equally
cheat on one another in keeping the proceeds of their condemnable
extortions on the roads.

**Ex. 17**

> The University College Hospital—or UCH as it was known—had a horrible reputation. The lack of government funding, coupled with the misappropriation of the little the hospital generated, had left the buildings dilapidated. Crucial medical tests were rationed and the doctors refuse to treat patients who hadn't brought their own medicine. The only reason why people went there rather than to the back-alley clinics was that they could be sure that the doctors had proper medical degrees' (p 30).

> Each time they walked past a hospital clock, Baba Segi would tap the face of his watch and frown in bewilderment...the clocks have stopped, Baba Segi. It is not a miracle. Neither is it magic. The clocks have simply stopped (p. 32).

Ex. 17 criticises how corruption had led to the ugly state of the UCH, the major health facility in the nation. Sadly, the magnitude of corruption would even lead to the inability to maintain the wall clocks in the hospital.

**Ex. 18**

> I went to church after I heard but I was not lifted. The candle-lit altar and the candle lightning Pastor looked ridiculous. The Prophet stared at my breasts for so long that I had to tell him not to defile me.

Shoneyin used REF, SSK and SCK in Ex. 18 to illustrate that there seemed to be no segment of society that was spared of decadence. At the church where it was expected that moral sanity and integrity would be preached and maintained, it was unfortunate that the Prophet stared at Iya Femi's breasts to the extent that she had to confront the Prophet for entertaining such lustful desire right in the church.

**12.9.2.4 Trampling Male Superiority**

To trample on male superiority in a patriarchal system is to accord men with those negative and uncomplimentary qualities that tradition usually imposed on women. Thus, since it is traditional to always look at the woman with suspicion anytime barrenness was experienced in a heterogeneous relationship, Shoneyin trampled on male superiority by creating Baba Segi as totally sterile. It was, therefore, not a great fall for him when readers discovered that Baba Segi, who had consistently insulted and embarrassed Bolanle for her inability to conceive because her womb was hostile to his seed, was the cause of the barrenness as no single sperm could be detected in his semen.

**Ex. 19**

> 'As far as he's concerned, it's his wife who's got serious problems. It
> would have been a different matter if he had a low sperm count, but there's
> nothing! Not a solitary sperm swimming around!' (p 194).

The contrast between society's stand on infertility as well as the approach
and attitude to Bolanle's supposed barrenness by Baba Segi made the
trampling on of male superiority in Ex. 19 significant and conspicuous.

### 12.9.2.5 Condemning Illiteracy

Condemning illiteracy is understood as the act of declaring issues related
to ignorance and stupidity as unacceptable. Assisted by REF and INF, with
this pract, Shoneyin emphasises that one would remain stupid, no matter
the level of wealth, when one is not literate.

**Ex. 20**

> Baba Segi glimpsed a figure in a white coat and ran to him… 'Doctor!
> Doctor! I need somebody to help me. It's my wife's womb…' 'Is this your
> first time in UCH?' 'I have never had reason to come here before, Ogun
> bears witness,' Baba Segi blurted (p. 31).

With humour revealed in Baba Segi's uncouth manner of shouting
to call the attention of the doctor and his self-patronising ignorance, the
novel speaks out against illiteracy. The incongruous behaviour of a man of
Baba Segi's economic status, as well as his reply, which he ended with
swear words even though there was no need for such, transformed Baba
Segi into being the punchline of the humour.

**Ex. 21**

> Do you and your husband have regular coitus?'
> 'What is the meaning of coitus? Don't think the two of you can bamboozle
> me because I did not go to university!' Baba Segi said (p. 36).

**Ex. 22**

> 'I take it that there are other children? I know it is bad luck to say how
> many but perhaps you could tell me roughly how many children you
> have?'
> 'You dare to call my children rough?'

Baba Segi's inability to understand the meaning of coitus in Ex. 21
made him think that the doctor and his wife wanted to fool him by using a
difficult word. In Ex. 22, the humour in the speech event was shown in
Baba Segi's misconception of the word "rough". The doctor wanted Baba

Segi to give him an estimate of the number of his children but Baba Segi misinterpreted the word to mean unrefined. Through the pract of condemning illiteracy, Shoneyin emphasised the need to be literate in the current techno-savvy world. No matter the level of one's wealth, one would be nothing other than a fool if one was not literate.

## 12.10 Conclusion

The preoccupation of this study is the investigation of the various functions that humour performs in Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*. The study investigates the pragmatic functions of humour in the text at the discourse levels of communicative events and of the text as an utterance in its own right. In the communicative events, characters are found to engage in different types of humour to produce practs of debasing others, justifying misdeeds, rejecting offers/compliments, and rebuking/cautioning/accusing within the context of polygynous rivalry and the context of tension. At the level of the novel as an utterance in its own right, humour performed the pragmatic functions of criticising patriarchy, discouraging polygyny, satirising social decadence, trampling on male superiority, and condemning illiteracy. These pragmatic functions indicate that humour functions beyond the level of provoking laughter and that there are several other functions that humour can perform in discourse. That the meaning of each of the expressions of humour cannot be divorced from their situational context reiterates the fact that the linguistic concept of context is central to any interpretation of humour.

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# CHAPTER 13

## THE PRAGMATICS OF FACE ACTS IN HEALTH-RELATED IFÁ DIAGNOSTIC NEWS DELIVERY IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*This study explores the pragmatic strategies engaged by the Ifá diviners in order to demonstrate face orientation in diagnostic news delivery in their consultative encounters with clients in Oyo State, Nigeria, as regards proffering culture-motivated spiritual solutions to their health-related problems. The data is comprised of tape-recorded conversations between diviners and clients in their health-motivated consultative encounters. These were subjected to content analysis with theoretical insights from Brown and Levinson's face-based approach to politeness and Mey's pragmatic act theory. Diviners orient to two types of face threats: threats to client's positive face (TCPF) and threats to client's negative face (TCNF), performed using four face acts: divisive revelation of others' responsibility for the client's health condition; delivery of shocking news about the client's health condition; anger-reflecting exposure of the self-cause of the client's health condition; and assuring the client of spiritual healing. Three linguistic strategies were also used: bald on-record (BOR), positive politeness (PP) and off-record (OR). TCPF is oriented to by practing divisive revelations of others' responsibility for the client's health condition with the aid of PP and BOR, and delivery of shocking news about the client's health condition, engaging BOR. TCNF is, however, oriented to via the practs of anger-reflecting exposure of the self-cause of the client's health condition using BOR and assuring the client of spiritual healing with the aid of an OR strategy. The study concludes that the diviners' face-oriented use of language is a cultural practice-motivated professional strategy they usually use in the delivery of health diagnostic*

*messages to secure the cooperation of the clients towards aiding spiritual healing during divinatory consultations.*

# 13.1 Introduction

Consultative encounters in Ifá traditional healthcare provide the contexts for participants' discursive actions based on their collaborative efforts which aim to aid the diviner's effort to successfully diagnose the client's health-related predicaments, in terms of providing spiritual solutions to them. Diagnosis, as well as delivery of the diagnostic news, in Ifá divination, which is the focus of this paper, is therefore essential to the strategic performance of the diviner's conflict mediation tasks. However, significant as this discursive feature is, research on language use in traditional healthcare encounters in Nigeria has focused more on stylistic features and pragmatic ones such as face threats and speech acts in medical encounters (Adegbite 1993, 1995; Adegbite and Odebunmi 2013) than on the exclusive study of diagnostic news delivery, with particular consideration for the pragmatic strategies engaged by the Ifá diviners in order to demonstrate face orientation in their consultative encounters with clients.

At an international level, studies have been devoted to the exploration of the impact of communication in traditional healthcare management processes (including the process of diagnosis), especially for preventive, regulative and promotional aspects of traditional healthcare delivery from a sociological perspective (e.g., Sundari 1986). Also, studies have described the role of interpersonal communication between practitioners and patients, an example being Al-Shura's (2014) exploration of interpersonal communicative methods in traditional Chinese medicine involving epidemiological conditions in the contexts of diagnosis, treatment and follow-up from the perspective of public health. An exclusive linguistic study of diagnostic news delivery would, however, offer clearer insights into the discourse of diagnosis, with respect to the pragmatic strategies employed by participants in consultative encounters. The present study, therefore, fills this vacuum by studying the types of face threats, face acts, and linguistic strategies which diviners orient to in diagnostic news delivery in Ifá diviner-client consultative encounters in Oyo State, Nigeria, in terms of proffering culture-motivated spiritual solutions to the clients' health-related problems. The choice of Ifà

divination hinges on how scholars propose that, of all the methods of divination employed by the Yoruba, Ifá is regarded as the most important and most reliable (see Abimbola 1976; Olatunji 1984; Ajayi 1996).

Audio tape-recorded conversations between diviners and clients in their consultative encounters in the major towns in Oyo State (Ibadan, Oyo, Ogbomoso, Saki and Iseyin) constituted the data for the study. The conversations were recorded with the consent of the diviners on the assurance of anonymous representation of the participants' (diviners' and clients') names in the analysis. The conversational code was mainly Yoruba, given the core Yoruba root of all the diviners and clients sampled. The conversations, which were translated into English for universal appeal and intelligibility, centred on health-related predicaments such as a swollen stomach, body weakness, impotence, unnamed sickness, afflictions and leg sores. Twenty (20) conversations of diviner-client dyads were recorded (four in selected diviners' homes in each town) in 2016, involving thirty participants (ten diviners [two in each state] and twenty clients [four in each town]), and those that exemplify diagnostic news delivery were selected.

The conversations were sampled for occurrences of face acts, with insights from Brown and Levinson's face-based approach to politeness and Mey's pragmatic act theory, which are complementarily useful in characterising the context-sensitive face orientations of the diviners in their spiritual-conflict mediation efforts. The study is therefore valuable in reaching an understanding of the pragmatics of practs-directed orientation to face acts within the constellation of Mey's pragmatic acts and Brown and Levinson's face-based view of linguistic politeness in the diagnostic context of the Ifá divination corpus for health-related preternatural conflict mediation in Oyo State, Nigeria. Thus, it makes a contribution to linguistic scholarship by revealing the utilisation of pragmatic tools in espousing the Yoruba's faith in the Ifá divination process as a viable mode of health management in Nigeria.

## 13.2 Language in the Ifá Diagnostic Context

In the Ifá divination practice among the Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria, a diviner-client encounter is characterised by language as a tool of expressivity. Language is thus an instrument drawn on by the diviners and their clients "for socio-cultural identification" (Odebunmi 2001: 26; 2016: 3) in intra-cultural communication. The fact is that the resources of language are collaboratively engaged for the expression of culture-sensitive experiences and expectations of participants in Ifá consultative

interactions. The collaborative action, notably, dictates the discursive practices in the encounter, necessitating that the diviner typically begins the healthcare process with a diagnosis. This diagnosis is usually spurred on by the client's consultation on the grounds of a predicament culturally believed to demand spiritual solutions. It commonly involves the diviner's first move which is interviewing the client with the aim of obtaining background information concerning the client's situation. Then the diviner goes ahead with verbal and spiritual techniques, while the client remains passive and listens attentively. In some situations, the client is permitted to comment on the divinatory findings of the diviner, especially to indicate areas in which the diviner has touched on his/her spiritual challenge.

A significant nature of language in the diagnostic context of interaction in the Ifá divination system is its cultural domiciliation (Odebunmi 2016: 5), which situates the language in the Yoruba culture and dictates the choice of the Yoruba code for the projection of the Yoruba cultural identity. This nature of language is particularly enshrined in diagnostic news delivery, whose communication projects the "descriptive, expressive and prescriptive functions" (ibid) of language. Thus, descriptively, language is communicatively engaged by the diviner to provide information as well as to address issues diagnostically revealed by Ifá about the client's predicaments. Expressively, language sometimes evokes the diviner's emotional state with respect to certain diagnostic revelations about the client's condition; and prescriptively, asymmetrical communicative cues are typically used by the diviner by engaging language to give directives and instructions to the client on appropriate measures revealed by Ifá.

Of course, the above functions communicatively rely on certain sociolectal codes marked by peculiar, culture-sensitive jargon (such as "bi'fá" or "bá'fá ní gbólòhùn" meaning "consult with the god of divinity", "rú'bo" meaning "offer sacrifice", "àwon àgbà" meaning "the witches", "ebo èbè" meaning "sacrifice of propitiation", "ohun etùtù" meaning sacrificial items", and "yo l'ójú opón ifá" meaning "appear on the divination tray" etc.) within the context of diagnosis in the Ifá divination professional practice. The Ifá diagnostic context can therefore be operationally referred to as the socio-cultural conditions that aid the revelation and understanding of the events and actions responsible for a client's predicaments, which cannot be determined by ordinary perception but by Ifá divinatory techniques. It largely hinges on inferences and reasoning based on prior experiences which are usually subjected to discursive negotiations between the diviner and the client. The use of language in Yoruba Ifá divination-based traditional healing is thus linked

to the native belief in the power of the diviner's spoken language as being "enshrined with some hidden symbolic and inexplicable implications" (Adegbite 1993: 1) about the client's predicament, only interpretable based on Òrúnmílà's embodied knowledge of matters affecting the destiny of humans.

## 13.3 Linguistic Studies on Communication in Ifá Traditional Healthcare in Nigeria

Linguistic studies on communication in Ifá divination-based traditional healthcare in Nigeria have illuminated scholars' ideas that traditional healing is an expression of native cultural histories, knowledge and medicine (see Simpson 1994; Salami 2002). Some of these studies have actually demonstrated the World Health Organisation's (2000: 1) position that "traditional medicine is the sum total of the knowledge, skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences indigenous to different cultures, used in the maintenance of physical or mental illness", especially with consideration for the roles of communication strategies/skills and discursive practices (cf. Olatunji 1984; Adegbite 1993; Adegbite 1995; and Adegbite and Odebunmi 2013).

Olatunji (1984) provides an inferential clue that Africans seek traditional healings in cases where spiritual involvements are suspected or assumed. The study, which sandwiches the discussion of the features of Ifá divination poetry among other features of Yoruba oral literature, hints at the impact of communication in Ifá divinatory practice. It centres the impact on institutional ethical orientation, which dictates stylistic choices of language use, especially in regard to both transactional and interactional roles of Yoruba usage between the diviner and the client in their consultative encounters. It thus reveals narrative essence, symbolism, mnemonic significational wordplay in duality and arithmetical progression and repetition as stylistic features of ese Ifá (Ifá divination poetry) accounting for meaning negotiation in encounters at a broad diagnostic level. Aside from being a stylistic study, which sets it apart from the present pragmatic enterprise, its broad rather than strict discussion of the patterns involved in Ifá divinatory diagnosis on diagnostic news delivery also marks a point of departure from the present study.

Adegbite's (1993) study is an exploration of some features of language use in Yoruba traditional medicine (YTM), and concentrates on interactions between traditional healers (herbalists and divination priests) and their clients. The study observes that the use of language in YTM is sociologically and contextually based, given that elaborate greetings and

other forms of intimacy are dominant. The study further finds that YTM is largely peculiarly marked by indirectness, perhaps arising from the nature of the Yoruba culture. In another related study, Adegbite (1995) investigates the structure of texts from herbalist-client encounters in the practice of YTM. The study describes the communicative encounter as Yoruba therapeutic communication which has solely dialogical structures. The findings show that these dialogical structures are either constituted by diagnostic and prescriptive transactions or monologic narratives, descriptions, arguments, directives, information, and requests in divinatory, incantatory and supplicating transactions. While these two studies relate to the present study in that they adopt a pragmatic approach and consider aspects of language use in diagnostic news delivery, they differ from it in theoretical orientation; they draw insights from the speech act theory, whereas the present study draws theoretical insights from Brown and Levinson's face-based approach to politeness and Mey's pragmatic act theory.

Adegbite and Odebunmi (2013) is, however, a comparative description of face-threatening acts (FTA) in conversational interactions between medical practitioners and patients in orthodox and traditional medical practice (herbalists and divination priests) among the Yoruba in southwestern Nigeria. The study reveals that language use in interactions between practitioners and clients in YTM features more instances of FTA with redress (positive politeness) than FTA without redress (bald on-record). The "off-record" strategy is also largely utilised in divination as an indirect means of diagnosing illnesses in YTM, with the expectations of indirectness in communication and social familiarity being carried into the consultative context of YTM. Though the study's description of FTAs in the discourse of diagnosis establishes its close relevance to the present study, it is different from the present study in two significant ways. First, unlike the present study which considers only the Ifá diagnostic news delivery, it is a comparative study of face threat in both orthodox hospitals and Ifá traditional medical practice; second, it theoretically benefits from only Brown and Levinson's face-based approach to politeness while the present research prefers a combination of the theory with Mey's pragmatic act theory.

The preceding information reveals that there seems to be a dearth of research that has exclusively focused on the linguistic exploration of Ifá diagnostic news delivery involving health-related issues from a pragmatic perspective in Nigeria. This study therefore plugs this hole by specifically examining the pragmatic strategies that the diviners engage in when performing face acts, with orientation to face threats and linguistic strategies for mitigating them in Ifá diviner-client consultative encounters

in Oyo State, Nigeria. This is with a view to proffering linguistic clues to a culture-motivated spiritual mode of managing the clients' health-related problems.

## 13.4 Theoretical Perspectives

This study taps into theoretical insights from a constellation of Brown and Levinson's face-based view of linguistic politeness and Mey's pragmatic acts, which are complementarily capable of supporting an understanding of the pragmatics of practs-directed orientation to face acts in the diagnostic context of the Ifá divination corpus for spiritual mediation on health-related predicaments. Brown and Levinson's (1987) approach to linguistic politeness describes it as a means of showing concern for people's face. The concept of "face" is thus at the core of Brown and Levinson's (1987) approach to politeness, given that all participants in spoken interactions emotionally invest in face, and it must be constantly under consideration (Mullany 2002: 3). Brown and Levinson contend that "face" can be best understood as an individual's feeling of self-worth or self-image (see Brown and Levinson 1987). They identify two types of face: Positive Face and Negative Face; positive face refers to people's desire for self-worth, while negative face refers to their desire for autonomy (Bloomer et al. 2005: 113). According to Bousfield (2008: 38), these two aspects of face are of different strengths and of differing importance in different cultures.

An interesting submission of Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) in their discussion of face is that face can be "damaged, maintained or enhanced through interaction with others", given that face is the emotional and social feeling of self that an individual has and expects others to recognise (Odebunmi, 2003). However, mutual vulnerability of face makes people run the risk of threatening (and damaging) the face of their co-interlocutors when they interact, as certain illocutionary acts dubbed FTAs usually employed in communicative encounters inherently threaten either the positive or negative face wants of the co-participants. As Bloomer et al. (2005: 113-114) note, acts that indicate that the speaker does not care about or is indifferent to the hearer's feelings threaten the hearer's positive face wants, while acts that indicate that the speaker does not intend to avoid impeding the hearer's freedom of action threaten the hearer's negative face wants. The potential threat to these aspects of face is largely pragmatically expected to be focused on in interactions by engaging five linguistic strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), which are:

1. Bald on-record strategy: FTA is performed directly, without redress, but as clearly and concisely as possible.
2. Positive politeness strategy: FTA is performed using linguistic strategies aimed at redressing the positive face threat to the hearer.
3. Negative politeness strategy: FTA is performed utilising linguistic strategies that aim to redress the negative face threat to the hearer.
4. Off-record strategy: FTA is performed off-record, that is, implicitly.
5. Don't perform the FTA strategy: FTA's performance is avoided for being judged to be too threatening to the intended recipient (see Bousfield 2008: 57).

FTAs are thus pragmatic acts that are liable to damage or threaten the hearer's positive or negative face. In Mey's pragmatic act theory, the verbal behaviour of an individual is considered within the affordances of the context, as "the context determines what one can say and what one cannot say" (Mey 2001: 43). According to Mey (2001: 221), pragmatic acts do not necessarily include specific acts of speech that can be held accountable for the action performed in a given context. They are performed when interlocutors communicate implicitly (see Mey 2001; Odebunmi 2006), that is, they involve a more roundabout technique to perform an action. Thus, a pragmatic act is performed when we co-opt others, appeal to them, set them up, threaten them, and so on through our conversations without using explicit lexical markers of such acts.

As Mey (2001: 206) says, "a typical pragmatic look at language users is to view them as performing pragmatic acts, on the specification, for any given situation, of the limitations and affordances of a general situational prototype capable of being executed in the situation". Such a generalised pragmatic act is what Mey calls a *pragmeme*. Also, there are the instantiated, individual pragmatic acts dubbed *ipras* or *practs* which ultimately refer to a particular pragmeme as their realisations (Mey 2001: 221). What counts as a pract is exclusively determined by the situation, and by the effects that the practs have, or may have, in a given context.

There are two parts to a pragmeme: the activity part, which comprises features meant for interactants, and the textual part, which presents elements of context within which the pragmeme finds its way of operating. The former involves speech act types as indirect speech acts, conversational ("dialogue") acts, psychological acts, prosodic acts and physical acts while the latter includes context elements such as INF

representing "inference"; REF, "relevance"; VCE, "voice"; SSK, "shared situation knowledge"; MPH, "metaphor"; and M "metapragramatic joker" and SCK, "shared cultural knowledge" introduced by Odebunmi (2006). Ultimately, the interaction between the activity part and the textual part gives off a pract or an allopract (see Mey 2001; Odebunmi 2006; Odebunmi 2008; Odebunmi and Oloyede 2016). In this study, the face-based theory of politeness addresses the types of face threats and the linguistic strategies used, while the pragmatic act theory accounts for the actual face acts (indirect speech acts and physiological acts) indicating the intention motivated by the threats, especially given the situation-derived as well as situation-constrained cultural affordances needed for understanding pragmatic intention.

# 13.5 Analysis and Findings

The analysis demonstrates the pragmatic strategies deployed by the diviners in orienting to the face in Ifá diviner-client consultative encounters. Diviners orient to two types of face threats: threats to client's positive face (TCPF) and threats to client's negative face (TCNF), performed using four face acts: the divisive revelation of others' responsibility for the client's health condition; the delivery of shocking news about the client's health condition; anger-reflecting exposure of the self-cause of the client's health condition; and assuring the client of spiritual healing, and three linguistic strategies: bald on-record (BOR), positive politeness (PP) and off-record (OR). TCPF is concerned with practing the divisive revelation of others' responsibility for the client's health condition with the aid of PP, and the delivery of shocking news about the client's health condition engaging BOR. TCNF is, however, concerned with the practs of anger-reflecting exposure of the self-cause of the client's health condition using BOR and assuring the client of spiritual healing with the aid of the OR strategy.

## 13.5.1 Threats to Client's Positive Face (TCPF)

TCPF is concerned with the performance of acts that suggest that the diviner does not take into consideration the client's feelings by practing:

> (i) A divisive revelation of others' responsibility for the client's health condition, with the aid of positive politeness and bald on-record strategies.

(ii) The delivery of shocking news about the client's health
condition, engaging the bald on-record strategy.

**The Divisive Revelation of others' Responsibility for the Client's Health Condition**

The pract of the divisive revelation of others' responsibility for the client's health condition is concerned with threats to the client's positive face using the positive politeness and bald on-record strategies. Such orientation to the positive face want of the client thus suggests that the diviner strategically exploits caring about the client's feelings-cum-positive face by implicating others, usually families, neighbours, colleagues or friends in the cause of his/her health condition, thereby inducing compliance-ensuring divisive thoughts in the client's mind. With the positive politeness strategy, the potential threat to the client's positive face is commonly and conventionally redressed using indirectness. With the bald on-record strategy, the threat to the client's positive face largely hinges on a blunt and direct declaration of the spiritual measures to be taken by the client. Examples 1 and 2 will clarify these points.

Example 1: (Divination was performed to find out the cause of a child's health predicament and accusing fingers were pointed at the mother's co-wives, being from a polygamous home.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Diviner: | *Arábìnrin, àìsàn omo re yìí, àsàsí ló yo lójù opón ifá.* |
| Client: | Bàbá, e gbà mí o. Ojú kan èpà, ojú kan erèe mi ni ílé oko mi náà nù un. Ojú sì rí tó kí n tó bí i. |
| Diviner: | Sé òhun nìkan l'okùnrin t'oko re bí ni? |
| Client: | Béèni bàbá. |
| Diviner: | *Abájo náà; nítorí obìnrin kan ló yo lójù opón nidi àsàsí yì í* |
| Client: | Bàbá, e sàá nú mì i. Ẹ má je kí wón pa omo mi o. |
| Diviner: | Kò séwu. |
| Client: | Ta wá l'obìnrin to wà ní'dì í àsàsí òhún gan? |
| Diviner: | *Àsàsí inú ilé ni. Òkan nínu àwon ìyálé rè sì ló fàá.* |
| Client: | Ara ń fu mí náà. |
| Diviner: | Fi ọkàn re balè, ara omo re yíò yá. |
| Client: | Ẹ sé bàbá. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Diviner: | *Woman, this sickness of your child, it is a magical affliction that appears on the divination tray.* |
| Client: | Old one, help me. That is my only child in my husband's house. And I went through difficulties before I gave birth to him. |
| Diviner: | Is he the only male child your husband bore? |
| Client: | Yes sir. |

| Diviner: | *Little wonder; because it is a woman that appears on the divination tray as the cause of this affliction.* |
|---|---|
| Client: | Old one, have mercy on me. Don't let them kill my child. |
| Diviner: | There is no problem. |
| Client: | Who is then the woman behind this affliction? |
| Diviner: | *It is an affliction from within the house. And one of your senior wives is responsible for it.* |
| Client: | I am so suspicious. |
| Diviner: | Put your mind at rest. Your child will be well. |
| Client: | Thank you, sir. |

Example 1 reveals practing a divisive revelation of others' responsibility for the client's health condition. These acts are pragmatically concerned with threats to the client's positive face using the positive politeness strategy. After his consultation with Ifá, the diviner announces that the child whom the client brings for spiritual healing is being magically afflicted, using the following utterances:

(i) *Arábìnrin, àisàn omo re yìí, àsàsí ló yo lójù opón ifá (Woman, this sickness of your child, it is a magical affliction that appears on the divination tray)*

(ii) *...nítorí obìnrin kan ló yo lójù opón nidi àsàsí yì í (...because it is a woman that appears on the divination tray as the cause of this affliction)*

(iii) *Àsàsí inú ilé ni... (It is an affliction from within the house...)*

The diviner practs the divisive revelation of one of the child's mother's co-wives as the person responsible for the poor health condition of the child, riding on SCK, thereby threatening the positive face want of the client. The face acts inherent in these utterances are performed with background access to the cultural knowledge of polygamous-induced envy that commonly manifests among co-wives, and the value placed on male children in Africa, which mostly ends in spiritual battles. The news about the child's spiritual affliction is therefore a serious threat to the client's positive face, as it has a negative impact on her emotional feelings.

However, to reveal the cause/source of the problem, the potential threat to the client's face is conventionally redressed using indirectness, giving off a positive politeness strategy which aids the diviner's diagnostic news delivery role. The use of indirectness is consistent with the cultural interactional practice in African traditional religious settings, especially in activities involving spiritual therapy for tackling illnesses. Indirectness is engaged to politely veil the actual person responsible for the predicament. Mentioning the actual name of the culprit is thus avoided for the

professional reason of safeguarding social disharmony between the client
and the actual co-wife who seems to be responsible for the child's health
predicament, especially given the divisive undertone of the news.

Diagnostic messages also sometimes pract face acts which
indicate the malevolent causes of the client's poor health orchestrated by
others. Of course, such acts conveying the divisive revelation of others'
responsibility for the client's health condition revealed via consultation
with Ifá are usually concerned with the threat to the client's positive face
want, with a culture-dictating engagement of the bald on-record strategy.
An instance can be cited from the data:

Example 2: (A man who has been nursing sores on his leg visits the
diviner, having made several efforts to seek a medical solution, but to no
avail.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Diviner: | *Arákùnrin, etí ẹ mélòó? Wòó, àwon aye ní ń bẹ n'ídi òrò egbò* |
| | *àdáàjiná rẹ.* |
| Client: | Ha a! Ta ni mo sè |
| Diviner: | Ìyàwó ẹ n kó? |
| Client: | Mo ti kòó sílè. |
| Diviner: | *Latí ẹ dáadáa, abaraméjì ìyàwó ẹ tí o kò sílè ló fi egbò kàn é.* |
| | *Ebo èbè sì lo ó* |
| | *rù ú fún ònà àbáyo.* |
| Client: | Mo gbó baba. Ẹ seun, baba. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Diviner: | *Man, how many ears do you have? See, the witches are* |
| | *responsible for your predicament of un-healing sores.* |
| Client: | Ah! Who did I offend? |
| Diviner: | What of your wife? |
| Client: | I have divorced her. |
| Diviner: | *Listen attentively, your witch of a wife whom you divorced is* |
| | *the one who inflicted you with the sores. And it is a* |
| | *propitiatory sacrifice that you will offer* for *the* solution. |
| Client: | I heard, old one. Thank you, old man. |

In Example 2, threats to the positive face want of the client manifest via
the practing of acts that convey the divisive revelation of the client's ex-
wife's responsibility for the client's health condition. The face acts,
capable of causing an unending rift between the client and his ex-wife who
is associated with witchcraft, obviously undermine his human value. These
acts are evident in the following utterances of the diviner:

(i) *...Wòó, àwon aye ní ń bę n'ídi òrò egbò àdáàjiná rę.*
    *(...See, the witches are responsible for your predicament of un-healing sores)*

(ii) *Latí ę dáadáa, abaraméjì ìyàwó ę tí o kò sílè ló fi egbò kàn é. Ebo èbè sì lo ó rù ú fún òn*à *àbáyo.*
    *(Listen attentively, your witch of a wife whom you divorced is the one who inflicted you with the sores. And it is a propitiatory sacrifice that you will offer for the solution).*

In the instance above, the diviner, through acts that threaten the client's positive face wants (of the desire to be valued as well as to have his feelings cared for), breaks the news to him of the person responsible for the client's health condition with reliance on SCK. With the contextual advantage of this cultural knowledge, he also successfully breaks the news of the seriousness of the situation, being associated with the involvement of the malevolent forces of witchcraft, by calling for a propitiatory sacrifice towards finding a solution to the problem. The diviner then engages the BOR strategy by bluntly announcing the news which reveals the witches, one of whom is the client's ex-wife, as the ones responsible for his un-healing sores. The engagement of the BOR strategy is further reinforced by the direct declaration that the client will only have to offer a sacrifice to appease the malevolent forces of witchcraft within the diviner's mediatory endeavour. This, however, serves to indicate an awareness of his face, with regard to his desire for good health, while it simultaneously serves to strengthen the client's hope in the Ifá divination system as a potentially viable means of aiding spiritual healing of his sores.

**The Delivery of Shocking News about the Client's Health Condition**
Practing the delivery of shocking news about the client's health condition is also usually concerned with the positive face of the client, engaging the bald on-record strategy. Orienting to the positive face want of the client via this strategy has the pragmatic implication of depicting the diviner's tactical avoidance of the care about the client's positive face by practing the delivery of news that shockingly undermines his/her self-worth, especially to create fear in him/her and secure his/her cooperation in his confidence to proffer a solution to the diagnosed problem. Acts revealed to be practed in this regard in the data include announcing the imminence of malevolent forces-orchestrated death (such as that caused by "àjẹ́", meaning "witches", etc.) and announcing the imminence of death devoid

of causal agents. The interactions in Examples 3 and 4 below exemplify the points being made here.

Example 3: (A woman complains of constant weakness which often makes her faint, with the medical diagnosis not revealing anything; and the diviner sets up a consultation to determine the root of the health challenge.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Client: | Bàbá, e dákun, kí l'ó fa àìlera mi gan? |
| Diviner: | *Láìnìtàn é je, òkú alàyè ni ó bí o se jókòó níwájú ù mi yìí; o ti di ẹran àwon àgbà tipé.* |
| Client: | Bàbá, kí l'èsè mi; e dákun e sàánu mìì; Ẹ má jè*é* kí n k*ú* báyìí. |
| Diviner: | Òrúnmílà á gbà é. |
| Client: | Old one, please, what is the exact cause of my ill health? |
| Diviner: | *Without deceiving you, y*ou are a living corpse as you sit in front of me; you have long become meat for the witches.* |
| Client: | Old one, what is my offence; please have mercy on me. Do not let me die like this. |
| Diviner: | Òrúnmílà will deliver you. |

Example 3 indicates that announcing the imminence of witches-orchestrated death is a face act successfully practed by the diviners in the data with recourse to SCK and metaphoric engagement, following the client's curious demand to know the diagnostic outcome of the consultation concerning her ill health after the diviner's consultation with Ifá. This act threatens the positive face of the client, and focuses on the BOR strategy in its blunt declaration of the kind of shocking news concerning her health situation. The utterance "*Láìnìtàn é je, òkú alàyè ni ó bí o se jókòó níwájú ù mi yìí; o ti di ẹran àwon àgbà tipé*" (*Without deceiving you, y*ou are a living corpse as you sit in front of me; you have long become meat for the witches*) is professionally engaged by the diviner to announce to the woman the spiritual gravity of her health challenge, so as to prepare her for the reality of the impending danger, which is the imminence of her death associated with the malevolent forces of witchcraft.

The pragmatic act of the utterance becomes successful in conveying a message that brings the client out of the ignorance of the spirituality of her health problem, especially on the path to obtaining a spiritual solution. Also, its face-threatening implication of achieving a psycho-spiritual effect (of securing the client's cooperation for successful mediation between her and the witches responsible for her predicament) also becomes successful, as evident from the client's response, with which she pleads for a death-averting solution.

However, in some instances, acts that pract the delivery of the shocking news of imminent death devoid of a causal agent are engaged following a revelation by the Ifá divination, with the potential threats of the act to the client's positive face. Although the BOR linguistic strategy is also commonly used, the effect is not as face threatening as the one in which the malevolent causal agent is mentioned. An example can be considered.

Example 4: (A sick man who could not talk again was taken to the diviner following unsuccessful treatment at some orthodox hospitals.)

Client:      Bàbá, ẹ gbàmí. Ara oko mi ò yá o.
Diviner:     Kí lè wá ń wò tí àìsàn se dáa gúnlè tó báyìí?
Client:      A ò wò wón níran rárá bàbá. Ati gbé won lo ilé ìwòsàn èèbo, wón sì ti fún won l'ábéré àti òrisirisi òògùn. Nígbà ti a ko rí'yàtò l'aní ká gbìyànjú t'ìbílè.
Diviner:     Odáa,'ifá áá t'ówa s'ónà.
Client:      Ẹ sá à gbàmí o. Ẹ ma jè é kí n d'opó òsán an gan.
Diviner:     (Lehin ti o d'ifá tán) *Arábìnrin, abéré o ràn án, òògún ò sì ran ohun tí ń se oko re. Ifá ní ikú oko re le fi ń sere yìí, tí e bá sàfara. Àisàn àse d'ójú ikú rèé l'ójú opón ifá.*
Client:      Há à! Ikú ke? Ta la sè? Kí ni síse báyìí, bàbá?
Diviner:     Ifá a túbò t'ówa s'ónà.
Client:      Mo dúpé bàbá. Ẹ seun gan.

Client:      Old one, help me. My husband is ill.
Diviner:     Why did you wait until the sickness weighs him down like this?
Client:      We are not nonchalant about his health, old one. We have taken him to the orthodox hospitals, and they have given him injections and different drugs. It is when we did not see changes that we decided to try the traditional option.
Diviner:     Okay, the god of divination will guide us.
Client:      Just help me. Don't let me become an untimely widow.
Diviner:     (After consulting with Ifá) W*oman, an injection cannot handle it, and drugs cannot handle what is wrong with your husband. The god of divination says you are toying with your husband's death if you tarry. It is a sickness that leads to death that I see on the divination tray.*
Client:      Ah! Death? Who did we offend? What is the solution, old one?
Diviner:     The god of divination will further guide us.
Client:      I am grateful, old one. Thank you so much.

Example 4 illustrates the diviner-client consultative interaction involving the diviner's acts that diagnostically pract the delivery of shocking news

about the client's health condition. This message conveyed to the client
through the use of metaphor obviously threatens the client's positive face.
The fact is that the direct and blunt tactics of the BOR strategy, with which
emphasis is placed on death resulting from the client's illness but is devoid
of a causal agent, hurt the client's feelings. This practing of a shocking
news delivery act, with the diviner's orientation to the positive face want
of the client via the engagement of the BOR linguistic strategy, is evident
in the following utterances of the diviner:

> *Arábìnrin, abéré o ràn án, òògún ò sì ran ohun tí ń se oko re. Ifá ní ikú oko
> re le fi ń sere yìí, tí e bá sàfara. Àisàn àse d'ójú ikú rèé l'ójú opón ifá.*

> (W*oman, an injection cannot handle it, and drugs cannot handle what is
> wrong with your husband. The god of divination says you are toying with
> your husband's death if you tarry. It is a sickness that leads to death that I
> see on the divination tray).*

These diviner's utterances pragmatically serve to discourage the client
from further seeking an orthodox medical solution earlier sought for a
rather spiritual health predicament. The utterances, therefore, affirm the
client's hope of her husband's healing in terms of the viability of the
mediatory option of the Ifá divination as a cultural alternative.

## 13.5.2 Threats to the Client's Negative Face (TCNF)

TCNF is concerned with the performance of acts suggesting that the
diviner questions or does not avoid impeding the client's freedom of
action. These are acts that pract:

(i)  Anger-reflecting exposure of the self-cause of the client's health
     condition (engaging the BOR strategy).
(ii) Assuring the client of spiritual healing (using the off-record
     strategy).

**Anger-Reflecting Exposure of the Self-Cause of the Client's Health
Condition**
Anger-reflecting exposure of the self-cause of the client's health condition
is practed, and is concerned with the threat to the client's negative face
with the engagement of the bald on-record strategy. By blatantly resorting
to anger speech, the diviner largely turns to this negative face want of the
client to pressurise him/her to the admittance of, confession of, and
rumination on the self-cause root of the health challenge, for his/her own

good. The orientation is therefore capable of equally inducing fear and enforcing sober submissiveness in the client in agitation for the knowledge of the actual self-cause of the health predicament. The data for this study thus manifest the occurrence of strong negative emotions of anger in the diviner's utterances, with respect to his exposure of the client's self-cause of his own health predicament which pragmatically functions to threaten the client's negative face want without undermining the benefit to the client. Example 5 clarifies this point:

Example 5: (A woman approached a diviner to seek a medical solution to her predicament of a swollen stomach and divination was performed, revealing that her predicament was as a result of her past wicked deed.)

| Diviner: | Omo mi, ǹjé o mò pé abé aṣo e ni ina ti ń jó? |
| Client: | Bàbá kò yé mìí. |
| Diviner: | *Ódá a, èjè ìbejì la fi hànmì pé ó wà l'órùn re yìí. Àṣe apààyàn ni ó.* |
| Client: | Kò rí béè baba o. Mi ò pààyàn rìí. |
| Diviner: | *Pádà. Èmi kìí ṣe màjèsín awo; Ifá t'èmi kìí sìí puró. Ìyà èje tó wà l'órùn re àti èpè ìtùfú ti o ṣe l'órí ara rè lò ń jẹ lówólówó, pèlú inú ù re tó wú bi Olóyún yìí. Wòó, ibi tí o gbà wolé n'ìyen, bí oò bá setán láti so òtító.* |
| Client: | Ẹ má bínú sími bàbá. Mo setán láti jéwó. Ikú u won sèèsi ni baba à. |
| Diviner: | O jé nàtán fún ànfàní ara à re. |
| Client: | Àlàyé náà ni mò ń ṣe yìí bàbá. Kódà... |

| Diviner: | My child, do you know that you are the cause of your predicament? |
| Client: | Old one, I don't understand. |
| Diviner: | Okay, it is the blood of twins that is shown to me that you are guilty of. So you are a killer. |
| Client: | It is not true, old one. I have never killed anyone. |
| Diviner: | *Hold it. I am not a little diviner; and my divination doesn't lie. It is the punishment of the blood you are guilty of and the curses of pretence raked on yourself that you are suffering from at the moment, with your swollen stomach like that of a pregnant woman. See, that is where you came in through, if you are not ready to say the truth.* |
| Client: | Don't be angry at me, old one. I am ready to say the truth. Their death was accidental, old one. |
| Diviner: | You better say the whole truth in your own interest |
| Client: | It is the explanation that I'm giving, old one. Even... |

Example 5 demonstrates an interesting occurrence of face act which practs the diviner's anger-reflecting diagnostic news delivery, given that the

news implicates the client in the self-cause of his own health predicament. The occurrence of the strong negative emotion of anger in the diviner's utterances pragmatically functions to threaten the client's negative face want, with the engagement of the BOR linguistic strategy, without undermining the benefit to the client. Preparatory to the practing of this emotional act of anger to professionally break the news of the client's self-cause of his own health problem, the diviner hints at the diagnostic revelation from Ifà, using a metaphoric figurative language typical of the cultural projection of sapiential lore in his first utterance. However, the client pretends to be ignorant of the diagnostic revelation, forcing the diviner to pract the negative emotion of anger, which eventually impedes the client's freedom of action and bluntly exposes her prior condemnable act of killing responsible for her ill health thus:

> *Pádà. Èmi kìí se màjèsín awo; Ifá t'èmi kìí sìí puró. Ìyà èje tó wà l'órùn re àti èpè ìtùfú ti o se l'órí ara rè lò ń jẹ lówólówó, pèlú inú ù re tó wú bi Olóyún yìí. Wòó, ibi tí o gbà wolé n'ìyen, bí oò bá setán láti so òtító.*

> *Hold it. I am not a little diviner; and my divination doesn't lie. It is the punishment of the blood you are guilty of and the curses of pretence raked on yourself that you are suffering from at the moment, with your swollen stomach like that of a pregnant woman. See, that is where you came in, if you are not ready to say the truth.*

Given the diviner's spiritual power which places him in a higher role relationship with the client, his negative emotion of anger is actually signalled by the imperative utterance "*pádà*" ("hold it"), while the blunt exposure of the client's prior condemnable act of killing and self-cursing responsible for her ill health is achieved via the utterances "*Ìyà èje tó wà l'órùn re àti èpè ìtùfú ti o se l'órí ara rè lò ń jẹ lówólówó, pèlú inú ù re tó wú bi Olóyún yìí*" (It is the punishment of the blood you are guilty of and the curses of pretence raked on yourself that you are suffering from at the moment, with your swollen stomach like that of a pregnant woman). This threat to the client's negative face, institutionally felicitous in Ifá divination practice, forces her to admit the self-cause of her swollen stomach predicament, occasioned by her claimed accidental killing of the said twins and the consequential curses of pretence raked on herself. The client's compliance (assisted by SCK of the imminent consequence) is, of course, a step towards cooperation with the divinatory directives in a bid to be healed from her health predicament.

**Assuring the Client of Spiritual Healing**
In diviner-client consultative encounters, practing assurances and promises
to the client of spiritual healing strictly and pragmatically demonstrates
concern with the threat to the client's negative face. The off-record
strategy is used for professional non-committal reasons with respect to the
eventual fate of the healing. Such acts obviously indicate some positive
future spiritual mediatory acts on the part of the diviner towards healing
the client of the health condition, which consequently put pressure on the
client to accept, therefore, leading to him/her incurring some debts,
especially involving compliance with sacrificial prescriptions and spiritual
directives. Such debts thus threaten his/her desire for autonomy, though
mitigated by the off-record strategy deployed by the diviner and the
practed assurance of spiritual healing of the inflicted health predicament.
This point is clarified in Examples 6 and 7 that follow.

Example 6: (Divination was performed for a sick man who could not talk
again following unsuccessful treatment at an orthodox hospital.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Client: | Bàbá, ẹ gbàmí. Ara oko mi ò yá o. |
| Diviner: | Kí lè wá ń wò tí àìsàn se dáa gúnlè tó báyìí? |
| Client: | A ò wò wón níran rárá bàbá. Ati gbé won lo ilé ìwòsàn èèbo, wón sì ti fún won l'ábéré àti òrisirisi òògùn. Nígbà ti a ko rí'yàtò l'aní ká gbìyànjú t'ìbílè. |
| Diviner: | Odáa,'ifá áá t'ówa s'ónà. |
| Client: | Ẹ sá à gbàmí o. Ẹ ma jè é kí n d'opó òsán an gan. |
| Diviner: | Arábìnrin, abéré o ràn án, òògún ò sì ran ohun tí ń se oko re. Ifá ní ikú oko re le fi ń sere yìí, tí e bá sàfara. Àisàn àse d'ójú ikú rèé l'ójú opón ifá. |
| Client: | Há à! Ikú ke? Ta la sè? Kí ni síse báyìí, bàbá? |
| Diviner: | Ifá a túbò t'ówa s'ónà. |
| Client: | Mo dúpé bàbá. Ẹ seun gan. |
| Diviner: | (Lehin ti o tun d'ifá) *Ifá ní a óò ra ilé ayé gbé fún oko re ni òo* |
| Client: | Sé wón óò sáà gbadùn. |
| Diviner: | *Ìwo má mi'kàn; Ifá kìí puró.* |
| Client: | Mo dúpé bàbá. Kí elédàá mi má jè é kí n d'opó. |
| Diviner: | Òrúnmìlà l'opé tó sí. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Client: | Old one, help me. My husband is ill. |
| Diviner: | Why did you wait until the sickness weighs him down like this? |
| Client: | We are not nonchalant about his health, old one. We have taken him to the orthodox hospitals, and they have given him injections and different drugs. It is when we did not see changes that we decided to try the traditional option. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Diviner: | Okay, the god of divination will guide us. |
| Client: | Just help me. Don't let me become an untimely widow. |
| Diviner: | Woman, injections cannot handle it, and drugs cannot handle what is wrong with your husband. The god of divination says you are toying with your husband's death if you tarry. It is a sickness that leads to death that I see on the divination tray. |
| Client: | Ah! Death? Who did we offend? What is the solution, old one? |
| Diviner: | The god of divination will further guide us. |
| Client: | I am grateful, old one. Thank you so much. |
| Diviner: | (After further consultation with the god of divination). *The god of divination says that we will make a spiritual negotiation for your husband.* |
| Client: | Is there a hope he will be healed? |
| Diviner: | *You don't be afraid; the god of divination does not tell lies.* |
| Client: | I am grateful, old one. May my creator not let me become a widow. |
| Diviner: | It is Orunmila that deserves the gratefulness. |

In the example of the diagnostic session above, the performance of a pragmatic act that assures the client of her husband's spiritual healing is found. This act threatens the client's negative face, with the off-record strategy being used, especially when leaving the assurance of the spiritual healing implicit and non-committal. The act is first practed with the utterance "*Ifá ní a óò ra ilé ayé gbé fún oko re ni ò*" (*The god of divination says that we will make a spiritual negotiation for your husband*). This affective metaphorical usage, which requires interpretive input from the Yoruba socio-cultural knowledge that society is full of spiritual afflictions, thus suggests that living is at a spiritually costly price which demands sacrifices to supernatural forces.

The pract is later reinforced with the utterance "*Ìwo má mi'kàn; Ifá kìí puró*" (*You don't be afraid; the god of divination does not tell lies*). These utterances, combined with the earlier one, inferentially indicate the diviner's readiness to offer spiritual mediation between the client and the malevolent forces responsible for the health predicament of the client's husband on the strength of the hope diagnostically provided by Ifá. Thus, the act impedes the client's freedom by mandating her to be ready for the prescribed sacrifices and consequently incurs a debt of appreciation to the diviner, which will strengthen the business relationship between them. Socio-culturally, the power and the role distance between the diviner and the client necessitate the diviner's professional obligation to assure the client of spiritual healing by exploring the negative face threat with the advantage of the off-record strategy, which leaves the assurance rather implicit.

Another instance of the performance of the face act of assurance/promise of spiritual support from the diviner to the client with concern for the client's negative face vis-a-vis the off-record linguistic strategy is witnessed in Example 7 that follows.

Example 7: (Divination was performed in respect of a man with a case of impotence.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Diviner: | (Ó ń bá oníbèérèè sòrò) Òre wa, ó ti tó ìgbà wo tí nkàn omokùnrin re ò ti dìde mó? |
| Client: | *Ó* ti koj*á* osù mew*à á.* |
| Diviner: | *Ó dáa náà, ta l'omobìnrin èyà míràn tí o sé'yún fún tí ò sì jaa kulè?* |
| Client: | E jé ki n ro'nú síi. |
| Diviner: | Ro' nú síi dáadáa. |
| Client: | (Leyin asiko di e) Abi "lágbájá" ni? |
| Diviner: | Jé á tún bi ifá léèrè (léhin tí ó tún bi'fá tán). Eni yìí kó. |
| Client: | "Tàmòdò" ń kó? |
| Diviner: | Jé á tún bi ifá wò (léhin tí ó tún bi'fá tán). *Eni yìí la ó rúbo èbè sí, kí òrò rè le d'ayò.* |
| Client: | Òótó ni; ó ti sé'yún fún mi rí. E sáà gbàmi. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Diviner: | (Addressing the client) Our friend, it has been how long that your manhood has not been responding? |
| Client: | It has been more than ten months. |
| Diviner: | Okay then, who is the lady from another tribe who aborted for you but whom you disappointed? |
| Client: | Let me think about it. |
| Diviner: | Think about it very well. |
| Client: | (After a short time) Or is it "X"? |
| Diviner: | Let us consult with the god of divinity again. (After the consultation again) It is not this person. |
| Client: | What of "Y"? |
| Diviner: | Let us consult with the god of divinity again. (After the consultation again) *It is this person that we will offer a sacrifice of propitiation to, for your predicament to turn to joy.* |
| Client: | It is true; she had aborted for me. Just deliver me. |

The consultative interaction above between the diviner and the client is significant for the diviner's performance of the pragmatic act of assuring the client of spiritual healing from his impotence. This face act is inherently demonstrated in the diviner's utterance "*Eni yìí la ó rúbo èbè sí, kí òrò rè le d'ayò*" (*It is this person to whom we will offer a sacrifice of propitiation, for your predicament to turn to joy*). Essentially, the act is directed at the negative face want of the client, as it impedes on his

freedom of action, by suggesting that he would have to offer a sacrifice to appease the lady (i.e., "Y") in question. Obviously, the off-record linguistic strategy is in force here to pragmatically hint at the kind of sacrifice to be made to appease "Y" on behalf of the client as well as to hint at the consequential hope of healing for him. On the knowledge of the cultural implication of the diagnosed spiritual measure, the client helplessly accommodates this threat to his negative face, and shows a readiness to comply with the diviner's spiritual intervention.

## 13.6 Conclusions

This study has explored the pragmatic strategies engaged by the Ifá diviners in order to demonstrate face orientation in diagnostic news delivery in their consultative encounters with clients in Oyo State, Nigeria, in terms of proffering culture-motivated spiritual solutions to their health-related problems. Maintaining that face orientation is conceptualised and expressed very differently in different cultures, the study has explored how diviners pract face acts, being concerned with the different face wants of the client in the data. The study has further demonstrated that the pragmatics of face acts in diviner-client interaction is guided by the professional ethics and practices of the diviners, as culturally determined, especially in native Yoruba conflict mediation contexts of Ifá divinatory practices.

Findings revealed that diviners orient to two types of face threats: TCPF and TCNF, performed using four face acts: the divisive revelation of others' responsibility for the client's health condition; the delivery of shocking news about the client's health condition; anger-reflecting exposure of the self-cause of the client's health condition; and assuring the client of spiritual healing. Three linguistic strategies are used: bald on-record (BOR), positive politeness (PP), and off-record (OR). TCPF is concerned with practing the divisive revelation of others' responsibility for the client's health condition with the aid of PP and BOR, and the delivery of shocking news about the client's health condition engaging BOR. TCNF is, however, concerned with the practs of anger-reflecting exposure of the self-cause of the client's health condition using BOR and assuring the client of spiritual healing with the aid of the OR strategy.

The study concludes that the diviners' context-sensitive face-oriented use of language is a practice-motivated professional strategy in which they usually engage in the culture-bound delivery of health diagnostic messages to secure the cooperation of the clients as regards aiding spiritual healing during divinatory consultations. The study is

therefore valuable in terms of understanding the pragmatics of practs-directed orientation to face acts within the constellation of Mey's pragmatic acts and Brown and Levinson's face-based view of linguistic politeness in the diagnostic context of the Ifá divination corpus for preternatural conflict mediation in Oyo State, Nigeria.

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# CHAPTER 14

# PRAGMATIC MANIFESTATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF *IT IS WELL* IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH USAGE

## ROMANUS ABOH AND PEACE DIMOYE AMGBAPU

## Abstract

*This paper investigates the relation between Nigerian English usage and the pragmatic choices discourse participants make in interactive situations. Specifically, the paper identifies the function of the Nigerian English expression, "it is well" as a pragmatic marker by accounting for its contextual uses and significations. The method of data collection involved listening to interlocutors in selected classrooms, school offices, public vehicles and playgrounds. The various conversations were tape-recorded. The analytical approach is anchored to Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory and the concept of pragmatic markers because the deployment of "it is well" can only be relevant to discourse participants in specific interactive situations. The analysis reveals the pragmatic manifestations of the expression to include the following elements: conversation close, discourse interruption device, negative response marker, hedge performative strategy, pragmatic presupposition marker, default expression of empathy and concern, conclusive marker and metadiscourse device. Also, the analysis demonstrates that the pragmatic roles instantiated by "it is well" and the significations derived are best understood when situated within the context of Nigerian English.*

Keywords: *Context; Nigerian English; pragmatic marker; "it is well"; discourse*

# 14.1 Introduction

The essence of any communicative exchange is the conveying of meaning. But what an utterance means or the relevance of an utterance to discourse participants depends largely on the context in which the expression is used. This is why both semanticists and pragmaticians are of the opinion that meaning is intractable. Elaborating the intractability of meaning and its explication, Huang argues persuasively that "…there is a huge gap between the meaning of a sentence and the messages actually conveyed by the uttering of that sentence" (2011: 5). What one can read from Huang's summation is the idea that what is linguistically encoded may vary significantly from what a speaker actually means as explicated by a hearer. Pragmaticians generally refer to this variation in meaning realisation as the linguistic underdeterminacy thesis. The expressions below exemplify the linguistic underdeterminacy thesis:

1. John is looking for his glasses.
   a.  glasses = spectacles.
   b.  glasses = drinking vessels (cited in Huang 2011: 6).

2. They are cooking. They like cooking rice on Sundays together.

The first expression is an instance of lexical ambiguity. This ambiguity needs disambiguating, but in order to successfully disambiguate it, contextual or real-world knowledge is required. This is because the context of an utterance or what Odebunmi (2015: 203) convincingly describes as "shared socio-cultural knowledge" is needed for us to know the intended meaning of the speaker. The two uses of the third-person pronoun *they*—known as deictic expression—in Example 2 can be adequately interpreted only by recourse to preceding knowledge of the referents of a particular discourse. In other words, *they* remains only known to the discourse participants as it points axiomatically to a particular group of people. Interestingly, *they*, as a referential mechanism, is an example of syntactic ambiguity. Though *they* functions both cataphorically and anaphorically, it is exophoric (extralinguistic information) and requires real-world knowledge for one who had no prior knowledge of the interactive situation to know the people being discussed. The two examples discussed above suggest that certain linguistic expressions can only be analysed by depending on "extralinguistic, pragmatic factors such as context, real-world knowledge, and inferences" (Huang 201: 6). Odebunmi had earlier emphasised Huang's position when

he stated that "context is the spine of meaning" (2006: 26). Put differently, context is the driving force of meaning.

It follows that, in order to fill the gap created by linguistic underdeterminacy, pragmatic markers and context have to be taken seriously in the meaning explication enterprise "because pragmatic communication is strictly defined by the situation in which interactive encounters are staged" (Odebunmi 2015: 202). In furthering Odebunmi's view, Aboh and Uduk (2016) posit that what constitutes the inner structure of language is its "pragmatism", that is, the way discourse participants deploy language to achieve their communicative intentions. In agreement with Odebunmi's (2015) conceptualisation of context, Aboh and Uduk (2016) state that the pragmatic context goes way beyond the setting of an utterance since an utterance has the capacity to trigger its own context, and that context embodies linguistic and non-linguistic factors of language use. This pragmatic perspective to meaning explication is conjectured on the basis that no utterance can really be understood out of its context. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to examine the contextual implications of *it is well* as a pragmatic marker in Nigerian English. As has been illustrated above, what people mean when they use language differs according to the context in which an utterance is uttered. This implies that the use of *it is well* can mean different things to different people, depending on contextual variables such as who is the speaker?, who is the hearer?, on what occasion was the expression uttered?, what situation backgrounded the utterance?, and who was there when the utterance was uttered?, among several other contextual constraints that determine what people mean when language is used. We are invariably implying that the pragmatic roles of *it is well* in the context of Nigerian English shape what is actually meant.

