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Homophonic Errors in Nigerian ESL Speakers' WhatsApp Text Messages

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Abstract

Since the advent of the social media, Nigerians have been 'compelled' to 'speak more' and 'type more' in the public space. Nigerians who are users of English as a Second Language engage in verbal and written communication, mostly in English, on Tiktok, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, WhatsApp and so on. The inevitability of typing messages on social media has unveiled the spelling inaccuracies of some Nigerians which, many a time, are instigated by confusion arising from the sound convergence of certain English words. With theoretical insight drawn from Al-Khresheh's (2016) Error Analysis Theory, the homophonic lexical items that were interchangeably employed in the written online discourse of certain Nigerian English as Second Language (ESL) speakers were examined. Thirty homophonic errors were extracted from WhatsApp. Findings revealed that 60% of the identified homophonic errors were caused by Nigerian ESL speakers' departure from the Standard British English pronunciation of certain words. It was recommended that a dictionary be consulted by Nigerian ESL speakers to differentiate the meaning of homophonic words in order to use them in appropriate contexts.

Keywords: communication, homophones, WhatsApp, British English, Nigerian English

Introduction

Writing a second language is complex (Heydari & Bagheri, 2012). One of the peculiar characteristics of the English language which makes it very complicated is the presence of homophones. Homophones are words that have the same pronunciation but different orthographic representation and semantic import. English homophones are tricky; they are often confused in written texts, especially among L2 speakers of the language. This research examined homophonic errors found in the WhatsApp text messages of certain Nigerian ESL speakers.

Previous Studies on the Error Analysis (EA) of Nigerian ESL Speakers

Error Analysis entails collecting samples of learner language and identifying, describing, classifying and evaluating the errors in the samples (Hasyim, 2002; Heydari & Bagheri, 2012). A number of research works have been carried out on the different types of errors made by Nigerian ESL speakers. Ojetunde (2013) investigated the lexical and grammatical errors in the English of some secondary school students in Epe, Lagos State. She discovered that the

grammatical errors outweighed the lexical ones with 81.06% and 18.94% respectively. Okhuosi (2018) worked on errors instigated by phonologically similar English words among students of The Polytechnic, Ibadan. She observed that vowel errors were caused by diphthongs and vowel length while consonant errors were facilitated by the place of articulation. She also noticed that the vowel sound errors outnumbered the consonant sound errors. Also, words with similar orthography and pronunciation were problematic to her recipients. Ndubisi and Ada (2020) examined the syntactic errors in the utterances of first year students of Coal City University, Enugu. They concluded that most of the errors were interlingual errors which cannot be categorised as standard Nigerian English. Francis (2022) investigated the lexical errors in the English language spoken by selected Mountain Top University students. He found that most errors made were unintended and were as a result of their being second language learners.

Mother Tongue Interference

Interference, as defined by Noviyenty and Putri (2020), is the language error caused by the infusion of the elements of mother tongue into the target language. Akindele and Adegbite (2005) further describe the phenomenon as the situation whereby there is an overlap of two different languages. This occurs as a result of the transfer of the linguistic system of one language to the second language. This transfer could occur at different linguistic levels: phonology, lexis, grammar, discourse, semantics and so on. Following Goswami (2020), the learner of L2 attempts to alter the system of the L2 to match their L1. Noviyenty and Putri (2020) further note that the extent to which L1 can influence L2 is dependent on the level of control the learner has over L2.

Akindele and Adegbite (2005) recognise two types of interference: proactive and retroactive interference. Proactive interference, which is also referred to as positive transfer, occurs when the mother tongue aids the acquisition of the target language. On the contrary, retroactive interference, also known as negative transfer, hinders the learning process of the second language. In other words, while positive transfer facilitates the learning process of L2, negative transfer impedes it (Goswami, 2020).

Features of NE Segmental Phonology

While most L2 speakers of English have mastered the syntax and semantics of the language, the phonological aspect remains a challenge to them (Olajide and Olaniyi, 2023). Following (Okhuosi, 2018), the phonemes that do not exist in Nigerian languages are usually problematic to Nigerian ESL speakers. The convergent and divergent points of BE and NE phonemes are captured in Table.

1. **Table 1: SBE Phonemes and iheir NE Equivalents**

Consonant Sounds																						
SBE	p	b	t	d	k	g	f	v	ө	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ	ʧ	dʒ	m	n	ŋ	l	r	w	j
NE	p	b	ʈ	d	k	g	f	f, p	t	d	s	ş	ʂ	ʃ	ŝ	dʒ	*m*	*n*	n, m	l	r	w	j

Vowel Sounds																				
SBE	iː	ɪ	e	æ	aː	ɒ	ɔː	ʊ	uː	ʌ	ɜː	ə	eɪ	aɪ	ɔɪ	əu	au	ɪə	eə	uə
NE	I	i	ɛ	a	a	ɔ	ɔ	u	U	ɔ	ɔ	a	x	aɪ	ɔɪ	x	au	ɪə	x	X

SBE- Standard British English

NE – Nigerian English

x – no equivalent phoneme

Adapted from Olajide and Olaniyi (2013)

The features of NE phonemes as identified by scholars such as Atoye et al. (2018); Eze and Igwenyi, (2016) Olajide and Olaniyi (2013); Tiffen (1974) are enumerated below:

1. The monophthongisation of diphthongs and triphthongs, e.g. make /meɪk/ pronounced as [m*ek]
2. Reduced vowel system, e.g. sit /s ɪt/ and seat /siːt/ pronounced as [sɪt]
3. Devoicing of word final consonants, e.g. was /wɒz/ pronounced as [wɒs]
4. The substitution of dental fricatives, /ө/ and /ð/ with alveolar plosives, /t/ and /d/
5. Absence of post-alveolar affricates, /ʧ/ and /dʒ/
6. Substitution of mid vowels, /ʌ/, / ɜː/ and /ə/ with [ɒ], [ɔ] and [a] respectively
7. The insertion of vowels to break up consonant clusters (epenthesis) e.g. bible /baɪbl/ pronounced as [baɪbul]
8. The wrong realisation of plural and past tense morphemes, e.g. /kɪkt/ pronounced as [kɪkd]

Methodology

Theoretical Consideration

The paper adapts Error Analysis Theory as reviewed by Al-Khresheh (2016). He defines Error Analysis as a theory in applied linguistics that examines, analyses and classifies L2 learners' errors. EA identifies two main sources of error: interlingual and intralingual interference. Interlingual errors occur as a result of a negative transfer of the linguistic pattern of the mother tongue or native language to the target language while intralingual errors are caused by the effect of the target language. Errors are categorised into four: omission, selection, addition and

misordering of elements. Omission occurs when a required item is left out of an utterance; Selection involves choosing an incorrect element, in other words, substituting a correct element with a wrong one; Addition entails the insertion of unnecessary element and misordering occurs when an item is wrongly placed (Ellis, 1997 in Al-Khresheh, 2016). Error can occur at different linguistic levels: phonology, morphology, lexis and syntax. Some examples are given below.

1. **Omission**
   a. Morphological Omission: *He slap her in the morning (omission of 'ed')
   b. Lexical omission: *There is book on the table (omission of article 'a' which ought to precede 'book')
2. **Addition**
   a. Phonological Addition: womb pronounced as [wumb] instead of /wu:m/ (addition of /b/)
   b. Morphological Addition: *Shocker absorber (addition of "er" to "shock")
   c. Lexical Addition: Fetch the water down (addition of "down")
   d. Syntactic Addition: *The Lagos (addition of "the")
3. **Selection**
   Lexical Selection: *They don't hear English (selection of "hear" instead of "understand")
4. **Misordering**
   a. Phonological Misordering: ask pronounced as [æks] instead of /æsk/
   b. Lexical Misordering: *Plate number instead of "number plate"
   c. Syntactic Misordering: This my bag is too dirty instaed of "This bag of mine…"

For the purpose of this study, "error of omission" will be referred to as "deletion" and "error of election" will be termed "substitution".

Procedure for Data Collection

Thirty WhatsApp text messages with homophonic errors were randomly selected for the study.

Analysis of Data

Both BE and NE homophonic errors were analysed with Error Analysis Theory as reviewed by Al-Khresheh (2016). The errors were categorized into three: substitution, deletion and addition.

Table 2: Categorisation of Homophonic Errors

S/N	Homophonic Error	No of lexical items	Percentage (%)
BE Homophones			
1	Substitution	12	40
NE Homophones			
2	Substitution	15	50
3	Deletion	1	3.3
4	Addition	2	6.6
Total		**30**	**100**

As revealed in Table 2, 40% of the identified homophonic errors are BE homophones, which are categorized under substitution error. The NE homophones are classified into three: substitution of sound, which is 50%; deletion of sound, which is 3.3% and addition of sound, which is 6.6%.

Table 3: BE Homophonic Errors

S/N	Identified Sentence	Erroneous Word	Homophonic variant	RP	Correct form
1	Am sorry	Am	I'm	/æm/	I'm sorry
2	…there is nothing amiss with what the ladies mother did	Ladies	Lady's	/leɪdɪz/	,,,there is nothing amiss with what the lady's mother did
3	Its been funny	Its	It's	/ɪts/	It's been funny
4	Whose the lucky guy?	Whose	Who's	/hu:z/	Who's the lucky guy?
5	Lets come in now for History.	Lets	Let's	/lets/	Let's come in now for History.
6	They do it because they think their	Their	They're	/ðeə/	They do it because they

	smart				think they're smart
7	Inform of another letter?	Inform	In form	/ɪnfɔ:m/	In form of another letter?
8	As each day goes bye	Bye	By	/baɪ/	As each day goes by
9	She is not aloud to go outdoors	Aloud	Allowed	/əlaud/	She is not allowed to go outdoors
10	Father brake every chain	brake	break	**/breɪk/**	Father break every chain
11	I can't here you	Here	Hear	/hɪə/	I can't hear you
12	Guy, is Philip hear?	Hear	Here	/hɪə/	Guy, is Philip here?

The substitution of the appropriate words with their homophonic variants brought .about orthographic and graphological errors in the sentences. In British English, a verb cannot begin a declarative sentence but such is the case in sentence 1 where "I'm" (the contracted form of "I am") was substituted with "am" (a be verb). The non-use of the apostrophe brought about the orthographic inaccuracy in sentences 2-6. In sentence 2, the plural form of "lady" (ladies) was used instead of the singular form with apostrophe s, "lady's"; the possessive form of "it" was used in lieu of the contracted form of "it is" in sentence 3; the interrogative adjective, "whose" substituted "who's", the contracted form of "who is" in sentence 4; the singular form of "let" (lets) in sentence 5 substituted the contracted form of "let us" (let's) and in sentence 6, the possessive adjective, "their" was used in the place of the contracted form of "they are" (they're).

The graphological error in sentence 7 (the spacing of inform) has a semantic implication on the sentence. Hence, in sentence 7, "in the form of something" (in form) was insinuated instead of "to tell". In sentences 8-10, "bye" (farewell) was selected instead of "by" (next to); "aloud" (with a loud voice) instead of "allowed" (permitted) and "brake" (a device) in lieu of "break" (to split). In sentences 11 and 12, "here" (adverb of location) and "hear" (to perceive sound audibly) were used interchangeably.

Table 4: NE Homophonic Errors of Selection

S/N	Identified Sentence	Erroneous Word	RP.	NE Trans	Pseudo homophone	RP	NE Trans	Correct form
13	Let ladders that we're difficult to climb become easy for you to climb	We're	/wɪə/	**[wɪə]**	Were	/weə/	**[wɪə]**	Let ladders that were difficult to climb…
14	once you torch currencies and coin…	Torch	/tɔ:ʧ/	**[tɒʧ]**	touch	/tʌʧ/	**[tɒʧ]**	Once you touch currencies and coin…
15	I can fill the business flourishing to a greater height.	Fill	/fɪl/	**[fɪl]**	feel	/fi:l/	**[fɪl]**	I can feel the business flourishing to a greater height.
16	Please chart me up	Chart	/ʧa:t/	**[ʧæt]**	chat	/ʧæt/	**[ʧæt]**	Please chat me up.
17	God should deliver the family from ancestral courses	courses	/kɔ:sɪz/	**[kɒsɪs]**	curses	/kɜ:sɪz/	**[kɒsɪs]**	God should deliver the family from ancestral curses
18	Ogun state has been taking from us	Taking	/teɪkɪŋ/	**[t*ekɪn]**	taken	/teɪkᵊn/	**[t*ekɪn]**	Ogun State has been taken from us
19	Now that they cut him, what is next?	Cut	/kʌt/	**[kɒt]**	caught	/kɔ:t/	**[kɒt]**	Now that they caught him, what is next?
20	For are husband to repent, the mother-in-law	Are	/a:/	**[æ]**	her	/hɜ:/	**[æ]**	For her husband to repent, the

	should forgive him							mother-in-law should forgive him
21	Remember that you cannot full all the people every time	Full	/ful/	[ful]	fool	/fu:l/	[ful]	Remember that you cannot fool all the people
22	You where making sense	Where	/wɪə/	**[wɪə]**	Were	/wɜ:/	**[wɪə]**	You were making sense
23	Lead and will follow	Will	/wɪl/	[wɪl]	We'll	/wi:l/	**[wɪl]**	Lead and we'll follow
24	Can we give them to?	To	/tu/	[tu]	Too	/tu:/	**[tu]**	Can we give them too?
25	My own ball is not tick enough	Tick	/tɪk/	[tɪk]	thick	/θɪk/	[tɪk]	My own ball is not thick enough
26	Both women had lived in peace since we parked in	Parked	/pa:kt/	**[pækd]**	Packed	/**pækt**/	**[pækd]**	Both women had lived in peace since we packed in
27	I packed to reply your message	Packed	/**pækt**/	**[pækd]**	Parked	/pa:kt/	**[pækd]**	I parked to reply your message

Nigerian ESL speakers select the sounds present in their repertoire to substitute those peculiar to BE (Atoye *et al*., 2018). As presented in Table 4, Nigerian ESL speakers pronounce we're /wɪə/ (the contracted form of "we are") and were /weə/ (a be verb) as [wɪə]; torch /tɔ:ʧ/ (an object used for illumination) and touch /tʌʧ/ (to come in contact with someone or something) as [tɒʧ]; fill /fɪl/ (to occupy completely) and feel /fi:l/ (to sense something) as [fɪl]; chart /ʧa:t/ (a map or graph) and chat /ʧæt/ (an informal discussion) as [ʧæt]; courses /kɔ:sɪz/ (learning programmes) and curses /kɜ:sɪz/ (a prayer of harm placed on someone) as [kɔ:sɪs]; taking /teɪkɪŋ/ (progressive form of take) and taken /teɪkᵊn/ (perfective form of take) as [t*ekɪn]; cut /kʌt/ (to divide) and

caught /kɔ:t/ (past tense of catch) as [kɒt]; are /a:/ (a be verb) and her /hɜ:/ (accusative form of "she") as /æ/; full /ful/ (filled up) and fool /fu:l/ (not wise) as /ful/; where /wɪə/ (interrogative pronoun) and were /wɜ:/ (a be verb) as /wɪə/; will /wɪl/ (a modal verb used to express willingness) and we'll /wi:l/ (contracted form of "we will") as [wɪl]; to /tu/ (a preposition that shows direction) and too /tu:/ (also) as /tu/; tick /tɪk/ (a parasite) and thick /θɪk/ **(not slim)** as [tɪk]; you /ju:/ (second person pronoun) and you're /juə/ (the contracted form of "you are") as [ju]; packed /pækt/ (filled with something) and parked /pa:kt/ (temporarily bringing a vehicle to a halt) as [pækd]. This mispronunciation accounts for the homophonic errors in Nigerian ESL speakers' written discourse.

Table 5: NE Homophonic Errors of Omission

S/N	Identified Sentences	Erroneous Words	RP	**NE Trans**	Pseudo-homophone	RP	**NE Trans**	Correct form
28	I have watched is interview many times	Is	/ɪz/	**[ɪs]**	his	/hɪz/	**[ɪs]**	I have watched his interview many times,

As presented in Table 5, there is the omission of letter h and consequently, the glottal sound to alter the speaker's intended meaning. hence, "is", a be verb, is made to function as an adjective, which is alien to the English grammar.

Table 6: NE Homophonic Errors of Addition

S/N	Identified Sentences	Erroneous Words	RP	**NE Trans**	Homophonic variants	RP	**NE Trans**	Correct form
29	His case his becoming critical	his	/hɪz/	**/ɪs/**	is	/ɪz/	**/ɪs/**	His case is becoming critical
30	Have told you	Have	/hæv/	**/æv/**	I've told you	/æv/	**/æv/**	I've told you

In NE, "his" (the possessive form of "he") and "is" (a be verb) as well as "have" (an auxiliary verb) /"I've" (the contracted) are pronounced the same way; thus, the writers' confusion leading to the erroneous insertion of letter h in their orthographic representation. The orthographic error

in sentence 30 has altered the grammaticality of the sentence for the reason that the structure of a declarative sentence usually begins with a subject and not a verb.

Discussion of Findings

Two broad categories of homophones were identified in this study. They are BE and NE homophones. BE homophones are lexical items that have the same pronunciation in British English while NE homophones are lexical items that do not sound alike in British English but pronounced the same way in Nigerian English. The homophonic errors were further classified into three: Error of substitution, error of deletion and error of addition. The major causes of BE homophonic errors was the non-use of the apostrophe to indicate contraction, mostly erroneously substituted with possessive adjectives and sometimes, the plural form of the lexical item. The NE homophones, on the other hand, were mostly caused by Nigerian ESL speakers' substitution of unfamiliar BE sounds with those that are present in Nigerian languages. This is in tandem with previous findings (Atoye et al., 2018; Eze & Igwenyi, 2016; Olajide & Olaniyi, 2013). Generally, the homophonic errors have serious semantic implication on sentences. This could cause communication breakdown; hence, the need to avoid such errors.

Conclusion

This study has identified BE and NE homophonic errors in the WhatsApp text messages of Nigerian ESL speakers. The identified errors were categorised into three: substitution, deletion and addition. The most recurring error is the error of substitution. Since homophonic errors can alter mutual intelligibility, it is recommended that Nigerian ESL speakers should master how words are pronounced in BBC English and consult the dictionary to differentiate the meaning of confusing words in order for them to be able to use homophones correctly.

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Appendix

S/N	Identified Sentence
1	Am sorry
2	…there is nothing amiss with what the ladies mother did
3	Its been funny
4	Whose the lucky guy?
5	Lets come in now for History.
6	They do it because they think their smart
7	Inform of another letter?
8	As each day goes bye
9	She is not aloud to go outdoors
10	Father brake every chain
11	I can't here you
12	Guy, is Philip hear?
13	Let ladders that we're difficult to climb become easy for you to climb
14	once you torch currencies and coin…
15	I can fill the business flourishing to a greater height.
16	Please chart me up
17	God should deliver the family from ancestral courses
18	Ogun state has been taking from us
19	Now that they cut him, what is next?
20	For are husband to repent, the mother-in-law should forgive him
21	Remember that you cannot full all the people every time
22	You where making sense
23	Lead and will follow
24	Can we give them to?
25	My own ball is not tick enough

26	Both women had lived in peace since we parked in
27	I packed to reply your message
28	I have watched is interview many times
29	His case his becoming critical
30	Have told you

Religious Identity and Elite Manipulation in Abdul-Rasheed Na'allah's *Seriya*

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Abstract

Religion constitutes a fundamental aspect of human existence, permeating social structures and individual identities worldwide. It serves as a lens through which individuals interpret their surroundings and define their sense of self within broader societal frameworks. This universal phenomenon manifests uniquely across cultures, encompassing diverse practices and beliefs that shape traditions and norms. This article explores the intersection of religious identity and elite hypocrisy, particularly how they function as tools of political patronage in Nigeria. It argues that religious identity plays a pivotal role in political negotiations within the Nigerian context, contributing to the dichotomy between "us" and "them". Drawing on Freudian concepts of Selective Perception, which posits that individuals tend to perceive and interpret information in ways that align with their pre-existing beliefs and identities, the analysis of religious consciousness in Abdul-Rasheed Na Allah's *Seriya* becomes crucial. Characters within the narrative exemplify how religious identity influences their decisions and actions, reflecting broader societal trends where religious affiliations shape political allegiances and agendas. The study exposes a socio-political climate marked by hypocrisy, manipulation, deceit, and exclusion. Ultimately, the article posits that characters' consciousness reflects their religious identities, influencing their socio-political engagements.

Keywords: Religious Identity, Elite Manipulation, Nigerian Drama, Political Hypocrisy and *Seriya*

Introduction

> For the Africans, "To live is to be caught up in a religious drama
> and to exist is to be religious in a religious universe" (Mbiti 1).

To effectively frame the argument of this study, it is crucial to clarify the key concepts of religion, religious identity and elite manipulation. Religion is a fundamental force that intertwines these concepts, as illustrated by the opening quote. It encompasses a broad range of beliefs, practices, rituals, and doctrines that guide individuals and communities in their spiritual and moral lives. Beyond being a system of faith, religion acts as a cultural and social institution that shapes worldviews, moral values, and communal identities. It provides individuals with a sense of purpose, belonging, and moral guidance, influencing their ethical decisions and interpersonal relationships. Moreover, religion often intersects with other aspects of identity, such as ethnicity, nationality, and socio-economic status, contributing to multifaceted and complex identities.

Religious identity, in particular, refers to the set of characteristics, beliefs, values, and affiliations that define an individual or group within a societal context. It includes both personal identity (traits unique to an individual) and social identity (membership in larger groups or categories). Specifically, religious identity pertains to how individuals perceive themselves and are perceived by others in relation to their religious beliefs and practices. It shapes self-concept, moral frameworks, and social interactions, playing a pivotal role in social cohesion and collective behaviour. On an individual level, religious identity encompasses personal beliefs and values that are deeply held and often central to one's self-concept. It includes personal convictions about the nature of existence, the divine, and the moral principles that guide behavior. These personal aspects of religious identity shape how individuals view themselves and their place in the world. They influence daily decisions, ethical judgments, and responses to life's challenges.

Elite manipulation, on the other hand, involves the strategic use of power and influence by privileged groups to maintain or expand their control over resources and institutions. Elites may leverage economic, political, and cultural power to shape public opinion, influence policy outcomes, and consolidate their authority. In the context of religion, the elites exploit religious affiliations and sentiments to mobilize support, legitimize their authority, or deflect criticism, thereby reinforcing their dominance. It is important to acknowledge that one key aspect of elite manipulation is economic power. This is so because the elites often control significant financial resources and economic assets, which they can use to influence public opinion and policy. Political power is another crucial tool for elite manipulation. They leverage their positions within government or political organizations to shape legislation, policy decisions, and governance structures. By positioning themselves as key players in the political arena, elites can guide policy in ways that preserve or enhance their power and control.

Understanding these dynamics is essential for appreciating the complex relationship between religious identity and elite behavior, revealing both the potential for societal cohesion and the risks of manipulation and conflict. Recent scholarly discourse highlights the complexities of religion's impact on society, cautioning against simplistic interpretations. As Agbigi and Swart

suggest, "African ideological philosophies often integrate profound religiosity, influencing societal norms and values" (2). Similarly, Kalu underscores how elites use religious symbols and narratives for mobilization and, regrettably, "as instruments of political conflict" (37).

Apparrantly, defining these concepts is vital for analyzing the intricate interplay between religion, identity, and elite manipulation. This framework sets the stage for examining how these factors intersect and influence socio-political dynamics, particularly in contexts where religious identity significantly shapes power structures and governance. In Abdul-Rasheed Na Allah's play *Seriya*, characters use their religious consciousness to reflect their realities and navigate socio-political landscapes, demonstrating how deeply ingrained religious identity can affect individual behavior and societal dynamics, especially in politically significant contexts.

Towards the Meaning of Religion

Religion is a "set of actions organized around the sacred that is a non-empirical source of power, transcendence, mystery and awe" (McGee 336). It determines the behavioural pattern of people in many ways. Mala and Aiyegbogun (33-34) believe that religion performs six interrelated functions, namely: restraining or criticizing the conduct of government, encouraging political participation, promoting democratic values and norm, articulating, and aggregating distinctive societal interests, generating cross-cutting identities and providing avenues for the development of leadership skills. Tylor sees it as a unified system of belief and practices which unite into a single moral community called a church (or a mosque) all of those who adhere to them (62, emphasis, mine). Other important definitions useful to this study see religion as a fixed relationship between the human self and some non-human entity, the sacred, the supernatural, the self-existent, the absolutely, simple or dependent God (Eyo 20).

To Omoregbe, religion is essentially a relationship, "a link established between two persons, namely, the human person and the divine person to exist" (15). It is "a faith and practice involving the relationship between mankind and what is regarded as sacred" (Ugwu 22); and it denotes the whole group of rites performed in the honour of the divine being" (Carpeter 19). In fact, some scholars in the field of religion, for example, Deng 143; Nkom 75; Kunhiyop 226, have all argued that in many African societies, religion constitute the main fabric which is intertwined with their general existence. This is so because it has in its common denominators and cultural signifiers that underscore shared identity. Other scholars argue that ritual, prayers and feelings of awe must be ordained and sanctioned by authority or tradition (Edet 2; Asagun 18). From the foregoing, it is pertinent to underscore that the characteristic features of any religion include the belief in supernatural being to whom obedience, service and honour are due. This is to Merriam, "the feeling or expression of human love, fear, or awe of some superhuman or overruling power, whether by profession or belief, by observance or rites and by ceremonies or conduct of life" (250).

Religious Identity and Consciousness of Religion in Nigeria

Perhaps, putting religious (an adjective) to qualify identity (a noun) is instructive. Grammar aside, it insinuates a restricted but pragmatic way of viewing what identity represents. In fact,

recent literature on religious identity has often emphasized the positive role of religion in the socialization process in the society (Alan and Smith 58; Laura 326; Thomas 257; Jin and Kim 115; and Michael 478). Religious identity is, therefore, a specific type of identity formation which centres on the collective consciousness on which the peoples' lives sprout, grow and flourish. Put in another sense, it constitutes how a person or group thinks of themselves as belonging to and representing the values of a particular religion or set. It, nonetheless, has rules about conduct that guide life within a faced group, and it is often organized and practiced in a community (Agbiji and Swart 2).

In the African worldview, religious identity is an ontological phenomenon: It is not only a set of practices and ritual that are related to the sacred, to God, to the mystical or to the supernatural (Harold Koening 284), but is also of integral importance because it concerns the deepest root of human existence that integrates human life into a coherent whole (Schuurman 273-274, Mbiti15; Loening 283). For Mu'azzam and Ibrahim, religion provides the ground for all decisions, actions and ultimate expectations in social, political and economic life, giving meaning to human life and action (69). It is, therefore, a strong element in the traditional backgrounds and exerts the greatest influence upon the thinking and feeling of the people concerned (Mbiti 1999 cited in Ilesanmi 2014).

Nigerians are the ninth most religious people in the world (Onapajo 112). The most populous Black Nation with a population above 200 million, Nigeria is projected to grow to 375 million to become the third largest in the world by 2050 (World Population Prospects 2022). The country's religious identities are usually classified into three: Traditional, Christian and Muslim. Many people have jokingly added a fourth strand to the list; "*Tradochrislam*" which is a blend of the three. Of these three, (or four, if you like), Islam and Christianity are nearly equally represented, while the traditional religion is the least politically active even though several ethnic groups or sub-groups, villages, clans or kins groups, are involved in the worship of different gods or goddesses. According to Greene Eleanu, "Religion is one of the vextions and contentious issues across the globe" (2). For a country like Nigeria, it plays out in many ways informing not only the people's philosophical understanding of their customs and tradition; belief system and morals; it encompasses their actions and social relationships.

Relating religion to identity is also contentious for many. Indeed, it can be argued that the development of an identity is what leads to organized religion. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* affirms that:

> Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, these rights include freedom to change his religion, or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance (*Article 18,* UN-UDHRS$_5$).

This declaration supports the respect for individual choice of religion and the government's expectation to protect same. Nigeria, as many other African countries, has adopted this

Declaration in the *1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* (as amended). For the sake of emphasis, it is presented below:

> Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance (*Chapter IV, 1-3*).

Despite the provisions, religious activities in Nigeria are now closely linked with power politics. This is because members of the Nigerian political class have continued to deploy religious activities or its symbols to gain or retain their political dominance. Politicians, therefore, exploit these religious activities as a determining factor to pursue their agenda knowing that religious factor remain one of the deepest and strongest rallying point of influence in Nigeria. It is worthy of note that the infiltration of religion into the electoral process in Nigeria is commemorated with all manner of thanksgiving and prayer sessions by politicians in churches and mosques.

Consequently, it is not surprising to observe that during election periods, candidates from various political parties frequently visit major church gatherings and religious events. These include large-scale conventions such as those held at the Redemption Camp by the Redeemed Christian Church of God, the Power Must Change Hands programme at Prayer City by the Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries, Shiloh, the annual event organized by the Winners' Chapel (also known as the Living Faith Bible Church led by Bishop David Oyedepo), and the Adoration Ministry led by Reverend Father Mbaka, among others. These visits are strategic efforts to connect with the religious sentiments of the electorate. Similarly, Islamic leaders and events also play a significant role in reflecting the shared social experiences of the people during these election periods.Across the country Muslims and Christians have co-existed peacefully for decades.

In the southwest where identity is mainly shaped by regional culture and values, they even inter-marry (Hoffman 5). Nigeria is secular state. That is separation of Church ans State, and that no religion should be adopted as a state religion or that no religion is superior to the other. In clear terms, the Nigerian Constitution frowns at the superimposition of any religion on the peoplen as contained in *Section 10 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* (as amended). What this means is that any attempt by anyone or any group to foist a religion on the nation or state would be rejected to avoid any conflict that may ensue as a result. Although this constitutional provision bars a State religion by adoption, it has, however, not deter many office seekers, or political jobbers to hover around the so-called men of God (MOGs) during campaigns. No wonder, Majek Fashek, the Nigeria reggae musician of blessed memory in one of his songs said, "Religion na politics and lots of people know all the tricks." In other words, religious identity is a formidable aspect of identity politics in Nigeria.

Perhaps, it is for this reason that many scholars such as Olutayo and Makanjuola 25; Ojo, 82; Adesina and Ganiyu, 35 and Ibrahim 12 maintain that religion has become a tool in the hands of politicians, policy makers and religious leaders, or people who seek public offices. These authors

in their postulations offer a contemporary perspective on the relationship between religion and politics in Nigeria, drawing from the latest academic and journalistic research. Their work provides modern insights into how religion intersects with politics, highlighting recent developments and case studies. They analyse the newest trends in how political figures and religious leaders leverage religion to shape public opinion and policy and assess the ongoing influence of religious institutions on political power dynamics, with particular attention to recent elections and policy shifts.

The Politics of the Elites

Elites who are politically conscious are ambitious individuals who seek political office for personal recognition, career advancement, and power (Guy 46; Hans-Dieter 79). Holding key positions in society, they can be seen as pillars upholding the political culture (Babafemi 76).. They also pose a significant threat to the political survival of society and often exploit religious, ethnic, or other primordial identity symbols to gain political advantages over their rivals (Babafemi 102). To explain elite hypocrisy, therefore, Pareto argues that elites maintain power through a veneer of respectability while pursuing self-interest (Pareto 183). Similarly, Mosca highlights how political elites manipulate ideological rhetoric to conceal their true motives (Mosca 65). Robert Michels adds that even democratic organisations [such as Nigeria] inevitably develop a controlling elite that prioritises its own interests under the guise of serving the public (Michels 82, emphasis, mine). These theories collectively demonstrate how elites frequently engage in hypocrisy by presenting themselves as public servants while pursuing personal agendas.

In a way, this elite hypocrisyis is evident in their sanctimonious posturing while seizing every opportunity to consolidate their powers. To achieve this, they leverage their legitimacy from various religious identity-based affiliations. The uncontrollable situation described above has led many Nigerians to use their religious identity as a criterion for accessing political opportunities. Sadly, in many parts of Nigeria, access to good governance, employment in government institutions, and overall government performance are often sacrificed due to considerations of religious identity. It is not uncommon to find individuals aligning with a particular religious group supporting only candidates of their own religious affiliation. For many Nigerians, their religious identity often defines them more prominently than any other aspect of their identity. Politicians exploit this identity as bait to secure electoral support, leading to an increase in religious conflicts exacerbated by elite hypocrisy, resulting in economic, social, and political manipulation and crises nationwide (Adekanye 45; Kaplan 132).

Despite the Nigerian Constitution prohibiting the formation of political parties along religious lines, political elites and groups continue to exploit religion across all geopolitical zones, where Christianity and Islam compete for influence and political dominance. This competition fosters regional support based on religious persuasion for candidates from each region. The diversity of regional solidarity in Nigeria is largely shaped by the manipulation of religious identities by elite groups seeking power and socio-economic influence. Religious influence over politics becomes pronounced when political elites invoke religious rhetoric before, during, and after elections. These elites wield decision-making powers over state institutions, which they control to maintain

authority and legitimacy. As Cordelli argues, elites are driven by the ability to mobilize resources and coercive tools, shaping both domestic and international arenas to extend and legitimize their rule, thereby ensuring acceptance among non-elite groups (91). They serve as arbiters of societal values and a unifying force without which the community risks fragmentation.

The Religion Question in Na' Allah's *Seriya*

African writers have always used their creative works as "art in the service of man" as Achebe puts it. Through these works, they can reflect on the diverse aspects of the peoples' religious identities, experiences and realities. Although Klinken has argued that the study of religion and literature is an emerging field (1), many creative works in Africa have touched on the issues of religion, nonetheless. To be sure, the beliefs in supernatural beings, such as gods, spirits and divinities, have been captured in many epic texts such as Djibril Tamsir Niane's *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*; and Mazisi Kunene's *Emperor Shaka the Great: A Zulu Epic* and many others. Within Nigerian Literature, creative works such as *Forest of a Thousand Daemons,* by Daniel Fagunwa, *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* by Chinua Achebe; Wole Soyinka's *A Dance of the Forests; The Strong Breed; The Lion and The Jewel; Kongi's Harvest* and *The Road* are works that reveal the social malaise in the form of corruption, leadership failure, political violence, military dictatorship, social inequity and systemic failure at every level of governance bedevilling the nation at every point in history. Majority of these works set in a cosmological environment which explore the various aspects or themes of the peoples' religion: ancestral curses running through generations, traditions of myth and rituals, secular social vision, or even demonstrate the ongoing relevance of indigenous worldviews in a contemporary Nigerian society.