## 14.2 Nigerian English as One of the World Englishes

There are various studies that have legitimated the existence of a variety of World Englishes known as Nigerian English such that an attempt in this study to further explain its existence or authenticity will be superfluous. Nigerian English is a variety of World Englishes and a major means of communication in the Nigerian community. Nigerian English can be broadly defined as "the variety of English spoken and used by Nigerians" (Adeniyi 2006: 25). Adedimeji (2007) submits that this is considered expedient and that Nigerian users of English would be able to cope meaningfully with the challenges posed by the knowledge-driven twenty-first century in which English is assuming greater roles and significance.

As language reflects the totality of the culture, philosophy and customs of its speakers, Nigerian English showcases the tradition and experiences of Nigerians. Socio-cultural linguistic patterns, therefore, characterise this postcolonial English. The fluidity of English allows it to adapt to the socio-cultural constraints that depict various contexts of its use.

In an earlier study that authenticates the existence of a variety of World Englishes known as Nigerian English, Udofot (1997) states that there are three varieties of spoken Nigerian English: (i) "Non-standard", (ii) "Standard", and (iii) "sophisticated" varieties, which are individually and collectively different from Standard British English. She also discovers that the common features in the spoken English of Nigerians include a tendency to stress more syllables in words than the native speakers do. Embedded, perhaps, in Udofot's postulate is the idea that there is a variety of English that can be said to be Nigerian, distinct from other world varieties, and that can be discussed from different levels of language.

In a similar but pragmatic orientation, Aboh and Uduk are of the view that what makes Nigerian English Nigerian is the fact that "English words are heavily coded by the socio-cultural life of Nigerians" (2016: 9). Also, from a pragmatic point of view, Aremu (2015: 94) categorically states that "The resilient nature of English has led to the new hybrids of the language in Nigeria, such as 'bush-meat' (savoury game), and 'sugar daddy' (an old man who flirts with a teenager)".

Similarly, Assiado (2007) stipulates that the Bible's turns of phrase have permeated the everyday language of English speakers, whether or not they have opened a copy. He also notes that over the last ten years or so, the vernacular of Nigerian Pentecostal Christianity has emerged as a fundamental source of Nigerian English. Nigerian Pentecostal Christian codes have now become so widely spread that even Nigerian Muslims and non-Pentecostal Nigerian Christians have unconsciously adapted them into their conversational repertoire. *It is well* has now transmuted into a legitimate Nigerian English expression. This is what this paper sets out to do—to account for the various pragmatic roles *it is well* performs in specific interactive situations.

## 14.3 Theoretical Bases

This paper is guided by pragmatic markers and relevance theory. Both theoretical concepts are relevant to this study because they aid our understanding of language use beyond its syntactic context and locate meaning in the context of language use. Aijmer, Adfoolen and Vandenbergen

(2006) are of the view that pragmatic markers merely indicate leaving the hearer with a significant amount of interpretational work and that they are closely related to the abstract nature of the core meaning and to the strategic uses that speakers make of such markers in different contexts. According to them, it is evident that contextual meanings are the result of a speaker's tactical uses of elements that are semantically vague enough to allow for multiple purposes. In essence, they refer to pragmatic markers as having interpersonal and textual, rather than ideational, functions. Therefore, it can be deduced that pragmatic markers have different meanings according to the context of use by speakers of an utterance. A speaker's use of an utterance in a context serves multiple purposes (pragmatic roles), according to the intention of the speaker. The speaker creates an environment for a suitable interpretation of meaning by the hearer in the context of use.

For Fox (2010), pragmatic markers are a class of signals that communicators use to manage conversations. Elaborating on his view, Fox asserts that this management of conversation implies so many things: they contribute to social solidarity, perform deictic functions and also usually orient towards the speaker's needs. He further explains that researchers have generally accepted that pragmatic or discourse markers focus on the way communication is negotiated, rather than on its content. It becomes important therefore that pragmatic markers are understood by interlocutors in a discourse for effective meaning to be achieved in a particular context. Blakemore (2011) demonstrates that what a pragmatic marker does is to activate a particular kind of inferential process and the hearer is expected to make an assumption that fits that process. Pragmatic markers have several roles and purposes in discourse. They point to the features of the context of use. Aijmer and Vandenbergen (2009) characterise pragmatic markers (PM) as reflexive because they comment on the utterance and thus assist in interpretation. This means that their meanings are not fixed, but rather vary according to a speaker's utterance in a context. Holker (1991), cited in Huddlestone and Fairhurst (2013), list four key features which can be used to describe PMs:

- PMs do not affect the truth conditions of an utterance
- PMs add nothing to the propositional content of an utterance
- PMs are related to the speech context or situation, rather than to the situation under discussion
- the function of PMs is emotive and expressive rather than referential, denotative or cognitive.

Ogoanah (2013) notes that pragmatic markers encode procedural meaning since they constrain the inferential processes in a way that maximises relevance. Thus, the pragmatic roles of pragmatic markers in Nigerian English procure meaning that is dependent on the context. This postulate agrees with the views of Akmajian, Demers, Farmer and Harnish (2004: 275) who argue, "no human language is fixed, uniform or unvarying; all languages show internal variation. Actual usage varies from group to group and speaker to speaker in terms of the pronunciation of a language, the choice of words and the meaning of those words and even the use of syntactic constructions".

Relevance Theory (RT), as postulated by Sperber and Wilson (1986/1985), was inspired by Grice's (1975) model of communication, an alternative to the classical code model. It is based on a definition of relevance and two principles of relevance: a cognitive principle (that human cognition is geared towards the maximisation of relevance) and a communicative principle (that utterances create expectations of optimal relevance). In relevance-theoretic terms, according to Sperber and Wilson, any external stimulus or internal representation which provides an input to cognitive processes may be relevant to an individual. Contrary to Grice's conversational maxims, Sperber and Wilson note that utterances raise expectations of relevance, not because speakers are expected to obey a cooperative principle and maxims or some other communicative convention but because the search for relevance is a basic feature of human cognition which communicators may exploit. According to RT, the most important type of cognitive effect achieved by processing an input in a context is a "contextual implication", a conclusion drawn from the input and the context together, but neither from the input nor context alone. As such, an input is relevant to an individual when and only when its processing yields positive cognitive effects. Sperber and Wilson (2002) stipulate that a speaker who wants his or her utterance to be as easy as possible to understand should formulate it within the limits of his or her abilities and preferences so that the first interpretation that satisfies the hearer's expectations of relevance is the one he or she intends to convey. This means that it is the duty of the speaker to help the listener to follow the path that could yield an optimally relevant interpretation. This is why Ogoanah and Adeyanju (2013) assert that the relevance-theoretic account of cognition and communication has practical implications for pragmatics, as verbal comprehension starts with the recovery of a linguistically encoded sentence meaning which must be contextually enriched in a variety of ways to yield a fully-fledged speaker's meaning.

The focus of this paper is on the pragmatic roles and contextual implications of language use. The data for analysis were sampled from the conversations of Nigerians which took place in classrooms, school offices, homes, inside public vehicles and playgrounds. These were tape-recorded. The discussions cover areas such as the Nigerian economy, sports, religion, youth behaviour, etc. The pragmatic marker cuts across all age groups in Nigeria. Over the years, the use of *it is well* has been consistent in everyday language use in Nigeria.

## 14.4 Pragmatic Manifestations and Contextual Uses of *it is well*

Since there are different reasons for a particular kind of language use by speakers in communicative situations, it implies that different meanings are also generated; these meanings conform to the context in which a particular expression is deployed. We present the various instances in which the expression *it is well* can be used.

### 14.4.1 It is well *as a Default Expression of Empathy and Concern*

The pragmatic marker originated from a popular hymn written by an emotionally distraught American Christian lawyer by the name of Horatio G. Spafford, who lived in Chicago in the 1800s and who was hit by a string of personal tragedies. As a survival strategy to cope with his grief, he penned a thoughtful hymn, entitled "It is well with my soul" that some Christians consider the closest to the heart for one who has come under the weight of grief.

Assiado (2007) asserts that *it is well* is becoming the default expression to indicate empathy and concern for people in difficulty of any kind. His position is exemplified in the Nigerian English expressions below:

1  *It is well* with your soul.
2  A. I lost my wife in a car crash.
    B. *It is well*, my brother.

When people are undergoing emotional distress or any tragedy, many Nigerian Pentecostal pastors and Christians say, "*It is well* with your soul". Although Assiado notes that it is only Nigerian Pentecostal Christians who deploy this "consoling" expression, recent investigations reveal that even non-Christians use the expression. However, it is an

appropriation by Nigerian Pentecostal Christians from the hymn cited above. It is thought that the expression embodies and possesses positive ambiances for emotionally disturbed people. This Pentecostal linguistic behaviour of some Nigerian Christians has an epistemological grounding and cultural validation since, through the linguistic calibration of ideas, language users are, in one way or another, involved in the articulation of their religious beliefs. The fact is that many a Nigerian Christian has the natural propensity to simultaneously brandish any negative thought and embrace what is considered positive, even in moments of disappointment, death and destruction.

In Example 2, *it is well, my brother*, is a deliberate attempt by the speaker to confer positive feelings on himself in the situation of the loss of his wife. This input is relevant to the encoder as it processes a positive cognitive effect on him, a worthwhile difference to his representation of the world. The use of the pragmatic marker in this context is a signal of the recovery of a linguistically encoded utterance meaning as demonstrated by RT. In other words, the expression is cognitively rich as it accurately expresses the feeling of the enunciator and performs the function of consoling an emotionally bartered person. The marker in this context is a form of positive signal to the encoder as the speaker uses it to yield positive effects. In other words, the expression fits neatly into the context as it metapragmatically suits the speaker's emotional needs. Besides that, the Nigerian English term, *my brother*, is deployed tactically to delineate the comradeship that exists among Nigerians. One does not have to be a person's blood relative for him to be identified as a brother.

## 14.4.2 It is well *as a Hedge Performative Marker*

Hedges, as conceptualised in the context of this study, are cautious words, notes and expressions applied by a speaker or writer to warn the listener about how much of what is being said should be taken literally. It can also be said that to hedge is to avoid committing oneself to a proposition or to avoid giving a direct answer to a question. Hedging has subtypes, namely, adverbial hedges (almost, apparently, after, perhaps), adjectival hedges (most, some, a certain number of), verbal hedges (may, might, could, appear, would), and phrasal or clausal hedges (as far as we know, I guess). *It is well,* as a pragmatic marker, falls under this category of usage in Nigerian English. The examples below will suffice:

1. The country is very rich, *it is well.*
2. Another lecturer died again, *it is well* with this institution of ours.
3. We may be making a mistake, but we thought we saw a car resembling the VC's official car at the girl's hostel, *it is well.*

In Example 1, the speaker hedges to avoid committing himself or herself to a proposition or to avoid giving a direct answer to a question. *It is well,* as used in this context by the speaker, is a way of providing an indirect answer that is contrary to what he or she means concerning the current state of the country. "The country is very rich" ordinarily is a positive statement on its own. However, the insertion of the clause *it is well* by the speaker, means a different meaning is articulated. The current economic situation of the country becomes a recovery ground for a hearer to infer that the speaker means the opposite. The expression becomes meaningfully relevant by virtue of the backgrounded knowledge of the economic recession which functions as the exophoric anchor that explains the overall meaning which an individual squeezes from the utterance. Therefore, the speaker tries to make the situation in the country look pleasant by the use of the pragmatic marker. This example is in line with Reicher's (2014) notion of hedges. For Reicher, hedges enable a speaker to distance themselves from the spoken content. They provide the speaker with a "safety net", as Reicher posits, against the hearer's potential false interpretation and decrease the speaker's responsibility for the expressed fact. The speaker also avoids the danger of being taken too literally. Hedges make the context, or at least the expression to which they refer to, more inoffensive. This implies that the speaker is trying to avoid commitment to a question or commitment to the truth of the economic state of the country.

Example 2 presents a perspective on the speaker's statement, as it provides unproven claims with caution, with the intention to enter a dialogue with his or her listener or audience. The speaker uses the marker to try to get the attention of the listener in a dialogue. The speaker is also not sure of the cause of a lecturer's death in the institution. The hedging technique enables the speaker to avoid giving a direct answer to what could have been responsible for the lecturer's death. The speaker deploys the pragmatic marker to indirectly warn the listener about how much of what is being said by him or her should be taken seriously. Although the speaker may know the cause of the death of the lecturer, he or she is trying to avoid being the carrier of the news. The speaker, therefore, wants to have a *seconder* to the proposition; this is why he or she tactically engages

the attention of the listener to comment on the issue. Importantly, with the use of the marker, the speaker not only avoids committing himself or herself to the proposition, but avoids giving a direct answer to a question.

In Example 3, the hedge performative marker softens the impact of a face-threatening act (FTA) as perceived in the overall context of the interaction. In some Nigerian institutions, one is always very mindful of how one talks about the Vice-Chancellor. This is because of the power the Vice-Chancellor exerts. It may be true that the Vice-Chancellor or his car, either official or unofficial, was seen at the girl's hostel, but such a thing has to be mentioned with caution. The speaker, therefore, has to use the hedge device so as to soften the impact of his or her proposition, which may carry a negative implication. This hedge device (*it is well*), as used in this context, softens the negative implication of the utterance on the referent, the Vice-Chancellor. This argument is based on what the university community expects from the Vice-Chancellor. Then, the use of *it is well* does not connote something positive, but disappointment on the part of the speaker.

### 14.4.3 **It is well** *as a Conclusive Marker*

*It is well* can also be used in conversational situations to bring a conversation to an end. In Nigerian English, discourse participants use *it is well* to draw conclusions deduced from shared background knowledge. Let us consider the examples provided below:

A. Governor Dickson is yet to pay salaries.
B. I wonder what the problem is in this State.
A. This state should be joined with the old Rivers State because there is no future for us.
B. *It is well.*

From the discussion between the interlocutors, it is evident that they operate within shared background knowledge of unpaid salaries in a particular state. Speakers A and B are witnesses of the happenings in the state and their responses draw significantly from the situation. The relevance theorists, Sperber and Wilson, postulate that the most important type of cognitive effect achieved is a conclusion deducible from both the input and context. Therefore, the use of the pragmatic marker in this context by Speaker B implies that all is not well with them, which is the conclusion that is drawn from the discourse of non-payment of salaries by the governor. This interpretation aligns with what Osisanwo (2003) refers

to as grounds and conclusion, which, according to him, is one of the devices of coherence in discourse that is technically linked to cause and effect. We provide some examples to substantiate Osisanwo's position:

1. The governor is not prepared to pay us, *it is well.*
2. The woman has given birth to seven girls, *it is well.*
3. A cup of rice is now sold for a hundred and twenty naira (#120), *it is well.*

In Example 1, the conclusion *it is well* because "the governor is not prepared to pay us" implies that with or without the governor's readiness to pay, life will still move on. It also suggests that they (the people) are willing to survive without salaries. Example 2 has an underlying meaning, a conclusion that it is not well with the woman with seven girls and her family. This is because the Nigerian patriarchal society requires that a man should have both male and female children. If the contrary is the case, people often raise eyebrows. Contextually, the expression concludes that it is not well with the woman. This use of *it is well* works cooperatively with the Nigerian belief system. The speaker's utterance works in tune with the relevance-theoretic construct that a speaker, who wants his or her utterance to be easily understood, should formulate it within the limits where the first interpretation satisfies the hearer's expectations of relevance. The use of the marker in this context, therefore, interprets the meaning communicated to the hearer by the speaker, because Nigerian society places a high premium on male children. Yet, the woman has none. The conclusion, therefore, is that something must be wrong with the woman and her family, as this is the first interpretation that a listener receives.

In Example 3, a cup of rice which was sold for sixty naira (N60.00) is now sold for a hundred and twenty naira (N120.00) because of the current economic recession Nigeria is facing. It is on these grounds that the conclusion is drawn by the speaker. The speaker uses the pragmatic construct to inform the hearer that the economy is getting worse by the day. This is the interpretation that comes to the hearer's mind. The utterances raise expectations of relevance, not because speakers are expected to obey a cooperative principle and maxims or some other communicative conventions, but because the search for relevance is a basic feature of human cognition, which communicators may exploit. This becomes possible with the use of the pragmatic marker, which serves as a feature for meaning interpretation to the communicators. But most

importantly is the fact that *it is well* is dependent on what a speaker knows of the country's economic downturn.

### 14.4.4 **It is well** *as a Pragmatic Presupposition Marker*

Pragmatic presupposition, in Osisanwo's (2003) view, is concerned with the conditions required before a speech act can be suitable for a given context. Pragmatic presuppositions are shared beliefs or background information about the context of an utterance. Some utterances are provided below for examination:

>  A. The government has been paying us half salary for over six months now.
>  B. *It is well* with Nigeria.

The use of the marker in the context above presupposes that in the real sense, it is not well with Nigeria, as the current situation of the country is really bad. *It is well,* as used in this context by Speaker B, presupposes the following: a high cost of living, unpaid salaries, low production, a poor power supply, among other indices of a depressed economy. Blakemore (2011) asserts that the use of this marker is to activate a particular kind of inferential process and the hearer, who is Speaker A, is expected to make an assumption that fits that interpretive process. Since interlocutors have shared knowledge of the language (*it is well*), certain basic assumptions should exist between them to facilitate a smooth flow of interaction. This is made possible with the use of the pragmatic marker by Speaker B to aid an understanding of the context of the discourse, which presupposes a lot of things as indicated above.

### 14.4.5 **It is well** *as a Negative Response Marker*

The use of the pragmatic marker, *it is well*, in a negative response context is evident in opening and answering moves. Osisanwo (2003) posits that an opening move can ask a question, make a request, supply information or direct an action to take place. And the answering move, a reply to the opening move, follows. The examples below will suffice:

>  1. A. Please, can I have #500 from you? (opening)
>  B. *It is well.* (answering)

>  2. A. Can you lend me some money? (opening)
>  B. *It is well.* (answering)

The answering move in this context functions as a negative response marker, which is a "NO" response to the opening move. It is a negative marker in response to an utterance. Speaker B tries to avoid the question from Speaker A, as the speaker neither answers "yes" nor "no" in response to Speaker B. Rather than say "No, I don't have" or "No, I cannot lend you some money", the speaker uses *it is well* to intimate to the hearer that s/he does not have any money. Wilson and Sperber stipulate that input is relevant to an individual when and only when its processing yields a positive cognitive effect. The implication for Speaker B is that he or she has turned down the request from Speaker A, with the use of the pragmatic marker in a deliberate manner to save his or her face.

### *14.4.6* **It is well** *as a Metadiscourse*

Metadiscourse is a central pragmatic construct which allows the listener to see how the speaker seeks to influence the listener's understanding of the discourse. Tswanya (2005) defines metadiscourse as a linguistic item that does not add anything to the propositional content but is intended to help the listener or reader organise, interpret and evaluate the information given. This implies that it is directed towards a particular line of meaning. This is also a feature of Nigerian English. Some examples are presented below:

1. The man who married last month is set to marry another wife again, *it is well* my sister.
2. She came home late last night, *it is well*.
3. Three former Nigerian coaches are dead, *it is well,* only God knows what will happen next.

From the examples above, it is evident that the speakers' choice of language use is a result of what they consider to be the best interpretation of the interactive situation. Mauranen (2010: 24) asserts that metadiscourse "implies an imposition of the speaker's perspective on the discourse and in so doing reduces the negotiability of the dialogic perspective". Mauranen's position has much in common with the functions of pragmatic markers. It deals with indicating awareness of talk and signalling to the interlocutors how to interpret it. In Example 1, the speaker's deliberate use of the marker enables the listener to deduce the intended meaning from the context. As such, the listener knows that the speaker is drawing attention to the fact that something is gravely wrong for a man who got married the previous month to wish to marry again only a

month after. *It is well* in this instance does not mean that all is well. In fact, it draws attention to the fact that something is terribly wrong. This is further strengthened by the Nigerian endearment marker, *my sister*. The listener, evaluating the information from the speaker's intended meaning, understands that something beyond the ordinary is pushing the man to get married to another woman only a month after he got married to a different lady. In Example 2, several meanings can be inferred from the girl's coming home late. The first to note, perhaps, is that it was not characteristic of her to stay out of the house late into the night. Second, she must have started engaging herself in a lifestyle that she was not used to: drinking, smoking, clubbing and having sexual relationships with men. Although the speaker does not mention these factors explicitly, s/he creates such awareness in the mind of the listener by the strategic deployment of the marker *it is well*. In Example 3, it is obvious that "it is not well" when three former Nigerian national coaches die in quick succession—within a short period of time. Rather, it is a problem of serious concern, a problem that must be taken seriously because no one knows what will happen next, as another former Nigerian coach may die in the near future. In all these examples, we see how the speakers of each utterance attempt to impose their impression on the discourse, making the listeners reason along their stream of argument.

## 14.4.7 It is well *as a Discourse Interruption Device*

The pragmatic marker *it is well* occurs consistently in Nigerian discourses to interrupt a speaker or to cause a break in communication. In a conversational situation when Speaker A has the floor and another discourse participant makes a move and takes over the floor, an interruption has taken place. An example is seen below:

> A. Baby, I need some money to make my hair, I need a new phone too and I also need a new…
> B. *It is well.*

The implication of the above is that Speaker B interrupts Speaker A with the relevant marker available to him in the context. It is a deliberate attempt by Speaker B because he is not interested in the conversation. Rather than use a harsh word, he deploys a relevant marker to achieve his goal of bringing the discussion to a close. This works in tune with the fact that a speaker can guide the hearer towards a particular line of interpretation and that the speaker's choice in a given instance depends on

the context of the utterance and the meaning intended by the speaker. Speaker B, who is most likely to be the boyfriend of Speaker A, understands that, if he allows her to continue, it may put their relationship on an uneasy footing because he knows he is unable to provide for her needs. Therefore, in order to prevent an ugly situation from happening, he interrupts her with the use of the marker *it is well* to communicate his intentions. It can be said that the perlocution in B's response is effort-thwarting, for it deters A from asking for more. Also embedded in Speaker B's response is the idea that A may not get what she asked for. Whether she understands the pragmatic act that is deployed or not, the conclusion is that he has achieved his goal, not in a violent manner, but in a way that yields a positive effect on both of them.

## 14.5 Conclusion

This study examined the use of *it is well* as a pragmatic marker in Nigerian English usage. It is revealed that language behaviour varies according to contextual use and contextual variables influence the meaning discourse participants can squeeze out of an utterance. Suffice it to say that the use of the pragmatic marker *it is well* in Nigerian English usage is a deliberate attempt by interlocutors to achieve some kind of inferential process that yields positive effects. The implication of this pragmatic marker to most Nigerians is that it confers a positive attitude on otherwise gloomy or mournful situations. It influences listeners' understanding of intended meaning by the speaker since the meaning depends on the context of the utterance. Communicators exploit this form of language use in various contexts because it meets their communicative needs.

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# CHAPTER 15

# IMPOLITENESS AND ENTERTAINMENT IN *WHO DESERVES TO BE A MILLIONAIRE*

## AYO OSISANWO AND TUNJI OJORA

## Abstract

*Existing scholarly works on politeness and media discourses have concentrated on tabloid, radio and television interviews with a bias for talk shows. Meanwhile, the language of TV game shows has not been sufficiently explored. This study, therefore, examines impoliteness in MTN's "Who Deserves to Be a Millionaire Nigeria". Culpeper's model of impoliteness, complemented with Kress and van Leeuwen's model of multimodality theory, serve as the theoretical framework for this study. The data for the study were sampled from three purposively selected episodes of the special edition of MTN's "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" show: "Who Deserves to Be a Millionaire". The game show was chosen for this study because it is the major game show which airs on Nigerian television and the data were subjected to qualitative analysis. Impolite acts such as mimicry, sarcasm and direct face threat, owing to the context of the show, served to achieve entertainment and laughter. Impolite counter strategies were used by both the host and the contestants to reduce or mitigate face damage to each other or one another.*

Keywords: *Media discourses; Who Deserves to Be a Millionaire; game show; entertainment; impolite acts*

## 15.1 Introduction

The phenomenon of impoliteness deals with how offences are communicated and taken. This paper focuses on the aspect of impoliteness that does not threaten the face of the contestant but one which evokes laughter and

entertainment in the game show. One of the objectives of the game show, *Who Deserves to Be a Millionaire* (henceforth *WDTBAM*)*,* which happens to be a special edition of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*, apart from giving back to society, is to educate and entertain the general public. Therefore, the context of this game show diffuses the concept of impoliteness because for a communicative act to be deemed as impolite, the speaker must have communicated a face-threatening act (FTA), intentionally or unintentionally, which the hearer perceives or constructs as such.

A very relevant concept in politeness is face, which refers to the regard an individual has for himself/herself. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), speakers develop politeness strategies to maintain their self-esteem. An individual's "face" is their public self-image. Every person has an emotional sense of self that they want every other person to recognise. When one is polite, they have shown awareness of another person's face. Therefore, when one says things that make people embarrassed or uncomfortable, or something that threatens another person's self-image, one is said to have performed an FTA. Politeness strategies are developed to deal with FTAs; for instance, if one uses a direct imperative to demand something from somebody, the impression being created is that one is better placed socially than the person. It is alright to use the direct imperative with people of a lower social status but not with people who one is not socially superior to. To do the latter is to use an FTA. On the other hand, when one says something that lessens the possible threat to another person's face, they are said to be performing a face-saving act.

Context, according to Odebunmi (2006), is the spine of meaning, which means that as the spine is important to the human body, so is context to meaning. Without context, an expression would not have a base of interpretation. Bradley (2014) opines that context is everything, and posits that context shapes meaning in all communication. Since every conversation is interpreted using a context, when a message is encoded in one context, but received in another, it likely leads to misinterpretation. The context of a communicative act determines, to a large extent, what is to be taken as impolite or otherwise. The data for this research show that the context of talk in the game show indicates that the FTAs performed by the host are aimed at evoking laughter and achieving entertainment. Zillmann and Bryant (1994) define entertainment as "any activity designed to delight and, to a smaller degree, enlighten through the exhibition of the fortunes or misfortunes of others, but also through the display of special skills by other and/or self". Barnouw and Kirkland (1992) opine that entertainment is a commodity that requires profitability: it is an

"experience that can be sold to and enjoyed by large and heterogeneous groups of people" (50). A talk show is a good example of instances where entertainment can be "sold" to a large number of on-air viewers. In his argument, Timberg (nd.) posits that "entertainment talk shows are represented by a similarly limited number of formats. By far the most prevalent is the informal celebrity guest/host talk show, which takes on different characteristics ...". He also opines that "Some entertainment talk shows have featured comedy through satirical takes on talk shows, monologues, or comedy dialogue. Some game shows have been built sufficiently around their talk that they are arguably Talk shows in disguise" (W*ho Wants to Be a Millionaire* being a good example of one).

## 15.2 The Game Show *Who Deserves to Be a Millionaire*

*Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* is originally a British television quiz show that offered a maximum cash prize of one million pounds for correctly answering successive multiple-choice questions. Contestants are presented with the question and four possible answers as options. The show was first aired on the September 4, 1998, and aired its last episode on February 11, 2014. The idea of the show has been bought by many other countries all of which follow the same general format. This show was also introduced in Nigeria on October 8, 2004. *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* is one of the most popular TV game shows in Nigeria. The show, which is sponsored by the telecommunication giant, MTN, was originally shown on the Nigerian Television Authority. It is anchored by Frank Edoho, and the game show is a replica of what we have in the famous British and American editions.

Having bought the franchise to replicate the game show, Ultima studios started the show in Nigeria. MTN's *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire Nigeria* is designed to conform with the norms of the game show. Each game session has fifteen questions and each of the questions attracts different monetary rewards. There are three lifelines in the game, namely, *ask the audience, 50/50* and *phone a friend*. To get into the "hot seat", ten contestants compete against one another on each episode in the *fastest finger first* in order to determine who gets to *play for ten million.* Also, this game show has special editions where celebrities are called upon to play for charity. In other instances, special editions, like the children's special, the valentine's edition, and the mother's day special, also come up periodically. But for the purpose of this study, the *WDTBAM* special edition was selected because it centres on great individuals who have

contributed to the development of the nation in their respective fields and occupations but are now in critical (financial) conditions and need help.

*WDTBAM* is a special series, not to test the intelligence quotient of the main contestants, but to help these contestants to get out of their current financial predicament by inviting them to play for the cash prize as opposed to the normal routine where ordinary contestants would have to try, frequently online, to be called for the *fastest finger first.* This accounts for the reason why two other celebrities are invited to join the contestant on the show to help them (the main contestant) in answering the questions and making sure that the contestant, who is in need of financial assistance, wins a tangible sum of money. It turns out the two celebrities, one who is referred to as the *quizmaster* for having won over ₦2,000,000:00 on the game show, are charged with the responsibility of answering the questions. For this reason, the tone of the show is not as serious as that of the normal shows and this brings about the entertaining effects created by the FTAs performed by the host (mainly) and the contestants/celebrities (rarely).

The host, Frank Edoho, is a broadcaster and compere. He became popular for being the host of the Nigerian edition of W*ho Wants to Be a Millionaire.* He is an on-air personality who has worked in several broadcasting stations which include Cross River Broadcasting Corporation, Nigerian Television Authority Channel 9 (Calabar), DBN Television, and Metro FM (Lagos), among others. He is the anchor of the game show and the animator who asks the questions. He engages in different FTAs, aimed at achieving entertainment, lightening up the atmosphere of the show and creating a soothing relief for the participants (contestant/celebrities) who are said to be in the *hot seat.* Frank regularly lightens the mood of the participants by constantly creating means of entertaining them and also getting them more relaxed. He uses certain linguistic and non-linguistic tools to achieve this.

## 15.3 Review of Relevant Literature

Some of the existing works on politeness and/or talk shows are perceived to be relevant to this paper. Some such works include Culpeper (2005), Haddington (2006), Odebunmi (2006, 2009) Osisanwo (2009, 2013), and Olutayo (2010), among others. Osisanwo (2009) takes a look at the strategies that are used in face mitigation in a telephone conversation between interactants on radio phone-in programmes. Using data from tape-recorded, naturally occurring conversations between presenters on a live radio/TV programme and a caller (representing listeners/contributors at home), on the one hand, and conversations occurring between roadside

interlocutors, on the other hand, the interactions were recorded and observed without the knowledge of the interactants to ascertain originality. The paper discovers that interlocutors in telephone conversations use different FTAs, ranging from positive and negative strategies to mitigations without redress. To a large extent, however, this depends on the mood, anxiety, and position, among others. Olutayo (2010) examines turn management in Nigerian television talk shows between the years 2004 and 2007. The study concludes that turn distribution strategies and their determinants facilitate the management of turns in TV talk shows and aid viewers' understanding of the discourse topics. Olutayo holds the view that there is always a shared understanding amongst the participants as regards who takes the floor, when a speaker should yield the floor, and how a speaker would know that another speaker wishes to take the floor. She concludes by saying that the data present a clear difference between shows comprising the elderly and the young.

Adegbite & Odebunmi (2010) examine threats in conversational interactions in orthodox and traditional medicines among the Yoruba in southwestern Nigeria. They argue that politeness is a kind of disposition we have towards other people that makes us not want to hurt their feelings or do things that we know will make them feel unwanted. We are tactful and nice in what we say, even when we do not sometimes mean it. We choose our words to fit the different occasions we experience every day. Even when we say things that are not too polite, especially when they are not said deliberately, we try to apologise. We are quick to recognise it when people are not polite in their speech because we have a sense of what it means to be polite when we address other people.

A book related to TV entertainment was written by Ian Hutchby. His book, as reviewed by Haddington (2006), focuses on the talk and language of the media. The book examines the "various interactional and discursive features of different media talk genres". Relating the text to the popular *Oprah Winfrey* show, Haddington sees the questions the host asks the audience as relatively easy, whereas the questions for the experts are built on a more difficult position to speak from (Haddington 2006). In the book, Hutchby also takes a look at confrontational TV talk shows. He examines some audience participation shows like the *Ricki Lake Show*, *Oprah Winfrey* and *Jerry Springer*. Focusing on the *Ricki Lake Show*, Hutchby examines the configuration of the show and how the host, audience, complainant and the defendant interact within a particular frame. Hutchby's analysis of the participation framework of the confrontational talk show has been done carefully and insightfully. This is because "[i]t reveals the importance of looking at the sequential organization of talk and

helps the reader to build up an understanding of the interaction on stage or on TV as 'confrontational'". However, Haddington points out in the review "that what is indeed missing in media talk research is a combined analysis of the different interactional modes (language, embodiment and place) as resources for action production in the televised media in particular". This gap is filled, in part, in this paper.

Culpeper's (2005) study is related to the present one, being an analysis of entertainment in television shows. Culpeper explains the concept of impoliteness as a means of entertainment as explicated by the analysis of the chosen data, and relates them to four "generic factors": *Intrinsic pleasure, Voyeuristic pleasure, The audience is superior* and *The audience is safe* (Culpeper 2005: 45). The study shows that a model of politeness is needed to explicate the discourse of the show, *The Weakest Link*. The study shows that the host of the show, Anne Robinson, "exercises strong control over the conversational floor" (Culpeper 2005: 68). It further reveals that prosody has also played an important role in the identification of impoliteness in the show. Some other parts of the paper also looked at the claim that impoliteness is indeed entertaining. Culpeper refers to the cause of these instances as voyeuristic pleasure and argues that for an impolite statement to be seen as entertaining, it has to be done "in a cleverly creative—and hence entertaining—way" (Culpeper 2005: 69). The study ends on a note which states that for anything to be regarded as impolite, the speaker must have uttered the statement with the intent of being impolite, while the hearer must as well take the behaviour as an intentional face-attack.

Most of the works reviewed here, except Culpeper (2005), have concentrated on other areas, including politeness in text and talk, and other discourse strategies deployed in talk shows within and outside Nigeria. However, there is a paucity of research on game shows. Besides, discourse studies have not been conducted on MTN Nigeria's *WDTBAM*. The difference between the current paper and Culpeper (2005) is in terms of the context, the host, and the game show, among others. This paper, therefore, examines the deployed impoliteness strategies and how they are used for entertainment purposes on the television show, *WDTBAM*.

## 15.4 Methodology and Theoretical Framework

Culpeper's (2016) model of impoliteness is favoured in this paper for obvious reasons. It is the most recent and updated version of Culpeper (1996, 2003, 2008 & 2011). This is complemented with Kress and van Leeuwen's model of multimodality theory. Culpeper (2008), which shares

the focus of entertainment on game shows with the current paper, attempts a revision of Culpeper's (1996) theory of impoliteness by showing the relationships that can exist between "impoliteness" and "entertainment" in a television quiz show. Culpeper (2008) aims to find out if impoliteness can sometimes be truly entertaining in certain contexts, and in particular in *"The Weakest Link Quiz Show"*. Building on his existing research works on impoliteness (Culpeper 1996, Culpeper et al. 2003), Culpeper (2016) proposes a new definition of the term impoliteness and also attempts a general revision to his existing model of impoliteness. This was made possible due to the fact that the data he used, *The Weakest Link*, "is a television entertainment quiz show which projects the concept of impoliteness in instances where it can be entertaining". His 2016 edition is a revised and updated version of the model. In his earlier model on impoliteness, Culpeper (1996) had divided impoliteness into two categories: inherent impoliteness (acts that innately threaten one's face regardless of the act) and mock impoliteness (acts that stay on the surface and are not intended to insult anyone). Culpepper (1996) had adopted five super strategies which were directly opposite to Brown and Levinson's types of politeness strategies:

1. *Bald on-record impoliteness:* performing the FTA in a direct, clear, unambiguous, and concise way even when face considerations are relevant.
2. *Positive Impoliteness:* strategies designed to damage the addressee's positive face wants.
3. *Negative Impoliteness:* strategies designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants.
4. *Sarcasm or mock politeness:* performing the FTA with politeness strategies that are obviously insincere.
5. *Withhold politeness:* not performing politeness work where it is expected.

Other politeness theories or models before Culpeper (1996) include Lakoff (1973), Leech (1983), and Brown and Levinson (1987), among others, and are classified as traditional views (see Terkourafi 2005, Odebunmi 2009). Besides Culpeper (1996), other works and scholars which can be classified to have postmodern views of politeness include Eelen (2001), Terkourafi (2002, 2003, 2005), Mills (2003), Watts (2003), Locher and Watts (2005), Haugh (2007), Culpeper (2005, 2008, 2011, 2016), and so forth.
Culpeper's (2016) model of impoliteness, called "impoliteness strategies" or "impoliteness triggers" has two branch nodes: conventionalised

formulae and implicational. To him, "the category 'conventionalized (impoliteness) formulae' involves a generalized implicature flowing from the perceiver's experiences of similar contexts, whereas 'implicational (impoliteness)' involves full-blown particularized inferencing" (Culpeper 2016: 440). Culpeper (2016: 436) posits that:

> For impoliteness items to count as impolite, they must go challenged. Evidence of challenges includes, notably, counter impoliteness (tit-for-tat pairings), but also meta-pragmatic comments (e.g., "that was so rude"), indications, verbal or non-verbal, of offence being experienced (i.e., symptoms of emotions such as humiliation, hurt or anger). Such actions are part of what constructs impoliteness contexts. How does one know that the formulae might be conventional? One type of evidence is the regularity of use in a particular context.

The conventionalised formulae are further categorised into nine categories which include *Insults, Pointed criticisms/complaints, Unpalatable questions &/or presuppositions, Condescensions, Message enforcers, Dismissals, Silencers, Threats,* and *Negative expressives*. To Culpeper, on the model of triggers for implicational impoliteness, the notion of a mismatch is important. Each category of triggers mismatches something in a different way. The three categories here include convention-driven (internal mismatch and external mismatch), form-driven and context-driven (unmarked behaviour and absence of behaviour).

Kress and van Leeuwen's model of multimodality theory, that is reading images, complements the theoretical framework. Their work is one of the pioneering studies on image analysis. According to Kress and Leeuwen (1996, 2002), visual structures are similar to linguistic structures because they influence the interpretations that they receive. However, visual and linguistic structures do not attract universal interpretations due to reasons ranging from diversity in culture, social phenomena, educational attainment, religious affiliations and so forth which have an impact on how visual data are interpreted. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), images involve two participants: *represented participants* and *interactive participants.* The represented participants are the people, for instance, social actors, and the places and things whose pictures appear or are depicted as images. The interactive participants are the outside forces involved in the images; they are the producers and the consumers. Interaction refers to the view that the producer produces the images for the consumption of the viewer. They are "therefore real people who produce and make sense of images in the context of social institutions to … regulate what may be 'said' with images, and how it should be said, and

how images should be interpreted" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1999: 377). Image act and the gaze, size of frame and social distance, modality, colour and perspective, and the subjective image are the subdivisions that require attention when considering visual data for analysis.

For the transcription of our data, the interactions between participants were specifically represented using the conventional annotations developed by Gail Jefferson and presented by Wooffitti (2005: 212). The transcribed forms were compiled, annotated, and the features were generated and sorted according to types.

## 15.5 Analysis and Findings

For the purposes of entertainment for which the TV game show is designed, the host on *WDTBAM*, Frank Edoho, maximises the potential for face damage to generate entertainment by displaying his creative ingenuity in the conversations with the contestants. Such gestures are occasionally returned by a contestant to generate a co-constructed entertaining scenario. Different impolite strategies deployed for use by the participants in the *WDTBAM* game show and how these remarks have been creatively done to achieve entertainment in the game show include mimicry, sarcasm and direct face threat, evidently displayed through the mild or hysteric laughter from the host, the audience, and occasionally, the contestant. While mimicry and sarcasm can be categorised under Culpeper's (2016) form-driven implicational impoliteness triggers, direct face threat, otherwise called bald on-record impoliteness, can be categorised under Culpeper's (2016) context-driven implicational impoliteness triggers or unmarked behaviour. Besides the implicational impoliteness triggers deployed in the exchanges, features of conventionalised formulae of impoliteness triggers such as pointed criticism/complaints, unpalatable questions/presuppositions, and message enforcers, among others, are often deployed to reinforce the implicational impoliteness triggers.

### 15.5.1 Mimicry as an Entertainment Strategy

Mimicry, an act of copying the speech or behaviour of another person, is a form-driven implicational impoliteness trigger used preponderantly by Frank Edoho in the programme. As pointed out by Goffman (1974: 539), mimicry involves quoting someone, and such quotations involve using the features of the original accent and gestural behaviour as well. As also cited by Culpeper (2005: 56), one can conceive impolite mimicry as a special case of Sperber and Wilson's (1986) echoic irony, where one echoes

another person's behaviour, mainly, the characteristic behaviour rather than just the verbal utterance or thoughts. According to Sperber and Wilson (1986: 240), the recovery of the relevant implicatures depends on a recognition of the utterance as an echo, on an identification of the source of the opinion echoed and, on a recognition that the speaker's attitude to the opinion echoed is one of rejection or disapproval. Hence, mimicry as displayed in our data, consists of a caricatured representation, both verbally and non-verbally. In the data, the host uses mimicry to generate entertainment verbally (Excerpts 1 - 3), and also uses imitation of facial gestures (Plates 1 - 3) to generate entertainment.

**Excerpt 1**

Frank: No no no.....if you answer the next (.) if you answer the question (0.4) it's right you have ₦2,000,000:00, ↑ but if you are wrong (0.6) you will go back to ₦250,000:00 (0.6) but the ₦1,000,000:00 you have now (0.4) you could walk away with it and it's still ₦1,000,000:00 (2.0)

Gloria: Ok (0.4) what do we do?

Pa Lere: ↓ let me go with the ₦1,000,000:00

Frank: [you said]

Gloria: [He says he] wants to go with ₦1,000,000:00

Frank: ((mimicking Pa Lere)) ↓ baba said he wants to go with the ₦1,000,000:00 ooo (1.0) because (0.6) ha!

All : [@@@@@@@]

Frank: ((still mimicking)) [↓is there any need for this dracular question o!]

**Plate 1**



**Plate 2**



**Frank imitating the facial expression of Pa Lere Paimo**

In Excerpt 1, having won the ₦1,000,000:00 question, the contestant gets stuck on the ₦2,000,000:00 question which the other celebrities cannot provide an answer to, and Frank attempts to draw their attention to the situation on the ground, and uses the situation to evoke fun and lighten the mood of everyone by making use of an undesirable event to achieve entertainment. He mimics by echoing the original speech of the contestant, and goes further, as seen in Plates 1 and 2, to mimic the gestural facial

behaviour of the contestant in order to achieve comic relief. Despite the fact that the act of mimicking an elderly person in the Yoruba culture is offensive, the contestant does not seem to take any offence. Plates 1 & 2 show the images of the represented participants. While the contestant is on Plate 1, the host is on Plate 2. The other represented participants on both plates are the questions asked, the options provided, and the graphical representation of the voting patterns for the answers chosen by the audience. Meanwhile, the represented human participants in both plates are seen pouting in a similar direction and displaying similar facial expressions. The *Merriam Webster Dictionary* says an individual pouts, that is pushes out his lips or mouth, to show (emotional) displeasure or anger. In essence, the contestant, Pa Lere Paimo, unconsciously pouts to show his emotion. This action was imitated by the other participant, the host, who does so to perform an FTA on the contestant. This is evident in the resounding laughter which followed the host's supposed impolite communicative act.
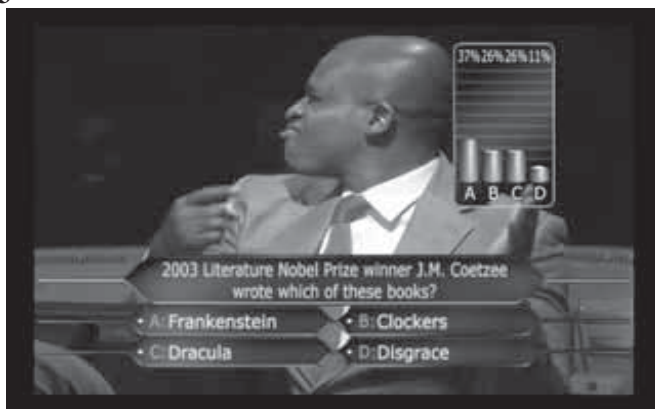
## Excerpt 2

Frank: 37% went for Frankenstein @@@@, 26% went for Clockers @@, 26% Dracula (0.6) 11% Disgrace. Normally when (.) the results are like this (.) that means some audience (.) they just close their eyes and press....

All: @@@@@@@@ ((except Frank))

Frank: Just (2.0) dey say wetin be that B okay okay (3.0) B

## Plate 3



**Frank imitating some of the studio audience**

Similarly, in Excerpt 2, the contestant and the two celebrities are unable to answer a question and they decide to make use of the *ask the audience* lifeline. The result, which is derived from the audience's response, is unreliable and therefore gives the host an opportunity to attack their faces. The studio audience comes from diverse walks of life, and therefore, might not prove to be knowledgeable when it comes to certain kinds of questions. This case is a typical example where the host threatens their faces by using two of the conventionalised devices of impoliteness triggers, that is *pointed criticism/complaints* and *insult* by saying they do not know the correct answer to the question. He criticises the fact that some of the members of the audience can either pick anything that comes to their mind at random without thinking about it ("...that means some audience...they just close their eyes and press...") or they can just ask the person sitting next to them what he or she thinks the answer is ("...dey say wetin be that B okay okay").

The host deploys the use of the *third-person negative reference* to *insult* some of the members of the audience whom he believes are really clueless. He demonstrates this, as seen in Plate 3, by the lackadaisical manner in which the audience selects answers to such questions in such cases. In Plate 3, the host is the represented participant, and just as seen in Plates 1 and 2, the other represented participants on the plate are the questions asked, the options provided, and the graphical representation of the voting patterns for the answers chosen by the audience. This shows that the actions in Plates 1 -3 play out within the same context. The host makes use of a lot of exaggerated effects in achieving entertainment from this FTA he engages in. He goes to the extent of closing his eyes just to show how undependable the audience can be. This is an impolite remark to have been made concerning the audience of the show because they were only called upon to help and they did their best. The host threatens the face of the audience by trying to mimic how they choose their answers. However, considering the context of these remarks, no offence is taken. This again shows that participants in this game show have co-constructed what impoliteness is and they are also aware of the fact that the acts are not intentional but rather for the sake of evoking fun and achieving entertainment. This is evident in the way everyone bursts into laughter at this face-threatening remark.

**Excerpt 3**
Mr Peters: But why did they do that to me?
Frank: why did they turn [it to stone?]
Mr Peters: [a little boy]

Frank: (2.0) Turn my ball to [stone] ((mimicking Mr Peters))
Mr Peters: @@@@@..........[ball] to stone @@@@@
Frank: ↑[Very wicked people] ((still mimicking))
All: [@@@@@@@@@]@@@@

**Plate 4**



**Plate 5**



**They all laugh at the exaggerated act of the host**

In Excerpt 3, Mr Ayodele tries to narrate an incident that happened to him in Oyo town when he was very young. He was a goalkeeper and was playing football at school one fateful day when he claimed that the ball which he was about to kick turned to stone and this resulted in serious injuries to him. The host snatches the scenario by using mimicry as a device to play down the painful experience the contestant recounts, by

repeating his words and describing the experience as unpalatable thus: "why did they turn [it to stone?]"... "Turn my ball to [stone]"... "Very wicked people". The contestant's story is laden with a lot of culture-specific details which are unknown to Frank owing to the fact that the two of them do not share the same cultural identity. So, this aids the entertaining part of this talk. This is because the bewilderment on the host's face adds to the comic effect of the conversation. The host repeats the exact words of the contestant that "...my ball was turned to stone". To have considered that there was no need for the emphasis laid on this incident by the host is to see it as an impolite act, but rather this FTA is seen as a means to amuse all, including viewers at home. In addition, the host deploys two of the conventionalised devices of impoliteness triggers, that is *insult* and *negative expressives* by describing the contestant's purported enemies in the story as "very wicked people". After these acts were performed, the resulting scenario is resounding laughter from everybody in the studio, including the contestant himself, as shown in Plates 4 and 5. The represented participant in Plate 4 is the host, while the represented participants in Plate 5 are the contestant, Mr Ayodele, and the two celebrities who are trying to help him win a substantial amount. The representations given to the participants in both plates show that they are all enjoying spontaneous laughter and they also display their teeth. This shows that the series of exchanges that just played out, as created by both the storyteller and the responses given by the host, are amusing and funny.

Another interesting thing about the instances where FTAs are used to achieve entertainment is that these acts are not targeted towards the contestant or the celebrities alone; they are also directed, at times, at the audience in the studio, as consenting participants. The context of *WDTBAM* neutralises the impoliteness that is inherent in certain remarks of the host. It can also be seen that the salience of impolite signals engulfs the context, with the result that the targets did not take offence.

## 15.5.2 Sarcasm as an Entertainment Strategy

Sarcasm, a mode of satirical or ironic utterance to create fun, is another strategy deployed in *WDTBAM*. Culpeper (2005: 61) avers that "in the literature on emotion and prosody, sarcasm is a secondary emotion, it feeds off other emotions such as surprise, and so it is easy to understand why they have characteristics in common". He argues further that "what makes sarcasm is a contextual judgement that it is so". Sarcasm is a form-driven implicational impoliteness trigger. Frank Edoho deploys the use of sarcasm, by attacking contestants' social identity face in order to be funny,

mainly by flouting different maxims (Grice, 1975). Instances of sarcasm are found in Excerpts 4 and 5, and in Plates 6 and 7.

**Excerpt 4**

Frank:   Yeah, I remember you (0.4) the thing I remember about you in not how you answered the question (0.2) but how ugly your face looked when you won ₦5,000,000:00

Babatunde: @@@@@@@

Frank: ↑Wow (2.0) ↓so (0.6) you want to use it to build a house or something?

Babatunde: Yes

Frank : So how is that going? (.) or you changed your mind and married a new wife?

Babatunde: [@@@@@@@]

Audience : [@@@@@@@]

Babatunde: [errr (0.8)]

Frank: [how is that going?]

Babatunde: The house is built and roofed (0.6) errr (1.0) just finishing

**Excerpt 5**

Gloria: bros (1.0) I hail you

Frank: [That's it]

Audience: [clap::::::::::::]

Pa Lere: ↓ Quizmaster

Frank: ↑ True quiz [master]

Gloria: [True quizmaster]

Frank: Not so right [eh?]

Gloria: [yes o!]

Frank: Eh (0.6) do it again in the next question

All: @@@@@@@

**Plate 6**



**The quizmaster laughs at the host's remark**

**Plate 7**



In Excerpt 4, the host tries to introduce a quizmaster, Babatunde Oni, who has won ₦5,000,000:00 on the game show before. The host deploys sarcasm to threaten the face of the quizmaster by directly condemning the quizmaster's face as "ugly" thus: "but how ugly your face looked when you won ₦5,000,000:00". However, before the quizmaster could respond, the host flouts the maxim of relevance, by asking a face-threatening question which does not have anything to do with the house. The host

makes use of two techniques in threatening the face of the quizmaster, namely, turn-hijack and sarcasm. This is where the host uses his hosting power to control the flow and turns of the discourses. The host immediately switches to ask the quizmaster if he had done what he said he was going to do with the money he had won on the show. The face damage could have been minimised if the question had stopped there. However, the host also deploys one of the conventionalised devices of impoliteness triggers, an *unpalatable question* by further asking, "or you changed your mind and married a new wife?" This is sarcastic. Nonetheless, the quizmaster seems to have become accustomed to the pranks Frank plays on the contestants (since this is not the first time he has come to participate on the show); therefore he takes it lightly and co-constructs the intent of the host which is not to satirise him but to make the show more entertaining by laughing. Plate 6 shows the reaction of the quizmaster to Frank's remark to him. The represented participant in Plate 6 is the quizmaster, Babtunde Oni. The image shows him laughing off the verbalisations from the host, and using his hand to cover his mouth to control his mouth from remaining widely apart or too ajar.

Similarly, in Excerpt 5, Babatunde Oni, the quizmaster in the Pa Lere Paimo episode, answers a question correctly that is worth ₦500,000:00 and this prompts the other celebrity, Gloria, to praise the quizmaster. In an attempt to minimise the praise accorded to the quizmaster by the contestant and the other celebrity, the host sarcastically verbalises that the quizmaster might not get the next question correct. This is indicated in his voice as he uses the rising tune to say, "do it again in the next question". This face threat is done not to create enmity but to create an amusing effect on the show. It is also seen that the quizmaster, Gloria, Pa Lere Paimo and the audience are all able to detect the notion behind this remark and are successful in the co-construction of the understanding that the host chooses to threaten the face of the quizmaster to have an entertaining effect on all. Hence, it is clear that everyone took Frank's sarcasm as entertainment, since the sarcasm does register. The evidence of this is the reaction that follows in Plate 7. The represented participants in Plate 7 are the quizmaster, Gloria, Pa Lere Paimo and the host. They all engage in laughter on the show.

### 15.5.3 Bald on-Record Impoliteness as an Entertainment Strategy

Bald on-record impoliteness, which is understood as a direct face threat to a participant in discourse, is equally used as a strategy to achieve entertainment in *WDTBAM*. FTAs are performed in a direct, clear,

unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is not irrelevant or minimised (Culpeper 2016: 425; Culpeper 1996: 356). Instances abound in our data, as exemplified in Excerpts 6 & 7, where the host goes direct in his FTAs as opposed to the mimicry and sarcasm that were discussed earlier. FTAs are prevalent in the episode which featured the actress, Ngozi Nwosu. She was accompanied by two celebrities by the name of Seun Olopituyi, a pressman, and Lilian Ama Aluko, an actress. Frank continuously and directly threatens the face of Seun in the exchange.

**Excerpt 6**

Frank:   In which year did Nigeria win the football gold medal of the Olympics? 1992 (.) 1996 (.) 2000 (.) 2004 (.)
Seun:    1996
Lilian:  [Yea:::h]
Frank:   [Why?]
Seun:    That was the golden year of Kanu
Frank:   That was the golden year of (2.0)
Seun:    [Kanu]
Frank:   [Kanu] Nwankwo
Lilian:  ↑Ye:::::s
Frank:   Er::::: who is asking all these questions about Kanu? (2.0) I said stick to the question.
All: @@@@@@@@

**Excerpt 7**

Frank: Alright (2.0) what answer would you have gone for? ((gazing at Seun))
Seun: (4.0) I would have gone for Mexico
Frank: (1.0) You would have (.) but you said Spain before Seun
Seun: ((shakes head and smile))
Lilian: No is [is::::]
Frank: [Why are journalists not on one (0.6) thing (.) they will be on one thing
Seun: ↑What do you have with journalist Frank?
Frank: I'm a journalist myself (.) come on! (.)I'm a journalist myself (0.6) so I can poke fun (0.4) I could be self-deprecating (2.0) alright (0.4) so!

In Excerpt 6, the host uses two conventionalised devices of impoliteness triggers—*unpalatable questions* and *message enforcers* to achieve his

*context-driven unmarked behaviour.* In the exchange, a ₦120,000:00 question is asked, and Seun, who happens to be a football fan, answers almost immediately and gets the question correct. In the process of answering this question, a direct FTA is used by the host who demands "why" Seun has chosen option B as his final answer and Seun responds to the question "why", which is asked by the host. In Seun's response, he demonstrates confidence using historical evidence to buttress the veracity of his response. In order to remain in control of the show and to further threaten the face of Seun, the host resorts to the use of the impoliteness trigger—*message enforcers*—by commanding Seun thus: "I said stick to the question". Although this seems very threatening, it generates resounding laughter.