In recent times, however, some of Nigeria's 21st century writers have used their works to present a situation in which various groups use language to construct their individual and collective identities and ideologies, legitimise their actions and justify their acts against others. Thus, Nigerian literature in various forms – poetry, drama, and the novel, as well as the critical discourse on them, have now been preoccupied with not just the combined impact of colonialism but also focused on the impact of the *new* religion on the people and their society. What is more? The creative writers such as Femi Osofisan, Odia Ofeimun, Festus Iyayi, Ben Okri, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Tanure Ojaide, Oyeh Otu and Abdul Rasheed Na' Allah and many others have continued to use their works as avenues of engaging with issues in the society thereby receiving due attention.

The play *Seriya* is another valuable contribution of Abdul-Rasheed Na'Allah to Nigerian literature. In *Seriya,* Na'Allah explores the aesthetics of religion in the lives of his characters in whom he presents the various cultural and political orientation of the Nigerian society. The playwright exposes the ills and conflicts that characterized the peoples' attitude to their religion and the interpretation they give to their realities. Of course, this is usually coloured by the religious beliefs and the outcome of their socialization process. Set in Ilorin for obvious reasons,[1]

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[1]Abdul-Rasheed Na' Allah was born in Ilorin, a multicultural city and capital of Kwara State. He attended his Quranic, elementary and university earning B.A. (Hons.) in Education and English; and his M.A. in English from

the play reflects the complex nature of the city's socio-cultural milieu in moulding the behaviour of those who live in it. That aside, the geographical architecture of the city space, i.e., its dynamic connection, is for the author "a mixture of rural and urban modernity." (*Prelude* 12). Clearly, readers are made to envisage a complex network of city life in mosaic of diversity and messy contradictions. The playwright, who believes that there is a connection between the city, space and literary creativity in the dramatic sense has this to say about the setting of *Seriya*:

> African and Islamic cultural and artistic symbols and images abound… a few British-style housing structure [announcing the marriage of two cultures] all [are seen] at the city's outskirts. Mainly traditional Yoruba and Hausa structures with corrugated iron sheets in downtown areas. Calls to Muslim prayers are heard five times daily from all directions, far and near, and soon sounds of Quranic recitations came through from ongoing *salats*, Muslim prayers. And as they subside, words, sentences, discussions, even laughter came from all directors, [Sic] mainly in Yoruba, but also in Hausa, Fulani, Nupe, Baruba and Kemberi ancestries [Prelude 12].

This opening action is a signifier to the cultural architecture embedded in the multifarious practices of the communities that inhabit the space. Not only is the ritualistic aspect of the city's metropolis affirmed by the playwright, the dynamics between space and its subversive connection with the human quest for fulfillment signals the opening action in Act 1. What would people say of her predicament begins the action as she talks to herself in a dramatic monologue:

Mariama: …or are you tired of me, oh Allah?The world will say she's finished… she's an *adelebo*– clearly a grown-up woman, twenty years old, has refused to marry… They will perhaps say she has a curse on her head… She will be a terrible role model in the community…" (*Seriya,* 13-14).

Mariama's dejection is borne out of a societal expectation. A woman of her age and status, beautiful and a successful teacher is expected not only to have been married but also with children of her own. Her inability to fulfil this desire at and when due is the cause of her outburst to Allah "Or are you tired of me, oh Allah? Oh, I am already one, am I not, Allah? (*Seriya* 13, 14). *Sakariyawu*, Mariama's father was quick to remind her that it is Allah alone who oversees the affairs of men. The consciousness with which daughter and father had their conversation betrays their religious temperament on certain fundamental moral principles on which aspects of their culture or religion are built. This is how she explains it to her father:

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the University of Ilorin. He has spent almost all his youth and adult life in Ilorin the unique multiethnic city, which is home to the Yoruba, Hausa and Nupe people and many others.

Mariama:

> God's *Seriya*, yet, is the severest. The principal has no child of his own. He has taken his third wife, and after two years, even that wife hasn't born him a child… God is the Almighty that measures out appropriate *Seriya* to the deafest human being who won't hear His admonitions and would not listen to His words. And sometimes Allah does what is good and human beings think He's done a bad thing (*Seriya*18).

Religious consciousness directly relates to how people conceive of their faith. It bespeaks of "the way their religion manifest itself in the thought and feelings and activities of individuals" (Pratt 13). In the Nigerian society generally, people's faith may be affected in specific ways by the social cultural climate that surrounds them. Thus, their religious consciousness provides a guide to the totality of their being especially in their submission to the will of Allah on earth. In the case of Islam, Moten argues:

> "It [a peoples' religious belief] is not [just] a set of metaphysical doctrines nor a body of rituals but a complete, comprehensive way of life embracing all spheres of human thought and action whether spiritual or mundane (218. Emphasis added).

As a result, to an absolute reliance of the will of Allah is required by every human who are only pencils in the hands of their maker. In this sense Islam is perceived to be holistic in nature as it guides the entire life and conduct of the people. This is what Mariama meant when she says:

> Who knows, the head-teacher might have even hated his own children if Allah had given him some and perhaps he might have starved them to death! He's become a laughing stock in the community and people say he is a sheep who calls himself a he-goat! (*Seriya*18).

Given the above, it is clear how a person or group think of themselves as belonging to and represented by the value of their religion. Also, by her position on the inability of her Headteacher to have children of his own despite marrying many women, readers are made to see the strong association of the characters in the play to their religious beliefs. Obviously, their religion becomes the consciousness upon which they derive their essence, define their existence or negotiated their communal interactions. No wonder all *Sakariyawu* could say following Mariama's wailing about her age and successes as a teacher but failure to attract a suitor or "the right man to take [her] to the most honourable house of motherhood" was a call for prayers to the Almighty God. Of course, prayer is a key component of the Islamic religion. It is the first pillar of Islam. Others are the Profession of Faith, Zakat, Fasting and Hajj. For the Muslim, prayer is obligatory upon the prophet Muhammad during his ascension to heaven. It is believed among Muslims that no matter what actions one performs in his life, the most important aspect is one's relationship to God, that is, one's faith (*imaan*), God- consciousness (*taqwa*), sincerity (*ikhlas*) and worship of God (*ibaadah*). (*IslamHouse.com,* "The Importance of Prayer", 3).

Apart from its spiritual benefits, prayer is a very important exercise which imposes the physical and mental health benefit for those who perform them. Madwi argues that:

> It generates within the subliminal self of man such spiritual power; light of faith and awareness of God as can enable him to strive successfully against all kinds of evils and temptations and remain steadfast at times of trial and adversity and protect himself against the weakness of the flesh and the mischief of immoderate appetites (24).

No wonder *Sakariyawu*, a devote Muslim settle for it: "My daughter, let me pray for you" [*Putting his right hand on her head*].

Mariama: [*Kneeling*] Thank you my father, I know your prayers and those of my mother have never ceased to keep me company… (*Seriya*19).

Both father and daughter, therefore, unite their faith to the God whom they believe has the power to change whatever situation is to be changed. For the two, religion becomes an eminently social practice which focuses less on the physical but more on the supernatural who can only be accessed through the collective consciousness of prayer sessions. Of course, this is also a requirement in Islam where man's relationship with God is both demonstrated and put into practice by prayer. It is believed that if prayers are sound and proper, the rest of man's deeds will be sound and proper: "Verily, the prayer keeps one from the great sins and evil deeds" (Quran 29:45). Another passage has it that "Verily, man was created impatient, irritable when evil touches him and ungenerous when good touches him. Except for those devoted to prayer those who remain constant in their prayers..." (Quran 70:19-23).This is the reason graduating from the Quranic School is a thing of celebration for the family. On such occasions, guests and friends of the family must colour the event by making cash donating or presenting gifts of various kinds to the graduates. For the elites, it is not just an opportunity to display their love for the community and its people, but also a time to betray their hypocrisy. This brings us to the second part of this essay.

Elite Manipulation

Manipulation is the usage of emotional influence over a person or situation to gain a positive result. It is "essentially controlling the action of a person or group without that person or group knowing the goals, purpose and method of that control and without even being aware that a form of control is being exercised on them at all" (Usman87). Through the character of *Sakariyawu*, Na' Allah x-rays the attitude of a typical Nigerian elite who sees religion as the fastest means of getting into the hearts of the people. The dialogue between him and *Lamidi*, the Local Government Chairman of *Ile-Eni* reveals a lot about Nigerian political elites and their physical and emotional reaction to situations around them. *Lamidi* had come to inform *Sakariyawu* that he would be physically present at his sons *Wolima* (Quranic school graduation ceremony). However, *Sakariyawu* sees the gestures as a political appearance and a systematic attempt to canvass for votes in the forthcoming election. He hits him hard in the following conversation:

Sakariyawu:

> Oh, the chairman… We do not see your masquerade outside of his den… For what have we earned the visit of the lion of the forest? (*Seriya* 24-25).

Since politics is seen as survival of the fittest where the strongest animal wills of supremacy, only the lion is, for sure, seen as the leader of the forest to which other animals must bow. A very clever politician who understands the implication *Sakariyawu's* statement moves into self-defense:

Lamidi: My brother, you know, I will always come see you. What is *Okuku* doing that it will not come towards the weaver? What is the nail doing that it would refuse to keep the finger company? What is tongue doing that it will not pay a visit to the teeth? ...Who am I without the good will of my Lords and benefactors? (25).

In Nigeria, religious manipulation is deeply rooted in the poor living socio-economic conditions of the people. This is a quality many Nigerian politicians must have to succeed in the act of public speaking to keep convincing their electorates of the need to vote for them at every election. To achieve victory over their opponent, politicians must strive to use words in rhetorical embellishment. In fact, words from their mouths can be seen as the "sounds of fury signifying nothing," apologies to Shakespeare. Unfortunately for him, *Sakariyawu* is not a novice to their attitude. Quickly, be retorted: "Eh eh, Chairman, the Chairman! I am not surprised. Today's politicians' mouths are like the White man's salt" (25). Apparently, language has the facilities which its users employ frequently to actualize their intentions (Opeibi 31). Thus, whether used as a mode of persuasion, while describing humans as political beings, or as a facility to facilitate interactions among humans, "the nature of language is said to be closely related to the demands people made of it, and the function it must serve" (Halliday 70). For the politicians, language is deployed to do a lot before, during and after electioneering process.

Right from the classical time, for example, in both the Greek *polis* and the Roman Empire, the use of words or the rhetorical tradition played a significant role in the verbal behaviour of politicians, creative writers and seers. The same is true even in the Nigerian society. Evidently, the metaphor of the *Whiteman's salt* is also very instructive. It carries upon it the peculiarity and effect of words on the audience: a means by which the ignorant are influenced, the noble is praised and the weak seduced, or subdued. It is not just "a mere stringing of words" as Ngugi (11) has also suggested. More than that, it captures the African essence [in] definition of their reality (Akwen 196). Undoubtedly, words or language can be instrument of oppression by which a person or group of people are subjugated. No wonder Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike warn:

> A necessity for linguistic experimentation lies in the fact that
> Africans do not use English the way the English do, and in the fact

that the rhetorical devices of each African language and community are peculiar to it and are a legacy of its cultural inheritance (262).

The sweetness of the words in the politicians' mouth does not only convey their normative ethos but are also produce the easiest means to manipulate people. A master of his craft, *Lamidi* was quick to deny *Sakariyawu's* allegation. To him, his words are coming out from "the truth mouth of [a] brother… the original local mouth" (*Seriya* 25). Here, *Lamidi* frowns at any reference to any form of colonial influence. Hence, to make the politician see how there exist a gulf between the two, *Sakariyawu* resulted to the description of the physical appearances of a corrupt Nigerian politician:

Sakariyawu:

> Come on, Chairman! I don't know we're still brothers. It is true we grew up together but you're a big man now… Look at your cloth, the material is imported from London, not our local *Ile-Eni* weave or the type bought from Jankara Market in Lagos. Your shoes are like the ones my daughter told me were called Italian shine. Your skin itself is changing colour or have you also imported skin lately? I also heard that you and your family have moved to your new duplex in the Government Reservation Area [*gazes at the stomach*]. You have also become pregnant, the rich man's pregnancy (26).

The politician could not take the truth anymore. He starts to sweat profusely. Sadly, *Sakariyawu* did not spear him as he continues to unleased one 'bitter word after another. He makes *Lamidi* to understand that his antics and hypocrisy are noticeable since he only comes around during campaigns or at religious gathering just to show off or to gain the support of timid electorates. Realizing that he could not match words for words with *Zakariyawu*, he quickly turns to Silifatu, *Zakariyawu's* wife for reassurance and patronage:

Lamidi: [*Receiving the water*] …My wife thank you so much… Actually, the reason I came was that I heard your son Fatayi would be celebrating *wolimat* tomorrow. Some of my councilors and I would like to celebrate with you. We know how important this is to you. He is your one and only son and we would like to be there for you. After all, what are we doing in the office that is more than sharing in the good and its other side with our people? (27)

It is surprising to hear Lamidi who once said to Zakariyawu that "it's being so tight at the office" changed his mind almost immediately just to gain the confidence of *Silifatu*. Clearly, hypocrisy manifests in situations where he must show that he cares about them. Unfortunately, it was quite easier for the woman to fall for his linguistic trap since all she wants at this time is the best for her only son by making his graduation day a memorable one for him. Lamidi was true to his words. On the appointed day, he came with his co-politicians as he had promised. He ceased the

day and made huge cash donations to the pleasures of everyone, especially *Aafa Layisis*, the Quaranic teacher who is also presented as a corrupt religious leader who takes to patronizing politicians because of what he would gain from them.

Aafa Layisi: The best of the human beings is he who is grateful to Allah for Allah's bounties to us (32).

To be 'grateful' to the cleric is to give big offerings or make huge donations to Allah. It is clear that his sermon is tailored towards financial prosperity which is his own mode of exploiting his congregation. He could not hide his taste for money as he introduces his supposedly invited guests as *gbajumo*. For him, the celebration day is a period to display financial superiority between the two groups: the businessmen and the politicians. According to him, "Today, politicians meet business tycoons. Today, we will know the other names money is called. Are we ready" (*Seriya*34). One by one, the Chairman and his Counsellor made significant donations to the admiration of all present. The Cleric continues his stock in trade: "It is by your spending today that you will show your love for them" (*Seriya* 37). At this point, people begin to wonder if money or wealth is synonymous with the love of God. The flagrant display of the Clerics' opportunistic behaviour is without caution as some of the attendees had to make jests of them:

Voice: These *Aafas* with love for money!

True to this, the cleric continues to ignore such comment as the one above while he goes on:

Aafa Layisi: You buy your children *alubarika*, this is the day, parents/when each child is called to the stage to read, we'll see those who love their children most, the people who want the greatest *alubarika* for their children. God's blessings have to be earned! Now.

Everyone listen to both the *Aafa* and the Chairman who is called to make his speech. The politicians did not mince words in announcing his other colleagues a special team within the National Party. He did what was typical of the Nigerian politicians who connive with their religious counterpart for score political points against their opponents.

Lamidi: We're ready to spend money here today for these students' *alubarika*. I have asked my councilors to arrange for food and soft drinks and some will be brought to the Friday Prayers today. We will be back here after *Jumaa Salat* [Friday prayer] and as for what we will spend here, you haven't seen anything yet. (39).

The most decadence and the use of manipulate words to arrest the 'timid victim' is justified by some of those present. Here is how a parent puts it:

Parent: I do not blame *Aafa* for asking for *alubarika, alubarika*.No one pays them salary, yet they teach our children and depend only on Thursday alms, which most parents don't pay … It is from one's work that one's eats, so our people say! (40)

While the parent seems to justify the action of the cleric, he comes down heavily on the politicians:

> And our politicians… "Oh, we love our people, we love our people." They build-personal mansions the fortnight after they get elected and claim they love the people. Our children have become *almajiri* (beggars) on the street as their teacher have become *alubara* (beggars). No, they can neglect the Quaranic schools, refuse to recognize their teachers. They can neglect our values and turn our children to hooligans roaming the streets. Shame! (40)

The parent blames everything on the politicians while exonerating the clerics. While everything was going Mariama becomes the voice of reason. The playwright uses her character to question the public morality of the people:

Mariama: Mama, I really don't like this a bit… He [politician] is wing my brother's *wolima* to campaign for his reelection. Filth, stinking filth! Vultures consume only filth. This is not the place for him. I was ashamed how he stood up after the *salat* to announce my brother's *wolima* to the faithful. In what ways is hawk related to guinea fowl, eh? (45)

Mariama thus represents the conscience of the people. Her perception entails how she sees the politicians and the religious leaders alike. Mariama screens out the uncomfortable behavious of the two through the process of stereotyping. The playwright should be commended for giving the female character such a precarious role in a male dominated society. Apart from that, Islam, too, has restricted the duties of the woman to what can be referred to as 'stateless functions.' Consequently, Mariama's words and her ability to question the status quo is the reality check for a disorganized system. Like Aristophanes' Lysistrata, who recruited the women of both Sparta and Athens to devise a clever plan to end the ongoing war between the two cities, Mariama has also initiated a similar movement to counter corrupt politicians and religious leaders who exploit religion for political gain. Through the power of her thoughts and reasoning, she is presented as a woman who desired equal opportunity and positive change for all in the society. Her selective perception aligns with Freud's idea which is a form of defense that explicate on the human inclination to consider issues from a given perspective, according to personal need, or to cope with parallel information existing in one's environment.

Conclusion

This article discusses religious identity, elite hypocrisy, and manipulation in Nigerian drama. It shows how Nigeria's political and economic elite use religion to gain power and appeal to voters, as illustrated by characters like Lamidi and his associates. The analysis reveals that characters in

the text represent individuals and groups who interact based on their religious identities, and that such interactions often lead to social and political manipulation. It highlights that national cohesion is unattainable in an environment of religious hypocrisy and manipulation, emphasising the ideologically mediated use of language in religious contexts. This research offers valuable insights into how religion shapes Nigerian literature and the role of literary writing in understanding social and cultural realities, providing a basis for further scholarship on the intersection of religion and politics in Nigerian society.

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Exploring Human Rights in Traditional Igbo Society: A Study of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* And Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones*

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Abstract

This paper entitled "Exploring Human Rights and Traditional Igbo Society in Achebe's Things Fall Apart and Ezeigbo's The Last of the Strong Ones" examines the portrayal of the complex interplay between traditions and modernity in the light of human rights policies and its impact on societal norms and cultural practices in a pre-colonial Igbo society. This paper employs a qualitative approach in identifying the concepts of justice and equity related to the pre-colonial Igbo society. It applies two qualitative research designs; ethnographical and historical as it is based on the colonial history of the Igbos while interrogating their practices and customs. Situating this research in postcolonial criticism, this paper interrogates the tensions arising from the clash between indigenous customs and European impositions in a bid to highlight the human rights and justice systems within the African tradition. The analysis reveals the intricate dynamics of human rights within the traditional Igbo society. It also exposes conflict resolution tactics as well as gender dynamics and relationships. It divulges the imposition of European practices on well-established norms and customs leading to profound shifts in societal dynamics. This research contributes to scholarly discourse on African literature, human rights and cultural studies by offering a nuanced examination into Achebe and Ezeigbo's portrayals of tradition and justice. Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that further research explores the implications of African narratives for contemporary discourses on human rights and cultural preservation.

Introduction

Post-colonial African literature stands as a landmark offering profound insights into the complexities of human existence at a tumultuous period. *Things Fall Apart* and *The Last of the Strong Ones* particularly explore the intricate interplay between tradition and European imposition and its influence in the shaping of Igbo customs and norms. These novels serve as a poignant reflection on the fragility of tradition and the resilience of the human spirit in the face of external forces.

In this paper, we embark on a critical exploration of the themes of human rights and justice in the backdrop of colonial imposition and influence while unraveling the African idea of justice and fairness. The relevance of these texts in contemporary discourse on human rights and tradition cannot be overstated. It contributes positively to building our African identity while acknowledging the struggles and triumphs inherent in the quest for dignity and self-determination.

Contrary to colonial narratives, African traditional societies had well established customs and practices set to govern and ensure justice before the advent of colonialism. The traditional Igbo society in particular, an ethnic group in modern Nigeria, rich in cultural heritages and customs, had their methods and means of resolving conflicts and dissension.

The pre-colonial Igbo ran an acephalous society like the Ibibios and Tivs, independent and conscious of their separate identities as each representative of every homestead was bound in a strict belief of descending from the same progenitor (Ego-Alowes 35; Okoko et al. 4). Thus, their system of governance was based on the principle of democracy though decentralized to give every homestead a chance to contribute in decisions that affected the community.

Human Rights and the Traditional Igbo system

Human Rights according to the United Nations is a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and organ of society shall strive to promote and respect with emphasis on rights to life and liberty as well as freedom of opinion and expression (UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights). This definition implies that humans rights is both universal (applicable everywhere) and egalitarian (same for everyone). The first five rights according to the United Nations are: Rights to Life and Liberty, Freedom from slavery and Torture, Freedom of opinion and Expression and the Right to Work and Education. These laws were created after the Second World War and the treatment of those considered inferior during the Holocaust. European contact with Africa termed the continent primitive as evident in the District Commissioner's remarks after discovering Okonkwo's body. They held dismissive and reductionist perspectives of the customs and traditions of the indigenous people because they found those customs strange and different from theirs.

However, there are theorists in contention against the universality of human rights which is highly supported by the American Anthropological Association (Dahiru et al.). They argue that the stance of universal human rights disregards the cultural differences of various societies. Based on cultural relativism, our understanding of a culture is influenced by individual/societal perspectives. Thus, a culture's perspective on human rights and justice might differ from another's. The traditional Igbo found a way to balance justice and political administration using their reverence for the spiritual as a fulcrum for justice and equity (Nwankwo 176).

Theoretical Framework

This research examines the historical context of justice and human rights from a postcolonial perspective for the evaluation and interpretation of the texts. As a theoretical framework, post-colonialism is concerned with the evaluation of narratives on imperialism. Young claims that post-colonial theory was birthed with the Tricontinental journal of 1966 which was initiated by the first global alliance of the people of Africa, Asia and Latin America against colonialism (5). Habib notes notable pioneering texts on post-colonialism such as Cesaire's *Discourse on Colonialism*, Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, Achebe's seminal text; *Things Fall Apart* and Lamming's *The Pleasures of Exile* to mention a few. Other notable post-colonial critics are Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin and Homi Bhabha who have contributed immensely to our understanding of post-colonialism as a theory and as a framework.

As a framework, it has adopted several aims such as to re-examine colonialism from the perspective of the colonised as well as to determine the economic, political and cultural impact of colonialism on the colonised (Young 6; Habib 272; Tyson 424). For Tyson, post-colonialism focuses on literatures of culture developed as a response to British domination.

Thus, the application of this theory is to examine the historicity of human rights as depicted in novels centred on the pre-colonial Igbo society.

***Things Fall Apart* as a Response to Colonialism**

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is recognized as the first African novel which was published in 1958 as a rewrite to the empire. Kenalemang's analysis of the text describes it aptly as a response to European depiction of Africans savages. He examines Achebe's presentation of the text as a revelation of both the strength and imperfections of the Igbo culture in order to reveal the humanness of the people. He also examines the influence of colonialism on the Igbo society. In similar fashion, Hasan et al illustrate the purpose of the text as a critique of colonialism while focusing on the psychological effects of dissension on the people as individuals and a collectivity. A'yunin's study on the effects of cultural colonialism leads to two questions; first, how is the Igbo culture portrayed in *Things Fall Apart* and secondly, what are the effects of colonialism on that culture? This analysis focuses on the social organizations of the Igbo culture especially marriage and religion with findings on the decimation of the culture. Mengara illuminates the five stages of colonialism explored in the text. The paper states exploration, expropriation, appropriation, exploitation and justification as the five stages and claims their importance for domination of the indigenes. The paper positions the text as a fictional

representation of colonial intrusion which fits the mold for colonial oppression. Despite the prevalence of criticism and opinions on the negativity of colonialism, Purwarno's paper explores the redeeming feats of colonialism in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. Although he acknowledges that colonialism is often perceived as evil irrespective of the discourse, he analyses colonialism from the historical lens of brutal exploitation while highlighting the advancement and progress gained through colonial contact. The advancements he lists are churches, schools, hospitals, courts, government and trade.

This research interrogates colonialism from the perspective of decimation of the indigenous cultures. It also attempts to prove that though the traditional Igbo did not have established systems of justice like the West, they had their form of legal system where people got justice and fair hearing.

Equity in *The Last of the Strong Ones*

In examining Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones*, critics often take a feminist lens to the concepts explored in the texts. Uka & Wosu interrogate patriarchy and women in a traditional African society. They analyse Ezeigbo's creation of bold and courageous female characters in a bid to tackle patriarchy in literary texts. They argue that the poor representation of women in African literature stems from the patriarchal nature of the African society. Using feminist criticism in particular, womanism to interrogate the concept of patriarchy they insist on the recognition of women as human beings, not inferior to their male counterparts. Their conclusion views women as assertive and achievers if given a chance. In like manner, Ladele explores the importance of reconstructing gender identities as well as national relations. She explores the ideology that post-colonial women writers textualize women's identities through fictional narratives as women are dominated in a male-centric culture that devalues them. Wosu and Jane in examining the discourse of gender and power in Ezeigbo's text, mention the prevalence of patriarchy in African cultures and its role in the marginalisation of women. They interrogate several cultural practices like secession rites, female genital mutilation, widowhood rites, polygamy etc. that work against the liberation of women in patriarchal structures. They state that these practices are further reinforced by written texts to maintain the status quo of dominance against the woman. They place Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* as one of the texts used to reinforce patriarchal values as the text presents a society that excludes women from the corridors of power. They analyse Ezeigbo's*The Last of the Strong Ones* as a rewrite/response to what they describe as Achebe's male-chauvinism, seeking to place the Igbo woman in her appropriate spot in a historical context. Azumurana chronicles the burden of African women in a male-dominated space and the survival strategies adopted by those women to subvert patriarchy. In his analysis of Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones* and Emecheta's *Double Yoke*, he points that both women are of different generations with different settings for their narratives, both are concerned with creating a space for themselves and their characters. Odewumi explores the empowerment of women before and during colonialism especially their [re]actions to power in male-dominant societies. She finds that women empowerment is driven by financial strength of women in their social environments.

This research will take a different path to interrogate the text from the perspective of social justice and balance.

This balance is often reflected in rituals, festivals and ceremonies as in the annual "Egwugwu" ceremony explored in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* which represents their ancestors showcasing their justice system and social hierarchy. Aside the interplay between religion and justice in the traditional Igbo system, there is a consistent use of language to portray their customs in relation to human rights and justice. This is evident in parables, idioms, folklores and other linguistic and archaeological sources. To understand the depth of human rights in the traditional Igbo setting, linguistic elements such as proverbs, idioms and names are to be examined to get a sense of justice, fairness and equity that pervades that society. Below are some notable examples:

    i)   "*Egbe bereugoberenkesiibeyaabelankukwapuya*" (let the kite perch and let the eagle perch also, whichever denies the other its perching right, let its wings break off).

This explains that everyone has individual rights and privileges and there is no room for favoritism.

    ii)   "*Onyeanwuna ma ibeyaefuna*" (Let nobody die nor let his neighbor get lost)

A clear implication of the right to protection of life and property of every individual and communal welfare.

    iii)   "*ofumkpulu aka lutammanu o zuendiozono*" (when one finger gets soaked with palm oil, it quickly spreads to other fingers)

This explains social corporate and collective responsibility for actions taken and the importance attached to good and evil as it affects the community.

    iv)   "*Onye jeakwutoolunchinanchiadighialiene*" (whoever has

palm nut let him drop some to grass cutter because it does not climb).

This explains the foundation of fairness, empathy and humanitarian service as guiding forces of the Igbo traditional society. Other example of proverbs that portray equality of all men includes "*Isi ntutu a koroibeya*" which means no individual human being is greater than the other.

Politically, the traditional Igbo system though democratic, was strictly patrilineal – led by the 'umunna' a group of men descending from the lineage of the same father but not the same mother often presided by the eldest male (Chigere 113).

Being an egalitarian and acephalous society, the actual organ of administration was the village council consisting of the leaders of various families or compound "Ndichie" (elders). These elders were their compound's mouth- piece as well as earthly representatives of their family ancestors. Her political organization was based on a republican system of government which

guaranteed its citizens equity witnessed by the Portuguese who first arrived in the 15th Century (Ilogu 11). In *The Last of the Strong Ones*, Ezeigbo aptly throws more light on this egalitarian system in which both men and women had equal rights to participate in governance.

> "It was also necessary to recreate and propagate a vivid and memorable account of the lives of the four main actors among the Umuada. They were the Oluada…they were the voice of the women (Ezeigbo 2).

The "Obuofo" represent the village council which is made up of notable men and women of virtue and uprightness: "Oluada and Umuada". This is a clear indication that traditional Igbo society had embedded the principle of equality amongst gender and right to equal representation and participation which is an important human right policy even in present times.

Things Fall Apart— **Chinua Achebe**

Case I: Inter-Clan Dispute

The Igbo traditional society has always been that in which deliberations, meetings, and caution are being exercised before any course of action is taken irrespective of the severity of the case. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe brings to light this laudable trait in the threatened war between Umuofia and Mbaino.

> "Gome, gome, gome, gome, boomed the hollow metal, and then the town crier gave his message…Every group of Umuofia was asked to gather at the market place tomorrow morning" (7).

One of Umuofia's daughter had been murdered by an Mbainoman and this was a direct confrontation to Umuofia in which war was imminent yet a conference is called, this proves beyond any reasonable doubt that Umuofia though the aggrieved believed in the voice of the people(a democratic trait) and also believed in dialogue rather than direct confrontation (Freedom of Expression)

> "Many other spoke and at the end it was decided to follow the normal course of action. An ultimatum was immediately dispatched to Mbaino asking them to choose between war on one hand and on the other the offer of a young man and a virgin as compensation". (8)

> "And in fairness to Umuofia it should be recorded that it never went to war unless its case was clear and just and was accepted as such by its oracle". (9)

In resolution of the impending crises, Mbiano clan acceded to the request of Umuofia and as such war is averted. This is a clear display of sportsmanship between both clans and a clear democratic trait which has always been prevalent in the Igbo traditional society since time immemorial. This is a justification of the fact that human right issues as regards conflicts even

beyond a village had procedures, simple rules that governed the dispensation of justice and were mostly settled in justice and fairness.

> "And so when Okonkwo of Umuofia arrived at Mbiano as the proud and imperious emissary of war, he was treated with great honour and respect and two days later, he returned home with a lad of fifteen and a young virgin". (9)

Dialogue, negotiation, and peace meetings have always been a core of the Igbo society despite Umuofia's justification to declare war. Considering their superiority in men and arms, they chose dialogue as a means of resolution. This amicable trait clearly shows that the Igbos before colonization had a clear grasp on the concepts of justice, fairness, rule of law and due process which are still relevant even in today's society.

Case II:Maintenance Of Law And Order

Adherence to the laws of the land by all and sundry has been a guiding force in the day to day running of the Igbo traditional society. Great emphasis is placed on obedience and observance and any act to the contrary attracts sanctions which are meant as deterrents to offenders and lessons for all. This is made to ensure the society is peaceful and orderly (Right of the state to protect its citizens) a key fundamental human right till date.

In chapter four of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart,* a case in point is drawn where a direct disobedience and violation by Okonkwo during the week of peace incurs the wrath of the community and is punished as is the custom by the priest of the earth goddess, Ezeani.

In this chapter Okonkwo's youngest wife Ojiugo goes visiting a friend and couldn't return early to prepare his meal, this action greatly provokes him and being a man known for his short temper and anger bursts, he reacts on impulse.

> "He walked back to his obi to await Ojiugo's return and when she returned he beat her very heavily in his anger he has forgotten that it was the week of peace.His first two wives ran out in great alarm pleading with him that it was the sacred week". (23)

> "…some of them came over to see for themselves it was unheard of to beat somebody during the sacred week". (24)

As is the custom, Ezeani, the priest of the earth visits Okonkwo in response to the sacrilege committed.

> "Take away your kolanut, I shall not eat in the house of a man who has no respect for our gods and ancestors". (24)

> "You are not a stranger in Umuofia you know as well as I do that our forefathers ordained that before we plant any crops in the earth we should observe a week in which a man does

not say a harsh word to his neighbor…You will bring to the shrine of Ani tomorrow one she goat, one hen, a length of cloth and hundred cowries". (24)

Igbo traditional society has always been governed by laws and customs handed down by their ancestors over time and these laws have helped sustain and guide the people at all times. Maintenance of such laws is very vital to the survival of people and has always ensured that peace prevailed. This is a further justification that human right principles are deeply embedded in the day to day governance of Igbo traditional society over time.

Case III: Dispute Resolution

Chinua Achebe aptly describes a traditional dispute resolution procedure which in all fairness throws more light on the level of advancement of Igbo traditional society and human rights issues even before westernization.

Igbo traditional society being an egalitarian one revolves round the principle of equal and fair representation, open dialogue and fair dispensation of justice.

In chapter ten, Chinua Achebe re-enacts a dispute resolution scene where two cases, one a fight between a married couple and the second a great land case.

"I don't know why such a trifle should come before the Egwugwu said one elder to another". (75)

It should be noted that in Igbo traditional society when it comes to dispensation of justice no case is termed unimportant or trivial. Both cases where given equal attention as it deserved.

In dispute resolution equal representation is very vital and this was clearly practiced by pre-colonial Igbo society.

"Each of the nine Egwugwu represented a village of the clan". (71)

This was so in order for a just resolution of conflict and avoidance of conflict of interest and clear conscience. In the case in point each aggrieved party was represented equally and both sides given the opportunity to present its case. This is a clear representation of fairness, dialogue and justice.

"We have heard both sides of the case said Evil forest; our duty is not to blame this man or praise that, but to settle the dispute". (74)

This is classical display of professionalism and great expertise. That the Egwugwu did not take sides show that its goal was in the interest of peace and not conflict. This sadly is lacking in our present day society where people are guilty even before they are charged and where justice has been denied in line with tribalism, self interest and corruption.

Fair trial, a fundamental right of every individual, has been an age long custom of the Igbo traditional society and this greatly helped in maintaining the peace even in a society that was clearly acephalous in nature and decentralized in structure. This is captured in chapter 13 in the ill-fated death of one of the sons of late Ezeudu during his funeral by Okonkwo's gun which shot the boy in error.

> "It was as if a spell had been cast all was silent in the centre of the crowd a boy lay in a pool of blood, it was the dead man's sixteen years old son … Okonkwo's gun had exploded and a piece of iron had pierced the boy's heart". (99)

According to the laws and custom of the land, where cause of death is accidental, the punishment was clearly different from an intentional cause of death. This was the case of Okonkwo who in error had killed the boy. Chinua Achebe beautifully portrays the level of advancement of the traditional Igbo society and the standardization of law and order. Despite the fact that a life was lost, justice and fair play ruled the day. It should be noted that there were no trial lawyers to defend the accused or prosecutors rather there were set of laws and guiding principles handed down by their ancestors which was relevant in settlement of human right issues of this magnitude.

> "It was a crime against the earth goddess to kill a clansman and a man who committed it must flee the land. The crime was of two kinds male and female. Okonkwo committed the female, because it had been inadvertent, he could return to the clan after seven years". (99)

This is a clear example to show that traditional Igbo society practiced, maintained and enforced human right policy and debunks any claim that pre-colonial Igbo society had no laws and tradition.

The Last Of The Strong Ones --- AkachiAdimora – Ezeigbo

Case I: Criminal Matters

In traditional Igbo society every individual had the right to life and any member that consciously attacked a fellow indigene had to face the consequences of the laws of the land. However, before such decisions are carried out a resolution and fact finding mission is often set in motion.

This is seen in chapter sixteen and ten of Ezeigbo's *TheLast of the Strong Ones* where a quarrel between Onyekozuru and Abazu nearly cost the life of Onyekozuru. During the meeting of the Umuada,Onyekozuru had suggested her brother-in-law as a medium to write a letter of complaint to the Kosiri (White people) which backfired as the content of the complaint was misrepresented and as such misinterpreted by the Kosiri. This was a very dire situation that put the whole of Umuada at the brink of war with the Kosiri.

"Abazu…I do not like your words replied Onyekozuru; I do not like the form your words are taking in this matter…What have I said that is not true…You brought us a dishonest man who has caused us trouble". (58)

This exchange of words between them despite pleadings from other members of the Umuada led to Onyekozuru revealing a very deadly secret about Abazu which centered on his potency as a man and which shocked the entire Umuada and enraged Abazu. In a bid not to disintegrate the Umuada and the collective peace of Umuga, a peace mission was sent to both parties to settle the dispute.

"After this discussion, Obiatu mentioned the quarrel between Abazu and Onyekozuru … this issue was discussed and in the end three people were given task of making peace between them… they were told to perform the task with the seriousness it demanded and as soon as possible". (111)

However, Abazu in his anger shot Onyekozuru in her compound and in a bid to escape punishment and the fact that it was a sacrilege he had committed, attempted suicide. Fortunately for Onyekozuru she survived the attempted murder. When the incident occurred, the village council quickly took immediate steps, first in saving the life of the injured and secondly apprehending the accused.

"…Umuada were there in full strength and we marveled at the speed news spread… the wound had been treated with herbs and bound with banana leaves… The five men who were sent to look for Abazu returned to report that he could not be found". (115)

This is a clear justification that Igbo traditional society valued right of life of every individual and the duty to protect its citizens from harm. Measures were taken to preserve the life of Onyekozuru while Abazu was hunted down to account for his actions.

Case II: Peaceful Co-Existence

Igbo traditional society imbibed the policy of peaceful co-existence amongst its neighbors and even strangers and was not known to provoke or attack.

"Let us write a letter to Kosiri and tell him what our people want. We should tell the strangers that we want peace, but not their meddling in our affairs". (17)

Akachi's chapter three aptly described this laudable humanitarian trait. She goes further to show that the Igbos have an innate right to preservation of their customs and tradition despite external influence while at the same time creating a harmonious environment for co-existence. They also believed in dialogue rather than confrontation and had guiding principles in all her proceedings.

Case III: Preservation Of Lives And Property

> "Obuofo met to continue discussion on the plan of action to defuse the tension caused by the ill-fated letter and to make adequate preparation to ensure the security of Umuga". (108)

In times of war, the preservation of lives and property are the major concern of the consultative assembly. Their duty was to ensure that their decisions are in the best interest of the populace which guaranteed their safety and well being. This is captured in chapter nine of *TheLast of the Strong Ones*.

Before they went to war they weighed the consequences of their actions as it affects the citizenry, a fundamental human right policy,

> "Murmurs of approval and disapproval swelled and collided; Onyekozuru cleared her throat and spoke. She warned Obuofo against taking a hasty action without proper planning or investigation". (109)

> "We shall not start a fight Okoroji cried but if the meddlers fire ten shots, we will reply with a hundred". (110)

Traditional Igbo society has been one that placed much emphasis on human survival and always ensured that in whatever decision the Ndichie took the right of the individual was always paramount.

Case IV- Domestic Dispute Resolution

The head of each family plays a very important role in maintaining peace and order in traditional Igbo society. Most times, his ability to settle or resolve disputes or pacify an aggrieved member of the family goes a long way in promoting the peace of the community.

A case in point is seen in chapter four of *TheLast of the Strong Ones* where Ejimnaka in anger and retaliation to an offence committed by her neighbor and rival Ijeoma, orchestrated the kidnap and sale into domestic slavery of her six year old son.

Her husband, Obiatu upon observing her nonchalant attitude toward the sad news gently confronts her and she confesses her role in the scheme.

> "Forgive me!... forgive him Obim I whispered …Yes yes I forgive you…Ejim I love you for your faults as well as for you virtues… A few days later, Ubani returned to freedom from domestic captivity". (31)

It can be observed that it was the diplomacy of Obiatu that remedied the situation, which in turn brought joy to the household of Ijeoma. This goes to show that the preservation of human life and resolution of conflict were a guiding force in everyday traditional Igbo society.

Comparative Analysis (*Things Fall Apart* and *The Last Of The Strong Ones*)

From the above survey, both novelists in their different styles of narration examined the intricacies of the traditional Igbo society as it relates to human right issues. Various instances and examples were used to portray rich culture, laws and traditions of the Igbo people.

It should, however, be pointed out that Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* gives a more in-depth analysis and examination of various human right issues as it relates to both mundane and more complex occurrences. There is a sense in which Achebe's text explores a deeper understanding of the Igbo ethos coupled with its recognition as the first Nigerian novel suggests the authenticity of the source of the narrative especially considering its intention of contesting colonial perception of the Igbos.

Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones* on the other hand narrows its narration to the Igbo traditional society in the periphery of colonialism. It also highlights the egalitarian nature of traditional Igbo society and the actual role played by consultative assembly in general affairs and more especially in interference with external influences. The role of women in traditional Igbo society is also beautifully elaborated.

Recommendations andConclusion

Both novelists must be applauded in their attempts at re-enacting the Igbo traditional society in its beauty and uniqueness. They have succeeded immensely in proving beyond reasonable doubt that the Igbo traditional society and by extension, Africa had a rich cultural heritage and imbibed the principles of fairness and justice in every aspect of its existence before the advent of the colonial masters. They have also proven that human life and the preservation of life and right of the individual are guiding forces in its day to day administration in the dispensation of justice and human right policy.

The above case study from both novels have brought to light the great achievements and level of advancement and civilization of pre-colonial Igbo society and they can as such be used as references and examples to show case the supremacy and relevance of Igbo traditional system even in present day dispensation of justice and actualization of fundamental human rights policy as it affects life in general.

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Exploring (AI) Artificial Intelligence's Role in Language Teaching and Learning: A Review of Key Technologies and Their Applications

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing various aspects of education and is increasingly being integrated into language teaching and learning. This article reviews the literature to examine key trends and findings related to AI technologies and their applications for second and foreign language education. It focuses on Natural Language Processing (NLP), Data-Driven Learning (DDL), Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE), Computer-assisted Dynamic Assessment (CDA), Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITSs), Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR), and chatbots, all within the framework of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). The review contributes to discussions on understanding and utilizing AI-supported language instruction, suggesting that AI will continue to be integrated into language education, profoundly affecting teaching methodologies. Language educators must ensure that AI is effectively utilized to facilitate language learning. To optimize the benefits of AI-supported language education, further in-depth research is recommended.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Language Education; Natural Language Processing; Computer-Assisted Language Learning; AI applications

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the capability of computer systems to perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, and problem-solving. Various scholars have explored the definition and impact of AI in different fields. Liang et al. (2021) and Pokrivcakova (2019) describe AI as a form of computer technology that allows machines to simulate human intelligence. This advancement has been significantly transforming numerous sectors, including education, where AI has become more integrated into teaching and learning environments (Mindzak & Eaton, 2021; Naffi et al., 2022; Srinivasan, 2022; Zhang & Aslan, 2021).

The categorization of AI's role in education has been divided into three key areas: learning for AI, learning about AI, and learning with AI, as proposed by Kukulska-Hulme et al. (2020). These distinctions highlight how AI can enhance educational administration, support students, and assist teachers. This paper aims to contribute to the discussions on AI in language education by synthesizing the trends and findings from existing studies on AI-supported language learning and teaching. Specifically, the paper examines key AI technologies used in second language (L2) and foreign language (FL) learning, including natural language processing (NLP), data-driven learning (DDL), automated writing evaluation (AWE), intelligent tutoring systems (ITSs), and more.

1.   Natural Language Processing (NLP)

NLP is a technology that enables AI to process and understand human language, making it a valuable tool in language learning. Machine translation (MT) and NLP applications support tasks such as automated feedback and text analysis, offering learners opportunities for improved learning experiences (Esit, 2011; Amaral et al., 2011; Monteiro & Kim, 2020; Pérez-Paredes et al., 2018). NLP helps teachers in providing immediate feedback on students' linguistic performance (Chinkina et al., 2020).

Pérez-Paredes et al. (2018) examined teachers' perceptions of NLP tools, finding that online dictionaries and spell checkers were commonly used but with limited knowledge of advanced NLP resources. Teachers displayed positive attitudes toward NLP, suggesting that further training on these technologies would enhance their adoption. On the other hand, Chinkina et al. (2020) compared teacher-generated and computer-generated questions, finding that both types yielded comparable outcomes, suggesting AI's potential in automating specific teaching tasks. While these authors provide complementary insights, Pérez-Paredes et al. advocate for more training in AI tools, whereas Chinkina et al. emphasize the direct usability of AI-generated content.

2. Data-Driven Learning (DDL)

DDL uses language corpora to facilitate learners' independent exploration of linguistic patterns. Learners engage with authentic language data through corpora, improving skills such as essay writing and scientific report drafting (Pérez-Paredes, 2022; Hadley & Charles, 2017). Tono et al. (2014) observed that corpus-driven writing corrections improved students' understanding of language structures, though the effectiveness of corpus use varied by error type. For example, misinformation errors were harder to correct compared to addition and omission errors. This finding implies that while corpora can be a powerful tool, their usage needs to be targeted.

Hadley and Charles (2017) provided a different perspective by noting that learners with low proficiency struggled to benefit from DDL approaches without additional support. They recommended a more structured approach to DDL for these learners. Similarly, Wu (2021) highlighted the importance of training learners to fully utilize the affordances of corpus tools. This suggests that DDL's success may depend on learner proficiency and the instructional design supporting corpus use.

Moreover, Crosthwaite et al. (2021) explored teachers' integration of DDL into lessons, concluding that while teachers recognize its benefits, they lack the necessary expertise to apply DDL effectively in classroom settings. Boulton and Vyatkina (2021) also identified the lack of replication studies and theory-driven research as limitations in DDL research, highlighting a need for further exploration. The views of these scholars underscore the value of DDL, while also emphasizing the practical challenges in its implementation.

3. Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE)

AWE technologies provide students with feedback on their written work and promote independent learning (Lee, 2020; Li et al., 2017; Barrot, 2023). Chukharev-Hudilainen and Saricaoglu (2016) demonstrated that AWE tools, like causal discourse analyzers, are effective in improving writing. However, Saricaoglu (2019) cautioned that the success of AWE tools depends on a combination of AI feedback and teacher input, as students may not improve with automated feedback alone.

Koltovskaia (2023) emphasized that teacher attitudes significantly influence the effectiveness of AWE tools like Grammarly, with teachers' skills determining the extent of AI adoption. Similarly, Han and Sari (2022) found that students benefit more from combined teacher and AI feedback, reinforcing the importance of a hybrid approach to feedback systems. Jiang and Yu (2022) added that students need to develop skills to interpret and use AI-generated feedback effectively, further illustrating the need for careful integration of AI tools in the classroom.

Wambsganss et al. (2022) introduced the concept of social comparison nudging in AWE tools, demonstrating that this psychological process helps students produce higher-quality argumentative texts. Their findings suggest that while AI feedback is beneficial, it may be enhanced by integrating social comparison mechanisms. This provides a unique perspective,

extending beyond the technical functionalities of AWE to explore how AI can influence learning behavior.

AI technologies such as NLP, DDL, and AWE have significantly impacted language learning and teaching. Each AI tool offers unique advantages, but their successful integration into education requires teacher training, structured learner support, and further research on their effectiveness. While AI holds promise for automating and enhancing language learning, its success depends on the synergistic combination of technology and pedagogy. Future research should focus on developing AI systems that are more adaptable to different learner needs and exploring the long-term impacts of AI-supported language education.

4. Automated powerful evaluation

CDA furnishes students with programmed intercessions (Ebadi and Saeedian, 2015) and permits students to dissect language-related issues (Kamrood et al., 2021; Tianyu and Jie, 2018). In CDA, remedial criticism (CF) has been normally examined as a key point. Ebadi & Rahimi (2019) say that CF helps teachers learn more about their students' abilities and gives students feedback on their mistakes. Researchers have been interested in the ability of computers to provide appropriate and effective CF, with the added benefit of an online version of CF that can be accessed by many students simultaneously. In a limited scale study, Ebadi and Rahimi (2019) utilized Google Docs (https://docs.google.com/) as an essayist coordinated effort device in their blended way to deal with online powerful evaluation in with three EFL college understudies. Although they demonstrated some difficulties in writing more difficult texts, their students expressed positive opinions regarding the dynamic assessment process.

In a shrewd CALL (ICALL) climate where experiences from computational semantics and NLP are coordinated, computer based intelligence (2017) researched the utilization of graduated CF (i.e., criticism advancing from general and verifiable to explicit and unequivocal) with six understudies learning Chinese at an American college. His Chinese language ICALL system could monitor the microgenetic changes of students as they completed an English-to-Chinese translation task through iterations of graduated CF. Although there were some instances in which the ICALL system failed to provide effective graduated CF and an onsite tutor provided the necessary remedies to the students, he found that the graduated approach to CF was effective in helping the students self-identify and self-correct a variety of grammatical issues (such as punctuation, grammatical objects, and verb complement).

Zhang and Lu (2019) looked into the use of a CDA listening test with 19 Chinese students at an American university. They found that the diagnostic language assessment not only worked well for assessing the students, but it also helped teachers provide more individualized support for them. The assessment made it possible to take the test at any time and from any location. Gao and Ma (2019) conducted drills with 117 intermediate-level EFL students at a Chinese university to examine two distinct forms of computer-automated metalinguistic CF with a different focus on CF. They reported that participants in the CF groups performed better than those in the no-feedback group, but that the CF had no significant effect on subsequent writing tasks. On the other hand, Yang and Qian (2020) investigated the use of CDA as a teaching and assessment

strategy to improve Chinese EFL students' reading comprehension. They found that, after four weeks of instruction, CDA-taught students performed better than conventionally taught students.

5.   Systems for intelligent education

ITSs are PC frameworks intended to give customized and intuitive guidance to understudies without mediation from a human educator. They have been the most widely recognized job of simulated intelligence in language training (Liang et al., 2021). When utilized in an EFL setting, they mean to help FL advancing really and productively (e.g., Choi, 2016). They can be utilized independently for self-study or as an addition to conventional educational strategies. They can be utilized in any instructive setting with students of all ages (e.g., Xu et al., 2019). They influence human fixation on computerized innovation to give typified growth opportunities (Mohamed and Lamia, 2018). There are different sorts of ITSs (e.g., Bibauw et al., 2019; Heift, 2010) and a few use simulated intelligence and AI calculations to adjust to the requirements of clients (Jiang, 2022).

By assessing user ability, detecting errors, providing CF, and delivering activities to students that are specifically targeted at what they need to work on, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar, ITSs can deliver individualized experiences to users (e.g., Amaral & Meurers, 2011; Choi, 2016). They can likewise give a situational setting to clients. For instance, they can give social data connected with the language being examined. According to Choi (2016), an ICALL tutoring system can help students learn grammatical concepts. Xu et al. (2019) led a meta-examination to explore the viability of involving ITSs for understudies in K-12 homerooms and found that ITSs created a bigger outcome size on perusing understanding when contrasted with conventional guidance. In order to provide more targeted, individualized feedback, more advanced ITSs incorporating more advanced NLP should be developed in future research.

6. Speech recognition software

Speech recognition software is an innovation that utilizes computer based intelligence and AI procedures to comprehend and create spoken and composed text. It is frequently used in software applications that use speech-to-text and voice recognition, such as notetaking apps, automatic transcribers, and intelligent personal assistants (IPAs). ASR is also used on smartphones when a user dictates a message into the device, and the device responds to the language by carrying out an action. According to Daniels & Iwago (2017), ASR has advanced rapidly over the past ten years, becoming more accurate and widely used across a wide range of industries. Golonka et al. (2014) stated that studies on ASR accounted for the majority of the measurable impact of technology on FL learning in a review of technology types and their effectiveness.

In the field of CALL, ASR has sparked a lot of interest (e.g., Ahn & Lee, 2016; Chen, 2011; de Vries et al., 2015; van Doremalen et al., 2016). The research that has been done (for instance, Chen et al., 2023; Moussalli & Cardoso, 2020; Tai & Chen, 2023) demonstrates that IPAs have a significant amount of potential to be utilized as a tool for learning L2/FL. In a less anxious setting, students can practice as much as they want (Tai & Chen, 2023). In a concentrate on the assessment of an IPA, Dizon (2020) tracked down that the utilization of Alexa

(https://developer.amazon.com/alexa) prompted an improvement in L2 talking capability. Essentially, Chen et al. (2023) guaranteed that Google Collaborator (https://assistant.google.com/) could be valuable for talking and tuning in. IPAs are for the most part precise at grasping clients' orders (e.g., Daniels and Iwago, 2017; Dizon et al., 2022). ASR in IPAs is beneficial for L2/FL development and improvement due to the use of natural language and immediate feedback.

As users receive immediate, individualized, and autonomous feedback, the use of ASR in messaging apps, software, and websites aids in the improvement of L2 pronunciation (e.g., Chen, 2011; Dai & Wu, 2023; Dizon, 2017; McCrocklin, 2016, 2019). Bashori et al. (2022) looked into two websites for learning English as a foreign language that use ASR to give different kinds of feedback. Contrasted with the benchmark group, the treatment bunch, which utilized the ASR-based sites, further developed their elocution abilities as well as their responsive jargon. Evers and Chen (2022) introduced a functional way to deal with using ASR innovation for elocution practice. Their EFL understudies read resoundingly into the notetaking application Speechnotes (speechnotes.co), which translated their discourse into text. They looked over their mistakes after they finished transcribing. They said that it was helpful to review their mistakes on their own or, especially, with someone else. Evers and Chen's study demonstrated that learners' pronunciation could be enhanced by utilizing ASR in conjunction with peer and technology feedback.

The mix of ASR into applications and programming permits the opportunity for growth to become intuitive, connecting with, and pleasant, which thus upholds L2/FL inspiration (Moussalli and Cardoso, 2020; Tai and Chen, 2023). Students can engage in conversation with IPAs like Alexa and Google Assistant (e.g., Chen et al., 2023; Dizon, 2017). In Evers and Chen's (2022) study, understudies showed uplifting perspectives towards utilizing ASR-put together programming to work with respect to their articulation. According to McCrocklin (2016), students who enjoy ASR-based activities and are able to complete them on their own are more likely to engage in autonomous learning. Educators likewise had positive discernments about the utilization of ASR-based programming to further develop L2 talking execution in van Doremalen et al's. (2016) study. Additionally, immersive environments can be created by incorporating ASR into language learning games and simulations (e.g., Morton et al., 2012). According to Forsyth et al. (2019), their students enjoyed using an animated chatting system. At the point when understudies feel open to speaking with an ASR framework, the framework can decrease the understudies' tension, increment their eagerness to convey, and emphatically affect their L2/FL inspiration (Ayedoun et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2023; Tai and Chen, 2023).

A further advantage of ASR is its ability to tailor learning materials to a student's requirements and objectives. Chen et al. (2023) observed that Google Colleague was really great for individualized advancing as leaners had some control over the speed and content in light of their requirements. In relation to accented speech, Spring and Tabuchi (2022) reported that Japanese EFL students could improve their vowel-related pronunciation by focusing on and correcting their pronunciation errors while practicing with the ASR system. Walker et al. (2011) demonstrated in a different setting how a nurse-patient simulator could be utilized by non-native English-speaking nurses to practice speaking English in a risk-free setting. Additionally, ASR can be useful for testing. For instance, Cox and Davies (2012) investigated the use of ASR-based

oral tests to evaluate EFL students' speaking abilities. They discovered that the tests could be used to predict speaking ability, making them useful in particular circumstances like class placement. Forsyth et al. (2019) contended that it would be doable to utilize frameworks in view of ASR for discussion based appraisal like an energized specialist.

A couple of negative worries are likewise noted in the writing. For instance, it may be more challenging for low-level students to comprehend an IPA (e.g., Dizon, 2017), and students frequently give up when they are unable to communicate their command (e.g., Dizon et al., 2022). Additionally, McCrocklin (2019) reported that some students were dissatisfied when ASR-based software failed to comprehend their speech. Despite the fact that Cox and Davies (2012) found no orientation predisposition, it is conceivable that some ASR-based programming is more precise for L2 leaners who have explicit accents contrasted with others. Likewise, Daniels and Iwago (2017) cautioned about protection worries while making sense of that it isn't clear what information IPAs store, where the information are put away, and how the information are utilized. Evers & Chen, 2022) and how ASR systems can benefit a variety of non-native English speakers with various accents (Bashori et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2023) are two areas where more research is needed.

7. **Automated Powerful Evaluation**

Automated evaluation within the framework of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has gained significant attention for its role in enhancing educational outcomes. According to Ebadi and Saeedian (2015), CALL facilitates programmed intercessions that empower students to engage in a more nuanced analysis of language-related challenges. This assertion is supported by Kamrood et al. (2021) and Tianyu and Jie (2018), who emphasize the utility of CALL in addressing linguistic complexities. Within this context, corrective feedback (CF) emerges as a critical component of effective language instruction.

Ebadi and Rahimi (2019) assert that CF not only informs teachers about their students' competencies but also provides essential feedback on their mistakes. This dual function of CF underlines its importance in the learning process. Researchers have increasingly explored the potential of computer-generated CF, particularly the accessibility of online feedback for multiple students simultaneously. For example, in a limited-scale study, Ebadi and Rahimi (2019) utilized Google Docs as a collaborative writing tool within a blended approach to online dynamic assessment involving three English as a Foreign Language (EFL) college students. Despite encountering challenges in writing complex texts, students reported a positive experience with the dynamic assessment process.

In a different context, artificial intelligence (AI) has been integrated into CALL environments. An Intelligent CALL (ICALL) framework was explored by a researcher (2017), who investigated the effectiveness of graduated CF—feedback that progresses from general to specific—among six students learning Chinese at an American university. The ICALL system was designed to monitor microgenetic changes during an English-to-Chinese translation task through iterations of graduated CF. Although the system occasionally failed to provide adequate feedback, necessitating intervention from an onsite tutor, the overall findings indicated that the

graduated CF approach effectively enabled students to self-identify and correct various grammatical issues, such as punctuation and verb complements.

Zhang and Lu (2019) further expanded on this by examining the implementation of a Computer Diagnostic Assessment (CDA) listening test with 19 Chinese students at an American university. They found that this diagnostic assessment not only effectively evaluated student proficiency but also facilitated individualized support from instructors. This adaptability was underscored by Gao and Ma (2019), who conducted drills with 117 intermediate EFL students in a Chinese university. Their findings suggested that participants who received CF performed better than those who did not; however, the feedback did not significantly impact subsequent writing tasks. Conversely, Yang and Qian (2020) demonstrated that CDA could enhance reading comprehension among Chinese EFL students, with CDA-taught students outperforming their conventionally taught counterparts after four weeks of instruction.

8. Systems for Intelligent Education

Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITSs) represent a technological advancement in providing personalized and interactive instruction to students without the need for human intervention. According to Liang et al. (2021), ITSs are a prevalent application of AI in language education, aimed at facilitating foreign language learning in an effective and efficient manner. As noted by Choi (2016), ITSs can be utilized independently for self-study or as supplements to traditional teaching methods, catering to students across various age groups (Xu et al., 2019). They capitalize on the human inclination towards digital technology to offer immersive learning opportunities (Mohamed & Lamia, 2018).

ITSs vary in their design and function, with some employing AI and machine learning algorithms to tailor experiences to individual user needs (Jiang, 2022). For instance, Amaral and Meurers (2011) and Choi (2016) emphasize the capability of ITSs to assess user competence, identify errors, provide CF, and deliver targeted exercises focusing on areas such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Moreover, these systems can offer contextualized learning experiences, including social information relevant to the language being studied.

A meta-analysis conducted by Xu et al. (2019) highlighted the effectiveness of ITSs for K-12 students, revealing a more significant impact on reading comprehension compared to conventional instructional methods. These findings suggest that advanced ITSs incorporating sophisticated natural language processing (NLP) should be developed for future research to provide more focused, individualized feedback.

9. Speech Recognition Software

Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) technology employs AI and machine learning techniques to interpret and generate spoken and written text. This technology is widely applied in various software applications, including note-taking apps, automatic transcription services, and intelligent personal assistants (IPAs). Daniels and Iwago (2017) highlight the rapid advancement of ASR over the past decade, noting its increasing accuracy and application across diverse

industries. Golonka et al. (2014) identified ASR as a significant factor in enhancing foreign language learning, highlighting its measurable impact on language acquisition.

Speech recognition software has generated considerable interest within the CALL domain (Ahn & Lee, 2016; Chen, 2011; de Vries et al., 2015; van Doremalen et al., 2016). Recent studies (Chen et al., 2023; Moussalli & Cardoso, 2020; Tai & Chen, 2023) demonstrate that IPAs have substantial potential as tools for learning a second language (L2) or foreign language (FL). Tai and Chen (2023) found that students benefit from practicing in a low-anxiety environment, where they can engage in repetitive practice without fear of judgment. Dizon (2020) noted improvements in L2 speaking proficiency when students interacted with an IPA, such as Alexa, while Chen et al. (2023) emphasized the benefits of Google Assistant for listening and speaking practice. The high accuracy of IPAs in understanding user commands has been affirmed by several studies (Daniels & Iwago, 2017; Dizon et al., 2022).

The immediate, individualized feedback provided by ASR in messaging applications, software, and websites supports L2 pronunciation improvement (Chen, 2011; Dai & Wu, 2023; Dizon, 2017; McCrocklin, 2016, 2019). Bashori et al. (2022) investigated ASR-based websites for learning English as a foreign language, finding that participants in the treatment group improved their pronunciation and vocabulary in comparison to a control group. Evers and Chen (2022) presented a practical approach using the ASR application Speechnotes, where EFL students read aloud, with their speech transcribed into text, allowing them to review their mistakes. Their study indicated that learners' pronunciation could be enhanced through the combination of ASR and peer feedback.

The integration of ASR into applications and software creates engaging and interactive learning opportunities, which can foster motivation in L2/FL learners (Moussalli & Cardoso, 2020; Tai & Chen, 2023). Students can engage in conversations with IPAs like Alexa and Google Assistant (Chen et al., 2023; Dizon, 2017), leading to positive attitudes towards ASR-based tools for pronunciation practice (Evers & Chen, 2022). Additionally, incorporating ASR into language learning games and simulations can create immersive environments (Morton et al., 2012), with Forsyth et al. (2019) noting that students enjoyed interacting with animated chatting systems. When students feel comfortable communicating with ASR systems, their anxiety diminishes, promoting willingness to communicate and positively influencing L2/FL motivation (Ayedoun et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2023; Tai & Chen, 2023).

ASR technology also enables the customization of learning materials to meet individual students' needs. Chen et al. (2023) observed that Google Assistant was effective for personalized learning, as learners could control the pace and content based on their preferences. Spring and Tabuchi (2022) reported improvements in vowel pronunciation among Japanese EFL students practicing with an ASR system. Walker et al. (2011) illustrated the potential of ASR in a nurse-patient simulator for non-native English-speaking nurses to practice English in a supportive environment. ASR can also serve evaluative purposes; for instance, Cox and Davies (2012) found ASR-based oral tests to be useful in assessing EFL students' speaking abilities, with the potential for predicting proficiency, making them valuable for class placement. Forsyth et al.

(2019) suggested the feasibility of utilizing ASR systems for dialogue-based assessments in animated settings.

Despite the potential benefits, several challenges and concerns regarding ASR have been highlighted in the literature. Dizon (2017) noted that low-level students may struggle with comprehending IPAs, and students often become frustrated when unable to convey their commands (Dizon et al., 2022). Additionally, McCrocklin (2019) reported dissatisfaction among students when ASR software failed to recognize their speech accurately. Although Cox and Davies (2012) found no gender bias, some ASR applications may exhibit varying levels of accuracy for L2 learners with different accents. Daniels and Iwago (2017) raised privacy concerns regarding data storage and usage by IPAs, indicating a need for greater transparency. Further research is warranted to explore the effectiveness of ASR systems for a diverse range of non-native English speakers and to address the gaps identified by Bashori et al. (2022) and Chen et al. (2023).

10. Chatbots in Language Learning

Chatbots, software applications designed to interact with users through text or audio in a conversational manner, have gained significant traction in various sectors, including language education (Bibauw et al., 2019; Coniam, 2014; Wang et al., 2021). Often referred to as bots, chatterbots, dialogue systems, virtual assistants, or virtual agents, these technologies are typically deployed on organizational websites across industries such as marketing, healthcare, technical support, customer service, and education. They aim to provide tailored services to website visitors (Fryer et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021). In essence, a user initiates a query to the chatbot, which processes the input to discern the user's intent and subsequently delivers a programmed response. Frequently, chatbots facilitate various tasks, including gathering user information, confirming identities, and guiding users toward relevant resources (Kim et al., 2021; Smutny & Schreiberova, 2020).

The evolution of chatbots can be traced back to the 1960s with the introduction of ELIZA by Weizenbaum (1966), marking the inception of chatbot technology. Over the decades, this domain has witnessed substantial advancements, leading to the emergence of more sophisticated chatbots, such as ALICE and Cleverbot. Smutny and Schreiberova (2020) highlight the prolonged existence of web-based chatbots, which have become increasingly integrated into messaging platforms like Facebook Messenger. Furthermore, Ayedoun et al. (2019) emphasize that some chatbots, like Replika, are designed to present human-like characteristics, thus enhancing user engagement through text, audio, and visual elements. Huang et al. (2018) and Smutny and Schreiberova (2017) note that contemporary chatbots employ natural language processing (NLP), pattern recognition, and neural machine translation techniques to achieve their objectives.

The burgeoning interest in chatbots is largely attributed to their potential to facilitate second language (L2) and foreign language (FL) learning in innovative ways (Wang et al., 2021). For instance, Huang et al. (2017) developed a dialogue-based chatbot, GenieTutor, aimed at assisting users in learning English as a foreign language. This chatbot specifically targets essential

language learning topics, such as ordering food, while also allowing for free conversation on various subjects. The Mondly chatbot, as an additional language-learning tool, supports multiple languages and can focus on specific themes of interest without necessitating human intervention (Bibauw et al., 2019; Coniam, 2014; Fryer et al., 2020). This capacity for unlimited patience, instant responses in natural language, and the ability to alleviate learner anxiety fosters an environment conducive to self-correction and encourages communication (Fryer et al., 2020). Students can practice aspects of language they may hesitate to explore with a human instructor or during initial exposure to a new language.

Goda et al. (2014) found that utilizing a chatbot prior to a group discussion increased student output and supported the development of critical thinking skills. In a similar vein, Kim et al. (2021) reported positive outcomes when students interacted with an AI bot before completing speaking tasks. Notably, voice-based chatbots yielded better performance than their text-based counterparts and traditional in-person settings. Ayedoun et al. (2019) argue that the effectiveness of a chatbot in fostering willingness to communicate hinges on its ability to implement appropriate communication strategies. Coniam (2014) corroborates this by asserting that chatbots generally deliver grammatically accurate responses within different contexts. The capability of chatbots to log conversations with students can enable teachers to tailor lessons that address specific errors made by learners.

Conversely, some literature highlights potential drawbacks associated with chatbot use in language education. Fryer et al. (2017) discovered that while chatbots might initially spark interest due to their novelty, student engagement tends to decline rapidly when compared to interactions with human instructors. Smutny and Schreiberova (2020) point out that many chatbots lack essential communication components, resulting in overly mechanical interactions. Moreover, Coniam (2014) critiques several English-language chatbots for producing meaningless or grammatically incorrect responses. The scarcity of empirical studies examining the impact of chatbots on L2 and FL learning is a pressing concern, as emphasized by Kim et al. (2021). Bibauw et al. (2019) advocate for long-term studies with larger participant groups to comprehensively assess chatbot effectiveness. Smutny and Schreiberova (2020) further recommend that future research focus on providing guidelines for educators on integrating chatbots into their teaching practices, as well as conducting content analyses of student interactions with these technologies.