Likewise in Excerpt 7, the participants, at this point, have decided to walk away with ₦1,000,000:00 having not been able to answer the ₦2,000,000:00 question correctly and in a bid to not go back to the last guaranteed level of ₦250,000:00. Frank then asks them the option they would have gone for. Here, it is observed that Seun does not co-construct the intentions backing the remark of the host with him. This is because Seun's response shows that he is taking offence by asking Frank what problem he has with journalists. According to Culpeper (2016: 439), "an unmarked behaviour and unconventionalized behaviour mismatches the context", and is taken to have occurred when, in the absence of an overt form or semantic marked feature, an exercise of power by an agent is perceived to be an abuse of power. Frank, having noticed that Seun has not taken the remark as a joke, which it is supposed to be, quickly explains that he is not threatening Seun's face, but he is stating the cliché characteristic of a journalist as being a smart and clever person. The host goes on to say that he could "poke fun" or be "self-deprecating" at the body (journalism) he is a part of too. The next section presents some of the impolite counterstrategies.

### 15.5.4 Impolite Counterstrategies

Impolite counterstrategies are tactics deployed in a discourse to correct or minimise an initially damaged face. In *WDTBAM*, as a means to minimise the supposed damage that could have been done to the various faces that could have been threatened as a result of various impolite remarks that the host had made, the host attempts to make use of some impolite counterstrategies, aimed at repairing the faces of the other participants in the game show. There are also instances where it is the participant whose face has been threatened who fights back and tries to block the face

threats, especially when the threatened participant does not see the fun or entertainment in the remark. Excerpts 8 and 9 substantiate this claim. While an impolite counterstrategy is made by the contestant in Excerpt 8, it is made by the host in Excerpt 9.

## Excerpt 8

Frank: In which year did Nigeria win the football gold medal of the Olympics? 1992 (.) 1996 (.) 2000 (.) 2004 (.)
Seun: 1996
Lilian: [Yea:::h]
Frank: [Why?]
Seun: That was the golden year of Kanu
Frank: That was the golden year of (2.0)
Seun: [Kanu]
Frank: [Kanu] Nwankwo
Lilian: ↑Ye:::::s
Frank: Er::::: who is asking all these questions about Kanu? (2.0) I said stick to the question.
All: @@@@@@@@
Seun: ↑You asked me why (.)
Frank: Okay
Seun: And I'm telling you why

## Excerpt 9

Frank: Alright (2.0) what answer would you have gone for? ((gazing at Seun))
Seun: (4.0) I would have gone for Mexico
Frank: (1.0) You would have (.) but you said Spain before Seun
Seun: ((shakes head and smile))
Lilian: No is [is::::]
Frank: [Why are journalists not on one (0.6) thing (.) they will be on one thing
Seun: ↑What do you have with journalist Frank?
Frank: I'm a journalist myself (.) COME ON! (.)I'm a journalist myself (0.6) so I can poke fun (0.4) I could be self-deprecating (2.0) alright (0.4) so!

In Excerpt 8, a question which is worth ₦120,000:00 is asked, and Seun, the football fan, correctly answers almost immediately. In the process of answering this question, direct FTA is used by the host. Seun sees it as an attack and tries to justify his reason for giving additional information

about his answer. The host is quick enough to notice this and responds just with "okay" so that the counter impoliteness strategy which Seun strives to achieve is possible. This claim points to the fact that Seun does not accept the face damage. This instance is a typical situation where an impolite counterstrategy is used by the contestant whose face is being threatened.

Similarly, in Excerpt 9, the participants have decided to walk away with ₦1,000,000:00, having not been able to answer the ₦2,000,000:00 question correctly. Frank then asks them the option they would have gone for. It is the host who makes use of the impolite counterstrategy to block the face damage that his remarks may have caused to the face of his addressee. He does this by explaining that the reason behind his face-threatening remark is not aimed at threatening Seun but to "poke fun" and consequently create laughter, hence resulting in a means of entertainment in the show. It is observed that each time the impolite counterstrategy is used, it puts an end to the creative effect of what is said, hence reducing the fun being derived from the remark.

Generally, it is seen that the impolite remarks are mainly constructed by the host for the purposes of amusement. However, it becomes more interesting and entertaining when some of the contestants display their creativity from different angles to show that the host is not the only one anointed for face threats and other impoliteness triggers implicating entertainment. Hence, some of them gave a timely response to the host, thereby ensuring a co-construction of impoliteness. Goffman (1967), in his participation framework, identifies two possible participants in a speech event. According to him, while an unratified participant is "a person present at, but not a recognised participant of a conversation, or speech event", a ratified participant is "one who, in a speech event has the role of speaker, addressee or intended audience" (Goffman 1967: 260). Following Goffman's distinction between ratified and unratified participants, in *WDTBAM*, we observed that while only the ratified participants are involved in constructing or co-constructing impoliteness, the unratified participants, that is the audience—studio and home—are involved in making the impolite remarks become entertaining, especially when such remarks are accompanied by desired reactions like (boisterous) laughter. Nevertheless, there are other situations where members of the studio audience take on the role of a ratified audience, for instance, in Excerpt 2 and Plate 3, the host decides to shift his FTA from the contestant to the audience.

## 15.6 Summary and Conclusion

This paper has examined various impolite strategies which have been put to use by the participants in the *WDTBAM* game show and how these remarks have been circumspectly and creatively carried out to achieve entertainment in the show. Certain tools are put to use in the actualisation of this effect. Mimicry is one such tool which has been put to use in achieving entertainment. The host mimics the participants both verbally and non-verbally, and in most cases, exaggerates the actions attached to the original speech to evoke laughter. Also, instances of sarcasm are seen as a means of creating some special effect towards achieving laughter in the game show. The use of the bald on-record strategy is also seen as a tool for the actualisation of the comic relief and entertainment in the show.

The study shows that the host of the show, Frank Edoho, "exercises strong control over the conversational floor" (Culpeper 2005: 68), and cleverly and creatively uses impolite statements and actions to amuse and thrill others. In addition, the impolite counterstrategy is seen as a tool used to minimise, accept or block face-damaging remarks that have been used against the participants. Impolite acts like mimicry, sarcasm and direct face threat, owing to the context, are taken lightly by the participants. They are seen as tools to achieve entertainment and laughter in the game show; they are also used to reduce tension and anxiety. Impolite counterstrategies are used by both the host and the contestants to reduce or block the face damage that has been done when they are not seen or taken as a means to achieve entertainment. The study agrees with Culpeper (2005: 69) that "for anything to be regarded as impolite, the speaker must have uttered the statement with the intent of being impolite, while the hearer must as well take the behaviour as intentional face-attack". The study also expands our knowledge of what is deemed as impolite and the contribution of context to determining politeness.

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# Appendix

### Glossary of transcription symbols

Jefferson's (2004) transcription symbols are adopted for the transcription of the conversations.

- (0.4) number in parenthesis indicates elapsed time of silence between and within turns measured in tenths of seconds.
- (.) This indicates a short silence (± a tenth of a second within or between utterances).
- @ This indicates laughter.
- [A square bracket indicates the onset of an overlapping turn.
- ] A right square indicates the end of an overlapping turn.
- ↓↑ Vertical arrows provide information about local pitch movements within syllables or at the level of a single syllable. A downward arrow signals a falling tone movement while an upward movement indicates a rising one.
- (()) Double parenthesis indicates transcriber's description.
- :::: Colons indicate prolongation of immediate prior sound. The longer the colon the longer the prolongation.
- = Equal sign indicates no break or gap between two lines.
- > < This part of the utterance is produced with a higher/faster pace than the surrounding talk.
- < > The pace is relatively slower.
- WORD Capitals indicate loudness relative to the surrounding talk.

# CHAPTER 16

# PROXIMISATION IN NIGERIA'S PRESIDENT BUHARI'S FIRST-YEAR COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS

## AKINBIYI ADETUNJI

## Abstract

*This study grounds Nigeria's President Mohammadu Buhari's first-year commemorative address (May 29, 2016) on Cap's (2013) "proximisation", a theory which identifies a three-tier cognitive-pragmatic construal of distance in discourse: spatial, temporal and axiological. As the results reveal, spatial proximisation projects a conceptualisation of (outside the deictic centre) ODC-instigated (in)actions as threatening the success of the speaker's administration and (inside the deictic centre's) IDCs' peace and survival. Temporal proximisation offers a projection of a past-to-present shift, as the speaker frames a "now" as the moment for his administration to begin to consolidate actions to correct the past and pave the way for a better future. Axiological proximisation is a construal of existing and anticipated conflicts between IDC/home values and ODC/adversarial values which threaten IDC ideologies locally (in Nigeria) and globally (internationally). In essence, the proximisation strategies in the address are ultimately legitimisation devices meant to positively project the speaker as worthy of political leadership and authority.*

Keywords: *Nigeria; political discourse; President Buhari; proximisation; space; time; value*

# 16.1 Introduction

This paper investigates the salience and functions of lexico-grammatical choices in the realisation of a political speaker's pragmatic and discourse goals in an instance of presidential monologic discourse. The speaker is Nigeria's president (Mohammadu Buhari), and the text is his first-year commemorative address (Democracy Day speech) to Nigerians on May 29, 2016.

The commemorative address, a subgenre of political speech, is a ceremonial, occasional speech used to mark "a commemoration of a past event considered to be relevant for the political present and future of an in-group" (Reisigl 2008: 254), by way of blaming, praising or paying tribute to specific events or persons in a nation's past. Examples include Independence Day speeches, testimonial addresses, and Democracy Day speeches. The commemorative address has been found to perform various functions, including declamation, eulogy, and discursive construction of memory and national identity (Sauer 2002; Vivian 2006; Wodak & De Cillia 2007), to ultimately connect the past with the present (Wodak & De Cillia 2007).

Notably, Sauer (2002: 118) posited three dimensions of connected speech actions in the commemorative address: (1) "the author's offer of a specific perspective" (author's perspectivisation and logical ordering of the represented facts contained in the speech), (2) "the characteristic of the communication community" (occasion, moment and place of speech, and the speaker's awareness of the hearers and interpreters), and (3) "the author's position as mediator" (the author's occupation of the discourse space between the represented facts and the audience as messenger, witness or participant).

The term, "proximisation" originated from Chilton's (2004) "proximising" (bringing conceptually closer), before Cap's (2005) nominalisation, "proximisation". Ever since, proximisation has been utilised as a methodological construct, or interpretive model or theory (the last alternative, "theory", is preferred in this study) in the analysis of public/political discourse, in such varied and crisscrossing fields as Corpus Linguistics, (Critical) Discourse Analysis, Critical Linguistics, Pragmatics and Psychology. This cross-disciplinary modelling has resulted in studies on anti-terrorism, anti-immigration, foreign policy, historic change, identity construction and discourse space delineation, speaker-perspectivisation, and war (Chilton 2004, 2005, 2011; Cap 2006, 2008, 2013; Dunmire 2011; Hart 2010; Wieczorek 2008a, 2008b, 2015).

Although Cap applied the theory to anti-terrorism and war discourses, this study seeks to prove the theory's malleability to other types of political/public discourse (here, the presidential commemorative address), since, the author believes that the justification and legitimisation of actions by political actors predicated on a "we"/"they" mental modelling and dialogical framing, typical of the Nigerian presidential address script (Adetunji 2006), is essential for symbolic distancing in political discourse. The cognitive-linguistic construction of symbolic distancing, the hub of the proximisation theory, needs much wider application in political discourse, especially in a ritualised speech event like the commemorative address.

The chapter is divided into six major sections. The first four sections set the tone for the discussion to follow: section 1 is introductory; section 2 presents a review of proximisation (-related) studies, and the types and functions of the presidential address; section 3 focuses on Cap's theory of proximisation; and section 4 attends to the study's methodology. In the last two sections, a discussion of the study's findings is carried out (section 5), and conclusive statements are made (section 6).

## 16.2 Proximisation (-Related) Studies

Specific to proximisation (and its allied concept, "legitimisation"), several studies (apart from Cap's) are prominent in the literature. As noted by Cap (2008, 2013), the theory of proximisation owes much to the work of Paul Chilton. Chilton offered proximisation as a linguistic strategy, based essentially on a spatial configuration of discourse, useful for investigating the political "we", identity (in personal, social, political terms), and (mis)representations of others. Chilton's Deictic Space Theory (2004) and Discourse Space Theory (2005, 2011) conceptualised how, in linguistic expressions below and beyond the sentence level, a person positioned other entities in relation to himself/herself—the deictic centre (the Self as "I" or "we")—in the discourse space, along a system of three axes, "space", "time" and "modality" (or STM), deploying background assumptions and indexical cues.

Dunmire (2011) applied both Critical Discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional Linguistics to G. W. Bush's 2002 US National Security Strategy, as well as key speeches related to the document. She identified the proximisation strategies which conveyed how constructions and representations of the future were used to legitimise military action in the present: while the document was marked by axiological proximisation, the speeches were dominated, essentially, by spatio-temporal proximisation

(especially, fear appeals). Additionally, she found linguistically salient the use of nominalisation, transitivity, and the representations of actions, agents and processes, especially for making "threat" the nominal which conceptualises the anticipation of the danger posed by Iraq (to the US) in the future.

Hart (2010) did a critical discourse analytical study of proximisation in British immigration discourse and noted the salience of metaphorical referencing and coercion revealed in referential strategies (demarcating in-group or central entities from out-group or peripheral entities) and predicational strategies (framing of people, objects, and events in syntactic, semantic and pragmatic terms).

In Kopytowska's (2010, 2013, 2015) investigations of mass-mediated communication (blogging, television news) through the lens of proximisation, she identified the discourse space as a media environment where the reduction of the distance between speaker/author and audience can be linguistically (through deixis, tense and aspect, and semantic mapping) and semiotically (through camera angles, zooming in, close-ups, point of view shifts) enacted. Notably, she added cognitive and emotional aspects to the proximisation construals to cater for the evocation of the audience's familiarity and emotional involvement, in the mediated manipulation of such mass communication properties as "liveness", "co-presence", and "participatory presence".

Wieczorek (2008a) identified proximisation as one of three linguistic strategies used to achieve legitimisation in a speech by the Spanish prime minister, Jose Luiz Rodriguez Zapatero, who was seeking legitimacy for a bill on same-sex marriage. Applying a modified version of Cap's proximisation, she claimed that all aspects of Zapatero's speech had "positive" character. Wieczorek (2008b) deployed the same modified version of Cap's proximisation to selected speeches made by America's president, George W. Bush (anti-terrorism) and the Spanish prime minister, Jose Zapatero (on the same bill in [2008a]). Conceptualising her data as the "political discourse of historic change", she found the proximisation strategies interacting both implicitly and explicitly and interpreted the positive and negative proximisation patterns, identified in the speech as macro acts of "offering" and "warning", respectively.

Proximisation-related linguistic studies (since the authors neither used the term nor deployed the specific "proximisation" strategies) investigating Nigerian data have yielded some interesting results. Okpanachi's (2009) discourse analytic study of President Obasanjo's national address on a planned Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) strike action revealed the prominence of adversarial, militaristic and discriminatory scripts, framing

the NLC as the "enemy" and appealing to the national patriotic ethos. These scripts were indicated by lemmas marking personalisation or self-intrusion ("I", as ego-signifier), solidarity solicitation (inclusive "we" and exclusive "we"), appeals to patriotism ("Nigeria" as a common identity of citizenship), NLC framing (negation forms), and militaristic discourse (military registers).

In his discourse analytic study of a speech of Nigeria's former president, Obasanjo, at his party's (the PDP) meeting in 2007, Taiwo (2008) investigated the speaker's use of linguistic choices for power enactment. He found salient the speaker's deployment of pronominals and metaphors as inclusion and distancing strategies for legitimising his and his party's ideological positions and for coercing the opposition. Oyekunle (2016) investigated the speeches of Nigerian military Heads of State (Yakubu Gowon, Murtala Mohammed, and Ibrahim Babangida), as containing polite and persuasive linguistic markers to seek legitimacy, using Toulmin's Model of Argumentation. He concluded that leaders of any kind of administration (including the military) can force their agenda on people through polite and persuasive rhetoric.

It is clear from the review of the Nigerian literature that a clear-cut study founded on the application of proximisation strategies to Nigerian data is lacking. This research gap drives this study. Specifically, this chapter aims to describe and interpret Buhari's address with and within Piotr Cap's (2013) discourse-pragmatic theory of "proximisation",[1] with the ultimate aim of identifying how the speaker deploys lexico-grammatical choices as extensively contextualised in the cognitive construals of space, time and value to achieve his socio-political discourse goals. Cap's theory is preferred for its cognitive-pragmatic orientation, explanatory power and demonstrative potential since the description and interpretation of political language thrive greatly on inference, context (linguistic and extralinguistic) and elaborate illustration.

## 16.3 Piotr Cap's Proximisation

Cap's (2005, 2008, 2013) proximisation is premised on a contextual organisation of the "discourse space" into three cognitive construals—spatial, temporal and axiological—which combine to manifest a speaker's linguistic conceptualisation and representation of distance in public/political

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[1] Cap's original term, "proximization", has been substituted here with the British English variant, "proximisation"; the latter variant is used throughout this chapter, except where the former is in a quotation.

discourse. Driving Cap's theory of proximisation is the idea of "the construed vision of a foreign entity encroaching upon a home territory and her audience [which] prompts issues of preventive response and its justification" (Cap 2013, p. 4). This idea is verbalised, especially, in lexico-grammatical choices which demarcate spaces, persons and values of the home territory (inside the deictic centre or IDC) from those of the foreign territory (outside the deictic centre or ODC).

In its earliest form, Cap's (2005, 2006) three-tier (STA) model of proximisation conceptualised the discourse space as defined by the cognitive categories of space (spatial), time (temporal) and value (axiological). Spatial proximisation is a conceptualisation of physical entities as geographically or geopolitically distant from the Deictic Centre (DC) while temporal proximisation identifies points in time when past or anticipated actions by entities (in the spatial axis) took place or will take place, respectively. Axiological proximisation concerns the values and beliefs of the entities in the spatial axis. Thus, the spatial axis is central to Cap's proximisation.

Much later, especially in his 2008 and 2013 publications, Cap elaborated on his proximisation model. In its modified form, a distinction is made in spatial proximisation between central and peripheral entities, as they relate to the DC: "home" or central entities are called the IDCs (elements inside the deictic centre) while the "peripheral" or distant entities are referred to as ODCs (elements outside the deictic centre). While the IDCs (public/political speaker and direct audience) are regarded as sharing positive, "home" values, the ODCs are represented as constituting negative, antagonistic and distant values, and "threat" is the notion, central to ODC characterisation (Cap 2013).

In spatial proximisation, six categories are noted, with the first two identifying the actors and the other four indicating the manner and consequence of ODCs' actions on IDCs: (1) Noun phrases construed as elements of the DC, i.e., IDCs; (2) Noun phrases construed as elements outside the DC, i.e., ODCs; (3) Verb phrases of motion and directionality marking the movement of ODCs towards the DC; (4) Verb phrases of action, marking the impact of ODCs upon IDCs (e.g., "destroy"); (5) Noun phrases of abstract concepts, framing the anticipatory impacts of ODCs on IDCs (e.g., "threat"); (6) Noun phrases of abstract concepts, framing the effects of ODC impacts on IDCs (e.g., "catastrophe") (Cap 2013: 105-107).

The speaker's present (a construal/frame of "now") is central to temporal proximisation. Temporal proximisation frames the time axis as one in which the premises of the past and present, together with

anticipations of the future, are used to decide on an immediate action to pre-empt an ODC action of the near future (Cap 2013: 111). This symbolic representation, of a present which needs to be "momentous" or historic when linked with a past and projected to a future, involves two simultaneous conceptual shifts: a "past-to-present" shift explains past actions by ODC entities which affect the speaker's present while a "future-to-present" shift essentially concerns how the activities of the ODC entities in the near future will impact on the speaker, based on premises construed from past events. The lexico-grammatical markers of the time frames are categorised into 5:

(a) Noun phrases identifying indefinite descriptions construing ODC actual impacts in alternative temporal frames
(b) Discourse forms showing a contrastive use of the simple past and the present perfect to construe a threatening future extending infinitely from a past instant
(c) Noun phrases containing nominalisations which construe presupposition conditions for ODC impact to occur anytime in the future
(d) Verb phrases containing modal auxiliaries which are construals of conditions for ODC impact as existing continually in the "now" and the infinite future
(e) Discourse forms containing parallel contrastive conceptualisations of oppositional and privileged futures extending from the "now" (quotation mine) (Cap 2013: 112-114).

Two temporal frames are identified: the past frame (PF) for events in the past; and the future frame (FF) for events in the future. Furthermore, temporal proximisation is marked by two constructs: Real Time (RT) and Construed Time (CT). While RT is the specified time of an event, CT markers are used to locate events in non-specific times, in temporal frames by analogy or other means. The RT-CT demarcation is less of a distinction and more of an interface because RT needs CT for a symbolic representation of time since it (the interface) helps conflate past, present and future time frames. Also, CT offsets the deficit of RT since all events cannot be perceived at one time (Cap 2013: 89). Moreover, Cap makes a case for more quantifiable markers of discourse forms which mark temporal proximisation regularly in a text: nominalisations, specific tense patterns, interrogative mood, and evidential elements.

Axiological proximisation identifies a construal of the ideological conflict between positive, "home" values of the IDC entities, the DS

central entities, and negative "alien" values of the ODC entities, who occupy the periphery. This conflict may lead to a physical clash, as in war discourse. These values are lexically marked as:

(a) Noun phrases construed as IDC positive values (ideologies)
(b) Noun phrases construed as ODC negative values (ideologies)
(c) Discourse forms which are not longer than one sentence or two consecutive sentences, involving one sentence or two consecutive sentences realised in a linear arrangement of a lexico-grammatical phrase which construes a materialisation of the ODC negative ideologies in the IDC space (Cap 2013: 119-120).

Cap also makes a distinction between "high probability" and "lower probability" forms, as indicated by epistemic difference. While high probability has explicit impact and functions "relatively independently of the other proximization strategies" (Cap 2013: 94), lower probability is less explicitly expressed and is parasitic on the other proximisation strategies, temporal and spatial. Axiological proximisation, in sum, conceptualises the existence of an ideological premise for the development of a threat which might be actualised in the form of physical impact, and whose essence resides in the transition from the ideological premise to the physical act. In sum, in Cap's "proximisation", the conceptualisation of "threat" is fundamental, spatial proximisation is the default strategy, and proximisation is projected as an end in itself, not as a means to an end.

In the discussion to come, Cap's proximisation theory has been applied to the data, to a very large extent, though with some modifications. All specific instances of spatial elements (demarcating IDC and ODC actors), temporal elements (identifying the relevant time frames as well as the DC) and axiological elements (dichotomising home and alien values) in the data are initially identified in the tables or out of context. Thereafter, relevant example sentences and paragraphs are used to illustrate the lexico-grammatical descriptions of the manner and consequences of actors' actions (spatial proximisation), how the past, present and future temporal frames are interfaced to project the real and anticipated impacts of ODCs on IDCs (temporal proximisation), and the demarcation of IDC and ODC values as sources of potential and actualised physical and ideological clashes threatening the IDCs (axiological proximisation).

## 16.4 Methodology

The study is based on a written-to-be-read transcript of Buhari's Democracy Day address to Nigerians on 29 May 2016, extracted from the online edition of *The Punch* newspaper.

Arranged in paragraphs, as in the original of the newspaper's version, the paragraphs have also been numbered, for ease of reference. "Speaker" refers to president Mohammadu Buhari throughout the analysis. The application of the proximisation strategies to the data is illustrated with relevant sample sentences and paragraphs and a sampled "paragraph" is denoted by its clipped form, "par".

## 16.5 Findings and Discussion

In the broad picture, the text is an address by the speaker (president Mohammadu Buhari) to the Nigerian populace on 29 May 2016, to mark Nigeria's Democracy Day or the day on which the military government handed power over to a democratically elected Nigerian national government (in 1999). It marks the end of the speaker's first year in office (since he was sworn in on 29 May 2015) and signals the commencement of his second year as Nigeria's president. The speech contains a verbalisation, in lexico-grammatical and discourse forms, the speaker's construals of the situation on (his) arrival, the current situation (indicated by actions he has completed or which are ongoing), and the expected situation (in the future). As such, the text contains both diachronic and synchronic elements, as the speaker conceptualises events and actions of the past (pre-29 May 2015) in relation to those of his present (post-29 May 2015).

As found in the data, spatial proximisation demarcates the two actors in the DS (IDCs and ODCs) and the manners and consequences of the actions of ODCs in relation to IDCs (as revealed in verb phrases, marking actual and anticipatory impacts). Temporal proximisation has been enacted through discourse and lexico-grammatical forms (noun phrases, verb phrases, nominalisations and tense patterns) which mark the impacts of ODCs' actions, linking the DS's past, present and future frames, couched mainly in the past-to-present conceptual shift. The deployment of axiological proximisation has revealed a contrastive construal of positive, home (IDC) values, and negative, alien (ODC) values, as lexico-grammatically manifested in actual and potential clashes of IDCs and ODCs. A demarcation between high impact (explicit)

probability and low impact (implicit) probability forms of axiological proximisation, verbalised in lexical choices, has also been identified.

### 16.5.1 Spatial Proximisation

Given the context of the speech—a national address to commemorate Nigeria's "day of democracy", together with the speaker's identity (Nigerian president, Mohammadu Buhari) and the exclusive type of politics in Nigeria, the spatial entities in the text's discourse space are easy to identify. The speaker, the Nigerian people, and Nigerian partners in progress are the IDCs while the previous government (preceding the speaker's), its members, and other construed enemies of the Nigerian state are the ODCs. As shown in Table 1, this IDC-ODC demarcation is realised in noun phrases that identify person(s), which specify natural and remote elements of the DC, and signify physical distance and psychological distance; this dichotomy is specified in the first and second boxes demarcating IDC entities, respectively. The wide range of IDC entities reveals the speaker's awareness of the locality and globality in the representativeness of his audience, a vital requirement of the commemorative address (Sauer 2002).

**Table 1:** *Spatial proximisation entities*

|  | **IDC entities** | **ODC entities** |
|---|---|---|
| **Natural elements** | A bureaucracy, a legislature, a major producer of crude oil, all, abducted Chibok girls, an independent judiciary, artisans, delta communities, every Nigerian girl, federal government, fellow citizens, home, I, innocent people, internally displaced persons, market women, most Nigerians, my advisers, Nigeria, Nigerian people, Nigerian state, northeast, our administration, our country, our (gallant) armed forces, our girls, our (Nigerian) women, people of this nation, politicians, state government, students, the country, the government, the state, this government, this nation, us, we, workers. | Boko Haram, corrupt officials, critics, ghost workers, mindless captors, militants, perpetrators and their sponsors, they, vandals, vested interests. |
| **Remote elements** | China, Gates Foundation, Global Fund, Educate a Child of Qatar, France, neighbours, friends, development partners, EFCC, Italian government, German government, international community, oil dependent countries, oil-rich states, several countries in the EU, the world, UK, UN agencies, US, World Bank. | |

Three extracts, (1), (2), and (3) illustrate spatial proximisation in the text. In (1), the speaker demarcates between IDCs and ODCs implicitly and explicitly and indicates, via verb phrases of action and motion, the impact of IDCs on ODCs and the movement of IDCs towards ODCs.

(1)    Fellow citizens let me end on a happy note. To the delight of
all, two of the abducted Chibok girls have regained their
freedom. During the last year, not a single day passed
without my agonising about these girls. Our efforts have
centred around negotiations to free them safely from their
mindless captors. We are still pursuing that course.

(*Par. 38*)

Although the demarcation between IDCs ("fellow citizens", "all", "Chibok
girls", "these girls", "my", "we", "our") and the ODC ("mindless captors")
seem obvious, there is an overlap in the conceptualisation. Given that
physical distance is one of the criteria for determining spatial
proximisation, "two of the abducted Chibok girls" could be classified both
as an IDC and an ODC. While "two of the abducted Chibok girls" can be
an IDC element, since the girls have been rescued and are thus part of the
speaker's *we*-group, the reduced NP "abducted Chibok girls" will be an
ODC element since it refers to girls who are still in the custody of, and
who could have become like, "mindless captors". However, practically all
"the abducted Chibok girls" belong psychologically within the ODC,
regardless of the presumably temporary location, with their captors. And
while the verb phrases of action, "have regained" and "have centred" mark
the impact of IDCs' action (of negotiating) on ODCs, the verb phrase of
motion, "are … pursuing", denotes IDCs' socio-political movement
towards tackling the threat posed by the ODC ("that course"). Moreover,
unlike in conventional, anti-terrorist spatial proximisation, when ODCs
move towards IDCs, it is a major cause for concern and therefore needs
the speaker's solicitation of the audience's endorsement of immediate
action (Cap 2013). In (1), the closer the physical distance between IDC
and ODC the better, since the script of the Chibok girls' narrative[2]
demands that the IDC moves towards the ODC, to rescue the girls, without
seeking any legitimisation for the movement.

In (2), spatial proximisation is denoted by verb phrases of motion,
identifying ODCs' actions and IDCs' reactions.

(2)    The recent spate of attacks by militants disrupting oil and
power installations will not distract us from engaging
leaders in the region in addressing Niger Delta problems. If

---

[2] As revealed in traditional and new media, Nigerians have been clamouring, since
2014 when more than 200 female students were abducted from Chibok (in
northeastern Nigeria) by Boko Haram insurgents, for the rescue of the girls by any
means whatsoever.

the militants and vandals are testing our resolve, they are
much mistaken. We shall apprehend the perpetrators and
their sponsors and bring them to justice.

*(Par. 23)*

The threat is the destruction of a nation's wealth ("oil and power
installations"), which
has been undertaken by the ODCs ("militants", "vandals", "perpetrators
and their sponsors") at the expense of the IDCs ("our", "us", "leaders in
the region", "Niger Delta", "we"). While the ODCs are "disrupting" and
"testing", the IDCs are "engaging" and "addressing", and hope, if they
fail, to "apprehend" and "bring to justice" the ODCs.
        In (3), the impact of ODC upon IDC is construed by verb phrases
denoting action.

(3)    In the northeast, Boko Haram had captured 14 local
       governments, driven the local authorities out, hoisted their
       flags

*(Par. 5)*.

In this extract, the verb phrases of action ("had captured", "driven" and
"hoisted") frame the impact of the ODC ("Boko Haram", naming a
religiously inclined terrorist group) on the IDC ("the northeast", "14 local
governments" and "local authorities"). These verb phrases contain both
past tense and past perfect forms, all locating these actions in the past
temporal frame. Within the text's context, the speaker uses this sentence to
represent the extent of ODC actions on a major element of the DS, Nigeria
(since Nigeria houses "northeast", "14 local governments" and "local
authorities"), to indicate the security architecture he "inherited" on
accession to office on 29 May 2015.

### 16.5.2 Temporal proximisation

The text reveals a conflation of the three temporal variables to the extent
that it indexicalises, essentially, the length of the speaker's administration
(one year in office). This is shown in the description of the events, which
the speaker describes or conceptualises, as relatively distant or proximal
from the speaker's "now", from three clearly demarcated frames: two past
(subframes PF1, PF2) and one future (FF). While PF1 signals past
events/actions prior to 29 May 2015, PF2 identifies those which took place
between 29 May 2015 and 29 May 2016.

And the time frames contain both RT and CT constructs to a greater
or lesser extent, the former less than the latter. And there are some time
frames (noun phrases, adverb phrases) which could have been difficult to
delineate, owing to the vagueness of the expressions, but for their
contextual transparency (e.g., "once" and "the recent past"). Table 2 gives
a broad picture of the text's temporal elements.

**Table 2: *Temporal elements in the text***

| Past Frame | | | Deictic Centre | Future Frame |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| PF1 | May 29 2015 | PF2 | May 29 2016 | rainy day, rest of the year |
| all my years, for so long, many years of hardship and disappointment, once, our history, past years, the past, the recent past, 2010, 2014 | day one, on our arrival, | a year of triumph consolidation, pains and achievements, by the end of December 2015, one year today, the last (one) year, the last 12 months, the last 4 weeks, recent | now, so far, thus far, today, 2016 | |

In sum, the data reveal a past-to-present shift, as the lexico-grammatical
choices and the discourse forms index the speaker's identification of errors
committed in the past by the ODCs, threatening the happiness or survival
of the IDCs, and his desire to put them right. This is evidenced in (4), (5)
and (6) below, revealing different degrees of explicitness.

(4)    It is one year today since our administration came into
office. It has been a year of triumph, consolidation, pains
and achievements. By age, instinct and experience, my
preference is to look forward, to prepare for the challenges
that lie ahead and rededicate the administration to the task of
fixing Nigeria.

(*Par. 1*)

This excerpt, (4), contains three RT markers ("one year", "today" and "a year") which denote an explicit reference to the exact day of the commencement of the speaker's administration (15 May 2016).

Additionally, the excerpt's second sentence conceptualises the speaker's multiply valued assessment of his own administration ("triumph, consolidation, pains and achievements"), thus far, as well as a centralisation of the "now" frame, as the moment for him to act pre-emptively ("to look forward … prepare … rededicate the administration") for a better future or against a future that repeats the past.

Not dissimilarly, in Excerpt (5), specific discourse forms illustrate the contrastive use of tense, aspect and mood to illustrate a Nigerian future threatened by a past, if the present is not properly handled.

> (5)    It is even more painful for me that a major producer of crude oil with four refineries that once exported refined products is today having to import all of its domestic needs. This is what corruption and mismanagement have done to us and that is why we must fight these ills.
>
> *(Par. 20)*

Here, the contrast is between the past and the present: the past is identified by the lemma, "exported", and the past frame (PF1) element of a CT, "once"; the present is couched in the use of a simple present tense lemma, "is", a present perfect verb phrase, "has done", an adverbial which marks the DC, "today", and a discourse deictic, "this". This past-present contrast is used to construe a threat to an implied future, as the speaker's use of the inclusive *we* and epistemic modal "must", in "we must fight these evils" coerces the audience not just into a hypothetical action against the evils ("corruption" and "mismanagement") but also hints that the evils may threaten Nigeria's future. As such, the threat is a symbolic enactment of the danger to IDC (the NP, "a major producer of crude oil with four refineries") by ODC values ("corruption and mismanagement"), indicated as having occurred in the past (though not an exact past, since the evils of corruption and mismanagement in governance in Nigeria cannot be specifically dated) but which must be tackled to secure the IDCs' future.

In the case of extract (6), the speaker's federal budget is discursively conceptualised as an "object", indicating contrastive construals between a poor past and a better future, starting from the present.

(6)     I am glad to tell you now we not only have a budget, but
        more importantly, we have a budget process that is more
        transparent, more inclusive and more closely tied to our
        development priorities than in the recent past. 30% of the
        expenditure in this budget is devoted to capital items.

(*Par. 18*)

Furthermore, we are projecting non-oil revenues to surpass
proceeds from oil. Some critics have described the budget
exercise as clumsy. Perhaps. But it was an example of
consensus building, which is integral to democratic
government. In the end, we resolved our differences.

(*Par. 19*)

Here, temporal proximisation is marked by verb phrases indicating
the present tense ("is"), present progressive ("are projecting"), present
perfect ("have described"), and simple/narrative past ("was" and
"resolved"), all expressing the "now" as CT, and the source for the present
and future (of "budgeting"). So, the topic of the discourse is "budget
exercise" which is contrastively conceptualised as "clumsy" by ODC
elements "some critics" and as "not clumsy" or "consensus building" by
IDC elements (inclusive "we" [in the first sentence] and "democratic
government"). Moreover, the speaker claims to have diminished the
threats posed to the budget by the ODC ("in the recent past"), in the
present, through the choice of the comparative adjectival "more", which
compares previous budgets with the current budget, in favour of the latter.
Thus, (6) presents a "quasi-dialogic discourse stretch" (Cap 2013: 93) in
which the IDC-ODC clash is offered as a privileged-oppositional future
paradigm (Dunmire 2011) projected by an IDC element (the speaker, as
exclusive *we* and "our") who positions his actions as more acceptable and
probable in the future than the ODCs' ("some critics"). Notably though,
the clause, "we resolved our differences", indicates the speaker's
conceptualisation of a merging of IDC and ODC perspectives, much
unlike the permanently parallel construal (of ODC-IDC positioning) in Cap's
temporal proximisation.

Moreover, in the address, some quantitative discourse markers of
temporal proximisation are salient in one way or another. In (7), via the
recurrent past-to-present shift in time frame, the speaker indicates with
tense and aspect modal patterns, discourse deixis, and evidences his efforts
to tackle the government's profligacy.

(7)     An important first step has been to get our housekeeping
        right. So, we have reduced the extravagant spending of the
        past. We started boldly with the treasury single account,
        stopping the leakages in public expenditure. We then
        identified forty-three thousand ghost workers through the
        Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information system. That
        represents pay packets totalling N4.2 billion stolen every
        month. In addition, we will save Twenty-Three Billion
        Naira per annum from official travelling and sitting
        allowances alone.

                                                                (*Par. 15-16*)

In the first instance, the excerpt projects a salience of tense, and aspectual
and modal patterning, depicting a movement from the present perfect
("has been" and "have reduced") to a number of tense-aspectual forms:
(narrative) past ("started"); to simple present ("represents"); to present
with future aspect ("will save"). This projects a temporal script of "what
has been done, to what was done (in the past), and to what effect".
Although only the CT, specifically PF1 is explicitly identified, the verb
phrases conceptualise the present and FF ("will", as a modal of prediction
or intention). The logical packaging of temporal proximisation in (7) is
exemplified with the patterning of the discourse deictics: a transition from
"first" to "so" to "then" to "that" and finally to "in addition", with each
deictic occurring in a different sentence which endorses the speaker's
attempt to make his audience conceptualise the temporal sequence and
discursive coherence of the issues discussed. And finally, in the use of
evidence ("treasury single account", "forty-three thousand ghost workers",
"N4.2 billion" and "Twenty-Three Billion Naira"), the speaker establishes
the advantages of the present as a clean break from the past. As such, the
speaker, through evidentials, metaphors and historical data, logically
perspectivises a separation of the past leader's unacceptable forms of
governance and administration from present-day political realities.

### 16.5.3 Axiological Proximisation

In the text, axiological proximisation is indexicalised by noun phrases
which demarcate "home" or positive values with which the speaker likes
to be identified or counts as an achievement, and "alien" or negative
values which the speaker criticises, scoffs at, rejects, or acts against. These
values are not just ideologies, but also less critically valued concepts, like

beliefs and actions. In Table 3, a broad picture of axiological markers
found in the text is provided.

**Table 3: *Axiological proximisation elements in the text***

| Home values | Alien values |
|---|---|
| achievements, amnesty programmes, best practices, consensus building, consolidation, democracy, democratic government, democratic principles, due diligence, dignity, empowerment, flexible exchange rate, (food) security, freedom, human capital development, job creation, modern farming, new economy, pros, rationalisation, restructuring, strong currency, strong economy, triumph | chaos, cons, cybercrimes, corruption, desertification, devaluation, differences, disappointment, divisions, duplications, economic misfortune, extravagant spending, forced marriage, fuel shortages, global shock, hardships, huge debts, illegal mining, impunity, insecurity, leakages, mismanagement, obstacles, padding budgets, pains, problems, rising cost of foods, terrorism, vile press criticisms. |

In Excerpt (8), a compound sentence depicts a construal of the
materialisation of ODC values in the IDC space, based on the speaker's
forced inference, though not in the exact manner specified in Cap's theory:
while Cap avers that the NP denoting the IDC value precedes that
specifying the ODC value (Cap 2013: 122), in the example below, the NP
denoting the IDC value is preceded by that specifying the ODC value.

> (8)    EFCC was given the freedom to pursue corrupt officials and
>         the judiciary was alerted on what Nigerians expect of them
>         in the fight against corruption.
>
> (*Par. 8*)

Here, axiological proximisation is enacted in the counterpoised
relations of an implied IDC value ("anti-corruption", encapsulated by

"EFCC"[3]) and its ODC counterpart ("corruption"). However, rather than dwell on the speculation of conflict, as Cap theorises, this ODC-IDC relation presents a givenness of conflict and a reaction, lexico-grammatically denoted by the reduced prominence of passive constructions ("was given" and "was alerted") and an infinitival structure ("to pursue"). The specific mentioning of the ODC value ("corruption") and its precedence by the definite article in the NP, "the fight against corruption" (without a prior mention) signals the speaker's appeal to legitimisation via proximisation, given the eminence of the anti-corruption crusade in the political agenda of the speaker's administration.

Axiological proximisation, in the data, also reveals forms which can be classified either as high and explicit impact probability or as low and implicit impact probability. Excerpts (9) and (10) will be used to illustrate these types. Excerpt (9) is an example of axiological proximisation with high impact probability.

> (9)     The policy measures and actions taken so far are not to be seen as some experiment in governance. We are fully aware that those vested interests who have held Nigeria back for so long will not give up without a fight. They will sow divisions, sponsor vile press criticisms at home and abroad, incite the public in an effort to create chaos rather than relinquish the vice-like grip they have held on Nigeria.
>
>                                                                  (*Par. 24*)

Here, the threat which the alien values ("divisions", "vile press criticisms" and "chaos") pose to the speaker's "policy measures and actions", and by implication, "home values", are foregrounded.

This clash is lexicalised by a counterpoising of IDCs ("we", "Nigeria", "the public" and "home") and ODCs ("vested interests", "they" and "those"). The speaker's epistemic stance (in Excerpt 9) evokes a movement from certainty, realised in assertions (marked by the verb phrases, "are not to be seen" and "are"), to possibility (marked by verb phrases containing modal auxiliaries, "will not give up", "will sow", ["will"] "sponsor", and ["will"] "incite"). This indicates not just a justification of the policy measures of the speaker (represented, here, by the political "we" [Chilton, 2004]) but also the speaker's assertion of the existence of ODCs and the threatening possibility of their alien values and

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[3] An acronym for Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, a Nigerian federal government-instituted anti-graft agency.

actions to sustain and perpetuate ODC-IDC ideological clashes ("[having] held Nigeria back for so long" and "[not wanting to] relinquish the vice-like grip they have held on Nigeria").

In (10), there is a projection of low impact probability axiological proximisation, since it is restricted to the interpretation of specific lexical choices whose axiological content is enhanced by the other types of proximisation, spatial and temporal.

> (10)   The last twelve months have been spent collaborating with all arms of government to revive our institutions so that they are more efficient and fit for purpose:
> That means a bureaucracy better able to develop and deliver policy
> That means an independent judiciary, above suspicion and able to
> Defend citizen's rights and dispense justice equitably.
> That means a legislature that actually legislates effectively and
> Above all, that means political parties and politicians committed to
> serving the Nigerian people rather than themselves.
> These are the pillars of the state on which democracy can take root and thrive.
> But only if they are strong and incorruptible.
>
> (*Pars. 10-13*)

As shown in this excerpt, the speaker's identity as the head of a democratic administration is indicated by noun phrases marking some of the administration's democratic entities ("bureaucracy", "judiciary", "legislature", "political parties" and "politicians"). And in "[t]hese are the pillars of state on which democracy can take root and thrive", the entities are summed up and projected as IDC elements, the speaker's government is positioned as ideologically positive, and therefore, a "home" value ("democracy"), and a positively valued conceptual metaphor, NIGERIA IS A SOLID STRUCTURE, are cognitively evoked. Implicit in the last sentence of (10) is the merging of alien values with noun phrases framing the anticipatory impact of ODCs on IDCs: the lemmas "weakness" and "corruption" are implicated by their near antonyms, "strong" and "incorruptible", respectively, as the speaker subtly expresses his fear that the democratic structures of his administration's universally acclaimed "home" values could be under threat by ODC entities. And in the "last

twelve months", a past-to-present temporal shift, dating the time frame within which the speaker's administration has tried to revive and reposition democratic institutions, is lexically enacted.

## 16.6 Conclusions

This chapter has attempted an analysis of Cap's theory of proximisation and applied it to a sample of Nigeria's President Mohammadu Buhari's political rhetoric. As shown above, the data reflect the applications of the theory to a greater or lesser degree. This is predictable, given the different foci of the political texts used for illustration: while Cap dwelt extensively on US anti-terrorist discourse, this study focused on the commemorative address or Democracy Day speech. Significantly, the study has not only examined discourse-pragmatic scholarship as regards the value of proximisation theory to ceremonial discourse, but it has also situated the application of proximisation theory in an African political context.

The proximisation strategies enacted in Buhari's speech have yielded essentially diachronic and synchronic interpretations. Diachronically, the speaker uses proximisation to evoke a departure from a negative or "alien" past (especially, the remote past or PF1) of insecurity, corruption, a weak economy and profligacy, as indexed by historical flashbacks, assertions, and evidence. Synchronically, the speaker hints at a threatened future, requests a "new beginning" and offers a privileged, better future, but only if the actions in the present are accepted and sustained.

At the micro-level, proximisation is realised in the data in different but connected ways: a spatial proximisation of the IDC territory (the speaker's administration, Nigeria) being threatened by the ODCs' actions and inactions, with the IDCs sometimes moving towards the ODCs for confrontation; a past-to-present shift in temporal proximisation, where the present (RT "now") is presented as being momentous and defining of the future; and an axiological proximisation which projects a clash between home/positive values and alien/antagonistic values, which threatens IDC ideologies on local (Nigerian) and global (international) levels.

At the macro level, Buhari's is typically a commemorative address, as it is meant for self-identification, consent, solidarity, and the speaker's disposition to act (Reisigl 2008). Also, the lexico-grammatical choices and discourse forms therein attune with Sauer's (2002) three speech actions (identified above). The discourse foregrounds Buhari's short time in office, willingness to act and ongoing activity representation.

Ultimately, Buhari's address serves the strategic political purpose of "legitimisation", a linguistic articulation of a speaker's right to be obeyed

based on his/her knowledge and assertion of the hearer's needs, a positive and boastful presentation of his/her performance, the advancement and reinforcement of global ideologies, and a projection of charismatic leadership (Cap 2008; Chilton 2004). More research could be directed at other instances of President Buhari's speeches, not only to add to the proximisation literature, but also to investigate the possibility of patterning his political rhetoric.

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# CHAPTER 17

# FACE CONSTITUTING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SELECTED FACEBOOK WALL INTERACTIONS

## ADENIJI A. ABAYOMI AND BADEJO O. OLABISI

## Abstract

*Language as a system of codes for communication is employed to share knowledge, customs, cultures and traditions. Facebook interactions are asynchronous forms of computer-mediated communication which lack simultaneous feedback, unlike face-to-face interactions. Interaction takes place, however, with a high level of interactional coherence that encapsulates face constituting strategies used to achieve conflict resolution. Research has been conducted on social media, conversations, pragmatics and facework but not much attention has been paid to how members of the selected platforms manage face threats and face damages in interactions, especially the strategies for constituting face in achieving conflict resolution in the threads of Facebook interactions. This paper, therefore, fills this gap by examining face constituting and conflict resolution strategies in Facebook interactions. Arundale's Face Constituting Theory was employed for the paper. Data were collected randomly from Facebook walls and the purposive random sampling technique determined the posts that were analysed and coded for the purpose of analysis. The findings reveal that face connection and conflict resolution are achieved with the aid of solidarity, unity, interdependence and association, while face separation hinges on divergence, dissociation, autonomy and independence. The paper concludes that interactants conjointly co-constitute meaning by connecting with and separating from others' faces, hence indicating that constituting face in using language is core to constituting human relationships in Facebook interactions.*

# 17.1 Introduction

Language is a system of codes for communication (Bodomo 2010: 4). It is employed to share knowledge, customs, cultures and traditions. It also controls, changes and shapes our immediate environment. "Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desire by means of voluntarily produced symbols" (Sapir 1921: 8); "it is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by which a social group co-operates" (Bloch and Trager 1942: 5). Thus, communication is a process in which people share information, ideas and feelings through any medium. It involves spoken and written words, body language, personal mannerisms and style, and the physical environment.

A new domain for English usage in recent times has substantially changed the form of English language on social media, reflecting the patterns of contact with other languages and the changing communication needs of the users. The creative and dynamic nature of human language accounts for the changes that occur over time in the English language in terms of pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary and meaning on social media such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, as reflected in our data. Therefore, computer-mediated communication (CMC) is a domain of information exchange via computer (Baron 1998: 142). It involves information exchange on the global cooperative collection of networks. Interactants code and decode linguistic and other symbolic systems for information processing in multiple formats through the medium of computers and allied technology such as PDAs and mobile phones, and through media like the Internet, e-mail, chat systems and text messaging.

Facework in CMC gives us an insight into how members of social media platforms manage face threats, reconnect face when damaged, and also resolve conflict if any arises during interactions or exchanges as far as the Facebook wall is concerned. Face can be damaged, maintained or enhanced through interaction with others (Brown and Levinson 1987). Face is mutually vulnerable to threat when people interact and damage the face of their co-interactants to some extent. "Face", as regards this study, is "participants' understandings of relational connectedness and separateness conjointly co-constituted in talk/conduct-in-interaction" where connectedness is understood as "meanings and actions that may be voiced as differentiation, independence, autonomy, dissociation, divergence and so on" (Arundale 2010: 2078). Arundale's

Face Constituting Theory (FCT) focuses on face rather than politeness. This thus sets aside many other critiques of Brown and Levinson's theory.

Notably, a lot of work has been done on social media such as Lampe, Ellison and Steinfield (2006); Wittkower (2010); Anderson et. al, (2010); Taiwo (2007; 2010); Chiluwa (2010; 2011); Awonusi (2004) Oni and Osunbade (2009) and Herring (1999; 2010; 2013; 2015). They paid more attention to Facebook structure, etiquette and privacy, conversational coherence, multimodality and pragmatic force in CMC. Not much attention has been paid to how members of the selected platform manage face threats and face damages in interactions, especially the strategies for constituting face in achieving conflict resolution in the threads of Facebook interactions. This study fills this gap by examining face constituting and conflict resolution strategies in Facebook wall interactions.

## 17.2 Literature Review

Facebook, asynchronous CMC and other literature relevant to this study are discussed in this section. The FCT of Arundale is also discussed to provide a theoretical basis for this study.

### 17.2.1 Facebook

Facebook walls mix personal updates, random trivia, policy announcements, attention-seeking, pictures, videos, boasts, confessions, appeals, and links, shared by people (Meikle 2010: 13). Facebook interactions are stored in some formats and made available to users for discussion and comments at any time (Crystal 2004: 23). Facebook is about "face" (losing or saving face). Users try to avoid FTAs that could harm someone's social status (Losh 2010: 35).

In asynchronous CMC like Facebook, there may be a delay in response to messages from seconds to months, depending on when an individual logs on to comment on the posts. Time delay is an inherent uncertainty in terms of knowing the length of the gap between the moment of posting a message and the moment of receiving a reaction (Crystal 2004: 43). When there is a time delay (lag), the conversational situation could affect the topic of the post/message because turn-taking is dictated by the software, and not by the participants. For instance, if one sends a reaction to someone else's comment before it was finished, the reaction will take its turn in a non-overlapping series of interactions, depending on

the network. Messages are posted linearly in the order in which they are received by the system.

There are guidelines which enhance social interactions and experiences on Facebook. Private information or private matters are not expected to be posted on a wall but should be sent as a message. Subscribers are to be mindful of what to post on walls. Etiquette requires that wall owners reply to comments, especially if they are questions, so that other subscribers do not look silly talking to a wall.

## 17.2.2 Asynchronous Computer-Mediated Communication

CMC is a process of human communication via computers, involving people, situated in particular contexts, engaging in processes to shape media for a variety of purposes (Herring 1996: 1). CMC is a communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of computers. Foulger (1990) claims that people adapt to the characteristics of interactive messaging systems to achieve communicative ends. Asynchronous CMC lacks simultaneous feedback and non-verbal cues (Walther 1992). Cherny (1999), Garcia and Jacobs (1999), and Herring (1999) examine how the lack of non-verbal cues and other properties of CMC systems affect turn-taking. This presumably contributes to reduced levels of interactional coherence and less effective management of the conversational process.

Herring (1999) identifies two obstacles to orderly turn-taking that are influenced by the characteristics of different CMC systems—the lack of simultaneous feedback and the disruption of turn adjacencies. There is a lack of simultaneous feedback due to the absence of non-verbal cues in all text-based CMC systems and the absence of message overlap in one-way message transmission systems (Anderson, J. et al. 2010: 3). Herring (1999: 2) claims that in face-to-face interaction, simultaneous feedback plays an important role in signalling listenership, timing turn-taking effectively, and maintaining continuous interaction. In synchronous interactions, participants share a common simultaneous non-threaded message environment (Capron 1990: 12). The participants must be logged in to the space at the same time in order to send and receive messages. Features of synchronous CMC are distinct from asynchronous CMC because it requires users to be logged in simultaneously.

## 17.3 Theoretical Framework

This paper focuses on FCT because it is appropriate for the investigation of the unique set of interactions on Facebook walls, and accounts for how participants constitute face and manage conflicts. Constituting face in interaction is concerned with face, facework, and interactional achievement. FCT employs a new conceptualisation of "face" in terms of the relationship two or more people create with one another in interactions. A conceptualisation is distinct from the understandings of face in terms of person-centred attributes like social identity, public self-image, or social wants that characterise existing theories (Arundale 2006; 2009).

FCT accounts for the interpretations, senses or impressions participants generate in conversation and interactional achievement that are invariably co-constituted (Arundale 1999). FCT is an intervention into the limitations of facework which, according to Brown and Levinson (1987: 48), is not suitable for the analysis of jointly produced social interaction. This is because Goffman's (1955) and Brown and Levinson's (1987) notions of face, according to Elsevier (2010: 2074), are "embedded within an intention-based transmission model of communication which is inconsistent with a social constructionist or interactional view of communication as a joint and collaborative activity". Arundale (1999: 148) attaches FCT to the "co-constituting" model of communication, a broader interactive achievement model of communication which argues that the knowledge individuals have of things is co-constituted in interactions over time.

One of the identified problems with Goffman's notion of face is that he conceptualised face as a personal or individual possession that arises through pre-established patterns of action. Goffman's notion of face was intended to examine interaction in North American contexts where it is rooted in a view of social actors who are concerned with protecting or enhancing their self-image (2010: 1463). Arundale's *FCT* understands face as a relational phenomenon with the parties conjointly achieving face connection or face separation. The concepts of "individual, interpreting, expectation and producing" are central to the co-constituting model of communication. An individual produces both linguistic and non-linguistic behaviours; interpreting describes the complex process an individual engages in when listening to and producing talk in interactions, giving impressions about what is said. Expectation captures the anticipation evoked by the individual of a pattern he is familiar with, while producing is the individual's generating of sequences of language constituents that comprise utterances to be interpreted by others, both as contribution and

participation in the stream of behaviour in interactions (Arundale 1999: 130). In FCT, the notions of connectedness and separateness are core to face constitution. Connectedness refers to meanings and actions that may be apparent as unity, interdependence, solidarity, association and congruence, while separateness refers to meanings and actions that may be voiced as differentiation, independence, autonomy, dissociation, divergence, and so on (Arundale 2006; 2004).

Conflicts generally arise when parties involved feel that their faces have been threatened during interactions. Despite observable pervasive manifestations of face threats in interpersonal interactions, face threat has become firmly embedded in pragmatics since its introduction in Goffman's (1955, 1967) work on face. Much of the work that has been subsequently undertaken over the past four decades as regards face threats has focused on understanding how participants avoid or reduce face threats in interpersonal interactions in politeness research. Face threats have just recently received more attention in pragmatics concurrent with the rise in impoliteness research (Chang and Haugh 2011: 2). No act is intrinsically face-threatening, as is often presumed to be the case as regards Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987) notion of FTAs. This is because some actions that can be evaluated as face-threatening actions may also be understood as face supportive. Arundale's (1999; 2006; 2010) FCT, which is a radical re-interpretation of and an alternative to Goffman's (1955) work, re-conceptualised face in terms of how participants interpret their relationship with each other. FCT, which is the framework adopted in this paper, adequately addresses the concerns with the cultural generality of Brown and Levinson's formulation. As Arundale (2006: 195) avers, FCT provides a framework for addressing the full scope of human facework, including the commonly examined strategic redress of face threats.