In recent years, the emergence of ChatGPT (https://chat.openai.com/) has generated considerable interest across multiple domains. This advanced chatbot utilizes extensive databases to generate comprehensive responses to user inquiries. Although concerns about factual accuracy persist (Vincent, 2022), educators and researchers are actively discussing ChatGPT's implications for educational practices. Zhai (2022) conducted a pilot investigation on the use of ChatGPT for composing academic papers, finding the text produced to be coherent and informative. This suggests a potential shift towards enhancing creativity and critical thinking within educational contexts. If employed judiciously, ChatGPT presents an opportunity for language educators to enrich their teaching methodologies and create engaging learning experiences.

11. Future Directions

Research into artificial intelligence (AI) in language education continues to proliferate. Current studies primarily explore AI technologies or applications that utilize specific types of AI algorithms or systems (e.g., Pikhart, 2020). Recent findings indicate that language learners exhibit positive attitudes toward AI tools for language acquisition (Chen et al., 2023; Moussalli & Cardoso, 2020; Wang et al., 2022). In educational environments, AI facilitates immediate feedback and adaptability, empowering students to engage independently in their learning and extending opportunities beyond traditional classroom settings (Srinivasan, 2022). Notably, writing remains the most commonly studied skill in AI-related computer-assisted language learning (CALL) research (Liang et al., 2021).

Sharadgah and Sa'di (2022) conducted a comprehensive review of studies examining AI in language learning and teaching from 2015 to 2021, identifying gaps related to non-verbal communication, gestures, expressions, emotions, translation, the lack of complex instructional materials for AI-driven learning, and uncertainties surrounding the classification of AI capabilities. This underscores the urgent need for thorough research across diverse settings. Although progress has been made in investigating AI teaching assistants (Kim et al., 2020) and AI speech recognition technologies (Gao et al., 2021), there remains substantial ground to cover. Additionally, concerns persist regarding language instructors' preparedness to implement AI (Kessler, 2021). Ethical considerations must also be prioritized when conducting AI research involving student and teacher data. Future research and practice should focus on exploring the pedagogical and technical advancements of AI, as well as its efficient application in language education.

Conclusion

Research into artificial intelligence (AI) in language education is rapidly expanding, revealing a landscape rich with opportunities and challenges. Recent studies highlight a growing acceptance of AI tools among language learners, indicating positive attitudes towards these technologies in language acquisition (Chen et al., 2023; Moussalli & Cardoso, 2020; Wang et al., 2022). AI's capability to provide immediate feedback and adaptability facilitates independent student engagement, extending learning opportunities beyond traditional classroom settings (Srinivasan, 2022). Notably, writing is the most commonly investigated skill in the realm of AI-assisted computer-assisted language learning (CALL) (Liang et al., 2021).

The comprehensive review by Sharadgah and Sa'di (2022) underscores existing gaps in research, particularly concerning non-verbal communication, gestures, emotions, and the complexity of instructional materials in AI-driven learning environments. This highlights the urgent need for more extensive research across varied educational settings. While advancements have been made in areas such as AI teaching assistants (Kim et al., 2020) and speech recognition technologies (Gao et al., 2021), significant gaps remain, particularly regarding the preparedness of language instructors to effectively implement AI in their teaching practices (Kessler, 2021). Additionally, ethical considerations regarding the use of student and teacher data in AI research must be prioritized.

The literature reviewed in this article demonstrates that AI is increasingly transforming language education, shaping methodologies and practices within the field. The integration of advanced technologies such as natural language processing (NLP), automated writing evaluation (AWE), intelligent tutoring systems (ITSs), and chatbots is becoming more prevalent in language learning contexts. This article contributes to the ongoing discourse on the understanding and application of AI-supported language teaching and learning. The findings suggest that while AI presents various advantages, challenges remain that must be addressed for effective implementation.

As AI technologies continue to evolve and integrate into educational frameworks, it is crucial for language educators to harness these tools effectively to enhance learning outcomes. To maximize the benefits of AI in second and foreign language education, more comprehensive and longitudinal research is recommended, focusing on the pedagogical implications, practical applications, and ethical considerations of AI technologies in diverse language learning environments. Through such efforts, the transformative potential of AI can be fully realized in the realm of language education.

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Morton's Thought and Ecological Crisis in Selected Niger Delta Novels

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Abstract

Much of the existing critical works on the Niger Delta literary oeuvre concern themselves with the extent of destruction to which the ecosystem has been subjected, the concomitant violent resistance, and their impacts on the survival of the people of the region. While these efforts are commendable, they do not offer lasting solutions to the ecological crisis for which the region has become infamous. As a deviation from this critical tradition, this paper attempts to show the root causes of the ecological crisis in the Niger Delta region as well as how to bring the crisis under control. To do this, three novels – Isidore Okpewho's *Tides*, Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* and Christie Watson's *Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away* were studied using Timothy Morton's concept of The Ecological Thought which anthropomorphizes the ecosystem in a bid to avert the destructive activities of both the resisters and the oil explorers. The paper concludes that when humans fully understand the interconnectedness and radical intimacy that exist between them and other "beings" in nature, ecological equilibrium will be easily achieved.

Keywords: Anthropomorphism, Ecological Crisis, Ecological Thought, Radical Intimacy

Introduction

The Niger Delta is an resource-rich region in Nigeria. The region has long suffered from environmental degradation and violence due to extensive oil extraction. Oil spills, gas flaring, and deforestation have devastated local ecosystems, contaminated water sources and farmland, and led to loss of livelihoods for indigenous communities. Consequently, the relevance of the Niger Delta writer depends largely on their ability to present the stark realities of the social, political, and ecological conundrums the region has been enmeshed in since the inception of oil exploration in 1950s. As Kolawole Ogungbesan rightly avers, "if literature is relevant at all, it is because we can obtain some pictures of society and life from it (26). It then follows that any writer of the Niger Delta fiction who fails to depict the petroleum generated ecological crisis in the region "must" in Wole Soyinka's words, "recognize that his [or her] choice lies between denying himself totally or withdrawing to the position of chronicler and post-mortem surgeon" (Cited in Biodun Jeyifo 59). It is from this perspective that the works of Isidore Okpewho, Helon Habila, and Christie Watson examined in this paper, and many others of the same ideological leanings, find their true essence. Indeed, it is the authors' dexterous weaving of the ecological concerns in the tapestry of their creativity that justifies their selection for examination in this research work.

Two of the novels under consideration in this paper –Okpewho's Tides and Habila Oil on Water feature veteran journalists as narrators in spite of the differences in narrative techniques employed by the authors. This study is of the opinion that the authors' choices of journalists in both   novels   give   a better picture of the Niger Delta region and the issues confronting them in the form of objective reportage. The choice of Tonwe and Piriye (natives) as the narrative voices in Tides and Zaq and Rufus (a native and a non-native) in Oil on Water are not only symbolic of collaboration and objectivity in the reportorial processes but also demonstrate "insider's" versus "extended-insider's" representation of the crisis respectively.

If objectivity is achieved through the narrative techniques of Tides and Oil on Water, it is heightened in Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away through its protagonist, Blessing. Watson uses the *I* of a child narrator in the character of Blessing, a 13year old girl, which speaks volume of the objectivity   in   the   depiction   of   the   crisis   in   the   region.   Through   the character of Blessing, Watson, having lived in London where the novel was written, gives an "outsider's" account of the crisis.

Unmistakably, both Tides and Oil on Water could be read as a connected sequence, like V. S. Naipaul's Miguel Street or Habila's Waiting for an Angel, since they both have same temporal and partly spatial settings and symmetrical thematic preoccupation, with the only major difference being in publication dates which have also registered some differing nuances in the narratological processes. However, the evident progression in the dimensions of ecological crisis in   both   novels   and   Tiny   Sunbirds,   Far   Away   necessitate   a   rotational reading of these novels in their order of publications. Guiding the analysis is Timothy Morton's theory of The Ecological Thought.

Critical Receptions of the Niger Delta Fiction

The attention that the Niger Delta crisis is receiving in the critical and literary universe has assumed an upward progression in recent years. One can conveniently argue that the region has witnessed a cornucopia of critical essays whose crux is the environmental problems discussed under interchangeable epithets. It is even more enthralling to note that the literature of the region has occupied one of the highest echelons of research interests for both students in higher degrees and seasoned scholars alike which mean well for the literary producers of/about the region. This is because in Bernth Lindfors opinion,

> [t]o be famous, to be reputable, to be deemed worthy of serious and sustained consideration, an author needs as much criticism as possible, year after year after year. Only those who pass this test of time—the test of persistent published interest in their art—will stand a chance of earning literary immortality. (143)

Congruently, given the critical attention writers like Ken Saro-Wiwa, Isidore Okpewho, Tanure Ojaide, and more recently Vincent Egbuson, Helon Habila, Ifeoma May, Christie Watson, Kaine Agary, among others are receiving from literary critics, one could conveniently conclude that these writers are gradually earning for themselves "literary immortality" through their faithful representation of the ecological crisis in the Niger Delta region.

It is however surprising that the critical influx these writers and their works have received have failed to sufficiently engage the radical intimacy or interconnectedness between both living and the non-living beings in the ecosystem which is the crux of ecological thought. Thus, most of the existing critical exercises are purely anthropocentric rather than ecocentric. In other words, human safety and survival rather than the environment itself is the focal point of these works. For instance, Philip Aghoghovwia (2014) examines the ways environmental concerns and the phenomenon of oil production in the Niger Delta are captured in contemporary literary representations by situating the "Niger Delta representations of the oil encounter within the intellectual frame of petrocultures" (iii). He analyses the texts in the light of how oil extraction is an intrinsic form of violence on the landscape and human population in the oil sites of the Niger Delta.

Calista Ugwu (2014) focuses on the endemic and the unnerving concept of environmental degradation, ecological consciousness, causes and consequences of environmental degradation. He investigates the portraits of degradation of place, innocence, ethos and psyche as well as ecological consciousness in selected novels in what he concludes as "an x-ray of greed, negligence and subversive activities by human beings, which have led to a total privation of a natural environment – the Niger Delta environment – a microcosm of the larger global environment" (11). His approach to the problem of Niger Delta here is commendable, especially in his recognition of the effects of the crisis in Niger Delta area.

Also, Charles Feghabo (2014) sees alienation as the basis of ecoactivism in the region. He also argued that the "collaborative politics that goes with oil and gas exploration in the region has had negative impacts on the people's psyche and their ecosystem, triggering the violent environmentalism in the area" (16). Feghabo's celebratory reading of violent acts of resistance set his work at variance with the present research. In fact, this research argues that violence is an agent of ecological degradation which should be discouraged forthwith

Again, one thing that is common to all these critics and many others not mentioned here is their obsession with the effects of ecological crisis on the human beings in the region. Even where environment is mentioned, the focus is human beings. This study contends that such an anthropocentric perspective can only perpetuate the crisis in the region since it has no capacity to address the root cause of the problem which Timothy Morton's ecological thought accounts for.

Morton's Concept of Ecological Thought

In an attempt to deconstruct nature/culture binary, Timothy Morton developed the concept of Ecological Thought in a 2010 book of the same title. The ecological thought considers everything in the universe as entangled, connected and interdependent. This interconnectedness and interdependence Morton calls the mesh. In his words, the "mesh consists of infinite connections and infinitesimal differences" (30). Thus, a distortion in any element in the ecosystem has an overarching effect on all other things within the ecosystem.

In his criticism of anthropocentrism, Morton contends that there is no center and no edge in the relationship between humans and nonhumans in the ecosystem. According to him, a true ecological thought implies "letting go of an idea that it has a center" (38) since all life "forms are the mesh, and so are all dead ones, as are their habitats, which are made up of the living and the nonliving" (29). Ecological Thought calls for an awareness of interconnectedness with the implication of "radical intimacy with other beings" (38) which in turn gives human beings the consciousness that the "destruction of some things will affect other things" (35). For example, the destruction of the Niger Delta ecosystem by multinational oil companies and violent resisters affects the fishes in the river and plants in the field. Through pipeline vandalism, violent resisters violate the ecosystem on which plant and other life forms depend for their existence. In the same vein, humans are also affected directly through hunger and poverty while the workers of the companies are also exposed to health hazard and the kidnapping activities of militant groups. Morton believes that if the notion of "coexistentialism" (47) or interconnectedness is understood "in an open system without center or edge," (39) everyone including capitalists will "have a very powerful argument for things" (38) in the ecosystem. Hence, this concept is relevant in tracing the causes of ecological crises not just from the perspective of the capitalists (multinational oil companies), but also from the perspective of the violent resisters as well as the ordinary locals of the Niger Delta region as portrayed in the selected novels.

Timothy Morton's Ecological Thought and Ecological Crisis in Isidore Okpewho's *Tides,* Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* and Christie Watson's *Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away*

Isidore Okpewho hails from the Niger Delta region and his personalized narration of the ordeals of the peoples of the region through the characters of Piriye Dokumo and Tonwe Birisbe is instructive. Through the use of first person singular and plural pronouns (I/we) and possessive adjectives (our/my) to qualify the people of Niger Delta, the reader is made aware of the fact that Okpewho tells his own story of the ecological crisis in the Niger Delta region as an insider who himself is, in some ways, a victim of the crisis. This is further adumbrated by the fact that Tonwe, one of the correspondents who retired to a life of farming and fishing in Seiama (1) but soon discovers that there is "a crisis brewing right by" (2) his doorstep lives in the Niger Delta region from where he reported the ecological imbalance in the region through correspondence. When asked by commander Adetunji if he lives in Warri, Tonwe simply responds, "No, I live in my village in the creeks, in Seiama" (29) where the "noise from exploration machines reduce my desired peace somewhat" (5). Although Tonwe's complaints appear too anthropocentric and selfish, it goes on to show clearly that Okpewho sets out to expose the sufferings of the ordinary man in the region with first-hand information from the creeks in *Tides*.

Commenting on the major themes of Okpewo's Tides, Ferdinand Asoo outlines what he terms "the basic problems of the Niger Delta" which are placed against the exigencies of national interests such as "economic growth, integration and cohesion…conflict between personal, ethnic, regional, professional, racial and national interest" (49). Ultimately, Asoo constricts the problem of Niger Delta region to the problem of environmental degradation (50) brought about by the activities of oil companies in the region. This work agrees with Asoo's line of thought that the crisis in the region is basically environmentally inclined. However, Asoo's opinion appears tangential and out of kilter with Timothy Morton's conceptualization of ecological thought as Asoo puts human beings and their interest at the centre and the non-humans at the periphery. For Morton, all life forms possess "infinite connections and infinitesimal differences" (30). This work opines that the novel is as concerned with human lives as other life forms which is the hallmark of ecological thought. This, perhaps, is why Okpewho does not give the plot of Tides enough time to build up before venturing into the danger to which the lives of the 'peoples' (human and non-human lives) of the region have been exposed. The novel opens with the damaging impacts of oil spillage on the ecosystem of Niger Delta in Piriye's first letter to Tonwe in the opening pages of the novel:

> … the spillage of crude petroleum from the oil rigs down there …
> has proved an absolute menace to agricultural life, for many farms
> are practically buried in thick layers of crude, which kills off many
> fishes and other forms of life (2).

In response to Piriye's letter, Birisibe tells the reader of a group of locals led by Opene who had paid him a visit in a view to getting him to represent them before the government agents to make a case for the ecosystem and their fishing occupation. These uneducated farmers know that "they faced certain disaster if the schools of fish were" (11) killed or forced out of their area. By these

corroboratory reportages, Okpewho seems to be showing the interconnectedness and interdependence of human beings and other life forms in the ecosystem which is the basis of ecological thought. Were Morton to be asked, he would say Okpewho thinks big by showing how human lives depend on non-human forms for survival.

While it is easy for critics like Asoo to conclude that Okpewho's Tides is basically about human interests - national, personal and ethnic (49), Okpewho demonstrates, as the novel develops that human and non-human, are the central focus of the novel. In itemising the dangers of oil pollution on the ecosystem, Okpewho writes:

> Now, the dangers of all this oil pollution to the environment are
> sufficiently well known to you. The fishes die because the floating
> oil blocks the oxygen from the water … the birds that dip in the
> water to catch fish and other foods … drown or die on dry land …
> the crops [and grasses] won't grow because the oil floating on the
> irrigation chokes the soil. Even the drinking water is affected (146
> my emphasis).

It is lucid from the above that the survival of the "fishes," the "birds," and the "crops" are fundamental to the ideological leaning of the novel. Whereas fishing forms part of the occupational and cultural quiddities of the region, peoples of Niger delta region are not known, both in reality and the fictional zeitgeists, to be fowlers. Hence, Okpewho's argument for the survival of birds, fishes, grass and the purity of drinking water can only be understood in the context of Morton's ecological thought. In Morton's view, ecological thought is "a practice and a process of becoming fully aware of how human beings are concerned with other beings - animal, vegetable, or mineral. Ultimately, this includes thinking about democracy. What would it be - can we even imagine it?" (Qtd in Iheka86). Okpewho has sufficiently demonstrated this awareness of concern for both humans and other life forms in the novel. The implication of the above is more implicit than otherwise. This is because, the novel attempts to show, without saying it, that it is the lack of this awareness on the part of the oil companies and the Government of Nigeria that led to the ecological degradation and the risk of survival the people of the region face.

It is instructive to note that Okpewho equally expresses concern for water bodies and rivers in Tides. As an insider, he knows the importance of rivers to his people not only in the sense of its utility values but also in its sacredness and tangled existentialism with his people. This is better explained in Ken Saro-Wiwa's words: "To the Ogoni, rivers and streams do not only provide water for life—for bathing, drinking, etc.; they do not only provide fish for food, they are also sacred and are bound up intricately with the life of the community, of the entire Ogoni nation" (12-13). Hence, one of Harrison's main complaints against the multinational oil companies in the region stems from water pollution. According to him,

> Every once in a while the tankers are washed – and that's another
> source of pollution. The method is called ballasting. Sea water is
> taken into the tanker to clean out the oil sticking to the insides of

> the hold. The sea water is the ballast, and after the tank has been cleansed it is de-ballasted – that is, the ballast and oil are thrown into the surrounding water. (145)

It is alarming to note that there exists an alternative to de-ballasting call Load-on-Top but "it is seldom practiced" (145) and "de-ballasting goes on all the time" (145) because the drive for profit making by the oil companies makes them oblivious of what Morton calls "ethics of the ecological thought" which is hinged on regarding "beings as people even when they aren't people" (8). In Morton's view therefore, water bodies should also be accorded respect as a being other than human in nature. By centering his narration not only around human beings, Okpewho seems to be saying, the ecological crisis in the Niger Delta region can only be overcome when everything in the ecosystem is given equal treatment as humans.

If Okpewho presents an insider's account of the ecological crisis in Tides, Helon Habila's account of the crisis in Oil on Water can be termed extended-insider's for a number of reasons. Though narrated in the first person point of view, Oil on Water is distinct from Tides in many ways. First, the combination of a native and a non-native journalists – Rufus and Zaq – as narrators in search of a "kidnapped British woman" (1) contrasts starkly with Tides' native journalists – Piriye and Tonwe – whose collaborative plans to write a book about a brewing crisis (2) give rise to the novel. It is apparent that one of the narrators in Tides resides in the creeks from where he exchanges correspondences with his counterpart in Lagos. This brings his personal experiences of the crisis to bear in the narratological processes and in turn adds touches of reality to the story. On the other hand, Rufus and Zaq only came from Lagos on professional duties to make a story out of the kidnapped British woman. It is safe to surmise then that while Habila's story of the ecological crisis in the Niger Delta region is coincidental, Okpewho's is deliberate. This explains why the crisis is presented in Oil on Water like a mere jourrnalistic report without much nuances of personalized experiences of the impacts of the crisis as evident in Tides. Besides, Habila is a Nigerian of Northern extraction who has never lived in the Niger Delta region. Thus, his account of the Niger Delta region as depicted in *Oil on Water* is considered as an "Extended Insider's" view of the crisis in this research.

More importantly, whereas Okpewho uses the first person pronouns to refer to the Niger Delta people, Habila uses the third person pronouns. For example, Rufus' reference to the people of the region as "them," "their," "they," and "the people" (34, 97) even though he is from the region counts him out of those experiencing the effects of the crisis. These referential differences make it all the more clearer that Habila's account is presented from the perspective of an "Extended Insider."

However, it is again worthy of note that Oil on Water can be read like a continuum of Tides since, as said earlier, they represent different phases of the evolution of the crisis. That is, Tides represents the nascent phase of the ecological crisis while Oil on Water represents the advanced stage of the crisis. It is therefore expected that most of the concerns raised in Tides find symmetry with those in Oil on Water albeit in larger proportion.

One thing that stands out and which runs through Oil on Water is anthropomorphism. All through the novel, both humans and non-humans are given equal treatments as victims of oil exploration and exploitation in the region. This is summed up in Maximilian Feldnar's words that Habila's "depiction of the Niger Delta's environmental destruction," is "heightened through rhetorical devices such as the personification of the landscape as a sick and dying person" (1). This implies that central to Habila's thematic concern is not only human but the non-human 'persons' such as birds, crabs, fish, land, water, air, etc. By implication, Habila puts everything in the habitat at the centre of his story. This fittingly situates the novel within the context of Morton's "Ecological Thought" since according to Morton, a true ecological thought implies "letting go of an idea that it has a center" (38) and a periphery.

Congruently, the novel is rife with images that demonstrate a deep concern for all life forms in the ecosystem. This concern, in the opinion of this work, is motivated by the awareness of
the indispensable interconnectedness that exist between the human and non-human persons in the ecosystem. Rufus's imagination of a polluted water body and its suffocating effects on the living things that inhabit it does not only express this concern but also serves as a strong social criticism against the oil companies for the neglect of the ecosystem. According to him, "thousands
of gallons of oil floating on the water, the weight of the oil tight like a hangman's noose around the neck of whatever life-form lay underneath" (227). The passage exemplifies a state of utter abandonment of the Niger Delta landscape to be despoiled by oil. It is also suggestive of the fact that oil remains the hangman whose "noose" hangs around the neck of the peoples, villages, animals and things in the Niger Delta ecosystem.

It is therefore not surprising that Habila records deaths of everything orchestrated by oil pollution and the concomitant violence with painstaking details. For instance, one of the first villages Rufus and Zaq visited "looked as if deadly epidemic had swept through it" (7). This implies that either the people deserted the village or are all dead. In fact, the "houses seemed to belong more to the trees and forest behind them than they did to a domestic human settlement" (10, my emphasis). Habila's choice of "domestic human settlement" presupposes that the "trees and forest" are non-domestic humans deserving of settlements too. By this depiction, Habila simply succeeds in treating, to use Morton's words, "many more beings as people while deconstructing our ideas of what counts as people" (8). As they go further, they "found a chicken pen with about ten chickens inside, all dead and decomposing, the maggots trafficking beneath the feathers" (7). All these heighten the image of death and decomposition that characterize the Niger Delta villages.

Similarly, Habila pays close attention to the effect of oil pollution on the aquatic life as well as the flora and fauna. Almost everywhere water or river is mentioned in the novel, the reader is presented with images of death and contamination, symbolic of the plight of the peoples of the Niger Delta region. In Rufus words, "We followed a bend in the river and in front of us we saw dead birds draped over tree branches, their outstretched wings black and slick with oil; dead fish bobbed white-bellied between tree roots" (8). The fish are not only dead but also caught between tree roots like the peoples of the region who are caught between the rebel and the

army after losing their sources of livelihood. To pursue this loss of aquatic and arboreal lives to a logical conclusion, Habila writes, "Over the black, expressionless water there were no birds or fish or other water creatures …" (9). This is why the Doctor clearly states, "I've been in these waters five years now and I tell you this place is a dead place, a place of dying" (142 -3). The Doctor's conclusion is critical to this study because it is an implicit suggestion that the willful despoliation of the ecosystem translates into death of human and non-human peoples in the ecosystem. It goes on to illustrate Morton's argument that the "destruction of some things will affect other things" (35). In essence, Habila seems to be saying that if this knowledge is taken into cognizance, the ecosystem of the Niger Delta would have been preserved and so would have been all the life forms.

Interestingly, Okonta, Ike and Oronto Douglas in their work, Where Vultures Feast: Shell, Human rights, and Oil in the Niger Delta, refer to the ecological crisis in the Niger Delta region as a kind of war "whose victims are hapless people and the land on which they have lived and thrived for centuries" (63-4). Their categorization of not only people but also land as a victim of the crisis stems from their tacit recognition of land as a non-living being that should be catered for. This perhaps accounts for why Habila treats the victimized landscape much the same way he does the people and animals in the novel. For him then, "the ruined, decomposing landscape" (55) is in "radical intimacy with other beings" (Morton, 38) that inhabit it. Therefore the effects of the pollution of the landscape results in suffocation of grass, "each blade covered with blotches like the liver spots on a smoker's hands" (8-9).

In a manner of summary of the impact of the ecological crisis on the people and "strange strangers," Habila lists:

> The forsaken villages, the gas flares, the stumps of pipes from exhausted wells with their heads capped and left jutting out of the oil-scorched earth, and ever present pipelines crisscrossing the landscape, sometimes like tree roots surfacing far away from the parent tree, and sometimes like diseased veins on the back of old shriveled hand…..the carcasses of the fish and crabs and water birds that folated on the deserted beaches of these tiny towns and villages and islands every morning killed by oil … (182)

The passage is important to this study in its personification of most of the things listed and their dead or diseased state arising from utter neglect. In Morton's view, these things are "the neighbor, the strange stranger, and the hyper-object" (135) that should be catered for.

Finally, Rufus' conclusion is worth evoking here. According to him, of "all the things that I saw that day, and all the words I heard, what made the most impression was the sight of the broken statues. The arms and legs and heads sundered from the body" (157). The statue referred to here is Habila's symbol of an ecosystem in a topsy-turvy state. The broken body parts are symbolic of the disconnection between the ecosystem and every being in it, living and non-living,

with the resultant effects of dislocation, hunger, disease, and death. This again brings to the fore the
importance of taking Morton's concept of ecological thought seriously in addressing the ecological crisis in the Niger Delta region.

If Oil on Water presents an extended insider's account of the ecological crisis in the Niger Delta region, Christie Watson's account of the crisis in Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away is rendered from the perspective of an "outsider." Though married to a Nigerian, Christie Watson is a British writer who never lived in Nigeria. Having spent her life in South London, it is plausible to conclude that her account of the Niger Delta crisis is basically premised on media narratives and information obtained from people and the internet. Watson herself, in an interview admitted that she "had made a lot of visits and talk to a lot of people for research but we go there anyway." This shows that her visits to Nigeria are very few and far in between which denies her the experiential knowledge of the crisis that her novel portrays. While this does not serve as an impediment to her narration and the picture of the Niger Delta she paints, it lays credence to her classification, in the context of this research work, as an outsider.

In addition, Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away has very scanty pictorial representations of the despoiled and polluted environment of the Niger Delta region in comparison with Okpewho's Tides, Habila's Oil on Water, Hope Eghagha's Emperor of Salvation, Tanure Ojaide's The Activist, May Ifeoma's Oil Cemetery, and many other literary works whose main focus is the ecological crisis in the Niger Delta region. Unlike Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away which attempts to treat heterogeneous themes alongside ecological crisis, these works concentrate on issues that are all tied to the politics of oil and the ecological war that has become synonymous with the region. This makes Shatto Gakwandi's remarks in reference to Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's Petals of Blood also fitting for Watson's Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away. According to Gakwandi, "[t]he Novel's principal weakness is that it attempts to do too much. The author attempts – and to a large extent succeeds– in weaving a pattern around highly disparate and heterogeneous..." (23) themes such as genital mutilation, family crisis, religion, love and relationship, etc. Although her attempt at writing about many things at the same time is considered as a weakness, it shows her readiness as an outsider to present an all-inclusive account of happenings in Nigeria in a single book.

Also, it is important to note that the earliest recorded report of the crisis in *Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away* is taken from the internet. After Timi's divorce, she decides to relocate from Lagos to Warri with her children – Blessing and Ezikiel. On getting to know they have to travel to Warri, Ezikiel declares, "Warri is not safe. And those villages are even worse! Swamp villages! I googled Warri at the internet café. Oil bunkering, hostage taking, illness, guns, and poverty" (8). His mother argues that she grew up there, insisting that Warri is safe but Ezikiel, based on what he reads makes her understand that Warri has "changed then. It's dangerous. The whole Delta region. And if we don't get shot the bacteria and parasites will surely kill us" (8). Ezikiel gives this prescient warning while still in Lagos based on the available information on the internet. That Ezekiel eventually got shot while picking snails (125) goes a long way to prove that what they read from the internet about the crisis is not too different from the reality. This implies that classifying Watson as an outsider does not make her account of the crisis in the Niger Delta

region inferior to those of Okpewho's and Habila's discussed earlier; it only provides another perspective from which the crisis can be viewed.

Watson, like Okpewho and Habila, shows an ecosystem that is highly anthropomorphised. In her view, there is no difference between a person and their surroundings. That is, humans, like every other thing in their surroundings, are components of their surroundings. On the flip side, their surroundings are also part of them. This is tersely revealed through the character of Blessing   in whose eye the story is told. Blessing says, a "person becomes part of their surrounding" (9) in the opening pages of the novel when the idea of relocation is still been mooted. She does indeed become part of the Niger Delta environment at the closing pages of the novel. Blessing is presented with the option of leaving the crisis ridden region for London after losing Ezikiel, her only brother, but she refuses. The only reason she gives for her decision to stay is that "I needed Mama to understand I was as much a part of the Delta as the mango and almond trees, the mangrove swamps, the river, and the red earth" (273). By this, Watson shows Blessing's sense of "radical intimacy with other beings" (38), to use Morton's phrase, in the ecosystem which in turn is intended to create the awareness that the "destruction of some things will affect other things" (35) including humans.

Blessing's declarations above is critical to the reading of the novel from the perspective of ecological thought. By equating herself with trees, the mangrove swamps, the river, and the red earth, she provides the basis for everyone including the capitalists and the radical resistance groups to "have a very powerful argument for things" (Morton, 38) in the ecosystem as well as defend the ecosystem from further despoliation. This "powerful argument for things" resonates with Grandma's argument to end the continued pollution of the ecosystem:

> We no want dangerous gas burnt in all this pipeline fire, give us
> cancer, coughing, asthma, like our lungs are less important than
> any other place. We want our fruits to grow, our animals to be able
> to eat grass and not drop dead. We want to drink water that has no
> oil in it … (264, my emphasis)

Notice that Grandma's argument is a balanced one in two parts. First, she points out the health challenges posed on the peoples of the region. Second, she argues for healthy fruits and grass and the survival of animals. In this, Grandma equally treats humans as part of the ecosystem and ecosystem as part of humans without prioritising the one over the other. In Grandma, Watson tries
to show the society the right way to view other life forms in the ecosystem and by so doing condemns the wanton disequilibrium of the ecosystem orchestrated by collusion of oil companies and the Nigerian Government.
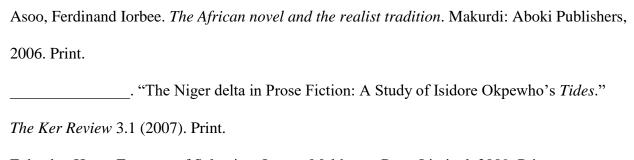
Congruently, the pictures of water and air pollution that the novel paints serve to register Watson's resentment towards the oil companies for utter and long neglect of the ecosystem. The novel records, the "air smelled like a book unopened for a very long time, and smoky, as though the ground had been on fire" (12). Her invocation of an olfactory image and its comparison with

an unopened book "for a very long time" clearly exemplifies how long the ecosystem has been left unattended to. Watson also points out the fact that the pollution of the landscape also translates into that of the air, both of which combine and "made the sky look angry" (12) over its inhabitant. The novel further records, as "we travelled across the water the smell of oil from the river made me cover my mouth and nose with my scarf" (112). This scenario brings to mind Grandma's earlier instruction to Blessing on the drinkability of the water of Niger Delta region. According to her "we must not drink this. Only in emergencies … now, this water is full of oil, and salt, so only for washing clothes and bodies. Not for drinking" (20). By these depictions, Watson demonstrates the disconnection between the peoples of the region and their ecosystem while inhabiting it. She seems to suggest that the disconnection is a function of lack of the understanding on the part of the oil companies and the violent resisters that everything in the ecosystem is intricately bound up in symbiotic relationship which calls for are assessment of values in wealth creation and acquisitions in the modern capitalist age.

In conclusion, Tides, Oil on Water and Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away present impassioned accounts of the ecological crisis of the Niger Delta region. The common denominator of these novels is the great concern for the despoiled flora and fauna, the water, the air, the landscape and the atmosphere of death and dearth that hold sway in the Niger Delta region. The novels invite the readers to view everything in the ecosystem as possessing human values. The authors achieve this by deploying devices that make such a reading possible. The most noticeable of these devices is personification of the landscapes, the water bodies, the flora and fauna and everything that constitute the mesh in the novels. In Morton's words, all "life forms are the mesh, and so are all dead ones, as are their habitat which are also made up of living and nonliving beings" (29). This understanding makes the readers argue for the protection of the ecosystem from further despoliation by violence and oil exploitation.

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Exploring Pragmatic Acts in Ebenezer Obey's Song, 'The Horse, The Man and the Son'

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Abstract

Music is an integral part of any society not only for entertainment, but also for therapy and as a powerful instrument for dissemination of information, moral formation, morale booster as well as medium for value inculcation and socialisation. This paper, Exploring Pragmatic Acts in Ebenezer Obey's song "The Camel, The Man, and The Son" (*Esin pelu ketekete*) delves into the intricacies of language use and social interaction embedded within Yoruba cultural contexts. It also investigates the didactic and moral functions of juju variety of music using Chief Ebenezer Obey's song, 'The Camel, The Man and the Son' (Esin pelu Ketekete), employing Mey's pragmeme, which is a pragmatic analytical device, that identifies the pragmatic acts verifiable in the selected song. It underscores the relevance of pragmatics in analyzing artistic expressions within specific cultural frameworks, illustrating how linguistic choices in song like that of Ebenezer Obey reflects and reinforces societal norms and values. It examines how pragmatic acts, encompassing speech acts, politeness strategies, and cultural references, shape meaning and interpretation within the song's narrative. It also investigates the song's portrayal of interpersonal dynamics, societal values, and moral lessons conveyed through linguistic choices and narrative structure. Additionally, the study considers the performance context of Obey's music, acknowledging its influence on audience reception and cultural resonance. Ultimately, this exploration seeks to highlight the intricate interplay between language, culture and music in shaping human experience and perception. Through a qualitative analysis, this research identifies various pragmatic acts such as directives, assertions, and expressive acts that elucidate

characters' intentions and relationships in the narrative. The population is primarily the lyrics of the song, 'The Horse, The Man and The Son'. This investigation showed that Ebenezer Obey, with the help of practs of ordering, assuring, describing, admonishing and warning, presents human insatiable attitude through the context of history and conflict. The selected song is predicated on the issue of inability to satisfy humanity. He used the pract of warning to stabilise his presentation. In conclusion, the analysis of pragmatic acts in Chief Ebenezer Obey's song, 'The Horse, The Man and The Son', reveals a masterful use of language to convey social, moral, and cultural values. Through various speech acts, including directives, advice, and warnings, Obey not only entertains but also educates his audience on the complexities of human behaviours and societal expectations. The song serves as a reflection of Yoruba wisdom, showcasing the pragmatic functions of language in fostering communal understanding and guiding individuals towards better decision making. By illustrating the dynamic interplay between language, culture, and context, this study demonstrates how pragmatic acts in music can transcend mere entertainment to serve as a tool for social commentary and moral instruction. Obey's use of language in this song, underscores the richness of Yoruba oral traditions and their relevance in addressing contemporary issues. Therefore, the song, 'The Horse, The Man and The Son', stands as a significant example of how music can function as a vehicle for pragmatic communication and cultural preservation.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Juju music, Ebenezer Obey, Pragmeme, Practs, Exploring

1.0   Background to Study

1.1   Introduction

Language plays a crucial role in music, acting as vehicle for conveying meaning, emotions and cultural messages in its lyrics, emotional appeal, and aesthetic and cultural representation (Middleton, 1990). The role of music in the dissemination of societal principles to determining and shaping its perception, orientation and re-orientation on challenges and transmitting its ideologies in order to create an overall societal development is germane. Music has been acknowledged to be a universal language (Longfellow, 1835). Cultures around the world employ music in different ways and for different reasons. If suitably harnessed, it is potent enough to implant in human, some moral values compared to other media like religious preachings, litrarature materials, motivational discussions and persuasions. All of these have made music aninstrument employed in controlling the human mind. Its omnipresence and accessibility is attested to; radio in our cars, our phones. In fact, a click of a button opens one up to social sites like Musix, VLC, Audiomack, YouTube and Pandora with millions of archived and evergreen songs. It has also been observed that music seems to constitute a young person's first informal teacher on some critical issues in life, such as sexuality, sexual behaviors and moral and value issues. Music has been a medium for all forms of human expression. Nigerian music has exploited this medium to express issues bothering on philosophical and moral concern such as love, honesty, diligence, contentment, governance etc, and condemning negativities in the society, such as laziness, misogynistic expressions, jealousy, covetousness etc. Styles in every songwriter are based on his linguistic competence and background (Kramsch, 1998).

1.2   Statement of Problem

The song 'The Camel, The Man, and The Son' (Esin pelu ketkete) by Ebenezer Obey is a seminal piece in Nigerian music history, rich with cultural nuances and linguistic elements. Within its lyrics lie a plethora of pragmatic acts, reflecting the complex interplay of language, culture, and society.

This paper will address these key questions:

1. What are the pragmatic acts embedded within the lyrics of 'The Camel, The Man, and The Son'?

2. How do these pragmatic acts contribute to the overall meaning and interpretation of the song?

3. What cultural and contextual factors influence the pragmatic acts observed in the song?

4. In what ways do these pragmatic acts reflect societal norms, values, and beliefs?

5. How do linguistic devices, such as metaphor, irony, and euphemism, enhance the pragmatic acts within the song?

Delving into these questions, this paper intends to provide a deep understanding of the pragmatic dimensions of Ebenezer Obey's iconic song and its significance within the broader context of Nigerian music and culture exploring the pragmatic acting in musical discourse. It will highlight Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Acts model.

1. 3   Objectives of the study

The major objective of this paper is to appraise the pragmatic acts in the selected song of Ebenezer Obey, 'The Camel, The Man and the Son'.

Specific objectives are to;

i.   identify the the fundamental contexts of the themes in the song, 'The Camel, The Man and the Son'.

ii.   discover the pragmatic acting performed in Ebenezer Obey's song

iii.   explicate the social relevance of the acts to the human society.

iv.   justify the educational, political and religious implications of the practs for social

development.

1.4   Significance of the study

Exploring the pragmatic acts in Chief Ebenezer Obey's selected song, 'The Camel, The Man and the Son' will provide insights into the communication strategies, social interactions, and cultural dynamics within Nigerian society, as depicted through this song. This examination will also help to unravel the layers of meaning embedded in the lyrics, shed light on the socio-political commentary inherent in the song, and contribute to a deep understanding of the function of music as a reflection of cultural identity and social discourse.

Finally, this paper will be useful in revealing the dynamics of Mey's Pragmatic Acts as it relates to the selected song, 'The Camel, The Man and the Son'. The result of this study will bring an illumination to the metaphor (hidden moral message) in the selected song.

1.5   Research Questions

1.   What are the fundamental contexts of the themes in the song?

2.   What are the pragmatic acting performed in Ebenezer Obey.

3.   What is the social relevance of the acts to the human society.

4.   To what extent does the song justify the educational, political, religious and moral implications of the practs for social development.

2.0   Literature Review

2.1   Conceptual Review

2.1.1   Origin of Juju Music

Juju music is a mixture of African with some touch of Western music (Merriam, 1955, p. 28) in his Contiguity Theory. The application of his model was influenced by submission of Smith's that music of entertainment is more susceptible to change than music that is associated with social institution (Smith, 1962, p. 11). The place of Lagos in the evolution of several genres of popular music in Nigeria was and remains pivotal, hence, it is important and relevant to appraise the social conditions that predisposed the city as the centre of juju variety of music in Nigeria. Lagos was an inconsequential Island inhabited by the Aworis, who were predominantly fishermen, prior eighteen century. However, colonialism changed the narrative. The inhabitants of Lagos increased tremendously thereby making it a notable commercial centre and a place of protection for individuals that were taking refuge in the city because of the British presence. Aside the internal resettlement, were emigrants from other parts of the Caribbean and Africa. The presence of the British in the city of Lagos ensured security of life and property made it a refuge for all. As regards commerce and trade, the city of Lagos became the export terminal for

produce from its agriculturally hinterland that it developed a thriving economy that attracted those seeking prosperity that its population rose rapidly from 25,000 in 1866, to 85,000 in 1901 according to Aderigbigbe, 1975; Echeruo, 1977; and Verger, 1976. Its multi-lingual cum tribal and multinational composition therefore manifested in the practice and patronage of diverse kinds of genres of music which invariably made the city a musically vibrant space where the seeking of musical entertainment was a life style. It is the mélange of these several musical traditions that this engendered that, by the end of the 19th century, resulted in neo-traditional forms of entertainment music out from which juju variety evolved.

2.1.2   Biography of Chief Commander Ebenezer Obey

Chief Ebenezer Remilekun Olasupo Fabiyi (Obey) was given birth to on 3rd April 1942 in Island Maternity, Lagos (formerly Mercy Hospital). After his delivery in Lagos, his mother went back to her village in Idogo, Yewa South Local Government of Osun State. There Ebenezer Obey grew up. His musical experience started as a choir boy in his church's Sunday school and later as the leader of his school band, Methodist Primary School. It was during his school days as a prefect, while telling other students to 'obey'; that is to say, ('cooperate','comply with' or 'abide by' school rules) that earned himthe nickname, 'Obey'. At his secondary modern school, his interest in music grew deeper and this passion got him familiarized with several musicians of his growing days. Obey dropped out of schoolfor this uncontrolled obsession for music and left his village in the 1950s for Lagos, where he played the guitar and Agidigbo (thumb piano) in several bands while working as a clerk in a pool company. He encountered Sir Akinbobi Salvage and Bangbose also known as Abembo Mayana while on guitar playing spree on the street of Mushin, Lagos, who paid Obey one pound two shillings after his first day of performance with them. This encounter launched him to invitations to different musical bands to play for them. At the age of sixteen, he met his mentor, Fatai Rolling Dollar, an instrumentalist playing with Joe Araba. Rolling Dollar was not a band leader by then. Obey claimed he formed the Fatai Rolling Spot Band in 1954. There, he served as a composer and played Agidigbo music, a genre of music championed by Adeolu Akinsanya. At the expiration of his tutelage under Fatai Rolling Dollar, Obey's International Brothers was formed in 1964. They played a variety of highlife laced with juju. His band quickly gained popularity for its Yoruba percussion, vocals, and layered guitar sounds and later transmuted into InterReformers Band in the early 1970s. Ebenezer Obey's encounter with Mr. Cress, the Managing Director of Decca in Lagos, turned his life around for good. His first (singles) album released on Decca records was 'E wa wo ohun oju mi ri'. However, the album that actually brought him to stardom was 'Olomi gbo temi'. Obey established his personal identity in Juju music with his vocal prowess. Whereas IK Dairo and other juju artistes performed many songs shrouded around women and their beauty, which of course, was the style then, Obey deviated using his sweet and velvety voice to bring on board religious and deep philosophical lyrics. Obey began to experiment with the infusion of some musical instruments like, lead and bass guitars and talking drums. He has won Silver Disc, Golden Disc and Platinum Disc in his musical career.

Ebenezer Obey typically sings in Yoruba language in all of his music, with occasional code-mixing and code-mixing. Most of his lyrics are centered on Yoruba values, histories, sceneries, stories, proverbs, ethics, and traditions. These anecdotes, socio-cultural enlightenments and

historical re-enactments in Obey's juju make both and old endeared to his music. This is because his fans or listeners generally do not only find his music entertaining, but also morally and culturally appealing and relevant. Obey also relies on indigenous texts, philosophical adages and current affairs for his lyrical themes.

2.2   Theoretical Framework

2.2.1   Systemic Functional Grammar

The model, Systemic Functional Grammar of Linguistics (SFL), conceives language as a social phenomenon which is used to perform several functions amongst human, being their exclusive preserve. The functions are however identified, according to Michael, (2019). as Metafunctions, and they include;

 Ideational Metafunction,

Interpersonal Metafunction, and Textual Metafunction

In Systemic Functional Grammar, language is used as a symbol of expression of ideas, that establishes relationships with others, and creates of text for the purpose of generating cohesion and coherence.

2.2.2   The Pragmatic Acts Model

Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory emanated from the Speech Acts theory. Pragmatic Acts is concerned with interactional situations in which speakers and hearers both achieve their aims. It does not initiate with what the speaker said and the hearer is looking for meaning of what was said by the speaker, but rather, it is concerned with the situation in which the utterance is considered as appropriate. It does not lay emphasis on rules of speech acts, but focuses on characterising pragmatic acts based on situations. (Mey, 2009, p. 750; Akinrinlola, 2019, p. 184).

The summation of the theory is thus:

> Pragmatic Acts are pragmatic because they base themselves on language as constrained by the situation, not as defined by syntactic rules or by semantic selections and conceptual restrictions. Pragmatic acts are situation-derived and situation-constrained; in the final analysis, they are determined by the broader social context in which they happen, and they realize their goals in the conditions placed on human action by the context. (Mey, 2001, p.228).

The Pragmatic Acts model establishes that it is the context that determines its nature. Pragmatic acts is different from a Speech Acts, in that a Pragmatic Acts does not necessarily involve speech. Pragmatic Acts can be looked at from the perspective of the agent and the acts. The angle of the agent considers the socio-demographic features of the person and his members' resources (MR) or background knowledge (Fairclough, 2001, p. 9; Noveck, 2018, p. 7; Oji,

2018, p. 369; 2019, p. 286; Lucey, 2019, p. 95). Emphasis here is on the language employed to perform the specific act and the language that can be used to create the condition needed to perform a pragmatic act. Pragmatic acting involves 'adapting oneself, linguistically and otherwise, to one's world', and one cannot pinpoint a specific 'predetermined use of any canonical speech act' (Mey 2001, p.215). In this regard, shared situational knowledge is important (Roitman, 2017, p. 9; Larrivée, 2017, p. 121; Casanovas, Rodríguez-Doncel & González-Conejero, 2017, p. 307; Chiassoni, 2017, p. 126; Barberis, 2017, p. 342).

Common scene within the social context is emphasised by this theory. It argues that our acting is determined by the scene while our action determines and reaffirms the existing scene. The focus is now on what is being done and not necessarily on what is being said. Hence, the theory recognises the instantiated pragmatic acts (practs).

This is further expatiated by Mey, (2001, p 221) :

> The theory of pragmatic acts does not try to explain language use from the inside out, that is, from words having their origin in a sovereign speaker and going out to an equally sovereign speaker and going out to an equally sovereign hearer (who then may become another sovereign speaker, and so on and so forth). 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 in the situation, as well as on what is actually being said.

The theory centres on practs, which are majorly determined by how the situation is understood by the participants (Mey 2001, p. 219; Bamgbose, 2018, p. 451; Akinola, 2019, p. 233). Grammatical correctness or strict observance of rules has not been considered a factor in studying practs. The instantiated individual pragmatic act (pract) has a particular pragmeme (generalised pragmatic act) as its realisation. No two practs are identical, because they are realised in an actual situation and each situation is unique; every pract is considered an allopract. This means that it is 'a concrete and different realisation of a particular instantiation of a particular pragmeme' (Mey 2001, p. 221; Weigand, 2018, p. 9). The understanding that individual participant has of the situation and the effects of the pract has or may have in a given context entirely determines what counts as pract.

In music, the artiste is the speaker whilehis listeners are his audience or hearers. However, he may have a primary audience as the target of his music. This may either be his fans or the people who speak the language of the music. But because music is a universal language, the audience of any music cannot be limited to only the immediate audience or speakers of the language. Therefore, in the analysisof a piece of music, cognisance must be taken of the culture of production and the culture of the immediate recipient. However, generalisations can be made. This theory is relevant to the goal of this study. The contextualization of speech and action of the selected song makes it easy to use in investigating its lyrics within the Nigerian context. Besides, the theory argues that we act through language, not only through speech. This makes it easy to see Obey's 'The Camel, The Man & The Son' as containing pragmatic acts that target living a life not to please anyone.

Jacob Mey's Pragmatic model (Pragmeme)

Activity Part   **Textual Part**

Speech Acts   **Context**

Indirect Speech Acts   a. inference (INF)

                                                       b. reference (REF)

a. conversational Acts (dialogue)   c. relevance (REL)

b. psychological Acts (emotions)   d. voice (VCE)

c. prosody (intonation, stress etc.)   e. shared situation knowledge (SSK)

d. physical acts: f. metaphor (M)

    body movement, gestures   g. metapragmatic 'M'……

    physiognomy (facial expression)

    o - null

PRACT

Allopract

Schemata of Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory

 Pragmeme denotes ' generalised Pragmatic Act' (Jacob, 2001), while practs and allopracts are the different manifestations of a pragmeme.

The textual and activity parts are highlighted in the tables below:

Inference (INF)	Implies meaning deduced from what is said and its interpretation.
Reference (REF)	Implies what a speech act refers to at the utterance level.
Relevance (REL)	Means the context/condition which determines linguistic code.
Voice (VCE)	Refers to turn taking or voice shift changes due mood and emotions.
Shared Situation Knowledge (SSK)	Implies mutual understanding between participants.
Metaphor	That is, textual part of pragmeme that foreground literary style.
Metapragmatic Joker	Means accepted way a speech act is used in conversation.

Table 1-Textual Part of Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Theory (MPT)

Conversational Acts	Implies dialogues which involve more than one speaker.
Psychological Acts	Refers to emotions brought into a pragmeme.
Prodosy	It is intonation and stress in the tone of the interactants.
Physical Acts	Indicates body moves, gestures, emotions, physiognomy.

Table 2-Activity Part of Jacob Mey's 2001 Pragmatic Act Theory (MPT)

3.0   Methodology

In this study, the researcher subjected the track, 'The Camel, The Man and The Son' to pragmatic analysis, employing Jacob Mey's pragmatic acts theory (pragmeme). The aim was to bring to light, the strategies Obey used to pass his message across and discuss the pragmatic acts involved in these strategies. Data used for this study was one of Ebenezer Obey's songs, 'The Camel, The Man & The Son', which was sourced from the audio electronic media. The album was released in 1973. A phone device was applied to extract the data from the internet where it was uploaded for public use. The track was downloaded from Musix via internet on a phone. The researcher played the song repeatedly, studied and translated into English to be able to serve the purpose of analysis of this study.

3.1   The Data

Chief Commander Ebenezer Obey's 'The Camel, The Man & The Son' (1973)

Literature abounds with the music of Chief Ebenezer Obey. Scholars, both in Arts and Humanities, have worked on the music of Obey from different from its musical import, its auditory appealto the deep proverbial and metaphorical messages embedded in every of his song. Linguistic scholars have approached Obey's music from both pragmatic and semantic framework. Ebenezer Obey's songs have been seen to have the capacity to produce and deliver not just an expected but also a desirable social transformation as attested to in the wisdom embedded in the lines of his lyrics.

3.2   The Data Presentation

In the selected song, Obey uses the choral and call-and-response styles all through. He employs Yoruba language majorly but concludes with English lines, *'Commander Ebenezer, do your best and leave the rest'*. He employs code-mixing and instance, code-switching between the two languages. Primary method of data collection was adopted. Being a qualitative study, the research selected for this study is a track, 'Esin pelu ketekete'. An allegory delivered in Yoruba but translated by the researcher into English. The translated portion into English is what the researcher uses for analysis, as it contains relevant data for this study. The Musical Key signature of the song is C Natural. His argument that no matter how perfect, careful or meticulous you might think you are, you cannot please humanity, Obey admonishes all to live life to please no one. The researcher provided the English translations of the portion of song to be analysed as text. Translation and in some instances, transliteration were made directly into English:

Call: *O mu mi ranti itan baba kan, Pelu omo re ti won nsin ketekete…2x*

Translation: That reminds me a story of a man with his son nurturing a camel

Call: *Esin peluu ketekete,…….. Esin peluu keteeket,e la'ye ojo yen*

                     Horse and Camel, …… in those days,

While the direct meaning of 'ketekete' is camel, the translation as used in the album is 'horse', which signifies a different animal in Yoruba language. Hence, Obey takes out time to explain in the introductory part of the trackthat both animals were used as means of transport;

Esin peluu ketekete,… Esin peluu keteeket,e la'ye ojo yen(Horse and Camel…in those days)

3.3   Analysis of Research

Research Question 1: What are the fundamental Contexts of the themes in the selected song?

1.   **Context of Historicity**

History is described as the total record of an event that has happened in the past, especially when juxtaposing with current events. Context of history was employed to inform the listeners of events that are relevant and extant to the present issues.

Extract 1

Call: *O mu mi ranti itan baba kan, Pelu omo re ti won nsin ketekete…2x*

Translation: That reminds me a story of a man with his son nurturing a camel

Call: *Esin peluu ketekete,…….. Esin peluu keteeket,e la'ye ojo yen*

                        Horse and Camel, …… in those days,

Resp: *Won dabi moto ti won ngun lo s'ode*

                         ….were the means of transport for human

Call: *Ketekete ti d'agba, Baba pelu omo re, Won ba mura ode,*

                        The horse was quite mature ……

Resp: *Won fe ririn ajo kan*

                        The man and his son were set for a journey

Extract 1 is a historical story of an event that occurred in the past. In a bid to buttress his assertion that humanity cannot be pleased, Obey reminisces employing an allegory of a man, his horse, and his son. The story begins with the man, being the owner of the both entities; horse and the young man, riding on the horse, while the others two follow.

2. Context of Conflict

Conflict is a form of variance between two individuals or group of individuals. It is also mean a form of campaign or reaction against something. The idea of conflict was employed to depict life

as a journey that is full of numerous battles. The context of conflict helps to conceptualise the fact that such human conflict could be spiritual, physical, emotional, or financial.

Extract 2

Call:	*Gegebi agbalagba, Baba gun ketekete, Omo re ntele lo*
	As an elderly, the man mounted on the camel, followed by his son
	Bi won se rin si waju die, Won pade adamo,
	Then, they were accosted by human
Resp:	*Eda omo araye….*
	Human creature
Call:	*Omo araye ni haun*
	They queried the man's action tagging him, 'merciless'
Resp:	*Baba agbalagba, omo re nrin n'ile, Iwo ngun ketekete….*
	…for riding on a camel while an innocent child takes a walk

In extract 2, Obey recountsthe experience of a man, his son and his camel who were set for a journey (of life). This man, acting according to what he thought was right, rides on his own horse which he had nurtured to maturity and good enough to serve him. Alas! Humanity frowned at his action with condemnation, referring to it as 'merciless', 'stupid', 'wicked', and 'foolish' at each stage of the four stages of the man's decision.

Research Question 2: What are the pragmatic acts that were performed in Ebenezer Obey's selected song?

Pract of ordering: With this pract, employing the stages of life; infancy, childhood, to adulthood, Ebenezer Obey presents human insatiable attitude. The innocent toddler moved through the stages of life to notice that he could not satisfy humanity. This experience nosedived into the allegory of The Man, The Son and The Horse.

Call: *L'ojo ta ba b'omo tuntun s'ile aye/2x*   **Resp**: *T'onile t'alejo lo ma kini ku ewu*

The day a child is given birth to   All and sundry will come congratulating

Call: *Ota omode*   **Resp**: *Bere lati ibi irakoro, Ka dami ni l'ounje*

Enmity starts as early from crawling   *nu,o ti bere ota nini, Ka da ni lo'mi nu, o*

                                                      ti bere ota nini, O ti bo s'owo aye…….

                                                      Crawling to and fro innocently disrupting things

                                                      There, enmity has crept in

Pract of Assuring: Predominantly, the assuring pract is employed in the song. This is usually characterised by emphatic statements and convincing historical facts. The assuring pract is typically done by a speaker to instill hope and confidence in his listener…..insisting he would please humanity

Lead: *Baba ba w'oke titi, O ni maa te yin lorun, eyin eda araye.*

                 The Man, declared, Human, "I will please you …."

Pract of describing: Obey's choice of words in describing the journey is also remarkable;

                 Eni mejeji lori ketekete, won mu irin ajo won pon, Won nlo, Won nlo

                 The both of the on the camel….. They proceeded their journey

Pract of admonishing: This also abounds in the song under review. Infact, it was theme of the album. It is the entire message of the song that brought about the allegory of The Man, The Son and The Horse.

Call: *Ko s'ogbon te le da, Ko s'iwa te le wu, Ko sona te le mo, Te le fi taye lorun*

                 There is nothing you can do to please human being

Pract of warning: This pract is employed to cap the entire experience. It is seen in the concluding part of the song. He took a part in Yoruba and the other in English. This might be to send the message across to all his audience, irrespective of tribe, because English language binds everyone together.

Call: *Ile aye fun gba die ni o…..*   **Resp**: *Omo araye e se rere o…3x*

                 We are here on earth just for a moment   **Resp**: Do good, everyone

Call: *A fi ka wu 'wa rere, rere lo to….*   **Resp**: *Omo araye e se rere o*

Nothing is as god as doing good always   **Resp**: Do good, everyone

Call: *Commander Ebenezer………..Do your best and leave the rest*

Resp: Commander Ebenezer………Do your best and leave the rest

Findings and Conclusion

It was observed that Chief Ebenezer Obey, using the linguistic tool of turn-taking, has, to a very great extent, used the wisdom embedded in his song to fill the moral gap of shaping behavioural patterns which has the potency of delivering social transformation and equally change attitude to bring about an expected acceptable mores and values of our society. He discourages man wanting to please humanity, claiming that such attempt will always be an effort in futility. He uses anecdotes, metaphor and adjectival; 'merciless, stupid, wicked foolish', to present what humanity view of every of one's action to please them. It is always in contrary. The analysis shows a vivid picture of a man's quest to satisfy humanity, tried all he could, to please humanity in the journey of life. Hence, live your life to please no one but your Creator. He employed several practs ranging from pract of warning, to assertion, to describing, to admonishing, to pract of command and defending to identify the nature and features of juju variety of music, discover the pragmatic acts in the juju variety of music and finally, explicate the social relevance of pragmatic acts to the human society.

Contribution to Knowledge

Exploring pragmatic acts in Chief Ebenezer Obey's song , 'The Came, The Man and The Son', contribute to knowledge by providing insights into Yoruba culture and traditions, particularly through its use of proverbial wisdom. The song employs storytelling and metaphorical language to convey moral lessons and societal values, enhancing understanding of interpersonal relationships, generational dynamics and the importance of wisdom in decision-making. Studying these pragmatic acts not only enriches cultural knowledge but also offers perspectives on how music can serve as a vehicle for social commentary and ethical teachings within Nigeria and broader African contexts. Applying the model of pragmeme to musical discourse is an indication of its compatibility to any form of language use. In addition, the study has extended the frontiers of the theory to discourses that seem like monologues but are actually dialogic.

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A critical discourse analysis of the audience's evaluation of telecommunication service providers' advertisements in Nigerian newspapers

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Abstract

Critical discourse analysts often depend on textual analysis for the interpretation and evaluation of the ideological effects of the text on the audience. This usually undermines the audience's interpretation and role in discourse studies. Thus, this paper reports the audience's evaluation of language use in telecommunication service providers' advertisements in Nigerian newspapers. The objectives of the study were to investigate and evaluate the readers' awareness of the manipulation of language used in the advertisements. The study adopted Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis and Hall's encoding and decoding theory as its theoretical framework. It used a survey method in which questionnaires were used as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaires were administered to 200 respondents selected randomly from two universities in Nigeria which were selected purposefully based on regional representation. The data were analysed quantitatively. The overall results of the audience evaluation of language used in the advertisements show that the majority of the respondents were aware of the manipulation of the language used in the advertisements and its effects (73%). The overall results of the interpretation of the advertisements as a discursive practice show that more than half of the respondents could interpret the force of the representation (55%). But the overall results of examination of advertisements as social practice show that more than half of the respondents could not evaluate the manipulation of the language used as part of the ideological manipulation of consumers within the capitalists' ideology (53%). Therefore, the paper concludes that the textual analysis is not adequate to determine the ideological effect of the language used in the advertisement texts.

Keywords: Advertisement, audience, critical discourse analysis, discourse, telecommunication service provider & manipulation

Introduction

The nature and role of the audience in discourse studies is sometimes complicated because the term 'audience' can be applied to a diverse and complex practice of discourse consumption (Schrøder, 2009; Windahl, Signitzer & Olson, 2009). Based on this, Johnstone (2008) points out that the audience's roles are not imagined in this same way everywhere. For instance, in media discourse, sometimes, they are perceived as imaginary, passive or active members of the society (McQuail, 2009). In advertising discourse, they are defined as consumers of not only advertisements but also goods and services (Windahl, Signitzer & Olson, 2009). And in recent times, especially with consideration to feedback mechanism, the audience are now seen as co-participants in discursive event.

Give this basis, some discourse studies have examined the audience of media texts as active participants in message consumption, reception or interpretation (Hall, 1993; Schrøder, 2009; Windahl, Signitzer & Olson, 2009). Nevertheless, in critical discourse studies, the position of the audience is often substituted with that of analysts (Fairclough, 1992). This is perhaps because audience are perceived to be at the mercy of manipulation, who need to be helped or empowered, and whose ability to evaluate meaning according to situation, need or interest is shortchanged by producers of such a message (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 2001; Wodak, 2001). As a result, there is a tendency in CDA to interpret and evaluate the audience's manipulation purely from textual component in discourse production (Fairclough, 1992). Considering this, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002), in their review of critical discourse approaches, observe that many critical discourse analysts do not evaluate audience's response, and this accounts for the near absence of audience research in CDA approaches. In the light of the foregoing, this study explores a critical discourse analysis of audience's evaluation of language used in telecommunication service providers' advertisements in Nigerian newspapers.

Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a multi-dimensional approach to the study of how language is used or manipulated to achieve ideological or persuasive effect, power or influence (Fairclough, 1992; Hart, 2014). As such, for Fairclough (1992), CDA is a way of examining the dialectical and constitutive relationship between language, power and ideology as manifest in discourses. van Dijk (2001, p. 352) sees the approach as "a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies [and exposes] the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in social and political contexts". According to van Dijk (2001), CDA is not only concerned with dominate ideologies but also with oppositional ideologies where resistance is significant and relevant to change and emancipation, and even evaluation. Meanwhile, Weiss and Wodak (2003, p. 15) explain that CDA is "fundamentally interested in analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationship of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language". Giving the above, Hart (2014, p. 2) argues that CDA as a "particular form of discourse analysis which, in one guise at least, seeks to disclose the ideological and persuasive properties of text and talk which might not be immediately apparent without the assistance of a systemized descriptive framework such as a grammar or topology". This makes CDA analysts to view language with questionable character

because it is the site in which ideologies, power relations and resistance are constructed, expressed, exercised and negotiated (Fairclough, 2001; Baker & Ellece, 2011). Thus, to all critical discourse analysts, CDA is concerned with productive, abusive or manipulative power imposed on the passive audience through language use. By this, the analysts see CDA as an approach that aims to help the audience to understand the motive of producers of messages, differentiate between what is fact and opinion and resist instances of manipulation, exploitation and dominance.

However, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) observe that although CDA recognises the role of the audience in the discourse production and reception, it tends to assign passive role to an audience by which text producers are seen as the alfa and omega of discourse production, and thus audience control. Hence, the investigation into discursive manipulation of language use is often limited to the analysts who claim a messianic role. The implication of this, as noted by Schrøder (2000) and Jørgensen and Phillips (2002), is evidenced in the near absence of empirical studies on the audience's evaluation of language use.

Theoretical framework

This study adopted Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis and Hall's encoding and decoding theory as its theoretical framework. Although the two theories are concerned with critical investigation of ideological effect of meaning and value from the stage of production to reproduction, Fairclough's model is much concerned with social and ideological effect of textual properties as produced by the text producer where the receiver is positioned as a passive participant (Fairclough, 1992); and Hall's model with the ideological effect of the interpretation process where the receiver is seen as an active participant (Hall, 1993). As such, the two theories are selected to complement each other in this study. First, Fairclough's theory of critical discourse analysis sees discourse as an important component of social practice that reproduces and changes social representation, social relation and identity and that is also determined by discourse practice as well as social practices and structures (Fairclough, 1992). As a discursive practice, Fairclough considers advertising discourse to shape and to be shaped by the production, circulation and consumption processes where advertisements are generated as a means of communication and a product for consumers' interpretation and consumption. Similarly, as a social practice, it is shaped by context of situation, institution and society or culture where the text can be seen as a means of ideological power. For instance, in advertising discourse, the context of situation is taken as marketing; institution as media and advertising; and society as the ideological, economic and political system that regulates the means of production, distribution and consumption. Its text is said to be constructed with the evaluative expressions such as comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs aimed to create personality or position for products; the use of conversational language or synthetic personalization such as pronouns to involve the audience in the discourse, and the use of imperative structures all to induce patronage (Fairclough, 2014). This is so because the capitalists' ideology which shapes advertising discourse sees its texts as an instrument for creating and maintaining consumption and market competition-hegemonic power through persuasive and comparative use of language.

In his model, Fairclough (1992) recognises the power of a text producer to produce social effects without possible resistance or variations of interpretation from the receiver of the text; which according to some scholars like Hall (1993) and van Dijk (2003) is also ideological. As such, Fairclough's theory is said to be biased towards not only text analysis but also analysis of producer's intended meaning and purpose where the audience is considered as an object of manipulation (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Nevertheless, Fairclough's three-dimensional framework is often used to analyse discourse from critical point of views. These dimensions involve the description of linguistic and textual properties of a text; interpretation of a text as a discursive production, distribution and consumption; and explanation of discourse as a form of social practice.

However, unlike Fairclough's theory, Hall's theory considers the audience as active participants in the process of discourse production, circulation, use and reproduction (Hall, 1993). The theory argues that the audience have power to interpret discourse according to their needs, experiences and situations; be it personal, social, cultural or economic (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001; McQuail, 2009). It formulates this on the assumption that the audience are usually aware of the intended meaning produced in discourse. This is against many discourse theories that give the discourse producers the power to influence the audience' beliefs, values and behaviours according to their interests; and thus investigate discourse effect in that order.

So, in his critical framework, Hall (1993) rejects the notion of meaning being objective and fixed by its producer as well as one way of interpreting it; rather he locates different meanings in the different positions of production and reception. Based on this, he proposes different ideological ways of decoding discourse in terms of understanding, interpretation, evaluation and social effect. Although, he accepts the position that producer's intended meaning can be encoded in a discourse in many ways which may be difficult to resist, he recognises the possibilities of the audience rejecting or re-interpreting it to suit their needs or social positions. He considers this as part of ideological effect of texts. Based on this, he provides a framework for ideological analysis of the audience' ideological interpretation of discourse. Hence, according to Hall (1993), there are three ideological ways of reading meaning to a text. These are classified by some scholars as types of reading or social positioning of readers: preferred reading, negotiated reading and oppositional reading (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001).

The preferred reading is realised when the audience read and interpret both the denotive and connotative meanings of a text and accept the values and the effects the way the producers expected. Textually, the preferred meaning and effect are evaluated with expressions of positive responses such as statements of agreement, belief, understanding, satisfaction, affirmation, support, acceptance, legitimacy, etc. In this sense, the text is read and interpreted objectively without the interpreter questioning its values and positions. So, at pragmatic level, the illocutionary or literal meaning and force of the text are deciphered in line with the producers' intended meaning and ideology. For instance, with preferred reading, the advertisement is seen as an objective information to help consumers to make purchase. In this sense, the audience have no input to the meaning being shared because they fellow the dominant position. Thus, the audience is said to become an object of manipulation by the producers who exercises hegemonic power over them.

In the negotiated reading, the audience read and interpret the meaning of the text as expected by its producers but resist the ideological influence of the discourse by acting differently according to their values and needs. In this, the readers understand the literal meaning, but form their own ideological interpretations contrarily to the producer's ideology (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001). This is to say that the readers modify the intended meaning to reflect on their values, beliefs and position. Textually, the negotiated meaning and effect are evaluated with expressions of either positive or negative responses such as statements of doubt, mix feelings, uncertainty, adjustment, compromise, skepticism, reservation, concession, correction, transformation, replacement, etc. Based on this, the readers may accept and reject some of the information and the values represented in the text. In effect, the audience exercise partial roles of resistance.