## 17.4 Methodology

Data were collected from Facebook walls. About twenty threads were selected randomly and the purposive random sampling technique was employed to determine the posts selected for analysis. Posts were presented as exchanges comprising interactants' contributions. Some parts of the data where the Yoruba language or pidgin were used were translated into the English language for clarity in our data analysis. Information on facework, Facebook, CMC, face constituting and conflict resolution strategies were generated from books and journals which served as the secondary source of data. These were subjected to content analysis with insights from Arundale's FCT.

# 17.5 Data Analysis

The findings reveal face separation and face connection strategies which aid conflict resolution on Facebook walls. Face separation hinges on independence as well as divergence and dissociation, while face connection and conflict resolution are achieved with the aid of solidarity, unity, interdependence and association.

## *17.5.1 Face Separation*

Face separation in the data deals with how co-interactants' exchanges are evaluated as being threatening to each other's face through dissociation, divergence and independence.

**Face Separation through Independence**
In the exchange below, face separation is pragmatically achieved through independence. The interactant's face is independently separated from the co-interactant's. The response to the initial post leads to conflict as the post was regarded as a threat to the addressees—"journalists". In Exchange 1 below, the post elicits responses from Facebook subscribers or co-interactants. These posts are verbatim copies and all "errors" are those of the Facebook user.

> **Exchange 1:**
> **Post by DKT:** Copy and paste Journalists, where are you? Yorubas will say "biowoeni o bateekuida, a kinbereiku to pa baba eni" (When one has not got hold of a cutlass, one should not challenge the killer of one's father). When you say the government of Nigeria waited for 6 years for it to bombard the terrorists and flush them out of their hideouts, let me ask you: were we equipped enough to stand up to the terrorists considering the obsolete nature of our arms and ammunition?
> **Co-interactant:** DKT leave sentiment abeg! Countries nuy every time from Russia and China. Even during the Biafra war. Its sentiment when you tack this way with all the souls that have been lost. 6 years na small thing?... like my gee Elukay wrote, you don't flush out terrorism in 6 weeks if you ain't acting a script. DKT and dada I will [sic] like to tell you even GEJ does not praise himself the way you do.

The expression, "copy and paste journalist, where are you?" is evaluated as a face threat by a co-interactant who is of the opinion that the Nigerian government should have been more aggressive in the fight against terrorism. The reaction by the interactant shows face separation. So, there is face separation between the co-interactants here. The post is a sort of reprimand of the interactants who had been criticising the Nigerian government for waiting for six years before reacting decisively to dislodge Boko Haram.

The interactional expectation of the first interactant is not met on the topic of discussion because there is a conflict of opinions. The interactant in Exchange 1 is quick to defend his position and protect his face which is already threatened by the accusatory tone of the initial post and the perceived attempt to rubbish his stand on the issue.

## Face Separation through Divergence and Dissociation

In Exchange 2 below, dissociation and divergence manifest in the face-threatening of the addressee, "Gov. Yari", and the face damage leads to conflict among co-interactants who contributed to the discussion. The interactants co-constitute the face that is being threatened here, revealing that, in the face separation, there are divergences of reasoning in the way participants co-constitute the threatened/damaged face as reflected in the comments. Again, all errors are those of the Facebook user.

**Exchange 2: The original post**: "One question for GovYari. That hotel you stole money to build, are they going to be reciting the Qur'an in it?"

> **Interactant1**: Kai! Ooo! Is his business naa, not an Islamic school.
> **Interactant2:** (laughing emoticon)
> **Interactant3**: Allah doesn't accept Harram gift
> **Interactant4**: (NuhuMohammad)Why Qur'an? Why holy book please? Can we touch him direct without touching his belief?
> (Reply 1, wall owner): A man is the totality of his belief
> (Reply 2): He will be touched in every way touchable
> (Reply 3): Nuhu who insulted the Qur'an here?? And besides, how many people use Qur'an or Islam as a shield for committing atrocities?? Yari is a criminal and shou face the wrath of the law.

The post is meant to trigger a political discourse among Facebook users. It is also meant to threaten and even damage the face of the addressee, the

state governor, Yari, a sharia law enthusiast who is alleged to have
diverted state money to build a hotel in another state. Interactant 1 does
not see the post as being appropriate. He believes the hotel is a commercial
business centre and not an Islamic school. Although his response gives a
face separation, it has a low degree of face threat. That is probably the
reason why the wall owner does not react to his subtle reprimand.

      The absence of a response from the owner of the post to
Interactant 1's reply is a face stasis. Interactant 4, like Interactant 1,
evaluates the post as a serious face threat because he interprets the
mentioning of sharia and the Qur'an in the post as an insult to his religion
and he registers his displeasure by asking the rhetorical question: *"can we
touch him directly without touching his belief?"*

Other interactants inflict face damage on the wall owner as he says:

> "We will never allow bastards to insult our religion because of
> what Yari did".

So, the interactional expectation of the wall owner (Johnson Andrew) for
posting his message is not met by some interactants (as with Interactants 1,
4 and 6). The wall owner suffers face threat from some co-interactants as a
result of social interactive face damage. Thus, the wall owner's provisional
interpreting is not confirmed in the interactants' turns. The wall owner,
interpreting Interactants 4 and 6's reactions as face threat and face
damage, conjointly co-constitutes face maintenance with them in a
religious, sensitive context by reiterating his earlier intention which is to
condemn Yari as a fraudulent man and a charlatan who uses religion as a
mask by replying, thus:

> no one is insulting your religion. Yari is a hypocrite, that
> is what we are saying. A man took some grains because
> of hunger, he was amputated. You did not think your
> religion is being insulted. Now a big man has stolen
> people's salaries and go on to build a house for
> prostitutes, drunkards and sin. You say talking about it is
> insulting your religion. Why are we like this?

The wall owner explains himself again and ends it with a mild rebuke
encoded in the rhetorical question "why are we like this?" which could be
seen to mean "why do people ignore the substance and hold on to
irrelevant issues?"

While Interactant 4 (Nuhu Mohammed) feels his face has been threatened by the wall owner by mentioning the Qur'an and sharia, others, some of whom are also Muslims, reply to him with face separation in their interpretation of his response to the initial post, with their contributions conjointly co-constituting divergence and dissociation from his religious sentimental view that the Qur'an is being insulted.

## *17.5.2 Face Connection*

Face connection is sometimes reached through interdependence, unity, solidarity and association, thereby aiding conflict resolution in the interactants' posts in the data.

### Face Connection via Interdependence

Exchange 2 below equally demonstrates face connection achieved through interdependence (in the three replies to interactants' comments in the exchange) as the discussion continues. All errors are those of the Facebook user.

**Exchange 2:**
**The original post**: "One question for GovYari. That hotel you stole money to build, are they going to be reciting Qur'an in it?"

> **Interactant1**: Kai! Ooo! Is his business naa, not an Islamic school.
> **Interactant2:** (laughing emoticon)
> **Interactant3**: Allah doesn't accept Harram gift
> **Interactant4**: (NuhuMohammad) Why Qur'an? Why holy book please? Can we touch him directly without touching his belief?
> (Reply 1, wall owner): A man is the totality of his belief
> (Reply 2): He will be touched in every way touchable
> (Reply 3): Nuhu who insulted the Qur'an here?? And besides, how many people use Qur'an or Islam as a shield for committing atrocities?? Yari is a criminal and shou face the wrath of the law.

Of course, Interactants 1, 2 and 3's comments to the discussion are interdependently connected. Therefore, the face constituting is conjointly interpreted and interdependently connected. Also, Interactant 4, who threatens and even damages the co-interactant's face, calls for face

connection by conjointly co-constituting an interdependent relationship as a means of resolving conflict—the post almost results in this among the co-interactants.

## Face Connection through Solidarity

There is face connection in the exchanges that follow through solidarity, especially to demonstrate face support as an understanding of the participants' connection with one another as they work conjointly to constitute turns at talking, actions, and conflict-sensitive meanings. All errors are those of the Facebook user.

**Exchange 3: Post:** "We will never allow bastards to insult our religion because of what Yari did".

> **Interactant 1**: I am seeing the first bastard in my life from this comment. Thanks for making me know who actually is a bastard.
>
> **Interactant 2**: But Lawal (referring to another interactant) how did this statement insult Qur'an or your religion. Do you understand English at all?
>
> **Interactant 3**: In what way did he insult Islam if I may ask??? It's the people like you that blow things out of proportion. Open your eyes and see clearly to liberate yourself from mental slavery. Same state hails a Gov who claimed to implement sharia. After stealing the state dry left you guys more backward than you are. Then tell me who is mocking Islam more than the Muslims who lied with the Qur'an and cheat people.
>
> **Interactant 4**: The statement is only asking Yari who alludes everything to religion and now building hotel where all the fornication of this world takes place. He said fornication is the cause of meningitis in Zamfara yet he built Hotel. Does he expect people to rent his hotel with the sole aim of reading Qur'an? To put it in a plain language, maybe you will understand better.

It is observed that the exchanges above reflect face threat and face damage which result in conflicts among the co-interactants. However, face constituting was conjointly interpreted, leading to conflict resolution through solidarity among Interactants 2, 3 and 4. In other words, the co-interactants' comments in the discussion give room for face connection, manifesting unanimous support and collective orientation to the position

that the post in question, which generated the exchanges above, did not insult the Quran or Islam, thereby aiding conflict resolution among the interactants.

**Face Connection via Unity**
Unity also serves to play a role in discursively connecting with other participants, indicating that constituting face in using language is core to constituting human relationships. Datum C can be considered:

**Exchange 4:**

>**Post by DKT:** Gentlemen, terrorism in Nigeria started one day and one day it will end. The picture we paint is like the fight against the terrorists started just last week. No! We have been preventing working to reduce the effect of their assaults on major cities…
>**Co-interactant**: Abi o DKT.

"Abi o", a Yoruba expression used by the interactant in Exchange 2, could be translated as "correct" which expresses the interactant's agreement with the co-interactant in Exchange 1, addressed as DKT on the topical issue of terrorism as an age-old security challenge in Nigeria. The acquiescent comment on the post is a reflection of face connection between the interactants who conjointly constitute a relationship of unity and of mutual alignment with their discursive opinions.

Unity of discursive opinion as a face connection-achieving strategy can also be seen in the exchange below. All errors are those of the Facebook user.

**Exchange 5:**
**Post:** Why Qur'an? Why holy book please? Can we touch him direct without touching his belief?

>**Interactant 1**: Johnson Andrew: (the wall owner): A man is the totality of his belief.
>**Interactant 2**: He will be touched every way possible
>**Interactant 3**: Nuhu who insulted the Qur'an here?? And besides how many people uses Qur'an and Islam as a shield for committing atrocities?? Yari is a criminal and should face the wrath of the law.

**Interactant 4:** (Nuhu Muhammad): Gentlemen, I think I didn't say Mr Andrew insulted Qur'an. Why Qur'an, why holy book…

**Interactant 5**: Because he always claims to be holy in all his affairs. Nuhu Muhammad, remember his comment against his people on the recent outbreak of Meningitis in his state that God is angry with them because of the sin they are committing, so, why did he see looting and building hotel with public fund in the Qur'an, please try to be honest when next you come across a comment like this.

Interactants 3 and 5, who seem to be Muslims by their names (Imran Ibn Musa and Unaiza Ibrahim Sani Bello), clearly reprimand other interactants for deflecting attention from the issue of corruption to religion, thereby constituting a relationship of unity. Interactant 4 realises that his provisional interpreting of the initial post is not confirmed by other interactants who have unitedly demonstrated face connection; he then aligns with the interactive reality of constituting face maintenance with other interactants and inserts a conciliatory statement:

"Gentlemen, I think I didn't say Mr Andrew insulted the Qur'an… Thanks guys".

This is consistent with FCT's principle that recommends pragmatic revision on the basis of a recipient's interpreting: "...if she is to produce another utterance in the conversation, A will have to utilise the interpreting of her initial utterance (and intention) that was co-constituted in B's response to her" (Arundale 1999: 146).

### Face Connection via Solidarity

Solidarity is unity among a group or a class of people which produces common interests. This is established in the exchange below:

**Exchange 6: Post: Happy birthday to you ma**

**Interactant 1**: 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU MA'.

**Interactant 2**: 'Mama ni yen'. (That is a mother)

**Interactant 1**: 'Abioo'. (Yes o)

**Interactant 3**: 'Iyaomo, may she reap the fruit of ha labour, wishn ha lnglyf and prosperity. Igbaodun,

odunkan.' (Mother, may she reap the fruit of her labour.
Many happy returns!)
**Interactant 4:** 'The most beautiful woman in the world'.

We can identify positive face in the exchange above. Therefore, there is no
form of any face threat or face separation. Positive responses from co-
subscribers indicate face connection in solidarity or agreement to honour
the celebrant (the topic of discussion) with the supposed impression the
post originator creates. The face constituting is conjointly interpreted and
solidarity among co-interactants reflects face connection. In other words,
there is no reflection of conflict or face separation among the interactants,
so they all honoured the addressee. All the interactants co-constitute and
co-maintain face support through solidarity.

**Face Connection through Association**
Association is another face connection strategy, which serves to maintain
face and resolve conflicts in participants' interactions on Facebook walls.
The exchange below instantiates this:

**Exchange 7: Post: "Look at my beautiful picture. How do I look?"**
**Interactant 1:** 'Hahahaha'
**Interactant 2:** 'u want take passport photograph for
WAEC?'
**Wall owner**: 'Exactly I'm registering for WAEC'
**Interactant 3**: 'dis ur pic no clear @ all'

The post in Exchange 7 above elicits reactions about picture quality from
co-subscribers on the platform. The picture is of poor quality and it is
passport-like. The owner might have been oblivious to the poor quality but
the interactants are not. The first interactant bursts into laughter and the
subsequent responses are also not complimentary to the picture, but rather
face-threatening, potentially capable of resulting in conflict. However, the
interactants' uncomplimentary comments are taken as face support given
the relationship of association invoked, despite the fact that the comments
are face-threatening to the picture's owner. Rather than giving room for
face separation and conflicts, despite the potential threat to the face of the
originator of the post, the originator takes what we could interpret as face
threat as face stasis which is reflected in his response, thus:

**Interactant 2:** "u wan take passport photograph for WAEC?"
**Wall owner:** "Exactly. I'm registering for WAEC"

The face constituting here is conjointly co-constituted and face threat is well managed via the relationship of jocular association leading to face connection in the exchange.

## 17.6 Conclusion

This paper examines face constituting and conflict resolution strategies in Facebook wall interactions, adopting insights from Arundale's FCT. Findings show the manifestation of face separation and face connection, with face separation occurring as a result of members' divergence, dissociation and independence while face connection vis-à-vis conflict resolution is aided by solidarity, unity, interdependence and association among the participants. The paper concludes that interactants conjointly co-constitute meaning and the topic of discussion by connecting with and separating from others' faces, hence indicating that constituting face in using language is core to constituting human relationships in Facebook interactions.

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# CHAPTER 18

# DISCOURSE REPRESENTATIONS OF CHILDREN'S ROLES IN SELECTED NOLLYWOOD MOVIES

## EZEKIEL OPEYEMI OLAJIMBITI

## Abstract

*Movie traditions, including Nollywood movies, are designed by movie practitioners to largely represent adults and children on a society-exclusive basis. However, previous studies on Nollywood movies have focused more on adults than children. They have, in Nigeria, devoted more attention to children's roles in the media than their roles in the movies depicting Nigerian social experiences. This study, therefore, investigated children's roles, their pragmatic features and their lexico-grammatical features with a view to establishing the types of representation of Nigerian children exhibited in Nollywood movies. The study adopted aspects of Mead's role theory, Myers-Scotton's markedness theory, and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. Eight films, covering four family genres, Married But Living Single, Daddy's Boy, Miss Queen and Maami; two evangelical genres, Too Much for God and Mafian Kids; and two gangster genres, Chibuso My Only Son and Finding Mercy, were purposively sampled because they contained dominant instances of largely Nigeria-peculiar children's roles. Eighty children's interactions were purposively selected from all the movies, and were subjected to discourse and pragmatic analyses. Four children's roles were identified in the selected movies, namely, victim role (VR) in all the movie genres; peacemaker role (PR) in evangelical and family movies; and troublemaker role (TR) and baby role (BR) only in family movies. Asymmetrical encounters in all movie types are characterised by VR, PR and BR indexed by material, mental, relational and verbal transitivity processes, while symmetrical encounters in family movies manifest TR marked by mental and material*

*transitivity processes. These implicate the children in the sampled movies as victims of adult irresponsibility, discriminators and naive individuals.*

Keywords: *Discourse representation; marked roles; unmarked roles; asymmetric encounters; symmetrical encounters*

## 18.1 Background to the Study

Children are vulnerable and are largely considered as people with no power in society, especially in Africa and other continents of the world. They often depend on adults exclusively in decision-making, for protection and for other social intricacies capable of shaping their experiences in society. The children's social world is routinely characterised by enthusiasm, competition and divergent values enhanced through the influence of parents, schools, peer groups and the media. These factors are significant in the way children understand the world. Congruently, the social experiences of children, like adults, are represented in the media. To corroborate this, Gerbner (1994: 40) affirms that "…the children hear more stories and facts through different media than through parents, schools, or community". The media is largely controlled by adults. This implies that it is adults that give representation to children in the media, especially in movies, and Nigerian movies are not exceptions. The roles assigned to children in movies where they feature would either duplicate the way they view themselves or the image perceived by movie practitioners. Eventually, both perceptions would probably enable these children to acquire a sense of themselves as future adults and experience an enhanced sense of their identity as children. A movie, as a form of social interaction, is a type of television genre that represents the social experiences of society. In Nigeria, for instance, Nollywood movies portray Nigerian children within the Nigerian socio-cultural context. It is against this background that this paper examines how Nigerian children are represented in Nollywood movies through their use of language by investigating their assigned roles.

        The nomenclature of human society necessitates interaction and in the very broad range of human activities, language is the key component of interaction. In every social interaction, language is routinely used to express life experiences shared socially through various communicative encounters within the affordances of socio-cultural contexts. Through language, interactants in interactive encounters engage in discourse issues, bringing their personality features resulting from their individual roles. Accordingly, the roles assumed by language users enable the display of

their definitive identities. Role, here, is defined as the position or purpose a person holds in a situation or relationship, while identity explains the distinctive perspective or self-presentation resulting from one's role (Burke 2013). Therefore, in tracking the representation of children in the Nigerian movie industry, attention cannot but be paid to the language use of the performers, especially children, in various interactions.

Previous studies on Nollywood movies have focused more on adults than children (Adejunmobi 2004 and 2007; Adedun 2010 and 2011; Ogunleye 2008; Ondego 2008) and, outside of this scope, have devoted attention more to children's representations in the news media (Korac 2009; Ponte 2013; UNICEF report 2016), video games (Buckingham 1993; Gottschalk 1995; Burke 2013), and art media and television advertisements (Parida 2013; Kaur 2015). Other studies have also considered children's representations in the news, novels (literature) and policy documentation (Qvortrup 1990; Parkes 2007; Johnson 2011 and Chang 2012). These studies found that children have been marginalised in nationalism studies, particularly in the news. The closest study to the present study is Kaur (2015) on children's representation in television advertisements in India. The present study differs from the previous studies as it extends the frontier of child discourse studies by investigating the discourse representation of children's roles in movies depicting Nigerian socio-cultural experiences. Given that Nollywood movies reflect the realities of Nigerian society, the question of representation of children in symmetrical and asymmetrical encounters in Nollywood movies, which is shown in their exclusive use of English, becomes paramount. Since the future of any society hinges on children, it is expedient therefore to discursively unpack their roles and see how they are linguistically indexed in reflecting their age proficiency status.

## 18.2 Children's Development and the Media

Children have been viewed by adults differently in specific historical periods and cultural locations. For instance, Aries (1962) cited in Kaur (2015: 106) argues that in the West, childhood was not considered a separate category worthy of adult attention until the sixteenth century. This trend changed later as childhood in the nineteenth century was characterised by acceptance, nurturing and caring attitudes. It was not until the twentieth century with the advent of globalisation that childhood was understood from a universal point of view. Aries avers that childhood is a culturally specific, socio-historical "construct" that can be understood differently in different locations, contexts and periods. Kakkar (1979)

buttresses Aries' view thus: "it is important to know how people within cultures behave with and relate to children".

As regards the nature of a child, several scholars have aired their views. For instance, Gbadeyan (2009: 337) says a child is a person under the age of sixteen. He claims that children, according to the broadcast code for advertising to children, refer to people less than twelve (12) years of age. In his view, Hornby (2012) defines children as young human beings who are not yet adults. Generally, the age classification of children differs from one country to another. For the purpose of this study, twelve (12) years and below is adopted as the age of children. This is also the position of UNICEF on the age categorisation.

Meanwhile, to know how children are understood by various cultures, there is a need to explore their representations in different cultures through different channels. One of these channels is the media. Media representations mirror myriad discourses, and at the same time, they inform and shape knowledge. It is, however, vital to know children's perceptions about media. Burke (2013: 59) quotes Common Sense Media (2011: 21) thus,

> there has been an increase in 5-7s use of social networking weekly… from 7% in 2009 to 23% in 2010, although this relates to their using virtual words like Club Penguin or Moshi Monsters rather than mainstream social networking sites… Also, more than a third (38%) of all children between the ages of 0-8 have used a cell phone, iPod, iPad or similar device to play games, use apps, or watch videos, TV shows or movies; but by the time they are in the 5-8 year ... (52%) have done so at one point or another.

In modern times, play has become more and more digitised and there is a large focus on the emerging literacy skills of the younger population.

To this end, media and digital toys and every other form of entertainment have infiltrated homes in both developed and developing nations. Gbadeyan (2009: 337) stresses that "most children love films, television and any moving pictures with sound. These electronic gadgets kindle their imagination and bring into play many more of their senses than do the written word or still-life pictures". Children are usually conscious of and often troubled by contradictions between what significant adults (e.g., family, teachers, and religious figures) say and do about societal issues (Zimmerman and Christakis 2005; Arnold, Graesch, Ragazzini and Ochs 2012). Kransor and Rubin (1981) suggest that children have different goals for each interaction that they are engaged in as well as performing various behavioural strategies to achieve them. They may use different behavioural strategies to achieve the same goal as well

as the same behavioural strategy to achieve different goals. They use the techniques of repetition and turn-taking to achieve their goals. It is during childhood that children acquire social knowledge and attitude which may continue into adulthood.

## 18.3 Previous Studies on Children's Representation in the Media

Several scholars have worked on children's representation in the news media; some of them are reviewed here. Davey (2009) carried out a study on *Children's portrayal in the British media* where she reflects on the negative portrayals of children in the media as troublemakers and victims. According to her, children are so portrayed because they are vulnerable, passive, dependant and angelic, and also, they have no self-organised body. Similarly, Korac (2009), on children and the media in Serbia, claims that children were used as a means for drawing attention or attaching importance to other themes. She further notes that 72 per cent of representations of children in the media were classed as "passive". She argues that "if an alien were leafing through newspapers, browsing the Internet, watching TV, they would likely make the following conclusions: the child is a member of a rare, helpless and rather endangered species".

Mascheroni, Jorge and Famugia (2014) attempt a study on media representations and children's discourses on online risks which is a study that covers nine European countries. They argue that "the co-construction of online risks is of particular interest for understanding children's online experiences, as it is on the basis of what is socially constructed as problematic that children define, negotiate and adopt preventive measures aimed at reducing unpleasant and harmful consequences". The study takes a standpoint that children are influenced by their social and cultural conditions with all their interactions with parents, peers, school and the media. The study further argues that "within media studies, the role of the media in shaping public discourses has been a recurrent and pervasive field of investigation". The study has two important submissions: (1) the analysis of media representations of online risks demonstrates that news coverage of these phenomena is affected by sensationalism, and that the media's constructions of childhood and children's online experiences influence how the issues are framed; (2) that media representations influence the public policy and research agenda, if not directly, then by shaping the discursive contexts in which parents, teachers, policymakers and scholars are dealing with the social issue of children and the Internet. Kaur (2015) investigates representations of children and childhood in

Indian television advertisements. The study sees childhood as a social construct by holding the same view as Qvortrup, et al. (1994) that each culture has its own notions and ways of defining children and childhood. Precisely, the study examines the dominant representations of the nature of children and childhood projected by advertisements on Indian television. There is a need to know the location of the children, whether within family units or wider society. The aim of the study is to determine how advertisements construct the concept of children and childhood and to determine their position within Indian society.

In sum, the above studies have captured children's representations in the media, for example, negative portrayals of children in the British media as being vulnerable, passive, dependant and angelic; children being used as an attention-drawing strategy; children as a largely helpless and endangered species; and children's roles being culturally determined by the fact that through the media, their role is evolving and changing. While these serve as a good premise, the present study differs because it investigates children's representation in Nollywood movies which have different cultural and contextual dimensions from previous studies. It is also significant to note that the present study will complement the scholarship in this dimension.

## 18.4 The Nigerian Film Industry: Exploring the Background

Like every society, Nigerian society has rich cultural values which are usually transformed into stage plays and finally into the realm of electronic gadgets. As a means of entertainment and communication of moral values and cultural norms to the audience in theatres and at homes, the Nigerian film industry was established. This film industry is known as Nollywood, which stands for all home videos and television series produced in Nigeria. This appellation was given to take after the similitude of the movie industry in the United States of America which is known as Hollywood and that of India—Bollywood. It formally came into being in 1992 following the success of Ken Neubue (in the production of *Living in Bondage*) who canvassed for the legalisation of the nation's movie industry (Ayakoroma 2008; Adedokun 2008; Okome 2008). The Federal Government of Nigeria in 1993 set up a regulatory agency, the National Film and Video Board, to censor the activities of the industry which implies that it is officially regarded as the national cinema industry of the country. Prior to this spectacular event, there were unforgettable events in the history of Nollywood. Ayakoroma (2008: 45) claims that film

exhibitions began to thrive during the colonial era, with Glover Memorial Hall playing host to copious memorable films viewed by Nigerians in August 1903. However, the non-availability of proper data reflecting the title of the debut movie caused a setback in the chronological histories of the Nigerian film industry. According to Larkin (2006), Nollywood produces over 6000 films every year, making the industry one of the largest film producers in the world.

Nollywood has not paid significant attention to children's involvement in movies, not least as regards producing children's movies to capture Nigerian children as intelligent, as is the case in other film industries across the globe. Their inclusion is just a necessity in the completion of storylines. Okon (2016: para.5) criticises Nollywood for neglecting children thus: "Hollywood has produced a plethora of kid's videos which have had a fantastic influence on [the industry]". He goes further to say that it is unfortunate that while the list of Hollywood videos for children is on the rise, Nollywood is yet to create videos for the viewing satisfaction of children. This is why children watch videos not permitted for their age-group, especially those shown on cable television without parental supervision. On Nigerian movies and viewership, Ekwauzi (2008) claims that women and children make up 81% of the Nigerian film viewing population. This is an accentuation of earlier findings of children's attitudes by Livingstone and Helsper (2008).

## 18.5 Role Discourse

Role discourse is central to the study of identity because there is no one that is role-less. Roles are so powerful that they define who we are, and it is through roles that we get to know people. Role is a theatrical term borrowed by social science and popularised by Goffman (1959; 1961). It is the basic unit of socialisation which shows how society allocates duties and functions to every individual. Roles provide opportunities for social relations. A role represents one person or character played according to a script. Through a role, every individual displays a great deal of spontaneity and idiosyncrasy. A role is described as a status or function one assumes during interactions. It explains human behaviour by looking at what social function is fulfilled by holding a given role. This, therefore, gives the picture of how interactants position themselves or are being positioned by others in a given social role. Linton (1971: 112) puts forward the relationship between status and role thus, "a role is the dynamic aspect of a status: what the individual has to do in order to validate his occupation of the status".

McCall and Simmons (1966: 131) give a clear distinction between social roles and interaction roles, so a role-taking ability can thus develop both from "subjective" experience with similar roles and from more "objective" experience in observing others in these roles. Professionals often develop a great deal of this objective knowledge about their clients, and the latter are often surprised by what seems to them uncanny familiarity with their own points of view. Such knowledge on the part of the doctor, teacher, and the official points to the fact that "empathy" must not be confused with sympathy or emotional involvement of any kind; the professional is often quite aloof and clinically distant from his client.

## 18.6 Theoretical Orientations

Insights are drawn from the following to ensure a comprehensive examination of children's representation in Nollywood movies: Role theory, Markedness theory and Systemic Functional Grammar. Role theory is an interdisciplinary theory that emerged from Mead's paper in 1934, entitled "Mind, self and society". It was later developed by Moreno (1934); Linton (1936, 1947); Goffman (1961); Biddle (1966) and in the current scholarship. Two traditions exist. The first one is structuralism which states that not all roles may be associated with identified social positions, but also conformity, stability and role complementarity. The second one is interactionist which conceives roles as emerging from interactions with others, taking perspectives, etc. The interactionist part is adopted in this study as it is a veritable tool to unpack children's roles in Nollywood movies.

Markedness theory, an interdisciplinary theory, is another analytical tool adopted by the study which deals with asymmetry relationships between elements of linguistic or conceptual structure. Trubetzkoy (1939) initiated the theory with the introduction of phonemes, later developed by Jacobson (1939) with the addition of morphology, Chomsky (1968) UG: core (unmarked) and peripheral (marked), linguistic prototypicality-psycholinguistic markedness, (Leech 1983) semantic markedness, (Givon 1991) structural markedness and discourse markedness, (Myers-Scotton 1993) interactional/intercultural sociolinguistics-markedness model, and (McCarthy 2002) Optimality Theory. It can be applied to any concept to show a relative evaluation and social appropriateness of such concepts in terms of differences. Technical concepts of this scholarship employed in this study are symmetrical, asymmetrical, marked and unmarked to determine the age-dependent status of the roles of children in Nollywood movies. Additionally, Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), a

linguistic framework developed by Halliday, is adopted to provide linguistic orientation and background to the study. The transitivity system, a unit of meaning under ideational function of language, is used to elucidate the clauses: material process, mental process, and so on.

## 18.7 Methodology

The data for this study were collected from compact diskettes (CDs) of movies of Nollywood, through purposive random sampling in Nigeria. The data analysed here consist of eight transcribed Nollywood movies, covering four family genres: *Married But Living Single (MABLS), Daddy's Boy (DABY), Miss Queen (MQUN)* and *Maami*; two evangelical genres: *Too Much for God (TMFG)* and *Mafian Kids (MAKIDS);* and two gangster genres: *Chibuso My Only Son (CMOS)* and *Finding Mercy (FIMY)*. These were purposively sampled because they contained dominant instances of largely Nigeria-peculiar children's roles. Attention was given to movies where children within the age bracket of 6-12 specifically featured alongside adults. These are English medium Nollywood movies in order to avoid bias in terms of language and culture since Nigeria is a pluralistic linguistic environment. Specific interactions involving children were carefully transcribed. In all, eighty interactions were gathered. The paper adopts aspects of descriptive design to handle the qualitative nature of the study. Specifically, verbal utterances and physical actions of the purposively selected encounters were captured for the critical interpretive and descriptive analysis. As a result, role theory was employed to unearth the emergent children's roles; markedness theory was used to determine the age-dependent status of these roles; while SFG was used to determine the linguistic processes involved in the interactions where the roles are captured.

## 18.8 Analysis and Findings

Four children's roles were identified: victim, peacemaker, troublemaker and baby. These roles are enacted in symmetrical and asymmetrical encounters in line with the interactionist tradition of role theory where the role is seen as fluid and subtle, a confirmation that role is not fixed or prescribed but something that is constantly negotiated between individuals. Additionally, marked and unmarked concepts of markedness theory augment the description of the identified roles. While both concepts are used to determine the age-dependent status of each role, SFG is utilised for the explication of the linguistic process deployed in each role, so as to present a robust interpretation of the data.

## *18.8.1 Victim Roles*

The victim role relates to children's frame of helplessness in asymmetrical encounters in the movies. It is characterised by abuse, circumstantial exploitation and domestic violence which they have no control over, given their circumstances as individuals with no social power. It, therefore, portrays their vulnerability to exploitation by adults. This role manifests in all the three movie genres that constitute the data for the study. Each manifestation of the victim role, together with their linguistic features, is discussed below:

**Victims of Abuse**

Abuse involves maltreatment, which can either be physical or psychological, enacted, for instance, through harmful treatment and insults. Children become victims of abuse when they are ill-treated and coerced to put up with conduct that is out of accord with accepted behaviour or norms permissible in society. This manifests in asymmetrical encounters largely in the family movie genre which is why it is an unmarked role characterised by the material process. In Excerpt 1, Suzan punishes Clinton because he attempts to report her to his father. This form of punishment is an abuse on the part of Clinton. As a result of the punishment, Clinton, in line 2, promises never to report Suzan again.

**Excerpt 1**

Background: Suzan is a maid in Clinton's father's house. She punishes Clinton by asking him to kneel and raise his hands for attempting to report her to his father the previous day for maltreating him.

1. **Suzan**: ((eating)) DON'T EVER↑ report me to your dad again↑
2. **Clinton:** I swear I will never try it again. <I swear>.↑
3. **Suzan**: ((waited for some minutes)) (1.35) The only condition I will release you is to go to your daddy and get me #2000↓
4. **Clinton**: [ ] impossible, he will never give me↓
5. **Suzan:** **(0.2)** You will take it. You will take it. You will open his bag or pocket and take it=
6. **Clinton**: [ ] He will beat me =
7. **Suzan:** ( ) He will not know>, quickly<, you do that, Okay?
8. **Clinton**: I will do it↑.
9. **Suzan:** **(0.3)** Then::::: go away↑.
*(EBETOG)*

The interaction between Clinton and Suzan in Excerpt 1 shows how children are subjected to abuse. The two tools that are obviously used by

Suzan to make Clinton a victim of abuse are threats and luring. Subjecting Clinton to unwarranted punishment and threats in line 1 is abuse. As Suzan is a maid employed to serve him, she has no legal right to impose her intended penalty on him. For instance, "DON'T EVER…" in line 1 is a linguistic threat Suzan imposes on Clinton. The loudness of this utterance implies a threat, which is a psychological way of frightening the child and is intended to relegate his personality. According to child psychology, this makes children lose their confidence and restricts their expressive abilities. Correspondingly, faced with the daunting threat and coercion of Suzan, Clinton is left with no option than to swear never to report her. He is seen as a victim because he is psychologically exploited, as articulated in the expression of Suzan who comes up with a condition that will guarantee his release, which is to get ₦2000 from his father in lines 3-4. Even while the innocent Clinton says in line 5: *Clinton: [ ] impossible, he will never give me*, Suzan instantaneously introduces Clinton to stealing in lines 6-7. This is an act of luring him into stealing. Introducing the young boy into this anti-social act is a great abuse of Clinton. With the use of coercion, Clinton has to engage in something against his will. As expected, Suzan succeeds in forcing Clinton to steal his father's money as a condition for his release because of the asymmetrical power relation and age differential between them. Subsequently, Clinton attempts to steal and he is caught by his father with his money. Here, Clinton plays a victim role of abuse as he becomes a delinquent and a sufferer which is not good for the future of the boy. This is an unmarked role, which resulted from the asymmetrical power differential that exists between both of them. Given the psychological make-up of Clinton, coupled with the bullying nature of Suzan within the context of hostility, the victim role assigned to Clinton in the interaction above is not unexpected. This accounts for the unmarked status of the role.

Arguably, this role is foregrounded by the material process as displayed in Excerpt 1. In line 2, *…I will never try it again*, "I" refers to Clinton as the actor, the process is "will never try" while the goal is "it" which is the act of reporting. Also, in line 10, where Clinton succumbs to threat and luring by promising to steal his father's money as a bailout, "I" is the actor, "will do" is the process, while "it" is the act of stealing. The material process here gives credence to the negative influence of the act of stealing accepted by Clinton as a result of threat within the affordances of the asymmetrical power relation that exists between him and the housemaid.

**Victims of Circumstantial Exploitation**

Circumstantial exploitation captures situations where children do not have the opportunity to express their view and then become victims of hostile circumstances orchestrated by exploitative adults. Children become victims of circumstance when what they experience in life is occasioned by uncontrollable conditions, which in turn have an adverse effect on them, as well as shaping their behaviours. In Excerpt 2, Junior, Pretty and Clinton are supposed to be served by their maid, Suzan, because their parents are not always around, but Suzan makes herself a super boss by creating a hostile environment for the children because she wants to enjoy herself.

**Excerpt 2**

**Background:** The children, Junior, Pretty and Clinton are having a nice time in their father's living room, but Suzan their maid comes around to halt their fun time.

1. **Children:**            (( ))
2. **Suzan:**     SHUT UP:::
3. **Suzan**: (0.4) And all of you, GET OUT ↑of this place.=
4.               ((Others left but Clinton refuses to leave. He now sits on a chair))
5. **Suzan:**     ((looks at him)) (0.8) And you so what are you doing here?
6. **Clinton:**  I didn't do anything now=
7. **Suzan:**     [ ] WILL YOU GET OUT OF MY SIGHT
8. **Clinton:**  (0.3) But >I-DIDN'T DO ANYTHING< I will tell daddy when he comes back.=
9. **Suzan**:     Come here, if you tell your dad anything when he comes back, tomorrow when he goes out, I will deal with you. Will you take one of your shoes and get out of
10.  this place?↓((she hisses))
     *(EBETOG)*

Suzan ought to be a caregiver, making the home pleasant and welcoming for the children since she is the housemaid, but in this scenario, she makes herself a tyrant who does not tolerate children. Lexical items like "shut up" and "get out" show that she is intolerant of children, as evidenced by the manner through which she disrupts the children's pleasurable time. The exemplified interaction demonstrates that the intention behind Suzan's utterance is to establish a power imbalance between her and the children, hence the unbecoming and unwelcome order she gives to the children. Even within this asymmetrical encounter, Clinton still tries to negotiate his

role by resisting the order to leave the living room, but his negotiated role is not sustained. Ultimately, the children are represented as victims of circumstance because the housemaid is not expected to exercise such illegal power over them. She dominantly exercised her power because of the asymmetrical power difference between them. Consequently, the children are helpless victims of circumstance, which is aggravated by their parents' constant absence from home. The only authoritative act Clinton could express is the threat to report the maid to his father when he comes back in line 8, which can be described as a feeble one, a marked pronunciation of an asymmetrical relationship between the interactants.

This role is enforced on the children in both excerpts 1 and 2 above as a result of the power imbalance between adults and children in such asymmetrical encounters. Therefore, it is an unmarked role because there is nothing the children could do to upturn this role in such situations. They are just victims of the circumstances of adults' misuse of power and their reckless lifestyle. Hence the utterances that define the asymmetric relations are material processes. The children are the actors, as initiated by Suzan the housemaid and seen in SHUT UP, All of you, GET OUT of this place, and so on.

## Victims of Domestic Violence

The term, "victims of domestic violence" relates to the negative effects of a dysfunctional family on members of the family, and in this context, on the children. In the movies, a representation of societal reality, some children become victims of the negative actions of their parents. It is an unmarked role because they have to suffer from circumstances beyond their control. This is characterised by material and relational processes in the evangelical movie genre. While the relational process is used to seek information by the interactants, the material process captures the actions that provide answers to the information sought. In Excerpt 3, Ibidun, the only child of Mr and Mrs Ajayi, becomes a victim of the crisis that ensued between the couple, as she is psychologically troubled.

## Excerpt 3

**Background**: Husband and wife are fighting in the middle of the night and their only daughter, Ibidun is crying and does not know what to do but approaches their neighbour.

((A knock at the door))
1. **Mr Daniel:**     ((panic)) Who is there?=
2. **Ibidun:**                ((answer while crying)) (0.2) I::: a-m
    the one↓

3. **Mr Daniel**:     Who?=
4. **Ibidun**:        Ibidun↑
5. **Mr Daniel**      >Haa! Ibidun<, what is the problem (0.2)at this time of the night?
6.              ((trying to open the door but his wife seized the key)) What is it?=
7. **Mrs Daniel**:    (0.3) Who is there with you?↓
8. **Ibidun:**        Nobody↓
9. **Mrs Daniel**:    what do you want?=
10. **Ibidun:**        ((crying aloud)) My daddy and my mummy,> they are fighting<.
11. **Mr Daniel**: ((he opens the door)) come in Ibidun. What is the matter?=
12. **Ibidun:**        mummy is injured, daddy hit her on the head↓
13. **Mr Daniel**: ((to his wife, surprised)) Darling, what is the matter?
14.              ((to Ibidun)) Let's go↑
15. ((they try to settle the matter between the couple but it was not really resolved))
   *(TMFG)*


Ibidun becomes helpless and confused which made her run out of their house in the middle of the night to their neighbours to seek their help in resolving the crisis between her parents. Line 10 shows that her peace and happiness have been tampered with. A child of her age should be asleep at twelve o'clock, a period around the middle of the night, but rather she is awake and crying which also made her run out of their house to seek the intercession of a neighbour for a predicament she is not responsible for, thus, accentuating her role as a victim of an unpleasant event.

The effect of the unhealthy relationship between the husband and wife has affected the academic performance of their daughter, Ibidun. In a subsequent encounter, Ibidun is invited by the head teacher, who knows Ibidun has been doing well before her recent low performance. When the head teacher questions her to ascertain the reason for her recent poor performance, she realises that it was due to a problem at home (domestic violence). The head teacher's comment about Ibidun's poor academic performance affirms her victimhood.

Relatedly, the material process dominates in all the interactions considered under the victim role. Most of the interactions involve actions, where children in some cases are actors and in other instances are goals,

which are represented as victims in the material processes. Also, in Excerpt 1 where Clinton is a victim of abuse (line 10: *Clinton: I will do it*), Clinton is the actor who, after being coerced by Suzan, agrees to steal his father's money as a bailout of his punishment for attempting to report her to his father; "it" is the goal while "will do" is the process.

Another process deployed in the victim role, especially victims of circumstances, is the relational attributive process. In Excerpt 3, line 12, Ibidun's utterance relates to the attributive relational process: *"Mummy is injured"*, "Mummy" is the carrier and "is" is the process that conjoins the carrier with the attribute—"injured". Though Ibidun's mother, who is the carrier, is portrayed as a victim of domestic violence, the psychological effect of the fight between the couple is felt by Ibidun. Hence, she solicits help by approaching Mr Ajayi, whom she believes can stem the fight and consequently end her traumatic experience at home. Thus, the interactants utilise the relational process to ask—Who is there? What is the problem? and to give information—I am the one, Mummy is injured, and so on.

### 18.8.2 Peacemaker Roles

The peacemaker role connects to children's conciliatory configuration in hostile or conflict situations within symmetrical or asymmetrical encounters. It is one of the age-related roles that children assume because peacemaking should be exclusively the responsibility of adults. However, when two adults are involved in a fight and a child has to establish peace between them, it indicates a role reversal because adults are supposed to establish peace among children. This manifests more in the evangelical movie genre in asymmetrical encounters and its occurrence in the family movie genre is strictly in symmetrical encounters. In either case, it is a marked role characterised by the mental process. Specifically, the analysis here focuses on the peacemaker role in asymmetrical and symmetrical encounters. Within the context of conflict, there is always a need for peace, as seen in Excerpt 4, which is asymmetrical in nature as captured in *Too Much for God*, an evangelical movie genre. In this family, Ibidun's parents were at loggerheads, and Ibidun took some frantic steps to reconcile her parents. In previous interactions, Ibidun suffered as a victim of domestic violence. In Excerpt 4, for instance, her school principal questioned her after discovering that she did not do well academically. From her response, the principal discovers that her bad performance is a result of family dysfunction. The principal then suggests how she could pre-empt peace between her parents. This can be described as an

externally experienced dependent peacemaking act or peacemaking influenced by a social agent.

## Excerpt 4

**Background**: Ibidun's parents have not talked to each other for over a month now. Consequently, Ibidun, their only daughter, has been the one linking them up if information has to be passed across. In this instance, Ibidun has invited the two of them to the sitting room for a discussion.

1. **Ibidun**: Daddy and mummy, (0.2)I want you to help me with my <assignment>
2. **Mum:** Hummm, what…
3. **Dad:** [ ] what is it? ☻
4. **Ibidun**: (0.2) What is the meaning of malice?↓
5. **Dad:** malice? Hmmmmm:::: the dictionary defines malice as the desire to harm
6. other people. (0.2)But to most people, malice simply means the act >of not
7. talking<to one another as a result of misunderstanding.=
8. **Ibidun**: ((to her mother)) now mummy, is it good for Christians to keep malice with
9. one another?=
10. **Mum:** Hmmmm… No↓
11. **Ibidun:** Why not?↑
12. **Mum:** Well:::: God... does not a-pprove of it.
13. **Ibidun**: ((to her father)) But daddy, can God answer the prayers of people who have
14. malice towards others?
15. **Dad:** Never↑ ((affirmatively))
16. **Ibidun**: Why not?
17. **Dad**: The:::Bible makes us understand... that if anybody comes to the presence of
18. God and he remembers that he had a >grudge against another< person, he must
19. Quickly go back to that person and make peace (0.3) with him before coming
20. back to the presence of God. Otherwise, whatever that person does will be
21. unacceptable unto God.=
22. **Ibidun**: [ ] hmmmm, but can people who have malice towards others GO with Jesus
23. when the raptures take place?

24. **Dad:**    >Never<, they can't.
25. **Ibidun**: ((To her mum)) mummy is that true?
26. **Mum:**  hmm.. they can't go with Jesus
27. **Ibidun:** Haa (start sobbing) ☻
28. ((her parents are surprised))
29. **Mum:**  Ibidun, what is it?
     **Ibidun**: So mummy, you and daddy will not go with Jesus when the rapture takes
30. place.
31. **Dad:**    who told you that?↓
32. **Ibidun**: ((still sobbing)) the two of you have been having malice towards each other
33. for about a month now.↓
34. ((Ibidun's father then reconciles with his wife))
     *(TMFG)*

She eventually achieves this in Excerpt 4. While the whole family is watching television, she initiates a process that finally settles the misunderstanding between her parents. Ibidun uses linguistic tact to correct. Tact is a skill in dealing with others or difficult issues. The tact correction she uses here is religious dogma. She pretends to have a school assignment that needs help from her parents. In line 4, she asks "… what is the meaning of malice?" In line 5, her father gives the dictionary meaning, and by this, she has established the problem existing in the family which is malice.

She further uses religious dogma in the form of questioning in line 8, so as to trigger a reconciliatory disposition in her parents, and a consequent resolution; thus, she asks whether it is good for Christians to keep malice. Even when her mother's response to the question is "NO", she inquires why the answer is no. Her mother says, "God does not approve of it". To further make her parents resolve their quarrel, she asks whether those who engage in the act of malice will be raptured with Jesus when the rapture takes place. Her parents' response is "never", and then she begins to sob. Another strategy here is sobbing which is one of the ways children get their needs met by their parents. So, realising that it is not good to keep malice and that those who engage in this act will not experience rapture with Jesus, her parents are left with no option than to resolve their differences. This is an above age-dependent role; therefore, it is a marked role.

The mental process is deployed in this role, as articulated in the way Ibidun has taken steps to ensure peace between her parents. In Excerpt 4, line 3: Ibidun: *Why is it that we don't pray together in this*

*house again?* Here, Ibidun is the senser, who seeks information. The information is labelled the phenomenon: *Why is it that we don't pray together in this house again?* The implicit process is "ask" because the phenomenon is a question. The phenomenon, a spiritual exercise, which is the act of prayer, captures the cognitive system of those who engage in it. Ibidun expresses her concern over its absence in her family to show the spiritual stability missing in the family. She believes that awakening her parents' consciousness to this truth will joggle their sense of responsibility, first as Christians, and second as parents who are expected to teach good morals to their children. In the first clause, *I don't enjoy it*, "I" is the Senser, "it" is the phenomenon, while "don't enjoy" is the process. In Excerpt 4, line 36: *the two of you have been having malice towards each other for about a month now* involves a material process. "The two of you" is a signification for Ibidun's parents; thus, they are the actors in the clause, while the goal is malice. The material action is defined by the verbal group: have been having. It is evident that Ibidun is pragmatically indicting to her parents that they have been keeping malice. Her goal is to establish peace between them.

### 18.8.3 Baby Roles

The baby role relates to children's psychological make-up as immature individuals manifesting infantile behaviours. It manifests in family and gangster movie genres and in both symmetrical and asymmetrical encounters. It is an unmarked role because it is age-dependent and it is linguistically characterised by the material process. Child-like innocence is behavioural and verbally displayed or expressed and children play this role in the spirit of enthusiasm. Excerpts 5 and 6 elaborate on this.

### Excerpt 5

**Background:** Billy takes the laundry basket to prepare a bed for his puppy.

1. **Billy's Mother**: ((comes in to ask him about the laundry basket)) Billy:::: B-illy what
2.    are you doing with the laundry basket?=
3. **Billy**: I am making a bed for my puppy
4. **Billy's Mother**: I want to believe it is not the same puppy I asked you to return to
5.    the road↑.
6. **Billy**: But dad said I could keep it↑.
7. **Billy's Mother**: oooooh::::! He did, right (0.3) I will see him.
*(DABY)*

Here, Billy takes the laundry basket to prepare a bed for his puppy. It is clear that Billy is completely ignorant of the difference between human beings and animals. This is why he cherishes his puppy more than himself. As well, he is ignorant of some other effects of his action, like diseases that can be contracted by such actions.

## Excerpt 6

**Background:** Billy prepares to go to school. He was seen playing with his puppy in his room.

1. **Billy**: ((to his puppy)) kindly::: let me >go< to school↓
2. ((he picks his bag to go to school)) (0.5)I am going to school. Bye Bobo
3. ((Puppy makes sounds then Billy comes back. He drops his books and puts
4. his puppy inside his school bag and leaves the room to meet his father outside
5. who would take him to school.))

(***DABY***)

Here again, Billy prepares to go to school, playing seriously with his puppy in his room. His innocence is demonstrated when he drops his books at home in order to keep his puppy in his school bag. His baby role is established in his preference for taking his dog to school rather than the books he needs to fulfil the purpose for which he is going to school, which means his essence of being in school is already defeated. In subsequent interactions, he sleeps with his puppy on the same bed and ties his puppy robe on his own leg while sleeping.

Also, Excerpt 7 presents another example of the baby role.

## Excerpt 7

**Background:** While Rhoda is playing with sand in their compound**,** her brother Favour comes out of the room, holding a knife.

1. **Favour**: Yan, yan, ((playing with a knife and getting closer to Rhoda, his younger sister))
2. **Rhoda**: you better go and drop that knife now before you wound me with it=
3. **Favour**: ((carelessly playing with the knife and hits Rhoda with it. She falls on the ground and crying))
4. **Rhoda**: MUMMY! MUMMY!:::::::::::::::::

5. **Mother**: ((hurriedly comes out)) what is it? ((She carries Rhoda))
   what happened to her?
6. Favour, did you cut your sister with a knife? Ehhhhh. What is this
   oh my God!
7. Rhoda, Rhoda↓
   (***BLOW***)

In Excerpt 7, Favour and Rhoda are privileged children whose parents are of high status, so they are usually encamped in their parents' compound. As a result of this, their movement and play are restricted. However, because they are children, they still have to play within their compound. Therefore, within the context of play, Favour feels free to play as pictured in the example, but the play happens to be excessive as reflected in the way Favour plays with a knife, while Rhoda plays alone. Favour displays a childish trait by playing with a knife and he moves close to his sister, Rhoda. Even when Rhoda tries to warn him to drop the knife, he persists. Rhoda is wounded in the process as she falls on the ground crying. It is babyish to engage in such expensive play and it is because there was no adult around to caution Favour at the time. As stressed earlier, it is an unmarked role because it is age-dependent. Favour and Rhoda are eight and six years respectively. Before this particular action, Favour has been watching Chinese action movies, where he has seen the Chinese involved in such actions. Also, to show that he has always been involved in this act, his father punishes him for his action as articulated in a subsequent excerpt: ***Father****: How many times have I warned you not to play with a knife?* By inference, it is a social media triggered action. *"Yan, Yan"* said by Favour in line 1, gives credence to this because this expression is common in Chinese action movies watched by Nigerian children.

The utterance that defines the baby role is a material process. Favour is explicitly the performer of the action, so he is the actor (you), while his sister (me) is the beneficiary. The goal is the knife (it)—...you better go and drop the knife before you wound me, uttered by Rhoda, the sister of Favour, who eventually hit Rhoda with it as he was playing with it. The processes are *go, drop, wound,* and *hit*. Thus, Favour plays with a knife, and playfully cuts his sister Rhoda with it. Analysing the utterance of Rhoda in line 2, Favour is the actor, Rhoda is the goal, while the process of cutting is the material action performed in the interaction. Also, in Excerpt 5, line 2 where Billy responded to his mother's question about the laundry basket: *I am making a bed for my puppy*, "I" is the actor, the

action is "making" which is the process, while "a bed" is the goal and "my
puppy" is the beneficiary.

## 18.8.4 Troublemaker Roles

The troublemaker role captures children's ways of instigating disturbances
for people around them, consciously or unconsciously. Children exhibit
this role in symmetrical and asymmetrical encounters, especially in the
family movie genre. This role is connected to the restlessness of a child
and impulsive habits because childhood is characterised by spontaneity
and playfulness or resilience. It is an unmarked role because it is age-
dependent and is linguistically characterised by mental and verbal
processes. Children play this role on account of a need or desire that they
want to achieve; at times it is baseless or it focuses on trivial issues.

This is expounded in Excerpt 8 where Billy takes his puppy to the
classroom without his teacher knowing and is busy playing with it while
the teacher is teaching.

**Excerpt 8**
**Background**: In the classroom, the teacher is teaching the pupils. Other
pupils are copying their notes except Billy and his friend who are playing
with the puppy inside Billy's bag.
1. **Teacher**: (( )) whenever there is any trouble, (0.4) there are some
   numbers that you can:::
2. call. Okay?↓
3. ((suddenly the attention of the teacher was focused on Billy))
4. **Teacher:** Billy::: you ... ar-e not writing. Where is your book?↓
5. **Billy**: ((he points to the table))
6. **Teacher**: ((collects his bag and finds a puppy)) JESUS! ((the whole
   class was
7. disorganised)) WHY DID you bring a dog to school?↓ ((she leads
   him to
8. the headmaster's office))
9. **Teacher**: Sir, this boy brought this dog to school. He disturbed my
   class↓
10. **Headmaster**: ((to Billy)) Youuuuuu, why did you bring a puppy to
    school?↓ (0.6) Just
11. wait here, I will come and deal with you.
12. ((Billy is left alone in the headmaster's office))
13. **Billy**: (0.8) why am I always getting into trouble?↓
14. ((He sings and plays carelessly with the standing fan in the office.

15. The headmaster comes in to caution Billy))
16. **Headmaster**: Haaa! Stop there. (0.4) So you can't see why you are always in trouble.
17. Now, where are my papers?
18. **Billy**: I have not seen your papers=
19. **Headmaster**: Do:::::n't try me.> Don't< try me at all.↑
    *(STM)*

In line 5, the teacher collects his bag and finds a puppy which disorganises the whole class because of the age of the children in the class. The teacher takes Billy and his puppy to the headmaster who is equally surprised that a little boy like Billy could do such a thing. He frightens Billy and orders him to sit in his office. Even in the office, Billy moves to the place where the standing fan is, intending to put his finger inside the fan that is switched on. It takes the intervention of the headteacher to caution him. His action almost cost his mother her job.

Again, Billy takes the meat in his father's food before he comes back from work and gives it to his puppy. This almost caused a fight between the couple because Billy's father thought that his wife deliberately offered him food without meat. Billy is indeed a troublemaker who causes trouble in the school and at home. Another instance of troublemaking is seen in the interactions presented in Excerpt 9:

**Excerpt 9**
**Background:** On Koye and Nelson's birthday, many children are invited. Billy comes in with his puppy
1. **Billy**: H-appy::: birthday, Koye and Nelson=
2. ((He leaves other children as they are singing and dancing to where the birthday
3. cakes are kept. He tries to play with the cakes. Suddenly, he shakes the table and
4. the cakes fall to the ground))
5. **Koye:** HAAAAAAA! MUMMY, BILLY::::
6. **Nelson**: ((holds Billy's cloth))
7. **Mrs Jackson**: Billy you are::: in trouble. Why did you destroy the cakes?
8. **Billy: [ ]** It was not me:::, it was not me↓
9. **Billy**: ((he runs away from the birthday party venue))
    *(DABY)*

This is an example of troublemaking within symmetrical encounters. Billy's restlessness could not allow him to stay where other children are gathered as he moves straight inside the room where the birthday cakes are kept. He thereby causes psychological trouble for the birthday celebrants, Koye and Nelson, as he destroyed their birthday cakes. His action causes the celebrants to cry on their day of celebration. Why would Billy go into the kitchen of the celebrants, even with his puppy? Because of the troublesome nature that he has been exhibiting in his house, he goes into the kitchen where he ought to be a visitor, checking almost everything there which eventually led to the destruction of the birthday cakes. Billy, in this interaction, acted on impulse to cause trouble. Having realised that he has caused trouble, he runs quickly to his house.