While by the oppositional reading, the audience understand the meaning of the text and interpret it differently from the producer's perspective or ideology. In this, the readers understand the perlocutionary force of the meaning and reject it because they believe that it is not to their interest or expectation. So, they reject the kind of meaning or influence the producer would expect to achieve. Besides, the audience do not only resist the influence of discourse but they also act according to their needs, beliefs, values, experiences and interest. By this type of reading, the readers belief that the meaning is constructed subjectively with the values and interest of the producer. Textually, the oppositional meaning and effect are evaluated with expressions of negative responses such as statements of disagreement, disbelief, misunderstanding, dissatisfaction, negation, rejection, resistance, criticism, disobedience, reconciliation, etc.

Therefore, Hall (1993) maintains that these three types of reading indicate that discourse have different kinds of interpretations. In line with this, Schrøder (2000) and Sturken and Cartwright (2001) posit that advertisements can have multiple layers of meaning that can be interpreted in different ways which can mean something different to different people. Thus, the Hall's encoding and decoding theory is considered appropriate to this study which seeks to explore a critical discourse analysis of the audience's evaluation of language used in telecommunication service providers' newspaper advertisements in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted a survey method of research in which a questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The study sampled 200 members of staff from two universities in Nigeria. The members of staff were selected purposefully because they form part of newspapers' audience target since newspaper readership is associated with educated class of the society. The two universities were selected purposefully to represent the two major regions of the country: Northern region and Southern region. The universities selected were Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State; and University of Lagos, Lagos State. The questionnaires which contain both open and closed ended questions were administered randomly by the researcher and research assistants recruited purposely for this exercise. The data collected were analysed by a quantitative method based a simple percentage statistical analysis.

Data presentation and analysis

The section presents the socio-demographic description of sampled respondents and the analysis of their responses. The analysis of the data is based on the one hundred and ninety-five (195) questionnaires returned and whose respondents were validated as the audience of newspaper advertisements.

Table 1: **Percentage distribution of respondents' demographic data**

Variables	Category	Frequency			Percentage
		Male	Female	Total	
Gender	Male	108	87	108	55%
	Female	-	-	87	45%
	Total	**55%**	**45%**	**195**	**100%**
Age	21-40 Years	10%	8%	35	18%
	41-60 Years	26%	22%	93	48%
	61-70 Years	19%	15%	67	34%
	Total	**55%**	**45%**	**195**	**100%**
Qualification	First Degree	22%	18%	78	40%
	Master	16%	13%	56	29%
	PhD	17%	14%	61	31%
	Total	**55%**	**45%**	**195**	**100%**
Job Classification	Academic Staff	33%	27%	117	60%
	Non-Academic Staff				
		22%	18%	78	40%
	Total	**55%**	**45%**	**195**	**100%**
Specialisation	Science	9%	8%	33	17%
	Social Sciences	12%	10%	43	22%
	Arts	16%	13%	57	29%

	Legal	6%	5%	20	10%
	Medical	4%	4%	15	8%
	Engineering	8%	6%	27	14%
	Total	**55%**	**45%**	**195**	**100%**
Religion	Islam	30%	25%	107	55%
	Christian	25%	20%	88	45%
	Total	**55%**	**45%**	**195**	**100%**
	Northern	28%	22%	97	50%
Region	Southern	28%	22%	98	50%
	Total	**55%**	**45%**	**195**	**100%**

Table 1 above indicates the description of demographic data of the respondents based on gender, age, qualification, job classification, area of specialisation, religion and region. In regard to gender, the table shows that 55% of the respondents were male and 45% were female. This shows that more than half of the respondents were male. In terms of age, the table shows that most of the respondents were within the ages of 41 to 60 (48%), followed by the respondents within the ages of 61 to 70 (34%), and then the respondents between the ages of 21 and 40 (18%). This discloses that the respondents within the ages of 41 to 60 dominated the sampled population, and this is the category of people who patronise newspapers. In relation to qualification, majority of the respondents had first degree (40%), followed by respondents with PhD's (31%) and then the respondents with master degrees (29%). For the job classification, the majority of the respondents were academic staff (60%) and some of them were non-academic staff (40%). In reference to area of specialization, the analysis reveals that most of the respondents specialised in arts (29%), some in social sciences (22%), and few in sciences (17%) and engineering (14%), and a very few in legal (10%) and medical (8%) professions. In respect of religion, the analysis shows that more than half of the respondents were Muslims (55%) and some of them were Christians (45%). In reference to the regional based of the respondents, the table reveals that 50% of the respondents were based in northern part and likewise other 50% were based in southern part of Nigeria. This means that the respondents were equally represented in the sample of the population.

Table 2: Readership analysis

Items	Variables	Frequency	Percentages

Readership	Yes	195	98%
	No	3	2%
	Total	**198**	**100%**
Frequency	Regularly	104	53%
	Not Regularly	91	47%
	Total	**195**	**100%**
Newspaper	Daily Trust	55	24%
	Leadership	24	11%
	This Day	24	11%
	The Nation	20	8%
	Punch	27	13%
	The Sun	24	11%
	The Guardian	50	22%
	Total	**225**	**100%**
Purpose/	Awareness	95	49%
Motivation	Purchase	60	30%
	knowledge	14	7%
	Entertainment	15	8%
	Research	7	4%
	Other purposes	4	2%
	Total	**195**	**100%**

Table 2 above indicates the analysis of the respondents' readership of the advertisements in the newspaper. In relation to the readership, the analysis reveals that 98% of the respondents indicated they read the advertisements in the newspapers and 2% of the respondents indicated

that they did not read the advertisements. This shows that the majority of the respondents were exposed to the telecommunication service providers' advertisements in the newspapers. Meanwhile, in respect of frequency of readership, the analysis shows that 53% of the respondents read the newspapers regularly and 47% of the respondent were not regular readers of the newspapers. In regard to the type of newspapers read, the analysis discloses that some of the readers read the *Daily Trust* (24%) and the *Guardian* (22%) and few of them read the *Punch* (13%), *This Day* (11%), the *Sun* (11%) and *Leadership* (11%). This shows that the advertisements were widely spread in the newspapers. In reference to the purpose or motivation for the reading of the advertisements, the analysis of the responses shows that 49% of the respondents read the advertisements for awareness and 30% of the respondents read the advertisements to make purchase and the other respondents for other purposes. This indicates that most of the respondents read the advertisements to get information and some of them read the advertisements in order to purchase items of the telecommunication service providers.

Table 3: Audiences' evaluation of language used in the advertisements

Questions	Responses	
	Yes	No
1. Are you satisfied with the kind of language used in the advertisements of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile in the newspapers?	182 (93%)	13 (7%)
2. Do you agree that the language used in the advertisements of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile in the newspapers reflects the kind of services they rendered or products advertised?		
3. Do you feel being personally talked or referred to in the way MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile use the words 'you' and 'your' in their advertisements?	30 (15%)	165 (85%)
4. Do the use of comparative and superlative adjectives such as 'best', 'better', 'number one', 'cheaper', etc. and adverbs such as 'more', 'most', 'faster', 'easier', etc. make you think different of the advertisers' products and services?		
5. Do the words such as new, beautiful, richer, smart, free, more, best, etc. used to describe some 9Mobile, MTN, AIRTEL and GLO products and services make you think good of the products and services?	171(88%)	24 (12%)
6. Does the use of expressions such as 'for you', 'for N10 only', 'as low as N25', 'with pride', 'everywhere', 'now', 'just', etc. with some of the advertisements give you the impression or reason to buy the service advertised?		
7. Do you think that the use of Nigerian pidgin in the advertisements	170 (87%)	25 (13%)

by MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile adds to your familiarity with the telecommunication services and products?

8. Would you say that the language used by GLO, MTN, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile to describe their products or services is exaggerated?

9. Do you feel that the language used in the advertisements of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile is constructed to make you subscribe to the service offered or buy their products?   165 (85%)   29 (15%)

10. Do you believe that the ways MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile use language in their advertisements in newspapers influence your patronage for their products or services?

11. Do you accept that the language used in advertisements of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile appeals to your needs for effective and efficient mobile telephone calls and browsing?

165 (85%)   30 (15%)

167 (86%)   28 (14%)

177 (91%)   18 (9%)

187 (96%)   7 (4%)

	149 (76%)	46 (24%)
	32 (16%)	163 (84%)
Total (Percentage)	**1425 (73%)**	**520 (27%)**

In the table 3 above, the respondents expressed high satisfaction (93%) with the language used in the advertisements of telecommunication service providers. They strongly agreed that the language used in the advertisements addressed them (88%) and thus attracted them to the products advertised. They also agreed that the adverbial group gives them good reasons to patronise the telecommunication services (85%); adjectival group makes them think good of the products and services (85%); the use of comparative and superlative adjectives such as 'best', 'better', 'number one', 'cheaper', etc. and adverbs such as 'more', 'most', 'faster', 'easier', etc. make them think different of the advertisers' products and services; and the pidgin expressions familiarise them more with the products (86%). But majority of them indicated that the language does not reflect the service rendered by the companies (85%). They also agreed strongly that the language used in advertisement was exaggerated (91%). They further revealed that the service providers do not satisfy their need for effective and efficient communication services (84%). They also indicated that these kinds of expressions were used to motivate them to buy or patronise the telecommunication products and services (96%). Thus, the overall results of the audience evaluation of language used in the advertisements show that the respondents were aware of the manipulation of the language used in the advertisements and its effect (73%). But they used their experience with the services of the telecommunication companies to evaluate and question the language used for not being the true reflection of some of their claims about their offers (85%). Likewise, the open question responses show that the audience understand the power of language to attract them to patronise the telecommunications services.

Table 4: Audience's interpretation of the advertisements as a discursive practice

Questions	Responses

	Yes	No
1. Do the ways MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile describe (advertise) their products or services make you to have interest and desire in their products or services in the market?	170 (87%)	25 (13%)
2. Do you agree that the information presented on advertisements is relevant to the products or services advertised?		
3. Do you think that the advertisements of GLO, AIRTEL, 9Mobile, and MTN in the advertisements provide the objective information their products and services?	94 (48%)	101(52%)
4. Do you believe the words 9Mobile, MTN, AIRTEL and GLO use in their advertisements?		
5. Do you recharge airtime, register package, and dial codes where applicable as advertised AIRTEL, 9Mobile, MTN, and GLO?	82(42%)	113 (58%)
6. Do you consider the advertisements serious while buying airtime or data plan for your calls or browsing?		
7. Do you enjoy the call rates and discounts offered by 9Mobile, MTN, AIRTEL and GLO as advertised?	75 (38%)	120 (62%)
8. Do you feel different for patronizing any of the products or services of AIRTEL, GLO, 9MOBILE and MTN?		
9. Do you accept that the language used in advertisements of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile appeals to your needs for effective and efficient mobile telephone calls and browsing?	85(44%)	110 (56%)
10. Do you know that the telecommunication service providers' intention is to sell their products and service?		
	78 (40%)	117 (60%)
		150 (77%)
	45 (23%)	
		105 (54%)
	90 (46%)	

		23 (22%)
	172 (88%)	
	190 (97%)	5(3%)
Total (Percentage)	**1081 (55%)**	**869 (45%)**

In the table 4 above, the most of the respondents disclosed that the ways MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile describe their products or services make them to have interest and desire in their products or services in the market (87%). Likewise, some of them expressed that they feel different by patronizing a particular product or service of a telecommunication service provider (54%). This shows that the consumers experience the benefits of the telecommunication differently. But some of the respondents also revealed that the information presented in the advertisements is not relevant to the products or service advertised (52%). They also indicated that the advertisements do not provide objective information about the products and services advertised (58%%). Also, a good number of them indicated that they do not believe the words used in their advertisements (62%). They do not response to the advertisement as expected by the advertisers (56%). A good number of them also indicated that they do not consider the advertisements serious while buying airtime or data plan for their calls or browsing service (60%) because they do not enjoy the call rates and discounts offered by the advertisers (77%). However, the majority of the respondents agreed that the language used in the advertisements appeals to their need for efficient and effective telecommunications services (88%). In addition, the vast majority of the respondents expressed that they know that the telecommunication service providers' intention is to sell their products and service with kind of language used in the advertisements (97%). The overall results of the assessment of the audience's interpretation of the advertisements as a discursive practice show that the respondents can interpret the intended force of the representation constructed and the intended effect expected, and the factors that shape the production and interpretation of the advertisements (55%); even though they did not response to the advertisement as expected by the advertisers (56%). In the open ended question responses, the audience further maintained that there were cases of manipulation and deception in the language used in the advertisement.

Table 5: Audience's perception of the advertisements as a social practice

Questions	Response	
	Yes	No
1. Do you accept that the language used in the advertisements of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile appeals to your needs for effective and efficient mobile telephone calls and browsing?	172(88%)	23(22%)
2. Are you convinced with the language used in the advertisements that the products or services of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, 9Mobile, etc. are good to buy?		
3. Do you agree that AIRTEL, MTN, GLO, and 9Mobile fulfill the promises made on their advertisements?	71(36%)	124(64%)
4. Would you say that the language used in the advertisements of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile is deceptive or manipulative?		
5. Do you consider the language used in the advertisements to be ideological or strategic to achieving the goals of the advertisers for sales and profits?	60 (31%)	135(69%)
6. Do you think that the competition for sales and profits in the telecommunication market affects the ways the telecommunication service providers use language in their advertisements?	151(77%)	44(23%)
7. Do you know the ideology that shapes the language used in the advertisement production and consumption?	35(18%)	160(82%)
8. Do you consider the use of the expression, "Terms and conditions apply" on the advertisements as necessary?		
9. If yes, does it appeal to your sense of reasoning?		
10. Would you like the language use in the advertisements to be regulated?	80(41%)	115(59%)
	27(14%)	168(86%)

	118 (61%)	77 (39%)
	42(22%)	153(78%)
	155(79%)	40 (21%)
Total (Percentage)	**911 (47%)**	**1039 (53%)**

In the table 5 above, the result of the audience's perception of the advertisements as a social practice shows that the respondents indicated that the language used in advertisements appeal to their needs for effective and efficient mobile telephone calls and browsing (88%). Some of the respondents indicated that the competition for sales and profits in the telecommunication market affects the ways the telecommunication service providers use language in their advertisements (59%). But some of them indicated that they were not convinced with the language used that the products or services are good to buy (64%). They expressed that the service providers do not fulfill the promises made on their advertisements (69%). They also disclosed that the language used in advertisements is deceptive or manipulative (77%). Some of the respondents showed that the use of precautionary statement, "Terms and conditions apply" in the advertisements is necessary (61%) and it appeals to their sense of reasoning (79%). Majority of the respondents expressed that the language used in the advertisements to be regulated (79%). Therefore, it can be interpreted that the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the ways the advertisers manipulated language to make unreliable promises. They can also explain the motive and intention for using such unreliable promises to get them to patronise their services. The majority of the respondents do not know the ideology that shapes the language used in the advertisement production and consumption (89%). Hence, most of the respondents revealed that the language used in the advertisements is not ideological or strategic to achieving the goals of the advertisers for sales and profits (82%).

Discussion of the findings

The aim of this study is to critically explore the audience's evaluation of language used in telecommunication service providers' advertisements in Nigerian newspapers. First, the results of the demographic data analysis in table 1 reveal that more than half of the respondents were male and the respondents within the ages of 41 to 60 dominated the sampled population and this

is the category of people who still patronise newspapers for information. In relation to qualification, majority of the respondents had first degree (40%), followed by respondents with PhD's (31%) and then the respondents with master degrees (29%). For the job classification, the majority of the respondents were academic staff (60%) and some of them were non-academic staff (40%). In reference to area of specialization, the analysis reveals that most of the respondents specialised in arts (29%), some in social sciences (22%), and few in sciences (17%) and engineering (14%), and a very few in legal (10%) and medical (8%) professions. This discloses that the audience were relatively educated to have the ability to interpret and examine the advertisements targeted to them. From the results obtained in the study, there is substantial indication that the audience qualification and area of specialization affect the levels that the way the audience interpret and evaluate the advertisements, as indicated in table 1 and 2.

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents were exposed to the telecommunication service providers' advertisements in the newspapers and more than half of the respondents read the students regularly (53%). The readership of the advertisements was widely spread across the newspapers. In reference to the purpose or motivation for the reading of the advertisements, the result shows that 49% of the respondents read the advertisements for awareness and 30% of the respondents read the advertisements to make purchase. This indicates that most of the respondents read the advertisements to get information and some of them to purchase items of the telecommunication service providers. In all this, the results revealed that the audience were conscious of their need for information about the services of telecommunication companies and the possibility of the advertisements satisfying their needs. By implication, the audience read the text to obtain objective and reliable information about the products or services advertised. Thus, this means that some of the audience were active participants in the meaning consumption (Hall, 1993).

In table 3, the overall results of the audience evaluation of language used in the advertisements show that the respondents were aware of the manipulation of the language used in the advertisements and its effectiveness (73%). In the result, the majority of the respondents indicated that the language used did not reflect the service rendered by the companies (85%) and they also agreed strongly that the language used in advertisement was exaggerated (91%). This constitute evidence of manipulative use of language to create a false representation, personality and position for products in order to draw patronage for it and also compete for market share. This reveals that the audience aware of the manipulation of the language used in the advertisement. But this result is contrary to critical discourse analysts' assumption that the audience are not aware of the manipulation use of language (Fairclough, 2001; van Dijk, 2001; Hart, 2014). However, the findings are in agreement with Fairclough's (1992) argument that the texts of advertisements are always replete with evaluative use of language for the audience's manipulation. But the result of the evaluation of the manipulation of the language used shows that the audience are not passive like perceived by Fairclough (2001). This further affirms Hall's (1993) claim that some audience of discourse are active consumers of texts.

Furthermore, in table 4, the overall results of the assessment of the advertisements as a discursive practice show that the respondents can interpret the intended force of the representation constructed and the intended effect expected, and the factors that shape the

production and interpretation of the advertisements (55%). The results of the study indicate that the respondents understand the advertisers' intention and reasons for the advertisements which are to make them to patronise their services. However, some of them do not response to the advertisement as expected by the advertisers (56%). As such, they do not believe the representation of the advertisers for their products. They response to the force of the advertisements based on their need, satisfaction, interest and experience with the services of network providers. This also indicates that the meaning and effect of the advertisements are negotiated (Hall, 1993). In this sense, the negative responses constitute expressions of dissatisfaction and criticism about the assessment of the advertisements as a discursive practice. Thus, the respondents show some level of resistance to the influence of the advertisement on their buying behaviour. This further indicates how the audience's knowledge and manipulation of language use, need, perception, and experience affect their interest and belief about the advertisements and services rendered by the advertisers.

In the table 5 above, the result of the audience's perception of the advertisements as a social practice shows that the respondents indicated that the language used in advertisements appeal to their needs for effective and efficient mobile telephone calls and browsing (88%). Some of the respondents indicated that the competition for sales and profits in the telecommunication market affects the ways the telecommunication service providers use language in their advertisements (59%). But some of them indicated that they were not convinced with the language use that the products or services are good to buy (64%). They expressed that the service providers do not fulfill the promises made on their advertisements (69%). They also disclosed that the language used in advertisements is deceptive or manipulative (77%). Majority of the respondents expressed that the language used in the advertisements to be regulated (79%). But the overall results of perception of advertisements as social practice show that more than half of the respondents could not relate the manipulation of the language used to the ideological function of language used within the capitalists' ideology (53%). Therefore, it can be interpreted that the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the ways the advertisers want to manipulate the consumers through unreliable promises. They can also explain the motive and intention for using such reliable promises to get them to patronise their services. The majority of the respondents do not know the ideology that shapes the language used in the advertisement production and consumption (89%). Hence, most of the respondents revealed that the language used in the advertisements is not ideological or strategic to achieving the goals of the advertisers for sales and profits (82%). Thus, these results can be interpreted that the audience could explain the marketing and economic contexts in which they consume and interpret the telecommunication advertisements in Nigeria but could not attribute this to the capitalist ideology for manipulative use of language as part of its mechanism for achieving its goals for sales and profits.

Furthermore, three different reading types in Hall's (1993) theory of decoding and encoding are identified in the text. The preferred reading, negotiated reading and oppositional reading. In the table 3, the respondents expressed satisfaction with the language used in the telecommunication service providers' advertisements because it appeals to their need for effective and efficient telecommunication mobile services but they expressed dissatisfaction that it does not reflect the kinds of service rendered and enjoyed by the companies. This indicates that

the meaning and effect of the advertisements are negotiated. Thus, the meaning of the text is negotiated because the readers understand the meaning of language used as expected by the producers of the text but compare it with their need and desire for effect and efficient telecommunication; based on which they recognised the language used to be deceptive because it does not reflect the real nature of services rendered to the consumers. Even though the text producers create false representation and positioning for their products, the respondent resist the temptation to be lured into making impulsive purchase. This also indicates that the meaning and effect of the advertisements are negotiated. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the ways the advertisers want to manipulate them through unreliable promises. These responses constitute expressions of dissatisfaction and criticism. Thus, the respondents show resistance to the influence of the advertisement on their buying behavior, even though they do not understand that this is part of the ideological or strategic use of language which is the concerned of critical discourse analysis as an approach.

Conclusion

This study has shown that some of the audience of the telecommunication service providers' advertisements are active interpreters and consumers of the text because of the levels of their awareness of the manipulation of language used in the advertisements. It further disclosed that the audience can interpret the effect and force of the language used but react to it according to their need, interest, experience and satisfaction with the service of the network service providers. This is made possible due to the level of education of the readers which provides them with the required knowledge to be able to understand and interpret the intention of the advertisers. Nevertheless, the study reveals that the audience could not evaluate the manipulation of the language used as part of the ideological manipulation for self-interest within the capitalist ideology. Therefore, the paper concludes that the textual analysis is not adequate to determine the ideological effect of the language used in the advertisement texts. On this account, the study recommends the application of audience analysis in CDA in order to have a balanced and fair interpretation of the social effects of the text.

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Analysis of the Use of Conjunctions as Cohesive Devices by 100 Level Students of the College Of Humanities at Al-Qalam University Katsina State

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Abstract

English as a language of education and instruction in Nigeria continues to remain a rich ground of enquiry for linguists and language educators. The examination of its use by the teeming population often reveals the level of mastery of this language that is spoken in most places in Nigeria, especially on Nigerian tertiary institution campuses. From its word classes to its meaning, proficiency in English is considered as a positive stride in Nigeria. This study focuses on the analysis of the use of conjunctions as cohesive devices by 100 Level students of the College of Humanities at Al-Qalam University Katsina State. Halliday and Matthiessen's Conjunctions Theory was adopted for the study. The research employed a mixed method research design on five students' essays randomly collected. The findings of the research show that investigating the use of conjunction is essential for students as it provides them with effective writing skills. Consequently, the results of the study reveal that students use different

types of conjunctions in their written essays including additive, causal, temporal and clarification. The study concludes that the correct use of conjunctions helps to create coherence in sentences as shown in the sampled essays. The study recommends that ESL learners should improve on the appropriate use of conjunctions as cohesive devices to achieve coherence in their essay writing. It could be done by learning processes to prevent incoherent text of students writing.

Keywords: Conjunction, Cohesive, Devices, Students, Writing.

Introduction

Language is an essential means for humans to communicate, to convey messages, to express thoughts, ideas, and viewpoints. In other words, it is the method of expressing ideas and emotions in the form of signs and symbols. These signs and symbols are used to send or receive the message. Students' writing especially in an English language classroom context needs to show their awareness of communicative goals and of the writing context. To achieve this, there is need to consider cohesive devices which are essential for maintaining coherence in written texts. Halliday and Hasan (1976) emphasized the importance of cohesion in language. Cohesion is a semantic concept, and refers to the way different parts of a text are related to each other by means of explicit and implicit connections. Cohesive devices, like conjunctions, contribute to the construction of meaning within a text.

Conjunctions are fundamental cohesive devices that bind different parts of a text together. They help to establish logical relationships between sentences and paragraphs. According to Halliday and Hassan (1976:10), "Conjunctions are central to the textual function of language, enabling the organization of information and establishing coherence in texts." Also, Quirk (1985:23) states, "Coordinating conjunctions facilitate the linking of grammatical equivalents, whereas subordinating conjunctions introduce subordinate elements, providing information that is dependent on the main clause." Biber. (1999:5) highlights that "Conjunctions contribute to the overall rhetorical structure of texts, indicating relationships between propositions and helping readers discern logical connections.

Effective communication and coherence are essential components of successful academic writing. Cohesive devices, particularly conjunctions, play a pivotal role in facilitating seamless connections between ideas and ensuring the logical flow of information within a written text. Despite their significance, many students often struggle to utilize conjunctions appropriately, leading to fragmented and disorganized writing. Thus, the paper aims to investigate the challenges faced by 100 Level students at Al-Qalam University Katsina in employing conjunctions as cohesive devices in their academic writing. The paper delves into the various types of conjunctions commonly used by students, their correct and erroneous usage patterns, and the impact of these cohesive devices on the overall clarity and coherence of their written work. Through its analysis and findings, the paper attempts to dissect the level of English grammar proficiency of the target audience.

The Conjunction

Conjunctions are cohesive by semantic connection and are typically realized at the lexico-grammatical level by adverbs, adverbial and prepositional expressions. Bryson (1997) sees conjunction as a word that links words, phrases or clauses. There are three types of conjunctions. Coordinating conjunction may join single words or they may join groups of words, but they must always join similar elements e.g. subject + subject, verb phrase + verb phrase sentence + sentence. A coordinating conjunction is used to join elements, the element become a compound element. Correlative conjunctions also connect sentence elements of the same kind: however, unlike coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions are always used in pairs.

Subordinating conjunctions, the largest class of conjunctions, connect subordinate clauses to main clause. These conjunctions are adverbs used as conjunctions. Halliday and Hassan (1976) argue that conjunction is not the same as the elementary logical relation that are expressed through the structural medium of coordinating but textual. Textual coordination connects or binds sentences. There are four basic categories of conjunctions namely additive, adversative, causal and temporal.

Additive conjunctions are used to add more meaning to a clause, they include: and, furthermore etc, adversatives show contrast between clauses which has the following examples - but, however, on the other hand, nevertheless etc. Causals are used to explain reason between clauses and the examples include - so, consequently, for this reason, etc. Temporal conjunctions are time related and they are - then, often, that before, later, after, at last, finally, etc. Aliyu (2006) views conjunction as "an uninflected word employed to link some words or some part of a sentence". The two main clauses of conjunctions are the coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. The coordinating conjunctions are introduced by such words as 'and' 'but' 'or' and 'nor'. The subordinating introduced by such words like: when, if, because and while. Lester (1994) sees conjunctions as single words used to connect parts of a sentence such as 'and', 'but' and 'or'. He added that conjunctive adverbs are special kinds of adverbs used instead of a coordinating or correlative conjunction to join the simple sentence in compound sentences. Conjunctive adverbs are at times stronger and more precise than coordinating conjunctions e.g. however, equally, besides etc.

Review of Related Literature

Conjunctions play a vital role in connecting ideas, sentences, and paragraphs, creating coherence and ensuring a smooth flow of information in written texts. Previous researches (such as Osagie, 2018; Adeleke, 2019) have emphasized the significance of conjunctions as cohesive devices, highlighting their contribution to the overall effectiveness of academic and non-academic writing. These studies underscore that students' ability to use conjunctions correctly and appropriately is crucial in producing well-structured and coherent writing. Ajayi (2015) analyzed conjunction usage in essays written by Nigerian undergraduate students. The research found that students frequently used coordinating conjunctions to connect sentences and ideas, but they tended to underuse subordinating conjunctions, leading to less complex sentence structures. In another study, Olatunji and Adebowale (2017) examined conjunction errors in writing samples of Nigerian secondary school students. The research reveals common mistakes, such as using incorrect conjunctions to link ideas and misplacing conjunctions within sentences. The study recommends targeted grammar instruction and feedback to address these errors effectively.

Osagie (2018) explored the role of conjunctions in achieving coherence in research papers written by Nigerian university students. The study identified a significant positive correlation between effective conjunction use and the overall coherence of the papers. The research highlights the importance of conjunctions as essential cohesive devices in academic writing. Also, Adeleke (2019) study compared the conjunction proficiency of Nigerian English language learners from different proficiency levels. The research reveals that advanced learners demonstrated more sophisticated use of conjunctions, employing a wider range of conjunction

types to convey various relationships between ideas. The findings underscore the developmental nature of conjunction usage in language learning.

Similarly, Ogunleye and Bello (2020) examined the use of conjunctions in argumentative essays written by Nigerian students. The study identified variations in conjunction usage based on the students' academic disciplines, with some disciplines favoring specific conjunctions to structure arguments. The research highlights the genre-specific nature of conjunction usage in students writing. Another study by Nwabueze (2009) focused on the role of conjunctions as coherence markers in Nigerian academic writings. The research analyzes how conjunctions were used to connect ideas and maintain logical flow in academic texts. The study emphasized the significance of conjunctions in achieving coherence and effective communication in Nigerian academic writing. Furthermore, Sisulu (2012) explored the use of conjunctions in South African political discourse. Sisulu analyzed speeches and written statements of political leaders to understand how conjunctions were employed to structure arguments, emphasize points, and create persuasive discourse. The research highlights the role of conjunctions in shaping the rhetorical strategies of South African political communication. These studies reviewed show the relevance of conjunctions in students' writings which varies in terms of their appropriateness. Inappropriate uses of conjunctions by the students show that applying conjunctions in writings was problematic for ESL learners.

Theoretical Framework

Conjunctions Theory by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) is used as the theoretical framework in this study to analyze and interpret the data. A conjunction is concerned with rhetorical transitions between whole 'messages', or even message complexes (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014). It is a resource for marking transition in the unfolding of a text (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014). It indicates the relations through which such textual transitions are created. Conjunctive elements are cohesive not in themselves but indirectly by virtue of their specific meanings; they are not primarily devices for reaching out into the preceding (or following) text, but they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

Research Methodology

The study adopts a mixed-method research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Thus, the analysis is done through conceptual explanation as well as through statistical means using a table and percentile. The participants of this study are 100 level students enrolled in various academic programs within College of Humanities at Al-Qalam University Katsina. A purposive sampling method is used to select participants to ensure representation from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Students were approached to write essays about campus life in Al-Qalam University Katsina and five out of the pool of essays received were randomly selected for analysis. Each essay was titled by the student who wrote them to reflect the topic of their choice.

Presentation of Data, Analysis and Comments

The following essays are presented as they were collected, then a table of categorisation is employed to analyse the categories of conjunctions that are in each essay and finally a commentary is given on each text of essay presented.

Text of Essay 1: Friends' Becoming Families
In this university I have met many people. In fact, some of them I cannot remember where we met but I know it is because I am here in Al-Qalam. So, after meeting many times in lectures or in the campus, we become friends. We now talk every day and do things together. We even lived in the same hostels. Many of these friends have now become like family members to me because of their kindness and support. I always like to share my things with them rather than to take it to other people. Friends have now become my family here and I like them so much.

Table 1: Text Analysis for Conjunctions

Essay 1: Friends'Becoming families	Enhancement	Extension	Elaboration
1. In this university I have met many people.			
2. In fact, some of them I cannot remember where we met but I know it is because I am here in Al-Qalam			(In fact) CLARIFICATION
3. So, after meeting many times in lectures or in the campus, we become friends.	(So) CAUSAL		
4. We now talk every day **and** do things together.		(and) ADDITIVE	
5. We even lived in the same hostels.			
6. Many of these friends have now become like family members to me because of their kindness **and** support.		(and) ADDITIVE	
7. I always like to share my things with them **rather** than to take it to other people.			(rather) CLARIFICATION
8. Friends have now become my family here **and** I like them so much.		(and) ADDITIVE	
TOTAL	1	3	2

Comments: The essay contains eight sentences. The writer employs a number of conjunctions at various parts of the essay as a means to bring cohesion into their flow of thought. The essay focuses on friendship extended to deeper levels in the university. There is a kind of a dependency on 'additive' conjunctions in an attempt to keep the flow. This reflects the average grasp of English vocabulary by the writer.

Text of Essay 2: Fixed Lectures
Firstly, I think a university should be like your secondary school where your teacher can come in according to their periods on the time table. But here at Al-Qalam, one of the things I hate the most is the fixed lectures. You are thinking of doing something after your lecture then someone will just come and say there is another lecture you have to do in the afternoon. In the end, the lecture may not even come for that lecture and you must for them until they call the class rep and say I am not coming anymore I have another meeting. At least, when you already know a lecturer is not coming you will not waste your time waiting for them.

Table 2: Text Analysis for Conjunctions

Essay 2: Fixed Lectures	Enhancement	Extension	Elaboration
1. Firstly, I think a university should be like your secondary school where your teacher can come in according to their periods on the time table.	(Firstly) TEMPORAL		
2.But here at Al-Qalam, one of the things I hate the most is the fixed lectures			
3.You are thinking of doing something after your lecture **then** someone will just come **and** say there is another lecture you have to do in the afternoon	(then) TEMPORAL	(and) ADDITIVE	
4. In the end, the lecture may not even come for that lecture and you must for them until they call the class rep **and** say I am not coming anymore I have another meeting.		(and) ADDITIVE	(In the end) CLARIFICATION
5. At least, when you already know a lecturer is not coming you will not waste your time waiting for them.			(At least) CLARIFICATION
TOTAL	2	2	2

Comments: The essay has five sentences. The categorization of 'in the end' as 'clarification' instead of 'temporal' is due to the fact that the statement is specific to the fact that the writer meant to sum up a thought and not merely disclose the time of an event. The essay contains six conjunctions.

Text of Essay 3: Socialisation on Campus

If you come to Al-Qalam, they will teach you how to socialise here. You will see so many things that you do not know before and you will start to feel like you want to try it too. During my first semester here in Al-Qalam, I always sit at the administrative block side and see many students coming in. some come in with their friends while some are coming alone. One thing I noticed is that the students that come in groups are always laughing. They always look happy. After a while, I started to see that most of the girls wear their hijabs in a similar pattern like scarfs at the top. Because of that I too soon started wearing my own like that. Now, I have a belief that in the university you will see so many types of behaviours and they will make you copy some and some of them you will not like personally.

Table 3: Text Analysis for Conjunctions

Essay 3: Socialisation on Campus	Enhancement	Extension	Elaboration
1. If you come to Al-Qalam, they will teach you how to socialise here.			
2. You will see so many things that you do not know before **and** you will start to feel like you want to try it too.		(and) ADDITIVE	
3. **During my first semester here in Al-Qalam,** I always sit at the administrative block side **and** see many students coming in	(During my first semester here in Al-Qalam,) TEMPORAL	(and) ADDIITIVE	
4. Some come in with their friends while some are coming alone.			
5. One thing I noticed is that the students that come in groups are always laughing.			
6. They always look happy.			
7. **After a while**, I started to see that most of the girls wear their hijabs in a similar pattern like scarfs at the top.	(After a while) TEMPORAL		
8. **Because of that** I too soon started wearing my own like that.	(Because of that) CAUSAL		
9. **Now**, I have a belief that in the university you will see so many types of behaviours **and** they will make you copy some and some of them you will not like personally.	(Now) TEMPORAL	(and) ADDITIVE	
TOTAL	4	3	0

Comment: the essay has nine sentences. It looks at how students pick up behaviours on campus. The writer uses seven conjunctions in total.

Text of Essay 4: Aiming for Excellence

I want to write about excellence. Since I was in the secondary school, I was always the first in my class and so I have the hope that wherever I go I will continue the same efforts. I have now gained admission into Al-Qalam University Katsina and I take my studies very serious. In fact, we have a study group where we meet to reteach ourselves courses that are difficult. Also, I and

my friends visit the library a lot. We believe that we can get more knowledge by reading more books than others. My ambition is to graduate with first class and I will keep working hard to make it In sha Allah.

Table 4: Text Analysis for Conjunctions

Essay 4: Aiming for Excellence	Enhancement	Extension	Elaboration
1. I want to write about excellence.			
2. Since I was in the secondary school, I was always the first in my class **and so** I have the hope that wherever I go I will continue the same efforts.	(So) CAUSAL	(and) ADDITIVE	
3. I have now gained admission into Al-Qalam University Katsina **and** I take my studies very serious.		(and) ADDITIVE	
4. In fact, we have a study group where we meet to reteach ourselves courses that are difficult.			(In fact) CLARIFICATION
5. Also, I and my friends visit the library a lot.		(Also) ADDITIVE	
6. We believe that we can get more knowledge by reading more books than others.			
7. My ambition is to graduate with first class **and** I will keep working hard to make it in sha Allah.		(and) ADDITIVE	
TOTAL	1	4	1

Comment:
The essay has seven sentences. There is a grammatical error in the use of 'and so'. The use of 'so' to indicate the cause of the next point of action is the most appropriate without necessarily using 'and' which the writer resolved to use. Also, the essay relies so much on 'additive' conjunctions.

Text of Essay 5: Family's Bread Winner
I am from Kwara state and my uncle works here in Katsina, so I gained admission into this university to quickly finish my studies and start to work. At the moment, I feel like I am the bread winner of my family because my parents prefer to send me to a university as the only boy in the family. They expect that if I become a graduate and serve, I will have better work opportunities than others. My other sisters are learning different apprentice work in Lagos and they also pray for me to become successful. I am determined not to let them down so I take my studies here serious. I am also trying to learn Hausa language so that I can have more connection with people for work. I am happy with Al-QalamUniversity because they do not go to strike like other universities.

Table 5: Text Analysis for Conjunctions

Essay 5: Family's Bread Winner	Enhancement	Extension	Elaboration
1. I am from Kwara state**and** my uncle works here in Katsina, **so** I gained admission into this university to quickly finish my studies **and** start to work.	(so) CAUSAL	(and) ADDITIVE (and) ADDITIVE	
2. At the moment, I feel like I am the bread winner of my family **because** my parents prefer to send me to a university as the only boy in the family.	(At the moment) TEMPORAL (because) CAUSAL		
3. They expect that if I become a graduate **and** serve, I will have better work opportunities than others.		(and) ADDITIVE	
4. My other sisters are learning different apprentice work in Lagos **and** they also pray for me to become successful.		(and) ADDITIVE	
5. I am determined not to let them down **so** I take my studies here serious.	(so) CAUSAL		
6. I am also trying to learn Hausa language **so that** I can have more connection with people for work.	(so that) CAUSAL		
7. I am happy with Al-Qalam university **because** they do not go to strike like other universities.	(because) CAUSAL		
TOTAL	5	3	0

Comments: the essay has seven sentences. The writer focuses on the idea of being the breadwinner of their family. There appears a dependency on 'causal' and 'additive' conjunctions in the essay.

Discussion of Data

Based on the findings of the five analysed essays written by 100 level students of college of humanities at Al-Qalam University Katsina, it is evident that extension conjunctions, like "and,""but," were the most frequently used. These conjunctions play a pivotal role in connecting ideas within sentences, aiding in the overall coherence and flow of the essays. Despite their extensive use, it is crucial to note that students encountered difficulties, particularly in the technical application of correlating conjunctions like "neither nor" or "either or." This deficiency

suggests a gap in their understanding of these specific conjunctions, leading to their avoidance in essays due to unfamiliarity. The results of this study correlates with that of Osagie (2018) who explored the role of conjunctions in achieving coherence in research papers written by Nigerian university students. Furthermore, the inadequate use of conjunctions as paragraph linkers was also noticeable, indicating a need for more explicit guidance on their utilization for broader text organization.

The prevalent errors or challenges faced by students in the proficient use of conjunctions indicate a need for focused educational interventions. The students' lack of expertise in applying correlating conjunctions demonstrates the necessity for targeted instruction to enhance their technical understanding. This is in line with the study conducted by Ajayi (2015) who analyzed conjunction usage in essays written by Nigerian undergraduate students. Additionally, encouraging students to incorporate conjunctions strategically as paragraph linkers could significantly enhance the overall coherence and structural integrity of their essays. These interventions might involve structured exercises, practical examples, and explicit explanations to familiarize students with the diverse functions of conjunctions in written discourse. This correlates with the results of the study conducted by Ogunleye and Bello (2020) who examined the use of conjunctions in argumentative essays written by Nigerian students.

Findings

The findings of the research show that investigating the use of conjunction is essential for students as it provides them with effective writing skills. Consequently, the results of the study reveal that the students use different types of conjunctions in their written essays including additive, causal, temporal and clarification. These textual organizations were the results of the text cohesion brought about the use and frequencies of the different types of conjunctions in the written essays produced by 100 level students enrolled in various academic programs within College of Humanities at Al-Qalam University Katsina. The results reveal that the presence and absence of any of the conjunctions affected the overall cohesion of the written essays.

Conclusion

Conjunctions are essential grammatical elements that serve as connectors in a sentence or between different parts of a sentence. They play a crucial role in establishing relationships between words, phrases, and clauses, contributing to the coherence and flow of written and spoken language. Scholars in linguistics have extensively studied conjunctions and classified them into various types based on their functions and uses in communication.

Recommendation

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that ESL learners should improve on the appropriate use of conjunctions as cohesive devices to achieve coherence in their essay writing. It could be done by learning processes to prevent incoherent text of students writing.

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The Syntax and Semantics of Negative Markers in Idọ̀mà and English: A Cross-Linguistic Investigation of Variation and Universals

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Abstract

Negative markers vary across human languages posing significant challenges to linguistic theory and language acquisition. Specifically, Idọ̀mà and English display distinct differences in their negative marking systems, with implications for cross-linguistic teaching and learning. Existing studies focused mainly on the comparison of English and major Nigerian indigenous languages, neglecting Idọ̀mà, being a minority and an understudied language. This paper, therefore, investigates the syntax and semantics of negative markers in Idọ̀mà and English languages, identifying the similarities and differences. Although, Idọ̀mà and English belong to different language families, they share areas of convergence and divergence. The study adopted the Chomskyan theory. Principles and Parameters Theory as an advanced theory of universal grammar explains that languages are different in their parameters but similar in their principles. English language data was obtained from English grammar texts relevant to the study whereas Idọ̀mà language data was collected purposively from competent native bilinguals. The Otúkpò dialect of Idọ̀mà was adopted being the central and standard dialect. Findings show that Idọ̀mà and English share a similar SVO word order but differ in negative constructions. Idọ̀mà places its negative marker after the verb whereas English usually places its negative markers before the main verb. Basically, in negative constructions, Idọ̀mà uses a SVONeg word order whereas English uses a SNegVO word order. Other negative markers or affixes are morphologically present in English but differ in Idọ̀mà. These differences are crucial and require critical attention for L2 learners to avoid ungrammaticality.

Keywords: Syntax, Semantics, Negative makers, variation, Universals

1.   Introduction

Negative construction is a fundamental idea in human language that allows speakers to communicate denial, refusal and disagreement. Negative makers or linguistic features used to express negations are essential parts of language structures and meanings. Particularly in the study of sentence structures and meanings, negative markers are essential parts (words or morphemes) that indicate negations (sentential, semantic or constituent negations). Despite the significance, negative makers have received little or no attention in the study of Nigerian languages such as Idǫmà language, being a minority and an understudied language.

Idǫmà, a Nigerian language, is part of the Niger-Congo language family, specifically, the Benue-Congo branch. Its syntax and semantics are formed by its distinct cultural and historical environment, and they differ greatly from those of European languages like English. English, a Germanic language, has a well-documented negation system or negative constructions with negative markers (words: not, no, never, none), (prefix: un-, non-, anti-) or (suffix: -less, -free), etc. playing important roles in its semantics and syntax. The use of negative markers cut across both languages but differs in nature and distribution. This is in line with the belief of Chomsky in his theory of universal grammar that all human languages have the same set of principles that cut across but, they may be distinct with respect to certain variables and this is called parameters.

English and Idómà belong to different language families. Idómà is the second lingua franca spoken in Benue State and it belongs to the Idomoid language family, which is part of the Benue-Congo language family. Umaru (2016:3) states that Idómà is primarily spoken by the Idómà people living in Benue State. According to National Population Commission (2006 census), Benue State has a population of 4,253,641. Idǫmà speakers numbered 1,307,647 at the time. The Idǫmà language consists of dialects such as Agatu, Edumoga, Otúkpò, Otukpa, Orokam, Akpa, Agila, Utonkon, Etilo, and Iyala. The Otúkpò dialect of Idǫmà was adopted for this study being the central dialect recognized and widely spoken as the standard dialect.

English is an Indo-European language. It is a West Germanic language descended from Anglo-Frisian languages spoken in numerous places throughout the world. Kachru (1997) suggests three circles to partition the English-speaking globe. He discusses the historical context of English, the language's position, and its functions in diverse places. According to Kachru, the Inner Circle includes native English-speaking countries such as England, the United States, and Canada. The Outer Circle includes former colonies or post-colonial speaking countries such as India, Ghana, and Nigeria, followed by the Expanding Circle, which includes countries such as China, Japan, and Turkey where English is becoming an important language in business, science, technology, and education. English has assumed a global status as a result of its widespread usage by many countries. The English language is the first language in some countries while other countries use it as a second language or as a foreign language. In the world today, the English language is regarded as a major lingua franca of international communication transcending geographical boundaries, spoken worldwide and serving as the primary language of science, technology, business, law, media, education, etc. Awonusi (1994) concludes that in terms of speaker's population, it is noted to come after Chinese and that a fair estimate put the

number of English speakers between 400 and 700 million. Odebunmi (2001) asserts that English language like most other languages performs transactional and interactional roles. Today, English has become the language of global tool for global understanding and its impact is shaping the global culture, identity and language in the world. In Nigeria, for instance it is the language of government, commerce, politics, education, mass media, law, and as medium of instruction in schools especially in secondary and tertiary institutions.

Contrastive analysis (CA) began with Robert Lado's work in 1957. Lado (1957) identifies contrastive analysis as a significant concept in second language acquisition process. CA is a systematic study of two or more languages to identify their structural differences and similarities. CA aims at comparing and establishing the convergence and divergence, focusing on the differences. This approach is significant in the fields of second language acquisition because it explicate the features of a target language, establish language genealogies and for the purpose of predicting language difficulties. Since, English and Idọ̀mà languages belong to two distinct language families, it is therefore, important to compare syntax and semantic of negative markers in the two languages in order to establish the convergence and divergence in line with the universal grammar. Previous studies have compared English and major Nigerian languages. This contrastive analysis of negative makers in Idọ̀mà and English languages offers essential insights to negative constructions, explores the universal and language-specific aspects of negations in the two languages.

Previous Studies

Some linguistic scholars have compared English and major languages in line with contrastive analysis thereby establishing the principles and parameters in human languages. Onmoke (2016) worked on parametric variation of personal pronouns in English and Ebira languages. The study revealed that despite the common ground of pronouns in English and Ebira, there are striking differences between the nature and operation of Ebira personal pronouns and those of English personal pronouns. Similarly, Kwokwo (2017) investigated the universal syntactic head parametric variation in English and Izọn Languages. He submitted that English is a head-initial language while Izon, being an SOV language and minus some exceptions, is generally a head-final language. Ojo and Omolaiye (2020) examined a comparative investigation of English and Okpameri inflectional morphemes. They conclude that the realisation of inflectional morphemes in words varies in languages. For instance, English and Okpameri are morphologically marked for plural but their realisations in words differ.

Statement of the Problem

Negative markers exist in human languages but differ in nature and distribution. The variation of these markers across languages, pose a significant challenge to linguistic theory and language acquisition. Idọ̀mà language is spoken in Nigeria and English as a global lingua franca display distinct differences in their negative marking systems with implications for cross-linguistic pedagogy. Previous studies have focused mainly on the comparison of English and major Nigerian indigenous languages, with little or no attention given to Idọ̀mà, being a minority and an understudied language. Therefore, a comprehensive contrastive investigation of the syntax

and semantics of negative markers in Idọ̀mà and English is overdue as it is needed to establish the principles and parameters that govern their usage, and to provide insights into the development of more effective language teaching methods and linguistic theories that can account for the universal and language-specific properties of negation in both languages which is crucial for L2 learners to avoid ungrammaticality.

Aim and Objectives

The study aims to examine a comprehensive cross-linguistic investigation of the syntax and semantics of negative makers between Idọ̀mà and English languages and to provide insights into both the variation and universals that exist in the two different languages. The specific objectives of the study are:
1. to identify and describe the nature of negative markers in Idọ̀mà and English languages
2. to analyse the syntactic and semantic properties of negative markers in both languages.
3. to establish the points of convergence and divergence of negative markers between Idọ̀mà and English languages and
4. to suggest solution to difficult areas of negative markers between Idọ̀mà and English languages for L2 learners.

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of negative markers in Idọ̀mà and English languages?
2. How are the syntactic and semantic properties of negative markers in Idọ̀mà and English languages expressed?
3. Are there points of convergence and divergence of negative markers in Idọ̀mà and English languages
4.   Is there solution to difficult areas of negative markers between Idọ̀mà and English languages for L2 learners?

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on syntax and semantics of negative markers in Idọ̀mà and English languages. Syntax of Idọ̀mà and English languages is examined to identify the nature and position of negative markers in both languages. Specifically, Otúkpò dialect of Idọ̀mà language and the British English (BrE) variety are adopted for the purpose of this study in line with the establishment of universal grammar.

Significance of the Study

This study provides insights into the syntax and semantics of negative markers in Idọ̀mà and English languages. It advances language teaching, learning, cross-linguistic communication, natural language processing and cognition. The study also contributes to the development of linguistic theories, such as universal grammar and the syntax-semantics interface, by identifying universals and language-specific features of negative markers. The findings shed light on how

learners acquire the syntax and semantics of negative markers, word order, convergence and divergence in Idọ̀mà and English languages. Its findings have pedagogical implications for teaching English and Idọ̀mà, enabling language instructors to design more effective curricula and materials. The study serves as a notable addition to scholarly work and as a documentation of Idọ̀mà language and it preserves the endangered language from adulteration, intrusion and extinction.

2.   Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design and contrastive analysis of data gathered from the two distinct and different languages. Idọ̀mà language data was gathered through structured questionnaire and oral interview from competent native speakers who are bilinguals in Idọ̀mà and English languages. Purposive sampling was adopted and the respondents translated the words and structures from English language to Idọ̀mà language in natural language to guide against instances of interference and adulteration. The native speakers were selected from Otúkpò because Otúkpò dialect is central and generally accepted as formal medium of communication and instruction among the people. English language data was obtained from English grammar texts: *Aspects of Chomskyan Grammar* by Lamidi (2008) and *A Contemporary Functional Grammar of English by* Ojo (2011). Secondary method was adopted at the time of carrying out this study because native speakers were not available to supply primary data. The researcher selected these texts because they were published empirical studies which are relevant to syntax and semantics of the English language which are works of researchers in the field of grammar. The data collected were analysed and contrasted in line with principles and parameters theory to establish the area of convergence and divergence in Idọ̀mà and English languages.

3.   Theoretical framework

This study adopted the Principles and Parameters Theory (PPT) also known as Government and Binding Theory. PPT was developed within the Universal Grammar (UG) and as a theory of UG, it consists all the principles and parameters that are common to all natural languages. UG, a theoretical concept proposed by Noam Chomsky in (1986), describes the human innate ability to acquire a language. Chomsky (1986:3) defines UG as the system of categories, mechanisms, and constraints shared by all human languages and considered to be innate. Similarly, Chomsky (1995:131) believes that while human languages appear to be different, they share some fundamental similarities or underlying commonalities, which are due to innate principles unique to language: that deep down, there is only one human language. UG views human languages as a whole and innate, that is, all human languages are characterised by Language Acquisition Device (LAD) which explains that human brain contains an innate mental grammar or mechanism that helps humans to acquire language. LAD is conceived to be a biological endowment of all normal human beings that enables them to acquire any language in their immediate environment. That means normal human beings are born with the instinct or 'innate facility' for acquiring language. UG spells out the characteristics of all natural languages in PPT. It sets the linguistic principles and features common to all human languages. It spells out two central components that characterize all natural or human languages. The principles encapsulate the elements or features that are common to all languages while the parameters capture the features or the elements that

behave differently in each language due to their peculiarity. The periphery is the parametric variation among languages and this study is set to examine the variation of syntax and semantics of negative markers in Idǫmà and English, identifying the similarities and differences.

PPT posits that a large portion of the grammar of any particular language is common to all languages. It describes syntax by using principles and parameters. The principles are universal while the parameters are language-specific. PPT explains the similarities and variations between natural languages which are determined by the parameterised choices that languages make in different dimensions include, head directionality, word order, Null-subject or pro-drop parameter, wh-parameter, negative makers, etc. Therefore, adopting the framework of PPT in this study provides insights into the parametric variation of negative markers in the two different languages. The framework was adopted to analyse negative markers in English and Idǫmà languages by examining how the parameters of negative markers are set in each language.

4.   Data Analysis and Discussion

Word order is a general term used to refer to the arrangement of words in a given linguistic structure to convey meaning. It is the order of the syntactic constituents of a language. Words may be strung together differently in languages which result in different word order. Word order in human language affects sentence meaning, emphasis and grammaticality. Greenberg (1966:76) cited in Sanusi & Oyewole (2019) identifies the first three word orders (SVO, SOV and VSO) as the most commonly found among human languages. Lamidi (2011) asserts that languages have specific word order. He submits that English and Yoruba languages have SVO sentence pattern, while Izon language has SOV sentence pattern.

	S	V	O
English:	Adam	loved	Eve.
Yorùbá:	Ade	re	ata.
	Ade	harvest	pepper.
	'Ade	harvested	pepper'.

	S	O	V
Izon:	Okoro	oboribei	batei.
	Okoro	goat	kill.

'Okoro killed a goat'.

(Lamidi 2011:8).

Likewise, Okwokwo (2017) asserts that Izon has a SOV word order. Word order can substantially determine the meaning of a sentence and changing the order of words can equally affect meaning.

Word Order in Idọ́mà

Umaru (2016) and Sanusi & Oyewole (2019) assert that the word order in Idọ́mà is essentially SVO. What this means is that Idọ́mà sentence pattern is SVO (subject - verb - object); the subject is usually preceded by the verb, and the verb is followed by the object in most cases. This can be exemplified as in the following sentences:

1a. Idọ́mà: Èném   hè   òlọ

   English: my mother   cook   soup

              S   V   O
                  'my mother cooked soup'

b. Idọ́mà: Òchè   rè   íhì
    English: Òchè   eats   yam
              S   V   O
                  'Òchè   ate yam'

c. Idọ́mà: Ofítẹ̀   mó   egwa
    English: Hunter   kills   snake
              S   V   O
                  'Hunter kills snake'

d. Idọ́mà: Énechọjọ   rà   ẹda

   English: Énechọjọ   buy   shoe

              S   V   O

                  'Énechọjọ bought shoe.'

e.	Idọ̀mà:	Enenchẹ	ju	ọkpa	li	Agbo

	English:	Enenchẹ	gives	book	to	Agbo

		S	V	DO		IO

'Enenchẹ gave a book to Agbo.'

f.	Idọ̀mà:	Èli	kpo	ènyi

	English:	Èli	fetch	water

		S	V	O

'Èli fetched water.'

g.	Idọ̀mà:	otọtẹ	nmó	adágbà
	English:	NP	kill	elephant
		S	V	O

'The hunter killed an elephant'.

h.	Idọ̀mà:	Audu	hí	íhì
	English:	NP	cultivate	yam
		S	V	O

'Audu cultivates yam'

Each of the above sentences (a-h) exhibits the SVO word order. This shows that Idọ̀mà language can be said to be SVO word order and this is in line with the common word order of human languages.

Word Order in English

English language has a SVO word order (subject-verb-object) relatively fixed and there are exceptions and variations. The subject (S) comes first, the verb (V) comes second and the object (O) occupies the third position. Word order in English is used as a typical method to construct sentences without ambiguity. SVO is the most common word order in English, however, English word order can be flexible and variations are possible for the purpose of emphasis, topicalization or stylistic purposes. This can be illustrated below:

2a. The boy (S) chased (V) the ball (O)
b.   He (S) eats (V) breakfast (O)
c.   She (S) tore (V) the book (O)
d.   The cat (S) catches (V) mice (O)
e.   The student (S) wrote (V) essays (O)
f.   The chef (S) cooks (V) dinner (O)
g.   The musician (S) played (V) the guitar (O)
h.   The scientist (S) conducts (V) experiments (O)

The sentences above illustrate the basic word order in English. The subject (S) performs the action described by the verb (V), and the object (O) receives the action. This is the most common word order in English and it is used to convey basic information in a clear and straightforward way.

Contrastive Statement

Convergence exists between English and Idọ̀mà languages in terms of word order. The word order in Idọ̀mà language which is usually subject-verb-object (SVO) is also the basic word order found in English language. The two languages are SVO languages as exemplified in data (1a-h) for Idọ̀mà and (2a-h) for English. However, English word order can be flexible and variations are possible for purposes of emphasis, topicalization or stylistics.

5.   Negation

Negation in languages is also known as negative construction. In linguistics, negation is a crucial and fundamental aspect of language that plays a vital role in constructing meaning, negotiating or resolving conflicts. Negation is also used to confirm or distinguish truth from falsehood. The capacity to negate is the capacity to refuse, to lie, to speak ironically and to distinguish truth from falsity (Horn 2001:1). Horn argues that negation is a universal feature of human language that can be found in all languages and they are essential for communication. Such negations are standard negation (not), metalinguistic negation (no) and scalar negation (not very), etc. Likewise, Dahl (1979) sees negation as a linguistic operation that reverses the truth value of a proposition or assertion. That is, it is a way to deny or contradict a statement, making it false or invalid. Dahl explores the typology of sentence negation across languages focusing on its semantic and pragmatic properties, exploring how negation functions in language to convey meaning and facilitate communication. Also, Hulse (2010) asserts that negation is a cognitive operation that involves the mental representation of the absence or reversal of a concept, property, or state. In other words, negation is a process of thinking about what is not the case, or what is opposite of a particular concept or situation. Lindstad (2007) also submits that negation is a language universal that can be found in all known languages and unique to human languages. Crystal (2008:323) submits that "negation is a process or construction in grammatical and semantic analysis which typically expresses the contradiction of some or all of a sentence's

meaning''. Therefore, in light of the above assertions and definitions, negation is then a grammatical construction that contradicts or negates all or part of the meaning of a sentence. Divergence occurs in Languages due to the syntactic position of the negative markers in grammatical sentences. Different languages have different ways of expressing negation through negative makers.

<div align="center">

Negation in Idọ̀mà
</div>

In Idọ̀mà, the negative marker 'nó' occurs at the sentence-final position to express negation. Although, Idọ̀mà language is SVO in word order but does not conform to the general hypothesis that languages with SVO word order usually have their negative marker pre-verbally. 'Nó' in Idọ̀mà language is the usual and common marker used to express denial, opposite or disagreement in sentences. The following examples illustrate the use of 'nó' in Idọ̀mà language.

Positive Statement   **Negative Statement**

3a. Ayẹnbe   rè   ọnihi   Ayẹnbe   rè   ọnihi   a   nó

    Ayẹnbe   eat   pounded yam   Ayẹnbe   eat   pounded yam   the   neg

    S   V   O   S   V   O

    'Ayẹnbe   ate   pounded yam.'   'Ayẹnbe did not eat pounded yam.'

b. Énechọjọ   rà   ẹda   Énechọjọ   rà   ẹda   nó

    Énechọjọ   buy   shoe   Énechọjọ   buy   shoe   Neg

    S   V   O   S   V   O

    'Énechọjọ   bought shoe.'   'Énechọjọ did not buy shoe.'

c. Òchè   ju   òkpa li Abah   Òchè   ju   òkpa li Abah nó

    Òchè   give   book to Abah   Òchè   give   book to Abah neg

    S   V   DO   IO   S   V   DO   IO

    'Òchè gave a book to Abah.'   'Òchè did not give book to Abah.'

d. Èli   kpo   eyin   Èli   kpo   eyin a nó

Èli	fetch	water			Èli	fetch	water	the	neg
S	V	O			S	V	O		

"Èli fetched water.'   'Èli did not fetched water.'

e.

otọté̩	nmó	adágbà		otọté̩	nmó	adágbà	nó
NP	kill	elephant		NP	kill	elephant	neg
S	V	O		S	V	O	

'The hunter killed an elephant'   'The hunter did not kill an elephant'

f.

Audu	hí	íhì		Audu	hí	íhì	nó
NP	cultivate	yam		NP	cultivate	yam	neg
S	V	O		S	V	O	

'Audu cultivates yam'   'Audu did not cultivate yam'

The negative marker **nó** occurs at the sentence final position in all the above negative constructions. We can therefore say that Idọ́mà despite being an SVO language, the negative marker occurs post-verbally as exemplified in data (3a-f).

Negation in English

There are negative markers in English language which are used to express absence, opposite, reversal of something or to negate all or part of the meaning of affirmative sentences. The most commonly used negative marker in English is the particle 'not'. 'Not' is usually positioned after the first auxiliary in a verb phrase and English being and SVO language usually have SNegVO structure. Negative markers in English language could be classified into three. These are: (negative adverbs: not, no, hardly, barely, scarcely, never, hardly ever, seldom, etc), (negative pronouns: neither, none, no one, nobody, nothing, etc.) and (negative determiners: no, neither, etc.) They are used to negate a statement, form a negative question or emphasize a negative point. Other negative markers are morphological negation (negative affixes) which negates the base word without grammatically affecting the remainder of the sentences. The negative affixes are negative suffix (-less, -free, etc) and negative prefixes (un-, dis-, anti-, mis-, di-, non-, ill-, a-, ex-, de-, counter-, mal-, in-, etc). SVO languages usually place their negative markers pre-verbally, occurring at the position before the main verb but this is different in Idọ́mà language despite being an SVO language. The following examples illustrated the use of negative markers in English:

4a. I am **not** going home.
   b. I do **not** like coffee.
   c. Samuel does **not** like ice cream.
   d. I do **not** like flattery.
   e. **No one** is perfect.
   f. **Nobody** knows the answer.

Other morphological negations (negative affixes) are illustrated below.

Negative prefixes:

5a. The news was **un**predictable ("un-" means "not").
   b.   She is **ir**responsible ("ir-" means "not").
   c. He is **non**committal ("non-" means "not").
   d. The machine is **in**efficient ("in-" means "not").
   e. The student was **dis**obedient ("dis-"means "not").
   f. 10. The plan was **im**practical ("im-" means "not").

Negative prefixes above ("un-", "ir-", "non-", "in-", "dis-", and "im-" are used to indicate the opposite or negation of the words' meanings.

Negative suffixes:

6a. The patient was penni**less** ("-less" means "without").
   b. The decision was fruit**less** ("-less" means "without").
   c. The effort was use**less** ("-less" means "without").
   d. The result was worth**less** ("-less" means "without").
   e. The attempt was fut**ile** ("-ile" means "unable to").
   f. The park is stress-**free** ("-free" means "without").

Contrastive Statements

English usually places its negative marker pre-verbally occurring after the first auxiliary in a verb phrase with some exceptions. Although, Idọ̀mà language exhibits SVO word order, it does not place its negative marker pre-verbally like English language. Idọ̀mà negative marker occurs post-verbally contrary to the tendency that negative markers precede the main verbs in SVO languages. From the above data, in English language, the negative marker '**not**' occurs after the first auxiliary in example (4a-d). Idóma language places its negative marker consistently at the sentence-final position, in the above negative constructions in example (3a-f). Therefore, it can be concluded that the pattern of negation in Idọ̀mà is usually post-verbal negation while that of English is usually pre-verbal negation. Affix negations (prefixes: "un-", "ir-", "non-", "in-", "dis-", "im-" and suffixes: "-less", "-free", "-ile") which could be called morphological negations are not usually present in Idọ̀mà language as they exist in English language.

6.   Findings

There are clear convergence and divergence in syntax and semantics of Idọ́mà and English word order. It is observed from example (1a-h) data that Idọ́mà and English languages share convergence in word order. Idọ́mà and English have SVO word order. Just like the English language, Idọ́mà sentence pattern is usually SVO (subject - verb - object); the subjects preceded the verbs and the verbs preceded the objects in most cases. In example (1a-h) and (2a-h) the subjects preceded the verbs, and the verbs preceded the objects. Though, English word order can be flexible and variations are possible for emphasis, topicalization or stylistics purposes.

Negative markers in English and Idọ́mà languages are used to express absence, opposite, reversal of something or to negate all or part of the meaning of affirmative sentences. However, there are clear divergence in syntax and semantics of Idọ́mà and English negative constructions. It is observed from example (3a-f) that Idọ́mà despite being an SVO language, the negative marker **"nó" occurs** at the sentence final position. Therefore, Idọ́mà negative marker **("nó")** occurs post-verbally (SVONeg) as exemplified in data (3a-f) while the most commonly used negative marker in English is the particle **"not''** as exemplified in data (4a-d) positioned after the first auxiliary in verb phrases and English being and SVO language usually have SNegVO structure. Also, while negative affixes are not present in Idọ́mà, there are negative affixes in English as exemplified in data (5a-f) and (6a-f).

7.   Conclusion

This study examined the syntax and semantics of negative markers in Idọ́mà and English languages. The nature and distribution of negative markers in both languages differ. This is in line with the establishment of universal grammar which established that languages are different in their parameters but similar in their principles. Idọ́mà and English language share convergence in word order but differ in the distribution of negative markers. Idọ́mà is usually post-verbal negation by placing its negative marker (nó) at the sentence-final position, while that of English is usually pre-verbal negation and also uses negative affixes.

8.   Hierarchy of Difficulties

Lado (1957) submits that the degree of divergence between two languages correlates with the degree of difficulty. It is possible that the degree of divergence between Idọ́mà and English syntax and semantics of negative markers determine the degree of difficulty and vice versa. Therefore, the aspects of similarities between Idọ́mà and English negative markers enhance learning and aspects of differences hinder learning or causes interference. If Idọ́mà-English learners or L2 learners transfer their L1 knowledge of negative markers in Idọ́mà to English, there would be an interference which would hamper performance. Therefore, Idọ́mà-English learners or L2 learners of English should pay attention to the divergence in these languages. Particularly, an Idọ́mà-English learner would have difficulties using negative constructions in English language because of his knowledge of the Idọ́mà negative construction SVONeg

(negative marker 'nó' occurs at the sentence-final position). Hence, there is a possibility for him/her to involve in cross-linguistic under-differentiation or over-differentiation because of the difference in nature and distribution of negative markers in both languages. Although, Idọ̀mà and English share SVO word order, Idọ̀mà negative marker occurs post-verbally (SVONeg) while negative marker in English usually occur pre-verbally (SNegVO). Therefore, L2 learners should pay critical attention to their convergence and divergence in order to avoid ungrammaticality.

9.   Recommendation

The main aim of contrastive analysis is to do a systematic description of two languages, juxtapose the two languages and establish areas of convergence and divergence**.** CA is a systematic study of two or more languages with the aim of identifying their structural differences and similarities focusing on the differences and explaining the process of second language acquisition. This research paper focused on the contrastive analysis of syntax and semantics of negative markers in Idọ̀mà and English languages. A single research work cannot claim to be exhaustive. Therefore, it is appropriate to recommend that more research be carried out on other aspects of the languages. This will equip second language teachers and learners with more literature on Idọ̀mà and English languages.

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UNE ETUDE ANALYTIQUE DE 'EMILOKAN' DANS LE DISCOURS POLITIQUE DU NIGERIA

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Abstract

The expression EMILOKAN was uttered by Bola Ahmed Tinubu (BAT) in one of the political meetings of his All Progressive Congress (APC) party in 2022. The expression generally means – it is my time or my turn to do or receive something after waiting for a while. It is also, from another perspective, my turn to lead the country or the power is mine at that moment. In BAT's situation, he used this expression to make a declaration that he will be the next president of Nigeria in 2023. He is known for his nationalist ideology and political skills. He is not shy in creating new words as he has been associated with the words like JAGABAN, EKO FOR SHOW and so on. In this paper, the researchers were able to evoke Bakhtin's theory which lays emphasis on the dialogical state of Man as the problem of this study aims to search for attractive Yoruba words and expressions to convince Nigerian youths to rally round the most influential candidate. This study foregrounds how language and politics intertwine in Nigerian society to persuade the

public or attract their interest towards a particular political party to succeed during the general election. Nigeria is a democratic country which gives citizens the opportunity to choose their leader for each mandate which lasts a period of four years. This action leads to a competition between power-seeking politicians like BAT and its rivals. This research brought up other vocabularies associated with other political gladiators like ATIKULATE – the personality of Atiku Abubakar and OBIDIENT – Peter Obi, former governor of Anambra state. Our recommendations consist of familiarising Yoruba speakers with the French equivalence of expressions emanating from the Yoruba language and simplify them for the non-native speakers.