Material, mental, relational and verbal processes enunciate this role. The material process structures the speech actions that relate to the actions of Billy, and the causes of the trouble and its effect. Instances are in lines 5 and 6 in Excerpt 8: "Why did you bring a dog to school?" and "He disturbed my class". The actor is Billy, while the goals are *dog* and *my class* respectively. The circumstantial adjunct of place (school) underscores the role because no pupil is expected to take a dog to school, as it is a place of learning. The verbal process is distinguished in Excerpt 8 where Billy verbalised what was going on his mind, so he is the sayer while the verbiage is *why am I always getting into trouble?* The receiver is the implicit audience, while the process was earmarked by an implicit "ask". The verbiage lends credence to his troublemaking role.

The mental process is also deployed in the troublemaking role. In Excerpt 8, while in the headmaster's office serving punishment, Billy is also accused of stealing the headmaster's papers. His response can be seen in line 12: *Billy: I have not seen your papers*. Here, the personal pronoun "I" serves as senser, "have not seen" is the verbal group that represents the process, while the phenomenon is "your papers". That he claims: "I have not seen your papers" gets him into more trouble, as he is further threatened by the headmaster in line 3.

## 18.9 Conclusion

This paper has investigated the discourse representation of children's roles in selected Nollywood movies. Roles identified in this study are victim, peacemaker, baby and troublemaker. The victim role, an unmarked role, is achieved through material and relational processes through the linguistic strategies of threat and luring because of an asymmetrical power relation between the children and their victimisers. The peacemaker role is

described as a marked role because it is an above age-dependent role within the context of a conflict between husband and wife and their only daughter initiating peace. Of course, it was an externally experienced dependent peacemaking act achieved through linguistic tact and religious dogma as strategies with the deployment of a mental process. The baby role is an age-dependent role. Excitedly influenced by pet and play, Billy manifests this role in the way he gives priority to his puppy at the expense of his books, even when going to school due to his psychological stage of innocence. The role is linguistically enunciated by the material process. Troublemaker is also an unmarked role. Material, mental, relational and verbal processes are employed in the construction of the role through inciting social unrest in the classroom and intentionally destroying other children's birthday cakes. Therefore, the mediated representation of children in this television genre, Nollywood movies, exclusively presents children as victims, troublemakers, babies and peacemakers as exhibited in both symmetrical and asymmetrical encounters in the presentation of societal realities. These findings align with Davey (2009) and Korac's (2009) findings on children as victims, vulnerable, troublemakers and angelic beings. Therefore, these show the children in the sampled movies as victims of adult irresponsibility, discriminators and naive individuals.

This study attempts a significant contribution to children's discourse in linguistic scholarship in Nigeria and the world at large. Particularly, it serves as a foundational work in the area of unpacking children's representation in filmic discourse in Nigerian Nollywood movies, which has been largely unexplored in Nigerian linguistic studies. The study has involved a conscious examination of children's roles in the selected Nollywood movies. It applied role theories, concepts of markedness theory and SFG to the analysis of children's interactions in Nigerian movie contexts. It provides insights into children's psychological issues for linguists and other researchers interested in child-related matters in the mediated context of Nollywood movies from the perspective of pragmatics. These are significant to how children are positioned in policy documents in activities ostensibly organised for their wellbeing, especially in Nigeria.

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# CHAPTER 19

## DISCOURSE REPRESENTATION OF ORTHODOX MEDICINE AND ALTERNATIVE THERAPY IN NETWORK MARKETING DISCOURSE IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

### OLADAYO OGUNSIJI

**Abstract**

*Positioning or representing is an unavoidable feature of marketing discourse, particularly in network marketing discourse where more emotional investment is placed, probably owing to its perceived lack of legitimacy and low social acceptability. Studies on network marketing discourse have examined aspects of its nature, especially its structural elements and persuasive strategies. However, attention has not been paid to the promotion of specific products and product-informed marketing strategies in the context of network marketing, especially where network marketers need to set a competitive advantage. Thus, this study investigates network marketers' promotion of alternative therapies by examining the representation of alternative medicine vis-à-vis orthodox medicine, the dominant and ingrained healthcare practice in Nigeria. Using the duo of stance and engagement in combination with Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Act theory on twelve purposively selected seminars organised by network marketing organisations, the study shows that network marketers abundantly use an affective, evaluative and evidential stance, the engagement devices of questions and directives, as well as references, inference and shared situational knowledge to represent alternative therapies as effective and convenient, while orthodox medicine is seen as inadequate, ineffective, inconvenient and unreliable. The study concludes by indicating that the negative-positive representation of orthodox medicine and alternative therapies in network marketing*

*discourse discloses the inevitability of mudslinging as one of the tools utilised in the network marketing of therapeutic resources to gain competitive advantage.*

Keywords: *Discourse representation; orthodox medicine; alternative therapy discourse; stance; pragmatic act*

## 19.1 Introduction

One of the important tools available to businesses and marketing organisations is communication. Communication bridges the gap between production and consumption. It serves as an interface between producers and consumers of goods and services, as messages need to travel back and forth if both parties are to realise their expectations of building stronger client bases and deriving maximum satisfaction from goods and services procured. Business organisations expend different communicative avenues and encode information, not only about their products but also about other related subjects. One such subject which is of particular relevance to this study is communication about real or perceived competitors. It has been submitted that competitors, apparently in order to gain competitive advantage, represent each other in certain lights which may or may not reflect reality and which constantly shape consumers' attitudes and beliefs (Burnett 2010).

Representing or positioning is an unavoidable component in the marketing world. This practice is even more prominent in network marketing schemes (henceforth, NMSs) (the concern of this study), which, according to Kong (2001: 500), is not a "socially acceptable and legitimate activity" and has no "solid social foundation". Network marketing has been referred to as a business model and a marketing technique that is based on the concept of referral. It requires selling a particular product and recruiting people to help sell who in turn recruit more people until a network is formed. Money and other incentives are earned by retailing products and recruiting people.

The scheme, which started as far back as the 1940s in the United States of America when some companies such as California Vitamin and Amway corporation began to give compensation plans for the marketing of their products, has now crept into our modern lives and is holding sway all over the world. Yarnell and Yarnell (1998), while asserting that network marketing will soon override the traditional method of marketing and service distribution, draw on Dee Hock's declaration:

> We are at that very point in time when a 400-year-old is dying and another
> is struggling to be born—a shifting of culture, science, society, and
> institutions enormously greater than the world has ever experienced. Ahead
> is the possibility of the regeneration of individuality, liberty, community,
> and ethics such as the world has never known, and a harmony with nature,
> with one another, and with the divine intelligence such as the world has
> never dreamed.

In spite of the claim of the present and projected prevalence made
of network marketing, there are a lot of debates which have, up until
today, not been resolved. While NMSs have been termed "efficient" and
"reliable" in some quarters (Antonio 2008), some have referred to them as
predatory schemes (Taylor 2012).

Just like any other organisation, network marketing organisations
(henceforth, NMOs) conduct their activities with an awareness of
comparable competitors. In addition, in the bid to create a social domain
for themselves, and see off controversies and advance their
scheme/organisation/products, NMOs engage in constructing various
identities for "self" and "other". One of the things crucial to businesses in
the commercial sphere is the identification of competitors and the
awareness of their activities. This will influence the promotional activity
of such a business, thereby enabling it to draw in customers and try to fend
off competitors. Burnett (2010) notes that competitors should not be
thought of as only product-like companies, but also as companies that
provide alternative products and services. NMOs that promote therapeutic
resources conceive of orthodox medicine as their competition in that both
seem to provide healthcare for humans. Talks by orthodox medicine
professionals (for example, doctors) and those of the network marketers of
therapeutic resources sometimes perform conflicting functions. For
instance, doctors frown at patients engaging in self-diagnosis and self-
treatment. This may not be so favourable for the enterprise of network
marketers of alternative therapies and supplements. As may be observed,
the language use of network marketers that promotes alternative therapies
reflects the commendation and vilification of alternative medicine and
orthodox medicine respectively. This study, therefore, aims to explore the
representations of orthodox medicine and alternative therapies by network
marketers that promote alternative therapies.

## 19.2 Situating the Research

For the purpose of this study, studies on network marketing discourse have
been categorised into non-linguistic and linguistic. The former group

comprises a historical overview of network marketing (Herbig and Rama 1997), a sociological perspective on Network Marketing Discourse, henceforth, NMD (Sparks and Schenk 2006), and studies within the field of marketing (Peterson and Wotruba 1996; Croft and Woodruffe 1996; Sargeant and Msweli 1999; Muncy 2004; Peterson and Albaum 2007). The second category, on which there is scant literature, will be expounded on. One prominent voice that has been given to network marketing discourse from the linguistic point of view is the work of Kong (2001). In his study, he takes the position that NMS—a practice domiciled in the business realm—depends basically on interpersonal relationships in its operation. As such, network marketing is marked with complexity in identity. Based on this position, his study explores how network marketers oscillate between two conflicting identities. Using Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, Kong catalogues the generic structural potential of NMD and explains that NMSs borrow from neighbouring domains in creating a social domain which enables them to strike a balance between "pragmatic business-oriented and personal emotion-driven styles" (Kong 2001: 500). Kong submits that NMOs "attempt to forge a reality that network marketing is a socially acceptable and legitimate activity" (ibid.) instituted primarily for the advantage of the general public, adding that the scheme lacks a solid social foundation. He concludes that other than doing the act of persuading, NMOs also reconstruct identity, not only for themselves but also for their customers. In agreement with Kong's finding that NMOs engage in the (re)construction of identity, this present study is based on the contention that by virtue of their operating in the marketing sphere where competition proliferates, NMOs couch message-laden cues about real and perceived competitors, thereby constructing identities for them as well.

In alignment with the same postulation that forms the background to his 2001 study, which is that NMSs are "notorious for [their] exploitative use of interpersonal" (Kong 2001: 473) relationships, Kong (2003), taking insights from Grice's Cooperative Principle and the notion of face, examines how network marketers and their prospective customers make sense of and successfully uphold their interactions when their identities conflict. He also bases his study on the belief that some acts have intrinsic "face" value. For instance, approaching prospects may be seen as threatening to the prospects' negative face, especially in an unsolicited sales encounter where prospects have to be identified and approached. The phase of approaching in sales encounters requires gaining the attention of the prospective customer, awakening his or her need, qualifying him or her, and setting the stage for the next phase of presentation (Anderson

1987). These may cause damage to the prospective customer's (henceforth, PCs) face in a number of ways.

Kong (2003) reveals that the selling sequence in NMD aligns with the traditional pattern of Approaching, Introducing, Dealing with Objections and Closing. In making sense of their interactions, network marketers and prospective PCs exploit the components of friendship which are intimacy, control, trust and positiveness. For example, network marketers, in approaching their PCs, engage an element of intimacy, thereby expunging the tendency to face threat that designates this phase. Instead of revealing their selling motives outright, network marketers may set them in their phatic interactions. Kong concludes that one, friendship is negotiated and contested for interactional purposes; and two, while network marketers situate their marketing practices within the intersection of friendship and business by adapting the features of the two systems, PCs themselves can also turn the features exploited to their own advantage. Kong earlier carried out a similar study in 1998 in which he investigated how the phenomenon of politeness is used to create in-group and out-group relationships in the Chinese context. In this study, Kong discovered that in sales encounters in Hong Kong, power distance and mutual expectation of relationship continuity are the determinants of the politeness strategies adopted for any sales interaction. While Kong (1998, 2003) provides a robust analysis of the mechanisms of NMSs in the context of interpersonal relationships, it is our contention that network marketers need not have any personal relationship with their PCs, as network marketers reach out to strangers as well.

While studies have examined the nature of network marketing discourse from the perspectives of the strategies involved and their structural elements, attention has not been paid to the promotion of specific products and the product-informed marketing strategies in the context of network marketing, especially where network marketers need to set a competitive advantage. Thus, this study investigates the promotion of alternative therapies to orthodox medicine by examining the representation of alternative medicine vis-à-vis orthodox medicine, the dominant and ingrained healthcare system in Nigeria.

The diffusion of alternative therapy (also known as complementary and alternative medicine) into mainstream health practices has attracted an investigation of the phenomenon, especially from social scientific and biomedical perspectives. It has been established that alternative therapies, including herbs, dietary/nutritional supplements and acupuncture that are not typically part of conventional orthodox medicine, are sought after by health seekers/receivers because of their dissatisfaction with standard

medical care (Foote-Ardah 2003). In most climes, the use of alternative therapy is based on negative attitudes towards the orthodox medical profession, practices and procedures, and the perceived high cost of chronic illnesses (Illich 1976; McGregor and Peay 1996; Vincent and Furnham 1996; Astin 1998). In addition, Pawluch et al. (2000) and Furin (1995), in their separate studies, reveal that health seekers are attracted to alternative therapies for a number of reasons including the need for health maintenance, healing, an alternative to Western medicine, and the mitigation of the side-effects of Western drugs. A paradigm shift from the dominant standard medicine, owing to perceived shortcomings, is implicated in the aforementioned. Given this, a readily available device for network marketers in the promotion of their alternative therapy is the orientation to the "shortcomings" of orthodox medicine whose appellations are allopathic medicine, standard medicine, biomedicine, Western medicine, conventional medicine and mainstream medicine. In other words, recourse is made to orthodox medicine while network marketers try to promote their alternative therapeutic resources, hence the need for the examination of the polar representations.

## 19.3 Theoretical Perspectives

This study draws insights from stance and engagement and Mey's (2001) pragmatic act theory. The theories are used to account for the nature of persuasion in network marketing discourse in the Nigerian setting, particularly with respect to the representation of self and other. Stance and engagement involve the positioning of the text producer to an issue, event or a person and the way the cognition of the text consumers is employed. The theory is used to address the representation of orthodox medicine and alternative therapy. Pragmatic act theory, on the other hand, explores the intention behind such constructions. In other words, beyond identifying the representation of NMSs and orthodox medicine with pragmemes, the study also attempts to answer the question: "to what end are the representations made?" The theories are further explained in the subsequent paragraphs.

Stance and engagement, which encompass features used in configuring the connexion between text, readers and social context, spell out the niceties of rhetorical functions in texts. Stance and engagement serve interactional macro-functions by which speakers project their opinions, judgements and commitments, and appeal to the hearers' cognition in order to include them as discourse participants and influence them in a certain way. According to Hyland (2008: 5), while "stance refers

to the writer's textual 'voice' or community recognised personality", engagement has to do with the ways speakers involve the hearers in the discourse. Four stance types have been identified: evaluative, epistemic, affective and evidential. Evaluative stance involves a writer picking up on a stance object and stamping it as having a certain value or characteristic. In other words, the speaker makes an assessment of an object, person, situation or event. Epistemic stance involves the speaker positioning him/herself with respect to his/her knowledge of the content expressed in the proposition. A speaker may project him/herself as knowledgeable and express their full authority in the proposition or they may just stay aloof and bring in other sources. Affective stance is connected with the emotion expressed by the speaker. A position is taken along the affective scale of, for instance, happiness or unhappiness, satisfaction or dissatisfaction, security or insecurity. Evidential stance requires the stance-taker to allude to a particular source of knowledge and to express their commitment to the assertion (Hyland 2005, 2008). The stance types are realised by hedges, boosters, attitude markers and self-mention. The key resources for realising engagement are reader-mention, directives, questions, knowledge reference and asides.

Du Bois (2007: 145) posits that speakers, apart from operating the stance types, perform specific stance acts which he refers to as acts with "specific content[,]…located in a particular dialogic and sequential context". In view of this, the theory of stance and engagement is supported by the pragmatic act theory, which accounts for speech acts in their specific situations.

The pragmatic act theory is a theory that accounts for language use in its particular context, which specifies the "limitations and possibilities" (Mey 2001: 214) of interactants in the communicative encounter. Mey's pragmatic act theory emerges as a way of expanding the speech act theory which is criticised for not taking into cognisance the fact that speech acts occur in situations. According to Mey, speech acts can only be effective when they are situated. As such, there are no speech acts; we only have acts of speech that are situated. The basis of a pragmatic act is the need to understand utterances. As Mey (2001: 217) says, "no conversational contribution… can be understood properly unless it is situated within the environment in which it was meant to be understood" which is why Mey refers to such a "conversational contribution" put within its environment as "instantiated pragmatic acts" or "ipras" or "practs". In order to analyse utterances in their specific contexts, therefore, Mey categorises possible features of communicative events into two parts: activity and textual parts.

Each of the categories comprises the various choices a language user makes use of in communicating.

From the activity part, the user may choose speech acts, indirect speech acts, conversational acts, psychological acts, prosody, physical acts, and so on. The user may as well fail to choose any of the options, in which case, the matrix equals zero. Mey (2001) adds that a zero matrix does not denote zero communication. Rather, it means that a language user's silence may perform a certain pragmatic act. Also, from the angle of the textual part, inferencing, reference, relevance, voice, shared situation knowledge, metaphor, and meta-pragmatic joker are some of the choices available to a language user. The combination of activity and textual parts produces a pract. The analysis was done by generating categories of representations, defining and exemplifying them, and unpacking the examples while unveiling the linguistic and pragmatic resources that point to the categories of representations.

## 19.4 Methodology

Network marketing organisations abound in Nigeria. In order to get as many network marketing organisations as there are in Nigeria, the Internet sources—http://www.adebusoye.com/top-mlm-in-nigeria/ and http://www. nigeria-mlm-network-marketing-guide.com/list-of-mlm-companies.html— accessed on 24 August 2016 were utilised. Thirty-three network marketing organisations were found, out of which ten—Trevor, Forever Living Products, Organo Gold, Alliance in Motion Global, GNLD, Tiens, Edmark, Longrich, Kedi Care and Tahitian Noni—were purposively selected. The ten selected organisations were based on: one, the types of products that were promoted by the organisations (only organisations that promote alternative therapies were considered); two, the availability of naturally occurring conversations between network marketers and their PCs; and three, accessibility to the NMOs. From the aforementioned NMOs, twelve meetings held between 28 August 2016 and 29 November 2016 were tape-recorded and orthographically transcribed. The meetings, which on average lasted two hours, took place at the offices of the different NMOs and had fifty people, on average, in attendance. The PCs, who were invited by their friends, family members and colleagues, cut across different social strata and age groups. The interactions were conducted in English, though there were doses of other codes such as Yoruba and Pidgin English. Analysis was carried out on the transcribed data using stance, engagement and pragmatic act theory.

## 19.5 Analysis and Findings

The study shows a qualitative analysis of the representation of orthodox medicine and alternative therapy in the competitive sphere where orthodox medicine, together with its practices, is perceived as standing in the way of the alternative therapies some NMOs promote. By engaging stance and engagement as well as pragmatic act theory, the analysis explores network marketers' stance-taking, identifying their stance acts and their pragmatic functions, as well as the engagement of PCs in the discourse. The analysis reveals that orthodox medicine is represented as inadequate, inefficient, inconvenient and unreliable. Medical practitioners are themselves represented as malevolent. On the other hand, alternative therapies are represented as efficient, convenient and reliable.

### *19.5.1 Representing Medical Practitioners as Malevolent*

Medical practitioners are portrayed as intentionally inflicting damage or intentionally "killing" patients by virtue of the treatment they give. Not only do the professional activities of medical practitioners in treating or managing certain ailments come under attack, the medical practitioners are, as well, attacked for engaging in therapies that do not make patients better but that, instead, worsen their cases and terminate their lives. This contradicts what the medical profession is made and known for. In representing medical practitioners as malevolent, network marketers condemn the activities of medical practitioners by orienting to affective, evaluative and evidential stances achieved through boosters and attitude markers. Questions, appeal to shared knowledge and directives are some of the devices used to lure the PCs into admitting such a representation.

**Excerpt 1**
(In Excerpt 1, NM A lists some of the ingredients that are contained in the products being marketed. She also talks about the usefulness of the ingredients to the human body.)
    1.    NM A: Another one I'll mention is Graviola. How many of us know Graviola?
    2.    You've heard of it? Do you know that Graviola is a powerful cancer
    3.    killer? Go on the Internet and google it. It's actually more powerful
    4.    than chemotherapy. Think it's about 10 times pow… more powerful

5.    than chemotherapy. Well, if somebody has cancer, what do the
6.    doctors do? Refer for chemo? And of recent they have done some
7.    studies and they discovered that chemo is terribly harmful to the
8.    system. So what they are giving you to supposedly get you better
9.    with cancer for someone who has cancer it's actually making the
10.   person worse (sic). But the God in his infinite wisdom had created
11.   something years ago that is more powerful than chemotherapy. So if
12.   you have a che... a cancer patient and you have chemotherapy and
13.   graviola, which will you give the person?
14.   Participants (Parts): Graviola
15.   NM A: Which would you give the person? Let's be truthful here. Which would
16.   you give the person?
17.   Parts: Graviola
18.   NM A: Graviola. The scientists have… you can go on the Internet, google it.
19.   G R A V I O L A. Graviola. 10 times more powerful than chemotherapy

To begin with, it will be necessary to set the above excerpt in its contextual space. NM A, having conjointly with the PCs established that the human race is presently facing the threat of becoming extinct as a result of the effect of modernisation, stresses that the daily intake of nutrients pro rata (which is "impossible") is the only solution to the said global problem. She then adds that the product being marketed (henceforth, X) contains all the nutrients, and thus can eliminate any ailment in the human body. The excerpt above reflects affective, evaluative and evidential stances which are characterised by attitude markers and boosters.

In Excerpt 1, a particular medical practice, chemotherapy, which is the treatment of diseases (particularly cancer) using chemicals, is greatly flawed. Medical practitioners also come under attack as they know the terrible effects of chemotherapy on patients but they use it all the same when they are aware of a safer alternative. As such, a malevolent identity is constructed for medical practitioners.

With the use of the question in lines 5 and 6: "well, if somebody has cancer, what do the doctors do? Refer for chemo [sic]?", NM A not only creates dialogic involvement of the PCs, but she also uses it to appeal to their shared knowledge, especially as it explicitly signals something which they are both familiar with, that is, the use of chemotherapy in the treatment of cancer. This engagement process assists NM A to foreground a reality (of medical doctors using chemotherapy in the treatment of cancer). Having done that, NM A expresses an evidential stance in lines 6 and 7: "they have done some studies and they have discovered that chemo is terribly harmful to the system", which positions the use of chemotherapy in the treatment of cancer negatively. In the evidential statement, the third-person plural "they" (though this cannot be linked to any antecedent in the excerpt) indexes scientists, possibly including medical doctors, biochemists, chemists, pharmacists, and so on, as drawing on shared knowledge—they are the ones with the expert power to make such a claim (after research might have been conducted); otherwise, the claim would be infelicitous. In other words, the evidential predicate in line 7: "discovered that chemo is terribly harmful to the system" is credited to "they"—scientists (medical doctors inclusive)—which means that the voice is represented as that of the scientists. Since the voice, that chemotherapy is harmful to the human system, is represented as the scientists', an inference can therefore be drawn that medical doctors are portrayed as engaging in the wanton destruction of human life. Another thing that is important to point out in the evidential predicate is the attitude marker "terribly harmful" in line 7 which is used to evaluate the use of chemotherapy for treating cancer. "Terribly harmful", which is also an evaluative stance predicate, by the virtue of the fact that it resides in the evidential stance, "have discovered that chemo is terribly harmful to the system", is accredited to the scientists. In other words, NM A, the speaker, projects scientists as the stance-takers who have themselves evaluated chemotherapy as dangerous.

In lines 8 to 10: "so what they are giving you to supposedly get you better with cancer… [is] actually making the person worse", NM A expressly makes clear her affective stance of dissatisfaction. This statement climaxes the representation of medical doctors as malevolent. Again, "they" in this statement indexes medical doctors, and the word "supposedly" indicates that she is not favourably disposed to such treatment as "it is actually making the person worse" (line 10). "Actually", as a booster, indicates NM A's certainty about her position that chemotherapy worsens patients' health conditions. Meanwhile, in lines 3-5, NM A has provided an alternative, Graviola (one of the ingredients

contained in the products being marketed) which she says is ten times
more powerful than chemotherapy. Again, NM A orients to the powerful
engagement device of questioning: "do you know that Graviola is a
powerful cancer killer?" (lines 2 and 3) to arouse curiosity and surprise.
The physical act directive "go on the Internet and google it", an act which
directs the PCs to carry out an action in the real world, is made to give
credibility and reliability to the claim. In line 3: "it is actually more
powerful than chemotherapy", "actually" as a booster is again used to
express certainty in the proposition and, of course, to make it acceptable.
NM A thus successfully practs dissuading. Having clearly positioned
chemotherapy, a resort that would be opted for in medical practice, and
Graviola, a fruit and one of the ingredients in the product being marketed
negatively and positively respectively, NM A, in lines 11, 12, 13, 15, 16,
18 and 19, guides PCs to make their choice between the two, using the
engagement device of questioning. Overall, it can be said that NM A
records a success in representing medical practitioners as malevolent. This
is evident in the PCs showing in lines 14 and 17 that they would prefer to
go for Graviola (invariably the product) in treating cancer instead of
consulting with medical practitioners.

By and large, in Excerpt 1 above, a side-effect that is often
associated with the use of chemotherapy, viz. the damage to useful human
cells, is appropriated in order to promote Graviola, its supposed
alternative.

## 19.5.2 Representing Orthodox Medicine as Inadequate
## and Inefficient but Alternative Therapies as Efficient

Orthodox medicine is presented as inadequate in providing solutions to
people's health challenges. On the other hand, alternative therapies being
promoted by NMOs are presented as potent. In constructing the opposing
"characteristics", network marketers rely heavily on instances (examples
in the real world) of where orthodox medicine failed and alternative
therapies succeeded in tackling people's health conditions. Network
marketers achieve the representations by orienting to affective stance,
evaluative stance and evidential stance supported by attitude markers,
reference, boosters and inference.

**Excerpt 2**
(Here, NM A evokes the efficacy of organic products by telling the
participants of a doctor who treats his patients with nutritional
supplements, especially where orthodox treatment is said to have failed.)

1.  NM A:    Now talk about one last thing before we move into the next
2.  segment. There's a man in America, he's an old doctor. His
3.  name is Dr Joel Wallach. He's a medical practitioner but he
4.  doesn't treat people the normal way doctors treat people, he
5.  says doctors actually kill people with the drugs they give unto
6.  them. He said he can reverse… he made a claim publicly that
7.  he can reverse any disease you bring to him with nutrients
8.  because science has told us yes nutrients, nutrients. There's so
9.  much noise about nutrients. Dr Joel Wallach said it's really
10. simple, it's true, bring me any disease, bring me any ailment, I
11. will reverse it with nutrients. He said bring me any ill… illness,
12. bring me any disease, I'll reverse it with nutrients and people
13. said he was just, you know, making claims. And then he gave
14. examples, he was on TV on Benny Hinn show, he said Creflo
15. Dollar's daughter… had terrible asthma, 11-year-old girl. They
16. had gone to the best of hospitals in America, they had gone to
17. the best of scientists but they said, "sir, there's nothing we can
18. do about the asthma, she'll live with it, it's too bad, it's too far
19. gone, there's no solution to it". They found Dr Joel Wallach
20. and they went to him and he said what he did was simple; he
21. just gave her the nutrients she needed every single day and

22.        guess what? She was fine within two weeks. Her asthma
           was
23.        gone—asthma that the doctors had given up on…. It's
           mind
24.        blowing!


    Excerpt 2 illustrates the representation of orthodox medicine as
inadequate and inefficient but alternative therapies as efficient.
Apparently, NM A's emphasis on the adequacy of nutrients in the
treatment of asthma, as shown in Excerpt 2 above, requires an antecedence
which allows NM A to project "the prior failure" of orthodox medical
procedures in curing the said ailment. The dual representation of orthodox
medicine and alternative therapies as inefficient and efficient respectively
is presented with the use of an evidential stance. What is observable in
lines 1 to 24 is testimonial marketing where NM A relays a situation in
which nutrients, which are said to be the components of the product being
marketed, are used in the treatment of a terrible health condition of an
eleven-year-old daughter of a rich American man after orthodox medicine
has failed. With the testimony, NM A "provides" evidence for her implicit
claim that alternative therapy is efficient whereas orthodox medicine is
not. Turning now to how an evidential stance is sustained in this excerpt, it
is important to know that what NM A does first is to give credence to the
source of her evidence. In line 2, reference is made to an American doctor,
Dr Joel Wallach, who is described as an "old doctor". The use of the
adjective "old" as an attitude marker in describing the doctor is significant
in the sense that it gives the qualities of know-how, skilfulness and
proficiency to the doctor. In the Nigerian context, more often than not, the
mention of "old doctor" suggests experience. There is a preference for old
doctors because they are believed to have been confronted with a wide
range of medical conditions, giving them the capability to handle various
health challenges effectively. Again, NM A calls Dr Joel Wallach a
medical practitioner but sets him apart from the other medical
practitioners. In lines 3 and 4, where NM A says, "He's a medical
practitioner but he doesn't treat people the normal way doctors treat
people", she deploys an evaluative stance with the use of a contrastive
"but" to present Dr Joel Wallach positively. The evaluation of Dr Joel
Wallach as a "different doctor" is significant if Excerpt 1, where NM A
represents medical doctors as malevolent, is considered. Dr Joel Wallach
is presented as a distinct and special kind of medical doctor. With the
attitude marker "old doctor" and the evaluative stance in lines 3 and 4, an
inference is drawn that Dr Joel Wallach is an experienced and special

doctor. NM A perceives the reference to Dr Wallach's good credentials relevant to the evidential stance she presents next: "he says doctors actually kill people with the drugs they give unto them" (lines 3 and 4). This is the labelling of medical doctors as "killers". The extra-vocalised authorial voice of the evidential source is made credible by implicitly making reference to the doctor's experience and skilfulness. The booster "actually" in the evidential predicate in line 5 reflects certainty in the projected stance-taker's claim. To further give credibility to the claim, reference is made to persons (e.g., Creflo Dollar, an American minister) and a television show (e.g., the Benny Hinn show).

The representation of alternative therapy as efficient is clearly reflected in lines 22-24, where NM A adopts an affective stance. In line 23, the fragment, "asthma that the doctors had given up on", does not portray alternative therapy as efficient but also emphasises the claim.

With reference to a specific instance (lines 11-17), NM A, in lines 13-19 ("They had gone to the best of hospitals in America… She was fine within two weeks. Her asthma was gone, asthma that the doctors had given up on…. It's mind-blowing!"), characterises orthodox medicine as inadequate and inefficient and alternative therapy as efficient.

### 19.5.3. Representing Orthodox Medicine as Inconvenient but Alternative Therapies as Convenient

Another representation that is given to orthodox medicine is that it is inconvenient and difficult to cope with, whereas alternative therapy is represented as not just convenient and easy but also as readily available. In making this representation, network marketers rely on both evidential stance and evaluative stance.

**Excerpt 3**
(In Excerpt 3, NM M gives an account of a patient who is said to have been cured by the product being marketed. She also claims that orthodox medicine, which had earlier been expended, failed. The round brackets in the excerpt show inaudibility.)
1.    NM M:    I walked to a pharmacist in Iwo Road, I know he does he practices
2.    clinical pharmacy. He's always there to attend to his patients. So I
3.    went there and I gave him a full box of our black coffee. I said all your
4.    diabetic patients that are coming in this week, give them this free and

5.    he was shocked. By the time I went back there the next week, he
      said
6.    he did not know that the product is working that he had a
      particularly bad
7.    case and he told himself he was going to use this one as a case
      study ( )
8.    the guy lives nearby so anytime he's coming from work or going to
9.    work ( ) checks his blood sugar that within three days, he could
10.   conveniently put the chil… the man off his drugs and he was just
      on
11.   that coffee alone. Now let me tell you the advantage, the black
      coffee
12.   has a twenty-four hours outlife. So only one sachet in the morning
      is
13.   enough to take you throughout the day. Meanwhile, the other drugs
      he
14.   was taking, he was taking morning afternoon and night so he was
      not
15.   convenient for the guy because the guy was like (NM M heaves). In
      fact, he
16.   said the guy was praying for him and now it has boosted the guy's
17.   confidence in him. I said that man said within three days he could
18.   conveniently put the man off his normal drugs because he could see
19.   that the Ganodama was doing better work than all the pills the guy
      was
20.   swallowing anyway.

In Excerpt 3, orthodox medicine and alternative therapy are posited as inconvenient and convenient respectively. It is considered expedient to bring to the fore the comparison NM M makes of the black coffee being marketed and the "normal" [orthodox] drugs (line 18) in that the comparison helps to give credence to the quality of convenience ascribed to the black coffee which is said to be made from ganodama. In her comparison, NM M refers to the two evaluative targets and characterises them as having the qualities of inconvenience and convenience respectively. The representation of alternative therapy as convenient occurs in line 12. By stating that "so only one sachet in the morning is enough to take you throughout the day", NM A indicates the ease alternative therapy provides. The attitude maker "only" specifically aids the representation of alternative therapy as convenient. This can be compared to what is indicated of orthodox medicine in lines 13-15. NM

A clearly shows an evaluative stance with the use of "not convenient" in "Meanwhile, the other drugs he was taking morning, afternoon and night so it was not convenient". To further illustrate both representations, the use of the verb "take" with respect to alternative therapy and "swallow" with respect to orthodox medication in lines 13 and 20 respectively foregrounds her evaluation of the two stance objects. It is important to note here that the use of the verbs "take" and "swallow" in Excerpt 3 has a cultural underlining. In the Yoruba setting, "swallow" can be used derogatorily to suggest that what is being ingested is of no use or is damaging to the body. This is opposed to the word "take" which connotes the usefulness of what is being consumed.

In lines 17-19, the comparison is clearly presented with the use of an evaluative stance. "Conveniently" and "doing better work…" are evaluative markers that positively portray alternative therapy.

### 19.5.4 Representing Orthodox Medicine as Unreliable but Alternative Therapies as Reliable

Network marketers also represent orthodox medicine as unreliable but alternative therapies as reliable. Orthodox medicine is said to hastily present unpalatable resorts (for example, amputation of any part of the body in a situation of severe damage) where other measures could be taken without necessarily presenting such unpalatable options. This situation presents orthodox medicine as the healthcare system which is not to be trusted. On the other hand, alternative therapies are portrayed as reliable since, as presented in the data, they "rescue" patients from the unpalatable "verdicts" given by orthodox medical practitioners. When network marketers present instances where patients who are faced with such unpalatable resolutions get their healing by taking alternative therapies, orthodox medicine is represented as unreliable but alternative therapies as reliable.

**Excerpt 4**
(Like in Excerpt 3, the network marketer here also gives an account of a patient who is said to have been cured by the product being marketed. One thing that could be of interest here is that NM M works as a pharmacist in hospital XY mentioned in line 10 in the excerpt below. The round brackets in the excerpt indicate inaudibility.)
1.    NM M: During the doctors' strike earlier this year, somebody in our team ( ) a

2. diabetic foot in Lagos and the doctors were on strike there was no way
3. he could ( ) the leg was getting worst and worst [sic] and someone in my team
4. googled ganodama and diabetic patient. He saw [a] lot of studies with
5. pictures of people that used ganodama to treat diabetic foot and he
6. called me I now said ok let's get ( ) and send to this man in Lagos and
7. this man ( ) and was also putting it on the leg on the foot. Within four
8. days the ( ) ermmm theee you know the bad part of it was getting off
9. and gradually, gradually the man was getting better …. Ideally, if you
10. bring a diabetic foot to XY (a federal teaching hospital is mentioned),
11. it's amputation.

As a way of foregrounding the reliability of ganodama, an alternative therapy which is said to have been used in curing a diabetic foot in Excerpt 4, NM M apparently sees the need to project hopelessness which might have been given (lines 10 and 11), had the diabetic patient resorted to an orthodox medical procedure. The representation of orthodox medicine as unreliable is clearly seen in lines 9 and 10 ("ideally, if you bring a diabetic foot to XY, it's amputation"). With the use of reference to a patient with a diabetic leg who got healed by taking the alternative therapy being marketed, it is inferred that what would have been the medical solution in such a situation, amputation, is unwarranted. With this, NM M practs condemning. This is to say that what would have attracted amputation, going by medical practices, is salvaged by alternative therapy. In order to give credence to the efficacy of the alternative therapy being marketed, NM M refers to an evidential stance in lines 4 and 5 where she indicates that studies have shown that the alternative therapy being marketed is good for the treatment of a diabetic foot.

## 19.6 Conclusion

The study uncovers the nature of persuasion in network marketing discourse with respect to setting a competitive advantage. In the bid to gain a competitive advantage, network marketers represent orthodox medicine as inadequate, inefficient, unreliable and inconvenient. They also represent medical practitioners as malevolent, whereas alternative therapies are represented as efficient, convenient and reliable. Different

stance types and pragmatic acts are deployed to frame the representations. Through linguistic resources, network marketers are able to create a polar description of orthodox medicine and alternative therapies, with the former receiving a negative portrayal. NMO's resort to besmirching supports Kong's (2001) contention that network marketing is built upon a weak foundation. Besides, from the analysis, it could be seen that network marketers invest a lot of emotional vigour, stimulating PCs' beliefs, especially by depending on "testimonial marketing". This again corroborates Biggart's (1989) description of networking marketing as a business of belief. The representations shown in the analysis cannot be said to be a reflection of reality; they only show NMD as a compelling discourse that is capable of influencing PCs. The unsubstantiated negative representation of orthodox medicine is perilous. The PCs, who would have been wrongly guided to lose confidence in orthodox medicine, would, instead of seeking medical attention for their health when need be, resort to self-diagnosis and self-medication. Network marketers' recourse to mudslinging in their marketing enterprise is mainly possible because there are no, in practice, control measures in Nigeria to regulate the activities of NMOs.

Insights from the findings emphasise the significance of pragma-discourse resources in uncovering certain actions humans perform in communicative encounters. The study has not only shown the representation of "self" and "other", but it has also revealed the pragmatic functions of such representations, thereby reflecting the popular position in stance-taking scholarship that the act of taking a stance fulfils different roles in our social life. Generally speaking, it appears from the analysis above that the promotion of alternative therapeutic resources has to be made while disparaging their orthodox medical counterparts.

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# CHAPTER 20

# PRAGMATIC ACTS IN ANTENATAL HEALTH TALK SESSIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE HOSPITAL, IBADAN

## IDAYAT MODUPE LAMIDI

## Abstract

*Antenatal health talk is an important aspect of the antenatal clinic where expectant mothers are educated on their wellbeing. It is one of the remedies established to prevent maternal mortality in Nigeria. Existing studies on antenatal health education have accentuated the inadequacy of the methods used in antenatal literacy classes which tend to underscore the positive results recorded concerning maternal mortality in Nigeria. Therefore, this chapter employs Mey's pragmatic act theory to examine the use of language as a human activity to disseminate knowledge at antenatal health talk sessions because the success of the health talks often translates to success at childbirth. Thirty health talk sessions were recorded through participatory observation at the University College Hospital, Ibadan. Six of these talks were purposively selected to avoid repetition of the same pattern. The analysis revealed that the antenatal health class is an interactive one, enhanced through the practs of questioning, informing, instructing, appealing, warning and advising employed by the health workers, the expectant mothers' contextual knowledge of the messages conveyed through the practs, and their response practs of questioning and answering. The expectant mothers ask knowledge-seeking questions and clarification questions. They also answer the knowledge-testing questions posed to them by the health workers. Thus, the responsiveness of the expectant mothers in the health talks serves as a major contribution to success during childbirth.*

# 20.1 Introduction

Proper healthcare is important during pregnancy to bring about the desired wellbeing of the mother and the unborn baby. The gestation period is the time when education on health behaviour and parental care is given to expectant mothers (henceforth EMs). The antenatal clinic session is established to serve as an avenue to reach out to the EMs to bring about safe deliveries. Through the various topics on the mothers' healthy living planned and delivered during each antenatal visit, the EMs are equipped with an awareness of the condition they are in, the need to ensure good healthy living, what to expect in labour and how to handle themselves, and care of the baby after delivery. These are given in a classroom setting where health workers (henceforth HWs) serve as the teachers and the EMs as students (Lamidi 2005; Taiwo & Salami 2007).

Scholars have studied various aspects of antenatal discourse like the listening skills of pregnant women (Viccars 2003), teaching methods in antenatal classes (Blakey & Cooper 2003), the organisation of discourse in antenatal classrooms (Taiwo & Salami 2007), and the ethnography of communication in conversations between doctors and pregnant women (Unuabonah 2008). The pragmatic acts employed in the antenatal health talk sessions between the HWs and the EMs have not been studied by these scholars. Moreover, the University Teaching Hospital Ibadan, the first of its kind, has not been studied in relation to antenatal health talks. Healthy living is a delicate issue that should be handled by skilled HWs. In view of this, Bernstein's Deficit Hypothesis, cited in Dittmar (1976: 4) opines that "the social success of members of a society and their access to social privileges are directly dependent on the degree of organisation of their linguistic messages". The organisation of these linguistic messages is done through the dictates of the situation of the speech event and its social context. I shall examine how the HWs handle the process of teaching and learning at the antenatal clinic which, according to Mey (2001), is a "human activity" that "is not a prerogative of [an] individual setting goals and deriving strategies, or charting out courses of action, like a captain on his ship, a Platonic rider on her or his beast of burden. Rather, the individual is situated in a social context…" (2001: 214). Thus, the situation of the speech in the antenatal clinic health talks (henceforth ANCHTs) is such that it is guided by the needs of the EMs and the goals of the ANCHTs which are delivered by the HWs. This is why I shall

employ the pragmatic act theory of Mey (2001) to find out how these related variables are harnessed to achieve the communicative goal of the ANCHTs.

## 20.2 Antenatal Care

Maternal mortality has been a health challenge faced by most developing nations. Nigeria, as the most populous black nation, has a maternal mortality rate of 280 to 1150 per 100,000 live births (Onwumeren 2010). In 2003, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared that "about 500,000 women die due to childbirth" (Ogunjimi, Ibe & Ikorok 2010: 36). There was a reduction in the maternal mortality rate in the statistics given by the WHO in 2015 from 500,000 in 2010 to 30,300 deaths (Alkema, Chou, Hogan, Zhang, Moller & Gemmill 2016). It has also been reported that "inadequate obstetric and postpartum care among other causes has been identified as one of the causes of maternal and child mortality" (Ogunjimi et al. 2010: 36). The reasons given for this alarming record are that "about 69% of women still give birth in a traditional setting either at home or in a church" and the fact that "only 30% of people in rural areas have access to health care within a distance of 4km". People in urban settings are also not left out of this (Lindros & Lawkkainen 2004). Most attendants of these births at home and in the churches are unskilled. To curb maternal and child mortality, a campaign for focused antenatal care has been recommended because adequate antenatal care "increases a mother's chances to stay alive and give birth to [a] healthy baby" (Ogunjimi et al. 2010: 37). This is the avenue to identify mothers at risk and deadly complications are avoided through the series of tests the EMs are subjected to and the interactions that take place between them and the HWs.

Pregnancy is a critical time when healthy living should be groomed in the EMs to forestall unpleasant experiences during and after the gestational period. Antenatal care is established as an obligation which must be carried out by the HWs and the EMs. This is a major task required to bring about the desired result throughout the gestation period to the delivery day and after delivery. It is an interactive session where the HWs and the EMs engage in dialogue on health matters to instil confidence in the mothers and emphasise the importance of skilled birth attendants during delivery. Other maternal health messages given at this forum concerned personal hygiene, nutritional advice, safer sex, birth preparedness and emergency readiness, care of the newborn, which includes breastfeeding, immunisation and family planning. Inadequate

care during pregnancy has been discovered to be a major cause of maternal death. Common occurrences include hypertension (pre-eclampsia and eclampsia) and antepartum haemorrhage (excessive flow of blood after childbirth). For these reasons, EMs are taken through intensive health interactions by the antenatal clinics to understand why they should adhere strictly to the health education given, which will dissuade them from believing in traditional childbirth or delivering their babies at home where skilled attendants will not be able to provide life-saving support. Effective antenatal care can only be achieved with competent HWs in a functioning health care system where there are adequate health facilities and laboratory support. Bearing this in mind, the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, is taken as a sample investigation to find out how HWs use language in ANCHTs to have a positive impact on the EMs.

## 20.3 The Antenatal Clinic of the University College Hospital, Ibadan

An antenatal clinic is a place where EMs are attended to. Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays are antenatal clinic days in Ibadan, and patients are allocated to any of these days depending on who their consultant is and the unit to which they are allocated. This is to avoid very large sessions in order to bring about effectiveness in the interactions. EMs must arrive at the clinic as early as 8 a.m. on their clinic days so as to have enough time to complete the various medical tests they have to undergo before the commencement of the health talk. The HTs are held between 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Two nurses are usually assigned this task of educating the EMs on maternal health issues mentioned in the last section. They do this on a rotational basis. The nurses are Yorùbá, and most of the EMs are also Yorùbá speakers. Only a few are Igbo and Hausa. The dominant languages used in the clinic to address the patients are English and Yorùbá. The nurses use the English language because most of the EMs are literate. Yorùbá is used as a rhetorical strategy by the health workers to reduce formality in the talks and to get across to all and sundry. The ANCHTs given are ways of reaching out to the EMs on the dangers in engaging the services of home birth attendants.

## 20.4 Existing Studies on Antenatal Health Discourse

Health discourse encompasses all communicative events that take place within a medical environment. This can be among medical practitioners or medical practitioners and patients, the most popular being doctor-patient

interaction. Each of these communicative events has its peculiar features. Language scholars have engaged in studies that unfold the nature and structure of medical discourse through the lens of discourse analysis, pragmatics and ethnographic studies. These works are as follows: Drew et al. (2001), Robinson (2001), Ohtaki, et al. (2001), Eggly (2002), Manning (2002), Gulich (2003), Odebunmi (2003), Campion and Langdon (2004), Odebunmi (2005a, 2005b and 2005c), Odebunmi (2006), Heritage and Robinson (2006), Adegbite and Odebunmi (2010) and Faleke and Alo (2010). Antenatal discourse, which is the scope of this present study, is a subgenre of medical discourse. It involves the EMs and the health care providers (gynaecologists, public health nurses and clinical nurses). This antenatal health discourse addresses mainly the wellbeing of the EMs and the foetus. Communication at the antenatal clinics features interactions between doctors and pregnant women during antenatal clinic bookings, routine check-ups, health talk sessions and when complications arise during the gestation period.

Morrison and Burnad (1997), cited in Viccars (2003), worked on the listening skills of pregnant women by testing their utterances to what was said. They observed that non-verbal responses like facial expressions, body position and eye contact impede communication between the nurses and the pregnant women during ANCHT sessions. Blakey and Cooper (2003) identified two teaching methods used in antenatal classes. These are the formal method (planned and organised) and the informal method (fallout of any spontaneous discussions). They noted that the lecture method is not appropriate for antenatal classes but that women should be divided into small groups to discover the level of knowledge in the class. They identified audiovisual aids, practical demonstrations, handouts and leaflets as other effective means of knowledge dissemination in antenatal communication.

Taiwo and Salami (2007) also examined the organisation of discourse in antenatal classrooms in southwestern Nigeria. They discovered that three categories of discourse acts were mostly used in the data: informative, elicitation and directive. This implies that the antenatal educators were more active in the classes than the students. They play the + HIGHER role in the discourse which places the pregnant women at the disadvantage of being passive learners. Unuabonah (2008) analysed the conversations between doctors and pregnant women through ethnography of communication. She found that safeguarding the health of the mother and the foetus, ensuring a safe delivery, prescribing drugs and reassuring the pregnant women about certain abnormalities they experience during the period are the ends of conversations at the antenatal clinic. Also, the

doctors control the discourse with the numerous questions they ask pregnant women. In all these studies, ANCHTs have been represented as a one-way communication where the HWs control the discourse by playing a domineering role while the EMs are seen as passive listeners. Also, pragmatic acts in antenatal health talk, which is a subgenre and the scope of this paper, have not been studied by scholars. In view of this, the present work examines the pragmatic acts used at the ANCHTs to clarify the linguistic tools used by the HWs during the health talks to disseminate knowledge to the EMs.

## 20.5 Theoretical Framework

Pragmatics is defined by Mey (2001) as a study which illuminates our understanding of how the human mind works, how humans communicate, how they manipulate one another and, in general, how they use language. Mey's pragmatic act theory is a theory of context, which was formulated to cater for the situational deficiency in the Speech Act theory. This is stated in Mey's words thus:

> What is wrong with speech act theory, in general, as has often been remarked, is that it lacks a theory of action; and even if it does have such a theory, the action in question is thought of atomistically, as wholly emanating from the individual (2001: 214).

Hence, the pragmatic act theory emphasises context as a major tool in the interpretation of communicative encounters for proper understanding. To understand a discourse, it must be situated within its context of use. He defines context as "a continually changing surroundings that enables participants to interact and in which the linguistic expressions of their interactions become intelligible" (Mey 2001: 36). Mey makes a distinction between a speech act and a pragmatic act. To him, a pragmatic act is encompassing when he reiterates that "a pragmatic act does not necessarily have to be a speech act, though situated speech acts are pragmatic acts" (Mey 2001: 216). The interlocutors in a speech event rely on the linguistic, metaphoric, socio-cultural and situational contextual backgrounds in performing a pragmeme (or pragmatic acts). A pragmeme represents communication as a dynamic action in which language users are not only restricted or circumscribed by societal norms but are also cautioned by them. In other words, the pragmatic meaning of an act is mainly bound by the interaction between the context or the situation of discourse in relation to the rules dictated by such a situation or context. A pragmeme is employed to create a particular result in a given situation. This is

supported by Capone (2005) that a pragmeme is a speech act—an utterance whose goal is to bring about effects that modify participants within it or to bring about other types of effect, such as exchanging/assessing information, producing social gratification or otherwise, right/obligations, and social bonds (2005: 1357).

We experience different speech situations in communication. A given situation determines the interpretation elicited in the utterances of the participants. When participants change roles, another meaning of the same utterance may be intended. Pragmemes work on the context of use and language rules of an utterance for interpretation. So, society determines what is said and meant because they must be uttered and interpreted within the prescription of the society (social and cultural constraints) in a given situation in relation to language rules. The emphasis on the context of situation in the interpretation of utterances is stressed by Mey (2001: 219) thus:

The theory of pragmatic acts does not try to explain language use from the inside out, from words having their origin in a sovereign speaker and going out to an equally sovereign hearer. Rather, its explanatory movement is from the outside in—the focus is on the environment in which both speaker and hearer find their affordances, such that the entire situation is brought to bear on what can be said on the situation, as on what is actually being said.

This reflects the fact that communication is not an activity of the interlocutors but that of the social context where they and their speeches are situated. There is no "reference to grammaticality or strict observance of syntactic rules" (Mey 2001: 221).

Mey (2001) represents the concept of pragmeme in the model below:

Pragmatic Acts in Antenatal Health Talk Sessions of the University College Hospital, Ibadan

PRAGMEME

ACTIVITY PART (INTERACTANTS)

TEXTUAL PART (CO(N)TEXT)

INF   REF   REL   VCE   SSK   MPH   'M'

SPEECH ACTS
......
INDIRECT SPEECH ACTS
CONVERSATIONAL ("DIALOGUE") ACTS
PSYCHOLOGICAL ACTS (EMOTIONS)
PROSODY (INTONATION, STRESS, ...)
PHYSICAL ACTS:
BODY MOVES (INCL. GESTURES)
PHYSIOGNOMY (FACIAL EXPRESSIONS)
(BODILY EXPRESSIONS OF) EMOTIONS

PRACT

ALLOPRACT

PRAGMEME, PRACT, ALLOPRACT

Fig. 1: Mey's (2001) Pragmeme

The activity and the textual parts constitute the pragmatic acts. The activity part of the pragmeme entails the possible options available to the participants in communication. There can be more than one activity in a communicative event or none (NULL). "NULL" in the model occurs in a situation when the participant(s) is/are silent. Silence is also classified as an activity and not a total end in communication. The textual part of the model comprises the contextual features which influence communication. These are: "INF" (inference), "REL" (relevance), "REF" (reference), "VCE" (voice), "SSK" (shared situational knowledge), "SCK" (shared cultural knowledge), "M" (meta-pragmatic joker) and "MPM" (metaphor). A pract or an allopract is the result of the interaction between the activity part and the textual part. According to Mey (2001: 221), a pragmatic act is "instantiated through an 'ipra' or 'a pract,' which realizes a 'pragmeme' as every pract is at the same time an allopract, that is a concrete instantiation of a particular pragmeme". We shall make use of the model above to unfold the pragmatic acts employed in antenatal discourse.

## 20.6 Methodology

Data were collected through participatory observations at the antenatal health sessions of the University Teaching Hospital (UCH), Ibadan. Thirty health talk sessions of the ANCHTs were recorded. These were studied and those with the same pattern of organisation were removed. In all, six of these health talk sessions were subjected to pragmatic analysis using Mey's pragmatic act theory. Extant research in antenatal health education has emphasised the inadequacy of the methods used in antenatal literacy classes (Viccars 2003; Blakey & Cooper 2003; Taiwo & Salami 2007). On this premise, this study shall examine the pragmatic act which has not been employed for analysis in antenatal discourse to discover any hidden linguistic code that has not been identified. The pragmatic acts theory of Mey (2001) is employed for analysis of our data. The choice of this theory is premised on its relevance to the analysis of the intrinsic nature of human interaction.

## 20.7 Data Analysis and Findings

The antenatal health talk session is one of the measures put in place to prevent maternal death in Nigeria. Here, what matters to the HWs (medical scientists, doctors, nurses and pharmacists) involved in antenatal health care is looking for a medium to make the expectant mothers realise the need for them to be healthy in pregnancy. This medium for

disseminating this message is through the HTs. The HWs directly involved in this task are the public health nurses who educate patients on the various health issues they may be facing. Thus, these nurses build on the contextual background of REL, INF, REF, SSK, SLK (shared linguistic knowledge) and SCK to pract informing, warning, appealing, questioning, advising and instructing. These are analysed in Figure 2 in the order of their frequencies.

| Practs | Frequencies | Percentage (%) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Questioning | 57 | 41.9 |
| Informing | 49 | 36.3 |
| Instructing | 15 | 11 |
| Appealing | 08 | 5.8 |
| Warning | 04 | 2.9 |
| Advising | 03 | 2.2 |
| **Total** | **136** | **100%** |

**Fig. 2: Frequencies of Pragmemes in the Antenatal Clinic Health Talk (ANCHT)**

The analysis above reveals that antenatal discourse in UCH features six pragmemes with 136 frequencies. Questioning has the highest frequency, while advising has the lowest. The frequency of questioning as a pract indicates the knowledge-sharing nature of antenatal discourse and the high involvement of the EMs in the communicative event. Questioning is followed by informing because when questions are asked, responses in the form of clarifications, illustrations and explanations are given through informing. This shows that the ANCHT of the UCH is an interactive one.

## 20.7.1 Pragmatic Acts in Antenatal Discourse

A pragmatic act is an act organised and utilised through a contextual background and a contextual implication. This session of our analysis shall unfold the interaction between the activity and the textual part of the pragmeme to establish the various practs identified in the ANCHTs. The practs are discussed below.

### 20.7.1.1 Questioning

Questions are important practs in antenatal clinic discourse. They are the linguistic codes used in discourse development. HWs use questions to generate topics to be discussed while the EMs employ them to seek information and to clarify issues bothering them. We shall examine three

allopracts of questioning that feature in the antenatal health talk classes. These are information-seeking questions, clarification questions and information/knowledge-testing questions.

## Information-Seeking Questions

This type of question is asked by the EMs to seek information on general or specific topics for discussion. These are illustrations.

*Datum 1.*
*EM- What can we do if we have constipation?*
*Datum 2.*
*EM- What is the normal volume of PCV?*
*Datum 3.*
*EM- How do we know that labour is near?*

The EMs ask the above questions out of the many in the discourse as a request from the HW for them to be part of the class activity. The SLK and SSK between the EMs and the HWs help in the understanding of the purpose of the act and the information to be supplied by the HW. "Constipation, PCV and labour" used in the questions can only be understood when situated in the medical context. The shared linguistic knowledge (SLK) of the HW and the EMs makes the interpretation of the questions real. The SSK is the medical context where pregnant women are involved. In this context, "labour" is the act of giving birth to a baby and not any manual engagement. PCV is the Packed Cell Volume of blood in the human system. "Constipation" is a common health problem of EMs. We shall examine the second type of questions in the discourse.

## Clarification Questions

EMs ask questions to seek clarifications on burning health issues they do not know from the professional stand of the HWs since previous knowledge is derived from friends and family members.

*Datum 4.*
*EMs- Excuse me, is it true that "ugwu" leaf supplies one blood?*
*Datum 5.*
*EMs- What position can a pregnant woman take while sleeping?*
*Datum 6.*
*EMs- Can we take ice water?*

For clarification questions to be asked, there is prior information given on each question asked. The EMs only want the medical expert to confirm or disprove them. This is because these questions are not answered in all the information received from the HWs. REF, SLK and SCK form the contextual background for practing clarifying questions. "Ugwu" is a vegetable culturally known to contain a blood supplying component. **Datum 4** is asked to clarify the potency of the vegetable used instead of blood supplying tonic. HWs only classify the vegetable as a food class to be taken by EMs and not as a daily dose. In **Datum 5,** the SSK creates the background for the interpretation of the sleeping position. The protruding stomach makes the lying position a question which needs adequate clarification. The eating habits of EMs is also an important aspect of the EMs' nutrition. Culturally, "ice water" is seen as dangerous to EMs' health and that of the foetus because of its level of coldness. The belief here is that it will affect the foetus.

### Knowledge-testing Questions

Knowledge-testing questions are asked by the nurses to test how well the patients understood previously discussed topics or issues.

*Datum 7.*
HW- *Somebody should explain to us the signs of labour. How many stages of labour do we have?*
EM- *Three*
HW- *Explain the three for us (sic)*
EM- *I just came in.*

*Datum 8.*
HW- *How do we take care of the cord?*
EM- *(silence)*
HW- *Care of the cord. Şé a şì rántí? How do we take care of it?*
*…Do we still remember?*
EM- *We use cotton wool and spirit.*

In **Datums 7 & 8,** the HW asks questions on those topics that had been discussed. These types of questions usually occur during question-and-answer sessions in the class. The participants ride on the contextual ground of REF, SSK and SLK to pract knowledge-testing questions. "I just came in" in **Datum 7** and the utterance, "Do we still remember" in **Datum 8** are REF indicators that a previous related piece of information has been given which EMs knowledge is tested on. "I just came in"

represents the absence of the HM when the information was passed and this implies that she does not know the answer. "Do we still remember" also suggests a prior knowledge given to the EMs which the HW wants their feedback on in the form of answers. These questions are relevant only in the context of the antenatal clinic because of the SSK and the SLK of the participants who are EMs.

### 20.7.1.2 Informing

Informing as a pract is a major action achieved through the contextual background of REF, INF, SSK and SLK. Informing is done by the HWs who take the role of a teacher in the class. It is the second in frequency out of the practs identified in the discourse.

### Datum 9.

HW: Water is equally important. It prevents constipation because whether we take water or not, we lose water every day through sweating, urinating, faeces. Constipation is dangerous to one's health.

The importance of water in the EMs' diet is explained in Excerpt 9 through REF, SLK and INF. Reference is made to water as one of the classes of food that make up a balanced diet. INF is drawn from the datum by stating the effect of not taking enough water as experiencing constipation.

### Datum 10.

...when you want to touch your toes, you should bend with your knees and not your back. You strain your back by doing this. Whereas the back should be preserved for the great task ahead because the weight of the pregnancy is carried by our back.

This datum is cued through the contextual background of REF, INF and SSK. The EMs get informed through their background knowledge. "The great task ahead" here is the act of childbirth which is understood by the EMs because of their SSK.

### 20.7.1.3 Instructing

Instructing is implied when the HWs emphasise the process through which a thing must be done. It works on the contextual knowledge of SSK and REF.

*Datum 11.*
*You can express the breast before going for work. Breastfeeding is very*
*important.*
SSK and REF are used here to pract instructing. SSK of the EMs finding it
hard to continue with exclusive breastfeeding of their babies after the
three-month maternity leave is the context for the instruction here. This is
to emphasise that exclusive breastfeeding after maternity leave is not as
difficult as the EMs see it. The HW makes REF to the importance of
breastfeeding to emphasise her point. The utterance "You can" signifies
the agent to which the instruction is given: the EMs.

*Datum 12.*
*Those that have not taken their TT should start earlier. You must take two*
*for this pregnancy.*

In this datum, REF, SLK & SSK are used in practing instructions. "Those"
refers to the EMs. "Should" indicates the obligation to do something. TT
rides on the SLK to be meaningful in the datum. This is the tetanus toxoid
vaccine.

**20.7.1.4 Appealing**
This is another pract that features in our data. Appealing is carried out by
the HWs to persuade the EMs of the need to comply with the instructions
given.

*Datum 13.*
*Have you all collected the list of items for labour? Let us buy everything.*
*Yorùbá people will say that 'Àlejò os̩ù mé̩sàn-án kì í s̩e àjò̩jì'. E̩ jò̩o̩ e̩ jé̩ ká*
*ra e̩rù o̩mo̩ wa'.*
*"A visitor that has given 9-month notification should not be treated as an*
*alien. Please, let us buy our babies items".*

Here, the pract of appealing works on the contextual background of SSK,
SLK, REF, VCE and INF. The utterance, "let us buy everything" is an
appeal to the EMs. The use of the pronoun "us" indicates persuasion
because the HW includes herself as a mark of solidarity. The word,
"please" also marks the act of appealing. The active voice used in the last
part of the datum indicates appealing. REF is made to the gestation period
as the time given by the baby for his arrival and the visitor in the proverb
is the baby. This is cued through the SLK of the EMs. The INF drawn here

is that none of the HMs has a reason for not buying the labour items given the gap in the time of the delivery of their babies.

### Datum 14.
The appeal here is made to God to help the EMs have a safe delivery. It is one of the songs sung at the beginning of the health talk.

| | |
|---|---|
| Mú mi bi wẹ́rẹ́ o Olúwa | "Let me have safe delivery, God |
| Mú mi bi wẹ́rẹ́ o, Ẹlẹ́dáà mi | Let me have safe delivery, my Creator |
| Mú mi bi wẹ́rẹ́ o, Olúwa | Let me have safe delivery, God. |
| Lójọ́ ìkúnlẹ̀, kómi má pọ̀ jù | On my delivery day. |
| Kéjẹ̀ má pọ̀ jù, kó má ṣaláìtó o. | Let there not be excessive or insufficient body fluid and blood on |
| the | |
| | day of delivery". |

REF, SCK, INF and SSK are worked on here to translate this song as an appeal to God. The SSK, SCK and REF to God as the only one that can help everyone in any situation makes the song a direct appeal to Him and not doctors or nurses. This is connected to the slogan in hospitals that "We care but God cures". The INF drawn here is that the Supreme Being is their help in that situation.

### 20.7.1.5 Warning
A warning comes as a pract to help the EMs see the danger of non-compliance to the ideal ways of living during pregnancy. The contextual cues of REF, SCK, SLK and INF are used in practing warning.

### Datum 15.
HW: *Ara ríro; Alábùkún, Phensic and all those native concoction tó máa ń purge wa, these can lead to premature abortion.*

REF is made to some painkillers which some EMs, in the process of self-medication, use whenever they experience body aches. The HW warns that the drugs can cause premature birth. The SCK and SLK play on the understanding that the drugs are not prescribed by a medical practitioner. The INF drawn here is the untimely birth of the baby.

### Datum 16.
HW: *You can take sugar, but don't let it be too much. Too much sugar can cause diarrhoea. Even "minerals" too should not be too much. This*

*can make the baby be too big and this may make you go through a caesarean operation. It is very dangerous considering the risk and the money.*

The HW warns the EMs against taking too much sugar by pointing out the danger in it. The REF, SLK, SSK and INF are the contextual tools used here to pract warning. REF to the excessive intake of sugar is the SSK of its danger to pregnant women, hence, making the baby too big. The INF is the risk and the medical bill incurred after a caesarean section is done. Thus, the warning is apposite.

### 20.7.1.6 Advising
Advising has the least frequency of all the practs. It is used in the class to support warnings by giving the possible options to avert danger.

*Datum 17.*
*HW: All these foods (food constituting a balanced diet) are very important; don't take one and neglect one. Then, take fruits every day.*

*Datum 18.*
*'Ó better ká ti prepare ara wa sílẹ̀ ju pé ká dé labour ward ká wá máa sọ pé àse bó ṣe ń rí nìyí'*
*"It is better to prepare for childbirth than getting to the labour ward and we lament that 'so, this is how it is'".*

In Datum 17, SSK, REF and INF process the pract of advising. The SSK is the class of food being referred to, the REF is the importance of taking them in the right proportion and the INF refers to having a healthy diet, all of which constitute the process of advising. In Datum 18, SSK, SLK, REF and INF are the contextual tools for practing advising here. The SSK refers to falling into labour at the end of the nine-month pregnancy, the SLK refers to understanding the place where they give birth to their babies, the "labour ward", and the reference to the regret of not preparing for the delivery, and the INF refers to getting prepared before the day of delivery. They all work together to pract advising.

## 20.8 Conclusion

This study has highlighted the pragmatic acts used at the antenatal health class of the UCH, Ibadan. It has thus established that the contextual tools of SSK, SLK, SCK, REF and INF are employed in the antenatal health

class of the UCH, Ibadan to pract questioning, informing, instructing, appealing, warning and advising. The pragmatic acts used in the ANCHTs help the EMs to take an active role in the class. Questioning and informing are used mostly in the classes because they constitute the discourse structure by both parties. Questioning, being the highest, creates an interactive classroom atmosphere. The EMs are encouraged to ask questions which they do well. The HWs also ask them questions from the previous lessons to update their knowledge. Thus, we discovered three allopracts of questioning: information-seeking questions, clarification questions and knowledge-testing questions. The first two types are done by the EMs while the HWs only ask knowledge-testing questions. This shows the involvement of the EMs in the classes. This study, thus, concludes that the antenatal health class can be as interactive as possible, with the HWs still controlling the class. It represents the EMs as active participants in the class compared to their representation in other antenatal health care units as passive participants. Their activeness is poised on the pragmatic acts employed by the HWs, the EMs' contextual knowledge of the messages being passed to them (together with their enquiry nature through the response acts of answering questions from the HWs), questioning to elicit information (information-seeking questions) and questioning to confirm prior known information (clarification questions). Through this research, the UCH, Ibadan is recommended as a model which other antenatal health classes should emulate. The EMs interact well, and they are well informed on how to be healthy during and after pregnancy which prepares them for successful childbirth and childcare.

However, the health songs are not well used in the classes. Praise songs are mostly sung. This has displaced the motive for the inclusion of the health songs in the antenatal health class routines. I, therefore, propose the adequate use of the health songs that feature pregnancy care, nutrition during pregnancy, childbirth, childcare, breastfeeding and immunisation. This will also complement the practs used to make the health messages real and easily retained by the EMs.

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# Appendix

**HW:** Good morning everybody.

**EMs**: Good morning.

**HW**: Ki enikan pray fun wa. Se muslim ni yin?

**EM**: Yes (prays).

**HW**: Thank you very much. Once again, you are welcome to the clinic. Naturally, after praying, we exercise our body. Somebody should give us a song from this side (points to the right side).

**EM**: (SINGS) E wa wo n t'oluwa se fun mi.

     Eyi lo mu mi dupe o ….

**HW**: E je ka sun siwaju awa to wa ni last bench. Please, our talk this morning is going to be like discussion. We are going to talk about diet this morning. Are they expensive? Are we going to wait for our husbands? We are going to talk about anaemia. What is anaemia?

**EM**: Shortage of blood cell.

**HW**: When we talk of anaemia, what are those things that can contribute to it?

**EM**: (Raises her hand) Malaria in pregnancy, unbalanced diets.

**HW**: Unbalanced diets. What are the things to do to prevent malaria?

**EM**: (Raises her hand) Cleaning of bushy area in our house.

**HW**: Prevention of stagnant water, eat well, taking of Sunday-Sunday medicine. Then, when we talk of diet, the most important one is protein and what are the sources of protein? And don't let us wait for our husband to provide for us. Olorun ma je ka kuku iya o.

**EMs**: Amin o.

**HW**: Ki lode taa le mu owo die dani taa ba n bo ni clinic? Teeyan ba paju de, oko a fe iyawo mii. Please, e je ka wa atunse si oro ara wa. Se ko si ibeere Kankan?

**EM**: What can we do if we have constipation?

**HW**: We can eat roughages, vegetables, fruits, take enough water, pap, etc. Any other question?

**EM**: Can we take beverages?

**HW**: Yes, you can take it. Sometimes, they tell you not to eat snail (Igbin) pe omo a maa dato. Se a ri eni to ko nito lenu? Any other question? Se ko si ibeere?

**EM**: Excuse me, is it true that "ngwu" and water leaf supply one blood?

**HW:** Yes.

**EM**: What about hot food?

**HW**: Ti o ba ni effect lara wa.

**EM**: Can one take ice water?

**HW**: Yes, because this time you feel hot. It cannot affect the baby inside.

**EM**: What about pepper soup?

**HW**: Se a ti gba TT wa? Ebe la ma be wa. Any other question? E joo, ka to lo, eni t'eje o ba to lara e, ki ni awon signs ti a fi maa mo?

**EM**: Dizziness, swelling of legs, the heart overwork.

**HW**: E joo, awa taa ba ti se investigation wa tan, e je ka lo record. Awa taa tii se e tan, e je ka lo pari e.

# CHAPTER 21

# A PRAGMATIC READING OF SEX-CONSTRUING METAPHORS IN SHONEYIN'S *THE SECRET LIVES OF BABA SEGI'S WIVES*

## ONWU INYA AND BLESSING TITILAYO INYA

## Abstract

*This paper examines the metaphorical construal of sex in a Nigerian novel combining insights from Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Relevance-Theoretic Pragmatics. For data, six sex scenarios involving the lead characters were purposively sampled for analysis. Eight conceptual metaphors provided cognitive framing for sex and the male sexual organ in the data, namely, SEX (WITH BABA SEGI) IS A VIOLENT ACTIVITY, THE PENIS IS A WEAPON, THE PENIS IS A HAMMER, THE PENIS IS A FOREFINGER, SEX IS PLEASURABLE, SEX IS HEALING, SEX IS HORSE-RIDING and SEX IS WAR. Identifying and interpreting these conceptual metaphors were done both by metaphor identification procedure (MIP) and the pragmatic processes of narrowing and broadening, contextualising the metaphors within the ideological stance of the author and the socio-cultural setting of the text.*

Keywords: *Pragmatics; sex-construing metaphors; Nigerian novel; relevance-theoretic pragmatics; conceptual metaphor*

## 21.1 Introduction

*The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* (henceforth, *Baba Segi*) is a female-authored novel set in southwestern Nigeria. This foregrounds a key assumption, that it is a response to male dominance in the Nigerian literary scene, and a rewrite of the "wrong positioning and imaging of African

women" (Idowu-Faith 2016: 393) by male authors. In this chapter, we examine how this rewriting of the "woman" and of the "man" is done through sex-related metaphors. The author of *Baba Segi,* Lola Shoneyin, has been described as a subversive writer whose "consciousness of women's marginality and the need to provide an alternative to patriarchal [in terms of subversive sexuality] shapes the direction of [her writings]" (Jegede 2011: 211). In other words, Shoneyin's writings in general, and *Baba Segi* in particular, are replete with sexual images that counter male sexist or phallocentric discourse which objectifies the female body as well as relegates her to the position of the inferior other. These sexual images also satirise the hegemonic futility or sterility of male domination, which is typified by the sexuality of the leading characters in *Baba Segi.*

Furthermore, sex is a profound and personal experience on the one hand, and a profane subject on the other hand. Thus, in describing sexual relations, people tend to resort to various forms of creativity. Acknowledging this fact, Crespo Fernández observes that, "[g]iven that metaphorization stands out as the most prolific linguistic device of lexical creativity, it is hardly surprising that speakers turn to figurative language as a means of coping with the realm of sex" (Crespo Fernández 2008: 98). The creative metaphorising of sex and sexuality, which foregrounds the socio-cultural norms of the Yoruba people, and which is also subverted by the author of *Baba Segi* to further her feminist ideology, provides a strong motivation for the study.

From a methodology point of view, the current study also explores the nexus between Conceptual Metaphor Theory (henceforth, CMT) and Relevance-Theoretic Pragmatics (henceforth, RTP) (cf. Gibbs and Tendahl 2006, Tendahl and Gibbs 2008; Tendahl 2009; and Wilson 2011). Wilson (2011) argues that a central point of distinction between CMT and RTP is the question of the origin of metaphor, whether it emanates from communicative needs, or from conceptual co-activations. In the current paper, we argue that both perspectives complement each other, such that while CMT provides a macro-perspective to the question of metaphoric expressions, RTP takes care of the micro-discursive manifestations of these phenomena. Two further points of intersections are argued in this paper. First, the process of enriching the metaphorical expression at the explicit level is consistent with calls within CMT to specify a more rigorous methodology in terms of a reliable procedure for identifying linguistics metaphors (Pragglejaz Group 2007; Steen 2007; Steen et al. 2010; Krennmayr 2011), and indicating an explicit protocol for extrapolating conceptual metaphors from linguistic evidence (Steen 2009; Semino et al. 2004; Krennmayr 2011). RTP's explicatural procedures of

disambiguation, saturation, free enrichment, and particularly ad hoc concept construction are implicated at this identification phase of metaphor analysis. Second, metaphor interpretation can benefit from RTP in terms of "explaining how hearers not only understand most metaphorical utterances, but typically understand them in the way the speaker intended" (Wilson 2011: 211).

Previous studies that have examined the metaphorical conceptualisation of sex-related issues in its strict sense include Odebunmi (2010), Crespo Fernández (2008), and Lakoff (1987: 409-415), while Pfaff, Gibbs and Johnson (1997), Murphy (2001), and Allan and Burridge (2006) are more generally concerned with the question of euphemisms, dysphemism and taboo-related issues, one of which is, of course, sex. Similarly, previous works on *Baba Segi* have examined metaphors of patriarchy and matriarchy (Olabanji 2012) therein, its stylistic features (Pam 2012), how its metaphors are interpreted based on Gricean pragmatics (Ezekulie 2014), and character stylistics (Idowu-Faith 2016). However, none of these studies have strictly investigated sex-construing metaphors in *Baba Segi* with combined theoretical insights from CMT and RTP, with the intention of specifying the interpretative route which readers are compelled to take in deriving relevant contextual implications, which are warranted by both the metaphorical input and the contextual assumptions of the socio-cultural context of the novel and the subversive, anti-sexist ideology of its author, among other encyclopaedic assumptions. The next section lays the theoretical foundation of the paper, which is followed by the methodology, the data analysis, and then the conclusion.

## 21.2 Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation of the study comprises Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Relevance-Theoretic Pragmatics.

### 21.2.1 Conceptual Theory of Metaphor

The theoretical assumptions of Conceptual Metaphor Theory were developed in the seminal work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980). It was developed within Cognitive Linguistics as an alternative to the Aristotelian perspective of metaphor, which considered the phenomenon as only a decorative use of language without any cognitive ramifications. The overriding current of the cognitive view of metaphor is that it is pervasive in human thought and everyday language and its use does not require any special talent or skill. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 153),

"[m]etaphor is primarily a matter of thought and action and only derivatively a matter of language". In other words, linguistic metaphors are merely surface manifestations of underlying conceptual metaphors, which are understood as mappings from one conceptual domain to another conceptual domain, for instance, between the domains of minds and machines, love relationships and journeys, or arguments and war.

Metaphor, from the cognitive view, is seen as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain. This can be conveniently captured as: CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN A IS CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN B. Kovecses (2010: 4) defines a conceptual domain as "any coherent organization of experience", and construes the relationship between concepts A and B as "a set of systematic correspondence between the source domain and the target domain in the sense that constituent conceptual elements of B correspond to constituent elements of A" (Kovecses 2010: 7). Conceptual metaphors employ, more often than not, an abstract concept as a target and a more concrete or physical domain as the source, as such metaphorical utterances are drawn from the concrete source domain to understand and express the abstract target domain. As an instance, in the conceptual metaphor EJACULATION IS FIRING AN ARM, a set of conceptual correspondences from the source domain of firearms (e.g., the rhythmic contraction of the trigger of a gun to deliver the impact by the hammer necessary for firing bullets, and the image of a firearm etc.) are systematically mapped onto the target domain of sex and ejaculation (i.e., the rhythmic contraction of the urethral bulb and penis to expel semen, etc. (Crooks & Baur 2010)). Therefore, the conceptual metaphors used in *Baba Segi* afford the characters the means of construing their sexual experiences, which are remote and complex, in more accessible and concrete terms. These metaphors also afford the author the creative tool to foreground her anti-sexist ideology.

Recall that we indicated above that the current trend in metaphor analysis is to follow a rigorous methodology in the identification of linguistic and conceptual metaphors respectively. One such procedure is the metaphor identification procedure (MIP) proposed by Pragglejaz Group (2007). Briefly, the basic thrust of MIP is that a linguistic item can be flagged as metaphorical in a given discourse context, if the meaning it gives off (its contextual meaning) is incongruous yet comparable to its basic meaning in other contexts, and the incongruity can be resolved by a cross-domain mapping (Steen et al. 2010). Furthermore, Krennmayr (2008) argues the need for dictionaries to be consulted by researchers when identifying metaphorically used words, as this will reduce reliance on intuition, and make for results that are more reliable. This is because

this methodology applies a consistent, verifiable approach to metaphor identification, and the procedure is further justified because of its similarity to the explicatural processes in RTP relative to metaphor interpretation. Thus, this paper reinterprets the process of metaphor identification in pragmatic terms, and this has the added advantage of indicating how the recipients are likely to interpret and comprehend the metaphors in question.

## *21.2.2 Relevance-Theoretic Pragmatics*

Relevance Theoretic Pragmatics (RTP) developed by Sperber and Wilson (1986) has its roots in the cognitive-philosophical strand of pragmatics. RTP is a response to two central claims in Gricean pragmatics namely:

1. "that an essential feature of most human communication is the expression and recognition of intentions", [and]
2. "that utterances automatically create expectations which guide the hearer toward the speaker's meaning" (Wilson and Sperber 2004: 607).

While Grice construes the expectations an utterance raises in terms of the Cooperative Principles and maxims of Quality (truthfulness), Quantity (informativeness), Relation (relevance) and Manner (clarity), RTP collapses these into the Cognitive Principle of Relevance and argues that the search for relevance is one of the basic features of human cognition. Furthermore, Wilson (2016: 3) argues that the other difference between core Gricean pragmatics and RTP is that "[the former] was mainly concerned with pragmatic factors affecting the identification of implicatures, whereas relevance theorists […] are equally concerned with pragmatic factors affecting the identification of explicit truth-conditional content".

RTP has two central claims that indicate how relevance works in cognition and communication and they are captured in terms of two principles: the **Cognitive Principle of Relevance** (human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance), and the **Communicative Principle of Relevance** (every act of overt intentional communication conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance). The Cognitive Principle of Relevance makes a number of predictions about the human cognitive system, chiefly that it tends to pay more attention to stimuli that are judged relevant, and as such, maximal attention is given to the more relevant stimulus among competing stimuli. This principle has some

implications for communication. For instance, a communicator who is aware of the Cognitive Principle of Relevance can intentionally produce a stimulus that is likely to attract the attention of his/her hearer, and guide such a hearer towards an intended conclusion. There are two layers of intentions in the preceding instance: first, the intention to inform the hearer of something, which is achieved by intentionally producing a stimulus; and second, the intention to inform the hearer of the intended information. This is the claim of the Communicative Principle of Relevance, which is that every act of intentional communication conveys the presumption of its own optimal relevance. Therefore, optimally relevant information is that which contributes maximally to the cognitive system at the lowest processing cost. Succinctly, an utterance is optimally relevant to a hearer if and only if it is relevant enough to be worth the hearer's processing effort; and it is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences (Wilson and Sperber 2004). Thus, relative to the literary text being considered, the author's subversive sexual metaphors are made optimally relevant to the readers who are compelled to recognise its anti-sexist, anti-patriarchal ideological implications, among other things.

**Relevance Theory and Metaphor**

Within RTP, metaphor is understood as an instance of loose language used in communication or as an interpretative representation of the speaker's thought. Sperber and Wilson (1986) make a distinction between descriptive and interpretative representations. While the former denotes the propositional form used to describe a state of affairs, the latter refers to a propositional form used to interpret another propositional form. This is where metaphor is steeped. A metaphorical expression, therefore, has a non-identical resemblance with the thought of the speaker. In other words, it is not literal, though it is useful, because it makes the speaker's thought more accessible to the hearer at a possibly lower processing cost. Apart from characterising metaphor as loose talk, RTP also describes metaphor in terms of implicatures, particularly weak ones relative to strong implicatures. While strong implicatures are those intended by the speaker to make his/her utterance relevant in an intended way, and which the hearer must recover, weak implicatures are strictly hearer-motivated and do not necessarily contribute to the satisfaction of the expectation of relevance raised by the utterance (Tendahl 2009). As a matter of fact, Sperber and Wilson (1986) opine that while conventional metaphors make for the recovery of one strong implicature and several weak implicatures, creative metaphors do not communicate any strong implicatures but a

range of weak implicatures, and "the cognitive effects achieved by conveying such a wide range of weak implicatures are identifiable as poetic effects" (Sperber and Wilson 2008: 100). This poetic effect is consistent with the subversive intent and ideological stance of the author of *Baba Segi*.

Furthermore, Carston (2002) presents a modified, elaborated account of metaphor analysis in RTP. The modifications include the introduction of the notion of an ad hoc concept and the fact that metaphors do communicate explicatures. Carston (2002) argues that the notion of "ad hoc concept" implies "that speakers can use a lexically encoded concept to communicate a distinct non-lexicalised (atomic) concept, which resembles the encoded one in that it shares elements of its logical and encyclopaedic entries, and that hearers can pragmatically infer the intended concept on the basis of the encoded one" (Carston 2002: 322). She further argues that being called ad hoc "reflects the fact that they are not linguistically given, but are constructed online (on the fly) in response to specific expectations of relevance raised in specific contexts" (Carston 2002: 322). An ad hoc concept may be broader or narrower than the encoded lexical concept (Carston 2002; Wilson 2011). In the case of broadening, the ad hoc concept constructed conveys a more general sense than the encoded meaning, while narrowing involves a pragmatic strengthening or tightening of a general concept to convey a more specific denotation, by selecting a subset of the information provided by the logical and encyclopaedic entries of the encoded concept for the construction of the ad hoc concept (Carston 2002). Carston (2002) argues that the construction of ad hoc concepts contributes to the derivation of the basic explicatures of an utterance which are mutually and continuously adjusted to the implicatures of that given utterance until the overall interpretation meets the hearer's expectation of relevance. Specifically, Wilson (2011) argues that "the idea that linguistic metaphors create new 'ad hoc' concepts has interesting implications for cognitive linguistics treatment of metaphor". These implications, as we would show presently, include: one, the idea that ad hoc concept constructions add an interpretative dimension to CMT metaphor identification procedure; and two, the fact that the pragmatic processes of narrowing and broadening implicated in metaphor interpretation equally apply to hyperbole and approximation, and as is the case with our data, metaphors tend to occur in textual proximity to hyperboles and approximation.

## 21.3 Methodology

The data for this paper were drawn from sex describing scenarios in *Baba Segi*. The novel by Lola Shoneyin is set in Nigeria, within the Yoruba culture of the domination of women and polygamy. We precisely focused on the sexual experiences and descriptions of six characters, namely Baba Segi's four wives: Bolanle, Iya Femi, Iya Tope and Iya Segi; his driver, Taju; and Baba Segi himself. Recall that the main thrust of the novel is the secret lives of Baba Segi's wives, and it is only fitting that attention is paid to their construal of sex. The sex-construing metaphors are classified into three: those that describe the sexual experiences between Baba Segi and his wives; those that construe the sexual experiences between three of Baba Segi's wives and their illicit lovers; and metaphors used to construe the male sex organ. The data are analysed with combined insights from CMT and RTP.

Furthermore, *Baba Segi* is a novel that treats the social and cultural challenges of both men and women as represented by a particular family. It reveals the troubles of polygamy which is one of the threats an African woman faces at the home front. It shows the politics at the home front, and gender in a society where there is a group called "men" and the "other" called "women". It also presents a correction of the distorted image of women by creating a woman who is the only educated among a pack of illiterates, yet stands out not by arrogance but by her ideals, morals and values, and is able to resist her husband's "torture" by hitting out at his weakness. The novel also reveals the politics between wives in a polygamous home, the possessive attitude of men, and the manipulative tendencies and domineering character of men.

This current metaphor analysis relies on rigorous protocols for determining metaphoricity, and one such protocol is MIP (Pragglejaz Group 2007), which has the following components:

1. Read the entire text-discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning.
2. Determine the lexical units in the text-discourse.
3. (a) For each lexical unit in the text, establish its meaning in context, that is, how it applies to an entity, relation, or attribute in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning). Take into account what comes before and after the lexical unit.
   (b) For each lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. For our purposes, basic meanings tend to be

- More concrete (what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste)
- Related to bodily action
- More precise (as opposed to vague)
- Historically older.

Basic meanings are not necessarily the most frequent meanings of the lexical unit.

(c) If the lexical unit has a more basic current-contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.

4. If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical (Pragglejaz Group 2007: 3).

This procedure is augmented by the explicatural processes of ad hoc concept constructions, which are then steeped in certain contextual assumptions to yield specific contextual implications.

## 21.4 Data Analysis

### 21.4.1 Metaphorical Construal of Sexual Relations between Baba Segi and Bolanle

In Example 1 below, Bolanle describes her sexual relations with Baba Segi. She is his fourth wife, a university graduate, who married Baba Segi so as to hide from the trauma of her having been raped as a teenager.

**Example 1**
It must have been my vulnerability that aroused him because **he returned at midnight to hammer me like never before**. He emptied his testicles as deep into my womb as possible. It was as if he wanted to make it clear with every thrust that he didn't make light of his husbandly duties*. **He wanted to fuck me pregnant.** If there was ever a moment when the memory of being raped became fresh in my mind, that was it (*Baba Segi* 43-44, emphasis mine).

Bolanle says that Baba Segi "returned at midnight to hammer me like never before", and the metaphorically interesting word is "hammer", which realises the conceptual metaphor SEX (WITH BABA SEGI) IS A VIOLENT ACTIVITY, precisely because "to hammer" someone sexually prototypically implies violence. The metaphoricity of the utterance "he

returned at midnight to hammer me like never before" is lodged in the lexical concept "hammer". The encoded meaning of the word "hammer" is the concept of HAMMER$_1$, which is defined by the Oxford Dictionary[1] as repeatedly hitting something, especially with a HAMMER$_2$, a tool with a head for mainly driving in nails and beating metal. What Bolanle intends to communicate by the use of "hammer" is not the lexical meaning of to HAMMER$_1$, but an ad hoc concept with a broader meaning, which includes mechanical tools and their uses plus humans and sex. The constructed ad hoc concept, to HAMMER*, therefore, denotes to hit repeatedly and violently at the female genital with the male organ, which implicates that Baba Segi is sexually violent or forceful, and that Bolanle feels she is being raped. These contextual implications are further warranted by the author's anti-sexist ideology, which is poised to expose how men exploit women sexually.

There is yet another explicature of the encoded concept HAMMER, which can be constructed ad hoc. It relates to the idiomatic sense of the concept to HAMMER$_3$. As an idiom, to HAMMER$_3$ is to impress on someone's mind by constant, forceful repetition or to make something clearly and fully understood by the use of repeated and forcefully direct arguments. This implies that the recipient of the argument is projected as one who would otherwise not accept the position of the speaker. The ad hoc concept constructed from this meaning is that Baba Segi HAMMERS** Bolanle, by repeatedly and forcefully thrusting his penis into her, as a means of stating forcefully and clearly his intention to get Bolanle pregnant. As a matter of fact, Bolanle's utterance warrants the foregoing claim: "It was as if he wanted to make it clear with every thrust that he didn't make light of his husbandly duties. He wanted to fuck me pregnant". The corresponding implicature is that Bolanle is responsible for the childlessness that has plagued her marriage, and Baba Segi intends to make it clear that "he didn't make light of his husbandly duties". Every thrust represents an argument, an attempt to make his intention fully understood, and Bolanle corresponds to an unwilling or stubborn partner, one who seems unwilling or unable to get pregnant. This forceful thrusting also realises the conceptual metaphor, SEX (WITH BABA SEGI) IS A VIOLENT ACTIVITY. However, in this case, the violence highlighted is not bodily, as denoted by the first "ad hoc" concept, to HAMMER*, it is psychological, to the mind; and as such Bolanle states that "If there was ever a moment when the memory of being raped became fresh in my mind, that was it". Bolanle correlates sex with Baba Segi, her husband, to

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[1] All definitions in this section are taken from www.oxforddictionaries.com.

being "raped", a powerful image that reinforces the violence inherent in her copulating with her husband. The ad hoc concept to HAMMER** therefore informs the contextual implications that Baba Segi believes or fears that Bolanle may possibly be barren, and desperately wants to get her pregnant, by whatever means, while Bolanle feels raped. The writer's creative juxtaposition of Bolanle copulating with her husband and her traumatic rape experience speaks to the issue of sexual violence both within and outside the home.

A theoretically interesting question would be to establish the origin of the metaphorical expression "he returned at midnight to hammer me like never before". Is it indeed a surface realisation of the conceptual metaphor SEX (WITH BABA SEGI) IS A VIOLENT ACTIVITY? In what way(s) can the progression from the linguistic to the conceptual metaphor be established? Is the metaphorical expression a matter of linguistic communication, a loose form used to communicate the complex thoughts about a sex experience? If that is the case, does the expression necessarily reflect an underlying conceptual metaphor? These questions are at the heart of the complementary approach to metaphor analysis (Gibbs and Tendahl 2006, 2008; Wilson 2011; Tseng 2014). First, it can be argued that the linguistic expression in (1) above is a realisation of the conceptual metaphor SEX (WITH BABA SEGI) IS A VIOLENT ACTIVITY, precisely because the metaphorically used words "to hammer" carry violent connotations, such that describing sexual intercourse with Baba Segi as being hammered activates other possible cognitive associations between the source and target domain, namely: Baba Segi is the perpetrator, Bolanle is the victim, and the penis is the weapon or "tool to attack, injure or kill" (cf. Crespo Fernández 2008: 106). Taken together, therefore, this network of cognitive correspondences constitutes the conceptual metaphor. In other words, sex as a violent activity correlates sex with Baba Segi with a violent crime with these specific correspondences: Baba Segi as the perpetrator of the violent crime, Bolanle as the victim of the violent crime, and Baba Segi's penis as the weapon used in committing the violent crime. In fact, these correspondences are further warranted by the fact that Bolanle's sexual experience with her husband activates her memory of being raped, which is an instance of violent crime.

Second, the progression from the linguistic evidence "to hammer" to the conceptual metaphor analysed above shows a step-by-step approach to metaphor identification akin to the MIP proposed in Pragglejaz Group (2007: 3). They state that in order to establish the metaphoricity of a word, the contextual meaning of that word should be distinct, yet comparable to

its basic meaning(s), which should be "more concrete (what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste), related to bodily action, more precise (as opposed to vague) [and/or] historically older" (Pragglejaz Group, 2007: 3). The explicatural procedure of the construction of ad hoc concepts implemented above throws more light into the inner workings of MIP. Wilson (2011: 197), while advancing the complementary potentials of RTP for CMT, argues that "[A]ccording to relevance theory, hearers understand linguistic metaphors by using linguistic and contextual clues to create 'ad hoc' (occasion-specific) concepts, which are typically not identical to any of the concepts linguistically encoded by the metaphorically used word or phrase, although they inherit some of their inferential properties from those concepts". In other words, metaphorically used words create occasion-specific concepts which are distinct from, yet comparable to, the linguistic encoded concept or literal words. As such, the expression "to hammer" triggers the construction of an ad hoc concept which denotes the use of the penis much the same way one uses a hammer to hit repeatedly at an object, but in the case of (1) above, the object is the soft tissues of Bolanle's vagina, and this has a strong possibility of causing physical injuries. There is indeed evidence that it caused her psychological injuries because the memory of her being raped is activated during this sexual intercourse. Thus, "to hammer" is a linguistic metaphor that realises the SEX (WITH BABA SEGI) IS A VIOLENT ACTIVITY conceptual metaphor, and the journey from the linguistic to the conceptual benefits from the combined insights of CMT and RTP.

The third issue relates to whether the metaphorical expression(s) in (1) was (were) used by the author to meet communicative or pragmatic needs rather than (or in addition) to the cognitive function indicated above. It can be observed that the writer progresses from a metaphor to a hyperbole/an approximation, and then to a literal, dysphemistic description of the sexual activity of Bolanle with Baba Segi. The metaphoric dimension is represented by the semi-lexicalised alternative to copulating: "to hammer", which may be either a euphemism or a dysphemism depending on the context (cf. Crespo Fernández 2008: 107). The hyperbolic/approximation dimension is indicated by the sentence, "He emptied his testicles as deep into my womb as possible". The lexical item of interest here is the verb "emptied". When Bolanle says Baba Segi "*emptied* his testicles as deep into my womb as possible", she constructs an ad hoc concept that is broader than the lexically encoded EMPTY, because strictly speaking, it is not possible for the ejaculatory fluid to be completely emptied out. Thus, the ad hoc concept EMPTY* is exploited to loosely say that Baba Segi ensured that there was enough semen to make

Bolanle pregnant. In other words, the concept EMPTY* means "close enough to EMPTY for her to be pregnant". This is a case of approximation, and Wilson (2011) argues that "approximation shades off imperceptibly into hyperbole" (cf. Wilson 2011: 200-202). The hyperbole plays out when Bolanle states that Baba Segi "emptied *his testicles as deep into my womb as possible*". Biologically speaking, it is impossible for a man to deposit his semen directly into the uterus during an ejaculation (Suarez & Pacey 2006). The improbability or exaggeration in the expression is weakened by the approximation inherent in the lexical items "as deep…as possible", which illustrates the point that there is "no sharp cut-off point between approximation and hyperbole" (Wilson 2011: 200). Thus, Bolanle uses the expression to implicate the desperation of her husband to get her pregnant, and this contextual implication is warranted by the explicature: "He [Baba Segi] emptied [EMPTY*] his testicles [a metonym for semen] as deep into my womb [a euphemism for vagina] as possible".

The literal dimension is evident in the utterance "He wanted to fuck me pregnant". The word "fuck" is a dysphemistic alternative to copulating through which the most pejorative traits of the taboo are highlighted with an offensive aim to the addressee or to the concept itself (Crespo Fernández 2008: 96). In other words, the writer's use of "fuck" is a defiance against the Yoruba socio-cultural constraint on explicitly describing sexual intercourse (cf. Odebunmi 2010). In fact, Alaba (2004: 7) states clearly that "[V]erbal expressions of sexuality come, as a rule, in euphemisms", and this rule is violated by the writer. This dysphemistic attitude of the writer, her deliberate offensive posture, underscores her subversive ideology. The author's choice of "fuck" is transgressive and "an act of revolution" (Jegede 2011: 214). As a matter of fact, the writer in (1) above provides alternative conceptualisations of sex which appear to be increasingly offensive, abusive and violent. For instance, the metaphor "to hammer" could pass as euphemistic, and the use of "testicles" as a metonym for "semen", as well as the use of "womb" instead of "vagina" could also pass as euphemistic. However, as one reads further, the dysphemistic, offensive and transgressive tone begins to emerge in the use of the explicit "fuck" and the disturbing image of "rape". Through this transgressive choice, the author shames the patriarchal order that equals the strength of a man with his ability to impregnate a woman, or more offensively "fuck" her pregnant, and matches the worth of a woman with her ability to bear children, and encourages both parties to use whatever means necessary to achieve this goal. Thus, in response to whether the metaphor in (1) above is used by the author for pragmatic reasons rather

than (or in addition to) the cognitive function of structuring the sex experience of Bolanle with her husband, we argue that it is not an "either… or" case but a "both…and", which reiterates the complementary position. A pragmatic exploration of conceptual metaphor in the data aids an assessment of the implicatures generated by the metaphor to reinforce the analysis of hyperbole, approximation, literal usage, euphemism and dysphemism, coupled with the analysis of the socio-cultural, ideological contexts of (1) above.

## 21.4.2 Metaphorical Construal of Sexual Relations between Iya Femi, Baba Segi and his Sexual Organ

Example 2 is Iya Femi's construal of her sexual experience with Baba Segi and a description of his sexual organ. She is the third wife.

**Example 2**
After a night with Baba Segi, **the stomach is beaten into the chest by that baton that dangles between his legs** (*Baba Segi* 50, emphasis mine).

Iya Femi describes sex with Baba Segi as having her stomach beaten into her chest with a baton. Two conceptual metaphors emerge from this construal: SEX (WITH BABA SEGI) IS A VIOLENT ACTIVITY and THE PENIS IS A BATON or superordinately, THE PENIS IS A WEAPON. The metaphoricity of the utterance in (2) is located in the lexical item "baton". The lexical or basic meaning of BATON is a short thick stick used as a weapon, especially by the police. From the context, it is obvious Iya Femi is referring to BATON*, which she uses to loosely describe Baba Segi's penis, which is the contextual meaning of BATON according to MIP (Pragglejaz Group 2007: 3). The lexical pragmatic process involved in the construction of the ad hoc concept BATON* is approximation (Wilson 2011). In other words, she approximates her husband's penis to a BATON*, that is, it is close enough to a BATON to be used as a weapon—a weapon located in between his legs for delivering sexual blows that BEAT* the stomach to the chest. In order to arrive at this interpretation, the ad hoc concepts of BATON* and BEAT* are constructed with inputs from the two conceptual metaphors analysed above and adjusted pragmatically through broadening (cf. Wilson 2011). When the explicated concepts are steeped in the contextual assumption of the author's feministic ideological stance, and the intertextual context of (1) above, the following implicatures are derived,

namely: Baba Segi is sexually aggressive; and sex with Baba Segi is traumatic.

The next example is also by Iya Femi. Here she describes Baba Segi's penis and the manner he uses it relative to her illicit lover's. A quick thing to also note in (3) below is that Iya Femi uses the tabooed word "penis" as she describes her husband's genitals, which is not socio-culturally compliant: names of sexual organs are not mentioned directly. For instance, the female organ is referred to as *oju ara obinrin* (lit. "the eye of a woman's body") while the male organ is called *nnkan omokunrin* (lit. "a man's thing"), see Alaba (2004: 11). The dysphemistic attitude, which is designed to offend the cultural sensibilities of the Yoruba people, is consistent with the author's ideological context as well as the textual context of the narrative of Baba Segi's sexuality, precisely his wives' ridicule of his manhood. Thus, while the writer ridicules the macro-cultural setting that privileges patriarchy, male dominance and sexual violence, the characters, particularly Baba Segi's wives, in the micro-context of the text, shame and undermine their husband's personality and sexuality. The ridiculing intention of Iya Femi is further strengthened by the hyperbolic description of Baba Segi's penis as "so big that two men could share it and still be well endowed". The unusual size of Baba Segi's penis would mean that its use would be clumsy, and which is why she describes it being used like a hammer "gbam-gbam-gbam". Here, we see how "hyperbole shades off imperceptibly into metaphor" (Wilson 2011: 201). As a matter of fact, we have observed, in the analyses of the examples so far, that metaphor tends to occur in the textual context of hyperbole and approximation, and this is consistent with the thesis of RTP, which asserts that metaphors are "simply a range of cases at one end of a continuum that includes literal, loose and hyperbolic interpretations" (Sperber and Wilson 2008: 84).

**Example 3**
It was good to have him back between my thighs, especially after two nights with Baba Segi, **whose penis was so big that two men could share it and still be well endowed. Where he used his, gbam-gbam-gbam, like a hammer, Tunde used his like a forefinger**; he bent and turned it until it stroked all the right places (*Baba Segi* 132, emphasis mine).

Furthermore, the metaphorical utterances in (3) above are used to describe the genitals of Baba Segi and Tunde respectively and how they use them. The conceptual metaphors for the organs are THE PENIS IS A HAMMER, and THE PENIS IS A FOREFINGER, which are realised by

comparing the basic meanings of "hammer" and "forefinger" and their contextual meanings in (3). It is the contextual, metaphorical interpretations that Iya Femi intends to communicate, and this is done through broadening the concepts of HAMMER (a hand tool consisting of a shaft with a metal head at right angles to it, used for driving in nails and beating metals) and FOREFINGER (the finger next to the thumb) to communicate a certain idea. These broadened concepts are HAMMER* (a large fleshy, muscular organ, or shaft, composed principally of erectile tissue with a head called the *glans penis*) and FOREFINGER* (a thin fleshy, muscular organ, or shaft, composed principally of erectile tissue), which are constructed as the metaphorical utterances are processed. She further describes how the two men use their organs during sexual intercourse and this foregrounds the following implicatures: while Baba Segi is sexually unskilled and clumsy, Tunde is sexually skilled and efficient; and while Baba Segi's organ is large, Tunde's is small and handy. These implicatures satisfy the reader's search for relevance, as this is what is made optimally relevant in the larger text in 3 (cf. Wilson 2016).

Another conceptual metaphor activated by (3) above is SEX IS PLEASURABLE, which is indicated by the linguistic metaphors "It was good to have him back between my thighs" and "he bent and turned it until it stroked all the right places". These metaphors set up systematic correspondences between sex and a pleasurable scratch: the itch is the sexual desire, the finger is the penis, the stroking or scratching is the intercourse, and the satisfaction and pleasure from the stroking is the orgasm. It is equally interesting to note the euphemism at play in Iya Femi's conceptualisation of her illicit relations with Tunde. She describes the intercourse as being "stroked [in] all the right places", and this mitigates the offensive nature of the alternative taboo term (cf. Crespo Fernández 2008), and makes the affair, if not acceptable, then excusable to the reader, and the larger socio-cultural milieu. The mitigating thesis is further accentuated by the juxtaposition of her relations with Baba Segi, which is aggressive, violent, painful and unsatisfactory with the good feeling of satisfaction she gets from Tunde.

### 21.4.3 Metaphorical Construal of Sexual Relations between Iya Tope, Baba Segi and her Lover

Example 4 is Iya Tope's construal of her sexual experience with Baba Segi. She is his second wife. In (4) she describes her sexual experience with Baba Segi and compares it with that of her illicit lover, the meat seller.

**Example 4**

For four years, that was how I lived: three days of **pummelling from Baba Segi and a day of healing from the meat seller**. Those afternoons were worth life itself and it was not until one morning, after I'd given birth to Motun, my third daughter, that I realised how little of life remained outside those afternoons (*Baba Segi* 86, emphasis mine).

The conceptual metaphors that underscore the emboldened utterance in (4) above are SEX (WITH BABA SEGI) IS A VIOLENT ACTIVITY and SEX IS HEALING and their metaphoricity lies in the lexical items "pummelling" and "healing". Iya Tope construes her sexual experience with Baba Segi as PUMMELLING, which has the basic meaning of hitting something or someone with repeated blows, especially using the fists with the intention of causing serious damage to it/them. Her intended meaning is not the encoded concept of PUMMELLING, but an ad hoc concept of PUMMELLING* which denotes using the penis to repeatedly strike at and into the vagina to the extent of causing serious damage to it, and emotional damage to the female partner. Here again, like (1) above, the mappings of sex as a violent activity has the following correspondences: Baba Segi as the perpetrator of a violent act/crime, Iya Tope as the victim of this violent act/crime, and Baba Segi's penis as the weapon used in the violent act/crime. Conversely, Iya Tope construes her relations with the meat seller as "healing". The encoded concept HEALING has the following meanings, namely: the process of curing or becoming well, having the effect of curing or improving something, to repair or rectify something that causes discord, to get rid of a wrong, evil, or painful affliction. It is from this ordered array of assumptions (cf. Wilson 2011: 205-206) that the ad hoc concept of HEALING* is constructed, which is to cure sexually, and especially, emotionally. That is why she construes her sexual experience with the meat seller as healing, which implicates that the meat seller is a more sensitive, gentle and efficient sexual partner: more sensitive to her emotional needs and gentler and more efficient in the act of sex itself. The pummelling metaphor provides the background needed for the foregrounding of her sexual experience with her illicit lover, which she describes as "healing". Recall the juxtaposition strategy we indicated above in the analysis of (3). We argued that in order to euphemise the illicit affairs Baba Segi's wives have, the writer tends to place Baba Segi's aggressive sex style within the textual proximity of their illicit lovers' more affectionate lovemaking style, which is then hyperbolised. For instance, Iya Tope says that her intercourse with the meat seller "were worth life itself", and how she

"realised how little of life remained outside those afternoons". This strategy of juxtaposition and exaggeration has the pragmatic effect of accentuating the negative characteristic of Baba Segi and centralising the positive characteristics of the illicit lovers, which, by extension, positively characterises the illicit affair. Furthermore, the author's feministic ideology manifests in the choice of the characters of Baba Segi's wives' lovers. For instance, the meat seller in comparison to Baba Segi is a "nobody"; yet in order to ridicule Baba Segi, who is the quintessential embodiment of the sexist, patriarchal ideology, the author makes the meat seller the one who provides sexual healing for Iya Tope, and thus the more desirable of the two men.

## 21.4.4 Metaphorical Construal of Sexual Relations between Taju and Iya Segi

The next example is Taju's description of his sexual experiences with Iya Segi. Taju is Baba Segi's driver, while Iya Segi is Baba Segi's first wife. The instance is one of the three descriptions of his sexual intercourse with Iya Segi, and since the metaphor he uses is consistent, it will suffice to analyse one to avoid redundancy.

**Example 5**
I was a little frivolous in those days but what else would you expect from a young man who didn't own an armchair? Instead of chiding me, she asked me to remain in the chair and laughed. **Next thing I knew, she was sitting on top of me riding me like a horse** (*Baba Segi* 222, emphasis mine).

The metaphorical utterance in (5) realises the conceptual metaphor SEX IS HORSE-RIDING. Crespo Fernández (2008: 104) discusses a similar metaphor and states that it is the woman who is referred to as the horse, while the man is the rider, who mounts her. Crespo Fernández (2008) interprets the sex-as-horse-riding metaphor as an "expression of disrespect toward women, who are depicted as less than human, and confers on the man a position of control and dominance over the female sexual partner". The current instance runs contrary to Crespo Fernández's (2008) interpretation as Taju, the man, is the horse and Iya Segi, the woman, is the rider who mounts him. This reversal is extremely motivated by the subversive, feminist ideology of the author. For instance, by making Iya Segi "ride Taju like a horse", she empowers the woman and gives her domination and control over the man. This is the ultimate goal of the author's ideology, which is the reversal or the undermining of the sexist,

patriarchal order that empowers the man and marginalises the woman. Furthermore, the conceptual mappings are from the domain of horse-riding to the target domain of sexual activities, which include the rhythmic movement of horse-riding as the horse gallops and the wild and wonderful feeling such galloping brings.

Now to the pragmatic interpretation of the metaphorical utterance, the encoded concept RIDING has the following assumptions attached to it: the sport or hobby of sitting on a horse and controlling it as it moves along, and the act of travelling on an animal or a vehicle; while a HORSE refers to a four-legged animal with a mane, tail, hooves and a long head. Of course, Taju is not a literal horse and neither is Iya Segi riding him in the basic sense of the word. Therefore, comprehending Taju's metaphorical utterance involves constructing the ad hoc concept, RIDING A HORSE\*, which is broader as its denotation includes both horses and humans.

## 21.4.5 Metaphorical Construal of Sexual Relations between Baba Segi and Bolanle

The last example to be analysed is Baba Segi's construal of his sexual experience with Bolanle. Baba Segi is one of the central characters of the novel, while Bolanle is the other. The narrative is woven around these two as they search for a solution to Bolanle's seeming incurable barrenness, a process which unearths the secrets and illicit affairs of Baba Segi's other wives, and reveals that Baba Segi is sterile.

**Example 6**
He frowned. It annoyed him that Bolanle was the reason he had come, when just two years before, **he had boasted of his conquest**: how Bolanle was tight as a bottleneck, **how he pounded her until she was cross-eyed**; and how she took the length of his manhood on her back splayed out and submissive (*Baba Segi* 4).

The conceptual base for the metaphorical utterance in (6) is the SEX IS WAR metaphor, which Fernández (2008: 103) describes as having the following correspondences "the lover is the enemy, to seduce the sexual partner is to overcome an enemy, the penis is a weapon". The metaphor is conveyed by the word *conquest*. The encoded meaning of CONQUEST includes: **a**. subjugating or defeating an enemy, **b**. acquiring something through force of arms, **c**. someone won over through strength of character or seduction for the purposes of love or sex, **d**. an act of

successfully gaining control of something difficult or dangerous. To construct the ad hoc concept CONQUEST*, these assumptions inform the process. Another ad hoc concept CONQUEST** can be constructed from assumption **d:** an act of successfully gaining control of something difficult or dangerous. In the African/Nigerian context, an educated woman is considered difficult to control and very dangerous, and for an educated woman such as Bolanle to be conquered, especially sexually by Baba Segi, an illiterate, is indeed a conquest.

The other sex-construing item in (6) is the word *pounded.* Baba Segi describes his sexual relations with Bolanle as pounding, which realises the conceptual metaphor SEX (WITH BABA SEGI) IS A VIOLENT ACTIVITY. To POUND has the following meanings: **a.** to strike something hard and repeatedly, **b**. to beat something or someone to a pulp, **c.** to bombard a place constantly with bombs and heavy guns, **d.** to teach by repetition. The ad hoc concept communicated by Baba Segi's POUND* contains the information in **a** to **d,** and can imply that he struck hard and repeatedly into Bolanle's genitals with his large penis to the extent that she looked like somebody who had been seriously beaten ("until she was cross-eyed... on her back splayed out and submissive"), with the intention of making it clear to her that he wanted to get her pregnant. The ad hoc concept is therefore broader than the encoded concept. The implicatures generated by the interpretation are that Baba Segi is sexually violent, and he is desperate to get Bolanle pregnant. Furthermore, he is proud of his sexual prowess. Ironically, in spite of the violence, the force, and the sexual prowess of Baba Segi, at the end of the novel, it is clear that he is sterile! This is the overall point of *Baba Segi*, which is the ridiculing of sexism, patriarchy and the socio-cultural norms that promote man over woman.

## 21.5 Conclusion

The paper has considered sex-construing metaphors in *Baba Segi* combining insights from Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Relevance-Theoretic Pragmatics. The central conceptual metaphor is SEX (WITH BABA SEGI) IS A VIOLENT ACTIVITY, and has the following mappings: Baba Segi is the perpetrator of a violent act/crime, Baba Segi's wives are the victims of his violent act/crime, and Baba Segi's penis is the weapon used in perpetrating the violent act/crime. Additionally, when the conceptual metaphor is explicated, it conveys the implicatures that Baba Segi is sexually violent, aggressive, rough, lacks affection towards his wives, and is desperate to get Bolanle pregnant. The conceptual metaphors

that underscore the sexual relations between Baba Segi's wives and their lovers stand in direct contrast with that of Baba Segi. These alternative metaphors emphasise the affectionate and pleasurable dimensions of sexual relations. The specific contributions of this paper include the fact that metaphor identification and understanding depend as much on conceptual associations manifested through lexical meanings in dictionaries (Krennmayr 2008) as on pragmatic calculations based on contextual information, and the fact that metaphoric expressions tend to co-occur with hyperboles and approximations. Furthermore, the paper has implications for gender studies because the analysis shows how the metaphoric expressions in *Baba Segi* underscore the subversive ideology of the author, such that the euphemistic and dysphemistic alternatives to taboo concepts are deployed pragmatically to suit the author's intention and ideological stance. Thus, metaphors can be manipulated to highlight the ills of male dominance and to de-emphasise possible negative characteristics of feministic revolt.