Keywords: Emilokan, Yoruba expressions, politics, Bakhtin theory, Nigerian youths

Résumé

L'expression EMILOKAN était prononcée en 2022 par Bola Ahmed Tinubu (BAT) dans l'une des réunions politiques de son parti All Progressive Congress (APC). Le sens de l'expression généralement veut dire – c'est mon temps ou encore mon tour de faire ou recevoir quelque chose après avoir attendu pour un bon moment. C'est aussi, dans une autre perspective, mon tour de diriger ou bien le pouvoir m'appartient à ce moment. Dans la situation de BAT, il a utilisé cette expression pour faire une déclaration qu'il sera le prochain président du Nigeria en 2023. Il est connu pour son idéologie nationaliste et sa compétence politique. Il n'est pas timide dans la création de nouveaux mots comme il a été associé avec les morphèmes comme JAGABAN, EKO FOR SHOW et ainsi de suite. Dans cette communication, on a pu évoquer la théorie de Bakhtine qui met l'accent sur l'état dialogique de l'Homme comme la problématique de notre étude vise à chercher les mots et expressions yoruba attirants pour convaincre les jeunes Nigérians à octroyer leur soutiens physiques, moraux et politiques au candidat le plus émerveillé. Nous avons dégagé comment la langue et la politique s'entremêlent dans la société nigériane afin de persuader le public ou bien attirer leur intérêt vers un tel parti politique dans le but de réussir pendant l'élection générale. Le Nigeria est un pays démocratique qui donne l'opportunité aux citoyens de choisir leur leader à chaque mandat qui dure une période de quatre ans. Cette action mène à une compétition entre les politiciens cherchant le pouvoir comme BAT et ses rivaux. Cette recherche a évoqué d'autres vocabulaires associés aux autres gladiateurs politiques comme ATIKULATE – la personnalité de Atiku Abubakar et OBIDIENT – Peter Obi, ancien gouverneur d'état d'Anambra. Nos recommandations consistent à inviter les francisants yoruba de bien connaitre les équivalences françaises des expressions émanant de la langue yoruba afin de les simplifier au public allogène.

Mots-clés: Emilokan, expression yoruba, politique, théorie de Bakhtine , les jeunes Nigérians

Introduction

De prime abord, la langue est l'un des plus efficaces emblèmes de la conduite sociale. Au moment d'un transfert normal de l'information, la langue est utilisée pour envoyer des messages essentiels concernant notre personnalité, origine, souhait, demande, conseil etc. Il est souvent étonnant de remarquer d'une manière illustrative comment nous pouvons juger l'histoire, le caractère et les intentions d'un individu simplement basés sur la langue de l'individu. Il s'avère nécessaire qu'un aspect de l'étude de la langue soit consacré sur le rôle de la langue dans la société. La langue yoruba, selon (Okunowo Y. 2017, p.194), comme d'autres langues africaines, peut être décrite comme une langue idéophonique (c'est-à-dire une séquence des sons qui représente une idée). Cette structure idéophonique, signalée par Okunowo, fait partie intégrale de cette langue maternelle y compris l'aspect sémantique et tout se trouve dans les autres langues africaines. Il est pertinent de noter que nous ne pouvons pas séparer la langue de la communauté humaine comme certaines cultures autour du monde élargissent leur chaîne de communication de la relation humaine qui assume une signification escaladée. La communauté yoruba se trouve dans différentes parties de l'Afrique de l'Ouest mais la plus grande concentration est incorporée au Sud-Ouest du Nigeria y compris une démographie de 35 million d'habitants (voir Oshin 2016, p. 118-119). Voilà le cas du Nigeria d'où nous avons un multiple de néologismes touchant tantôt l'arène politique tantôt les expressions émanant de la part des jeunes Nigérians ou encore des supporteurs d'un parti politique à l'autre. En effet, le Nigeria est un pays démocratique qui permet aux citoyens de choisir leur dirigeant et cette action exige une compétition entre les hommes politiques qui sont disponibles pendant ces activités électorales qu'on appelle l'élection.

La vie politique de Bola Ahmed Tinubu

Monsieur Bola Ahmed Tinubu du parti politique All Progressives Congress (APC) du Nigéria, a été déclaré vainqueur de l'élection présidentielle très disputée du pays, voir www.wikipedia.org .
Âgé de 70 ans, il a été l'ancien gouverneur de l'État de Lagos et faiseur de rois de la politique nigériane, héritera d'un pays confronté à une fracture politique, à des menaces pour la sécurité nationale et à des défis économiques, notamment la montée en flèche du coût de la vie.
Tinubu a pu capturer 36% des 24 965 218 (vingt quatre millions neuf cent soixante cinq milles deux cents dix-huit) voix exprimées pendant de l'élection présidentielle du 25 février dont le résultat est contesté par ses plus proches rivaux – Atiku et Obi.
Pour devenir président du Nigeria, l'article 134 de la Constitution stipule qu'un candidat à la présidence doit posséder le plus grand nombre de voix pendant de l'élection présidentielle. Ce faisant, le candidat doit également obtenir au moins un quart des voix exprimées dans chacun des 25 États de la Fédération, y compris le territoire de la capitale fédérale. Tinubu a pu bien remplir cette condition.
Ses plus proches rivaux, Atiku Abubakar, du Parti démocratique populaire (PDP), a obtenu 29 % des suffrages exprimés et Peter Obi, du Parti travailliste (LP), 25 %. Les deux partis avaient auparavant qualifié le scrutin de simulacre et demandé son annulation.
Le PDP et le Parti travailliste (LP) ont protesté contre l'incapacité de la Commission électorale nationale indépendante (CENI) à télécharger les résultats de l'élection présidentielle, pour

chacune des 176 606 (cent soixante seize milles six cents six) centres de vote, sur un portail électronique accessible à tous les citoyens, comme promis précédemment.

La commission électorale (INEC) a imputé son incapacité à télécharger les résultats à un réseau Internet défaillant dans tout le pays.

La campagne de Bola Ahmed reposait en grande partie sur son bilan en tant que gouverneur de l'État de Lagos, la capitale commerciale du Nigeria. Il est à noter qu'il a été battu à Lagos par Peter Obi, un ancien gouverneur de l'État d'Anambra, dans le sud-est du Nigeria.

Le Parti travailliste d'Obi, quasi inconnu, a pu galvaniser l'intérêt des jeunes citadins et a pris à partie le système bipartite du pays lors de l'élection présidentielle de 2023.

Il s'avère nécessaire de noter que le Nigeria compte la plus grande population de jeunes au monde, avec un âge médian de 18,1 ans. Presque 70% de la population a moins de 30 ans, et 42% a moins de 15 ans. Les jeunes sont souvent laissés pour compte lorsqu'il s'agit de gouvernance et d'indices économiques.

À l'extérieur de Lagos, Bola Ahmed a pu capturer la plupart des autres États de sa région d'origine, le sud-ouest. Il a également rempli la condition constitutionnelle de recueillir au moins 25 % des suffrages exprimés dans 24 États de la fédération.

Généralement considéré comme le faiseur de roi politique responsable de l'émergence du président Muhammadu Buhari en 2015, Tinubu est aimé et détesté dans des proportions quasi égales.

Ses admirateurs le voient comme un gladiateur politique numéro un du Nigeria, un technocrate, et un administrateur talentueux. Ils lui attribuent le mérite du récent développement de Lagos, la capitale commerciale du Nigeria.

Les détracteurs souhaitent toujours son échec en ce qui concerne son âge, l'ascendance de ses parents, sa formation et sa santé. Des allégations de corruption persistent, bien qu'il ait été jugé et acquitté. Voici dans dans les lignes ci-après son ascension politique.

L'ascension politique de Tinubu

Monsieur Bola Ahmed Tinubu s'est fait connaître au niveau national pendant la funeste Troisième République du Nigeria (1985-1992), alors qu'il existait une Assemblée nationale et un président militaire, le général Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida.

Pendant l'arrangement quasi-démocratique de l'époque, Tinubu était membre du Sénat nigérian lorsque Babangida a annulé les résultats de l' élection présidentielle de 1993 du le vainqueur était un homme des affaires Moshood Kashimawo Abiola.

La lutte de Tinubu pour la revalidation de cette élection l'a fait entrer dans la conscience politique nationale. Il s'est ouvertement opposé à l'annulation et a œuvré à la restauration de la démocratie au Nigeria.

À un moment donné, il est devenu la cible de l'élimination militaire et a dû fuir à l'étranger. Tinubu a pu coordonner et largement financer la campagne pour la démocratie au Nigeria depuis son exil.

À l'aube du retour à la démocratie en 1999, Tinubu est devenu le gouverneur de l'État de Lagos, la capitale économique du pays.

Gouverneur de Lagos

Pendant ses huit ans étant le gouverneur de 1999 à 2007, l'État de Lagos a introduit des réformes dans les domaines de la génération de revenus, du système judiciaire, de la sécurité, du développement des infrastructures et d'autres secteurs.

Mais son mandat a été dominé par une longue bataille avec le gouvernement fédéral à propos de sa décision de créer de nouveaux gouvernements locaux à Lagos. Cette décision a provoqué la colère du gouvernement fédéral dirigé par le président Olusegun Obasanjo, qui a pris la décision de retenir l'allocation fédérale mensuelle qui était due à l'État.

Jusqu'alors, on pensait qu'aucun État du pays n'était capable de survivre sans allocation fédérale mensuelle. Tinubu a réussi à augmenter les recettes internes de l'État, ce qui lui a permis de survivre pendant cette période. À partir de ce moment là, Lagos n'a cessé d'accroître sa capacité à s'autofinancer. En 2022, seuls six des 36 États du Nigeria étaient capables de survivre de manière indépendante.

Parmi les six États de la région, Tinubu est le seul gouverneur du sud-ouest du Nigeria à avoir été réélu en 2003 sous la bannière du parti d'opposition de l'époque, l'Alliance pour la démocratie. Les cinq autres gouverneurs ont tous perdu leur bataille pour un second mandat face à des adversaires présentés par le parti démocratique populaire au pouvoir, dirigé par le président Olusegun Obasanjo. On pense que Tinubu a gagné grâce à sa popularité auprès des électeurs de Lagos.

Il est resté influent dans l'État et est communément décrit comme le parrain de la politique de Lagos, ayant joué un rôle important dans l'émergence de ses successeurs au poste de gouverneur de Lagos.

Constructeur de ponts et éducateur de talents

Bola, ce gladiateur politique, est souvent décrit par ses admirateurs comme un bâtisseur de ponts politiques. Il a la réputation d'être capable de repérer et d'entretenir les talents. Nombre de ceux qu'il a repérés sont devenus de grands acteurs de la politique et de la gouvernance au Nigeria.

Par exemple, il a nommé l'ancien vice-président du Nigeria, Yemi Osinbajo, un universitaire juriste, au poste de procureur général et de commissaire à la justice dans l'État de Lagos. En 2015, il a pu nommer Osinbajo comme vice-président de Buhari.

Tinubu a également contribué à l'émergence de nombreux ministres et conseillers spéciaux dans le cabinet de Buhari, d'anciens et d'actuels membres de l'Assemblée nationale, ainsi que d'anciens et d'actuels gouverneurs d'État qui étaient ses assistants et ses partisans politiques.

Le controversé Tinubu

Nul n'ignore le fait que les controverses concernant l'origine parentale et les diplômes de Tinubu ont constitué des obstacles à sa campagne électorale.

À travers la vie politique nigériane, les questions d'identité telles que la famille et la lignée ancestrale jouent souvent un rôle clé dans l'évaluation des candidats.

Feu Alhaja Abibat Mogaji, la puissante dirigeante de l'association des commerçants du marché qui portait le titre de Iyaloja General de Lagos et du Nigeria, était largement reconnue comme la mère de Tinubu. Elle est décédée en 2013, à l'âge de 96 ans.

Mais les critiques insistent sur le fait qu'elle ne pouvait pas être sa mère biologique. Ils affirment que Tinubu a une identité différente de celle qui est dans le domaine public. Sa famille a contredit ces rumeurs.

Son âge est une autre source de polémique. Tinubu affirme avoir 70 ans. Ses détracteurs affirment qu'il est probablement plus âgé que cela. Ses détracteurs insistent également sur le fait qu'il est en mauvaise santé et inapte à être président, une affirmation que lui et ses partisans ont réfutée.

En ce qui touche la corruption, il n'a jamais été condamné. Sous l'ancien président Goodluck Jonathan, il a été inculpé devant le tribunal du code de conduite mais acquitté. Cela a contribué à améliorer son image. Ses partisans soutiennent que s'il était vraiment corrompu, il aurait été condamné, d'autant plus qu'il était un politicien de l'opposition.

Le faiseur de roi est le président élu

En 2015, Tinubu a dirigé un mouvement politique qui a donné naissance au parti All Progressives Congress, une coalition de partis d'opposition qui a finalement battu le Peoples Democratic Party lors du scrutin présidentiel.

C'était la première fois depuis 1999, date du retour du Nigeria à un régime démocratique, qu'un parti au pouvoir et un président en exercice perdaient une élection.

Bola Ahmed Tinubu a été considéré comme le faiseur de roi politique responsable du succès de Buhari en 2015. Nous pensons également qu'il a soutenu Buhari dans sa candidature à un second mandat en 2019.

Actuellement, il est devenu le président élu et le successeur du président Buhari, dont le mandat se termine officiellement le 29 mai 2023.

La vie politique d'Atiku Abubakar

Monsieur Atiku Abubakar, GCON, est né le 25 novembre 1946. Il est un politician nigérian, voir – www.wikipedia.org . Il est un homme d'affaires et a été le vice président du Nigéria entre 1999-2007 pendant le régime du president Olusegun Obasanjo. Il avait échoué d' être le gouverneur de l'État d'Adamawa en 1990 et 1996 mais finalement réussi en 1998. Il a contesté avec fiasco d'être le président du Nigéria six fois: 1993, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019 et 2023. En 1993, il a essayé sous le parti politque SDP pour les élections présidentielles du primaire mais cédé la place à Moshood Abiola et Babagana Kingibe. En 2007, il a été candidat presidential du parti politique AC mais dominé par Umaru Yar'Adua de PDP. En 2011, il a contesté les élections présidentielles du primaire de PDP mais dompté par le président Goodluck Jonathan. En 2014, il s'est lancé en parti politique de APC en faveur des élections présidentielles du primaire mais consommé par Muhammadu Buhari. En 2017, il est retourné à PDP et était le candidat présidentiel du PDP pendant les élections présidentielles du 2019 tout en cédant encore la place à Muhammadu Buhari. En 2022, il a été choisi comme le porte-drapeau de PDP en faveur de l'élection présidentielle de 2023 mais c'était malheureusement le même échec car Bola Ahmed Tinubu a été élu le président du Nigéria.

La vie politique de Peter Obi

Monsieur Peter Obi était né le 19 juillet 1961 à Onitsha. Il a fait ses études au Christ the King College, www.wikipedia.org. Il s'est marié à Margaret Brownson Usen en 1992 et ils ont pu avoir deux enfants: Gabriel Nwamaka Frances Obi et Gregory Peter Oseloka Obi. Il est intéressant de savoir qu'Obi appartient à l'ethnie Igbo. Il a été le gouveneur de l'État d'Anambra 17 mars au 2 novembre 2006 après d'être destitute par l'assemblée locale et du 9 février au 29 mai 2007, après l'annulation de sa destitution par la justice. En octobre 2018, il a été nommé colistier du candidat présidentielle du PDP – Atiku Abubakar en faveur des élections présidentielles de 2019. En 2023, Peter Obi s'est retiré des primaires du PDP en faveur du Parti travailliste tout en devenant le candidat à l'élection présidentielle. Il a pu adopter comme colistier Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed de l'État de Kaduna. Obi était présenté comme le candidat de la jeunesse nigériane et des élites urbaines et appréciés par d'autres nigérians dans la diaspora. Après les élections présientielles de 2023, il a eu la troisième position avec près de 25% des voix d'où Bola a été le premier et Atiku était le deuxième respectivement. Aprè le dépouillement des

résultats, les membres des partis d'Atiku et d'Obi ont condamné les fraudes électorales ochestrées par la commission électorale nationale indépendante (INEC). Les deux politiciens : Obi et Abubakar ont décidé de contester le résultat de l'élection devant la justice.

Le concept de mot chez Bakhtine

Linguistiquement parlant, le MOT se distingue, selon Bakhtine (1963 & 2000), étant un élément de la langue universelle facilitant un échange interindividuel dans une communauté humaine. Dans le même ordre d'idées, Bakhtine catégorise simplement TOUT MOT appartenant à un seul auteur c'est-à-dire que le mot peut représenter soit une position personnelle vis-à-vis d'un défi ou encore d'un empêchement langagier. Le mot peut être impersonnel appartenant à groupe social ou un groupe d'ethnie. Le mot peut jouer aussi le rôle d'un phénomène métalinguistique c'est-à-dire d'un usage personnalisé. Cette pratique nous montre la vision du monde du locuteur, d'un écrivain ou encore d'un facilitateur de langue concerné. Cette situation dialogique suscite une réponse ou encore une réaction de la part de l'audience visée. La communication dialogique provoque non seulement un échange interindividuel mais aussi elle nous montre généralement leurs points de vue personnels, leurs paroles, leurs objectifs dans l'interaction donnée. Le MOT peut toutefois communiquer l'ensemble des idées de son auteur y compris son attitude envers le contenu. C'est d'ailleurs pourquoi nous voulons montrer l'attitude de notre président Bola Ahmed Tinubu désormais (BAT) de son fusionnement de l'expression Yoruba EMILOKAN vis-à-vis du contenu métalinguistique destiné aux jeunes Nigérians. Ce faisant, l'emphase a été mise sur la particularité du MOT chez certains spécialistes russes, Boris Ejxenbaum (1886-1959) et Viktor Vinogradov (1895-1969) touchant au dialogue c'est-à-dire l'échange des répliques, à l'introduction des éléments du langage parlé dans les œuvres littéraires, à la stylisation et à la parodie. C'est dans cette optique que le mot exhibé par notre président BAT fut accepté par tous les citoyens Nigérians comme ils chantaient souvent dans l'église, la mosquée, au stade, au restaurant, au campus etc. par le biais de l'expression EMILOKAN EMILOKAN EMI NI ORIRE KAN – (C'est mon tour. Le succès m'appartient).

Cadre théorique et méthodologique

Puisque cette recherche vise l'étude du mot captivant yoruba qui cherche à persuader les jeunes Nigérians afin d'exhiber leur soutiens physiques, moraux et politiques pour le candidat le plus émerveillé parmi les trois gladiateurs politiques. Nous avons adopté la théorie de Bakhtine qui met l'accent sur l'état dialogique de l'Homme. C'est l'aspect de la métalinguistique de cette théorie de dialogisme qui englobe notre concept de EMILOKAN de BAT afin de psychologiquement capturer l'attitude et l'attention des jeunes pendant l'élection présidentielle de 2023 au Nigeria. Adesola (2023) avait utilisé ce dialogisme pour briser l'obstacle linguistique des apprenants universitaires tout en cherchant un rapprochement entre leur compétence et performance dans la langue cible. Cette recherche a été inspirée par le discours de Bola Ahmed Tinubu pendant sa campagne politique dans l'état d'Ogun en 2022 quelques jours avant les élections primaires. Nous avons pu interviewer la compétence de certains étudiants universitaires de Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED), Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) et Osun State University (UNIOSUN) respectivement sur le concept en question. D'autres informations émanant du débat entre les jeunes Nigérians sur les réseaux sociaux comme Facebook, WhatsApp et d'autres informations venant de la part de l'ancien président Olusegun Obasanjo en ligne. Lado (1957), cité par Akoso et Patricia (131) nous fait savoir que les

apprenants sont affrontés par certaines difficultés lors de l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère comme le français, causées par la divergence structurale entre la langue maternelle et la langue cible. Voilà la linguistique contrastive en jeu comme nous voulons mettre en exergue certains mots Yoruba ainsi que leurs versions françaises pour que notre point de vue soit apprécié.

Objectifs de l'étude

Les objectifs de notre communication sont les suivants:

1. développer advantage la compétence linguistique des apprenants nigérians à travers le concept de EMILOKAN.

2. élargir le vocabulaire des apprenants dans la langue cible en illustrant d'autres lexiques yorouba dans la même ère politique.

3. familiariser les francisants nigérians par rapport à d'autres lexiques qui n'appartiennent pas à la même langue maternelle.

Questions de recherche

Notre communication essaie de répondre à ces questions saillantes suivantes:

1. Comment peut – on mettre à la portée de tout le monde l'intention de l'originateur du mot EMILOKAN?

2. Y a-t-il d'autres mots yoruba prononcés par BAT lors de son discours de la campagne électorale?

3. Y a-t-il d'autres mots n'appartenant pas aux expressions yoruba dans la discussion journalière des jeunes Nigérians au réseau social?

Que veut dire EMILOKAN?

Emilokan est un mot yorouba qui a été découvert dans la parole de Bola Ahmed Tinubu désormais (BAT), un leader national et un candidat à l'élection présidentielle du Nigeria lors d'une convention politique qui s'est déroulée à l'État d'Ogun (avant l'élection primaire du parti APC en Mai 2022). Emilokan qui tient son origine de la langue yoruba peut être considéré comme une phrase condensée pour devenir un seul mot. EMILOKAN – veut dire "Moi est le tour" qui signifie "il est mon tour" ou "c'est mon tour". Dans le discours pragmatique et dans le contexte où cette expression qui devient un mot est employé par BAT, "Emilokan" signifie "Il est mon tour de devenir président suivant la liste de APC". BAT a utilisé ce mot pour souligner sa conviction qu'après avoir donné de nombreuses chances à d'autres personnes notamment le président Muhammed Buhari. BAT voulait expliquer que c'était son tour pour régner en tant que président du Nigeria. Il a fermement décidé que personne ne peut en aucun cas entraver son ambition. Il est bien connu par ses supporteurs de son idéologie nationaliste et sa compétence

politique. Il n'est pas timide mais il est un gladiateur politique bien renommé. C'est peut-être la raison pour laquelle est aussi appelé JAGABAN, EKO FOR SHOW et ainsi de suite. Le mot EMILOKAN avait l'intention de signaler que le leader national était le prochain sur la liste des candidats pour les élections présidentielles de 2023. Obasanjo (2022) a, quant à lui, renforcé ces idées en disant que Tinubu a créé de nouveaux mots (*emilokan* – c'est mon tour ; *eleyi* – celui-ci; *olule* – il a échoué) dans le dictionnaire politique du yoruba.

Politiquement parlant, avec toutes les réussites de BAT, il l'incombe mieux de devenir le numéro un de notre cher pays. Le mot EMILOKAN est cependant reçu par le public avec les différents points de vues et commentaires. Sur le plan sociolinguistique, nous avons constaté que le mot s'est rapidement circulé parmi les jeunes Nigérians surtout au Sud-ouest de notre chère nation avant son éparpillement dans les quatre coins du pays. Il est essentiel de noter que le néologisme EMILOKAN a déjà attiré plus de bonheur et honneur à BAT par toutes les autres tribus. Ce qui fait qu'on ne peut en aucun cas ignorer le rôle d'une langue et son usage dans une société. Nonobstant, cet homme politique, parmi ses co-gladiateurs, s'est détaché pour attaquer et rabaisser verbalement le président Muhammed Buhari. C'est cette aggression qui a donné naissance à ces phrases piquantes suivantes:

- Ó se ìkíni, ólulè – Il a échoué dans sa première tentative.

- Ó se ìkeji, ólulè – Il a échoué pour la deuxième fois.

- Ó se ìkéta, ólulè – Il n'a pas pu réussir dans sa troisième tentative.

- E gbe kíni yi wa – Donnez –moi ce poste présidentiel

- Emi lokan – C'est mon tour. C'est mon tour de devenir président.

On compte d'autres néologismes yorouba appartenant à la même ère : ELEYI, O LULE, ELO FOKAN BALE, E DIBO ESEBE, ATIKULATE et OBIDIENT. Il nous incombe de mieux signaler que les deux derniers néologismes ne sont pas du yoruba mais appatenant aux tribus hausa et igbo. Nous avons essayé de les déchiffrer l'un après l'autre pour appuyer notre point de vue.

Signification de certains néologismes politiques

Ayant eu une mûre réflexion sur la version française de EMILOKAN, il s'avère nécessaire d'aller au bout des autres mots mentionnés ci-haut qui ont rapport au néologisme politique de même ère.

ELEYI: C'est un mot qui signifie celui-ci. Cette expression a été utilisée par BAT d'une façon dérogatoire lors de son discours à Abeokuta, avant l'élection présidentielle du primaire, adressant Son Excellence Prince Dapo Abiodun, le gouverneur de l'état d'Ogun afin d'exprimer son mécontentement envers lui.

OLULE: Ce mot veut dire tout simplement il a échoué. BAT nous fait savoir ses efforts fraternels octroyés au Président Muhammed Buhari afin de gagner l'élection présidentielle du 2015. Il s'avère nécessaire de rappeler que ce dernier a échoué son poste désiré trois fois en 2003, 2007, 2011. C'est grâce à l'intelligence déployée par BAT, un gladiateur politique, qu'il a pu réussir le poste du premier citoyen du Nigéria en 2015.

ELO FOKAN BALE: Cette expression qui signifie soyez à l'aise en yoruba, *elo fokan bale*, relevé du discours de BAT pour calmer son audience avant les élections car certains ont eu peur à cause de multiple candidats qui avaient postulé pour le même poste.

E DIBO ESEBE: Cette expression veut dire voter et préparer la soupe. C'est une expression qui renvoie à un acte de corruption où les politiciens donnent de miettes aux électeurs pour recueillir les votes surtout dans les bureaux de vote.

ATIKULATE: Une locution destinée aux supporteurs du candidat Atiku Abubakar du parti démocratique du peuple (PDP) d'où celui-ci représente ethnopolitiquement les nordistes . Ce candidat est un gladiateur politique qui était l'ancien vice président du Nigeria pendant le régime du Président Olusegun Obasanjo entre 1999-2007. Il est intéressant de savoir que c'est depuis 2007 qu'il essayait et continue à essayer jusqu'à présent d'être le président du Nigeria. Force est de remarquer au Facebook, le hashtag #Atikulate éparpille pendant la campagne en faveur du porte-drapeau du PDP pour lui souhaiter bonne chance. Un message fantastique renforce l'idée de convaincre le public que M. Atiku Abubakar était plus articulé et avait une meilleure compréhension des défis contemporains qui affligent les jeunes Nigérians que ses principaux adversaires.

OBIDIENT: Une locution destinée aux supporteurs du candidat Peter Obi du parti travailliste (LP) d'où celui-ci représente ethnopolitiquement la région du Sud-Est. Il était l'ancien gouverneur de l'état d'Anambra entre 2006 et 2014. En ce qui concerne l'élection présidentielle de 2019, il a était le vice président d'Atiku Abubakar d'où les efforts pendant ces activités étaient fiasco. Il est intéressant de noter que Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed est l'adjoint de Peter Obi dans leur mouvement d' Obidient qui fait appel aux jeunes nigérians d'être fidèles et les voter lors d'élection présidentielle de 2023.

D'autres expressions captivantes exhibées par les jeunes électeurs Nigérians

Beaucoup de jeunes Nigérians ne peuvent en aucun cas oublier à la hâte certaines des images puissantes que les néologismes qui ont caractérisé les élections de 2023 ont créés. Voyons à titre d'exemples certaines expressions captivantes politiques énumérées ci-dessous:

1. **"Ó tó gé"** – Le mantra de campagne ou encore le mantra politique le plus puissant des élections de 2019, [otogɛ] signifie "Assez! C'est assez." C'est un slogan adopté par la section du parti APC de l'État de Kwara. C'est une expression largement soupçonnée d'avoir contribué à la chute de l'ancien président du sénat Bukola Saraki et de ses alliés du parti démocratique du peuple (PDP). Malgré qu'il y ait une contradiction sur le slogan "ó tó gé", ce mot a été inventé par le chanteur islamique, Ibrahim Labaeka, membre de l'Association des musiciens islamiques

du Nigeria (ISMAN). Il est un artiste populaire d'Ilorin dont les œuvres étaient utilisées pour persuader les électeurs de voter contre Saraki. Après ce mot vient l'expression suivante "*Lilo le e lo*" qui signifie "vous allez partir" qui signifie "Nous allons vous chaser du pouvoir".

2. **"4 plus 4"** – *Next Level*, comme "O to ge" est un mantra exhibé par la bouche vers l'oreille, le "4 plus 4" est une utilisation non verbale de la langue des signes. L' expression est principalement visée au désir de soutenir la candidature du président Muhammadu Buhari à la réélection en 2019. Cette pratique se fait en écartant les deux mains et tous les doigts sauf le pouce. Il est à noter que les deux quatre doigts distincts affichés représentent chacune des périodes de quatre ans des deux mandats souhaités pour le président puisque le mandat est renouvelable une fois selon la Constitution République fédérale. Le panneau de campagne électorale "4 plus 4" est suivi du chant occasionnel *Next Level* parmi les partisans de Buhari.

3. **Take It Back** – C'est un mantra politique vivement apprécié par les jeunes Nigérians de nos jours. L'initiateur de *Take It Back* est l'éditeur de *Sahara Reporters*, Omoyele Sowore, candidat aux élections présidentielles de 2019 et 2023 sur la plate-forme du Congrès d'action africain (AAC). M. Sowore est un militant renommé et un rassembleur du mouvement *Take It Back* dont la philosophie de base est de reprendre le pays de ceux qui pillent ses ressources. Sowore a malheureusement perdu l'élection présidentielle en 2019 face à Muhammadu Buhari de l'APC.

4. **Sòrò Sókè** – C'est un mouvement des jeunes Nigérians visant à la libération des opprimés chez les oppresseurs ou encore les gladiateurs politiques. Ce mantra est attribuable au sang, à la sueur et aux larmes. *Sòrò Sókè* signifie "Parlez fort" ou "Ne taissez vous pas". C'était une chanson de bataille utilisée pendant le mouvement de #EndSARS ou encore la brutalité policière menée par les manifestants nigérians contre la mauvaise habitude du *Special Anti-Robbery Squad* (SARS) précisément le 20 Octobre 2020. Il s'avère nécessaire de rappeler que des manifestations et des rassemblements communautaires ont eu lieu à Lekki, une ville de Lagos.

5. **Ambo** – Ce mot yorouba signifie *nous viendrons*, un mantra de campagne en faveur de l'ancien gouverneur de l'État de Lagos, M. Akinwunmi Ambode de 2015-2019. Après son premier mandat, celui-ci a rencontré son fiasco au moment où les membres de l'APC ont adopté M. Sanwo-Olu comme porte-drapeau lors du primaire du parti. Avant cet exercice électoral, le slogan avait attiré des partisans de M. Ambode pour son parti à Epe, sa ville natale. Cette situation a provoqué un autre mantra "Ambo lekan si" qui signifie *Nous viendrons une fois de plus*, afin de faciliter la candidature de celui-ci à la reelection.

6. **Omi Tuntun** – Cette expression "nouvelle eau" veut dire tout simplement *nouvel air / une bouffée d'air frais*. C'est une expression visée au porte-drapeau du PDP dans l'État d'Oyo, M. Seyi Makinde. Il s'est présenté comme nouvel air qui peut vraiment émanciper le peuple de son état à travers la plate-forme du Parti socio-démocrate (SDP) mais il a échoué en 2015. C'était en 2019 qu'il a été considéré comme un concurrent majeur et il a eu une victoire éclatante.

7. **Sanwo-Eko** – Cette expression veut dire connotativement *le paiement des Lagosiens* ou la *transformation positive de la vie des Lagosiens*. C'est un mantra de campagne du gouverneur actuel de l'État de Lagos. Cette expression était employée par les chefs et partisans de APC lors

du primaire du parti. Des fois, ces supporteurs adoptent une autre version comme *Sanwo-e* qui signifie *payer/ donnez-nous de l'argent* ou encore *il faut nous payer*! Il nous incombe de mieux informer notre public que cette expression *sanwo-e* évoque la corruption dans l'arène politique nigériane car sans la distribution monétaire pendant la campagne électorale les portes-drapeaux pourraient facilement échouer dans les élections.

Conclusion et recommandations

De ce qui précède, la création linguistique des mots et expressions dans les discours politiques du Nigéria ne peut en aucun cas être sous-estimée surtout pendant les campagnes électorales car les slogans divers sont souvent prononcés par les jeunes pendant la campagne électorale. La sémantisation ou /et la praxématique de mots et expressions yoruba (*emilokan, olule, eleyi, ediboesebe, omi tuntun, otoge, ambo, soro soke, sanwo-e* etc) réveille systématiquement la conscience des concernés ou/et électeurs. Cette pratique nous rappelle que chaque parti développe son mantra pour que son point de but soit bien apprécié par le public. *Emilokan* comme nous avons pu illustrer ci-haut, c'est mon tour/c'est mon temps d'être le président du Nigeria, attire l'attention de tous les Nigérians les jeunes comme les adultes dans les six zones géopolitiques et les étrangers mêmes. Il est à noter que l'un des mots ou expressions évoqués fait allusion à la corruption soit directement ou indirectement. Nous aimerions conseiller aux jeunes Nigérians de prendre note des suivants:

-   la culture des yoruba peut être bien présentée au monde entier à travers des néologismes créés par les politiciens ou les électorats;

-   la pratique qui consiste à distribuer de l'argent pendant la campagne électorale, doit être découragée;

-   les francisants yoruba doivent s'intéresser à chercher les équivalences françaises des expressions émanant de la langue maternelle afin d'élargir leur vocabulaire.

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