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CHAPTER 22

POLITENESS OF BEGGING EVENTS
IN NORTHERN NIGERIA:
THE KADUNA METROPOLIS EXAMPLE

JOEL OLATUNDE AYODABO

## Abstract

*Begging is a universal social phenomenon that is not defined by indices of race, culture or gender. Rather, it could be a product of a number of social, medical and psychological circumstances. In this paper, Brown and Levinson's theories of "politeness" and "face" form the background for the examination of begging events in the Kaduna metropolis of northern Nigeria. The overall aims are to examine the politeness strategies being employed by beggars, and to identify the speech acts performed by the utterances of the beggars. A research assistant was used to move around the Kaduna metropolis to collect data through recording of some begging events. The study revealed that beggars of all categories began their events by calling their targets status-related names. They followed that by exploiting the factor of religion by mentioning the name of God, in different forms. They then say different prayer forms, before lastly making requests that were stated either overtly or covertly. The conclusion is that the knowledge of pragmatic mappings such as common ground, CP, presupposition, implicature and inference is critical to utterance processing in begging events.*

Keywords: *Beggars; funders; prospective givers; linguistic cues; politeness strategies*

## 22.1 Introduction

Analysing discourse is in the realm of text linguistics. Scholars and researchers have done considerable work in analysing religious and classroom greetings, hospital and radio programmes, and casual talk genres, but the focus of this paper is the genre of begging, which is a universal phenomenon.

In this paper, therefore, linguistic cues which beggars use in their begging events are examined within the purview of politeness. Here, a particular instance of begging is considered as a speech event. Five speech events were purposively selected in the Hausa (4) and English (1) languages to cover different categories of beggars. These are the physically challenged, the aged beggars who sit in particular spots, the *Alimajiri*, and those classified as "executive" beggars (well-dressed men and women), who tell stories of misfortune to extort money from unsuspecting people.

Data were collected over a period of three months (March to May 2013) within the Kaduna metropolis, the common ground being that whatever was obtainable in Kaduna, a cosmopolitan city, could be said to be fairly representative of the wider situation in northern Nigeria and, possibly, elsewhere in Nigeria and even beyond. The utterances have been glossed into intelligible English, for uniform analysis.

## 22.2 Politeness and Face Maintenance

The best known and most widely used approach to the study of politeness is the framework introduced by Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson in *Questions and Politeness*, reissued with corrections as *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Brown and Levinson's theory of linguistic politeness is sometimes referred to as the "'face-saving' theory of politeness".

In one sense, all politeness can be viewed as a deviation from maximally efficient communication, or as a violation of Grice's conversational maxims. To perform an act other than in the most clear and efficient manner possible is to implicate some degree of politeness on the part of the speaker.

Brown and Levinson have listed three "sociological variables" that speakers employ in choosing the degree of politeness to use, and in calculating the amount of threat to their own face: (i) the social distance of the speaker and hearer (D); (ii) the relative "power" of the speaker over the hearer (P); and (iii) the absolute ranking of impositions in the

particular culture (R). The greater the social distance between the interlocutors, the more politeness is generally expected. The greater the (perceived) relative power of hearer over speaker, the more politeness is recommended. The heavier the imposition made on the hearer (the more of their time required, or the greater the favour requested), the more politeness will generally have to be used.

Attempts have been made to distinguish between positive and negative politeness. Both types of politeness involve maintaining positive and negative face, where positive face is defined as the addressee's perennial desire that his wants should be thought of as desirable, and negative face as the addressee's "want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded" (Brown and Levinson 1978/1987: 129).

Positive politeness strategies are intended to avoid giving offence by highlighting friendliness. These strategies include juxtaposing criticism with compliments, establishing common ground, and using jokes, nicknames, honorifics, tag questions, special discourse markers, and in-group jargon and slang. Negative politeness strategies, on the other hand, are intended to avoid giving offence by showing deference. These strategies include questioning, hedging, and presenting disagreements as opinions. This theory of politeness has become the model against which every research on politeness defines itself.

Central to Brown and Levinson's theory is the concept of face. Face has been defined as something that is emotionally invested, and face can be *lost*, *maintained* or *enhanced* and it must be constantly *attended to* in interaction. Politeness can be either positive politeness or negative politeness, and both strategies are tied to the importance of face in every culture. They define "face" as the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself. In other words, "face wants" may consist of negative or positive face. When speakers appeal to positive face wants, they employ positive politeness language that emphasises in-group identity, shows concern, and seeks areas of agreement. Expressions of compliments typically represent characteristic positive politeness strategies.

When speakers appeal to negative face wants, they use negative politeness strategies that seek to reduce any imposition. Further, in most situations, everyone seeks to maintain each other's face. Thus, communicating effectively involves saving face both for the speaker (S) and the addressee (H) or the speaker and the hearer. Certain acts can damage or threaten another person's face, and these acts are referred to as face-threatening acts (FTAs). An FTA has the potential to damage the hearer's positive or negative face or the act may damage the speaker's own positive or

negative face. In order to reduce the possibility of damage to the hearer's or the speaker's face, one may adopt certain strategies; these strategies are called politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson 1978/1987: 65). Politeness strategies can be divided into four main strategies: Bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record strategies.

Being polite therefore consists of attempting to save face for another. All cultures have face, and all cultures maintain face in different ways. However, understanding cultural norms of politeness enables communicators to make strong predictions about communicating effectively within a culture. The functions include avoiding embarrassing the other person or making them feel uncomfortable. These underlie the type of strategy that a beggar employs in a particular begging event.

Although there are several works on politeness systems, there is a dimension, as introduced by Scollon and Scollon (1995: 99), who believe and state that specific factors influence the adoption of strategies. They categorise the face relationships into three politeness systems, namely deference, solidarity and hierarchical. These politeness systems are considered important to this work on begging events.

The first system is the *Deference Politeness System.* In this model, the interlocutors see themselves at the same social level with no interlocutor exerting power over the other (-Power), but with a distant relationship (+Distance). As a result, both interlocutors use independence strategies, including expressions that minimise threat to avoid the risk of losing face.

The second is the *Solidarity Politeness System*. In this model, interlocutors see themselves as being of equal social position (-Power) and with a close relationship (-Distance); in this system, the interlocutors use involvement strategies to assume or express reciprocity or to claim a common point of view.

The third is the *Hierarchical Politeness System*. Here, one participant is in a superordinate position (+Power), and the other is subordinate (Power). In this asymmetrical system, where the relationship may be closer or more distant (-Distance or + Distance), Scollon and Scollon (1995: 101) have observed that while the participant with higher power may use "involvement strategies", the participant in a lower position may employ "independence strategies" to minimise threat or to show respect to the interlocutor.

## 22.3 The Art of Begging

Begging, according to Dromi (2012: 851), is the practice of imploring others to grant a favour, often a gift of money, with little or no expectation of reciprocation. Beggars may be found in public places such as transport routes, urban parks, restaurants and busy markets. Besides money, they may also ask for food or other small items. Beggars have existed in human society for as long as human history has recorded. Begging has remained in most societies around the world, though its prevalence and exact form may vary. According to Jackson J. Spielvogel (2008: 566),

> Poverty was a highly visible problem in the eighteenth century, both in cities and in the countryside... Beggars in Bologna were estimated at 25 per cent of the population; in Mainz, figures indicate that 30 per cent of the people were beggars or prostitutes... In France and Britain by the end of the century, an estimated 10 per cent of the people depended on charity or begging for their food.

Perhaps cognisant of the social consequence of the above scenario, "Aggressive panhandling" has been specifically prohibited by law in various jurisdictions in the United States and Canada. This is a term typically defined as persistent or intimidating begging (Johnson 2008). Because of concerns that people begging on the street may use the money to support alcohol or drug abuse, government authorities in the United States and Canada have advised those wishing to give to beggars to give gift cards or vouchers for food or services, and not cash. Some shelters also offer business cards with information on the shelter's location and services, which can be given in lieu of cash (Malanga 2008: 69).

Begging has been restricted or prohibited at various times and for various reasons, typically revolving around a desire to preserve public order or to induce people to work rather than to beg for economic or moral reasons (Bunyan 2008: 22). Various European *Poor Laws* prohibited or regulated begging from the *Renaissance* to modern times, with varying levels of effectiveness and enforcement. This is the situation in Lagos and, very recently, in the Kano States of Nigeria, with varying levels of effectiveness and enforcement. Some other state governments are now trying to clear beggars off the major streets.

The art of begging is an anti-social act which involves both verbal, and sometimes, non-verbal acts. The dialogue may involve two or more people as speaker(s) and hearer(s), and the hearer is not bound to use verbal language to communicate his cooperation or otherwise. Where the hearer does not use verbal language but reacts through body language,

responding by giving out money, or waving off the beggar in an "I-don't-have-money-to-give" manner, a macro speech act can be said to have been performed.

In the art of begging in Nigeria, there is the use of in-group language or dialect. There is also the dimension of code-mixing and code-switching when a beggar is not sure of the language a prospective giver speaks. The phenomenon of code-switching involves any switch from one language or dialect to another in communities where the linguistic repertoire includes two or more such codes. It may also simply involve switching from one language to another, in bilingual or multilingual communities.

At times, in-group identity markers such as genealogical address forms are used, or other generic names. This is common among professional praise singers, panegyric chanters, and singers and drummers who perform to solicit people for money. In Yoruba communities, and perhaps elsewhere, address forms such as *aponbepore* (the one who is as red as red oil), *owurubutu* (someone whose fatness is moderate and befitting), *akuruyejo* (someone whose short stature rhymes with dancing steps), *aguntasoolu* (someone whose physical height matches his dress), are used by praise singers or "executive beggars" to describe human features in positive ways to attract the doling out of money by the people so praised or described. When one dresses well in any social function, such professional praise singers address one as *akowe* or *oga* (the learned or master), all in a way to massage your ego. This is an indirect way of begging for alms.

Beggars of all categories employ both strategies of "Direct and Literal Communication" as well as "Non-literal Communication" (Akmajian, Demers, Farmer and Harnish 2008: 388). There are many ways of beginning a conversation or other talk exchange. According to Akmajian et al. (2008: 389), "One is to start with no preliminaries whatsoever…. Another is to preface our remarks with an *opening*". For instance, various attention-getters (called *vocatives*) are used at the beginning of a conversation, such as "Hey", "Hey, John", "Excuse me", and "Say..." (Akmajian et al. 2008: 389). They go on to state that:

> Once we have the hearer's attention, we might then use a conversational parenthetical such as "You know," "Listen," "Know what?" But probably the most common opening in casual conversation is the *greeting*. Basically, a greeting is an expression of pleasure at meeting someone. But the expressions can vary enormously in complexity and formality (389).

The above is typical of the strategy often used by "executive beggars" to extort money from unsuspecting people known and unknown to them.

## 22.4 Categories of Beggars

For the purpose of this work, beggars have been categorised as follows: the physically challenged (the blind, the lame, the dumb, and the mentally challenged); able-bodied dirty beggars or social deviants (*almajiri*); the aged (old male and female beggars who sit at a certain spot); and executive beggars (able-bodied adults, who tell stories of being stranded or robbed, and so need financial help. They move from offices to motor parks, and even visit notable people's homes).

The physically challenged beggars are of different types. There can be the blind (man/woman) being led by a boy or girl, who could be a relation. This category consists of a parent-child formation. The parent, who is obviously blind, places his/her hand upon the shoulder of the child. They start (in some cases, the blind) by offering prayers to a prospective giver, and concluding it with a personal appeal. They move from street to street, and from market to market, begging for alms. There are some others who are crippled. A few of them who can afford wheelchairs drive themselves, while the severe ones are pushed about begging for alms. Another subclass of the physically challenged includes beggars who have lost an arm, leg or some other visible part(s) of the body. One way of attracting attention by this class of beggars is that they always exhibit their impairment to a prospective giver to arouse pity and empathy.

Another class of beggars is called the *almajiri*. These are young, dirty boys who roam the streets. *Almajiri* is derived from the Arabic word *Al-Muhajirin,* which refers to Prophet Mohammed's migration from Mecca to Medina. Literally, the word means "the emigrant". According to Mallam Sumaila (oral source), however, in Hausa land, the word *almajiri* could take different forms: it could refer to someone who begs for assistance on the streets or from one house to the other, as a result of deformity or disability. It could also refer to children who attend informal religious schools who roam the streets in order to get assistance; or to a child who engages in some form of labour to earn a living. Therefore, one can say *almajiri* is a general name given to both students and the destitute. *Almajiri* (student) is meant for Quranic students, whereas *almajiri* (destitute) simply means a beggar, whether a child or an adult. However, the *almajiri* (student) begs for alms and food, but only at a specified time, which may be after school hours, during break time or during school-free

days, unlike the *almajiri* (beggar) who only stops begging when he falls asleep.

The aged beggar (male/female) is another category. These beggars either stay at particular spots or move about slowly, begging for alms. In most cases, they sit at roadsides, or near public places praying for passers-by. At times, they walk or sit in groups.

Another class of beggars is "executive beggars". These are able-bodied adolescents, men and women of all ages. Such people go into offices, move along the streets, and lurk around motor parks, restaurants and other public places telling "stories" of misfortune. Some will carry medical prescription papers to beg for money for the treatment of relations or themselves. Some others present documents (real or fake) just to extort money from unsuspecting people. One feature that is characteristic of this class is that they are usually well dressed or partially well dressed. They are found on the streets, in offices, in hospitals, in homes, and at ceremonies.

## 22.5 Methodology

This is a survey study with a descriptive approach. Beggars were observed with the aid of a research assistant who could speak the Hausa language well. Out of the seven begging events recorded, five were finally selected. The justification for the selection was the need to cover different categories of beggars discussed in the literature. The five tape-recorded events were transcribed in their original indigenous language form. These have also been translated into the English language for analysis. The transcribed version in Hausa was given to experts in the Hausa language for verification. The recorded version (see the Appendix) serves as data here.

For analysis, common ground is established between the beggars and the hearers to examine the extent of politeness or otherwise of the beggars. Searle's (1969: 85) classification of speech acts is adopted for identification of the speech acts performed in each of the begging events. The strategies employed by each of the beggars are identified through linguistic cues in the transcribed texts, and the speech act types are worked out through presupposition, CP and inference. The five selected begging events are referred to as B1-B5 here.

## 22.6 Data Presentation and Analysis

The five begging events recorded and transcribed are presented in the table below, on the bases of "type of beggar", "strategies" employed by each of

the beggars, and the identified functions that the "speech act(s)" performed in each of the begging events.

| Begging Event (BE) | Beggar Type | Strategies | Speech Act(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| BE 1 | Aged blind man + a lead | Name-calling (*Alhaji*), Mentioning the word *Allah*, Making requests | Indirect Request Act |
| BE 2 | Executive Beggar (a well-dressed lady) | Greetings, Storytelling, Requests, Prayer | Direct Request Act |
| BE 3 | *Almajiri* (Four young boys) | Name-calling, Chorus Singing, Prayer, Making Requests | Direct/Indirect Asking |
| BE 4 | Old woman, sitting in a spot | Honorific terms, Prayer | Indirect Asking Act |
| BE 5 | An old beggar in a wheelchair | Greetings, Mention of the word *Allah*, Prayer | Direct Request Act |

## 22.7 Discussion

Begging Events 1 to 5 are henceforth referred to as BE 1 to BE 5, and the utterances are analysed on the basis that the beggars and the prospective givers share certain common ground. Even where a prospective giver did not understand the beggar's language (Hausa), it was assumed that the mode of appearance of the beggar and his/her comportment and manner of approach were suggestive of his/her intention (which was to beg for alms).

In BE 1, the beggar opened by uttering the word *Alhaji*, which could mean a "visitor". But here, it is used as a politeness marker. It is meant to massage the ego of the prospective giver. In Nigeria, the general (though not often true) belief is that the name *Alhaji* confers honour and prestige on whoever is addressed as such. In particular, when an individual dresses in a flowing gown with a cap on his head, he is believed to be an

*Alhaji*. In other words, the word *Alhaji* is used as a status identifier. After this initial identification, the beggar mentioned the word *Allah* (God) as an expression of his belief that the mention of the word *Allah* could influence people's desire to give alms. This position perhaps hinges on the belief that religion places a high premium on the giving of alms to the less privileged. In fact, giving alms is one of the five pillars of Islam, and Christianity also supports this practice.

The word *Alhaji* is used as a conversation opener. This is a use of the hierarchical politeness system. The power and distance ratings are positively skewed towards the prospective giver; hence *Alhaji* is used as a hedge to minimise the threat to the prospective giver's face. There is also the constant mention of the word *Allah* (God) by the beggar to pour profuse prayer on the prospective giver. The beggar prayed thrice for the prospective giver before making his request:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Alhaji, Allah shi kiyaye* | *Alhaji*, may God protect |
| *Allah Ya tsare* | May God protect |
| *Allah Ya kai ku gida lafiya* | May God deliver you to your house safely |
| *A taimaka saboda Allah* | Help in the name of God |

Every prayer act was anchored on God, and the request, which was not definitive, imposed responsibility on the prospective giver. The clause "Help me…" is open-ended, as the beggar was not specific or particular about the form of help that he needed. In other words, through the words, he indirectly asked for money, food, clothes, etc.

In BE 2, a classic example of "executive begging" was demonstrated. The beggar, who had no visible physical deformity or destitution, opened her begging event with the greeting, *Barka da yini* (Good afternoon), but when the prospective giver apparently replied to her in the English language (perhaps because he couldn't speak Hausa), the beggar changed her language to English. The prospective giver's response of "Yes! Any problem?" gave the beggar another chance to repeat her greeting in English: *Good afternoon, sir*. What followed the greeting was a storyline of how she (the beggar) got stranded and needed money to take a vehicle to (*Kawo*) a point within the Kaduna metropolis. She ended her story by offering two sets of prayers:

"God will help you. You will not suffer sir".

Here, the strategies used were through the linguistic cues of greeting, storytelling and request, followed by prayers. Her request was an indirect

one, given the summary of strategies that she had employed. What she actually uttered was "I need your help/ I don't have transport money".

In BE 3, the *Almajiri*, who moved in a group, begged in a unique way. The *Almajiri* have accepted their plight by uttering *the beggar is begging*, and they used prayer as a strategy for sourcing money and any other valuables, as in: *May God give you so as to give us/Aunty, even if it is food without soup*. The use of the word *Aunty* is to hedge the begging event as well as to demonstrate politeness. Overall, this is a functional direct speech act of asking, and the linguistic cues used are name-calling, stating, prayer and direct asking.

In BE 4, the old female beggar opened her event with the word *Alhaji* (similar to the strategy employed in BE 1), which has the semantic meaning of "visitor" or "stranger". But in this case, particularly in Nigeria, the word is a status identifier of a compliment to a notable Muslim. She offered a prayer of protection to the "giver", with emphasis on *Allah* (God) to do it. This beggar's strategy was to merely repeat her prayers, believing that the "giver" would rely on common ground, implicature and inference for effective interpretation of her intention. This is a way of warming herself into the mind of the prospective giver. She also relied on the presupposition that passers-by already knew that those old men and women who sat along roadsides were beggars, who solicited passers-by for money, and perhaps she did not need to openly canvass for money. That method was strategic in that such men and women did not impose threats on the "faces" of their "targets". They only prayed for those who walked along the spot where they sat. In essence, the woman beggar used the honorific term *Alhaji* or "Sir" plus "Allah" (God) to indirectly beg for money or any other valuables.

In BE 5, the old woman in a wheelchair opened her event with name-calling. The use of the word *Alhaji* presupposes that the prospective giver is a Muslim. This beggar has marked politeness. It was a strategy to save the face of the giver and to curry his favour. The greeting, *You are welcome* was used to enhance solidarity. *Allah* (God) was also mentioned to introduce the dimension of religion, and the implicature is that godly people always give alms to the needy. The old disabled woman on wheels offered prayers after which she made a direct request. The linguistic cues are therefore name-calling, use of the name of God, offer of prayer, and making a direct request. We also have an instance of a direct speech act of "asking".

## 22.8 Concluding Remarks

From the analysis done so far, it is obvious that all the beggars in their begging events used one form of honorific term or the other to enhance the hierarchical politeness strategy. For instance, when a beggar calls someone an *Alhaji*, h/she is simply demonstrating politeness, and possibly merely massaging the ego of a would-be giver, the true value of the meaning of the word notwithstanding. Also, the word *Allah*, meaning God, has been variously used by all the beggars to exploit the position of religion, in terms of giving alms. Different prayer forms also characterised all the begging events. Finally, in terms of utterances, both direct and indirect speech acts of asking, begging and requesting were performed by all the beggars. We should, however, note that the simplest and, perhaps, most straightforward kind of speech act is performed directly and literally. As we have in this study, by being literal and direct, a beggar would have imposed a minimal load on the prospective giver in comprehending what has been said. With indirect and non-literal acts, more inferences would be required on the part of the prospective giver(s).

## Acknowledgements

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# Appendix

**Begging Event 1 (BE 1)**
**Location**: Junction Road, Kaduna, Nigeria
**Beggar Type**: An apparently blind middle-aged man holding a long stick was being piloted by a young boy. The two (the blind man and the lead) are shabbily dressed.
**Beggar's Name**: Unknown
**Beggar's language of expression**: Hausa
**Information**: The young boy led the blind man towards a man standing, by the roadside, waiting for a bus. Just as the boy stopped about a metre from the man, the blind man uttered the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Alhaji, Allah shi kiyaye* | *Alhaji*, may God protect |
| *Allah Ya tsare* | May God protect |
| *Allah Ya kai ku gida lafiya* | May God deliver you to your house safely |
| *A taimaka saboda Allah* | Help in the name of God |

**Begging Event 2 (BE 2)**
**Location**: In front of a restaurant, in Kabala in Kaduna, Nigeria
**Beggar Type**: A well-dressed lady
**Beggar's Name**: Unknown
**Beggar's Language**: Hausa and English
**Information**: As the Research Assistant stepped out of the restaurant, a lady of about 25 years approached him as he moved towards his car. The following conversation ensued:

Beggar: *Barka da yini* Good afternoon
Researcher: Yes! Any problem?
Beggar: (apparently, when she noticed that the prospective giver couldn't speak the Hausa language, she moved closer, and spoke in passable English in low tones):

Good afternoon sir, I am going to *Kawo*. I need your help. I don't have money for transport. God will help you. You will not suffer sir.
The man (giver) standing near his car, apparently embarrassed, dipped his hand into his pocket, and offered the lady a two hundred naira note, without uttering a word.
Beggar: (She hurriedly collected the money) *Nagode* sir, thank you sir, as she moved towards another parked car within the premises.

**Begging Event 3 (BE 3)**
**Location**: In front of a house at Katsina Road, Kaduna, Kaduna State of Nigeria
**Beggar Type**: *Alimajiri*
**Beggar's Names**: Unknown
**Beggar's Language**: Hausa
Information: This is a group of mainly young Hausa boys, usually in adolescence, who go around, house by house, begging. Sometimes, they meet people (or pedestrians) on the road.
In this instance, they begged in chorus thus:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Wahidi sadaka* | The one alms |
| *Allah* | God |
| *Almajiri yana bara* | The beggar is begging |
| *Allah* | God |
| *Allah Ya baku mu samu* | May God give you so as to give us |
| *Iya ko gaya ne ba miya* | Aunty, even if it is food without soup |

The above method of begging involves prayers offered in favour of the prospective giver. *Wahidi* is an Arabic word, while *wahid* meaning "one", literally meaning God, in this context. When the lead speaker recited, the chorus (the rest of them) answered by saying "Allah", which means God. This method of begging is usually conducted in melody.

**Begging Event 4 (BE 4)**
**Location**: Near a bus stop, along the road near the Kawo Market, Kaduna, Kaduna State of Nigeria
**Beggar Type**: Old Women
**Beggar's Name**: Unknown
**Beggar's Language**: Hausa
**Information**: These are old women who sit and beg. They don't walk around begging, rather they are known for sitting at a given spot, all the time (everyday). As passers-by go in front of them, a particular old woman said:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Alhaji, Allah Ya kiyaye* | Sir, may God protect |
| *Allah shi kare* | May God protect |

They mostly do this without any act of overt begging, rather greetings and prayers.

**Begging Event 5 (BE 5)**
**Location**: Near a bus stop, along the road near the *Kawo* Market, Kaduna,
Kaduna State of Nigeria
Beggar Type: Old woman (disabled) in a wheelchair
**Beggar's Name**: Unknown
**Beggar's Language**: Hausa
**Information**: This is another category of beggars. They are usually
wheeled about by their children or relatives. In this case, it can be the
parent wheeling the child or vice versa. In this particular instance, she
uttered the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Alhaji barka da zuwa* | *Alhaji*, you are welcome |
| *Allah Ya sa a sauka gida lafiya* | May God make your arrival to your house a safe one. |
| *A bada sadaka saboda Allah* | Give alms in the name of God. |

# CHAPTER 23

# SPEECH ACT ANALYSIS OF EROTIC LANGUAGE IN THE *SONG OF SOLOMON*

## TAIYE MARY ODIONKHERE

## Abstract

*The Song of Solomon is considered a paradox in the Bible because its language is an articulate eroticism. Existing studies have researched its structure and socio-cultural content, while the pragmatic perspective is under-researched. This study, therefore, examines the speech acts, psychological modes, contextual features and the components of love in the book. This is with a view to establishing the nexus between the illocutions and components of love, and a consequent validation of the text as a manual of erotic love. The study adopted Searle's speech act theory, Sternberg's triangular theory of love and Stumpf's cognitive-evaluative theory of emotion. The purposive sampling technique was used to select forty-three out of the sixty-one verses in the first four chapters of the Song of Solomon; the version of the Bible utilised was the New International Version. Three macro acts were identified: expressives, directives and commissives. Expressives included romancing, longing and adoring; and instances of directives were inviting and imploring, while promising highlighted commissive acts. These were connected to three psychological modes: active affective motivational acts, volitional acts and occurrent pro-evaluations. Expressive pragmatic acts marked out motivational and occurrent pro-evaluation states, while volitional acts characterised directives and commissives. Two contextual features delineated the acts: shared cultural knowledge and shared situational knowledge. The macro acts were represented in three components of love: intimacy, passion and decision/commitment. While expressives were enunciated in the intimacy and passion components of love, directive and commissive acts cut across decision/commitment and intimacy segments. The speech actions distinguished three kinds of love: companionate, romantic and consummate.*

*Consequently, the correlation between the speech acting, psychological modes and the components of love was a patent indication that the Song of Solomon was meant to perform an amatorial function and not a transcendental one.*

Keywords: *Components of love; contextual features; psychological mode; Song of Solomon; speech act*

## 23.1 Introduction

The Song of Solomon is considered a paradox in the Bible because it is an exquisite love poem that expresses a photographic sexual love between two lovers, without making reference to God, even once. On account of this, it is considered an obscured text by commentators, hence their passionate drive to spiritualise it even though it has no contextual springboard to anchor such a notion on (Wirt 1990; Bradshaw 1995). Wirt (1990) equally argues that the book has been abused by unscientifically spiritualising the interactions of the interlocutors. There is no direct ascription to God; rather, the book is an unclouded communication of sumptuous sexual feelings between two passionate lovers, cloaked with oriental imageries. Consequently, its inclusion in the Bible has elicited recurrent controversies; congruently, there is no consensus amongst scholars as regards its interpretation and authorship.

Hence there is an impetus to complement previous studies and further their findings by providing a scientific description of the speech acts of the interactants, the contexts that defined the erotic acts, as well as the components of love that authenticate the text as a passionate interaction between ardent lovers, which extant studies have not considered. The ultimate intent is to certify that the semantic content is a typical representation of intimacy, passion and commitment that are consistent with the everyday world of married couples and those in courtship, rather than a metaphorical representation of the love between God and the Israelites. These lovers are Solomon and a Shulamite lady.

## 23.2 Historical and Theological Background
## to the *Song of Solomon*

The *Song of Solomon* functions as wisdom literature in the Bible, including *Job*, *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiastes*. It is a lyrical poem referred to as the *Song of Songs* by the Hebrews because it is the best out of the 1005 songs written by King Solomon and the only one that is preserved. It is

recorded in 1Kings 4:32 that "He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five". It is the 22nd book in the Old Testament, the fifth and the last of the five poetical books in the Bible. It has eight chapters, 117 verses and 2661 words. The book extols the purity, beauty and supreme joy of love during courtship, marriage and its physical expression. Basically, it is an erotic love poem that articulates a prototypical amorous interaction between lovers, which makes it a single one of its kind in the Scriptures that needs to be explored and excavated for its distinctiveness in the use of sexual arousing language. Essentially, it deserves exceptional studious attention as the biblical prototype that presents an indispensable human reality of passionate and consummatory love, couched in metaphorical oriental imageries as ordained by God.

## 23.3 Statement of the Problem

The *Song of Solomon* has been extensively researched from various perspectives, particularly the structural configuration, while the pragmatic interpretation is under-researched. For instance, the following authors have subjected the book to structural elucidation: Exum (1980), Elliot (1989), Dorsey (1990), and Davidson (2003). In contrast, Boer (2007) engages a socio-cultural interpretation to explicate how the worlds of fecundity and lovers connote allocatory economics in the *Song of Solomon*, while Porter (1990) gives an exegetical appraisal of the text via historical-critical methodology. Though from a different angle, Kauk (2010) focuses on its historical context to defend the "shepherd hypothesis", while Babajide (2007) engages a stylistic approach to study its poetic language. Also, Odionkhere (2012) looks at the speech acts of the language used in the book without considering the components of love that validate the authenticity of the interactants speech action as erotic language. Nevertheless, in spite of these numerous studies, there is still no consensus on the message the author wants to pass to his audience.

While just a few researchers argue that the *Song of Solomon* is an expression of amorous love between a couple, a large number submit that it is an allegorical depiction of the relationship between God and the Israelites, even though there is no transcendental anchorage to substantiate this standpoint (Wirt 1990; Bradshaw 1995). Consequently, in order to accurately interpret the communicative intention of the writer, it is necessary that pragmatic research will not only articulate the functions of the erotic acts of the lovers, but also segment the components of love expressed in the discourses, as well as the intentional mental states of the lovers, in order to further the amatory perspective of the text.

## 23.4 Expected Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to scholarly knowledge by investigating the pragmatic perspective of language use in the *Song of Solomon* that has not been adequately explored. The analysis of interlocutors' speech acts will help to reveal cultural and contextual constraints on their linguistic choices, and this knowledge will make the text more comprehensible. It furthers previous works by providing a functional description of the illocutions of the text and the psychological modes, the contexts that account for the illocution, and the components of love that define the speech acts, which will eventuate in a scientific groundwork for succeeding scholarship on its language, pragmatics and religious discourse.

## 23.5 Review of Previous Studies on the *Song of Solomon*

Scholars and theologians have carried out extensive research on the *Song of Solomon*. For instance, Babajide (2007) explores the stylo-linguistic parallels of the graphological, lexical, phonological and syntactic features of the *Song of Solomon* and p'Bitek's *Song of Lawino*. He submits that both are printed in narrow columns and are clearly separated by space in between. Importantly, the study accentuates the erogenic theme which authors like Remmers (2006) and Malick (2012) argue connotes a transcendental relationship between Christ and the Church. Babajide (2007) submits that Solomon's use of metaphoric expressions is a strategic way of presenting sexual love.

In contrast, Dennison (1993) evaluates different studies on the book. According to him, the allegorical view presents the "Beloved" as God or Christ, while the Shulamite maiden is a symbolic representation of the Israelites or the Church. He also observes that while some research shows that the erotic poem centres on Solomon and the Shulamite maiden, others contend that the book portrays a love triangle between Solomon, the Shulamite, and an unnamed shepherd lover. However, this study aligns with Dennison's (1993) point of view that the *Song of Solomon* is a poetic narration of the love between Solomon and the Shulamite maiden and not a love triangle as postulated by Kauk (2010), while at the same time, it is a canonical poem celebrating marital love.

Quite differently, Porter (1990) gives an exegetical appraisal of the book as wisdom literature via historical-critical methodology. Porter (1990: 4) affirms that the content of the book reveals the beauty, intimacy and sexual consummation that God expects between couples; albeit there is an underlying tone of God's love for his people in the book.

Consequently, in view of this, Porter (1990: 5) concludes that the *Song of Solomon* x-rays a historical story that depicts two layers of meaning: sexual love and God's love for his people. Porter's (1994) study, however, presents an illogical incongruity because his propositions are inconsistent; his finding is a demonstration of two strata of meaning, even though there is neither explicit linguistic representation in the book, nor contextual background to anchor his eventual premise on, other than the fact that it is one of the books in the Bible.

Inversely, Kauk's (2010) research is a defence of the three-character interpretation. The study authenticates Solomonic authorship, aside from attempting to establish the fact that besides the shepherd, Solomon is also another main character in the book. While this current paper is in agreement with Kauk's (2010) view that the book is an expression of intimate love between lovers, as well as approbating and endorsing Solomonic authorship, the stance of both studies differs significantly as regards the characterisation of the main characters. Kauk hypothesises a triangular love, relegating Solomon's part in the amatory scene, whereas this study argues that the *Song of Solomon* is a dramaturgical presentation of a dyadic love between Solomon and the Shulamite maiden, considering the sequential segmentation of the interactants' speech acting.

Given that the book has been interpreted from various perspectives as earlier mentioned, which is equally evident in the review, nevertheless, the pragmatic angle that considers the functions of the discourses and the implicatures that define the speech acts, their contexts, and a pragmatic description of the components of love has not been explored. Thus, the course of this present research appends previous works on religious discourse, and the language of the *Song of Solomon*, in particular, by investigating the nexus between the illocutions, the psychological modes, that is, the intentional mental states of the two lovers as represented in the discourses, as well as the components of love that underpin the erotic acts.

## 23.6 Theoretical Perspectives

### 23.6.1 Speech Act Theory

A speech act is a language and intention-based activity that is integral to the explication of religious discourses, including the Bible. Speech act theory is an approach to the study of discourse that is used to segment text into definable units in order to explicate the function of the language use. It focuses on the knowledge of the fundamental prerequisites necessary for

the production and interpretation of interlocutors' speech acts (Schiffrin 1994). As attested by Levinson (1983: 9), "Speech Act theory is concerned with the pragmatic meaning that studies the relations between language and context that are grammaticalised, or encoded in the structure of the language". It considers knowledge about what interactants know about social institutions and one another as contextual background. This mutual knowledge pilots the use of language and the interpretation of utterances. Searle (1969) theorises "a rule-governed skill that is obtainable by relying heavily on the intuitions" (Schiffrin 1994: 55) of interlocutors.

On the one hand, Searle's (1969) rules and conditions for the execution of speech acts incorporate the communicative intention and psychological states of interactants as essential conditions for the realisation of speech actions, while on the other hand, preparatory conditions vary and are concerned with the real-world prerequisites for each illocutionary act. Following this, the rules encompass the contextual background, that is, the circumstances surrounding the speech event and the shared background knowledge which the speaker and hearer have about each other and the real world. Oppositely, the sincerity condition is concerned with the psychological state of the speaker, and subsequently states the precondition that is applicable to each kind of action. Fundamentally, speech act theory considers the essential condition as the cardinal constitutive rule because of its determinant role in the identification and segmentation of the illocutionary point of the speech act.

According to Yule (1996: 31), the actions performed via utterance are three interrelated acts. The first one is the locutionary act, which is the act of producing a meaningful linguistic expression—this is the propositional act, while the second one is the illocutionary act that reveals the intention of the speaker; thus, it is referred to as the speaker meaning. It is realised through the "communicative force of an utterance" (Yule 1996: 31). The third concept is the perlocutionary act. This act is the effect of the illocutionary force on the hearer's thought or action. Consequently, Searle (1969) identifies five classes of macro acts which encase different kinds of micro speech acts. They are representatives, directives, expressives, declaratives and commissives. He also distinguishes between direct and indirect speech acts.

### 23.6.2 Triangular Theory of Love

The triangular theory of love theorised by Sternberg (1986) gives a pragmatic description of the features of love. Sternberg, a psychologist, argues that love has three components and as such can be "viewed as

forming the vertices of a triangle" (Sternberg 1986: 119). According to him, the first of the three constellations is intimacy, which is the top vertex of the triangle. Next is passion which is located on the left-hand vertex of the triangle, while decision/commitment occupies the right-hand vertex of the triangle. The intimacy component interprets "feelings of closeness, connectedness and bondedness in [a] loving relationship" (Sternberg 1986: 119). It explicates the acts of affection in interactions.

On the contrary, the passion component expresses erotic force that culminates in "romance, physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena in loving relationships" (Sternberg 1986: 119). Additionally, it captures motivational and arousal discourses that define the experience of passion in amatory relationships. Contrariwise, decision/commitment describes decision as short-term because it depicts the decision of a speaker to love the hearer, while commitment portrays interactions that sustain sexual love; in consequence, it enunciates decisive existent and potential speech acts that signify long-term relations. Thus, it follows that the component of love entails cognitive discourses. As stated by Sternberg (1986: 120), the properties of the triangular love theory are stability, conscious controllability, experiential salience, typical importance in short-term relationships, typical importance in long-term relationships, a commonality across loving relationships, psychological involvement, and susceptibility to conscious awareness. However, the occurrences of all these features vary in the three components.

Besides highlighting the properties, the theory also distinguishes eight different kinds of love that augment the constituents of love, and a consequent accentuation of their interrelationship. Each differs in the kind of loving experience it culminates in. They are nonlove, liking, infatuated love, empty love, romantic love, companionate love, fatuous love and consummate love.

### 23.6.3 Cognitive-Evaluative Theory of Emotion

Emotions are depictions of mental states and Stumpf (1930) explains that mental states are "first and foremost conscious mental events accessible to introspection", but that "it is legitimate to postulate unconscious mental events as theoretical entities" (Reisenzein and Schönpflug 1992: 35). Thus, on this latter premise, Stumpf defines emotion as "a passive affective state which is directed at a judged state of affairs" (Reisenzein and Schönpflug 1992: 36). Stumpf submits that the mental state of a speaker is basically intentional because in most cases it has a direct object in the real world. He classifies mental states into two broad categories:

intellectual and affective, adding that both have different psychological modes. However, as regards this paper, only the affective mental states shall be utilised for the description of the intentional mental state that accounted for the discourses, and the passive and active states. The active affective state divides into optative desires, motivational states and volitional states, while the passive affective state involves intentional feelings directed towards the state of affairs or objects, which can also be described as either approval or disapproval. The passive affective state dichotomises into occurrent pro-evaluation (approval) and occurrent con-evaluation (disapproval). Motivational desire captures discourses that enunciate the emotional force of a speaker, intended to activate and direct the behaviour of the addressee. Volitional states represent propositions that picture the predilections or needs of a speaker.

## 23.7 Methodology

The descriptive design was adopted because it enabled content analysis. This perspective was preferred because the nucleus of the research was to categorise, characterise and exemplify the illocutions and components of love that defined the sexual acts in the sampled data. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the data from the first four chapters of the *Song of Solomon*, a wisdom literature, which comprised sixty-one verses. The sixty-one verses were subjected to content evaluation, while forty-three were purposively selected for their graphic representations of erotic acts. The version of the Bible used for analysis was the New International Version. Searle's speech act theory (1969) was used for the interpretation of the illocutions and context, while Sternberg's (1986) triangular theory of love accounted for the components of love underlying the text; Stumpf's cognitive-evaluative theory of emotion interpreted the psychological modes articulated in the discourses. The content was subjected to qualitative analysis.

## 23.8 Analysis and Discussion

Erotic acts are not only speech actions that articulate feelings of sexual desires but also the ones that arise out of sexual yearning, whereas components of love are the features which describe the type of emotion expressed by the lovers' speech actions. Meanwhile, the psychological mode is a description of the intentional mental state that accounted for the speech act. Three out of the five Searlean general speech acts are found in the sampled data, namely, expressives, directives and commissives.

According to Mey (2001), expressives express the "inner state" of interlocutors, which are their emotions or psychological states, and love in the precinct of the *Song of Solomon* is a romantic and profound sexual desire between the couples. That is why expressives outnumber the others.

Besides, directive and commissive macro acts are the offshoots of the voluptuous expressive act. The locutions are manifestly declaratives and imperatives, and a consequent direct relationship between the forms and the functions of the utterances. Thus, they are direct speech acts. Importantly, the richness of the expressive acts individualised and substantiated the semantic content as interactions between two fervent lovers and not as a portrayal of the relationship between God and the Israelites. The interactants in the following examples are King Solomon and the Shulamite lady.

### 23.8.1 Expressive Acts

Expressive acts are experiential utterances through which a speaker expresses needs, desires and emotional attitudes. Consequently, through this act, the interlocutors articulate their sexual feelings for each other. Expressive acts outnumber the other two macro acts because they represent the building blocks of the theme of erotic mutual love between the two major characters of the lyrical poem. As aforementioned, love is a sweet, sensuous emotion that has to do with the inner state of man, and the function of the expressive act is to visibly show this through the use of language. Solomon has skilfully achieved this through the use of language, couched with tantalising ancient erotic symbols. The sumptuous and sexual attributes used in describing the feelings of the lovers towards each other, especially when they are together, can only be realised through expressive acts, hence their richness. Virtually all the locutions are in the declarative form, while their illocutionary acts are realised as appreciating, adoring, praising, longing and romancing. Examples are as follows:

### 23.8.2 Appreciating Acts

Appreciating acts are positive and favourable interactions that show how Solomon and the Shulamite maiden value each other and their relationship. Through appreciating acts, both of them acknowledge the good and physical qualities they perceive in each other.

Example 1:
How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes are
doves. Song 1 vs. 15
How handsome you are, my lover! Oh, how charming! And our bed is
verdant. Song 1 vs. 16

The context of this interaction is Solomon's royal tent in Lebanon.
Solomon is the speaker in vs. 15, while the speaker in vs. 16 is the
Shulamite maiden. The first utterance is a perlocutionary act to the subtle,
yet blatant illocutionary act of longing performed by the Shulamite in
verses 13 and 14 (*My lover to me is a sachet of myrrh resting between my
breast...*). As an ardent lover of the Shulamite, the exclamatory speech
acting aptly portrays Solomon's passionate and equally erotic response to
the invitation. These acts illustrate romantic love that defines the passion
component of love. They feature the motivational and arousal dimensions
associated with passion, hence the psychological mode is the active
affective motivational state. He applauds her beauty and serene character
by comparing her eyes to those of a dove. This utterance depicts that the
two lovers are gazing intently and lovingly into each other's eyes.
Constable (2014) explains that aside from the fact that doves are a
symbolic representation of serenity in Eastern literature, rabbinic teaching
submits that the eyes of a bride are indexes to her character. As such, the
perlocutionary act evinces that Solomon acknowledges the Shulamite
maiden's virtuous simplicity, which eventuates in the subsequent verse
(16).

        The Shulamite maiden shows her appreciation of Solomon's
sincere complimentary remarks on her beauty and character by
commending his looks and character in return; so, it likewise functions as
a perlocutionary act to the previous utterance. Additionally, *And our bed is
verdant* is a perlocutionary act, in recognition of Solomon's reference to
the Shulamite's inexperience, which she equally affirms through her
response. She concedes that though she is naïve in the art of sex, their
lovemaking will be fruitful and pleasurable. Thus, Solomon's reply in the
next verse complements the illocutionary act, that her role will be a
supportive and complementary one. The transaction between the lovers is
an indication of a high commonality that is expected in a loving
relationship, which also defines their susceptibility to a conscious
awareness of the bond they share as highly strong, a token that their
psychological involvement and experiential salience are equally high. The
propositional acts for both are declarative statements; they are direct
speech acts because there is a direct relationship between the forms and

functions, which correspond with the sincerity condition stipulated by Searle (1969), for they are denotations of the sincere feelings of the interlocutors. The Shulamite's response depicts a feeling of closeness and connectedness associated with a loving intimate relationship. The expressive appreciating act illustrates both romantic and companionate love; as such, the intentional mental state is occurrent pro-evaluation because the interaction is a demonstration of impassioned feelings.

### 23.8.3 Adoring Acts

To adore is to love somebody very deeply; adoring acts are therefore expressivities of profound passionate love. They are expressions that show the intensity of the intimacy and sexual love between Solomon and his lover.

Example 2:
Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon; your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate. Song 4 vs. 3
Your two breasts are like two fawns, like two fawns of a gazelle that browse among the lilies. Song 4 vs. 5

The speaker in the examples above is King Solomon while the addressee is the Shulamite maiden. This conversation takes place at the king's chambers in Jerusalem on their wedding night. According to historical records, he loves pomegranates and gazelles. Part of his daily provisions are "...goats, as well as deer, gazelles, roebucks and choice fowls" (1Kings 4: 23; Constable 2014). This shared knowledge is in agreement with Searle's principles of contextual background. Therefore, equating their qualities to the lips and breasts of the Shulamite maiden further assures her that she is well adored, as well as bolstering the theme of eroticism. The illocutionary force of the propositional acts meets Searle's sincerity, essential and preparatory conditions. The locutions are a meaningful description of his feelings on their wedding night that attract an equally ecstatic invitation from the Shulamite maiden for him to consummate the marriage in subsequent verses.

Given that both lovers comprehend the locutions is evidence that the commonality across the loving relationship depicted here is high, hence the resultant susceptibility to conscious awareness is high, a token that the psychological involvement and experiential salience are equally high. The adoring acts illustrate romantic, companionate and consummate love, inherent in the passion component of love. They represent its

motivational and arousal dimension, which can equally be described as hot, coupled with underlying warm feelings that define the intimacy component of love as hot, while the intentional mental states that define the speaker's sincerity are passive occurrent pro-evaluation (approval) and the active motivational state.

### 23.8.4 Romancing Acts

Romance is a display of sexual affection through verbal and physical expressions. Consequently, the speech act is an illustration of deep bodily amorous affectivity. Through romancing acts, the Shulamite and her lover articulate a verbal-cum-physical sexual relationship as exemplified in Example 3.

Example 3:
How delightful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much more pleasing is your love more than wine, and the fragrance of your perfume than any spice! Song 4 vs. 10
Your lips drop sweetness as the honeycomb, my bride; milk and honey are under your tongue. The fragrance of your garments is like that of Lebanon. Song 4 vs. 11
You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain. Song 4 vs. 12.

The interaction between the two lovers articulates a romancing act, encased in a passion component. The romancing pragmatic act is a drive that will eventually culminate in a consummatory type of love, and it is performed by the king, who is addressing his new wife, the Shulamite maiden after their wedding. The setting is King Solomon's chambers in Jerusalem, on their wedding day. After the wedding, as they caress each other, the king commends his new wife's reciprocation. The propositional content in 4, vs.11 is an indication that they are actually kissing each other as expressed in "your lips drop sweetness like the honeycomb" and "milk and honey are under your tongue". The exclamatory marks at the end of the two sentences in verse ten aptly show the exciting and intense sexual emotion of the king in the speech acting, which Searle describes as an illocutionary force indicating device. These acts clearly manifest hot, passionate love as seen in the intensely high experiential salience and psychological involvement of the lovers.

Thus, the intentional mental state highlighted in the discourses is passive occurrent pro-evaluation (pleasure). Hence the conscious

controllability of the lovers is low, thus highlighting their susceptibility to conscious awareness as low. The acts capture romantic love, companionate love, and both culminate in consummate love, defining the feeling of closeness and bondedness expected in a loving relationship. The depictions of these three kinds of love aptly represent the two of the three components of love postulated by Sternberg—intimacy and passion. Both are intensely hot.

### *23.8.5 Longing Acts*

Longing is operationally conceived in this study as a persistent and strong sexual desire for somebody, as exemplified in Example 4. Longing acts picture the Shulamite maiden's desire to make love to her lover.

Example 4:
Strengthen me with raisins, refresh me with apples, <u>for I am faint with love.</u> Song 2 vs.5
His left arm is under my head, and his right hand embraces me. Song 2 vs. 6

The speaker in Example 4 is the Shulamite maiden. The underlined expression in 2 vs. 5 is a longing act, addressed to her lover, the King. The proposition is an adjunct that follows an imperative sentence, and the requester wants the requestee to strengthen her with love because she yearns to make love, hence it is a graphological depiction of longing. The illocutionary force of longing is further established through the main clause: "Strengthen me with raisins, refresh me with apples"; it is a directive, an inviting act that is caused by the longing desire to make love. The inviting and longing speech acts signify that both lovers share an impressively hot passion and a close-knit intimacy. The reciprocal romantic and companionate love of the lovers stimulates the urge for consummation, particularly by the Shulamite maiden. The sequence of prior propositional acts and their forces show that she has been nursing this desire right from chapter 1 vs. 2 when she says: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your love is more delightful than wine". Likewise, when she tells the king "our bed is verdant" (1 vs. 16), he is "like an apple tree" whose "fruit is sweet to my taste" (2 vs. 3), and yet the king fails to touch her though he also desires her, for "his intent (banner) over" her "is love" (2 vs. 4). Her faintness, which is due to sexual arousal, makes her invite the king to strengthen her with raisins (fruit) and to refresh her with apples, which means "make love to me".

Thus, the longing act evidently proves that the speaker's conscious controllability of her passion is low; her stability is also shown to be low, while on the contrary, her psychological involvement in the relationship is strong, and her susceptibility to conscious awareness of the physical attraction between them is high. As such, the speaker's psychological mode is an active affective motivational act for the longing act, while the intentional mental state that accounted for the inviting act is an active volitional act and it communicates a willing inclination. Generally, fruits, shade and apple trees are ancient erotic symbols in Eastern literature (Constable 2014). In the next verse (6), which is a dramatic monologue, the Shulamite maiden articulates her imagination by saying, "His left arm is under my head and his right arm embraces me". Moreover, in ancient Eastern love poetry, it is the woman who takes the initiative when it comes to matters of sex. The illocutionary act of longing also portrays the experiential salience of the couple as high because they share a marked physical attraction.

### 23.8.6 Praising Acts

Praising refers to expressing admiration and approval. This is portrayed in Example 5 where Solomon commends the Shulamite maiden for being a virgin. Hence, his utterances are expressions of erotic approval.

Example 5:
You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain. Song 4 vs. 12
Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with choice fruits, with henna and nard, nard, and saffron, calamus and cinnamon with every kind of incense tree, with myrrh and aloes and all the finest spices. Song 4 vs. 13
You are a garden fountain, a well of flowing water streaming down from Lebanon. Song 4 vs. 15.

In Example 5, the King addresses the Shulamite maiden. The context of the interlocution is the king's chambers in Jerusalem, after their wedding. The king is impressed that she is a virgin, so he praises her for this. The propositional acts are declarative statements describing a garden, but they are figurative expressions referring to the addressee's virginity, which she understands by drawing inference from shared background knowledge. The communicative force of the propositional content is praising. The addressee recognises this and responds by performing the perlocutionary act of inviting, through which she invites Solomon to

consummate the marriage. He sees her as a garden, not a common one, but a rare garden that is filled with luscious edible fruits which no one has ever accessed or tasted, but has now become his. He describes her virginity as a garden locked up, a spring enclosed and a fountain that is sealed (Constable 2014); they are metaphorical expressions for chastity. The garden, fountain and spring are metaphors that represent the Shulamite's body and virginity. He expresses his pleasure and satisfaction as they make love by describing the Shulamite maiden as a well of living water streaming down from Lebanon that has come to give him life and joyous gratification in lovemaking. Thus, the pragmatic acts of praising are drives that climaxed in consummation, as portrayed in 4 vs. 16, with an inviting act—*Let my lover come into his garden and taste its choice fruits*. By referring to the Shulamite maiden as a fountain garden, spring, fountain and well is a pointer that she is the only woman he actually loves and romantically inclined to be with because most of his marriages are political arrangements (Ahimaaz 2005). He confirms this in chapter 6 vs.8, "Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines, and virgins without number; but my dove, my perfect one is unique, the only daughter of her mother, the favourite of the one who bore her. The maidens saw her and called her blessed; the queens and concubines praised her".

Additionally, the ascriptions show that sexual love is refreshing and thirst-quenching, that is, it is pleasing and exciting. The praising acts equally show that their experiential salience is high, that is, their familiarity with each other is striking; besides, they share a strong intimate and passionate relationship. As such, the intentional mental state articulated in the example is occurrent pro-evaluation, expressing the approval of the speaker, specifically meant to inspire a reciprocal action from his lover.

### 23.8.7 Directive Acts

Directive acts are those acts that have the illocutionary force of their utterances as acts of requesting, imploring, inviting, advising and inquiring; they augment the theme of eroticism articulated in the *Song of Solomon*. Examples are taken in turn.

**Requesting Acts**
Requesting involves asking somebody to do something; it is an expression of desire in the *Song of Solomon*. As represented in Example 6, the utterances communicate the emotional desires of the lovers.

Example 6:
Take me with you – let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers.
Song 1 vs. 4

...show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and
your face lovely. Song 2 vs. 14.

In 1 vs. 4, the Shulamite maiden is addressing the King during one
of their meetings in his vineyard at Baal Hamon, Lebanon. She makes this
request because her brothers forbid her from seeing the king, whom they
believe will deflower her, and then abandon her. Hence, they refer to him
as a fox in chapter 2 vs. 15. Meanwhile, the Shulamite maiden wants to be
alone with the king because she yearns to be with her lover, considering
the request for a kiss in the second verse of chapter one, a depiction of a
strong passion. The propositional content condition is met because the
locution is a representation of the state of affairs as situated in the future
with respect to the time of utterance. The modulated command in the first
proposition, buttressed by the conventional linguistic meaning of the other
two, shows that the Shulamite maiden seeks the consent of the king. Also,
he believes that he can grant the request because they are lovers, showing
a shared background knowledge, thus meeting Searle's preparatory,
sincerity and essential conditions for the request. As such, to achieve this,
he must hurriedly take her to his chambers to forestall her brothers'
unwelcome interruption.

The requester in 2 vs. 14 is King Solomon, and the requestee is the
Shulamite maiden. Solomon makes this request when he pays her a visit at
her home in Lebanon. Before the arrival of the king, the Shulamite maiden
is excited that her lover is coming for a visit. So, she sings out his praises
before her brothers in 2 vs. 9a (*My lover is like a gazelle or a young
stag...*), hoping that they will gladly welcome and receive him, but
unfortunately, the reverse is the case. The king realises this, and that is
why he starts his request by saying, "My dove in the cleft of the rock, in
the hiding places on the mountainside...". In the cleft of the rock means an
uncomfortable position while the second phrase connotes a situation that is
hazardous. The unit of discourse is a description of a distressing
situation—why else will he visit his beloved and he can only stand behind
the wall, gaze through the windows and peer through the lattice? Hence
his requests that the Shulamite should show him her face and let him hear
her voice. The propositional acts are imperative sentences expressing the
wish of the requester. These directive acts are illustrations of romantic and
companionate   love   that   capture   the   intimacy,   passion   and

decision/commitment constituents of love. The locutionary acts express motivational and arousal discourses, particularly the contextual background that necessitates the request, yet point to the intimacy between the lovers. Both the intimacy and the passion components of love shared by the lovers culminate in the decision to be together. Subsequently, they are cognitive discourses that exemplify the decision/commitment component of love that sustains sexual love; therefore, it enunciates decisive existent and potential speech acts that signify long-term relations. The psychological mode that accounted for the requesting pragmatic act in 1 vs. 4 is an active affective volitional act, a depiction of the Shulamite maiden's inclinatory disposition, while 2 vs. 14 stems from the desire of Solomon to influence his lover to see him, and as such, the intentional mental state is an active affective motivational act.

**Imploring Acts**
Imploring acts are speech actions that function as entreaties. These acts are performed by Solomon and the Shulamite in order to activate a new directional thought and action as regards their location and loving relationship, which consequently will enable them to be together.

Example 7:
My love spoke and said to me, Arise my darling, my beautiful one and come with me. Song 2 vs. 10

The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise; come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me. Song 2 vs. 13.

The context of the interaction is Lebanon, during the king's visit. The king implores the Shulamite maiden to leave her house because he is debarred from entering their house by her brothers who believe that the king has no intention of marrying her. As a result, the king implores the Shulamite maiden to follow him to his vineyard at Baal Hamon where they can be alone and unhindered to enjoy each other's company. The locutionary act is a series of imperatives that earnestly seek to change an unpalatable situation, and which are modulated by declarative statements that express the fruitfulness and pleasantness of plants to establish the illocutionary force as imploring and not an order. Thus, the discourses establish both the decision and commitment constituents of love that uphold erotic love; hence they enunciate decisive existent and potential speech acts that signify long-term relations. As such, the intentional mental state of Solomon is an active affective motivational act, meant to

activate a positive decision and a resultant commitment from the Shulamite maiden.

### Advising Acts

Advising relates to acts that counsel/offer opinions. The lovers perform an advising speech act so as to direct each other's actions, and consequently stem antagonistic reactions from the Shulamite maiden's brothers.

Example 8:
Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, turn, my lover, and be like a gazelle or like a young stag on the rugged hills. Song 2 vs. 17.

        The setting of Example 8 is the Shulamite maiden's home in Lebanon. The Shulamite maiden advises the king to go back to his house when he visits her because her brothers disallow him from entering their house. She encourages him by telling him to be like a gazelle that is swift and graceful, and a stag that is mature. Basically, she is advising the king not to be abashed or daunted, but to be composed and self-assured as he has always been when dealing with social issues. Advising acts capture the commitment constituent of love that strengthens erotic love; hence they enunciate definitive existent and potential speech acts that signify long-term relations. The intentional mental state is an active affective motivational desire that is meant to direct the behaviour of Solomon.

### Inviting Acts

Inviting acts are those that relate to asking, requesting, or alluring. In the text, the Shulamite maiden performs an inviting act as a means of allurement because the speech action is meant to arouse Solomon's sexual desire. This is aptly represented in Example 9.

Example 9:
Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth - for your love is more delightful than wine. Song 1 vs. 2

Let my lover come into his garden and taste its choice fruits. Song 4 vs. 16

Strengthen me with raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love. Song 2 vs. 5.

The speaker in this example is the Shulamite maiden. While the first utterance functions as a prefatory erotic act that sets the ambience of the

text as interactions between ardent lovers, the other verses further disambiguate its spiritual precinct, simultaneously underpinning the text as a sumptuous love poem. After the wedding ceremony, the Shulamite maiden invites the king to come into his garden and taste its choice fruit on their wedding day. Although the syntactic structure is that of a request (4 vs. 16), it has the force of an invitation. It is a perlocutionary act in recognition of the illocutionary act of praising performed by the king in the same chapter, spanning through verses twelve and fifteen. At the beginning of the chapter, the king praises her with successive strings of metaphors and similes before crowning it with the metaphors of gardens with numerous sweet-smelling plants and a well of living water. And of course, the Shulamite burst out with an unrestrained ecstatic invitation for the king to come into his garden and consummate the marriage (taste its choice fruits). Garden is a reference to her virginity which the king commends her for keeping until she weds as mentioned in the illocutionary act of praising.

Following on, 2 vs. 5 is an inviting act performed by the Shulamite maiden. She invites the king to make love to her because she "is faint with love". That is, her longing to make love to the king has weakened her. She has been nursing this desire right from chapter 1 vs. 13. When she tells the king "our bed is verdant" (1 vs. 16), he is "like an apple tree" whose "fruit is sweet to my taste" (2 vs. 3), and yet the king fails to touch her though he also desires her, for "his intent (banner) over" her "is love" (2 vs. 4). Her faintness, which is due to sexual arousal, makes her invite the king to strengthen her with raisins (fruit) and to refresh her with apple, which means to make love to her. Generally, fruits, shade and apple trees are ancient erotic symbols. The king recognises the act because in the next verse (6), in a dramatic monologue, the Shulamite maiden articulates her imagination by saying, "His left arm is under my head and his right arm embraces me". The locution is constructed in the conventional way of making a request, while the illocutionary force is labelled inviting because of the textual and contextual background. The components of love that define the inviting act feature decision and commitment constituents— indicators of a lasting relationship. The speech actions show the resolvedness of the Shulamite maiden to sustain the love between her and her lover, so the intentional mental state is an active affective volitional state.

### 23.8.8 Commissive Acts

A commissive act communicates a speaker's commitment to a cause; it enunciates a pledge or promise to do something. The act is captured in Example 10 as promising speech acting through which both lovers reaffirm and strengthen their love for each other.

**Promising Acts**

Promising refers to assuring a person that something will happen or be done. In Example 10, both lovers show their commitment to each other and their sexual relationship through promising acts.

Example 10:
I will get up now and go about the city, through its street and squares; I will search for the one my heart loves. Song 3 vs. 2

Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of incense. Song 4 vs. 6.

In 3 vs. 2, a soliloquy is uttered by the Shulamite maiden, a device used by the author to reveal her thoughts and loneliness, and a consequent demonstration of wanting to be with her lover; hence, her decision to get up and search for the one her heart loves. The setting of the utterance is her home, in Lebanon. It is a promising act that stems from her desire to be with her lover, which is confirmed in her prior utterance, equally a monologue, but a longing act: "All night long on my bed I looked for the one my heart loves; I looked for him but did not find him" (3 vs. 1). As such, the commissive act is not only a portrayal of the decision/commitment component of love—I will get up now and go about the city... I will search, but also a companionate love—I will search for the one my heart loves, besides exemplifying an intimate romantic relationship between the couples. Consequently, Song 3 vs. 2 represents feelings of closeness that are expected in a harmonised and amorous relationship; thus it is a motivational discourse, particularly underlined by the speaker's willing inclinational promising act (I will get up...; I will search...). Per se, the psychological mode is a volitional act because the speech acting is a reflection of a prepared disposition and predilection.

The context of the utterance in 4 vs. 6 is the king's palace after the wedding between Solomon and the Shulamite lady. This example is an illustration of a pragmatic promising act, a depiction of the decision/commitment component of love, and a signification of a lasting relationship. The king promises to love and stay with the Shulamite

maiden until his death. He is dazed by the beauty of the Shulamite, so he praises her from the crown of her head to the soles of her feet by mentioning each part and likening it to beautiful imageries that his wife will understand (4 vs. 1-5), expressive praising acts which culminate in the commissive promising act. The speech actions accurately illustrate the vertices of the triangular theory of love stipulated by Sternberg: intimacy, passion and decision/commitment. The act equally captures the three kinds of sexual love that are expected in mutual erotic love—romantic, companionate and consummate love. The mountain of myrrh and hill of incense are metaphorical representations of the Shulamite, which she understands because of their intimate and passionate relationship, coupled with the fact that they are now married. Solomon is captivated by her beauty, and this is a feature of romantic love that articulates physical attraction between the lovers, which ensued into a promise from the King to love her forever—*Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, I will go to the mountain of myrrh.* The promising act aptly exemplifies the decision/commitment component of love, thus harmonising with the high level of intimacy and passion component of love. It evidently captures motivational and arousal discourses that define the experience of strong sexual desire and excitement in an erotic relationship. While the promising act of Solomon indicates that the passion component of love is really hot, it equally indicates that his conscious controllability in that scenario is low, thus underscoring his susceptibility to conscious awareness as low. Subsequently, the pragmatic promising act shows that the intentional mental state that accounted for it is an active volitional act because it communicates an expressive willingness to abide by a long-term relationship with the addressee.

## 23.9 Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has examined erotic language in the *Song of Solomon* in order to show that the semantic content is meant to perform an amatorial function, and not a transcendental one, as argued by some researchers. Through the application of speech act theory, three macro acts are identified: expressives, directives and commissives. Subsequently, in accordance with sexual love, expressive acts like appreciating, adoring, praising, longing and romancing characterise the interactants' speech actions. Moreover, requesting, advising, imploring and inviting pragmatic acts, delineated under directives, spring from the expressive speech acts, as well as the promising act listed under commissives.

The two contextual features observed in the data are shared cultural knowledge and shared situational knowledge, and these are characterised by the use of imageries and cognitive mappings. The erotic acts represented in Sternberg are three components of love: intimacy, passion and decision/commitment. While expressive acts are enunciated in the intimacy and passion components of love, directive and commissive acts cut across the decision/commitment and intimacy segments. The speech actions also distinguish three kinds of love out of the seven submitted by Sternberg: companionate, romantic and consummate love. The psychological modes that define the erotic acts are active affective motivational acts, volitional acts and occurrent pro-evaluation (approval). While expressive pragmatic acts mark out motivational and occurrent pro-evaluation states, volitional acts characterise directive and commissive acts.

Consequently, the analysis indicates that the *Song of Solomon* is fundamentally a manual of sexual love for married couples and those in courtship and intending ones, and should be regarded as such, rather than a symbolic representation of the love between God and the Israelites, or Christ and the Church because there is no contextual background in the interactions of the interactants that accounted for the allusion. This study has focused on the speech act analysis of erotic language in the *Song of Solomon*. Further research can be carried out on the pragmatic strategies deployed by the interactants or on the metaphoric expressions articulated in the text. This study is also expected to advance subsequent research in pragmatic studies and erotic discourse.

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# Chapter 24

# The Pragmatics of Hedges in Police-Suspect Interaction in Ibadan, Nigeria

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## Abstract

*Eliciting confessional statements from suspects constitutes the thrust of police interrogation. Existing studies on police discourse have concentrated on forms of communication in the Nigeria Police Force to the neglect of the pragmatics of hedges in police-suspect interaction, henceforth PSI. This paper engages a pragmatic description of the use of hedges in PSI, particularly with a view to describing the pragmatic functions of hedges employed by investigating police officers, (IPOs), and suspects during interrogation. A modified version of Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Act theory serves as the theoretical anchor for this study. Data for the study comprise burglary and stealing, robbery, kidnapping, arson, rape, felony, malicious damage and conspiracy cases observed at the State Criminal Investigation Department, Iyaganku, Ibadan, between 14 May 2013 and 3 March 2014. The findings reveal that IPOs, in a bid to get suspects to confess to crimes, employed hedges with shared situation knowledge (SSK), inference (INF) and shared cultural knowledge (SCK) to pract warning, blaming, encouragement, justification and rebuke. However, suspects employed hedges with SSK and INF to pract ignorance, refutals, vagueness and explanation.*

Keywords: *Hedges; Nigerian Police officer; suspect; pragmatic acts; police-suspect interaction*

## 24.1 Introduction

Several forms of communicative interaction exist in the Nigerian Police Force. Some of them include police-police interaction, police-accused interaction and police-suspect interaction. PSI constitutes one of the domains of institutional talk and is a form of forensic discourse which has formed an essential aspect of forensic linguistics. Since forensic linguistics studies language and the law, forensic linguists are saddled with the task of proffering solutions to the knotty area of language use, particularly in crime investigation. In police-suspect interaction, language resources are manipulated to achieve meaning. It is a form of interaction in which quite a number of discursive practices are negotiated through the use of linguistic markers and choices to make implicit or indirect meaning (Nicola 2012; Farinde 2008; and Heydon 2005). Implicit meanings are alluded to without being explicitly expressed. Van Dijk (1997) sees this kind of meaning as part of the mental process. They are related to underlying beliefs but are not openly expressed.

In the context of police-suspect interaction, power is enacted by institutional rules and procedures (Cossin 2009; Heffer 2010; Gordon 2012; Ayodele 2013; Edwards 2013; Ekundare 2014; Akinrinlola 2016; and Ajayi 2016). According to these scholars, the regulation of society vests police officers with institutional power over suspects. In this regard, the investigating police officer (hence IPO) determines the interrogation topic, poses questions, interrupts, and controls the floor during interaction with suspects. S/he devises a series of strategies to elicit confessional statements from suspects. This is because, during this interaction, the primary aim of the IPO(s) is to secure confessions from suspects. Suspects, on the other hand, are conscious of evading IPOs' technical questions. This "struggle" between the social actors (IPOs and suspects) during the interaction often results in power-play between/among them. All these aforementioned existing studies on police discourse have examined forms of police communication to the neglect of its pragmatic significance. Besides, the studies do not account for the dynamics of power in such interaction. A paucity of scholarly works in this direction has prevented an understanding of how power works in PSI. Similarly, previous studies such as Farinde (2011) and Ajayi (2016), for instance, have conceptualised power as a unilateral weapon in the hands of police officers. The studies do not account for the place of suspects in police interrogation. This study takes into account the pragmatic significance of police officers' interrogation techniques as well as suspects' responses during police interrogation. The goal of this paper is to examine the

pragmatic functions of hedges by police officers and suspects during interrogation sessions. The study is significant in that it will enhance an understanding of how police officers and suspects engage in interrogation. Apart from revealing how PSI works, it promises an inclusion of materials in language teaching, and will contribute to the existing repertoire of knowledge in forensic linguistics.

The paper is divided into six sections. The first section provides the background. The second section presents perspectives on the use of hedges in discourse. Section three spells out previous studies on police discourse. Section four presents the theoretical framework and method. The fifth section presents the analysis and findings of the study while the last section concludes the work.

## 24.2 Hedging in Language Use

Hedging is one of the linguistic devices adopted by IPOs and suspects during interrogation sessions to achieve manipulation and power play. Hedging is a subcategorisation of metadiscourse which is used to achieve certain pragmatic goals. The concept of "hedge" has been traced to Lakoff (1972: 195) who opines that hedges are expressions that "modify the category membership of a predicate or noun phrase in their ability or propensity to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy". However, since its introduction to scholarship, the term has metamorphosed, and taken on different conceptions like many other concepts in language studies that have defied consensual definitions. As submitted by Alonso et al. (2012), the communicative value of hedges has shifted from their position as mere modifiers of the speaker's commitment to the truth value of a whole proposition, and their actual use as politeness strategies. The multidimensionality of the concept of "hedges" is further captured by Markkanen and Schröder (1997: 15) in the statement below:

> The concept [of hedges] has lost some of its clarity and sometimes seems to have reached a state of definitional chaos, as it overlaps with several other concepts. This problem concerns many other linguistic concepts and their definitions, beginning with the concept of "language" itself.

Shifting their attention from the definitional fuzziness of hedges, Prince et al. (1982) submit that hedges are devices that can be used for blurring the speaker's commitment to the truth of the preposition conveyed; and they can also be used to express indetermination (Hübler 1983). Alonso et al. (2012) conclude that hedges can be employed by a speaker as a strategy of negative politeness with the function of avoiding disagreement (Brown &

Levinson 1987); it is also a way of showing that a speaker's position or proposition is tentative so as to avoid being proved wrong later. From the position(s) of these scholars, it is evident that hedges are employed to achieve specific purposes by language users. In other words, they are terms and expressions intentionally employed by a speaker to evoke a particular perlocutionary effect on the hearer. Commenting on the operation of hedges, Clemen (1997: 237) states:

> Hedges are determined by context, the colloquial situation and the speaker's/writer's intention, plus the background knowledge of the interlocutors. Hedging cannot be deduced only from the combination of the individual clausal elements plus the relevant illocution.

Hedges are used in discourse situations to weaken the illocutionary force in utterances (Leech 1981: 102, 1983: 67; Levinson 1983: 37; Skehon 1988: 33). It has to do with the ability to tone down and veil the illocutionary weight in language use. Such language ability is technically referred to as pragmatic competence. It is one of the means through which interlocutors access meaning in conversational interactions. The use of hedges as noted by Channell (1994: 19), Drave (2001: 60), Fraser (2010: 133), Hinkel (2005: 89) and Nikula (1996: 78) is geared towards achieving certain interactional goals such as expressing politeness, expressing solidarity or group affiliation, softening a request, or expressing withdrawal. They assert that hedges take different forms and occur at different levels of grammatical units. As such, they carry different pragmatic functions. Thus, hedges are context-defined and as meaning-making devices, they could occur at lexical, phrasal, clausal, sentential or even discourse levels.

### 24.2.1 Linguistic Strategies for Achieving Hedges in Language

Different scholars have expressed their opinions on how linguistic strategies are employed to achieve hedges in interpersonal communicative interaction. However, for the purpose of this study, we examine and adopt the position of Martin (2003). According to Martin (2003: 63), the following are ways to achieve hedges in languages:

- Strategy of indetermination which enshrouds the proposition with a certain degree of lesser qualitative and quantitative explicitness, ambiguity (vagueness) and uncertainty. The use of the modal auxiliary verb is preponderant here. Examples of such verbs include may/might/can/could, etc. It also involves

the use of cognitive verbs such as "seem to" and "appear to". This strategy equally employs the use of modal adverbs such as probably, possibly, and perhaps. Similarly, we have approximators of frequency such as generally, approximately, and frequently.

- Strategy of camouflage hedging (introduced by Namsaraev 1997) comprising metalinguistic operators such as really, actually, in fact, generally speaking, etc.
- Strategy of subjectivisation which consists of the use of first-person personal pronouns that are followed by verbs of cognition employed to highlight the subjective nature of the given propositions, thereby leaving the (hearer/audience) with the choice of either agreeing or disagreeing with the position of the speaker from a neutral point of view. It involves the use of such opinionated expressions such as "in my view", "to my knowledge", "from my experience", etc.
- Strategy of depersonalisation which has to do with a speaker or writer attempting to veil or blur their presence by employing different kinds of agentless impersonal passive constructions. This involves expressions such as "it was discovered", "in this study, data were gathered and analysed", etc. This strategy also involves the use of impersonal active constructions such as "this study concludes", "this paper explores", and so on.

These linguistic operations have been considered relevant to this study considering the various linguistic manipulative strategies that are peculiar to PSI. These strategies are targeted towards achieving institutional goals in such interactions. Some of these strategies, as shall be seen later in this paper, are employed by IPOs and suspects in PSI.

## 24.3 Perspectives on Police Discourse

Several scholarly works have been done on police discourse, both within and outside Nigeria. In establishing the role of social status in discourse, Dastjerdi (2008) examines the choice of words and the tone of the speakers. He opines that the way people put words together can sometimes engender coercion, threat and extortion in others. He examines the discourse of traffic police officers and drivers in order to analyse the discriminating linguistic usage observable in exchanges among the given social actors. He observes that many illegitimate dealings are committed. Dastjerdi's work is laudable in the area of unveiling how police officers employ threat and coercion, devoid of language use. However, the study

does not show how linguistic tools are used to elicit confessional statements from suspects.

On the structure and orientations in police-accused discourse, Farinde (1997) studies police interrogation from a linguistic point of view. He observes the motivations and orientations of participants towards the subject of interrogation. He observes that a number of communicative strategies are used by the police in the language of police interrogation. Considering the role of interpreters in police-suspect interrogation, Terebo (2012) examines the place and role of police interpreters in PSI, and concludes that IPOs acting as interpreters in PSI do not demonstrate a good command of the English language in their role as interpreters. Her work exposes the dilemma of detainees and makes a case for a reform of the police investigation procedure. However, little attention is paid to strategies of eliciting facts from suspects.

On the coordination of talk in police-suspect interrogation, van Charldorp (2010) examines the conduct and coordination of two activities that are relevant in police interrogation: talking and typing. He focuses on how police records are mutually constructed by police and suspects. He says that police officers' typing functions are an institutional controlling action. However, van Charldorp does not pay attention to how the contributions of IPOs and suspects in PSI are used to achieve some pragmatic goals in the interaction. From the foregoing, aspects such as the role of language in police-suspect interrogation, and ideologies behind discourses in police-suspect interrogation need to be explored. Therefore, this study focuses on the manifestation of these phenomena in PSI, in order to have a better understanding of their pragmatic roles in such interactions.

## 24.4 Theoretical Framework

Jacob Mey's pragmatic act theory, which revolves around the concept of pragmeme, is modified and employed as the theoretical anchor for the study. Mey's pragmeme is a modification of the theory of speech acts proposed by Austin (1962) and Searle (1979). While speech acts theory takes cognisance of the use of language, the theory of pragmeme is concerned with the action part of language use. Stressing the weakness of speech act theory, Capone (2016) opines that speech acts (of Searlian origin) appear too philosophical. He notes that a speech act is a sentence with a bit of context often artificially studied. But a pragmeme, as he rightly notes, need not be an utterance, and may be equivalent to long, structured and completed units. A pragmeme exposes one to the dynamics

of language and a bit of culture. In essence, it studies the connection between language, culture and the immediate society. He describes a pragmeme as being dialogic in approach. He strikes a difference between a speech act and a pragmeme. To him, a pragmeme could consist of various utterances and its force is tied to convention while the force of a speech act relies on inferential powers. He notes that in a pragmeme, new norms are created, precedents are initiated and the propagation of the rules of language is enacted. In a pragmeme, the context of acting carries more weight than the spoken act. The importance is not on what is "said" but the "unsaid". Hence, the pragmatic act is not explicitly made since there is no speech act or language use to depict the act. The only way to perceive a pragmatic act here is to be on the look-out for it, or to listen to it. In the words of Mey (2001: 221), the pragmatic act theory focuses on "the environment in which both speaker and the hearer find their affordances such that the entire situation is brought to bear on what can be said in the situation, as well as what is actually being said". This perspective is captured as a pragmeme, a generalised pragmatic act regarded as the only force associated with making utterances. Haughs (2016) observes that pragmatic act theory focuses on "an examination of the condition that makes language use, and in particular, a certain language use, possible; that is, what is affordable in that interaction". The theory offers an alternative to the analysis and theorisation of social action with respect to talk (embodied) conduct. Haughs submits that pragmatic act theory helps to explain and interpret the nuanced complexities of our social world.

The pragmatic act is instantiated through an ipra or a pract, which realises a pragmeme. "Every pract is at the same time an allopract, that is to say a concrete instantiation of a particular pragmeme" (Mey 2001: 221). What determines a pract is solely the participants' knowledge of the interactional situation and the potential effect of a pract in a particular context. An individual can set up the conversational context of the pragmeme act in question, such that, in the terminology of a speech act, when such an act is considered, it may "count" for a particular act, for example, "bribing", "warning", "scolding" and so on because it is understood as such, just like a speech act is felicitous. What is more or less a context in speech acts is known as a common scene in a pragmeme. However, a common scene is more than just context as it entails the underlying presuppositions that make the context possible.

Below is Mey's model of pragmatic acting:

Figure 1. Mey's model of pragmatic acting
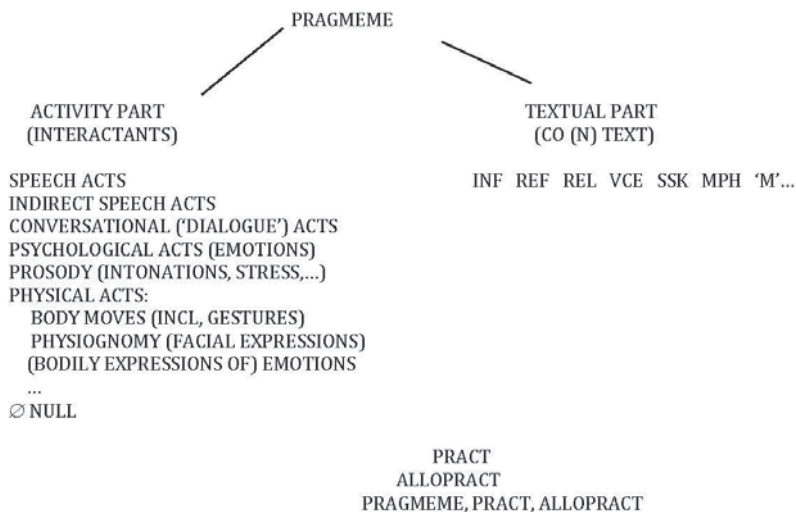


Source: Mey (2001: 222)

The schema above shows that there are two parts to a pragmeme: the activity part, meant for interactants; and the textual part, referring to the context (within which a pragmeme operates). To communicate, the interactants draw on such speech act types as indirect speech acts, conversational ("dialogue") acts, psychological acts, prosodic acts and physical acts. These are engaged in contexts, which include: INF, for "inferencing"; REF, for "reference"; REL, for "relevance"; VCE, for "voice"; SSK, for "shared situation knowledge"; MPH, for "metaphor"; and M, for "meta-pragmatic joker". The interaction between the activity part and textual part results in a pract or an allopract. For the peculiarity of this study, Mey's theory of pragmatic acting is modified and employed to explain the context of PSI, and account for the goals of IPOs and suspects during interrogation sessions. Mey's modified pragmatic act schema adopted in this study is presented below:

Figure 2. Modified Mey's pragmeme schema
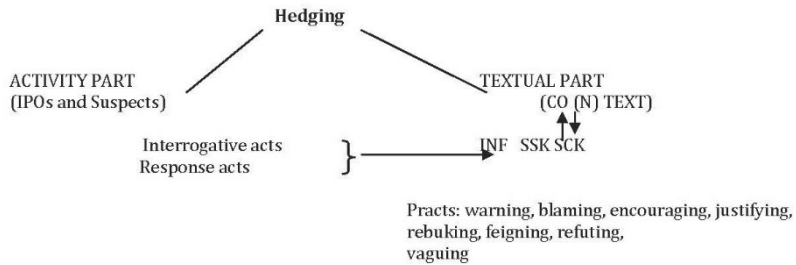


This schema shows that PSI thrives on interrogative and response acts, as performed by IPOs and suspects. While IPOs employ questioning/interrogative acts in warning, rebuking, encouraging, and justifying suspects, suspects make recourse to response acts to refute, feign ignorance and express vagueness of IPOs' accusatory questions, drawing on contextual factors such as inference (INF), shared situational knowledge (SSK), and shared cultural knowledge (SCK).

## 24.5 Method

Data for this study were collected at the State Criminal Investigation Department, Iyaganku, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria between 14 May 2013 and 3 March 2014. It is a department of the Force that is saddled with crime investigation. The researchers requested a letter of introduction from the Head of Department of English, University of Ibadan to the Commissioner of Police, Oyo State Command. Upon approval by the State Commissioner of Police, the researchers were given a letter of introduction to the State Criminal Investigation Department. Sixty-five sessions of interrogation were randomly captured. Interrogation on cases such as burglary and stealing, kidnapping, murder, rape, felony, arson, robbery, defamation of character and forgery were observed during the data collection. However, ten cases were purposively selected for this study because of the prominent use of hedges by the participants involved. Data collected were transcribed into text and for conversations in Yoruba and Pidgin, efforts were made to translate them into the English language. Ethical considerations were also observed, hence the pseudo names in making reference to the participants. The qualitative method of analysis was adopted. Emphasis was on the use of the modified version of Mey's

pragmeme theory to explicate the various acts performed with the use of hedges by police officers and suspects.

# 24.6 Analysis and Discussion

This section presents the analysis of the data. The section focuses on IPOs' and suspects' use of hedges to achieve pragmatic effects in interrogation sessions. Of particular interest to the study is how the social actors' (IPOs and suspects) acts connect with context to achieve practs in the interrogation. Hedges are used in the interaction between IPOs and suspects to achieve some institutional goals. In a bid to elicit confessional statements from suspects, IPOs technically withheld their commitments to the propositional contents of the subjects of interrogation. These attempts were to get suspects' cooperation and loyalty. Suspects, on the other hand, hedge to wriggle themselves from the "traps" of the IPOs. The truth values in the propositions are consciously undermined by suspects in order to avoid being incriminated by IPOs.

## 24.6.1 Pragmatic Functions of IPOs' Use of Hedges in Police-Suspect Interaction

This section provides an analysis of the pragmatic and contextual functions of the use of hedges by IPOs and suspects in PSI. The pragmatic functions of hedges and their contextual use in the interaction are warning, rebuking, feigning, justifying, blaming, and encouraging. These are discussed from the perspectives of IPOs and suspects.

### 24.6.1.1 Warning Suspects
Hedges are used by IPOs in interactions to warn suspects of their rights during the interrogation process. In the initial part of the interaction, IPOs exercise some restraints on the rights of the suspects by putting forward words of caution. In some cases, the cautionary words are written on the police forms. In other cases, suspects are meant to repeat the cautionary words after the IPOs. This is evident in the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 1**
1.      P: Let me tell you that you (name of suspect) having been duly cautioned in English, Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba that you are not obliged to say anything unless you **wish** to do so, but whatever you say will be taken down in writing and **may** be used as evidence in the court of law (0.2).

2.  S: Ok sir.
3.  P: You were arrested on the 4th of April 2013 in connection with the robbery incident that happened at XX.
4.  S: Yes sir!
5.  P: Did the police lie against you?
6.  S: I **may** need to make some explanations, sir.
7.  P: If you confess, I **believe** you would not be put in a cell.

The above interaction between the IPO and the suspect is a case of robbery. A notable community leader in the Ikasa area reported a robbery at Dugbe Police Station in 2014. Police officers swung into action after a series of investigations. The suspects were eventually rounded up the following month. One of the suspects was investigated by Corporal Sasa. At the opening of the interrogation, the IPO introduces the legal requirements of the cautionary notice. The context of the case (robbery) in the excerpt above creates a feeling of fear, trepidation and discomfort for the suspect. Considering the legal implication of the offence, the IPO decides to interpret the case literally. The IPO's recourse to the legal requirements of the case forces the suspects to adhere strictly to the demands of the IPO's statements. Apart from the fact that the context creates unequal power relations between the IPO and the suspect, it also compels the suspect to respond in affirmative terms to the questions of the IPO. The statement warns the suspect to exhibit every sense of decorum during the interrogation. The IPO cautions the suspect to remain quiet while the interrogation lasts.

The IPO consciously hedges by using *wish* to downplay the illocutionary force in his statement. Using inference (INF), the IPO intends to allay the fears of the suspect. He wants the suspect to have some freedom during the interrogation. The IPO's use of *wish* implicates a restriction on the scope of his responses. The use of *may* by the IPO also suggests a restriction on the rights of the suspect. The suspect's right is trampled upon in a subtle manner. The context is that which presents an unequal power relation between the IPO and the suspect. The use of the modal hedge, *may*, reduces the weightiness of the legal implication of the caution given to the suspect. The IPO's use of the hedge is to lure the suspect to give a confessional statement relevant to the case under investigation. The task of getting the suspect to confess is a type of psychological act. An interaction between the psychological act and inference (INF) realises the pract of warning. The IPO's use of hedge is also seen in line 7 when he says, "I believe you will not be put in a cell". The use of *believe* here carries some

pragmatic force. Using inference, INF, the IPO cleverly de-emphasises his commitment to the truth value in his statement. He cannot state categorically what will become of the suspect, but he hedges to indicate withdrawal from such declarative statements. The use of *believe* by the IPO has the pragmatic force of convincing the suspect to cooperate with him. The suspect's deliberate use of *sir* in lines 2, 4 and 6 are instances of hedging which are geared towards mitigating the suspect's offence. Within the context of robbery cases, the IPO's utterances connect with inference (INF) to realise the pract of warning.

### 24.6.1.2 Blaming

Blaming is another pragmatic function which hedges perform in PSI. In this context, hedges are employed by IPOs to blame suspects for crimes committed. The IPOs often skilfully implant a sense of guilt in the minds of suspects through blaming to persuade them to confess. A case of rape in Excerpt 2 helps to establish this claim:

### Excerpt 2

1.   P: Arakùnrin, ìwọ lo fà á. Ìwọ lo jẹbi. **Bóyá** aṣọ tó wọ̀ ló wo ọ́ lójú
      **tàbí** ẹwà rẹ̀ ni?
      Young man, you **caused** it all! You are to blame. **Perhaps** the
      clothes she wore attracted you **or** was it her beauty?

2.   P: Bóyá o ti ń ṣe é tẹ́lẹ̀ gan-an.
      Perhaps, you (**might) have been** doing it before.

3.   S: Ọ̀gá, mi ò fi ipá ba lòpọ̀ rárá.
       Sir! I did not force her at all.

4.   P: Dákẹ́ arákùnrin.
      Keep quiet, young man!

5.   S: Ọ̀gá, iró̩ ni. Ẹ jẹ́ kí n ṣàlàyé.
      Sir, it is a lie! Let me explain…

6.   P: Ọmọ Yoruba ni ẹ. Ǹjẹ́ nǹkan tó o ṣe ò lòdì sí àṣà Yoruba?
       You are a Yoruba man. Don't you think that what you did is
       against the Yoruba culture?


Excerpt 2 captures an interrogation of a 38-year-old man arrested over an allegation of rape, which involves a twelve-year-old girl. The IPO and the suspect know the legal implications and weight of the offence committed, and as such, both parties have to devise means of achieving their interactive goals. The context of the interaction is a pointer to the use of hedges in the interaction. The excerpt is a case of rape. The IPO's utterances are geared towards incriminating the suspect. The questions of

the IPO are structured to lure the suspect towards expressing incriminating utterances. The IPO resorts to the use of a conjunctional hedge in a bid to justify the suspect's involvement in the crime. This he does by giving probable options that might have prompted the suspect to commit the crime in question. The use of *or* tends to place the suspect on the "safe" side as it does not pin-point any particular factor that lured the suspect to commit the crime. Rape-related cases manifest the use of hedges that are liable to lure the suspect to admit guilt. The use of such a hedge is predicated on the fact that the suspect, during interrogation on rape-related cases, feels unwilling to divulge information as a result of the legal implication of the offence. Considering the role of inference (INF), the use of *seem to have caused*, a phrasal hedge, presupposes that the IPO is not affirmative as regards the cause of the crime. He is not sure if the reason he gives is what actually made the suspect perpetrate such an act. To further express the IPO's flippant attitude towards the weightiness of the subject of the interrogation, he uses *perhaps*, an adverbial hedge, to technically apportion blame to the suspect. The IPO's use of the phrasal hedge *might have been doing* practs blaming. Using shared cultural knowledge (SCK), the IPO, being the more powerful participant in the context, blames the suspect for flouting the cultural norms of the Yoruba. This is because the Yoruba culture forbids rape and perpetrators are usually made to face serious sanctions within the dictates of the culture. There is the interplay between the psychological acts of the IPO and textual features like inference and SCK which results in blaming. It is important to stress that the pragmatic act of blaming used by the IPO was deliberately instituted to lure the suspect to confess to the subject of the interrogation. Nicola's (2012) submission that IPOs do not legitimately blame suspects during interrogation sessions is not in tandem with the findings of this study. IPOs deliberately blame suspects, and also accuse victims of crime in a bid to achieve a confession.

### 24.6.1.3 Encouraging Confession

Another strategy used by IPOs to seek confession from suspects during interactions is the act of encouraging suspects to confess to guilt. In interactions, IPOs routinely advise suspects to make a clean breast of their roles in the crime with the hope that they would be exonerated, but in actual fact, this may not be true in the legal context if the suspects confess. This is evident in the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 3**

1    P: Mo gbàgbọ́ pé ẹ̀ṣẹ̀ tó o ṣẹ́ má a níyanjù.

     I **believe** that the offence that you committed will have a solution.

     I believe that the offence that you committed will be resolved.

2    P: Ìgbàwo lo à á fún ọ̀gbẹ́ni Ronaldo?

     When did you sell it to Mr Ronaldo?

3    S: Ọdún tó kọjá.

     Year that passed

     Last year.

4    P: Tóbá ṣèmi nìwọ ni, mà á sowọ́pọ̀ pẹ̀lu ọlọ́pà ìwádi yìí láti parí ẹjọ́ yìí.

     **If I were you**, I **would** cooperate with the IPO and get this case settled.

5    P: Nítèmi, mo mọ̀ pé a má a dá ọ sílẹ̀

     **As for me, I know,** you will be freed.

6    P: Mo lè ràn ọ́ lọ́wọ́ lórí ẹjọ́ yìí.

     I **can** assist you in this case.

7    P: Wọ́n ní o ti má a ń ṣe irú rẹ̀ tẹ́lẹ̀.

     They said you have been doing this type of job before

     **I was told** you have been perpetrating this act for a long time.

8    S: Rara oga!

     No sir.

9    P: **Generally,** we do not prosecute cases of this nature once you confess.

In Excerpt 3, the suspect is said to have conspired with his friends to dupe Mr Ronaldo. The suspect is alleged to have sold a plot of land to the said Mr Ronaldo. After about two years, Mr Ronaldo finds some constructions appearing on the land. He reports the "illegal" occupant and it is revealed that the land was later re-sold to the "illegal" occupant. In the interaction between the IPO and the suspect, the IPO encourages the suspect to confess to having committed the crime. In this case of an attempt to commit conspiracy and felony, the IPO disguises the ultimate consequences of telling the truth from the suspect. He promises the suspect safety even after the confession. The context of conspiracy-related cases, as seen in the interaction, presupposes the use of adverbials and conditional clauses by IPOs to create instances which are meant to encourage suspects. Using SSK, the IPO considers the gravity of the suspect's offence and wonders if the case could be waived. This necessitates the use of the verbal hedge *believe*. The IPO hedges when he is to determine the fate of the suspect. The strategy is to withhold the

consequence of the suspect's offence. The context precipitates the use of the verbal hedge to underestimate the assertiveness of the IPO's decision regarding the case. It could be inferred from the words of the IPO that the case might not be a walk-over. The use of the clausal hedge *if I were you*, by the IPO, also suggests that the IPO is interested in manipulating the psyche of the suspect to yield to the process of interrogation. The clausal hedge expresses indeterminacy and vagueness in the words of the IPO. If the IPO were the suspect, he could not have cooperated with the IPO. It is a means of convincing the suspect to confess with minimal police input. The use of *as for me, I know* by the IPO equally leaves the suspect in the dark as regards the outcome of the case being investigated. Besides, the extent of the IPO's knowledge of the case and the law cannot be measured and ascertained. The IPO resorts to the use of depersonalisation as a strategy to veil and blur the presence of agency through the passive construction *I was told* during the interrogation. The identity of the person is blurred. Using SSK, the IPO's statement practs encouragement. The goal was to encourage the suspect to confess. Considering the interaction, there is an interplay between the IPO's utterances and textual properties like INF and SSK to realise the pract of encouragement. The IPO also uses what Namsaraev (1997) calls a metalinguistic operator, an instance of camouflage hedging. He uses the word *generally* to express vagueness as per the police treatment of such cases.

### 24.6.1.4 Justifying Objection

Justifying objection is another elicitation strategy employed by IPOs in the course of the interrogation. In the case where this was observed during our data collection, suspects gave some character and faith-based reasons they could not have committed the crime. The interrogator twisted the suspects' responses into an acceptable excuse for the reason they did what they were accused of. The suspects came up with such "tenable" excuses to save their faces from being threatened by the IPO. This is evident in Excerpt 4:

### Excerpt 4

1. P: Do you always give accounts to your master?
2. S: Yes sir.
3. P: But I was told that about 700,000 was missing.
4. S: That cannot be true sir.
5. P: **Generally speaking**, is your master good to you?
6. S: Sir, that is a long story.
7. P: **We learnt** you have a Toyota Sienna car and a piece of land. You **could have** bought the properties before you got the job.

8. S: Yes sir.
9. P: Where did you get such money to buy these properties? You are just 29 years old.
10. S: Oga, I am a Christian (0.2) I cannot do such. I am a Deacon as well.
11. P: In your church?
12. S: Silence.
13. P: Well, I don't expect that from you**.** So, you **really** didn't want to cheat your master. Did you?
14. S: I didn't sir. Is just that I don't have peace on the job and his wife disturbs me a lot.
15. P: **Perhaps your master is very stingy too** (0.2) Are you well treated?
16. S: At all sir!
17. P: **Does the job give an avenue for you to start your own business**?
18. S: In fact, sir, it does not.

     In the interaction presented in Excerpt 4, the police officer turns the various excuses given by the suspect into justification (perhaps for committing the crime). The suspect is a young man who studied Agricultural Extension. He managed the farm of the complainant for a period of two years during which he (the complainant) was not always on the ground to see to the wellbeing of the business. The business almost crumbled and the wife of the business owner later got to know that the handler of the business had engaged in some financial foul play which had had adverse effects on the business. The sum of seven hundred thousand naira (#700,000) was declared missing. On this note, the handler was arrested. In the interaction, the suspect, in a bid to escape the unpalatable consequences of his actions, decided to come up with reasons to exonerate himself. The IPO is aware of this and devises a clever strategy to welcome the excuses of the suspect. The suspect's excuses are based on both character and faith. He tells the IPO that he is a Christian and he cannot have committed such an offence. The IPO's use of the hedging phrase *generally speaking* expresses indetermination. The suspect cannot determine the actual aspect to be considered in assessing his master's goodness to him. This statement of the IPO indicates a lack of commitment to the truth value of the case and an attempt to justify the suspect's "action". The IPO says, "*we learnt* that you have a Toyota Sienna". This statement reduces the truth value of the IPO's story.

The IPO tries to put words in the mouth of the suspect by saying the suspect *could have* bought the car before he got the job. The use of the verbal hedge lessens the semantic value of the proposition. In a bid to get the suspect to confess, the IPO justifies the suspect's claims by adding that *perhaps* the master of the suspect could have been a stingy person. He further asks whether the job allowed the suspect to do some other things. All the manifestations of hedges in the interaction express indeterminacy as per the facts of the case. The IPO uses these hedges to justify the suspect's actions so that he could confess to the crime being investigated.

**24.6.1.5 Rebuking a Suspect**

IPOs, in their bid to elicit confessional statements from suspects, rebuke them during interrogation sessions. A rebuke takes the form of passing disparaging remarks and calling suspects names. The goal of such an act is to make the suspects confess. An example from our data is presented in Excerpt 5:

**Excerpt 5**

1. P: O jáfara.
    You were **a bit** careless.
2. P: Ọmọ àlè ni ẹ́. Àìsòótọ́ nìyẹn.
    You are **such a bastard**. That is unfaithfulness.
3. S: Ẹ jọ̀ọ́ ọ̀gá.
    Please sir
4. P: Ìwé wa fihàn pé ògbójú olè ni ẹ́.
    **Our records have it** that you are an ardent thief.
5. S: Rárá sir.
    No sir!
6. P: Ọ̀rọ̀ tó o kọ sílẹ̀ fihàn pé aláìlóótọ́ ni ẹ.
    Your statement **suggests/reveals** that you are dishonest.
7. S: Kì ń ṣe bẹ́ẹ̀ sir
    It is not like that sir/it is not so sir
8. P: Olè, olóríburúkú ni ẹ.
    Thief, you are an unfortunate being!
9. S: (Silent)
10. P: Nítèmi, ó yẹ kóo lọ sẹ́wọ̀n.
    In my opinion, you should be jailed.
11. S: Ẹ jọ̀ọ́ sir
    Please, sir.

Excerpt 5 is a case of conspiracy and stealing. The suspect was an apprentice with a certain Mr Kaka. The master sent him to withdraw an amount of money from the Automated Teller Machine (ATM) on that fateful day. Having withdrawn the money from the ATM, he "left for" his master's shop. The master waited endlessly for his arrival. When it appeared that he was not forthcoming, the master went to check his whereabouts at the bank. He was surprised to see him crying profusely in the street. Having interrogated him, he told his master that the money had disappeared. The master later handed him over to the police. In the interrogative interaction, the suspect narrates his story to the IPO, but he (the IPO) rebukes him in a subtle manner. The context of stealing-related cases features the use of adverbial hedges and naming by IPOs. In rebuking the suspect, the IPO uses an adverbial hedge, *a bit*, to describe the degree of the suspect's carelessness. The use of the hedge is to express politeness in his interaction with the suspect. It is used to lessen the threat his rebuke could constitute to the face of the suspect. To further point out to him (the suspect) that his action is a punishable one, the IPO calls him *omo ale*, (a bastard). Using shared cultural knowledge (SCK), *omo ale*, in the Yoruba cultural belief, is someone (a bastard) whose parental history cannot be traced. The IPO calls the suspect a bastard in order to castigate him because of the crime committed. There is also the use of an agentless impersonal passive construction, a form of clausal hedge, by the IPO when he says, "*our records have it* that you are a criminal". This construction is used to realise depersonalisation. The identity of the person who made the allegation is withheld. In the interaction, the psychological acts of the IPO interact with shared Yoruba cultural knowledge to realise the pract of rebuke.

### 24.6.2 Pragmatic Functions of Suspects' Use of Hedges in Interactions

#### 24.6.2.1 Offering Explanation

As evident in our data, suspects equally employ the use of hedges in their interactions with IPOs to achieve certain goals. One such goal is to offer an explanation, particularly when it is their turn to explain their involvement in the crime they are alleged to have committed or to exonerate themselves. IPOs are interested in probing the veracity of suspects' involvement in crimes while suspects hedge in a bid to escape IPOs' traps. The form of hedge expressed by suspects often takes the form of avoiding the precision in IPOs' questions. Instead of suspects answering IPOs' questions directly, they often resort to offering an explanation. This is

done to avoid incrimination which their direct answer would attract from IPOs. This presupposes the fact that both IPOs and suspects sometimes work at cross purposes during interrogation. Instead of responding to the questions of the IPOs, suspects give long and windy sentences, giving explanations about their knowledge of the crimes committed. An example is presented in Excerpt 6:

**Excerpt 6**

1. P: How did you know about the deal?
2. S: **We were called by one of the co-workers on Sunday so when I got there, they had started the meeting. I told them that I would be going back home immediately, but I was asked to stay.**
3. P: My question is simple; did you agree at the meeting to carry out such an act?
4. S: **I do not interact with most of the boys in the shop because I do not trust them. Although I was called to the meeting and I was told we would meet the following day.**

The responses of the suspect in lines 2 and 4 in the excerpt above clearly show that the suspect in question deliberately hedges to give explanations instead of giving the usual single-word or short responses often preferred by IPOs. The suspect is said to be among the gang that burgled a particular shop in Agbeni Ogunpa. In the interaction, the suspect deliberately hedges in his explanation. The context of stealing-related cases also features the use of passive constructions by suspects to withdraw from being committed to the subject interrogations. The rationale behind the suspect's use of a hedge is to complicate the job of the IPO. Even when the IPO asks a polar question in line 3, the suspect deliberately uses a compound-complex sentence as a hedge in offering his explanation. This is in tandem with Heydon's (2005) study which posits that sentential structure carries meaning in interaction. Using SSK, the suspect hedges to avoid the consequence of his actions. This explains why he resorts to a long explanation that does not establish his guilt in the crime allegedly committed. The hedge sentence in the utterance of the suspect in line 4 is a form of hedge that does not ascertain a particular agent responsible for the intended action. *I was told we would meet the following day* in the statement of the suspect expresses inexplicitness as the agent is blurred. It is a strategy to render invalid the notion the IPO already had about his culpability in the crime on which he was being interrogated. In the entire interrogation, IPOs'

utterances interact with shared knowledge of the situation to realise the pract of explanation.

### 24.6.2.2 Feigning Ignorance

Another pragmatic function of suspects' use of hedges in PSI is to claim ignorance as regards the questions raised by IPOs. Suspects subtly claim ignorance in order to escape IPOs' punishments. Suspects use this strategy to complicate the interrogation process. An example from our data is seen below:

**Excerpt 7**

1. P: Dem sey you fight with the Fulani man.
   They said/alleged you fought with the Fulani man.
   S: Oga, dis Fulani don dey disturb us since many months now. Dem dey destroy our crop de way dem like.
   Sir, this Fulani people have been disturbing us for months now. They destroy our crops at will…
2. P: Dem sey you kill two of him cow.
   They alleged you killed two of his cows.
   S: (*silence*)
   S: Na lie be that.
   That is a lie!
3. P: I don go where the thing happen. You don know?
   I have been to the scene of the crime. Do you know that?
   S: I no know sir.
   **I don't know** sir.
4. P: The Fulani man sey one of him cow don sick.
   The Fulani man told us one of the cows is sick.
   S: I think him dey talk lie.
   **I guess** he is telling a lie.
5. P: How?
   S: I no sure sey any of the cow dey sick.
   **I am not sure** any one of the cows is sick.
6. P: Watin you mean?
   How do you mean?
   S: He talk that one to put me for trouble.
   He said **that to implicate me**.
7. P: You no hit the cow?
   Didn't you hit the cow?
   S: Wetin I know be sey the cow no sick. All the cow dey well when I see them for farm.

> **As far as I know**, the cow is not sick. All the cows were healthy when I saw them on the farm.

The suspect involved in this interaction is arrested for fighting a Fulani man on his (the suspect's) farm. He is also accused of hitting one of the cows of the Fulani man. The suspect, on the other hand, accuses the Fulani man of malicious damage. The context established in the case of affray above is expressed in the linguistic choices of the social actors (IPO and suspect). In his interaction with the IPO, the suspect is aware of the gravity of the allegation levelled against him. The suspect resorts to the use of negation and adverbial clauses to invalidate the claims of the IPO. Using SSK, the suspect is aware that the act could earn him grave consequences. This makes him allege that he (the complainant) destroyed his crops on the farm. This could be seen in line 1 of Excerpt 7. Apart from accusing the complainant, the suspect relies heavily on hedges to achieve certain goals in the interaction. This could be seen in lines 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. The suspect appeals to ignorance. He uses hedges to technically withdraw from the questions by claiming ignorance. The suspect's hedged utterance, "*I guess* he is telling a lie" could be seen as a strategy to resist the FTA posed by the IPO. Here, the suspect practs resistance and exoneration. In line 5, the suspect states: *I am not sure any one of the cows is sick*. This statement is made by the suspect to prove his innocence and to invalidate the allegations levelled against him by the complainant. The suspect's last hedged utterance in the excerpt above, *as far as I know* practs his stance on his innocence about the allegation against him. The results of this study contrast sharply with that of Farinde's (1997) study which maintains that police-accused interrogation is geared towards physical acts. This study identifies that PSI engages many psychological manipulations, one of which is feigning ignorance. It could be safely said here that the suspect uses clausal hedges which interact with shared situation knowledge to realise the practs of ignorance, allegation, resistance, invalidation and innocence in the interaction.

### 24.6.2.3 Refuting

One other pragmatic act employed by suspects in their interactions with IPOs during interrogation sessions is refuting. This is a strategy of proving wrong the statements of IPOs. Suspects refute IPOs' statements without proving convincing or logical bases for their arguments. An example is seen below:

**Excerpt 8**

    1. P: Ǹjẹ́ oò sọ pé ẹ jọlọ sí ilé ọ̀gbẹ́ni (XC) nínú ọ̀rọ̀ ẹnu rẹ tí a kọ́kọ́ gbà sílẹ̀?

    Didn't you indicate in your first statement that you went to Mr (XC)'s house with the other boys?

    2. S: **Mi ò sọ bẹ́ẹ rárá**.

    I did not say so at all.

    3. P: Mo sọ fún ẹ pé o sọ bẹ́ẹ̀.

    I put it to you that you said so.

    4. S: **Mi ò sọ bẹ́ẹ**.

    I did not say so.

       Excerpt 8 features a case of burglary and stealing. The suspect in question is alleged to have gone with some other accomplices to burgle the house of a certain Mr Saha. In the excerpt, the suspect resorts to the use of negation to hedge the IPO's questions when he finds out he could no longer withstand the pressure embedded in the IPO's questions. The suspect's use of hedging is a deliberate attempt to exonerate himself and reduce the truth value in the statement of the IPO. He refutes the IPO's accusations by saying *I did not say so*. The suspect realises the pract of refuting in the interaction so as to establish his innocence. Apart from employing refuting to establish their innocence, suspects also employ the pract to counter IPOs' allegations. An example from our data is presented in Excerpt 9:

**Excerpt 9**

    1. P: I put it to you, you are a cheat!
    2. S: **No sir!**
    3. P: Have you seen Simeon before?
    4. S: **I don't know** him at all!

Suspects resort to practing refuting/denying as a kind of escapist strategy. Suspects deny IPOs' allegations in order to escape punishment. Example 9 is a case of felony involving AC, who was accused of illegal possession of AD's land. This accusation, if proved to be true, would definitely attract some forms of sanctions. So, in order to avoid being sanctioned or punished (according to the extant criminal codes of Nigeria), the suspect countered and denied the allegation. The suspect denied the allegation with the use of negation in line 4.

Suspects also employ denial as a linguistic tool to resist police authority. It is used as a means of balancing the unequal power relations between them and IPOs during interrogation. From the data gathered, it is observed that suspects hedge to express resistance. Resistance is expressed in several ways such as countering assertions and accusations, refuting accusations, and dropping politeness markers. One way in which suspects resist IPOs' talk in PSI is by countering IPOs' assertions and accusations. The data show that IPOs make a lot of assertions and accusatory statements as strategies to force suspects to confess to guilt. They accuse suspects in order to discredit their cases; and in reaction, suspects try to counter these assertions and accusations, with the intention of absolving themselves of the accusations levelled against them. Although Heydon (2005), Farinde (2008), Ajayi (2016) and Akinrinlola (2016) hold that IPOs hold institutional power and wield such during interrogation, suspects also express power in interaction through subtle means, one of which is rendering invalid the claims of IPOs.

### 24.6.2.4 Vaguing

Another pragmatic function of hedges as observed in suspects' responses in our data is that of vaguing, i.e., expressing vagueness. Suspects react to IPOs' questions by giving answers that do not express clarity of thought regarding IPOs' questions. Such responses are deliberately given to manipulate IPOs to lose track of the interrogation session. An example from the data is in Excerpt 10:

### Excerpt 10

1. P: The statement you gave in the morning is different from the one you gave just now.
2. S: **I was not asked in the morning. I was asked questions and I answered them.**
3. P: Was the backdoor shut before you came in?
4. S: **My room is very far from the backdoor. I never closed it once. We can ask those whose rooms are close to the backdoor.**

The suspect in the interaction in Excerpt 10 was arrested in connection with a missing young man in the suspect's house. The missing man left for work on a Monday morning and never returned home. The occupants of the house were arrested as part of the efforts to investigate the case. The linguistic choices used in kidnapping-related cases form the context of the interaction. Considering the legal implications of the offence, the IPO uses

questions that restrict the scope of the suspect's responses. He (the IPO) asks a question that demands a yes or no response in the second sequence of the interaction, lines 3 and 4. Instead of giving a precise response, the suspect hedges by giving windy expressions to evade precision in his response. The suspect's response expresses inexplicitness as it does not address the specific issue raised in the question. In line 3, for example, the suspect hedges, avoiding responding to the specific question he is asked. He only indicates that *he was asked questions and he answered them.* The suspect also tried to manipulate the IPO in line 4 when he was asked whether the back door was locked before he came in. Using inference (INF), the suspect wanted to convince the IPO that he could not have known the whereabouts of the suspect since his room is very far from that of the suspect. This was done to prove his innocence. Here, there is a connection between the suspect's utterances and inference (INF) to realise the pract of vagueness.

## 24.7 Conclusion

This paper has characterised and described the pragmatic functions of hedges in PSI in the Nigerian context. PSI, as a form of institutional talk, involves conscious attempts at finding facts about crimes. Both the IPOs and suspects are geared towards achieving certain institutional and personal goals in the course of the interaction. IPOs are constrained to elicit confessional statements from suspects. In achieving this institutional goal, IPOs manipulate suspects to confess to guilt. Suspects, on the other hand, are conscious of escaping IPOs' elicitation-cum-manipulative strategies. The two social actors thus work at cross purposes. Hedges become linguistic tools used for speech acting in the interaction. This justifies the appropriateness of Mey's modified theory of pragmatic acting employed in the study to describe the various orientations of the social actors as regards the subject of interrogation. Both IPOs and suspects employ hedges to achieve certain institutional and personal goals in interrogation. While IPOs employ hedges to blame, condemn, accuse and rebuke suspects, suspects employ hedges to explain their innocence, exonerate themselves, and refute and resist IPOs' positions during interrogation. IPOs' and suspects' use of manipulative strategies are instances of psychological acts which interact with the textual part of the pragmeme to realise certain pragmatic acts. IPOs resort to the use of SSK, INF and SCK to pract warning, blaming, encouragement, justification and rebuke. Suspects use SSK and INF to pract ignorance, refutals, vagueness and explanation. Hedges are manipulated by police officers and suspects

during interrogation sessions to mitigate the semantic contents of their contributions. It is interesting to note that hedges, in their context of use, manifest varying forms and they occur at various levels of grammatical categories. Hedges, with regard to PSI, are used to perform various institutional functions. PSI involves a great deal of psychological manipulations, particularly on the parts of the major participants (IPOs and suspects) involved.

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